Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework

User Guide

March 2022

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Part 1: About the Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework for Western Australia

Purpose of this guide

This guide demonstrates how to align your government agency commissioning plans and service agreements to the Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework (Framework). The Framework will enable a shared understanding of outcomes across government agencies and the community services sector and to better harness data to demonstrate the effectiveness of community services at achieving positive outcomes for the people of Western Australia.

Purpose of the Framework

The Framework sets out the community outcomes that the Western Australian Government seeks to achieve in delivering community services. It will help to better meet the needs of the people of Western Australia by:

> building a shared understanding of outcomes across government agencies and the community services sector;

> supporting agencies and the community services sector to adopt an outcomes-focused approach in community services planning and commissioning;

> promoting consistency in the measurement and evaluation of outcomes and activities;

> enabling innovation, learning, and improvement; and

> encouraging agencies and the community services sector to work together to achieve outcomes.

Where the Framework applies

The Framework applies across all commissioning plans, programs and service agreements under the Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy. Government agencies undertaking community services commissioning activities are encouraged to use the Framework to support the design, delivery, and evaluation of the community services they deliver. The Framework applies to all new commissioning plans and service agreements and the relevant reporting requirements described in each commissioning plan.

Ownership of the Framework

The Framework is an initiative of the Supporting Communities Forum. It was initially developed through Department of Finance (Finance) funding to the Western Australian Council of Social Service, under the guidance and oversight of the Supporting Communities Forum.

Finance will undertake ongoing implementation of the Framework in consultation with government agencies and the community services sector, with oversight from the Supporting Communities Forum.

Government agencies are responsible for integrating the Framework into their community services commissioning and service delivery management and may contact Finance for guidance in doing so.

The Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework

The Framework consists of domains, community outcomes, indicators and measures.

Domains

Domains are the generalised set of wellness categories for whole populations of the Western Australian community. The Framework consists of seven domains:

Safe – We are free and safe from harm

Stable – We are financially secure and have suitable, stable housing

Healthy – We are healthy and well

Equipped – We choose how to live our lives

Empowered – We have the skills, experiences, and resources to contribute to our community and economy

Connected – We connect with

(numbered one through 31) and several sub-outcomes (numbered 1.1 through 31.2), which can be viewed in the Framework. **Community outcomes** are long-term outcomes (usually longer than the service agreement term), often expressed on a population level, can be affected by events outside of the services, and may or may not be achieved by the services even if all outputs (deliverables) are provided to a high standard.
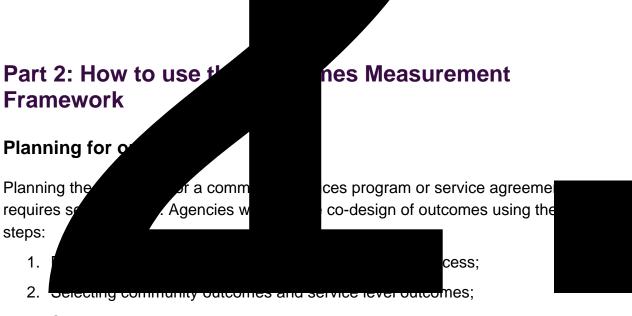
Service level outcomes

Community services use service level outcomes as well as community outcomes. **Service level outcomes** are outcomes that can reasonably be expected to be achieved for service recipients during the term of the service agreement if services are delivered to the expected standard. Service level outcomes are not included in the Framework but will still need to be determined and measured for each community service.

Indicators and measures

The indicators identify elements of change under each community outcome that

the data library will allow agencies to reference a standardised set of measurements that best reflect each indicator.

Finance has a data library template which government agencies may use and adapt to their needs. Please contact Finance if you would like to access the template. Alternatively, government agencies are free to develop their own data library templates.

Part 2: How to use t̶h̶e̶ ̶O̶u̶t̶c̶o̶m̶e̶s Measurement Framework

Planning for o̶u̶t̶c̶o̶m̶e̶s

Planning the o̶u̶t̶c̶o̶m̶e̶s̶ ̶f̶o̶r̶ a comm̶u̶n̶i̶t̶y̶ ̶s̶e̶r̶v̶i̶ces program or service agreeme̶n̶t̶ requires s̶e̶v̶e̶r̶a̶l̶ ̶s̶t̶e̶p̶s̶. Agencies w̶i̶l̶l̶ ̶l̶e̶a̶d̶ ̶t̶h̶e̶ co-design of outcomes using the̶s̶e̶ steps:

1. D̶e̶f̶i̶n̶e̶ ̶t̶h̶e̶ ̶c̶o̶-̶d̶e̶s̶i̶g̶n̶ ̶p̶r̶ocess;
2. Selecting community outcomes and service level outcomes;
3. Selecting indicators and measurement methodology;
4. Collecting data; and
5. Feedback and iteration.

Participants in the co-design of outcomes should include relevant people within your government agency, as well as service providers, service recipients and other community members.

1. Define your activities through program logic mapping

Defining your program outcomes

Your community service needs to have a clear intention for the change being sought. A program logic model is one tool that can help to articulate how your activity will achieve .92 reW*nBT/F1 12 Tf1 0 0 1 248.5 614.5 Tm0 g0 G -0.012 Tc[a)]Ti2 Tf1 0

f. **Assumptions**   list the assumptions you have made regarding links between the inputs and activities. Does evidence support these assumptions?

g. **External Factors**   list the external factors that could impact service delivery and intended outcomes.

A community services program logic template and a program logic model guideline are available on wa.gov.au.

2. Select the community outcomes and service level outcomes

Using the Framework and in consultation with relevant stakeholders including potential service providers, choose at least two relevant community outcomes that your program or service agreement aims to achieve. Consider ways that activities may contribute to changes across all areas of the Framework and try to identify as many impacts that arise from the program as possible.

way to develop a complete assessment of outcomes is to use a mix of approaches, often to draw on multiple data sources. Data collection methods cannot be determined without input from service providers, as they are frequently responsible for collecting the data. We recommend that you select methodologies that have the following characteristics:

a standardised collection methodology within the sector;

a currently used collection methodology by your agency or service provider. Seek insight from your service provider and align to what they are already collecting where possible;

the collection methodology will not induce a bias in the answer, and

the collection methodology is not overly intrusive or burdensome on the service provider or the service recipient.

Data should be kept in one central digital database within each agency to be analysed and used. All new data collection systems should be pilot tested. Treat any data collected in the first round of data collection with caution while testing your collection methods. Also, remember that you will learn what works best for data collection over time.

5. Feedback and iteration

Using feedback to monitor and achieve better outcomes

Regularly review the results of your outcomes measurement to ensure you achieve your intended impact. Is the data confirming that services are achieving the intended outcomes, or does it show mixed results? Is the data showing that services realise benefits you did not expect? Can the service provider share insights into the service based on the data?

A valuable way to review the data is to examine it in line with your program logic model. By checking each area, you can uncover a range of information to make changes to your program to deliver improved outcomes.

Situation: Have you understood the situation correctly?

Inputs: Are you using the appropriate resources?

Activities: Are you delivering activities appropriately?

Outputs: Are you delivering the right outputs?

Outcomes

An extended list of program logic model feedback and iteration questions is available in the package of materials for the Framework.

6. A working example of using the Framework

Below we will demonstrate how to use the Framework through an example.

You are commissioning a service designed to improve rates of school attendance for kindy and pre-primary aged children. You are planning the service and will need to undertake the process below to identify information for the Request document.

STEP 1: Define your service activities using program logic mapping

Using the program logic model, work with stakeholders to co-design

For our example, the agency in partnership with service providers determines that the best way to collect data will be through a combination of departmental data and a before/after survey of service recipients.

STEP 5: Add this information into your planning document

The information identified through the program logic process should inform the relevant areas within your planning documents. This information includes the outcomes, proposed indicators and measures, and data collection methodology. As data becomes available throughout service delivery, these metrics can ensure the service delivers the intended outcomes.

More information is available regarding evaluating your service agreement in the program logic model g