HARVARD Kennedy School
Government Performance Lab

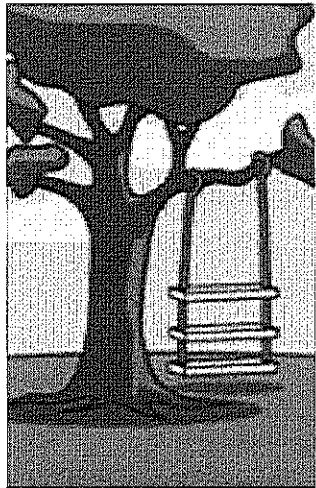# Developing Results-Driven RFPs and Contracts

Strategic Procurement Coaching
Working Group: February 21, 2018

Introductions

Who are you? Name, division, role

Some perspective on the challenges of designing RFPs and contracts...
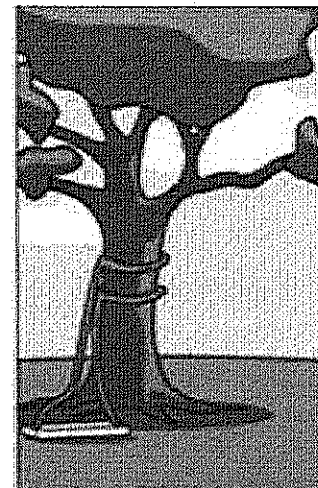

How the Department explained it
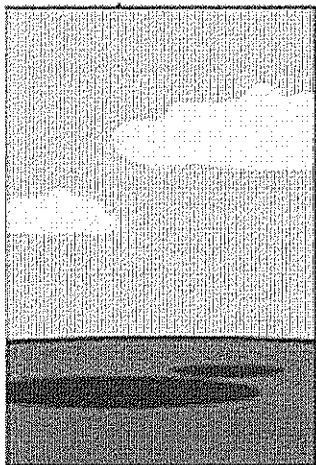
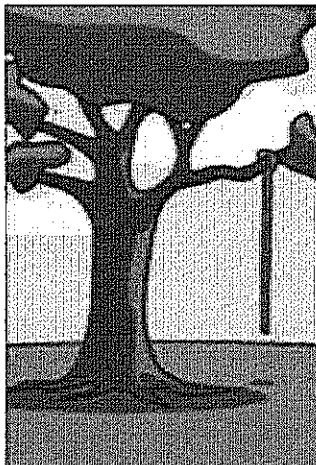How the Project Manager understood it

How the Engineer designed it

How the Program Manager wrote the RFP

How the Department Director described it

How the approvals were documented

How the Vendor installed it
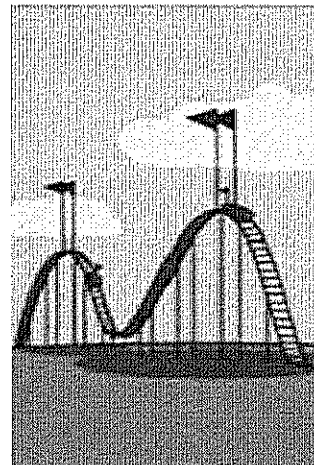
How the Vendor invoiced it

How the grants management software supported it

What the Department really needed

Today's agenda

9:00	Today's Objectives

9:10   Advancing Strategic Priorities

9:35   Encouraging Innovation

9:50   Preparing for Active Contract Management

10:00   Discussion

10:20   Wrap up

10:30   Adjourn

Coaching structure and today's objectives

Drop-Ins

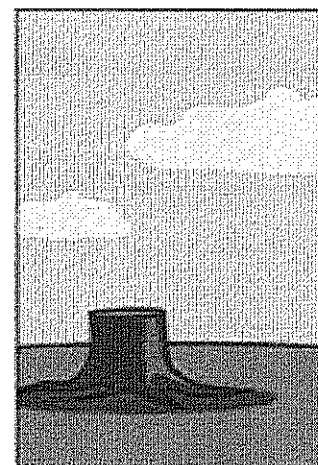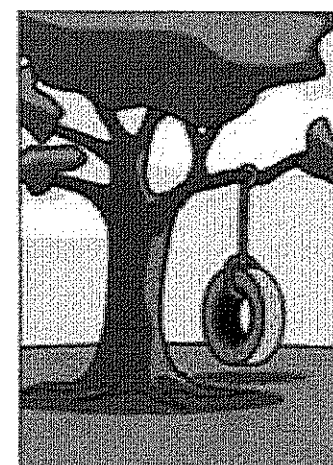| Nov-Dec	**Feb-Mar**	Apr-May
Conducting a Strategy & Needs Assessment	Writing an Effective RFP	Actively Managing Contracts
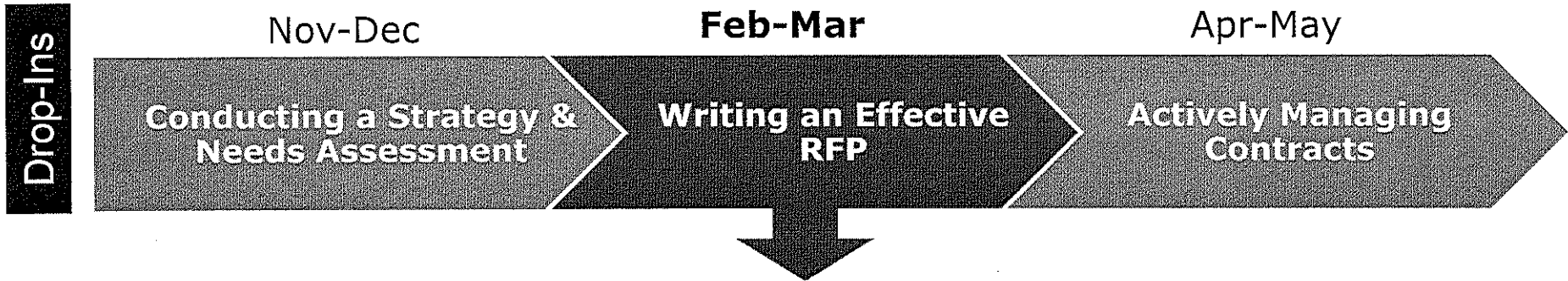
Results-driven RFPs and contracts should be **crafted, not drafted**, to:

Objectives

Advance Strategic Priorities	Encourage Innovation	Prepare for Active Contract Management
RFPs are a strategic opportunity to improve results. Use the RFP background and purpose to align the procurement with department strategy and program goals.	RFPs can bring new or creative program approaches to light. In the scope of work, articulate a clear vision of success while leaving appropriate flexibility for creative solutions.	Some of the most important piece of contracting is contract management. Use the RFP to establish a foundation for collaborating with vendors to use data to improve performance over time.

Seattle Case Study: Using Contracts and RFPs to focus on outcomes and drive performance

Problem

- Despite increases in funding, **homelessness rose significantly** from 2011-16
- The City's contracts, data, and performance management practices **severely hampered their ability to understand what was driving the problem**
- **Existing contracts** were focused on outputs and compliance, and **were not reinforcing the main goal** of reducing homelessness

New approach

The City decided to **re-orient contracts to focus on key outcomes** of permanent housing placements and housing stability by:

1. Specifying performance goals

2. Setting up a data tracking system

3. Improving data collection

4. Actively managing contracts

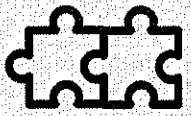| Note that metrics are reported at the portfolio level.	Year-to-Date Performance		Year-to-Date Target		August 2016 Performance		Monthly Average from Prior Three Months	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I. Key Metrics								
Successful Diversion Outcomes	16		24		2		4	
Milestones to Success								
Obtained Identification	28		24		3		4	
Enrolled in Public Assistance	23		24		4		3	
Payment of Arrears	20		24		2		3	
Permanent Housing Outcomes	45	38%	48	40%	6	43%	6	40%
Housing Stability		87%		95%		85%		86%
Returns to Homelessness (6 months)		26%		10%		27%		28%
Returns to Homelessness (12 months)		32%		10%		32%		30%
Racial Disproportionality of Households Achieving Key Outcomes								
Households of Color		86%		100%		82%		89%
White		105%		100%		107%		103%
II. General and Program Administration Metrics								
Capacity	50		50		50		50	
Entries	116		120		14		13	
Exits	117		120		14		15	
Occupancy		92%		90%		95%		95%
III. Data Collection								
HMIS Consent		88%		100%		80%		92%
HMIS Data Completion		97%		100%		90%		95%

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Using the building blocks of RFPs to advance strategic priorities

Articulating what you want to achieve – the vision of success – starts with the following components:

- ❑ **A clear problem statement:** In what ways are you trying to improve upon the status quo? Why?

- ❑ **Outcome goals:** What are you trying to achieve with this contract? How can this be quantified?

- ❑ **Metrics:** How will you measure whether or not you have made progress on this goal?

- ❑ **A defined target population:** Who are the intended recipients of this product or service? What are their needs?

- ❑ **Other key insights from needs assessment:** What other supporting data/information will most help prospective vendors craft responses that further the department's vision of success?

Problem Statements: The anatomy of an effective problem statement

RFP# 7551107
TITLE: Pay for Success Contract for Re-Entry Services*

Rhode Island is seeking partners to execute a contract for services that improve employment and recidivism outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals at a moderate- to high-risk of re-offending (hereafter "high-risk individuals").

Each year more than 3,000 Rhode Islanders return to their communities after time spent in prison or jail. Unfortunately, because of strained supervision resources and the limited availability of evidence-based programming for ex-offenders, many released individuals find themselves caught in a cycle of incarceration. Of the 3,331 offenders released in the state in 2012, 54% of men and 40% of women were re-incarcerated within three years of release.

This procurement seeks interventions that will decrease recidivism rates for high-risk individuals.

Problem Statements: Crafting an effective problem statement

A good problem statement has five basic elements*:

1. Connects the department's priorities to a clear and specific **outcome goal**

2. Clearly explains **the gap** between where we are today and where we want to be (our goal)

3. Quantifies **key variables** related to where we are today, where we want to be, and the gap between

4. Is sufficiently focused in scope to be **actionable**

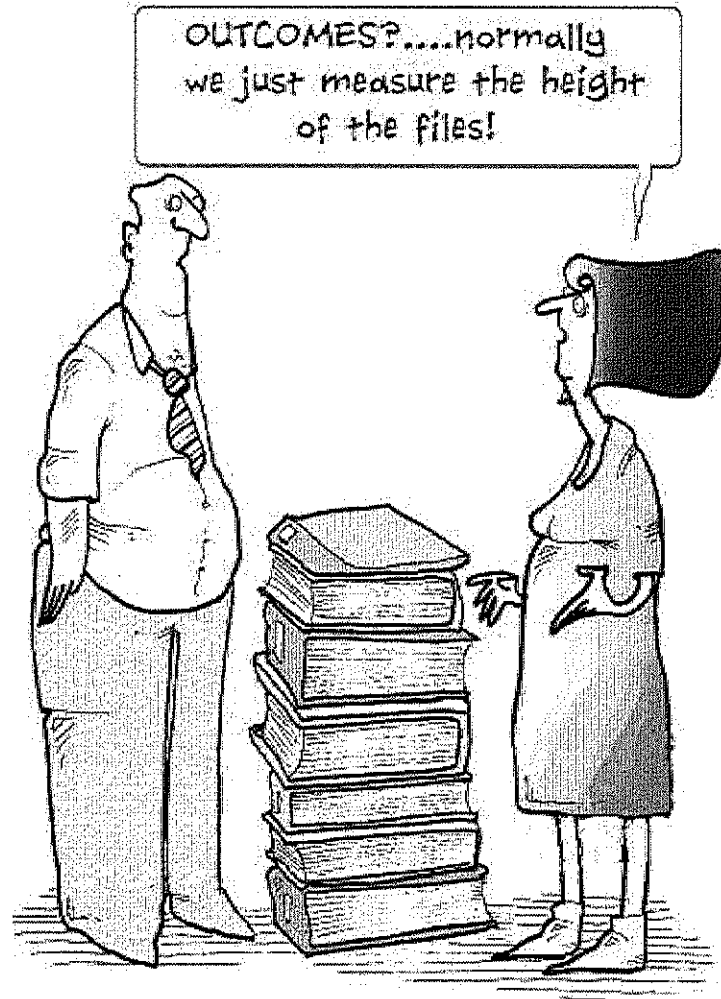5. Is as **neutral** as possible about possible diagnoses or solutions

*For further reading, see Nelson P. Repenning, Don Kieffer, and Todd Astor, "The Most Underrated Skill in Management," *MIT Sloan Management Review*, Mar. 13, 2017; online at: https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/the-most-underrated-skill-in-management/

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Outcome Goals

Outcome Goals: What do you mean by outcomes?

➢ The results, or consequences, of your work!

➢ What kind of changes came about as an effect of this program?

➢ What do people think, feel or practice now that they didn't before this program?

➢ How do people behave, act or respond now that they didn't before this program?

Outcome Goals: Find the outcome goal #1

This RFP aims to:

1 End chronic homelessness

2 Increase movement to stable housing for individuals who are frequent users of the shelter system

measurable

3 Offer services including case management, meals, showers, housing search to eligible homeless individuals

Which of these examples feel too broad, too narrow, or just right? Why?

Outcome Goals: Find the outcome goal #2

This RFP aims to:

1 Provide a case management team made up of 8 doctors, 5 nurses, and 1 rocket scientist

an action, not a goal

2 Improve the long term self-sufficiency for individuals on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

3 End reliance on safety net services

too vague - not quantifiable

Which of these examples feel too broad, too narrow, or just right? Why?

how do we measure

Outcome Goals: Find the outcome goal #3

This RFP aims to:

1 Reduce 3-year recidivism rates and increase employment

2 Provide high-quality discharge planning (i.e. intensive pre-release assistance and referrals to community orgs.) to 500 offenders

3 Deliver 10 hrs of intensive counseling, develop complete discharge plans, prepare exit docs

Which of these examples feel too broad, too narrow, or just right? Why?

Outcome Goals: Procurements should clearly focus on *what* the agency is trying to achieve

Toolbox: Examples of Clear RFP Outcome Goals

- "Enable elderly individuals to safely live at home by decreasing crisis-driven placements into long-term nursing care"

- "Increase employment for individuals receiving temporary cash assistance"

- "More frequently keep children in their own homes, prioritize family placements for children who must be removed, and use group placement only when necessary for short-term treatment"

- "Replace six highway overpasses without disrupting weekday commuter traffic"

Don't let specs and reqs masquerade as outcome goals!

Using the building blocks of RFPs to advance strategic priorities

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Metrics: Real-world examples of translating goals into measurable success

Seattle Homeless Investments RFP＊

The Homeless Investments RFP seeks applications from agencies that provide services that support movement toward and access to permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.

＊https://www.seattle.gov/homeless-investments-rfp

Metrics: Real-world examples of translating goals into measurable success

Seattle Homeless Investments RFP*

The Homeless Investments RFP seeks applications from agencies that provide services that support movement toward and access to permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.

The five key performance metrics are:

- Entries from homelessness – people in the program are actually experiencing homelessness at the time of service, rather than housing instability;

- Exits to permanent housing – the percentage of total exits to a permanent housing destination

- Length of stay – how long people stay in the program;

- Returns to homelessness – any household who exited a program to a permanent housing destination six months prior to the report period, and then subsequently accessed Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing or a Safe Haven program.

- Utilization rate – the program's ability to serve as many people as possible

*https://www.seattle.gov/homeless-investments-rfp

Metrics: How do we effectively articulate goals and metrics in RFPs and contracts?

✓ **Orient providers to success:** By articulating goals and metrics, you are defining what success looks like and establishing a shared understanding of what you and the providers are working toward.

✓ **Keep it (relatively) simple:** If you don't have enough metrics, you risk not fully understanding performance. If you have too many, it may appear that none of them are particularly important and it may be difficult to focus the provider on specific metrics.

✓ **Balance output and outcome measures:** If you only measure outputs you can't reliably say if your contract is having an impact on participants. Including outcome metrics is crucial to understanding program performance.

✓ **Be consistent:** If you have multiple contracts that are similar or aim to achieve the same goal, you should use consistent metrics across them. This will allow you to compare performance between different providers and combine performance across contracts to understand system-wide impact.

✓ **Leave room to learn:** It can be helpful to ask providers for their input on meaningful metrics. Contracts should also reserve the right to adjust goals and metrics once programs are up and running.

Using the building blocks of RFPs to advance strategic priorities

Articulating what we want to achieve – our vision of success – starts with the following components:

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Target Population: Matching the right people to the right services at the right time

Ways to target and match:

- Use existing, evidence-based risk/needs-assessment tools

- Make **direct referrals** to providers

- Include **"no eject/reject policies"**

- Hold provider accountable for **outcomes of everyone referred**, not just those served

- Use **payments** to reward targeting of the neediest populations

Target Population: Example outcomes framework for unique subpopulations

This figure illustrates the outcomes framework for Department's anticipated service array.

1. Family at risk of DCYF involvement	1A. Identify and prevent at-risk families from DCYF involvement	1B. Safely divert investigated families from subsequent DCYF involvement	1C. Divert youth from the juvenile justice system	
2. Child at risk of removal from family	2A. Safely prevent unnecessary entry into out of home care and congregate care	2B. Improve anti-social behaviors and strengthen court compliance of delinquent youth	2C. Prevent crisis-driven disruptions in care through mobile crisis response	2D. Treat mental and behavioral needs of children in their communities
3. Child requiring out of home placement	3A. Care for children in family-based foster care while driving to permanency	3B. Address acute youth barriers to placement in family based setting	3C. Assess and stabilize children requiring out of home placement	3D. Prepare youth for independence
4. Child transitioning to permanency	4A. Develop parenting capabilities and family resources required for reunification	4B. Facilitate and sustain reunification and other transitions from out of home care	4C. Support successful transitions to adulthood	4D. Accelerate and sustain adoption when reunification is not an option

https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/files/siblab/files/rhode_island_dcyf_rfp_2016.pdf

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Other key insights: Building from the Needs Assessment Worksheet

Scope the need for this procurement	Explore potential solutions	Prepare the vendor community
1. (a) Consider your agency's mission and the larger program of which the product or service you're procuring will be a part. Name at least three long-term goals this program is trying to achieve. (b) How will the product or service you're procuring contribute to achieving these goals?	4. (a) What strategies are you using to search for potential solutions that could bring about the results you described in question 2? (b) Based on your search, what different approaches exist? Are there any new or innovative methods worth considering?	7. How are you closing the information gap between your department and vendors regarding the goals you described in question 1, the desired results you listed in question 2, and the problems you identified in question 3?
2. Imagine your department in the future, reflecting upon a completely successful implementation of the product or service you're procuring. What are the most important results you'll be celebrating?	5. (a) How are you determining which of the solutions you identified in question 4 are most appropriate for your context and most likely to bring about the desired results? (I.e., research, evidence, stakeholder interviews.) (b) Based on this work, what appear to be the most promising strategies?	8. What tactics are you using to expand the number of vendors who are likely to respond to your solicitation, and also to get new ideas from existing vendors?
3. Consider the product or service that's currently in place, or the way in which your department imperfectly addresses these goals today. Name at least three things that are going well with this approach that you'd like to continue, and name at least three things that *are not* going well and need to change.	6. How are you testing the approaches that you identified in question 5 (b), and checking your assumptions, to validate which strategies will work?	

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Encouraging Innovation: Finding the "just right" balance between specificity & flexibility

This RFP aims to:

1
End chronic homelessness

2
Increase movement to stable housing for individuals who are frequent users of the shelter system

3 Offer services including case management, meals, showers, housing search to eligible homeless individuals

Too Broad	**Just Right**	**Too Specific**
Does not address specific issues, failing to provide information to help providers narrow their responses	RFPs that invite creative solutions by focusing on *what* we want to achieve, rather than *how* to achieve it	RFPs that are overly prescriptive, limiting potential solutions

Equipment: All equipment must be maintained in good working condition and must be properly registered and equipped in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Costs for all equipment and apparatus required in the performance of the work shall be borne by the Contractor. All equipment must be operated in a manner consistent with the manufacturer's recommendations. Minimum Equipment list (**See attachment A**) for performing the work under these specifications shall be possessed by the Contractor for listed project areas at time of award of bid and maintained throughout the maintenance season. It will be determined by the City, after bid openings, whether more equipment will be required due to how many acres are actually awarded. Number of acres, slope areas and maintenance cycles will be determining factors. Any additional equipment will be purchased prior to award of bid.

Mowers shall be of an appropriate size for the area being mowed. Blades shall be sharp as to give a fine, clean cut. Mower decks shall be leveled as to give an even, level cut. The equipment shall be operated at a speed and in a manner that poses no danger to the public and achieves the desired appearance.

Contractor's vehicles, tractors and mowers (60" deck or larger) are to be clearly identified in a visible contrasting color with the name of the Contractor's company, using minimum two (2") inch (height) letters. The Contractor's company name is to be permanently placed on the equipment in a location which is highly visible to the general public. The City shall approve the equipment identification.

Full Grounds Maintenance Cycle
This cycle is intended for all parks and public fac[...] through Sunday from sunrise to sunset. Exceptio[...] approved in writing by the Landscape Supervisor[...] Work to be completed in each cycle includes:
1. Litter and trash pickup (for total acres in e[...] prohibited and subject to liquidated damag[...]
2. Mowing, trimming, and edging
3. Removal/blowing of grass clippings, leaves[...]
4. Removal and disposal of downed tree limbs[...]
5. Removal of suckers and sprouts from main[...]
6. Removal of plant growth in cracks, joints, and seams of paved areas, and along fence lines
7. Removal of partially dead, dead, damaged or diseased shrubs as identified by a Park Inspector
8. Shrub/perennial bed maintenance
9. Maintenance of "vegetation free zones" around trees in mowed areas
10. Removal of advertisement yard signs
11. Areas requiring mulch will be established and maintained by the Contractor at 2" chip depth. If no chips are present, the Contractor will be responsible to establish the mulch layer subsidiary to the contract. Areas shall be maintained at this depth at all times. If it is necessary to remove 2" of dirt or material from the edge of the mulch area in order for the chips to be secured, that will be the sole responsibility of the Contractor. All mulch material must be approved by a Park Inspector prior to application.

Daily Contact: The Contractor shall contact the assigned Park Inspector daily Monday through Friday prior to 8:00 a.m. This daily contact assures discussion of location issues, informs the City of Contractor's work schedule and locations for the day and provides request for inspection and payments being processed in a timely manner. Daily contact and communication with Park Inspectors assists the City and Vendor in a successful ...

Encouraging Innovation: Wichita Grounds Maintenance RFP 2015

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Encouraging Innovation: Wichita Ground Maintenance RFP 2016

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Firms will provide an appropriate and cost effective plan for grounds maintenance activities at City locations. All proposals should include a detailed scope of services that reflect the proposer's approach to grounds maintenance. At a minimum, project deliverables will include:

1. Outcomes. A contractor should review the broad areas that the City considers reflective of well-maintained grounds. The proposal should include a discussion of the specific and measurable standards the proposer considers to be appropriate grounds maintenance for each category of locations (City Lots; Park Property; Right-of-Ways; Property associated with Building Properties; Public Facilities; and Old Town). When a contract is negotiated with a successful firm, these measurable standards will be negotiated and used to measure contractor performance.

2. Strategies. The contractor should indicate anticipated maintenance strategies based on the proposed outcomes. This should include a discussion on anticipated frequency of mowing, and the frequency and description of any other maintenance activities.

3. Services. The services required vary based on the category. Generally, grounds maintenance services should include mowing, edging, blowing clippings, pre-mowing trash pickup, weed-eating, applying herbicides and pesticides, and shrub pruning (Old Town only). The following services are **not included** within the scope of this proposal: planting & maintaining of annual floral display beds; any tree maintenance functions; any maintenance and programming of irrigation systems; refuse container pickup and disposal service; cleanup of illegal dumping; turf and landscape renovations; maintenance of all park infrastructure including playground system equipment maintenance; and graffiti removal.

4. Proposed Equipment. The contractor shall be responsible for providing all equipment necessary to perform these services. The City is not defining equipment requirements. However, proposals should include a list of all equipment anticipated to be utilized for the scope of work.

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Encouraging Innovation: Guardrails for being specific, not prescriptive

- Have providers **justify feasibility** of program proposals

> "Describe why the proposed service model is likely to cause the achievement of desired outcomes for the target population."
>
> "Describe respondent's prior experience delivering the proposed service to the target population. How will respondent ensure services are delivered in a manner consistent with the service model?"

- Point providers to **evidence-based models** they should consider and/or consider evidence-bases when judging proposal

> "[Insert Department] seeks proposals that cite specific rigorously-designed, replicated, and peer-reviewed research – or, for locally-developed programs, a well-constructed theory of change and logic model supported by the best available research – that credibly supports causal links between services delivered and achievement of desired outcomes. Provide URLs or other details sufficient for verification of cited research."

- **Integrate** priorities into scoring criteria

Today's agenda

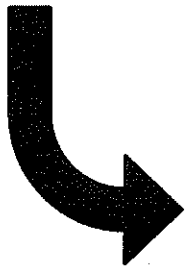|	
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Preparing for Active Contract Management: Translating RFPs to contracts

There are a few ways we can **align contracts with outcomes** we want to achieve:

1. Embed expectations about data and active contract management with providers

2. Structure payments against desired behavior when appropriate

3. Ensure contract language mirrors goals and key concepts from the RFP.

Some of the most important work for government comes during the course of the contract, when real-time improvements to the service or product can drive better outcomes for the people being served.

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Discussion

What is one takeaway from today that you can incorporate in an upcoming RFP?

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Resources to get your RFP process started

We will follow up via email with:

1. **RFP Checklist**[1]
   - Guide to the steps involved in the RFP procurement process

2. **RFP Timeline**
   - Create a personalized timeline to help manage your RFP

[1] Also available online at the Division of Purchases Agency Resource Center (ARC):
www.purchasing.ri.gov/StateAgencyInfoCenter/AgencyLogin.aspx

Next Session: Workshop the development of your your own RFPs

Next working group, in 2 weeks:

Wednesday, March 7

9:00 – 10:30a

DOA Conference Room B

➢ Discuss the specifics of an RFP you're working on

➢ Receive feedback from peers

➢ Get guidance on <u>how to make the leap from the ideas presented today to an actual RFP draft</u>

Prepare 2-3 questions for next session

For example:

"I have to re-procure a big technology system. There are a lot of federal requirements this system needs to comply with. How can I reconcile the reality of these requirements with your suggestion to leave more flexibility in the RFP specs?

Appendix

Metrics: Real-world examples of translating goals into measurable success

Rhode Island Home- and Placement-Based Services to Improve Outcomes RFP *

The purpose of this solicitation is to procure stand-alone home-based services, stand-alone placement-based services, and integrated home-based and placement-based services that improve long term outcomes for children and families in DCYF care.

Key performance metrics include:

- Decreasing repeat antisocial or delinquent behaviors

- Preserving home placements for youth at risk of removal

- Preventing placement into out of home care

- Accelerating family reunification or achievement of permanency

- Preventing repeat maltreatment

Metrics: Real-world examples of translating goals into measurable success

Massachusetts Pay for Success Contracting for Adult Basic Education*

Through this Request for Responses (RFR), the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (EOAF) ... seeks to partner with entrepreneurs from the provider community to execute ... contracts targeted at supporting adults so as to assist them in making successful transitions to employment, higher wage jobs, and/or higher education.

Key performance metrics include: (RFR)
- Transition adults to employment, higher wage jobs, and/or higher education
- Help close the skills gap
- Generate new income and sales tax revenues from increases in employment and earnings
- Reduce reliance on safety net programs
- Reduce incarceration costs

Key performance metrics include: (Contract)
- Program engagement (still engaged 11 days after start of services)
- Average earnings 1 year after program completion
- Participants earning at least 12 college credits 1 year after enrollment

Metrics: Balancing output and outcome metrics helps track progress and performance

Depending on available data, dashboards often mix two types of metrics:

Toolbox: Choosing performance metrics

	Output metrics	Outcome metrics
Description	• Early warning signs indicating if a program is on track to achieve its ultimate results • Measure quantity and efficiency	• Ultimate results a program aims to achieve • Measure impact and quality
Benefits	• Can be early proxy measure for results • Often faster to observe or easier to measure than results • Sometimes necessary to make sure data available for other metrics	• Explicitly linked to the purpose of the program • Can capture whether program has lasting impact
Weaknesses	• Alone, rarely offer insight into efficacy/opportunities for improvement • May be misleading because never perfectly predict results	• Often time delayed • May require matching data to other systems
Examples	• Proportion of people who graduate job training • Percentage of prisoner assessment data entered into a system • Time from child referral to when services begin	• Wages 1 year after training completion • Recidivism 3 years post release from prison • Child removals after stabilization services

Services for children, youth, and families at risk of experiencing removal

In this RFP, DCYF is procuring home-based services for children, youth, and families at risk of experiencing removal that help families develop skills, resources and natural supports to safely remain together.

Outcome category	2A Safely prevent unnecessary entry into out of home care and congregate care
Description	DCYF requests proposals for supports and services to help children and families open to DCYF – including those together at home cared for through the Family Services Unit and Intake/ Monitoring Unit, and those cared for in kinship and DCYF foster homes who may be at risk for congregate care placements – develop the skills, resources, and natural supports that safely prevent unnecessary entries into out of home care and/or congregate care.
Potential program elements	Child and/or family counseling and therapy, care coordination, clinical casework, in home assistance, family education and skill-building, community monitoring, family support partners, dedicated respite resources, and/or other program elements.
Sub-populations for whom additional specialized programming is requested	a) Children and youth with developmental disabilities b) Children and youth with complex medical needs c) Children and youth with problem sexual behavior d) Adolescents with severe behavioral and mental health needs e) Families in which caregivers have co-occurring substance abuse, domestic violence, and/or mental health needs f) Families with pregnant or parenting youth
Supplemental characteristics of proposals sought by DCYF	a) Provide opportunities for continuity of services, supports, and resources across placement settings
Primary performance objectives	a) Prevent repeat maltreatment b) Preserve home placements for youth at risk of removal c) Equip families to safely exit DCYF care and successfully function independently
DCYF historically accomplished outcome through referrals to	MST, FCT, TST-Comm, TACT, PLL, Triple P, Parenting Classes, Outreach & Tracking, EFSS, and PFN
Programs not currently offered through DCYF that may be appropriate	MST for Child Abuse and Neglect, MST for Problem Sexual Behaviors, Functional Family Therapy, Homebuilders, The Incredible Years, Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT)

Encouraging Innovation: Rhode Island TANF Services RFP

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS), is soliciting proposals from qualified entities to provide individualized and family support services, job readiness, job placement, employment training and retention services, as well as integrated social and employment, childcare, transportation, and training services that improve the long term self-sufficiency for Rhode Island Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) customers, also known as Rhode Island Works (RI Works or RIW) customers, in accordance with the terms of this Request for Proposals and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases Home Page by Internet at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

This solicitation invites new innovative and collaborative approaches to deliver an array of support and employment services to RI Works customers in an effort to improve their families' long-term economic well-being. The awarded vendor(s) as a result of this solicitation are expected to work seamlessly with other awarded vendors, DHS, and other state agencies. The organization and scoring of this RFP encourages responses that include collaborations between multiple vendors that demonstrate a holistic approach to improving outcomes for customers including:

1. Developing new solutions to increase living-wage employment
2. Providing a seamless customer experience by eliminating programmatic siloes
3. Strengthening performance strategies

Encouraging Innovation: Evaluating the evidence bases of proposed programs

The strongest programmatic evaluations demonstrate causal effectiveness by comparing results for clients served by a program against estimates of what might have happened had the client not received the service.

Methodology	Description	Considerations
Randomized Control Trial	Compare individuals who are randomly assigned to control and treatment groups	Considered the gold standard; with large enough sample size, can demonstrate causality
Participant vs. Non-Participant	Compare people who participated to people who did not participate	What if participants and non-participants differ (selection bias)?
Differences in Differences	Compare changes over time for participants to changes over time for non-participants	Must assume that "trends" are equal across groups
Before-and-After	Compare participants to themselves before treatment	Things change over time! Could wrongly attribute changes to the intervention
Regression Discontinuity	Exploit a cutoff in a program rule to compare those just above and below the cutoff	Hard to find good cutoffs! Can only talk about impacts near the cutoff

Evaluations that do not include any comparison group are almost always very limited in their ability to attribute causal effects to any set of activities.

Encouraging Innovation: Evaluating the evidence bases of proposed programs

Regardless of evaluation design, the following factors are **important considerations in determining our confidence** that proposed service models are likely to achieve desired outcomes for the target population:

- ❑ **Sample size** – Are there enough clients in the study to be confident that observed outcomes are related to the intervention, not simply random? Usually, this requires a sample size of 100+ individuals (but this is not a hard rule).
- ❑ **Study population** – Is the population studied similar to your target population? Can results from another jurisdiction be reliable applied here?
- ❑ **Program purpose** – Do the studied outcomes match the purpose of the program as proposed in your RFP?
- ❑ **Time horizon** – Have positive outcomes been sustained over time following the intervention, or only observed immediately following the intervention?
- ❑ **Effect size** – Were the impacts of the program found to be small or large? The effect size can help us understand the magnitude of observed differences.
- ❑ **Replication** – Have the study's findings been replicated by other evaluations?
- ❑ **Independence** – Was the evaluation conducted by an entity independent of the service provider and model developer/purveyor?
- ❑ **Peer review** – Has the study been published in a peer-reviewed journal?

The Pew-MacArthur *Results First Initiative* has compiled research on program effectiveness from eight national clearinghouses, reconciled the different systems and vocabularies, and provided the data in a clear, accessible format. Their database is here: http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2014/09/resultsfirst-clearinghouse-database.

Preparing for Active Contract Management: Embedding expectations

To embed expectations about data and active contract management with providers, contracts should include:

- ❑ An articulation of the **vision of success**

- ❑ **Core metrics** on which reporting will be expected

- ❑ Expectation that **performance may be used to make decisions** for contract extensions, future RFP awards

- ❑ **Target population description and selection requirements**, and the ability to adjust

- ❑ No constraint on **ability to adjust metrics/reporting**

- ❑ Expectation of **regular, collaborative meetings about performance**

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Data is necessary but insufficient for driving performance discussion and actions

Percentage of family preservation cases closing with family goals met

- Provider A has consistently been successful – what practices do you think contribute most to this success?

- Providers B and C experienced drops in January – what might explain these changes?

Why this is important:

Only 3% of families that meet their goals experience maltreatment;

10% of families that *do not* meet their goals experience maltreatment