



## Shared Measurement Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. What is shared measurement?

Currently, many agencies collect information on the clients they serve; however, often times this data is kept siloed. No single organization can address all of problems in our society, and more often than not, the clients one agency serves, are also being served elsewhere. Shared measurement helps to address this issue. By creating one system that houses data on individual clients, we will be able to better understand the outcomes of individuals and the impact of an array of services.

### 2. Why should my organization care about shared measurement?

Data can help us to more fully understand the results of our work in our community. Data can and should be presented in a way that recognizes the complexity of the lives we touch. We will describe children, families and individual as members of a community. Our reports will reflect our value for the individuals to the vitality of our community. And, because it may add workload to individual organizations, it must also provide an added value to organizations. For instance, it should add to individual organization's understanding about the needs of and/or and their relationship with the community they serve.

### 3. What is the benefit of shared measurement?

This project will be the first to examine the long-term effects of multiple services on individual outcomes for Sonoma County residents. It will provide us of a more holistic picture of an individual, taking into consideration the variety of services one receives and the community conditions impacting their situation. Shared measurement will increase the collective knowledge, strengthen the missions of organizations, improve our ability to target funding and share resources for collective goals, improve funding practices, provide opportunities to celebrate shared successes, and increase community-wide awareness about shared accomplishments.

### 4. Do I have to make a commitment to share data now?

No, at this point, we are still in the planning process to develop a system that will meet your needs for shared measurement. We are inviting you to participate in our planning process to develop our shared measurement system. In the future, we hope that you will engage in an MOU to share data.

**5. What is the role of my organization?**

We will have different levels of participation available, as we understand organizational capacity to participate varies. At the very least, we hope that all organizations read the material we provide and make any and all feedback regarding the direction of the workgroup. Organizations may attend 90 minute meetings to provide feedback, respond to survey monkeys, or give comments in an email. You may also delegate representatives of your organization to attend the monthly planning workgroup meetings.

**6. Who are the members of the current workgroup?**

The current workgroup is comprised of members of the following organizations (listed alphabetically). This is an open workgroup and we welcome your participation. To participate, please contact Megan Sirna at 565-5836 or [msirna@schsd.org](mailto:msirna@schsd.org) for more information.

- Community Action Partnership
- Community Foundation
- Drug Abuse Alternatives Center
- First 5 Sonoma County
- Sonoma County Community Development Commission
- Sonoma County Department of Child Support Services
- Sonoma County Department of Health Services
- Sonoma County District Attorney's Office
- Sonoma County Human Services Department
- Sonoma County Information Systems Department
- Sonoma County Office of Education
- Sonoma County Probation Department
- United Way of the Wine Country
- Windsor School District

**7. What level of data are we talking about?**

The shared measurement system will track individual client-level data. No information about individual clients will ever be published; however, to understand the impacts of multiple services and the outcomes for clients, we must track each client individually. We do not expect to collect data about every client that we each serve. We anticipate developing cohort samples – groups of randomly selected clients that we follow over time. We probably cannot even start a new cohort each year. These details are still being discussed and we welcome your input.

**8. How will confidentiality be handled?**

We believe that confidentiality is central to the work that we are doing and are extremely aware of the confidentiality risks of collecting individual client level data. At this time, we are in discussions about but have not yet memorialized how confidentiality will be handled, and encourage you to provide feedback and comments on the issue.

**9. What resources are required of my organization?**

We are requesting that organizations participate in whatever capacity makes sense for their organization. For some organizations, the only resources they are able to make available is staff time to respond to emails. For others, they may be able to provide meeting space or some start up funds.

Ultimately, we hope that you will share data about individual clients. Our goal is that this information will be shared as easily as possible – such as through a regular automatic upload. However, if your organization currently does capture client data in an electronic system, you may have the opportunity to enter the data into our system and potentially use our system for your own case management. These decisions are still to be made and we welcome your input.

**10. What incentives are available for participation?**

The incentive for organizations to participate in the shared measurement system is to increase their access to data about clients and the community that they do not currently have access to. Organizations will receive detailed aggregate reports on their services and the clients they serve, and will contribute to a larger, county-wide report on all cohort participants. In addition, organizations that did not previously have the capacity to evaluate their programs will now be provided with information that can be used for evaluations, which will allow them to improve their services.

**11. What happens if my organization chooses not to participate?**

If your organization chooses not to participate in the planning process, you will not have the opportunity to provide input on the design or processes of the shared measurement system. If your organization chooses not to participate in the shared measurement system, we will not be able to capture the complete picture of outcomes for the clients your organization and our community serves. In addition, your organization will not receive aggregate reports on the clients you serve.

**12. What are your plans for sustainability?**

The goal of this project is to build a longitudinal data system to assist Sonoma County organizations, funders, and community partners in providing effective services; however, we acknowledge that a project of this scope may attract the attention of external researchers, other counties, and/or state-level policy makers. We will work in collaboration with funders, a new Board of Directors, and community members to design and execute a sustainable growth model that allows for expansion, and our hope is that collectively Sonoma County will develop a research institute to support and sustain the shared measurement project.

**13. How is this related to other initiatives in Sonoma County?**

Developing a way to track our shared outcomes supports the work of Upstream Investments, Health Action, Cradle to Career, and much of our other work together because it will help us to better understand our short-term and long-term outcomes. There are currently several activities emerging to expand the measurement of shared outcomes in different sectors and we collaborate with and align with these initiatives as much as we can. If you are aware of opportunities for this work to align with other work, please let us know.

**14. What are the next steps for your workgroup?**

We are working on developing a scope of work for the shared measurement system, which we will use in an RFP for a vendor. In addition, we are constantly in talks about long-term funding. We meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. You are welcome to join once or continually.

**15. Is there room for someone from my organization to join the workgroup?**

Yes! We welcome any and all new members.

**16. I have comments about the progress thus far. How can I provide feedback?**

Please contact Megan Sirna at [msirna@schsd.org](mailto:msirna@schsd.org) or 565-5836 or Oscar Chavez at [ochavez@schsd.org](mailto:ochavez@schsd.org) or 565-3812.