

A stylized illustration of a city scene. The background is a light blue sky with a white sun in the upper left and a street lamp with a glowing light in the upper right. In the foreground, there is a large green tree with a glowing light at its base. To the left, a light blue building with a red roof and a white archway is visible. To the right, an orange building with a white archway and a street lamp is shown. A person in a white shirt and blue pants is walking on a raised orange platform, pointing towards the left. A smaller figure is walking behind them.

# Large City Learning Systems

2024 Built for Zero Learning Session

# Welcome!

**Whose in  
the room?**

# Dynamic and Emerging Complexity in Large Cities

- Politicization of homelessness as an issue
- Encampments and unsheltered homelessness
- Large number of actors, agencies and constituencies with competing priorities
- Negative press and pessimistic public narrative
- Multiple complex funding streams emerging and sunseting

# Local Learning Systems



Make the  
shift from  
"my program"  
to "my  
community."

**Built  
For  
Zero.**  
COMMUNITY  
SOLUTIONS

# A different kind of “shift” ...

- From “my program” or “my agency” to “my community”
- From a mindset of scarcity to a mindset of abundance
- From getting results from a small set of passionate leaders to systems and structures for distributed and diverse leadership
- From “how can we apply for this grant?” to “how does this funding align with other streams of funding coming into this community?”
- From reactive project management work to proactive learning work

# From Reactive to Proactive

## Reactive Project Work

- Piecing together projects, grants, and other improvement initiative
- Just-in-time deployment strategy
- Learning from accidents and errors
- Responding to feedback from providers and clients
- Work disconnected from mission and values
- Putting out fires



## Proactive Quality & Learning Work

- Strategic and focused approach to quality efforts
- Thoughtful, well-designed deployment
- Anticipating and averting errors
- Engaging clients and providers in service design
- Creating value-driven work
- Preventing fires



# Project Management is necessary but not sufficient

- **A Project Management System** is best suited for executing a defined plan to achieve a specific goal within a set timeframe.
- **A Learning System** is more focused on ongoing, iterative enhancements to processes, emphasizing experimentation and learning.

# Project Management System vs. Learning System

Aspect	Project Mgmt Systems	Learning Systems
<b>Primary Goal</b>	Deliver a specific, time-bound product, service, or outcome	Continuously enhance processes, systems, or services over time
<b>Focus</b>	Scope, time, cost, and deliverables	Process and systems optimization, efficiency, and effectiveness
<b>Approach</b>	Linear or iterative (e.g., Waterfall, Agile)	Cyclical, using iterative cycles (e.g., PDSA, PDCA, Six Sigma)
<b>Timeline</b>	Defined start and end date	Ongoing, with continuous cycles of improvement
<b>Stakeholder Involvement/Leadership Structure</b>	Typically defined at project start; roles and responsibilities are fixed	Emphasizes broad engagement, often including frontline staff for input and feedback
<b>Tools &amp; Techniques</b>	Gantt charts, work breakdown structures, risk analysis, Agile sprints	Root cause analysis, process mapping, looking at data over time, iterative testing cycles
<b>Key Metrics</b>	Scope, schedule, budget, and quality of deliverables	Process measures, outcome measures, and balancing measures
<b>Problem-Solving Approach</b>	Focused on delivering a solution based on predefined requirements	Focused on understanding root causes of problems and testing small changes for improvement
<b>Change Management</b>	Managed through structured processes like communication plans and stakeholder engagement strategies	Built into the approach, with emphasis on small tests of change, iterative learning, and adaptability

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A learning system will transform the system and sustain zero

# Success Themes of A Community Wide Learning System

- Using Data at Scale
- Distributing Leadership and Governance
- Understanding and Evolving Service Delivery Workflows
- Building Capacity and Infrastructure (Policy, Workforce, Funding)
- Developing A Learning and Improvement System to Drive the Work

# Using Data at Scale

# Using Data at Scale: Exploratory Questions

- How often are we looking at data and how are we using it in our context? In what ways are we looking at data across population segments?
- What is included in our data? What sectors? What localities?
- In what ways are race and ethnicity data influencing our learning and strategy?
- Do we have a clear understanding of the outcome and process measures we have established? Have we received and incorporated feedback to achieve a shared understanding?
- Do we have a clear and shared definition across sectors of what sustaining Functional Zero in our community means?

# Distributing Leadership & Governance

# Distributed Leadership & Governance : Exploratory Questions

- What sectors across the community are involved in the work? Who isn't at the table and why? What cross-sector systems do we need to engage with or strengthen relationships with to feel confident monitoring and responding to population inflow?
- Who are the political leaders who champion this work? What does it look like to work with them?
- In what ways are other senior leadership on board? What role did they play in creating the strategic plan?
- What things do we have buy-in from leadership/authority to move on and what decisions need broader conversation with leadership to gain buy in and approval?
- When was the last time we had a conversation about HOW decisions are going to be made? How might we bring rigor to that process?



# Understanding & Evolving Service Delivery Workflows

# Service Delivery Workflows : Exploratory Questions.

- What are the boundaries of the system of who (providers, services) we are including in the homeless crisis response system? Who do we need to build relationships with to gain deeper insights about how the system currently operates?
- Are our system processes clear and applied consistently across our system? What policies and procedures are in place to help guide our collaborations?
- Where are people falling through the cracks of our systems? Have we incorporated feedback from persons with lived experience in those policies?
- Where has our community incentivized collaboration across service delivery? Where is collaboration disincentivized?
- Where have we seen processes and/or procedures improve/become more efficient? What did it take to get there?
- Are there any policies and procedures we need to update or implement to support our ability to sustain?

# Building Capacity and Infrastructure (Policy, Workforce, Funding)

# Capacity and Infrastructure (Policy, Workforce, Funding): Exploratory Questions

- Do we have a system in place that allows us to understand our current needs and resources? If there are gaps in our resources, how can we work towards securing more resources?
- What ways has our community invested in capacity (e.g., roles)? Who makes those decisions? Where are there challenges in capacity?
- Which policies are unlocking our work to move forward? Which policies are challenging our work from moving forward, including exacerbating racial inequities?
- Which are the major funding sources are supporting our work and what processes are in place to align the funding? What funding sources could support our work (especially from different sectors in the community)?

# Developing A Learning and Improvement System to Drive the Work

# Learning and Improvement System to Drive the Work:

## Exploratory Questions

- Where do we currently reflect on our data and other feedback loops? How can we make that more frequent and more formalized?
- Where is our shared aim discussed? Is it tied to a review of data on progress toward our aim?
- In what ways are we sharing data across population segments?
- Does our team have established roles and responsibilities assigned to changes we want to make to our processes and systems? Do these roles have the ability to make decisions in the process?
- How are we meaningfully incorporating lived experience into our decision-making processes for the community's sustainment work?

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