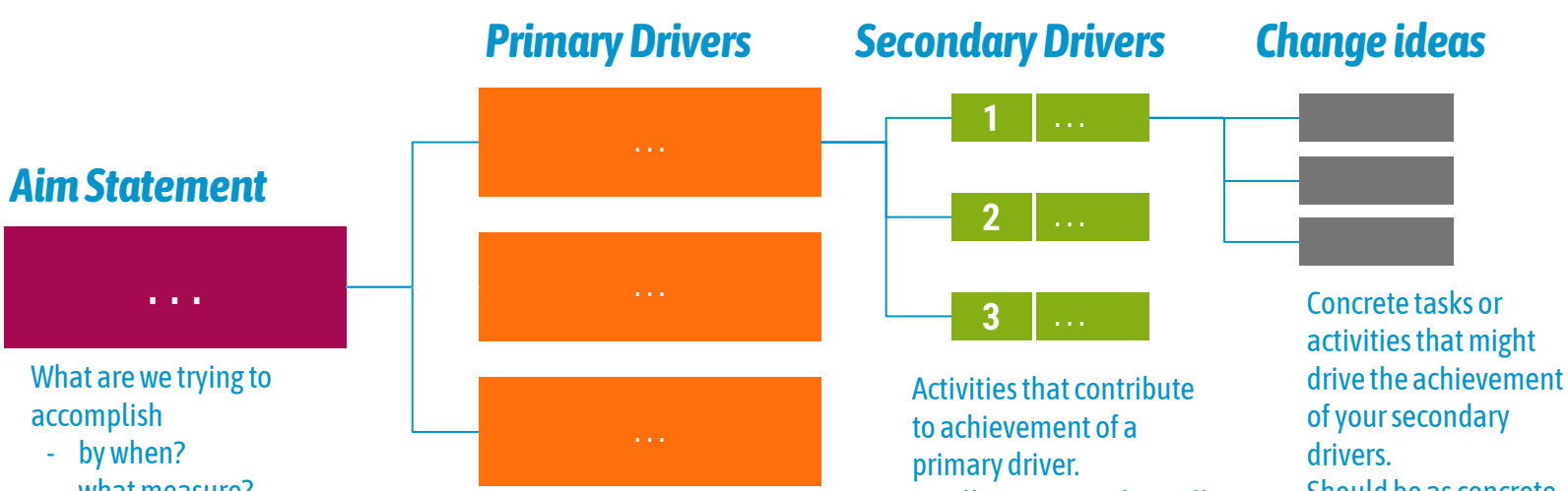
Drivers and Driver Diagrams

How Can We Ensure the Right Strategies to Achieve Our Aim?

If Our Plan is Going to Change (And It Is) ...

- We need our strategy to be modular.
- We need every part of our strategy to be testable on its own.
- We need a way to separate bad ideas from bad execution.
- We need an easy way to see and revise our strategy, ideally on a single page.

We ❤ Driver Diagrams



What are we trying to accomplish
- by when?
- what measure?

Example:
BC will reduce Chronic homelessness by 50% * by March 31, 2028

** from Jan 202X baseline*

High-level buckets that lots of other strategy ideas will eventually fit into. **Highest order priority** -- you should need a lot of evidence to make you think you wouldn't need to do this to achieve your aim.

Activities that contribute to achievement of a primary driver.
Smaller priorities, but still not concrete enough to be specific tasks. These are probably best understood as lanes of work.

Concrete tasks or activities that might drive the achievement of your secondary drivers.
Should be as concrete as possible, and small enough to do quickly.

How we organize our work

What needs to be true in a state/region?

Theory of Change

ToC

Desired End State



How do we make this true in our state/region?

Theory of Execution

ToE

Action Plan to reach desired end state

Updated November 2023

BFZ State-Level Theory of Change

WHAT needs to be true in a state.

State-level impact on population-level outcomes

STATEWIDE STAKEHOLDERS ALIGN AROUND SHARED AIM & BUILD COLLECTIVE WILL

- Statewide community engagement strategy
- Communications strategy for influence & accountability
- Strategic partnerships that align behind what's working
- State cohort of local teams shares commitment to zero
- Shared, measurable, time bound goals at state and local levels
- State-level cross agency, cross-community governance structure

STATEWIDE QUALITY DATA & SHARED MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

- State partner and agency partnership to build comprehensive data
- State-level performance management infrastructure
- Statewide measurement standards & mechanisms for cross-community/CoC coordination
- Data infrastructure supports system-wide data collection

STRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS TO CLEAR THE PATH

- Resources & incentives are aligned w/population-level outcomes
- Policies & administrative practices change to remove barriers
- Cross-agency programs and solutions improve state and local conditions
- Proven solutions at scale (program & system)

COLLABORATIVE STATEWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Dedicated staffing capacity responsible for population-level outcomes at state & local levels
- Training in problem solving skills (improvement science, etc)
- Robust peer connection and learning network
- Active state/local feedback loop
- State-level intermediary provides backbone support

RACIAL EQUITY AND LIVED EXPERTISE ARE KEY DRIVERS IN ENDING HOMELESSNESS

- Shared, measurable indicators of racially equitable system
- Racial equity and PLEH focus are centered in communications, performance management & peer learning
- Models of engagement in system design, leadership, and improvement, for people with lived expertise

Built For Zero.
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Backbone Model
Theory of Execution

HOW a backbone team organizes its work

Backbone organization aligning strategy and implementation structures to support ending homelessness in a community or region, or State

OPERATIONALIZE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE & BUILD COMMUNITY NETWORK

- Convene diverse partners (including BIPOC & PLEH) across geography & build collective will
- Establish governance & decision making structure for a guiding coalition
- Set shared, measurable, time bound system-wide goals
- Engage elected officials to build will & clear the path

BUILD QUALITY DATA SYSTEMS

- Activate partners to build comprehensive, real-time, person-specific data
- Develop local/regional/State performance management infrastructure
- Adopt end state, measurement & data standards, including racial equity
- Collect qualitative and other user experience data to inform system changes

ALIGN RESOURCES & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Activate strategic partnerships (foundations, BIPOC-led, etc) to align behind what's working
- Build partnerships with Anchor Institutions & upstream partners
- Develop mechanisms for funding alignment
- Identify & help close funding gaps for system-level impact

ADOPT CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure data is transparent & used for action (including Coordinated Entry improvement)
- Scale up evidence-based best practices (program & system)
- Lead coaching & adoption of standards, tools & model using QI framework
- Implement an evaluation & learning system w/a robust feedback loop
- Provide training and capability building in core competencies for partners

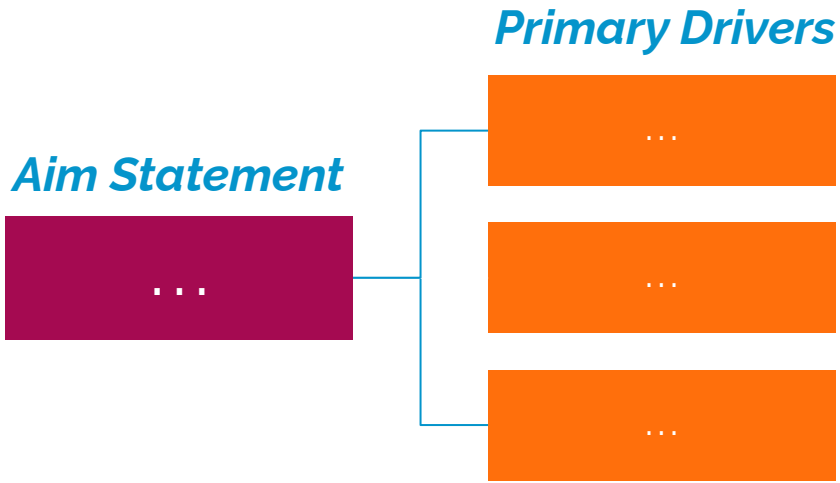
PROVIDE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- Ensure dedicated system staffing capacity matched w/scale
- Provide project management & coordination for guiding coalition
- Drive strategic communications & narrative change on proven solutions
- Support local, regional and State advocacy & policy change efforts
- Ensure alignment with basic CoC or State requirements & activities

Updated 5.24.23

Primary Drivers

A Driver Diagram starts by connecting your aim statement to the **primary drivers** of that aim. Think of primary drivers like high-level buckets that lots of other strategy ideas will eventually fit into. What do we need to do to get to our aim?

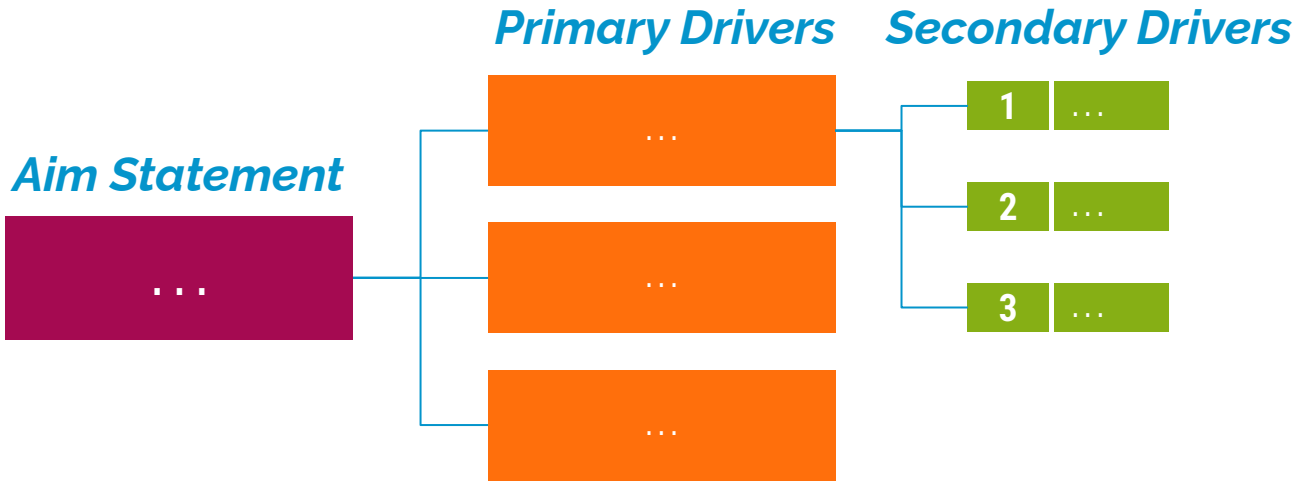


Primary Drivers

- Activity that “drives” or contributes to the achievement of a project aim.
- Highest order priority -- you should need a lot of evidence to make you think you wouldn’t need to do this to achieve your aim.
- Necessary and sufficient to achieve your aim.
- Measurable: Remember, ‘How will we know a change is an improvement?’.

Secondary Drivers

A **primary driver** is driven by **secondary drivers**. If a primary driver is like a bucket, secondary drivers are like many smaller boxes or containers inside the bucket.

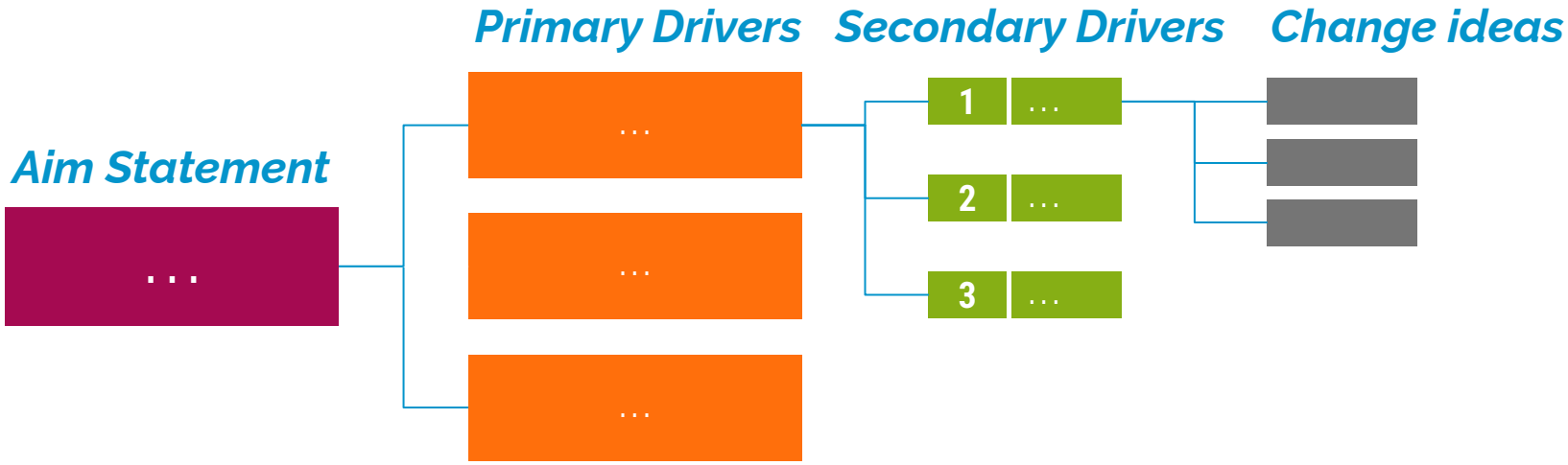


Secondary Drivers

- Activities that contribute to achievement of a primary driver.
- Smaller priorities, but still not concrete enough to be specific tasks. These are probably best understood as lanes of work.
- You may be less sure of these things than your primary drivers. But you'd still be surprised if they weren't important.
- Measurable. Heard that anywhere before?

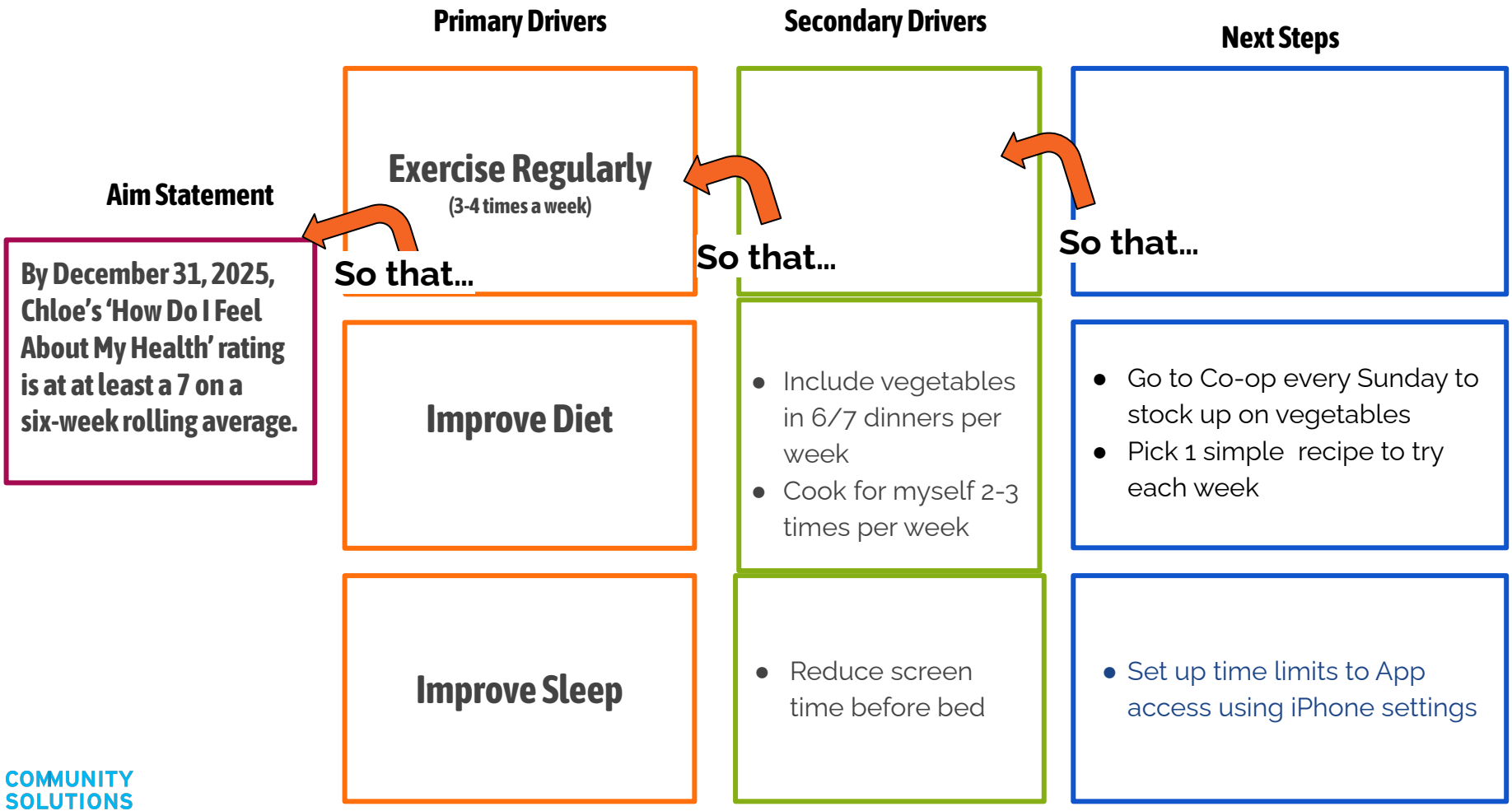
Change Ideas/Next Steps

Once you've got clear, **secondary drivers**, you're ready to design actionable **change ideas** that you could actually test. These are like the individual items inside each container. A change idea should be clear, specific and as concrete as possible.



Change Ideas/Next Steps

- Concrete tasks or activities that might drive the achievement of your secondary drivers.
- Should be as concrete as possible, and small enough to do quickly (e.g. Go for a morning run; Co-design meeting agenda w/ local team leader).
- These are simply initial ideas to test out. The evidence threshold can be low here. You wouldn't be shocked if these didn't work.
- Measurable. Measurable. Measurable.



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Aim Statement

Reach Functional Zero for Family homelessness by January 1, 2028

Sample Primary Drivers

- Quality and Reliable Data
- Accelerate Housing Placements
- Decrease Inflow

Secondary Drivers

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Backbone Model Theory of Execution

Backbone organization aligning strategy and implementation structures to support ending homelessness in a community or region, or State

OPERATIONALIZE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE & BUILD COMMUNITY NETWORK

- Convene diverse partners (including BIPOC & PLEH) across geography & build collective will
- Establish governance & decision making structure for a guiding coalition
- Set shared, measurable, time bound system-wide goals
- Engage elected officials to build will & clear the path

BUILD QUALITY DATA SYSTEMS

- Activate partners to build comprehensive, real-time, person-specific data
- Develop local/regional/State performance management infrastructure
- Adopt end state, measurement & data standards, including racial equity
- Collect qualitative and other user experience data to inform system changes

ALIGN RESOURCES & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Activate strategic partnerships (foundations, BIPOC-led, etc) to align behind what's working
- Build partnerships with Anchor Institutions & upstream partners
- Develop mechanisms for funding alignment
- Identify & help close funding gaps for system-level impact

ADOPT CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure data is transparent & used for action (including Coordinated Entry improvement)
- Scale up evidence-based best practices (program & system)
- Lead coaching & adoption of standards, tools & model using QI framework
- Implement an evaluation & learning system w/a robust feedback loop
- Provide training and capability building in core competencies for partners

PROVIDE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- Ensure dedicated system staffing capacity matched w/scale
- Provide project management & coordination for guiding coalition
- Drive strategic communications & narrative change on proven solutions
- Support local, regional and State advocacy & policy change efforts
- Ensure alignment with basic CoC or State requirements & activities

Updated 5.24.23

Sample State Backbone: Start-up Strategy & Goals

First Milestone Goals

By August 31, 2025:

- Each CoC has improved their Scorecard score by X%/or #
- At least two CoCs have met Quailty Data Standards
- Each CoC has a clear champion (as evidenced by…)
- Each CoC is reporting data into PMT by May 31, 2025
- Final revised messaging and communications to reflect a broader *statewide initiative to end homelessness* (i.e, beyond data quality)
- Set initial population level goals for: Chronic, Veterans, Families, Youth [ALIGNED WITH STATE METRICS (se Danielle's info]
- Confirmed plan for bringing on needed capacity for State Level Place-Based Coaching

Secondary drivers

Community Engagement and Networking	• Draft guidance for shared terms and language for a Statewide initiative ○ Going to continue calling it Quality Data Collab. At the end of the AC, the team will begin calling it "Built for Zero Maryland" or something else publicly.
Build Quality Data Systems	• Finalize roadmap for state level QD in State

Align Resources & Partnerships	• HUD VASH
	  ○ Danielle/Suzanne met with VA leadership and they're going to follow up w/ Dana and acting secretary. Lots of VA turnover, so difficult to connect with. Now starting from scratch. They noted struggles with local leadership.
	  ○ VASH tied up in projects and waiting for that to launch. Lots of untapped housing opportunities.
	  ○ Work to rebuild relationship with VA
	• Connect with VA partners; Assess VA relationship locally

Adopt Culture of Improvement	• Implement a state-local learning loop focused support to clear barriers
	  ○ Goal of "0 by '35" but not publicly announcing due to funding/politics. Close to internal metrics being set. Want to get '25 data out before establishing '26 goals. Goal of 5% reduction or another percentage that would offer performance measurements. What are systems and what are ops goals?
	• Provide training and capability building in core competencies for community partners
	  ○ CS to support this with new PBC

Provide Operational Support	• Confirm seed and/or ongoing funding source for state level systems improvement coach ○ Awarded for PBC (State System Improvement Advisor)! Working to sustainably fund for 2 years. Budget timelines align well and there are a few options. Hiring will hopefully start in Sept./Oct.

SAMPLE State Backbone: Start-up Strategy & Goals

	Secondary drivers	**Action Steps** *(March - August 2025)*
Community Engagement and Networking	• Draft guidance for shared terms and language for a Statewide initiative	• Work with [State] Comms team to define the statewide initiative and messaging
Build Quality Data Systems	• Finalize roadmap to the state level QD in [State]	• CS draft road map based on definition of State level QD
Align Resources & Partnerships	• HUD VASH • Connect with VA partners	• Assess VA relationship locally
Adopt culture of Improvement	• Set initial population level goals for Chronic, Veterans, Families, and Youth	• Launch CoC Action Cycle 1 - focused on improving systems to produce quality data • Align with state goals
Provide Operational Support	• Confirm seed and/or ongoing funding source for state level systems improvement coach	

SAMPLE State Backbone Team Strategy (ToE)

Long term Aims:
By [month, year]:

Short-term Benchmarks:
By [Feb 2026]:

What does success look like in 6 months?

March - August 2025

OPERATIONALIZE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE & BUILD COMMUNITY NETWORK

- Convene diverse partners (including BIPOC & PLEH-led groups and those who serve historically marginalized communities) across geography & build collective will & trust
- Establish governance & shared decision making structure for a guiding coalition that authentically includes the voices of BIPOC & PLEH
- Set shared, measurable, time bound system-wide goals
- Engage elected officials and key influencers to build will & align policies & funding

BUILD QUALITY DATA SYSTEMS

- Activate partners to build comprehensive, real-time, person-specific quality data
- Develop local/regional/State performance management infrastructure that can view data at aggregate & disaggregate levels
- Adopt end state, measurement & data standards, including equity standards and processes
- Collect qualitative and other user experience data to inform system changes
- Develop process for regular data review, reporting and application

ALIGN RESOURCES & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Activate strategic partnerships (foundations, BIPOC-led, etc) to align behind what's working
- Build partnerships with Anchor Institutions & upstream partners, bringing those partners along into the shared vision
- Develop mechanisms for funding alignment to shared outcomes
- Identify & help close funding gaps for system-level impact

ADOPT CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure data is transparent & used for action (including Coordinated Entry improvement)
- Scale up evidence-based best practices (program & system)
- Lead coaching & adoption of standards, tools & model using QI framework
- Implement an evaluation & learning system w/a robust feedback loop, that includes client experience feedback
- Provide training and capability building in core competencies for community partners

PROVIDE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- Provide routine strategy and needs assessments to identify priorities and align approaches
- Ensure dedicated state system staffing capacity matched w/scale
- Provide project management & coordination for guiding coalition
- Drive strategic communications & narrative change on proven solutions
- Support local, regional and State advocacy & policy change efforts
- Ensure alignment with basic CoC or State requirements & activities