

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DATA & LEARNING CHAMPIONS

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## We advocate for prioritizing program-level data that can be used to improve our work and strengthen our mission.

- Focus on data that can be used to guide program implementation and improvement. Gain clarity around why certain data is collected.
- Get data into the hands of front-line staff and managers sooner, rather than later, to optimize on the ground, real-time learning.
- Then, share the data back, letting them know how their feedback has helped to improve our work.
- Consider ways to regularly collect data from clients; ensuring constituent voices are heard is critical to better understanding client outcomes and program benefits.



## We are dedicated to having transparent conversations about the complexity and cost of achieving client outcomes and measuring impact.

- Openly discuss the challenges of what it will take to truly create change for the clients and community.
- Clarify with organizational leadership what's possible (and what's not) when it comes to evaluation work. Discuss the differences between assessing causation versus contribution, assessing outcomes versus impact.
- Establish open communication with our funders and strive to have early and frequent conversations.

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## We are committed to gaining participation and buy-in from staff and board in order to build a culture of learning.

- Plan regular opportunities to share data across the organization.
- Seek out feedback and ideas related to data efforts from program-level, front-line staff and clients.
- Encourage organizational leadership to get involved and actively participate in this important work.
- Think creatively about ways to make data and evaluation accessible and engaging and encourage "learning," "reflection" and "iteration."



## We work to establish regular processes and systems for evaluation.

- Learn and share best practices related to data and evaluation with team members, managers, leadership, the board, etc.
- Work to gain clarity regarding roles, responsibility and ownership of data and evaluation systems; everyone in the organization should be clear about the ways they can contribute.
- Encourage staff at all levels to develop competencies related to collecting, analyzing and utilizing data for learning and improvement.

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### We ask critical learning and evaluation questions.

- Carve out regular opportunities to have conversations where critical evaluation questions can be discussed.
- Acknowledge that sometimes a data-related meeting will raise more questions than answers...and that's ok!
- Ask questions related to data ethics, data sharing, and cultural competence.



### We work to strengthen our own skills to more effectively serve as data and learning champions.

- Assess your strengths and weaknesses and leadership style to better understand how you can most effectively support the data and evaluation work and seek out relevant professional development opportunities.
- Reflect on the power and privilege we as individuals, and as representatives of our organizations, bring to this work. Look for opportunities to learn more about data and evaluation approaches that seek to counter these power imbalances.
- Advocate for and support the funding needed to pursue professional development, both for ourselves and others on our team.

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### We recognize we can't do this work alone and seek out allies within our organizations and peers in the nonprofit sector.

- Seek out staff within our own organizations who also share a commitment to using evidence and data.
- Attend data and evaluation related networking events to build connections.
- Share our learning back with others on our teams and nonprofit peers.
- Encourage our peers and allies. We know that the work of creating change within our organizations can take years; it requires patience and an understanding that we are often "planting seeds" that will take time to grow.



For the complete document of guiding principles, visit:  
[www.goodmeasuregroup.org/resources](http://www.goodmeasuregroup.org/resources)