



Office of Refugee Resettlement Refugee Program Social Adjustment and Integration Promising Practice



Episcopal Migration Ministries Leveraging Data for Program Improvement

In 2020, Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) launched a training and peer learning program to strengthen capacities of its subrecipients¹ to collect and use data to measure results, guide program improvements, and inform overall decision making. This program delivers training that is practical and accessible for subrecipients and accounts for diversity across subrecipient capacity, characteristics, programming, and client populations.



Practice Description

EMM implemented a program to help their subrecipients learn how to utilize data to improve their programs and operations. EMM required participating subrecipients to complete a three-month training series designed to equip and empower them to leverage internal data from their case management database; set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timebound (SMART) goals; and track outcome indicators related to refugee integration. Upon training completion, subrecipients submitted individual proposals to EMM to request funding to support the implementation of a one-year project that contains SMART goals and incorporates the collection and analysis of internal data to guide continuous improvements and measure results. Additionally, EMM staff provided individualized coaching to subrecipients during program implementation.



Need for the Practice

EMM's subrecipients were developing and implementing a variety of programs and services; however, they were not measuring outcomes or reporting on their activities to EMM or other stakeholders. EMM learned that subrecipients did not have sufficient knowledge, skills, tools, or resources to extract data from their case management database or to use data to demonstrate and share results. Recognizing the importance of subrecipients showing the difference their organizations are making in the lives of refugees to potential funders, partners, and the general public, EMM implemented a training initiative to teach subrecipients how to use data to improve their performance and report their impact.

¹ The term subrecipients refers to EMM's local affiliates.



How to Implement the Practice

EMM described the following key steps to implement this practice:

- Select an outcomes framework² on which training will be based and that dovetails with the identified training needs and learning objectives.
- Invest the staff time and resources to create a well-organized curriculum. The training modules should introduce subrecipients to the concepts of performance measurement and allow a hands-on, practical experience for participants to identify suitable outcome measures for their individual programs and guide them on data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Include opportunities for peer learning and provide individualized coaching to address the specific needs of some participants.
- Provide subrecipients with the tools, materials, and resources needed to internally collect and analyze real-time data regularly.
- Conduct an initial pilot with a small number of subrecipients before expanding the program to all subrecipients in their resettlement network.
- Secure private funding to support subrecipients with their continued use of internal data beyond the one-year program period.



Preliminary Results

EMM provided preliminary results to demonstrate the effectiveness of this practice. Specifically, subrecipients reported:

- Collecting, extracting, and utilizing data to report client outcomes and program results to EMM and other stakeholders.
- Leveraging internal data to seek additional funding streams, new partnerships, and other resources necessary to grow and develop refugee programming.
- Establishing SMART goals and strategies to improve service delivery related to helping clients integrate in their communities.

² EMM used the conceptual framework developed by Ager & Strang (2004) that suggests 10 key indicators of integration.



Inputs/Resources

Agencies should expect to invest some funding and time to implement this practice. Below are key inputs and resources needed to adopt this practice.

- Funding to support the staff time and resources needed to research an appropriate approach, develop the training methodology, respond to inquiries, provide technical assistance, and manage the overall initiative.
- Staff skills and resources to facilitate training, provide individualized coaching beyond the formal training workshops, and create tools and customized reporting formats in the database system.
- Database system to facilitate the collection, storage, analysis, and reporting of client data. EMM uses the Immigration and Refugee Information System (IRIS) database and was able to grant the subrecipients access to the system.



Contextual Considerations

Agencies should consider the following contextual factors that may impact implementation of this practice.

- Subrecipients must be willing participants and motivated to do the work. EMM requires subrecipients to attend (or access recordings of) all training sessions.
- Training and coaching should account for diversity across subrecipient sites and be designed to meet their individual needs.
- Policies may be needed to protect personally identifiable information or clarify roles and permissions when allowing multiple users to access a database. Depending on the database contract agreement, agencies may need to consider the legal and contractual ramifications of who can access certain data and information.
- Depending on how the subrecipient network is structured, a data-sharing agreement may be required to document what data are being shared and how the data may be used.
- Becoming a data-driven organization may require a shift in organizational culture.

What is a Promising Practice? A promising practice is a unique and/or innovative approach, method, or technique that has demonstrated effectiveness and is replicable. ORR's Refugee Program primarily identifies potential promising practices during recipient and subrecipient monitoring and engages in a validation process to ensure the practice meets the standards to classify it as "promising." Each practice falls under one of the following domains: Physical and Behavioral Health, Employment and Economic Stability, Education and English Language, or Social Adjustment and Integration.