Making Strategic Program Choices: How to Know When to Say Yes

Wednesday, January 18, 2023
9 - 10 am PT / 12 - 1 pm ET

The Bridgespan Group
Collaborating to accelerate social impact

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About The Bridgespan Group

Our Services

- Developing & Sharing Insights
- Leadership Development
- Philanthropy Consulting
- Nonprofit & NGO Strategy Consulting

The Bridgespan Group is a global nonprofit organization that collaborates with mission-driven leaders, organizations, and philanthropists, to make the world more equitable and just.

Friendly reminders

After today's webinar, we'll send you:

Recording & slides

Links to all the resources we mention today

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What is strategy?

TRANSFORMING Available Resources **INTO** Maximum Social Impact

BAD NEWS	"Cannot do everything"
GOOD NEWS	"Everything is not equally worth doing"
STRATEGY IS...	Achieving the tightest fit between actions and intended impact

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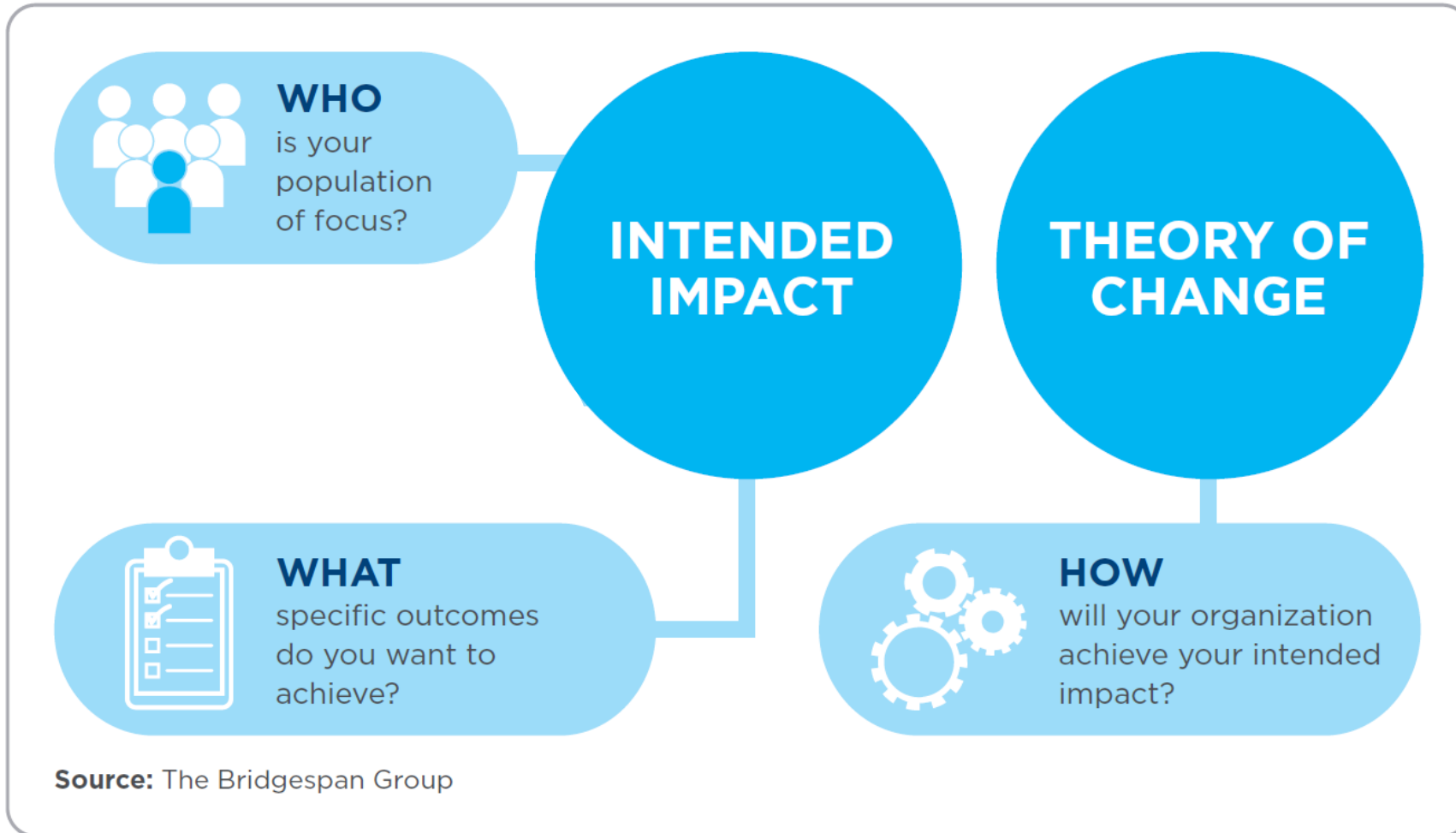# Reflect on a recent decision

Use the Zoom chat function:

What considerations did you weigh when making a recent programmatic decision?

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Intended impact and theory of change help clarify what you are seeking to achieve and how

WHO is your population of focus?

WHAT specific outcomes do you want to achieve?

INTENDED IMPACT

THEORY OF CHANGE

HOW will your organization achieve your intended impact?

Source: The Bridgespan Group

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Strategic decision-making criteria make explicit what matters most to organizations as they consider programmatic decisions

CATEGORY	SAMPLE STRATEGIC CRITERIA
Aligned with Theory of Change	• **Who:** Focuses on target constituents / clients • **What:** Achieves target outcomes • **How:** Aligns with core activities, approaches, values, beliefs
Financially sustainable	• Net financial contribution is positive • Funding is renewable and sustainable • Cost per outcome is reasonable • Utilization rate is expected to be high
Operationally viable	• Fits with staff skills and expertise, or can be developed • Feasible given current staff time / capacity • Leverages existing infrastructure and facilities • Relationships with partner organizations are strong • Policy environment is supportive • Achievable path to a scale that will have meaningful impact
Organizational benefits/risks	• Does not duplicate strong programs from other orgs • Provides a unique leadership role for organization • Organizational risks are low (reputation, relationships, legal) • Gives access to other high-impact opportunities

Tailored to each nonprofit: Invest time in customizing and aligning as a team

More consistent across nonprofits: Select the limited few that are highest priority and customize if needed

Choose the 8-10 most critical for your organization

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A criteria rubric helps define what "excellent" looks like

Category	Criteria	Concerning	Moderate	Excellent
Alignment with Theory of Change	**Serves our community** — Black and Latinx families under 200% of the Federal Poverty Line — Families in housing instability	≤75% of participants meet at least one criteria	75-90% of participants meet at least one criteria	≥90% of participants meet at least one criteria
	Focused on our **key issue areas:** — Housing stability — Economic mobility — Youth empowerment	Program does not focus on any of our issue areas	Program focuses on one key issue area	Program focuses on more than one key issue area
	Based on **anti-racist principles** and **addresses systemic racism**	Does not acknowledge systemic racism	Addresses symptoms of systemic racism	Creates solutions to address systemic racism
	Helps **develop leaders** within our community	Leadership development not included	Leadership development part but not core	Leadership development a core focus
	Successfully achieves **clearly defined program outcomes**	Unlikely to meet outcome targets	Likely to meet some but not all outcome targets	Likely to meet outcome targets

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WHO WE WORK WITH

Youth, ages 14–24, enrolled in alternative high schools
located in lower income neighborhoods throughout LA County, with a focus on BIPOC groups that have disproportionately higher dropout rates and justice system involvement.

School staff at underserved alternative high schools
(teachers, principals, paraeducators, counselors, probation, support staff)

District Administrators & Funders

WHAT WE DO

Engagement & Exposure
- School Programs
- Partnerships with civic and cultural institutions
- Program content centers creative expression and student voice.

Skills Building & Case Management
- After-school Residencies
- Career & Life-Skills Workshops
- High School Internships
- Case Management Support

Connections to Opportunity
- College Prep Scholarships
- External Internships
- Alumni Events & Exhibitions

Advocacy for the inclusion of alternative schools as sites of increased resource allocation and specialized programming

OUTCOMES WE SEEK

Short-term:
- Coursework completion
- Increased attendance
- Growth in SEL Capacities
- PD opportunities for school staff

Medium-term:
- High School Graduation
- Articulated post-secondary plan
- Deeper connection to the arts, civic, and cultural institutions

Long-term:
- Self-awareness, self-confidence and ability to express and advocate for self and community
- Begin to implement a post-secondary plan.
- Sustained district investment in school day programs that advance equity in access to the arts

OUR ULTIMATE ASPIRATION

artworxLA students graduate from high school with a greater awareness of their agency within society, and flourish as creative adults with access to a living wage and an expanded sense of community.

artworxLA

INTENDED IMPACT | THEORY OF CHANGE

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	DEFINITION OF EXCELLENT	%
Alignment with Intended Impact/ Theory of Change	**Target Population**	School serves students reflecting all four dimensions of target population (enrolled in alternative high school, in LA County, high % of BIPOC students and students on FRLP).	13
	Advanced Programs Participation	School has students participating in Advanced Programs this year/previous year.	13
	Data Availability	School regularly collects and shares data on retention, attendance, graduation rate, academic progress.	8
	Leadership Buy-in	Principal supports artworxLA programs (including attendance at events, supporting students into Advanced Programs, writes letters of recommendation, etc.	8
	Alignment in Values	School programming supports the student all the way through graduation, and leadership advocates for the arts as part of a full education with school day programs for course credits.	8
Financial Sustainability	**School Funding**	School contract covers 50% of fully-loaded program costs.	16
	Matching Funds	School eligible for matching funds that cover the other 50% of program costs.	16
Operational Viability	**Renewal Process**	Contract is multi-year without new applications each year, high likelihood of funding, and buy-in from key decision-makers (teachers, principals, administrators)	6
	Scaling Potential	Opportunity for growth within the site, demonstrated via 1) school's funding commitment and 2) number of students enrolled (potential for additional classes)	6
	Partnership Equity	School is committed to full-year schedule, establishing space and point-person for workshops, and is flexible to artworxLA's schedule needs.	6

artworxLA   RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

ALIGNMENT IN VALUES (PRINCIPAL)

- When students catch up on their credits, do they return to their original school or continue through graduation?
- What are the school's graduation requirements?
- How do students complete their VAPA and elective credits?
- Does the school have ESLRs or a mission statement?
  (For us:) How does **artworx**LA connect to these core values?
- What are your priorities for school culture this year?
  (For us:) Where is there overlap where **artworx**LA can support?

SCALING POTENTIAL (PRINCIPAL)

- What is the typical class size? Would you be interested in multiple classrooms or multiple days of programming?
- Where do you recruit students from, and do you foresee the number of students increasing or decreasing in the next year?

LEADERSHIP BUY-IN (PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS)

- Our workshops are usually 90–120 minutes.
  Is there a way to fit this into your Bell Schedule? (Both)
- Can you commit to a full year of programming?
- Can you commit to two special field trips events, including chaperones, bagged lunches, and transportation?
- Are teachers interested in participating in **artworx**LA's professional development opportunities? (Both)
- Where do you see the value in arts programming?
- Do you have an arts specialist, or would **artworx**LA be your arts provider?

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (PRINCIPAL/DISTRICT ADMIN.)

- What is the school's available funding for arts programming?
- Do you have access to Title I funding? What programming is it currently used for?
- Do you have access to Personalization Funds or additional District funding (ACN, CTE, etc.) that aligns with our program?
- Are there District funding streams you have not tapped into that matching funds would help to secure?
- Do you know how many of your students are system-impacted, foster youth, or transition age youth?
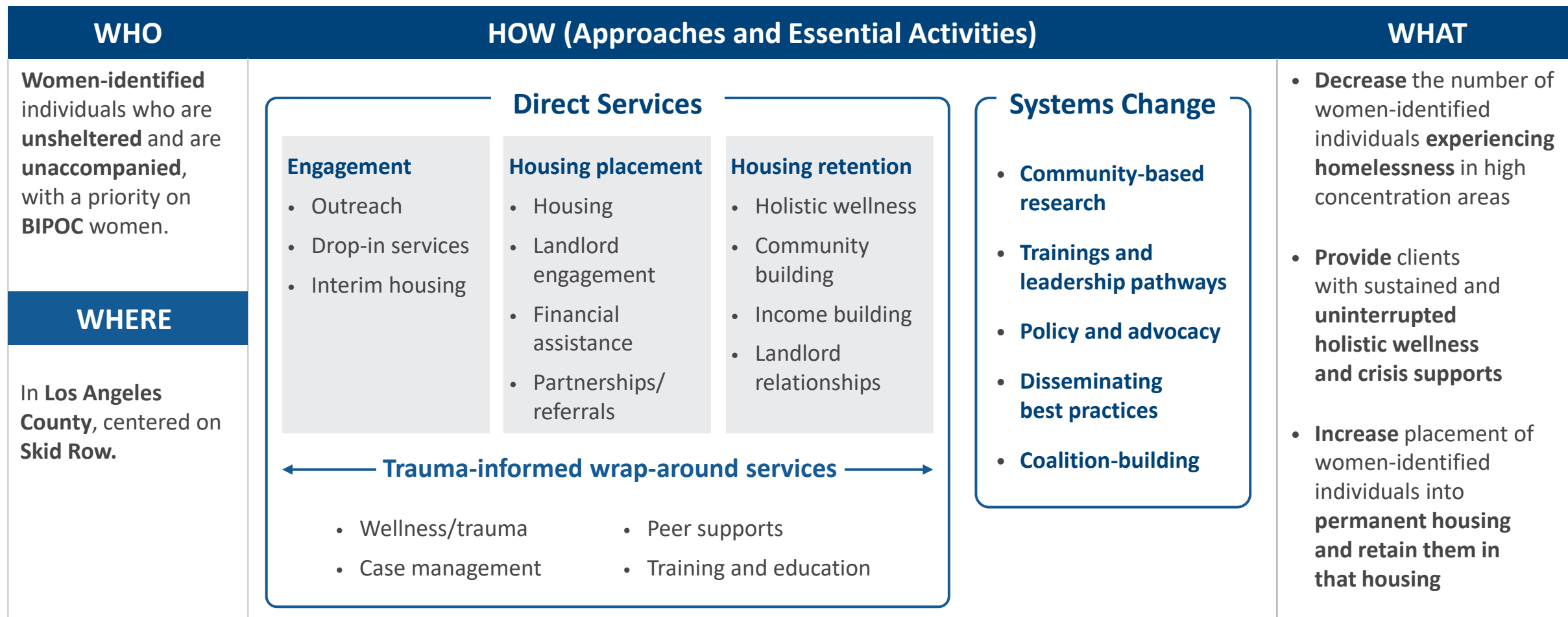
RENEWAL PROCESS (PRINCIPAL/DISTRICT ADMIN.)

- What is the timeline for a contract or renewal process?
- Should we draft an individual PO, MOU, or does a proposal need to go for School Board approval?

PARTNERSHIP EQUITY (PRINCIPAL AND TEACHERS)

- When would we secure the workshop schedule?
- Who will be the school staff member joining us during the workshops?
- Who is the point-person for scheduling field trips and logistics outside of the classroom experience?
- What space will be used for the workshop, and are we able to safely store a box of student art kits throughout the year?
- Do you have additional partners for supportive services? Are there any specific areas you are seeking partners (we could help with?)

DWC's Intended Impact and Theory of Change

WHO	HOW (Approaches and Essential Activities)	WHAT

WHO

Women-identified individuals who are **unsheltered** and are **unaccompanied**, with a priority on **BIPOC** women.

WHERE

In **Los Angeles County**, centered on **Skid Row.**

HOW (Approaches and Essential Activities)

Direct Services

Engagement
- Outreach
- Drop-in services
- Interim housing

Housing placement
- Housing
- Landlord engagement
- Financial assistance
- Partnerships/ referrals

Housing retention
- Holistic wellness
- Community building
- Income building
- Landlord relationships

← **Trauma-informed wrap-around services** →

- Wellness/trauma
- Case management
- Peer supports
- Training and education

Systems Change

- **Community-based research**
- **Trainings and leadership pathways**
- **Policy and advocacy**
- **Disseminating best practices**
- **Coalition-building**

WHAT

- **Decrease** the number of women-identified individuals **experiencing homelessness** in high concentration areas

- **Provide** clients with sustained and **uninterrupted holistic wellness and crisis supports**

- **Increase** placement of women-identified individuals into **permanent housing and retain them in that housing**

Special sauce: We work through uplifting and empowering the lived experience of the women we serve

DWC Decision Criteria Summary

Intended Impact and Theory of Change	• Serves **women-identified, trans, or other non-binary people** who are unsheltered and unaccompanied, with a focus on **BIPOC** women • Serves **LA county**, focused on **Skid Row** • Enables us to **place and sustain women-identified individuals in housing** (e.g., uplifts Housing First principles) • Allows us to meet women's **basic needs** (e.g., income, healthcare, workforce development, mental health supports)
Organizational benefit	• Provides a **unique leadership role** for organization
Financials	• **Funding** is renewable • **Funding** is sustainable
Operations	• Feasible given **current or funded program staff time/capacity*** • Feasible given **current or funded infrastructure and operational capacity** (e.g., physical space, executive team time, HR/Finance team time, server capacity • **Achievable path to a scale** that will have meaningful impact

Full DWC decision criteria rubric (1/3)

Criteria	Low	Medium	High
Intended Impact and Theory of Change — Serves **women-identified, trans, or other non-binary people** who are unsheltered and unaccompanied, with a focus on **BIPOC** women	Does not target women-identified, trans, or other non-binary people or only focuses on one of the following groups: 1. unsheltered 2. unaccompanied 3. BIPOC	Targets women-identified, trans, or other non-binary people with additional focus on at least two of the following groups: 1. unsheltered 2. unaccompanied 3. BIPOC	Targets women-identified, trans, or other non-binary people with focus on all three of the following groups: 1. unsheltered 2. unaccompanied 3. BIPOC
Serves **LA county**, focused on **Skid Row and/or current DWC clients**	<70% of client referrals or population served are from Skid Row or current DWC clients; primarily serves people outside a 30-mile radius of Skid Row/LA County	70-84% of client referrals or population served are from Skid Row or current DWC clients; if not, population served is within a 30-mile radius of Skid Row within LA County **OR** development partner leads housing outreach and move-ins	>85% of client referrals or population served are from Skid Row or current DWC clients
Enables us to **place and sustain women-identified individuals in housing** (e.g., uplifts Housing First principles)	Opportunity does not provide a pathway to permanent housing; or, has a slow path to housing, strict participant requirements (e.g., sobriety, exit dates) and/ or sets someone up for adverse consequences (e.g., not being able to afford rent after program)	Opportunity will eventually lead to permanent housing, but will require the participant to wait longer for the result **AND** has no or limited requirements for placement	Opportunity provides or has a clear path to permanent housing with no or minimal requirements for placement and/or time limits
Allows us to provide **wrap-around services** to meet women's basic needs (e.g., food, income, workforce development, physical and mental health)	Does not provide resources for a holistic approach and has a limited approach to housing readiness	Provides some resources to enable a holistic approach to housing readiness with opportunities for personal growth and stability for women	Provides resources to enable a holistic approach to housing readiness with opportunities for personal growth and stability for women

Full DWC decision criteria rubric (2/3)

	Criteria	Low	Medium	High
Organizational benefit	Provides a **unique leadership role** for organization	Opportunity does not provide a unique leadership role for DWC, is mainstream to the sector, and / or duplicates others' efforts.	Opportunity allows us to use our expertise and influence but may require greater investment of effort/time or have limited capacity to create change	Opportunity allows DWC to act as thought leaders, advance best practices (e.g., trauma informed care), share our expertise, and create change. Further strengthens DWC's brand in the field.
Financials	**Funding** is renewable	Program funding is not renewable or potentially renewable, but we do not have confidence it will be	Program funding is potentially renewable, and we have some confidence it will be (e.g., due to past grants, relationships)	Program funding is multi-year and / or renewable
	Funding is sustainable	Program funding requires the use of general funds to meet cover program costs or back-office support, or requires the use of the line of credit	Program funding fully covers program staff and partially covers the back-office support required to sustain the program. Does not require the use of a line of credit	Provides sufficient or more than sufficient funding to fully support program staff and back-office support. Does not require the use of line of credit

Full DWC decision criteria rubric (3/3)

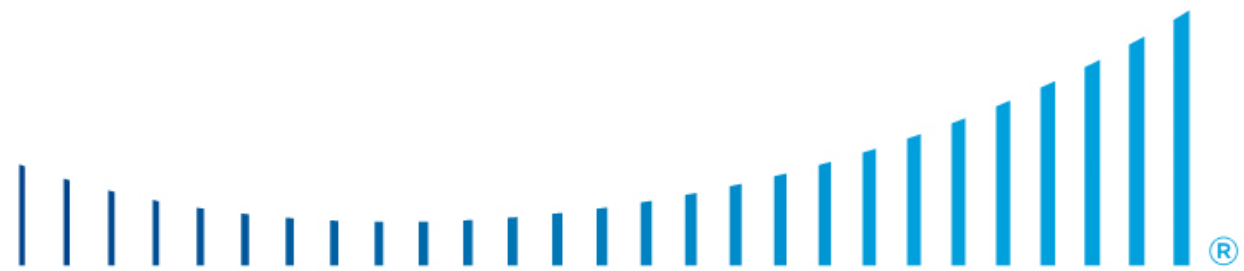| Criteria	Low	Medium	High
Operations Feasible given **current or funded program staff time/capacity***	Program requires significant investment in additional resourcing or capacity development, or a significant amount of current program staff time (e.g., additional program staff, re-allocating current program staff time)	Program is operational with limited modifications to existing approach to programming and program team capacity; requires some investment in additional resourcing, capacity development, or current program staff time	Program is operational with existing program staff capacity (e.g., staff time, expertise, team structures) **OR** opportunity enables us to hire staff to meet that capacity
Feasible given **current or funded infrastructure and operational capacity** (e.g., physical space, executive team time, HR / Finance team time, server capacity)	Program requires significant modifications to existing infrastructure and or capacity; modifications to infrastructure are not aligned with planned growth	Program is operational with limited modifications to existing infrastructure and non-programs team capacity; modifications to infrastructure are somewhat aligned with planned growth and current capacity for new initiatives	Program is operational with existing infrastructure and non-programs team capacity; fully aligned with planned growth and current capacity for new initiatives
Achievable path to a scale that will have meaningful impact	Program neither serves a high number of people **NOR** efficiently uses resources on a per person served / per outcome achieved basis	Program can serve a high number of people **OR** program efficiently uses resources on a per person served / per outcome achieved basis	Program can serve a high number of people (current population or new) **AND** program efficiently uses resources on a per person served / per outcome achieved basis

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