



Family
Resiliency
Center



Empowerment and Participatory Approaches to Building Agency Evaluation Capacity Project

Year Two Annual Report: Implementing Action Steps

Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental
Disabilities Board Meetings

May 21, 2025



Gratitude and Appreciation

- Agency staff & leaders
- Working group members
- Board members & staff
- Programs participating in technical assistance
- Funding (PI Dariotis)
 - Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards

THANK
YOU

Overview

- Context: Revisiting project goals and strategy
- Revisit year 1 needs assessment take-aways
- Summary of year 2 activities
- Next Steps

Context: Project Goals and Approaches

Capacity Building and Partnering

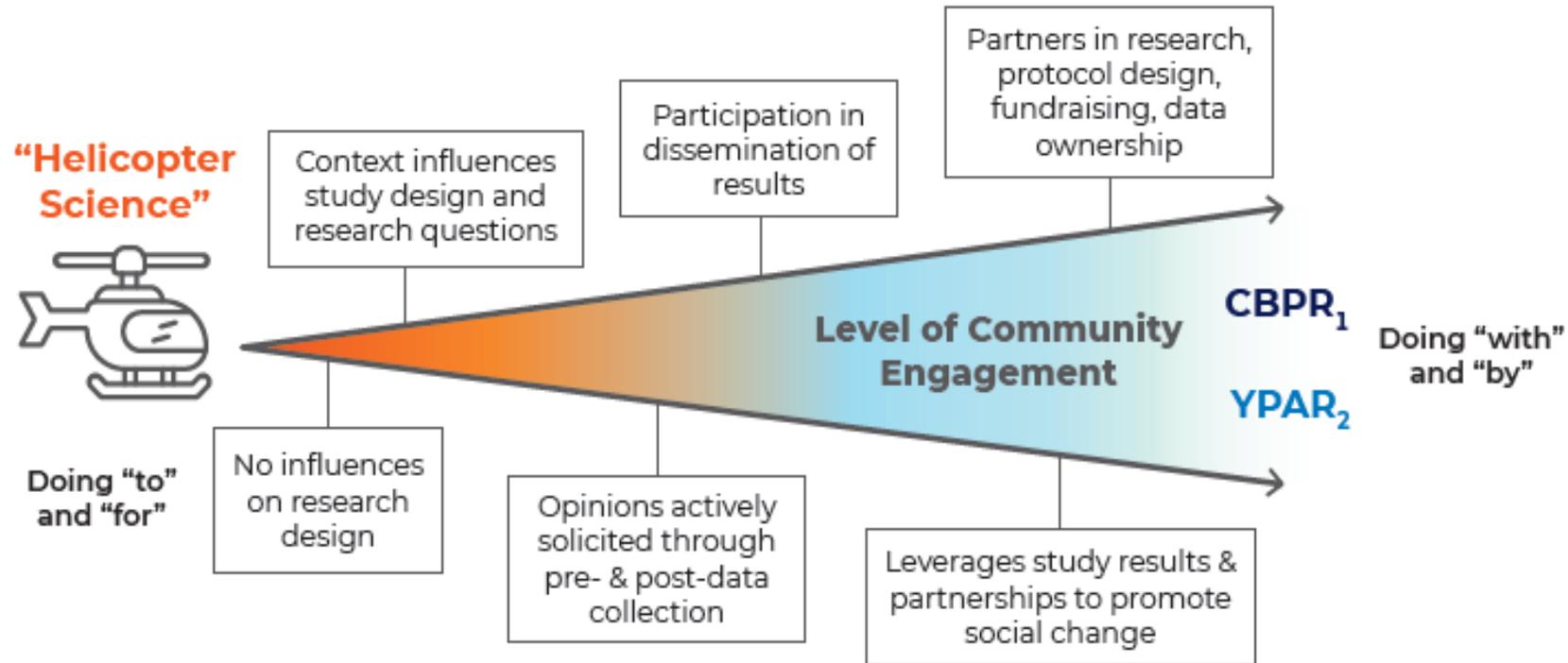
Project Goals

- **Overarching goal:** Build the **evaluation capacity** of CCMHDDDB and board-funded agencies using **participatory** and **empowerment approaches**.
- **Year 1 goal:** Determine agency and board **needs, strengths, and expectations** for evaluation team's future activities and begin moving to **action**.
- **Year 2 goal:** Use year-one needs assessment findings and ongoing feedback to engage in **relevant capacity-building activities**.

Approaches

- **Participatory** = centering staff voices & multiple perspectives
 - ***A more holistic understanding:*** current capacity, what has worked, and what needs remain.
- **Empowerment** = capacity building
 - Boards and agencies ***implement*** and ***sustain*** practices, becoming continuous learning organizations.

Participatory Approach

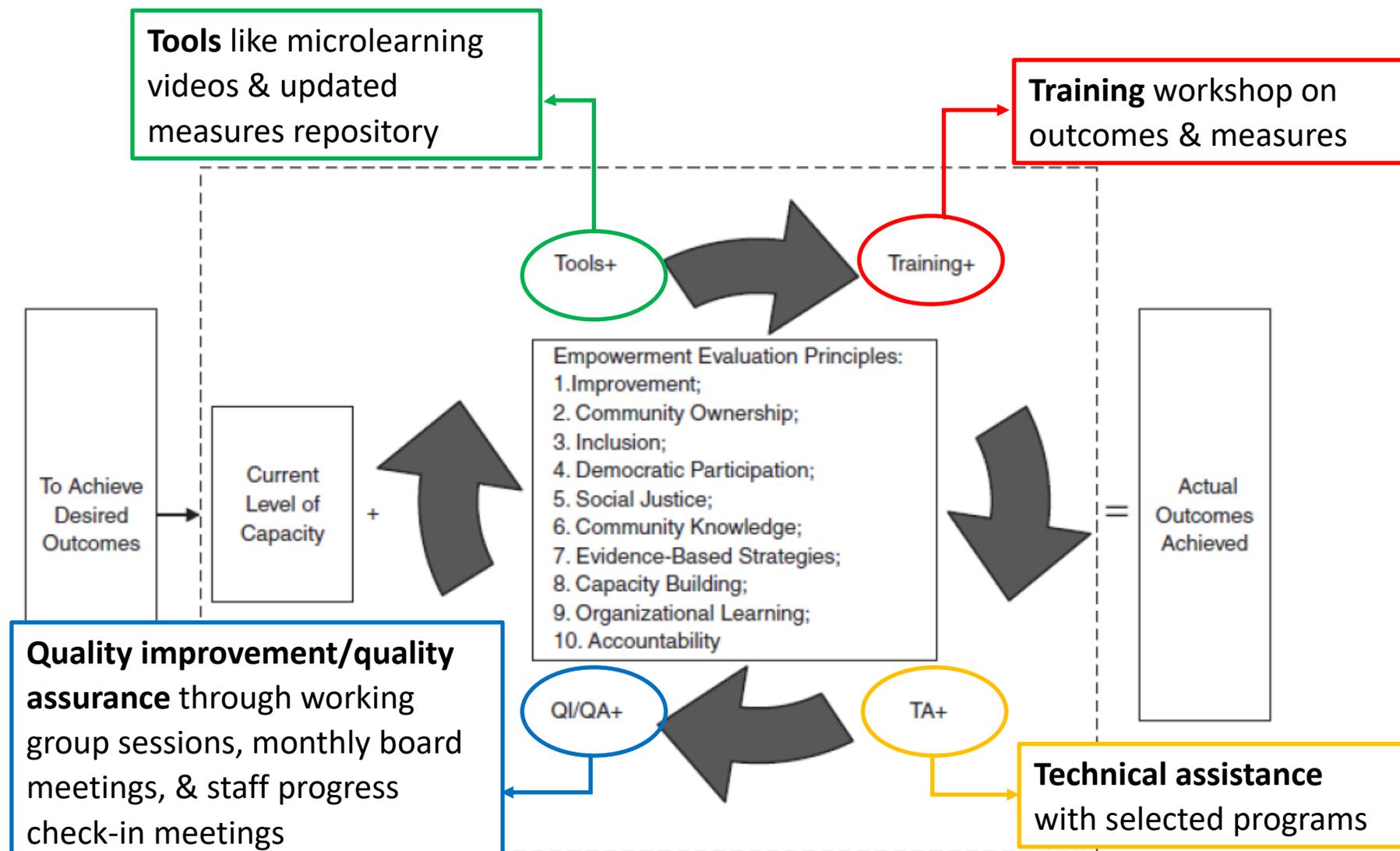
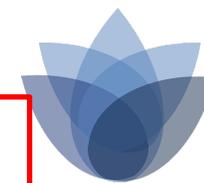


From Study Participant...

...to Research Partner

Graphic adapted from the following source: Balazs & Morello-Frosch, 2013

¹ Community-Based Participatory Research
² Youth Participatory Action Research



Note: Figure adopted from Fetterman, D., & Wandersman, A. (2007). Empowerment evaluation: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 28(2), 179-198.



Year 1 Needs Assessment

- Identified agency and board strengths and areas for growth related to program evaluation.



76

The number of perspectives we included from agency staff, agency leaders, and evaluators.

Takeaways

- **Agencies & boards want:**
 - **To be heard** – Participatory approaches for needs and action plans
 - **Resources** – Provide knowledge, improve efficiencies, story-telling proficiency
 - **To work together** – Communities of practice and open communication



Summary of Year 2 Activities



Technical assistance: Tailored support for specific program evaluation needs identified by selected programs



Working group: Cross-agency mentoring and rapid feedback on evaluation topics/training directions



Trainings and resources: Capacity-building materials developed based on agency-driven needs



Open communication & informal support: Consistent communication about progress and planned activities and availability for questions

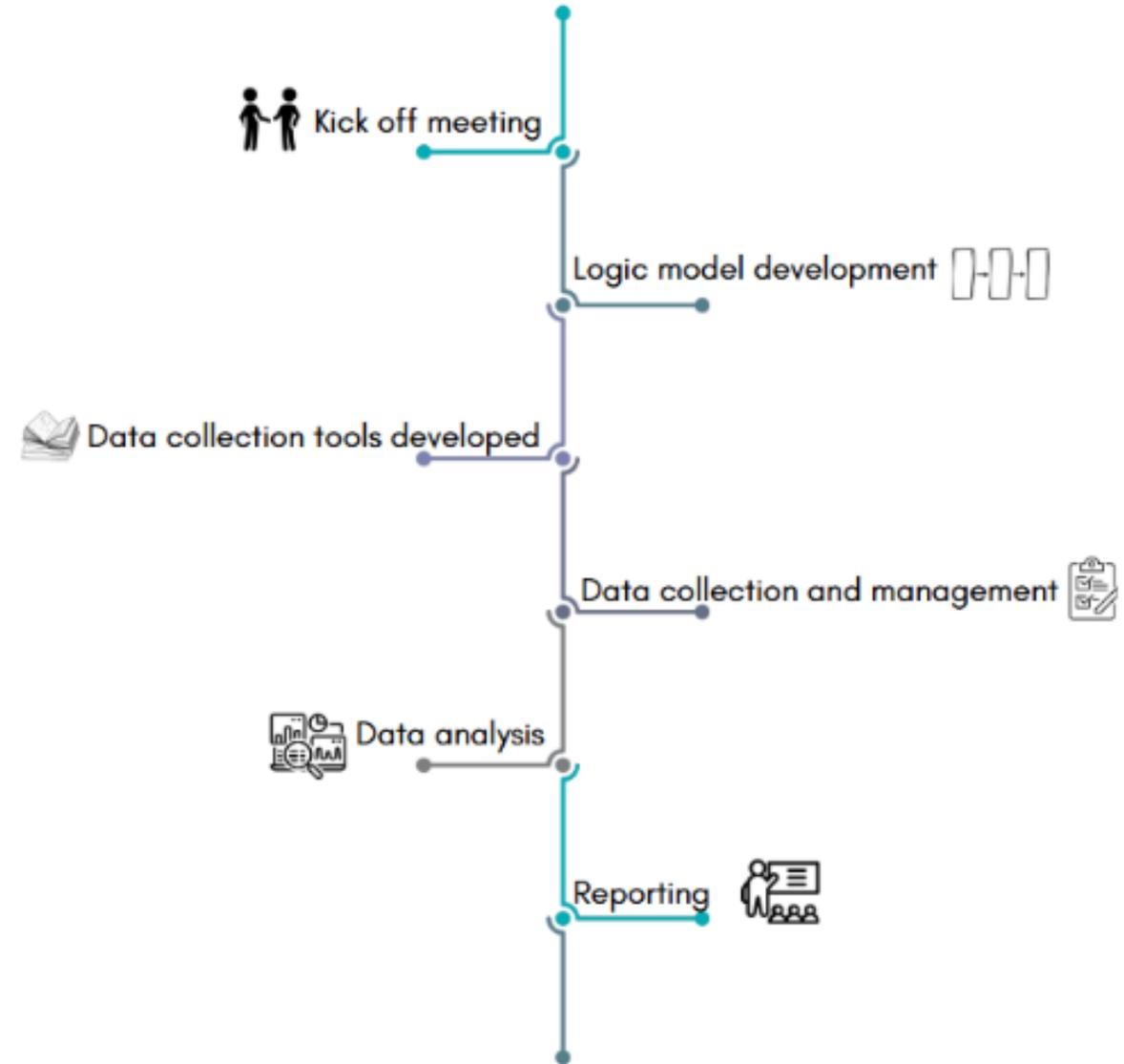
Technical Assistance

- **Reach & skills:**
 - 4 programs identified evaluation support needs
 - **Improved understanding** of logic models, survey development, survey administration, and data analysis.
- **Effect:**
 - All evaluation survey respondents (n=5) reported **future skills use was “very”** or “somewhat” likely.

Technical Assistance

“Collaboration was strong. Appreciated the reciprocal input which was reflected in final outcome of survey tool.” - Agency Staff member

Figure 2. Year 2 Technical Assistance Process



Cross-Agency Working Group

- **Reach & skills:**
 - 7 agencies; 3 core members met regularly
 - Feedback, troubleshooting, and evaluation learning
- **Effect:**
 - **Rapid feedback** on evaluation products and trainings
 - Community building

Working Group

“The working group has been valuable in building my knowledge base around logic models. It has changed my mindset and approach to my organization's programs, and I am now better able to contribute to those sorts of discussions.” – Working Group Member

Trainings & Resources

Reach & skills:

- Outcome **measurement workshop**: 25 attendees from 18 agencies
- Publicly available 4-part **microlearning series** on logic models
 - **>800** player impressions since January 2025 launch.
- 6 microlearnings to-date: **1,658** player impressions

Effect:

- Resources are **broadly shared** across funded agencies and to other agencies by other funders.

The Logic Model

Understanding Inputs

Open Communication & Informal Support



Reach & skills:

- Monthly updates at MH & DD board meetings
- Monthly progress meetings with board staff

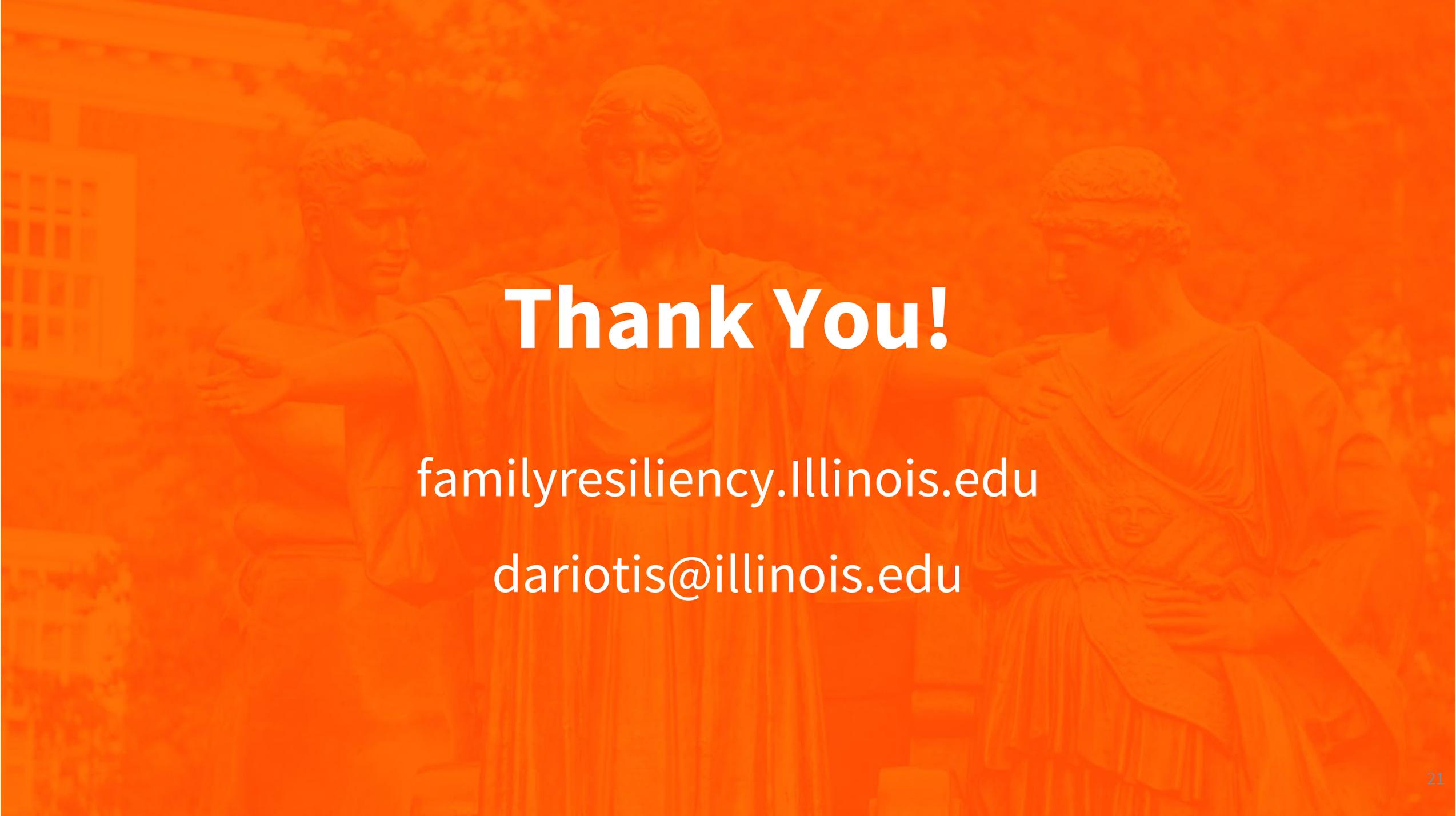
Effect:

- Increasing sentiment that agencies and boards are moving in the same direction
- Annual report offers public accountability and understanding of evaluation team activities

Next Steps

Ideas for Year 3 activities include:

- Identifying funded programs needing in-depth **TA**
- Developing new **trainings**
- Evolving the **working group** into a community of practice
- Piloting “**office hours**” for specific and quick needs



Thank You!

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