

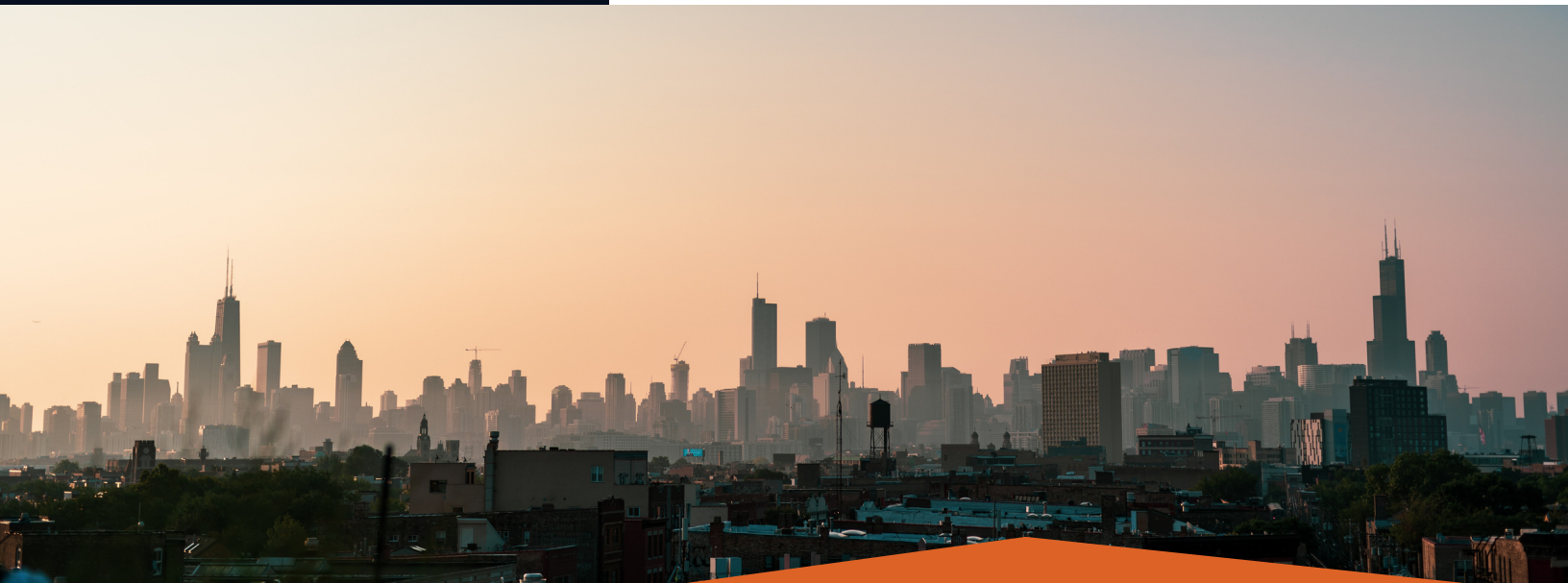


UpMetrics

Collectively, we can be doing more.

A customer spotlight on:

thrivechicago



upmetrics.com

Thrive Chicago is built on a very simple yet powerful idea: collectively, we could be doing more. It is an idea that has fueled their growth, directing crucial resources to nonprofits supporting Chicago's youth, and encouraged a culture that is always striving to do better. This lesson has inspired others in the UpMetrics family because it strips away the notion that you need certain things to get started: an abundance of data, a tech suite, a perfect logic model, etc. If you're always striving to do more, you can start anywhere, and continue to improve. All that really matters is your mission, working toward that North Star.



TOGETHER
WE CAN ENSURE
THAT EVERY
CHICAGO YOUTH
THRIVES

Only 15-30% of Chicago's young people are supported by youth-serving nonprofits, yet over \$2 billion is invested each year in over 300 youth-sector nonprofits. Thrive was created on the idea that it's possible to achieve greater impact with this capital if impact organizations coordinated their efforts. Each nonprofit in this network of 300 utilizes a majority of the funding they receive to execute their programs, leaving little room to invest in the capacity needed to collect and analyze data. The challenge here is without this analysis, organizations are limited in their ability to innovate, to optimize their existing operations and grow, and to expand their impact. With this, Thrive saw an opportunity to use data to address gaps or areas of need that cannot be seen without data analysis.

When reflecting on their ability to maximize their impact, Thrive decided the best strategy would be to follow the philosophy of action learning. With action learning, Thrive can create programs that are resilient, inclusive and informed by data. With continuous access to information around program impact, nonprofit partners are able to create meaningful and sustainable improvements in their communities. It also empowers action today, with an opportunity to continue to evolve and do more. Thrive started with a simple question that would set the foundation to get started with action learning, knowing they could then pivot and expand as they collected more data. **They asked: what is success?**

Source: thrivechi.org

What is success?

While powerful, the impact of Thrive's work is difficult to measure as it spans numerous organizations and targets systemic challenges that block a child's ability to enter kindergarten ready, succeed in high school, graduate, and earn a college degree or credentials. The first step in establishing an action learning environment was to pinpoint what Thrive is working towards: what does success look like?

The UpMetrics services team worked with Thrive, asking questions like:

1. What does success look like for the project and constituents?
2. What are current challenges with data collection?
3. What story do we want to tell and who's the audience?



Success in this case also relied on the ability of Thrive to be agile, effectively using action-reflective learning. Therefore it was crucial to collect feedback from partners as well, focusing on:

1. **Reflection:** What key project related activities went as planned, didn't go as planned, or surprised you?
2. **Intentions:** What key project related activities are you working on now or in the coming weeks?
3. **Emerging needs:** What areas of support do you need from Thrive and UpMetrics?
4. **Pain points:** Any places the project seems to be getting stuck, or areas for potential concern?

What is quantifiable?

From conversations around success grew these four key areas where Thrive wanted to achieve measurable impact:

- Establish resiliency, inclusivity, and data-driven practices within existing programs and initiatives.
- Provide tools and strategic support that drive continuous learning and improvement in the process of engaging community and implementing programs.
- Build neighborhood network organization capacity for data collection, analysis, and storytelling (reporting).
- For partners, improve their use of data and access to funding.

With clear indicators of success established, UpMetrics and Thrive were able to work together to determine measurements or key performance indicators (KPIs) for each of these areas. Metrics are crucial to enable action learning, allowing you to check progress toward goals and pivot as needed. To translate these desired outputs into quantifiable goals required three steps:

1. *Creation of a logic model:* Determine inputs, outputs and outcomes. The logic model can be iterative - as you learn new optimizations or realize outputs that differ from what you expected, update the model. There's no such thing as an effective static logic model because communities change - partly because of your impact.
2. *DeCAL methodology:* UpMetrics worked with Thrive to define outcomes and collect data for analysis and storytelling.
3. *Establish goals and indicators,* your milestones along the path to achieving your desired outcomes.

The DeCAL Approach:

Define the key data points and metrics to understand impact and track progress towards goals.

Collect data and centralize information in one place.

Analyze data and visualize impact, turning information into actionable insights.

Leverage information to design programs, inform decisions, and tell stories to increase access to funding.

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“Due to time and resource constraints, oftentimes organizations lack the capacity to track and analyze critical process measures, instead focusing on outcomes and impact. Yet, we believe it is in the process of implementation that the true quality of the work is determined. Mike’s ability to coach organizations in developing relevant and measurable KPIs in conjunction with the functionality of the UpMetrics dashboard have been indispensable in facilitating data accessibility for cross-functional teams.”

Jessica Dargiel
Data and Learning Manager,
Thrive Chicago

Layering in Qualitative Data

While quantitative data is crucial when identifying and measuring indicators of success, providing clear metrics for all stakeholders, it can be difficult to interpret alone. Perhaps program participation decreased, but why? To identify new areas for improvement, or opportunities for collaboration, context is crucial.

Thrive sought out neighborhoods in Chicago where understanding community context, incorporating community voice, and developing responsive and inclusive strategies are critical. To ensure they were able to keep a pulse on these qualitative elements of success, Thrive and UpMetrics worked together to:

1. Create a dashboard that incorporates Census data, providing Thrive with a tool to understand community context when evaluating programs.
2. Collect community feedback with the use of a survey tool. In this case Thrive used the Data Collector feature within the UpMetrics platform, eliminating the need for partners to learn and utilize another tool.
3. Derive insights to iterate on program design and reporting.



Collectively, we can do better.

Thrive's work has shown us that data and continuous learning can help us design, teach, and collaborate better. All that is required is a commitment to constantly improving. Start small, then iterate as more data is available to track progress towards established metrics.

Throughout the process of building this process with Thrive, several lessons were realized. Primarily, it is difficult to work with quantitative data, not just establishing metrics for success but also providing the means to collect this data. However, Thrive has shown how equally important quantitative and qualitative data sources are when looking to learn more about the impact of your programs.

It was also apparent in this project that transparency was crucial to the success and effectiveness of an action-reflection learning measurement system. Thrive prioritized the creation of real-time dashboards for feedback loops from community to organizations. Dashboards also served as a method to communicate insights across teams and up to leadership.

Today, Thrive is continuing to work with UpMetrics to achieve measurable positive change in the Chicago community. A foundation has been set and they continue to identify areas of improvement as they work toward their mission. Thrive is embarking on a PPE and digital device distribution program to support communities in protecting themselves during the pandemic and providing access to the internet to bridge the digital divide. Thrive is also continuing to survey community organizations and share real-time dashboards to power feedback loops from Thrive to community organizations.