



Family
Resiliency
Center



Empowerment and Participatory Approaches to Building Agency Evaluation Capacity Project

Year Three Annual Report: Equipping Programs Through
In-Person and On-Demand Supports

Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental
Disabilities Board Meetings

June 22, 2026 & July 29, 2026

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 3 activities
- Next Steps

Context: Project Goals and Approaches

Capacity Building and Partnering

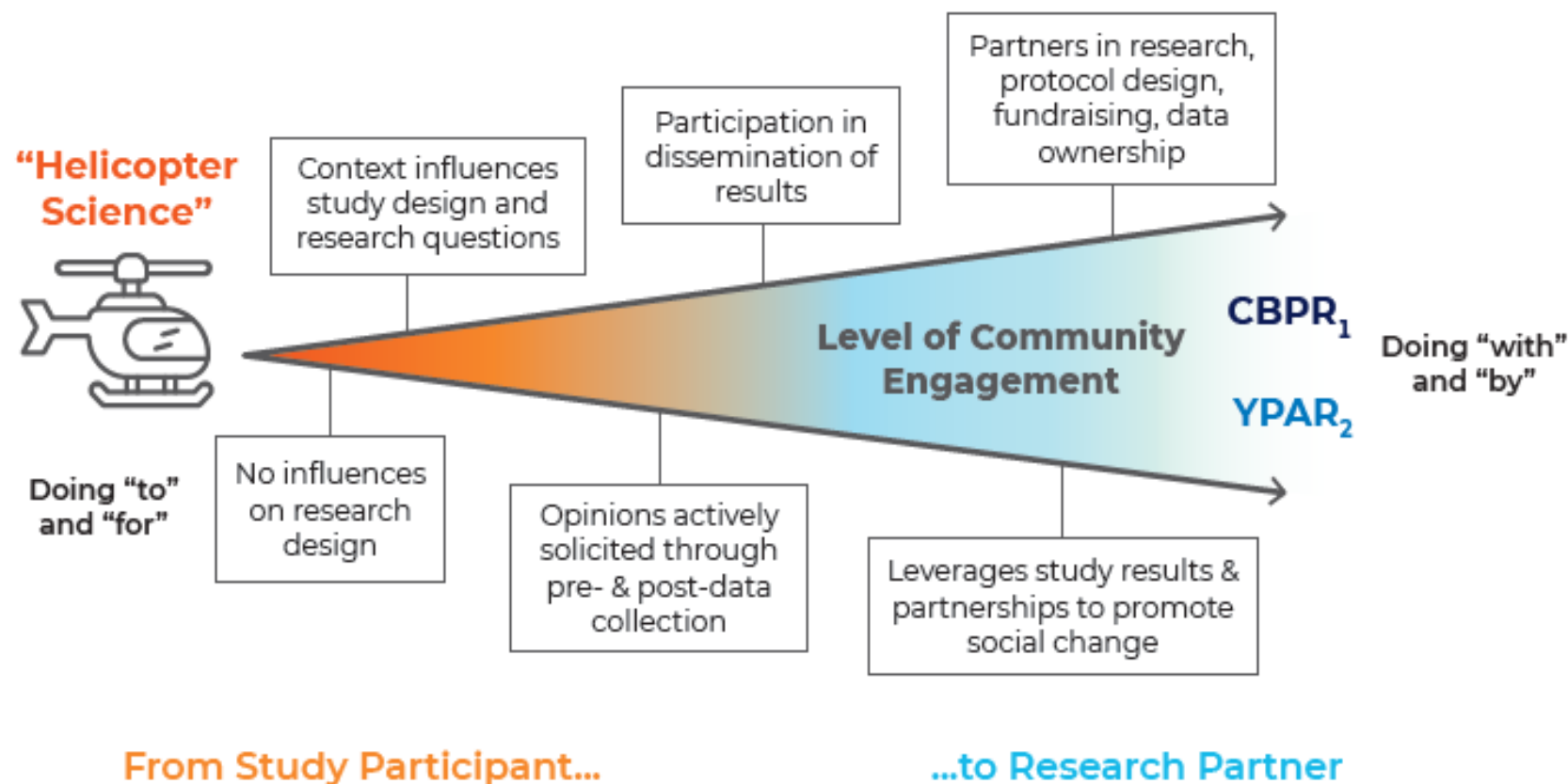
Project Goals

- **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**.
- **Year 3 goal:** **Continue** successful and relevant initiatives & implement **new activities** to meet evolving needs in real-time.

Approaches

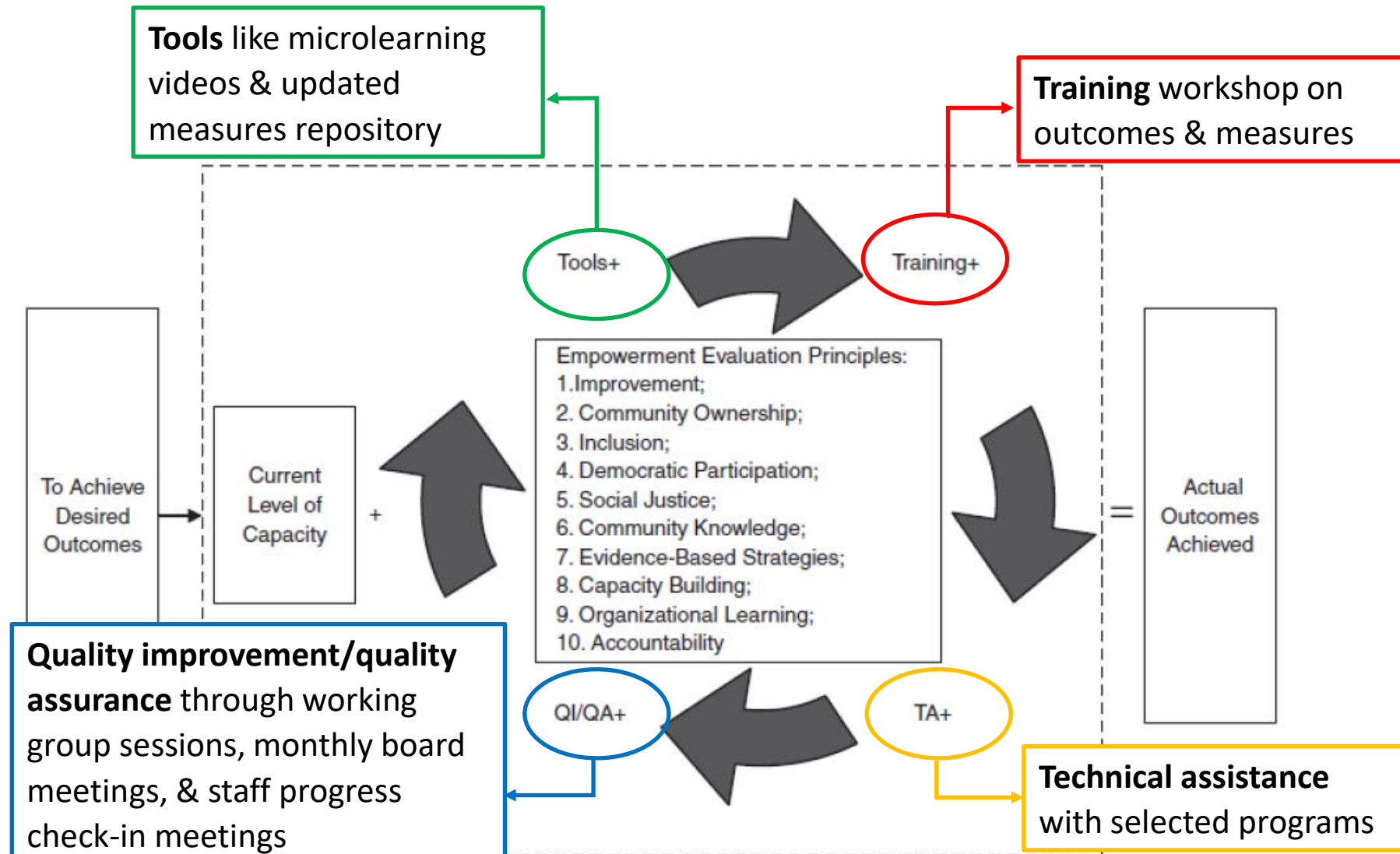
- **Participatory** = centering staff voices & multiple perspectives
 - ***A more holistic understanding:*** current capacity, what has worked, and what needs remain.
- **Empowerment** = capacity building
 - Boards and agencies ***implement*** and ***sustain*** practices, becoming continuous learning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

Participatory Approach



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.



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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 & Year 3 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

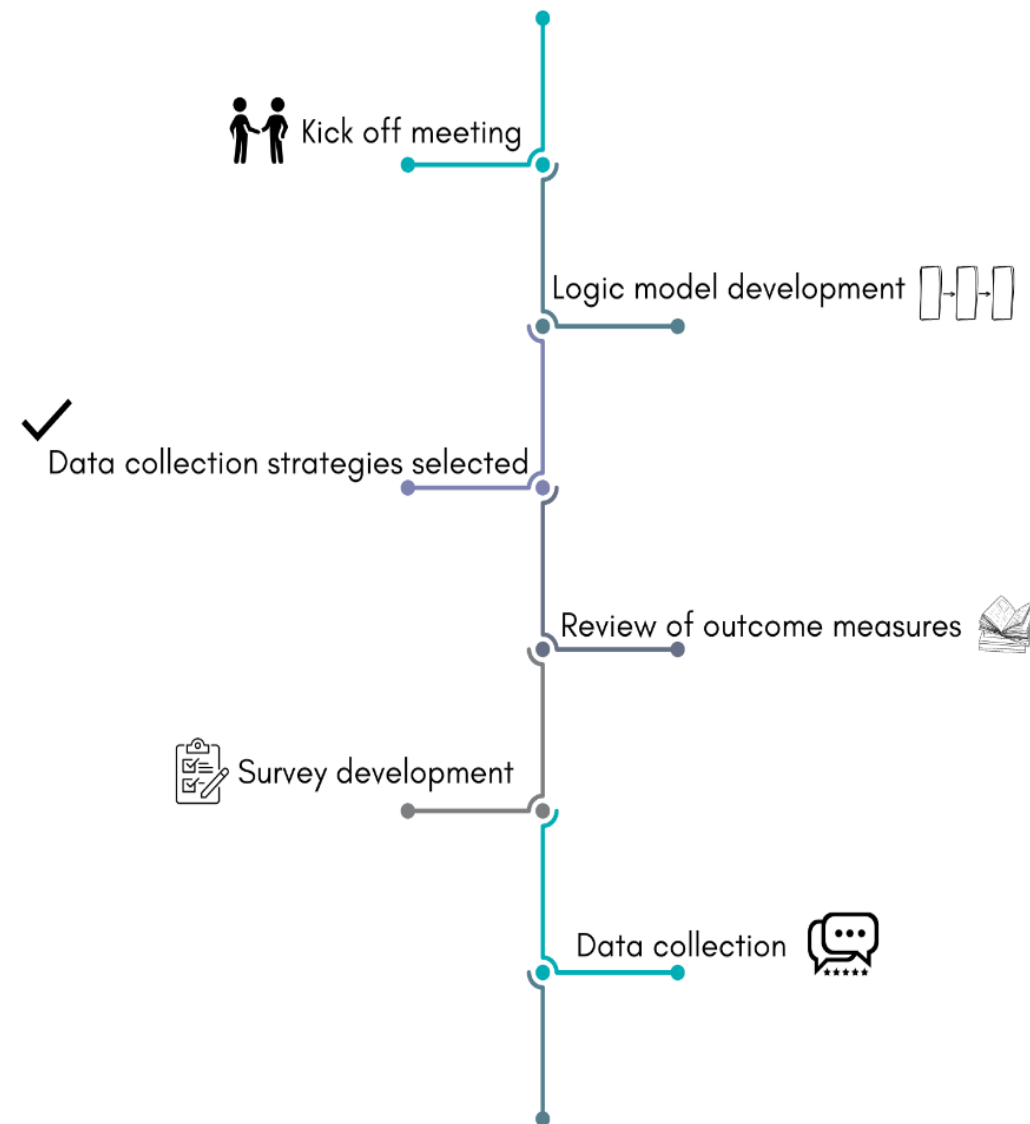
Technical Assistance

- **Reach & skills:**
 - 3 programs identified evaluation support needs
 - Less experienced in evaluation
 - **Improved understanding** of logic models, survey development, and survey administration
 - Reached over **5,700 clients**
- **Effect:**
 - All evaluation survey respondents (n=3) reported
 - Future skills use would **improve services and program quality assessment**
 - Would **recommend** evaluation TA to others

Technical Assistance

“I am very appreciative of RJG and the FRC in general for helping us improve our services. I have nothing but positive things to say, and I will happily recommend you to others. THANK YOU” - Agency Staff member

Figure 2. Year 3 Technical Assistance Process



Cross-Agency Working Group

- **Reach & skills:**
 - 4 agencies; 3 core members met regularly
 - Feedback on trainings, troubleshooting, and evaluation learning
- **Effect:**
 - **Rapid feedback** on evaluation products and trainings
 - Shared knowledge
 - Community building
 - Improved confidence and value of evaluation
 - Survey design skills

Working Group

“I have learned a lot from the working group. I wish I would have had it when I first started! I have worked on some different surveys, and I have learned a lot about how to make them. I’m not a data person; I’m a people person. But I have learned a lot from the data I’ve collected. They have helped me look at a program and understand what to change or fix. That makes a big difference. You guys have made it easier for me to understand my job.” – Working Group Member

Working Group Informed Trainings and Resources

*“The content and resources that have come out of the group work would be very beneficial to the agencies who are willing to use it.” –
Working Group Member*

Trainings & Resources

Reach & skills:

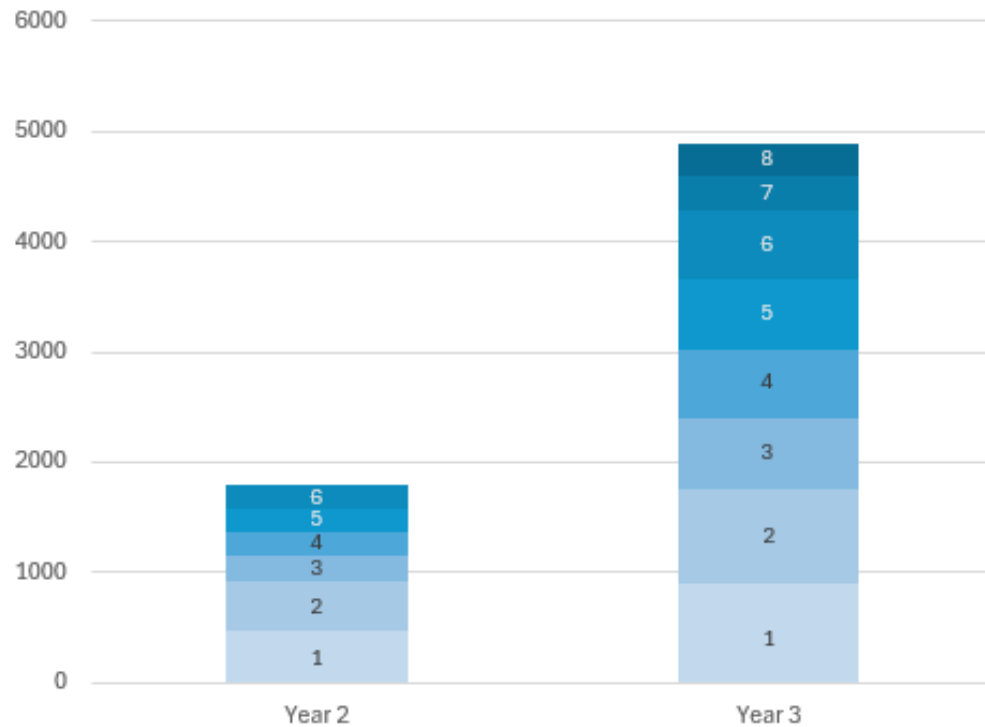
- Storytelling **workshop**: >12 agencies
- Publicly available **microlearnings**: 3 new:
 - Avoiding the data dump,
 - Avoiding under and overreporting,
 - How to program a survey using a low-cost platform
- 8 microlearnings to-date: **nearly 5,000** player impressions; **300+** plays
- **Reference guides**: data types; survey programming step-by-step

Effect:

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

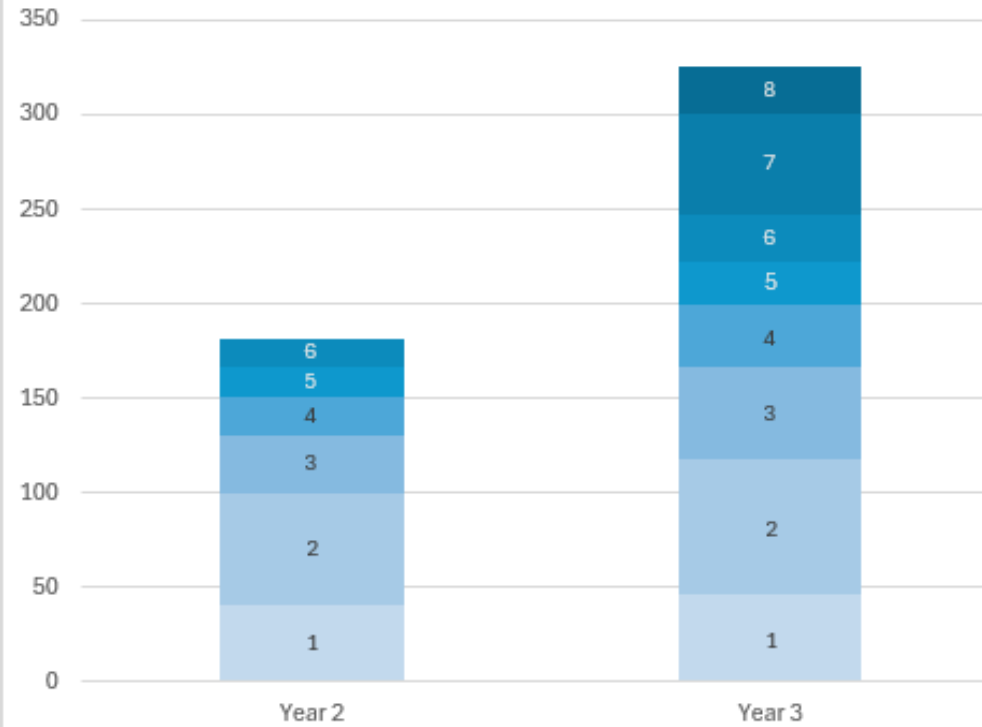
Trainings and Resources

Cumulative Microlearning Player Impressions



- 8. Reporting - Avoiding the Data Dump
- 7. Reporting - Avoiding Under- and Overreporting
- 6. Logic Model - An Example
- 5. Logic Model - Outcomes
- 4. Logic Model - Outputs
- 3. Logic Model - Inputs
- 2. How to Avoid Overpromising and Underdelivering
- 1. Process & Outcome Evaluation

Cumulative Microlearning Plays



- 8. Reporting - Avoiding the Data Dump
- 7. Reporting - Avoiding Under- and Overreporting
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- 3. Logic Model - Inputs
- 2. How to Avoid Overpromising and Underdelivering
- 1. Process & Outcome Evaluation

Microlearnings

“I just love what you're doing. I taught research methodology for years at the university, and I would have very much benefited from some of these short micro-lessons. People get so distracted by how and what to report, and you have really distilled it into a humorous as well as very cogent summary..”

– Susan Fowler, DD Board Member

Open Communication & Informal Support

Reach & skills:

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

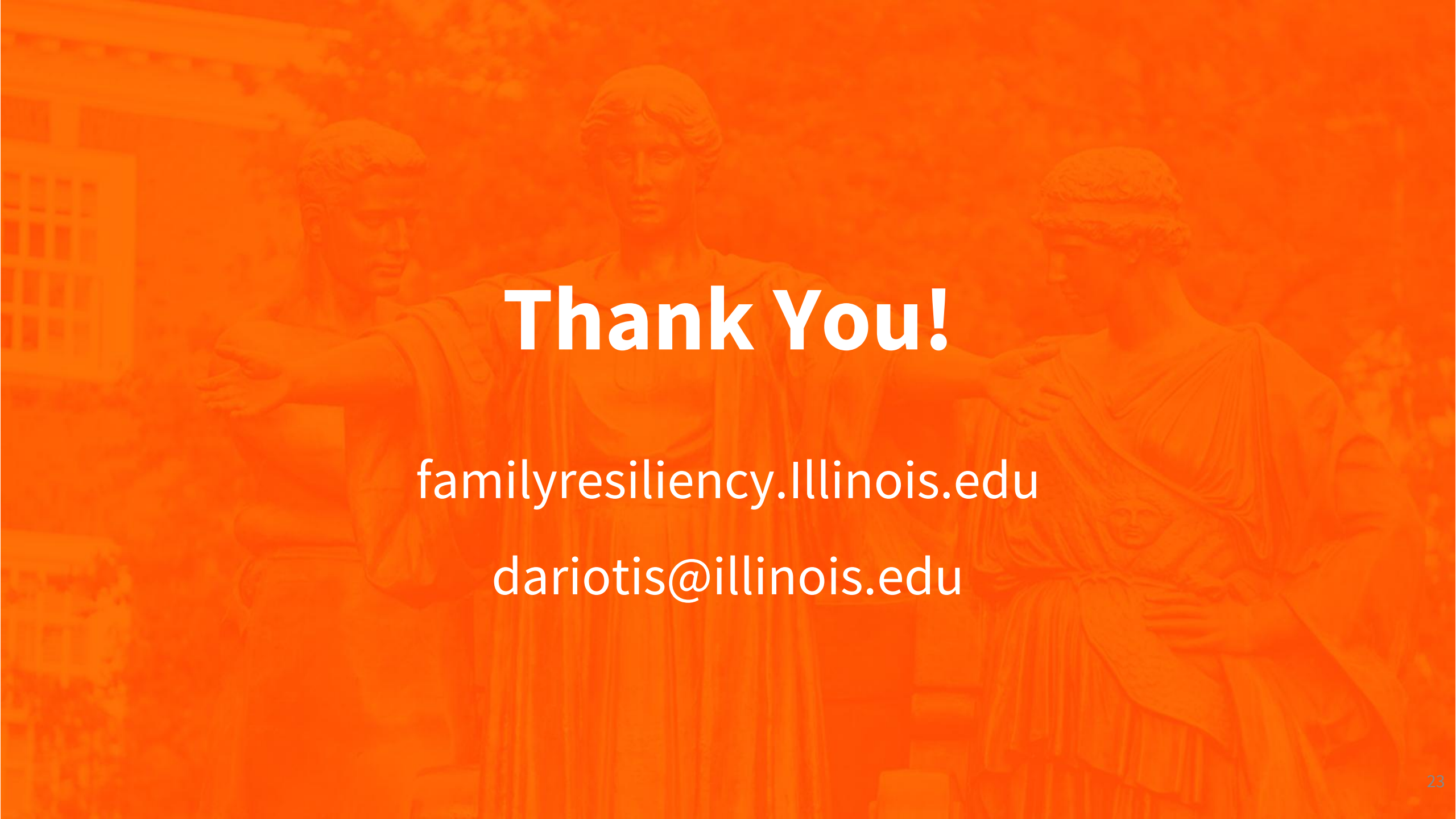
Effect:

- Increased cross-communication
- Annual report offers public accountability and understanding of evaluation team activities

Next Steps

Ideas for Year 4 activities include:

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



Thank You!

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