

# WELL-DESIGNED AND WELL-IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

In high-performance organizations:

- Leaders and managers who run programs that are intended to produce meaningful life changes **hold themselves accountable for helping participants achieve desired outcomes**. Programs intended to provide important but not life-changing products or services, such as food for homeless families, are not accountable for outcomes but must deliver high-quality outputs.
- Leaders, managers, and staff **treat constituents with respect, authenticity, and empathy**.
- Leaders and managers select or design their programs and strategies based on a **sound analysis of the issues and evidence-informed assumptions** about how the organization's activities can lead to the desired change (often referred to as a "theory of change").
- Once programs and strategies are up and running, leaders and managers continually ask: **Are we collecting the information we need to ensure we're effectively meeting the needs of our participants? Are we reviewing and acting upon the latest evidence in our field? Are we open to counter-evidence that suggests we should be doing things differently?**
- Leaders and managers **implement their programs in a high-quality manner** using rigorous implementation standards.
- Leaders and managers are **sensitive to the cultural, racial, and political dynamics in the communities they serve** and are open to making adjustments to their programs and strategies when these dynamics shift.
- Leaders and managers **establish and rigorously apply clear criteria for who is in their target population**.
- Leaders and managers **do a good job of recruiting, retaining, motivating, listening to, and learning from their program participants**.
- In the case of direct-service organizations, all management and staff **seek to build strong relationships with those they serve**. This relationship is often the single biggest determinant of whether participants will stay engaged in programming and thereby achieve the desired results.
- Leaders and managers **guard against the temptation to veer off course** in search of numbers that look good in marketing materials or reports to funders.