

Interacting With State And Local Policy Makers To Translate Disability Statistics

State of the Science Conference, StatsRRTC

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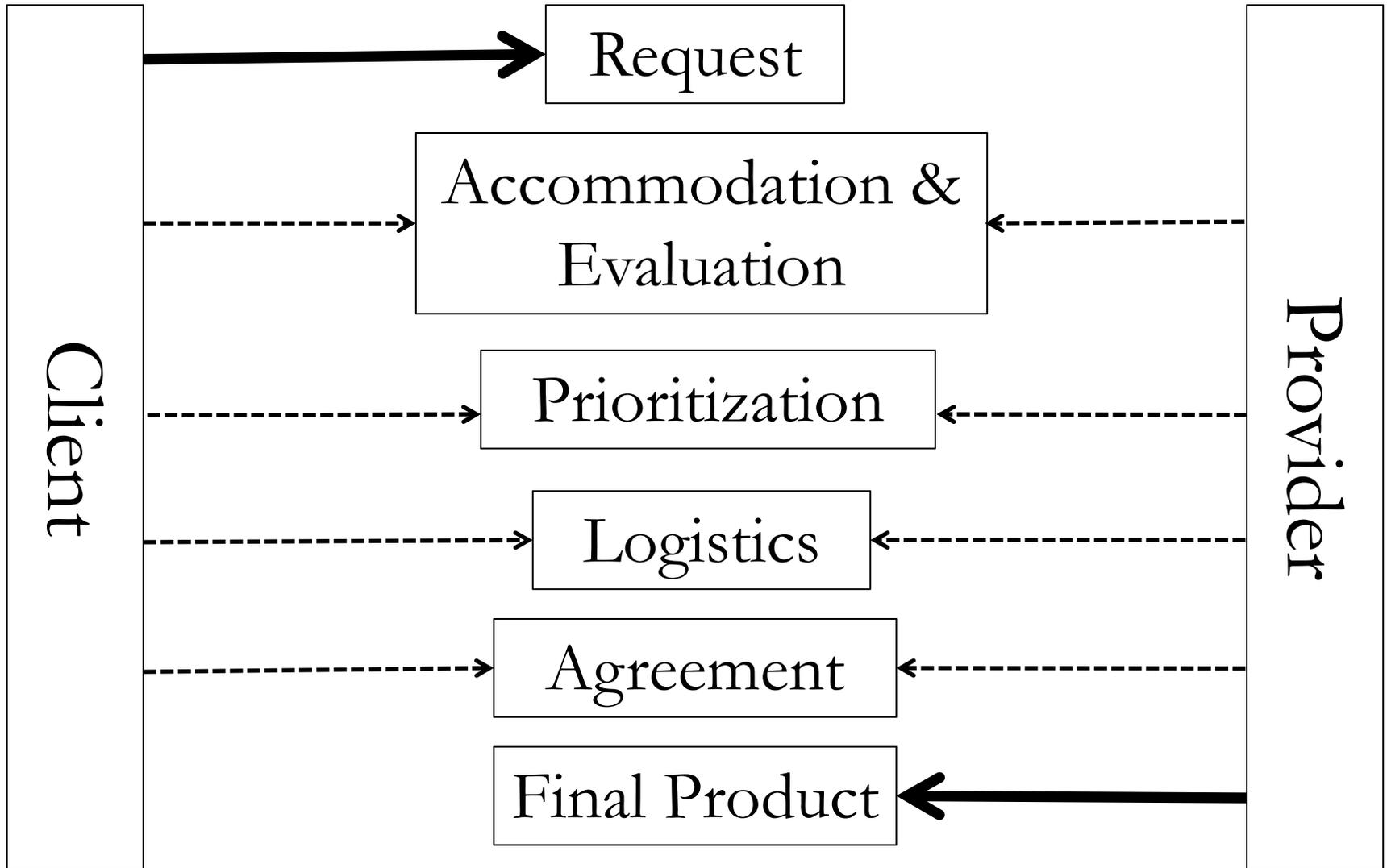
Introduction

- Describe the approach to translating data for state-level vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living (IL) policymakers, administrators, and rehabilitation advocates
- Repeated iterative process where requests are modified dependent on what the client knows, wants and what is possible

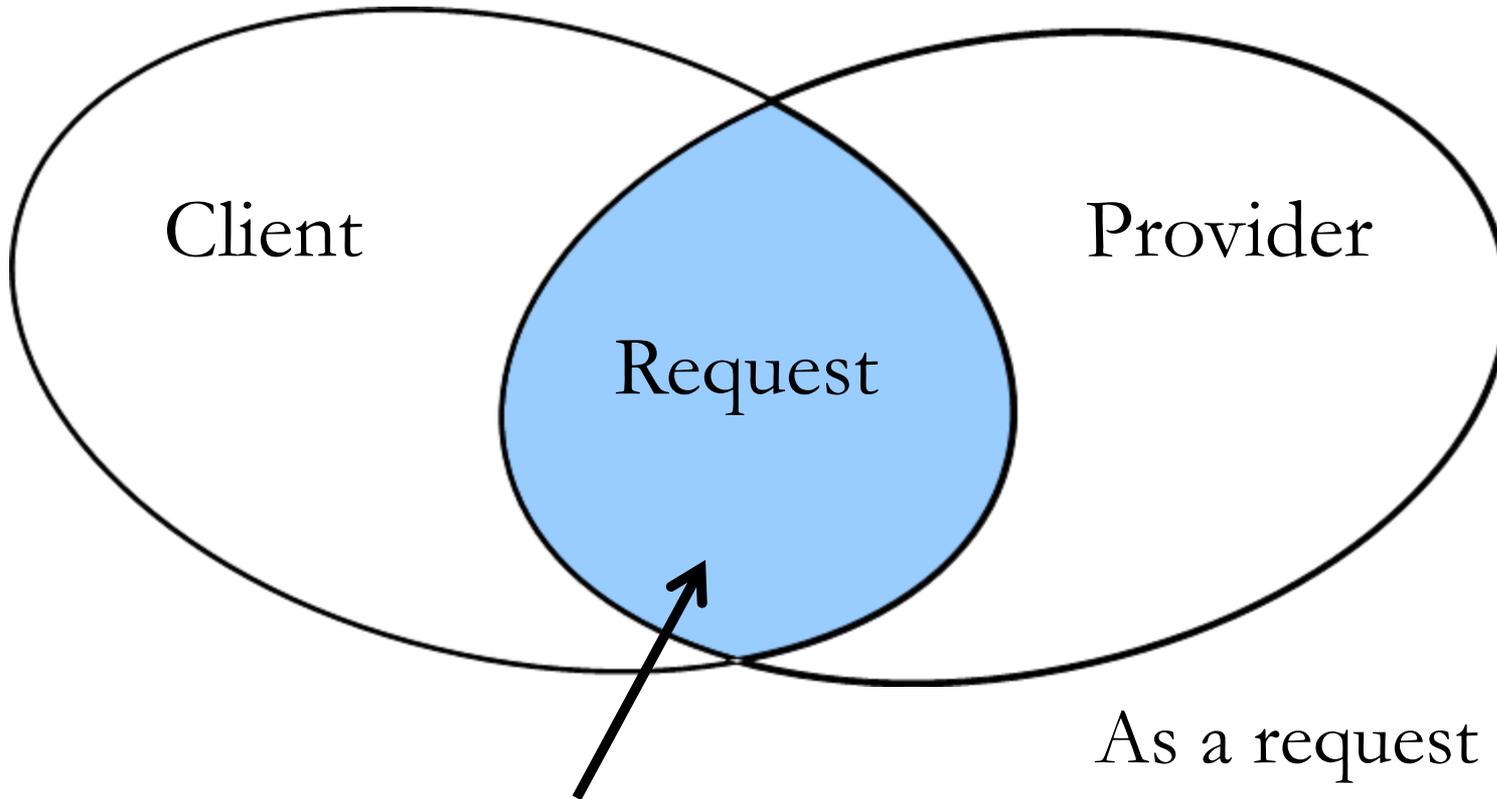
Introduction

- Requests are usually not presented in terms of hypotheses or with an understanding of the available data
- Often requests are based on conclusions, and must be rephrased as likely hypotheses representing the client's ideas
- Important to get the client to discuss and interpret the hypothesis and explain any naïve or incorrect assumptions
- Essential to ensure the client understands the potential conclusions and limitations of the hypotheses that are suggested
- Conclusions and interpretations resulting from analyses are usually too broad and must be refined / directly tied to analysis
- Often an appropriate comparison group must be established and assistance provided to ensure any generalizations or limitations are understood.

Basic Framework



Accommodation & Evaluation



Interaction

As a request gets larger or more complex the circle widens and more explanation is needed.

Accommodation & Evaluation

Stage Goal: 1) Review/understand client goals; translate into hypothesis
2) Assess the potential to meet client's needs

Process:

- Systematic review of client initial request
 - Ask the client about their optimal or ideal goals and which questions need to be answered
- Gauge the statistical comfort/knowledge-level of the client
- Establish basic hypotheses
- Introduce limitations – if known, what variables are available
- Introduce key terminology and comparisons
- Modify the request dependent on client needs and feasibility – one most common constraint is the limitation of available data
- Dependent on the client understanding of statistics and research

Prioritization within the Request

A process to identify:

- Which hypotheses are most important to the client?
- What are the most important questions they have and want analyzed?
- What does the client really want to be able to say or report? (often requires multiple discussions)

Key: Both client and provider must bring their agendas to the table to establish a mutually beneficial set of priorities

Logistics

- What data and computing resources are available
 - Staff resources
- Educational resources – both Client- and Provider- side
- Establish ongoing and competing projects
- Discuss a timeline / timeframe that is feasible for the provider and meets the client's needs

Agreement

- Coming to an agreement for a final request does require a complex, iterative process
 - Multiple discussions are often required, and every time a prior step is reviewed and/or changed the discussion needs to be repeated
- Often the client's understanding of data sources and availability evolves throughout the iterative process

Establishing A Final Product

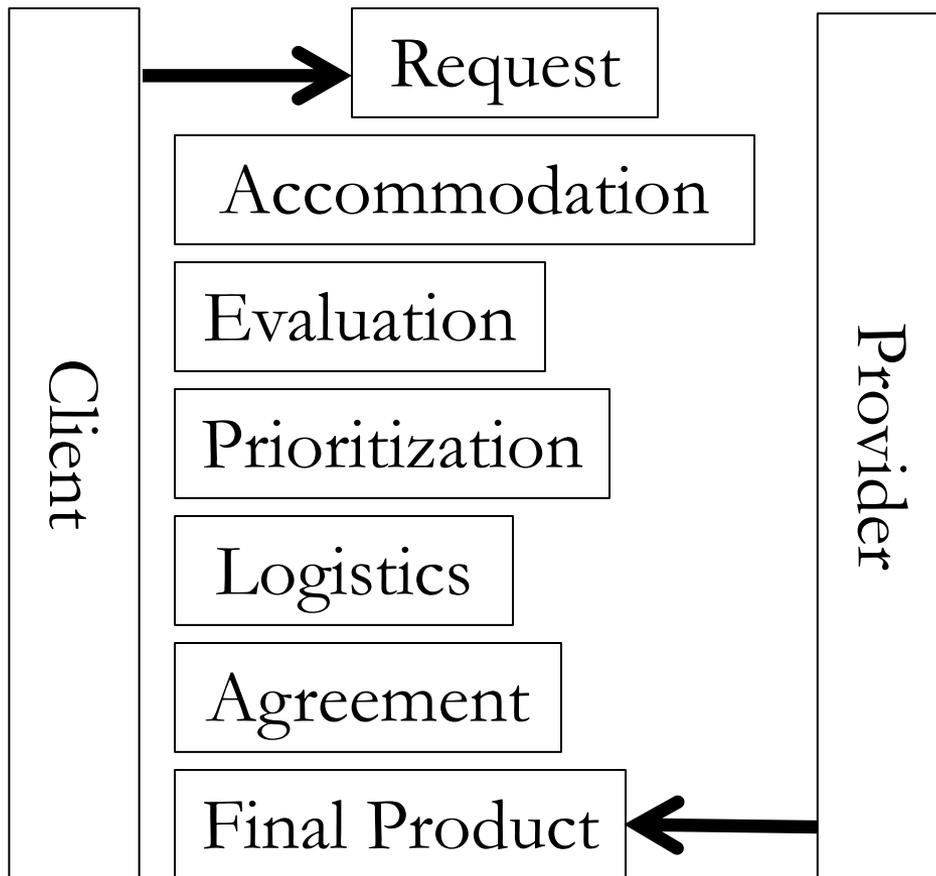
Questions we often use with the client:

- “What three slides do you want?”
- “What paragraph do you want to be able write?”

Final products typically include:

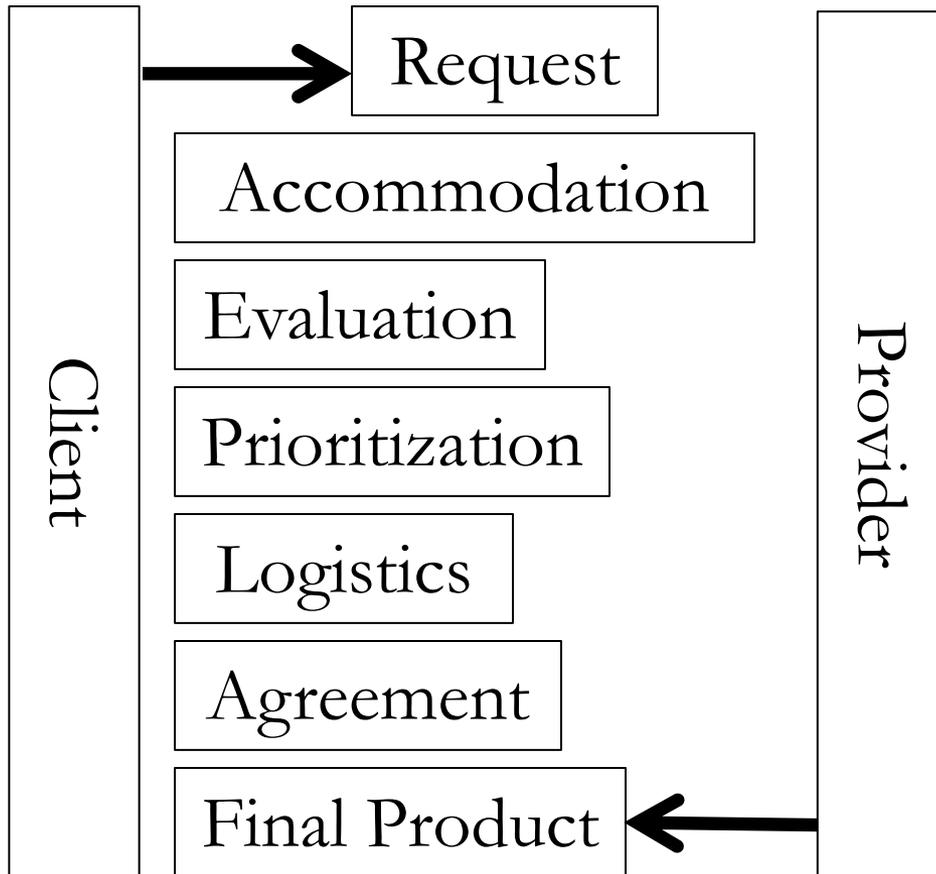
- Statistics
- Formal summary
- Tables
- Graphs

REQUEST: Major City (ACS)



- Not all data needed for the request were available
- Limitations of the data were reviewed
- Appropriate comparison groups were established for the client
- Interpretations and generalizability were explained by provider
- Data provided for client in an excel table format

REQUEST: National Youth (CPS/ACS)



- Complex request
- Grant deadlines and other projects impacted timeline
- Identification of appropriate statistical methods
- Estimated standard errors for counts and proportions, calculated confidence intervals
- Data was again provided for the client in an excel table format

Defining Concepts

- Client requests often have included measurements of:
 - “Working better”
 - “Being healthier”
 - “Underemployment”
 - “Discrimination”
- Often one must ask a client multiple times about the terminology they use and what they want to be able to say using these terms to appropriately define the measurements/variables

Terminology

- Inference
- Sampling Frame
- Hypothesis
- Generalizability
- Causality
- Correlation
- Association

Summary

- Introduce ideas with simple statements
- Avoid statistical jargon
- Limiting general statements
- A lot of interaction and communication
- “Get the client talking”
- What are the client’s pressures?
- What are the client’s motives
- Where is the client coming from?