CitySquare's Opportunity Center (above) is a multi-service 52,000 square foot facility originally envisioned as a solution to overcrowding in the growing number of social services and community development programs. After participating in D3 and the Working Families Success cohort with CFT, CitySquare adopted the “quarterback approach” to create a center that uses data to develop comprehensive programs for clients.
that would include a food distribution center, a state of the art wellness center, a comprehensive employment training center, AmeriCorps offices and staging areas for the non-profit’s growing Food on the Move program, which is funded by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

The Opportunity Center was originally conceived as a “mall of nonprofits,” where local agencies could be co-located together to support clients. But through its involvement in the D3, CitySquare began to see the Opportunity Center as a way to deliver more integrated and connected services, based on data. CitySquare moved from seeing itself as a landlord who merely houses nonprofits together to being the quarterback of a team of service providers who help clients navigate an integrated system of economic services and supports, mutually aligned around a shared vision.

Suzanne Smith, founder of Social Impact Architects and a D3 facilitator and coach, was assigned to work with CitySquare as part of its participation in D3. Smith has worked with other communities, including Cincinnati which had established a series of integrated service models through its Unit-ed Way-led Place Matters Project. Smith and CFT staff arranged for CitySquare to tour Cincinnati’s integrated service delivery locations as a way to demonstrate what could be possible for the Opportunity Center.

After participating in D3, CitySquare was eager to join CFT’s Working Families Success cohort. While the organization philosophically supported the idea of co-creating with its clients (whom the nonprofit calls neighbors), the Working Families Success cohort helped CitySquare focus in on the seamless integration of services, and develop the full range of services now provided at the Opportunity Center to support neighbors around the achievement of economic outcomes. Once the CitySquare team gets the model refined at the Opportunity Center, they hope to expand it to other CitySquare locations and populations.

CitySquare developed a unique model for Dallas, but also now uses greater collaboration and data-driven decision-making internally, because of the CFT cohort work, said John Siburt, CitySquare’s president and chief operations officer.

“We had grown so fast and had become siloed in our thinking internally,” Siburt said. “We needed a vision and language to drive us to the next level, and both D3 and Working Families got us there.”

Lessons Learned
The CFED report lit a fuse within CitySquare’s team, as well as the larger nonprofit community, that transformed people’s understanding of the economic challenges facing local households. Additionally, the report triggered an interest in providers, such as CitySquare, to look at the services they provided, and evaluate if those offerings were making the real and lasting impact that they were striving to help their neighbors achieve. The CitySquare team reflected on the key lessons learned so far:

- **Co-creation** was always important to the CitySquare ethos, but the Working Families Success model and intense technical assistance and support provided by CFT took the idea and made it tangible for the staff, especially through the financial coaching approach to serving clients.
- **Adoption of best practices** allowed CitySquare to leapfrog existing practices and dream bigger for its work. CFT, through its funding and support, brought in local and national experts who provided learning and best practices, which made the process more impactful and efficient for CitySquare and other participating agencies.
- **Data** was always being collected at CitySquare, but now CitySquare leaders are **intentional about their use of data and outcomes** to evaluate programs and better understand how they can improve all internal and external work. The expanded focus on outcomes through the agency has created a reinforcing loop of continuous improvement, transparency and shared language for staff at all levels.