Oregon Department of

Early Learning and Care

Data Governance to advance data equity

Elise Cordle Kennedy (she/her), Chief Research and Data Officer

Dylan Antovich (he/him), Senior Data Analyst

Wednesday Oct. 29th, 2025, 1-3pm

Question – Your journey

Where are you in your data governance journey?

- Not started at all

- Planning

- Early initiation – holding meetings

- Full implementation

Funny Data Quotes

"The first rule about data governance is to not talk about data governance"

"Data without metadata is like a supermarket full of tins with no labels."

"Expecting data engineers to fix data quality is like asking your plumber to give you clean water"

"If data had mass, the earth would be a black hole"

"Data ages like fish not wine…it gets worse as it gets older, not better."

Why DELC cares about Data Governance

Promotes data equity:

- Sets standards to ensure data are collected using best practices around REALDT and SOGI information,

- Allows for disaggregation to understand who we serve

- Provides explicit policy to clarify data ownership and acceptable use (e.g., Tribal data sovereignty)

Supports more ethical data collection:

- Only necessary data are collected, and data collection methods are aligned, reducing burden

- Protects the security and privacy of data contributed by those we serve

Makes data more useful:

- Sets standards to improve the quality and utility

- Makes data easier to find and use (e.g., data dictionaries/catalogues, data sharing agreements)

Rules of resilience in DG

1. Make data governance fun!
2. Tie to a why
3. Build off existing work
4. Find solutions to problems that already exist (ie. don't make new problems)
5. Make data governance accessibly
6. Take. Your........time ☺

How DELC does DG

Data Governance (n) – Cross-agency policies and processes for collecting, storing, organizing, cleaning, owning, sharing data, etc. aligned with DELC's strategy and values.
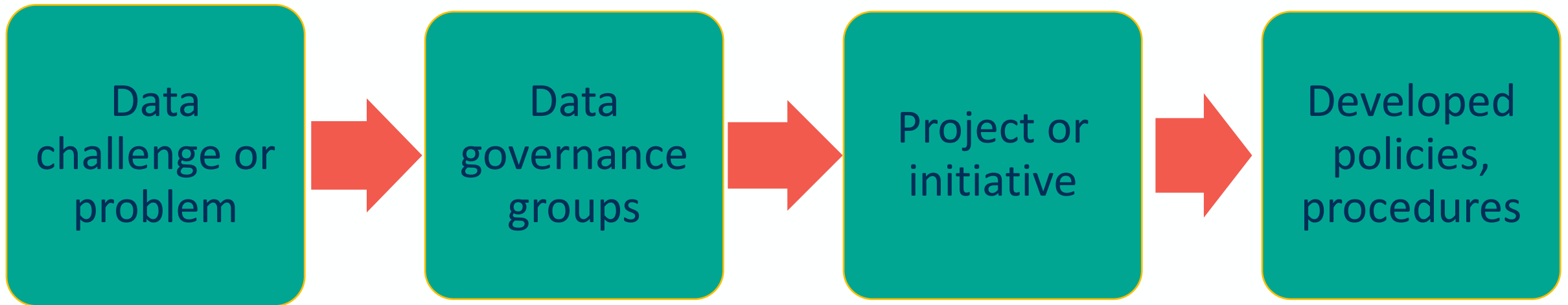
- End Products people can use
- Tagging and masking practices in Snowflake.

Data Governance (v) – Decision-making, policy-development, and problem-solving processes to ensure data governance (n) is fully implemented.

- Monthly staff groups
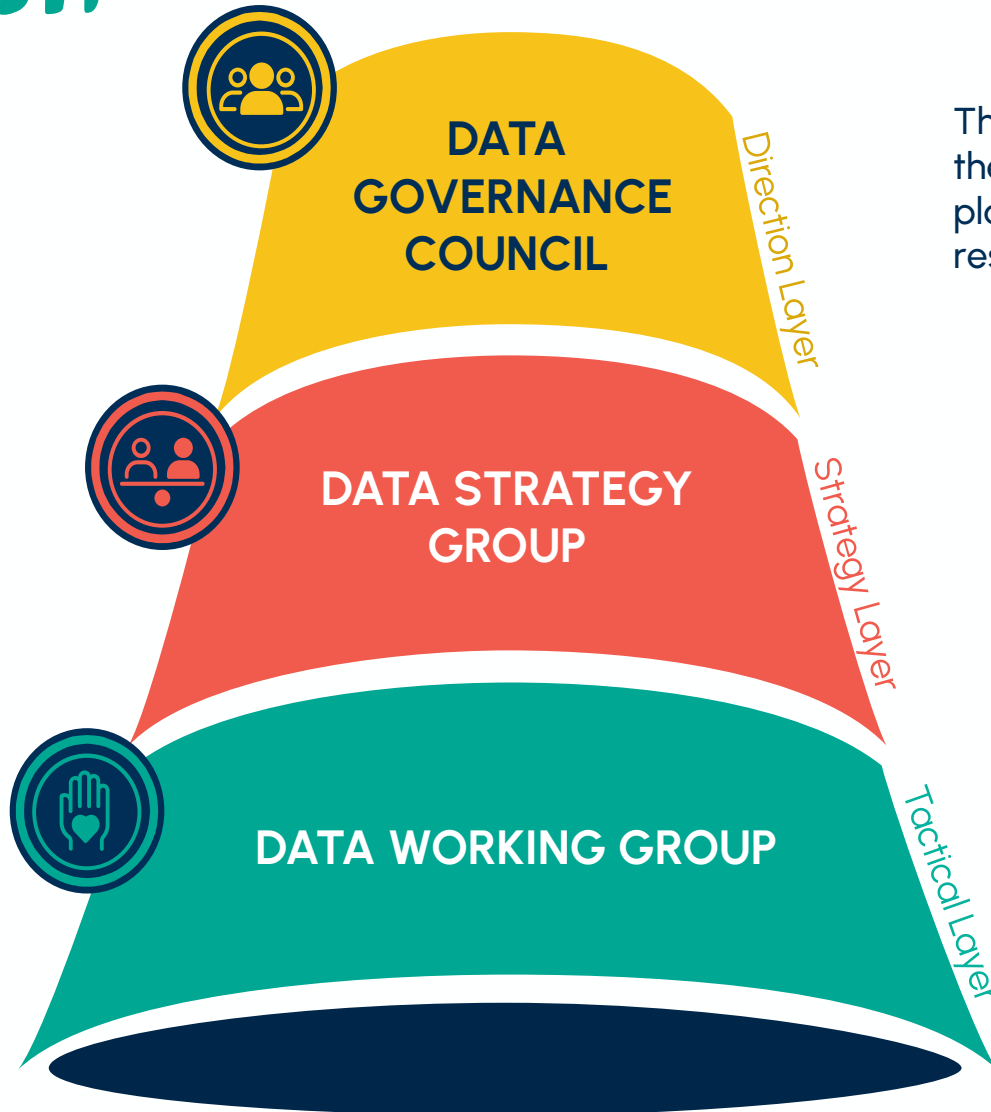- Non-invasive practice– building off current work

The cyclical governance structure

Data challenge or problem → Data governance groups → Project or initiative → Developed policies, procedures

Data Governance Structure

DATA GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Direction Layer

DATA STRATEGY GROUP
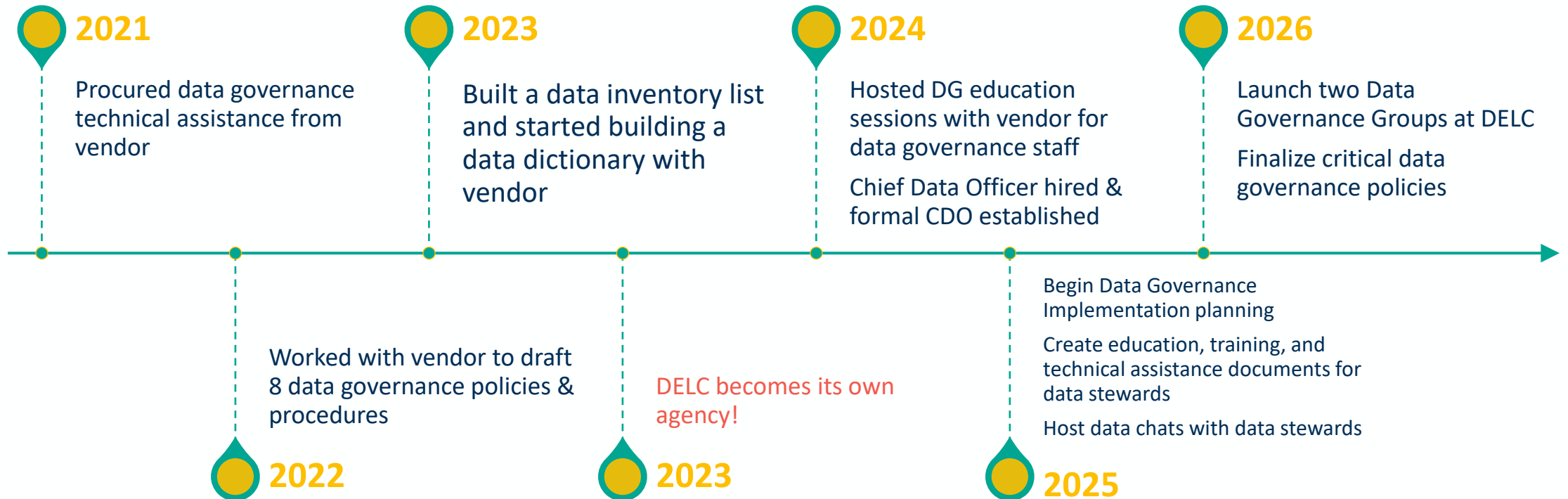
Strategy Layer

DATA WORKING GROUP

Tactical Layer

The Direction layer of DG will resolve anything that the data strategy group cannot resolve or be the place where agencywide strategic decisions are resolved.

The Strategy layer of DG will propose DG initiatives for Council approval, and then oversee the implementation of policies and initiatives upon approval.

The Working layer of DG will devise and enact activities to support implementation of DG policies and initiatives. They will be responsible for identifying and communicating opportunities for DG initiatives to the Strategy group.

Timeline of DG @ DELC

2021

Procured data governance technical assistance from vendor

2023

Built a data inventory list and started building a data dictionary with vendor

2024

Hosted DG education sessions with vendor for data governance staff

Chief Data Officer hired & formal CDO established

2026

Launch two Data Governance Groups at DELC

Finalize critical data governance policies

2022

Worked with vendor to draft 8 data governance policies & procedures

2023

DELC becomes its own agency!

2025

Begin Data Governance Implementation planning

Create education, training, and technical assistance documents for data stewards

Host data chats with data stewards

Data Governance requires cultural change

- Hosted information sessions for staff with vendor

- Required several executive leadership team meetings to align on committee structures

- Hosted data chats with data owners and stewards

What are data?

Data are pieces of information that can be brought together, analyzed, and used to make meaning.

- facts
- numbers
- stories
- pictures
- records

What type of information can help answer my question?

Data Governance requires resilience & time

Durable, non-invasive Data Governance takes YEARS to implement

- Took a year to write the policies and get aligned on language

- Took a year to design education and data governance materials for staff

- Will take a year to implement the initial committees

- Will take years to complete projects