



**HARVARD** Kennedy School

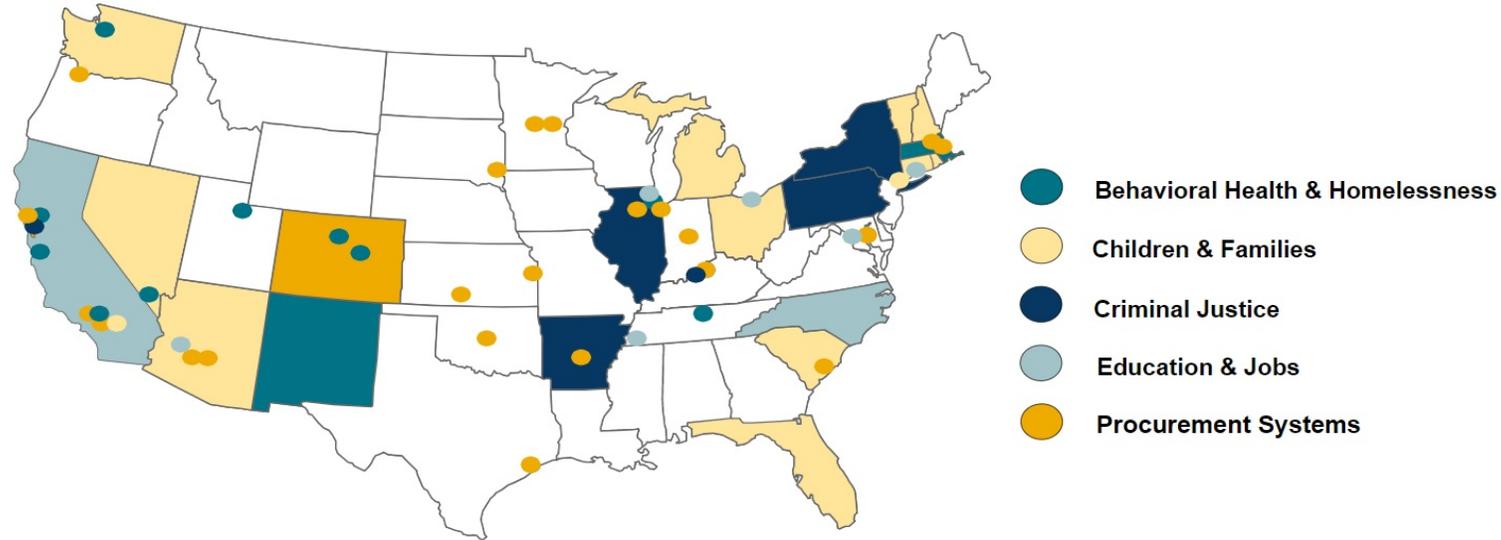
*Government Performance Lab*

# **Plugging the Gap: Building the Supply of Evidence**

November 15, 2018

# Introducing the Government Performance Lab (GPL)

**We work pro bono and exclusively on the government side of projects.  
90 projects with 66 jurisdictions across 31 states**



**1**

**Make progress on social problems**

Transform how local and state governments **deliver social services**

**2**

**Enhance how government functions**

Improve the outcomes local gov'ts achieve for citizens **through procurements and other performance channels**

Shared lessons & capabilities

# Strategies for driving the supply of evidence-based programs

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- Encourage prudent risk taking and reinforce the importance of evidence and data through leadership
- Provide training on data and evaluation to staff
- Promote rigorous evaluation, especially for issue areas lacking evidence-based models
- Expand funding for evidence-based programs while continuing to fund promising, new approaches
- Cultivate innovation of evidence-based program models

# How can we maximize the chance that the focus on evidence in fact translates to better outcomes?

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- Approach evidence as a continuum and with nuance
- Create functional and easily accessible tools to convey evidence
- Assess the quality of ongoing implementation
- Set up regular, outcomes-oriented engagements using real-time performance data between stakeholders
- Encourage dialogue about the lessons learned from successes *and* failures

# Effectiveness Tool Developed for a GPL Engagement

## Key questions when assessing evidence

How closely does the (planned) implementation match the evidence?

*Examine:*

- Intervention activities – e.g. what exactly was studied? What is the theory of change?
- Population – e.g. who received the intervention?
- Context – e.g. was the intervention implemented in a setting with similar characteristics (e.g. a high-poverty urban school)?

How strong is the evidence?

*Examine:*

- Study design – e.g. how rigorous was the evaluation?
- Scope – e.g. how large was the study population? Replication?
- Source – e.g. who did the evaluation (internal or third-party)?

What are the outcomes?

*Examine:*

- Outcomes studied – e.g. which metrics were studied? Over what time periods (long vs. short term)? Are metrics predictive of longer-term outcomes?
- Results – e.g. for which metrics were statistically significant improvements detected? Were there metrics with negative findings? How large were the detected changes?
- Relevance – e.g. how well do these results align with our program goals/ expectations?

## Assessment categories

Not enough info to assess evidence-base of initiative

Initiative not informed by existing evidence base

Initiative includes some evidence-based elements

Initiative follows an evidence-based model

*Implementation/process evaluation shows fidelity to an evidence-based model*

*Evaluation of initiative shows positive impact*

*Evaluation of initiative shows negative impact*