



HARVARD Kennedy School

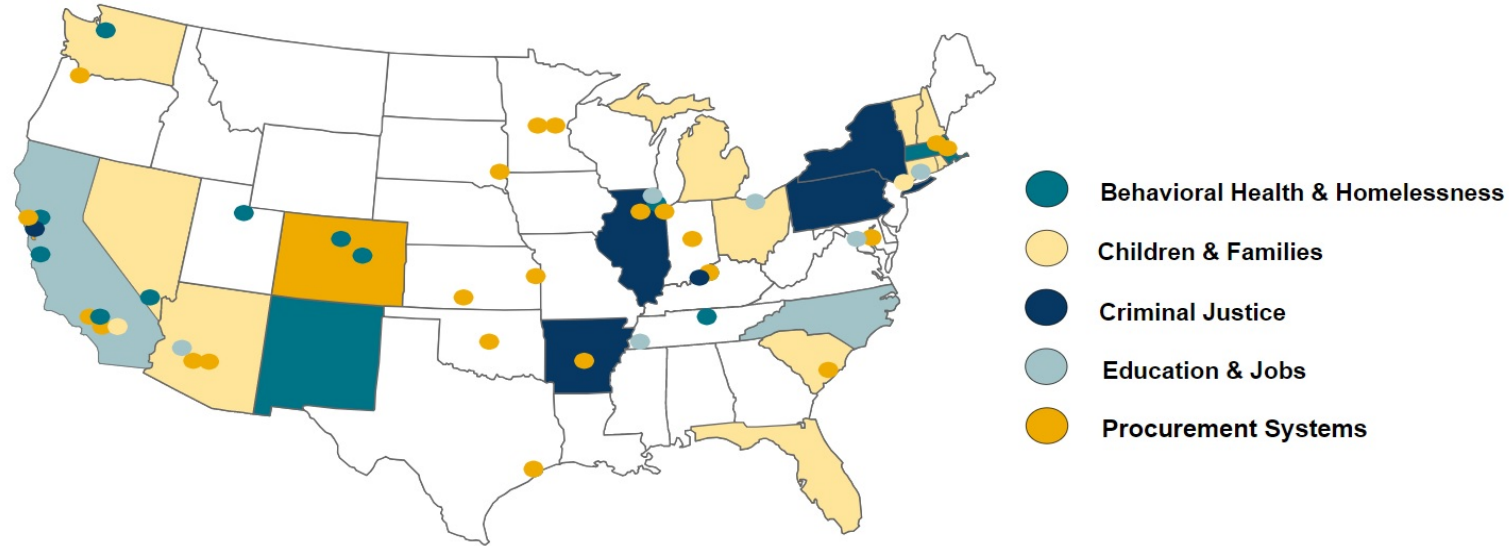
Government Performance Lab

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

- 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?

- 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