Results First in Your State

Results First, a project of the Pew Center on the States, partners with states to implement a cutting-edge cost-benefit analysis model that identifies policy options that provide the best outcomes for citizens while improving states' fiscal health. This model was developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP); the state has used this approach for over 15 years to help policy makers craft sound budget and policy choices. The model can be used to assess states' criminal justice, education, child welfare, substance abuse, mental health, health care, public assistance, housing and teen birth prevention programs.

States are selected for participation in Results First based on several factors: a commitment to making evidence-based policy decisions; the ability to provide the data needed to operate the cost-benefit analysis model; and a willingness to dedicate resources to the effort, including staff with data matching, statistical analysis and fiscal analysis skills.

Results First engages interested states in a six-step process:

1. Results First and designated state representatives discuss the model and implementation process via email and preliminary telephone conversations.

2. State representatives submit a formal letter of commitment to the Results First project of the Pew Center on the States.

3. Results First makes an initial site visit to meet with stakeholders, assess the state's analytical and data capabilities, identify the level and nature of technical assistance to be provided and discuss cost-sharing options.

4. State representatives establish a policy work group to oversee the effort and a staff work group to manage the implementation process.

5. With the assistance of Results First, the staff work group develops an implementation plan to guide the effort.

6. With help from Results First, the staff work group customizes the model with state-specific data and begins to generate cost-benefit analyses.

The policy work group identifies questions to explore using the model and uses the results to help shape state policy and budget deliberations.

The Pew Center on the States is a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts that identifies and advances effective solutions to critical issues facing states. Pew is a nonprofit organization that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life.

Results First

- **Provides the cost-benefit analysis model to the state.** Pew also supplies periodic updates to the model that incorporate new research and enhancements identified through our work in participating states.

- **Provides orientations to designated state representatives** to explain the approach to cost-benefit analysis and how the model can help inform policy and budget deliberations.

- **Helps the state establish policy and staff work groups** that guide and implement the model. The policy work group should include executive, legislative, and/or judicial officials who will consider the model's results when making policy decisions. The staff work group should:

  ◊ Be viewed as an honest broker so that stakeholders have confidence in the process and its results;

  ◊ Have access to the data needed to run the model;

  ◊ Possess the technical skills needed to operate the model;

  ◊ Identify a project manager to lead the effort;

  ◊ Make the project a clear priority for all those involved; and

  ◊ Have regular meetings with the stakeholder group to report progress, raise implementation issues and discuss results.

- **Helps the staff work group implement the model.** This assistance includes periodic site visits by Pew staff and its technical assistance contractors as well as regular communication via virtual meetings, conference calls and email. Pew supplies a high level of aid during the implementation period (typically 4-8 months) as well as ongoing assistance to help the state continue to customize the model and use its results to help inform policy and budget deliberations. Major areas of this technical assistance include help in:

  ◊ Developing implementation plans and schedules;

  ◊ Tailoring the model to the state's unique characteristics by adding state information for all data elements and/or state-specific studies to the model's summary of national research;

  ◊ Identifying data sources and analyzing program and fiscal data; and

  ◊ Running the model and interpreting its results.

- **As requested by the state, help generate and advance reform options.** The model enables states to explore a wide range of questions, but policy makers must identify the questions they wish to analyze using the model. Pew staff can help states identify these policy questions and implement evidence-based criminal justice, early childhood and dental health initiatives that are informed by the model's analyses.

- **Shares lessons learned among participating states.** Pew periodically convenes meetings of participating states to promote information sharing and identify ways to further strengthen the cost-benefit analysis model. Pew also regularly compiles nationwide status reports on states' cost-benefit analysis activities and annual reports summarizing progress achieved in each state.

Partner states:

- **Submit a formal letter of commitment** signed by the appropriate state officials to demonstrate commitment to implementing the cost-benefit models and considering the results in policy deliberations.

- **Develop an implementation plan.** With guidance from Results First and in coordination with the policy and staff work groups, the designated project manager should develop a detailed implementation plan that:

  ◊ Identifies key implementation steps;

  ◊ Identifies sources for required program and fiscal data;

  ◊ Designates staff who will provide and analyze these data;

  ◊ Establishes a timeline that accounts for each implementation step;

  ◊ Identifies key issues (e.g., data limitations) that will need to be addressed throughout the implementation process; and

  ◊ Specifies how and when status reports and results will be provided to the stakeholder group.

- **Provide the state-specific data** necessary to implement the cost-benefit model.

- **Commit staff resources to implement and run the model and analyze findings,** with support from Results First staff and contractors.

- **Collaborate with Results First to help strengthen the model and build a learning community of states.** This includes helping to compile lessons-learned reports after the model is implemented and sharing information with other participating states.

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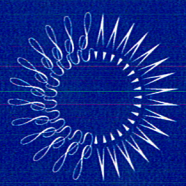

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