Plugging the Gap: Building the Supply of Evidence

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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

Introducing the Government Performance Lab (GPL)
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