

## **Brief 1**

### **Summary of Key Legislative Actions**

All the actions suggested in this series of briefs aim at improving the effectiveness of the state's services to its citizens. This brief singles out a number of the principal actions legislators can take. More details on each action are provided in the brief identified after each action.

The first group of legislative actions seeks to achieve the best and most useful outcome information. The second group identifies actions for then using effectively the outcome information.

#### **Key Legislative Actions for Getting Useful Outcome Information**

- Action 1. Legislate a process for regular reporting of results-based information to the legislature by each major state program, information identifying clearly what the program has accomplished for the state's citizens, not merely what activities the program has undertaken. Many states have already done this to some extent. (Briefs 2, 3, and 5)
  
- Action 2. Provide training in legislating-for-results for legislators and legislative staffs. (Brief 4)
  
- Action 3. Ask legislative staffs to review in advance the performance information provided by agencies to identify issues for legislator follow-up during hearings and other legislative sessions. This may be the most critical step in obtaining reliable and understandable information. (Brief 6)
  
- 1. Action 4. Seek explanations from agencies for unexpectedly poor or good outcomes. This is a vital step before deciding on possible legislative actions. ( Brief 7)
  
- Action 5. Establish a formal process for review of quality of the outcome data. As the data become used for making major funding and programmatic decisions, it becomes necessary for the legislature to be able to have confidence in that data. (Brief 8)

## **Key Legislative Actions For Effectively Using Outcome Information**

- Action 1. Examine outcome information as part of your review of budget requests. This can be of considerable help in making resource allocation decisions to provide resources where they have the greatest likelihood of achieving the most benefits to citizens. (Briefs 9 and 11)
- Action 2. Periodically review state programs, outside the budget process, to identify which services have had strong outcomes and which have had poor or weak results – and why. This will provide evidence to agencies and their programs that the legislature is very interested in results and not only in activities and outputs. This in turn will encourage agencies and their programs to focus on results and how best to deliver their services. (Brief 10)
- Action 3. When developing policies and new authorizations, review the latest outcome information relating to current key issues – as a basic starting point (i.e., baseline). (Brief 12)
- Action 4. Require that outcome information be included as a major criterion when establishing performance incentives for agencies and state employees. This will increase accountability of the agencies and employees and encouraging them to focus on important service outcomes. (Brief 13)
- Action 5. Support and encourage agencies to include outcome targets in service contracts and grants (including those to local governments). This will increase accountability of contractors and grantees and encourage them to focus on important service outcomes. (Brief 14)
- Action 6. Include outcome information when communicating with constituents to help put across the message that the state is focused on citizen concerns. Preferably, obtain from agencies, and provide citizens, with service outcomes information relating to constituents’ own county or city. (Briefs 15 and 16)