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Evidence-Based Policymaking: *Investing in Programs that Work*

August 4, 2015

The Policy Challenge



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- Though policymakers want to make the best choices, the process often relies on inertia and anecdote
- Very limited data on:
 - What programs are funded
 - What each accomplishes
 - Which ones provide the highest return
- **Solution: bring systematic evidence into the system**



The Results First Approach



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Inventory current programs and compare them to evidence

Conduct cost-benefit analysis to compare returns on investment

Target funds to most effective programs

Goal: Improve outcomes without increased spending



Inventory and assess current programs



ADULT PROGRAMS	FY14 BUDGET	FY14 BUDGET %	RATING
Moral Reconciliation Therapy	\$150,000	2.5%	Evidence-based
Thinking for a Change	\$65,000	1.0%	Evidence-based
Education programs	\$300,000	5.0%	Evidence-based
Transcendental Meditation	\$75,000	1.2%	Strong positive: high rigor
Stayin' Clean	\$150,000	2.5%	Evidence-based
Changing Course	\$91,000	1.6%	Promising
Adult Boot Camp	\$250,000	4.1%	No effects
Domestic Violence program	\$650,000	11.0%	Poor outcomes
Sober Living Environment	\$374,000	6.0%	???
Moving On	\$70,000	1.2%	???
Others	\$3,850,000	64.0%	???
Total Program Budget	\$6,025,000		

12%: Evidence-based

2%: Promising

15%: No or negative effects

71%: Lack evidence

Analyze return on investment: Functional Family Therapy



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OUTCOMES FROM PARTICIPATION		MAIN SOURCE OF BENEFITS
Reduced crime	\$29,340	Lower state & victim costs
Increased high school graduation	\$9,530	Increased earnings
Reduced health care costs	\$398	Lower public costs
Total Benefits	\$37,587	
Cost	\$3,333	
Net Present Value	\$34,254	
Benefits per Dollar of Cost	\$11.28	

Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy

Analyze and compare returns on investment



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POLICY/PROGRAM	COST	LONG-TERM BENEFITS	COST/BENEFIT RATIO
Intensive supervision (only)	\$4,140	-\$578	-\$0.14
Mental health court	\$2,935	\$20,424	\$6.96
Community drug treatment	\$1,602	\$17,711	\$11.05
Correctional education in prison	\$1,128	\$21,426	\$19.00
Work release	\$661	\$7,117	\$10.77
Cognitive behavioral therapy	\$412	\$9,695	\$23.55
Community job training & aid	\$135	\$5,501	\$40.76
JUVENILE PROGRAMS			
Functional Family Therapy	\$3,262	\$70,370	\$11.86
Aggression replacement training	\$1,508	\$62,947	\$41.75
Coordination of services	\$395	\$5,501	\$13.94
Scared Straight	\$65	-\$4,949	-\$76.35

**Washington State 2012 dollars*

Target funds to most effective programs



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- **Legislative levers:**
 - Create statutory definition of evidence levels
 - Require agencies to inventory current programs
 - Direct central entity to assess evidence and ROI
 - Mandate funding preference for evidence-based programs

Results First assesses a growing number of social policy areas



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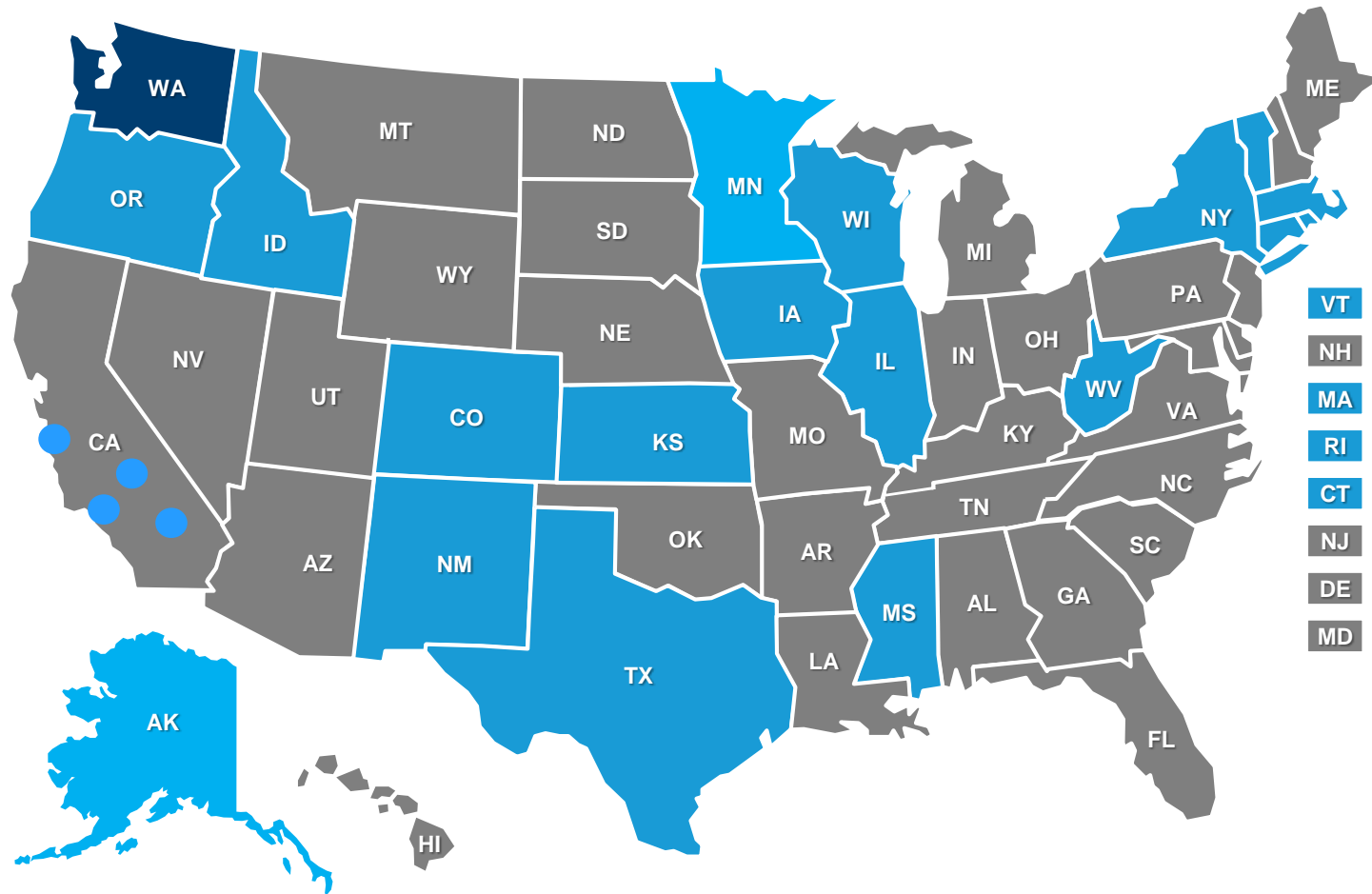
- Adult criminal justice
 - Juvenile justice
 - Substance abuse
 - Mental health
 - Child welfare
 - Early childhood education
 - K-12 education
 - Teen pregnancy prevention
 - Diabetes prevention
- Next up:
 - Expanded health care
 - Workforce

States currently participating in Results First (in blue)



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STATE PARTNER CRITERIA

1

Leadership Commitment

2

Designate central 'honest broker' to coordinate work

3

Willingness to incorporate evidence in process



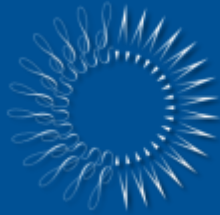
On-line Resources



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- **Results First Clearinghouse Database** – consolidated information on programs rated by 8 national clearinghouses
- Results First fact sheets and case studies
- *“Evidence-Based Policymaking: A Guide for Effective Government”*
- *“Legislating Evidence-Based Policymaking”*
- www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/pew-macarthur-results-first-initiative



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www.pewstates.org/ResultsFirst