

# Colorado Results First Initiative



# Overview of the Results First Initiative

- The Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative started as a partnership between the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Catherine T. and John D. MacArthur Foundation.
- The Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative provides states with a benefit-cost tool to compare programs delivered in the state.
- The Results First benefit-cost model was initially created by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and has been modified for states across the country to use.
- Colorado is one of 20 states to participate in this initiative.

# Results First in Colorado

- The Colorado Results First project started as a partnership between the Governor's Office and the Legislature in July, 2014.
- There are two full-time positions for the project in the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting.
- To gather data for the project, the Results First team worked with the Executive Branch agencies, the Judicial Branch, counties and service providers.

# Results First in Colorado (cont.)

- Colorado has reviewed programs offered in the following systems:
  - Adult Criminal Justice
  - Juvenile Justice
  - Child Welfare
- The Colorado Results First team is currently reviewing programs offered in Colorado's behavioral health systems.
- The model can also perform benefit-cost analyses in other policy areas, such as prevention and early childhood education. It can also be used to predict the benefit-cost of a new program or service.



# The Results First Approach

## Program Inventories

- The first step in Colorado's Results First Initiative is to develop program inventories and identify programs and services delivered in Colorado.
- The Results First team collected information on program descriptions, program goals, and how programs were evaluated, along with other data.
- The Results First team then compared our state's programs to comprehensive national and international research to determine the level and types of research available on programs.

# Research on Colorado's Programs

The Results First team compiled inventories of programs delivered in the Adult Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare systems and cataloged the level of research available on these programs.

## 41 Evidence-Based Practices

- Program or practice offers a high level of research on effectiveness, determined as a result of multiple rigorous evaluations. These programs typically have specified procedures that allow for successful replication.

## 19 Promising Practices

- A “promising” program or practice has some research demonstrating effectiveness, but does not meet the full criteria for an evidence-based designation.

## 50+ Theory Based Practices/Need Additional Research

- This makes up approximately 47% of programs in these policy areas.

# The Results First Approach (cont.)

## Benefit-Cost Model

- After completing the program inventory, the Colorado Results First team identified evidence-based programs delivered in the state to run analyses through the Results First model.
- The Pew-MacArthur Benefit-Cost Model uses the best international and national research on programs that demonstrate effectiveness on specific outcomes (e.g. criminal justice programs that effectively reduce recidivism) and utilizes Colorado-specific cost data and trend data to project benefit-cost analyses for Colorado's programs.
- Programs that are included in the model must be evidence-based and rigorously evaluated. The model presumes that programs are being delivered as designed (with fidelity).
- The model shows for every dollar invested in a program, what the projected return on investment will be.

# Adult Criminal Justice

Evidence-Based

- 21 programs
- Prison, Parole, Community Corrections, other Community Treatment

(+) ROI

- 13 programs
- Prison and Parole programs are demonstrated to be most cost-effective

(-) ROI

- 8 programs
- Utilizing the opportunity to have a discussion around improvement

# Juvenile Justice

Evidence-  
Based

- 8 programs analyzed
- NYC Facilities and Parole

(+) ROI

- 7 programs
- Several program costs had to be excluded because of issues with fidelity

(-) ROI

- 1 program
- Research demonstrates that chemical dependency treatment has a relatively weak effect on recidivism reduction

# Child Welfare

Evidence-Based

- 4 programs analyzed
- Several other programs identified, but in pilot stage

(+) ROI

- All 4 projected a positive return on investment

(-) ROI

- None
- Future analyses need to be done on pilot programs

# What We Have Learned...

- *The program inventory process highlighted that limitations exist in identifying data on state-funded programs delivered in Colorado.*
  - The State does not always collect data on money that goes out for programs and services.
  - Counties responded at well over 60% to the program inventory request, but the State still has incomplete information on how funds are spent.
- *Numerous programs in the state have limited to no research available on effectiveness.*
  - When asked to self-report on how programs are evaluated, typically audits by the state auditor were mentioned. These audits typically address compliance measures or financials, with limited program evaluation.

# What We Have Learned...(cont.)

- *Although certain programs are evidence-based, issues with fidelity remain.*
  - Some Departments noted that although programs are intended to be delivered as evidence-based practices, there is indication that programs are not being delivered as designed (programs are not adhering to fidelity.)
  - State boards that set evidence-based standards for programs were not designed or funded to provide oversight or technical assistance to ensure programs adhere to standards.
- It is important to note that the Results First Initiative utilizes a benefit-cost tool. The Results First team did not evaluate programs. In order to build evaluation capacity in Colorado, the state will need to prioritize and invest in this.

# Colorado Results First Contacts

- Ann Renaud, Senior Management and Budget Analyst/Project Director, [Ann.Renaud@state.co.us](mailto:Ann.Renaud@state.co.us)
- Jessica Corvinus, Project Manager, [Jessica.Corvinus@state.co.us](mailto:Jessica.Corvinus@state.co.us)
- Tiffany Madrid, Research and Data Analyst, [Tiffany.Madrid@state.co.us](mailto:Tiffany.Madrid@state.co.us)

Reports of findings are now available at:

<https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/ospb-live/>