The Pew-MacArthur Results First Approach

Five simple steps to evidence-based policymaking

1. State Data

2. ROI Results
#1. $$$
#2. $$
#3. $
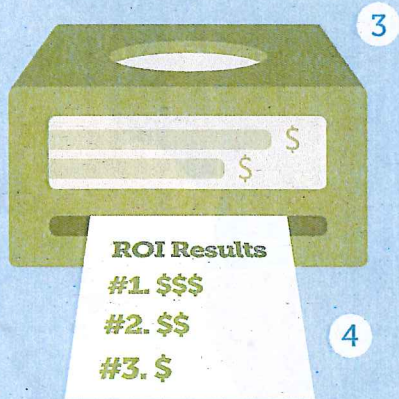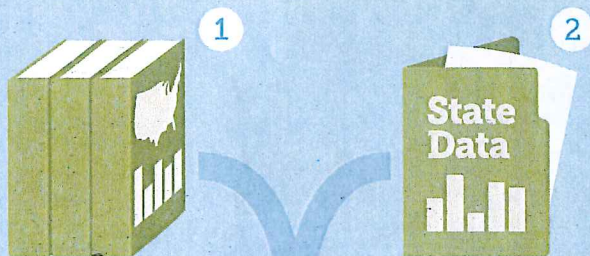
1 Results First provides a national database of evidence on program effectiveness.

2 The state adds and analyzes their own state-specific population and cost data.

3 The model calculates long-term costs and benefits for each program.

4 The model ranks programs according to their return on investment.

5 Policymakers consider the information during the budget process.

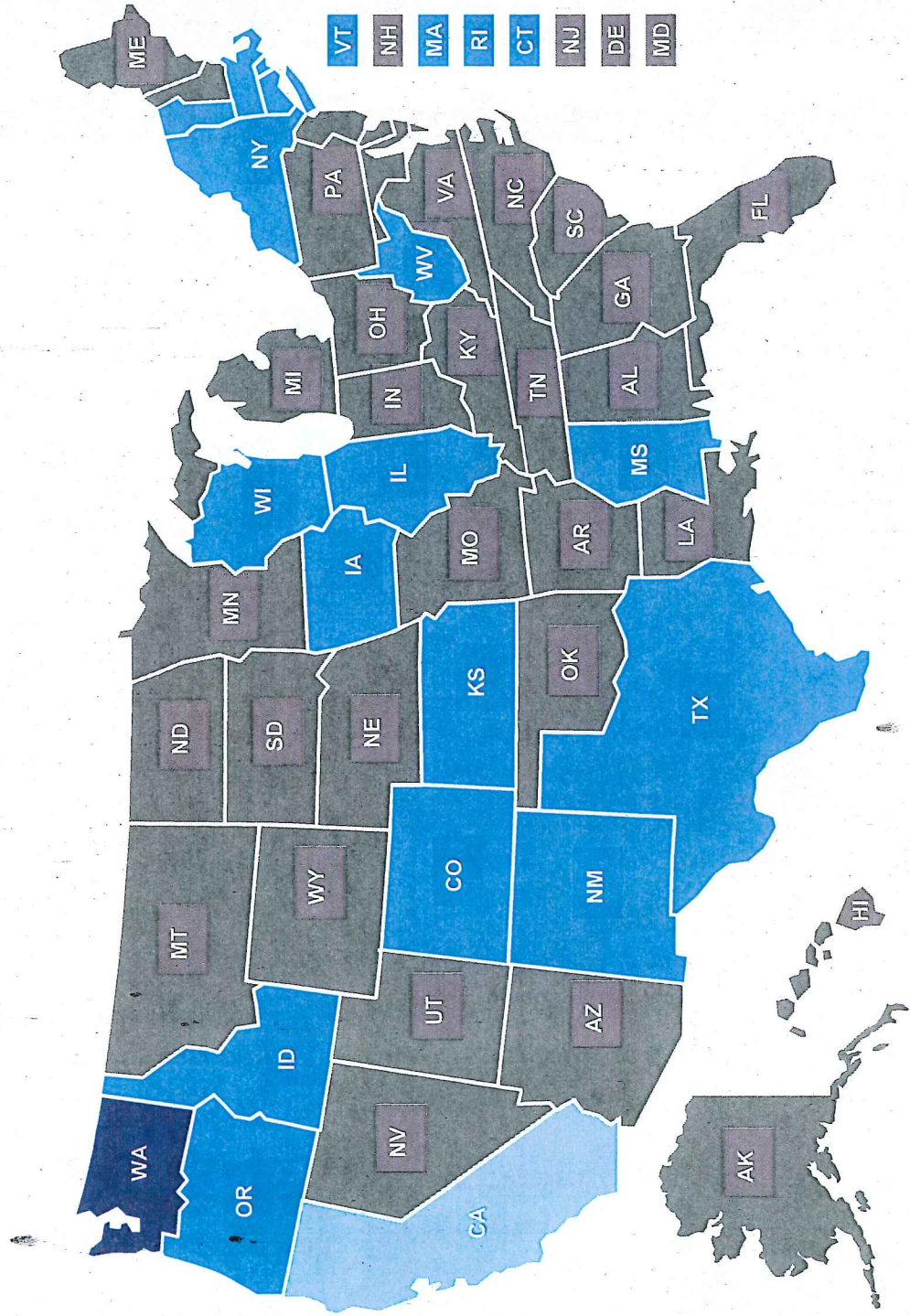## For further information, please visit:

pewstates.org/resultsfirst

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Participation in Results First

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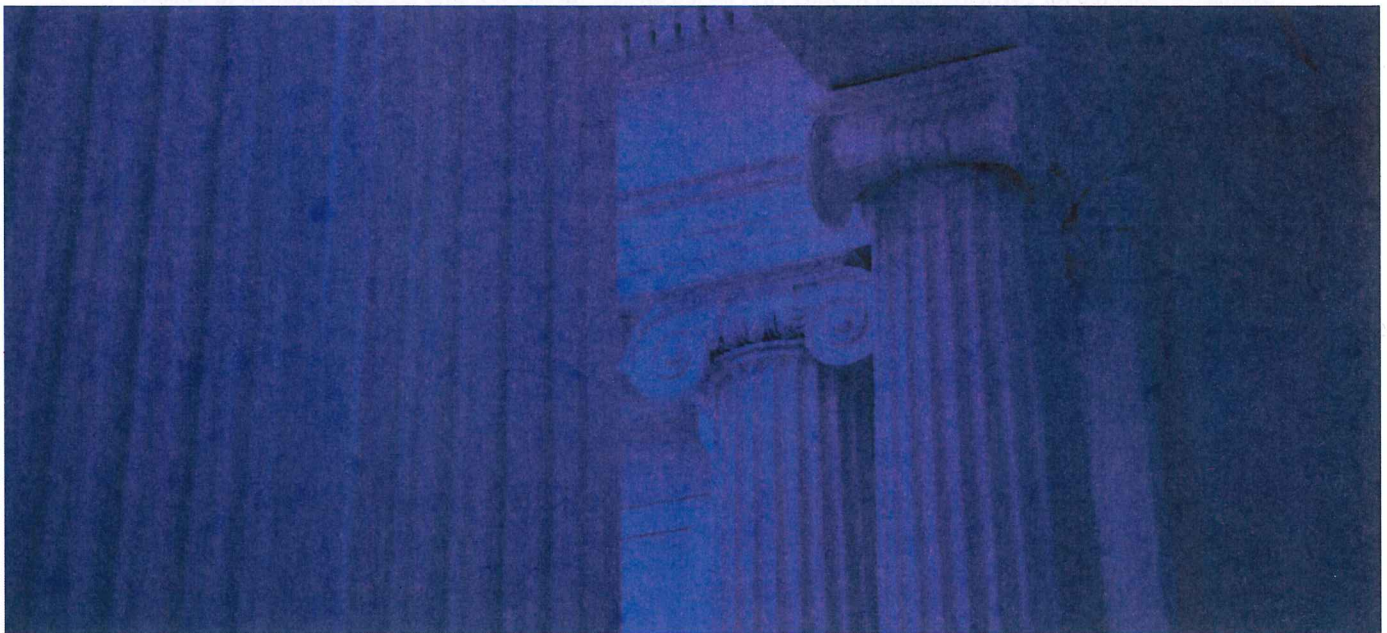
Results First in Your State

The Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative, a project of The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, works with states to implement an innovative cost-benefit analysis approach that helps them invest in policies and programs that are proven to work.

This model was initially developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. State policymakers in Washington have used this approach for more than 15 years to craft sound budget and policy choices. The model can be used to assess programs in key state policy areas, currently including adult criminal and juvenile justice, child welfare, education, mental health, and substance abuse. The model will be expanded to assess programs in additional policy areas over time.

Since 2011, more than 14 states have worked with Results First to adopt the model and begin applying this rigorous analysis to their policy and budget decisions. More states will join the initiative in the coming months.

How States Can Participate

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

To determine whether a state is prepared to join the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative, our staff holds several conference calls with state representatives to discuss the model and the implementation process. Then, Results First staff conduct an initial site visit to assess the state's preparedness to participate in the initiative, meet with stakeholders, explore analytical and data capabilities, identify the level and nature of technical assistance to be provided, and discuss goals.

The Role of Results First Staff

Once a state has joined the Results First Initiative, Results First staff will:

Provide the cost-benefit analysis model to the state and supply periodic updates that incorporate new research and enhancements identified through our work in participating states.

Provide orientations to state policymakers and staff to explain the approach to cost-benefit analysis and how the model can help inform policy and budget deliberations.

Help the state establish policy and staff work groups that guide and implement the model. The policy work group typically includes executive, legislative, and/or judicial officials who will consider the model's results when making policy decisions.

Help the staff work group implement the model. This assistance includes periodic site visits by Results First staff and its technical assistance contractors as well as regular communication via virtual meetings, conference calls and email. The Results First team supplies extensive assistance during the implementation period (typically six to 12 months) as well as ongoing support to help the state customize the model and use the results to inform policy and budget deliberations. Major areas of this technical assistance include:

- Developing implementation plans and schedules.
- Tailoring the model by adding state-specific information for all data elements and/or studies to the model's summary of national research.
- Identifying data sources and analyzing program and fiscal data.
- Assisting the state in running the model and interpreting the results.

Help generate and advance reform options as requested by the state. The model enables states to explore a wide range of topics, but policymakers must identify the specific questions they wish to analyze. Results First staff can help states identify these policy questions and use the model to identify and evaluate solutions.

Share lessons learned among participating states. Results First periodically convenes meetings of participating states to promote information sharing and identify ways to further strengthen the cost-benefit analysis model. Results First staff also regularly compiles case studies highlighting progress in states.

The Role of Partner States

Submit a formal letter of commitment signed by state policy leaders, ideally from both the executive and legislative branches, to demonstrate commitment to implementing the cost-benefit model and considering the results in policy deliberations.

Once a state has joined the Results First Initiative, state staff will:

Appoint a policy work group to oversee state efforts, identify questions for analysis, and use the results to help shape state policy and budget decisions.

Establish a staff work group to manage the implementation process. 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.
- Designate a project manager to lead the effort.
- Make the project a clear priority for all those involved.
- Have regular meetings with key stakeholders to report progress, raise implementation issues and discuss results.

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

- Identifies key steps.
- Identifies sources for required program and fiscal data.
- Designates staff to analyze the data.
- Establishes a timeline.
- Identifies key issues (e.g., data limitations) that will need to be addressed throughout the process.
- Specifies how and when status reports and results will be reported.

Collect and analyze the state-specific data necessary to implement the cost-benefit model.

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

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

The Pew Charitable Trusts

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pewstates.org

The Pew Charitable Trusts is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

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