Results First:
Helping States Apply Objective Data and Independent Analysis to Policy Decisions to Get the Best Return on Investment

Sara Watson, Interim Director, Results First
Senior Officer, Pew Center on the States
www.PewCenterontheStates.org
Pew Center on the States

Identify and profile emerging trends

Assess innovation and pinpoint solutions

Raise awareness of the need for change and evidence-based solutions

Design and run strategic advocacy campaigns to advance targeted reforms
The Pew Center on the States

Maximizing Government Performance
- Public Safety Performance Project
- The Government Performance Project
- Election Initiatives

Investing in Human Capital
- Partnership for America’s Economic Success
- Pre-K Now
- Pew Children’s Dental Campaign
- Pew Home Visiting Campaign

Ensuring States’ Fiscal Health
- Research and Information
Results First

• New, three-year initiative, created by Pew and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, with additional funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation

• **Goal** is to help states:
  – Calculate policies’ and programs’ true costs and benefits
  – Put results first in making policy decisions

• **Four steps:**

  - Use the best information
  - Learn from other states
  - Design policies that work together as a package
  - Help leaders create the climate to make decisions based on results
Key Elements of Results First

• Expand WSIPP model: Programs + Policies = Portfolio
• Peer review the WSIPP model
• Conduct 50-state scan of use of cost-benefit analysis in states to inform policy; write case studies
• Work with 6-10 states to apply WSIPP (or other) tool to analyze data, advance policies in sentencing/corrections
• Collaborate with Pew’s Public Safety Performance Project to build political support for evidence-based reforms – results only one element of a full campaign
• Explore possible additional topics for Results First
• Partner as appropriate with NGA, NCSL, Vera, others
Washington State Institute for Public Policy
Steve Aos, Director

Nature of the Institute

✓ Non-partisan, 27 year history
✓ Projects assigned by legislative bills
✓ Legislative/Executive Board of Dir.
✓ Legislative questions to WSIPP:
  • What works? What does not?
  • Cost-benefit, return on investment?

Recent Directions to WSIPP from the WA Legislature

What works?
What are the costs & benefits of policies to improve these outcomes?

✓ Education, Early Ed. (2003, 2006, 2009),
✓ Child Abuse & Neglect (2003, 2007, 2009),
✓ Substance Abuse (2003, 2005, 2009),
✓ Mental Health (2005, 2009),
✓ Developmental Disabilities (2008),
✓ Teen Births (1994),
✓ Employment (2009),
✓ Public Assistance (2009),
✓ Public Health (2009), and
✓ Housing (2009)
Fighting Crime & Reducing Costs

Legislature to WSIPP: “Are There Evidence-Based Policy Options That Reduce Crime, but at Less Cost?”

Our 3-Step Research Approach: Three Tests

1. What works, and what doesn’t, to reduce crime?
   ✓ We locate rigorous (comparison group), real world evaluations of adult and juvenile corrections programs, & prevention. (571+ studies to date)

2. What are the economics of each option?
   ✓ We estimate the taxpayer and crime victim benefits and costs (ROI) to people in Washington

3. Statewide, how would alternative “portfolios” affect prison demand, public spending, & crime?
### Addendum: Sentencing

**If You Balance Two Policy Choices:** Adjust Your Current Evidence-Based Policy AND Adopt Evidence-Based Programs: *Incarceration*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative Policy/Budget Choice</th>
<th>Near-Term Fiscal Impact</th>
<th>Crime Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Reduce prison average daily population</td>
<td>Save Money (probably)</td>
<td>Increase crime (probably)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Invest in certain “evidence-based” programs</td>
<td>Spend Money</td>
<td>Decrease crime (probably)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Do the smart combination of A and B.</td>
<td>Save money, <strong>NET</strong> (likely)</td>
<td>Be crime neutral or better, <strong>NET</strong> (likely)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Uncertainty Abounds: Risk Analysis Can Help
(AKA: Gauging the Risk of Giving the Wrong Advice)

✓ Uncertainty in the magnitude of most inputs to the model
  • Known unknowns, and the dreaded “unknown unknowns” (unk unks)
✓ Monte Carlo simulation
✓ Expected result & the probability of crime going up, not down

Analytical Steps

• Bound key parameters: (low, modal, high, or mean and standard errors)
• Run the model 10,000 times, randomly drawing from your bounded parameters, and record net crime change each run
• Plot the 10,000 runs, see how often a portfolio is likely to result in more (or less) crime.
The Next Steps

With support from the MacArthur Foundation, the Washington State Legislature, & the Pew Charitable Trusts, we are putting the WSIPP benefit-cost model, including sentencing analysis, into “user-friendly” software for states!

Sign Up Today!!!
Criteria for States to join *Results First*

- Policy proposals under active debate that model can inform
- Ability to provide necessary state-specific data to run the model
- Interest in/history of using results data in policy
- Leadership commitment to results-informed policy change
- Willingness to commit own resources
What will states get from Results First?

- Training in using the model, interpreting the results, translating for policy audience
- Support to find data and adjust for WSIPP tool
- Peer advice on strategies to use the data in policy – in-state and cross-state meetings
- Help in building political climate for evidence-based reforms

For more information contact Sara Watson, swatson@pewtrusts.org, 202-552-2134