

# The Vermont Results First Initiative Overview

*In 2010, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation launched an effort to build upon the work of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and develop a benefit cost tool for use by interested states nationwide, now known as the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative.*

## **Results First Benefit – Cost Tool:**

At the core of the Results First approach is the benefit-cost analysis tool:

1. It 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 benefits and costs for each program.
4. The model ranks programs according to their return on investment.
5. Policymakers consider the information during the budget process.

Results First is currently working with states to customize this approach to assess programs and inform policy and budget decisions in key areas, including adult criminal and juvenile justice, child welfare, education, mental health, and substance abuse to help states make prudent taxpayer investments.

## **Results First answers these questions:**

*Research Question 1:*

Which programs are effective?

*Research Question 2:*

What are the benefits and costs of each program?

## **Examples from other states:**

[Washington State Results First](#)

[New Mexico Results First](#)

[Massachusetts Results First](#)

[Rhode Island Program Inventory](#)

The Results First Initiative provides Vermont with a highly sophisticated econometric model that analyzes the benefits and costs of potential investments in evidence-based programs. The model uses the best available research to predict the outcomes of each program, based on the state's unique population characteristics. It calculates the cost to produce these outcomes and their discounted long-term dollar value, including separate projections for benefits that would accrue to taxpayers, benefits to wider society, and benefits to the participants of the programs. It is step one of [a comprehensive process towards evidence-based policymaking](#).

## **Next Steps:**

Support improved data collection

- Establish costs for existing and additional programs
- Finalize program inventory
- Assess program fidelity
- Educate stakeholders regarding the benefits of and key strategies for using this approach in Vermont

To be able to apply the Results First model broadly and arrive at the needed assessments, the state needs to complete a program inventory that will include additional public policy areas beyond adult criminal justice and improve its ability to attach costs to the specific intervention programs.

## **For more information contact:**

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