

Sustaining Commitments from Innovation to Implementation

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Researcher - Public Agency Collaborations Are Challenging!

- Different frames of reference
- Different speeds
- Different institutional prerogatives
- Yet, can have common goals, i.e. reducing homelessness

Funding source matters, organizational auspice matters

- Public agency funding generally guarantees audience
- Privately funded projects may lack relevance
- Pilot projects could be the “sweet spot” – privately funded innovation leading to policy adoption

Example: One Government Agency in US, Major Pilot to Reduce Homelessness

- Funded by contract to develop a pilot project – scuttled by pandemic budget cuts
 - Incremental funding increase made pilot feasible, at first
- Private funder picked up the next round of planning; expanded pilot – commitments were strained....
 - On-going spending commitments eat up the resources, effective or not
 - Need to find “new” funding, or another incremental boost

Next Approach

- Coalition building to target legislature for aggressive pilots
- But relies on political dynamics and “electeds”
- Failures have nevertheless laid groundwork and educated officials, advocates and policymakers

Reliable territory for researchers:

- Planning projects for current spending targets
- Program evaluations of existing or “tweaked” programs

But most promising for advancing field and impact

- Research demonstrations
- Pilots
- Policy changes

Strategic partnerships

- Entrepreneurial providers
- Ambitious public agency leads
- Advocates who share an “evidence” agenda
- Electeds looking for wins