

# Data for the Public Good: Challenges and Barriers in the Context of Cities

Robert M. Goerge

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Book Preview: Privacy, Big Data, And The  
Public Good: Frameworks For Engagement

June 16, 2014

CUSP-NYU

# Goals

- What is needed?
- How do we build data that will assist cities in accomplishing the social goals and address the well-being of residents?
- Describe both the ingredients that are necessary to build data resources, but also the barriers that prevent sustained effort

# Information needs and data development

- Crime, school outcomes, public health care and surveillance, early care and education, workforce development, after-school activities, and human service receipt
- The Allegheny County Department of Human Services' Data Warehouse in Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh)
  - child welfare, behavioral health, public school, welfare program, corrections, housing, and aging services
  - Front-line workers are able to access information on individuals or families from other agencies to inform their information-gathering or service provision.
  - **Data is also used to conduct system-wide analyses to support research, strategic planning, needs assessment, and program evaluation.**

# How to develop capacity in city agencies

- the key ingredients for success include:
  1. strong support from executive leadership across government agencies;
  2. a track record of success;
  3. no data breaches;
  4. lawyers and laws generally supporting of data sharing, and
  5. securing independent funding for most of the work.

# Example: Illinois

- 30 years of relationships with government leaders
- Includes data from early childhood, all educational levels, employment, social problems – crime, abuse/neglect, poverty
- Addressing the information needs of policymakers, including evaluation, monitoring, conducting ad hoc analyses
- Maintaining timely data

# Sustainability

- These efforts appear and disappear
- In order to sustain these efforts over time
  - new leadership needs to be educated about the importance of existing data efforts, and new relationships based on mutual trust and need must be formed.
  - When strong relationships with middle-level staff and legal agreements are in place, data-sharing and utilization can continue without pause.
  - Often, and ideally, data delivery, with the proper legal permissions, is a hands-off process that occurs regardless of whether anybody is watching.