

Government Integration Support Services

Summary:

Governments experience substantially lower efficiency and effectiveness when their various departments – when working with the same families – don't coordinate their efforts and share their data. Tax fraud goes undetected. Tax receipts go uncollected. Health and human services programs work at cross purposes, leave gaps in their services, or duplicate services unnecessarily. Schools, homeless programs, social services, public health, and public safety programs all would work better, and overall costs would be lower, if their efforts were better coordinated and each program was better informed about what other programs knew about their clients.

Two obstacles often inhibit cooperative efforts and data sharing: perceived legal prohibitions and the lack of governance procedures for managing the joint efforts and shared data confidentiality.

Stewards of Change (SOC) is helping governments at all levels to define legally allowable integrated services and data-sharing systems. SOC's consultants have a track record of success in setting up and helping to operate integration program governance mechanisms such as Executive Committees or Steering Committees, which ensure that such efforts will achieve meaningful, enduring results. Further, since coordinating services involves sharing data about clients and families that is often legally protected, SOC offers experienced legal analysis support to help governments define what data can be shared, as well as when and how.

Data Sharing Legal Analysis

Stewards of Change (SOC) has developed data-sharing legal toolkits for the federal government (ACF), New York State, and the National League of Cities; these provide an analysis of how the major federal laws impact what data may be shared about residents (adults and children), and also delineate the most effective process for extending the legal analysis to a local jurisdiction. The National League of Cities data-sharing toolkit is a good foundation, but local state, county, and local laws and regulations also need to be analyzed to ensure data and operational integration efforts proceed smoothly and legally, and that the public's trust is protected and maintained.

Stewards' legal staff is able to ensure that governments build successfully on the NLC Toolkit and quickly make progress in achieving the benefits that operational integration promises.

Download the NLC toolkit at:

<http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/IYEF/Data%20Sharing%20for%20Better%20Results.pdf>

Integration Project Governance Support

Successfully managing the effort to develop common strategies among separate departments and programs is a very big challenge, as is building stakeholder support for collaboration and integrated operations. Such

efforts often fail and the financial, operational, and constituent benefits of integrated operations go unrealized.

Stewards of Change is leading the way in guiding jurisdictions to create governance and management processes that succeed. During one recent project, the Illinois Framework program, SOC provided the primary guidance to create a nationally recognized handbook for governance of interoperability projects and also worked with staff attorneys to forge an information sharing environment that respects confidentiality and privacy laws across the state agencies. The Governance Framework is available at:

http://illinoisframework.org/pdf/Establishing_Governance_for_HHS_Interoperability_Initiatives.swf)

SOC can bring its knowledge and record of success to other jurisdictions, helping them to define and manage efforts that achieve tangible, cost-effective results. Our staff are available to help define project goals and desired outcomes, to apply for funding to pursue projects, to establish and manage the project governance, and to measure and document the benefits and results of integration and interoperability projects.