

# RAPID-CYCLE RESEARCH

## Findings from Urban Institute

### CONTEXT

Integrated data systems link administrative individual-level data across multiple health and human services systems to enable service providers to better understand and address a full range of client needs. The Urban Institute conducted 16 interviews (with data experts, state officials, researchers, and advocates) to examine how two states — Washington and Oregon — approached design, governance, implementation, and financing of their integrated data systems.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What factors are critical for successful cross-sector data-sharing efforts?

### KEY FINDINGS

#### Understanding Privacy Laws, Having Leadership Buy-in, and Building Organizational Culture That Values Data Can Promote Cross-Sector Data Sharing

Strategies to potentially overcome challenges and effectively promote greater data sharing include establishing legal frameworks, developing strong data governance, and supporting data literacy. Strong data governance allows for transparency and accountability in terms of how data are collected, linked, protected, and used. It is important to build capacity of individuals and community organizations to effectively engage in data work.

#### People, Relationships, and Trust Are Equally, if Not More Important, Than Technology

Data-sharing initiatives seem to be first and foremost about people and relationship management. Without the right people at the table who understand data, can establish and maintain effective relationships, and agree on a shared purpose for data sharing, the most elaborate analytics platform will not realize its full potential.

#### Trust Building Across Stakeholders, Including Engaging People and Communities Whose Data Are Being Collected, Is Critical

Mistrust, including a strong sense of protectiveness of an organization's own data and a lack of public trust in government-sponsored data-collection efforts, is a key barrier to data sharing. Organizations need to be transparent about why and how individuals' data will be used and protected. Additionally, effective engagement of key stakeholders in governance, including program participants and the general public, can help overcome mistrust of data-sharing initiatives. Unfortunately, community members are often underrepresented or missing in discussions and decisions about data.

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