Strategic Evidence Planning

HOW LEADERS PROVE AND IMPROVE THEIR IMPACT
Evidence is remarkably powerful. It helps you make informed decisions by revealing what’s working and what isn’t, for whom, and why. It helps you align your staff and board and engage with funders so you can accelerate your progress on outcomes. The challenge is developing a system that generates the ongoing evidence your organization needs.

At Project Evident, we provide the evidence-building tools, talent, and technology that social and education sector organizations need to continuously learn and to improve how they measure, evaluate, and report results. We empower our partners to build evidence that is relevant for those they serve, resulting in better outcomes for communities.

Generate evidence of your impact. Continuously.

Our Team’s Expertise:
Evidence Planning
Data Analytics
Data Systems & Technology
Monitoring & Evaluation
Policy
Philanthropy
Nonprofits
State & Local Government

“It has been amazing to watch even strong, long-established organizations learn and improve as they work to craft a strategic evidence plan.”

- Dr. Rebecca Maynard
Professor of Education and Social Policy Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education
Every organization is unique. And yet, the challenges they face are often similar. Most of these organizations know what they need to do to move forward. It’s the how, of course, that proves quite difficult. Specifically, how to measure and improve impact. How to prioritize investments. How to determine the wisdom of expansion. These are some of the big and important questions that a Strategic Evidence Plan will help you answer. It’s your unique roadmap for continuous evidence building and program improvement, offering you detailed guidance and concrete recommendations. It can show you a clear path to the outcomes you envision.
How your plan comes together.

Developing your plan requires collaboration with our interdisciplinary team. We'll provide facilitation, guidance, and expertise to develop your customized roadmap. The chart below shows a simplified outline of the process.

The results of our collaborations are well documented. You'll not only have a clear understanding of how to generate different types of evidence to accelerate outcomes, but also how to engage funders for greater collaboration.

**Define Vision & Goals**
Articulate a vision for how evidence can advance strategic priorities, and identify concrete goals to help achieve that vision

**Review Context & Capacity**
Use in-depth interviews, focus groups and document review to understand organizational capacity and context, including current assets and any gaps in tools, data, technology, or talent

**Develop Roadmap**
Apply learning from assessment to delineate investments and actions needed to achieve goals, including staffing, operations, policy, and learning recommendations

**Support Implementation**
Help implement recommendations, including development of data systems, rapid cycle tests for program improvement, and outreach to funders and policymakers
Case Study:
The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

ORGANIZATION:
Offers transitional jobs, job coaching, placement assistance, and more to help improve the lives of individuals with recent criminal convictions.

CHALLENGE:
Generating evidence to answer critical questions.

- How can CEO clarify key program elements that contribute to the program’s recidivism effects?
- How can CEO improve long-term employment outcomes?
- How can CEO meet differential needs among participants?

PLAN:
CEO partnered with Project Evident to create a Strategic Evidence Plan to accelerate investments and activities for continuous evidence generation and program improvement. Three goals were identified:

- **Build staff capacity and practices** for ongoing dialogue, reflection, and learning activities with data to support evidence generation.
- **Optimize the use of tools** for data collection, analytics, and visualization to extract insights for improvement.
- **Implement new practices** to test program assumptions and innovations to explore their effectiveness.

OUTCOMES:
CEO now has an evidence strategy delineating specific steps for delivering impact over a three-year period. CEO calls it “the clearest path we’ve had for improving how we assist participants on their challenging journey to create a new life.”
Case Study: PowerMyLearning

ORGANIZATION:
This national education nonprofit works to improve children's academic mastery and social-emotional learning outcomes by strengthening the “triangle” of learning relationships among students, teachers, and families.

CHALLENGE:
PowerMyLearning developed a program called Family Playlists to reinforce the learning relationships. In these interactive homework assignments, students practice a set of learning activities and then teach them to a family member, who then provides feedback to the teacher. Three goals were identified:

- Optimize the adoption process for teachers assigning Family Playlists.

- Optimize the triangle of learning relationships among students, teachers, and families.

- Improve academic mastery and social-emotional learning outcomes.

PLAN:
The Strategic Evidence Plan crafts a multi-year vision to accelerate understanding of how to optimize Family Playlists engagement and maximize student outcomes in the next three years. The SEP included four key recommendations:

- **Execute model innovation cycles** for evidence generation and continuous improvement.

- **Build partnerships** to support evidence generation and improvement.

- **Enhance data, systems, and tools** to support evidence generation and improvement.

- **Develop and implement a communications plan** for optimal messaging of evidence efforts.

OUTCOMES:
Building on our SEP recommendations, we helped PML implement a small-scale rapid evaluation that showed a positive impact of Family Playlists, but a smaller impact among English Language Learners (ELLs). The low-cost, low-risk evaluation provided PML with positive results as well as actionable insights to advance program improvements and evidence building.
What are the answers you need?

Our experience has shown us that almost every social and education sector organization struggles to answer these three fundamental questions:

How can we understand and improve the impact of our work for vulnerable communities?

How should we prioritize program investments and activities given our limited resources?

How can we expand our reach to meet the needs of more people and communities in need?

Our experts are ready to help you uncover the answers to these questions and many more. For details on how a Strategic Evidence Plan can help your organization help others even more, please visit us at projectevident.org.
“As an organization, we are now much more clear about what we need to do to achieve our own vision for impact and learning, and have a strong, actionable game plan to proceed.”

- Barrie Hathaway
  President & CEO, JobTrain

Learn how a Strategic Evidence Plan can help your organization at projectevident.org