



**STATES FOR
THE FUTURE**

A Data to Policy Network

IMPACT

FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The States for the Future Network cultivates a vibrant ecosystem that enables data-driven, research-informed solutions to the greatest challenges facing states. This ecosystem is made up of both **Member** organizations who embody the SFF Impact Framework and are actively working within a specific state to improve the lives of its residents and **Partner** organizations who serve as critical collaborators and enablers of the work SFF Members are doing.

Together, SFF Members and Partners create meaningful, sustainable change at scale within and across states, unified by their **commitment to:**

Championing a long-term shared vision for their states and measuring progress against specific goals and metrics

Relying on quality data and research, not ideology, to inform policy work

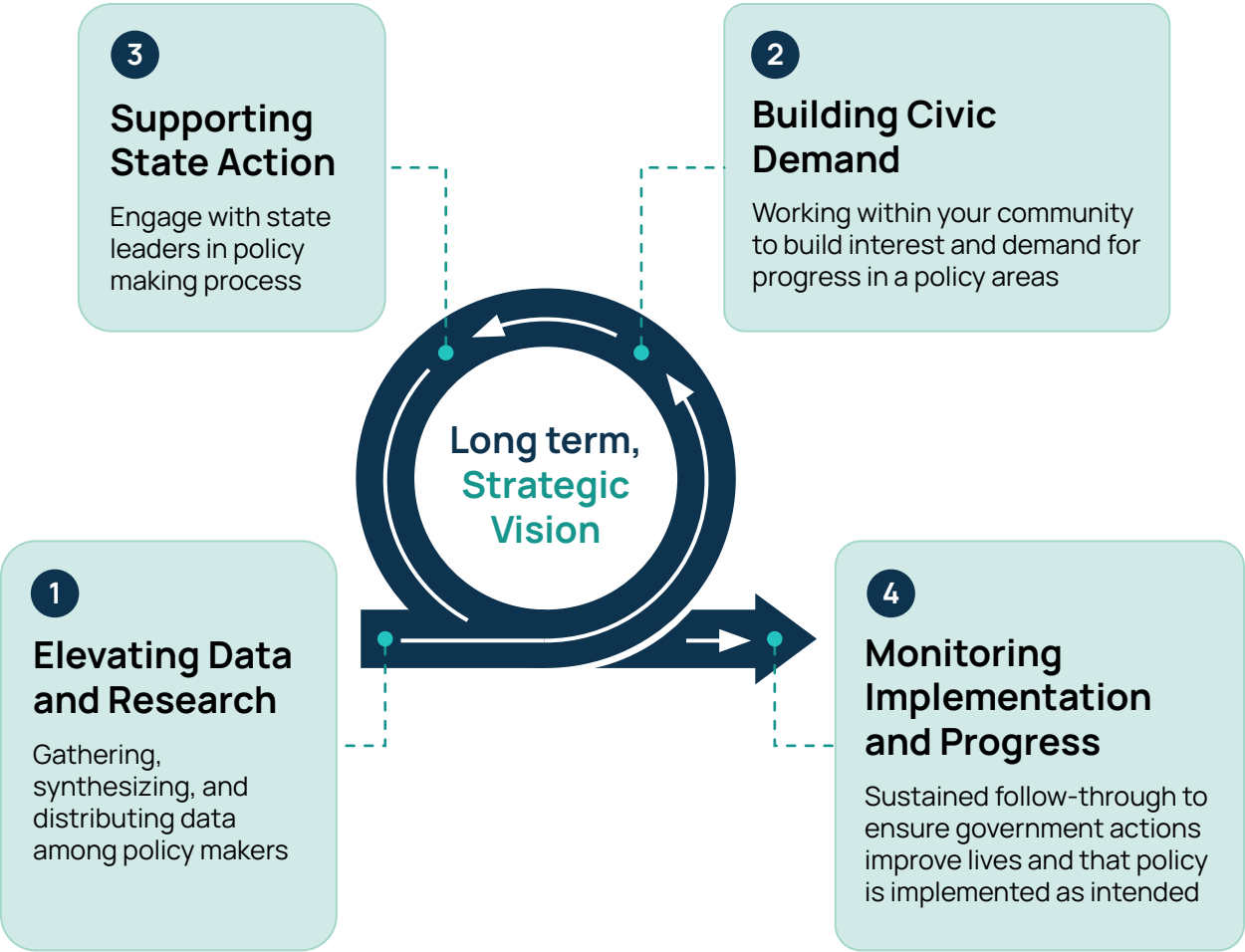
Building consensus and investing in stakeholder engagement

Advancing solutions and driving state action toward those solutions

Remaining non-partisan and committed to improving the lives of all residents

STATES FOR THE FUTURE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

The SFF Impact Framework, inspired by the best practices of founding States for the Future Members and Partners operating in states around the nation, articulates a theory of action for data-driven, state-level impact and identifies the key elements that enable that impact. The Framework is designed to support the launch, growth, and strengthening of organizations that sustain change beyond the temporal bounds of a single administration or legislative session by understanding challenges, proposing and implementing solutions, and refining that work over time. This helps ensure that states continue to address the biggest challenges they face in sustainable, responsive, and evolving ways.



Advancing a Long term, Strategic Vision

A clearly articulated, long term, strategic vision, with measurable goals is the foundation of the Impact Framework. The vision articulates the priorities of the organization, defines the scope of issues on which it will engage, and establishes how it will measure the state's progress, and its own, over time.

Building upon that foundation, SFF Members engage in an iterative process incorporating four key workstreams. While there may be some variation depending on the specific issue, board policy area, or state context, this process typically follows the sequence outlined below before feeding back into itself, creating a virtuous cycle that amplifies and accelerates impact overtime.

Examples of long-term shared visions from SFF organizations

The Arizona Progress Meters

Center for the Future of Arizona



Texas 2036 Strategic Framework Dashboard

Texas 2036



Washington Vitals

AWB Institute



Elevating Data & Research

Fulfilling their foundational commitment to data and research, SFF Members elevate the best data and research to inform state decision making. Through a deep commitment to quality data, unbiased analysis, and transparency regarding sources, process, and assumptions, Members establish themselves as trusted sources of reliable information and data. Members identify, conduct, and collaborate on high-quality, academically-sound data analysis, data visualization and interactive tool development, and effective communication of findings and implications. This also includes reviewing and leveraging research from academic institutions and other trusted sources and translating into practical evidence-based solutions

Building Civic Demand

SFF Members are highly effective at galvanizing civic demand regarding the most pressing challenges and impactful statewide solutions. Their success is the result of extensive, representative stakeholder engagement and robust, strategic communications. As trusted sources of data and expertise and trustworthy collaborators, Members are highly effective at building thoughtful and effective coalitions that help enable or spur state action toward shared goals. Skillfully leveraging all communication mediums and channels, Members educate and activate critical stakeholders, equipping them to act independent of the organization to advance needed solutions. Members steward their influence to maintain their integrity, trustworthiness, and reliability, exercising discipline and navigating nuance while elevating issues of statewide importance.

Supporting State Action

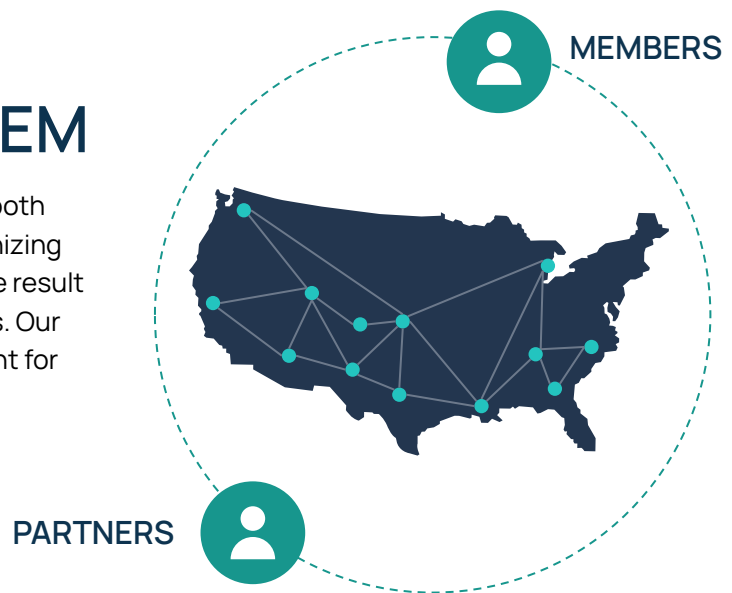
One distinguishing feature of SFF Members is their commitment to directly engaging with their states' governments to ensure proposed solutions become government realities. While this work can take on a variety of forms, Members—with a clear understanding of federal and state ethics laws—take action to ensure state leaders consider and implement sound, data- and research-informed solutions. This includes a variety of activities including giving expert testimony, providing data, research support, and thought partnership to state agencies, engaging in administrative implementation processes, legislative advocacy, and when appropriate, directly lobbying.

Monitoring Implementation & Progress

SFF Members recognize that, for reforms to be sustainable and sustained, they must engage beyond a specific policy or regulatory change and make a concerted effort to ensure government actions actually improve the lives of residents. Therefore, direct engagement in policy and program implementation is a priority for them, including technical support to and participation in rulemaking processes, ongoing conversation with legislators, agency leadership, and program designers to ensure the intent of reforms are realized for the benefit of the people of their states. Members also believe deeply in accountability and continuous improvement. Thus, robust program implementation tracking and progress monitoring of key indicators over time are central to the work of Members, who evaluate the effectiveness of reforms at addressing the challenges their states face and use that data to guide their future engagement on critical issues.

A DATA-DRIVEN POLICY ECOSYSTEM

The States for the Future network serves both Member and Partner organizations, recognizing that impactful solutions are most often the result of collaboration and strategic partnerships. Our supports and engagement will look different for each, but it is this ecosystem of critical relationships that provides value for both Members and Partners.



SFF Members

States for the Future Members are non-partisan, non-profit, state-specific policy organizations advancing change in their state. They are a vital resource in addressing the challenges their state faces and creating long term, positive change. Operating within the unique contexts of their individual states, States for the Future Members integrate data and research into the policy making process, developing and elevating pragmatic, long term non-partisan solutions, and building bipartisan support for the implementation of those solutions. In pursuit of achieving sustainable, meaningful outcomes in their individual states, SFF Members are committed to a state-specific, strategically contextualized implementation of the SFF Impact Framework.

SFF Partners

In practice, the SFF Impact Framework cannot be successfully executed by any one organization. Rather, SFF Members are dependent upon other state or national organizations that are uniquely equipped and positioned to contribute to one or more of the Framework elements while not executing on all of them. In this way, SFF Partners play a critical role in supporting and enabling the work of SFF Members. Partners collaborate with Members, bringing subject matter expertise, robust data resources and analytic capacity, coalitions, and technical, financial, and human resources aligned to shared priorities between Members and Partners. Often operating across states, Partners effectively identify best practices and key learnings, disseminating critical and empowering knowledge across member organizations that elevates and advances progress in states.

SFF IMPACT FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

Actions, Examples, and Supports

States for the Future Members approach this work in different ways and at different stages in their journey. These differences reflect the unique landscapes across states and provide ripe opportunities for states to be laboratories of democracy, creating meaningful solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our states and nation.

The SFF Impact Framework is designed to accommodate this variation and SFF programming, resources, and tools are designed to support Members as they engage in all elements of the framework. Below are some examples, resources, and tools for how this work looks in practice:

	Elevating Data and Research	Building Civic Demand	Supporting State Action	Monitoring Implementation & Progress
Example enablers & activities	Publishing data dashboards. Conducting research. Building simulators & data tools to aid in understanding complex issues.	Communications campaigns. Op-eds & media interviews. Coalition Building. Polling. Hosting convenings.	Building legislative agendas. Advocacy. Lobbying. Drafting policy. Providing testimony.	Leading working groups. Supporting agencies with research and expertise. Evaluating impact of policy. Identifying new data & policy needs.
Examples from SFF participating organizations	Future of Texas Energy dashboard - Texas 2036 North Carolina Resilience Index - North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office	2024 Ballot Guide - Common Sense Institute, Colorado The Arizona We Want - Center for the Future of Arizona	Bill Tracker - Utah Health Policy Project Strengthening the Federal Government's Data Disaggregation Pillar - AAPI Data	Health Price Transparency - Texas 2036
SFF Resources & Tools	Tool: States for the Future's Indicator Explorer Resource: States for the Future's Building Good Data Products Webinar: Using Rankings & Indicators with the Common Sense Institute Webinar: Creating & Launching the North Carolina Resilience Index with the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office	Webinar: Polling & How to Get Started with the Center for the Future of Arizona	Resource: <i>Engaging in Advocacy as a Nonprofit (coming soon)</i>	

SFF IMPACT FRAMEWORK ADOPTION

The following questions are intended to help you think through and prioritize how you might utilize the framework to launch a new organization, facilitate a strategic partnership between existing organizations, or enhance and expand the work of an existing organization, and by extension the SFF Network, toward advancing policy solutions in your state.

Advancing a Long-term, Strategic Vision

- » What are the critical problems your state is facing? Can these problems be addressed through policy?
- » Does your organization have a clear vision for the future of the state and the state-level outcomes that need to be achieved? Does it have a way to measure progress towards this vision at the state and community level, to prioritize over time?

Elevating Data and Research

- » How can your organization elevate the best data and research to inform policy makers? Which issues are missing an evidence-based discussion?
- » What expertise do you have as an organization and where might you need to collaborate and leverage existing research capacity (e.g., public universities)?
- » Is your organization trusted for its ability to provide neutral and reliable information and guidance?

Building Civic Demand

- » Is there a shared understanding of what residents in your state care about?
- » Where can your organization enhance its role in convening voices in your state around shared goals and data to educate, inform, and activate policy makers and stakeholders?
- » What other organizations and influencers can you partner with and support?

Supporting State Action

- » What challenges exist in the policymaking process in your state?
- » What opportunities exist for your organization to expand its influence in the state policy making process to advance your organization's vision for your state?

Monitoring Implementation & Progress

- » Does your organization have relationships with key stakeholders within state agencies who are tasked with rulemaking and policy implementation? How can your organization support this work?
- » Is your organization equipped to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of policy and serve as a critical partner and trusted source of accountability over time?

EXPLORE OUR RESOURCES

Virtual Learning

- » [Engaging Stakeholders to Build the Washington Vitals](#)
- AWB Institute
- » [Using Rankings & Indicators](#)
- Common Sense Institute, Colorado
- » [Polling & How to Get Started](#)
- Center for the Future of Arizona
- » [Analyzing and Communicating About State Budgets](#)
- Sycamore Institute & Wisconsin Policy Forum
- » [Creating & Launching the North Carolina Resilience Index](#)
- North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office
- » [Preparing for the Big Shift: Changes to Federal Race & Ethnicity Data Standards](#)
- AAPI Data



Reports & Tools

[Building Quality Data Products](#)


[2024 Convening Report](#)

[States for the Future Data Platform](#)

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