



NGA CENTER FOR BEST PRACTICES

PROVIDING GOVERNORS IDEAS THAT WORK



“The governors’ think tank, its Center for Best Practices”

—The Washington Post

OUR MISSION

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices develops innovative solutions to today’s most pressing public policy challenges and is the only research and development firm that directly serves the nation’s governors. Through the NGA Center, governors and their advisors:

- Learn what works, what doesn’t, and what lessons can be learned from other states grappling with similar challenges;
- Obtain specialized assistance designing and implementing new policy programs or improving the effectiveness of current programs;
- Receive up-to-the-minute information about what is happening in other state capitals and Washington, D.C.

OUR SERVICES

“The National Governors Association . . . includes the NGA Center for Best Practices, which focuses on state innovations and best practices on a range of issues.”

—Associated Press

Identify and Share Best Practices

The NGA Center evaluates public policy innovations and provides governors with practical solutions through:

- Published research reports, policy analyses, issue briefs, and a variety of other materials examining today’s most pressing issues;
- Policy workshops, seminars, academies, and cross-state learning labs;
- Challenge grants awarded to states to build pioneering policy agendas or improve existing policies by implementing best practices.

Provide Tailored Technical Assistance

The NGA Center uses comprehensive information on best practices, on-site problem analysis, and trusted advice from colleagues across the country and in-house policy experts to:

- Analyze state challenges with governors’ policy and program staff;
- Produce confidential, quick-response memoranda on specific policy requests;
- Convene meetings of leading policymakers, program officials, and scholars;
- Facilitate strategic problem-solving, including matching experts and peers across state boundaries to share common experiences and effective responses.

Serve as an Information Clearinghouse

The NGA Center collects and disseminates vital information on various gubernatorial initiatives through:

- *The NGA Center Website*: Found at www.nga.org/center, the site houses a range of timely materials on state policy initiatives and is the preeminent stop for information on state activities.
- *Front & Center*: Distributed to state policy staff, this weekly electronic newsletter highlights critical trends and emerging issues affecting states.
- *Webcasts & Webinars*: On an ongoing basis, NGA Center divisions host robust webcasts and webinars on the critical policy issues facing states and options for addressing them.

OUR EXPERTISE



ECONOMIC, HUMAN SERVICES & WORKFORCE DIVISION

focuses on best practices, policy options, and service delivery improvements across a range of current and emerging issues, including economic development and innovation, workforce training, employment services, research and development policies, and services for children, youth, low-income families, and people with disabilities.



EDUCATION DIVISION

provides information on best practices in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. Specific issues include common core state standards and assessments; teacher effectiveness; high school redesign; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education; postsecondary education attainment, productivity, and accountability; extra learning opportunities; and school readiness.



ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

identifies best practices and provides technical assistance on issues including clean energy for the electricity and transportation sectors; energy, transportation, and infrastructure financing; building a modern energy workforce and related industries; transportation and land use planning; and clean up and stewardship of nuclear weapons sites.



HEALTH DIVISION

covers a broad range of health financing, service delivery, and coverage issues, including state options under federal health reform, quality initiatives, cost-containment policies, health information technology, state public health initiatives, and Medicaid.



HOMELAND SECURITY & PUBLIC SAFETY DIVISION

supports governors' homeland security and criminal justice policy advisors. This work includes supporting the Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council (GHSAC). Issues include emergency preparedness, interoperability, cyber-crime and cyber-security, intelligence coordination, emergency management, sentencing and corrections, forensics, and justice information technology.

OUR IMPACT

Raising the Bar for Education

Recognizing the nation's competitiveness relies on an education system that can adequately prepare youth for college and the workforce, the NGA Center and the Council of Chief State School Officers produced the Common Core State Standards, which define the knowledge and skills students should gain in grades K-12 to graduate high school fully prepared for college and work. The NGA Center is now working with states as they implement the standards—raising the bar for education across the country. The NGA Center also continues to produce policy guides for governors on key aspects of education reform and hosts policy academies and cross-state meetings to help states advance science, technology, engineering, and math education, improve teacher quality, reduce high school dropout rates, and increase college completion.

Creating an Accessible and Cost-Effective Health Care System

Over the past decade, states have been taking steps to improve the delivery of health care services. However, health care costs have continued to rise to a point that risks our nation's economic competitiveness. Additionally, the federal health care reform law promises to expand coverage to many million more Americans, making it more important than ever for states to find and implement effective policies to bend the cost-curve. The NGA Center is helping states understand their options under federal health

reform and providing resources that enable states to continue to be innovators in health care delivery. Through policy workshops, publications, and online forums, the NGA Center is at the forefront of helping states design policies that improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care services.

“The release of new [Common Core] academic standards . . . marks the beginning of a new era in public education in this country.”

—Education Week

Helping States Compete in the Global Economy

Over the past several years, state governments have experienced the worst fiscal conditions since the Great Depression. As states make tough decisions to adhere to budget constraints and begin to emerge from the recession, the NGA Center is helping states streamline services and grow their economies. In addition to analyzing state efforts to streamline and redesign government, the NGA Center is providing information on policies that can help economies succeed in the global marketplace. These include programs that focus on college and credential attainment, sector-based workforce training, incentives to boost university research, development and commercialization, and incentives for the private sector to create high-quality jobs.



Founded in 1908, the National Governors Association is the collective voice of the nation's governors and one of Washington, D.C.'s most respected public policy organizations. Its members are the governors of the 50 states, three territories, and two commonwealths. The **NGA Center for Best Practices** is the only policy research and development firm that directly serves the nation's governors by developing innovative solutions to today's most pressing public policy challenges.

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