Applying Policy Analysis to the Decisionmaking Process

SF LGBT Aging Policy Task Force
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Basic Approach to Decision Making

1. Define Problem
2. Identify Alternative Policies
3. Evaluate Alternative Policies
4. Determine Evaluation Criteria
5. Select Preferred Policies and Recommend

Select Preferred Policies and Recommend

Define Problem

Identify Alternative Policies

Evaluate Alternative Policies

Determine Evaluation Criteria
But Reality is More Complex

Analysis

- Problem Definition
  - Identify Issues
  - Historical Why, How
  - Current Conditions
  - Definition of Needed Change

- Policy Instruments
  - Analyst's Frame
  - Analytic Methods
  - Identify the Options
  - Definition of Options & Means

- Cast of Characters
  - Stakeholder Frames
  - Decision Makers
  - Influence Brokers
  - Definition of Constituency
  - Identification of Impediments
  - Evaluation of Impediments

Formulation

- Prioritize options
- Recommendation
- Decisionmaker Dialog
- Regulation
- Legislation
- Enforcement
Policy Analysis Developed to Supplement Public Administration

• Public Administration developed early 20th century to:
  – Manage public organizations, including human resources, operations, external relations, finance, other functions
  – Develop and implement policies, projects, and programs addressing policy problems
  – Reference Points: Organizational Design/Management/Public Finance/Political Context
  – MPA, MHA, MBA

• Policy Analysis developed late 20th century to:
  – Focus on gathering and processing information to develop and assess options addressing public policy problems
  – Evaluate existing programs by analyzing quantitative and qualitative data
  – Reference Points: Economics, Social Science, Quantitative Analysis
  – MPP, M Applied Econ/Stats
Policy Analysis Informs Decisionmaking in Complex Environments

1. Identify, Gather, and Analyze Information
2. Identify Alternative Policies
3. Develop and Weight Evaluation Criteria
4. Use Results to Identify Problems
   - Use Criteria to Prioritize Preferred Options
   - Identify Alternative Policies
Examples of Evaluation Criteria

- Economic efficiency — benefits and costs.
- Distributional equity — how option impacts are distributed among different demographics.
- Social/Cultural acceptability — extent to which option may be supported/opposed by current social norms, cultural values, or interest groups.
- Operational and Fiscal practicality — the capacity necessary to actually operationalize the option.
- Legal and Political viability — the potential for the option to be enacted and implemented.
- Uncertainty — the degree to which the level of impacts associated with the option can be known.
Data Gathering and Analyzing Tools

Examples:

• Quantitative and Qualitative Studies
  – Use social science methodologies
  – Can generate original data (e.g. surveys) or summarize existing information (e.g. meta-analyses)

• Trade off Analyses (Multiple Criteria Evaluation)

• Program Evaluation of Existing Programs

• Benefit Cost Analyses

• Economic and Actuarial Impact/Modeling

• Operations Research
## What’s used in SF?

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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Survey/ Meta-Analysis</th>
<th>Program Evaluation</th>
<th>Benefit Cost Analyses</th>
<th>Economic Impact</th>
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Next Steps For Taskforce?

• Choose the tools
• Gather and analyze the data
• Define the problem/further articulate the problem
• Identify policy options
• Develop evaluative criteria and apply to options
• Make recommendations