

Midwest and Great Lakes Economic Development Summit
ABOUT THE CENTER FOR STATE INNOVATION

CSI's Purpose

America's current challenges demand bold, innovative, progressive leadership from states. The purpose of the Center for State Innovation (CSI) is to provide Governors and other state executives willing to assert such leadership the best available ideas and tools in governing. Working with a national network of state policy experts and technical assistance providers — think tanks, universities, former state officials, and others — we offer state executives turnkey access to the best policy thinking and technical assistance in the country.

CSI believes that every state can achieve shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and high performance democratic government. We offer evidence-based, outcome-measured, fiscally prudent strategies for doing so. CSI also believes that national government should encourage such progressive state innovation and learn from it. We support a new federalism that does that.

CSI is a non-partisan, non-profit, 501(c)3 supported by foundations and individual donors. Our services are free.

CSI's Program

CSI provides four kinds of service.

Policy and Message — CSI offers policy and message development assistance in most major areas of state policy, including education, health care, public safety, energy, infrastructure, transportation, economic and workforce development, voting and elections, revenue, and government performance. In these areas, CSI Policy Briefings offer progressive policy options, messaging advice, analysis of implementation costs and requirements, and performance metrics. CSI Strategy Academies offer in-depth engagement in designing new initiatives.

Technical Assistance — CSI doesn't stop at policy recommendations. We have a national network of leading technical assistance providers with proven track records in implementing progressive policies at the state level. We connect state executives to this network, helping them move ideas to reality.

Multistate Initiatives — Some state problems are best addressed through regional collaboration among neighboring states, and often individual policy innovations are helped along by many states pursuing them at once. CSI identifies promising opportunities for both kinds of multistate initiative, which we support through research, communications, convenings, and other means.

Progressive Federalism — CSI makes the case for the national importance of state innovation and the national policies needed to support it. We argue for a new cooperative federalism in which national government permits state experiment above national minimums; avoids unfunded mandates; supports cross-state learning and evaluation; and harnesses the contribution of our "laboratories of democracy" in achieving national goals.