

Project IMPROVE

Research and evaluation can be powerful tools in the hands of practitioners. They support better decision making and higher quality programming, ultimately leading to better outcomes for children and families. Yet too often, research is something done **to, for, or about** programs and not **with and by** them.

Project IMPROVE helps Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and related programs learn to use and produce evidence to improve their programs. Led by Mathematica and The Adjacent Possible—nationally recognized research and learning partners—Project IMPROVE offers three kinds of opportunities to state and local TANF and related programs.



Co-design and test innovative, evidence-driven solutions.

Project IMPROVE uses the [Learn, Innovate, Improve \(LI²\)](#) framework to teach programs how to use analytic methods to diagnose challenges and develop and test innovative solutions.

For example, in Massachusetts, Project IMPROVE worked with three local TANF offices struggling to engage participants virtually. Using LI², each local office identified one reason for low engagement; designed an innovative, evidence-informed solution; and piloted it.

The exercise built the capacity of local TANF leaders to repeat the LI² process to improve other program areas.



Participate in an action-oriented community of learning.

Through meetings, webinars, interactive design sessions, and other activities, Project IMPROVE brings together program teams from across the country to share their insights and lessons. For example, in fall 2022, Project IMPROVE launched **a nationwide Leadership Initiative** to support established and emerging leaders from TANF and related programs.

The initiative covered strategic and visionary leadership, tools for managing change and continuous improvement, operational management, supporting and advancing leaders of color, developmental supervision, and changing culture and practice.

More than 100 leaders from more than 50 programs across 11 states and the Santo Domingo Tribe in New Mexico registered for the Leadership Initiative.

Learn more about the Leadership Initiative by reading [a short brief](#) on the Project IMPROVE [PeerTA website](#).



Co-develop accessible tools and products.

Project IMPROVE produces tools and products, such as training videos and research-to-practice briefs, to advance evidence-driven practice. Examples of recent Project IMPROVE products include the following:

- A [brief](#) describing how TANF and related programs can use business process management to improve staff and participant experiences
- A [short video](#) on how TANF and other employment program providers can use the Administration for Children and Families' Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse to make evidence-informed decisions
- A series of three short videos that explores the importance of engaging families in program improvement and gives tips to engaging families
- A [practice guide](#) that supports program leaders as they use the LI² framework in partnership with a research or technical assistance support team

How can your team get involved?

Project IMPROVE collaborates with state and local TANF agencies and their partners. They should be motivated to bring about meaningful change, committed to test innovative practices, and willing to engage in a learning community of like-minded teams. Neither existing research capacity nor funding are necessary. Please contact us to learn more about Project IMPROVE!

Let's Progress Together. Contact Damon Waters at Damon.Waters@acf.hhs.gov or Mathematica and The Adjacent Possible at ProjectIMPROVE@mathematica-mpr.com.

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