

Asking Key Questions:
A Legislator's Guide to Using Performance Information
Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

Basic questions to ask agencies in budget and program review hearings:

1. What is your program (or agency) mission? Who are your customers?
2. How is this program expected to help the state's citizens? Which citizens?

Performance Outcomes

3. What key results are expected from this use of taxpayers' funds?
4. Did your program obtain the expected results in the most recent funding period?
5. What key performance indicators do you use to track progress in attaining these results?
6. What are the unintended impacts of the program, both positive and negative?
7. What have been the values for these indicators in the past years?
8. How do these compare to targets you established for the funds you received? Have any been unexpectedly good or unexpectedly poor?

Stakeholder Impact

9. For which citizen groups have the results been less than desired? (Examples: Groups by location, gender, income, age, race/ethnicity, disability, etc.)
10. If any targets were missed, why were those targets missed?
11. What is currently being done to improve deficiencies?

Budgetary Impact on Outcomes

12. What actions does your proposed budget include that would improve results?
13. How would results change if funding is increased by 5 percent? Decreased by 5 percent?
14. Which groups of citizens might benefit? Which might lose? To what extent?
15. What other programs and agencies are partners in producing desired results?