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Poverty and Evidence-Based Governance

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity

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Executive Summary

The brief history of the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) offers an opportunity to see how evidence-based policymaking works in practice — and within a large city government. Established in late 2006 to find new and effective ways to lift New York City residents out of poverty, CEO has been, from the start, more than an antipoverty agency. It is an ongoing experiment in governance, one that addresses a complex public problem through innovation, testing, and problem measurement. CEO offers an alternative policy process within government, where policy commitments are commensurate with the quality of evidence about their effects. Rather than relying on extensive planning of major initiatives — which may sometimes inhibit innovation, and which depends on forecasting policy effects under great uncertainty — CEO pilots new policy ideas and relies on actual feedback on their effects, including rigorous evaluations when appropriate.

CEO commissioned this report to describe and assess its role in city government and its contribution to the broad movement to promote evidence-based policymaking. The report was researched and written by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, the public policy research arm of the State University of New York, in collaboration with MEF Associates. To understand CEO's roles within New York City government and the national policy community, the Rockefeller/MEF team relied on over sixty interviews with CEO staff, other city officials, service providers, evaluation firms, national policy experts, and advocacy organizations, among others. The team also obtained and analyzed budget and program documents, as well as the many project evaluations and descriptions generated by CEO and its contractors and partner agencies since 2007. CEO reviewed drafts of the report for accuracy and compliance with its intended purpose. However, the findings and conclusions in this report are ours alone and do not represent the views or official positions of CEO.

CEO offers an alternative policy process within government, where policy commitments are commensurate with the quality of evidence about their effects.

The CEO Model in Brief

Much of the report discusses how CEO operates within the city government. We concluded that CEO is a serious effort to bring about "the advocacy of persistence in alternative reform efforts" within government, an ideal voiced by Donald T. Campbell in his classic 1969 article, "Reforms as Experiments." CEO is organized around a problem — poverty — rather than particular programs. It works with city agencies to elicit and develop new policy ideas to help New York residents escape poverty. Drawing on a flexible source of funding, it invests in pilot programs but offers no long-term commitment to the initiatives, so there is less resistance to rigorous efforts to estimate impacts or end programs that fail to show positive results. CEO evaluates all of the pilots, usually in a graduated manner, starting with program reviews and moving toward rigorous impact analyses, sometimes involving randomized control trials. CEO's responses to the reviews and evaluations of the pilots are typically flexible and collaborative, as they work with agencies to improve the program models, adjust their implementation, or decide whether the program is successful or not.

After implementation and evaluation of the pilots, the programs are judged successful if their evaluations show them to be effective and if the partner agencies are committed to the programs and willing to invest in their long-term sustainability. Successful programs may then be "baselined," which means that the funds used by CEO to support the pilot are transferred to the partner agency. CEO expects the partner agency to find additional funds in order to "scale up" the program to cover a much larger share of the target population.

In addition to these activities, CEO also tracks changes in poverty in New York City, using an innovative measure and methodology. CEO's poverty measure has been widely praised by policy and poverty experts, and it has led to the recent adoption at the federal level of a similar supplemental poverty measure by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Taken together, CEO's operations create an alternative policy process within city government, a process more accommodating than typical government processes to innovation, rigorous evaluation, cross-agency cooperation, and evidence-based choice. Instead of trying to predict the consequences of new programs even before they are tried, CEO moves the burden of information gathering and analysis from preimplementation to postimplementation. The critical policy choice is shifted from initial adoption of a program to the decision whether to continue and scale up a program — or, in some cases, modify the program model and try it again. Policy decisions thus depend on observation of a program rather than the many assumptions and analogies needed to predict the effects of a change in policy before its implementation. This approach suggests a new direction in public administration, away from extensive planning of major initiatives and toward a "trial and error" approach that builds up and modifies programs in response to rigorous evidence from their actual implementation.

Specific Conclusions

In addition to describing CEO's operations, this report reached the following conclusions:

1. CEO has developed programs or projects with twenty-seven city agencies since 2007. Partners have included many agencies that do not have explicit antipoverty goals, such as the Department of Consumer Affairs and the City University of New York.

2. CEO has helped bring about collaborations across agencies on innovative pilots, including many agencies that

had little or no direct involvement with each other in the past, such as the Department of Small Business Services and the Department of Probation.

3. Agency personnel typically view CEO staff members as responsive to agency ideas, as eliciting ideas, and not imposing them. For instance, many agency officials report that CEO staff act as "thought partners" in building on ideas that agency staff had considered or heard of, but had no prior opportunities to pursue.

4. A key resource of CEO was its proximity and connection with the Mayor's Office. Its placement under the deputy mayor for health and human services, who oversaw a wide range of agencies, and a widespread perception that the Center enjoyed the support of the mayor, were crucial in getting agencies to pay attention to CEO and its requests.

5. CEO's Innovation Fund is also an essential source of influence. It allows CEO to make investments in diverse pilots in the areas of workforce development, youth development, re-entry services, asset development, health and nutrition, and others. The flexibility of this funding is particularly attractive to city agencies, as most have little opportunity to try new program ideas, since their funding sources are typically committed to specific programs or restricted by federal or state regulations.

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6. CEO also gets leverage in dealing with city agencies from its reputation as technically proficient and intellectually honest. Its reputation is strengthened by its staff's expertise in evaluation methods, relevant policies, and history of frank reporting. It boosted its credibility in its first years by the release of its first poverty report, which showed poverty to be greater in New York City than the official federal measure indicated. Its reputation was also helped by the perception (found among many respondents) that former Mayor Bloomberg did not use CEO in a clearly political or partisan manner.

7. While cities do not typically integrate evaluation in government programs, CEO performs some type of evaluation for nearly all of its pilots. Its evaluations often begin in the early stages of implementation with program reviews, which assess compliance with the program model by examining enrollments, movements of individuals through program processes, and outcomes. Later evaluations gauge program impact. Some programs — such as the City University of New York Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (CUNY ASAP), NYC Justice Corps, Opportunity NYC, and Young Adult Internship Program — have been

evaluated using randomized control trials, but most have employed other research designs. In general, CEO has tailored its evaluation designs to what information is needed and feasible in particular circumstances — to tell CEO and partner agencies what they do not know already.

8. CEO uses the evidence it gathers in making funding and implementation decisions. It has terminated several programs found to be ineffective, and it has "baselined" other programs determined to be successful. Yet it has also made intermediate decisions at several points during the implementation and evaluation processes, including revisions in program models, changes in the use of performance measures, and changes in service providers.

9. In addition to baselining effective programs — which may then be "scaled up" by the partner city agencies — CEO has expanded the reach of successful programs by funding their implementation in several U.S. cities through its role as an intermediary under the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a grant awarded by the federal government's Corporation for National and Community Service.

10. CEO has also emphasized its role as an evidence-based, problem-focused entity by means of its innovative measure of poverty that, unlike the traditional federal measure, takes into account the many in-kind and tax benefits low-income individuals receive from government to boost income and reduce poverty. The measure also differs from the traditional measure by taking into account the costs of working (such as childcare and transportation) and out-of-pocket health care expenses. Finally, the CEO measure is based on updated assumptions regarding how low-income households spend their money, and it is adjusted to local differences in the costs of living. CEO's poverty measure and annual reports influenced the federal government to adopt a similar, supplemental measure of poverty. They also led to a 2013 amendment to the New York City Charter to require the mayor to issue an annual report on poverty, using CEO's methodology.

11. CEO has to date invested in sixty-two pilots. The largest share of programs (about one out of three) has been in the area of youth development. Other major categories of pilots have included prison re-entry services, workforce development, and asset development. Thus far, CEO has found that about an equal number of projects are successful (effective and supported by the partner agencies) and unsuccessful (not effective or not

supported). Other projects (slightly more than one-half of the sixty-two projects) are still being evaluated or were one-time initiatives not intended to be continued.

12. In general, CEO-commissioned evaluations found more of its asset development and workforce development programs to be successful than its youth development and re-entry services programs. Yet CEO has continued its search for effective youth development and re-entry programs.
13. CEO has also revised programs in light of its evaluations — maintaining the basic program model, but attempting to fix problems of implementation. One example is the Conditional Cash Transfer program, which has been simplified considerably. For instance, the program was revised before it was tried again as part of the SIF initiative: Greater emphasis was placed on explaining the program in order to make the incentives clearer to families.
14. CEO has helped to spread antipoverty goals among a wider range of city agencies, including higher education institutions (CUNY), Small Business Services, Consumer Protection, and Probation.
15. Still, CEO faces challenges. Some officials in city government, and some advocates, believe CEO's programs are too small to make real progress in reducing poverty. That view may reflect a misunderstanding of the role of pilots. Yet it also reflects a real concern about scaling up successful programs. "Scaling up" successful programs does not always happen, meaning that many effective programs still reach only a small share of the total population that would benefit from the programs' implementation. CEO has not fully overcome the difficulties in changing the major investments and operations of large city bureaucracies.
16. Overall, CEO does represent a unique type of governing institution, one that promotes a new kind of public administration — an approach that stresses experimentation, trial and error, and rigorous observation of program impacts before major policy commitments are made. This approach differs substantially from the more common one, which emphasizes extensive planning before implementation and ensuring compliance with plans — with much less emphasis on evaluation, feedback, and frequent adjustments.

"Scaling up" successful programs does not always happen, meaning that many effective programs still reach only a small share of the total population that would benefit from the programs' implementation.

Recommendations

The report ends with recommendations for CEO. They include: 1) measuring poverty-related problems more closely aligned with the types of programs CEO typically invests in; 2) piloting and evaluating administrative and other incremental changes in existing programs; 3) summarizing the broader findings from evaluations conducted by CEO and CEO-like entities, and discussing their implications for federal policies, including federal assistance; 4) working to promote CEO-like entities in other cities; and 5) playing a broader role in city government (i.e., outside poverty policies) in providing expertise in measuring problems, piloting innovative programs, evaluating, and/or partnering with private funders.

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Poverty and Evidence-Based Governance

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity

In his classic 1969 article, "Reforms as Experiments," Donald T. Campbell called for a new way of making public policy,

> in which we try out new programs designed to cure specific social problems, in which we learn whether or not these programs are effective, and in which we retain, imitate, modify, or discard them on the basis of apparent effectiveness....[1]

Campbell knew that real political institutions and public bureaucracies did not act this way. He observed that, new policies "are advocated as though they were certain to be successful." Honest skepticism about the effects of proposed measures was rare, in part because its expression would doom their enactment, and the system "cannot tolerate learning of failure." To overcome these barriers, he called for one "simple shift in political posture," a "shift from the advocacy of a specific reform to the advocacy of the seriousness of the problem, and hence to the advocacy of persistence in alternative reform efforts should the first one fail."

However, Campbell had little to say about how this "simple shift" can happen. Nor have many others addressed the difficulties of overcoming the political and institutional barriers to sustaining a persistent government effort to solve stubborn, complicated problems through rigorous trial and error. Urging governments to rely on and generate credible evidence and focus on problems begs the question of *how* they will overcome the tendencies to oversell initiatives, consider only marginal changes from current practices, restrict initiatives to those that fall wholly within agency "stovepipes," and avoid rigorous evaluations.

The brief history of the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) offers an opportunity to see how evidence-based problem solving might work in practice — and within a large city government. Established in 2006 to help find ways to lift people in New York City out of poverty, CEO from the start was more than an antipoverty agency. It was, and still is, an experiment in governance, one whose various parts fit together to create a system of innovation, testing, and analysis — all in service of the mission to reduce urban poverty.

As we explain below, CEO's activities and procedures in New York City government work together to create a different way of formulating and trying out policy ideas, a way that is more accommodating than traditional policy and administrative processes to generating and applying evidence to public decisions. In many respects, CEO is one approach to realizing Campbell's goal — "the advocacy of persistence in alternative reform efforts." CEO is organized around a problem rather than particular programs. It works with a wide variety of city agencies to elicit and develop new ideas for programs or policies. It runs small pilots with minimal political commitment, so there is less resistance to rigorous efforts to estimate impacts or end programs that fail to show significant and positive results. CEO, in sum, creates a trial policy process that can feed new, tested measures into the traditional policy process. There is no guarantee that the traditional policy processes will in fact draw from the successful innovations produced by CEO's operations. But there are multiple routes by which CEO-initiated innovations can be "scaled up" into major changes — and thus eventually lead to real progress in solving even as large a problem as urban poverty.

To understand the character and role of CEO and its place in the growing effort to increase the roles of innovation and evidence in making public policy, CEO officials asked the Rockefeller Institute of Government (RIG), the public policy research arm of the State University of New York, to study and report on its operations. To assist with the analysis, the Institute subcontracted with MEF Associates (MEF). RIG and MEF relied on interviews, program reviews and evaluations, budgets, annual reports, program data, and other information to understand how CEO worked and how it related to other parts of city government. Its sixty-two interviews included CEO staff, other city officials, external evaluators who worked on CEO projects, leaders of advocacy organizations, policy researchers, federal officials, and others involved with CEO over the years. An overview of the number of interviews and the types of people interviewed is in Appendix D. Throughout the report, quotations that are not clearly coming from a cited document are drawn from the interviews, and the type of individual is generally indicated. Interviews, with few exceptions, were not for attribution. We include quotations or paraphrases from interviews when we were able to confirm the basic points with statements by other interviewees or with documentary evidence.

I. CEO's Mission and Creation

The Center for Economic Opportunity was created in early 2006, at the start of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's second term, out of two closely connected developments. First, Mayor Bloomberg appointed Linda Gibbs to serve as deputy mayor for health and human services (New York City, Office of the Mayor, 2006). The new position was intended to provide an integrated, longer-term view to health and human services and bring the full range of city resources, a "whole city" approach, to bear on problems common among the agencies' varied clienteles. As deputy mayor, Gibbs oversaw the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Homeless Services, the Department of Correction, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Human Resources Administration, the Administration for Children's Services, and several other agencies. Gibbs' new position was part of an effort by the Bloomberg administration to streamline city agencies and integrate services addressing similar goals and clienteles yet divided by agency jurisdictions.[2]

Second, it was clear from the beginning that the central problem shared among these agencies was poverty. The Mayor's State of the City address on January 26, 2006, not only highlighted the poverty problem but also enlisted outside assistance to help solve it:

> Today I am committing to a major reduction in the number of children, women and men who live in poverty in this City over the next four years. To that end, this year, we'll launch a public-private task force … that will attack chronic unemployment and poverty in the homes and neighborhoods where the need is greatest.[3]

The task force soon became the Commission for Economic Opportunity, thirty-two civic leaders — led by Richard Parsons of Time Warner and Geoffrey Canada of the Harlem Children's Zone — asked to answer two questions: Who is being left behind and what can be done about it?

Rather than make specific policy recommendations, the Commission suggested a broad strategy for alleviating poverty. While acknowledging the complexity of poverty as a large-scale problem, members of the Commission recognized that New York City already had many agencies and programs in the public and private sectors that were aimed, at least in part, at reducing poverty. The Commission members reasoned that future efforts to reduce poverty should leverage existing resources and coordinate fragmented services. In its report, the Commission called for "a coordinated management strategy that cuts across administrative lines and joins together multiple agencies." It recommended developing better measures of poverty and economic opportunity, which could clarify problems and progress in the city. And it asked that initiatives be evaluated, using the "most rigorous methods feasible" (Commission for Economic Opportunity, 2006, 42). The Commission also encouraged the city to target people for whom marginal investments are most likely to reap significant rewards — specifically, the working poor, young adults, and families with young children.

However, the Commission's report, issued in September 2006, said little about which agency or organization would be responsible for directing these efforts. Determined not to let the Commission's recommendations languish on the shelf, Deputy Mayor Gibbs quickly established a new entity, the CEO, to put the Commission's recommendations into effect; and she appointed Veronica White to lead the new Center, which would operate out of the Mayor's Office. White's first task was to raise money from the city and private sources to support a staff and establish an "Innovation Fund" for new programs.

Rather than limit consideration of initiatives to those that fit within a single agency's jurisdiction or "stovepipe," CEO would work with multiple agencies and help them work together on crosscutting interventions when appropriate.

The goals of the new entity were to draw on the full range of resources or tools, private as well as public, to address poverty and economic opportunity issues. CEO was not viewed as a new agency in New York City government. It would not implement programs. This noncompetitive relationship with city agencies was essential in getting support from commissioners. CEO would instead supplement what the agencies did by measuring poverty and working with city agencies to advance the long-term goal of moving people out of poverty. It would work with line agencies to elicit new ideas — ideas that are "out of the norm," indeed, that "rattle the cage," in Deputy Mayor Gibbs' words. And rather than limit consideration of initiatives to those that fit within a single agency's jurisdiction or "stovepipe," CEO would work with multiple agencies and help them work together on crosscutting interventions when appropriate.

CEO would also arrange funding for pilot programs, either from its own "Innovation Fund" or from other sources. It would design and support evaluations of the pilots' impacts — and facilitate relationships between the agencies and external evaluators to ensure that the evaluations were well implemented. Finally, CEO would help interpret the evaluations of the pilot programs and determine which of them merit continuation and expansion, which programs should be modified, and which should be ended. If the programs were successful and warranted expansion, CEO would assist with funding.

II. CEO as an Alternative Policy Process

Taken individually, CEO's basic features are not new. Several state and local governments launched antipoverty initiatives in 2006 and 2007, typically commissions aimed at finding solutions that cut across agency and program "silos" (Levin-Epstein and Gorzelany, 2008). Efforts to make government more innovative and outcome-oriented have grown in recent years, particularly

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since the launch of the "New Public Management" reforms in New Zealand in 1984 and the Clinton administration's "National Performance Review" of 1993 (Kettl, 2005).

Rigorous (typically, random assignment) evaluations of demonstration programs in social policy date at least as far back as the mid-1970s, when the Supported Work evaluations were initiated; and they grew in number in the 1980s and 1990s with studies of the Work Incentive program, the Work/Welfare demonstration, and the AFDC waiver evaluations (Gueron and Rolston, 2013; Nathan, 2000, 111-25). Broader federal efforts to promote rigorous experimentation have emerged since 2000, notably the creation of the Institute of Education Sciences in 2002 (Easton, 2012) and, more recently, a series of memoranda issued by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to promote evidence-based initiatives and evaluation among federal agencies (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2012, 2013; Orszag, 2009).

Nor is CEO entirely unique within New York City. Its operations reflect several themes that ran through the Bloomberg administration: the drive for new ideas to solve urban problems; the acceptance, even embrace, of the risk of failure, which was viewed as inevitable when innovative ideas are tried; and the widespread use of metrics and analysis to evaluate the effects of changes, as well as measure the depth and scope of the problems to be addressed.

Yet CEO is unique in the way it combines these characteristics. CEO creates an alternative policy process within city government — a process more accommodating than typical government processes to innovation, rigorous evaluation, cross-agency cooperation, and evidence-based choice. That is, rather than trying to inject innovation, evidence, and integrated problem-solving into traditional government procedures, CEO constituted a new type of entity and set of processes to perform these functions — all in service of antipoverty goals. The products of these processes — innovative and tested programs — are then made available to be picked up and expanded by city agencies and diffused to other governments through a variety of dissemination activities, including replications in other cities.

A core component of CEO's approach is its routine use of comparatively small pilot programs, supported by a flexible funding source. The pilots spend less money and serve fewer people than citywide programs implemented by mainline agencies. In FY 2010, the median annual funding for twenty-five CEO-supported programs was $1.3 million. Four programs received more than $4 million in CEO support in FY 2010, while four others received less than $200,000.[4] The programs served between 100 and 2,000 people per year. Although CEO programs ranged widely in size, even the larger pilots were dwarfed by ongoing social programs in the city. Cash assistance programs (Family Assistance and Safety Net Assistance) in New York City, run by the Human Resources Administration (HRA), typically spent well over $100 million *per* *month*, while SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly Food Stamps) recipients numbered 1.9 million in October 2013.[5]

The pilots serve only a limited share of their target populations; usually they are implemented in just a few communities. The pilots are also small in a political/bureaucratic sense. Unlike most of the programs operated by city agencies, CEO programs are politically tentative — there is no firm commitment that the programs will continue beyond their trial period.

Because CEO's pilots are comparatively small, they can more easily overcome political, bureaucratic, and financial barriers to innovation, evaluation, and evidence-based action. Evaluations are easier to impose on pilots, since pilots do not yet have established constituencies — circumstances that not only make it easier to evaluate the programs but also to alter or end the programs if they are found to be ineffective. CEO is not asking agencies to evaluate their core programs — only time-limited, small-scale extensions of their activities, programs that are developed through discussions and negotiations among government officials, and that do not yet have strong political defenders.

Reliance on pilot programs contributes to innovation. Innovative pilot programs may be unusual and controversial in their design or origin. But since they are only pilots, city officials can downplay their significance and manage political reactions. Also, because less is at stake for the agencies when generating ideas for pilot initiatives, agency personnel may be more open to significant departures from their usual programs. In addition, because pilot programs cost much less than implementing a full-scale program, more programs may be funded through a flexible funding source outside the usual budgetary process. Flexible funding is critical because new budget items and policy initiatives typically require extensive up-front justifications and documentation of expected costs and benefits — requirements that can inhibit the adoption of truly innovative programs.

Because CEO pilots may be terminated if, after evaluation, they are found to be ineffective, there is less at stake when they are launched. Instead of trying to predict the consequences of new programs even before they are tried, CEO moves the burden of information gathering and analysis from preimplementation to postimplementation. The critical policy choice is shifted from initial adoption of a program to the decision whether to continue and scale up a program — or, in some cases, modify the program model and try it again. By moving the analyses and decisions further into the future, CEO's approach depends on actual observation of a program rather than the slew of assumptions and analogies needed to predict the effects of a change in policy prior to its implementation.[6] This approach recognizes the uncertainty surrounding the effects of new programs, particularly innovative ones that have little or no evidence base to draw on. The result is a policy process that relies less on prediction and more on successive, well-structured assessments — a process that leads to more learning and more opportunities for innovative ideas.

The process does not necessarily end with innovation and learning. If a program is found to be successful, it may be "baselined," in which case funds used by CEO to conduct the pilot are turned over to the agency via the city's budget process to support the program's continuation. *If* additional funds can be found, the program may also be expanded to include more recipients, such as all target recipients in New York City, a process called "scaling up." The additional resources may be federal, state, or city funds — or perhaps private resources if some public-private partnership can be worked out. Agencies have a fair amount of discretion over how to use the baselined resources from CEO's budget (at least after the first year), so CEO emphasizes supporting programs that already have political support within the agency — that is, programs that the agency wants to carry out. CEO thus becomes a means by which agencies can test favored ideas and move them towards citywide implementation if they appear to be effective, and if funding and other critical resources are available for expansion.

The measure and the report also clarify CEO's special role — as an entity dedicated to solving a persistent, widespread, complex *problem*, not an agency committed to particular solutions or programs.

CEO also spreads successful programs and ideas across the nation. It disseminates its findings through reports, conferences, its Web site, and other means to a national audience of professional researchers and public officials. Through a grant from the federal government, it supports and oversees the replication of some of its more promising programs in major cities across the U.S.[7] It has developed and refined its widely lauded and innovative poverty measure, which greatly improves on the traditional federal measure by including more comprehensive and accurate estimates of household income and costs (New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, 2013b). The poverty measure and CEO's estimation methods have been replicated in several other cities and was recently adopted by the U.S. Census Bureau as an official, supplemental poverty measure (Short, 2012). These activities outside New York City are not incidental byproducts of CEO's strategy but an important extension of it, premised on the assumption that urban poverty must be addressed by the federal government, with its considerable financial resources, before poverty can be greatly reduced.

Finally, CEO's poverty measure and its annual poverty report for New York City help identify the effects of a variety of public programs on poverty and rely on more reasonable assumptions about the costs of living and working than those that undergird the old federal poverty measure. Yet the measure and the report also clarify CEO's special role — as an entity dedicated to solving a persistent, widespread, complex *problem*, not an agency committed to (and as Campbell saw it, "trapped" by) particular solutions or programs.

In sum, CEO supports innovative thinking and the use of evidence within traditional public bureaucracies by establishing a separate, preliminary, and collaborative policy process within the city's executive branch. The process typically starts with agencies collectively identifying an innovative approach to a poverty-related problem; trying it out in a limited way; using the pilot's experience (rigorously observed through evaluations) to estimate the program's impact; and, if the program appears to successful, moving the program toward broader adoption and implementation in New York City and elsewhere.

III. The Elements of CEO

Certain features of CEO are particularly important in making this process of incremental, evidence-based innovation feasible. Its position within city government and distinctive roles and capabilities help it work well with a wide variety of agencies. Its access to discretionary funding for innovative pilots creates new opportunities for agencies to try new initiatives and take greater risks. CEO's emphasis and expertise in collecting and using evidence on the performance and impacts of programs incorporates analysis and evidence in the routine development of new programs.

CEO in City Government

Making change in government is hard, especially when the change is intended to address a large-scale and complex problem like poverty. Local governments face many constraints in efforts to change what they do and how they do it: federal and state funding rules, legal directives, civil service regulations, and chronically outdated information systems. Rigid government bureaucracies "operate with command-and-control procedures, narrow work restrictions, and inward-looking cultures" and they are "particularly ill-suited to addressing problems that often transcend organizational boundaries" (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004, 7). To overcome these barriers, the typical recommendation in the U.S. in recent years is to contract out functions to private firms and reap the benefits of their flexibility and responsiveness. Private firms are not subject to the same constraints as public organizations and they can more readily respond to competitive pressures with innovative responses.

Privatization, however, is no panacea. If the aim is to influence how the vast apparatus of government deals with major problems, private agencies may be unable to develop the long-term relationships of trust and understanding with public agencies needed to work with them effectively. Interactions between public and private agencies may be constrained by procurement and contracting regulations as well as data confidentiality issues. And private agencies may not have the political strength to influence large, powerful government agencies.

CEO is emphatically a part of city government. Yet it is not a traditional city agency but an organization specially located, charged, and staffed to leverage the power of New York City government to solve poverty-related problems using innovation and evidence. It can work with a wide variety of city agencies and establish good relationships with agency personnel; it can share information with agencies in a flexible way; and, because it is located in the Mayor's Office, it can draw on the power of that association when working with agencies.

Indeed, CEO has worked with twenty-seven agencies since 2007. Most of these city agencies saw social welfare goals as part of their missions, though many of them were not typically viewed as "poverty agencies." For example, the city's Department of Consumer Affairs collaborated with CEO in creating the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE), an office designed to help low-income New Yorkers manage their finances, link them to financial counselors, help them get out of debt, open a bank account, and access tax credits for which they're eligible. CEO also worked with the Department of Small Business Services to develop and pilot Community Partners, a program that links jobseekers known to community-based organizations to appropriate job placement services in the public workforce system.

Many times CEO has worked on programs involving multiple agencies. One example is Employment Works, a program in which the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) helps to place persons on probation — referred to them by the Department of Probation — in jobs and gives them educational, training, and other services aimed at preparing probationers for long-term employment. Another example is Jobs-Plus, which provides comprehensive place-based employment services for public housing residents, and which joins the Human Resources Administration, the Housing Authority, and the City University of New York.

Even when it did not help develop specific programs, CEO fostered new relationships across agencies. According to one executive, CEO allowed the agency to "build independent relationships with the Department of Homeless Services and HRA.... CEO helped us get our foot in the door because of their relationship with other agencies which allowed us to develop our own relationships." Similarly, an agency executive said that CEO makes it possible for city officials "to be in the family with agencies we never worked with before, sharing data, trying pilots, getting the data we need [can] help mainstream poverty issues."

CEO's goal is not only to connect agencies around specific programs but also build common understandings — including new ideas and influences — of the problems and solutions among agencies. According to one agency executive, CEO "showed us evaluation, data, and had a third party push on outcomes." The result is a more tightly integrated and cohesive network. For those on the front lines of poverty reduction, "CEO's goal has been to create a community" among providers where "increased opportunities for networking creates a feeling of connectedness."

Most ideas for CEO programs come from the mainstream city agencies. Several agency officials characterized CEO staff as "thought partners," as people who can "bat around ideas" that agency staff had considered or heard of, but had had no prior opportunities to pursue. According to an official at SBS, they had been "percolating a number of ideas" before talking with CEO, so when they were approached by the Office's staff, "It wasn't hard for us to put together a list of things we wanted to try," from sector-based centers to a work advancement program, community partners, and a NYC training guide. Working with CEO staff offered "a lot of back and forth" that gave the SBS "creative freedom on our part to do things and experiment [with] things that were cutting edge in the area of workforce development."

At times, however, CEO has looked outside NYC government for ideas, as they did with the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs. These programs offered needy families cash assistance when they completed benchmarks for children's education, family health, or parents' employment. CCT programs had been tried, evaluated, and found to be effective in other nations, particularly in Mexico (Riccio, et al. 2010). But they had not been tried and evaluated in the U.S. In this case, CEO had to help create an administrative apparatus for implementing the program — which it did for one of the programs (Family Rewards) by assigning responsibilities to a large, national nonprofit service organization and a group of neighborhood partner organizations.

CEO's capacity to work with so many agencies and connect ideas and people is facilitated by its position and role in government.

CEO's capacity to work with so many agencies and connect ideas and people is facilitated by its position and role in government. First, it distinguishes itself from mainstream agencies by not implementing programs. By focusing on the problem (i.e., poverty) and working with line agencies to identify, test, and refine solutions that the agencies implement, CEO poses less of a threat to agencies' control over their own functional areas. Also, by avoiding direct implementation responsibilities, CEO reserves its staff resources for activities that add capacity to city government and service providers. As one provider noted, CEO provided "real technical assistance as opposed to contract monitoring." Its "collaborative" and "intellectual" approach not only offered "the space to innovate" but also the flexibility to make program changes sensitive to new information (such as the need for a longer program orientation for program participants). Yet CEO's oversight role and control over funding also give it leverage to ensure that things get done, even when multiple agencies are involved.

Second, CEO benefited from its proximity and connection with the mayor. When it was located in the Mayor's Office and enjoyed the personal support of the mayor and deputy mayor, agencies were particularly attentive to CEO.[8] One agency official who was asked by CEO to consider serving a constituency the agency had not dealt with before perceived the request as coming "from City Hall," that is, as a mayoral directive. A top agency executive observed, "The power of CEO is in its proximity to the Mayor's Office. We [agency personnel] do a lot of things. We affect a lot of people's lives. But we're one step away from the political power."

The identification with the mayor and his team goes beyond CEO's organizational location. The mayor's public statements about government and poverty strengthen the connection. As one service provider noted, "I can speak to my perception and how I think a lot of other people see CEO.… You know Mayor Bloomberg and Deputy Mayor Gibbs took a pretty hardnosed approach.… [N]ot just doe-eyed liberal … [but] let's be pragmatic about this, let's be results driven, let's be targeted." CEO's functions and activities are thus reinforced and strengthened by the mayor's demands for new ideas, risk-taking, and metrics to test those ideas. The mayor made it clear that he realized new ideas do not always succeed. What is important is learning what works and what does not. One implication of that goal is that learning, and thus analysis, must be as accurate, credible, and objective. As one commissioner noted,

> One of their [CEO's] strengths is that Bloomberg doesn't use CEO for political purposes. It's not a political arm of the mayor's office with a political agenda. So they have this sort of apolitical aspect.… It's a bipartisan, neutral force without being caught up in the political push and pull.

One early demonstration of this emphasis on evidence rather than political calculations was the administration's publication of the first report on poverty in New York City (New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, 2008). The report uses a measure that corrects many weaknesses of the official federal poverty measure, including a higher poverty threshold and a more inclusive resource measure. The CEO poverty measure showed a higher level of poverty in the city than the traditional federal indicator. But despite the political problems that such a finding would present, the report was issued anyway. As one respondent noted, "the mayor didn't flinch" and the report was published. Once the administration was "convinced that we're counting things [i.e., needs and resources], it was like … the chips fall where the chips fall." CEO thus began building a reputation for credible, careful analysis and reporting that is not dominated by political considerations.

Third, CEO benefits greatly from the capabilities of its staff. The staff is small, less than twenty people,[9] but they include many people with advanced degrees and extensive skills and experience with measurement and evaluation — as well as knowledge of poverty programs and issues. They tend to be younger than most agency staff and are more involved in national and international conferences and discussions of poverty and policies. As one city official noted, CEO staff are "more world and national conscious.… And they are also more academic and more intellectual so they spend more time with that crowd [evaluation and research organizations, such as MDRC, Brookings, and national political leaders]."[10]

Yet CEO staff and leadership offer more than academic thinking. CEO's place in government is in some respects an attempt to solve the "two community" problem, i.e., the idea that "researchers and policy makers constitute two different communities," communities that differ in language, time horizon, responsiveness to constituencies, written versus spoken communication, concern for the validity of evidence, and many other behaviors and attitudes (Weiss, et al., 2008, 33).[11]

By putting a research shop in the center of city government, New York City attempts to break down this traditional division. The separation is further eroded by CEO's engagement with agencies throughout the policy process, including its staff's troubleshooting role in helping agencies deal with problems of implementation, such as weaknesses in the program model, incapacities among service providers, or problems in working with other agencies. Although most CEO staff and leaders have strong research backgrounds and connections with others in the research community, they often develop strong relationships with line agencies, as both CEO and agencies work for the same mayor, are subject to the same budget cycles, and struggle together to solve the same problems of implementation and understanding.

CEO's place in government is in some respects an attempt to solve the "two community" problem, i.e., the idea that "researchers and policy makers constitute two different communities."

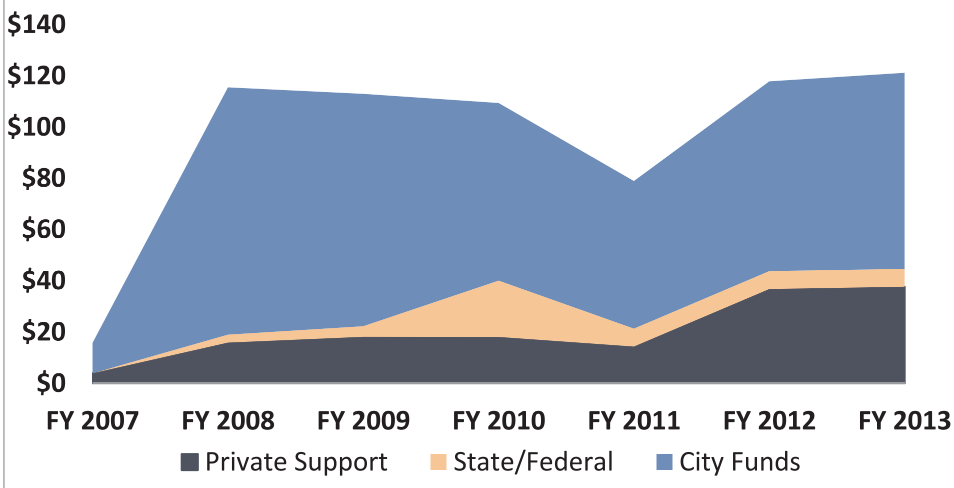
For example, our interviews uncovered considerable testimony from agency employees that CEO staff work hard to understand agencies' needs and are helpful in developing policy ideas, arranging external or internal funding, designing evaluations, establishing metrics to monitor performance, and performing other critical management functions. These extensive and mutually helpful interactions between CEO staff and agency officials appear to have led to trusting relationships between researchers and program staff, a critical condition for implementing program evaluations in the public sector (Taut and Alkin, 2003).

Investments in Innovation

The relationships between CEO staff and agency personnel are developed most of all as they work together in formulating and implementing pilot programs. Rather than shifting governance from the public to private sector — as the U.S. version of the New Public Administration argues for (Kettl, 2005, 360-2) — CEO attempts to reproduce market flexibility and innovation *within* government through the strategic deployment of its financial investments. CEO's Innovation Fund allows the government to invest in new ideas, test their effectiveness, and end unsuccessful initiatives before they are institutionalized within government.[12]

Based on a private-sector model, program funds are allocated to the Innovation Fund rather than specific programs in particular agencies. CEO's job is to manage the Innovation Fund to spark innovation — to give agencies a financial incentive to consider new programs or ways of doing business — and make decisions based on evaluations of which programs work. Between FY 2008 and FY 2013, CEO's Innovation Fund hovered at over $100 million. CEO's budget comes from city, federal, and state governments, and private dollars. Drawing on CEO's own budget data, Figure 1

Figure 1. CEO's Innovation Fund (in millions of dollars)



Source: Author's analysis of budget data provided by CEO.

compares the size of each of these funding streams. Between FY 2008 and FY 2013, CEO received an annual average of 71 percent of its financial resources from city funds, 22 percent from private support, and 8 percent from state and federal governments.[13] After the economic downturn in 2007 and 2008, CEO's support from city dollars declined, but private investment grew.

CEO's budget is not large relative to other NYC agencies. By comparison, HRA, the major human services agency in New York City, had a budget of more than $8 billion in 2008 and 2009.[14] What's critical for CEO's impact is *how* it uses this funding. CEO presents city agencies with the opportunity to experiment with new ideas — some of which the agencies have wanted to try out but have not had the opportunities to do so. For example, in 2006, the Department of Small Business Services planned to recruit more qualified job applicants by linking the work of community-based organizations to the needs of the city's workforce centers (Community Partners Program). Ideally, the department wanted to hire outreach workers at the Workforce1 Centers to better coordinate efforts between city agencies and community organizations. But the existing federal funding stream of SBS, the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), imposed constraints on how funds could be used, hampering innovation. According to one agency representative,

> We knew it could work if we had a staff dedicated to this and we could then use scarce WIA dollars to integrate. But we could not use WIA dollars before we knew it would work. That's where CEO stepped in.... [T]hey said, 'let's try it.' And that's exactly what we did. CEO funded it, had sole responsibility for a year and a half. And when it was clear that it worked, we were comfortable enough to use WIA dollars. We didn't want to experiment with WIA funds until we knew what the performance outcomes would be.

As a testament to its success, the Community Partners Program generated 5,000 partner placements in 2011, or 20 to 25 percent of the agency's total placement outcomes. Moreover, one service provider indicated, and several others agreed, that the program has been integrated into their way of doing business.

CEO's financial resources allow for increased innovation in part because there are fewer strings attached.

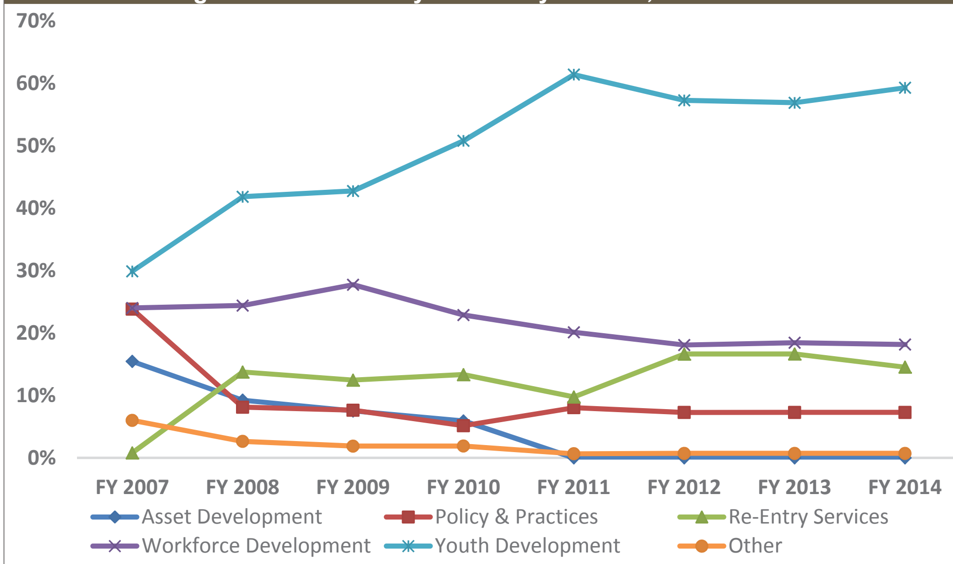
Some agencies looked at CEO and the Innovation Fund as an opportunity to expand in ways they had not previously considered. Officials at the Department of Consumer Affairs, for example, reached out to nonprofits, banks, and residents to understand how people receive their wages, pay their bills, save, and the reasons they do or do not have bank accounts. This work led to the creation of several programs aimed at increasing the financial literacy of low-income people. CEO also introduces innovative ideas from other locales, such as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs, which were based on Oportunidades, a government social assistance program in Mexico (Riccio, 2010a). Adapting CCT to New York City is a good example of how CEO uses its funds to innovate from *ideas* as well as from *agencies.* As one policy expert noted, "With CCT, we started with an idea, not an agency. [CEO] had the knowledge and expertise across city government and the authority to engage them.… They can advance an idea. Identify the right agencies and engage them. They knew who to bring to the table and they could get them to the table. CCT probably wouldn't have happened without CEO. They helped in the development, implementation, and testing of these programs."

CEO's financial resources allow for increased innovation in part because there are fewer strings attached. As one agency executive explained, "With CEO, the funding is flexible. With WIA funding there is a sequence of services. But with CEO there is a lot of flexibility to do different things, like starting an internship program. You can't do that with WIA funding, it's not an allowable cost." Indeed, many of the agency representatives we spoke to said that funding from CEO allowed them to improve service delivery through the identification, implementation, and evaluation of new ideas. Moreover, funding flexibility, combined with CEO's "thoughtful" staff and "less bureaucratic" structure, makes CEO "dramatically different" from other funders. According to one policy expert:

> They stay focused on substance and on goal and they're very informed about the larger field in which this work is being done. They can put us in touch with people.… Foundations can sometimes be that way but government ends up so constrained by procurement restrictions and conditions that go along with funding streams that it's all about performance, whatever the template is. [Governments do not offer] a dynamic, robust *let's think about what we're doing and what we're learning*. There's no room for government to do innovative stuff. You can't go to them with an idea and get funding for it. It just doesn't happen like that anymore.

One consequence of CEO's flexibility in funding has been the diversity of projects it has supported — as well as its capacity for change. CEO has supported and provided active oversight and evaluation for over sixty pilots since 2007. The types of programs

Figure 2. Share of City Dollars By Domain, FYs 2007-14



Source: Authors' analysis of budget data provided by CEO

have ranged widely across the areas of workforce development, asset development, youth development, re-entry services, and other government policies designed to improve the quality of life for low-income families. Drawing on CEO's own budget data, Figure 2 shows the share of city dollars that CEO spent across programs out of its total city-dollar spending for each fiscal year from 2007 to 2014. The portfolio has changed over time, as more funding has gone to youth development and re-entry services and somewhat less to workforce development programs. There are many reasons for these changes. Some of the workforce development programs, for example, were found to be successful and baselined to their agencies, while new resources became available for youth programs via the Young Men's Initiative from the city and private foundations.[15] What is striking, however, for a government entity is the wide range of programs under CEO's purview and its capacity to shift its agenda quickly — capabilities made possible in part by its flexible funding.

CEO's role in funding also extends to raising funds from external sources. Our interviews with funders suggested that CEO, from their perspective, has been more than just another city agency. It has centralized and streamlined processes for funding programs and has increased confidence in public-private partnerships. Private funders have long invested in programs to alleviate poverty in New York City. But prior to CEO, they did not have direct relationships with city agencies. One funder explained that they would talk to agency representatives, but there was "no direct mechanism to fund in tandem with public sector projects." Public-private partnerships were arranged through community-based organizations rather than with city government directly. The Mayor's Fund for the Advancement of New York City helped facilitate such partnerships by cutting through bureaucracy and encouraging private fund raising. However, CEO improved upon the situation by working more closely with funders to assure them that the projects would be innovative and accountable. A foundation official said that CEO put a "finer and more specific point on what a specific enterprise would look like." CEO "was a more deliberate program developer, implementer, and evaluator." One agency executive pointed out that fund raising around its program was made easier due to CEO's involvement. In brief, just as it linked the research community and government agencies, CEO also helped connect agencies and private funders.

Generating Evidence

If credible evidence is to carry weight in policy decisions, such evidence must exist. Yet strong, informative evaluations are uncommon. In a 2013 report, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that only 37 percent of federal agencies in a government-wide survey had evaluated *any* of their programs within the past five years (U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), 2013). And though federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and foundations have encouraged governments to conduct rigorous evaluations, particularly in the last decade, one of the most prominent such organizations, the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, still looks back to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) waiver evaluations of the 1990s and early 2000s as the last time when strong evaluations were widespread and informative (Baron, 2013, 2).

Many reasons may account for the absence of rigorous research on program effectiveness. The GAO report found that the most common explanation cited by agency officials was a lack of resources. Evaluations can be costly. This is especially true of the "gold standard" for impact evaluations — "randomized control trials" (RCTs), in which random assignment is used to establish the counterfactual against which the effect of some policy or program is judged. Impact evaluations, especially RCTs, can also take several years to complete; a mayor or commissioner who approved the evaluation may be long gone when the results come in. Finally, public officials often do not trust evaluators — a circumstance that makes it hard to implement an evaluation (Taut and Alkin, 2003).

Political calculations also inhibit evaluations. Politicians are not eager to authorize funding for an evaluation that might prove their arguments for enacting the program were wrong. Agency heads are concerned that studies showing even one their programs to be ineffective might be viewed by top officials as evidence that the agencies' overall efforts merit less funding. Also, many evaluations are not useful for future policy decisions: the evaluations often offer little guidance to government officials about *why* an intervention does (or does not) produce a significant impact. Some programs have many attributes, and it's unclear from the evaluation about which attributes generated the impact. In addition, some evaluations do not measure the program's implementation, making it hard to know whether negative results were due to the program model or the failure of the government to fully implement that model.

However, CEO overcomes most of these barriers. First, a core component of CEO's model is its commitment to evaluate the impact or performance of *all* of its pilot programs. Evaluation designs and

Funders were more comfortable partnering with the city than they had been in the past, given CEO's intermediary role, which assures funders that their money goes to programs that produce results, new knowledge, or both.

measures are often planned before a program is implemented, a sequence that helps to ensure that the correct data are collected from the start and appropriate comparison groups, if used, are observed. The early commitment to evaluate also helps deal with the politics of evaluation. In most programs supported by CEO, there is no question about whether evaluation will occur — only about its design, criteria, and timing. And the commitment to evaluate precedes the accumulation of other commitments that inhibit evaluation — such as the hiring of staff, advocacy defense of the program, or the emergence of a vocal constituency that relies on the program's services.

Second, CEO leverages funding to support evaluations that are otherwise too expensive for city government. Few federal and state grants provide significant funds for evaluations. As one policy expert noted, there is a limited pot of money from which to draw and CEO's financial support has been critical in meeting the high cost of good evaluations. Service providers told us that CEO's ability to provide resources also made it possible for them to deal with the cost and complexity of helping to implement high quality evaluations.

Although CEO has used its Innovation Fund for some of its evaluation work, its emphasis on evidence has led to stronger and more trusting relationships with external funders, some of whom then help underwrite the evaluations by means of grants to the Mayor's Fund, which can accept private donations for city programs. Funders were more comfortable partnering with the city than they had been in the past, given CEO's intermediary role, which assures funders that their money goes to programs that produce results, new knowledge, or both. One funder noted that, in addition to the impact findings associated with the CCT program, the project produced more robust data on family poverty indicators in the city. "It [the evaluation] took a look at how families were operating and experiencing school, access to health care, and other things that Opportunity NYC was trying to influence." More generally, funders noted that CEO, and its place within the city's bureaucracy, brought rigorous evaluation to the city in a short period of time in a way that would not have happened otherwise. It started to build a broader organizational culture of evaluation within city government.

Third, CEO provides enormous assistance in arranging and managing the evaluations — and ensuring some level of trust and understanding between agencies and evaluators. The Center works with agencies to identify metrics for measuring the program's impact; develop appropriate research designs; and determine when a program is ready for evaluation. CEO prescreens the outside evaluators to ensure that there is always a ready pool; the most frequently used firms are MDRC, Metis, and Westat. Evaluations are typically carried out through partnerships between the firms and CEO. CEO's good relationships with these firms, as well as the agencies, allow Center staff to facilitate relations between city agencies and evaluators and build confidence in the evaluation and challenges as they come up during the evaluations. One evaluator noted during an interview that CEO "can advance an idea, identify the right agencies, and engage them. They knew who to bring to the table and they could get them to the table" — critical yet difficult tasks for external evaluators.

Fourth, CEO offers flexibility in the types of evaluations it arranges. Its evaluations vary widely in design. CEO staffers reported that decisions about how and when to conduct evaluations are based on three criteria: the Center's level of investment, the timing of expected outcomes, and what is known in the field. More than one CEO employee said they designed their analyses and evaluations to learn "what they don't already know." Some programs — such as the City University of New York Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (CUNY ASAP), NYC Justice Corps, Opportunity NYC, and Young Adult Literacy Program (YALP) — have used randomized control trial designs to estimate impacts. Others — including SaveNYC, Advance at Work, Community Partners Program, Employment Works, and Teen Action — have relied on quasiexperimental or other nonrandom research designs to assess effectiveness. In some cases, CEO assessed only elements of the programs, such as analyses of tax data on participation in the Child Care Tax Credit or focus groups in the MillionTreesNYC Training Program.

CEO is also flexible in its responses to new information over time. CEO's approach to most programs is to start with program reviews that summarize the early performance of a program by examining how it is implemented, how many clients it serves, what kinds of clients participate, and how many clients complete various parts of the program.[16] If a program is not doing well in its early stages, based on performance monitoring, CEO may simply decide not to invest in an evaluation. However, CEO sometimes decides that poor performance may be fixed. One employment program for persons in the criminal justice system (Justice Corps) showed higher recidivism rates than expected in an early assessment. But rather than judging the program model to be a failure, CEO worked with program personnel to find outside experts and evidence on how the program might be modified to get better results.

Overall, CEO does what few other public entities have done: They have evaluated, at some level, nearly every program they have supported. They can do this in part because it is their standard operating procedure — and the expectation is linked to the financing of the pilots. It is also easier to evaluate the programs because the pilots are small and new, without strong political backers. There is little outside pressure to avoid honest and rigorous evaluation. And CEO overcomes other widespread barriers to evaluation by providing financial support for the analyses, by facilitating and smoothing relationships between evaluators and agencies, and by responding to findings in a flexible way, which may include fixing a program instead of ending it.

Acting on Evidence

Once programs are evaluated, CEO attempts to replicate and expand those that are most successful. CEO defines a program as successful when it meets three criteria:

1. It must show that it works effectively as an antipoverty approach by demonstrating significant participant impacts relevant to an appropriate comparison group.
2. The partner agency for the program must show its ongoing commitment to the program by integrating the program and/or similar strategies into other agency activities.
3. The agency must take steps to ensure the program's long-term sustainability by dedicating additional government and/or private funding to support the program.

After programs are declared successful, CEO generally turns control of the program and its funding to the agency responsible for its implementation, a process called baselining.

After programs are declared successful, CEO generally turns control of the program and its funding to the agency responsible for its implementation, a process called baselining. (CEO's budget is then reduced by the same amount.) The agency is then required to spend the new funds on the program for the first year. After that, the agency may continue the program or keep the funds and use them for some other purpose. The long-term flexibility given to the agency in using the funds is one reason why CEO counts agency commitment to the program as a major criterion for success.

Once CEO declares programs successful and baselined, city agencies are expected to scale them up to cover a larger share of the target population. CUNY ASAP is one example of how a successful program can be grown by city agencies after it leaves CEO. CUNY ASAP was designed to bolster community college graduation rates throughout New York City by providing eligible students with increased academic, social, and financial support services. After three years of operation, the program exceeded its graduation targets and was declared successful by CEO in 2010. Following the release of an evaluation showing strong impacts (Linderman and Kolenovic, 2009), members of CUNY's Central Office of Academic Affairs ASAP team decided to broaden the program's eligibility criteria in the fall of 2009 to see if the program could be equally effective for less academically prepared students. More recently, in October 2011, then CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein announced a plan to scale up the program from 1,300 students to over 4,000 by 2014 using CUNY funding. According to CUNY ASAP's Web site, 1,567 new students were recruited across all six participating community colleges in August 2012 and 1,800 additional students were recruited for fall 2013.

Jobs-Plus provides another example of how CEO relies on its experience with programs and the resulting evidence base to determine which of its successful programs to bring to scale and how. Jobs-Plus originated as a national demonstration project that tested intensive employment services for public housing residents in six cities between 1998 and 2003. Initially evaluated by MDRC for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, MDRC's study found strong impacts in three of the sites included in the demonstration (Bloom, et al., 2005; Riccio, 2010b). Based on these findings, MDRC encouraged CEO to test Jobs-Plus in a single-site pilot in New York (using city funds) and, soon afterwards, two additional sites (using federal funds, namely, the Social Innovation Fund (SIF); more on SIF below). The success of the program led to CEO-facilitated conversations with the commissioners of Human Resources Administration (HRA), Small Business Services (SBS), and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) about "scaling up" Jobs-Plus to more NYC sites..

The conversations among the commissioners, evaluators, and CEO staff focused on the use of performance-based contracts to monitor implementation. While performance-based contracts are routinely used by HRA to achieve target outcomes (Desai, Garabedian, and Snyder 2012), CEO pointed out that the initial Jobs-Plus program generated impacts without them, and that the complexity of such contracts might diminish the program's overall effectiveness. In the end, HRA agreed that only 40 percent of the contracts entered into through Jobs-Plus would be performance-based. This CEO-facilitated collaboration across city agencies, combined with evidence from a pre-existing impact evaluation, thus resulted in modifications in the standard operating procedures of a large city agency. Following positive experiences with small scale replication, CEO has now expanded the program to seven new sites throughout the city.[17]

If pilots do not work, or do not have the results hoped for, CEO may cut off funding. CEO funding for some programs has sometimes ended when the pilot failed to meet performance targets — such as Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO), a one-on-one mentoring and group counseling program for young inmates to be released from Rikers Island.[18] CEO is phasing out its funding to CUNY Prep, a program aimed at helping out-of-school youth and adults get their GEDs and enter and remain in college, due in part to the failure of many clients to remain in college after a couple of semesters (New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, 2013a, 19). Youth Financial Empowerment, which offered financial education workshops to young people aging out of foster care, was also ended after it became clear that few participants had opened savings accounts.

Sometimes programs are ended because the circumstances that originally justified them have changed. Nursing Career Ladders was discontinued after the recession reduced hiring in the health care labor market and there was no longer a nursing shortage. MillionTreesNYC, a program that helped prepare unemployed, out-of-school youth for green jobs, was ended in 2012 because employment demands in the field had tapered off. Finally, in some cases, pilots were not expected to continue from the start. The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs, for instance, were, according to CEO staff, never intended to be baselined or scaled up in NYC government; they were one-shot endeavors that simply ran their course (though they were implemented in modified form as SIF programs).

As already noted, CEO can take intermediate steps between declaring a program successful and cutting off funding. It can and often does respond to program reviews, implementation studies, and evaluations to build better programs.[19] While, for instance, Family Rewards, one of the CCT programs, was terminated in its original form, the program model was modified in light of findings from prior evaluations and is now being tested in its revised form in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Bronx as part of SIF. The new model responded directly to the evaluation findings by modifying the target populations, simplifying the incentives, and boosting the advertising efforts for participating families. In another program, a provider we interviewed noted frustration with a program that generated poor outcomes. Working with CEO, however, the provider developed an alternative model that addressed challenges faced by participants (e.g. frequent court appointments, childcare issues, and transportation problems). The respondent reported that changes to the program model, including a shorter intern requirement and a less strict attendance policy, led to improved outcomes in recruitment, retention, and placement in subsidized employment.

CEO can take intermediate steps between declaring a program successful and cutting off funding.

Successful (or promising yet flawed programs, as in the case of Family Rewards) can be extended beyond New York City via the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), as already noted. SIF grants are awarded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service to "intermediaries." Between 2010 and 2012, CEO, in collaboration with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, was the only government selected as a grantee. Intermediaries like CEO award the federal dollars (which are matched by the nonprofits or their funders), oversee the implementation of the programs, and arrange rigorous evaluations. With a dual focus on increasing nonprofit capacity and building on existing evidence as to what works, SIF enabled CEO to increase its national visibility by participating in a high profile initiative of the Obama administration. SIF also provided CEO with the opportunity and resources to introduce some of its successful antipoverty initiatives to other cities, including Kansas City (Missouri), Memphis (Tennessee), Newark (New Jersey), Cleveland (Ohio), San Antonio (Texas), and Tulsa (Oklahoma).[20] As one CEO staffer pointed out, receiving the SIF grant was important because it helped "to show that what works in New York can work elsewhere." It also highlighted CEO's larger strategy: identifying and diffusing effective antipoverty programs across the nation, as a way of building a broader coalition of political support for national action on evidence-based practices.

CEO thus not only reviews and evaluates programs. It acts on its findings. It works with agencies and providers to modify program models or improve their implementation when early results are mixed; it ends funding when evaluations or other observations suggest that the basic program model is flawed; and CEO baselines programs that it finds to be successful. In a few cases, CEO is even spreading its own programs to other U.S. cities and testing whether their findings are robust in other sites.

Measuring the Problem: The Poverty Measure

The core of CEO's mission is highlighted by one of its most widely lauded activities, its annual report on the size and characteristics of the poverty population in New York City (New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, 2013b). In one of its first tasks after its establishment in 2006, CEO quickly responded to the Commission on Economic Opportunity's recommendation to develop a more accurate and policy-relevant measure of poverty. The traditional federal poverty measure failed to identify groups of people who did, or did not, benefit from existing policies and practices (Iceland and Bauman 2007; Mayer and Jencks 1989; Short 2005; Sullivan, Turner, and Danziger 2008). To rectify the situation, CEO began working on an alternative measure in 2007 based on the 1995 recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). The NAS recommendations called for a measure that would more accurately depict who is living in poverty and capture the effects of government programs on poverty (Citro and Michaels, 1995).

According to one national policy expert we spoke to, implementation of a NAS-like measure was delayed at the federal level, primarily because it was expected to yield a higher poverty rate. In contrast, Mayor Bloomberg, along with Deputy Mayor Gibbs, saw the new poverty measure as a way of capturing a more accurate picture of the economic conditions faced by the city's residents and to gain a better understanding of the impact antipoverty programs had on New Yorkers. In their assessment, the benefits of the new measure outweighed the risks.

Those in both the research and policy communities have recognized CEO's work on the new poverty measure as having set an example for others across the country. Many in the federal policy community believe that CEO's work pushed the Obama administration to have the Census Bureau develop and publish its own supplemental poverty measure (Short, 2012). CEO's work has also stimulated efforts in other states and cities. As one policy expert said, "The CEO poverty measure is not just a measure produced by an organization but one that has the support of the Mayor of New York City. CEO took the lead, they did it first and did it well, and they shamed the federal government into following suit." More recently, the New York City Council recognized the enduring value of the new poverty measure by enacting legislation in December 2013 requiring the mayor to submit an annual report on poverty, using CEO's methodology.

CEO's findings have been surprising at times. The CEO poverty rates have been higher than the traditional Federal Poverty Level in New York City. But the measure reveals large and unexpected differences across age groups. For example, CEO's measure indicates that fewer children are living in poverty when compared to the federal poverty rate. This is due in large part to the provision of school meals; SNAP, or food stamps; housing adjustments; and income taxes, such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refunds, that have the effect of reducing child poverty. By contrast, CEO finds that people over sixty-five years of age are *more* likely to be poor than the federal measure indicates, due to out-of-pocket medical expenses.

In some instances, CEO has used knowledge created by the poverty measure to determine which types of programs are most needed. According to the 2011 report on poverty, many households were hit by a "double blow" in the wake of the 2008 recession. Income was lost not only due to diminished job opportunities but also because many income support programs were conditioned on employment (New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, 2011, 55, 60).[21] The combined declines of employment and work-conditioned benefits made the need for subsidized job programs obvious — programs that CEO piloted in the form of the Works Progress Program, Justice Community, and others — since participants would have earnings that trigger tax credits (such as EITC) and other benefits for working families.

Several respondents indicated that the reports have helped keep poverty on the City's agenda.

Nonetheless, the connection between CEO's annual analyses of poverty and its program priorities is not always clear. CEO's programs tend to focus on increasing investments in human capital through education, training, better health, and so on. Such investments are expected to lead to increased earnings — an emphasis that dates back to the Commission report. But the poverty reports focus on income and income support programs and say little about human capital. To be sure, the annual reports reveal great differences in poverty rates between households with adults of different educational attainments and work experiences (New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, 2013, 20-1). But they do not describe changes in educational attainments, work experience, and other measures of human capital in the city — much less the factors associated with such changes and variations. Yet understanding those factors might be very helpful in deciding what types of human-capital-enhancing programs are needed and for whom and where. The basic point is consistency across CEO's operations — between measurement of the problem or problems it is trying to solve, on the one hand, and the types of solutions it typically promotes, on the other.[22]

Several respondents indicated that the reports have helped keep poverty on the City's agenda. Also, by showing how ordinary expenses (such as commuting to work and medical expenses) contribute to poverty, CEO's measurement of poverty have helped make poverty more concrete and understandable to the public. The reports have also strengthened CEO's reputation within New York. The fact that the administration was willing to show that poverty was higher than previously understood surprised some in the advocacy community, and that finding, combined with its detailed analyses, helped develop CEO's reputation for credible, objective analysis.

IV. Results

It is early to assess CEO's impact on ideas, evidence, policy, and other government outcomes. Some of the pilots, their evaluations, and their subsequent course in New York and elsewhere will take years to cycle through. But a few tentative conclusions are reasonable.

Table 1: CEO's Policy Domains by Program Status (All programs, 2006-2013)

	Asset Development	Workforce Development	Youth Development	Re-Entry Services	Policies & Practices	Total
	Standard CEO Programs					
Successful (continued)	5	4	2	0	2	**13**
Discontinued	0	3	5	5	1	**14**
Pilots (ongoing evaluation)	0	2	5	2	5	**14**
	Other CEO-Related Programs					
Social Innovation Fund	2	2	1	0	0	**5**
Young Men's Initiative Pilots	0	0	4	6	0	**10**
Completed (one-shot initiatives)	3	0	2	0	2	**7**
Total	10	11	19	13	9	**62**

Source: Authors' analysis of data in CEO annual reports and interviews with CEO staff.

First, CEO has generated many and quite varied innovations. Table 1 shows the distribution of programs launched since CEO was established in 2006. Sixty-two projects have been initiated, involving twenty-seven agencies. As the bottom row of Table 1 shows, youth development programs are the most numerous at nineteen, but other programs are fairly evenly distributed among the other four categories. Major categories of initiatives include (a full list of programs is in Appendix C):

1. Asset development, such as the OFE's programs, including the Financial Education Network. OFE is the first municipal office in the U.S. dedicated to helping low-income residents make the best use of their financial resources (New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, 2009).

2. Workforce development, including Sector-Focused Career Centers, operated by SBS and designed to help low-income individuals prepare for jobs in transportation, health care, or manufacturing. The Centers were evaluated along with two other workforce development initiatives led by SBS and were found to have higher job

placement rates than traditional workforce services (Henderson, et al., 2010).

3. Youth development, such as CUNY ASAP, a program designed to help low-income students with developmental needs to complete their associate degrees at community colleges within three years through support services and financial resources (Linderman and Kolenovic, 2009, 2012).

4. Re-entry services, including NYC Justice Corps, a program designed by the NYC Department of Correction and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to help re-engage young people with past criminal involvement in their communities through community service projects (Tapper, et al., 2009).

5. Policy & practices: This catch-all category includes cross-policy initiatives, like the CEO Poverty Measure, as well as diverse policy initiatives, such as Healthy Bodegas, which aims to increase the availability of low-fat milk, fruit, and vegetables in the city's bodegas, which represent 80 percent of food sources in targeted low-income neighborhoods (New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, 2010).

Some of the initiatives are complex, multiservice programs, such as CUNY ASAP, NYC Justice Corps, and Opportunity NYC. Some are simpler or not so complicated in terms of how they are expected to exert an impact, such as the Child Care Tax Credit, Healthy Bodegas (now Shop Healthy NYC), and School Based Health Centers. Still others — such as the Office of Financial Empowerment — are broader, nearly system-level changes developed by city agencies to do a better job addressing the needs of low-income city residents. CEO has clearly generated a rich array of real programs that many different city agencies can draw from — and many of these programs are particularly innovative from the perspectives of their host agencies, as the programs represented major departures from their traditional goals and target populations.

Second, CEO has generated a considerable body of evidence on the effectiveness of programs, issues of implementation, and program models. Our review of CEO documents forty programs that have been evaluated or are in the process of evaluation — including program reviews, implementation studies, and outcome evaluations. Twenty-one programs have had (or are having) quantitative impact evaluations, including seven RCTs. Few no programs escaped any sort of review or evaluation; one of the few exceptions was the NYC Training Guide, a research tool that matches jobseekers with appropriate training programs.

Modifications in light of reviews and evaluations have in fact been relatively common among CEO programs.

CEO's findings are often unique and of practical importance. Although the conditional cash transfer program evaluations generated mixed results, the evaluations CEO arranged (and conducted by MDRC) led to important changes in the program before it was implemented and evaluated again through SIF grants. The target population was modified; the incentives (which were found to be confusing to participants) were simplified; staff were assigned more active roles in advising the families; and rewards for various behaviors were provided in a more timely manner, closer to the behaviors themselves (Riccio, et al., 2013, 198). Modifications in light of reviews and evaluations have in fact been relatively common among CEO programs, as already noted. As a result, CEO not only offers program ideas and accounts of their implementation to government agencies, in some cases it also offers suggested changes in program models based on rigorous feedback. The volume and frequency of CEO evaluations across several domains have also produced important cross-cutting insights — such as the importance of provider capacity, now a basic element of many CEO evaluations and reviews.[23]

The CEO model has been particularly useful in searching for solutions to challenging problems — by combining innovation and evaluation, and having opportunities to do both repeatedly over time. As Table 1 shows, CEO has tried thirteen different "re-entry" interventions. In 2007 alone, CEO launched four programs with the Department of Corrections to serve youth on Rikers Island with the mentoring and support services they need to transition back to their communities. All four of these programs (and a fifth begun in 2008) were discontinued because they did not demonstrate results.

These negative findings may be frustrating. But negative findings are also informative, and just as important, they do not stop CEO from searching for ways of helping the large number of young people coming out of the criminal justice system. In fact, some of CEO's efforts — such as NYC Justice Corps and Employment Works — have looked more promising. Because CEO has not stopped looking for ways to serve young people (especially men) leaving prison, it has been able to try out new approaches, based on both positive and negative findings from prior analyses. The Young Men's Initiative, in particular, has brought renewed resources to pilots designed to promote responsible fatherhood (CUNY Fatherhood Academy), improve General Educational Development (GED) pass rates (IMPACT: Peer Mentoring for Young Adult Literacy), improve health (Teen and Young Adult Health Program), reduce gun violence (Project CURE VIOLENCE), and provide youth with the skills and support they need to stay *out* of the criminal justice system and *in* their communities (Community Education Pathways to Success, Justice Community, Justice Scholars).

CEO's contribution to knowledge also includes its poverty measure, which, among other things, measures the effects of noncash benefits to people. As noted above, federal officials and national policy experts have credited CEO for pushing the federal government to develop and implement its own version of this measure. And though it is hardly clear how national policies will change with respect to large noncash benefits like nutritional assistance, the research using the new supplemental measure at least demonstrates the importance of such benefits for reducing poverty in the U.S. (Short, 2012). CEO's work also led to a change in the New York City Charter in late 2013, when the City Council amended the Charter to require the mayor to issue an annual report on poverty, using CEO's measurement methods.

Third, CEO has produced significant changes in policies and city agencies. As the top row of Table 1 shows, thirteen pilots have been judged successful and baselined in the host agencies' budgets. These programs have generally been expanded beyond their size as pilots. In these cases, agencies are investing their own funds (or federal or state funds they are eligible for) in these programs. For example, in 2009, SBS demonstrated its commitment to the Community Partners initiative by fully covering program costs with traditional federal workforce funding. In 2010, the program was funded entirely by federal Workforce Investment Act funds.

Federal officials and national policy experts have credited CEO for pushing the federal government to develop and implement its own version of this poverty measure.

Most of the baselined programs have come out of three strong collaborators: the City University of New York, the Department of Small Business Services, and the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). In fact, in each of these three cases, public institutions without a traditional focus on poverty have substantially increased their responsiveness to the needs of low-income individuals. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment has launched a broad array of efforts to help low-income people with financial management, from getting bank accounts to avoiding predatory lenders and getting tax credits for which they qualify. CUNY has created a particularly rich array of programs to make its colleges more accessible to low-income persons and especially the working poor. CUNY ASAP is perhaps the best example, as it employs several measures to make courses easier for working people to take and to progress through college with peer reinforcement via "cohorts." Others include CUNY Young Adult Employment Programs, CUNY Catch, and NYC Justice Corps.

SBS has taken several steps to make its workforce development centers and training programs more accessible and useful to low-income workers and jobseekers — such as Community Partners, which uses community-based organizations to connect low-income jobseekers to workforce centers and thus to employers. As a SBS official explained,

> I think they [CEO] challenged us to look at some of the poverty issues. There were times where we had to push back and say these things we're not capable of doing.… [But it] certainly helped sharpen the focus on the needs.… The fact is that we got involved in things we otherwise wouldn't have gotten involved in, programs

> like Employment Works and Scholars at Work.… Once we made a commitment to make these programs work, they've been very successful.

Fourth, CEO has introduced new orientations within city government. As Table 1 shows, one of the most striking results is the fact that CEO regularly discontinues programs when they are not found to be effective — and CEO staff do not think that modifications in program will make the programs effective. Ending programs, based on evidence, is hardly a common governmental practice, as the checkered history of sunset provisions and similar efforts at accountability would attest. Also, CEO's frequent use of evaluations has made it an ongoing resource for such analyses — a kind of in-house consulting group for evaluations in NYC government.

Fifth, CEO may be influencing other city governments through its role as a SIF intermediary. CEO is replicating and evaluating five of its programs in seven partner cities, including Family Rewards, Jobs-Plus, Project Rise, SaveUSA, and WorkAdvance. It is too early to know whether these programs will go beyond their pilot and evaluation stage in these cities — which are found in all major regions of the country — but if so, CEO could influence the urban policy agenda nationally as well as locally.

The Challenge of "Scaling Up"

However, despite these successes by CEO, there is still concern that CEO's policy impact is not large enough. As a city council staffer said, "The biggest criticism of CEO … has been that the programs have not been ramped up to scale. The total number of people served by programs like YAIP [Young Adult Internship Program] needs to be expanded."[24] He continues:

> Look at their [CEO's] numbers served. What's needed is a more comprehensive approach. We're delighted that the administration has taken a stand on poverty but how serious is this commitment?

As one provider said in relation to the Young Adult Internship Program, "if you look at the systematic data, by most accounts the system is serving a few thousand out of 200,000. We're going to war with a pea-shooter."

YAIP is a program to re-engage youth disconnected from school and employment through employment internships. It is still a pilot, so its small size is understandable. Yet other effective programs, like CUNY ASAP, have expanded beyond their size as pilots but remain small (there were 462 new enrollees in CUNY ASAP in FY 2012).[25] As an official in Small Business Services observed regarding CEO initiatives,

> I would say they're much smaller than existing programs.… [W]hen you look at something like

> Employment Works and Sector Centers, it's hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people. It's important, but it pales in comparison to what we have [in SBS's main programs].

One city official appreciated CEO's analytical strengths but also saw the financial, administrative, and political gaps between the pilots and the types of programs and policies needed to meet widespread needs: "It's one thing to say, 'Did the program work?' The harder question is, 'Did you do it in a way that is replicable with real money in the real world?'"

Some of this criticism is directed more at (former) Mayor Bloomberg than at CEO. The mayor was viewed by some of the advocates we spoke to as being unwilling to fund successful programs enough to reach citywide. Also, some of the slippage may have been the result of recent economic and fiscal conditions. Much of CEO's short history has occurred during and after a recession and slow recovery, and weak growth in city revenues — not to mention cutbacks in federal and state assistance — has made it hard to find funding for program expansions.

"It's one thing to say, 'Did the program work?' The harder question is, 'Did you do it in a way that is replicable with real money in the real world?'"

But part of the problem in expanding programs may be a natural consequence of the CEO model. Pilots are programs that agencies would like to see launched, but do not have the funding streams to do so on their own. Such funding may still be lacking after the pilot is completed, since many federal and state funding streams remain inflexible. Also, though the pilots may have support within the agencies, even if they are found to be effective, they may not have enough political support among advocacy organizations, legislators, or others outside the bureaucracy to compete for scarce discretionary resources to expand them to scale.

In addition, while one of CEO's strengths is its capacity to reach beyond traditional human service agencies for program ideas, its broad reach also means that many of the agencies it works with may view CEO initiatives as less important to their core mission than many other programs. Most of the agencies (such as Consumer Affairs, Probation, and Small Business Services) involved in CEO pilots do not report to the deputy mayor for health and human services. They may thus be less willing to support CEO's programs when competition for resources is intense. As a city official noted, "One of the problematic features of CEO from the beginning was that the vast majority of activity was taking place in agencies that didn't report to her [Deputy Mayor Gibbs]."

CEO's long-term perspective may also distance it from important political actors. As a City Council staff person responded when asked about CEO's impact, "We spend more time on immediate issues than in addressing broad, long-term innovations.… We do more oversight where things are not working, where there is an immediate crisis, and where there is potential for legislation." The staffer noted that that's "hard for them [CEO] because it's a multi-year process to show results. And when you're innovating, not everything works." A top executive official also noted CEO's weaker connections with the Council as well as other elected officials (except Mayor Bloomberg): "If the audience is the policy community, they're in great shape. They're generating ideas and pushing the envelope. And that's good. But it's different in the political community." In the political community, CEO is less visible. The Council staff person said that, because CEO's programs are "small scale," a "generic council member without a CEO program in his district or a committee [assignment] that oversees CEO programming might not know as much."

In sum, some of CEO's strengths and special capabilities make "scaling up" a challenge for even its most effective pilots. CEO works most closely with executive agencies in developing innovative ideas for programs that do not require legislative action. Yet its Council support may be needed if CEO pilots are to be "ramped up" into large, citywide programs with stable funding. CEO's programs may often lack political salience or support, a situation that increases the odds that CEO can conduct rigorous evaluations and act on the results. But the absence of strong political support may mean that even baselined CEO projects may be among the first to be cut by an agency, as one city official told us, when resources are scarce. This does not mean that CEO's process can never lead to big programs. But it is no easy transition from effective pilot to large-scale, well-funded policy.

Another challenge for "scaling up" successful initiatives concerns changes they experience as they shift from pilots to baselined programs, out of CEO's control. For instance, while CEO focuses on poverty, agency officials may change the focus of the program to meet other targets, such as the volume of people assisted or placed in jobs and internships, regardless of the severity of need. The evaluation report for the Community Partners pilot program found that the program had higher job placements than the workforce development system generated without the program, and that it reached disadvantaged clients when the program targeted low-income neighborhoods (Henderson, MacAllum, and Karakus, 2010).

However, the emphasis on targeting particular low-income neighborhoods was dropped. Agency executives noted there was no need to continue focusing on particular ZIP codes when the program was shown to be effective — and, in any event, their agency was, in the words of an SBS official, "demand driven" in the sense that they "start with the jobs and then match the people" to the jobs. As a result, "We like CBOs … who send us people who are ready for jobs. There is no emphasis to draw from particular neighborhoods.…" Specific job placement targets for persons in needy neighborhoods are thus removed. The impact of this change is unknown, but it has the effect of undermining one of the program's virtues, its engagement of persons in low-income neighborhoods. Thus, although the CEO's work with SBS and other agencies has led to important changes in their responsiveness to low-income individuals, the struggle to sustain that focus continues.

V. A New Type of Public Institution

CEO has helped a wide variety of NYC agencies to generate innovative programs, but perhaps its greatest innovation is itself. In many ways, CEO is an answer to Campbell's call for "a truly experimental approach to social reform," for a shift in public administration and policymaking from a program-centered orientation to one that is focused on solving problems through rigorous trial and error.

CEO attempts to carry out this experimental style of governance. It accepts the fact that officials in mainstream public agencies cannot be expected to act as "experimental administrators." They and their agencies are committed to particular programs, and those programs are often jealously guarded against potential challenges, including rigorous impact evaluations. Yet the same officials often have ideas that might lead to new and more effective solutions to big problems. CEO's brief history shows that those ideas can be elicited, developed, and refined through extensive discussions with experts and other agencies, transformed into pilot projects (while avoiding overselling or over-committing), evaluated in a graduated and honest manner, and acted upon based on the findings.

CEO has helped a wide variety of NYC agencies to generate innovative programs, but perhaps its greatest innovation is itself.

In essence, CEO creates an alternative policy process squarely within city government. It uses its proximity to, and support from, the mayor to get the attention of a wide range of agencies when it looks to find new and sometimes cross-cutting ideas — and to encourage public officials to take risks. It relies on its location in government to work closely and persistently with agency officials and develop its reputation for honesty, helpfulness, and mission-focus. It draws from a rarity in government — a pool of flexible, uncommitted funds for new pilots and evaluations. And it serves as an intermediary between, on the one hand, partner agencies implementing pilots and, on the other, external funders and evaluators.

Its overall process for generating and testing innovations is particularly important. CEO does not inject evidence-gathering and evidence-based action in the usual "hard-in/hard-out" policy process, i.e., a process that demands extensive justification and political overselling to get a program established, and that results in a program that cannot easily be ended or even evaluated. Instead, CEO oversees its own "easy-in/easy-out" policy procedure, one that allows new ideas to be piloted, and that is open to program reviews, impact evaluations, and program actions based on evidence, including termination.

CEO's alternative process thus offers a closer correspondence between the times when good evidence on policy effectiveness is available and when policy decisions are irrevocable. In the traditional policy process, the most important (that is, the hardest-to-reverse) policy decision is when the program is first launched, yet that is also when evidence on program effectiveness is weakest. If the program is truly innovative, little is known about its probable impact. But even if the program is based on a model that has been evaluated, there is always uncertainty about whether the prior evaluations in other contexts will apply in this new setting. By contrast, CEO's decisions about policies are generally reversible up until the point when it baselines funding for the program, i.e., relinquishes control of the funding to the partner agency. That happens, however, only after CEO has observed the program for some time — perhaps years — after program reviews, adjustments, and evaluations.

CEO's approach to evidence-based policymaking differs from other efforts with similar goals. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget's evidence-based initiative has two major prongs. First, it asks agencies to draw heavily on rigorous evidence when proposing new programs — an approach that may increase the demand for evidence but does not increase its supply, nor does it offer easy access to innovative ideas. Second, OMB requests that agencies build strong evaluation designs in their program plans. CEO does this too but, unlike CEO, OMB does not necessarily provide funding for the evaluations or assistance in designing them, working with evaluators, or interpreting the findings.

In sum, the CEO experience suggests that the policy process itself may need to be augmented if policymaking is to be more innovative and evidence-based.

Other efforts to build evidence have used or have recommended using the intergovernmental system, such as requirements for rigorous evaluations of programs supported by federal assistance to states (Baron, 2013; Manzi, 2012). It is true that many of the best examples of strong evaluations were required as conditions attached to federal waivers, particularly AFDC waivers (Gueron and Rolston, 2013, 217-261). CEO also requires evaluations as a condition for providing financial support to programs it supports. But because it is part of city government, it can work more flexibly and responsively with city agencies than did the federal government with states. CEO can work with the agencies to modify program models, deal with or replace poor providers, and make adjustments in the focus and design of evaluations in light of early experience with the programs. Also, federally mandated evaluations are typically big, expensive evaluations of entire programs, while CEO has the flexibility to identify, implement, and assess smaller changes in practices. Finally, CEO can pilot and evaluate a wide range of program ideas, involving many different agencies, while waivers generally offer flexibility within a single funding stream controlled (usually) by a single agency.

In sum, the CEO experience suggests that the policy process itself may need to be augmented if policymaking is to be more innovative and evidence-based. It may be necessary to *add a process* that pilots programs before major policy commitments are made. Within that process, policy commitments must be pushed forward in time, *after evidence* is actually collected on innovations. CEO's brief history also suggests that this process may be best managed by an entity *within government*, one that can work closely, continuously, and iteratively with implementing agencies — one that can help the research community work with government, while helping government work with the research community. Finally, CEO shows the importance of *additional, flexible resources* in promoting innovation, generating new evidence, and responding appropriately to research findings.

There still remain challenges in producing large-scale policy change. As already discussed, "scaling up" successful pilots in NYC does not always happen. Much of the slippage is inevitable given CEO's basic model, which is premised on programs being dispensable — as not, at least initially, having enough political support to resist evaluation, modification, or even termination. It is no easy task to make politically weak yet analytically sound pilots into well-established, large, and fully-funded programs. And though it is possible that CEO could develop stronger relations and greater visibility with the city's "political community" (particularly the Council and advocacy groups), as some interviewees recommended, that task may be hard to balance with the need for CEO to maintain its reputation for nonpolitical, neutral analysis and reporting.

Another challenge for CEO's influence stems from the fact that it is not systematically producing generalizations or working theories about poverty — what causes it, and how to reduce it. As one interviewee said, "it lacks focus and an underlying theme." The absence of "theory of poverty," as this observer noted, may affect CEO's role and influence:

> If the objective is to introduce rigor, accountability, and experimentation into government, then the absence of such a theory is less important. If the goal is to shape policy and the national debate by telling the story about why we have poverty and why it exists, then [the lack of a theory] is more important.

To be sure, many of CEO's programs focus on investing in human capital through education, employment, training, financial literacy, and healthy habits to support increased earnings and income. The criticism, however, still has some validity. The various programs attempt to increase investments in human capital through many different approaches, including counseling, workshops, financial incentives, internships, easy access to educational activities (e.g., for prisoners), and improved coordination of workforce development services with employers and community-based organizations. It is unclear, however, which general approach CEO finds most promising — and, as noted already, it is unclear how its program-level findings relate to and account for variations in poverty.

Perhaps CEO can provide some direction to broader, political debates over poverty by suggesting some careful generalizations based on its cumulative findings. But this is a challenge that grows out of a core feature of CEO. CEO's program selections are often guided by what line agencies are willing to do rather than by a particular theoretical perspective on poverty. There are limits to this approach, as suggested by Jim Manzi's statement, "theory precedes experiment" (Manzi 2012, 18). Testing many pilots with agency support but without much theoretical guidance may lead to more baselined (and perhaps "scaled up") programs, but perhaps less cumulative knowledge about where future, effective innovations are likely to be found.

Indeed, theory-building is a task probably beyond the scope of a single CEO-like entity — many more experiments and innovations are needed to develop credible generalizations. This line of thinking suggests that CEO's greatest influence might result if its approach is replicated in other governments. That would allow for the multiplication of experiments, including efforts to test the robustness of findings in other jurisdictions. It would also produce a wider range of innovations, since other parts of the nation are likely to consider different families of interventions.[26] CEO's SIF grants are a partial effort in that direction, though they only try to determine whether what works in NYC also works in other cities; they do not establish independent experimenting institutions generating and testing their own innovations.

But that is being done too. CEO-like entities are being developed in Philadelphia, Hartford, Providence, and Richmond.[27] If CEO's experimental, piecemeal approach to solving poverty is going to work, the diffusion of the "CEO model" as an innovation in government may be the most promising route. The potential spread of the CEO programs and operations to other cities may in part be the Center's response to criticisms that it has not done enough to reduce poverty. Founding director of CEO, Veronica White, noted CEO's accomplishments in bringing more people and agencies into the dialogue about poverty, in developing and spreading the poverty measure, and in learning which programs work and which do not. But to bring about significant reductions in urban poverty, she said that the federal government must

> …step up to the plate and fund these programs. We could always do more. And if we have more resources we can do more. But those resources will come from the federal government.

In brief, cities can innovate and test ideas, perhaps better than any other level of government. But even a wealthy city like New York would need the federal government's fiscal capacity to take many programs to a scale where they can have an appreciable impact on urban poverty. The creation of CEOs in many cities, and in all major regions of the country, may be needed to build the national coalition needed to influence federal action toward such ends.

If CEO-like entities are to be diffused, it is critical to recognize the conditions that make it work. It requires a dedicated, flexible,

> **CEO has flourished in part because it was in the mayor's office but not treated as a political instrument — a balancing act that many chief executives may not have the discipline or wisdom to pull off.**

and sizeable fund to support pilots and evaluations. It needs the visible endorsement and confidence of a mayor, as well as his or her commitment to demand innovation, push for metrics and evaluations, accept risk and failure, and focus on problems that cut across agency boundaries. Also, as one commissioner noted, CEO has flourished in part because it was in the mayor's office but not treated as a political instrument — a balancing act that many chief executives may not have the discipline or wisdom to pull off. And it needs a talented staff and leadership, committed to bridge the wide gap between government officials and the research community.

CEO has clearly developed a unique and promising model for generating and incorporating evidence in government policymaking and administration. It shares some characteristics of other institutions intended to increase the role of analysis and explicit problem-solving in public decisions, but it is different from all of them. Though its mission spans many agencies, it is not an interagency coordinating group, as it has its own funding source for new programs and evaluations — and has its own staff and special role. Though many of its staff members have expertise in poverty research, it is more than an advisory commission to bring new expertise to bear on public problems — since it has a continuing and integrated role within government.

It is also more than an evaluation or auditing shop, an organization like the U.S. Government Accountability Office that assesses programs in a variety of ways. CEO not only evaluates programs but also helps to formulate, launch, and implement them. And it is more than an incentive program for rigorous evaluation and evidence-based action, such as OMB's use of the executive budget process to encourage the greater use and production of reliable evidence among federal agencies, since CEO works closely with agencies and offers them the resources and technical assistance to make innovation and analysis feasible. Instead, CEO offers an alternative policy process, one that realigns the relationship over time between policy commitments and the quality of evidence — that moves public administration away from reliance on extensive planning and forecasting under uncertainty and toward greater dependence on calibrated responses to rigorously collected evidence. If there is a serious effort to make government policies smarter and more effective in dealing with many types of problems — not just poverty but also such challenges as energy sustainability, environmental protection, educational performance, and economic development — New York City's Center for Economic Opportunity should be considered as a potential institutional model.

VI. Future Directions

CEO's distinctive approach to producing policy change is worth sustaining, refining, and diffusing. There are many directions the Center might go in, ranging from modifications in its work to more extensive changes in its role within city government and the federal system. If CEO retains its focus on poverty under the new mayor, we have four recommendations; a fifth recommendation would move CEO in a different direction.

First, we recommend that CEO expand its work on measuring the problem or problems it is trying to solve — and in ways that connect more closely to its policy focus. As already suggested, if CEO focuses on programs that build human capital and promote employment, it would be reasonable to establish measures of the distribution and changes in human capital and factors that impede or facilitate employment and the acquisition of human capital among low-income individuals in New York City. This evidence could help CEO and its partner agencies target their thinking about innovative interventions. Who and where, for instance, are the individuals who are struggling with literacy, staying in school, getting postsecondary training, and locating job opportunities? More generally, what does the city look like from the perspective of low-income working people? What challenges do they face in commuting to and from work, finding job postings, accessing health providers, enrolling in training and education services, arranging childcare, and getting nutritious and affordable food? CEO has responded to these problems in several ways, but the annual poverty report — though it is extremely valuable — does not track progress (or its lack) in meeting these needs.

There should be a role for evidence not just in the measurement of poverty and the effectiveness of public interventions designed to reduce poverty but also for *diagnosing* poverty, that is, understanding the concrete circumstances that make it difficult to escape poverty or near-poverty in a particular city.

Essentially, there should be a role for evidence not just in the measurement of poverty and the effectiveness of public interventions designed to reduce poverty but also for *diagnosing* poverty, that is, understanding the concrete circumstances that make it difficult to escape poverty or near-poverty in a particular city. This is a challenging task. But if CEO could develop a method for identifying the features in a specific city that contribute to low levels of employment and earnings and improvements in human capital — a social diagnostic tool — it would not only offer a better connection between CEO's investments and its measurement of outcomes, it would make a major contribution to urban government.

A second suggestion is to have CEO do more work at a subprogram level, for instance, at the level of administrative innovations. Rather than just piloting new programs, CEO could work with agencies to design tests of ideas to improve the effectiveness of existing programs. Different ways of communicating with clients, different processes for determining eligibility for benefits, different types of service providers, and other modifications in existing programs might be developed and tested in the same pilot/evaluation process CEO has carried out for entire programs. CEO has already done this at times, such as its effort to increase EITC take-up, but much more could be done. In some ways, these types of changes would be easier to try, test, and act on, since they are changes that are more fully under the control of city executives, and administrative data are more likely to be available. Evaluations may be easier too, since, unlike many of the CEO programs, these changes do not have many complex components, and attribution to a particular public action is simpler when evaluated. However, we would not expect large impacts, so it is probable that the evaluations will need to involve large samples and better measurement to get adequate statistical power.

A third recommendation addresses one of CEO's most difficult tasks — finding ways to scale up effective pilot programs. Much will depend on the new mayor as well as the city's budget, and CEO may simply need to find better ways to communicate to the political community, as noted above. But another way of getting help (eventually) would be to make a more concerted effort to enlist other levels of government. If there is to be a much larger investment in human capital in urban areas, the federal government will need to be involved, as several CEO staff observed themselves. CEO's evaluations and SIF programs are useful methods for building an agenda for future federal action. Yet much more could be done. CEO, perhaps in collaboration with CEO-like entities in other cities, could put together a report (or series of reports) that summarizes its findings with respect to effective means of increasing human capital and employment among persons in poverty. The report should also describe the federalism implications of these findings. If, for instance, certain types of programs are found to be effective, what federal (or state) funding streams can support them? If there are obstacles due to federal regulations or problems in engaging multiple agencies (or stovepipes), what are those federalism and policy barriers? Where would greater flexibility and resources in the federal system have the biggest impact on cities attempting to implement, evaluate, and refine the most promising ideas?

Fourth, to help with the third recommendation, CEO may consider finding ways to promote similar entities in other cities. As already noted, some of that is happening already. But CEO could play a convening national and even international role as the first institution of this kind. There are foundations and organizations already trying to spread CEO-like operations to other governments, and those efforts should be encouraged. It would perhaps be useful for the new entities as well as for cities that are considering similar organizations for CEO to play some leadership role in sharing information and ideas. CEO and these other early adopters might also consider summarizing their findings in occasional joint reports. Finally, the entities might draft ideas for national legislation to establish and provide partial funding for CEO-like organizations in local governments.

Finally, a fifth recommendation would move CEO (or a sister agency) in a somewhat different direction, toward becoming a more general, less policy (and poverty) focused entity. CEO could expand its role in testing innovative ideas to other policy areas, such as education, housing, economic development, energy, consumer protection, and so on. CEO has considerable technical expertise in impact evaluation, including practical knowledge and judgment about when to evaluate and how to respond to various evaluation findings (which often raise as many issues as they resolve). CEO is already doing some of this in-house consulting on evaluations, but it might do it more as a core function. It might also advise on piloting project ideas, measuring problems, and partnering with private funders — all things it has done well, and which are not easy for most agencies to do. The downside to this approach would be that CEO would lose its problem-focus — it would move toward being a specialized technical assistance agency and no longer be a major voice on poverty. On the positive side, CEO would help check the tendency to rely more or less exclusively on performance measures, benchmarking, and other simple outcomes to improve policy and support public management — methods that can be useful if used correctly, but that do not measure program impacts. It would be a mechanism for diffusing the ideas of experimentation, impact evaluation, and trial and error within urban public management.

Endnotes

1 Donald T. Campbell,"Reforms as Experiments" *American Psychologist* 24, 4 (April 1969): 409. For a more complete statement of Campbell's views in this regard, see his essay, "The Experimenting Society," in *The Experimenting Society: Essays in Honor of Donald T. Campbell*, ed. William N. Dunn (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, 1998), pp. 35-68.

2 These efforts at coordination began early in the Bloomberg administration. In 2003, Mayor Bloomberg eliminated the Department of Employment and consolidated worker-training programs in the Department of Small Business Services. See Jennifer Steinhauer, "City Ties Unemployment Services to Needs of Businesses,"*The New York Times* (July 18, 2003), http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/18/nyregion/city-ties-unemployment-services-to-needs-of-businesses.html (Steinhauer, 2003).

3 "Mayor Michael Bloomberg's 2006 State of the City Address," *Gotham Gazette* (January 26, 2006), http://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/open-government/3136-mayor-michael-bloombergs-2006-state-of-the-city-address.

4 Data on spending and enrollments from NYC CEO.

5 Data from New York City Department of Social Services, Human Resources Administration, "HRA Facts: October 2013," Report #MCA40, http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/hra_facts/hrafacts_2013/hra_facts_2013_10.pdf.

6 Note that one of Charles Lindblom's criticisms of the "root" approach to policy decisions was its reliance on "theory," since good, predictive theory about the effects of policy choices on society was (and largely still is) weak and incomplete. See Charles Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through,'" *Public Administration Review* 19 (1959):87. Instead, Lindblom urged greater reliance on information gleaned from actual experience in the wake of changes—which is precisely the approach employed by CEO. In his description of the "limits of rationality," Herbert A. Simon also stressed the problems of prospective analyses, analyses of options before they are put into effect:

1. "Rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow on each choice. In fact, knowledge of consequences is always fragmentary.
2. "Since these consequences lie in the future, imagination must supply the local of experienced feeling in attaching value to them. But values can be only imperfectly anticipated.
3. "Rationality requires a choice among all possible alternative behaviors. In actual behavior, only a very few of these possible alternatives ever come to mind." See Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organizations* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 93-4.

7 The grant was awarded by the Corporation for National & Community Service via its Social Innovation Fund (SIF). See http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund/previous-competitions/2010/mayors-fund.

8 After Mayor Bill De Blasio took office in 2014, CEO no longer reports to a deputy mayor. It reports to the director of the Mayor's Office of Operations.

9 While the staff in CEO is small, CEO's funding supports personnel expansions in New York City agencies to oversee and implement pilot programs (totaling seventy-nine staffers) and run successful programs (another ninety-seven staffers).

10 CEO's staff backgrounds and their placement in government seem to be a practical response to Karen Cadigan's observation: "[I]nfusing even the most useable research into the policy world isn't enough. Infusing researchers in the policy world is needed, too." See Karen Cadigan, "Commentary on The Uses of Research in Policy and Practice," *Social Policy Report* 26 (2012):18.

11 In their book, *Evidence Based Policymaking*, Bogenschneider and Corbett write, "Community dissonance theory [another term for the two-communities thesis] attributes underutilization of research to a communication gap between knowledge producers and knowledge consumers who engage in different core technologies and function within … disparate communities that make it difficult to communicate with each other. This communication breakdown occurs because each community operates within distinct professional and institutional cultures with different communication styles, decision-making criteria, questions of interest, reward systems, salient constituencies, and time frames" See Karen Bogenschneider

and Thomas J. Corbett, *Evidence-Based Policymaking: Insights from Policy-Minded Researchers and Research-Minded Policymakers* (New York: Routledge, 2010): 79. Also see Vivian Tseng's discussion of the role of relationships between researchers and practitioners in "The Uses of Research in Policy and Practice," *Social Policy Report* 26 (2012):1-16.

12 By relying on a separate, flexible funding source, primarily the Innovation Fund, CEO offers agencies opportunities for "slack innovation." See Richard M. Cyert and James G. March. 1963. *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963). Organizational "slack" has long been viewed as one major source of innovation — it generally means resources over and above that those needed to support ongoing programs, meet short-run business requirements, or serve other basic commitments. The other driver of innovation, and perhaps the most common, is "problemistic search," which is typically motivated and guided by short-term problems for the organization. Thus, research on innovations often find that the most and least successful organizations are the most likely to innovate, though the nature of the innovation differs at the two ends. Slack innovation is more likely to lead to longer-term solutions or address problems not immediately stressing the organization.

13 Due to rounding, these numbers sum to more than 100 percent.

14 "Hearing on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2011 Preliminary Budget: Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services." Finance Division Briefing Paper, March 8, 2010, http://council.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/budget/2011/pbr_hradss_2011.pdf.

15 For more information on the Young Men's Initiative, see http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/hra_facts/hrafacts_2013/hra_facts_2013_10.pdf.

16 See, for instance, the program review of the Educational Expansion Program on Rikers Island at http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/rikers_prr.pdf.

17 CEO's analyses of implementation issues fit well with findings that governments are often more interested in understanding how programs actually operate in the field than in the estimated impacts. See David Greenberg, Marvin Mandell, and Matthew Onstott, "The Dissemination and Utilization of Welfare-to-Work Experiments in State Policymaking," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 19 (2000):367-82.

18 For a summary of the evaluation of GOSO, see http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/goso_prr.pdf. The program is continuing but without CEO funding.

19 See Richard P. Nathan, *Social Science in Government: The Role of Policy Researchers.* (Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute Press, 2000): 120-4 on the importance of observing the implementation process in evaluation studies if researchers are to develop appropriate responses to evaluation findings.

20 The Social Innovation Fund also gives CEO an alternative way of scaling up. Family Rewards was not continued in NYC but was included in the SIF programs. Other SIF programs include Jobs-Plus, Project Rise, SaveUSA, and WorkAdvance. See http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/initiatives/sif.shtml.

21 The EITC, the Making Work Pay Tax Credit, and childcare credits are only available to tax filers who have been working.

22 To remedy the inconsistency, CEO might go in at least two directions: It could, as suggested, conduct more measurements of investments in human capital and assess their associations with poverty; or it could put greater emphasis on improving income support programs (which are already highlighted in the annual poverty series). It could also do both.

23 CEO evaluations and reviews typically include information on implementation issues, which some research has found to be of even greater interest to state and local officials than the impact estimates. See Greenberg, et al., 2000 and Robin H. Rogers-Dillon, *The Welfare Experiments: Politics and Policy Evaluation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Law and Politics, 2004).

24 According to CEO's performance data, YAIP had 1,740 new enrollees in FY 2012. The number who completed the program was 1,444, and the number placed in education/employment equaled 771. The number who were retained in education/employment after nine months was 285. See http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/initiatives/employment_yaip.shtml. For information about YAIP, see the preliminary evaluation at http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/yaip_report_2009.pdf.

25 See http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/initiatives/education_asap.shtml

26 CEO's programs are often (though not all) labor intensive, while many state and local governments have been cutting back their human service workforces and relying on "light touch" approaches. See Thomas Gais, Donald Boyd, and Lucy Dadayan, "The Social Safety Net, Health Care, and the Great Recession,"in *The Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government Finance,* ed. Robert D. Ebel and John E. Petersen (New York: Oxford, 2012): 584-5. Also, different regions in the U.S. provide very different levels of funding for human service programs, so a national network of CEO-like entities would help produce a much richer array of programs and findings. For a related discussion of this need, see Thomas Gais, *Children, Southwestern States, and the Federalism Problem*, Big Ideas: Children in the Southwest (Washington, DC: First Focus, 2012), http://www.firstfocus.net/library/reports/children-southwestern-states-and-the-federalism-problem. A national program that provides support for the creation of CEO-like entities in many cities and states would be particularly useful in spreading the approach to governments where resources are lacking to create a dedicated Innovation Fund.

27 Nesta and Bloomberg Philanthropies are also exploring the CEO model as part of their effort to promote innovation in local governments through its "i-teams." See http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/i-teams.

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Appendix A. CEO Initiatives

ASSET DEVELOPMENT

$aveNYC
Earned Income Tax Credit Mailing
Family Rewards
Opportunity NYC: Family Rewards
Opportunity NYC: Work Rewards
SaveUSA
Office of Financial Empowerment
*Financial Education Network
* Financial Empowerment Centers
* OFE Tax Campaign

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Advance at Work
Business Solutions Training Fund
City Agency Hiring Initiative
Community Partners Program
Employment Works
Jobs Plus
Nursing Career Ladders LPN
Nursing Career Ladders RN
NYC Training Guide
Sector-Focused career Centers
Work Advance

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Community Education Pathways to Success
Cornerstone Mentoring Program
CUNY ASAP
CUNY Fatherhood Academy
CUNY Performance Based Scholarships
CUNY Prep
IMPACT: Peer Mentoring for Young Adult Literacy
MillionTreesNYC
Noncustodial Parents Initiative
Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation
Opportunity NYC Spark
Project Rise
School-Based Reproductive Health Clinics
Teen Action
Teen and Young Adult Health Programs
Young Adult Internship Program
Young Adult Literacy Program
Youth Financial Empowerment

RE-ENTRY SERVICES

Advocate Intervene Mentor
Arches
CUNY Catch
Echoes
Food Handlers Certification Program
Getting Out Staying Out
Justice Community
Justice Scholars
Life Transition Program
NYC Justice Corps
Project Ceasefire
Rikers Island Education Expansion
Supportive Basic Skills Program

POLICY & PRACTICES

ACESS NYC Outreach & Marketing Campaign
CEO Poverty Measure
Child Care Tax Credit
e311 Language Access
Early Childhood Policy & Planning Positions
Increase FSET for Workforce Development
Language Access
Office of the Food Policy Coordinator
*Healthy Bodegas

Appendix B: Investment by Policy Domain

	Original Programs	Expansion of existing NYC programs	Modification of existing NYC programs	Replication of programs originating outside of NYC
Asset Development	EITC Mailing; Office of Financial Empowerment; Financial Education Network; Financial Empowerment Centers; OFE Tax Campaign (5)		SaveUSA*; Family Rewards* (2)	Opportunity NYC: Family Rewards; Opportunity NYC: Work Rewards; $aveNYC (3)
Workforce Development	Employment Works; NYC Training Guide (2)	Business Solutions Training Fund; City Agency Hiring Initiative; Nursing Career Ladders: LPN; Nursing Career Ladders RN (4)	Community Partners Program; Sector-Focused Career Centers: Transportation, Healthcare & Manufacturing; Work Advance* (3)	Advance at Work; Jobs-Plus* (2)
Youth Development	CUNY ASAP; CUNY Fatherhood Academy; Teen and Young Adult Health Program; Youth Financial Empowerment (4)	Cornerstone Mentoring Program; CUNY Performance Based Scholarships; CUNY Prep; MillionTreesNYC; Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation (5)	IMPACT: Peer Mentoring for Young Adult Literacy; School-Based Health Clinics; Young Adult Internship Program; Young Adult Literacy Program; Project Rise*; Community Education Pathways to Success; Non-Custodial Parents Initiatives (7)	Opportunity NYC: Spark; Teen Action (2)
Re-Entry Services	LIFE Transition Program; Advocate Intervene Mentor; Echoes (3)	CUNY Catch; Getting Out & Staying Out; Supportive Basic Skills Program (3)	Justice Community; Justice Scholars; Rikers Island Educational Expansion (3)	Food Handlers Certification Program; NYC Justice Corps; Project Ceasefire; Arches (4)
Policy & Practices	Early Childhood Policy & Planning Positions; Office of the Food Policy Coordinator; Healthy Bodegas Initiative; Language Access; CEO Poverty Measure (5)	ACCESS NYC Outreach & Marketing Campaign; e311 Language Access (2)		Increase FSET for Workforce Development; Child Care Tax Credit (2)

* CEO Social Innovation Fund program

Source: Authors’ analysis of data in CEO annual reports and interviews with CEO staff.

Appendix C: Program Status by Domain

	Asset Development	Workforce Development	Youth Development	Re-Entry Services	Policies & Practices
Successful	EITC Mailing; Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE); Financial Education Network (OFE); Financial Empowerment Centers (OFE); Tax Filing Opportunities (OFE) (5)	Advance at Work; Community Partners; NYC Training Guide; Sector-Focused Career Centers (4)	CUNY ASAP; School-Based Reproductive Health Clinics (2)		CEO Poverty Measure; Food Policy Coordinator (FPC) (2)
Pilots		Business Solutions Training Funds; Employment Works; (2)	Community Education Pathways to Success; Teen Action; Young Adult Internship Program; Young Adult Literacy Program (4)	Food Handlers Certification Program; NYC Justice Corps (2)	Child Care Tax Credit; Language Access; Increase FSET for Workforce Development; Healthy Bodegas (FPC) (4)
YMI Pilots			Cornerstone Mentoring Program; CUNY Fatherhood Academy; IMPACT: Peer Mentoring for Young Adult Literacy; Teen and Young Adult Health Program (4)	Advocate Intervene Mentor; Arches; Echoes; Justice Community; Justice Scholars; Project Ceasefire (6)	
Discontinued		City Agency Hiring Initiative; Nursing Career Ladders LPN; Nursing Career Ladders RN (3)	CUNY Performance Based Scholarships; CUNY Prep; Youth Financial Empowerment; Noncustodial Parents Initiatives; MillionTreesNYC (5)	CUNY Catch; Getting Out Staying Out; Life Transition Program; Rikers Island Educational Expansion; Supportive Basic Skills (5)	Early Childhood Policy & Planning Positions (1)
Completed	$aveNYC; Opportunity NYC: Family Rewards; Opportunity NYC: Work Rewards (3)		Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation; Opportunity NYC: Spark (2)		Access NYC Outreach & Marketing Campaign; e311 Language Access (2)
SIF	Family Rewards; SaveUSA (2)	Jobs Plus; WorkAdvance (2)	Project Rise (1)		

Source: Authors' analysis of data in CEO annual reports and interviews with CEO staff.

Appendix D: Methodology

In addition to reviewing budget documents, evaluations, and other written sources, we conducted sixty-two semi-structured interviews between November 2012 and May 2013. We spoke with CEO staff, city agencies, providers, funders, policy experts and political officials in New York and Washington, DC. We generated our sample in two waves.

- First Wave: We first spoke to CEO staff, agencies, providers, and funders with knowledge of specific programs to generate new insights on the role and function of CEO in New York City government. We asked: How does CEO choose its programs? How does it develop them? And how does CEO's approach look similar to or different from the respondents experience with other programs? CEO has a diverse portfolio and to ensure that we have a representative sample, we chose programs stratified by issue area (asset development, workforce development, youth development, re-entry services, policies and practices) and type of innovation (original, replication, reconfiguration, and expansion). We then identified as many key actors associated with these programs that we could to speak with.
- Second Wave: We next talked to community leaders, policy experts, and political officials in New York City and Washington, DC, to understand CEO's broader impact. What impact has CEO had on the ways that government functions? On how policy is created, implemented, and supported? Because CEO's impact extends from New York City to Washington, DC, we generated a list of relevant actors in both places, including names suggested by CEO.

Interview protocols were developed collectively by the research team. The questions varied based on a respondent's position and relationship to CEO. Interviews were conducted in-person and over the phone, usually by two members of the research team. Interviews lasted anywhere between 15 minutes and two hours. The majority of interviews were approximately 45 minutes.

Interviews were conducted on the record but not for attribution, unless otherwise requested by the person with whom we were speaking.

Our interviews are summarized below.

	New York	Washington DC	Other
CEO Staff Current and former CEO staff	10		
Agency Representatives	12	2	
Political Official	2		
Service Provider	19		1
Policy Expert Think tanks, academics, evaluation firms, specialists	8	6	
Funder	2		

As we conducted interviews, the research team met to talk about the key themes that were developing from our discussions. After interviews were completed, we read each interview and listed key topics and themes that our interviewees discussed. Some of these topics and themes we had anticipated, and asked respondents to address. Other topics and themes were unexpected, but came up repeatedly in our conversations. We then organized the supporting data by theme to construct our anticipated, and asked respondents to address. Other topics and themes were unexpected, but came up repeatedly in our conversations. We then organized the supporting data by theme to construct our analysis. For example, we grouped all mentions of CEO working across agencies.

The result of our interviews is a picture of how people most familiar with CEO, New York City governance, poverty, and research see CEO, its role and function, and its impact. We place these findings within broader theoretical framework developed in academic literature.