

Spotlight on Philadelphia | GovLabPHL

Overview

- ▶ Mayor: Jim Kenney
- ▶ Lead staff on Innovation: Anjali Chainani, Director of Policy; Andrew Buss, Director of Innovation Management
- ▶ Population of municipality: 1.58 million (2017)
- ▶ Open data website: <https://www.opendataphilly.org>

GovLabPHL, an innovative initiative stationed within the Mayor's Office, is a **multi-agency team centred on embedding evidence-based and data-driven methods into City programs and services** through cross-sector collaboration. It is currently one of two municipal-based policy labs in the country, and it is the only policy lab in the country that operates **using a partnership model**, with little to no routine funding. Over the past 3 years, GovLabPHL has hosted 3 annual conferences on behavioural economics; has piloted over 12 randomised control trial projects within city government; hosted a 10-month speaker series on human-centred design in partnership with the Office of Open Data and Digital Transformation; and organizes a data-driven book club for city employees.

Vision and approach to innovation capacity

The city's innovation strategy

Along with 44% of cities surveyed, Philadelphia has an **explicit innovation strategy**.

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with the following terms:

Evidence-based research

Capacity-building

Approaches to innovation capacity

Similar to 40% of cities surveyed, Philadelphia approaches innovation capacity **both** from a **holistic/macro level**, as well as in **specific policy areas**.

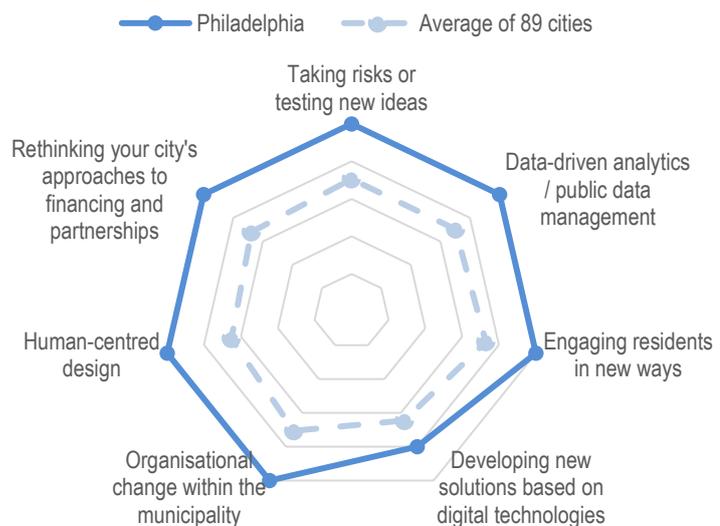
The **top two priority policy areas** for the city's innovation work include:

Homeless Services

Waste and Litter

Most common innovation activities

Philadelphia's most common innovation activities are **taking risks and testing new ideas; promoting data-driven analytics; engaging residents in new ways; facilitating organisational change within the municipal administration; human-centred design; and rethinking the city's approach to financing and partnerships**.



Funding for innovation capacity

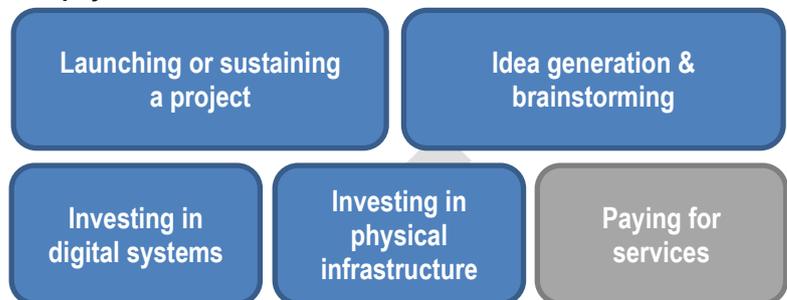
Funding to support innovation capacity

Like 77% of cities surveyed, Philadelphia has dedicated funding to support innovation capacity, which originates from the following sources:

- ✓ **Municipal budget**
(city council approved funds/operating budget)
- ✓ **External funding**
(philanthropy/non-profit/academic/think tank resources)
- ✓ **Non-financial resources**
(in-kind contributions)

Types of activities being funded

Philadelphia's funding for innovation capacity is generally directed towards **launching or sustaining a project**, and **generating ideas & brainstorming**. These are the two most commonly funded activities among all cities surveyed. Philadelphia also **invests in digital systems and physical infrastructure**.



Organisational structure & staffing



Philadelphia has four teams for innovation with **30 staff**. **The Office of Innovation Management** oversees the City's innovation efforts. Specific evidence-based methods are led by **GovLabPHL** at the Mayor's Office. **The Department of Revenue** has also been experimenting with evidence-based methods to test and improve access to tax assistance programs. [The Office of Open Data and Digital Transformation](#) helps departments publish open data.

Staff skills and profiles include:

- ✓ **Project manager**
- ✓ **Data scientist**
- ✓ **Designer**
- ✓ **Sociologist**
- ✓ **Communication officer**
- ✓ **Community engagement staff**

Partnerships for innovation & data



Philadelphia has developed partnerships to promote its innovation capacity with **other public agencies, private firms, not-for-profit organisations, and city residents/resident associations**. In particular, Philadelphia, through over 20 external research partnerships, has created **numerous learning opportunities**. In addition, the Office of Innovation Management, in partnership with Jefferson University, launched [the Municipal Innovation Academy](#), an eight-week intensive program offered to City employees.

To improve data use, the city has also developed **data partnerships with the private sector, academia, think tanks, and private philanthropy** to collect and analyse data, as well as **with other cities**.

Measuring outcomes

Policy areas that **benefit from sufficient data**, or **lack sufficient data**, to support innovation capacity in the city:



Innovation is **helping the city** to:

- ✓ **Improve resident outcomes**
- ✓ **Improve service delivery**
- ✓ **Improve internal government operations**

The most **critical success factors** in supporting the city's innovation work:

- ✓ **Dedicated funding**
- ✓ **Focus on measurement**
- ✓ **Support from outside city administration**

NB: No response provided by the city for the policy areas in grey.