

# TIPS FOR DATA-FUELED INNOVATION

Using data, agencies can make smarter decisions around service delivery. But turning vast amounts of data into actionable innovations isn't easy. At a [recent GovLoop event](#), two experts shared their experiences and wisdom for fueling agency innovations with data. Here are highlights of what **Frances Peralta-Donio**, Data and Analytics Contractor at the Human Services Department in New Mexico, and **Gianluca Cairo**, Vice President of Operations and Strategy at Dayforce, had to say.

## MAKE DATA EASY TO ACCESS

In Peralta-Donio's department, there's a method analysts use when working with data. She compares it to a simplified recipe-building process: You're making an elaborate recipe, but you skip the part where you have to collect all the ingredients. Instead, you just have them at your fingertips.

"So, this innovation means that instead of having to make Thanksgiving dinner every time they go in, they're at the Wind Buffet in Las Vegas — they can pull whatever they need," she said. "It's beautiful. It tastes delicious. And they can pull this information, present it to leadership in a way that leadership can use it to make informed decisions. To me, that's what data-fueled innovation means."

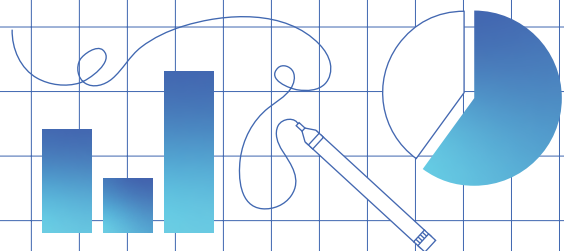
Data lakes and data marts help her agency handle inpatient admissions and readmissions because necessary data is available more easily. As Peralta-Donio said, these data repositories "become the foundation for our dashboards, to share that information out to leadership."

She also believes in eliminating data silos so that service providers and constituents can access data from disparate systems when necessary. In Peralta-Donio's experience, accessible, de-siloed data makes hospitals more efficient; it also empowers constituents to become more proactive regarding their care.

## TEACH DATA LITERACY

As technology changes under our feet, learning is needed constantly, to keep us upright and on track. That's as true for the analysts working directly with data systems as the leaders making decisions based on the data, said Peralta-Donio. Data literacy, or data fluency, should expand with the data systems and technology that analysts build and use. Peralta-Donio said she teaches leadership how to ask for and use information, and she trains analysts to support those needs. Data helps leaders create goals, drive their strategy, manage operations and evaluate and measure their progress. Even smaller-scope data and tools help overall operations and strategy.

"We give [leadership] all these tools that they've never had before, so they can start learning how to use that information to make better decisions," said Peralta-Donio.

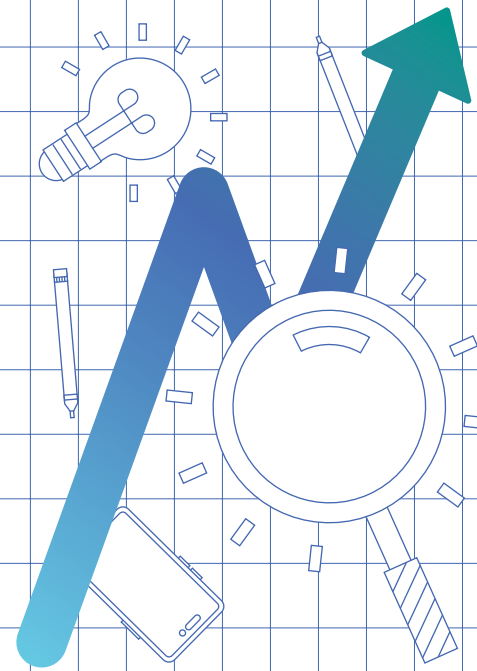


## SEE DATA AS OPPORTUNITY

Cairo calls the amount of data being generated today “almost incomprehensible, in terms of how much there is.” There’s more data now than ever before, and in the public sector specifically, he said.

Agencies can gain from this data by seeing it as an opportunity to improve their operations — “to enable database decisions, to enhance service delivery in a way that’s never happened before,” he added. He believes that the right technologies can help agencies better use their resources to prioritize high-value activities, maximize compliance and become more effective.

“There’s a tremendous opportunity for public sector leaders to make a generational change to technology transformation,” he said.



## TELL A DIGESTIBLE, TIMELY STORY WITH DATA

“Data is one thing, but leveraging it in a way that helps tell a story and helps you achieve your organizational objectives is really at the core of what this data is all about,” said Cairo.

He recommends making sure there’s a single source of truth across agency platforms. He also believes data should be available in real time and not delayed. Thirdly, Cairo stresses using reporting and visualization tools.

“They allow you to bring all of that together and configure it, to understand how you’re aligning and progressing toward your objectives,” he said. “You need insights, which connect all of the key data points together in real time, and to do it in a way that’s actually digestible.”

With accessible data and ongoing data education for employees at all levels, any team can improve their service delivery, the experts said. Through skillful communication, data professionals can also inform constituents during their interactions with agencies. A tremendous amount of data is exciting, but it’s even more exciting if agencies can realize data benefits through innovative, improved operations and constituent engagement.

