

# **POST PROJECT EVALUATION, TRACKING, AND RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION**

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AASHTO RAC SUMMER MEETING 2025



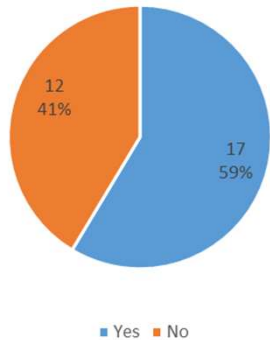
Pennsylvania  
Department of Transportation

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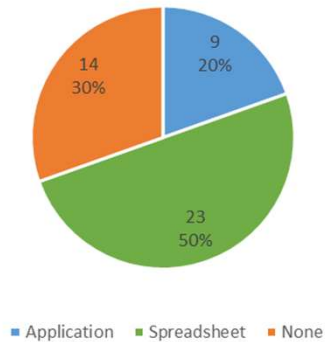
- Implementation Survey Highlights
- Implementation Briefs
  - “Asking Leading Questions”
- Best Practices Guide Development
- Pennsylvania’s Perspective

# IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY RESULTS

Do You Use Set Implementation Statuses?

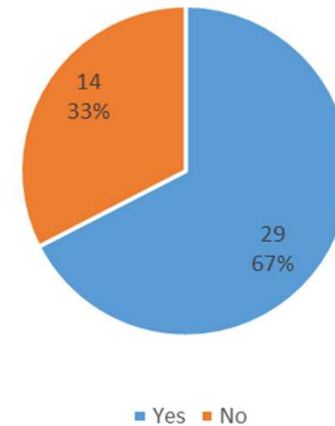


What do you use to track Implementation?



- Implementation Survey RAC 2024
- 43 unique responses
- Increased Implementation Resources

Are You Tracking Research Implementation?



# IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY RESULTS

- Variety of responses
  - Scaled vs Checkbox
  - Simple vs complex
  - Qualitative, not quantitative
  - Database/Spreadsheet
  - No standard timeframe

## **Most Common**

No Implementation

Planning/Planned – In Progress – Implemented

# IMPLEMENTATION BRIEFS

## Leading Questions—How to Increase Your Success for Implementation

The term “leading question” makes me envision a defense attorney shouting “Objection!” In that case, a leading question is a bad thing; in some cases, they can be helpful. The term came to me when I received an email from Information Systems informing me server XYZ is down. I had no idea what server XYZ was or if I even used it. This led me to wonder what things I talk about in research that don’t make sense to others.

Take implementation. Implementation should start at the very beginning when we are defining the research statement. We often say things like “What is the objective of the research?” and “What deliverables do you need?” when communicating with our technical staff, but do they make sense? I began rephrasing the questions. Examples are below.

WHAT PROBLEM ARE YOU TRYING TO SOLVE?	HOW WILL THIS HELP THE DOT (OR OTHERS)?	WHAT WOULD SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION LOOK LIKE?	WHO WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE OUTCOME?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use instead of “What is the objective?”</li><li>• Phrasing it this way forces them to dig deeper, sometimes realizing there isn’t a problem, they just need data.</li><li>• Important for subject matter experts to think through what the current dilemma is that we need research to solve.</li><li>• Once there is a better idea of the problem at hand, we can start developing a good problem statement.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask this instead of the purpose of the research.</li><li>• Makes technical staff dig a bit deeper about what there is to be gained from the research.</li><li>• With limited budgets, it is important to focus on research projects that will make an impact.</li><li>• Such phrasing can help provide answers that indicate how much of a priority the project should garner.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call out implementation outcomes instead of deliverables.</li><li>• Thinking about successful implementation could show what is needed is a change in a spec or design procedures.</li><li>• Having a goal in mind and spelling it out at the beginning makes it easier to implement at the end of the project.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By asking “Who would be affected?” the technical staff proposing the research must broaden their perspective beyond those directly involved in the project to think of who will have to do something different if the project is successful.</li><li>• “Boots on the ground” folks are often left off advisory teams, though their input is valuable; they are the ones that are in the field day-to-day and can spot issues that, if not addressed ahead of time, can kill implementation.</li></ul>

Using leading questions like the ones outlined can help us get enough information for a good request for proposal. I’m sure we have all managed projects where, halfway through the research, the technical experts say things like, “You know what else would be helpful...?” Changes in scope once a project starts can be difficult and expensive. If those discussions take place sooner rather than later, they can be addressed in the request for proposal.

The path towards successful implementation begins at the very onset of the research idea. Let’s be honest—no one has the time or money to do a project that will end up leading nowhere.

- Second brief
- Focused on usable information across all states
- Lead to small changes in thinking, usable by many
- Leading Questions
  - Mutual understanding of issue
  - Retains focus
  - Multiple viewpoints considered
  - Managing expectations of program

# BEST PRACTICE GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

- Template for implementation processes
- Assist in defining implementation
- Focuses on aspects of implementation:
  - Processes
  - Monitoring
  - Tools
  - Roles
  - Statuses
- Living document as implementation grows

# PENNSYLVANIA'S PERSPECTIVE

Research Implementation:  
Utilizing research results and  
recommendations to make  
decisions within the Department

## Strengths

- Implementation Coordinator
  - Consultant assistance
- Established independence

## Opportunities

- Integrating implementation deliverables
- Efficient tracking & communication

# QUESTIONS?

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