

New Executive Order aims to improve federal programs with social science research

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An Executive Order signed by President Obama on September 16 would direct federal agencies to identify programs that could benefit from social and behavioral science insights. The order is based on the new Social and Behavioral Sciences Team's (SBST) first annual report and establishes guidelines simplifying government forms. The SBST is a White House initiative created in 2014 intended to make government programs more effective and efficient.

The SBST's report indicated that successive reforms and improvements to federal agencies increased economic opportunities. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture worked with the SBST to better inform farmers on how to obtain microloans. This collaboration resulted in a 22 percent increase in farmers applying for financial aid and a subsequent 22 percent increase in likelihood that farmers would obtain a microloan.

In their second year, the SBST will take on a new project to address energy- and environmental-related challenges. The project will aim to deliver better information to automotive drivers about optimal fuel usage, increase the amount of renewable fuels used in the government fleet, and inform families about energy efficient appliance options to reduce superfluous energy usage and lower costs.

Source: The White House
