

# The State of the States

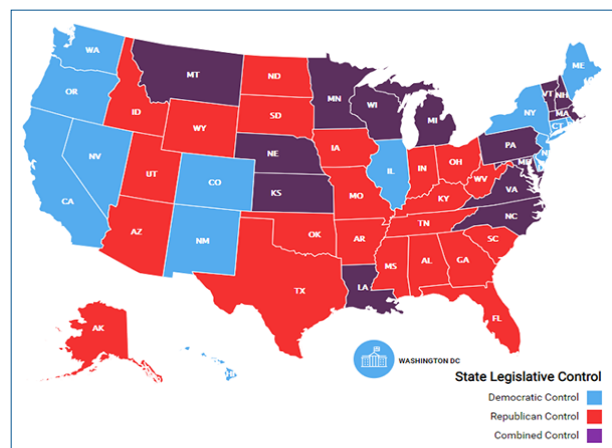
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## Project profile

### What is your idea

The State of the States is an online policy intelligence subscription service and database which gives state and local government practitioners and policymakers in the United States the right information to do their jobs more effectively. The platform has three parts: a 'policy brain' which curates and explains examples of best practice in policymaking across different policy issues and challenges; a network for practitioners to connect and share problems and best practice; and social media sentiment analysis function for policies.

### What problem are you solving

Market validation activities have confirmed that US local and state government policy practitioners benefit from learning from peers in other governments about best practices for addressing similar immediate, medium and long term policy problems. However, these practitioners face perennial constraints of: a lack of time and monetary resources; staff churn; legislative term limits; and legacy ways of listening to citizens. The State of the States is a subscription service which curates and provides instantly this information for policymakers and governments.

### What is your progress to date

Having recently completed a problem discovery stage, we will use internal LSE funding to create an MVP that builds on 'The State of the States', a free award-winning digital platform where users can explore aspects of US state politics, policy, and demographics. We will then test the usability and usefulness of this commercial MVP with potential customers and continue to scope users' needs for the next level of service, which will include creating subscription tiers and improving the user experience.

### What resources can help you grow

The State of the States has a staged approach to growth. In our next stage, we require analysts and business development to grow the platform's resources to enhance our subscriber offer, as well as network introductions to gain traction for the platform in the United States and worldwide. As this stage matures and we approach break-even, after one year we will focus on further software development based on user feedback, as well as the development of networks and outreach.

### How will you spend the £50k money

This investment will allow us to reach our next development stage, following the planned completion of our MVP by end of the 2020. The £50k moves the project to the next stage by covering two part-time analysts for one year to create and curate case-studies and the practitioners' network for information sharing on the platform. By year's end, our substantially enhanced subscriber offer will allow us to reach a sustainable break-even point, and to seek additional investment.

### About your team

Chris Gilson: multi-award winning research communicator working on US local, national and state politics. Chris is assisted with the development of The State of the States by the LSE's Innovation team.

As the platform grows and succeeds, we will be adding experts to the team in the areas of data science and analysis, social media analysis, and web development.

