## What data governance structure is best for my organization?

Determining what data governance structure is best for your organization is the first step to establishing a comprehensive data management program, but it can be a tricky one. Answer the following questions and keep track of how many 1s and 2s you choose. Review both governance models to see if your selections align with the recommendations.

### How does policy-making generally work in your organization?

1. Top-Down: Our executive leader initiates all of our internal policies.
2. Bottom-Up or Multidirectional: We have at least a few different influential leaders across the organization who can set policy on different topics.

### How comfortable and knowledgeable is your executive leader when it comes to the details of how your organization uses and manages data?

1. Very comfortable and likes to handle matters directly.
2. Prefers to delegate to data experts (e.g., CIO, CDO, IT Director)

### Have there been previous unsuccessful attempts at data governance under the current administration?

1. No

2. Yes

### (Optional) If you did have a previous unsuccessful attempt, why was data governance not successful previously?

1. No executive support
2. Culture change concerns

### Data Governance Structure 1: Unified Data Governance Model

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| The unified data governance model is made up of a small group of key stakeholders from various departments and organizational levels who can share unique perspectives and insights on how data is being managed throughout the organization. These discussions are led by a chief executive with decision-making authority. Other participants represent a variety of departments (IT, finance, budget, legal, etc.) and are generally managers or leaders in their areas.  **Top-down policymaking.** The unified model requires executive leaders to take the lead in policy-making and be major participants in the data governance discussions. It is important for them to know where the pain points are and the outcomes they could achieve by developing new data policies. Determining the focus of policymaking is typically consensus-based but ultimate decisions flow mainly from the vision of the executive leaders who are a part of the data governance structure. However, sometimes priorities are set by executive leaders outside of the data governance group, such as the city council.  **Executive leader led.** The unified model works best when you have an executive leader with a strong vision of how data should be handled and is looking for insights from other parts of the organization to guide the pathway to solutions. Having a clear idea of the direction forward can alleviate concerns and focus the discussions of the data governance group.  **Fewer than 10 participants.** Having small data governance group discussions with representatives from different levels and departments will enable your organization to get a good understanding of what is really happening with its data. However, this group will need to do outreach across the organization so it’s important to ensure that capacity exists.  **Works against executive support concerns.** Because executives are required to be so active in this model, it ensures that you have executive buy-in and understanding of the data governance efforts. However, executive leaders are busy people. Relying on them to take charge of the data governance process could slow down your work.  **Does not generally include external stakeholders.** This model needs to be a smaller group of participants who are comfortable sharing problems and concerns to be productive. Sometimes this mentality isn’t possible when external stakeholders are involved.  Cities using this model:   * Laredo, TX * Tulsa, OK (with external stakeholders) |

### Data Governance Structure 2: Executive Committee-Working Group Model

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| The executive committee and working group model distributes its policy recommendation and decision-making responsibilities. An executive group of leaders from across the organization approves or revises policy recommendations drafted and vetted by working groups. Working groups are made up of data stewards from each department/division. Generally, each working group takes on one topic of interest to the organization, such as creating a data portal or engaging community stakeholders. They could include external stakeholders, depending on the topic area. For example, open data working groups frequently have seats for several community participants to share their perspectives.  **Bottom-up or multidirectional policymaking.** Policy making is very collaborative in this model. Sometimes the executive group dictates the priority area and policy direction, while the working group discusses the best way to enact policies and procedures. Other times working groups present ideas on opportunities for changes based on their experiences working with and managing the organization’s data. This is a very fluid structure that seeks to work on what is most important organization-wide.  **Data expert-led.** For this model of data governance to work, it is important to have wide representation from across the organization, particularly from departments that are heavy data users or producers. Having the data governance conversations led by a more technical, data-informed member will ensure that data governance topics are related to organization-wide priorities and sufficiently surface data concerns, and that solutions are grounded in reality and reflect what is possible given the organization’s structure and budget.  **10 or more participants.** It is great to have many interested colleagues involved. To ensure that everyone’s voice is heard and conversations are action-oriented, it is important to have smaller group discussions that are focused on exploring specific topics and providing actionable solutions. With so many interested parties, having an executive board with decision-making capabilities that acts on the recommendations of working group(s) is commonly the way to go.  **Works against culture change concerns.** The executive committee-working group model includes such a variety of participants and experience levels that it is an effective way of alleviating culture change concerns. There are opportunities for staff members of all backgrounds and technical understanding to participate and share their experiences. The working group model is a great way to create advocates and build confidence in data use.  **Frequently includes external stakeholders.** Because many working groups are subject-matter focused, it is easy to incorporate external stakeholder feedback appropriately.  Cities using this model:   * Arlington, TX * Edmonton, Alberta * Cambridge, MA * Modesto, CA * Riverside, CA * [Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0vYJLIAhW5ZQ3JWRU4zUmxXSUE/view?usp=sharing) * Memphis, TN * Mesa, AZ |