

# Moving our whole team to R

## AEA 2019 - Public Profit

Four things really helped us move forward quickly and we would recommend to anyone taking the leap to R:

### 1. Form a Pilot Team

We identified a Pilot Team to take the lead in learning R. This team consisted of four folks across roles who had experience working with data in SPSS. We hired outside help to provide direct training to the Pilot Team and get us up to speed quickly. The Pilot Team helped us have in house 'experts' and identify how R would fit into our collaborative work setting when it came time, a few months later, to train the whole team.

### 2. Create Norms and Best Practices

It was challenging to avoid the temptation of using our SPSS norms and best practices for R. In practice, the ways we worked in SPSS did not always translate over to R (for example, R does not allow for value labels, which we'd relied on heavily in SPSS). The Pilot Team helped us outline some internal norms and best practices to start; the rest of the team continues to identify and add to this list.

### 3. Ensure Accountability and Practice

In order to ensure all staff had first-hand experience writing and running code we identified a real dataset for each person, across all roles, to clean and analyze in R for a real external deadline. The Pilot Team held 'office hours' to help staff as they cleaned and analyzed their data.

### 4. Host R Parties!

In order to encourage continued learning and collaboration, we hold R Parties. At these we share cool code, quick tips, or ideas for how to improve our processes. Everyone learns something new, is given the opportunity to share, and leaves with new ideas for how to improve our work using R.

Through these strategies, over the course of a year we were able to shift our team's mentality from *"Can we do that in R?"* to *"We can do that in R! (and I'll figure out how.)"*