

Bryan Sivak

Jessica Mulholland | February 29, 2012



A poster on the wall of [Bryan Sivak's](#) office offers up this quote from Southwest Airlines Co-Founder Herb Kelleher: "We have a strategic plan. It's called doing things." As Maryland's first chief innovation officer, Sivak has taken that example to heart over the past 10 months.

Upon his arrival last May, Sivak was tasked with helping to quickly implement some of Gov. Martin O'Malley's signature initiatives, like creating a health insurance exchange, and addressing issues like broadband access and engaging citizens in their government via social media and other technologies.

In less than a year, Sivak launched a grant program to help local governments start bike-sharing initiatives, as well as a microgrant program for the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene that funds implementation of employee-generated ideas for low-cost ways to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

"The idea," Sivak said, "is that the people who have good ideas are on the ground doing the work."

He's also initiated crowdsourcing so that citizens can comment and add suggestions about ways the state can improve programs and operations. And he's working with the

University of Maryland and a California design firm to redesign the state Emergency Operations Center from the ground up. “It’s a complete reimagination from the physical and technological aspects,” he said.

Perhaps one of Sivak’s proudest accomplishments is the way he’s tackled Maryland’s [technology transfer](#) problem. The state ranks No. 1 per capita in the nation for the receipt of research and development dollars, he said, but falls to No. 37 when it comes to commercializing these lab-developed technologies. In response, Sivak helped launch a nearly \$6 million Maryland Innovation Initiative — a partnership between the University of Maryland, Morgan State University and Johns Hopkins University designed to bolster the state’s ability to commercialize research breakthroughs.

The Innovation Initiative also includes a focus on accountability. Sivak said Maryland will create a “Commercialization Stat” function within its StateStat management infrastructure to track results. “ It’s easy for us to announce a new technology and throw money at it, but it’s much harder for any institution to stand up to what they say the technology is going to do,” Sivak said.

One suspects Kelleher would agree.

<http://www.govtech.com/top-25/Bryan-Sivak.html>