



## Scholar Spotlight: Anita Larson

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Anita M. Larson

This week, we are spotlighting another new member to the SSN team, Anita Larson. Anita applies her knowledge of the public sector to study and develop integrated data systems to increase collaboration across government sectors and levels, particularly in regards to education.

### [Anita Larson](#)

Project Lead, Minnesota Department of Education; and Part-Time Faculty, Hamline University

*SSN Key Findings:* [How Data Sharing and Integrated Information Systems Can Improve Government Performance](#)

Larson's research spans a diversity of cross-sector public policy areas. As a research fellow at the University of Minnesota she led an integrated data project that produced a number of peer-reviewed publications related to the outcomes of children with child welfare involvement. The contributions of this research were applied to many aspects of Minnesota's child welfare and education practice sectors. Her current position at the Minnesota Department of Education is dedicated to leading the state's first integrated data system for early childhood, which brings together data from three different state departments. This work has prompted greater collaboration across disparate systems to improve outcomes and render services more efficient. Collaboration for good government is the broad goal of Larson's work. She recently completed a co-authored book on academic-policymaker collaboration titled *Researcher-Policymaker Partnerships: Strategies for Launching and Sustaining Successful Collaborations* which brings together the knowledge of academic researchers and the public sector to again, improve public service across numerous case studies. Larson has spent most of her public sector career in planning and evaluation in the fields of public economic programs, homeless services, public health, community corrections, child welfare, and early education. The importance of measurement, accountability, data-informed decision-making, and collaboration informs her instructional practices and pedagogy as a part-time professor at Hamline University in St. Paul.

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