**Three-Step Policy Assessment Process**

**Step 1: Gold standard**

* Identify a gold standard
  + Options include legislation, best practice elements, research findings & scientific literature
* Operationalize mutually exclusive elements for coding
  + Legislation may have multiple concepts in a single statute
* Develop standardized score sheet or codebook
  + Use decision rules and coding guidance using examples
  + Use multi-dimensional scoring for each item (“present” vs “absent” does not work well)

**Step 2: Collect & code policies**

* Systematically collect policies
  + Clear definition of what is considered a “policy”
  + Document data collection and management procedures clearly
* Train coding team
  + Review & discuss each item on score sheet
  + Have entire team code the same policy, then compare coding
  + Discuss & reconcile differences
* Code policies using standardized score sheet
  + Initial coding best done in a group setting so issues can be discussed
* Assess reliability
  + Complete this step early
  + Conduct a blind, double-code for 10% of policies at a minimum
  + Identify problematic items or coders needing additional support
* Refine coding
  + May need to rescore items or entire policies

**Step 3: Make meaning of coding**

* Identify comparison group
  + Define “fully compliant” policies or identify a threshold or “good enough” score
* Weight vs. overall sum of scores
  + Decide if some elements should be weighted more than others and why
* Generate numeric scores for each policy
* Mandatory vs. “bonus” items
  + May have multiple scores for each policy (mandatory, bonus, and total sum)
* Establish classification system
  + Ranking (Gold, Silver, Bronze)? Threshold (scores of 80+ are “compliant”)?
  + Could use key elements plus a minimum score