Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government

About Results for America

Results for America
Results for America is helping decision-makers at all levels of government harness the power of evidence and data to solve our world's greatest challenges. Our mission is to make investing in what works the "new normal," so that when policymakers make decisions, they start by seeking the best evidence and data available, then use what they find to get better results.

Invest in What Works Policy Series
This *Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government* is part of Results for America's Invest in What Works policy series launched in 2012 to help local, state, and federal policymakers harness the power of evidence and data to increasingly shift taxpayer dollars toward results-driven, evidence-based solutions.

Contents

Foreword

While the *Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government* was developed before the start of the COVID–19 crisis, the pandemic emphasizes more than ever why it is important for government to invest in building its capacity to use evidence and data to make decisions. Simply put, the coronavirus has put in stark relief the imperative that governments use the best, most accurate, and most timely information in order to make decisions — decisions that have tremendous health, economic, and social impacts on people. In fact, a nationally representative poll, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago in May 2020, found that one–third of Americans believe their state governments are not making sufficient use of data and evidence to manage their response to COVID–19.[1] Although the examples highlighted in this guide are not COVID–19 specific, the Blueprint Strategies for using evidence to guide policy and measure results are especially necessary during this crisis.

This Blueprint is also based on the idea that ensuring equity — particularly for people of color — is a moral imperative and one of the most fundamental responsibilities of government. Evidence and data can be key tools to help governments improve equity by understanding communities' needs; continuously improving programs for all residents; using evidence to ensure the equitable delivery of quality services; and sharing what works among governments to speed problem–solving. Equipping governments with the capacity to effectively use evidence and data is a vital step towards creating thriving communities with economic opportunity for all.

In sum, with all of the complex challenges facing state governments and the communities they serve, the need for specific resources, such as this Blueprint, to help governments build their capacity to use evidence and data in decision–making is more important now than ever before.

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1 NORC surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Americans via AmeriSpeak from May 29 to June 1, 2020; the margin of error is +/– three percentage points. For additional details, see the poll.

Blueprint Overview

This *Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government* (Blueprint) is an implementation guide for Results for America's *Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence* (State Standard of Excellence). The State Standard of Excellence sets a national benchmark for how state governments can use evidence and data to achieve better outcomes for their residents, whereas the Blueprint provides state governments with specific implementation strategies and actions for consistently and effectively using evidence and data in budget, policy, and management decisions.

Taken together, the State Standard of Excellence and Blueprint provide state governments with a set of comprehensive resources to:

Create a high-level roadmap for how they can increase their capacity to use evidence and data in their decision-making

Build capacity to foster and sustain an organizational culture focused on learning and results

Improve investments by using their evidence and data capacity to spend taxpayer dollars on evidence-based solutions that achieve better results for their residents

This Blueprint is designed for state government leaders in governors' offices, state budget offices, and within state agencies who are charged with making their state's critical budget, policy, and management decisions. The Blueprint describes explicit Strategies, detailed Actions, useful resources, and specific examples of leading practices to help state governments make progress on the State Standard of Excellence and improve results for their residents.

Blueprint Development

The Blueprint was developed with the assistance of senior staff from a bipartisan group of governors offices as part of the What Works Bootcamps training series hosted by Results for America and the National Governors Association to help advance evidence-based policymaking in state governments. Through a series of in-depth, facilitated learning sessions in 2019 and 2020, senior staff from more than a dozen governors' offices contributed their expertise to developing this Blueprint. As such, this Blueprint is a practical guide that reflects the collective experience of many of the country's most effective state government leaders.[2]

2 Please see the acknowledgements section (pp. 42–43) for a full list of the people who graciously contributed to this Blueprint.

Strategies for Delivering Results in State Government

The Blueprint is organized into the following Blueprint Themes, which are aligned with the State Standard of Excellence. Each Theme has three related Strategies, detailed Actions for executing these Strategies, and specific examples of how state governments have implemented these Actions.

Blueprint Theme	Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
Managing for Results	A. Establish public, customer oriented, measurable strategic **goals** and metrics that reflect the governor's priorities. B. Create a **systematic approach to managing results** that aligns budget, policy, and legislative activities to advance the governor's statewide priorities and supports continuous learning. C. Promote a **culture of using data and evidence** to deliver results for customers.	1. Strategic goals 2. Performance management/ continuous improvement
Leveraging Data	D. Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively **collecting and using data** across state agencies to improve programs and operations. E. Build **talent** in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data. F. Establish a roadmap for **more integrated data usage** that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.	3. Data leadership 4. Data policies/ agreements 5. Data use
Building and Using Evidence	G. Create **leadership structures** to effectively build and use evidence across state programs and departments. H. Build the **infrastructure to evaluate state programs** through evaluation policies, evidence definitions, program inventories, and funding to support state leaders. I. Position the **budget** as a key tool to build state evaluation capacity and apply that capacity to focus resources on evidence-based investments.	6. Evaluation leadership 7. Evaluation policies 8. Evaluation resources 9. Outcome data 10. Evidence definitions and program inventory
Investing for Results	J. **Prioritize key areas** for analysis and improvement based on statewide goals. K. Use data-driven tools and methods to **preference evidence** by spending on the most effective and cost-efficient programs and initiatives. L. **Redirect grant dollars and contract spending** towards interventions with evidence of effectiveness in order to deliver results and encourage innovation.	11. Cost-benefit analysis 12. Use of evidence in grant programs 13. Innovation 14. Contracting for outcomes 15. Repurpose for results

Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government

Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Investing for Results Matters

Of special note, Investing for Results is the most important Blueprint Theme for state government leaders. Spending is where the "rubber meets the road" — the point at which governments allocate public resources to deliver services and programs. Using the Strategies in this Blueprint will help state leaders shift away from making spending decisions based on assumptions and towards spending resources on activities that have (or are building) evidence of effectiveness. As illustrated in the Colorado example below, shifting resources is a difficult, but necessary, step to achieve the best possible results both in government and for customers.

How States Can Achieve Better Results Using the Blueprint

As one example of what state governments can achieve by implementing the Strategies in this Blueprint, below is a short description of evidence-based policymaking in action and the results achieved in the state of Colorado.

COLORADO

Managing for Results

For over a decade, Colorado's state government has been a leader in using data and evidence to improve its results (including being recognized as a Leading State in the 2019 State Standard of Excellence). During this time, the state implemented many of the Blueprint Strategies, illustrating how evidence-based policymaking can improve results in the area of economic opportunity.

Colorado launched a public dashboard in 2016, with customer-oriented metrics that cascaded down to agency operations through departmental strategic plans. Leveraging both lead and lag metrics, the state reviewed its performance quarterly at the cabinet level, which informed cross-departmental collaboration on strategic initiatives. This effort was launched by the state's first Chief Performance Officer, appointed in 2015, and expanded that same year when the new Lieutenant Governor assumed the role of Chief Operating Officer with operational responsibility for a state government budget of more than $30 billion and a 30,000 person workforce. Over three years, the state improved on 85% of its metrics and hit the target on 55%. For example, as noted in the Governor's November 2018 budget request, the state expanded broadband connectivity for school districts from 74% in 2015 to 98% in 2018, lowered the healthcare uninsured rate from 14% in 2013 to 6.5% in 2017, and cut or modified half of the state's 24,500 regulations, delivering more than $7.9 million in cost avoidance and 2.3 million in hours saved for Colorado businesses in 2017. Given the success of these efforts, the public dashboard was maintained across a change in Administration in 2019. The state also established process improvement resources and teams that led to the completion of nearly 900 projects over seven years, touching every state agency. These efforts combined to promote a statewide culture of delivering results for the customer.

Leveraging Data

In 2009, Colorado hired the country's first state government Chief Data Officer (CDO) to create an enterprise-wide vision for data usage in support of service delivery. The CDO chaired the statewide Government Data Advisory Board that created a statewide data integration service, which allowed for interoperability of data assets among state entities. The state also established a training academy in 2013 to support staff in using data-driven methods to improve outcomes across all agencies. More than 500 state leaders completed the training, which included topics on using metrics and data-based methods to deliver results; the training regularly received a 50%+ net promoter score.

Building and Using Evidence

In 2017, the state created the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab as a strategic research partner for government agencies and a bridge to the research community. In one of many efforts, the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab and the Governor's Office co-designed the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) to facilitate data sharing for research and analysis purposes to drive improvement in state policies and programs. During this period, the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting increased the use of data and evidence in budget decisions by requiring agencies to include the following in their budget requests: evidence of program effectiveness, alignment with the Governor's dashboard metrics, and if they had been the focus of a process improvement project. The Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting has partnered with state agencies, academic and philanthropic organizations, and the state legislature's Joint Budget Committee in an Evidence-Based Policy Collaborative to "use the best available research and information to help guide and inform policy and budget decisions" for the state's budget of more than $30 billion.

Investing for Results

Colorado also took a number of actions to prioritize funding programs and initiatives that delivered results. In 2014, the state partnered with The Pew Results First Initiative to leverage a cost-benefit model to assess programs in the areas of adult criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare. This cost-benefit analysis identified 24 programs with positive returns on investment as well as nine programs with more costs than benefits. (These nine programs were reassessed so they could be improved.) Building on these efforts, in 2018, the Governor's Office and the legislature passed legislation to create three child welfare Pay for Success initiatives. Funded with $6 million, these projects aimed to return $15 million in savings to taxpayers and society.

Pulling It All Together
Expanding Concurrent Enrollment to Support Economic Opportunity

State policymakers believe that to prepare all students for a rapidly changing world, they must continue to make stronger connections across the traditional silos of K–12 education, higher education, and employment. Concurrent Enrollment programs allow students to do just this by earning college–level credit while in high school. Motivated by the strong evidence of the success of these programs, the state rapidly expanded Concurrent Enrollment opportunities. Nearly 46,000 students participated in these programs in 2018, up 10% from the previous year, representing nearly one–third of all juniors and seniors who attend public high schools in Colorado.

The effort to promote and grow Concurrent Enrollment in Colorado is a comprehensive example of the state's use of the Blueprint's Strategies to deliver results. Governor Polis is **managing for results** by supporting the statewide target set by the state's Commission on Higher Education of 66% postsecondary credential attainment among adults ages 25 to 34 by 2025. Governor Polis included this statewide target on his Governor's Dashboard, with Concurrent Enrollment as a key strategy to get there, with its own specific target metrics.

Recognizing the need to **leverage data** to make the case for the expansion of Concurrent Enrollment, the Colorado Department of Higher Education worked with the Colorado Department of Education to combine data (in a way that preserved student privacy) so that the effectiveness of the program could be measured. Agency leadership, as well as staff focused on data management and evaluation within them, enabled the agencies to bring expertise in research and evidence–based methods.

The Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab was enlisted to help **build and use the evidence** needed to understand if the program was working. A causal study was conducted, which followed five cohorts of 11th grade students who attended a state secondary school, from the 2009–2010 school year through the 2015–2016 school year. The results were encouraging. The study found that, even with special attention to low–income and minority family outcomes, the probability of enrolling in college within one year of expected high school graduation was 77% for students who participated in Concurrent Enrollment, versus 52% for those who did not; the probability of persisting into a second year of college was 82% versus 77%, respectively. In 2020, the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab is using rigorous methods to evaluate if Concurrent Enrollment improves time–to–degree and wages for participants.

Governor Polis then **invested in results** by citing the evidence of Concurrent Enrollment's effectiveness as a key reason to scale the program further through "smart policy tweaks and investments this year and in the years to come." This led to a direct request for a $500,000 increase in funding for Concurrent Enrollment programs for the FY 2020–21 budget cycle, meant to accelerate the governor's goal of improving the affordability of a postsecondary credential.

How to Use the Blueprint for Delivering Results in Government

The Blueprint contains Strategies — and specific accompanying Actions — that provide a practical way for state governments to more effectively achieve results by increasing their evidence and data capacity. However, it is worth noting that this capacity building is an iterative process and that each state's process will not necessarily be linear. As such, to help state leaders identify the necessary resources for each Action, the Blueprint denotes which of the following common levers is associated with the implementation of the Action:

People

People are the backbone of state government. To effectively invest in what works, state governments need both strong leadership (with the right talent in the right positions) and broad adoption of data and evidence by staff at all levels. By building capacity from leadership to frontline staff, state governments can create a true evidence–based culture that achieves better results.

Policy

Policy drives action in state government. In order to execute activities consistently and effectively, state governments need clear policies that are appropriately communicated across stakeholder communities. Clear policies on data and evidence can align people around common goals and precipitate the appropriate infrastructure needed to support progress.

Infrastructure

Appropriate systems, structures, and tools allow state government employees to fully carry out their responsibilities. Infrastructure can be key for increasing *and* sustaining evidence–based policy capacity through means such as data systems, governance structures, and evaluation tools.

Managing for Results

Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
A. Establish public, customer-oriented, measurable strategic **goals** and metrics that reflect the governor's priorities. B. Create a **systematic approach to managing results** that aligns budget, policy, and legislative activities to advance the governor's statewide priorities and supports continuous learning. C. Promote a **culture of using data and evidence** to deliver results for customers.	1. Strategic goals 2. Performance management/ continuous improvement

Managing performance starts with understanding how the governor's administration defines success and builds the overarching system and culture to deliver that success. Without a set of goals and metrics (or strategic plans) to define the administration's agenda, it is difficult to communicate to staff within the agencies or the general public what the government aims to deliver. An integrated system for reviewing performance goals and connecting decision-making across the major activities in an administration greatly increases the chances that key goals and metrics will be achieved, especially across issue areas that extend beyond traditional government agency and department silos. Performance management helps state governments improve customer service, program performance, and outcomes for their residents. This use of data to set goals and monitor performance can be an especially powerful way to improve equity by focusing efforts on communities of color. Further, transparency with the public and stakeholders places the focus on results, rather than process. This emphasis on results is difficult to sustain without a culture centered on data-driven and evidence-based policymaking. Policies and goals can be changed over time, but a state government culture that prioritizes the use of data and evidence to deliver better results for residents creates lasting impact.

Strategy A

*Establish public, customer oriented, measurable strategic **goals** and metrics that reflect the governor's (or agency's) priorities.*

Actions

- Appoint or designate a key leader, such as a Chief Performance Officer, with the authority and skill set to lead the creation of specific goals and metrics across government agencies and departments **People**

- Ensure the strategic planning process for developing the governor's and agency–specific goals and metrics incorporates a breadth of internal and external stakeholder input to support legitimacy **People** **Policy**
  - › Establish a clear set of definitions and guidelines for using metrics (e.g. lead vs. lag metrics, and input vs. output vs. outcome), and ensure that public–facing and decision–oriented metrics are focused on tangible results that matter (i.e. consider the question, if we moved the dial on this metric, would it matter to the public?)
  - › Engage and include community stakeholders into the process for developing state goals to reflect community needs

- Make the goals and metrics accessible to the public through a scorecard or dashboard that is updated in real time or at regular intervals **Policy** **Infrastructure**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice	
COLORADO Governor's Dashboard	The Colorado Governor's dashboard outlines strategic goals, metrics, and performance plans that are directly linked to the governor's annual budget request. Around each strategic area, the governor convened working groups of cabinet members to directly engage key leaders in managing progress towards each goal. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 1).**
WASHINGTON Results Washington	The Governor's dashboard on Results Washington publicly lists statewide strategic goals, outcome measures, and live progress towards meeting these goals. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 1).**
VERMONT State Strategic Plan 2018–2023 (FY2019–FY2023)	An executive order mandated the creation of Vermont's statewide strategic goals. Vermont has published its strategic plan online and it includes extensively detailed strategic outcomes, goals, breakthrough indicators, and targets. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 1).**

Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government

Strategy B

*Create a **systematic approach to managing results** that aligns budget, policy, and legislative activities to advance the governor's statewide priorities and support continuous learning.*

Actions

- Develop a performance review process for goals and metrics that focuses on learning from data and engages staff at all levels (including senior personnel with authority to make decisions) as well as community stakeholders where relevant 👥 **People** 🏛 **Policy**

- Link outcome metrics for the governor's goals to the department strategic plans and dashboards to support their use in operational decision–making and program evaluation 🏛 **Policy** ⚙ **Infrastructure**
  - › Consider using a "logic tree" approach to show how administration goals link to department and even individual goals and activities
  - › Consider the role of equity in how departments design and implement their strategic plans

- Create structures to link budget, policy, and legislative efforts that support the achievement of goals and metrics 🏛 **Policy** ⚙ **Infrastructure**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

WASHINGTON

Results Washington Results Review

The Washington Governor and state leadership convene monthly Results Reviews meetings on specific strategic goals and outcome measures. These meetings engage community members in sharing their experiences and are made publicly available.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 2).

COLORADO

Colorado Governor's Budget Request

The Governor's budget request aligns the Governor's priorities with the budgeting process and cycle. This is supported by the Colorado State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent Government (SMART) Act.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 1).

TENNESSEE

Transparent Tennessee

Tennessee's data and performance website, Transparent Tennessee, has statewide performance dashboards, which are connected to each cabinet–level agency's operational and strategic plan.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 2).

Strategy C

*Promote a **culture of using data and evidence** to deliver results for customers.*

Actions

- Take executive-level action (e.g. executive order or legislation) to codify and signal support for the use of data-driven decision-making to deliver results for customers 🏛 **Policy**

- Conduct ongoing internal and external communication about the overall approach to delivering results that helps support internal culture and builds trust with the public 🏛 **Policy**

- Establish a method and resources (e.g. lean process improvement) for managers and front-line staff to use data and other information to improve operations in keeping with the administration's goals 🏛 **Policy** ⚙ **Infrastructure**

- Provide adequate personnel resources, training, support, and network development for management and front-line staff to effectively use data to solve problems and deliver results ⚙ **Infrastructure**

- Measure employee engagement with specific questions to test awareness and connection with core administration values, performance processes, and priorities 👥 **People** ⚙ **Infrastructure**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

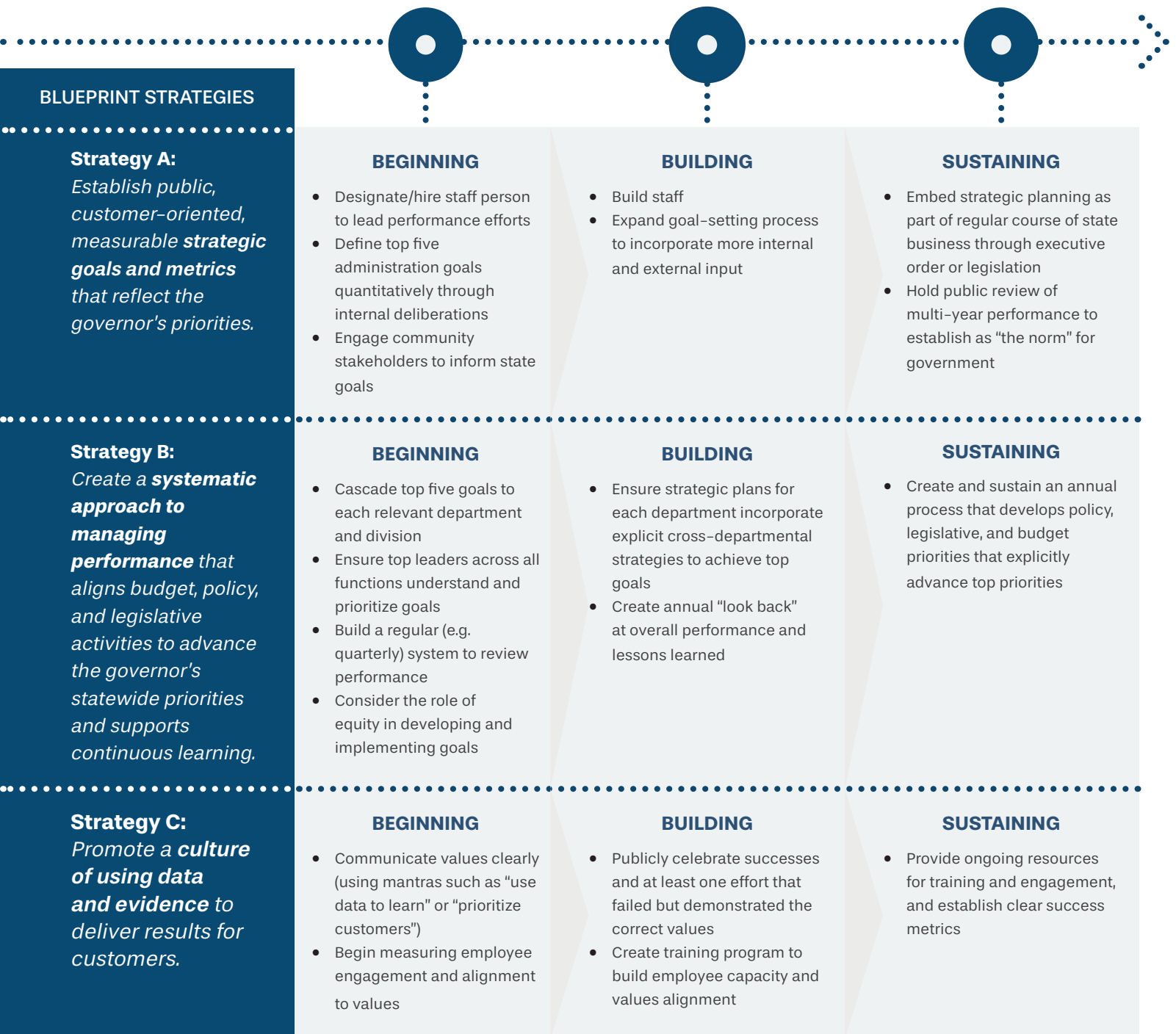|		
	COLORADO Department of Human Services C-Stat	C-Stat is the Colorado Department of Human Services' performance-based analysis strategy that allows each program to focus on continuous improvement and outcomes. The dashboard is supported by stat meetings where executive leadership and staff analyze data to identify positive trends and opportunities for improvement. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 2).**
	RHODE ISLAND Government Innovation League	The Rhode Island Governor's Office and The Policy Lab at Brown University partnered to launch the Government Innovation League, a fellowship program for staff that is designed to foster innovation and process enhancements across the state through training, coaching, and implementation support. In 2019, Rhode Island has developed a variety of performance improvement projects through this model.
	MARYLAND Managing for Results	Maryland's Managing for Results initiative publishes annual performance reports and tracks agencies' key goals, objectives, and performance measures, which are supported by the Governor's Improvement Office. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 2).**

What Could This Look Like Over Time?
Managing for Results

BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES	BEGINNING	BUILDING	SUSTAINING
Strategy A: *Establish public, customer-oriented, measurable* **strategic goals and metrics** *that reflect the governor's priorities.*	• Designate/hire staff person to lead performance efforts • Define top five administration goals quantitatively through internal deliberations • Engage community stakeholders to inform state goals	• Build staff • Expand goal-setting process to incorporate more internal and external input	• Embed strategic planning as part of regular course of state business through executive order or legislation • Hold public review of multi-year performance to establish as "the norm" for government
Strategy B: *Create a* **systematic approach to managing performance** *that aligns budget, policy, and legislative activities to advance the governor's statewide priorities and supports continuous learning.*	• Cascade top five goals to each relevant department and division • Ensure top leaders across all functions understand and prioritize goals • Build a regular (e.g. quarterly) system to review performance • Consider the role of equity in developing and implementing goals	• Ensure strategic plans for each department incorporate explicit cross-departmental strategies to achieve top goals • Create annual "look back" at overall performance and lessons learned	• Create and sustain an annual process that develops policy, legislative, and budget priorities that explicitly advance top priorities
Strategy C: *Promote a* **culture of using data and evidence** *to deliver results for customers.*	• Communicate values clearly (using mantras such as "use data to learn" or "prioritize customers") • Begin measuring employee engagement and alignment to values	• Publicly celebrate successes and at least one effort that failed but demonstrated the correct values • Create training program to build employee capacity and values alignment	• Provide ongoing resources for training and engagement, and establish clear success metrics

Wins

By following the actions above and building over time, states should aim to achieve wins along the way to galvanize internal and external support. Here are some sample wins, though there are many other types of achievements that states could use to mark their progress.

SHORT-TERM WINS

- Hire/designate a Chief Performance Officer to ensure the governor's goals are results-driven with metrics, outcomes, and deliverables
- Create a public dashboard to show progress towards meeting strategic goals (see Colorado Governor's Dashboard)
- Identify and engage key agency leaders in statewide performance management and align agency goals with dashboard

MID-TERM WINS

- Build a performance team to support a cross-agency performance management system for strategic goals
- Ensure statewide strategic and performance goals are reflected in agencies' work (see Colorado's Department of Human Services's C-Stat)
- Highlight important wins publicly and internally to emphasize progress made towards accomplishing goals

LONG-TERM WINS

- Normalize performance management and strategic planning through executive action (see the executive order that established Results Washington)
- Leverage the annual budget process to align governor's priorities with budget development (such as the Colorado State Measurement for Accountability, Responsive, and Transparent Government Act)
- Convene leadership and performance teams for regular public stat meetings (such as Results Washington Results Reviews)
- Leverage performance management data and continuous improvement insights to inform research and learning agendas

📊 Leveraging Data

Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
D. Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively **collecting and using data** across state agencies to improve programs and operations. E. Build **talent** in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data. F. Establish a roadmap for **more integrated data usage** that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.	3. Data leadership 4. Data policies/ agreements 5. Data use

The key to improving performance in government is to leverage data to inform goals, measure progress, and learn lessons for future improvement. Appropriate frameworks, easy ways to align data, and talent make it possible to comprehensively use data for improvement, research, and evaluation. This type of data use creates the foundation of knowledge about what works, for whom, and why in ways that can allow governments to identify and reduce the systemic barriers that produce inequality. In this manner, governments have demonstrated the power of unleashing administrative data, often supported through improved data linking and sharing. While the technical components of linking data with the appropriate privacy measures are paramount, qualified and empowered personnel play a critical role in helping agencies leverage data to improve decisions while building a data–centric culture across the state.

Leveraging Data

Strategy D

*Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively **collecting and using data** across state agencies to improve programs and operations.*

Actions

- Create a framework that includes the purpose, priorities, methods and governance for collecting, using, and sharing data across state agencies 🏛 **Policy** ⚙ **Infrastructure**
  - › Connect the framework to the administration's priorities and systematic approach to managing results
  - › Elevate data usage to "make peoples' lives better" (as opposed to more academic pursuits) to help guide data use, address barriers to equality of opportunity, and make the case internally and publicly for why data is important
  - › Center racial equity and the community voice within the context of data integration to avoid perpetuating the racially–biased systems that have produced inequitable outcomes

- Consider a guiding vision that protects data privacy and security but elevates the principle of "our default is to share" among state agencies to break down silos between agencies and systems 🏛 **Policy**

- Codify a vision for data use in an executive order or legislation for sustainability 🏛 **Policy**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

CONNECTICUT **State Data Plan and Data Governance**	Connecticut's Chief Data Officer and individual agency data officers are required to update the state data plan biennially. The plan contains 11 principles and accompanying practices that all agencies should adopt to improve their management, use, sharing, and analysis of data. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 3).**
OHIO **InnovateOhio**	In 2019, Ohio's governor signed Executive Order 2019–15D consolidating state data systems into the InnovateOhio Platform, which uses data as "a shared strategic asset" whose "value is multiplied when data sets are linked across programs and organizations." The executive order created a presumption of data sharing between state agencies, except where a specific legal prohibition is identified in writing. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 5).**
CALIFORNIA **Open Data**	California's statewide Open Data Policy encourages departments to share data in standard and accessible formats through the California Open Data Portal. As outlined in the California Open Data Handbook, the state's efforts are designed to improve collaboration, expand transparency, encourage innovation, and increase effectiveness. In addition, the state hosts CalData, a professional network for government officials and partners to promote the best uses of open data. **More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 4).**

Leveraging Data

Strategy E

*Build **talent** in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data.*

Actions

- Hire a Chief Data Officer (CDO) within, or strongly connected to, the governor's office with the expertise, authority, and resources to build a data vision, framework, and to guide the effort statewide 👥 **People**
  - › Ensure the CDO has a voice in the policy, budget, and management decisions where data is a critical element

- Build capacity to support data capture, management, and collaboration across agencies 👥 **People**
  - › Identify existing technical resources across agencies to understand strengths, gaps, and opportunities for increased collaboration
  - › Consider increasing technical capacity (e.g. data analysts) within agencies but prioritize placing "data strategists" (i.e. data strategy that is human-centered vs. solely technical) into coordination and management roles

- Build groups and relationships to support the data agenda, such as:
  - › Data governance board to provide formal feedback on data standards and usage
  - › Community of practice amongst all data-related leaders / key agency staff to share best practices
  - › Relationship(s) with university researchers to add expertise and capacity for potential project-based work
  - › Stakeholder engagement mechanisms to ensure that community voice informs how data is gathered and used

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

CONNECTICUT
Chief Data Officer

A 2018 Connecticut law established the statewide Chief Data Officer and Connecticut Data Analysis Technology Advisory Board and required each state agency to designate an agency data officer to manage high-value data sets and coordinate data-related activities with the state Chief Data Officer.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 3).

KENTUCKY
Center for Statistics' Data Governance

By providing data sets, publishing reports, and fulfilling research requests, the Kentucky Center for Statistics provides state-specific education and workforce data insights with appropriate data privacy and data access controls. With more than 40 staff members who are dedicated to data use and sharing, the Center is run by an executive director with an oversight board composed of participating state agencies. The Center has developed a research agenda for 2020-22.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 5).

INDIANA
Chief Data Officer

Created by a 2017 law, Indiana's Chief Data Officer has the budget, staff, and authority to coordinate data analytics and data transparency for state agencies; advise state agencies regarding best practices for data maintenance, security, and privacy; and oversee the Indiana Management Performance Hub.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 3).

Strategy F

*Establish a roadmap for **more integrated data usage** that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.*

Actions

- Activate the right leadership group (ideally including a data governance board, the Chief Data Officer, and engagement from within the governor's office) to help drive the collaborative creation of a statewide data roadmap 👥 **People**

- Develop an inventory of the people, processes, and infrastructure used to capture data (including partners if feasible) to provide a view of the "starting point" for enhanced data integration and usage moving forward 👥 **People**

- Create a data infrastructure roadmap that starts from the current status of data use and builds to a data system integrated at the most viable level 🏛 **Policy** ⚙ **Infrastructure**
  › Engage internal stakeholders to understand sensitivities, resources, and starting point technological realities to build data integration that allows rapid cross–agency data combination for the purpose of specific problem solving
  › Consider a progressive approach that starts with quick wins focused on linking programmatic data for research purposes. While a more expansive data system tied to case management within agencies may be viable in the longer term, it may not be appropriate as a short–term or medium–term goal
  › Engage community stakeholders to build a set of questions and use cases that can ultimately be solved by integrating data

- Tie the performance management system and the data infrastructure together so that the administration's top goals are supported by regular, cross–agency data capture 🏛 **Policy** ⚙ **Infrastructure**

- Expedite data sharing across and within agencies by creating formal, standardized, and easy-to–apply agreements that agencies can use to share data without risking privacy or security 🏛 **Policy**

- Provide technical assistance to agencies on an ongoing basis to support new data imperatives 👥 **People**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

WASHINGTON

Department of Social Services's Integrated Client Database

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Research and Data Analysis Division maintains an Integrated Client Database with data from 10 state agencies, 40 separate data systems, and millions of individuals. RDA's integrated data environment has been used by the state's Health Home Program to generate tens of millions in performance payments from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as a result of improved care management for persons dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 5).

COLORADO

Linked Information Network of Colorado

Colorado Governor's Office and the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (CEAL) co-designed the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) to facilitate data sharing for research and analytics purposes as a way to improve state policies and programs.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 5).

INDIANA

Management Performance Hub

Indiana Management Performance Hub is an integrated database that brings together data from key policy issues related to opioids, education and workforce development, medicaid, fiscal transparency, and other areas. According to a 2018 annual report, the Hub has generated an estimated return on investment of $40 million for the state.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 3).

What Could This Look Like Over Time?
Leveraging Data

BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES	BEGINNING	BUILDING	SUSTAINING
Strategy D: *Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively **collecting and using data** across state agencies to improve programs and operations.*	• Establish the principles and values to drive the effort • Create a high-level vision and initial framework to guide efforts	• Develop the more advanced version of the framework	• Engage internal and external stakeholders to review the framework from top to bottom • Codify through legislation or an executive order
Strategy E: *Build **talent** in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data.*	• Designate/hire a Chief Data Officer • Inventory the relevant assets, resources, and activities • Create a data governance board to support roadmap development	• Hire agency and centralized staff to bolster capabilities • Establish external partnerships to expand expertise • Build an internal community of practice	• Assess talent and fill any gaps to ensure the right technical and strategic capacity for long-term sustainability • Assess roadmap implementation and appropriately resource the next phase of development
Strategy F: *Establish a roadmap for **more integrated data usage** that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.*	• Develop first version of roadmap with clear high-level steps tied to framework and performance management system • Publish open data in machine readable, user-centric formats • Identify key short-term wins • Ensure a data-sharing process and agreements are in place	• Prioritize roadmap execution • Build out next phase of roadmap based on initial learnings and consider what level of integration is appropriate • Expand technical assistance to agencies	• Assess roadmap implementation and appropriately resource the next phase of development

Wins

By following the actions above and building over time, states should aim to achieve wins along the way to galvanize internal and external support. Here are some sample wins, though there are many other types of achievements that states could use to mark their progress.

SHORT-TERM WINS

- Create a vision for leveraging data as a strategic asset (such as Connecticut's State Data Plan created by the Chief Data Officer)
- Create data-sharing protocols to reduce barriers to sharing among state agencies and with external partners such as other governments, nongovernmental entities, research institutions (see Colorado's LINC data collaborative)
- Make data open by default, publicly available, and downloadable on dashboards to encourage data usage (see Ohio's fiscal transparency efforts)
- Improve data linkages across programs to better define problems and achieve solutions (see Indiana's Management Performance Hub for examples)

MID-TERM WINS

- Develop a data governance framework to further codify practices and build momentum (see Connecticut's State Data Plan with its 11 principles and California's Open Data Handbook)
- Leverage data analytics for programmatic decisions, service delivery, and policymaking, including the creation of research agendas (see North Carolina's center to leverage data analytics and Kentucky's KYSTATS that has a multi-year research agenda)
- Build external partnerships to advance data integration and expand technical capacity of agencies (see Colorado's LINC data collaborative)

LONG-TERM WINS

- Leverage integrated data to enhance service delivery and identify cost-savings (see Washington's integrated database which led to savings in Medicare spending)
- Implement a comprehensive data strategy that is updated regularly (such as Connecticut's State Data Plan, which is updated biennially as required by law)
- Invest in data analytics capacities and teams in agencies (see Washington's State Department of Social and Health Services' data analytics division)

Building and Using Evidence

Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
G. Create **leadership structures** to effectively build and use evidence across state programs and departments. H. Build the **infrastructure to evaluate state programs** through evaluation policies, evidence definitions, program inventories, and funding to support state leaders. I. Position the **budget** as a key tool to build state evaluation capacity and apply that capacity to focus resources on evidence–based investments.	6. Evaluation leadership 7. Evaluation policies 8. Evaluation resources 9. Outcome data 10. Evidence definitions and program inventory

Data is a key tool for performance management but it can also play a valuable role in building longer term evidence about interventions that achieve the best outcomes. In order to take full advantage of data, it is important to have the evaluation infrastructure that allows empirical evidence to inform an administration's budget, management, and policy decisions. "Knowing what works" in a particular context (and what to fund) requires research and evaluation capacity both within and outside of government. Research and evaluation offices can conduct evaluations, build lasting collaborative research partnerships, and provide expertise on high–quality evidence–building activities. At their best, these evaluation offices engage residents to identify key priorities, especially how governments can build and use evidence to improve equity. Funding these capacities is essential and can be done through set–asides, carve–outs in program funds, and even budget line items. Embedding research infrastructure in government that is aligned with budgeting processes allows states to move towards results–focused spending.

Building & Using Evidence

Strategy G

*Create **leadership structures** to effectively build and use evidence across state programs and departments.*

Actions

- Hire a Chief Evaluation Officer or Chief Learning Officer to provide leadership on an overall approach to evaluation and learning 👥 **People**

- Build cross-department and cross-functional teams to ensure the right breadth of perspective is leveraged to address top administration priorities 👥 **People** 🏛 **Policy**
  - › Provide the appropriate level of authority, responsibility, and resources to these leaders and teams so they can properly execute

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Blueprint Strategies in Practice

MASSACHUSETTS

Chief Strategy and Research Officer

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Planning and Research is led by a Chief Strategy and Research Officer who is responsible for improving the use of data and research findings to influence policy and program decision-making.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 6).

OHIO

Office of Research, Evaluation and Advanced Analytics

The Director of the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Research, Evaluation and Advanced Analytics helps educational leaders across the state use evidence through resources and a clearinghouse.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 6).

TENNESSEE

Office of Evidence and Impact

Tennessee's Office of Evidence and Impact, founded in 2019, supports the state's evidence-based budgeting and program inventories through evidence reviews and technical assistance on developing evidence-building evaluations and activities.

<table>
<tr>
<td>Building &
Using Evidence</td>
<td>🔍
Strategy H</td>
<td>*Build the **infrastructure to evaluate state programs** through evaluation policies, evidence definitions, program inventories, and funding to support state leaders.*</td>
</tr>
</table>

Actions

- Develop policies that promote and guide the use of data and evidence in program development and assessment, including the public release of reports   🏛 **Policy**
  › Consider developing an explicit "learning agenda" for the capture of data across programs, so that performance management efforts go beyond just tracking outcomes to focus more broadly on learning and analysis; identify ways to seek community input on the learning agenda so that it reflects the needs of a diverse group of stakeholders

- Build a program inventory of all efforts by area (e.g. criminal justice, mental health, child welfare) to enable better comparison and evaluation   ⚙ **Infrastructure**

- Create clear definitions and tiers of evidence (e.g. evidence–based vs. data–supported, etc.) to better communicate within departments, the public, and the legislature about what is working and what is not   🏛 **Policy**

- Engage outside experts, such as university–based researchers, to enhance internal capacity for research and evaluation of programs   👥 **People**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

MINNESOTA

Evaluation Policy, Evidence Definitions, and Clearinghouse

In partnership with The Pew Results First Initiative, Minnesota Management and Budget inventoried nearly 500 publicly-funded interventions and rated their evidence of effectiveness in a clearinghouse. To support the ongoing focus on funding evidence-based programs and interventions, Minnesota Management and Budget released an evaluation policy to govern evaluations, which specifically mandates the release of all completed evaluation reports regardless of findings. Minnesota Management and Budget also defines evidence for research, evaluation, and funding purposes.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 7).

CALIFORNIA

Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

The California Department of Social Services created an Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, which allows child welfare providers and professionals to identify, select, and implement evidence-based child welfare practices. In addition, the Clearinghouse provides guidance and support for program implementation. The Clearinghouse's numerical rating scale categorizes programs into six tiers of evidence and uses a relevance scale as a complement to the scientific rating scale to demonstrate applicability for client populations.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 10).

TENNESSEE

Education Research Alliance

The Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) is a formal research partnership between the Tennessee Department of Education and Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education. Led by seven full-time staff and guided by a steering committee and advisory council, the Department and the University have co-developed a research agenda that allows the University to conduct research on a variety of issues.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 7).

Strategy I

*Position the **budget** as a key tool to build state evaluation capacity and apply that capacity to focus resources on evidence–based investments.*

Actions

- Develop a budget decision–making process that preferences requests with evidence and/or data about quantifiable outcomes (i.e. not just counting inputs and outputs)   🏛 **Policy**
  › Consider a rubric that increases the priority of a specific request based on the level of evidence for the program, while also creating space for new programs that do not yet have an evidence base, but do have strong data that demonstrates quantifiable outcomes

- Create a standard funding allocation to build the state's capacity to evaluate programs (e.g. 1% with a cap on the total amount); this is especially relevant for new programs where it is important to design the evaluations and metrics that will be used to measure the success of the initiative   🏛 **Policy**

- Ensure the new budget process is integrated into the broader systematic approach to managing results, so that priorities and learnings from different parts of the governor's office and agency leadership are not siloed   ⚙ **Infrastructure**

- Engage with the legislature to refine the new budget process   👥 **People**
  › Clarify terms such as "evidence–based" vs. "data informed" to ensure consistency and clear communication

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

COLORADO

Budget Instructions

Colorado's FY 2020–2021 budget development instructions (pp. 10–12) prioritize new program requests "based on the evidence and body of research supporting the program's effect on desired outcomes and proposed implementation plan." In the FY 2020–2021 budget cycle, the state applied an evidence continuum to budget requests and used that criteria to inform resource allocation decisions.

MINNESOTA

Guidance for New and Expanded Programs

Minnesota Management and Budget issued guidance on how to report outcome data. In addition, the state also used evidence to inform funding decisions resulting in $87 million in new or expanded evidence-based programming in the FY 2020–2021 budget.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 10).

NORTH CAROLINA

Budget Office Reform

In 2018, North Carolina redesigned its budget process to increase the use of evidence-based decision-making. As a result, the 2019–2021 budget development instructions require that agency requests "for new or expanded programs or services must include evidence and research supporting the program's effect on desired outcomes."
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 9).

Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government

What Could This Look Like Over Time?
Building and Using Evidence

BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES

Strategy G:
*Create **leadership structures** to effectively build and use evidence across state programs and departments.*

BEGINNING
- Establish cross-agency teams to address specific results-focused projects
- Designate/hire a Chief Evaluation Officer
- Ensure clear coordination and authority across data and evidence-related efforts

BUILDING
- Assess and revise the agenda for Chief Evaluation Officer and cross-agency teams
- Address capacity gaps

SUSTAINING
- Engage legislature to build support and identify potential legislative opportunities

Strategy H:
*Build the **infrastructure to evaluate state programs** through evaluation policies, evidence definitions, program inventories and funding to support state leaders.*

BEGINNING
- Assess current policy practices, identify gaps, and compare to leading practices
- Develop clear definitions and tiers of evidence for use across the state
- Identify immediate and near-term actions to support cross-agency team projects
- Begin a program inventory by topic area

BUILDING
- Establish learning agenda tied to broader performance management system
- Engage outside experts to bolster capacity
- Ensure the evidence definitions are used properly in practice
- Build out program inventory

SUSTAINING
- Assess data and evidence infrastructure and address gaps

Strategy I:
*Position the **budget** as a key tool to build state evaluation capacity and apply that capacity to focus resources on evidence-based investments.*

BEGINNING
- Create and pilot a new budget process using a data and evidence decision-making rubric

BUILDING
- Refine and expand new budget process and provide support for agencies to use it
- Integrate new process with performance management
- Engage the legislature in new budget process finalization

SUSTAINING
- Consider standard resource allocations, scaled by program size and with a cap, to support new and existing program evaluation

Wins

By following the actions above and building over time, states should aim to achieve wins along the way to galvanize internal and external support. Here are some sample wins, though there are many other types of achievements that states could use to mark their progress.

SHORT-TERM WINS

- Broadly adopted evidence definitions across state government (such as in Colorado)
- Designate/hire a chief evaluation officer to lead and coordinate evaluation activities (such as in Minnesota)
- Develop a clear structure for coordinating evaluation and evidence activities across agencies, which could include the state legislature (See Alabama's Commission on Evaluation Services)

MID-TERM WINS

- Create learning agendas (statewide and at agencies)
- Develop an evaluation policy aligned with evidence definitions (see Minnesota Management and Budget's evaluation policy)
- Build relationships with institutions and organizations that can provide external research capacity (such as the research-practice partnership model of the Tennessee Education Research Alliance)
- Make evidence and evaluations publicly available through a clearinghouse or inventory (such as the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare)

LONG-TERM WINS

- Create a strong state evaluation culture with centralized, agency, and external capacity (see State Education Agencies in Mississippi, Ohio, and Massachusetts, which have created research and evaluation offices to lead and coordinate evaluation activities)
- Use tiered evidence structures that build evidence and encourage innovation (see the Education Innovation and Research program from the U.S Department of Education)
- Require evidence of effectiveness in budget proposals, especially for newly proposed programs (see Minnesota Management and Budget guidance on making evidence-based budget proposals)

ⓢ Investing for Results

Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
J. **Prioritize key areas** for analysis and improvement based on statewide goals. K. Use data-driven tools and methods to **preference evidence** by spending on the most effective and cost-efficient programs and initiatives. L. **Redirect grant dollars and contract spending** towards interventions with evidence of effectiveness in order to deliver results and encourage innovation.	11. Cost-benefit analysis 12. Use of evidence in grant programs 13. Innovation 14. Contracting for outcomes 15. Repurpose for results

Government spending is policy in action. Incorporating evidence and data into these spending decisions is the best way for state governments to make improvements over the status quo, which too often reinforces historical inequality. Rather than making spending decisions based on assumptions and hunches, leaders and policymakers should spend resources on programs, interventions, and services that have evidence of effectiveness. To improve results, government should shift public resources to the most effective interventions in order to increase their scale and impact.

There are a range of tools for making government spending more evidence-based, from legislatively mandating public spending on evidence-based interventions to using outcome-focused contracts. These tools can be used across state government to shift funding away from strategies that fail to deliver the desired outcomes and towards evidence-based interventions that achieve better results for state residents.

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Strategy J

*Prioritize **key areas** for analysis and improvement based on statewide goals.*

Actions

- Identify top priorities where evidence–based investments can improve results in the short and long term 🏛 **Policy**

- Consider building momentum by starting with a handful of high–potential use cases that demonstrate how better use of data can deliver actionable insights that improve outcomes and equity 🏛 **Policy**
  › For the longer term, consider a more expansive learning agenda that addresses broader, more systemic challenges (e.g. education cost reduction, supporting those who are "high users" of multiple government services) that can utilize innovative problem–solving approaches, such as service matching improvements, rapid–cycle evaluations, behavioral science, design thinking, agile project management, and other cutting–edge public policy approaches

- Focus resources and energy on key areas (versus taking an approach that prioritizes all activities at once), and work towards building momentum and systems that will lay the groundwork for future related efforts (as opposed to one-off projects) 👥 **People** 🏛 **Policy**

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

COLORADO

Governor's Office and Agencies Partner with External Research Lab

The Colorado Governor's Office and the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (The Lab) co-designed the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) to facilitate data sharing for research and analytics purposes as a way to improve state policies and programs. Using this data, the Lab and state agencies have collaborated on projects to improve outcomes in areas such as child welfare, criminal justice, health, education, economic opportunity, and workforce. LINC has also issued a request for proposals that would provide funding for each of the Governor's Cabinet Groups, which support implementation of the governor's strategic goals, to utilize LINC for high-priority cabinet business analytic needs in meeting these goals.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 5).

MARYLAND

Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

The Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services focuses on achieving the governor's child welfare goals. The Office incentivizes the use of data by requiring at least three years of performance information from grant applicants and incorporates evidence by allocating 10 points (out of 100) for evidence of effectiveness with a bonus point to any applicant who proposes an evidence-based home visiting program (utilizing a model approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 12).

INDIANA

Efforts to Lower Statewide Infant Mortality Rates

To meet the governor's goal of having the lowest infant mortality rate in the Midwest, Indiana leveraged its Management Performance Hub, which facilitates the linkage, storage, and analysis of administrative data. By linking data across 17 data sets, Management Performance Hub staff were able to better understand and map mortality rates, discovering that the infant mortality rate in Indiana is 7.3%, compared to the national rate of 5.8%, which accounts for 602 babies dying before their first birthdays in the state. This information drove increased investment in a targeted strategy to identify those at risk and connect them with vital resources to reduce infant mortality through an innovative program focused on building a network of wraparound services for mothers and infants. As a result, infant mortality rate decreased significantly from 2017 to 2018 and is at its lowest since 2012. By 2019, the initiative had linked 44 de-identified maternal and infant health mortality data sets.
More information: Results for America blog.

Strategy K

$ (icon)

*Use data-driven tools and methods to **preference evidence** by spending on the most effective and cost-efficient programs and initiatives.*

Actions

- Incorporate cost-benefit analysis into the ongoing evaluation of programs 🏛 **Policy**
  › Consider providing centralized resources and guidance for cost-benefit efforts (e.g. through a university-supported research center outside of the agencies) to provide more standardized, public, and rapid assessments
  › As individual programs or interventions are evaluated, make sure to consider the benefits that are accrued across each agency and to the public more generally, versus just looking at one agency's view of savings

- Build evidence and outcome requirements into programmatic efforts by using evidence of effectiveness (level of evidence or past performance) as a factor in assessing grantee applicants 🏛 **Policy**
  › Consider offering more funding for state or local programs that are backed by proven results
  › Consider creating a tiered approach that directs more funding to proven programs (versus established programs with no or limited results), while also supporting innovative programs that do not have a track record yet

- Adopt performance-based contracting with service providers 🏛 **Policy**
  › Consider shifting to contracts that tie part of payments to specific, quantitative outcomes that directly benefit customers (results-driven contracting or Pay for Success)
  › Increase the use of active contract management (regular communication with service providers based on performance indicators to monitor the progress of implementation) and identify corrective actions to support improvement

Blueprint Strategies in Practice

NEVADA

Commitment to Funding Evidence-Based Interventions

Since 2017, the Nevada Department of Education has allocated 100% of the state's $8.5 million in federal Title I school improvement funds to districts and schools for interventions backed by strong, moderate, or promising evidence (using the top three tiers of evidence as defined by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]).
More information: Results for America case study and 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 12).

RHODE ISLAND

Active Contract Management Strategies and Results-Driven Contracting

Rhode Island's Department of Children, Youth, and Families relied on active contract management strategies in restructuring 116 contracts (totaling $90 million), which resulted in a reduction in the number of foster children in groupcare and an expansion of foster care.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 14).

WASHINGTON

Institute for Public Policy's Cost-Benefit Analyses

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has published hundreds of cost-benefit analyses in a wide variety of issue areas over the past 10 years. The WSIPP cost-benefit framework has been widely adopted by governments across the country.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 11).

($) Strategy L

Redirect grant dollars and contract spending towards interventions with evidence of effectiveness in order to deliver results and encourage innovation.

Actions

- Identify programs where results could be improved, including those that consistently do not achieve desired policy outcomes or equity goals   🏛 **Policy**
  - › Determine if program outcomes can be improved by using evidence of effectiveness to allocate funds to more effective practices or providers
  - › If improved results cannot be achieved by using evidence of effectiveness, then consider how to best redirect existing funding to other programs, practices, or service providers that are more likely to achieve the desired outcomes
  - › Consider a measured, but clear, process that is not automatic, but provides a rubric-based indication of if a program is a candidate to have its funding redirected (e.g. 3+ years of missed outcomes by 20% or more, and no clear plan for remediation)
  - › Assess the potential for agencies and programs (given their mission, scale, and statutory requirements) to successfully redirect funding when outcomes are not achieved; consider other options like a partnership with outside experts to improve performance (or use of active contract management) to drive continuous improvement with service providers and grantees

- Create a clear incentive system to promote innovation in program development and overall operational improvement   🏛 **Policy**
  - • Consider allowing departments that shift funds away from non-performing programs to automatically keep a percentage of that original funding to spend on innovative programs, especially those that help community organizations build their evidence base
  - • Build a focus on innovation into the roles of key leaders, such as the Chief Evaluation Officer or Chief Performance Officer, to allow for a broader and more integrated approach

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Blueprint Strategies in Practice

PENNSYLVANIA

Performance-Based Contracts Policy

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has set performance targets for its community corrections program through performance-based contracts. Providers that meet recidivism prevention goals receive a 1% increase in their rate while providers that fail to meet targets for two consecutive years can have their contracts terminated.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 15).

MINNESOTA

Performance-Based Targets for Cash Assistance Programs

The Minnesota Department of Human Services requires counties that do not meet the Self-Support Index performance targets to submit performance improvement plans. In counties where "no improvement is shown by the end of the multi-year plan, the county's or tribe's allocation must be decreased by 2.5 percent" as required by law.
More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence (Criteria 15).

What Could This Look Like Over Time?
Investing for Results

BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES

Strategy J:
*Prioritize **key areas** for analysis and improvement based on statewide goals.*

BEGINNING
- Identify a handful of near-term, high-potential projects to drive impact and generate momentum

BUILDING
- Establish a learning agenda that includes broader, more systemic challenges
- Explicitly lay the groundwork for expanded and integrated data and evidence-based results management

SUSTAINING
- Ensure appropriate level of resources committed to top priorities and more expansive results management

Strategy K:
*Use data-driven tools and methods to **preference evidence** by spending on the most effective and cost-efficient programs and initiatives.*

BEGINNING
- Create inventory of current methods used to prioritize spending and identify gaps and opportunities
- Pilot one or more new or expanded methods to use evidence of effectiveness to fund programs
- Implement an active contract management approach to increase collaboration with service providers in order to improve results

BUILDING
- Assess pilot results and expand use of evidence of effectiveness to funding for additional programs
- Ensure new evidence-focused spending efforts are integrated into the budget process and performance management system
- Build capacity for cost effectiveness and evidence efforts through partnerships (such as a university)
- Expand active contract management to additional program areas

SUSTAINING
- Require that evidence of effectiveness be used to allocate funds in many/all major programs
- Establish fixed budget resources to continue to build capacity and maintain efforts to use evidence to improve outcomes
- Engage the legislature to build support and identify potential legislative opportunities

Strategy L:
Redirect grant dollars and contract spending towards interventions with evidence of effectiveness in order to deliver results and encourage innovation.

BEGINNING
- Identify and assess a few programs where the track record of results indicates that using evidence of effectiveness could fund better outcomes
- Pilot an incentive-based approach to promote program and operational improvement

BUILDING
- Consider expanding evidence of effectiveness approach to additional programs based on learnings from initial efforts to improve outcomes
- Assess pilot and expand incentive-based approach

SUSTAINING
- Engage with the legislature on an approach to funding redirection and identify potential legislative opportunities to use evidence to improve program results

Wins

By following the actions above and building over time, states should aim to achieve wins along the way to galvanize internal and external support. Here are some sample wins, though there are many other types of achievements that states could use to mark their progress.

SHORT-TERM WINS

- Develop guidance on the use of evidence–based interventions (see Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services' list of recommended Evidence–Based Programs and Practices)
- Start using evidence of effectiveness to allocate funds in small number of areas with strong evidence base or in high–priority strategic areas (see Nevada's use of evidence in its Title I education programs)

MID-TERM WINS

- Show improved results through use of evidence of effectiveness in grant programs and expand to additional programs (see how New Mexico funded more evidence–based programs and how the Nevada Department of Education is seeing promising results)
- Operate innovation challenges or fund tiered evidence frameworks to expand promising practices while growing the evidence base
- Identify contracts that could be improved through data–driven and results–focused contracting strategies (such as Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families use of active contract management strategies)

LONG-TERM WINS

- Demonstrate significant improvements in major programs by using evidence of effectiveness
- Budget for evaluations to identify more effective approaches by using a set–aside or carve–out of programs funds for evaluation activities (see Colorado's $500,000 evalution fund)

Conclusion

The shift from "business as usual" to delivering real results is an iterative process that requires strong leadership and intentional action to build a culture of data and evidence use. The Strategies outlined in this Blueprint allow state governments to build the infrastructure and capacity they need to become learning organizations that continuously work to improve results. This detailed implementation guide demonstrates how governors and their staff can consistently use evidence and data in budget, policy, and management decisions to achieve improved outcomes for their residents.

Above all, this Blueprint equips state leaders to make better decisions to effectively and equitably spend state funds. By providing Strategies, Actions, and tools to use evidence in state budgeting and spending decisions, this Blueprint offers state governments a guide for investing in what works and for becoming models of excellence like those described in Results for America's *Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence*. Ultimately, the effective use of state funds to achieve desired outcomes for state residents is the best measure of whether a governor achieves results.

For Further Information

Please contact Results for America (info@results4america.org) for additional information about the Strategies and Actions contained in this Blueprint or for assistance with implementing these strategies in your state.

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Appendix A

The following chart provides an overview of the Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence and the Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government.

A Comparison of the Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government and the State Standard of Excellence

	State Standard of Excellence	Blueprint for Delivering Results
Format	High-level roadmap and self-assessment tool	Detailed implementation guide
Purpose	Provide a "north star" for best-in-class data-driven, and evidence-based practices with demonstrated results	Provide specific Strategies and Actions for building data and evidence capacity
Content	Summaries of leading and promising data-driven and evidence-based practices from state governments	Detailed steps to help state governments improve data and evidence use over time
Audience	Governors, governors' senior staff, and state agency heads	Governors' senior staff, state budget directors, state performance management directors, state evaluation staff, and state agency senior staff
Development	Engages all state governments in sharing their data and evidence work	Developed by leading state government staff as part of What Works Bootcamp training series

Appendix B

Examples of Prioritizing Evidence of Effectiveness in Government Grant Programs

This table provides specific examples of how governments have prioritized evidence of effectiveness in their grantmaking decisions. Using evidence of effectiveness means shifting taxpayer dollars to programs that have been proven to be effective through strong evaluations or based on their past performance.

Of note, the term "grant programs" as used below includes all types of government spending on human services programs, including grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other programmatic expenditures.

Strategy	Activity	Difficulty Level	Example
1. Define and Identify Evidence			
1a	Adopt a common definition of the term "evidence" to be used across budget, policy, and programmatic decisions at the state level (and at the local level, if possible); this could include aligning state programs with evidence definitions and requirements in federal programs	Easy	• Tiered definition of evidence in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act • Washington and Colorado (RFA 2018 State Standard of Excellence) • Nevada Department of Education (see Appendix 4 of linked case study for examples and more state program details)
1b	Identify programs and practices being implemented across the state and categorize them according to a common definition of evidence	Hard	• Colorado, Connecticut, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Oregon (RFA 2018 State Standard of Excellence) • Washington's Inventory of Evidence– and Research–Based Practices and Menu of Best Practices and Strategies • Michigan's MyStrategyBank (a component of MiDataHub) • Minnesota Office of Management and Budget Inventory

Strategy	Activity	Difficulty Level	Example
1c	Highlight and/or link to evidence-based strategies in funding announcements and/or grant applications	Easy	• Pennsylvania (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA plan] highlights Center for Employment Opportunities), Hawai'i (WIOA plan highlights Pay for Performance) • Corporation for National and Community Service AmeriCorps evidence-based education programs (RFA 2019 Federal Standard) • Nevada Department of Education Multi-Grant Competitive Application • Illinois' IL-EMPOWER Learning Partners • Connecticut's Evidence-Based Practice Guides (linked to in various grant applications) • Georgia's Local Education Agency Guidance for Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions
1d	Encourage the use of evidence-based interventions by creating or identifying existing clearinghouses of evidence-based interventions	Medium	• California, Minnesota, Washington (RFA 2018 State Standard of Excellence) • Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse
2. Prioritize Evidence of Effectiveness in Grant Design			
2a	Ask grant applicants how they plan to utilize evidence/data in their program, whether their program is evidence-based and at what level of rigor (i.e. strong, moderate, or preliminary evidence)	Easy	• US Department of Education (USED) Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program • USED Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants • Nevada Department of Education Office of Student and School Supports
2b	Give applicants for federal and state competitive grant funds *preference points* if they propose investing those funds in evidence-based programs and practices	Medium	• CNCS AmeriCorps 2019 NOFA (RFA 2019 Federal Standard)

Strategy	Activity	Difficulty Level	Example
2c	Require the use of evidence-based programs and services	Easy	• Oregon, Florida, and Washington (2018 State Standard of Excellence) • HHS ACF Family First Act and Family First Prevention Services Act (Title IV-E funds) (2018 Federal Standard) • Vermont Department of Education • Nevada Department of Education
2d	Create tiered evidence grant programs that provide competitive funding to programs at different levels of evidence to identify promising practices and expand proven interventions	Medium	• USED Education Innovation and Research program • CNCS Social Innovation Fund
3. Outcomes-Based Grant Management			
3a	Assign points for grantees' past performance in achieving outcome goals when reviewing new grant applications and/or considering grant renewals	Easy	• US Department of Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care up to 56 points for past performance in reducing homelessness (RFA 2019 Federal Standard of Excellence, 8.2)
3b	Structure competitive grant programs so recipients get initial funding (e.g., three years) but must show results to receive continuation funding (e.g., two additional years)	Easy	• US Department of Justice Juvenile Justice Reform Act funds awarded to states are ended after year two if grantees have not met their requirements
3c	Use evaluation/outcomes data to identify low-performing grantees (e.g., the bottom 10%) and then require them to re-compete for future funding	Medium	• US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Head Start Designation Renewal System (RFA 2019 Federal Standard of Excellence)
3d	Use performance-based contracts that link outcomes to payments by requiring achievement of certain performance benchmarks to receive grant payments	Easy	• Pennsylvania (2018 State Standard of Excellence), Ohio WIOA Aspire program
3e	Set aside funding for providers offering models with high or moderate causal evidence or contracts that pay directly for outcomes	Medium	• HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services 10% mental health block grant set aside (RFA 2019 Federal Standard)

Strategy	Activity	Difficulty Level	Example
4. Evidence–Building Activities			
4a	Authorize grant recipients to use their awarded funds for evaluations as a direct cost, not just indirect ones	Easy	• US Department of Labor (DOL) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment grant allows up to 10% for evaluation
4b	Require grantees to participate in state agency–led and funded evaluation as a condition of receiving grant funding if asked by the funding agency	Easy	• US DOL (RFA 2018 Federal Standard)
4c	Require and/or incentivize (via competitive preference points, for example) grantees to conduct evaluations of their funded program(s)	Medium	• CNCS AmeriCorps evaluation requirement for grants over $500k (RFA 2019 Federal Standard) • HHS ACF Responsible Fatherhood Opportunities for Reentry and Mobility (RFA 2019 Federal Standard)
4d	Set aside a percentage (i.e. 1%) of funding in each program or agency to fund evaluation and research	Easy	• HHS ACF Child Care and Development Fund .5% set aside (RFA 2019 Federal Standard, see 9.3)
4e	Create a statewide and/or agency–specific evaluation fund to allow for the evaluation of funded programs	Medium	• Colorado's Implementation and Evaluation Grant

For more details on how governments can use evidence of effectiveness to achieve better results, please see Results for America's Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government (Strategy K), 2019 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence (Criteria #12), 2019 Invest in What Works Federal Standard of Excellence, 7 Ways to Improve Workforce Outcomes Using Evidence: 2019 Policy Roadmap for State & Local Officials, and Once Evidence Skeptics, Now Evidence Champions: The Nevada Department of Education Seized the Opportunity presented by the Every Student Succeeds Act to Prioritize Evidence to Improve Nevada Public Schools.

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