

Results for America's definitions for "evidence-based" and "evidence-building" programs are designed to help government leaders build systems that use data and research findings to improve people's lives. We hope these definitions will be used by federal, state and local governments to direct public funding to solutions that are most likely to work for the people they serve. We are grateful for the insights of nearly 100 stakeholders, including government officials, community advocates and practitioners, working in the field of evidence-based policymaking who helped inform these definitions.

Introduction and Context

- Results for America helps **government leaders drive public resources** toward improving economic mobility outcomes for all residents **by investing in evidence-based programs**.
- Government leaders who are at the cutting edge of evidence-based policymaking are –with Results for America's support –defining 'evidence-based' and **using their definition to inform how they more effectively and equitably allocate resources** and evaluate the impact of their investments.
- Results for America has, together with its partners, helped define "evidence-based" and prioritize evidence-based investments in important federal, state and local government policies, including groundbreaking evidence provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015.
- **These efforts have contributed to positive results**, and at the same time, we believe there are important **opportunities to improve these and future definitions**.
- We've gathered feedback from a broad set of nearly 100 stakeholders to inform a **stronger definition of evidence-based** that is more likely to result in better outcomes for all.

These Definitions are Designed to

- Encourage consideration of the **full body of evidence** for programs that are being considered.
- Give governments the option to encourage programs with a proven track record while recognizing and valuing the usefulness of a **broad set of methods** for understanding the successful implementation and potential impact of a given investment.
- Elevate the importance of generating knowledge that focuses on **why, how and for whom** programs work, given that an average effect can mask significant differences across subgroups, including by race, ethnicity, gender, geography, income and other characteristics.
- Distinguish evidence-based programs from programs that are not yet evidence-based, while creating **pathways for evidence-building**.
- Ensure the presence of an **informed rationale for implementation** in each context and based on stakeholder input –in other words, government leaders should be able to articulate a theory of change for why their proposed investment is likely to have a positive impact in their jurisdiction.
- Encourage **ongoing evaluation** of the implementation and impact of funded programs.