

The 2021 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence contains four themes, 16 criteria, and 51 sub-criteria as detailed below. On the 2021 State Standard of Excellence [Submission Form](#), states will be asked to provide information and documentation for any of the sub-criteria listed below that are relevant to their state’s work. For more information about the 2021 State Standard of Excellence submission process, please click [here](#).

|  <b>Managing for Results</b>   |  |
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| <b>1. Strategic Goals</b>   | <p><b>Does the Governor have public statewide strategic goals?</b><br/> <i>The state has statewide strategic goals that are public, quantitative, published regularly, customer-oriented, aligned, equity-oriented, and publicly informed.</i></p>   |
| <p>1.1 The statewide strategic goals are public, quantitative, and published regularly.</p> <p>1.2 The statewide and agency goals are aligned and customer oriented (i.e. at least 75% are relevant to residents' well-being vs. tracking government inputs).</p> <p>1.3 The statewide goals seek to advance equity (i.e. goals address racial inequalities by using either explicit equity goals or through formulations that aim to close gaps, reach universal levels, or disaggregate progress by race, ethnicity, and other equity dimension where relevant for the policy objective).</p> <p>1.4 The statewide goals are publicly informed.</p> |  |
| <b>2. Performance Management / Continuous Improvement</b>   | <p><b>Do state leaders manage performance with data and promote continuous improvement?</b><br/> <i>The state has achieved better outcomes through an enterprise performance management system that engages state leaders in using performance data to continuously improve results.</i></p> |
| <p>2.1 The state has a senior leader that oversees the statewide performance management system (e.g. a chief performance officer) .</p> <p>2.2 The state continuously improves outcomes by engaging the governor's office and agency leaders in a process that routinely tracks progress on statewide and agency goals, including, at least, quarterly meetings.</p> <p>2.3 The state shares performance data and outcomes (disaggregated when available) with state budget, program, agency, and grantmaking staff to inform budget, policy, and management decisions.</p>   |  |

**3. Culture** **Do state leaders promote a culture of using data and evidence to deliver results?**  
*The state has a culture that supports the sustainable use of data and evidence to deliver results in a transparent, equitable, and ethical manner.*

- 3.1 The governor publicly communicates the state's use of data and evidence as tools to improve results (e.g. executive order, press release, interview, values statement, State of the State address).
- 3.2 The state provides regular training for state staff on how data and evidence can improve results and reduce inequities, which includes anti-racism and anti-bias components (e.g. algorithmic bias, community engagement).
- 3.3 The state provides incentives, awards, or recognition for state staff who deliver improved results using data and evidence.

**4. Innovation** **Does the state use innovation to improve results?**  
*The state uses innovation to achieve its priority goals and improve results for residents.*

- 4.1 The state (or its agencies) has processes and staff that promote innovation to meet its priority goals and improve outcomes (including reductions in racial inequalities).
- 4.2 The state (or its agencies) uses data and evidence to demonstrate that innovation efforts have improved outcomes (including reductions in racial inequities).



## Leveraging Data

**5. Data Leadership & Governance** **Does the state have leadership and governance structures to use data to deliver results?**  
*The state has senior leadership and governance structures with the mandate to equitably use data to improve results.*

- 5.1 The state has senior leadership with the authority to use data to inform policy, budgets, and management decisions (e.g. chief data officer).
- 5.2 The state has a statewide data governance structure, with agency representation, that informs the state's data collection, data sharing, and data privacy practices.
- 5.3 The state has a statewide or agency-level advisory board(s) that provides advice on the state's data policies and includes meaningful representation from people whose data are collected, including communities of color.

**6. Data Policies**

**Does the state have policies that support using data to improve results?**

*The state has data policies that outline the principles, people, and activities that govern its data collection and use.*

- 6.1 The state has data policies with a "share first" philosophy and appropriate privacy controls that allow for data sharing across agencies, with external partners, and to the public (through open data).
- 6.2 The state has a data policy that outlines how data are collected and used to improve results, including principles on ethics and equity.
- 6.3 The state has a standardized, widely-used agency data sharing agreement that allows data to be routinely shared.

**7. Data Infrastructure**

**Does the state have infrastructure to support data sharing and usage?**

*The state has improved outcomes through technology infrastructure that allows it to efficiently collect, inventory, and share data.*

- 7.1 The state has technology infrastructure with appropriate privacy controls that allows agencies to collect and share data across agencies, with external partners, and to the public (through open data).
- 7.2 The state has a functional inventory of data assets that supports data sharing.
- 7.3 The state considers the potential for algorithmic or other biases when developing, updating, or procuring technology infrastructure for data collection, sharing, or analysis.

**8. Data Use**

**Does the state use data to improve results?**

*The state has improved outcomes by combining and analyzing cross-agency data to inform policy, budget, or management decisions.*

- 8.1 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes for individuals and groups by using cross-agency data to produce valuable insights.
- 8.2 The state (or its agencies) engages with affected groups, in particular communities of color and other underrepresented groups, about how their data are used to craft specific policy solutions and uses their feedback to improve data analysis and interpretation.
- 8.3 The state (or its agencies) has improved results by providing technical assistance resources to state staff, partners, and grantees to support their access, analysis, and use of data.



## Building and Using Evidence

**9. Evaluation Leadership & Governance**

**Does the state have leadership and governance structures to evaluate spending and results?**  
*The state has leadership and governance structure with the authority to use evaluations to improve results.*

- 9.1 The state (or its agencies) has a senior leader(s) with the authority to oversee evaluation policy and use (e.g. chief evaluation officer).
- 9.2 The state (or its agencies) has an evaluation governance structure that engages internal and external stakeholders, including communities of color, to inform the state's evaluation policies and priorities.

**10. Evaluation Policies**

**Does the state have evaluation policies and a learning agenda to support the building and use of evidence?**  
*The state has evaluation policies and a learning agenda that outline the principles, people, and activities to use evidence to improve results.*

- 10.1 The state has an evaluation policy that outlines its approach to building and using evidence, including a requirement to make all evaluations publicly available and disaggregate results wherever possible.
- 10.2 The state has a multi-tiered definition of evidence for research and funding purposes that includes qualitative evidence and lived experience.
- 10.3 The state (or its agencies) has a learning agenda which outlines the state (or agencies') planned evaluations, their timelines, and milestones.

**11. Evaluation Resources**

**Does the state invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluation capacity?**  
*The state has dedicated resources for using evaluations to improve results.*

- 11.1 The state (or its agencies) invest at least 1% of program funds to support evaluations.
- 11.2 The state (or its agencies) allows service providers, grantees, and local governments to use program or administrative funds for evidence building and evaluation.
- 11.3 The state has an easy to use contracting mechanism that allows state agencies to quickly procure evaluation services.
- 11.4 The state (or its agencies) conducts a periodic review of evaluation spending to understand the share of externally contracted evaluations conducted by MWBEs or community-based organizations.

**12. Evaluation Use** **Does the state use program evaluations to improve results?**  
*The state has improved results by using evaluation, program inventories, and cost benefit analysis.*

- 12.1 The state (or its agencies) has an inventory(ies) of state-funded programs categorized by at least two tiers of evidence.
- 12.2 The state (or its agencies) improves outcomes by conducting cost-benefit analyses of public programs, which includes an equity lens when relevant to identify how and to whom costs and benefits accrue.
- 12.3 The state (or its agencies) conducts evaluations and uses relevant findings (disaggregated whenever possible) in its policy, budget, and management decisions.
- 12.4 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes by providing technical assistance to help service providers, local governments, and grantees use evaluation findings and evidence-based practices.

 **Investing for Results**

**13. Results-Focused Budget Process** **Does the state incorporate evidence in its budget process?**  
*The state has improved outcomes by prioritizing data and evidence in its budget process through guidance to agencies and engagement with the legislature.*

- 13.1 The state budget instructions request that agencies include information about the evidence-base for programs in their budget submission in order to improve outcomes.
- 13.2 The state has achieved improved outcomes through the budgeting process that gives priority to programs/initiatives that are evidence-based (including all available types of evidence) or have an evaluation plan in place.
- 13.3 The state budget includes information on program outcomes and other performance data, which are disaggregated to reflect impacts on people and communities of color where relevant.
- 13.4 The governor's office collaborates with the state legislature to prioritize evidence in the state's budget development and approval processes.

**14. Results-Focused Contracting** **Does the state use results-focused contracting?**  
*The state has improved outcomes by using results-focused contracts for its publicly funded programs.*

- 14.1 The state (or its agencies) procurement policy encourages results-focused contracts that include outcomes aligned with community priorities and state goals.

- 14.2 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes through results-focused contracts that measure outcomes, impacts, and/or cost-effectiveness for key procurements, contracts, and/or grants on appropriate time scales to allow impact to emerge and with impacts disaggregated wherever possible.
- 14.3 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes by using performance data and frequent communication with service providers/grantees to actively manage human services contracts.
- 14.4 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes by proactively reducing barriers and providing ongoing technical assistance to allow MWBEs to successfully complete results-focused contracts.

**15. Evidence-Based Grantmaking**

**Does the state use evidence to allocate grant funds?**

*The state has improved outcomes by allocating grant funding based on evidence of effectiveness.*

- 15.1 The state has policy(ies) that requires agencies to prioritize the allocation of funds to evidence-based interventions.
- 15.2 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes by using evidence of effectiveness to allocate funds in grant competitions, including its largest five grant programs.
- 15.3 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes through grant programs with a tiered evidence framework to identify and scale evidence-based interventions in consultation with service providers and grantees.

**16. Repurpose for Results**

**Does the state shift funding away from ineffective programs?**

*The state has improved outcomes by moving funds away from programs that are ineffective and towards those that get results.*

- 16.1 The state (or its agencies) has procedures to shift funding away from programs or grantees that fail to achieve results over time or cause harm as reflected in performance data and/or participant feedback.
- 16.2 The state (or its agencies) has ended a contract, grant, or program that failed to achieve results or caused harm.
- 16.3 The state (or its agencies) has improved outcomes by providing technical assistance or resources to enhance the performance of programs or grantees that fail to achieve results, cause harm, or have unintended, negative consequences over time.