



State and Local Workforce Fellowship

Since 2014, RFA has supported the evidence-driven transformation of the public and social services sector through fellowship programs for state and local workforce leaders, state education leaders, city/county government leaders, and nonprofit chief executives. In 2019 RFA launched a [State and Local Workforce Fellowship](#) to help data- and evidence-driven state and local government leaders make tangible progress in improving employment outcomes. Despite tremendous pressure and unprecedented need, Fellowship teams have made incredible progress throughout the pandemic, and the need for an equitable recovery, driven by data and evidence, continues. Fellowship teams' accomplishments include advancing equitable outcomes-based procurement and grantmaking, implementing job quality initiatives, and achieving cultural change shifts toward evidence within government agencies and provider communities.

RFA is excited to launch two new, 12-month cohorts of the State and Local Workforce Fellowship beginning in September 2022, focused on 1) using evidence and data to improve job quality for all workers, and 2) evidence-based workforce spending. The Fellowship provides a peer network of top government innovators from around the country, offering new ideas and approaches and providing direction and courage when challenges inevitably arise. This network is complemented by individualized coaching and technical assistance to implement evidence-based strategies, including:

- **Training from subject matter experts** to develop the most important capacities and practices to effectively implement evidence-based strategies, which may include active contract/grant management, outcomes-based contracting, job quality and equity measurement and improvement, and evaluation and evidence-building.
- **Access to a curated repository of action-oriented tools** such as sample RFPs, legislative language, toolkits, and strategies for leading organizational change.
- **Spotlighting and celebrating Fellows' successes** to drive public and political support and build demand among a broader group of workforce development decision-makers, including through articles, speaking opportunities, op-eds, Congressional staff briefings, meetings with U.S. Department of Labor officials, and public events.

Advancing Job Quality Track

Similar to RFA's ongoing [Good Jobs and Equity Project](#), Fellows teams that select this track will learn and apply the foundational components of RFA's [job quality framework](#) to your state or local context, including:

- Strategy: Developing a job quality framework and definition for your jurisdiction.
- Equity: Understanding the connection between equity, stability, and economic mobility within this job quality framework.
- Measurement, Data, and Evidence: Adopting an evidence framework and leveraging evidence-based approaches to drive success within your job quality framework.
- Leading by Example: Positioning your government agency to address internal processes that support job quality for employees and contractors.
- Action Planning: Operationalizing your strategy using your jurisdiction's workforce funding.

[Learn more about why job quality matters](#)

RFA will not only help Fellows teams that select this track to develop job quality frameworks that work for their jurisdictions, we will also help them develop and implement policies and practices that promote job quality within those frameworks through:

- Procurement: Working directly with employer partners, programs, and/or populations through awards, purchases, and contract management to define and prioritize evidence of effectiveness and job quality.
- HR Practices: Making shifts through internal processes, organizational practices, and/or priorities to change the way they recruit, hire, support, develop and advance talent.
- Policy: Using research, influence, and network to inspire policy change at the federal, state, or local level.
- Empowerment: Fostering and supporting change through worker and business education, awareness, and even organizational structure shifts.

Evidence-Based Workforce Spending Track

Fellows teams that select this track will learn the fundamentals of evidence- and outcomes-based grantmaking, contracting, and budgeting, including:

- Goal Setting: Clearly define the problem you want to solve and the goals for the program, including what population you want to serve.
- Performance Metrics: Identify the outcomes you want to achieve and what data sources will allow you to track those outcomes.

- Evidence Framework: Adopt a [tiered evidence framework](#) to anchor your initiative. Based on target outcomes and service population, determine what evidence requirements align with your goals.
- Performance-based Funding: Link funding directly to desired outcomes, where appropriate, to align incentives.
- Equity and Innovation: Develop application and award processes that invite innovation and ensure equity while also contributing to improved program outcomes.
- Active Management: Use outcomes data to guide management and performance discussions, adjust strategies, and build evidence of what works, for who, and in what context.

Teams will develop action plans and apply these concepts to at least one grant or contract award or internal budgetary decision.

Membership

RFA requests that Fellows apply as a state-local partnership, with at least one representative from both the state and local levels who each have authority related to workforce funding and/or who hold a leadership or executive-level position. Teams should identify 3-6 Fellowship members including WIOA, TANF, SNAP E&T, Perkins CTE, or other workforce funding streams to enhance connectivity and develop a comprehensive approach across the state. Additional implementation team members may be included in training and coaching sessions on an ad hoc basis.

While not an exhaustive list, previous Fellows' job titles have included roles such as:

- Chief of Staff at an Economic Development Agency
- Policy Director at a mayor's office
- Executive Director at a county workforce board
- Project Manager at a community college system

Timeline

- August 31, 2022: Statement of Interest due from teams
- September 2022: Initial team technical assistance calls with each Fellows team
- October 27-28, 2022: In-person convening (Washington, DC)
- October 2022 - September 2023: Technical assistance, training, peer learning, and strategy implementation.
- September 2023: End of the official cohort. Individual projects may extend as appropriate.

[Click here](#) to submit an Application/Statement of Interest to join the next Fellowship cohort.

Fellowship FAQ's

1. *What is the RFA State and Local Workforce Fellowship?*

In the fall of 2019, RFA launched a [State and Local Workforce Fellowship](#) to help data- and evidence-driven state and local government leaders make tangible progress in improving employment outcomes. In September 2022, RFA will be launching two new, 12-month cohorts of the State and Local Workforce Fellowship focused on 1) using evidence and data to improve job quality for all workers, and 2) evidence-based workforce spending. The Fellowship provides a peer network of top government innovators from around the country complemented by individualized coaching and technical assistance to implement evidence-based strategies, training from subject matter experts, access to a curated repository of action-oriented tools, and sharing Fellows' success with RFA's audiences.

2. *What are the benefits of joining?*

- Receive coaching and TA from an organization that specializes in supporting government leaders as they advance innovation in their workforce organizations.
- Strengthen your organization's network by collaborating with other leaders in the public workforce system.
- Gain access to training materials, webinars, reports, and more.

3. *What is the format and time commitment?*

- **Coaching/TA calls:** Opportunities to receive support on how to best implement principles from Fellowship programming.
- **Training:** Deepen your skills by attending webinars and interactive training on best practices.
- **Convenings:** Connect, problem solve, and learn with other leaders in the public workforce system during in-person sessions.
- **Time Commitment:** Fellowship teams will meet with RFA staff monthly for Coaching/TA calls with additional cohort-relevant trainings offered on a monthly basis. The entire Fellowship will come together twice annually for two-day educational Convenings. It is encouraged that Fellowship teams meet together as a group outside of Fellowship programming at a cadence that supports their project's progress.

4. *What type of projects can the Fellowship support?*

- **Advancing Job Quality:** Employing evidence-based interventions to ensure workforce programming invests in programs, partners, and businesses that have or lead to high quality jobs.

- **Evidence-Based Workforce Spending:** Using evidence- and outcomes-based grantmaking, contracting, and budgeting to set goals, define performance metrics, develop an evidence framework, link funding to outcomes, support equity and innovation in funding models, and actively manage grants and contracts.
5. *How much do we need to know about data and evidence-based policymaking?*
Expertise in evidence-based policymaking is not required; however, it is recommended that members of the Fellowship team have knowledge of their organization's procurement strategies, desired outcomes based on populations served, funding streams, current local or state-level data systems, and program models.
 6. *Are we able to participate in programming for both tracks?*
If both tracks are of interest, your jurisdiction should identify separate teams to focus on each track to ensure that there is enough capacity to fully participate. Otherwise, RFA recommends that teams focus their efforts on advancing a singular project that falls into either track. Regardless, Fellows will have opportunities to join supplemental trainings across both tracks that helps build skills in evidence-based decision-making.
 7. *Is there a cost to apply?*
There is no cost to apply, and Fellows will be supported with training and travel costs.
 8. *What is the deadline to apply?*
Fellowship teams should submit an Application/Statement of Interest to join the next cohort no later than Wednesday, August 31, 2022. Please [click here](#) to submit an application.
 9. *What do past fellows have to say about the fellowship?*
 - "It helped us move forward on our project which we previously only considered and kept us accountable to accomplishing what we set out to do."
 - "For workforce programs to remain meaningful, we need to make some big strides in the use of evidence and how we tell the story to the public. This is a great way to do it."
 - "The opportunity to connect with partners from multiple levels of workforce (state and local) and from different states provided the opportunity to hear many different perspectives on how to address workforce challenges and how to get the most out of our workforce dollars. Learning how others are implementing performance-based contracts was great along with hearing about the data/TA providers that are available to help get the evidence needed."
 - "I have learned how to move our state towards looking at the provision from the standpoint of evidence, especially when making decisions."

RFA Background

Results for America's (RFA) 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.

RFA is accelerating the use of data and evidence across all levels of government by:

- **Standards of Excellence:** Creating “[north stars](#)” that highlight the government capacity needed to invest in what works.
- **Implementation:** Supporting policymakers committed to investing in what works through tools, resources, and technical assistance.
- **Mobilization:** Mobilizing champions committed to investing in what works.

RFA is focused on advancing data and evidence use in:

- **Policy:** Promoting the adoption of both laws and policies at all levels to encourage and incentivize the use of data and evidence.
- **Practice:** Ensuring that governments are embedding data and evidence into government programming.
- **Dollars:** Supporting all levels of government to use data and evidence to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently and effectively, achieving intended outcomes.
- **Access:** Advancing the number of policies, practices, and dollars shifted toward what works that have enabled additional people to gain access to services.
- **Outcomes:** The positive outcomes produced directly or indirectly as a result of investing in evidence-based practices and policies.