Methodology

Results for America classified state governments' data-driven and evidence-based practices, policies, programs, and systems as "leading" or "promising" examples based on (1) whether the effort met the minimum threshold described below and (2) the extent to which it demonstrated five characteristics: results, breadth, depth, legal framework, and interconnectedness.

In order to meet the minimum threshold for inclusion as leading or promising, the example must:

- Meet the requirements of the criteria question
- Be in effect in June 2019
- Be verifiable with publicly available information

Results refers to the demonstrated impact of the practice, policy, program, or system in terms of results achieved, dollars saved, and/or lives improved.

Breadth refers to whether the example is in effect:

- Across the state government
- Across multiple state agencies
- Across an entire state agency
- Across multiple programs within a state agency
- Within one program within a state agency

Depth refers to the extent to which the practice, policy, program, or system is exemplary in all aspects of the criteria.

Legal Framework refers to whether the practice, policy, program, or system is mandated by law, an executive order, or another formal rule-making mechanism.

Interconnectedness refers to the extent to which the practice, policy, program, or system directly informs budget, policy, and/or management decisions.
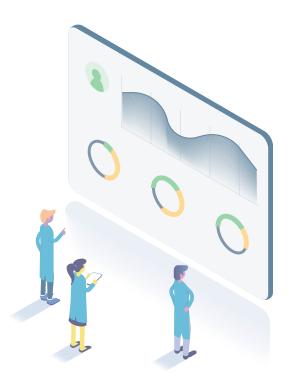
Background

Results for America developed the 2019 State Standard of Excellence between May 2018 and June 2019. Results for America gave the state governments featured in this 2019 State Standard of Excellence an opportunity to review and comment on the content and presentation of the information related to their work. Results for America recognizes that it is difficult to distill complex practices, policies, programs, and systems into a single standard of excellence and accordingly relied on the knowledge of experts and leaders both within and outside state governments during the development of the 2019 State Standard of Excellence.

Results for America acknowledges that there are likely additional state government practices, policies, programs, and systems that have been omitted from this 2019 State Standard of Excellence. In fact, of the 125 examples included in the 2019 State Standard of Excellence, 86% were new practices implemented between May 2018 and June 2019; whereas the remaining 14% of examples included for the first time in 2019 were, in fact, in effect in 2018, but were not included in the 2018 State Standard of Excellence. In future years, Results for America plans to continue to publish updated versions of the Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence to illustrate how states are progressing in their use of evidence and data to improve outcomes for residents.

Research Sources

Results for America's analysis is based on data provided under license by the Pew–MacArthur Results First Initiative (which was used to inform its 2017 report on states' engagement in evidence–based policymaking) and input from more than 150 current and former state government officials and other experts. The views expressed herein are those of Results for America and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pew Charitable Trusts or the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. All hyperlinks to the World Wide Web in this report were operational at the time of publication; however, URLs may change over time. Results for America regrets any inconvenience to readers; links will be updated in future editions of the Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence.

Acknowledgements