



2020 State Standard Submission Guide

January 2020

Results for America is excited to launch its annual process for updating the **Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence** (State Standard). The State Standard is the national standard for state governments that want to consistently and effectively use evidence and data in budget, policy, and management decisions to achieve better outcomes for their residents.

The **2020 State Standard Submission Guide** provides information about the submission process for the 2020 State Standard. The following pages contain guidelines, tips, and timelines for how state governments should submit examples of their work to be considered for inclusion in the 2020 State Standard. In February 2020, Results for America will release the 2020 State Standard Submission Form to be completed by states.

As a starting place, you can visit the *2019 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence* [online](#) and review your state's [State Spotlight](#) to see how your state stacked up in 2019. The State Standard's 15 criteria are available online [here](#). To learn more about the 2019 State Standard and Results for America's state policy program, [subscribe](#) to the monthly What Works in State Government newsletter.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please email [Josh Inaba](#) at Results for America.



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About the Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence

The Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence is designed to: **create a national standard**, which defines the data and evidence infrastructure state governments need to have in place in order to invest in what works; **show case examples** of results-driven and evidence-based practices, policies, programs, and systems within state governments; and **provide a roadmap** for state government leaders committed to invest in what works. The 15 criteria cover the following

thematic areas: managing performance; leveraging data; using and building evidence; and spending for results.

By collecting and then elevating leading and promising examples annually, the State Standard serves a compendium of best practices that states can look to when implementing or replicating evidence-based and data-driven policies, programs, and budgets. It also serves as a high-level framework for states seeking to build a culture of data- and evidence-use across the enterprise, while also broadly informing the field about evidence-based policymaking in state governments.

Publication Timeline and Deadlines

Date	Deliverable
January 2020	Results for America releases 2020 State Standard Submission Guide
Mid-February 2020	Results for America releases 2020 State Standard Submission Form
Mid-March 2020	States submit 2020 State Standard Submission Form for review by Results for America
Late April 2020	Results for America requests additional information/clarifications from states based on examples submitted
Early May 2020	States submit revised examples for analysis and publication by Results for America
Summer 2020	<i>2020 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence</i> national launch

2020 Submission Guidelines

Results for America is seeking **potential new examples from 2020** and **updates to past examples** featured in the *2019 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence*. The State Standard includes [15 criteria](#) that capture a variety of evidence- and data-related activities and infrastructure such as strategic goal setting, performance management, data-sharing, evaluation and research resources, use of evidence in funding and budget decisions (see Appendix A for detailed criteria).

All state examples should demonstrate results or impact. Please ensure that all state examples include hyperlinks to artifacts (i.e. policies, legislation, documents, memos, job descriptions, contracts, reports, findings, etc.). These artifacts allow Results for America to vet submitted state examples and provide an important resource for other state governments in the published State Standard. Prior to submitting examples, states should work to ensure that relevant artifacts and documents are publicly available (see Appendix B for detailed assessment methodology). When writing new examples and updating past examples, states should follow these guidelines:

New 2020 Examples	Updated 2019 Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write summaries (5-8 sentences) of new examples in effect in the period between July 2019 and May 2020• Include hyperlinks to publicly available materials• Include information and links about the impact and outcomes resulting from the example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review 2019 examples (see State Spotlights)• Edit and revise content, including hyperlinks• Delete practices that are no longer in place• Update information and links about the impact and outcomes resulting from the example; be sure to include new studies, reports, or findings

Please refer to the 2019 State Standard (pages 11-17) to see the [leading examples](#) which meet these guidelines. They include hyperlinks, respond to the criteria, and describe impact and outcomes. To see how your state compared to last year's leading examples, view your State Spotlight [here](#).

Results for America is more seeking examples in the following criteria:	Results for America is more seeking examples in the following sectors:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation leaders and officers (Criteria 6)• Dedicated resources for evaluation and research activities (Criteria 8)• Grant programs and competitions that prioritize evidence-based interventions (Criteria 12)• Contracting for outcomes projects (i.e. pay for success that show promising results) (Criteria 14)• Repurposing for results (Criteria 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child welfare• Criminal justice• Health• Education• Workforce• Economic mobility

Appendix A: Invest in What Works Standard of Excellence Criteria

Also available on page 72 of the [2019 State Standard of Excellence](#).

1. Strategic Goals	Did the governor have public statewide strategic goals?
2. Performance Management and Continuous Improvement	Did the state or any of its agencies implement a performance management system aligned with its statewide strategic goals, with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals, program objectives, and measures; and did it consistently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance?
3. Data Leadership	Did the governor's office or any state agency have a senior staff member(s) with the authority, staff, and budget to collect, analyze, share, and use high-quality administrative and survey data—consistent with strong privacy protections—to improve (or help other entities including, but not limited to, local governments and nonprofit organizations improve) federal, state, and local programs? (Example: chief data officer)
4. Data Policies/Agreements	Did the state or any of its agencies have data sharing policies and data sharing agreements—consistent with strong privacy protections—with any nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, local government agencies, and/or federal government agencies which were designed to improve outcomes for publicly funded programs, and did it make those policies and agreements publicly available? (Example: data sharing policy, open data policy)

5. Data Use	Did the state or any of its agencies have data systems consistent with strong privacy protections that linked multiple administrative data sets across state agencies, and did it use those systems to improve federal, state, or local programs?
6. Evaluation Leadership	Did the governor's office or any state agency have a senior staff member(s) with the authority, staff, and budget to evaluate its major programs and inform policy decisions affecting them? (Example: chief evaluation officer)
7. Evaluation Policies	Did the state or any of its agencies have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s), and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations?
8. Evaluation Resources	Did the state or any of its agencies invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluations?
9. Outcome Data	Did the state or any of its agencies report or require outcome data for its state- funded programs during their budget process?
10. Evidence Definition and Program Inventory	Did the state or any of its agencies release a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and make publicly available an inventory of state-funded programs categorized based on at least two tiers of evidence?
11. Cost-Benefit Analysis	Did the state or any of its agencies assess and make publicly available the costs and benefits of public programs?
12. Use of Evidence in Grant Programs	Did the state or any of its agencies (1) invest at least 50% of program funds in evidence-based solutions or (2) use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds to eligible grantees (including local governments) from its five largest competitive and noncompetitive grant programs?

13. Innovation	Did the state or any of its agencies have staff, policies, and processes in place that encouraged innovation to improve outcomes?
14. Contracting for Outcomes	Did the state or any of its agencies enter into performance-based contracts and/or use active contract management (frequent use of data and regular communication with providers to monitor implementation and progress) to improve outcomes for publicly funded programs?
15. Repurpose for Results	Did the state or any of its agencies shift funds away from any practice, policy, or program which consistently failed to achieve desired outcomes?

Appendix B: Methodology

Also available on page 18 of the [2019 State Standard of Excellence](#).

Results for America classifies 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 as of July 2019 and underway through May 2020
- 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.