

Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government

Leveraging Data



Blueprint Overview

This *Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government* (Blueprint) is an implementation guide for Results for America's [Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence](#) (State Standard of Excellence). The State Standard of Excellence sets a national benchmark for how state governments can use evidence and data to achieve better outcomes for their residents, whereas the Blueprint provides state governments with specific implementation strategies and actions for consistently and effectively using evidence and data in budget, policy, and management decisions.

Taken together, the State Standard of Excellence and Blueprint provide state governments with a set of comprehensive resources to:



Create a high-level roadmap for how they can increase their capacity to use evidence and data in their decision-making



Build capacity to foster and sustain an organizational culture focused on learning and results



Improve investments by using their evidence and data capacity to spend taxpayer dollars on evidence-based solutions that achieve better results for their residents

This Blueprint is designed for state government leaders in governors' offices, state budget offices, and within state agencies who are charged with making their state's critical budget, policy, and management decisions. The Blueprint describes explicit Strategies, detailed Actions, useful resources, and specific examples of leading practices to help state governments make progress on the State Standard of Excellence and improve results for their residents.

Blueprint Development

The Blueprint was developed with the assistance of senior staff from a bipartisan group of governors offices as part of the [What Works Bootcamps](#) training series hosted by Results for America and the National Governors Association to help advance evidence-based policymaking in state governments. Through a series of in-depth, facilitated learning sessions in 2019 and 2020, senior staff from more than a dozen governors' offices contributed their expertise to developing this Blueprint. As such, this Blueprint is a practical guide that reflects the collective experience of many of the country's most effective state government leaders.

Strategies for Delivering Results in State Government

The Blueprint is organized into the following Blueprint Themes, which are aligned with the State Standard of Excellence. Each Theme has three related Strategies, detailed Actions for executing these Strategies, and specific examples of how state governments have implemented these Actions.

Blueprint Theme	Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
 Managing for Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Establish public, customer oriented, measurable strategic goals and metrics that reflect the governor's priorities. B. Create a systematic approach to managing results that aligns budget, policy, and legislative activities to advance the governor's statewide priorities and supports continuous learning. C. Promote a culture of using data and evidence to deliver results for customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic goals 2. Performance management/continuous improvement
 Leveraging Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively collecting and using data across state agencies to improve programs and operations. E. Build talent in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data. F. Establish a roadmap for more integrated data usage that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Data leadership 4. Data policies/agreements 5. Data use
 Building and Using Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Create leadership structures to effectively build and use evidence across state programs and departments. H. Build the infrastructure to evaluate state programs through evaluation policies, evidence definitions, program inventories, and funding to support state leaders. I. Position the budget as a key tool to build state evaluation capacity and apply that capacity to focus resources on evidence-based investments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Evaluation leadership 7. Evaluation policies 8. Evaluation resources 9. Outcome data 10. Evidence definitions and program inventory
 Investing for Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J. Prioritize key areas for analysis and improvement based on statewide goals. K. Use data-driven tools and methods to preference evidence by spending on the most effective and cost-efficient programs and initiatives. L. Redirect grant dollars and contract spending towards interventions with evidence of effectiveness in order to deliver results and encourage innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Cost-benefit analysis 12. Use of evidence in grant programs 13. Innovation 14. Contracting for outcomes 15. Repurpose for results

Leveraging Data

Blueprint Strategies	Relevant State Standard of Excellence Criteria
<p>D. Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively collecting and using data across state agencies to improve programs and operations.</p> <p>E. Build talent in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data.</p> <p>F. Establish a roadmap for more integrated data usage that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.</p>	<p>3. Data leadership</p> <p>4. Data policies/agreements</p> <p>5. Data use</p>

The key to improving performance in government is to leverage data to inform goals, measure progress, and learn lessons for future improvement. Appropriate frameworks, easy ways to align data, and talent make it possible to comprehensively use data for improvement, research, and evaluation. This type of data use creates the foundation of knowledge about what works, for whom, and why in ways that can allow governments to identify and reduce the systemic barriers that produce inequality. In this manner, governments have demonstrated the power of unleashing administrative data, often supported through improved data linking and sharing. While the technical components of linking data with the appropriate privacy measures are paramount, qualified and empowered personnel play a critical role in helping agencies leverage data to improve decisions while building a data-centric culture across the state.









Strategy D

*Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively **collecting and using data** across state agencies to improve programs and operations.*

Actions

- Create a [framework](#) that includes the purpose, priorities, methods and governance for [collecting, using, and sharing data](#) across state agencies  [Policy](#)  [Infrastructure](#)
 - › Connect the framework to the administration's priorities and systematic approach to managing results
 - › Elevate data usage to "[make peoples' lives better](#)" (as opposed to more academic pursuits) to help guide data use, address barriers to equality of opportunity, and make the case internally and publicly for why data is important
 - › [Center racial equity and the community voice](#) within the context of data integration to avoid perpetuating the racially-biased systems that have produced inequitable outcomes
- Consider a guiding vision that protects data privacy and security but elevates the principle of "[our default is to share](#)" among state agencies to break down silos between agencies and systems  [Policy](#)
- Codify a vision for data use in an executive order or legislation for sustainability  [Policy](#)

Blueprint Strategies in Practice



CONNECTICUT

State Data Plan and Data Governance

Connecticut's Chief Data Officer and individual agency data officers are required to update the [state data plan](#) biennially. The plan contains [11 principles](#) and accompanying practices that all agencies should adopt to improve their management, use, sharing, and analysis of data.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 3](#)).



OHIO

InnovateOhio

In 2019, Ohio's governor signed [Executive Order 2019-15D](#) consolidating state data systems into the [InnovateOhio Platform](#), which uses data as "a shared strategic asset" whose "value is multiplied when data sets are linked across programs and organizations." The executive order created a presumption of data sharing between state agencies, except where a specific legal prohibition is identified in writing.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 5](#)).



CALIFORNIA



Open Data

California's statewide [Open Data Policy](#) encourages departments to [share data](#) in standard and accessible formats through the [California Open Data Portal](#). As outlined in the [California Open Data Handbook](#), the state's efforts are designed to improve collaboration, expand transparency, encourage innovation, and increase effectiveness. In addition, the state hosts [CalData](#), a professional network for government officials and partners to promote the best uses of open data.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 4](#)).

*Build **talent** in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data.*

Actions

- Hire a Chief Data Officer (CDO) within, or strongly connected to, the governor's office with the expertise, [authority](#), and resources to build a data vision, framework, and to guide the effort statewide  **People**
 - › Ensure the CDO has a voice in the policy, budget, and management decisions where data is a critical element
- Build capacity to support data capture, management, and collaboration across agencies  **People**
 - › Identify existing technical resources across agencies to understand strengths, gaps, and opportunities for increased collaboration
 - › Consider increasing technical capacity (e.g. [data analysts](#)) within agencies but prioritize placing "data strategists" (i.e. data strategy that is human-centered vs. solely technical) into coordination and management roles
- Build groups and relationships to support the data agenda, such as:
 - › [Data governance board](#) to provide formal feedback on [data standards and usage](#)
 - › [Community of practice](#) amongst all data-related leaders / key agency staff to share best practices
 - › Relationship(s) with [university researchers](#) to add expertise and capacity for potential project-based work
 - › Stakeholder engagement mechanisms to ensure that [community voice](#) informs how data is gathered and used



Blueprint Strategies in Practice



CONNECTICUT Chief Data Officer

A [2018 Connecticut law](#) established the statewide [Chief Data Officer](#) and [Connecticut Data Analysis Technology Advisory Board](#) and required each state agency to designate an agency data officer to manage high-value data sets and coordinate data-related activities with the state Chief Data Officer.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 3](#)).



KENTUCKY Center for Statistics' Data Governance

By providing [data sets](#), publishing [reports](#), and fulfilling [research requests](#), the [Kentucky Center for Statistics](#) provides state-specific education and workforce data [insights](#) with appropriate [data privacy](#) and [data access](#) controls. With more than [40 staff members](#) who are [dedicated to data use](#) and sharing, the Center is run by an executive director with an oversight [board](#) composed of participating state agencies. The Center has developed a [research agenda](#) for 2020–22.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 5](#)).



INDIANA Chief Data Officer









Created by a [2017 law](#), Indiana's [Chief Data Officer](#) has the budget, staff, and authority to coordinate data analytics and data transparency for state agencies; advise state agencies regarding best practices for data maintenance, security, and privacy; and oversee the [Indiana Management Performance Hub](#).

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 3](#)).



*Establish a roadmap for **more integrated data usage** that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.*

Actions

- Activate the right leadership group (ideally including a [data governance board](#), the [Chief Data Officer](#), and [engagement](#) from within the governor's office) to help drive the collaborative creation of a statewide data roadmap  **People**
- Develop an inventory of the people, processes, and infrastructure used to capture data (including partners if feasible) to provide a view of the "starting point" for enhanced data integration and usage moving forward  **People**
- Create a data infrastructure roadmap that starts from the current status of data use and builds to a data system integrated at the most viable level  **Policy**  **Infrastructure**
 - › Engage internal stakeholders to understand sensitivities, resources, and starting point technological realities to build data integration that allows rapid cross-agency data combination for the purpose of specific problem solving
 - › Consider a progressive approach that starts with quick wins focused on linking programmatic data for research purposes. While a more expansive data system tied to case management within agencies may be viable in the longer term, it may not be appropriate as a short-term or medium-term goal
 - › Engage community stakeholders to build a set of questions and use cases that can ultimately be solved by integrating data
- Tie the performance management system and the data infrastructure together so that the administration's top goals are supported by regular, cross-agency data capture  **Policy**  **Infrastructure**
- Expedite data sharing across and within agencies by creating formal, standardized, and easy-to-apply agreements that agencies can use to share data without risking privacy or security  **Policy**
- Provide technical assistance to agencies on an ongoing basis to support new data imperatives  **People**



Blueprint Strategies in Practice



WASHINGTON

Department of Social Services's Integrated Client Database

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services [Research and Data Analysis Division](#) maintains an [Integrated Client Database](#) with data from 10 state agencies, 40 separate data systems, and millions of individuals. RDA's integrated data environment has been used by the state's [Health Home Program](#) to generate tens of millions in [performance payments](#) from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as a result of [improved care management](#) for persons dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 5](#)).



COLORADO

Linked Information Network of Colorado

Colorado Governor's Office and the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (CEAL) co-designed the [Linked Information Network of Colorado](#) (LINC) to facilitate data sharing for [research](#) and analytics purposes as a way to improve state policies and programs.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 5](#)).



INDIANA

Management Performance Hub

Indiana Management Performance Hub is an integrated database that brings together data from key policy issues related to [opioids](#), [education and workforce development](#), [medicaid](#), [fiscal transparency](#), and [other areas](#). According to a 2018 [annual report](#), the Hub has generated an estimated return on investment of \$40 million for the state.

More information: 2019 State Standard of Excellence ([Criteria 3](#)).



What Could This Look Like Over Time?

Leveraging Data

BLUEPRINT STRATEGIES

Strategy D:

*Develop the vision, framework, and governance for effectively **collecting and using data** across state agencies to improve programs and operations.*

BEGINNING

- Establish the principles and values to drive the effort
- Create a high-level vision and initial framework to guide efforts

BUILDING

- Develop the more advanced version of the framework

SUSTAINING

- Engage internal and external stakeholders to review the framework from top to bottom
- Codify through legislation or an executive order

Strategy E:

*Build **talent** in the governor's office and agencies to advance the state's vision for collecting and using data.*

BEGINNING

- Designate/hire a Chief Data Officer
- Inventory the relevant assets, resources, and activities
- Create a data governance board to support roadmap development

BUILDING

- Hire agency and centralized staff to bolster capabilities
- Establish external partnerships to expand expertise
- Build an internal community of practice

SUSTAINING

- Assess talent and fill any gaps to ensure the right technical and strategic capacity for long-term sustainability
- Assess roadmap implementation and appropriately resource the next phase of development

Strategy F:

*Establish a roadmap for **more integrated data usage** that links program data across state activities through better process and technology, while ensuring strong privacy protocols.*

BEGINNING

- Develop first version of roadmap with clear high-level steps tied to framework and performance management system
- Publish open data in machine readable, user-centric formats
- Identify key short-term wins
- Ensure a data-sharing process and agreements are in place

BUILDING

- Prioritize roadmap execution
- Build out next phase of roadmap based on initial learnings and consider what level of integration is appropriate
- Expand technical assistance to agencies

SUSTAINING

- Assess roadmap implementation and appropriately resource the next phase of development

Wins

By following the actions above and building over time, states should aim to achieve wins along the way to galvanize internal and external support. Here are some sample wins, though there are many other types of achievements that states could use to mark their progress.

SHORT-TERM WINS

- Create a vision for leveraging data as a strategic asset (such as Connecticut's [State Data Plan](#) created by the [Chief Data Officer](#))
- Create data-sharing protocols to reduce barriers to sharing among state agencies and with external partners such as other governments, nongovernmental entities, research institutions (see [Colorado's LINC data collaborative](#))
- Make data [open by default](#), publicly available, and downloadable on dashboards to encourage data usage (see [Ohio's fiscal transparency efforts](#))
- Improve data linkages across programs to better define problems and achieve solutions (see Indiana's [Management Performance Hub](#) for examples)

MID-TERM WINS

- Develop a data governance framework to further codify practices and build momentum (see Connecticut's State Data Plan with its [11 principles](#) and California's [Open Data Handbook](#))
- Leverage data analytics for programmatic decisions, service delivery, and policymaking, including the creation of research agendas (see North Carolina's [center](#) to leverage data analytics and Kentucky's [KYSTATS](#) that has a multi-year research agenda)
- Build external partnerships to advance data integration and expand technical capacity of agencies (see [Colorado's LINC data collaborative](#))

LONG-TERM WINS

- Leverage integrated data to enhance service delivery and identify cost-savings (see Washington's integrated database which led to [savings in Medicare spending](#))
- Implement a comprehensive data strategy that is updated regularly (such as [Connecticut's](#) State Data Plan, which is updated biennially as required by [law](#))
- Invest in data analytics capacities and teams in agencies (see Washington's State Department of Social and Health Services' [data analytics division](#))

About Results for America

Results for America

Results for America is helping decision-makers at all levels of government harness the power of evidence and data to solve our world's greatest challenges. Our 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.

Invest in What Works Policy Series

This *Blueprint for Delivering Results in State Government* is part of Results for America's Invest in What Works policy series launched in 2012 to help local, state, and federal policymakers harness the power of evidence and data to increasingly shift taxpayer dollars toward results-driven, evidence-based solutions.

For Further Information

Please contact Results for America (info@results4america.org) for additional information about the Strategies and Actions contained in this Blueprint or for assistance with implementing these strategies in your state.



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