

# How Secretaries Can Use RFPs to Scale Effective Programs

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Results for America

Former Commissioner of the Chicago Department of  
Family & Support Services



# Better Outcomes by Leading with Evidence

Secretaries' Innovation Group

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**Tuesday, June 24, 2025**








Select the bulb that's right for you




Select the bulb that's right for you

Elige la bombilla adecuada para usted



 <b>RESULTS</b> FOR AMERICA	1	11	21	31	41	51	61	71	81	91
	2	12	22	32	42	52	62	72	82	92
	3	13	23	33	43	53	63	73	83	93
	4	14	24	34	44	54	64	74	84	94
	5	15	25	35	45	55	65	75	85	95
	6	16	26	36	46	56	66	76	86	96
	7	17	27	37	47	57	67	77	87	97
	8	18	28	38	48	58	68	78	88	98
	9	19	29	39	49	59	69	79	89	99
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100



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10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

# More than \$1 Trillion

2%



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2	12	22	32	42	52	62	72	82	92
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9	19	29	39	49	59	69	79	89	99
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Human Services Department Services Division				2024 Human Services Supplemental Budget (Dollars in Thousands)												SF 2024 SF 2025			
				GOVERNOR				SENATE				CONFERENCE COMMITTEE AGREEMENT							
				FY 2024-25		FY 2025-27		FY 2024-25		FY 2025-27		FY 2024-25		FY 2025-27		FY 2024-25		FY 2025-27	
LINE	BUDG FUND	ACT	DESCRIPTION																
045			Administrative Underpend	0	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	0	0	0	0
046			GP TOTAL	0	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	(2,438)	0	0	0	0	0
047		CF 11	Chancellor - Admin	0	0	(3,565)	0	(3,565)	0	(3,565)	0	(3,565)	0	(3,565)	0	0	0	0	0
048		GP 12V1	PPP @ 32%	0	1	1,647	0	1,147	0	1,147	0	1,147	0	1,147	0	0	0	0	0
049				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
050			Traditional Background Studies Reduction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,024)	(2,024)	(4,048)	(4,048)
051		CF 52	Other LTC Grants - PCA Background Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,024)	(2,024)	(4,048)	(4,048)
052				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,024)	(2,024)	(4,048)	(4,048)
053			SLS Grant - Historical Underpend	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	(3,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
054		GP 16	Qualitative Grants - SLS Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	(3,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
055				0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	(3,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
056			HCBS PMAP Provider Capacity Grant Cancellation	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	0	0	0	0
057			GP TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	0	0	0	0
058		CF 52	Other LTC Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	0	0	0	0
059				0	0	0	0	0	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	(2,500)	0	0	0	0	0
060			HCBS PMAP Transitions to Community Grant Cancellation	0	0	0	0	0	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	0	0	0	0
061			GP TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	0	0	0	0
062		CF 55	Qualitative Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	0	0	0	0
063				0	0	0	0	0	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	(300)	0	0	0	0	0
064			Withdrawal Management Grant Underpend	0	0	0	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	0	0	0	0
065			GP TOTAL	0	0	0	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	0	0	0	0
066		CF 59	CS Treatment Support Grants	0	0	0	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	(500)	0	0	0	0	0
067				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
068			Additional Funding for Food Security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
069			GP TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
070		CF 41	CHS & Economic Support Grants - All Food Security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
071		CF 42	CHS & Economic Support Grants - Food Shelf Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,380	1,380	0	0	0	0	0	0
072		CF 47	CHS & Economic Support Grants - MH Food Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,610	2,610	0	0	0	0	0	0
073				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
074			Mobile Crisis Grant Expansion	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
075																			
Department of Health																			
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099	SF 3887		Establish Community Care Hub Grant	0	0	0	0	554	0	0	0	554	554	554	554	0	0	0	0
100			GP TOTAL	0	0	0	0	554	0	0	0	554	554	554	554	0	0	0	0

Results for America's mission is to **make investing in what works the “new normal”** so that government decision makers will regularly and effectively use evidence and data to increase the impact of the \$1 trillion+ that governments spend each year to accelerate economic opportunity.

## That will lead to improved outcomes...?

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Washington State Institute for Public Policy

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SeattleU Research Center

IES + WWC

Search Results

Full List of Programs

The Economic Mobility Catalog

What's New

- Early childhood
- K-12 education
- Post-secondary education and workforce development
- Health and social well-being
- Justice and public safety
- Higher and tertiary education
- Immigration and governance
- Educational inequalities
- Demography and middle class mobility
- High potential graduate



# To affect outcomes, you need to affect the dollars.



## Grants and Contracts



## Budgets



## Direct Services

# Opportunities to Improve Outcomes in...



**Grants and  
Contracts**



# Opportunities in grants and contracts

## Well-intentioned

*“Each grant recipient must....Ensure implementation of early literacy evidence-based structured literacy practices with fidelity.”*

## Well-intentioned with “teeth”

### Evidence Tier Definitions and Requirements

#### High Evidence Program Tier

High evidence programs are ones that are supported by rigorous evaluations of the program or of an essentially similar program design and outcomes. The program or essentially similar program must have:

- conducted two or more well designed and well implemented Randomized Controlled Trial or Interrupted Time Series studies that include both a comparison group and a statistically valid technique to assess causation that eliminates or minimizes confounding factors. The studies must have had minimal attrition. These studies must show that the program has **both a positive and meaningful outcome**, and that there is a **high degree** of confidence that the outcome is primarily caused by the program.

### Evidence Tier Bonus Scoring—Information for Applicants

**Bonus points** are earned based on the level of the evidence continuum shown in the application. Points are earned as follows:

- High Evidence Tier: The studies provided have been reviewed and the proposed program is comparable to the studies. CLEAR or Other Entity ratings confirm the studies achieved a high rating and demonstrated positive meaningful outcomes.  
*Points given: 10*
- Moderate Evidence Tier: The study provided has been reviewed and the proposed program is comparable to the study. CLEAR or Other Entity rating confirms the study achieved a moderate rating and demonstrated positive meaningful outcomes.  
*Points given: 6*

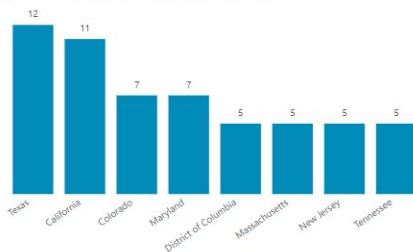
# 36 states have grant programs that define and prioritize evidence of effectiveness in RFPs/NOFOs



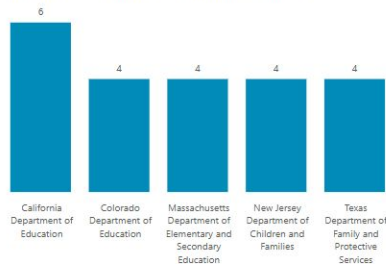
Results for America (RFA) has identified the following State grant programs in **36 states** representing a total of **69 agencies** investing taxpayer dollars into what works by defining and prioritizing evidence of effectiveness between 2020-2024. State agencies use grants to provide resources to local partners who deliver services. They can produce better and more equitable results for residents by increasing the proportion of public resources directed to interventions with evidence of effectiveness. Nominate a program for potential inclusion [using this form](#).

## Honor Roll of State Grant Programs that Define and Prioritize Evidence of Effectiveness

Top states by number of programs featured



Top state agencies by number of programs featured



This Honor Roll features:

- 36** states
- 69** agencies
- 105** grant programs
- 161** Requests for Proposals (RFPs)/Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)

*Evidence-based investments since 2020:*  
**\$2,570,352,301**

Issue Area

All

State

All

State	Agency Name	Program Name	Summary of Grant Program	# of RFPs/NOFOs that define and prioritize	Funding that defines and prioritizes	Links to RFPs / NOFOs	
Alaska	Serve Alaska	AmeriCorps State and National Grants - Competitive	This grant program funds service-oriented efforts surrounding community health and wellness. Grantees must propose program designs that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence, according to the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange. In the process of scoring applications for funding, up to 20 points (out of 100) are awarded based on evidence quality and tier. The State requires applicants who have previously received 3+ years of funding for the same project to submit impact evaluation plans according to the approved AmeriCorps requirements.	2	\$0.3M	<a href="#">2021</a>	<a href="#">2023</a>
Arizona	Arizona Department of Education	Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant	This grant program funds services to improve child literacy. Grant funds must be used for interventions with strong or moderate evidence of effectiveness, as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act.	1	\$20.0M	<a href="#">2021</a>	
Arkansas	Arkansas Division of Workforce Services	AmeriCorps State and National Grants - Competitive	This grant program funds service-oriented efforts surrounding community health and wellness. Grantees must propose evidence-based program designs as defined by the Corporation for National and Community Service.	2	\$0.2M	<a href="#">2021</a>	<a href="#">2022</a>

## Action Steps

- 1) *Establish a definition of evidence of effectiveness*
- 1) *Apply the definition of evidence in order to prioritize the use of evidence*
- 1) *Update grant policies and templates to make evidence a default priority*

## Options

*Option 1: Require the use of evidence*

*Option 2: Reward the use of evidence*

**Option 1:** Require the use of evidence

Require use of:

a) **any** evidence-based model(s)

OR

b) **specific** evidence-based model(s)

**Option 2:** Reward the use of evidence

Award preference points for:

c) **any** evidence-based model(s)

OR

d) **specific** evidence-based model(s)

# Example of Option #1 : Require the use of evidence

The **Texas** Adult Mental Health Recovery Based Outreach Services in Peer Focused Environments Utilizing the Clubhouse Model Request for Applications requires grantees to implement the evidence-based Clubhouse model.

## 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This procurement is intended to solicit applications to be considered for funding through the **Recovery-Focused Clubhouse Program** (“Program”). The purpose of the program is to fund the Clubhouse International model, which has been proven to enhance recovery-based outreach, services, and programming to support people living with mental health challenges. HHSC will award grants to local Texas organizations, to be matched at 25%, to implement the Clubhouse model with fidelity.

The Clubhouse model is a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) **evidence**-based practice that provides a recovery-focused environment for people whose lives have been disrupted because of their mental health challenges (members). Members benefit from having the support of others who are in recovery and who believe that mental illness is treatable. While participating in a Clubhouse, members gain access to opportunities to rejoin the worlds of friendships, family, employment and education, and to the services and support they may individually need to continue their recovery.

# Example of Option #2: Reward the use of evidence

**Maryland's** 2024 *ENOUGH* grant program notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) awards up to 5 bonus points for proposing programs with evidence of effectiveness.

## 2.5 Evidence-Based Programs and Models

The ENOUGH Grant Program invites applicants to apply a comprehensive approach to addressing childhood and inter-generational poverty across multiple sectors and systems, as well as focused interventions that reach the majority of young people in a community and, specifically, impact children living in poverty. Research-informed frameworks like [Collective Impact](#), [Targeted Universalism](#), the federal government's [Places & People Thriving Approach](#), and the Urban Institute's [Upward Mobility Framework](#) can provide best practices, strategies, and tactics for designing an integrated approach aligned with the ENOUGH Theory of Action.

For **Track 3: Implementation**, **priority points will be awarded** to applications that demonstrate which interventions in the proposed Neighborhood Action Plan are informed by research and are thus, evidence-based. "Evidence-based" means that there is evidence from an experimental or quasi-experimental study that a project component has been effective in improving a relevant outcome with similar populations or in similar settings. Track 3: Implementation applicants must submit the [Evidence-Based Programs Table](#) with their application to receive bonus points.

Sources of evidence include (among others): programs rated as "evidence-based" in government clearinghouses, rigorous evaluation and research findings, academic literature, professional or academic convening reports, government publications, and empirically robust research briefs. See [Appendix G](#) for clearinghouse resources focused on identifying and evaluating evidence-based programs.

# Opportunities to Improve Outcomes in...



**Budgets**



# Opportunities in budgets

## Well-intentioned

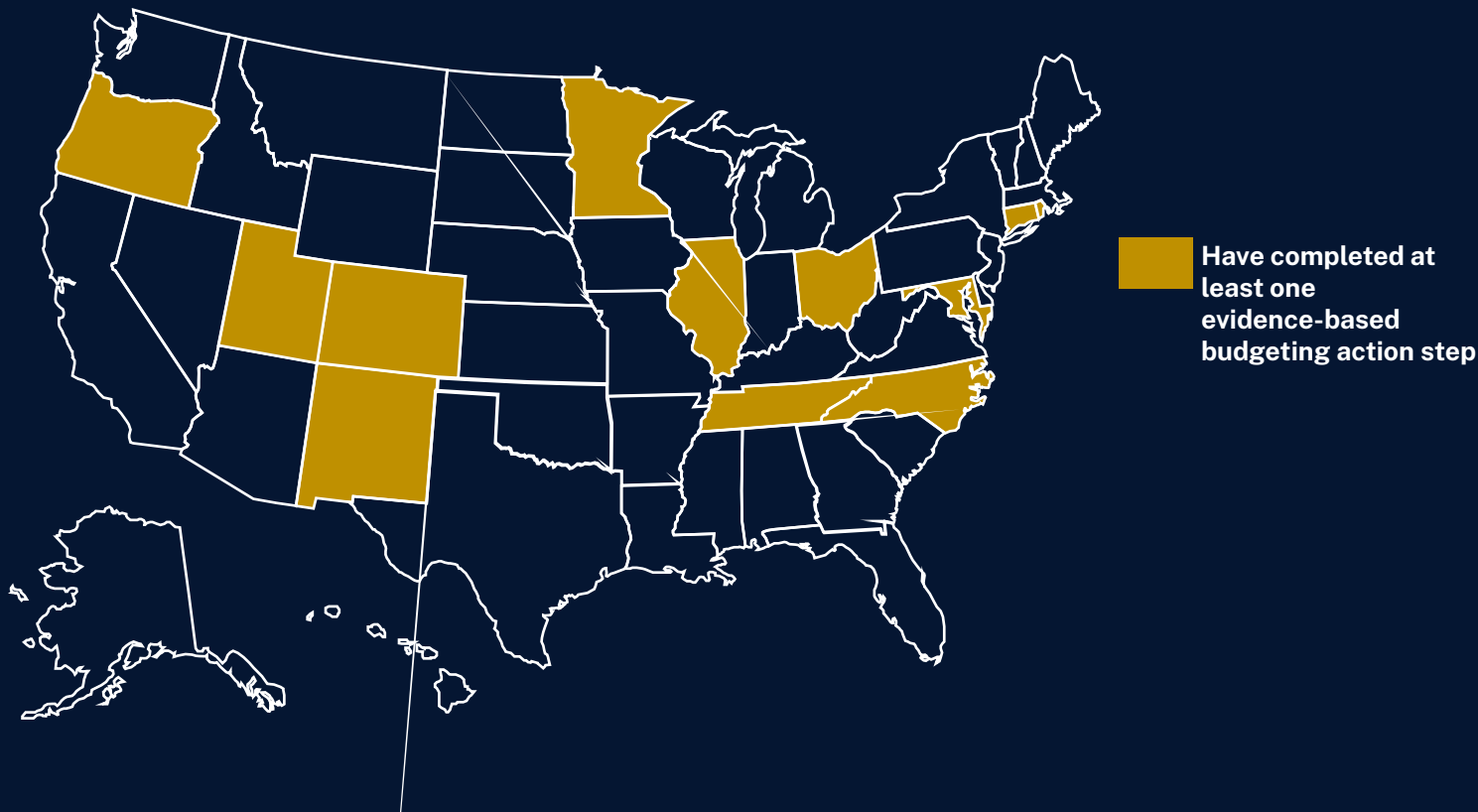
*“In order to ensure alignment of executive branch agency operations with the state’s priorities, the office of management and budget may produce, with all necessary cooperation from executive branch agencies, analyses and recommendations to improve program performance, conduct evidence-based budgeting, and respond to sudden shifts in policy environments.”*

## Well-intentioned with “teeth”

*“For the purposes of evidence-based budgeting, rigorous evaluations are those that use high-quality experimental or quasi-experimental designs.”*

<b>10. Evidence:</b> Does this <i>program</i> , or one very similar to it, currently have an evidence base cited in a national clearinghouse or clearinghouse database like <a href="#">Results First's</a> ? If so, list the information below. If not, leave this section blank. Refer to detailed guidance for more information.		
<b>Clearinghouse</b> <small>Name the clearinghouse or database that reviewed the program or intervention.</small>	<b>Entry Name &amp; Link</b> <small>Enter the name of the program from a clearinghouse you feel is a good match to your program, and the URL for the page.</small>	<b>Evidence Rating</b> <small>How is this piece of evidence rated in the clearinghouse?</small>
		Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Important Notes</b> <small>Does your program model or population differ in some way from the cited evidence? Provide any important notes here.</small>		

# 12 states have a budgeting process that incorporates evidence



As of April, 2025

## Strategy

*Clearly Define  
Evidence*

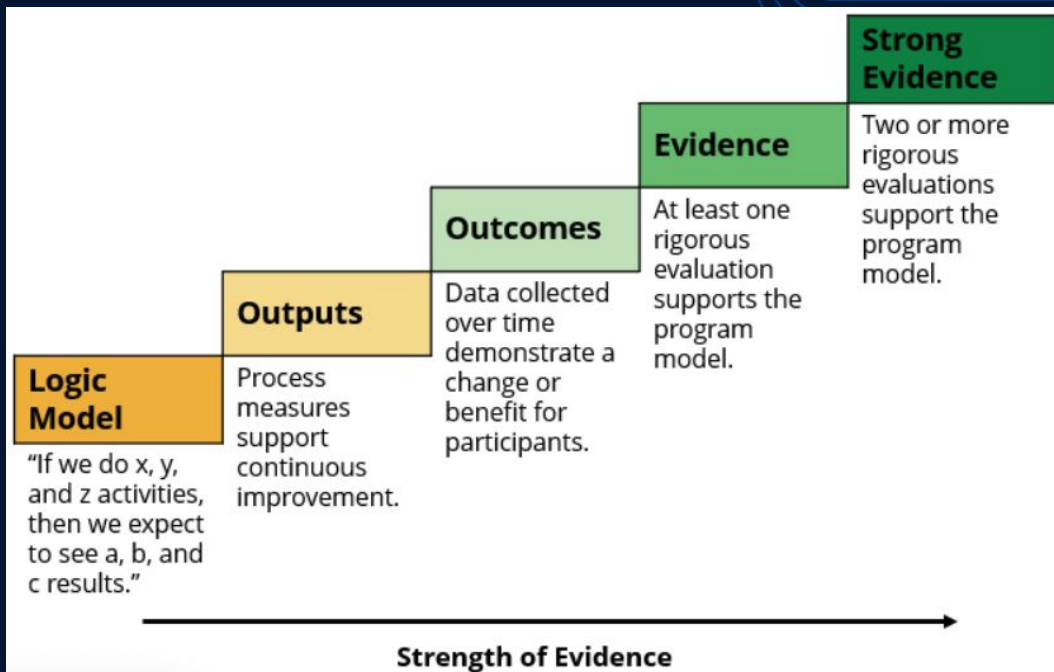
*Prioritize Evidence  
in State Budgeting*

## Action Steps

- 1) *Establish a statewide definition of evidence of effectiveness*
- 2) *Implement budget instructions and templates that collect evidence information*
- 3) *Set statewide evidence-based budgeting targets*
- 4) *Provide evidence indicators in public budget documents*
- 5) *Summarize items signed into law that support evidence-based interventions*

# Step #1: Define Evidence

**Tennessee's** 'Evidence Framework' provides standardized language to classify programs based on specific qualifying criteria about the level of evidence supporting the program.



## Step #2: Budget Instructions & Templates

The **Ohio** Office of Budget and Management uses a 'Results-Focused Budgeting' template to collect information on evidence of effectiveness for new and expanding programs.

To document and justify requested program expansions, new initiatives, or significant increases, each agency will complete the Results-Focused Budgeting template for any appropriation line item (ALI) with a requested budget increase of five percent or more, or for new program ALI requests for new initiatives.

The Results-Focused Budgeting template requires agencies to provide output and outcome measures, data for those measures, and if applicable, a summary of the **evidence that demonstrates the impact of the program model**. Your agency has a wealth of available data, including 293 datasets from 92 programs currently available on the [DataOhio portal](#) and Ohio's data infrastructure has been recognized as a leading example by [Results for America](#). Additionally, data on many outcome measures can be found through the Federal Statistical Agencies listed below. To determine if a program or initiative is evidence-based, agencies can either provide information from an agency sponsored evaluation or can search one of the many evidence clearinghouses listed below.

## Step #3: Expenditure Targets

By statute, the **Oregon** Department of Corrections, Youth Authority, and Youth Development Division must all spend at least 75% of that funding on evidence-based programs.

- (1) An agency shall spend at least 75 percent of state moneys that the agency receives for programs on evidence-based programs.
- (2) The agency shall submit a biennial report containing:
  - (a) An assessment of each program on which the agency expends funds, including but not limited to whether the program is an evidence-based program;

## Step #4: Evidence Indicators

In **Colorado**, the Governor's 2025-26 budget request links to evidence summaries and plans to build evidence through evaluation.

### Attachment 7 Evidence-Based Policy

It is the intent of the Governor that state budget and policy decisions be made using data, research, and evidence, and to invest in activities that allow the state to continually monitor, evaluate, and support its priorities. Evidence on the impacts of state programs and activities should be an integral part of the budget development process and ongoing performance management. OSPB has required evidence-related information in budget proposals since FY 2017-18.



## Step #5: Summarize items that support evidence use

The **New Mexico** Legislative Finance Committee includes information about evidence-based programs signed into law as part of their ‘Legislating for Results: Post-Session Review’.

### General Appropriation Act of 2024

New Mexico's financial boom extended into the 2024 legislative session, with strong revenue growth continuing to support unprecedented budget growth. New Mexico is projected to have \$13.05 billion in general fund revenue in FY25, including new money. The LFC recurring budget recommendation totaled \$10.1 billion, a 5.9 percent increase over the FY24 operating budget, with \$1.1 billion set aside for nonrecurring or special appropriations. Growth in the recommendation was driven by health and human services and education, with general fund recommendations growing over \$200 million for each of those sectors. General fund appropriations for the new Health Care Authority approached \$2 billion, up from \$1.6 billion in FY24, although a portion of that growth is attributable to absorption of programs from other agencies, including the Department of Health. The LFC budget plan also included a strategy to leverage over \$1 billion in new money for multiyear investments in **evidence-based services**, with guardrails included to measure implementation and outcomes, left reserves at 30 percent of planned spending, and left \$200 million for tax code changes.

# State Evidence-Based Budgeting Guide

5 Steps for Investing in What Works



November 2024



# State Evidence-Based Grantmaking Guide

April 2025



# We Help States Put Data & Evidence to Work

More than ever, it's imperative that public dollars are spent efficiently. At Results for America, our **no-cost**, bipartisan ***Shifting Dollars Technical Assistance***<sup>SM</sup> helps teach leaders at all levels of government how to **Invest in What Works** and deliver impactful, positive outcomes for their residents.

Email: [states@results4america.org](mailto:states@results4america.org) to get started.

**Questions? Ready for more?**

Patrick Carter

Vice President & State Practice Lead

[Patrick@results4america.org](mailto:Patrick@results4america.org)

—  
**Thank you!**

**RESULTS**  
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**FOR AMERICA**

