State Standard of Excellence Criteria

CRITERIA TITLE	CRITERIA DESCRIPTION
1. Strategic Goals	Did the governor have public statewide strategic goals?
2. Performance Management / 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?

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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?