

CHANGE TAKES LEADERSHIP



2026 Seal of *Excelencia* Certification Application Webinar



March 30, 2026
2:00-4:00pm ET



Agenda Overview

Why the Seal of *Excelencia*?

Seal of *Excelencia* Certification Application 2026

Certification Application Process

Application Support & Resources

Seal of *Excelencia* Certified Institutional Panel



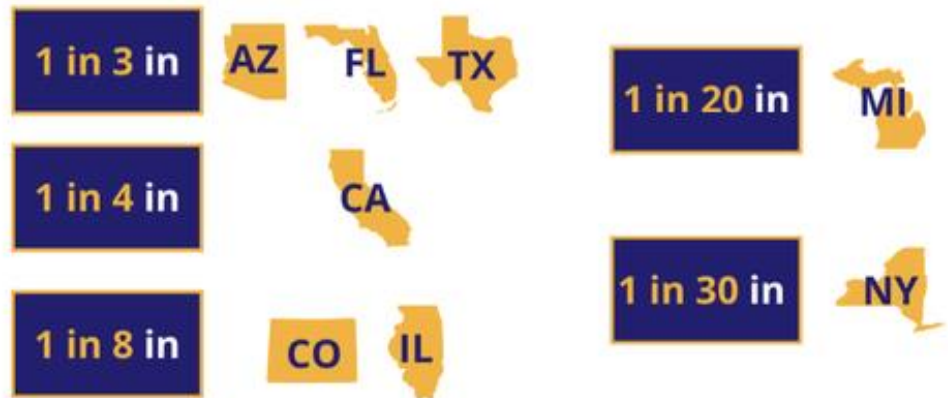
Trendsetters

48 Seal of *Excelencia* certified institutions enrolled **16%** and graduated **18%** of all Latino graduates. They enroll **7%** and graduate **8%** of all students. (2025)

Areas of interest as a cohort:

1. Transitions and Pathways
2. Teaching & Learning
3. AI
4. Completion
5. Workforce
6. Institutional Capacity

Of Latino students, Seal-certified institutions enroll:



Seal of *Excelencia*

Excelencia in Education established the Seal of *Excelencia*, a rigorous, data-driven certification **framework** that requires colleges and universities to show momentum leading to continuous improvement in student and institutional outcomes.

- **Framework** that integrates essential components of transformation.
- Comprehensive **institutional strategy** for SERVING students.
- **Capacity building** for institutions in key areas.
- A **partnership** with institutions to share and learn strategies that align data, practice, and leadership.
- A **community of learners** sharing and learning from each other to accelerate Latino, and all, student success.



Seal of *Excelencia*

Seal of *Excelencia* **framework** reinforces four essential components of higher education value:

- Ensuring all students succeed;
- Supporting continuous improvement institution-wide;
- Enhancing economic/social mobility; and
- Demonstrating effective use of public funds.



Institutions earn **certification**, a national standard of excellence, through **an intentional alignment of data, evidence-based practices, and leadership**, all resulting in students' educational and economic success.

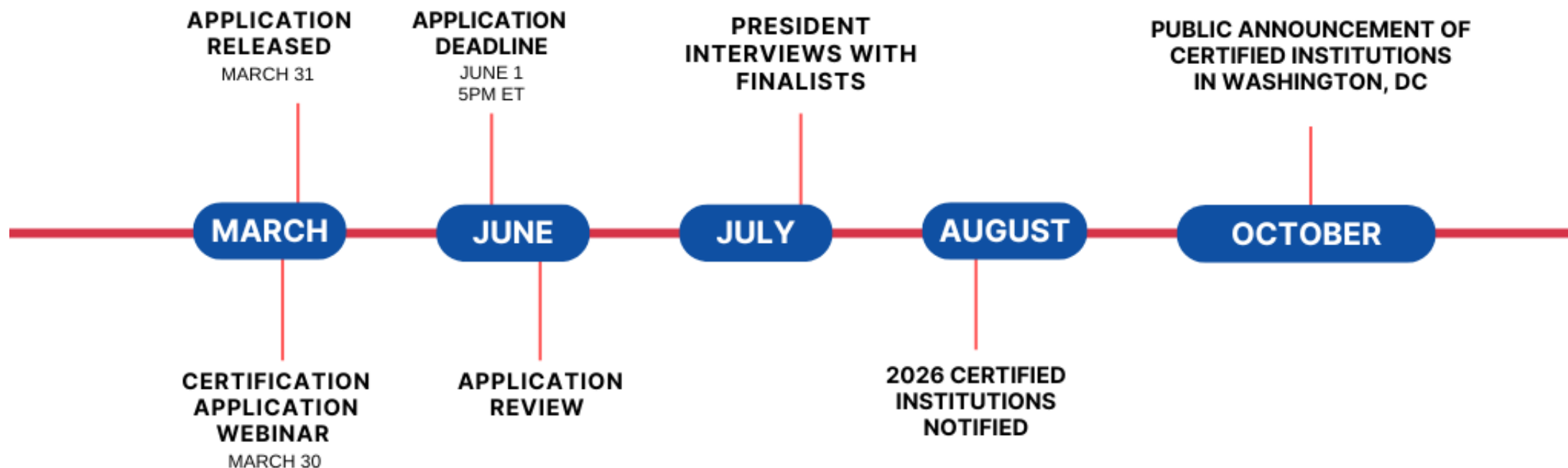
Certification is granted for 3 years; institutions invited to recertify.

Seal of *Excelencia* Framework

Data	Practice	Leadership
Institutions collect, disaggregate, and analyze 3-5 years of data for impact in six practice areas	Institutions intentionally implement and advance at least 3 evidence-based programs and policies with data on impact in 6 key practice areas	Institutions demonstrate intentional commitment to improve student success in 5 leadership areas tied to their strategic plan
1. Enrollment 2. Retention 3. Transfer In/Out 4. Financial Support 5. Representation 6. Completion	1. Enrollment 2. Retention 3. Transfer In/Out 4. Financial Support 5. Representation 6. Completion	1. Mission & Strategy 2. Data & Practice 3. Human Resources 4. Communication 5. Institutional Culture

2026 SEAL OF *EXCELENCIA*

APPLICATION PROCESS



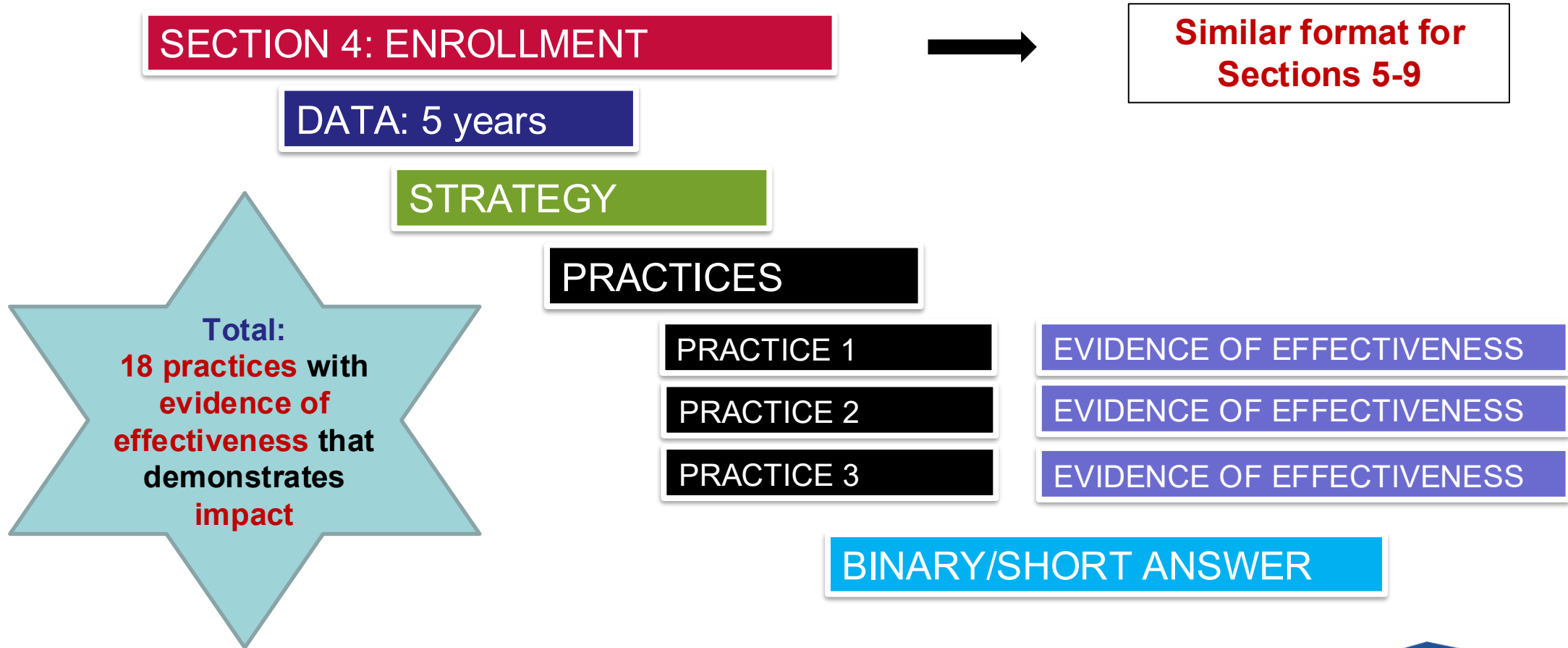
2026 Seal of *Excelencia* Certification

Application Sections

Section 1: Verification for E-Action	Section 2: Contact Information	Section 3: Background	Section 11: Final Comments
Section 4: Enrollment	Section 5: Retention	Section 6: Transfer	
Section 7: Support Financially	Section 8: Representation	Section 9: Completion and Beyond	
	Section 10: Leadership		

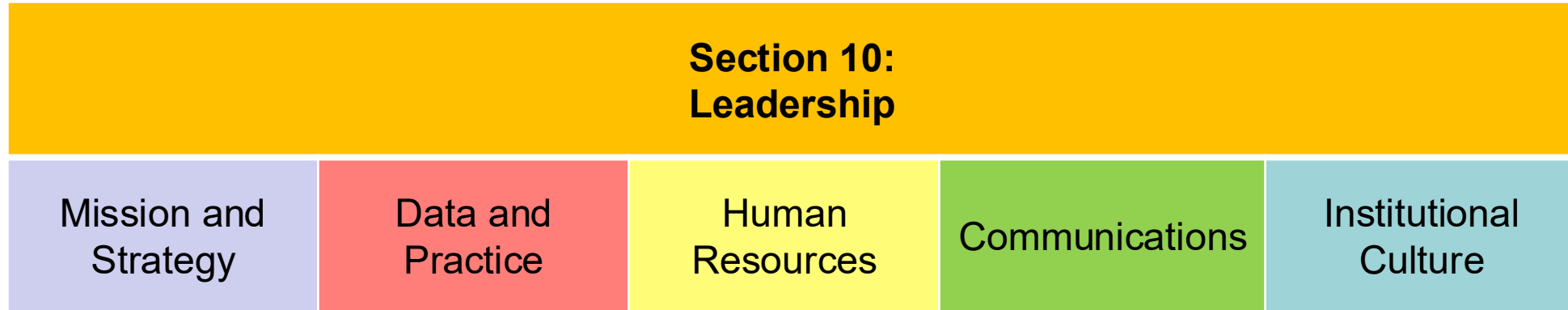
2026 Seal of *Excelencia* Certification

Application Sections



2026 Seal of *Excelencia* Certification

Application Sections



- Open-ended questions
- Focused more on **institutional strategies from strategic plans**
- Data shared should highlight:
 - Institutional response to data analysis/findings
 - Institutional progress, intentionality of efforts
- Answers should support and/or align to information shared in previous sections

Excelencia looks for: **Intentionality**

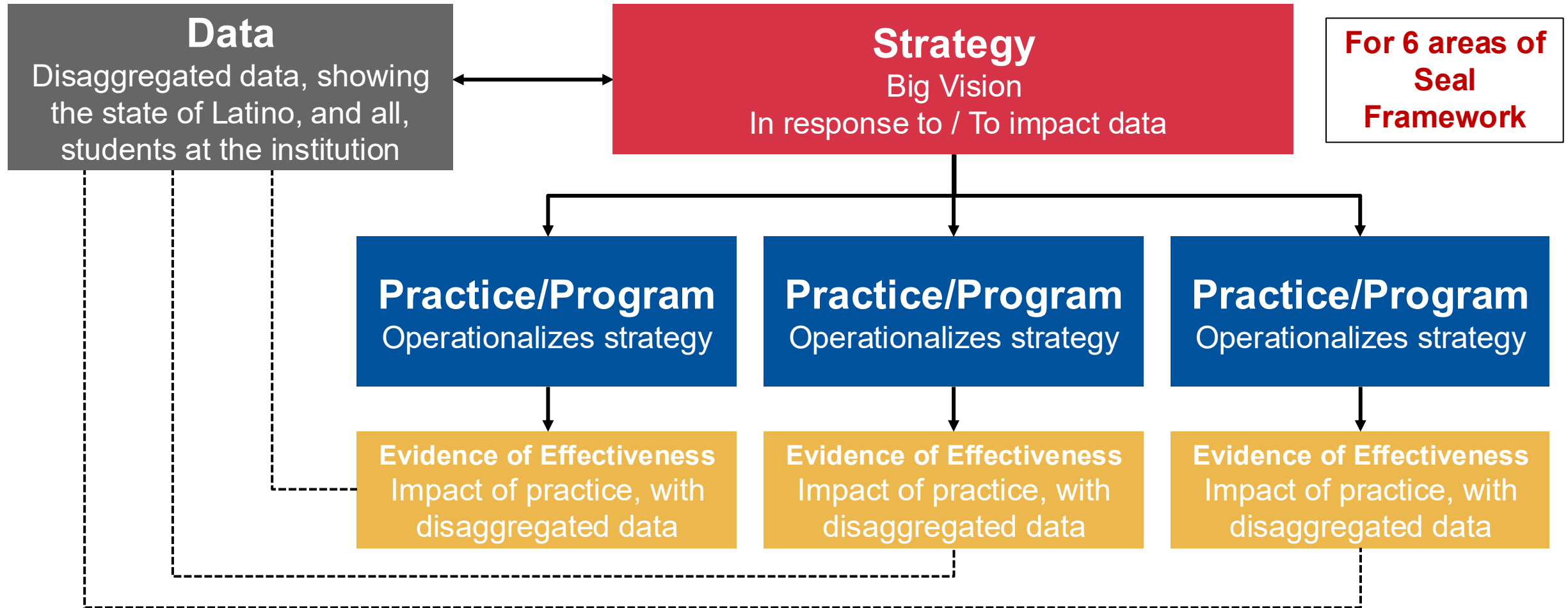
Intentionality:

- **Does not *exclude*** other students.
- **Intentionally** SERVING **Latinos** while **intentionally** serving **all**.
- Developing the ability to intentionally serve Latino students enhances the capacity of institutions to intentionally serve all students.

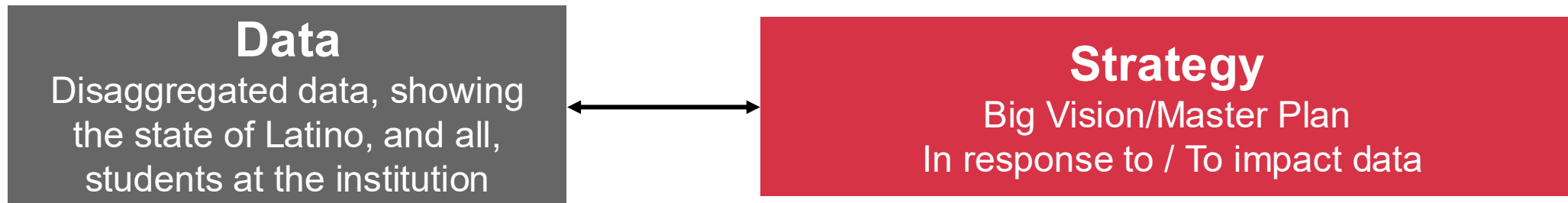
Key Questions:

- How are you ensuring Latino students are thriving, amongst all students?
- What does it mean, authentically to your institution, to be intentional in SERVING Latino students while intentionally SERVING all students?
- How does it manifest in your data? Programming? Leadership?

2026 Seal of *Excelencia* Certification Application



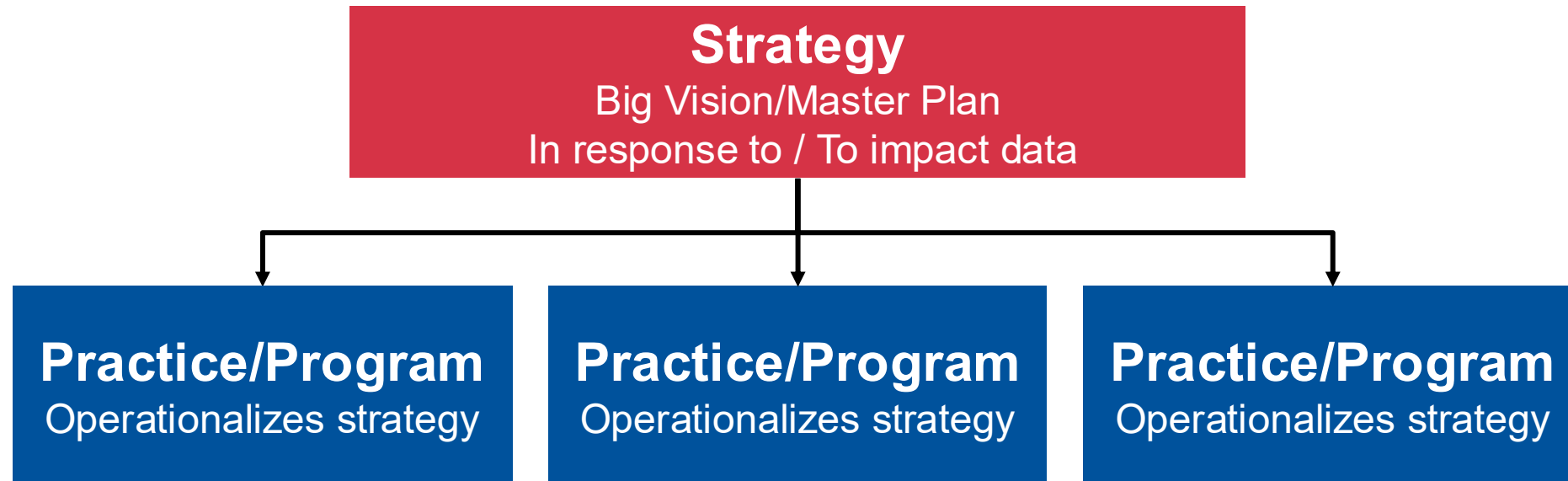
Excelencia looks for: **Intentionality** to SERVE & **Alignment** of Data, Practice & Leadership



Alignment of data with strategy

- Does strategy help reviewer understand data peaks/valleys?
- Does strategy address/respond to the data trends/peaks/valleys?
 - *Strategy can be thought of as “big picture,” “the why,” or “philosophy” that guides leadership, faculty, and staff.*

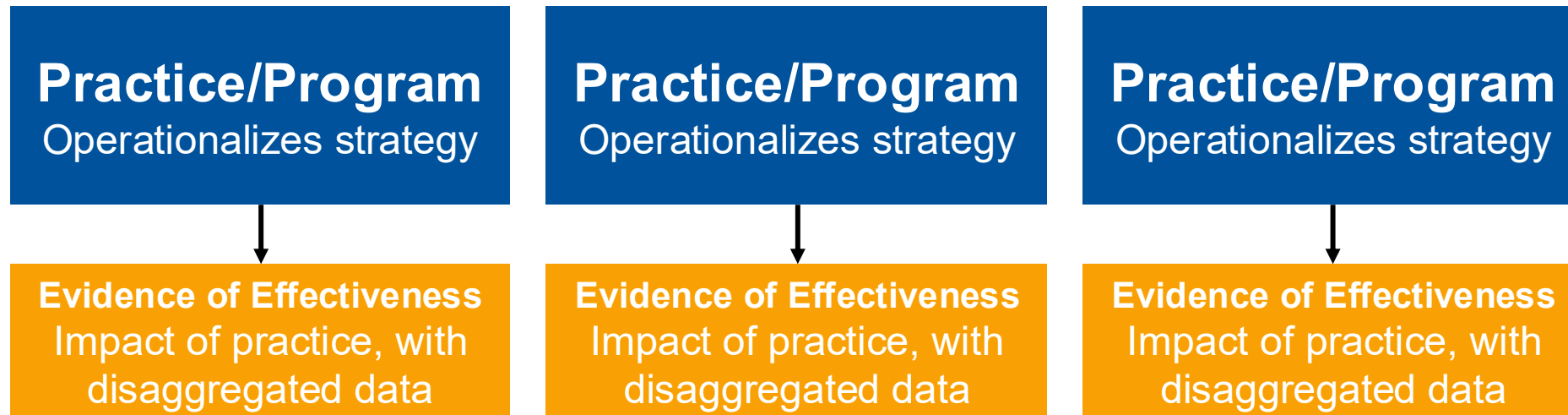
Excelencia looks for: **Intentionality** to SERVE & **Alignment** of Data, Practice & Leadership



Alignment of strategy and practices

- Practices highlighted clearly articulate their alignment with the strategy for that area.
- Some practices align with multiple strategies; you decide best fit or to use practice(s) again in other section(s).
 - *Practices are data-based interventions; can also be programs, processes, services.*

Excelencia looks for: **Intentionality** to SERVE & **Alignment** of Data, Practice & Leadership



Alignment of practices and evidence of effectiveness

- Disaggregated data shared as evidence of effectiveness to demonstrate **impact** of practices in that particular area of the Seal framework; beyond just participation.
 - *Example: Practices in **enrollment section** have evidence of effectiveness that demonstrate **impact** on Latino student **enrollment**, while impacting all student enrollment.*

Telling Your Story of Institution's Journey to More Intentionally **SERVE** Latino Students

- Narrative should be **clear** and **succinct** (word limits).
 - Reviewer should not have to assume nor infer.
- Should tell one story that is **authentic** to your institution, students, and community.
- **Continual voice and tone** throughout all sections.
- **Cohesive** and **aligned** throughout all sections.
- **All** questions are answered.
- Recommend **a final reader** before submitting.

No additional documents, attachments or links are allowed.



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My Seal Account

Log in or Create an Account

- This site is for [Excelencia in Action \(E-Action\)](#) affiliates to submit a Seal of *Excelencia* certification or recertification application.
- Only one application should be submitted per institution, at the direction of the institution's president, and in coordination with the E-Action Lead Affiliate.
- An account is needed for an institution to apply for Seal of *Excelencia* certification.

Visit our [Seal Certification Application webpage](#) for additional information on the application, including FAQs, and our [capacity building page](#) for support available to institutions preparing their application.

Log in

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Create a New Account

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Email:

Seal@EdExcelencia.org

@EdExcelencia

#LatinoStudentSuccess

www.EdExcelencia.org



2026 Seal of *Excelencia*

What is the SSITA?

Seal Serving Institutional Transformation Assessment (SSITA) is a **streamlined version of the Seal of *Excelencia* institutional assessment tool**. A self-assessment tool that provides a starting point for institutions to examine with a student-centered lens who they are serving, not serving, and aim to serve with data, practice, and leadership.

To **help prepare institutions** for their journey to more intentionally serve Latino, and all, students and **build campus support** among faculty, staff, and administrative leaders.

2026 Seal of *Excelencia*

**SSITA facilitates
institutional
opportunities to:**

- **Identify preliminary data, evidence-based practices, and leadership efforts** that can inform a more student-centered approach to student success
- **Conduct a self-analysis to identify institutional successes, challenges and gaps** to intentionally SERVE Latino students while intentionally serving all students
- **Initiate a preliminary plan of action** for further development of institutional resources, commitment, and strategies as part of a community of common cause for Latino, and all, student success.

Similarities & Differences

SSITA (aka “Seal Lite”)

Self-assessment **tool** – **No Certification**

6 Sections

3 Areas of Seal framework – enrollment, retention, completion

Institutional Data – **2 years** in 3 areas of Seal

Practices with evidence of effectiveness – at least **1 in 3 areas of Seal framework** (3-6 total)

Leadership section – **3 questions**

Seal Certification Application

Self-assessment **tool** - **Certification**

11 Sections

6 Areas of Seal framework – enrollment, retention, transfer, financial support, representation, completion

Institutional Data – **5 years** in 6 areas of Seal

Practices with evidence of effectiveness – **3 for each 6 areas of Seal framework** (18 total)

Leadership section – **15 questions**

2026 Capacity Building Opportunities

SSITA

Spring Cohort: April 22 and May 27; 2:00-4:00pm ET - **Deadline: April 1**

Fall Cohort: Oct. 14 and Nov. 18; 2:00-4:00pm ET - **Deadline: Sept. 2**

Data Institute

July 14, 21, 28; 1:00-5:00pm ET - **Deadline: June 10**

Evidence-Based Practices Institute

June 9, 16, 23; 1:00-5:00pm ET - **Deadline: May 6**

Alignment Institute

September 15, 22, 29; 1:00-5:00pm ET - **Deadline: September 9**

Post Completion Institute

August 4, 11, 18; 1:00-5:00pm ET - **Deadline: July 1**

What Works Workshops

April and September



2025 Seal of *Excelencia* Certified Institutions



Jami Hall
Dalton State
University



Jose Melendrez
University of Nevada,
Las Vegas



Magdalena Barrera
San José
State University