Workshop on Tracking and Evaluation of RD&D Programs at DOE

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The Foundations of the Evidence Act

- The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 ("Evidence Act")
  - Enacted into law on January 14, 2019 as P.L. 115-435
  - Bipartisan law, addressing 11 of 22 recommendations in the 2017 U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking report

- Title 1—Federal Evidence-Building Activities required:
  - Leadership across the agency for key roles, including an Evaluation Officer and a Statistical Official
  - Strategic evidence planning in the form of a multi-year Agency-wide Learning Agenda and Annual Evaluation Plans
  - Capacity Assessment of the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of the statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis of the agency
  - Evaluation Policy (aligned with OMB M-20-12)

The Administration is Committed to Evidence Building and Use

- January 2021 [Presidential Memorandum](#) on Restoring Trust in Government through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking

- OMB Guidance:
  - A-11, Section 59.1; 200.22; Part 6, [Section 290](#)
  - [M-21-27](#), Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans
  - [M-20-12](#), Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices
  - [M-19-23](#), Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Learning Agendas, Personnel, and Planning Guidance
  - [M-22-12](#), Advancing Effective Stewardship of Taxpayer Resources and Outcomes in the Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act:

  "*Programs should be designed to collect and use data, or use existing data, that is needed for measuring progress and building evidence on program effectiveness, including implementation activities, performance reporting and program evaluation, as appropriate*"

Why is Evaluation So Critical?

- With substantial investments in new programs, and expansion of existing programs, we must understand the extent to which efforts have their intended impacts and strive for continuous improvement.

- To learn what works and target resources in the smartest way possible
  - What strategies work, for whom, and under what conditions?
  - Which strategies are cost-effective in achieving goals in a given circumstance?
  - Is the strategy being implemented as intended?
  - Does the strategy truly fill a gap or would the intended outcomes be reached otherwise?

- To learn from and inform both how we manage and implement (operational) and what gets done (mission)

- It allows us to not just report on what happened, but how it matters

Agencies Are Making Progress By:

- Establishing Evaluation Officers in accordance with guidance
  - i.e., not wearing multiple hats, selected based on evaluation expertise and experience, provided with adequate support to lead evidence planning and implementation efforts
- Investing in qualified FTEs to support EOs and build capacity in components
- Executing on their Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans to meet critical evidence needs
- Allocating resources to fund priority evaluations
- Strengthening networks and building capacity through Communities of Practice and professional development activities
- Including standard data reporting and evaluation requirements in funding announcements
- Integrating evidence and evaluation planning in program development processes by requiring logic models and theories of change

Governmentwide Support for Evaluation

- Professional Development: Workshop series, trainings and toolkits geared to non-evaluators in leadership or decision-making positions

- Hiring: Program Evaluation Job Series and Career Path (forthcoming), recent SMEQA hiring action at GSA

- Procurement: Working with GSA to implement a solution that will help agencies reach firms with demonstrated program evaluation capability

- Research Partnerships: Research portal in development

- Technical Assistance: ICEP consultations and office hours

- PRA: Working group with OIRA and efforts to streamline submission and review

- Community building: EOC meetings that include small agencies and components, ICEP events with evaluation community

Resources

- Evaluation.gov: hosts agency Learning Agendas, Annual Evaluation Plans, and Capacity Assessments

- Learning Agenda Question Dashboard

- Analytical Perspectives Chapter on Evidence, President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2024

- White House Evidence and Evaluation website