Evaluation Information and Resources for State RESEA Programs

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Presentation Objectives

- Understand what goes into determining whether an RESEA intervention is considered to be demonstrated effective
- Understand implications for evaluations that states might conduct that aim to produce evidence of RESEA interventions’ effectiveness
- Share evaluation tips and resources
- Explain the Abt team’s role in helping DOL and states implement evidence requirements
About the RESEA Evaluation

- Contract from DOL/CEO to Abt Associates-led team (with the Urban Institute, Capital Research Corporation, and NASWA)
  - Working in close collaboration with OUI and OPDR

- To provide support to DOL and states on implementing statute. Includes:
  - Developing options for evidence standards and building the evidence base
  - Describing states’ current RESEA programs
  - Providing evaluation technical assistance to states

- Period of performance: Sept 2018-Sept 2021
What Should States Expect from the RESEA Evaluation?

- Implementation study will include:
  - Clarifying calls with select states;
  - Site visits to 10 states; and
  - Phone interviews with RESEA leadership from 25 states;
  - Surveys of all 51 RESEA programs.

- Evaluation webinars, tools, briefs and other resources

- Evaluation Technical Assistance (EvalTA) to:
  - Build states’ evaluation capacity
  - Help understand the evidence base
  - Support states’ consideration and implementation of new evaluations
The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA) specifies that states use RESEA funds for interventions that:

“...reduce the number of weeks for which program participants receive unemployment compensation by improving employment outcomes for program participants.”

Intervention ratings indicate “demonstrated capacity to improve… outcomes for participants.” (BBA)
Causal Evidence Ratings for RESEA Interventions

- Intervention ratings consider findings from across all studies of the intervention

- Ratings of an intervention are based on how many
  1. Credible impact evaluations
  2. …find “statistically significant” favorable effects
  3. …on outcomes specified in the BBA
     - Employment
     - UI Duration
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1. Credible Impact Evaluations

- **Impact** is different from **outcomes**
  - **Outcomes** = what happened
  - **Impact** = What difference did my RESEA intervention make on those outcomes (vs. what would have been without the intervention)

- **Impact study** = A study that estimates the difference that an intervention makes

- **Credibility** = Confidence that the impact study’s findings reflect the effect of the intervention, not something else
1. Who Determines Credibility? It’s CLEAR!

- CLEAR (Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research)
  - DOL/CEO-run research and evaluation clearinghouse
  - Makes research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public ([http://clear.dol.gov](http://clear.dol.gov))

- CLEAR reviews and summarizes labor-related research and evaluation reports
  - Rates credibility of impact studies
  - Links to original publications
1. Study Quality Rating Levels

**High**
- Confident the effects are **solely attributable** to intervention
- Analysis meets methodological standards & results are **credible**

**Moderate**
- Somewhat confident that effects are attributable to intervention, though other factors may contribute
- Factors not accounted for might have contributed to effects

**Low**
- Cannot be confident that effects are attributable to intervention
- Interpret study findings with **caution**
1. Rating Studies vs. Rating Interventions

- The two ratings do very different things
  - **Study rating**: “How credible is the evidence from a single study?”
    - Icons TBD
  - **Intervention rating**: “Taken together, what does the evidence from all credible studies indicate about an intervention’s effectiveness?”
    - Icons TBD

- A study’s rating *will not change* over time
- An intervention’s rating *can change* as new evidence becomes available
1. Credible impact evaluations that
2. …find *statistically significant* favorable effects
3. …on outcomes specified in the BBA
2. What is Statistical Significance?

- Like a poll’s margin of error, impact study findings have some uncertainty.
- If an impact finding is “statistically significant,” it means that the margin of error (aka “confidence interval”) is small enough that we can be confident that an impact actually occurred.
- Depends on how much data you have.
2. How Large of a Sample Does an Impact Evaluation Need?

- It depends on:
  - Your research question
    - What intervention are you evaluating (whole program or component)?
    - What outcomes are looking at?
  - Your impact evaluation design

- Required sample sizes can be larger than you might expect

- Before starting a study, make sure you understand how large of a sample you need to answer your research questions
1. Credible impact evaluations that

2. …find statistically significant favorable effects

3. …on outcomes specified in the BBA
3. RESEA Outcomes

- To serve as evidence of effectiveness, evaluations of RESEA interventions must show impacts on UI duration and employment \((BBA)\)
  - For employment, focus is particularly on short-term outcome

- Also consider proximal outcomes
  - Attendance at meetings
  - Use of more intensive reemployment services
  - Other?
Random assignment studies require smaller sample sizes than do other impact study designs.
Critical Success Factors for Conducting Evaluations

- Use a rigorous design with comparison groups, like random assignment
  - Enables your evaluation to potentially receive a High or Moderate study quality rating from CLEAR

- Generate the sample size needed to answer your research question(s)

- Have an experienced independent evaluator
  - Can help you with the two items above
  - Can also help conduct high quality evaluations to answer research questions you might have that are not about impact
Building the RESEA evidence base is a team effort

Sources of support:
- Up to 10% of RESEA grant to conduct evaluations
- Integration and alignment with the broader workforce system
- RESEA evaluation technical assistance
  - Webinar series
  - Toolkit, tip sheets, briefs, and more
  - Customized help to states

Plan Evaluation of Program

Refine Program or Evaluation

Conduct Evaluation

Reflect on & Communicate Evaluation Findings
Already posted:

- **Evaluating RESEA: How Does It Help My State and Where Do We Start?**

- **Which Evaluation Designs Are Right for Me?**
  - [https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2019/05/07/13/07/What-Evaluation-Designs-Are-Right-For-My-State](https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2019/05/07/13/07/What-Evaluation-Designs-Are-Right-For-My-State)

- **What Evaluation Details Do I Need to Plan For and How Long Will It Take?**
  - [https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2019/05/30/14/24/Procuring-and-Selecting-an-Independent-Evaluator](https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2019/05/30/14/24/Procuring-and-Selecting-an-Independent-Evaluator)

- **Procuring and Selecting an Evaluator**

- **Assessing Data for Your RESEA Evaluation**

- **De-Mystifying Random Assignment Designs for RESEA**

Coming soon:

- **Using CLEAR – A Demonstration**

- **Evaluations Using Existing Administrative Data: Quasi-Experimental Designs**

- **Implementation Studies**

- **Office Hours Q&A Sessions**
Resources

- **CLEAR** ([https://clear.dol.gov](https://clear.dol.gov)):
  - Causal Evidence Guidelines, Ver. 2.1
    
    *Guidelines for rating the strength of causal evidence presented in causal impact studies.*
    

- **DOL/CEO Guidelines for Randomized Control Trial (RCT) Designs** (Applicable to Impact Estimates for Experimental Studies)

    *This checklist lists the topics that should be addressed in an evaluation plan using a Random Assignment design.*
    
    [https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/resources](https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/resources)

- **OMB Guidance for Providing and Using Administrative Data**

  - *This memo provides advice and tips for sharing and using administrative data based on OMB guidelines*
    
    [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/memoranda/2014/m-14-06.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/memoranda/2014/m-14-06.pdf)

- **Federal State Unemployment Compensation (UC); Confidentiality and Disclosure of State UI Information**

  - *Confidentiality of UC data is governed by 20 CFR Part 603 and any disclosure or redisclosure of confidential UC data must comply with 603 requirements.*
    
    [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=e1a7783dda0e23e8d234f1f64613&h=L&mc=true&r=PART&n=pt20.3.603](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=e1a7783dda0e23e8d234f1f64613&h=L&mc=true&r=PART&n=pt20.3.603)
Thank You!