

Strengthening the Research, Policy, and Practice Relationship: A Federal Perspective

Demetra Smith Nightingale
Chief Evaluation Officer
U.S. Department of Labor
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Overview

- Role of Chief Evaluation Office at DOL
- Setting the agenda for disability research and evaluation
- Evaluation policy principles
- Knowing “What Works”

Chief Evaluation Office Role

- CEO's Role: "...conduct rigorous, relevant evaluations and use evidence from evaluations to inform policy and practice" to meet the mission of the Department of Labor

Federal Evidence-Driven Policy

Agenda

- Evidence means both Program Perform and Program Evaluation
- Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act 2010
 - Department Strategic Priorities
 - Agency and program performance measures and reviews
- Office of Management and Budget “Guidance” 2011-2015 emphasizes evaluation and evidence:
 - Evidence-based budgeting
 - Tiered evidence grant funding
 - Capacity building
- Presidential Evidence-based Initiatives

Some High Priority Evidence-based Initiatives-Aligning Research & Policy

- Performance Partnership Pilots (for improving outcomes of disconnected youth)
- Place-based initiatives (e.g., Promise Zones)
- My Brother's Keeper
- White House Job-Driven Training Initiative
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

How is the Evaluation Agenda Set at DOL?

- Learning Agendas by each agency
- Public and stakeholder input
 - Critical role of ODEP
 - Requests for Information (RFI)
 - Forums and stakeholder meetings
- Collaborative annual plan for the Department
 - Align with performance and strategic priorities
 - Comply with Congressional mandates for evaluation
 - Pilots and demonstrations of alternative or new strategies
 - Prioritize within budget constraints

What Kinds of Questions Evaluations Can Address?

- What effect does a program or strategy have overall and for particular populations?
- What will be the effect of a proposed change?
- What works and what doesn't—and for whom?
- Which offices are doing “better”?
- Which approach works “best”?
- How much does a program cost? What is the Return-on-Investment?
- Is the program implemented well, consistently?
- Does a program meet its objectives?
- Can a program's performance be improved?

Examples: Current Disability Evaluations

- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)
- Accessibility of One Stop Centers for Persons with Disabilities
- Community College Support Demonstration for Students with Disabilities

Principles in DOL's Evaluation Policy

- Establish, improve, and maintain a culture of evaluation at DOL
- Increase the quality of evaluations sponsored by DOL
- Maintain credibility through independent and ethical evaluations
- Improve data access and quality for evaluations and program management
- Disseminate DOL evaluation and research reports and products
- Ensure evaluations and studies are useful and relevant (to DOL, agencies, programs, and the Administration)—use the findings

Knowing “What Works”

- Synthesis of evaluation and research for practice and programs
 - White House Skills Initiative
 - “Ready to Work: Job Drive Training and American Opportunity”
 - What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence

Access both from CEO website:
<http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/jdt/>
 - Workforce Strategies Solutions (DOL-ETA)
Access at <http://strategies.workforce3one.org/>
- Evidence-based Clearinghouses
 - DOL’s Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR)
 - Topic areas of interest: disability employment, community colleges, opportunity youth, and more coming soon....

Access at <http://www.clear.dol.gov>

Contact

Demetra Nightingale
U.S. Department of Labor
Chief Evaluation Officer
Nightingale.Demetr@dol.gov