

Evidence-Building Plans and Activities: Evidence Act Title I

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Phased Implementation Approach

**Phase 1:
Learning Agendas,
Personnel, & Planning**

- Learning Agendas
- Chief Data Officers
- Evaluation Officers
- Statistical Officials
- Agency Data Governance Boards
- Chief Data Officer Council
- Evaluation Officer Council
- Interagency Council on Statistical Policy
- Agency Evaluation Plans
- Capacity Assessments
- Open Data Plans

**Phase 2:
Open Data Access
& Management**

- Make Data Open by Default
- Comprehensive Data Inventory
- Federal Data Catalogue
- Repository of Tools and Best Practices

**Phase 3:
Data Access for
Statistical Purposes**

- Make Agency Data Assets Available to Statistical Units
- Expand Users' Secure Access to Data Assets through Statistical Units
- Allow Recognition of New Statistical Units
- Standardize Application Process for Accessing Data Assets
- Codify Statistical Unit Responsibilities

**Phase 4: Program
Evaluation**

- Program Evaluation Standards and Best Practices
- Program Evaluation Skills and Competencies (with OPM)

**Ongoing
Implementation &
Reporting**

- Budget Cycles
- Information Resource Management Plans
- Performance Plans
- Strategic Plans
- Federal Data Strategy Annual Action Plans
- Open Data Biennial Report
- Statistical Programs Annual Report
- Regulatory Planning
- Information Collection Review



Title I: Federal Evidence-Building Activities

- Evaluation Officers, Statistical Officials, and Councils
- Learning Agenda (Evidence-Building Plan)
- Annual Evaluation Plan
- Capacity Assessment
- Program Evaluation Standards and Competencies
- Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence-Building

Laying the Foundation for Evidence-Building

- Evidence-based policymaking requires systematic planning
- Start by identifying priority questions to address
 - Learning Agenda
- Strategize approaches to obtaining answers
 - Leadership and collaboration of senior officials
 - Data governance
 - Annual Evaluation Plan
- Assess capacity and needs
 - Capacity Assessment
- Elevate program evaluation to build evidence
 - Evaluation standards, competencies, and policies

Leadership and Collaboration

- Evidence Act establishes three new senior-level positions:
 - Evaluation Officer (EO) with authority and responsibility for leadership on evaluation and learning agenda activities (CFO Act agencies only)
 - Chief Data Officer (CDO) with authority and responsibility for data governance and lifecycle information management
 - Statistical Official (SO) with authority and responsibility to advise on statistical policy, techniques, and procedures (CFO Act agencies)
- Emphasis on collaboration and coordination across positions
- Corresponding Councils for each group of officials

Learning Agenda

- Systematic plan for identifying and addressing priority questions relevant to the programs, policies, and regulations of the agency
- Should be iterative, flexible, transparent, and tailored to meet the agency's needs
- Promotes deliberate and strategic planning of evidence-building activities
 - Systematic way to identify the data agencies intend to collect, use, or acquire
 - Requires agencies to engage a range of stakeholders
 - Supports greater transparency and accountability for agencies' evidence-building efforts

Evidence Planning

- Annual Evaluation Plan
 - Includes all “significant” evaluations that the agency intends to undertake in a given fiscal year
 - Consistent with the Learning Agenda
 - Actionable plan that must be updated annually
- Capacity Assessment
 - Assessment of the statistics, evaluation, research and analysis capabilities of an agency
 - Opportunity for agencies to assess the extent to which current capacity meets their evidence needs
 - Mechanism to assess evidence capacity across Federal Government

Program Evaluation Standards and Practices

- Evidence Act established statutory system for evaluation, complementary to statistics and performance
- OMB M-20-12, Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices
- Provides a common set of standards for high-quality evaluation across government
- Provides a framework of practices for agencies to build and improve evaluation infrastructure

Program Evaluation Standards

- Relevance and Utility
- Rigor
- Independence and Objectivity
- Transparency
- Ethics

Program Evaluation Practices

1. Build and Maintain Evaluation Capacity
2. Use Expert Consultation Effectively
3. Establish, Implement, and Widely Disseminate an Agency Evaluation Policy
4. Pre-Specify Evaluation Design and Methods
5. Engage Key Stakeholders Meaningfully
6. Plan Dissemination Strategically
7. Take Steps to Ensure Ethical Treatment of Participants
8. Foster and Steward Data Management for Evaluation
9. Make Evaluation Data Available for Secondary Use
10. Establish and Uphold Policies and Procedures to Protect Independence and Objectivity

Intended Use of Standards and Practices

- Strengthen or build evaluation capacity
- Implement Evidence Act requirements, including agency evaluation policy
- Carry out all evaluation functions and activities, including at the enterprise level and within sub-agencies, operational divisions, and bureaus
- Hire and retain qualified evaluation staff

Title I Implementation

- OMB M-19-23 issued in July 2019
- OMB M-20-12 issued in March 2020
- Designated Officials named
- Councils meet regularly
- Interim Learning Agendas, first annual Evaluation Plans, and Interim Capacity Assessments submitted
- Development of full Learning Agendas and Capacity Assessments in progress (part of next Strategic Plans)
- Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence-Building formed
- Program Evaluation Skills and Competencies with OPM (in progress)

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