Coordinating to Use Data in New Ways: The Opportunity of the Evidence Act

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What is the Evidence Act?

- Introduced by Speaker Paul Ryan and Senator Patty Murray after the release of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking’s report in September 2017
- Addresses 11 of the Commission’s 22 recommendations
- Signed by the President and enacted into law on January 14, 2019 as P.L. 115-435
- Includes three Titles:
  - Title 1—Federal Evidence-Building Activities
  - Title 2—Open Government Data Act
  - Title 3—Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency (CIPSEA) Act
What is the Evidence Act?

**Background: 3 Big Ideas**

1. Evidence-Based Policymaking Requires Systematic Planning

2. Effective Federal Data Asset Use Requires High-Quality Data Governance

3. Privacy-Protected Data Sharing Requires Coordinated Support
Why Does the Evidence Act Matter?

• Builds on longstanding principles underlying Federal policies and data infrastructure
• Creates a new paradigm for agencies to rethink how they build and use data and evidence
• Focuses on leadership with creation of three new senior officials responsible for meeting Act’s requirements
• Emphasizes collaboration and coordination across functions within agencies
• Calls on agencies to strategically and methodically build evidence vs. ad hoc efforts
• Elevates program evaluation as a key agency function
Focus on Coordination and Collaboration

• Requires designation of three new senior-level positions to coordinate these activities (EO, SO, and CDO)

• Evidence Act and OMB implementation guidance stress collaboration and coordination among the designated officials:
  • Data Governance Bodies are an important tool to support strong coordination;
  • All three officials on Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building; and
  • Specific support and coordination on key deliverables

• Effective implementation requires engagement across the agency, including senior leadership, policy officials, program administrators, strategic planning, budget staff, etc.

• Coordination across agencies through Councils for each designated official and cross-Council collaboration
Leveraging the Moment

• Unequivocal call to action to better use existing data to build evidence and use it to make decisions
• Opportunity to more effectively coordinate evaluation, statistics, and policy
• Requires agencies to rethink how we do this work:
  • Leverage designated officials to better coordinate
  • Work across siloes
  • Be strategic
• Requires commitment and focused effort!
Tools to Rethink How We Use Data

• What are the tools agencies can use to leverage this momentum?

• Evidence Act offers many:
  • Deliverables like multi-year learning agenda and capacity assessment
  • Comprehensive data inventories
  • Federal data catalog
  • Expanding access to data for evidence –
    • Presumption of accessibility
    • Expanding secure access to CIPSEA data assets
    • Single application to data assets
Roadmap for the Session

• HUD’s Experience Supporting and Enhancing its Data Infrastructure and Use
  • Calvin Johnson – Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring (PD&R/HUD)

• Linking State Medicaid Data and Child Welfare Data for Outcomes Research
  • Valeria Butler – Senior Social Science Research Analyst (OPRE/ACF/DHHS)
  • Emily Madden – Program Analyst (ASPE/DHHS)

• The Department of Labor’s Data Exchange and Analysis Platform
  • Christina Yancey – Chief Evaluation Officer (CEO/DOL)
  • Scott Gibbons – Chief Data Officer (CEO/DOL)
  • David Judkins – Principal Associate (Abt Associates)