

Executive Summary

Event Title: Evaluation Culture, Awareness, and Strategic Planning - Peer Learning Cohort: Session 4

Date: February 23, 2023

Moderator(s): Gloria Salas-Kos, Cynthia Forland

Speaker(s): Elise Lowe-Vaughn, Robin Bauknecht, Brian Richard, Ph.D., Yolanda Clark, Ph.D., Greg

McBoat, Barbara Larsen, Nick Hart, Ph.D.

Highlights from the Evaluation Design and Implementation Assessment were shared to demonstrate variability in key evaluation domains.

Evaluation Culture and Awareness Baseline: Through polling responses, states noted progress made in understanding the benefits of evaluation to improve services and using evidence-based results to inform decisions. Most state teams plan to consider effective evaluation strategies as they implement new or revamped programs and services.

State Culture of Evidence: Representatives from Colorado shared their experiences with establishing an evaluation team comprised of state and local workforce staff and university research partners. Building upon an initial quasi-experimental evaluation, the state developed an ongoing mixed methods design that uses quantitative data analysis, qualitative local research, and customer surveys to provide training and improve the capacity of staff to produce equitable access to high-wage employment and maximize program performance for all customers; and to incorporate aspects of research and evaluation into the state's plan.

Evaluation-Building across the Nation: A national expert described the evidence capacity-building momentum driven by leadership support and motivation, a culture for evaluative thinking, and data and technical capacity. At the federal level, there is an expectation to engage in capacity-building that focuses on evidence-building—developing formal learning agendas to fill gaps in evaluation—and to recognize the value of using evidence at the state and local levels. Challenges to consider include legal frameworks, expertise and resources, access to and quality of data, coordination across silos, and leadership capacity and commitment. Use of evidence occurs everywhere; it has different types of uses and takes time to document, and it can also be addressed through research-practice partnerships.

Participants split into breakout groups to discuss key steps to develop a culture of evidence, such as creating awareness about evaluation, what it is and is not, and leveraging leadership commitment.

■ Federal ■ State ■ Other

*timestamps are not hyperlinked

Run of Show*

Welcome and Introductions	0:26
Recap and Open Discussion	2:34
- Do agency staff and partners understand the benefits of evaluation to improve services and use evidence-based results to inform decisions? - Do agency staff and partners regularly consider effective evaluation strategies?	5:41
A State Perspective: Commitment to a Culture of Evidence	9:18
The Paradigm Shift & Culture of Success	19:29
Evaluation Team, 3-Pronged Approach, Challenges	22:16
A National Perspective: Evidence-Building and Evaluation in Government	34:39
Current Demand & What Is Evidence Capacity?	36:06
Connecting Supply-Demand / Production-Use	41:43
How This All Connects, Challenges, and Benefits	46:51
Questions	50:20
Peer Discussion Breakouts	54:52
- What steps have you taken to date to develop a culture of evidence? - What will your next (2-3) steps be in furthering your research and evaluation of workforce development programs? - What are the greatest obstacles in taking those next steps?	
Looking Ahead: Upcoming activities, coaching support, and resources	59:49