

CRITERIA	 ACF	 ACL	 CNCS	 MCC	 SAMHSA <sup>1</sup>	 USAID	 USED	 USHUD	 USDOL
<b>TOTAL SCORE (Out of a possible 100)*</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>60<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>86</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>1. Leadership:</b> Did the agency have a senior staff member(s) with the authority, staff, and budget to evaluate its major programs and inform policy decisions affecting them in FY18?	8	7	8	8	7	8	8	8	10
<b>2. Evaluation and Research:</b> Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?	9	7	8	9	7	8	9	8	10
<b>3. Resources:</b> Did the agency invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluations in FY18?*	7	9	8	10	0 <sup>2</sup>	10	6	6	7
<b>4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:</b> Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	9
<b>5. Data:</b> Did the agency collect, analyze, share, and use high-quality administrative and survey data – consistent with strong privacy protections – to improve (or help other entities improve) federal, state, and local programs in FY18?	9	8	9	9	8	9	9	9	9
<b>6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works Designations:</b> Did the agency use a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and did it disseminate and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through a user-friendly tool in FY18?	9	7	8	9	6	9	10	7	9
<b>7. Innovation:</b> Did the agency have staff, policies, and processes in place that encouraged innovation to improve the impact of its programs in FY18?	8	8	7	9	8	10	8	8	8
<b>8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive Grant Programs:</b> Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18?	7	5	8	9 <sup>3</sup>	7	8 <sup>4</sup>	10	8	8
<b>9. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Non-Competitive Grant Programs:</b> Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest non-competitive grant programs in FY18?*	7	5	7	N/A <sup>3</sup>	8	N/A <sup>4</sup>	8	7	7
<b>10. Repurpose for Results:</b> In FY18, did the agency shift funds away from any practice, policy, or program which consistently failed to achieve desired outcomes?*	8	6	5	8	1	8	7	7	6

\* These scores are based on information provided by the nine federal departments and agencies included in this Standard of Excellence. You can find this background information, as well as a description of how Results for America developed these scores at <http://2018.results4america.org>.

<sup>1</sup> Meeting this criteria requires both federal agency and congressional action.

<sup>2</sup> Results for America gave SAMHSA several opportunities to review and edit the information in this document, but it declined to do so. RFA's 2018 Invest in What Works Federal Standard of Excellence, therefore, includes information from the 2017 Standard, which SAMHSA helped develop, as well as new information posted on the SAMHSA website between October 2017 and September 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Results for America was unable to determine the amount of resources SAMHSA invested in evaluations in FY18 for criterion #3. Therefore, to tally a final score, Results for America scored criterion #3 a 0 and reduced the denominator from 100 to 90 points.

<sup>4</sup> MCC only administered competitive grant programs (and no non-competitive grant programs) in FY18. Therefore, to tally a final score, Results for America doubled the score for criterion #8 (8x2=16) and awarded 0 points for criterion #9.

<sup>5</sup> USAID only administered competitive grant programs (and no non-competitive grant programs) in FY18. Therefore, to tally a final score, Results for America doubled the score for criterion #8 (8x2=16) and awarded 0 points for criterion #9.

CRITERIA

**1. Leadership:** Did the agency have a senior staff member(s) with the authority, staff, and budget to evaluate its major programs and inform policy decisions affecting them in FY18?

ACF:

- Administration for Children Families' (ACF) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning, Research, and Evaluation, a Senior Executive Service career official, oversees ACF's [Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation](#) (OPRE) and supports evaluation and other learning activities across the agency. ACF's Deputy Assistant Secretary reports directly to the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families. ACF's [evaluation policy](#), which is published in the Federal Register, gives the OPRE Deputy Assistant Secretary "authority to approve the design of evaluation projects and analysis plans; and... authority to approve, release and disseminate evaluation reports."
- ACF's budget for research and evaluation in FY18 is approximately \$165 million. OPRE's staffing includes 61 federal positions, experts in research and evaluation methods and data analysis as well as ACF programs and policies and the populations they serve.
- In the past year, ACF released evaluation impact reports on major programs including [Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood programs](#), [Personal Responsibility Education Programs](#), and [Health Profession Opportunity Grants](#), as well as impact reports on strategies that can be used by ACF programs including [subsidized employment](#) and [career pathways](#). OPRE released many other types of research reports related to ACF programs. Examples include research reports related to [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families](#), [Head Start](#), [Child Care](#), the [Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program](#), [Child Welfare](#), the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#), the [Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects](#), and [Refugee Cash Assistance](#). Research and evaluation efforts are ongoing in other ACF program areas. The [OPRE Research Library](#) contains all publications, and the [OPRE website](#) also includes a [Projects by Topic](#) page.
- OPRE engages in ongoing collaboration with program office staff and leadership to interpret research and evaluation findings and to identify their implications for programmatic and policy decisions. Examples of how research and evaluation findings have influenced ACF regulations and funding opportunity announcements include:
  - When ACF's Office of Head Start significantly revised its Program Performance Standards (PPS), the regulations that define the standards and minimum requirements for Head Start services, the revisions drew from decades of research and the recommendations in the Final Report of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation. For example, the 2016 PPS includes new and strengthened requirements for Head Start programs to use evidence-based curriculum with an organized developmental scope and sequence; to use evidenced-based parenting curricula; to support staff to effectively implement curricula and monitor curriculum implementation and fidelity; and to implement a research-based, coordinated coaching strategy for education staff. These requirements drew on a wide array of research efforts that developed, tested, and established an evidence base on effective curricular and professional development/coaching strategies for use in Head Start programs.
  - ACF's Office of Child Care drew on research and evaluation findings related to eligibility re-determination, continuity of subsidy use, use of quality dollars to improve quality of programs, and more to inform regulations related to Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization.
  - ACF's Office of Family Assistance (OFA) used lessons learned and emerging findings from research and evaluation on the first round of Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) to inform the funding opportunity announcement for the second round of grants. Specifically, research findings informed the program components highlighted as important to the HPOG approach in the second round of funding. For example, based on the finding that many participants engaged in short-term training for low-wage, entry-level jobs, OFA more carefully defined the career pathways model, described specific strategies for helping participants progress along a career pathway, and identified and defined key HPOG education and training components. Based on an analysis which indicated limited collaborations with healthcare employers, OFA required second round applicants to demonstrate use of labor market information and consultation with local employers and to describe their plans for employer engagement.

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- ACL:
- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is led by the [Administrator](#) who oversees five major units: the [Administration on Aging](#) (AoA), [Administration on Disabilities](#) (AoD), [Center for Integrated Programs](#) (CIP), [Center for Policy and Evaluation](#) (CPE), and the [National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](#) (NIDILRR).
  - CPE houses the [Office for Performance and Evaluation](#) (OPE). OPE is the primary office that oversees evaluation efforts within ACL. OPE is led by a Director who is a GS-15, senior career civil servant, who reports directly to the Director of CPE who reports directly to ACL's Administrator. In addition to the Director, there are five other full time staff overseeing 17 evaluation-related contracts. OPE's Federal Fiscal 2018 budget for evaluation and performance management was approximately \$10 million dollars. This budget represents dedicated funding authorized through legislation and is administered by the Director of OPE.
  - Evaluation and performance information is communicated to leadership to support policy decisions through weekly meetings between the Director of OPE and CPE, weekly meetings between the Director of CPE and the Principal Deputy Administrator and Acting Commissioner on Disabilities, and quarterly meetings between the Director of OPE and the Principal Deputy Administrator and Acting Commissioner on Disabilities.
  - Under an overarching [analytic support contract](#), ACL's program offices are able to transfer funds to OPE, which allows OPE staff to provide oversight and guidance regarding evaluation design and implementation, performance measurement development, and the interpretation of data for decision-making. This approach promotes coordination and allows close partnerships between programmatic experts and the evaluation experts in OPE to help programmatic staff develop needed evidence to support policy and funding decisions.
  - ACL's [evaluation policy](#) describes ACL's commitment to conducting rigorous, relevant evaluations and to using evidence from evaluations to inform policy decisions and practice across the agency. It indicates ACL's interest in conducting outcome-focused evaluations for all ACL programs, and in promoting rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics in the conduct of evaluations. This policy gives the director of OPE the authority to approve the design of evaluation projects and analysis plans; and the authority to approve, release and disseminate evaluation reports. ACL's evaluation policy "applies to all ACL-sponsored evaluations" and states that "OPE and program offices will work in partnership to inform potential applicants, program providers, administrators, policymakers and funders through disseminating evidence from ACL-sponsored and other good quality evaluations."
  - At the start of each budget cycle, the Director of ACL's Center for Policy and Evaluation sends ACL center Directors a one-page document titled "[Policy Review of ACL Funding Opportunity Announcements \(FOAs\)](#)". As part of this review process, OPE staff review Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA) to determine: "Does the FOA provide enough detailed information to help applicants think critically about the measures they should include in their applications to effectively measure their progress towards meeting the goals outlined in the FOA?" OPE staff then make specific recommendations to program staff to improve language in their FOAs around performance measurement and evaluation to help ensure that program staff have evidence to inform future funding and policy decisions.
  - While OPE directly oversees most of ACL's evaluations, ACL's, NIDILRR conducts its own evaluations ([NIDILRR External Evaluation](#) and [NIDILRR Performance and Evaluation](#)). Coordination between OPE staff and NIDILRR evaluation staff occurs through participation of NIDILRR evaluation staff in bi-weekly OPE staff meetings.

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CNCS:

- The Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Director of the [Office of Research & Evaluation](#) (R&E) oversees the development of social science research designed to measure the impact of CNCS programs and shape policy decisions; encourage a culture of performance and accountability in national and community service programs; provide information on volunteering, civic engagement, and volunteer management in nonprofit organizations; and assist in the development and assessment of new initiatives and demonstration projects. The R&E Director, who is overseeing R&E's \$4 million budget and a staff of nine in FY18, reports directly to the CNCS Chief of Staff and is a member of CNCS's [Leadership](#) and Policy Council. The R&E Director also meets regularly with CNCS Program Directors to identify areas where evidence can be generated and used for various decisions.
- The R&E Director meets annually with all CNCS program offices to identify priorities and negotiate which pools of funds are needed to support the year's priorities. The FY18 plan was developed through a series of formal and informal conversations. AmeriCorps State and National is prioritizing Evidence-Based Planning Grants and an evaluation of how grantees have scaled evidence-based interventions. AmeriCorps NCCC is prioritizing the development and implementation of a learning framework for more systematically assessing member leadership development and community impact. AmeriCorps VISTA is considering how to evaluate the impact of Team Leaders on the organizations sponsoring them compared to organizations without Team Leaders. Senior Corps will release final findings in late FY18/early FY19 from its longitudinal survey of volunteers including a comparison to similar older adults who volunteer. Senior Corps (Senior Companion Program) impacts on caregivers will also be released. The CNCS [research grants competition](#) is also supported by program offices as appropriate.
- CNCS published and began implementing its [Transformation and Sustainability Plan](#) in FY18. One of the six goals included in this plan is prioritizing evidence-based interventions. Specifically, "CNCS will further refine the intervention models it funds based on evidence and demonstrated success, while maintaining the flexibility to support statutory and Administration priorities. CNCS will also continue to support innovative interventions and approaches based upon preliminary evidence in order to build grantee capacity, foster innovation, and meet evolving community needs, and will evaluate these interventions to learn more about whether they are effective."

MCC:

- There are three key touchpoints in each Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) program's lifecycle where senior MCC leadership uses evidence to evaluate and inform policy decisions: Development, Decision, and Implementation stages.
  - In the Development stage, selection of projects and policy decisions are informed by the Department for Policy and Evaluation's (DPE) Economic Analysis (EA) division. EA is headed by the [Chief Economist](#) whose role is to oversee and strengthen the economic evidence base used for program development, including economic growth diagnostics, root cause analyses, beneficiary analyses, and cost-benefit analyses. EA has a staff of 19 and an estimated FY18 budget of \$707,000 in due diligence (DD) funds. EA's analytical work provides the evidence base to determine which projects will have a sufficient return on investment so as to be funded by MCC.
  - This analytical work underpins the program logic for MCC's investments and informs MCC's [Monitoring and Evaluation](#) (M&E) division (also a part of DPE) on the primary outputs and outcomes that should be measured to assess the effects of MCC's investments. M&E has a staff of 29 and an estimated FY18 budget of \$26.2 million in DD funds. (Departments throughout the agency have requested a total of [\\$62.6 million in DD funds for FY18](#).) The M&E Managing Director (MD) is a career civil service position with the authority to execute M&E's budget. The MD participates in technical reviews of proposed investments, as well as regular monitoring meetings that inform policy and investment decisions.

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- MCC (cont):
- At the Decision stage, the input of both EA and M&E is provided to the [Vice President for DPE \(VP-DPE\), to whom both divisions report](#). The VP-DPE and Chief Economist sit on MCC's Investment Management Committee, where they perform the role of ensuring a rigorous evidence base for each investment before the submission of programs to the MCC Board of Directors for final approval. Therefore, both the Vice President (who is equivalent to an Assistant Secretary rank and reports directly to the CEO of MCC) and Chief Economist (who is equivalent to a Deputy Assistant Secretary, and is a competitively selected technical expert hired as a career civil servant) are senior leaders at MCC who have the authority, staff, and budget to evaluate MCC programs and inform policy decisions.
  - Once in Implementation, M&E DD resources are used to procure evaluation services from external independent evaluators to directly measure high-level outcomes to assess the attributable impact of MCC's programs and activities. MCC sees its independent evaluation portfolio as an integral tool to remain accountable to stakeholders, demonstrate programmatic results, and promote internal and external learning. Through the evidence generated by monitoring and evaluation, the M&E MD, Chief Economist, and VP-DPE are able to continuously update estimates of expected impacts with actual impacts to inform future programmatic and policy decisions. In FY18, MCC began or continued comprehensive, independent evaluations for every Compact or Threshold project at MCC (a requirement found in Section 7.5.1 of MCC's [Policy for Monitoring and Evaluation](#)). To date, MCC has already published more final evaluations this year than in any prior year, increasing its stock of published evaluations by 23 percent this fiscal year. All evaluation designs, data, reports, and summaries are available on MCC's [Evaluation Catalog](#).
  - MCC is a member of the Federal Inter-Agency Council on Evaluation Policy (ICEP), which is coordinated by the OMB's evidence deputies. Given MCC M&E's strong experience and leadership in areas of rigorous and transparent evaluations, in FY18 MCC was asked to deliver several presentations at ICEP meetings (including one on MCC's experience and learning in the areas of evaluation microdata dissemination guidelines and practices, and another on transparency and evaluation publication policies), as well as to prepare one or more monthly or semi-monthly workshops for OMB's evaluation training series in Summer 2018. Examples of MCC expert trainings include: (1) Project Evaluability; (2) Management and dissemination of evaluation microdata; and (3) Integration and dissemination of evaluation findings.
  - To remain abreast of ongoing research and policy dialogues outside of MCC—in academia, multilateral development banks, donors, and nongovernmental organizations—MCC recently established an Economic Advisory Council (EAC). With the aim of bringing thought leaders and experts into MCC to highlight technical advances in the field, innovations, and learning in economic development, the EAC will hold meetings semi-annually to solicit feedback and advice that will be shared across the agency for internal discussion and use. The EAC will be composed of approximately 20 members drawn from diverse backgrounds, balanced across institutions, economic sub-disciplines, and by their region of applied expertise.

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SAMHSA:

- The director of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ) Division of Evaluation, Analysis and Quality (DEAQ) serves as the agency's evaluation lead with key evaluation staff housed in this division. In addition, the agency's chief medical officer (CMO), as described in the *21st Century Cures Act*, plays a key role in addressing evaluation approaches and the utilization of evidence-based programs and practices among grantees; at this time, a collaborative approach between CBHSQ and the Office of the CMO is being established to ensure broad agency evaluation oversight by senior staff. The Office of the CMO is housed within the agency's emerging Mental Health Policy Lab (currently the Office of Policy, Planning and Innovation) and will influence evaluation policy decisions across the agency in a more systematic manner as the new Policy Lab is stood up in January 2018. In January 2018, SAMHSA announced the creation of the [National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Lab](#), which is designed to "play a central role in shaping SAMHSA's efforts to bring more science to the evidence-based practices used in the prevention, treatment, and support services being provided by behavioral health practitioners and other clinicians."
- SAMHSA's [Office of Policy, Planning and Innovation](#) provides policy perspectives and guidance to raise awareness around SAMHSA's research and behavioral health agenda. OPPI also facilitates the adoption of data-driven practices among other federal agencies and partners such as the National Institutes for Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- At this time, evaluation authority, staff, and resources are decentralized and found throughout the agency. SAMHSA is composed of four Centers, the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ). CMHS, CSAT, and CSAP oversee grantee portfolios and evaluations of those portfolios. Evaluation decisions within SAMHSA are made within each Center specific to their program priorities and resources. Each of the three program Centers uses their program funds for conducting evaluations of varying types. CBHSQ, SAMHSA's research arm, provides varying levels of oversight and guidance to the Centers for evaluation activities. CBHSQ also provides technical assistance related to data collection and analysis to assist in the development of evaluation tools and clearance packages.
- SAMHSA evaluations are funded from program funds that are used for service grants, technical assistance, and for evaluation activities. Evaluations have also been funded from recycled funds from grants or other contract activities. Given the broad landscape of evaluation authority and funding, a variety of evaluation models have been implemented. These include recent evaluations funded and managed by the program Centers (e.g., First Episode Psychosis, FEP); evaluations funded by the Centers but directed outside of SAMHSA (e.g., Assisted Outpatient Treatment, AOT), and those that CBHSQ directly funds and executes (e.g., Primary and Behavioral Health Care Integration, PBHCI, and the Cures-funded Opioid State Targeted Response funding). Evaluations require different degrees of independence to ensure objectivity and the models above afford SAMHSA the latitude to enhance evaluation rigor and independence on a customized basis.
- In 2016, CBHSQ conducted a summer review of evaluation activities with the program Centers and presented its findings to the SAMHSA Executive Leadership Team (ELT). As a result, SAMHSA revised and finalized a new [Evaluation Policy and Procedure](#) (P&P) grounded in an earlier evaluation P&P and is currently developing a Learning Agenda to prioritize activities to address gaps in data collection, data analysis and the identification of evidence based practices in high profile areas (e.g. SMI, SED, Opioids, Marijuana, Suicide, Health Financing, among others.) The new Evaluation P&P requires Centers to identify research questions and appropriately match the type of evaluation to the maturity of the program. A new workgroup, the Cross-Center Evaluation Review Board (CCERB), composed of Center evaluation experts, will now review significant evaluations at critical milestones in the planning and implementation process, providing specific recommendations to the Center Director having the lead for the evaluation. SAMHSA's Cross Center Evaluation Review Board (CCERB) works with the four centers within SAMHSA: CSAP, CMHS, CSAT, and CBHSQ to advise, conduct, collaborate, and coordinate on all evaluation and data collection activities that occur within SAMHSA. SAMHSA's CMO will also play a key role in reviewing evaluation proposals and clearing final reports.

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### USAID:

- United State Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) in the [Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning](#) (PPL) helps the agency build a body of evidence from which to learn and adapt programs. USAID is a decentralized agency with evaluations commissioned by missions and offices based in countries around the world. LER provides guidance and builds staff capacity in monitoring, evaluating, and learning from its work. The Director of LER is a senior staff member with the authority, staff, and budget to ensure agency evaluation requirements are met, including that all projects are evaluated at some level, and that decision-making is informed by evaluation and evidence. The LER Director oversaw approximately 27 staff and an estimated \$8.9 million budget in 2018. At different times in the history of the office, the LER Director has been a senior political appointee, a senior Foreign Service officer, or a career civil servant. The position is a member of USAID's Senior Leadership Group, which is comprised of the agency's highest managerial and technical positions in Washington and overseas.
- The LER Director and staff inform policy decisions across the agency by ensuring evaluation requirements in legislation are reflected in USAID policy and practices, attending senior level decision-making meetings when evaluation is on the agenda, providing input into working groups, and reviewing statements, draft memos, and other policy products. For example, LER staff review Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs) prior to approval to ensure evidence is used to inform country development objectives. In another example, LER manages monitoring and evaluation policy at USAID, which is codified as part of [USAID's Program Cycle Operational Policy](#), otherwise known as Automated Directives Systems (ADS) 201. This was adjusted after the *Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act* of 2016 (FATAA) was passed to ensure the monitoring and evaluation requirements bring the Agency into compliance with FATAA. For example, FATAA requires that agencies establish annual monitoring and evaluation objectives and timetables to plan and manage the process of monitoring, evaluating, analyzing progress, and applying learning toward achieving results. ADS 201 requires missions to develop a Performance Management Plan (PMP) that includes both a monitoring and evaluation plan, which must be updated at least once a year. All Operating Units (OUs) must annually complete the Performance Plan and Report (PPR), which include annual monitoring indicators and planned evaluations.
- The majority of LER's work is related to providing training, tools, technical assistance and guidance to staff in how to monitor, evaluate, and learn from USAID programs. LER staff design and manage a few high-priority evaluations at a time, such as the [Evaluation of Sustained Outcomes in Basic Education](#), published in March 2018. LER also coordinates several cross-agency working groups organized to support learning champions and monitoring and evaluation specialists throughout the Agency.

### USED:

- United States Department of Education's (USED) [Institute of Education Sciences](#) (IES), with a budget of \$613.5 million in FY18, has primary responsibility for education research, evaluation, and statistics. The IES Director is appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and advises the U.S. Education Secretary on research, evaluation, and statistics activities. Four Commissioners support the IES Director, including the Commissioner for the [National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance](#) (NCEE), who is responsible for planning and overseeing ED's major evaluations. IES employed approximately 170 full-time staff in FY18, including approximately 20 staff in NCEE.
- The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) reports to, and advises, the Secretary on matters relating to policy development and review; program performance measurement and evaluation; and the use of data and evidence to inform decision-making. OPEPD's [Policy and Program Studies Service](#) (PPSS) has a staff of about 20 and serves as the Department's internal analytics office. PPSS performs data analysis and conducts short-term evaluations to support continuous improvement of program implementation, working closely with program offices and senior leadership to inform policy decisions with data and evidence.

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USED (cont):

- IES and PPSS staff collaborate closely through ED's Evidence Planning Group (EPG) with other senior staff from OPEPD, including Budget Service, as well as staff from the [Office of Innovation and Improvement](#) (OII), the Performance Improvement Office, and the Office of the General Counsel. EPG currently includes around 25 participants from these offices within ED. EPG supports programs and advises Department leadership and staff on how evidence can be used to improve Department programs and works to provide resources and support to staff in the use of evidence. EPG has coordinated, for example, the development of [revised evidence definitions and related selection criteria](#) for competitive grant programs that align with the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (P.L. 114-95) (ESSA), and provided guidance on the strategic use of those definitions in the Department's grant competitions. EPG has also facilitated cross-office alignment of investments in technical assistance related to evidence and pooling program funds for evaluations.
- Senior officials from IES and OPEPD, and OII are part of ED's leadership structure. Officials from OPEPD and OII weigh in on major policy decisions. OPEPD plays leading roles in the formation of the Department's policy positions as expressed through annual budget requests, grant competition priorities, including evidence, and technical assistance to Congress to ensure that evidence appropriately informs policy design.

USHUD:

- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (USHUD) [Office of Policy Development & Research](#) (PD&R) informs HUD's policy development and implementation by conducting, supporting, and sharing research, surveys, demonstrations, program evaluations, and best practices. PD&R achieves this mission through three interrelated core functions: (1) collecting and analyzing national housing market data (including with the Census Bureau); (2) conducting research, program evaluations, and demonstrations; and (3) providing policy advice and analytic support to the HUD Secretary and program offices.
- PD&R is led by an Assistant Secretary who oversees six offices, about 139 staff including a team of field economists that work in HUD's 10 regional offices across the country, and a budget of \$89 million in FY18. The Assistant Secretary ensures that evidence informs policy development through frequent personal engagement with other [principal staff](#), the Secretary, and external policy officials including Congress, speeches to policy audiences, sponsorship of public research briefings, and policy implications memoranda.
- PD&R staff is integral to departmental working groups focused on program-specific or cross-cutting policy development and initiatives. As part of such engagement, PD&R ensures that deliberations are informed by program evaluations and the research literature and conducts policy studies, regulatory impact analyses, and special-purpose analyses of administrative data or external data to answer specific policy questions that arise. As part of [ongoing research](#) in FY18, PD&R continues to undertake evaluations of the programs that account for the vast majority of HUD's outlays, including evaluations of key outcomes for rental assistance programs (Moving to Work and Moving to Work Expansion, Family Self Sufficiency, Rental Assistance Demonstration, Rent Reform), homeless assistance programs (Family Unification Program), and the Housing Counseling program.
- PD&R regularly engages with each HUD program office to ensure that metrics, evaluations, and evidence inform program design, budgeting, and implementation. Periodic meetings enable PD&R to inform program offices about evaluation progress, and program offices to share knowledge with PD&R about emerging needs for research, evaluation, and demonstrations to advance program policy. Such collaboration has ensured that major policy changes have developed through rigorously evaluated program demonstrations that include [interim reports](#) to help shape program design.

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USDOL:

- The United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Chief Evaluation Officer is a senior official with responsibility for all activities of the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), and coordination of evaluations department-wide. In 2016, DOL's [Chief Evaluation Officer](#) was converted to a career position, a change which more fully cements the principle of independence and reflects DOL's commitment to institutionalizing an evidence-based culture at the agency. Evaluation results and products are approved and released by the Chief Evaluation Officer (as per the [DOL Evaluation Policy](#)), and disseminated in various formats appropriate to practitioners, policymakers, and evaluators.
- The CEO includes 15 full-time staff plus a small number of contractors and one-to-two detailees at any given time. This staff level is augmented by staff from research and evaluation units in other DOL agencies. For example, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has 9 FTE's dedicated to research and evaluation activities with which CEO coordinates extensively on the development of a learning agenda, management of the studies, and dissemination of results. CEO staff have expertise in research and evaluation methods as well as in DOL programs and policies and the populations they serve. CEO also employs technical working groups on the majority of evaluation projects whose members have deep technical and subject matter expertise. Further, CEO staff engage and collaborate with program office staff and leadership to interpret research and evaluation findings and to identify their implications for programmatic and policy decisions.
- In FY18, the CEO is directly overseeing approximately \$21.4 million in evaluation funding (this includes a direct appropriation of \$8.04 million for department program evaluation and a set-aside amount of up to 0.75% of select department accounts). Additionally, many projects are co-funded with DOL agencies using programmatic dollars. CEO also collaborates with DOL program offices and other federal agencies on additional evaluations being carried out by other offices and/or supported by funds appropriated to other agencies or programs.
- The CEO's role is to develop and incorporate evidence and evaluation findings as appropriate and to identify knowledge gaps that might be filled by evaluations or convey evidence that can inform policy and program decisions or performance. DOL's Chief Evaluation Officer and senior staff are part DOL's leadership structure and play a role in the formation of the DOL's agencies' annual budget requests, recommendations around including evidence in grant competitions, and providing technical assistance to DOL leadership to ensure that evidence informs policy design. There are a number of mechanisms set up to facilitate this: CEO has traditionally participated in quarterly performance meetings with DOL leadership and the Performance Management Center (PMC); CEO reviews agency operating plans and works with agencies and the PMC to coordinate performance targets and measures and evaluation findings; quarterly meetings are held with agency leadership and staff as part of the Learning Agenda process; and meetings are held as needed to strategize around addressing new priorities or legislative requirements.

CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

- ACF:
- ACF's [evaluation policy](#) addresses the principles of rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics and requires ACF program, evaluation, and research staff to collaborate. For example, the policy states, "ACF program offices will consult with OPRE in developing evaluation activities." And, "There must be strong partnerships among evaluation staff, program staff, policy-makers and service providers." ACF established its Evaluation Policy in November 2012, and published it in the [Federal Register](#) in August 2014.
  - ACF's annual portfolio reviews, which are publicly available on the [OPRE website](#), describe key findings from past and recent research and evaluation work, and how ongoing projects are addressing gaps in the knowledge base and answering critical questions in the areas of [family self-sufficiency](#), [child and family development](#), and [family strengthening](#), including work related to [child welfare](#), [child care](#), [Head Start](#), [Early Head Start](#), [strengthening families](#), [teen pregnancy prevention and youth development](#), [home visiting](#), [self-sufficiency, welfare, and employment](#). These portfolio reviews describe how evaluation and evidence-building activities unfold in specific ACF program and topical areas over time and how current research and evaluation initiatives build on past efforts and respond to remaining gaps in knowledge.
  - Building on this assessment of the existing evidence base and the questions being answered by ongoing research, OPRE annually updates its research plans and proposes a research and evaluation spending plan to the Assistant Secretary. This plan covers both longer-term activities that build evidence over time as well as activities to respond to current administration priorities and provide information in the near term. This plan covers areas in which Congress has currently provided authority and funding to conduct research and evaluation.
  - ACF's evaluation policy requires that "ACF will release evaluation results regardless of findings... Evaluation reports will present comprehensive findings, including favorable, unfavorable, and null findings. ACF will release evaluation results timely – usually within two months of a report's completion." ACF has publicly released the findings of all completed evaluations to date. In 2017, OPRE released nearly 100 publications. OPRE publications are publicly available on the [OPRE website](#).
- ACL:
- ACL has an agency-wide [evaluation policy](#) that reconfirms ACL's commitment to conducting rigorous, relevant evaluations and to using evidence from evaluations to inform policy and practice. The evaluation policy addresses how ACL promotes coordination between evaluation staff and policymakers as well as stressing the importance of the involvement of policymakers in the development of evaluation questions. ACL's [evaluation policy](#) stipulates that "ACL will release evaluation results regardless of the findings. Evaluation reports will describe the methods used, including strengths and weaknesses, and discuss the generalizability of the findings. Evaluation reports will present comprehensive results, including favorable, unfavorable, and null findings. ACL will release evaluation results timely – usually within six months of a report's completion."
  - All [completed evaluation reports](#) are posted on the ACL website (see also [NIDILRR External Evaluation](#)). Authorizing legislation for ACL programs also specify that evaluation be conducted and that the results will be made available to the public (e.g., [Older Americans Act Title II, Section 206](#), [Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act \(DD Act\) Title II Section 210](#), [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Chapter III subtitle D Section 169](#), [Elder Justice Act Part II Section 2044](#)).
  - For an evaluation plan, ACL's Office of Performance and Evaluation (OPE) submits a concept paper to the Principal Deputy Administrator and Acting Commissioner on Disabilities outlining proposed evaluation activities for each upcoming year. This plan reflects conversations between OPE staff, Agency leadership, and program staff regarding policy priorities. It describes how OPE will allocate its resources to answer identified evaluation questions, and to provide sound evidence regarding how well programs are meeting their stated goals as well as recommendations for program improvement.

CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

ACL (cont):

- While ACL has not completed a formal agency-wide learning agenda, ACL has a [process](#) for developing Center-specific learning agendas that will form the basis for an eventual agency-wide learning agenda to be completed and released in FY19. The process involves annual reviews with each ACL Center to support the generation and use of evaluation findings to inform agency strategies and decision making. Specifically, a series of interviews with Center Directors is conducted immediately prior to the development of Center funding proposals and include discussion of the most important questions that need to be answered in order to improve program implementation and performance; ways to strategically prioritize these questions given the level of current understanding, available resources, feasibility, and other considerations; appropriate tools and methods to answer each question; and approaches for information dissemination that are accessible and useful to ACL leadership. ACL anticipates piloting this process in late fall of 2018.
- The [Long-Range Plan of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](#) (NIDILRR) publishes a five-year agenda that will advance its research efforts (i.e. learning agenda).

CNCS:

- CNCS has an [evaluation policy](#) that presents five key principles that govern the agency's planning, conduct, and use of program evaluations: rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics.
- CNCS considers its mission a set of empirical questions to be tested. As such, the agency uses the following core set of questions to organize its evidence building strategy each year:
  1. How do CNCS programs affect the individuals who serve (e.g., national service members and volunteers)?
  2. How do CNCS programs affect the individuals served by grantee and sponsor organizations (e.g., "beneficiaries")?
  3. How do CNCS programs contribute to the civic health of communities?
  4. How can CNCS programs be used most effectively by communities to solve local challenges?
- A comprehensive portfolio of research projects has been built to address these questions. As findings emerge, future studies are designed to continuously build the agency's evidence base. The CNCS [Office of Research & Evaluation](#) relies on scholarship in relevant fields of academic study; a variety of research and program evaluation approaches including field, experimental, and survey research; multiple data sources including internal and external administrative data; and different statistical analytic methods.
- The agency's evidence-building strategy is updated annually based on input from agency leadership as well as from emerging evidence from completed studies. This agenda is reflected in the CNCS Congressional Budget Justifications each year (see [Fiscal Year 2016](#) pp. 55-56; [Fiscal Year 2017](#) pp. 5-6, 55-56; and [Fiscal Year 2018](#) p. 3). CNCS's R&E coordinates the agency's learning agenda, which includes building its evidence base and facilitating the use of evaluation to inform important decisions. To this end, the office conducts research and evaluation on CNCS service programs; helps build the capacity of agency-funded partners to conduct and understand evaluations; and facilitates evidence-based and evidence-informed grant-making.

## CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

CNCS (cont.):

- A report synthesizing findings from FY16 and early FY17 research and evaluation studies conducted by or sponsored by CNCS may be found [here](#). More generally, CNCS creates four types of reports for public release: research reports produced directly by research and evaluation staff, research conducted by third party research firms and overseen by research and evaluation staff, reports produced by CNCS-funded research grantees (see [research competition](#) for more information), and evaluation reports submitted by CNCS-funded program grantees. All reports completed and cleared internally are posted to the [Evidence Exchange](#), an electronic repository for reports. This virtual repository was launched in September 2015. Quarterly analytics for new products created, number of reports posted, page views, and users are provided by our contractor.
- In FY16, CNCS developed [Evaluation Core Curriculum Courses](#) which are presented to its grantees through a webinar series and is available on the CNCS website along with other [evaluation resources](#). The courses are designed to help grantees and other stakeholders easily access materials to aid in conducting or managing program evaluations. R&E staff supported workshops using these materials for Senior Corps grantees in July 2018 and AmeriCorps grantees in September 2018. In addition, according to an internal evaluation CNCS conducted with State Commissions regarding their use of Commission Investment Fund grants to improve their ability to conduct high quality performance measurement and evaluation, having these CNCS resources facilitated implementation of the grant. As one commission explained, "One thing that definitely kept things running smoothly is that the resources—the two core curriculum courses, the performance measure and evaluation—having those already developed, ready to go...not having to develop new things from scratch and just being able to go directly to this is what theory of change is...having that ready to go was also really helpful in moving along."

MCC:

- MCC's Independent Evaluation Portfolio is governed by its publicly available [Policy for Monitoring and Evaluation](#). This Policy requires all programs to develop and follow comprehensive [M&E plans](#) that adhere to MCC's standards. The Policy was revised in March 2017 to ensure alignment with the [Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016](#). Pursuant to MCC's M&E policy, every project must undergo an independent evaluation. This aspect of the policy makes MCC unique among US federal agencies and other bilateral donors.
- Each comprehensive M&E Plan includes two main components. The monitoring component lays out the methodology and process for assessing progress towards the investment's objectives. It identifies indicators, establishes performance targets, and details the data collection and reporting plan to track progress against targets on a quarterly basis. The evaluation component identifies and describes the evaluations that will be conducted, the key evaluation questions and methodologies, and the data collection strategies that will be employed. Each country's M&E Plan represents the evaluation plan and learning agenda for that country's set of investments.
- To ensure appropriate quality and risk assessment and management of the independent evaluation portfolio, MCC M&E and its evaluation contractors also follow the Evaluation Management and Review Process Guidelines. To ensure timely release of independent evaluation materials, a public evaluation entry is created in the [MCC Evaluation Catalog](#) as soon as an Evaluation Design Report (EDR) is cleared by MCC management. This entry is populated with all subsequent evaluation materials as they become available, including questionnaires, Baseline Report, and other corresponding documentation. Once an independent evaluation's analytical report – an Interim or Final Report – is drafted, it is sent through MCC's rigorous review process which is governed by the Evaluation Management and Review Process Guidelines. At this time, findings and lessons learned are documented in a [Summary of Findings](#), and all independent evaluations and reports are publicly reported on the [MCC Evaluation Catalog](#). As of August 2018, MCC has contracted or is planning 198 independent evaluations. To date, 91 Interim and Final Reports have been finalized and released to the public.

CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

MCC (cont):

- For FY18, MCC has pursued a robust agency-wide, multi-year research and learning agenda around better use of its data and evidence for programmatic impact. DPE has prioritized learning around how MCC develops, implements, monitors, and evaluates the policy and institutional reforms (PIR) it undertakes alongside capital investments. The PIR learning agenda is focused on better evidence for methodological guidance to economists and sector practices to support the expanded use of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) in more cases of PIR that MCC supports. The purpose is to make investments in PIR more effective by meeting the same investment criteria as other interventions MCC considers for investment; to make assumptions and risks more explicit for all its investments that depend on improved policies or institutional performance; and to help inform the design of PIR programs to ensure that they have a high economic rate of return.
- MCC produces periodic reports that capture the results of MCC's learning efforts in specific sectors and translate this learning into actionable evidence for future programming. At the start of FY18, MCC published a Principles into Practice report on its investments into roads; this report demonstrated MCC learning around the implementation and evaluation of its roads projects, and critically assessed how MCC was changing its practice as a result of this learning. In FY18, MCC began additional [Principles into Practice](#) reports on its activities in the education and water, sanitation, and hygiene sectors.
- In FY18, MCC initiated a new learning effort around its use of Root Cause Analysis (RCA). MCC uses RCA to examine the underlying drivers of binding constraints to growth. The Root Cause Analysis Working Group has been formed to generate evidence and recommendations on how MCC conducts this analysis. The group has reviewed MCC's experience with root cause analysis across 11 compacts or threshold programs and identified possible areas for improvement. The Working Group is currently drafting guidance to help country teams with process and the use of various RCA tools. The working group is also exploring the need for sector-specific (e.g., power, education) approaches to RCA that reflect insights on examining drivers of constraints.

SAMHSA:

- SAMHSA's [Evaluation Policy and Procedure](#) (P&P), revised and approved in May 2017, provides guidance across the agency regarding all program evaluations. Specifically, the Evaluation P&P describes the demand for rigor, compliance with ethical standards, and compliance with privacy requirements for all program evaluations conducted and funded by the agency. The Evaluation P&P serves as the agency's formal evaluation plan and includes a new process for the public release of final evaluation reports, including findings from evaluations deemed significant. The Evaluation P&P sets the framework for planning, monitoring, and disseminating findings from significant evaluations.
- The Evaluation P&P requires Centers to identify research questions and appropriately match the type of evaluation to the maturity of the program. A new workgroup was formed in 2017, the Cross-Center Evaluation Review Board (CCERB), composed of Center evaluation experts, who began reviewing significant evaluations at critical milestones in the planning and implementation process, providing specific recommendations to the Center Director having the lead for the evaluation.
- SAMHSA's Cross-Center Evaluation Review Board (CCERB) worked with the four centers within SAMHSA: CSAP, CMHS, CSAT, and CBHSQ to advise, conduct, collaborate, and coordinate on all evaluation and data collection activities that occur within SAMHSA. CCERB staff provided support for program-specific and administration-wide evaluations. SAMHSA's CMO also played a key role in reviewing evaluation proposals and clearing final reports.

CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

SAMHSA (cont.):

- Results from significant evaluations will be available on SAMHSA's website, a new step SAMHSA took with its newly-approved Evaluation P&P in the Fall of 2017. As of July 2018, one summary was posted on the website – a process evaluation of the [Safe Schools/Healthy Students \(SS/HS\) State Program](#). No other evaluation summaries are posted, including of any ongoing evaluation studies. Significant evaluations include those that have been identified by the Center Director as providing compelling information and results that can be used to make data driven, evidence-based, and informed decisions about behavioral health programs and policy. The following criteria is used to determine whether an evaluation is significant: (1) whether the evaluation was mandated by Congress; (2) whether there are high priority needs in states and communities; (3) whether the evaluation is for a new or congressionally-mandated program; (4) the extent to which the program is linked to key agency initiatives; (5) the level of funding; (6) the level of interest from internal and external stakeholders; and (7) the potential to inform practice, policy, and/or budgetary decision-making.
- CBHSQ is currently leading agency-wide efforts to build SAMHSA's learning agenda. Via this process, we have developed agency-wide Learning Agenda templates in the critical topic areas of opioids, serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, suicide, health economics and financing, and marijuana; learning agendas focused on other key topic areas such as alcohol are underway as well. Other topics, such as cross-cutting issues related to vulnerable populations, are interwoven through these research plans. Through this multi-phased process, CBHSQ is systematically collecting information from across the agency regarding research and analytic activities, analyzing and organizing this information into a guiding framework to be used for decision-making related to priorities and resource allocation. SAMHSA began this process in early 2017 and planned to complete it in the winter of 2018. SAMHSA has developed a template for the issue of opioid abuse, the first topic we tackled in this effort and thus the most complete at this point in time and has been used in determining research questions along with the current activities underway across the agency that are relevant to these areas. The template followed the construct outlined by OMB in the publication entitled [Analytical Perspectives; Budget of the U.S. Government; Fiscal Year 2018](#).
- SAMHSA's [Data Integrity Statement](#) outlines how CBHSQ adheres to federal guidelines designed to ensure the quality, integrity, and credibility of statistical activities.
- SAMHSA's [National Behavioral Health Quality Framework](#), aligned with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Quality Strategy, is a framework to assist providers, facilities, payers, and communities better track and report the quality of behavioral health care. These metrics are focused primarily on high-rate behavioral health events such as depression, alcohol misuse, and tobacco cessation, all of which impact health and health care management and thus affect a large swath of the U.S. population.

USAID:

- USAID has an agency-wide [Evaluation Policy](#), published in 2011 and updated in October 2016, to incorporate changes in [USAID's Program Cycle Policy](#) and to ensure compliance with FATAA. The 2016 policy updates evaluation requirements to simplify implementation and increase the breadth of evaluation coverage. The updates also seek to strengthen evaluation dissemination and utilization. The agency released a [report](#) in 2016 to mark the five-year anniversary of the policy. Over the last three fiscal years, USAID has completed nearly 500 more evaluations ([188 in FY15](#), [145 in FY16](#), and [161 in FY17](#)).
- LER works with Washington bureaus to develop annual evaluation action plans that review evaluation quality and use within each bureau, and identify challenges and priorities for the year ahead. While the plans are optional, most bureaus participate. LER uses these plans to prioritize financial and technical assistance to help bureaus address challenges and as a source for agency-wide learning on improving evaluation quality and use. In addition, all USAID bureaus and missions must report annually on any planned, ongoing, or completed evaluations, otherwise known as the "Evaluation Registry."

CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

USAID (cont.):

- At USAID, learning, monitoring, and evaluation priorities are set by bureaus or OUs for the programs within the bureaus' area of responsibility. Many bureaus have a learning agenda for specific priorities within their bureau, with some learning agendas being specific to sectors or topics but shared agency-wide. And sometimes priorities are coordinated with other U.S. agencies when program responsibilities are shared. For example, the Feed the Future initiative, led by USAID with eleven agencies contributing to the effort, has a [Handbook of Indicator Definitions](#) to guide cross-agency monitoring efforts. A 2017 snapshot of recent USAID learning agendas is included as an annex in USAID's [Landscape Analysis of Learning Agendas](#) report. PPL is also implementing a [Program Cycle Learning Agenda](#) (PCLA) to prioritize questions about how USAID's program cycle policy is working in practice. PCLA questions include how staff perceive and value PPL capacity building support around the Program Cycle, and whether the Program Cycle incentivizes programs that are based in evidence and managed adaptively through continuous learning.
- Since September 2016, USAID multi-year CDCSs now require a learning plan that outlines how missions will incorporate learning into their programming — including activities such as regular portfolio reviews, evaluation recommendation tracking and dissemination plans, and other analytic processes — to better understand the dynamics of their programs and their country contexts. In addition to mission strategic plans, all projects and activities are now also required to have integrated monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans.
- As a part of the USAID Transformation, USAID will prioritize supporting partner countries as they progress along their journey to self-reliance, taking increasing ownership over planning, and financing and implementing their own development agendas. USAID support will focus on building partner countries' commitment and capacity to assess where countries are on this journey (using USAID's [self-reliance metrics](#)), mobilize resources to finance development, and engage the private sector in collaborating to develop market-based solutions to development challenges. This will entail transforming USAID's partnerships with developing countries to facilitate locally-led development, and to define the conditions under which countries achieving high degrees of self-reliance transition away from development assistance. In order to learn continuously as we develop our approach, USAID is creating a learning agenda around self-reliance to capture and share knowledge of what works, what doesn't, and what gaps in policy and practice need to be addressed.
- USAID has an internal evaluation registry that is updated on an annual basis to provide data on completed, ongoing, and planned evaluations, including evaluations planned to start anytime in the next three fiscal years. All final USAID evaluation reports are available on the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#), except for a small number of evaluations that are considered [Sensitive But Unclassified](#). For [FY15](#), [FY16](#), and [FY17](#), USAID created infographics that show where evaluations took place, across which sectors, and include short narratives that describe findings from selected evaluations and how that information informed decision-making.
- [Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research](#) (PEER) is an international grants program that funds scientists and engineers in developing countries who partner with U.S. government-funded researchers to address global development challenges. PEER supports the connection of international and American researchers to advance new solutions, innovations and approaches. The PEER program is designed to leverage federal science agency funding from NASA, NIFA, NIH, NOAA, NSF, Smithsonian Institution, USFS, USDA, and USGS by directly supporting developing country scientists who work in partnership with current or new colleagues supported by these U.S. government agencies. Technical areas include water resource management, climate change, biodiversity, agriculture, energy, disaster mitigation, nutrition, maternal and child health, and infectious diseases.

## CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

USED:

- ED has a [scientific integrity policy](#) to ensure that all scientific activities (including research, development, testing, and evaluation) conducted and supported by ED are of the highest quality and integrity, and can be trusted by the public and contribute to sound decision-making. In January 2017, IES published "[Evaluation Principles and Practices](#)," which describes the foundational principles that guide its evaluation studies and the key ways in which the principles are put into practice.
- In addition, IES works with partners across ED, including through the EPG, to prepare and submit to Congress a 2-year biennial, forward-looking evaluation plan covering all mandated and discretionary evaluations of education programs funded under ESSA (see the FY18 plan [here](#)). IES and PPSS work with programs to understand their priorities, design appropriate studies to answer the questions being posed, and share results from relevant evaluations to help with program improvement. This serves as a research and learning agenda for ED.
- ED's [FY17 Annual Performance Report and FY19 Annual Performance Plan](#) includes a list of ED's current evaluations in Appendix E, organized by topic. IES also maintains [profiles](#) of all its [evaluations](#) on its website, which include key findings, publications, and products. IES publicly releases all peer-reviewed publications from its evaluations on the IES website and also in the [Education Resources Information Center](#) (ERIC). IES announces all new evaluation findings to the public via a [Newsflash](#) and through social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#)). IES regularly conducts briefings on its evaluations for ED, the Office of Management and Budget, Congressional staff, and the public.
- Finally, IES manages the [Regional Educational Laboratory](#) (REL) program, which supports districts, states, and boards of education throughout the United States to use research and evaluation in decision making. The research priorities are determined locally, but IES approves the studies and reviews the final products. All REL studies are made publicly available on the [IES website](#).

USHUD:

- PD&R has published a [Program Evaluation](#) policy that establishes core principles and practices of PD&R's evaluation and research activities. The six core principles are rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, ethics, and technical innovation. In FY18, PD&R undertook an internal review of the principles and compliance to assess whether modifications are needed. The review highlighted points of tension in the application of standards, but PD&R found that the standards themselves did not require amendment.
- PD&R's evaluation policy guides HUD's research planning efforts, known as research roadmapping. Key features of research roadmapping include reaching out to internal and external stakeholders through a participatory approach; making research planning systematic, iterative, and transparent; driving a learning agenda by focusing on research questions that are timely, forward-looking, policy-relevant, and leverage HUD's comparative advantages and partnership opportunities; and aligning research with HUD's strategic goals and areas of special focus. HUD also employs its role as [convener](#) to help establish frameworks for evidence, metrics, and future research. In FY18, PD&R staff is collaborating on an assessment of processes and procedures for identifying and executing in-house research projects at 15 federal agencies. This work will develop an approach to assess practice maturity and identify lessons to strengthen the value of PD&R's in-house research efforts.
- HUD's original "[Research Roadmap FY14-FY18](#)" and "[Research Roadmap: 2017 Update](#)" constitute the core of HUD's learning agenda. The roadmaps are strategic, long-term (five-year) plans for priority program evaluations and research to be pursued given a sufficiently robust level of funding. On the basis of the learning agenda and additional policy questions that emerge, HUD also develops annual evaluation plans that identify specific research priorities. Actual research activities are substantially determined by Congressional funding and guidance.

CRITERIA

**2. Evaluation and Research:** Did the agency have an evaluation policy, evaluation plan, and research/learning agenda(s) and did it publicly release the findings of all completed evaluations in FY18?

USHUD (cont):

- PD&R's [Program Evaluation Policy](#) (p. 87950) is to publish and disseminate all evaluations that meet standards of methodological rigor in a timely fashion. Additionally, PD&R includes language in research and evaluation contracts that allows researchers to independently publish results, even without HUD approval, after not more than six months. PD&R has occasionally declined to publish reports that fell short of standards for methodological rigor. Completed evaluations and research are summarized in HUD's [Annual Performance Report](#) (pp. 123–131) at the end of each fiscal year, and research reports are posted on PD&R's website, [HUDUSER.gov](#).

USDOL:

- DOL has an [Evaluation Policy Statement](#) that formalizes the principles that govern all program evaluations in the department, including methodological rigor, independence, transparency, ethics, and relevance.
- CEO works with each of 12 operating agencies within DOL to create a learning agenda, which is rolled up into a separate agency-wide learning agenda (or Department evaluation plan). Learning agendas are updated every year. They highlight priority questions that the operating agencies would like to answer. They are a catalyst for setting priorities, identifying questions, and for conceptualizing studies that advance evidence in areas of interest to DOL agencies, the department, and the Administration.
- CEO develops, implements, and publicly releases an annual DOL evaluation plan. The evaluation plan is based on the agency learning agendas as well as DOL's Strategic Plan priorities, statutory requirements for evaluations, and Secretarial and Administration priorities. The evaluation plan includes the studies CEO intends to undertake in the next year using the set-aside dollars. Appropriations language requires the Chief Evaluation Officer to submit a plan to the U.S. Senate and House Committees on Appropriations outlining the evaluations that will be carried out by the Office using dollars transferred to CEO; the DOL evaluation plan serves that purpose. The [2017 plan](#) was posted on the CEO website. The [2018 evaluation plan](#) is also publicly available. The evaluation plan outlines evaluations that CEO will use its budget to undertake. CEO also works with agencies to undertake evaluations and evidence building strategies to answer other questions of interest identified in learning agencies, but not undertaken directly by CEO.
- Once contracts are awarded for new evaluation studies, study descriptions are posted on the [Current Studies](#) page of CEO's [website](#) to provide the public with information about studies currently underway including research questions and timelines for study completion and publication of results. All DOL reports and findings are publicly released and posted on the complete reports section of the [CEO website](#). DOL agencies, such as ETA, also post and release their own research and evaluation [reports](#).

CRITERIA

**3. Resources:** Did the agency invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluations in FY18?  
(Examples: Impact studies; implementation studies; rapid cycle evaluations; evaluation technical assistance, and capacity-building)

- ACF:
- In FY18, ACF plans to spend approximately \$165 million on research and evaluation, research and evaluation technical assistance, and research and evaluation capacity-building, representing 0.3% of ACF's \$58.6 billion budget in FY18 (in addition to investments in evaluations by ACF grantees). The amount of ACF's spending on evaluation is largely determined by Congress.
- ACL:
- ACL spent approximately \$16 million on evaluation in FY18, representing .88% of the agency's \$1.8 billion FY18 budget.
  - The bulk of these funds are based on a set-aside required under the *Older Americans Act*. As specified in Title II, section 206 of the [Older Americans Act](#), "From the total amount appropriated for each fiscal year to carry out title III, the Secretary may use such sums as may be necessary, but not to exceed half of one percent of such amount, for purposes of conducting evaluations under this section, either directly or through grants or contracts."
- CNCS:
- CNCS plans to spend a total of \$6.55 million, representing .65% of CNCS's \$1 billion budget in FY18, on evaluation and evaluation capacity building activities (R&E evaluation and program funds combined), including:
    - \$8,500,000 of FY18 AmeriCorps funds have been awarded in Commission Investment Fund grants, of which approximately one third will be used for building commission capacity to support grantees (formula grantees) in the areas of evaluation and performance measurement;
    - \$2,050,000 of FY18 Senior Corps funds will be spent on evaluation and evidence-building activities (representing 1 percent of Senior Corps' \$202.11 million FY18 budget); and
    - \$1,671,766 of FY18 evaluation funds have been awarded for AmeriCorps grantee evaluation capacity building.
  - In addition to these program evaluation and evidence capacity building investments, CNCS will invest close to \$1.5 million in research grants that fund studies designed to systematically assess the outcomes and impacts of national service programs and volunteerism. These studies rely on large Federal survey and administrative data sets to statistically examine relationships between nonprofit organizations that rely on volunteers and other civil society organizations and various community outcomes (e.g., health and well-being). Furthermore, these studies examine individual outcomes such as the long-term economic outcomes of volunteering (using longitudinal survey data) or the effects of culturally relevant curriculum on the civic behavior of participants over time. Finally, these research grants fund studies that examine the role of civic participation in identifying and implementing solutions for community issues like opioid use, disaster recovery, academic success, and equitable economic development.
- MCC:
- MCC's FY18 investment in monitoring and evaluation to date is \$15.1 million, which amounts to 5.1% of Compact spending for FY18 (\$293.6 million). This investment exceeds the proportion of FY17 spending in which MCC invested over \$21.9 million in M&E, roughly 4.2% of Compact spending for FY17 (\$516.1 million).

CRITERIA	
<p><b>3. Resources:</b> Did the agency invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluations in FY18? (Examples: Impact studies; implementation studies; rapid cycle evaluations; evaluation technical assistance, and capacity-building)</p>	<p><u>SAMHSA:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results for America was unable to determine the amount of resources SAMHSA invested in evaluations in FY18.</li> </ul> <p><u>USAID:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In FY17, USAID missions and offices reported completing 161 evaluations with resources totaling approximately \$42 million. In addition, they were actively managing another 286 ongoing evaluations, many that span more than one year, with total ongoing evaluation budgets estimated to reach almost \$210 million. Overall spending on evaluations completed or ongoing in FY17 (\$252 million) represents about 1.4% of USAID's \$17.6 billion FY17 program budget.</li> <li>This amount does not include the budget for the Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research which primarily focuses on monitoring, evaluation, and learning capacity building and technical assistance (\$8.9 million in FY17) or the investment in the <a href="#">Demographic and Health Surveys</a> (DHS) (\$189 million total in FY13-FY18) or surveys funded by other sector programs that often make up some of the underlying data used in many evaluations.</li> </ul> <p><u>CNCS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CNCS plans to spend a total of \$6.55 million, representing .65% of CNCS's \$1 billion budget in FY18, on evaluation and evaluation capacity building activities (R&amp;E evaluation and program funds combined), including:</li> </ul> <p><u>USED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall spending on evaluation (about \$38 million in FY18) represents .08% of ED's \$46.1 billion discretionary budget (without Pell Grants) minus administrative funds in FY18. This total reflects a targeted definition of program funds dedicated to evaluation, including impact studies and implementation studies. It is important to note that the timing of evaluation projects and the type of research projects proposed by the field results in year-to-year fluctuations in this amount, and does not reflect a change in ED's commitment to evaluation.</li> <li>While some evaluation funding – such as that for <a href="#">Special Education Studies and Evaluations</a> – is appropriated to IES (\$10.8 million in FY18), most evaluations are supported by funds appropriated to ED programs. The Evidence Planning Group (EPG) described above supports program staff that run evidence-based grant competitions and monitor evidence-based grant projects, advises Department leadership and staff on how evidence can be used to improve Department programs, and provides support to staff in the use of evidence.</li> <li>The Education Innovation and Research (EIR) and the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) programs utilize technical assistance contractors that support grantees in the design and implementation of their project-level evaluations, as well as the development of evaluation resources that are now being shared publicly on the <a href="#">NCEE, What Works Clearinghouse</a>, and program websites. In FY17, using funds appropriated in previous fiscal years, about \$2.8 million was dedicated to this evaluation technical assistance for EIR grantees, and about \$700,000 was dedicated to supporting SEED grantees.</li> </ul>

CRITERIA

**3. Resources:** Did the agency invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluations in FY18?  
(Examples: Impact studies; implementation studies; rapid cycle evaluations; evaluation technical assistance, and capacity-building)

USED (cont.):

- In addition to the narrowly defined figure above, ED invests in evaluation by supporting states and school districts so that they can conduct studies of their own education policies and programs. For example, IES runs annual grant competitions to support researcher-practitioner partnerships between state and local education officials and research institutions, including a new program for low-cost, short duration evaluations. IES also awarded approximately \$24 million in the [Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems](#) grant program across 16 States to support efforts related to: (1) increasing use of data for decision making; (2) conducting training on data use, data tools, or accessing data and reporting systems; and (3) utilizing research and analysis results. Finally, the [Regional Education Laboratories](#) (RELs) provide extensive technical assistance on evaluation and support research alliances that conduct implementation and impact studies on education policies and programs in ten geographic regions of the U.S., covering all states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Over \$55 million was appropriated for the RELs in FY18.
- ED emphasizes evaluation and the building of evidence in a number of its grant programs through requirements that grantees conduct or participate in evaluations. This emphasis on evaluation continues even for programs supported by an existing evidence base, as the evaluation design for these programs looks at impact with new settings, different populations, and project-specific implementation. In many instances, during grant competitions, this evaluation criterion is reviewed and scored by evaluation experts familiar with the What Works Clearinghouse standards, ensuring proposed evaluation plans are of the appropriate design and rigor. Additionally, a number of OII programs dedicate resources to evaluation technical assistance and program level evaluations.
- IES and OII grantees are expected to make the results of their evaluations public through Education Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) and other grant-funded dissemination activities. In addition, all impact evaluations funded by IES and OII are reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), which plays a major role in summarizing and disseminating findings from the most rigorous studies to ED and the broader field.
- ED has an opportunity to increase its annual investment in program evaluation through the reauthorized ESEA pooled evaluation authority, which allows the Department to use funds appropriated to ESEA programs to evaluate any ESEA program included in the biennial evaluation plan prepared by IES. In addition, the ESEA permits ED to reserve up to .5 percent of program funding for evaluation activities.

USHUD:

- In FY18, HUD plans to spend \$89 million on evaluations, representing 0.17% of HUD's \$51 billion discretionary budget (minus salary and expenses).
- For FY18, Congress appropriated \$89 million for the Office of Policy Development and Research's (PD&R's) Research & Technology account, including \$50 million for core research activities; up to \$14 million for research, evaluations, and demonstrations; and not less than \$25 million for technical assistance. The total represents an FY18 investment in evaluations and evidence amounting to 0.17 percent of HUD's \$51 billion gross [discretionary budget authority, net of salaries and expenses, for FY18](#). The funding for core research is used primarily for the American Housing Survey, other surveys, and data acquisition that support evaluation of HUD's mission activities in domains such as affordable housing and housing finance.
- PD&R's FY18 appropriation of \$24 million for Salaries and Expenses also supports evidence in the form of PD&R's in-house research and evaluation program, economic analyses, data linkage initiatives, and management of housing surveys and contract research and evaluation.
- Additionally, PD&R leverages public resources by issuing data licenses and by establishing [Research Partnerships](#) with private-sector partners who contribute at least 50 percent of project resources and undertake research that contribute to HUD's objectives.

CRITERIA	
<p><b>3. Resources:</b> Did the agency invest at least 1% of program funds in evaluations in FY18? (Examples: Impact studies; implementation studies; rapid cycle evaluations; evaluation technical assistance, and capacity-building)</p>	<p><u>USDOL:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In FY18, DOL's CEO invested approximately \$21 million in evaluation and evidence building activities. This represents approximately 0.20% of DOL's FY18 discretionary budget for agency programmatic appropriations minus salaries and expenses.</li> <li>This amount only represents the dollars that are directly appropriated or transferred to CEO. Additionally, many DOL evaluations and research studies are supported by funds appropriated to DOL programs and/or are carried out by other offices within DOL. In fact, in addition to CEO, most agencies and program offices conduct and support evaluation activities with their own dollars. For example, ETA funds evaluations and provides evaluation technical assistance and capacity building activities to states to help them meet evaluation and reporting requirements under the <i>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)</i>. ETA continues funding and technical assistance to states under the Workforce Data Quality Grant Initiative (WDQI) to link earnings and workforce data with education data longitudinally (for example in in FY18, ETA will award approximately \$6.0M for <a href="#">WDQI grants</a>). ETA and DOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) have also modified state workforce program reporting system requirements to include data items for a larger set of grant programs, which will improve access to administrative data for evaluation and performance management purposes. Further, several DOL agencies also have separate evaluation appropriations. DOL studies funded through individual agencies and program offices also coordinate with DOL's CEO.</li> <li>In many areas where DOL is undertaking evaluation activities, the evaluation budget far exceeds 1% of the budget for the program. For example, the budgets for the evaluations of a number of recent grant programs, such as the America's Promise grant evaluation and the Reentry Grant Evaluation, are between 3% and 5% of the programmatic budget.</li> <li>The Administration's FY14–FY17 budget requests recommended allowing the U.S. Secretary of Labor to set aside up to 1% of all operating agencies' budgets for evaluations, coordinated by CEO. In FYs 2012–2015, Congress authorized the Secretary to set aside up to 0.5% of these funds for evaluations, in addition to the separate evaluation funds that exist in many DOL agencies. In FY16–FY18, Congress authorized DOL to set aside up to 0.75% of operating agency budgets for use by CEO for evaluations.</li> </ul>

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:**

Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?

(Example: Performance stat systems)

ACF:

- ACF's performance management framework focuses on outcomes and aims for coordinated and results-oriented management and operations across all ACF programs.
- ACF aims to develop performance measures that are meaningful and can be used by program managers, leadership, outside stakeholders, and Congress to assess and communicate progress. Results for these metrics are reported annually in the [ACF Congressional Budget Justification](#). ACF reports on approximately 140 performance measures (84 outcome measures and 54 output measures) in the FY19 Congressional Budget Justification.
- ACF is an active participant in the HHS Strategic Review process, an annual assessment of progress on key performance measures. ACF participated in the development of [HHS's FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan](#), which includes ACF-specific objectives. ACF also worked with the Department to provide ACF-specific elements (primarily within Strategic Goal 3) to support the [FY 2019 HHS Annual Performance Plan/Report](#). During 2018, ACF will continue to work with HHS on the required reporting on ACF accomplishments captured in the FY 2018–2022 HHS Strategic Plan and the quarterly Strategic Review process.
- Individual ACF programs regularly analyze and use performance data, administrative data, and evaluation data to improve performance. Two performance management systems worth noting are the Participant Accomplishment and Grant Evaluation System (PAGES) management information system for Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) grantees and the [Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management \(nForm\) management information system](#) for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood grantees. Both are web-based management information systems that are used both to track grantee progress for program management and to record grantee and participant data for research and evaluation purposes.

ACL:

- OPE is responsible for performance management, which includes approximately 25 output and outcome measures reported in [annual budget justifications](#). These results are reviewed annually by ACL leadership. OPE, in coordination with ACL's Center for Management and Budget, leads the ACL's internal Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) Program which supports agencies in efforts to gain operational efficiencies and improve performance.
- ACL's [performance strategy](#) presents a high-level approach to the planning, conduct, and implementation of performance management. The strategy presents a high-level approach to the planning, conduct, and implementation of performance management and represents ACL's commitment to providing rigorous, relevant, and transparent performance data highlighting all the programs and initiatives ACL supports. This strategy describes (p. 2) how ACL's "performance data is reported and tracked: (1) to monitor the administration's progress towards achieving our departmental and agency strategic goals, objectives, and priorities; (2) to support ACL's budget justifications; and (3) to monitor program performance and support improvement." ACL develops and maintains a repository of high quality and robust performance data on all of ACL programs and business lines to demonstrate the impact of programs and services. And ACL, as described under Goal 4 (p. 1), works to "Encourage the utilization of the performance strategy and data in policy and practice to enhance planning and decision-making enabling ACL to easily track goals, objectives and performance across the agency." Implementation of this strategy, in combination with the center-specific learning agenda process and NIDILLR's Long-Range Plan (Described under criterion 2 above), contributes to ACL's development of an Agency-wide learning agenda.

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:**

Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?

(Example: Performance stat systems)

ACL (cont.):

- Current information about ACL performance is available in [reports to Congress](#) and Congressional budget justifications. The [2018 justification](#) provides the overview of ACL's performance management approach:
  - With its aging programs, ACL focuses on three categories of performance measures: (1) improving consumer outcomes; (2) effectively targeting services to vulnerable populations; and (3) improving efficiency. Each measure is representative of activities across the Aging Services Program budget, and progress toward achievement is tracked using a number of indicators.
  - ACL has implemented a quality review system (QRS) for developmental disability programs under ACL's/AIDD. The QRS uses a three-tiered model to review program compliance, outcomes, and fiscal operations and use review results to target and coordinate technical assistance. The first tier is annual standardized review. The second tier is standardized, in-depth review involving a team of reviewers conducted on a periodic basis. Tier three is customized monitoring for programs for which ACL has significant concerns in terms of compliance and performance.
- ACL continues development of a formula grant monitoring framework for *Older Americans Act* Title III and VII state formula grants. The framework combines assessments of grantee's progress toward program goals and objectives with identification of risk or instances of fraud, waste and abuse.
- There is a rigorous process in which each office within ACL develops Program Funding Plan Memoranda which detail the proposed discretionary grant and procurement activities for the office and justify each proposed activity consistent with ACL's mission and performance measures. Senior leadership has established processes for use of performance data for management decision-making, including a quarterly discretionary dashboard, bi-weekly reports for the Administrator/Assistant Secretary, quarterly reviews of operating budgets, quarterly managers' meetings and bi-weekly center director meetings.
- NIDILRR has developed a [data and performance management program](#) to measure progress and track outcomes of competitive grant recipients. The program has posted and made available annual performance data from grantees to all NIDILRR staff from 2007 to [2013](#). A [public summary](#) can be accessed online.
- Annually, all ACL grantees report their performance data which is used to inform agency budget justifications, publicly available reports, and for the delivery of technical assistance to support continuous program improvement. For example:
  - NIDILRR uses a [web-based platform](#). Additionally, grantees are required to complete the final performance report module within 90 days of the grant's end-date. This report captures overarching, summative results and insights gained from the performance period which grant officers feed back to grantees as part of its continuous quality improvement approach.
  - Many of ACL's Disability Program grantees use a system called [ACLReporting](#) to report on performance annually or semiannually.
  - *Older Americans Act* Title III and VII grantees use as system called NAPIS/CARDS for annual performance reporting. In FY18 ACL piloted a new web-based reporting system to improve the user experience and include additional data security and verification tools. These performance data, as well as data for the OAA Title VI program and data from a national survey which are used for performance reporting, are available in the [Aging Integrated Database](#).
  - [SMP/SHIP](#) programs have complex and standalone data systems. Their performance is reported to ACL and is used to provide more focused TA and support for the programs. Data from both programs is publicized in a number of ways. Each quarter, all State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) get a report from ACL to show how they are doing with a county by county breakdown with quality Likert scores and quantitative analysis of their reports. Project officers use this to help states understand how they are doing and where they can improve.

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:**

Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?

(Example: Performance stat systems)

CNCS:

- CNCS has a focused set of Agency-Wide Priority Measures derived from the 2011–2015 [Strategic Plan](#). Every CNCS Program contributes to the Agency-Wide Priority Measures. There are also specific grantee/sponsor measures that roll up into the Agency-Wide Priority Measures, which can be found in the [Agency-Wide Priority Measures chart](#). Grantees are required to select at least one national performance measure, and they are required to report performance measures data annually. CNCS encourages grantees to use these measure for continuous program improvement. CNCS uses the agency-wide priority measures to assess its own progress toward attaining the goals and objectives of its strategic plan.
- The CNCS Chief of Staff has asked the agency's Management Team of 18 Directors to identify a core business improvement to initiate in FY18 to advance the goal of strengthening core business functions (identified in the agency [Transformation and Sustainability Plan](#)). Each Director will be responsible for the project's outcome, impacts, timeline, and metrics for determining success.
- The Senior Corps program has invested over \$1 million in various management analyses that have been and will be used to inform operations, programming, and its research agenda moving forward. Focus groups with the field were conducted by an independent contractor to improve performance measurement, recruitment practices, volunteer incentive policies, partnership development, and information sharing among offices. Case studies were also funded (and are currently underway) to better understand various dimensions of program implementation. A contract will also be awarded this fiscal year to comprehensively assess the quality of program administrative data and its potential uses for performance management.
- The AmeriCorps NCCC program tracks five key performance indicators: (1) alignment of NCCC teams with state identified priorities; (2) in-kind contributions from project sponsor organizations and communities; (3) employee viewpoint trends; (4) member graduation rates; and (5) number of alumni remaining in the community post-graduation. A pilot was initiated in 2014 to determine how the program might pursue increasing its effectiveness while decreasing costs. A comparison of key performance indicators (e.g., number of service hours, number of projects and sponsors, member attrition) was made between two classes that served and graduated from the program prior to the pilot and three classes following pilot implementation. Findings from the pilot demonstrated that costs could be reduced while maintaining the same level of community service and increasing member retention in the program. The revised program model has since been implemented in three of four program locations with the third occurring in FY18.

MCC:

- MCC monitors progress towards compact and threshold program results on a quarterly basis using performance indicators that are specified in the M&E Plan for each country's investments. The M&E Plans specify indicators at all levels (process, output, and outcome) so that progress towards final results can be tracked. Every quarter each partner country submits an [Indicator Tracking Table](#) (ITT) that shows actual performance of each indicator relative to the baseline that was established before the activity began and the performance targets that were established in the M&E Plan. Key performance indicators and their accompanying [data by country](#) are updated every quarter and published online. MCC management and the relevant country team reviews this data in a formal Quarterly Performance Review meeting every quarter to assess whether results are being achieved and integrates this information into project management and implementation decisions.
- In an effort to track and aggregate evidence across its entire portfolio, MCC has implemented a [common indicators](#) structure across six sectors in which it invests. In all MCC countries, projects in these six sectors – energy, land and property rights, education, WASH, transportation, and agriculture – capture evidence across a common set of indicators to allow MCC to build an agency-wide evidence base around its investments.

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:**

Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?

(Example: Performance stat systems)

MCC (cont):

- MCC also supports the creation of multidisciplinary 'country teams' to manage the development and implementation of each compact and threshold program. Teams usually include the following members: coordinator, economist, private sector development specialist, social inclusion and gender integration specialist, technical specialists (project specific), M&E specialist, environmental and social performance specialist, legal, and financial management and procurement specialists. From the earliest stages, these teams develop project logics and M&E frameworks supported by data and evidence, and use them to inform the development of the projects within each program. Teams meet frequently to gather evidence, discuss progress, make project design decisions, and solve problems. Prior to moving forward with a program investment, teams are encouraged to use the lessons from completed evaluations to inform their work going forward.
- Established as a key element for success in the [2016 Open Government Plan](#), Knowledge Management (KM) continues to be a critical priority for MCC. In FY18, the agency formed a Knowledge Management Core Team led by a newly appointed Knowledge Management Lead. The objective of this KM initiative is to better capture and disseminate intra-agency information and resources. By leveraging accumulated knowledge, MCC will be better positioned to implement country programs and achieve development impact more efficiently and effectively.
- Throughout FY18, MCC is implementing a [new reporting system](#) that will enhance MCC's credibility around results, transparency, and accountability. The [Star Report](#) and its associated business process quarterly captures key information to provide a framework for results and improve the ability to promote and disseminate learning and evidence throughout the compact and threshold program lifecycle. For each compact and threshold program, evidence is collected on performance indicators, evaluation results, partnerships, sustainability efforts, and learning, among other elements; and critically, this information will be available in one report after each program ends. Through the [Star Report](#), MCC is able to capture how and why programs achieved certain results and provide better reporting of compact and threshold program performance to public audiences, such as Congress, other development agencies, and the academic community. Each country will have a [Star Report](#) published roughly seven months after completion. MCC's first [Star Report](#) will focus on the recently closed compact in Cabo Verde and will be published in September 2018.
- MCC reports on its performance in its [Agency Financial Report](#) (AFR) which provides the results that enable the President, Congress, and the American people to assess MCC's performance for the fiscal year. In particular, the AFR provides an overview of MCC's programs, accomplishments, challenges, and management's accountability over the resources entrusted to MCC. MCC also prepares an [Annual Performance Report](#) (APR) each fiscal year that is included in its Congressional Budget Justification. Together, the AFR and APR provide a comprehensive presentation and disclosure of important financial and programmatic information related to MCC's operations and results, including a fair assessment of MCC's leadership and stewardship of the resources entrusted to the agency. MCC provides further information related to its activities in an [Annual Report](#).

SAMHSA:

- In 2016, SAMHSA's Office of Financial Resources (OFR) established a Program Integrity Review Team (PIRT) staffed by representatives from each of its four Centers and managed by OFR. On a quarterly basis, three SAMHSA discretionary grant portfolios (one from each of the three program Centers) conduct a self-analysis to examine grantee performance based on objective performance data, financial performance and other factors. Program staff present their program self-assessments to the PIRT and receive feedback on, for example, targets of concern. In one instance, grantees were surpassing their targets by 200-300%, resulting in the board suggesting that the targets be re-examined as appropriate for these high-performing grantees. In addition, the Centers have historically managed internal performance review boards to periodically review grantee performance and provide corrective actions as needed.

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:**

Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?

(Example: Performance stat systems)

SAMHSA (cont.):

- A new unified data collection system, [SAMHSA's Performance Accountability & Reporting Systems](#) (SPARS), was put into place in early 2017. Historically, the three program Centers had independent data collection systems that did not allow for global reviews of agency activities. The new system allows for greater transparency about grantee performance across Centers. SAMHSA aligns program objectives and measures through its utilization of SPARS, SAMHSA's online data entry, reporting, technical assistance request, and training system for grantees to report timely and accurate data. SPARS is a mechanism by which SAMHSA meets requirements of the *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993* (GPRA) and the *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010*.
- SAMHSA's strategic plan [Leading Change 2.0: Advancing the Behavioral Health of the Nation 2015–2018](#) outlines six strategic initiatives for fiscal years 2015–2018. These initiatives are linked to SAMHSA's policy, programmatic, and financial planning that support innovative, evidence-based practices that show promising results and best expertise and knowledge around treatment and prevention of mental health and behavioral challenges for a variety of stakeholders (p. 5).
- Pursuant to the [21st Century Cures Act](#), SAMHSA is required to establish standards for grant programs that, among other factors, addresses the extent to which grantees must collect and report on required performance measures, and SAMHSA must advance the use of performance metrics recommended both by the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) (Sec. 6002, pp. 464–465) and the Director of CBHSQ (Sec. 6004, p. 470). In addition, SAMHSA's Chief Medical Officer is required to coordinate with ASPE to assess the use of performance metrics in evaluation activities, and coordinate with the Assistance Secretary to ensure programs consistently utilize appropriate performance metrics and evaluation designs (Sec. 6003, p. 468). The Assistant Secretary must also submit a biennial report to Congress that assesses the extent to which its programs and activities meet goals and appropriate performance measures (Sec. 6006, p. 477).

USAID:

- USAID partners with the U.S. Department of State to jointly develop and implement clear strategic goals, strategic objectives, and performance goals, articulated in the FY 2018 – 2022 U.S. Department of State – USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). Indicators measuring progress on strategic goals, strategic objectives, and performance goals are collected from across the agency, in part, through the annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR), and performance is reported externally through the [Annual Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report](#) (APP/APR) and the [Agency Financial Report](#).
- USAID also measures operations performance management to ensure that the agency achieves its development objectives and aligns resources with priorities. USAID's Performance Improvement Officer (PIO) and USAID's Program Management Improvement Officer (PMIO) lead agency efforts to use performance data for decision-making and improve performance and operational efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the PIO and PMIO coordinate tracking of Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goal and Agency Priority Goal (APG) progress; leverage performance management reviews to conduct deep-dives into evidence; and oversee business process reviews and other program and management assessments to ensure that the agency more efficiently and effectively achieves its mission and goals. USAID reports on APG and CAP goal progress on [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov).
- USAID missions develop CDCSs with clear goals and objectives and a [PMP](#) that identifies expected results, performance indicators to measure those results, plans for data collection and analysis, and periodic review of performance measures to use data and evidence to adapt programs for improved outcomes.

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:**

Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?

(Example: Performance stat systems)

USED:

- ED develops a four-year strategic plan and holds quarterly data-driven progress reviews of the goals and objectives established in the plan, as required by the *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010*. ED's [FY18-22 Strategic Plan](#) includes two parallel goals, one for P-12, and one for higher education (Strategic Objectives 1.4 and 2.2, respectively), that focus on supporting agencies and educational institutions in the identification and use of evidence-based strategies and practices. The Department's [FY 2017 Annual Performance Report and FY 2019 Annual Performance Plan](#) includes the FY17 performance results for the strategic objective 5.3 in the previous Strategic Plan, which also included metrics for evidence and for which established targets were mostly met.
- Per GPRAMA's requirement that agencies conduct quarterly data-driven performance reviews, the Office of the Deputy Secretary facilitates these discussions with the goal leaders and their teams each quarter. The Deputy Secretary is the designated Chair of these meetings and they involve reviewing data submitted by the goal teams, performance to date, and discussing any challenges or known risks. Office and goal leaders attend these meetings in person.
- In addition, ED has emphasizes continuous improvement in evidence-based decision-making among States and districts. In 2016, ED released non-regulatory guidance, [Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#), which recommends a five-step decision-making process to promote continuous improvement and improvement and support better outcomes for students. This [guidance](#) has served as a framework for the ED's technical assistance related to implementation of ESSA's evidence provisions, such as the [State Support Network's](#) community of practice on evidence-based practices that supports nine states with selection of interventions. ED has conducted outreach to build awareness of the guidance with stakeholder groups. In addition, ED included tailored guidance for these five steps in its guidance on [Title II, Part A](#), and [Title IV](#) of ESEA. These resources supplement ED's substantial evidence-focused technical assistance efforts, such as:
  - RELs work in partnership with policymakers and practitioners in their regions to evaluate programs and to use evaluation findings and other research to improve academic outcomes for their students.
  - Comprehensive Centers provide support to States in planning and implementing interventions through coaching, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and ongoing direct support.
  - The State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence-Based Practices Center provides tools, training modules, and resources on implementation planning and monitoring.

USHUD:

- HUD complies with federal strategic planning and performance management requirements, which include quarterly reporting on Agency Priority Goals on [Performance.gov](#). HUD documents alignment between strategic goals and supporting objectives and performance metrics in the [Annual Performance Plan](#) and [Annual Performance Report](#), and identifies the staff assigned lead responsibility for each objective.
- HUD has launched an effort called "Prescription for HUD" through which senior staff reviews quarterly data demonstrating progress toward Secretarial priorities and Agency Priority Goals. Prescription for HUD supersedes the original HUDstat approach to performance management.

CRITERIA

**4. Performance Management/Continuous Improvement:** Did the agency implement a performance management system with clear and prioritized outcome-focused goals and aligned program objectives and measures, and did it frequently collect, analyze, and use data and evidence to improve outcomes, return on investment, and other dimensions of performance in FY18?  
(Example: Performance stat systems)

USHUD (cont):

- In FY17, HUD launched a pilot of "[Standards for Success](#)," a new standardized data collection and reporting framework for discretionary grant programs. The framework is intended to enable grant activities to be driven by coordinated outcomes and assessed using return on investment metrics. The framework is helping to standardize data elements, measures, definitions, metrics, and reporting periods; align programmatic data elements and measures with higher-level agency priority goals and objectives; and strengthen online reporting through record-level reports for greater analysis and responsiveness of programs. In the pilot's first year, three HUD programs participated with a subset of their grants. The pilot is building an evidence base for scaling up Standards for Success as the common reporting framework for all discretionary grant programs.

USDOL:

- DOL's [Performance Management Center](#) (PMC) is responsible for DOL's extensive performance management system, which includes 1,000 measures which are reviewed quarterly by Department leadership. PMC leads the department's Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) Program, which supports agencies in efforts to gain operational efficiencies and improve performance. The program directs customized process improvement projects throughout the department and grows the cadre of CPI practitioners through Lean Six Sigma training.
- PMC leads DOL's implementation of the *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010* (GPRMA), including requirements such as the [four-year Strategic Plan](#) and [Annual Performance Report](#). Using a performance stat reporting and dashboard system linked to component agencies' annual operating plans, PMC coordinates quarterly reviews of each agency's program performance by the Deputy Secretary to analyze progress and identify opportunities for performance improvements.
- At the agency level, ETA recently implemented extensive performance reporting requirements for programs authorized by the WIOA and related workforce programs. ETA's workforce programs use a similar data layout for performance reporting, using the same data elements and definitions. This facilitates comparison of outcomes and information for different programs. ETA uses this performance information to inform program policy and budgetary decisions.
- An important role that DOL's CEO helps to play is to facilitate the interaction between program and evaluation analysts, and performance management and evaluation. Learning agendas updated annually by DOL agencies in collaboration with DOL's CEO include program performance themes and priorities for analysis needed to refine performance measures and identify strategies for improving performance. The quarterly reviews with leadership routinely include specific discussions about improving performance and findings from recent evaluations that suggest opportunities for improvement.

CRITERIA

**5. Data:** Did the agency collect, analyze, share, and use high-quality administrative and survey data – consistent with strong privacy protections – to improve (or help other entities improve) federal, state, and local programs in FY18?  
(Examples: Model data-sharing agreements or data-licensing agreements; data tagging and documentation; data standardization; open data policies)

ACF:

- In 2016, ACF established a new [Division of Data and Improvement](#) (DDI) providing federal leadership and resources to improve the quality, use, and sharing of data. DDI serves as ACF's coordination point on all things related to administrative data and interoperability, with DDI staff providing support to ACF program offices and their stakeholders at all levels. DDI works to support the development of interoperable data systems, improve data quality and program integrity, and use data to build evidence and improve programs.
- ACF's [Interoperability Initiative](#) supports data sharing through developing standards and tools that are reusable across the country, and addressing common privacy and security requirements to mitigate risks. ACF has developed resources such as the [National Human Services Interoperability Architecture](#), which proposes a framework to facilitate information sharing, improve service delivery, prevent fraud, and provide better outcomes for children and families; an [Interoperability Toolkit](#) to help state human services agencies connect with their health counterparts; and a [Confidentiality Toolkit](#) that supports state and local efforts by explaining rules governing confidentiality in ACF and certain related programs, by providing examples of how confidentiality requirements can be addressed, and by including sample Memoranda of Understandings and data sharing agreements. Several ACF divisions have also been instrumental in supporting cross-governmental efforts, such as the [National Information Exchange Model](#) (NIEM) that will enable human services agencies to collaborate with health, education, justice, and many other constituencies that play a role in the well-being of children and families. New pages published on the ACF website in 2018 highlight resources for [Interoperability and Data Sharing](#) and [ACF Program Guidance on Sharing Administrative Data](#). ACF will soon announce an [Interoperability Action Plan](#) to continue this work.
- An important element of the ACF Interoperability Action Plan is that all ACF programs will actively pursue actions that allow and encourage states and tribes to share data, including the removal of unnecessary restrictions that prevent legal, ethical, and authorized data sharing, for the benefit of clients served by these programs. ACF program offices will actively seek out opportunities to enhance and support integrated data initiatives such as coordinated case management and data-informed decision-making, and ACF will continue to expand efforts to make data available for research, evaluation, cross-program outcome measurement, and other statistical purposes to inform policymaking and program improvement. ACF and its program offices will develop and implement a Data Sharing First (DSF) strategy that starts with the assumption that data sharing is in the public interest. ACF will encourage and promote data sharing broadly, constrained only when required by law or when there are strong countervailing considerations.
- ACF administers the [Public Assistance Reporting Information System](#), a platform for exchange of data on benefits receipt across ACF, Department of Defense, and Veterans Affairs programs. This platform entails data sharing agreements between these three federal agencies and between ACF and state agencies.
- In 2018 ACF produced a Compendium of ACF Administrative and Survey Data Resources. All major ACF person-level administrative data sets and surveys are included, including 11 administrative data sources and eight surveys. Each entry includes the following information: data ownership and staff experts, basic content, major publications and websites, available data sets (public, restricted use, in-house), restrictions on data sharing, capacity to link with other data sets along with history of such linking, data quality, and resources to collect, prepare, and analyze the data. The compendium is currently available for internal use at HHS; a public version is forthcoming.

## CRITERIA

**5. Data:** Did the agency collect, analyze, share, and use high-quality administrative and survey data – consistent with strong privacy protections – to improve (or help other entities improve) federal, state, and local programs in FY18?  
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ACF (cont.):

- ACF has numerous efforts underway to promote and support the use of data for research and improvement. Highlights of these efforts are listed below:
  - ACF has made numerous administrative and survey datasets publicly available for secondary use, such as data from the [National Survey of Early Care and Education](#), [Child Care and Development Fund](#), [National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being](#), and [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System](#), among many other examples.
  - ACF's National Directory of New Hires has entered into data sharing agreements with numerous agencies. For example, the Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office and Employment & Training Administration have interagency agreements with ACF for sharing and matching earnings data on nine different formal net impact evaluations. The [NDNH Guide for Data Submission](#) describes an agreement with the Social Security Administration to use its network for data transmission.
  - ACF's [TANF Data Innovation Project](#) supports innovation and improved effectiveness of state TANF programs by enhancing the use of data from TANF and related human services programs. This work includes encouraging and strengthening state integrated data systems, promoting proper payments and program integrity, and enabling data analytics for TANF program improvement. The project supports the use of data for understanding the broad impact that TANF has on families, and improving knowledge of how the federal government and state partners can use data to more efficiently and effectively serve TANF clients.
  - The [Family Self-Sufficiency Data Center](#), a cooperative agreement with the University of Chicago, supports the development, implementation, and ongoing operations of the Data Center to support family self-sufficiency research and activities. To date, the project has: conducted a comprehensive needs assessment; developed a prototype for a web-based data archive and analysis tool; worked with states and localities, providing modeling, analytic, and technical support to providers and users of family self-sufficiency data; and generated publicly-available resources, including data models and code to help state-level data users produce analyses. The Center is currently analyzing TANF caseload data through a data sharing agreement with ACF's Office of Family Assistance. One goal is to assess data quality and opportunities for matching with other administrative data sources. Another is to produce descriptive information about caseload dynamics over time.
  - ACF is producing a resource series on [Supporting the Use of Administrative Data in Early Care and Education Research](#). This set of resources is intended to strengthen the ability of state/territory child care administrators and their research partners to use administrative data to address policy-relevant early care and education research questions.
  - OPRE actively promotes archiving of research and evaluation data for secondary use. In FY18, ACF OPRE research contracts included a standard clause requiring contractors to make data and analyses supported through federal funds available to other researchers and to establish procedures and parameters for all aspects of data and information collection necessary to support archiving information and data collected under the contract. Many datasets from past OPRE projects are stored at archives including the ACF-funded [Child Care & Early Education Research Connections](#) site and the [ICPSR data archive](#).
  - New pages published on the ACF website in 2018 include resources for [Administrative Data for Research and Improvement](#).

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- ACL:
- ACL makes the majority of its administrative and survey datasets publicly available through the following systems:
    - The [National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System](#) provides national data on the exploitation and abuse of older adults and adults with disabilities. ACL has developed a [best practices and policies](#) for data submission and specifications.
    - The [Aging Integrated Database](#) (AGID) is an integrated, user-friendly online data system, including data on ACL programs and Census bureau data.
    - The [Burn Model System](#) (BMS) provides a comprehensive and longitudinal record of health and community outcomes of burn survivors with more severe injuries. It is the only project that collects long-term outcomes on both pediatric and adult patients to better understand the relation between the injury, acute care, rehabilitation, and long-term functioning of people with burn injury.
    - NIDILRR's [Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems National Data and Statistical Center](#) (TBINDSC) advances medical rehabilitation by increasing the rigor and efficiency of scientific efforts to longitudinally assess the experience of individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI).
    - The [National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center](#) (NSCISC) supports and directs the collection, management and analysis of the world's largest and longest spinal cord injury research database.
  - The [Office of Information Resources Management](#) manages ACL information and technology services, including providing IT governance and managing network security and privacy responsibilities. Prior to the collection of data, all programs must complete Privacy Impact Assessments specifying how performance and evaluation data will be secured and its privacy protected.
  - ACL has an internal policy requiring that all evaluation contracts include the following language: "The contractor shall develop an IT Security Plan and conduct related security assessments in accordance with the *Federal Information Security Management Act* (FISMA). The IT Security Plan must ensure the integrity, confidentiality, when appropriate, and availability of all data collected on behalf of the Federal government. All records that are the property of the Federal government must be maintained in accordance with HHS policies and procedures, and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) disposition schedules. The Contractor shall provide a certification statement concerning the proper maintenance of all records to the COR at the beginning of the contract. The Contractor shall discuss the disposition of records with the COR and obtain COR approval before any records are disposed. The Contractor shall notify the COR within 24 hours concerning any loss of data integrity, any unauthorized disclosure of data, or any misuse of data." Contractor staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements prior to accessing any ACL data.
  - The majority of ACL's data is aggregated at the grantee (e.g., State) level, limiting the ability to link those data to other datasets. For individual evaluation projects, for which individual-level data are collected, ACL has had success using administrative data sets from other federal agencies.
    - Specifically, as part of the *Older Americans Act* Nutrition Services Program (NSP) evaluation, ACL's contractor, Mathematica, used Medicare claims and enrollment data to construct outcome measures and define Medicare beneficiary characteristics such as hierarchical condition category (HCC) scores, the original reason for an individual's Medicare eligibility, whether the individual had dual enrollment in Medicare and Medicaid, and whether the individual had chronic conditions.
    - To describe NSP participants' geographic access to food, the contractor used residential address information for each respondent in the outcomes survey, data from the Census Bureau, and address data for food retailers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Using this information, the research team calculated measures of geographic access to food and determined whether a respondent lived in an urban or rural area.
    - The research team used data from the American Community Survey to obtain local-area population characteristics to better describe the communities in which meal participants lived.

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ACL (cont.):

- ACL collects administrative data from grantees to improve its programs and the capacity of service providers:
  - In 2014, ACL developed a [Dementia Capability Assessment Tool](#) in support of their programs to expand dementia capability in communities. In 2017 the tool was translated into an online format, making it possible to analyze each program's progress toward dementia capability in its entirety or broken down by sector.
  - [VD-HCBS data](#) is used to understand the effects of the program and to provide targeted TA to network locations that are having issues with the VA program.
- AIDD is building the capacity of state developmental disabilities agencies to gather vital information on service outcomes through the [National Data Measurement Project](#) and the adoption of the National Core Indicators (NCI) as the uniform dataset. The NCI framework comprises over 100 key outcome indicators that are designed to gather valid and reliable data across five broad domains: individual outcomes; family outcomes; health, welfare, and rights; staff stability; and system performance.

CNCS:

- As the nation's largest grant maker for service and volunteering, CNCS collects data about service program members, volunteers, and the organizations in which members and volunteers are placed. Member/volunteer demographic, service experience, and outcome data are collected in a variety of ways – both through administrative processes and through surveys.
- CNCS cleared an internal Data Sharing Policy in January 2018 which further strengthens the agency's data management capacities. The purpose of the policy is to provide the agency with a standard policy, practice, and approval process for identifying and releasing data assets.
- In FY18, CNCS enhanced its National Service Reports. Through the "[National Service in Your State](#)," the public can now view comprehensive data about CNCS resources that were invested in each state over the past 12 months. In addition, CNCS staff now are able to run a variety of data reports at the state, city, county, and Congressional District levels at any time along with state-specific [social media graphics](#). These reports are used for a range of operational and educational purposes, and users can choose the type of report, geographic level, and which components they want to run.
- The [Administrative Data Pilot](#) competition (\$4.05 million) will continue until September 2019 and is designed to support current Pay for Success projects' access to high-quality, less expensive data for evaluation purposes so they can improve the outcomes of their interventions. The grantees will create a mechanism for service recipients to systematically take advantage of emerging best practices. Three projects and 11 service recipients were selected: The Urban Institute supports four projects and is helping each develop a work plan for accessing and sharing administrative data; Utah's Sorenson Impact Center supports four projects and is helping them identify appropriate methods and metrics for measuring results as well as obtaining and analyzing data; and Third Sector Capital Partner (TSCP) and Stanford's Center on Poverty and Inequality (CPI) have three projects to increase their capacity to link and analyze data.
- CNCS has posted the [Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool](#) to encourage its use for data collection both internally and externally. The CNCS Chief Risk Officer has asked the Director of R&E to help use this tool for modifying the agency's grant risk assessment and monitoring protocol.
- In FY18, data collected from Americorps member exit survey allowed CNCS to generate more accurate reports on key experiences and anticipated college, career, and civic engagement outcomes, which were shared internally. Survey results were shared with program and agency leadership in FY18 for program improvement purposes. In FY18, R&E finalized a data request form and an MOU template so that program-level and state-level data sets and reports can be shared with partners. The agency is working on protocols to share these data through its [open data platform](#).

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### CNCS (cont.):

- Volunteering statistics were made available, through a data sharing agreement with the Census Bureau, on an [interactive platform](#) for the first time as well as [service location data](#). The goal was to make these data more accessible to all interested end-users. Similarly, the dataset of alumni identified for the [alumni outcome survey pilot](#) was shared with the Census Bureau and matched with the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey data, with findings expected in late FY18. This administrative data match between alumni records and the Census' LEHD dataset to obtain employment and employment sector outcomes for AmeriCorps alumni will help the agency reduce its reliance on traditional survey methods so that key economic outcomes can be obtained from more objective sources and for less cost.
- CNCS worked closely with the U.S. Census Bureau in FY17 to revise the Current Population Survey supplements to improve the data quality of these instruments. One supplement was created based on a thorough literature review, psychometric testing, cognitive interviews, and public comment. The instrument was cleared by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and data collection occurred in September 2017. CNCS will release the statistics in the Fall of 2018.
- In April of 2018, the CNCS Chief of Staff asked the Director of R&E to help stand up a Data Analytics Unit over the following six months. A Data Analytics Working Group was identified and started convening in May 2018. The final scheduled meeting took place in September 2018. Recommendations for improving the quality and transparency of CNCS data management policies, structures, and processes was presented to the Executive Leadership Team in October 2018. This effort reflects the CEO and Chief of Staff's commitment to ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of data infrastructure and to demonstrate agency success through credible and compelling data.

### MCC:

- From its founding in 2004, MCC's model has been based on a set of core principles that are essential to effective development assistance: good governance, country ownership, focus on results, and transparency. MCC promotes transparency in order to provide people with access to information that facilitates their understanding of MCC's model, its decision-making processes, and the results of its investments. [Transparency](#) (and therefore open data) is a core principle for MCC because it is the basis for accountability, provides strong checks against corruption, builds public confidence, and supports informed participation of citizens. As a testament to MCC's commitment to and implementation of transparency and open data, the agency was the highest-ranked U.S. government agency in the [2018 Publish What You Fund Aid Transparency Index](#) for the fifth year. In addition, the U.S. government is part of the [Open Government Partnership](#), also a signatory to the [International Aid Transparency Initiative](#) (IATI), and under the [Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act](#) (FATAA), all which require foreign assistance agencies to make it easier to access, use, and understand data. All of these actions have created further impetus for MCC's work in this area, as they establish specific goals and timelines for adoption of transparent business processes.
- MCC is committed to using high-quality data and evidence to drive its strategic planning and program decisions. The [M&E plans for all programs and tables](#) of key performance indicators for all projects are available online by compact/threshold program and by sector, for use by both partner countries and the general public. MCC makes Program Data, including financials and results data, available through its [Open Data Catalog](#). DPE leads the MCC Disclosure Review Board (DRB) process for publicly releasing the de-identified microdata that underlies the [independent evaluations](#) on the Evaluation Catalog, following MCC's [Microdata Management Guidelines](#) to ensure appropriate balance in transparency efforts with protection of human subjects' confidentiality.

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MCC (cont):

- The [Microdata Evaluation Guidelines](#) inform MCC staff and contractors, as well as other partners, on how to store, manage, and disseminate evaluation-related microdata. This microdata is distinct from other data MCC disseminates because it typically includes personally identifiable information and sensitive data as required for the independent evaluations. With this in mind, MCC's Guidelines govern how to manage three competing objectives: share data for verification and replication of the independent evaluations, share data to maximize usability and learning, and protect the privacy and confidentiality of evaluation participants. These Guidelines were established in 2013 and updated in January 2017. Following these Guidelines, MCC has publicly released 71 de-identified, public use microdata files for its evaluations. MCC's experience with developing and implementing this rigorous process for data management and dissemination while protecting human subjects throughout the evaluation life cycle is detailed in [Opening Up Evaluation Microdata: Balancing Risks and Benefits of Research Transparency](#).
- MCC's Economic Analysis division produces and publishes interactive, downloadable [Economic Rate of Returns \(ERR\)](#) spreadsheets that include the description of the project, including its economic rationale; the expected project impacts, including detailed cost and benefit estimates; and a tool allowing users to modify key assumptions and study the effects of those modifications on the project's returns. The Cost Benefit Analyses that generate the ERRs are reported at the lowest level of disaggregated activity that data and program logic permit, and all this information is reported online. The ERR spreadsheets also include Beneficiary Analysis, which indicates to which segments of the population benefits are expected to accrue.
- MCC and other donors are [increasing the amount of gender data released](#) and helping to [improve](#) international data transparency standards.
- MCC has a partnership with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), referred to as the [Data Collaboratives for Local Impact \(DCLI\)](#). This partnership is improving the use of data analysis for decision-making within PEPFAR and MCC partner countries – working toward evidence-based programs to address challenges in HIV/AIDS and health, empowerment of women and youth, and sustainable economic growth. Data-driven priority setting and insights gathered by citizen-generated data and community mapping initiatives contribute to improved allocation of resources in target communities to address local priorities, such as job creation, access to services, and reduced gender-based violence. DCLI continues to inform and improve the capabilities of PEPFAR activities through projects such as the [Tanzania Data Lab](#), which has trained nearly 700 individuals, nearly 50% of whom were women, and has hosted a one-of-a-kind "[Data Festival](#)." Recently, the lab has announced a partnership with the [University of Virginia Data Science Institute](#) and catalyzed launching of the first Masters in Data Science in East Africa, in partnership with the University of Dar Es Salaam.
- After a sustained learning agenda around its evaluations, this year the M&E division is focused on the use of its monitoring data for real-time learning within compacts. The division is seeking to better understand how and when monitoring data are used and how its results can feed back into compact decisions. A critical component of this work is identifying and utilizing higher frequency monitoring data to build a real-time evidence base to better impact program implementation. Specifically, MCC seeks to measure high frequency outputs using newer and cheaper technologies such as cell phones, geospatial data, satellite imagery, the internet of things, and machine learning. To facilitate this data collection and use, MCC has issued a [call for partnerships](#) in these areas.

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MCC (cont):

- MCC's [Data Analytics Program](#) (DAP) enables enterprise data-driven decision-making through the capture, storage, analysis, publishing, and governance of MCC's core programmatic data. The DAP streamlines the agency's data lifecycle, facilitating increased efficiency. Additionally, the program promotes agency-wide coordination, learning, and transparency. For example, MCC has developed custom software applications to capture program data, established the infrastructure for consolidated storage and analysis, and connected robust data sources to end user tools that power up-to-date, dynamic reporting and will ultimately streamline content maintenance on MCC's public website. As a part of this effort, M&E has developed an Evaluation Pipeline application. It provides up-to-date information on the status, risk, cost, and milestones of the full evaluation portfolio for better performance management.
- The Transparent and Accountable Governance Project in the Kosovo Threshold program aims to facilitate data-driven decision-making by promoting the public availability and analytical use of data across civil society and the government. The [Kosovo Open Data Challenge](#) ("Dig Data") activity will award grants through a competitive process to individuals or organizations who have innovative ideas about how to use, analyze, and present data to influence and support the Government's analytical and public communication needs. To ensure the newly available data resulting from the Program and other sources is used to drive decision-making, Dig Data will engage, support, and connect local innovators, developers, and solution providers to use open data to help produce tools and analysis that respond to Government needs, thereby creating examples of constructive relationships between the Government, private sector, and civil society. Dig Data will support relevant Government entities to creatively share data and formulate their critical needs or questions. The activity will also support the Government to implement or plan for implementation of solutions identified as part of the activity. Through this process, Dig Data will, in particular, emphasize identification of potential inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, region, or other relevant disaggregations, and solution-oriented analysis of data, and adoption of those solutions. The first window of the challenge is on labor force data and employment solutions. The second window will be on environmental air quality data, and the third will be on judicial data.

SAMHSA:

- SAMHSA has five data collection initiatives: [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#) (NSDUH); population data; [Treatment Episode Data Set – Admissions](#); client level data; [National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services](#) (N-SSATS); substance abuse facilities data; [Drug Abuse Warning Network](#); emergency department data; and the [National Mental Health Services Survey](#) (N-MHSS) and has made numerous administrative and survey datasets publicly available for secondary use. Each data collection can be sorted by metadata parameters such as geography, methodology, spotlights, data reviews, and data tables. CBHSQ oversees these data collection initiatives and provides publicly available datasets so that some data can be shared with researchers and other stakeholders while preserving client confidentiality and privacy. Some restricted data cannot be shared beyond federal staff.
- SAMHSA's [Data Integrity Statement](#) articulates the administration's Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ), a Federal Statistical Unit, adherence to the federal common set of professional and operational standards that ensure the "[quality, integrity, and credibility](#)" of statistical activities.

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SAMHSA (cont.):

- [SAMHSA's Performance and Accountability and Reporting System](#) (SPARS) hosts the data entry, technical assistance request, and training system for grantees to report performance data to SAMHSA. SPARS serves as the repository for the Administration's three centers: Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention (CSAP), Center for Mental health Services (CMHS), and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). Due to concerns about confidentiality and privacy, the current data transfer agreement limits the use of grantee data to internal reports so that data collected by SAMHSA grantees will not be available to share with researchers or stakeholders beyond SAMHSA and publications based on grantee data will not be permitted. Enhancements to the existing data collection system to improve data transparency and sharing of administrative and performance data are being planned. The foundational system went live in February 2017. Going forward, changes will allow for analytic reports to be shared with grantees so that performance successes and gaps can be better tracked, both by the project officers overseeing the grantees and by the grantees themselves. It is anticipated that this will improve communication and oversight as well as offer more real-time opportunities for program performance. Enhancements to the existing data collection system to improve data transparency and sharing of administrative and performance data are currently being [implemented](#). Information on latest available data for program staff can be found on the portal announcement section on the [home page](#).
- [SAMHSA's Performance and Accountability and Reporting System](#) (SPARS) hosts the data entry, technical assistance request, and training system for grantees to report performance data to SAMHSA. SPARS serves as the repository for the Administration's three centers, Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention (CSAP), Center for Mental health Services (CMHS), and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). Due to concerns about confidentiality and privacy, the current data transfer agreement limits the use of grantee data to internal reports so that data collected by SAMHSA grantees will not be available to share with researchers or stakeholders beyond SAMHSA and publications based on grantee data will not be permitted. SAMHSA expects to revisit the issue once the Commission on Evidence Base Policymaking releases their findings in September 2017.
- SAMHSA's [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive](#) (SAMHDA) contains substance use disorder and mental illness research data available for restricted and public use. SAMHDA promotes the access and use of SAMHSA's substance abuse and mental health data by providing public-use data files and documentation for download and online analysis tools to support a better understanding of this critical area of public health.
- Per SAMHSA's Evaluation Policy & Procedure (P&P), CBHSQ will work with CMHS, CSAT, and CSAP Center Directors and other program staff to develop a SAMHSA Completed Evaluation Inventory of evaluations completed between FY11 and FY17. This inventory and the evaluation final reports will then be made available on SAMHSA's intranet and internet sites. In addition, data files from completed evaluations will be made available on the intranet, and via a restricted access mechanism such as SAMHDA.

USAID:

- USAID has an [open data policy](#) which, in addition to setting requirements for how USAID data is tagged, submitted, and updated, also established the [Development Data Library](#) (DDL) as the agency's repository of USAID-funded, machine readable data created or collected by the agency and its implementing partners. The DDL, as a repository of structured and quantitative data, complements the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#) which publishes qualitative reports and information.
- To improve linkages and break down silos, USAID continues to develop the [Development Information Solution](#) (DIS) – an enterprise-wide management information system that will enable USAID to collect, manage, and visualize performance data across units, along with budget and procurement information, to more efficiently manage and execute programming. Releases have begun on DIS work streams as of Q3 FY18, with an accelerated timeline for full implementation of core functionality by the end of 2019, which will then be followed by enhancements.

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USAID (cont.):

- The United States is a signatory to the [International Aid Transparency Initiative](#) (IATI) – a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative that created a data standard for publishing foreign assistance spending data and allowing comparison across publishers. USAID continues to improve and add to its published IATI data. Published location data for USAID projects can be viewed and queried on [D-Portal](#) for Mali, Lebanon, Colombia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, The Democratic Republic of Congo, West Bank/Gaza, Jordan, and Georgia.
- The USAID [GeoCenter](#) uses data and analytics to improve the effectiveness of USAID's development programs by geographically assessing where resources will maximize impact. The GeoCenter team works directly with field missions and Washington-based bureaus to integrate geographic analysis into the strategic planning, design, monitoring, and evaluation of USAID's development programs. The GeoCenter also provides important data-centered trainings to USAID staff.
- The USAID Data Services team is dedicated to improving the usage of USAID data and information, so that the agency continues to ensure its development outcomes are supported by evidence. Through USAID Data Services, the development community has direct access to more than 100 sources of international development data via the [International Data and Economic Analysis](#) (IDEA) website and [Foreign Aid Explorer](#), a site that reports comprehensively on U.S. government foreign assistance, from 1946 to the present.
- USAID uses data and evidence to inform policy formulation, strategic planning, project design, project management and adaptation, program monitoring and evaluation, and learning what works, through a framework called the [Program Cycle](#), which underwent major revisions in September 2016.
- USAID's [Monitoring Country Progress](#) (MCP) system is an empirical analytical system which tracks and analyzes country progress to facilitate country strategic planning.
- USAID also publishes spending data alongside program results on the [Dollars to Results](#) (D2R) page of the USAID website. D2R provides illustrative information on USAID's impact around the world by linking annual spending to results. USAID updated D2R in FY17 to include data on all of the countries where USAID works.
- USAID's [Privacy Program](#) discusses policies and practices for protecting personally identifiable information (PII) and data.

USED:

- ED has several resources to support the high-quality collection, analysis, and use of high-quality data in ways that protect privacy. IES' [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES) serves as the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. Almost all of ED's K-12 statistical and programmatic data collections are now administered by NCES via [EDFacts](#). NCES also collects data through national and international [surveys](#) and [assessments](#). Administrative institutional data and statistical sample survey data for postsecondary education is collected through NCES in collaboration with the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) and the [Office of Federal Student Aid](#) (FSA). Some data are available through public access while others only through [restricted data licenses](#). ED's Office for Civil Rights conducts the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) (CRDC) on key education and civil rights issues in our nation's public schools. Additionally, the Data Strategy Team helps to coordinate data activities across the Department and the [Disclosure Review Board](#), the [Family Policy Compliance Office](#) (FPCO), the [EDFacts](#) Governing Board, and the [Privacy Technical Assistance Center](#) all help to ensure the quality and privacy of education data.
- Department data are made publicly available [online](#) and can be located in the ED [Data Inventory](#). In FY17, ED continued to maintain and grow the Data Inventory, ensuring the information for ED contacts are up to date and expanding the library to include additional years of existing data sets as well as adding new data sets. Additionally, ED is exploring ways to leverage revisions to a technical system to use the data generated through information collection approval process to populate new entries within the Data Inventory.

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USED (cont):

- ED made concerted efforts to improve the availability and use of its data in FY17. With the release of the revised [College Scorecard](#), the Department now provides newly combined data in a tool that helps students choose a school that is well-suited to meet their needs, priced affordably, and consistent with their educational and career goals. Additionally, the College Scorecard promotes the use of open data by providing the underlying data in formats that researchers and developers can use through downloadable data files and Application Program Interface (API). In fall 2017, ED updated the Scorecard as part of its annual data refresh and launched a new comparison tool to further promote informed educational choices. The 2018 updates are currently underway.
- InformED, the ED's primary open data initiative, works to improve the Department's capacity to make public education data accessible and usable in innovative and effective ways for families, policy makers, researchers, developers, advocates and other stakeholders. Through InformED, ED has:
  - Continued to leverage its interactive data story template and used it to deliver rich and accessible data narratives around pressing education topics. This has included launching a data story focused on the educational experiences of English learners, accessible [here](#). There are additional data stories under development or under consideration.
  - Developed an Open Data IT plan to create an enterprise-wide solution to improve data dissemination capabilities making public data more discoverable, accessible, and usable for the public, while still protecting student privacy. The plan identified enterprise solutions to enhance open data projects at ED.
  - Supported data-informed decision-making internally by piloting data dashboards that provide data on key metrics while leveraging best practices in data visualizations.
  - Continued to maintain and support ED's [data landing page](#) to make it easier to identify and navigate to data sources and data tools from across the agency.
- ED also continued to participate in [The Opportunity Project](#) initiative, now coordinated by the U.S. Department of Commerce. In 2017, ED participated in the initiative's federal agency cohort of projects and worked with external developers to support the development of multiple tools. The tools centered on one of two use cases identified by ED around (1) promoting access to and interest in STEM fields, and (2) supporting States in developing data report cards.
- ED partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to deliver a webinar entitled, "Connecting Housing and Education: How a Data-Sharing Partnership Can Improve Outcomes for Children in your Community." This webinar, which had over 1,000 registrants, largely pulled from the tool: [Data Sharing Road Map: Improving Student Outcomes through Partnerships between Public Housing Agencies and School Districts](#), which was jointly developed by ED and HUD.
- Additionally, ED administers the [Statewide Longitudinal Data System](#) (SLDS) program (\$32.3 million in FY18), which provides grants to states to develop their education-related data infrastructure and use these data for education improvement.

## CRITERIA

**5. Data:** Did the agency collect, analyze, share, and use high-quality administrative and survey data – consistent with strong privacy protections – to improve (or help other entities improve) federal, state, and local programs in FY18?  
(Examples: Model data-sharing agreements or data-licensing agreements; data tagging and documentation; data standardization; open data policies)

### USHUD:

- HUD has an ambitious [open data program](#). The HUDUSER.gov web portal provides researchers, practitioners, and the public with [PD&R datasets](#) including the American Housing Survey, HUD median family income limits and Fair Market Rents, and Picture of Subsidized Households tabulations of administrative tenant records that cross program silos and provide summary statistics at multiple geographic levels. HUD's [eGIS portal](#) provides [geo-identified versions](#) of these datasets, administrative data, and other datasets to support public analysis of housing and community development issues related to multiple programs and policy domains using GIS tools. HUD sponsors [custom tabulations of American Community Survey data](#) that make standard adjustments of household incomes and units for household size to enable researchers and practitioners to analyze state and local housing needs. HUD provides researchers with microdata from experimental program demonstrations and research initiatives on topics such as housing discrimination, the HUD-insured multifamily housing stock, and the public housing population. To help users identify which data are useful to them, [reference guides](#) identify datasets and characterize their relevance and usefulness for research in designated categories. HUD continues its partnership with the Census Bureau to [enhance public access](#) to the American Housing Survey with a custom [table creator](#), [administrative data linkages to break down data silos](#), [infographics](#) to summarize results, and stronger data privacy controls.
- PD&R has authority to enter into cooperative agreements with research organizations, including both funded [Research Partnerships](#) and unfunded [Data License Agreements](#), to support innovative research projects that leverage HUD's data assets and inform HUD's policies and programs. A dedicated subject-matter expert is available to answer questions for those seeking a data license. Data licensing protocols ensure that confidential information is protected.
- PD&R partnered with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to [link](#) HUD administrative data for assisted renters with respondents to two national health surveys and made the linked data available to researchers to begin building a picture of [tenant health](#) issues. In FY18, the data linkage is being extended to include survey and administrative data for 1999 through 2016. Data access is provided through the NCHS research data centers to ensure that confidential information is protected.
- HUD is involved in a wide array of data-sharing agreements described under Data Infrastructure in the [Roadmap Update](#) (pp. 52–56). Notably, HUD and the Census Bureau have entered into an interagency agreement for the Bureau's Center for Administrative Records Research and Applications (CARRA) to link data from HUD's tenant databases and randomized control trials with the Bureau's survey data collection and other administrative data collected under the privacy protections of its Title 13 authority. These RCT datasets are the first intervention data added to Federal Statistical RDCs by any federal agency, and strict protocols ensure that confidential information is protected.

### USDOL:

- DOL makes the majority of its administrative and survey datasets publicly available for secondary use. For more information, see CEO's [Public Use Datasets](#) and [ETA's repository of public use datasets](#).
- DOL's worker protection agencies have open-data provisions on enforcement activity for firms online and accessible through the [Data Enforcement site](#) (Mine Safety and Health Administration, Wage and Hour Division, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Employee Benefits Security Administration).
- DOL's [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS) (approximately \$612 million in FY18) serves as the principal federal agency responsible for measuring labor market activity, working conditions, and price changes in the economy. BLS has 111 cooperative agreements with 50 States and four Territories for labor market and economic data sharing. For calendar year 2017, there were 525 "letters of agreement" on data usage with academics to conduct statistical research, and 95 data sharing agreements with federal/state agencies including the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Census Bureau, for a total of 620 agreements (see [here](#) for a link to the FY17 agreements).

CRITERIA

**5. Data:** Did the agency collect, analyze, share, and use high-quality administrative and survey data – consistent with strong privacy protections – to improve (or help other entities improve) federal, state, and local programs in FY18?  
(Examples: Model data-sharing agreements or data-licensing agreements; data tagging and documentation; data standardization; open data policies)

USDOL (cont):

- DOL's ETA has [agreements with 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico](#) for data sharing and exchange of wage data for performance accountability purposes. In FY15, DOL's ETA began work with the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Career Technical and Adult Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Rehabilitative Services Administration, and Office of the General Counsel to revise and renegotiate the agreements that ETA shares with 50 states and territories to facilitate better access to quarterly wage data by states for purposes of performance accountability and research and evaluation requirements under WIOA. This work aims to expand access to interstate wage data for Education's Adult and Family Literacy Act programs (AEFLA) and Vocational Rehabilitation programs among others. This work has continued through FY18 and is being conducted in collaboration with state agencies that are subject to the performance accountability and research and evaluation requirements of WIOA and of the State Unemployment Insurance Agencies regarding access to wage records.
- DOL's CEO, ETA, and VETS have worked with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop a secure mechanism for obtaining and analyzing earnings data from the Directory of New Hires. In this past year DOL has entered into interagency data sharing agreements with HHS and obtained data to support 10 job training and employment program evaluations.
- The privacy provisions for BLS and ETA are publicly available [online](#).
- In FY18, DOL continued efforts to improve the quality of and access to data for evaluation and performance analysis through the Data Analytics Unit in DOL's CEO office, and through new pilots beginning in BLS to access and exchange state labor market and earnings data for statistical and evaluation purposes. The Data Analytics unit has also updated its Data Exchange and Analysis Platform (DEAP) with high processing capacity and privacy provisions to share, link, and analyze program and survey data across DOL programs and agencies and with other agencies. Internal use of DEAP is available now, and public access will be available in the future.
- The DOL Data Board, a DOL interagency working group, was formed in 2017 and expanded in 2018 to promote data capacity among DOL agencies and establish a new data governance model advancing DOL's management of data as a strategic asset and service.
- WIOA calls for aligned indicators of performance for WIOA core programs. ETA has worked within DOL and with ED to implement this alignment, including indicators definitions, data elements, and specifications to improve the quality and analytic value of the [data](#). DOL chose to include several additional DOL programs in this process, which will result in unprecedented alignment of data and definitions for 13 federal programs (11 at DOL and two at ED).
- DOL and ED issued five WIOA Final Rules, which all became effective October 18, 2016. The [regulations](#) cover WIOA programs under Title I, II, III, and IV, in addition to other miscellaneous changes. The aligned indicators of performance are included in the DOL-ED [Joint Rule for WIOA, part 677](#).
- ETA continues funding and providing technical assistance to states under the [Workforce Data Quality Initiative](#) to link earnings and workforce data and education data longitudinally to support state program administration and evaluation. ETA and VETS also have modified state workforce program reporting system requirements to include data items for a larger set of grant programs, which will improve access to administrative data for evaluation and performance management purposes. An example of the expanded data reporting requirements is the [Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program](#) FY16 grants.

CRITERIA

**6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works**

**Designations:** Did the agency use a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and did it disseminate and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through a user-friendly tool in FY18?

(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

ACF:

- ACF has established a [common evidence framework](#) adapted for the human services context from the framework for education research developed by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. The ACF framework, which includes the six types of studies delineated in the ED/NSF framework, aims to: (1) inform ACF's investments in research and evaluation; and (2) clarify for potential grantees and others the expectations for different types of studies.
- While ACF does not have a common evidence framework across all funding decisions, certain programs do use a common evidence framework for funding decisions. For example, the *Family First Prevention Services Act* (FFPSA) enables states to use funds for certain evidence-based services. ACF is currently developing an evidence framework that will be the basis for determining services eligible for funding. The [Head Start Designation Renewal System](#) determines whether Head Start and Early Head Start grants are automatically renewed, based in part on how Head Start classrooms within programs perform on the [Classroom Assessment Scoring System](#) (CLASS), an observation-based measure of the quality of teacher-child interactions. The Personal Responsibility Education Program Competitive Grants were funded to replicate effective, evidence-based program models or substantially incorporate elements of projects that have been proven to delay sexual activity, increase condom or contraceptive use for sexually active youth, and/or reduce pregnancy among youth based on a [systematic evidence review](#).
- ACF sponsors several [user-friendly tools](#) that disseminate and promote evidence-based interventions. In particular, several evidence reviews of human services interventions disseminate and promote evidence-based interventions by rating the quality of evaluation studies (using objective standards vetted by technical experts and applied by trained, independent reviewers, and similar to those used by other agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse and the U.S. Department of Labor's CLEAR) and presenting results in a user-friendly searchable format. Reviews to date have covered [teen pregnancy prevention](#); [home visiting](#); [marriage education and responsible fatherhood](#); and [employment and training](#); and include both ACF-sponsored and other studies.
- Additionally, ACF is currently working to fulfill two new statutorily required evidence reviews. (1) *The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017* directed HHS to create a "What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising Projects to Move Welfare Recipients into Work" that includes "projects that used a proven approach or a promising approach in moving welfare recipients into work, based on independent, rigorous evaluations of the projects." (2) As mentioned above, the *Family First Prevention Services Act* (FFPSA) enables States to use Federal funds available under parts B and E of Title IV of the *Social Security Act* to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements through the provision of evidence-based mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, in-home parent skill-based programs, and kinship navigator services, and requires an independent systematic review of evidence to designate programs and services as "promising," "supported," and "well-supported" practices.

ACL:

- The [National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](#) (NIDILRR) uses a [stages of research framework](#) (SORF) to classify and describe its funded grants and research projects within the grants. The four stages of SORF include: exploration and discovery, intervention development, intervention efficacy, and scale-up evaluation. Using SORF, NIDILRR gains insight into what is known and unknown about a problem; whether it is time to develop interventions to address a particular problem; whether it is time to test the efficacy of interventions; and whether it is time to "scale-up" interventions for broader use.
- The *Older Americans Act* (OAA) requires the use of evidence-based programming in Title III-D-funded activities, [Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services](#). In response, ACL developed a [definition](#) of the term evidence-based, and created a [website](#) containing links to a range of resources for evidence-based programs. This is a common evidence framework used for OAA-funded activities for this particular program.

CRITERIA	
<p><b>6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works Designations:</b> Did the agency use a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and did it disseminate and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through a user-friendly tool in FY18? (Example: What Works Clearinghouses)</p>	<p><u>ACL</u> (cont):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While ACL does not endorse specific programs, it does publish <a href="#">intervention summaries</a> of aging and disability evidence-based programs and practices that include: general information about the intervention; a description of the research outcomes reviewed; ratings of the quality of research and readiness for dissemination; a list of studies and materials reviewed; information about the translation of the intervention to additional settings and populations; and contact information to obtain more information about implementation or research. The information provided was modeled after the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) <a href="#">National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices</a> (NREPP).</li> <li>• ACL works through its <a href="#">resource centers</a> to help grantees use evidence to drive improvements in outcomes for older adults and individuals with disabilities. For example, with funding from ACL, the <a href="#">National Resource Centers at NCOA</a>, in collaboration with the Evidence-Based Leadership Council, lead an innovative vetting process to increase the number of programs available to ACL's aging network that meet the Title III-D evidence-based criteria. This process has resulted in adding six new health promotion programs and three new programs for preventing falls. Another round of program reviews is currently underway.</li> <li>• To support the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed programming, service providers can find out about evidence-based programs that serve people with dementia and their caregivers by consulting a white paper drafted with funds from ACL– <a href="#">Translating Innovation to Impact: Evidence-based interventions to support people with Alzheimer's disease and their Caregivers at home and in their Communities</a>.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program</a> (ADSSP) funds competitive grants limited to States to expand the availability of evidence-based services that support persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) and their family caregivers; and to create state-wide, person-centered, dementia-capable home and community-based service (HCBS) systems. Half of the funding must be used to provide direct services.</li> <li>• In 2015, ACL's <a href="#">Aging and Disability Evidence-Based Programs and Practices</a> initiative developed a <a href="#">toolkit</a>, currently available on the ACL website, to help the public learn about evidence-based programs and interventions for implementation at the community-level and to promote their utilization.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center</a> (MSKTC) has worked with NIDILRR's Model Systems grantees to develop and publish a variety of evidence-based factsheets about living with spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, or burn injury – written in language that all users can read and understand.</li> <li>• ACL's Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program (ADSSP) encourages the translation of dementia specific interventions shown to improve the health and well-being of persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia and/or their caregivers and implemented into communities. Since the introduction of evidence-based programming into the agencies Alzheimer's and dementia programs more than 20 evidence-based interventions have been introduced and continue to be translated to states and communities. ACL's requirement for inclusion of dementia specific evidence-based interventions is demonstrated in the 2018 funding opportunity announcement entitled <a href="#">Alzheimer's Disease Programs to States and Communities</a>.</li> </ul>

CRITERIA

**6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works**

**Designations:** Did the agency use a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and did it disseminate and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through a user-friendly tool in FY18?  
(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

ACL (cont):

- To build the evidence base, ACL funded cooperative agreements for the development and testing of model approaches towards coordinated and comprehensive systems for enhancing and assuring the independence, integration, safety, health, and well-being of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the community. In FY18, ACL implemented an evaluation of these model programs to determine whether the models implemented across the sites impact the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities as follows. Information from the evaluation will be used to inform future ACL funding announcements and the training and technical assistance provided by ACL to communities serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to ensure the integration of evidence into ACL's programming. While the evaluation is not yet complete, initial findings about what works were integrated into the requirements of the funding announcement for the FY18 award cycle.

CNCS:

- CNCS adapted the evidence framework used by its Social Innovation Fund and the Investing in Innovation Fund at ED in order to include it as part of the AmeriCorps State and National program's [FY16](#), [FY17](#), and [FY18](#) grant competitions.
- In March 2015, CNCS released Phase I of the CNCS [Evidence Exchange](#), a virtual repository of reports intended to help CNCS grantees and other interested stakeholders find information about evidence- and research- based national service and social innovation programs. Phase 1 includes a database of single study reports with some additional descriptive information about the study, as well as a systematic review of the national service evidence base. Phase 2 in FY16 added studies as grantees completed their independent evaluations and submitted reports to CNCS. In FY17, CNCS focused on disseminating final reports as studies were completed and ensuring that the functionality of the site made the information as accessible as possible. In FY18, CNCS focused on enhancing the search function as more reports have been added.

MCC:

- MCC uses a rigorous evidence framework to make every decision along the investment chain, from country partner eligibility to sector selection to project choices. MCC uses [common, evidence-based selection criteria, generated by independent, objective third parties](#), to ensure objectivity in country selection for grant awards. To be eligible for selection, countries must first pass the MCC [2018 Scorecard](#) – a collection of 20 independent, third-party indicators that objectively measure a country's policy performance in the areas of economic freedom, investing in people, and ruling justly. Both the scores for all countries as well as the criteria for assessing performance based on these scores are reported publicly and in a fully transparent process. A new application was recently created to render the indicator scorecards more easily accessible and viewable on mobile devices to further the use of the scorecards' evidence. The criteria for passing the 2018 Scorecard are applied universally to all low- and lower-middle-income candidate countries. MCC's Board of Directors then considers three key factors for selecting countries: (1) a country's performance on the 2018 Scorecard; (2) the opportunity to reduce poverty and generate economic growth; and (3) the availability of funds. In the case of subsequent compacts, MCC also considers the partnership and performance of the first compact, measured in part by M&E, in addition to the above three criteria. (An in-depth description of the country selection procedure can be found in the annual [Selection Criteria and Methodology](#) report).
- Then, to determine on which sector(s) a MCC program will focus, MCC's Economic Analysis (EA) division undertakes a constraints-to-growth diagnostic to determine the binding constraints to economic growth in a country. Finally, to determine the individual projects in which MCC will invest in a given sector, MCC's EA division combines root cause analysis with cost-benefit analysis to determine those investments that will have greatest development impact and return on MCC's investment.

CRITERIA

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(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

MCC (cont):

- MCC's model is based on a set of [core principles](#) deemed essential for development assistance to be effective – good governance, country ownership, focus on results, and transparency. In pursuing these, MCC has created a [Principles into Practice](#) series which describes MCC's experience in operationalizing these principles in sector-level investments. Each report details MCC's implementation experience, what is learned in implementation, and how the Agency is applying that learning to current and future investments. This portfolio-wide meta-analysis offers instructive learning for both internal and external audiences. MCC has made a concerted effort to better disseminate these reports in FY18 through panels, events, and conferences, including the American Evaluation Association.
- All evaluation designs, data, reports, and summaries are made publicly available on MCC's [Evaluation Catalog](#). In FY18, MCC is launching a new product to better capture and disseminate the results and findings of its independent evaluation portfolio. New "Evaluation Briefs" will be produced for each evaluation and will offer a user-friendly, systematic format to better capture and share the relevant evidence and learning from MCC's independent evaluations. These accessible products will take the place of MCC's [Summaries of Findings](#). Evaluation Briefs will be published on the [Evaluation Catalog](#) and will complement the many other products published for each evaluation including evaluation designs, microdata, survey questionnaires, baseline findings, interim reports, and final reports from the independent evaluator.
- In FY18, MCC conducted internal research and analysis to understand where and how its published evaluations, datasets, and knowledge products are utilized. This effort underscores MCC's commitment to transparency and learning as MCC seeks to widen its understanding of the use of the evidence it produces. The results of this analysis will guide future efforts on evidence-based learning such as which sectors MCC prioritizes for evidence generation and publication and what types of products best communicate MCC's evidence and learning. The above-described Evaluation Briefs are in part a result of MCC's findings around evaluation user metrics. MCC finalized baseline metrics around evidence and evaluation utilization in April 2018 and is continuing to track global use of its knowledge products on a quarterly basis with a goal of expanding the base of users of MCC's evidence and evaluation products.
- In FY18, MCC sought to strengthen its outreach and dissemination of results in more innovative ways. Following on MCC's [first evidence workshop](#) in El Salvador in 2016, MCC worked closely with the country-led implementation unit in El Salvador (FOMILENIO II), the President's Technical Secretariat, and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (JPAL) to organize M&E trainings with targeted content for varying levels of government officials. Over the course of three months, over 100 participants from across the Government of El Salvador learned the foundations of [evidence-based policy making](#), and designing and implementing evaluations. FOMILENIO II, MCC, and the Technical Secretariat hosted focus groups in June 2018 to develop an action plan for incorporating evaluation work into policy decisions.
- To further bring attention to MCC's evaluation and evidence, MCC publishes a quarterly evaluation newsletter called [Statistically Speaking](#). This newsletter highlights recent evidence and learning from MCC's programs with a special emphasis on how MCC's evidence can offer practical policy insights for policymakers and development practitioners in the United States and in partner countries. It also seeks to familiarize a wider audience with the evidence and results of MCC's investments.

CRITERIA

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(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

SAMHSA:

- There is great diversity across SAMHSA programming, ranging from community-level prevention activities to residential programs for pregnant and post-partum women with substance misuse issues. While this diversity allows SAMHSA to be responsive to a wide set of vulnerable populations, it limits the utility of a common evidence framework for the entire agency. Within Centers (the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, and the Center for Mental Health Services), consistent evidence frameworks are in use and help to shape the process of grant-making (e.g., Center staff are familiar with the pertinent evidence base for their particular portfolios). At the programmatic level, staff review the state-of-the-art for a particular topic area to facilitate grantee adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs). While staff awareness of EBPs varies, a systematic approach to evidence classification remains to be developed. Most Center staff rely on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices to identify evidence-based programs for grantee implementation.
- Until 2018, SAMHSA regarded the [National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices](#) as the primary online user friendly tool for identifying evidence-based programs for grantee implementation. In January 2018, SAMHSA [announced](#) that it was "moving to EBP implementation efforts through targeted technical assistance and training that makes use of local and national experts and will that assist programs with actually implementing services...." At the same time, the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use outlined significant concerns with the rigor and effectiveness of NRREP, and [reportedly](#) terminated the contract with the organization running NRREP. It was [stated](#) that the Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Lab would now "play a central role in shaping SAMHSA's efforts to bring more science to the evidence-based practices used in the prevention, treatment, and support services being provided by behavioral health practitioners and other clinicians."
- In April 2018, SAMHSA [launched](#) the [Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center](#) (Resource Center) that aims to provide communities, clinicians, policy-makers and others in the field with the information and tools they need to incorporate evidence-based practices into their communities or clinical settings. The Resource Center contains a collection of science-based resources, including Treatment Improvement Protocols, toolkits, resource guides, and clinical practice guidelines, for a broad range of audiences. Similarly, the [Evidence-Based Practices \(EBP\) Web Guide](#) features research findings and details about EBPs used to prevent and treat mental and substance use disorders. Stakeholders throughout the behavioral health field can use the EBP Web Guide to promote awareness of current intervention research and to increase the implementation and availability of EBPs.
- In February 2018, SAMHSA [published guidance](#) for healthcare professionals and addiction treatment providers on appropriate prescribing practices for FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder (OUD) and effective strategies for supporting the patients utilizing medication for the treatment of OUD.
- In January 2018, SAMHSA [announced](#) it had released \$12 million in funding to the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry to begin the effort to utilize local expertise to provide TA and training on scientifically based evidence-based practices to combat the nation's opioid crisis. The Opioid State Targeted Response TA program aims to provide TA on evidence-based practices across the spectrum of prevention, treatment and recovery.

CRITERIA

**6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works**

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(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

SAMHSA (cont.):

- SAMHSA has universal language about using evidence-based practices (EBPs) that is included in its Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) (entitled Using Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)). This language includes acknowledgement that, "EBPs have not been developed for all populations and/or service settings" thus encouraging applicants to "provide other forms of evidence" that a proposed practice is appropriate for the intended population. Specifically, the language states that applicants should: (1) document that the EBPs chosen are appropriate for intended outcomes; (2) explain how the practice meets SAMHSA's goals for the grant program; (3) describe any modifications or adaptations needed for the practice to meet the goals of the project; (4) explain why the EBP was selected; (5) justify the use of multiple EBPs, if applicable; and (6) discuss training needs or plans to ensure successful implementation. Lastly, the language includes resources the applicant can use to understand EBPs. Federal grants officers work in collaboration with the SAMHSA Office of Financial Resources to ensure that grantee funding announcements clearly describe the evidence standard necessary to meet funding requirements.
- In 2011, based on the model of the National Quality Strategy, SAMHSA developed the [National Behavioral Health Quality Framework](#) (NBHQF). With the NBHQF, SAMHSA proposes a set of core measures to be used in a variety of settings and programs, as well as in evaluation and quality assurance efforts. The proposed measures are not intended to be a complete or total set of measures a payer, system, practitioner, or program may want to use to monitor quality of its overall system or the care or activities it provides. SAMHSA encourages such entities to utilize these basic measures as appropriate as a consistent set of indicators of quality in behavioral health prevention, promotion, treatment, and recovery support efforts across the nation.

USAID:

- USAID has a scientific [research policy](#) that sets out quality standards for research across the agency. USAID's [Program Cycle Policy](#) includes specific evidence standards for decisions related to country strategic planning, project design, [monitoring, evaluation](#), and learning. For example, USAID policy requires evidence and data to assess the development context, challenges, and opportunities in all of USAID's country strategies. Similarly, all USAID projects must include a detailed analytical phase with findings documented in the Project Appraisal Document.
- USAID is a member of the [International Initiative for Impact Evaluations](#) (3ie), which funds impact evaluations and systematic reviews that generate evidence on what works in development programs and why. Rather than creating a separate "what works" clearinghouse, USAID has chosen to work with 3ie and other development partners to support 3ie's [database of impact evaluations](#) relevant to development topics (including over 4,500 entries to date), [knowledge gap maps](#), and [systematic reviews](#) that pull the most rigorous evidence and data from across donors. 3ie also houses a collection of [policy briefs](#) that examine findings from its [database of impact evaluations](#) on overarching policy questions to help policymakers and development practitioners improve development impact through better evidence. Various USAID bureaus or OUs have funded 3ie to produce evidence gap maps on topics such as: science, technology, innovation, and partnership; state-society relations; and productive safety nets.

## CRITERIA

### 6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works

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(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

#### USAID (cont.):

- Several USAID Bureaus synthesize sector-specific evidence from evaluations and other sources to summarize key findings and identify gaps in knowledge that then inform sector learning agendas. For example, the Bureau for Food Security keeps a [collection of evidence](#) related to what works in agricultural development and food security, an interactive community where USAID staff and partners can contribute content. Established in 2011, [Agrilinks](#) has become the go-to source for informative discussions on development topics and the latest information that is furthering resilience, food security, and poverty reduction.

#### USED:

- ED's evidence standards for its grant programs, as outlined in the [Education Department General Administrative Regulations](#) (EDGAR), build on ED's [What Works Clearinghouse](#)™ (WWC) evidence standards. ED uses these same evidence standards in all of its discretionary grant competitions that use evidence to direct funds to applicants proposing to implement projects that have evidence of effectiveness and/or to build new evidence through evaluation (see criterion #8 for more detail).
- As noted above, EPG has coordinated the development of revised evidence definitions and related selection criteria for competitive programs that align with the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and streamline and clarify provisions for grantees. These revised definitions align with ED's suggested criteria for states' implementation of ESSA's four evidence levels, included in ED's non-regulatory guidance, [Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#). ED also developed a [fact sheet](#) to support internal and external stakeholders in understanding the revised evidence definitions. This document has been shared with internal and external stakeholders through multiple methods, including the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education [ESSA technical assistance page for grantees](#).
- The Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII), in coordination with staff from IES and members of EPG, developed Evidence Requirements Checklists for the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) [mid-phase and expansion grant competitions](#). The checklists are intended to help applicants determine what studies to include on the Evidence Form with their application for the purposes of meeting the evidence requirement. Applicants can use the checklist as an informal worksheet to understand the evidence criteria used to review studies and learn about additional evidence-related resources available online. OII also worked with IES to develop [two presentations](#) to further support applicants in submitting evidence that meets the established standards: *Understanding the Evidence Definitions Used for U.S. Department of Education Programs and Using the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) to Identify Strong or Moderate Evidence of Positive Effects from Education Interventions*.
- Additionally, IES and the National Science Foundation issued a joint report that describes six types of research studies that can generate evidence about how to increase student learning in 2013. These principles are based, in part, on the research goal structure and expectations of IES's National Center for Education Research (NCER) and National Center for Special Education Research (NCSE). NCER and NCSE communicate these expectations through their [Requests for Applications](#) and [webinars](#) that are archived on the IES website and available to all applicants.
- ED's [What Works Clearinghouse](#)™ identifies studies that provide valid and statistically significant evidence of effectiveness of a given practice, product, program, or policy (referred to as "interventions"), and disseminates summary information and reports on the WWC website. The WWC has reviewed more than 10,000 studies that are available in a [searchable database](#), including a commitment to review all publicly available evaluation reports generated under i3 grants. The WWC released four new [Practice Guides](#) in 2016 and 2017. WWC Practice Guides are based on reviews of research and experience of practitioners and are designed to address challenges in classrooms and schools.

## CRITERIA

### 6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works

**Designations:** Did the agency use a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and did it disseminate and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through a user-friendly tool in FY18?

(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

#### USED (cont):

- In 2017, the WWC released the [version 4.0 Standards and Procedures Handbooks](#), which take into account improvements in research methodology. More recently, in early 2018, the WWC launched an [online training system](#) for the version 4.0 standards and procedures. The online training system is available to anyone, anywhere, and at any time – and is free to everyone. To make information about statistically significant evidence of effectiveness available to the public more quickly, the WWC has improved its suite of online reviewer tools.
- As noted above, in 2016, ED released non-regulatory guidance, [Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#), which recommends a five-step decision-making process to promote continuous improvement and support better outcomes for students that is built on common evidence definitions. This [guidance](#) has served as a framework for ED's technical assistance related to implementation of ESSA's evidence provisions, such as the [State Support Network's](#) community of practice on evidence-based practices that supports 9 states with selection of interventions. ED has conducted outreach to build awareness of the guidance with stakeholder groups. In addition, ED included tailored guidance for these five steps in its guidance on [Title II, Part A](#), and [Title IV](#) of the ESEA. These resources supplement ED's substantial evidence-focused technical assistance efforts, such as:
  - [Regional Educational Laboratories](#) work in partnership with policymakers and practitioners in their regions to evaluate programs and to use evaluation findings and other research to improve academic outcomes for their students.
  - [Comprehensive Centers](#) provide support to States in planning and implementing interventions through coaching, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and ongoing direct support.
  - The [State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence-Based Practices Center](#) provides tools, training modules, and resources on implementation planning and monitoring.

#### USHUD:

- PD&R provides the public, policymakers, and practitioners with evidence of "what works" primarily through [HUD USER](#), a portal and web store for program evaluations, case studies, and policy analysis and research; the [Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse](#); and through [initiatives](#) such as Innovation of the Day, Sustainable Construction Methods in Indian Country, and the Consumer's Guide to Energy-Efficient and Healthy Homes. This content is designed to provide current policy information, elevate effective practices, and synthesize data and other evidence in accessible formats such as [Evidence Matters](#). Through these resources, researchers and practitioners can see the full breadth of work on a given topic (e.g., rigorous established evidence, [case studies](#) of what's worked in the field, and new innovations currently being explored) to inform their work.
- In FY17, HUD developed and piloted a new standardized data collection and reporting framework for its discretionary grant programs called [Standards for Success](#). The framework consists of a repository of data elements that participating programs use in their grant reporting. The repository of data elements establishes common definitions and measures across programs for greater analysis and coordination of services. HUD designed and made available an online data collection and reporting tool for those grants participating in the pilot. This tool enables grantees to directly enter the applicable data elements as well as upload files. All data are consolidated for record and analysis. HUD's broader adoption of this framework would establish a common basis for determining grant performance, return on investment, and funding decisions.

CRITERIA

**6. Common Evidence Standards/What Works**

**Designations:** Did the agency use a common evidence framework, guidelines, or standards to inform its research and funding decisions and did it disseminate and promote the use of evidence-based interventions through a user-friendly tool in FY18?  
(Example: What Works Clearinghouses)

USDOL:

- DOL uses the [Cross-agency Federal Evidence Framework](#) for evaluation planning and dissemination. Additionally, DOL collaborates with other agencies (HHS, ED-IES, NSF, CNCS) on refining cross-agency evidence guidelines and developing technological procedures to link and share reviews across clearinghouses. The Interagency Evidence Framework conveys the categories of evaluations, the quality review of evaluation methodologies and results, and the use of evaluation findings. The framework is accepted department-wide.
- DOL's [Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research](#) (CLEAR) is an internet-based evidence clearinghouse. CLEAR's goal is to make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public more broadly, so that it can inform their decisions about labor policies and programs. CLEAR identifies and summarizes many types of research, including descriptive statistical studies and outcome analyses, implementation, and causal impact studies. For causal impact studies, CLEAR assesses the strength of the design and methodology in studies that look at the effectiveness of particular policies and programs.
- CLEAR reviews causal studies in a number of labor-related topic areas and assigns them a rating indicating the strength of their causal evidence. It provides an objective assessment and rating of the degree to which the research establishes the causal impact of the intervention on the outcomes of interest based on established [causal evidence guidelines](#).
- DOL uses the CLEAR evidence guidelines and standards to make decisions about discretionary program grants awarded using evidence-informed or evidence-based criteria. The published guidelines and standards are used to identify evidence-based programs and practices and to review studies to assess the strength of their causal evidence or to do a structured evidence review in a particular topic area or timeframe. Requests for proposals also indicate the CLEAR standards should be applied to all CEO evaluations.
- In addition to CLEAR, ETA maintains a user friendly technical assistance tool to promote state and local service providers' use of evidence-based interventions through [Workforce System Strategies](#), a comprehensive database of over 1000 profiles that summarize a wide range findings from reports, studies, technical assistance tools and guides that support service improvement, program management and operations; education and training; employment, retention or advancement activities; and other workforce development related topics.
- DOL's [Evaluation Policy Statement](#) formalizes the principles that govern all program evaluations in DOL, including methodological rigor, independence, transparency, ethics, and relevance. CLEAR standards provide DOL a tool to understand and make transparent how it defines rigor, and to assess the extent to which DOL studies meet the highest standards of methodological rigor.

CRITERIA

**7. Innovation:** Did the agency have staff, policies, and processes in place that encouraged innovation to improve the impact of its programs in FY18? (Examples: Prizes and challenges; behavioral science trials; innovation labs/accelerators; performance partnership pilots; demonstration projects or waivers with strong evaluation requirements)

ACF:

- ACF's [Behavioral Innovations to Advance Self-Sufficiency](#) (BIAS) project was the first major effort to apply a behavioral economics lens to programs that serve poor families in the U.S. The project conducted 15 rapid-cycle randomized tests of behavioral innovations in seven states with nearly 100,000 sample members. The results of these tests demonstrated the promise of applying insights from behavioral science to improve human services program outcomes. The [Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency-Next Generation](#) (BIAS-NG) project continues ACF's exploration of the application of behavioral science to the programs and target populations of ACF. Additionally, the [Behavioral Interventions Scholars \(BIS\) grant program](#) supports dissertation research that applies a behavioral science lens to research questions relevant to social services programs and policies and other issues facing low-income families.
- ACF is in the process of procuring a contract to build knowledge about the utility of human-centered design approaches in the context of delivery of human services. Key project tasks will include expert consultation, review of the knowledge base, a synthesis of the current state of the field, and a pilot study of the feasibility of implementation of human-centered design in ACF programs. This work builds on [prior work done by ACF's Office of Family Assistance](#) testing the utility of design thinking as a creative problem solving approach for social service organizations.
- ACF has actively participated in the [HHS IDEA Lab](#), an entity within HHS launched in 2013 to invest in internal innovation, leverage external innovation, and build collaborative communities to tackle cross-cutting issues of strategic importance. [Projects](#) have included the ACF Administration for Native Americans' *Application Toolkit* and *DataQuest: Making ACF Native Data Visible and Useful*, the ACF Office of Family Assistance's *Understanding Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Through Data Visualization*, and the ACF Office of Head Start's *Partnership Alignment Information Response System*.
- Several ACF grant programs are demonstration projects or allow waivers with evaluation requirements. Examples are listed below.
  - The Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program was authorized as a demonstration program with a mandated federal evaluation. OPRE is utilizing a [multi-pronged evaluation strategy](#) to document the operations and assess the success of the HPOG program. The evaluation strategy aims to provide information on program implementation, systems change, outcomes, and impacts.
  - ACF's Office of Child Support Enforcement administers grant-funded demonstration projects and waivers with research components. Current examples include: the [Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt](#), (PJAC) demonstration project which will allow grantees to examine whether incorporating procedural justice principles into child support business practices increases reliable child support payments; the [Behavioral Interventions for Child Support Services Demonstration Program](#) (BICS), which is testing how behavioral economic strategies affect child support results; the [National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration Project](#) (CSPED), which is testing the efficacy of child support-led employment programs; and [Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program](#) (PTOC), which is testing approaches to safely develop parenting time orders at the time child support is established.
  - ACF's [Foster Care](#) program (\$5.3 billion in FY16) has approved over 30 jurisdictions to develop and implement child welfare waiver demonstration projects to improve outcomes for children in foster care or at risk for entry or re-entry into foster care. Through these demonstrations, ACF waives provisions of law to allow flexible use of funding normally limited to foster care for other child welfare services. Many participating jurisdictions are implementing evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions and all demonstration projects are required to have a rigorous evaluation conducted by a third-party evaluator. Although ACF does not currently have statutory authority to grant new waivers, current projects are expected to continue through September 30, 2019. [General information](#) on this program, including a [fact sheet](#) and [summary](#) of relevant legislation/policy, is available at the online [Children's Bureau](#) portal.

CRITERIA

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- ACL:
- ACL has historically used innovation dollars provided under Title IV of OAA as a means of testing new approaches to service delivery and developing replicable models that could then be embedded into core programs. One example of how this approach has been used effectively is the [Title III-D Preventive Health Services Program](#). Since 2003, ACL has tested evidence-based models for delivering health services in community-based settings across a variety of areas, including Chronic Disease Self-Management, Falls Prevention, Enhanced Fitness, and Medication Management. As these models proved more successful than traditional approaches, states increasingly shifted their funding to provide greater support to evidence-based approaches.
  - In FY18, ACL released a [new grant opportunity](#) from the [National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](#) (NIDILRR) under the Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR), Phase I. An estimated 10 grants will be awarded to small businesses. The purpose of the SBIR program is to stimulate technological innovation in the private sector, strengthen the role of small business in meeting federal research or research and development needs, and improve the return on investment from federally-funded research for economic and social benefits to the nation.
  - In FY16, ACL established the [Elder Justice Innovation Grants](#) program to increase knowledge about effective prevention and intervention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults, native elders, adults with disabilities, people who self-neglect, and guardianship abuse. In FY18, ACL monitored the second year of [two-year grants](#) awarded to five nonprofit organizations in FY17 totaling \$2.2 million.
  - In 2015, ACL awarded a grant, [Advancing Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Supportive Services for Holocaust Survivors](#), to develop and implement person-centered, trauma-informed supportive services for Holocaust survivors living in the United States. In FY18, the program worked with one grantee and more than 50 community-based sub-grantees to develop innovative interventions that seek to minimize the risk of re-traumatization by receiving supportive services. To date, more than 40 new models of care have been developed.
  - In FY18, ACL will award grants under the [Alzheimer's Disease Programs to States and Communities](#) (HHS-2018-ACL-AOA-ADPI-0307). The ACL's Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative (ADPI) is informed by the work and recommendations of National Alzheimer's Project Act Advisory Committee. The ADPI is implemented with authority contained within Title IV of the *Older Americans Act* and is designed to pilot dementia-capable HCBS programs to states and communities, evaluate program outcomes and use program outcome data to garner support to sustain successful initiatives beyond the federal program period.
  - NIDILRR [participates](#) in the [Small Business Innovation Research](#) program to improve the lives of people with disabilities through research and development of innovative products generated by small businesses, and to increase the commercial application of NIDILRR-supported research results and development products.
  - ACL funds resource centers to promote innovation, such as the [Center for Assistive Technology Act Data Assistance](#). The [Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services](#) program tests innovative and promising practices that move members of the aging services network towards evidenced-based practices that enhance the quality and effectiveness of nutrition services programs.

CRITERIA

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CNCS:

- CNCS awarded four AmeriCorps Evidence-Based Planning grants (an investment of \$237,183 in evaluation funds) in FY18 (see grant announcements [here](#)). These one-year planning grants were awarded to encourage the identification of a new evidence-based program or practice and develop a strategy for integrating national service into the effective model. In addition, awardees will develop an evaluation plan to assess the innovation should it be funded in future grant competitions. R&E staff is conducting a process evaluation of these grantees to systematically assess the successes and challenges of implementing the grants.
- CNCS awarded seven AmeriCorps Evidence-Based Planning grants (an investment of \$500,000 in evaluation funds) in FY17 (see pages 5 and 20 of the FY18 AmeriCorps State and National Grants [notice of funding opportunity](#)). Of the seven Evidence-Based Planning grantees in 2017, two applied for competitive 2018 implementation grants, and one applicant was awarded. One grantee is planning to apply for a 2019 implementation grant. In addition, two of the four commission subgrantees applied for 2018 formula funding, and both applications were awarded.
- Lessons learned from Year 1 include the following: (1) Planning grants need a full year of planning time and R&E support. Currently they receive about three months of support before they must submit their application for the next implementation grant; and (2) the implicit expectation should be that a 2017 planning grantee will apply only for the 2019 funding cycle if a decision is made to implement and evaluate the intervention.
- CNCS anticipates awarding continuation funds for [Commission Investment Fund](#) grants in FY18. Overall, a similar percentage of these grants (roughly one third) will focus on building the capacity of State Commissions and their grantees to collect and use performance and evaluation data. R&E staff are completing a process evaluation of these grantees that will identify the successes and challenges of implementing these grants.

MCC:

- In September 2014, MCC's [Monitoring and Evaluation](#) division launched the agency's first [Open Data Challenge](#). This challenge encourages Masters and PhD students working in economics, public policy, international development, or other related fields to leverage the [MCC Evaluation Catalog](#) to search publicly available, MCC-financed, primary data for policy-relevant analysis. The Open Data Challenge initiative is intended to facilitate broader use of MCC's US-taxpayer funded data, encourage innovative ideas, and maximize the use of data that MCC finances for its independent evaluations.
- In 2014, MCC developed an internal "Solutions Lab" that was designed to encourage innovation by engaging staff to come up with creative solutions to some of the biggest challenges MCC faces. MCC promotes agency-wide participation in its Solutions Lab through an internal intranet portal. To further encourage staff who pursue innovative ideas throughout the compact lifecycle, MCC launched the annual MCC Innovation Award as a part of the Agency's Annual Awards Ceremony held each summer. The Innovation Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate "exemplary" leadership integrating innovation in project design, project implementation, and/or systems functionality and efficiency. Selections for the Innovation Award are based on a demonstrated ability to lead and implement innovative strategies from project conception that foster sustained learning and collaboration and add value to MCC and/or country partnerships.
- MCC recently launched a Millennium Efficiency Challenge (MEC) to encourage innovation specifically in the compact and threshold program development phase. The challenge was designed to tap into the extensive knowledge of MCC's staff to identify efficiencies and innovative solutions that can shorten the program development timeline while maintaining MCC's rigorous quality standards and investment criteria. Winning ideas were selected and are being integrated into the compact development process starting in FY18. Senior management selected two MEC proposals around expedited diagnostics and agile management to build out their ideas and move forward in trial implementation.

CRITERIA

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- MCC (cont):
- [DCLI](#), the MCC-PEPFAR partnership discussed in criterion 5, also hosts an [Innovation Challenge](#) that identifies, supports, and involves country-based youth, developers, programmers, and solution providers through targeted competitions that address specific challenges with data. Since mid-2016, it has reached nearly 1,200 innovators, awarded almost 40 small scale grants in areas related to HIV/AIDS and health, economic empowerment of youth and women, and early childhood development challenges that increase risk and constrain economic potential. A number of these innovations are being considered for scale-up through public-private partnership funding. Another DCLI project, [Data Zetu](#), uses innovative "listening" campaigns to engage over 300 citizens and local leaders in subnational areas to generate over 100,000 hyperlocal [data points](#) which can be used to plan development interventions, such as schools, health centers, and specific services. The data collected by this project, including community insights, were "[opened](#)" and [shared](#)" in order to promote transparency and action.
  - MCC regularly engages in implementing test projects as part of its overall Compact programs. A few examples include: (1) in Morocco, an innovative [pay for results](#) mechanism to replicate or expand proven programs that provide integrated support including short-term (one to six months) job readiness skills training, technical training, job matching, follow-up to ensure longevity, and other services; (2) a "[call-for-ideas](#)" in Benin to interested companies and organizations from around the world to submit information regarding potential projects that would expand access to renewable off-grid electrical power in Benin; (3) a regulatory strengthening project in Sierra Leone that includes funding for a [results-based financing system](#) designed to strengthen the regulator's role, incentivize performance by the utilities, and enhance accountability; and (4) an [Innovation Grant Program](#) in Zambia to encourage local innovation in pro-poor service delivery in the water sector through grants to community-based organizations, civil society, and/or private sector entities.
  - MCC has signed a five-year (2017-2022), \$450m grant with the Kingdom of Morocco, called the Morocco Employability and Land Compact. The focus of the Compact is on making improvements toward land productivity and employability to create new economic opportunities, improve workforce skills, and strengthen the business environment. The Labor Market Impact Evaluation Initiative is a key component of the compact aimed at improving labor market outcomes through the use of rigorous quantitative research. The Initiative will finance rigorous impact evaluations and other rigorous empirical studies, as well as policy-research engagements, to build the capacity of the Moroccan government to commission and generate such studies on its own. This is the first time MCC has pursued a country-led Initiative focused on impact evaluations and policy research.
- SAMHSA:
- The [SAMHSA Knowledge Network](#), a collection of technical assistance and training resources provided by the agency, provides behavioral health professionals with education and collaboration opportunities, and ample tools and technical assistance resources that promote innovation in practice and program improvement. Located within the Knowledge Network are groups such as the [Center for Financing Reform and Innovation](#), which works with states and territories, local policy makers, providers, consumers, and other stakeholders to promote innovative financing and delivery system reforms.
  - In addition, SAMHSA participates in collaborations with other HHS agencies to promote innovative uses of data, technology and innovation across HHS to create a more effective government and improve the health of the nation, via the HHS IDEA Lab. SAMHSA has co-developed and submitted several innovative data utilization project proposals to the [Ignite Accelerator](#) of the HHS IDEA Lab, such as [Rapid Opioid Alert and Response](#) (ROAR), a project to monitor and prevent opioid overdoses by linking heroin users to resources and information.

CRITERIA

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SAMHSA (cont.):

- The agency is currently exploring the use of tiered-evidence frameworks in its award decision-making to actively encourage innovation at the grantee/program level. In addition, pursuant to the *21st Century Cures Act*, SAMHSA is establishing the [National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory](#) (Policy Lab) (Sec. 7001, p. 501), by restructuring the current Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation (OPPI). The new Policy Lab will review programs and activities operated by the agency to identify programs and activities that are duplicative, identify programs and activities that are not evidence-based or effective, and formulate recommendations for coordinating, elimination, or improving such programs (Sec 7001, pp. 502-503).
- To further promote innovation, per the *Cures Act*, SAMHSA's Assistant Secretary may coordinate with the Policy Lab to award grants to states, local governments, tribes and tribal organizations, and other eligible organizations to develop evidence-based interventions. These grants can help support the evaluation of models and interventions that show promise, or the expansion, replication, or scaling up of interventions that have been established as evidence-based (Sec. 7001, pp. 503-504).

USAID:

- USAID established the U.S. [Global Development Lab](#) (the Lab) in 2014 to increase the application of science, technology, innovation, and partnerships to extend the agency's development impact in helping to end extreme poverty. In FY17, the Lab's budget was \$72 million, and there were 106 direct hire staff (civil service and Foreign Service personnel) on board. The Lab is comprised of a diverse and specialized staff of scientists, engineers, technology and partnership experts, former venture capitalists, and program and administrative who work closely with colleagues across the agency and by bringing together a diverse set of partners to discover, test, and scale breakthrough innovations to solve development challenges faster, cheaper and more sustainably. The Lab is the home for the [Development Innovations Ventures](#), the agency [Grand Challenges for Development](#), the [Higher Education Solutions Network](#); the Innovation Design and Advisory Team; the Applied Innovation Team; and the [Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Innovations program](#) (MERLIN) to source, co-design, implement and test solutions that innovate on traditional approaches to monitoring, evaluation, research and learning. Two relevant innovations being tested are [Developmental Evaluation](#), which aims to provide ongoing feedback to managers on implementation through an embedded evaluator, and [Rapid Feedback](#), which allows implementers to test various methods to reach certain targeted results (more quickly than through traditional midterm or final evaluations).
- In the past six years, through the Global Development Lab, USAID, and its partners have launched ten [Grand Challenges for Development](#) (GCD): Saving Lives at Birth (2011), All Children Reading (2011), Powering Agriculture: An Energy Grand Challenge for Development (2012), Making All Voices Count (2012), Securing Water for Food (2013), Fighting Ebola (2015), Combating Zika and Future Threats (2016), Scaling Off-Grid Energy (2016), Ensuring Effective Health Supply Chains (2017), and Creating Hope in Conflict: A Humanitarian Grand Challenge (2018). GCDs are robust partnerships that leverage each partner's strengths to engage new solvers through incentive prizes, challenge grant funding, and crowdsourcing to capture learnings, accelerate support services, and generate awareness to identify the most promising solutions, test them, and scale those that are proven to work. Across the Grand Challenges for Development portfolio, partners have jointly committed over \$508 million (\$140 million from USAID) in grants and technical assistance for over 450 innovators in 70 countries. To date, more than \$154 million in follow-on funding has been catalyzed from external sources, a key measure of success.
- USAID is at the forefront of distilling the steps needed to execute open innovation competitions such as challenges and prizes that pay for results. USAID's process is captured in a series [Tools for Innovation Programming](#) (only available internally), which serve as the backbone of the [GSA Challenges and Prizes Toolkit](#), as well as the [Pay for Results in Development: A Primer for Practitioners](#), which released its third edition in November 2017.

CRITERIA

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USAID (cont.):

- [Development Innovation Ventures](#) (DIV) is USAID's tiered, evidence-driven open innovation program. DIV awards grants for innovative solutions to any development challenge, on the basis of rigorous evidence of impact, cost-effectiveness, and a pathway to scale via the public and/or private sectors. DIV awards funding across three stages, ranging from under \$200,000 for testing early-stage innovations to up to \$15 million for scaling evidence-backed innovations. The DIV model is designed to source breakthrough solutions, to minimize risk, and maximize impact by funding according to outcomes and milestones, to rigorously evaluate impact and cost-effectiveness, and to scale proven solutions. Since 2010, DIV has supported over 185 innovations in 45 countries with approximately \$104 million. In addition to mobilizing external financing of \$589 million, DIV grantees have directly impacted over 30 million beneficiaries with measurable outcomes, such as fewer infant deaths, higher literacy rates, and more households with affordable and reliable energy. Ongoing DIV grants continue to accelerate breakthrough innovation for transformative impact, with a refreshed emphasis on advancing local innovation and entrepreneurship in partnership with USAID Missions and the rest of the Agency. USAID opened a call for new DIV applications in September 2018.
- USAID also supports innovation through the external [Global Innovation Fund](#) (GIF), a private fund co-founded by USAID and based on the DIV model. Like DIV, GIF invests in social innovations to improve the lives of millions of people in the developing world, but, as a private fund, GIF is also able to provide debt and equity financing.
- USAID partners with the Australian Department of Foreign Assistance and Trade (Australian Aid), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund and promote the [Global Innovation Exchange](#) (the Exchange), a free, online platform that connects social entrepreneurs with the funding and other resources they need to be impactful. As of June 2018, the Exchange has 28,143 registered users; 7,320 innovations; 2,673 deals; and over \$270 million cumulative funding opportunities. USAID's investment in the Exchange has provided a key platform not only for USAID's business intelligence around innovation investment but the entire global industry. With the Exchange, USAID and others in development can see in one place all of the development innovations, where they are being tested, and the maturity curves, allowing USAID to make smarter innovation investments in the future. This platform has also tracked what has been funded where and what monies are accessible to domestic and global innovators, more rapidly connecting the right people, resources, and information at the right time. This platform won the 2017 ACT IAC Government Impact Innovation of the year.
- The Innovation Design and Advisory Team (iDesign) helps advance USAID's culture of innovation and intrapreneurship through testing, application, and mainstreaming of innovative design and problem-solving processes. USAID's Applied Innovation team works with programs and implementing partners, including contractors and grantees, to capture learning and accelerate innovations supported by USAID. The Applied Innovation team is working to expand innovation adoption across USAID's programming, and test the theory that innovations can enhance development impact, save time and resources, and improve programmatic efficiencies.
- USAID's [Higher Education Solutions Network](#) (HESN) program is a partnership with seven competitively awarded universities working with partners worldwide. Leveraging nearly equal investments from each institution, the universities have established eight Development Labs that have built a global research network of 1,100 partners from 82 countries. Through HESN, USAID has been able to harness the ingenuity of students and faculty to create or test over 500 innovations, which have helped USAID missions reach their development goals and benefitted an estimated 16.7 million individuals in developing countries.
- [Feed the Future Innovation Labs](#) are led by U.S. Title XII universities and are collaborative research programs between U.S. universities and host-country universities or national research institutions. The Feed the Future Innovation Labs are an integral component of USAID's implementation of the U.S. Government Global Food Security Research Strategy through their leadership and implementation of research and capacity building.

CRITERIA

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USAID (cont.):

- LER's Research and Development (R&D) Hub for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) helps agency staff determine best fit for emerging M&E approaches to specific contexts and programs and plays the role of connector by linking champions and conducting research on and documenting emerging M&E approaches that have been helpful in various circumstances. Approaches include working with [complexity-aware M&E](#), context monitoring, monitoring without indicators, and M&E for adaptive management.
- LER's [Global Learning for Adaptive Management](#) (GLAM) project aims to enable adaptive management through access to, use of, and learning from better and more timely monitoring and evaluation evidence. GLAM, which was awarded in early 2018, is co-funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and USAID. GLAM will work with USAID and DFID field offices and partners to identify, facilitate, and support innovative monitoring and evaluation methods and tools for more adaptive programs, while conducting action research to advance learning on adaptive management.
- USAID's [Acquisition and Assistance Lab](#) (A&A) is an interconnected network of A&A staff advancing the agency's mission through workforce development and the testing and scaling of innovations in acquisition and assistance. The A&A Lab was developed as a result of feedback from staff, senior leadership, and the partner community on the need to empower and enhance the A&A workforce, and to find innovative ways to do business. Since 2016, USAID has established five A&A Labs throughout the world, which have proven to be effective at fostering new ideas, sharing solutions, identifying workforce challenges, and advancing new approaches to traditional acquisition and assistance practices.

USED:

- The [Education Innovation and Research](#) (EIR) program is ED's primary innovation program for K–12 public education. EIR grants are focused on validating and scaling evidence-based practices, and encouraging innovative approaches to persistent challenges. The EIR program incorporates a [tiered-evidence framework](#) that supports larger awards for projects with the strongest evidence base as well as promising earlier-stage projects that are willing to undergo rigorous evaluation. Funds may be used for: (1) early-phase grants for the development, implementation, and feasibility testing of an intervention or innovation which prior research suggests has promise, in order to determine whether the intervention can improve student academic outcomes; (2) mid-phase grants for implementation and rigorous evaluation of interventions that have been successfully implemented under early-phase grants or have met similar criteria for documenting program effectiveness; and (3) expansion and replication of interventions or innovations that have been found to produce a sizable impact under a mid-phase grant or have met similar criteria for documenting program effectiveness. All grantees must carry out a rigorous independent evaluation of the effectiveness of their project.
- ED is participating in the [Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth](#) initiative. These pilots give state, local, and tribal governments an opportunity to test innovative new strategies to improve outcomes for low-income disconnected youth ages 14 to 24, including youth who are in foster care, homeless, young parents, involved in the justice system, unemployed, or who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school.
- ED is continuing to promote the use of data in innovative ways by engaging with developers. This includes launching a new [Developer Hub](#) and [GitHub platform](#), which provides developers with needed information and resources, and the creation of new APIs. Additionally, ED continues to be an active participant in the [Opportunity Project](#), which encourages the use of federal data for social good by providing a process for developers, data enthusiasts, policy leaders, and communities to co-create innovative tech solutions that expand opportunity.
- ED is currently implementing the [Experimental Sites Initiative](#) to assess the effects of statutory and regulatory flexibility for participating institutions disbursing Title IV student aid.

CRITERIA

**7. Innovation:** Did the agency have staff, policies, and processes in place that encouraged innovation to improve the impact of its programs in FY18? (Examples: Prizes and challenges; behavioral science trials; innovation labs/accelerators; performance partnership pilots; demonstration projects or waivers with strong evaluation requirements)

USED (cont.):

- The IES [Research Grants Program](#) supports the development and iterative testing of new, innovative approaches to improving education outcomes. IES makes research grants with a goal structure. "Goal 2: Development and Innovation" supports the development of new education curricula; instructional approaches; professional development; technology; and practices, programs, and policies that are implemented at the student-, classroom-, school-, district-, state-, or federal-level to improve student education outcomes.
- On behalf of ED, IES also administers the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, which competes funding to small business that propose developing commercially viable education technology projects that are designed to support classroom teaching and student learning. Projects must go through an iterative development process and conduct research to determine promise of effectiveness.
- ED has funded a number of tools to support innovation and rigorous evaluation in the field, including the following:
  - [RCT-YES](#) is a free software tool that uses cutting-edge statistical methods to help users easily analyze data and report results from experimental and quasi-experimental impact studies of education programs.
  - [Downloadable programs help users build logic models](#) and create ongoing plans for monitoring, measuring, and tracking outcomes over time to measure program effectiveness.
  - A [guide for researchers on how to conduct descriptive analysis in education](#) to help identify and describe trends in populations, create new measures, or describe samples in studies aimed at identifying causal effects.
  - The [Ed Tech Rapid Cycle Evaluation Coach](#), a free online tool that helps users plan, conduct, and report findings from experimental and quasi-experimental impact studies of education technology products. The tool is optimized for non-technical users and employs unique statistical methods that allow findings to be presented.
  - [CostOut](#), a software tool that helps users assess the cost and cost effectiveness of education interventions.
- ED is implementing a number of [Pay for Success projects](#):
  - Career and Technical Education (CTE): \$2 million to support the development of PFS projects to implement new or scale up existing high-quality CTE opportunities.
  - English Language Acquisition: \$293,000 to conduct a feasibility study that will identify at least two promising school sites that are using evidence-based interventions for early learning dual language models where a PFS project could take shape to help scale the interventions to reach more students those who need them.
  - Early Learning: \$3 million for Preschool Pay for Success feasibility pilots to support innovative funding strategies to expand preschool and improve educational outcomes for three- and four- year-olds. These grants are allowing states, school districts, and other local government agencies to explore whether Pay for Success is a viable financing mechanism for expanding and improving preschool in their communities.
  - Technical Assistance: The Office of Special Education Programs is collaborating with early childhood technical assistance centers to educate and build capacity among state coordinators in IDEA Part C and Part B to explore using PFS to expand or improve special education services for young children.
  - In addition, ED has conducted a Pay for Success webinar series for the Comprehensive Centers.
- The [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#), passed by Congress in July 2018, authorizes a new innovation fund to "create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale evidence-based, field-initiated innovations" in career and technical education. The fund is authorized as part of National Activities under Section 114. The Secretary may use up to 20 percent of the funds authorized for national activities for innovation fund activities; the authorized level for national activities is \$7.6 million in FY19 and gradually increases to \$8.2 million by FY24.

CRITERIA

**7. Innovation:** Did the agency have staff, policies, and processes in place that encouraged innovation to improve the impact of its programs in FY18? (Examples: Prizes and challenges; behavioral science trials; innovation labs/accelerators; performance partnership pilots; demonstration projects or waivers with strong evaluation requirements)

USHUD:

- HUD's [FY19 budget request](#) (pp. 48-4) seeks to establish an Office of Innovation that will focus on testing and validating solutions to state, local, and federal housing and community development problems, modeled on the Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Action (IDEA) Lab at HHS. The Office of Innovation will comprise three main components: a Building Technology component that addresses the need for resilient housing in disaster prone areas and affordable housing nationwide by identifying, evaluating, and incentivizing the adoption of resilient and affordable housing construction methods and materials; an Internal Innovation component that will facilitate innovation workshops for small HUD teams to improve the way their program or office works; and an Open Innovation Component that will engage the expertise, methods and tools of the private sector such as open data, crowdsourcing, challenges and prizes, and entrepreneurs in residence. (See [budget request](#), pp. 48-4.)
- PD&R is conducting numerous random-assignment program demonstrations to test new, innovative program models, as described in PD&R's [biennial report and online](#): the Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration, First-Time Homebuyer Education and Counseling Demonstration, Pre-Purchase Homeownership Counseling Demonstration, Support and Services at Home (SASH) Demonstration for elderly households, Supportive Services Demonstration for health services in elderly housing, Rent Reform Demonstration, Rental Assistance Demonstration, and the Small Area Fair Market Rent Demonstration. The evaluation reports for such demonstrations frequently include baseline, interim, final, and long-term follow-up reports to keep policymakers apprised of emerging evidence. HUD's largest program, Housing Choice Vouchers, grew out of the landmark Housing Allowance Demonstration of the 1970s and is shaped by the Moving to Opportunity demonstration.
- PD&R houses the [Office of International and Philanthropic Innovation](#), and administers five types of [Secretary's Awards](#) to encourage excellence: Public-Philanthropic Partnerships, Opportunity and Empowerment, Healthy Homes, Historic Preservation, and Housing and Community Design. The competitions are judged by juries of professionals and bring visibility to the nation's most compelling, innovative solutions for addressing housing and community development challenges.
- PD&R sponsors an [Innovation in Affordable Housing Competition](#) to engage multidisciplinary teams of graduate students in addressing a specific housing problem developed by an actual public housing agency. The [competition](#) increases the nation's future human capacity to address the affordable housing crisis by exposing future designers, administrators, and policymakers to real-world challenges of a specific legal and community context, with their proposals to be evaluated by an expert jury.
- HUD's Office of Strategic Planning and Management completed a Data Vision Initiative to identify opportunities for HUD to collect more data about impacts. The initiative resulted in recommendations for specific metrics that HUD programs could begin to collect (such as reasons tenants exit HUD-assisted housing).

USDOL:

- DOL is participating in the [Performance Partnership Pilots](#) (P3) for innovative service delivery for disconnected youth which includes not only waivers and blending and braiding of federal funds, but gives bonus points in application reviews for proposing "high tier" evaluations. DOL is the lead agency for the evaluation of P3. An interim report is expected in 2018.
- DOL recently awarded a contract to undertake a number of new behavioral insights studies and is conducting knowledge development and feasibility analyses to explore potential trials under that project. Additionally, DOL is completing a behavioral science evaluation that tested tailored outreach methods and modes targeted to women to increase their awareness of, and participation in, non-traditional occupations. The study was implemented in select sites of the American Apprenticeship grants. DOL recently completed a number of behavioral science evaluations—three in unemployment insurance, two in OSHA, one in OFCCP, and one in EBSA for pension contributions (see the [CEO website](#) for more information).

CRITERIA

**7. Innovation:** Did the agency have staff, policies, and processes in place that encouraged innovation to improve the impact of its programs in FY18? (Examples: Prizes and challenges; behavioral science trials; innovation labs/accelerators; performance partnership pilots; demonstration projects or waivers with strong evaluation requirements)

USDOL (cont):

- DOL is using Job Corps' demonstration authority to test and evaluate innovative and promising models that could improve outcomes for youth. In 2016 DOL awarded a contract for a Job Corps pilot program, the Cascades Job Corps College and Career Academy. The pilot will test alternative strategies for the operation of Job Corps for younger participants (ages 16 and 21). Past research on the program showed that while Job Corps increased the education and earnings of program participants, it was more beneficial for youth over age 20 than for its younger participants. This pilot uses DOL's demonstration authority to test innovative and promising strategies (which include using a career pathway program approach of integrated academic and technical training, workforce preparation skills, and support services) to better meet the needs of this population. CEO is sponsoring a rigorous impact evaluation to examine the effectiveness of the pilot. See the study overview [here](#).
- DOL has two pilot projects that tested the use of a Pay for Success (PFS) financing model in pilot projects from 2013–2017. In these pilots, private for-profit and philanthropic investors paid the up-front costs of delivering an intervention designed to achieve specific outcomes within a given timeframe, knowing they would only receive a return if the project met its specific outcome targets. Both pilots employed a random assignment methodology to measure results. DOL is sponsoring a process study to document project implementation and provide information on the PFS approach for policymakers and program administrators. The first report from this study was released in 2016, documenting the development of pilots and first year of implementation. A second report will document the pilots' longer-term operational experiences, including the extent to which the pilots achieved their performance milestones, and is expected in 2018. DOL also sits on the Supporting Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results interagency council and is informing implementation of the Pay for Success provisions of the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018* (PL 115–119), based on its experience with the pilots.
- DOL has invested more than \$90 million through the [ApprenticeshipUSA initiative](#) – a national campaign bringing together a broad range of stakeholders, including employers, labor, states, and education and workforce partners, to expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeship in the United States. This includes more than \$60 million for [state-led strategies](#) to grow and diversify apprenticeship, and [State Accelerator Grants](#) to help integrate apprenticeship into education and workforce systems; engage industry and other partners to expand apprenticeship to new sectors and new populations at scale; conduct outreach and work with employers to start new programs; promote greater inclusion and diversity in apprenticeship; and develop statewide and regional strategies aimed at building state capacity to support new apprenticeship programs. All of these grants include funding for data collection; additionally, ETA and CEO are conducting an evaluation of the [American Apprenticeship Initiative](#).
- In 2018 DOL intends to invest significantly in the Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness (RETAIN) Demonstration Project, which will test the impact of early intervention projects on stay-at-work/return-to-work outcomes. This demonstration project includes strong evaluation requirements. Grantees will be required to participate in an evaluation, which will be designed in Phase 1 and conducted during Phase 2 by an external, independent contractor.
- CEO received grant making authority in 2016. In January of 2017, CEO awarded [nine research grants](#) aimed at supporting university-based research of workforce policies and programs. The goal is to build capacity and drive innovation among academic researchers to answer questions that will provide insight into labor policies and programs.

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

ACF:

- In FY18, the five largest competitive grant programs are: (1) [Head Start](#) (\$9.9 billion); (2) [Unaccompanied Children Services](#) (\$1.3 billion); (3) [Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships](#) (\$755 million, included as part of Head Start total); (4) [Transitional and Medical Services](#) (\$320 million); and (5) [Preschool Development Grants](#) (\$25 million).
- ACF's [template](#) (p. 14 in Attachment C) for competitive grant announcements includes two options, requiring grantees to either 1) collect performance management data that contributes to continuous quality improvement and is tied to the project's logic model, or 2) conduct a rigorous evaluation for which applicants must propose an appropriate design specifying research questions, measurement and analysis. This helps build the evidence base through ACF grantmaking.
- In FY12, ACF significantly expanded its accountability provisions with the establishment of the [Head Start Designation Renewal System](#) (DRS). The DRS was designed to determine whether Head Start and Early Head Start programs are providing high quality comprehensive services to the children and families in their communities. Where they are not, grantees are denied automatic renewal of their grant and must apply for funding renewal through an open competition process. Those determinations are based on seven conditions, one of which looks at how Head Start classrooms within programs perform on the [Classroom Assessment Scoring System](#) (CLASS), an observation-based measure of the quality of teacher-child interactions. Data from ACF's [Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey](#) (FACES) and [Quality Features, Dosage, Thresholds and Child Outcomes](#) (Q-DOT) study were used to craft the regulations that created the DRS and informed key decisions in its implementation, including where to set minimum thresholds for average CLASS scores, the number of classrooms within programs to be sampled to ensure stable program-level estimates on CLASS, and the number of cycles of CLASS observations to conduct.
- ACF has an ongoing research portfolio [building evidence in Head Start](#). Research sponsored through Head Start funding over the past decade has provided valuable information not only to guide program improvement in Head Start itself, but also to guide the field of early childhood programming and early childhood development. Dozens of Head Start programs have collaborated with researchers in making significant contributions in terms of program innovation and evaluation, as well as the use of systematic data collection, analysis and interpretation in program operations.
- ACF has an ongoing [Study of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships](#) which includes a review of the literature to summarize the current knowledge base around EHS–child care partnerships; development of a theory of change model to articulate relations among key features, characteristics, and expected outcomes of partnerships; development of approaches to measuring partnerships for existing and new data collection efforts; and the design and implementation of a descriptive study documenting the characteristics and features of EHS–child care partnerships and activities aiming to improve professional development and the quality of services to better meet families' needs.
- ACF's [Personal Responsibility Education Program](#) (\$75 million in FY18) includes three individual discretionary grant programs that support evidence-based competitive grants that teach youth about abstinence and contraception to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
- To receive funds through ACF's [Community Based Child Abuse Prevention](#) (CBCAP) program, (\$39.8 million in FY18) states must "demonstrate an emphasis on promoting the increased use and high quality implementation of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices." CBCAP defines evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices along a continuum with four categories: Emerging and Evidence-Informed; Promising; Supported; and Well Supported. Programs determined to fall within specific program parameters will be considered to be "evidence informed" or "evidence-based" practices (EBP), as opposed to programs that have not been evaluated using any set criteria. ACF monitors progress on the percentage of program funds (most recently 61.1% in FY15) directed towards evidence-based and evidence-informed practices.

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

ACL:

- In FY18, the five largest competitive grants programs are: (1) [National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](#) (\$95 million); (2) [Independent Living](#) (\$78 million); (3) [University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities \(UCEDD\)](#) (\$39 million); (4) [Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act Programs \(MIPPA\)](#) (\$38 million); and (5) [Alzheimer's Disease Program](#) (\$18 Million).
- ACL grant awards are made, in part, based on the clarity and nature of proposed outcomes and whether the proposed project evaluation reflects a thoughtful and well-designed approach that will be able to successfully measure whether or not the project has achieved its proposed outcome(s); includes the qualitative and/or quantitative methods necessary to reliably measure outcomes; and is designed to capture "lessons learned" from the overall effort that might be of use to others, especially those who might be interested in replicating the project. To the extent that grantees had completed similar work in the past, they are asked to demonstrate in their funding applications that those efforts were successful. Further, grantees are required to submit data through the ACL Reporting tool. The data are reviewed and, as needed, technical assistance is provided to grantees.
- At the start of each budget cycle, ACL's Center for Policy and Evaluation sends ACL centers a one-page document titled "[Policy Review of ACL Funding Opportunity Announcements \(FOAs\)](#)." As part of this review process, OPE staff review Funding Opportunity Announcements to determine "Does the FOA provide enough detailed information to help applicants think critically about the measures they should include in their applications to effectively measure their progress towards meeting the goals outlined in the FOA?" OPE staff make specific recommendations to program staff to improve language around performance measurement and evaluation. The degree to which applications provide detailed information about their expected outcomes and how they will measure those outcomes informs funding decisions.
- The [NIDILRR evaluation](#) was conducted by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and was released in 2012. A ten-year evaluation plan was developed based on the NAS evaluation. The plan includes a set of research questions aimed at assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of NIDILRR's operations as well as the quality and impacts of NIDILRR-funded activities and products. Implementation is on-going and helps to guide funding priorities and decisions by ensuring that they are more closely tied to the evidence about promising practices produced by prior NIDILRR grantees.
- In FY18 NIDILRR released a competitive [grant](#) with the express purpose of building evidence of the effectiveness of exercise interventions or programs for improving and sustaining health and health related quality of life (HRQOL) among people with disabilities, and to determine the extent to which improved HRQOL is related to improved community participation outcomes.
- The [Long-Range Plan of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research \(NIDILRR\)](#) describes ways in which "NIDILRR proposes to support competitions that build on prior investments that resulted in evidence of efficacy and effectiveness. These competitions will provide funding for further development and testing of practices and interventions in additional settings, or among new populations of people with disabilities. These efforts may support translational research to develop practical strategies for ensuring more widespread use of new evidence-based findings in the area of disability and rehabilitation research and development."

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

ACL (cont.):

- Independent Living (IL) programs include a mix of formula and discretionary grants. The [Centers for Independent Living \(CILs\) Program](#) provides 354 discretionary grants to centers that are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private nonprofit agencies who provide IL services. To continue receiving CIL program funding, eligible centers must provide evidence that they have previously had an impact on the goals and objectives for this funding including:
  - Promotion of the IL philosophy;
  - Provision of IL services on a cross-disability basis;
  - Support for the development and achievement of IL goals chosen by the consumer;
  - Efforts to increase the availability of quality community options for IL;
  - Provision of IL core services and, as appropriate, a combination of any other IL service;
  - Building community capacity to meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities; and
  - Resource development activities to secure other funding sources.
- [UCEDDs](#) are a nationwide network of independent but interlinked centers, representing an expansive national resource for addressing issues, finding solutions, and advancing research related to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Applications are also reviewed based on their description of current or previous relevant experience and/or the record of the project team in preparing cogent and useful reports, publications, and other products.
- MIPPA funds are awarded to State grantees and to the National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment. To continue funding without restrictions, State grantees are required to submit [state plans](#) that ACL staff review for the specific strategies that grantees will employ to enhance efforts through statewide and local coalition building focused on intensified outreach activities to help beneficiaries likely to be eligible for the Low Income Subsidy program (LIS), Medicare Savings Program (MSP), Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D) and in assisting beneficiaries in applying for benefits. The plans also require that States reflect successes achieved to date and direct their efforts to enhance and expand their MIPPA outreach activities. The National Center applicants must describe the rationale for using the particular intervention, including factors such as evidence of intervention effectiveness.
- For [Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative](#) (ADPI) funding, "If the applicant has held an ADSSP grant between 2011 and 2017, they must explain the work of their previous dementia systems project." Applicants must also "describe the rationale for using the particular intervention, including factors such as: "lessons learned" for similar projects previously tested in your community, or in other areas of the country; and factors in the larger environment that have created the "right conditions" for the intervention (e.g., existing social or economic factors that you'll be able to take advantage of, etc)." ACL promotes evidence building in this area through activities such as a [2017 research summit on dementia care](#). The goal of the research summit was to identify what is known and what new knowledge is needed in order to accelerate the development, evaluation, translation, implementation, and scaling up of comprehensive care, services, and supports for persons with dementia, families, and other caregivers. The summit focused on research needed to improve quality of care and outcomes across care settings, including quality of life and the lived experience of persons with dementia and their caregivers. Grant applicants and awardees are encouraged to use such information to inform their programming.

## CRITERIA

### 8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

ACL (cont.):

- Although not one of its five largest competitive grants, ACL awarded a cooperative agreement titled "[Living Well-Model Approaches for Enhancing the Quality, Effectiveness and Monitoring of Home and Community Based Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities](#)" to design, identify, and implement a range of evidence based practices and/or innovative strategies focusing on improving services in the community that support people with developmental disabilities living in the community or those moving to the community from a more restrictive setting. Successful applicants are required to demonstrate expertise and experience in improving quality outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

CNCS:

- CNCS is operating two competitive grant programs in FY18: (1) the [AmeriCorps State](#) and National program (excluding State formula grant funds) (\$244,064,965 million); and (2) [Senior Corps RSVP](#) program (\$49 million). (The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grants were integrated into the AmeriCorps State and National program. CNCS requested \$50 million for SIF in FY17, but Congress eliminated funding for this evidence-based program in FY17 and again in FY18.)
- CNCS's AmeriCorps State and National Grants Program (excluding State formula grant funds), [application](#) (pp. 14-17) allocated up to 36 points out of 100 to organizations that submit applications supported by performance and evaluation data in FY18. Specifically, up to 24 points can be assigned to applications with theories of change supported by relevant research literature, program performance data, or program evaluation data; and up to 12 points can be assigned for an applicant's incoming level of evidence, the quality of the evidence, and the applicant's evaluation capacity. These categories of evidence are modeled closely on the levels of evidence defined in the Social Innovation Fund (see note above). An additional 8 points could be earned by demonstrating a culture of learning (e.g., collecting and using information for learning and decision making). In sum, 44 of 100 points are earned through demonstrating quality data, rigorous evidence, and the use of this information for continuous improvement and decision-making. The percentage of grant dollars allocated to strong, moderate, preliminary, and no evidence categories shifted between FY17 and FY18 (see chart below), such that more FY18 grant dollars were awarded to applicants with strong levels of evidence for proposed interventions, and fewer grant dollars were awarded to applicants with little to no evidence of effectiveness.

Percentage of competitive AmeriCorps grant funds that support evidence-based projects	FY16	FY17	FY18
Strong	20%	18%	26%
Moderate	14%	11%	11%
Preliminary	44%	45%	34%
No evidence	22%	26%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

CNCS (cont.):

- CNCS and the VA are outcome payers for the Veterans Coordinated Approach to Recovery and Employment (CARE) Pay for Success Project. The intervention is the Individual Placement and Support program, an evidence-based approach to supportive employment. The evidence base consists of 25 published RCTs and is also currently under review by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation for inclusion in their Moving the Needle Initiative. This project will initiate service delivery in the Summer 2018 with outcome payments beginning at 18 months and continuing in months 24, 30, and 42 of the project. CNCS funded this project through forward-funded resources from the Social Innovation Fund (see note above).
- CNCS will initiate a process evaluation in FY18 as part of its Scaling Effective National Service Solutions initiative (initiated in FY16). An independent contractor reviewed grantee evaluation reports and scaling plans submitted in FY15, FY16, and FY17, and determined which interventions had sufficient evidence to warrant scaling as well as variation in scaling goals and experiences. Three grantees were selected for a process evaluation to systematically assess their scaling experiences. Findings from the evaluation will be used to inform grantmaking and provide guidance for how and when to scale effective service interventions.
- CNCS published and began implementing its [Transformation and Sustainability Plan](#) in FY18. One of the six goals included in this plan is prioritizing evidence-based interventions. Specifically, "CNCS will further refine the intervention models it funds based on evidence and demonstrated success, while maintaining the flexibility to support statutory and Administration priorities. CNCS will also continue to support innovative interventions and approaches based upon preliminary evidence in order to build grantee capacity, foster innovation, and meet evolving community needs, and will evaluate these interventions to learn more about whether they are effective."

MCC:

- MCC awards all of its agency funds through two competitive grant windows: [Compact and Threshold](#) programs (whose budgets for FY18 were \$800 million and \$26.6 million). Both types of grants require demonstrable, objective evidence to support the likelihood of project success in order to be awarded funds. For country partner selection, MCC uses 20 different indicators within the categories of economic freedom, investing in people, and ruling justly to determine country eligibility for program assistance. These indicators (see [MCC's FY18 Guide to the Indicators](#)) are collected by independent third parties.
- When considering granting a [second compact](#), MCC further considers whether countries have: (1) exhibited successful performance on their previous compact; (2) exhibited improved 2018 Scorecard policy performance during the partnership; and (3) exhibited a continued commitment to further their sector reform efforts in any subsequent partnership. As a result, the MCC Board of Directors has an even higher standard when selecting countries for subsequent compacts. Per MCC's policy for [Compact Development Guidance](#) (p. 6): "As the results of impact evaluations and other assessments of the previous compact program become available, the partner country must use this use data to inform project proposal assessment, project design, and implementation approaches."

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

MCC (cont):

- Following country selection, MCC conducts a [constraints analysis](#) to identify the most binding constraints to private investment and entrepreneurship that hold back economic growth. Coupled with a subsequent root-cause analysis, the constraints analysis enables the country, in partnership with MCC, to select compact or threshold activities most likely to contribute to sustainable, poverty-reducing growth. In developing the project proposals, MCC requires that countries use all available evidence to inform the design and potential impact of a project. Specifically, this evidence should be drawn from evaluations of similar completed projects in the compact country or, if this is not available, results from another country with similar economic characteristics and conditions that may be applicable. MCC will not approve proposals or parts of proposals without good supporting evidence that the proposal will have a significant impact on economic growth and poverty reduction. Due diligence, including feasibility studies where applicable, are also conducted for each potential investment. MCC then performs Cost-Benefit Analysis to assess the potential impact of each project, and estimates an [Economic Rate of Return](#) (ERR). MCC uses a 10% ERR hurdle to more effectively prioritize and fund projects with the greatest opportunity for maximizing impact. MCC then recalculates ERRs at compact closeout, drawing on information from MCC's monitoring data (among other data and evidence), in order to test original assumptions and assess the cost effectiveness of MCC programs. In connection with the ERR, MCC conducts a [Beneficiary Analysis](#), which seeks to describe precisely which segments of society will realize the project's benefits. It is most commonly used to assess the impact of projects on the poor, but it has broader applicability that allows for the estimation of impact on populations of particular interest, such as women, the aged, children, and regional or ethnic sub-populations. This process is codified in MCC's [Compact Development Guidance](#). Per the guidance, MCC requires the use of evidence to inform country and project selection by requiring that each project meet certain investment criteria like generating high economic returns, including clear metrics for results, and supporting the long-term sustainability of results.
- In line with MCC's M&E policy, MCC projects are required to submit quarterly [Indicator Tracking Tables](#) showing progress toward projected targets. MCC also requires independent evaluations of every project to assess progress in achieving outputs and outcomes throughout the lifetime of the project and beyond.

SAMHSA:

- The following represents SAMHSA's five largest competitive grant programs for which funds were appropriated in FY18: (1) Opioid State Targeted Response (\$1.5 billion in FY18); (2) Children's Mental Health Services (\$125 million in FY18); (3) Strategic Prevention Framework (\$119.5 million in FY18); (4) Targeted Capacity Expansion – General (\$95.2 million in FY18); and (5) Substance Abuse Treatment Criminal Justice (\$89 million in FY18).
- The President's Budget request for SAMHSA for FY18 stipulates "that up to 10% of amounts made available to carry out the Children's Mental Health Initiative may be used to carry out demonstration grants or contracts for early interventions with persons not more than 25 years of age at clinical high risk of developing first episode of psychosis." Specifically, funds from this set-aside should address whether community-based interventions during the prodrome phase can prevent further development of serious emotional disturbances and eventual serious mental illness, and the extent to which evidence-based early interventions can be used to delay the progression of mental illness, reduce disability, and/or maximize recovery.

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

SAMHSA (cont.):

- SAMHSA has universal language about using evidence-based practices (EBPs) that is included in its Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) (entitled Using Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)). This language includes acknowledgement that, "EBPs have not been developed for all populations and/or service settings" thus encouraging applicants to "provide other forms of evidence" that a proposed practice is appropriate for the intended population. Specifically, the language states that applicants should: (1) document that the EBPs chosen are appropriate for intended outcomes; (2) explain how the practice meets SAMHSA's goals for the grant program; (3) describe any modifications or adaptations needed for the practice to meet the goals of the project; (4) explain why the EBP was selected; (5) justify the use of multiple EBPs, if applicable; and (6) discuss training needs or plans to ensure successful implementation. Lastly, the language includes resources the applicant can use to understand EBPs. SAMHSA shares evidence-based program and practice language with grantees as they compete for SAMHSA grants and describe the types of program/practice implementation they hope to engage in to address the needs of their particular target populations and communities. The review criteria contained in the FOA make clear that applicants proposing to use programs and practices with a more robust evidence base will receive higher scores and thus greater support for their funding application.
- The President's Budget for SAMHSA for FY18 plans to implement a tiered evidence approach in the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) program, which will allow for funding allocations and awards based on the implementation of both innovative practices or programs and more standard programming. Grant funding will be tied to the particular approach taken by the grantee. At the present time, SAMHSA does not use preference points to link funds to evidence of effectiveness; however, the 10% set-aside includes language to suggest that the Coordinated Specialty Care model is a first episode approach of importance to this work.
- Among SAMHSA's [standard terms and conditions](#) of all grant funding is the requirement that grantees collect and report evaluation data to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs under the *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010* (P.L. 102-62). In addition, grantees must comply with performance goals and expected outcomes described in Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs), which may include participation in an evaluation and/or local performance assessment. While exemplar FOAs are not available to be shared publicly at this juncture, SAMHSA is developing the first tiered evidence FOA that will be funded in FY18, a key step to incentivize innovative practice/program models among grantees. While exemplar FOAs are not available to be shared publicly at this juncture, SAMHSA is developing the first tiered evidence FOA that will be funded in FY18, a key step to incentivize innovative practice/program models among grantees.

USAID:

- In FY18, USAID's top five accounts, as appropriated, included: [Global Health Programs](#) USAID (\$3.02 billion); Development Assistance (\$3 billion) (see p. 9 of this [Reference Guide](#)); [International Disaster Assistance](#) (\$2.7 billion); Economic Support Fund (\$1.82 billion) (see p. 10 of this [Reference Guide](#)); and Assistance to Europe Eurasia and Central Asia (\$750 million) (see p. 10 of this [Reference Guide](#)).
- USAID is committed to using evidence of effectiveness in all of its competitive contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants, which comprise the majority of the agency's work. USAID's Program Cycle policy ensures evidence from monitoring, evaluation and other sources informs decisions at all levels, including during strategic planning, project and activity design, and implementation. The [Program Cycle](#) is USAID's particular framing and terminology to describe a common set of processes intended to achieve more effective development interventions and maximize impacts. The Program Cycle acknowledges that development is not static and is rarely linear, and therefore stresses the need to assess and reassess through regular monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

USAID (cont.):

- In 2013, USAID reformed its policy for awarding new contracts to elevate past performance to comprise 20 to 30 percent of the non-cost evaluation criteria. For assistance, USAID does a "risk assessment" to review an organization's ability to meet the goals and objectives outlined by the agency. This can be found in [ADS 303](#), section 303.3.9. Contractor performance is guided by USAID operational policy [ADS 302](#), section 302.3.8.7. As required in FAR Subpart 42.15, USAID must evaluate contractor performance using the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). Information in CPARS, while not available to the public, is available for Contracting Officers across the government to use in making determinations of future awards.
- In June 2018, USAID [revised its process](#) for engaging senior leadership in the review of proposed high-dollar-value A&A awards (contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements) with a total estimated cost of \$20 million or more. The new policy, called the [Senior Obligation Alignment Review \(SOAR\)](#) helps to ensure the agency is using innovative approaches to provide long-term sustainable outcomes and provides oversight on the use of mechanisms and proposed results. The review also contributes to more rigorous project design and establishes greater linkages between Washington and field activities. Factors under review include: approach, use of evidence, past activities, innovation, and sustainable results.
- USAID seeks to increase collaboration, co-design, and co-financing approaches that promote innovation and the diversification of the partner base. This will result in a broader evidence base, more empowered partners, results-driven solutions, and stronger host-country capacity and self-reliance, to advance the agency's overall goal of ending the need for foreign assistance. Based on an assessment of best practices and potential innovations, USAID will develop and implement procurement strategies and methodologies that achieve greater reliance on collaborative approaches and co-creation. In addition, USAID will train staff on co-creation and more-collaborative methods to engage our partners. The agency is measuring progress towards this goal through one of its Agency Priority Goals.

USED:

- ED's five largest competitive grant programs in FY18 are: (1) [TRIO](#) (\$1.01 billion in FY18); (2) [Charter Schools Program](#) (\$400 million in FY18); (3) [GEAR UP](#) (\$350 million in FY18); (4) [Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program](#) (TSL) (\$200 million in FY18); and (5) [Comprehensive Literacy Development Grants](#) (\$190 million in FY18).
- ED uses evidence of effectiveness when making awards in all 5 of these largest competitive grant programs. (1) The vast majority of TRIO funding in FY18 will be used to support continuation awards to grantees that were successful in prior competitions that awarded competitive preference priority points for projects that proposed strategies supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness, including over \$300 million in Student Support Services, over \$150 million in Talent Search, and nearly \$400 million in the Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math and Science programs combined. (2) Under the Charter Schools Program, ED generally requires or encourages applicants to support their projects through logic models – however, applicants are not expected to develop their applications based on rigorous evidence. (3) For the 2017 competition for GEAR UP, ED used a competitive preference priority for projects based on moderate evidence of effectiveness for state and partnership grants (approximately \$70 million in new awards in FY17). ED is funding continuation awards in 2018 for these evidence-based projects. Additionally, ED is conducting 2018 GEAR UP competitions (nearly \$130 million) including an absolute priority for applicants proposing evidence-based strategies to improve STEM outcomes. (4) The TSL statute requires applicants to provide a description of the rationale for their project and describe how the proposed activities are evidence-based, and grantees are held to these standards in the implementation of the program. In 2018, the program is paying out continuation awards from the 2017 competition. (5) The Comprehensive Literacy Development (CLD) statute requires that grantees provide subgrants to local educational agencies that conduct evidence-based literacy interventions. Plans for the 2018 competition are forthcoming, as ED can make awards under the CLD program through September 30, 2019.

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

USED (cont.):

- The Evidence Planning Group (EPG) advises program offices on ways to incorporate evidence in grant programs, including by encouraging or requiring applicants to propose projects that are based on research, and by encouraging applicants to design evaluations for their proposed projects that would build new evidence.

USHUD:

- In FY18 HUD's largest competitive programs are: (1) [Continuum of Care](#) (\$1.9 billion); (2) [CHOICE Neighborhoods Implementation](#) (\$145 million); (3) [Lead Based Paint Hazard Reduction](#) (\$130 million); (4) [Section 202](#) (\$105 million); and (5) [Section 811](#) (\$82 million).
- Competitive grants in the Continuum of Care program account for most HUD grant resources in FY18, and serve homeless populations by providing permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing services. The Continuum of Care program awards preference points based on reporting of system performance measures focused on outcomes. The [FY17 NOFA](#) allocated \$1.6 billion using a 200-point scale. The 200 points were awarded for various features, many of which included evidence of effectiveness:
  - Up to 49 points for system performance, including –
    - up to 10 points to CoCs that demonstrate an overall reduction of at least 5 percent in the number of individuals and families who experience homelessness;
    - up to 3 points to CoCs that demonstrate how they are working to reduce the number of individuals and families who become homeless for the first time, with maximum points awarded to CoCs that demonstrate a reduction in the number of first-time homeless;
    - up to 11 points to CoCs that reduce the length of time individuals and families remain homeless and specifically describe how they will reduce the length of time individuals and families remain homeless;
    - up to 9 points to CoCs that demonstrate an increase in the rate in which individuals and families move to permanent housing destinations or continue to reside in permanent housing projects;
    - up to 6 points to CoCs that reduce the extent to which individuals and families leaving homelessness experience additional spells of homelessness;
    - up to 4 points to CoCs that increase program participants' incomes from employment and non-employment cash sources; and
  - Up to 60 points for performance and strategic planning, including –
    - up to 15 points to CoCs for demonstrating the extent to which they are ending chronic homelessness;
    - up to 3 points to CoCs that demonstrate the total number of homeless households with children and youth has decreased;
    - up to 8 points to CoCs that demonstrate a decrease in the total number of homeless veterans in the CoC; and
    - up to 4 points to CoCs that demonstrate the total number of homeless veterans has decreased.
- The FY18 CHOICE Neighborhoods [Implementation Grants](#) program's scoring criteria accounts for how strong the evidence base is for each applicant's selected strategies. The 102 points possible are awarded for factors of capacity, need, strategy, leverage, and soundness of approach (pp. 54–56). Included in these factors are points for evidence-based criteria, including 3 points for evidence-based public safety approaches (p. 65), 2 points for evidence-based early learning programs (p. 72), and 2 points for high-quality school-based or out-of-school education programs (p. 72).

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

USHUD (cont.):

- The [Lead Based Paint Hazard Reduction program](#) scores applicants based on their ability to monitor performance and specifically asks for statistics on elevated blood lead incidence/prevalence. Of 102 points possible, 10 points are awarded for the applicant's performance history (p. 38), 5 points for effective use of funds (p. 40), and 20 points for evidence of applicant need (pp. 41–43).
- Additionally, all HUD-funded programs require recipients to submit, not less than annually, a report documenting achievement of outcomes under the purpose of the program and the work plan in the award agreement for accountability purposes and to build evidence of effective practices in the field.
- HUD and the U.S. Department of Justice have a partnership to demonstrate the effectiveness of a Pay for Success financing approach. Demonstration grants require implementing [Pay for Success](#) financing to reduce homelessness and prisoner recidivism by providing permanent supportive housing using the "housing first" model. HUD is conducting an evaluation of the efficacy and cost effectiveness of the Pay for Success approach.

USDOL:

- In FY18, the five largest competitive grant programs awarded were: (1) [YouthBuild](#) (\$85 million); (2) [Reentry Projects](#) (\$84million); (3) [RETAIN Demonstration Projects](#) (\$63 million); (4) [Indian and Native American Employment and Training Program](#) (\$62 million); and (5) [National Health Emergency \(NHE\) Dislocated Worker Demonstration Grants](#) (\$21 million).
- All grantees have been or will be involved in evaluations designed by CEO and the relevant DOL agencies. In each case DOL required or encouraged grantees (through language in the funding announcement and proposal review criteria) to use evidence-based models or strategies in grant interventions and/or to participate in an evaluation, especially to test new interventions that theory or research suggest are promising.
- DOL includes rigorous evaluation requirements in all competitive grant programs, involving either: (1) full participation in a national evaluation as a condition of grant receipt; (2) an independent third-party local or grantee evaluation with priority incentives for rigorous designs (e.g., tiered funding, scoring priorities, bonus scoring for evidence-based interventions, or multi-site rigorous tests); or (3) full participation in an evaluation as well as rigorous grantee (or local) evaluations.
- For example, the YouthBuild [funding announcement](#) required applicants to demonstrate how their project design is informed by the existing evidence base on disadvantaged youth serving social programs, and in particular disadvantaged youth workforce development programs. The funding announcement also contained language stating that grantees are required to participate in an evaluation as a condition of grant award should DOL undertake one. DOL funded an [evaluation of YouthBuild](#) using a randomized controlled trial. The evaluation included 75 programs across the country and nearly 4,000 young people who enrolled in the study between 2011 and 2013. The final report, presenting the program's effects on young people after four years, will be released in 2018.
- The Reentry Projects grant program used a tiered evidence framework to require applicants to propose evidence-based and informed interventions, or new interventions that theory or research suggests are promising, (or a combination of both) that lead to increased employment outcomes for their target populations. Applicants must frame their goals and objectives to address this issue and are able to select and implement different program services and/or features of program models. The grant [funding announcement](#) includes examples of previous studies and evaluations that DOL has conducted on reentry programs, as well as other evidence-based and promising practices, and applicants were encouraged to review these resources prior to designing their intervention. DOL currently has an [evaluation underway](#) of the Reentry Projects grant program.

CRITERIA

**8. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Competitive**

**Grant Programs:** Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18? (Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

USDOL (cont):

- The Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness (RETAIN) Demonstration Project will test the impact of early intervention projects on stay-at-work/return-to-work outcomes (see here for the [funding announcement](#)). This project builds off of current evidence and includes a rigorous evaluation. The demonstration will be structured and funded in two phases. The initial period of performance will be 18 months and will include planning and start-up activities, including the launch of a small pilot demonstration and an evaluability assessment. At the conclusion of the initial period of performance, a subset of awardees will be competitively awarded supplemental funding to implement the demonstration projects. Awardees will be required to participate in an evaluation, which will be designed in Phase 1 and conducted during Phase 2 by an external, independent contractor.
- The [funding announcement](#) for the Native American Employment and Training Program required applicants to demonstrate how their project design is informed by the existing evidence base on disadvantaged youth serving social programs, and in particular disadvantaged youth workforce development programs, and contains language stating that grantees are required to participate in an evaluation as a condition of grant award should DOL undertake one.
- The [funding announcement](#) for the National Health Emergency (NHE) Dislocated Worker Demonstration Grants states that a primary goal is to test innovative approaches to address the economic and workforce-related impacts of the opioid crisis, and contains language stating that grantees are required to participate in an evaluation as a condition of grant award. The purpose of these grants is to enable eligible applicants to serve or retrain workers in communities impacted by the health and economic effects of widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose.

CRITERIA

**9. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Non-Competitive Grant Programs:**

Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18?

(Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

ACF:

- In FY18, ACF's five largest non-competitive grant programs are: (1) [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#) (\$17.3 billion); (2) [Child Care and Development Fund](#) (Block Grant and Entitlement to States combined) (\$8.1 billion); (3) [Foster Care](#) (\$5.5 billion); (4) [Child Support Enforcement Payments to States](#) (\$4.36 billion); and (5) [Low Income Home Energy Assistance](#) (\$3.6 billion).
- ACF has a long-standing and ongoing [research portfolio building evidence related to TANF](#). Congress has recently provided ACF with additional funds and statutory requirements related to building evidence in this area. In FY17, Congress designated 0.33% of the TANF Block Grant for research, evaluation, and technical assistance, a substantial increase over previously available resources. ACF has used this money to invest in a major new research project on [Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families](#) (BEES) as well as the [TANF Data Innovation Project](#) described above. Additionally, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017* directed HHS to create a "What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising Projects to Move Welfare Recipients into Work," as described in Question 6.
- ACF has an [ongoing research portfolio examining child care](#). Research in this area furthers our understanding of child care as a support for parental employment and for children's developmental well-being, and of the role of child care subsidies in allowing low-income working parents to balance work and family obligations. Recently, ACF significantly increased its investment in child care research, from \$14M in FY17 to \$23M in FY18. ACF's Office of Child Care provides evidence-based guidance based on OPRE research when providing technical assistance to grantees.
- ACF has an [ongoing research portfolio on abuse, neglect, adoption, and foster care](#). The child welfare research portfolio includes research on children who are maltreated or who are at risk for child maltreatment; children and families who come to the attention of child protective services; and children and families who are receiving child welfare services either in their families of origin or in substitute care settings. OPRE partners with ACF's Children's Bureau to conduct research covering a broad array of topics, including identification of antecedents and consequences of child maltreatment, strategies for prevention of maltreatment, and service needs and service outcomes for children who come to the attention of child welfare. ACF's child welfare waiver demonstration projects, described above, provide further evidence in this area.
- The *Family First Prevention Services Act* (FFPSA) (Division E, Title VII of the [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018](#)) newly enables States to use Federal funds available under parts B and E of title IV of the *Social Security Act* to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements through the provision of evidence-based mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, in-home parent skill-based programs, and kinship navigator services. FFPSA requires an independent systematic review of evidence to designate programs and services as "promising," "supported," and "well-supported" practices. Only interventions designated as evidence-based will be eligible for federal funds.

ACL:

- In FY18, the five largest non-competitive grants programs are: (1) [Nutrition Services](#) (\$835 million, which includes both congregate meals (e.g., served at senior centers) and home delivered meals); (2) Home and Community-Based Supportive Services (\$348 million); (3) [Family Caregiver Support Services](#) (\$150 million); (4) Partnerships for Innovation, Inclusion and Independence (\$45 million); and (5) [Developmental Disabilities – Protection and Advocacy](#) (\$39 million).
- [Eligibility and funding levels for mandatory \(formula\) grants are based on specific legislation](#). While non-competitive grants are mandatory (formula) grants for ongoing programs, which require no application or competition, ACL regional staff work closely with awardees to monitor performance including through review and approval of annual performance data and through the provision of technical assistance both on an as-needed basis and through regularly scheduled grantee meetings.

CRITERIA

**9. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Non-Competitive Grant Programs:**

Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18?

(Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

ACL (cont.):

- ACL's three largest non-competitive grant programs (Nutrition Services, Home and Community-Based Supportive Services, and Family Caregiver Support Services) are funded under the [Older Americans Act](#) and, therefore, are required:
  - to participate in periodic evaluations that build the evidence base. OPE is currently conducting evaluations of the [Nutrition Services program](#) (Title III-C) and the [Family Caregiver Support Services program](#) (Title III-E); and
  - to submit state plans that use uniform procedures for determining need for services which should guide the plan for delivering those services under the grants. This section also requires that State grantees conduct periodic evaluations of, and public hearings on, activities and projects carried out in the State including evaluations of the effectiveness of services provided to individuals with greatest economic need, greatest social need, or disabilities; and
  - to provide technical assistance about the use of evidence-based programs and model programs, which ACL does through its resource centers. For example, [resource centers](#) can help meal providers to ensure that meals provided through these programs fulfill the standards set by the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and which are required under the *Older Americans Act*.
- These three programs also require applicants to submit [State plans](#), which must be approved prior to funding awards. The State plans are assessed for the degree to which applicants have:
  - Documented tangible outcomes achieved as a result of previous state long-term care reform efforts; and
  - Translated activities, data (i.e., evidence), and outcomes into proven best practices which can be used to leverage additional funding.
- The PIII program was proposed in FY18 as a new program. ACL proposes to work with Congress on the development of authorization language for this new program including methods for using evidence to allocate and monitor funding.
- While not one of ACL's largest non-competitive grant programs, the [Health Promotion program](#) (part of ACL's Preventative Health Services funded at \$1.8 million) requires that funds be spent on evidence-based programs. This change followed a decade of progress by the aging services network to move efforts toward implementing disease prevention and health promotion programs that are based on scientific evidence and demonstrated to improve the health of older adults. The federal FY12 Congressional appropriations law included, for the first time, an evidence-based requirement.

CNCS:

- CNCS operates one formula grant program in FY18, the [AmeriCorps](#) State formula grants program (\$137,453,226). CNCS also operates four direct grant programs in FY18: (1) [AmeriCorps](#) National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) (\$32 million); (2) [AmeriCorps](#) VISTA (\$92 million); (3) [Senior Corps](#) Foster Grandparents (\$108 million); and (4) [Senior Corps](#) Senior Companion Program (\$46 million).
- In FY18, the Senior Corps Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion programs embedded evidence into their grant renewal processes by offering supplemental funding ("[augmentation grants](#)") to grantees interested in deploying volunteers to serve in [evidence-based programs](#) and providing evaluation data on implementation fidelity, including outcomes. A total of \$1.2 million is allocated for FY18 augmentation grants.

CRITERIA

**9. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Non-Competitive Grant Programs:**

Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18?  
(Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

CNCS (cont):

- NCCC will invest savings from efficiency measures into research and evidence activities, and VISTA will invest savings from reallocating member training dollars into evaluation projects –
  - NCCC plans to invest \$1.2 million in FY18 in a contract that will allow CNCS to conduct 3 studies focusing on retention of members, leadership development among members attributable to their service experience, and an analysis of community impacts based on years of data on projects conducted by teams nationwide. NCCC will also invest approximately \$300,000 to support three research grants that will examine civic engagement following natural disasters in relation to community resiliency with respect to sustainable environments.
  - VISTA will contribute approximately \$50,000 to 5 research grants in FY18 that will study equitable development issues. CNCS is also working with the program to develop a comparative case study that will allow it to follow up in a sample of communities to assess the longer-term effects of volunteer mobilization, partnership development, and resources leveraged to sustain project work and achieve community impacts.

MCC:

- MCC does not administer non-competitive grant programs.

SAMHSA:

- The following represents SAMHSA's largest non-competitive grant programs for which funds were appropriated in FY18: (1) Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program (\$1.8 billion in FY18); (2) Mental Health Block Grant Program (\$722.5 million in FY18); (3) Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Program (\$64.6 million in FY18); and (4) Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Program (\$36.1 million in FY18).
- In FY18, Congress maintained the 10% set-aside for evidence-based programs in SAMHSA's Mental Health Grant Block grant (p. 377 of the [FY18 appropriations law](#)) to address early serious mental illness (ESMI) (including psychotic disorders). In its [FY19 budget request](#) (p. 121), SAMHSA expressed its desire to continue the set-aside. In [FY17](#), SAMHSA's Mental Health Grant Block maintained a 10% set-aside for evidence-based programs (p. 4) to address early serious mental illness (ESMI) (including psychosis) among individuals. In [FY18-19 grant applications](#), states must describe how they will utilize the 10% set aside to align with coordinated specialty care models such as that which is grounded in the National Institute of Mental Health's RAISE (Recovery after an Initial Schizophrenic Episode) work, or other approved evidence-based approaches. A key assumption of the block grant applications that grantees must meet is that, "state authorities use evidence of improved performance and outcomes to support their funding and purchasing decisions" (p. 8). In addition, a quality improvement plan is requested from all grantees, which is based on the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement/Total Quality Management (CQI/TQM). Grantees are also required to comply with [performance requirements](#), which include assessing how funds are used via data and performance management systems and other tracking approaches.

CRITERIA

**9. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Non-Competitive Grant Programs:**

Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18?

(Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

USAID:

- USAID does not administer non-competitive grant programs.
- USAID does contribute funding to multilateral institutions known as Public International Organizations (PIOs), which are listed [here](#), and include the World Bank, UN, and multi-donor funds such as the Global Fund. A Public International Organization (PIO) is an international organization composed principally of countries. In these specific cases, USAID funds are part of overall U.S. government funding for these partner institutions. These funds become subject to the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the organization that receives them. For example, the [Global Fund](#) has a performance-based funding system, which bases funding decisions on a transparent assessment of results against time-bound targets. USAID's [ADS chapter 308](#) provides more information on how PIOs are defined and includes guidance related to due diligence required prior to awarding grants to PIOs.

USED:

- ED's five largest non-competitive grant programs in FY18 included: (1) [Title I Grants](#) to LEAs (\$15.8 billion); (2) [IDEA Grants](#) to States (\$12.3 billion); (3) [Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants](#) (\$2.1 billion); (4) [Impact Aid Payments to Federally Connected Children](#) (\$1.4 billion); and (5) [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) (\$1.2 billion).
- ED worked with Congress in FY16 to ensure that evidence played a major role in ED's large non-competitive grant programs in the reauthorized ESEA. As a result, section 1003 of ESEA requires states to set aside at least 7% of their Title I, Part A funds for a range of activities to help school districts improve low-performing schools. School districts and individual schools are required to create action plans that include "evidence-based" interventions that demonstrate strong, moderate, or promising levels of evidence.
- Section 4108 of ESEA authorizes school districts to invest "safe and healthy students" funds in Pay for Success initiatives. Section 1424 of ESEA authorizes school districts to invest their Title I, Part D funds (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk) in Pay for Success initiatives.
- ED is working to align its diverse technical assistance to best serve state, school districts, and schools as they use evidence to drive improvements in education outcomes.

USHUD:

- HUD's [budget](#) contains three large formula grant programs for public housing authorities (PHAs): (1) the [Public Housing Operating Fund](#) (\$4.6 billion in FY18); (2) the [Public Housing Capital Grants](#) (\$2.8 billion); and (3) [Housing Choice Voucher \(HCV\) Administrative Fees](#) (\$1.8 billion). Another three formula grant programs serve cities or tribes: (1) [Community Development Block Grant Entitlement/Non-Entitlement](#) (\$3.3 billion in FY18); (2) [HOME Investment Partnerships](#) (\$1.4 billion); and (3) [Native American Housing Block Grants](#) (\$0.8 billion).
- Although the funding formulas are prescribed in statute, evaluation-based evidence is central to each program. HUD used evidence from a 2015 [Administrative Fee study](#) of the costs that high-performing PHAs incur in administering a HCV program to propose a new FY17 approach for funding Administrative Fees while strengthening PHA incentives to improve HCV outcomes by providing tenant mobility counseling.
- HUD's funding of public housing is being radically shifted through the [evidence-based Rental Assistance Demonstration](#) (RAD), which enables accessing private capital to address the \$26 billion backlog of capital needs funding. Based on demonstrated success of RAD, for [FY19](#) HUD proposed removing the cap on the number of public housing developments to be converted to Section 8 contracts. HUD is also conducting a [Rent Reform](#) demonstration and a [Moving To Work](#) (MTW) demonstration to test efficiencies of changing rent rules and [effects on tenant outcomes](#).

CRITERIA

**9. Use of Evidence in Five Largest Non-Competitive Grant Programs:**

Did the agency use evidence of effectiveness when allocating funds from its five largest competitive grant programs in FY18?

(Examples: Tiered-evidence frameworks; evidence-based funding set-asides; priority preference points or other preference scoring; Pay for Success provisions)

USHUD (cont):

- HUD conducted an extensive [assessment](#) of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian housing needs to strengthen the evidence base for the formula programs.

USDOL:

- In FY18/PY18, the five largest non-competitive grant programs at DOL are in the Employment and Training Administration: (1) the [Unemployment Insurance](#) state grants (\$2.5 billion in FY18); (2) the [Employment Service](#) program state grants (\$666 million in PY18); and three authorized programs under WIOA: (1) [Youth Workforce Investment](#) program (\$903 million in PY18); (2) [Adult Employment and Training](#) program (\$845 million in PY18); and (3) [Dislocated Workers Employment and Training program](#) (\$1 billion in PY18).
- All ETA grant programs allocate funding by statute, and all include performance metrics (e.g., unemployment insurance payment integrity, WIOA common measures) tracked quarterly.
- A signature feature of WIOA (Pub. L. 113-128) is its focus on the use of data and evidence to improve services and outcomes, particularly in provisions related to states' role in conducting evaluations and research, as well as in requirements regarding data collection, performance standards, and state planning. Conducting evaluations is a required statewide activity, but there are additional requirements regarding coordination (with other state agencies and federal evaluations under WIOA), dissemination, and provision of data and other information for federal evaluations.
- WIOA includes evidence and performance provisions which: (1) increased the amount of WIOA funds states can set aside and distribute directly from 5-10% to 15% and authorized them to invest these funds in Pay for Performance initiatives; (2) authorized states to invest their own workforce development funds, as well as non-federal resources, in Pay for Performance initiatives; (3) authorized local workforce investment boards to invest up to 10% of their WIOA funds in Pay for Performance initiatives; and (4) authorized states and local workforce investment boards to award Pay for Performance contracts to intermediaries, community based organizations, and community colleges.
- Currently, ETA is working with states to implement the requirements of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program (an Unemployment Insurance state grant program to assist individuals receiving UI benefits with reemployment). The RESEA program is an evidence-based strategy that combines an assessment for continuing Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility with the provision of reemployment services and referrals to other workforce partners. RESEA and its predecessor, Reemployment Eligibility Assessments (REA), previously have been funded and authorized from 2005-2018 via federal appropriations acts, and grants have been provided to states. Currently 51 states and territories offer RESEA. *The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018* made the RESEA program a permanent, but still voluntary, program to serve UI claimants. DOL currently has an [implementation evaluation](#) and [impact evaluation](#) underway of the REA program, and intends to begin an evaluation of RESEA this year.
- Evaluations are currently under way of WIOA core programs. For example the [WIOA implementation study](#) is examining states' implementation of the core workforce programs authorized under WIOA's Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and Title III (Employment Services). It will also explore the role of WIOA in stakeholder integration among programs authorized under Titles II (Adult Education and Literacy) and IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). Additionally, two studies are underway or recently completed examining American Job Centers, including a [Study of American Job Center Customer Experience](#) and the [American Job Center Institutional Analysis](#).

CRITERIA

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- ACF:
- The [Head Start Designation Renewal System](#) requires Head Start (\$9.9 billion in FY18) grantees to compete for grants moving forward if they failed to meet criteria related to service quality, licensing and operations, and fiscal and internal controls. The 2007 *Head Start Reauthorization Act* made all Head Start grants renewable, five-year grants. At the end of each five-year term, grantees that are running high-quality programs will have their grants renewed. But grantees that fall short of standards are now required to compete to renew grants. Grantees whose ratings on any of the three domains of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, an assessment of adult:child interactions linked to improved outcomes, fall below a certain threshold, or in the lowest 10 percent of grantees, must also compete.
  - ACF, in collaboration with the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration, has established criteria for evidence of effectiveness of home visiting models, and oversees the [Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Review](#) (HomVEE), which determines whether models have evidence of effectiveness. To date HomVEE has reviewed evidence on 45 home visiting models, determining 20 of these to have evidence of effectiveness. Grantees must use at least 75% of their federal home visiting funds to implement one or more of these models.
  - As noted in the response to question 1, OPRE engages in ongoing collaboration with program office staff and leadership to interpret research and evaluation findings and to identify their implications for programmatic and policy decisions, including encouraging or requiring recipients of grants to use effective (and not ineffective) practices.
- ACL:
- ACL released two new funding announcements in FY18 exploring methods for potentially redirecting funds from lower performing programs to higher performing ones:
    - The [Paralysis Resource Center State Pilot Program](#) is part of an effort to ensure program efficiency and to test two approaches for making sub-awards to community-based organizations that provide long-term services and supports to people with paralysis, their families, and their support networks. Outcomes from the pilot will help ACL assess the most effective and efficient ways to make such sub-awards and will determine how ACL funds this effort going forward.
    - Under OPE's overarching [analytic support contract](#), ACL is developing a tool to help grant officers more easily monitor the degree to which [Chronic Disease Self-Management](#) and [Falls Prevention](#) grantees are meeting their ACL approved program completion targets. ACL staff will use this information to either fully release or restrict grant funds over the life of the multi-year awards.
    - The [Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services](#) grants will be monitored using a new tool that allows grant officers to more clearly determine grantees' progress towards meeting their targeted service levels and therefore restrict or withhold funding based on that progress.
  - Based on a review of programmatic purpose and outcomes, ACL's [FY18 budget request](#) proposed to:
    - In part, based on work with researchers which was disseminated through a [2014 webinar series](#), ACL consolidated three small programs that serve people affected by Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias programs into a single Alzheimer's Disease Program, funded at the same total level. This will increase programmatic flexibility and efficiency and enable grantees to better meet the needs of people affected by these illnesses.
    - Based on a lack of evidence regarding the unique benefits of these programs, ACL proposed to devolve program responsibilities to states or local communities for the Limb Loss Resource Center and Paralysis Resource Center. The mission and activities carried out by these programs are duplicative of other Federal efforts. Savings from eliminating these redundant programs total \$3 million and \$8 million, respectively.

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ACL (cont):

- ACL has implemented a quality review system (QRS) for developmental disability programs under ACL/AIDD. The QRS uses a three-tiered model to review program compliance, outcomes (i.e., evidence), and fiscal operations and use review results to target and coordinate technical assistance. The first tier is annual standardized review. The second tier is standardized, in-depth review involving a team of reviewers. These reviews are conducted on a periodic basis. Tier three is customized monitoring for programs that ACL has significant concerns regarding terms of compliance and performance. ACL continues development of a formula grant monitoring framework for *Older Americans Act* Title III and VII state formula grants. The framework combines assessments of a grantee's progress toward program goals and objectives with identification of risk or instances of fraud, waste, and abuse. These reviews allow ACL, if warranted, to restrict grant funding based on findings of insufficient evidence of performance.

CNCS:

- According to CNCS policy, AmeriCorps considers past performance (e.g., meeting performance targets) as part of its criteria for making funding decisions. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment inform funding decisions every year for every grant competition. In evaluating programmatic performance, CNCS considers the following for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees submitting applications for the same program model:
  - Grant progress reports – attainment of Performance Measures;
  - Enrollment and retention;
  - Compliance with 30-day enrollment and exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal;
  - Site visit or other monitoring findings (if applicable);
  - Significant opportunities and/or risks of the grantee related to national service; and
  - Commission Rank.
- For example, in FY18, due to ongoing program design and performance issues, AmeriCorps provided ongoing and directive feedback to a long-standing grantee that it would face significant hurdles to securing future CNCS funding. The organization decided against submitting a grant application, and CNCS was able to repurpose almost \$3 million to fund interventions implemented by other stronger, more impactful grantees.
- The AmeriCorps NCCC program reallocated significant mandatory and discretionary program resources in FY18 (for savings totaling an estimated \$1,872,000) to optimize the program's utilization of facilities and maintain responsiveness to community needs (e.g., teams located near areas frequently affected by natural disasters and more members residing in fewer federal facilities), to maximize the cost per unit (e.g., member), and to maintain the quality and effectiveness of service in the community. NCCC outsourced recruitment, created lodging efficiencies, consolidated member support services (e.g., administrative intake), and closed a campus that had the highest region cost per unit. Some of these savings (an estimated \$400,000) will be invested in research and evaluation activities in FY18. These efficiency measures have a long term estimated savings of \$4 million for reinvestment in program priorities.

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CNCS (cont.):

- The AmeriCorps VISTA program started reallocating member training resources in FY16, moving from more resource-intensive, in-person training to virtual training. By the end of FY18, all member orientation training will be virtual. Member survey data indicate consistently positive results over this time period with regard to the utility of the training for a successful service experience, with over two thirds of respondents rating training and resources received from AmeriCorps as "excellent" or "good." Preparing VISTA members to impact their communities is now achieved in a more cost-effective and efficient manner, and allows more flexible onboarding for the thousands of nonprofits hosting VISTAs around the country. VISTA is also collaborating with NCCC on a consolidated member support pilot, to merge support functions across the VISTA and NCCC programs to achieve efficiencies. VISTA also created a new Data Analyst position to standardize data tools and create new internal controls through automated flags and reports. Savings are being reinvested in targeted skill-based trainings for VISTA members and supervisors and evaluation activities.
- The AmeriCorps NCCC program tracks five key performance indicators: (1) alignment of NCCC teams with state identified priorities; (2) in-kind contributions from project sponsor organizations and communities; (3) employee viewpoint trends; (4) member graduation rates; and (5) number of alumni remaining in the community post-graduation. A pilot was initiated in 2014 to determine how the program might pursue increasing its effectiveness while decreasing costs. A comparison of key performance indicators (e.g., number of service hours, number of projects and sponsors, member attrition) was made between two classes that served and graduated from the program prior to the pilot and three classes following pilot implementation. Findings from the pilot demonstrated that costs could be reduced while maintaining the same level of community service and increasing member retention in the program. The revised program model has since been implemented in three of four program locations with the third occurring in FY18.

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MCC:

- MCC has an established Policy on [Suspension and Termination](#) that lays out the reasons for which MCC may suspend or terminate assistance to partner countries. Assistance may be suspended or terminated, in whole or in part, if a country: (1) engages in activities contrary to the national security interests of the US; (2) engages in a pattern of actions inconsistent with the MCC's eligibility criteria; or (3) fails to adhere to its responsibilities under a compact or threshold grant, or related agreement. Evidence of failing to achieve desired outcomes is included in category two. Such actions may be evidenced by, among other things:
  - A decline in performance on the indicators used to determine eligibility;
  - A decline in performance not yet reflected in the indicators used to determine eligibility; or
  - Actions by the country which are determined to be contrary to sound performance in the areas assessed for eligibility for Assistance, and which together evidence an overall decline in the country's commitment to the eligibility criteria.
- MCC has terminated a compact partnership, in part or in full, seven times out of 35 compacts approved to date, and has suspended partner country eligibility (both compact and threshold) four times, most recently seen with the suspension of Tanzania in March 2016 due to actions contrary to MCC's eligibility criteria. MCC's Policy on Suspension and Termination also allows MCC to reinstate eligibility when countries demonstrate a clear policy reversal, a remediation of MCC's concerns, and an obvious commitment to MCC's eligibility indicators, including achieving desired results. For example, in early 2012, MCC suspended Malawi's Compact prior to Entry into Force as MCC determined that the Government of Malawi had engaged in a pattern of actions inconsistent with MCC's eligibility criteria. Thereafter, the new Government of Malawi took a number of decisive steps to improve the democratic rights environment and reverse the negative economic policy trends of concern to MCC, which led to a [reinstatement of eligibility](#) for assistance in mid-2012. MCC's model uses objective, evidence-based eligibility criteria to determine whether a country is pursuing the policies necessary to support poverty reduction through economic growth. For countries that meet these criteria, MCC provides large investments to capitalize on the country's policy environment to spur economic growth and reduce poverty. When countries fail to maintain such policies or take actions that undermine these policies, they can have a negative impact on the ability of MCC's programs to achieve their desired results.
- In a number of cases, MCC has repurposed investments based on real-time evidence. In MCC's first compact with Morocco, the Government of Morocco proposed the Enterprise Support Project to address two of its critical economic priorities: reduce high unemployment among young graduates and encourage a more entrepreneurial culture. The project was designed to be carried out in two phases, with continuation of the second phase subject to positive results from an impact evaluation of the first phase. The pilot phase was completed in March 2012; although it met its implementation targets and showed promising trends, the impact evaluation did not show statistically significant impacts. The revised economic rate of return did not justify scaling up the project for a second phase. MCC did not continue with a second phase and the project was closed in May 2012. In MCC's compact with Lesotho, MCC cancelled the Automated Clearing House Sub-Activity within the Private Sector Development Project after monitoring data determined it would not accomplish the economic growth and poverty reduction outcomes envisioned during compact development. The remaining \$600,000 in the sub-activity was transferred to the Debit Smart Card Sub-Activity, which targeted expanding financial services to people living in remote areas of Lesotho. In Tanzania, the \$32 million Non-Revenue Water Activity was re-scoped after the final design estimates on two of the activity's infrastructure investments indicated higher costs that would significantly impact their economic rates of return. As a result, \$13.2 million was reallocated to the Lower Ruvu Plant Expansion Activity, \$9.6 million to the Morogoro Water Supply Activity, and \$400,000 for other environmental and social activities. In all of these country examples, the funding is either reallocated to activities with continued evidence of results or returned to MCC for investment in future programming.

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MCC (cont):

- MCC also consistently monitors the progress of compact programs and their evaluations across sectors, using the learning from this evidence to make changes to MCC's portfolio. For example, MCC undertook a review of its portfolio investments in roads in an attempt to better design, implement, and evaluate road investments. Through evidence collected across 16 compacts with road projects, MCC uncovered seven key lessons including the need to prioritize and select projects based on a road network analysis, to standardize content and quality of road data collection across road projects, and to consider cost and the potential for learning in determining how road projects are evaluated. This body of evidence and analysis was [published](#) in November 2017. The lessons from this analysis are being applied to road projects in compacts in Cote d'Ivoire and Nepal as MCC roads investments see a shift toward increased maintenance investments. Critically, the evidence also pointed to MCC shifting how it undertakes road evaluations which led to a new request and re-bid for proposals for MCC's roads evaluations based on new guidelines and principles. These changes in future practice are especially important to highlight as MCC operates in a five-year timeframe, often investing in large infrastructure projects. Because of the difficulty in changing implementation in such a limited timeframe given the types of projects MCC finances, MCC's focus on shifting funds from ineffective programs and policies is often demonstrated in future compact and threshold program investment decisions.

SAMHSA:

- SAMHSA's FY19 budget request proposed eliminating nine programs (totaling \$279.6 million), but none of them for reasons of failing to achieve desired outcomes.
- In January 2018, SAMHSA [announced](#) it would shift resources away from the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) toward targeted technical assistance and training for implementing evidence-based practices. The reasoning was that NREPP had skewed presentation of evidence-based interventions, which did not address the spectrum of needs of those living with serious mental illness and substance use disorders." SAMHSA [publicly confirmed](#) that it terminated the contract for the organization running NREPP.
- The SAMHSA budget provides performance information along with budget information which Congress can use to determine funding levels. Each year the program Centers review grantees within each program, project, or activity in terms of performance and financial management, when funding decisions are made for continuation funding. It is up to each Center to determine the factors that go into decisions related to continued funding based on guidance from the Office of Financial Management, Division of Grants Management. To the extent that costs are reduced for continuation funding, those funds can be repurposed to fund new grantees or to provide additional contract support for those grantees. In FY17, SAMHSA underwent a stringent review process for all funding requests utilizing both program and fiscal performance. During this process, SAMHSA utilized \$51M in unspent funding from existing grantees to fund new programs and activities.
- CBHSQ staff conducted a summer evaluation inventory in the summer of 2016, requesting that program staff from the Centers provide information related to how their evaluation findings inform the next iteration of their programs and/or new evaluation activities. For the most part, program staff indicated that evaluation findings were used to improve the next round of funding opportunity announcements and thus grantee implementation of program.

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USAID:

- USAID's updated operational policy for planning and implementing country programs has incorporated a set of tools and practices called [Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting](#) (CLA), that include designing adaptable activities that build in feedback loops; using flexible implementing mechanisms; and adopting a management approach that includes consulting with partners about how implementation is evolving and what changes need to be made. Through the [Program Cycle](#), USAID encourages managing projects and activities adaptively, responding to rigorous data and evidence and shifting design and/or implementation accordingly.
- USAID uses rigorous evaluations to maximize its investments. A [recent independent study](#) found that 71 percent of USAID evaluations have been used to modify and/or design USAID projects. Below are a few recent examples where USAID has shifted funds and/or programming decisions based on performance:
  - [Serbia | Democracy & Governance](#) – An evaluation completed six years after the end of a community development and civic engagement project found that increasing citizen engagement in public policy and government responsiveness requires simultaneous targeting of citizens, the government, and private and civil sectors. Findings led to the launch of new activities focused on the rule of law, media strengthening, and business competitiveness incorporating the evaluation's recommended multifaceted approach.
  - [El Salvador | Education](#) – An evaluation of an education project revealed the need to improve effectiveness by better matching interventions with individual target school and community needs to better serve out-of-school youth. As a result, the project changed how it is working with the Ministry of Education. It was also modified to address barriers to gender equality and social inclusion, to increase access to and quality of secondary-level education, and improve educational opportunities for school dropouts.
  - [Cambodia | Agriculture](#) – An impact evaluation showed significant increases in participating farmers' gross commercial horticulture income and cropped area, but not in returns to land or economic productivity. Going forward, USAID agricultural programming in Cambodia will help organize farmers into cooperatives and strengthen farmer-buyer linkages to improve production and overall household income.
  - [Afghanistan | Economic Growth](#) – A mid-term evaluation of a program that enables women to increase their participation in the formal economy found that 98% of interns placed in jobs report working in a women-friendly workplace, although it is too soon to show whether the program has helped businesses increase profits or hire more women. Going forward, the program plans to raise the age cap of job placement candidates, hold trade fairs featuring women-to-women networking, and better support microenterprises.
  - [Ethiopia | Health](#) – An evaluation of a project to improve the lives of vulnerable children and their families showed a significant improvement in educational attainment, health status, economic status, access to food and nutrition, and safer shelter. Future USAID efforts will further strengthen the capacities of regional and local government and civil society to serve these children and their families even better.
- [BalanceD MERL](#): One of the MERLIN mechanisms, BalanceD, is ending early because evidence showed that it was being used for traditional M&E activities (e.g. survey data collection and M&E system set-up) rather than anything innovative. The decision to end the program early was made after two MOUs requested traditional support from BalanceD MERL, and no further interest for testing innovations using BalanceD was found.

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USAID (cont.):

- USAID's [Securing Water for Food: A Grand Challenge for Development](#) (SWFF) selected the highest potential water-for-food innovations and is providing grant funds and ongoing assistance to support business development. SWFF starts as a competition, but the winners must continually show results to receive a new tranche of funding. To move forward, grantees must achieve technical and financial milestones, such as increased crop yields and total product sales. Of the 38 total awardees, twenty-three received Year 2 funding; fifteen did not, because they did not meet the target number of end-users/customers in a cost-effective way and because their model was not deemed sustainable without USAID funding. By using milestone-based funding, SWFF has helped over 3.6 million farmers and other customers grow more than 4 million metric tons of food and reduced water consumption in agriculture by more than 11.4 billion liters of water compared to traditional practices. For every \$1,000 spent by the SWFF program, SWFF innovators have impacted 156 customers and end users, produced 282 tons of crops, reduced water consumption by more than 832,000 liters, improved water management on 86 hectares of agricultural land, and generated more than \$200 in sales. In addition, SWFF innovators have formed more than 300 partnerships and secured more than \$16 million in leveraged funding.

USED:

- ED seeks to shift program funds to support more effective practices by prioritizing the use of evidence as a requirement when applying for a competitive grant. For ED's grant competitions where there is data about current or past grantees, or where new evidence has emerged independent of grantee activities, ED typically reviews such data to shape the design of future grant competitions.
- Additionally, ED uses evidence in competitive programs to encourage the field to shift away from less effective practices and toward more effective practices. For example, ESSA's EIR program supports the creation, development, implementation, replication, and scaling up of evidence-based, field-initiated innovations designed to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students. IES released [The Investing in Innovation Fund: Summary of 67 Evaluations](#), which can be used to inform efforts to move to more effective practices. The Department is exploring the results to determine what lessons learned can be applied to other programs.
- The President's FY19 Budget eliminates, streamlines or reduces 39 discretionary programs that duplicate other programs, are ineffective, or are supported with state, local, or private funds. Major eliminations and reductions in the FY19 Budget include:
  - Supporting Effective Instruction State grants (Title II-A), a savings of \$2.3 billion. The program is proposed for elimination because the program lacks evidence of improving student outcomes (see pp. C-17 to C-19 of the FY19 budget [request](#)). It also duplicates other ESEA program funds that may be used for professional development.
  - 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, a savings of \$1.2 billion. The program lacks strong evidence of meeting its objectives, such as improving student achievement. Based on program performance data from the 2014-2015 school year, more than half of program participants had no improvement in their math and English grades and nearly 60 percent of participants attended centers for fewer than 30 days (pp. C-22 in the FY19 budget [request](#)).
- In addition, the President's Budget proposes to streamline and consolidate programs to achieve management efficiencies, focus federal investments on activities supported by evidence, and reduce the federal role in education.
- In the previous administration, ED worked with Congress to eliminate 50 programs, saving more than \$1.2 billion, including programs like [Even Start](#) (see pp. A-72 to A-73) (-\$66.5 million in FY11) and [Mentoring Grants](#) (pp. G-31) (-\$47.3 million in FY10), which the Department recommended eliminating out of concern based on evidence.

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USHUD:

- HUD's FY17 [budget request](#) included a new formula for funding [Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Fees](#) that shifts funding away from inappropriately compensated public housing agencies and increases overall funding according to evidence about actual costs of maintaining a high-performing voucher program. (See [here](#) for more info.) HUD's FY17 budget request also sought a [\\$11 billion shift](#) (pp. 8–9) of resources toward housing vouchers for homeless families, based on the rigorous experimental analysis of four service options in the [Family Options study](#).
- HUD's FY19 budget request sought to [eliminate funding](#) for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). A 2005 PD&R [evaluation](#) had shown that targeting of CDBG resources toward communities with greater needs would be greatly enhanced by any of four alternatives to the 1978 statutory formula, but such improvements have not been authorized. An earlier 1995 [evaluation](#) found that although CDBG had made a contribution to community development, the neighborhood interventions generally were ad hoc rather than well-coordinated and strategic.
- HUD's FY19 budget request seeks [Rental Assistance Demonstration](#) funding to support the conversion of approximately 30,000 public housing units to the Section 8 platform, enabling them to secure private capital to support needed improvements at revenue neutral subsidy levels. The transfer will remove deteriorating public housing units from the inventory while preserving the affordable housing with an estimated \$1.8 billion in public and private financing for capital improvements. Units converted to Section 8 will no longer be funded with public housing operating subsidies or modernization grants.
- In FY18, HUD updated the Grants Management Handbook to encourage the use of evidence-based models or strategies in the scoring of grant applications. Because the funding amounts available for competitive grant programs are fixed, such scoring strategies necessarily defund low-performing applicants. This portion of the handbook is still optional for grant programs. The competitive Continuum of Care program also awards points that shift funds toward grant applications that have demonstrated better outcomes, that rank and fund better-performing projects, and that reflect mergers of small and struggling recipients.
- HUD is currently piloting [Standards for Success](#), a standardized data collection and reporting framework to enable HUD's competitive grant programs to better assess performance levels and thus make more informed funding determinations. Informed by the pilot and further guidance from OMB, the framework will enable HUD to establish benchmarks and performance expectations for grant recipients to support allocating grant funds toward high performers and away from chronically low performers.

USDOL:

- DOL's evidence-based strategy is focused on program performance improvement and expansion of strategies and programs on which there is evidence of positive impact from rigorous evaluations. DOL uses both evaluation results and program performance measures to make decisions about future funding.
- Since 2014, DOL has closed three Job Corps centers based on chronic low performance. Closure of underperforming centers allows DOL to shift limited program dollars to centers that will better serve students by providing the training and credentials they need to achieve positive employment and educational outcomes. In a [Federal Register notice](#) published in August of 2017, DOL announced a center closure and the methodology used for selecting centers for closure.
- Discretionary grant performance is closely monitored and has been used to take corrective action and make decisions about continued funding. For example, Youthbuild grant funding is based heavily on past performance. Organizations that have previously received and completed a YouthBuild grant award receive points based on past performance demonstrated, totaling 28 points (almost 30% of their score). This effectively weeds out low performing grantees from winning future awards. (For more information, see the [Grant Funding Announcement](#)).

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USDOL (cont):

- Additionally, DOL uses evidence in competitive grant programs to encourage the field to shift away from less effective practices and toward more effective practices. For example, recent grant programs such as the Reentry Grant Program use a tiered evidence framework to require grantees to use evidence based approaches and not choose approaches that have been found to be ineffective. This supports the creation, development, implementation, replication, and scaling up of evidence-based practices designed to improve outcomes, and dis-incentivizes grantees from using approaches not backed by evidence or that have been found to be ineffective.
- DOL's FY19 budget request prioritizes programs with demonstrated evidence (e.g., it proposes investing \$200 million in apprenticeships, a proven strategy) and proposes reductions to unproven strategies (e.g., it proposes shifting dollars in Job Corps away from serving younger youth for whom past studies have not found positive long term impacts, to focus the program more on the older youth for whom the program has been shown to be more effective).

## CRITERIA

### Other Evidence and Evaluation Efforts

ACL:

- The Developmental Disabilities Protection and Advocacy program (PADD) establishes and maintains a system to protect the legal and human rights of all persons with developmental disabilities. The annual performance measure of the percentage of individuals who have their complaint of abuse, neglect, discrimination, or other human or civil rights corrected compared to the total assisted demonstrates the rate of successful benefits accruing from the program. The rate of success has been consistently over 80 percent and trending upward since FY11. In FY15, the target was exceeded with nearly 87 percent of consumers having their complaint corrected. While funding is required under statute, as specified in criterion two in its [Paperwork Reduction Act](#) application to the Office of Management and Budget, ACL uses evidence submitted through the annual performance reporting process to "gauge for program accomplishments against program objectives for purposes of identifying continuing challenges and formulating technical assistance and management support provided to P&A systems."

CNCS:

- CNCS awarded a contract in June 2018 to support the agency's ability to review and synthesize research findings from program evaluations conducted by grantees on a continuous basis. The ability to independently assess the quality and rigor of evaluation studies as they are submitted to the agency is a critical capacity and pillar of building evidence infrastructure. In the past, this function was siloed within individual programs, but now one contract will support all agency programs – creating important efficiencies and consistencies for assessing evidence. Existing review and synthesis findings (see R&E's [State of the Evidence Report](#) to see the numbers behind national service and practical benefits of volunteering) and their use in FY19 grantmaking and management are under discussion.

USAID:

- USAID is exploring ways to move agency work to maximize exploration in "pay for results" models of programming. Innovation is not just about products and services but also the agency's own procurement and programming models. Development impact bonds (DIBs) are a results-based financing mechanism, where investors provide upfront capital for an intervention and are paid as results are achieved. USAID has launched two DIBs, one on maternal and child health in India, and another on poverty alleviation in Africa. The [2017 Village Enterprise DIB](#), aims to support the growth of sustainable small businesses in Africa, helping communities increase economic self-sufficiency and transition out of poverty. Through this DIB, USAID's DIV, DFID, and other funders are committing to paying for specific outcomes: Village Enterprise gets up-front funding in the form of working capital from socially-motivated investors, and flexibility to adapt the program to maximize impact. USAID and other funders' repayments to the investors are conditioned on Village Enterprise delivering verifiable results such as improved income and consumption. The impact bond, valued at a total of \$5.28 million, will allow Village Enterprise to scale its successful program that has already helped 39,000 small businesses get off the ground. Village Enterprise's approach is to create and sustain microenterprises by providing a small cash grant, business and financial literacy training, mentoring, and access to savings. By partnering with the private sector and maintaining a focus on results, USAID can remain good stewards of U.S. taxpayer dollars and advance agency efforts to reduce poverty and promote economic growth.

## **About the Results for America Invest in What Works Federal Standard of Excellence**

Results for America's (RFA) *Invest in What Works Federal Standard of Excellence (2018)* highlights the extent to which the Administration for Children and Families (within HHS); Administration for Community Living (within HHS); Corporation for National and Community Service; Millennium Challenge Corporation; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (within HHS); U.S. Agency for International Development; U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and U.S. Department of Labor have built the infrastructure necessary to be able to use data, evidence, and evaluation in budget, policy, and management decisions.

It is important to note that:

- RFA developed the standard's criteria and scoring structure in close consultation with more than 75 current and former federal government officials and key stakeholders from all across the country.
- The purpose of the standard is to educate members of the general public as well as public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders on how federal departments and agencies are currently using data, evidence, and evaluation to invest taxpayer dollars in what works.
- RFA gave the federal departments and agencies included in the standard multiple opportunities to review and comment on the content and presentation of the information included in it. RFA greatly appreciates their willingness to help develop this document and their continued commitment to making the federal government as effective and efficient as possible. Since RFA recognizes that it is very difficult to distill complex practices, policies, and programs into a single cross-agency scorecard, RFA exercised its best judgment and relied on the deep expertise of leaders both within and outside of the federal government during the development of the standard.
- RFA released six previous versions of this Federal Standard of Excellence, formerly entitled as the *Federal Invest in What Works Index*, in [June 2013](#), [September 2013](#), [May 2014](#), [March 2015](#), [April 2016](#), and [October 2017](#).

## **Scoring**

The standard assessed nine federal departments and agencies against 10 data, evidence and evaluation criteria. Each criteria was equally weighted and scored on a scale of 0–10 resulting in a total possible score of 100 points. Federal departments and agencies were given 1–3 points if they have demonstrated an intent to meet the stated criteria; 4–5 points if they have demonstrated some initial internal progress toward meeting the criteria; 6–7 points if they have made some initial public progress toward meeting the criteria; 8–9 points if they have made some meaningful public progress toward meeting the criteria; and 10 points if they have fully and successfully met the criteria. These scores were based on the information and links provided by these nine departments and agencies.

RFA gave SAMHSA several opportunities to review and edit the information in this document, but it declined to do so. The *Invest in What Works Federal Standard of Excellence (2018)*, therefore, includes information from the 2017 standard, which SAMHSA helped develop, as well as new information posted on the [SAMHSA website](#) between October 2017 and September 2018.

## **About Results for America**

Results for America is helping decision-makers at all levels of government harness the power of evidence and data to solve our world's greatest challenges. Our mission is to make investing in what works the "new normal," so that when policymakers make decisions, they start by seeking the best evidence and data available, then use what they find to get better results.

In November 2014, RFA published [Moneyball for Government](#), the national bestselling book that brings together a group of bipartisan leaders and makes the case for government at all levels to inform public policy and funding decisions by using the best possible data, evidence and evaluation about what works. In January 2016, RFA published the second edition of *Moneyball for Government* featuring a new bipartisan chapter about the importance of using data and evidence to drive U.S. foreign assistance. For more information about Results for America, visit [www.results4america.org](http://www.results4america.org).