

Federal Evaluators Conference 2012

Conference Agenda

8:30am – 8:45am

Arrival and Registration
Whitten Patio

8:45am – 9:00am

Welcome
Whitten Patio

Patricia Sheikh, M.A.
Deputy Administrator
Office of Capacity Building and Development, Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Stephanie Shipman, Ph.D.
Assistant Director, Applied Research and Methods,
U.S. Government Accountability Office

9:00am – 10:00am

Plenary Session

Rigorous Non-Experimental Design for Evaluating Effectiveness *Whitten Patio*

Moderator:

Stephanie Shipman, Ph.D.
Assistant Director, Applied Research and Methods
U.S. Government Accountability Office

Presenters:

[Gary T. Henry, Ph.D.](#)
Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Public Policy and Education
Vanderbilt University

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

While randomized experiments permit strong inferences about causal influence of a factor or program on desired outcomes, they are often not feasible for evaluating federal programs and policies. Our invited speaker, well known for his writing and lectures on this topic, will discuss the theory

behind estimating program effects, and the appropriate conditions for and advantages of several popular alternative rigorous designs: propensity score matching designs, difference-in-differences with longitudinal data, and regression discontinuity designs.

10:00am – 11:00am

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Incorporating Cost-Benefit and Economic Analysis

Room Location: Whitten Patio

Moderator:

Kristi Pettibone, Ph.D.
*Evaluator, Program Analysis Branch
National Institute of Environmental Health and Science
National Institutes of Health*

Presenters:

[Jim Simons](#)
*Director, Office of Regulatory Analysis and Evaluation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation*

Stefanie Schmidt, Ph.D.
*Senior Evaluation Specialist
Chief Evaluation Office
U.S. Department of Labor*

[Jeff Dowd, M.S.](#)
*Program Evaluation Lead, Office of Strategic Programs
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
U.S. Department of Energy*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Cost-benefit and economic analyses are valuable tools that evaluators can use to demonstrate an agency's good stewardship of federal dollars. Federal agencies are increasingly being held accountable for demonstrating the effectiveness of their programs and evaluators can use these analyses to examine and document the relationships between the cost of a program or intervention with the associated effects or impacts. During this panel discussion, three evaluators with the NHTSA, DOL and DOE will share their experiences incorporating economic analyses into their evaluations,

communicating the findings to stakeholders and decision makers and working with program staff and agency leadership to utilize the findings.

Cross Agency Collaboration on Evaluation (First Panel)

Room Location: Whitten Building Room 107A

Moderator:

Valerie Caracelli, Ph.D.
*Senior Social Science Analyst
Center for Evaluation Methods and Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office*

Presenters:

[Susan Jenkins, Ph.D.](#)
*Evaluation Team Lead, Office of Performance and Evaluation
Center for Disability and Aging Policy
Administration for Community Living
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Benjamin Howell, Ph.D.
*Senior Analyst
Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation
Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

[Elizabeth Rudd, Ph.D.](#)
*Social Science Analyst
Program Evaluation
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*

Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, Ph.D.
*Health Science Specialist
National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

As federal evaluators, we sometimes find ourselves with an opportunity to work with other agencies to evaluate a program or set of programs. These collaborations have been encouraged by the current administration as a way to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy. During this panel session evaluators from 3 different agencies will discuss their experiences participating in cross-agency evaluation collaborations. They will talk about the benefits and challenges of these collaborations and will specifically address the practicalities of working on cross-agency evaluation collaborations, such as formal versus informal relationships and funding the evaluation effort. They will also discuss how they balanced their internal

priorities and needs with needs of partner agencies. Finally the panelists will describe the indicators of success and will talk about how they knew the collaboration was successful and how they identified areas for improvement.

Evaluating Grant Portfolios (First Panel)

Room Location: South Building Room 3109

Moderator:

Norma Fleischman, Ph.D.
*Program Analyst, Evaluation Lead
Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education*

Presenters:

[Doris Werwie, Ph.D.](#)
*Evaluation Lead
National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)*

[Jeanne C. Rivard, Ph.D.](#)
*Senior Program Officer
National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies*

[Matt Birnbaum, Ph.D.](#)
*Research and Evaluation Officer
Institute for Museum and Library Services*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

This panel will feature speakers who will discuss innovative approaches in assessing grant portfolios and ways to use the evaluation results to inform organizational strategic development and generalizing to other stakeholder programs. Ms. Werwie and Ms. Rivard will present on the completed Phase I evaluation, conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research grant portfolio. The evaluation results were used to inform the development of the agency's strategic plan. Mr. Birnbaum will discuss an innovative evaluation of state formula grant programs and how the approach can be widely generalized to many grant programs that involve a complex interplay of federal, state, and local governments in service delivery with an emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration and to other significant endeavors grounded in rich community relationships.

11:00am – 12:00pm

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Building Evaluation Capacity in Federal Agencies

Room Location: South Building Room 3109

Moderator:

Hoke Wilson, Ph.D.
*Lead Social Science Analyst
Office of Research and Analysis
Food and Nutrition Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Presenters:

[Thomas J. Chapel, M.A., MBA](#)
*Chief Evaluation Officer
Center for Disease Control and Prevention*

[Cynthia Clapp-Wincek, M.A.](#)

*Director, Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)*

[Katherine Dawes, M.A.](#)

*Director, Evaluation and Support Services
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Presenters from three Federal agencies will discuss challenges of evaluation in their settings and the innovative efforts they have underway to build buy-in for evaluation and enhance the evaluation capacity of their staff, leadership, and partners.

Integrating Evaluation Information and Key Evaluation Strategies into an Effective Story to Enhance Policy-Level and Programmatic Decision-Making by Senior Leadership.

Room Location: Whitten Patio

Moderator:

Sylvia K. Fisher, Ph.D.
*Director, Office of Research and Evaluation
Office of Planning, Analysis, and Evaluation
Health Resources and Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Presenters:

[Michael Coplen, M.A.](#)

*Senior Evaluator, Office of Research and Development
Manager of the Culture and Safety Performance Program
Federal Railroad Administration*

[Susan Jenkins, Ph.D.](#)

*Evaluation Team Lead, Office of Performance and Evaluation
Center for Disability and Aging Policy
Administration for Community Living
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Louise Ryan, MPA

*Ombudsman Program Specialist
Administration on Aging
Administration for Community Living
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Effectively telling a program's story through performance and evaluation data is integral to enhanced policy-level and programmatic decision-making. Evaluators, however, often encounter numerous challenges and barriers in their efforts to communicate performance and evaluation information to senior leadership. This session focuses on common challenges and barriers to evaluation use, and key evaluation strategies that evaluators can adopt to effectively tell a program's story to senior leadership to enhance policy and decision-making.

Building the Evidence Base for Program and Policy Design using Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Evaluation Methods

Room Location: Whitten Building Room 107A

Moderator:

Amy R. Ritualo, M.A.
*Program Analyst (Evaluator)
Office of Capacity Building and Development
Foreign Agriculture Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Presenters:

[Emily Hogue, Ph.D.](#)

*Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Bureau of Food Security
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)*

[Brandie Sasser, M.A.](#)

*Division Chief, Monitoring and Evaluation
Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking
U.S. Department of Labor*

Naomi Goldstein, Ph.D.

*Director, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

This session will feature speakers who will discuss various approaches to building a strong evidence base and filling knowledge gaps to inform program and policy design in diverse subject areas. Presenters will discuss innovative and cost-effective methods and approaches for coordinating and conducting experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations. Ms. Hogue will discuss how USAID Feed the Future developed a learning agenda on agricultural development to guide the 22+ experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations they are implementing around the world. Ms. Sasser will discuss how the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking utilized cost-effective methods to help build the evidence base on the effectiveness of child labor program interventions by analyzing existing data and partnering with external organizations, such as the World Bank, implementing experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations in relevant program areas. Ms. Goldstein will discuss the Administration for Children and Families experiences in using administrative data in experimental evaluation designs.

12:00pm – 1:00pm

*Networking Lunch- South Building Cafeteria
Located on the 1st Floor, Entrances on Wing 2 and Wing 3*

1:00pm – 2:00pm

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Cross Agency Collaboration on Evaluation
Whitten Patio

Moderator:

Kristi Pettibone, Ph.D.
*Evaluator, Program Analysis Branch
National Institute of Environmental Health and Science
National Institutes of Health*

Presenters:

[John Y. Baek, Ph.D.](#)

*Education Evaluator, Office of Education
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*

Amanda Cash, DrPH

*Senior Health Policy Analyst
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Division of Science and Data Policy
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

[Dale Pahl](#)

*Office of Research and Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

As federal evaluators, we sometimes find ourselves with an opportunity to work with other agencies to evaluate a program or set of programs. These collaborations have been encouraged by the current administration as a way to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy. During this panel session evaluators from 3 different agencies will discuss their experiences participating in cross-agency evaluation collaborations. They will talk about the benefits and challenges of these collaborations and will specifically address the practicalities of working on cross-agency evaluation collaborations, such as formal versus informal relationships and funding the evaluation effort. They will also discuss how they balanced their internal priorities and needs with needs of partner agencies. Finally the panelists will describe the indicators of success and will talk about how they knew the collaboration was successful and how they identified areas for improvement.

Evaluating Grant Portfolios

Whitten Building Room 107A

Moderator:

Tarsha McCrae, MPH, CHES
*Public Health Analyst
Center for Tobacco Products
Food and Drug Administration*

Presenters:

[Joanne Guthrie, Ph.D., MPH, RD](#)

*Senior Nutritionist
Economic Research Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

[Sudha Sivaram, Ph.D.](#)

*Program Director
National Cancer Institute*

[Christie Drew, Ph.D., MHS](#)

*Chief, Program Analysis Branch
National Institute of Environmental Health Services*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

This session will feature speakers who will discuss the various approaches utilized for the evaluation of extramural grant portfolios. Ms. Guthrie will describe evaluation efforts of a portfolio of extramural research activities (university center, mid-sized grants, small developmental awards) applying behavioral economics concepts to improving child nutrition. Ms. Sivaram will present on evaluating cancer research capacity building training grants, using the D43 mechanism, in low and middle income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Ms. Drew will share implementation strategies and initial results from the process evaluation of large program project infrastructure development grants utilizing the P30 mechanism.

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Plenary Session

Use of Evaluation Results

Whitten Patio

Moderator:

*Stephanie Shipman, Ph.D.
Assistant Director, Applied Research and Methods
U.S. Government Accountability Office*

Presenters:

[Matt Birnbaum, Ph.D.](#)

*Research and Evaluation Officer
Institute for Museum and Library Services*

[Michael Coplen, M.A.](#)

*Senior Evaluator, Office of Research and Development
Manager of the Culture and Safety Performance Program
Federal Railroad Administration*

[Sandra Annette Toro, Ph.D.](#)

[Toro]

*Program Director, Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings
Directorate for Education and Human Services
National Science Foundation*

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Program evaluations may identify specific problems inhibiting achievement of desired results or provide deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind observed phenomena; they may reinforce prior understandings or raise new policy questions. Evaluators from three different agencies will describe how evaluation methods were used to help identify agency priorities and develop feedback mechanisms that helped managers shape both strategic and tactical decisions to improve program performance.