

Welcome!

Virtual Research Symposium Day 1

Assessing Capacity for Using Data to Build Actionable Evidence



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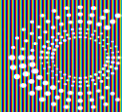
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Opening Remarks



Kathy Newcomer, Ph.D.

Board Member, Data Foundation &
Professor of Public Policy and Public
Administration, George Washington
University / [@gwtrachtenberg](#)



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Informing Infrastructure Improvement Decision-making with the Best Available Science

Ed Kearns, Ph.D., Chief Data Officer, First Street
Foundation and former Chief Data Officer at National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration /

[@edward_j_kearns](#)



June 2022

Informing Infrastructure Improvement Decision-making with the Best Available Science
Dr. Ed Kearns, First Street Foundation

What is First Street?

First Street is a nonprofit formed to communicate risks from climate change to individual Americans - starting with flood risk in 2020, and followed by wildfire, heat and other climate perils in 2022.

We recognize an urgent need for consistent, property-level, publicly-available climate risk information for the entire United States to inform decision-making at all levels.



By using Open Science practices and democratizing this scientific, peer-reviewed climate risk data, First Street empowers Americans to take action.

First Street seeks partners to make climate information useful to individuals, governments, and businesses.

We especially hope that First Street data can be used to screen for where public funds may be best spent to address climate risk.

Which issues are First Street and its data addressing?

1. Communicating hazards, physical risk and probabilities
2. Enabling people to take informed action
3. Making climate risk information highly specific and actionable
4. Democratizing access to climate risk information
5. Help direct Federal funding towards areas with the most climate risk

#5 - for example, Executive Order (13690) implementation of the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) from 2015 that requires any federally-funded construction to meet the specified standards:

- [Climate Informed Science Approach \(preferred\)](#) The flood hazard area that results from using the best-available, actionable hydrologic/hydraulic data and methods that integrate current and future changes in flooding based on climate science.



We distill many different data sources into consumable information, using Open Science and best available science and climate data.



Data inputs from:

Government
Businesses
Academics



Hazard model



Spatial and
economic analysis



Climate models



Property and damage
claims Information



Every property is assigned:

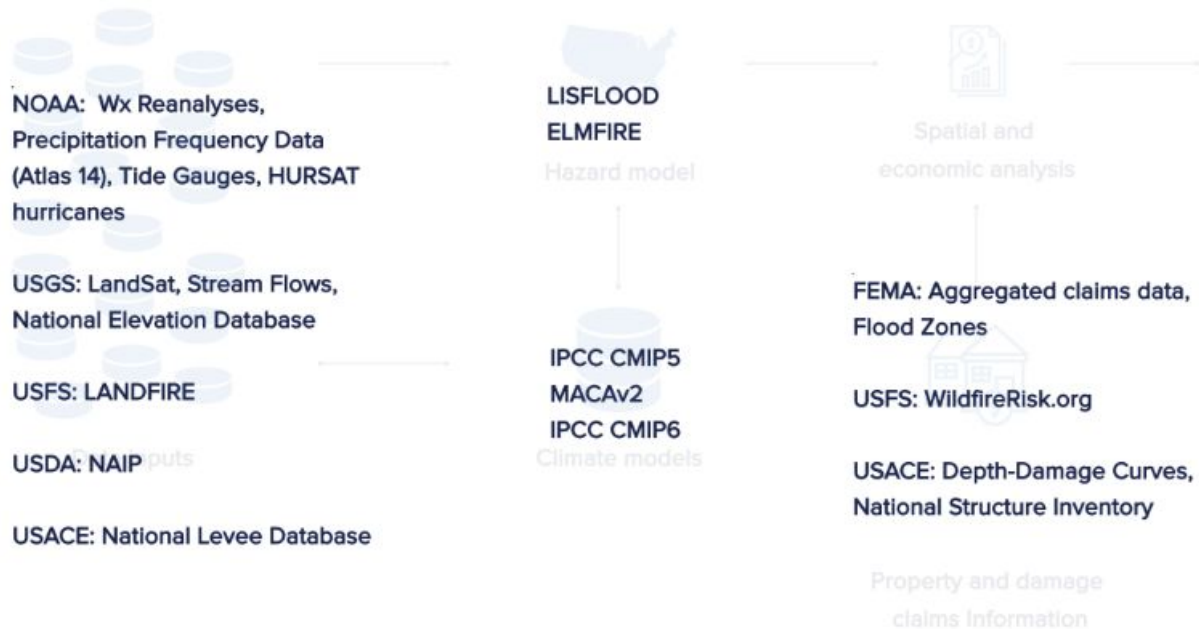
1. Risk Score 1-10
2. Expected Losses as \$

Information outputs
from:

First Street

U.S. Government open data makes this value chain possible.

Open data are rapidly transformed using Open Science methods into publicly available data under both commercial and noncommercial licenses.



RISK FACTOR



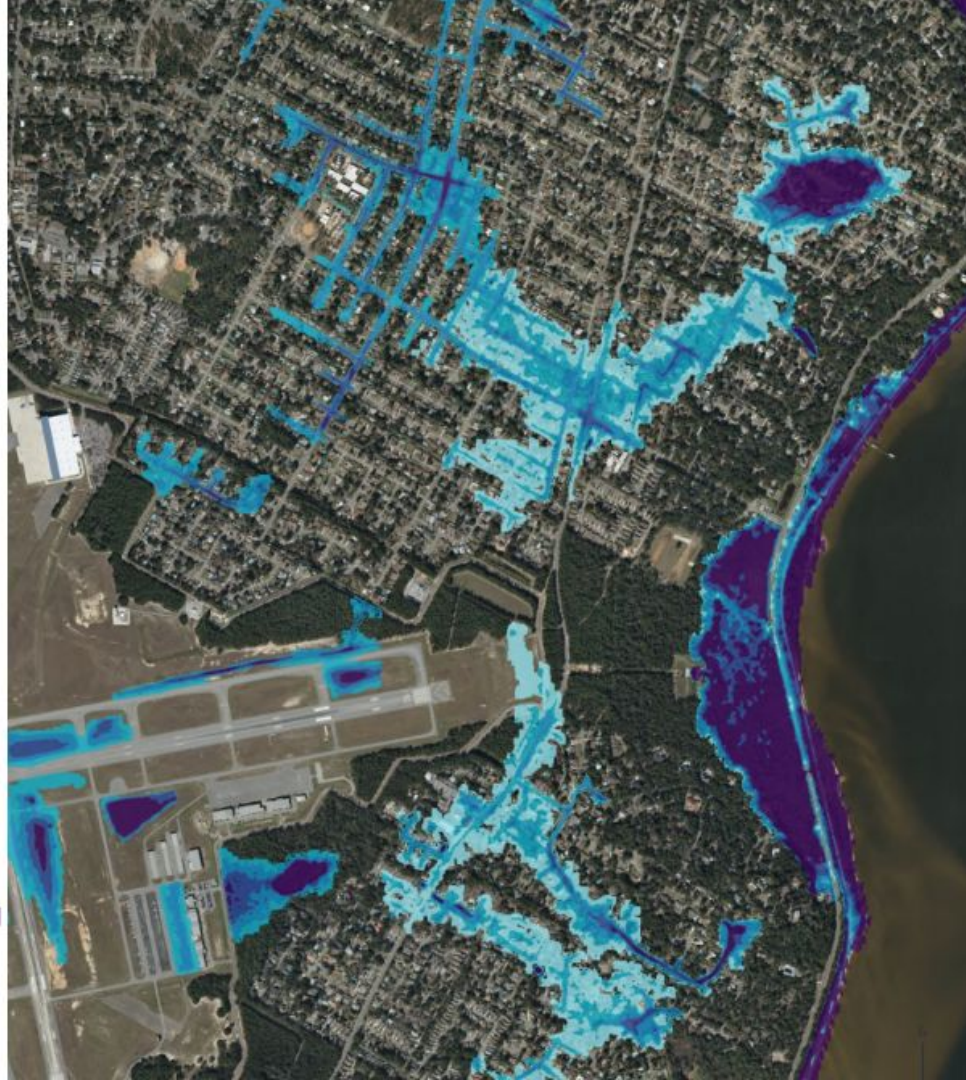
Data simplified as understandable information:

1. Risk Score 1-10
2. Expected Losses \$

Using open data inputs, we generated our hazard layers which estimate flood data for the entire country at a 3 meter resolution.

FSF's model (an implementation of the open access LISFLOOD 2D model) is driven by NOAA and USGS data, and accounts for the topography of an area, where buildings/streets are located, the expected capacity of the sewer systems to stop flooding, and any extra protection from adaption features. The model was run at 30m resolution for different rain/storm likelihoods (probabilities) to know where we would expect water under each scenario and then downscaled to show an associated depth of that water at 3m horizontal resolution.

3m resolution, Pensacola, FL



We then used our patented technology to apply our flood layers to calculate the depth of flooding - traceable to the best available science - to the building footprint and associated damage based on the specific building characteristics.

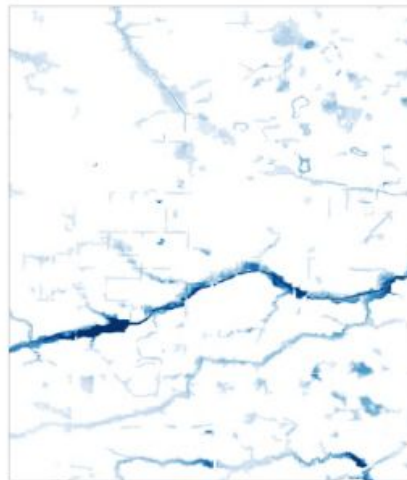
Property Parcel Outlines (Polygons)



Building footprints (Outline of structure)



Flood layer ex. 1% for 2022



Max depth calculated to the building



Comparing First Street Foundation results to FEMA.

Pluvial and climate components account for most of the differences - along with differences in methodology.

Comparison of properties with known risk

8.6 million FEMA identified



16.1 million Flood Factor identified

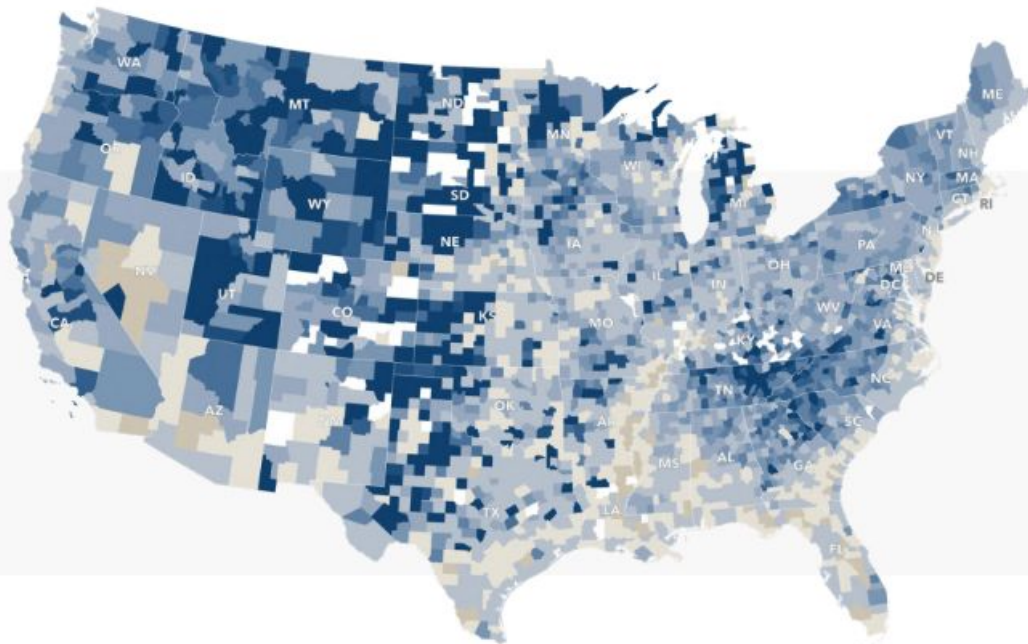


🏠 x 250,000

Comparison of count of properties within a Special Flood Hazard Area as established by MeasureCat, Inc. versus those with 1% annual risk from the First Street Foundation Flood Model.

Difference in number of properties at substantial flood risk* (FSF) compared to FEMA

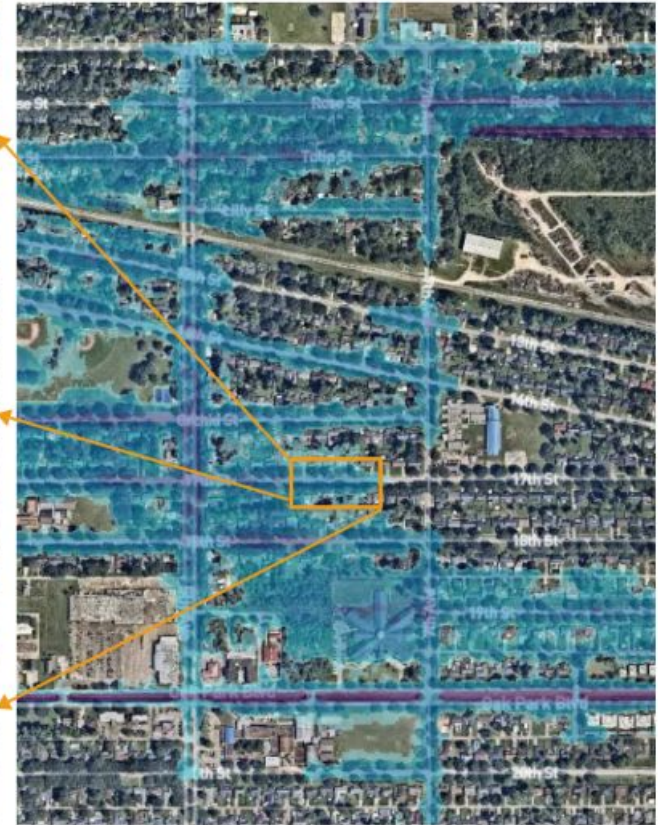
More properties at risk in FSF model →



Can these estimates be trusted? Yes - unfortunately our validation opportunities are plentiful.

We have validated against over 50 historical flooding events, using high-water estimates from NOAA and USGS. After our launch at the end of June, 2020 we also began validating against new flood events to track the accuracy of our model. In July, Hurricane Isaias was the first flood event which validated our accuracy of not only locations but expected depths of water.

In the Oak Park neighborhood of Lake Charles, LA we were able to validate our model twice, once in August when Hurricane Laura caused significant flooding in non-FEMA flood zones and then again in October when Hurricane Delta caused the same neighborhood to flood again.

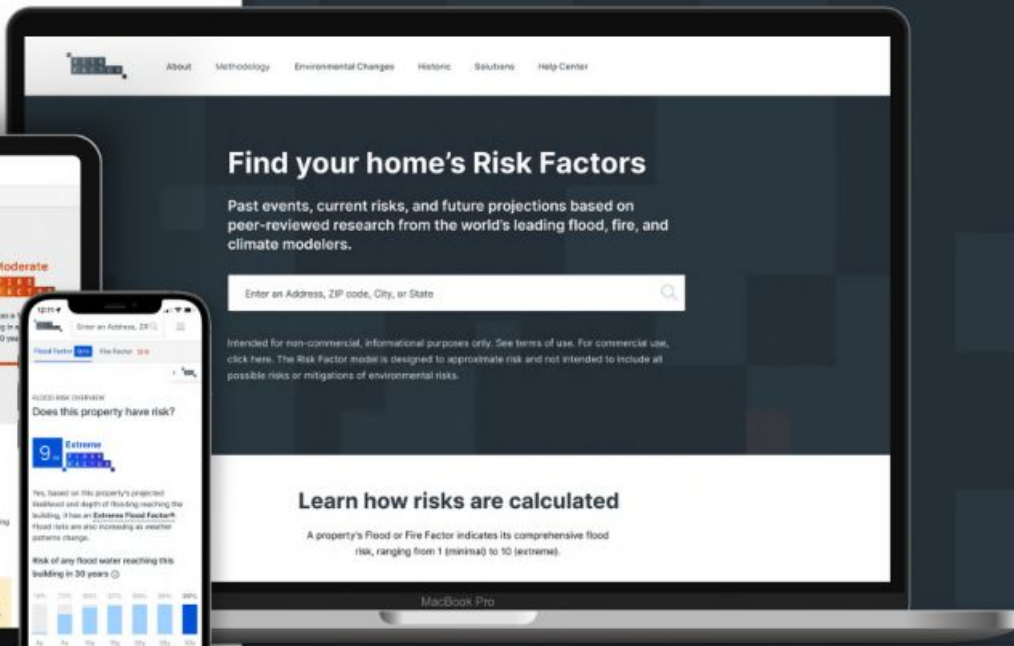
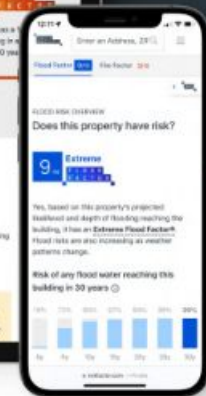
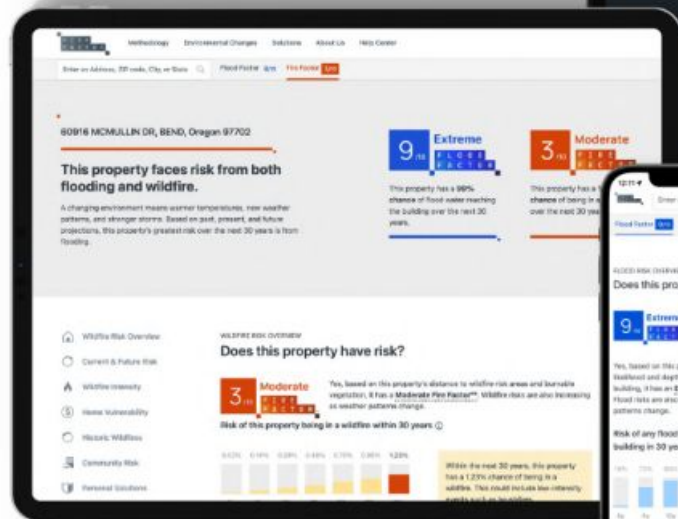


Pensacola Florida



RISK FACTOR™

Property specific, climate risk statistics - open and transparent methods, traceable to IPCC climate models.

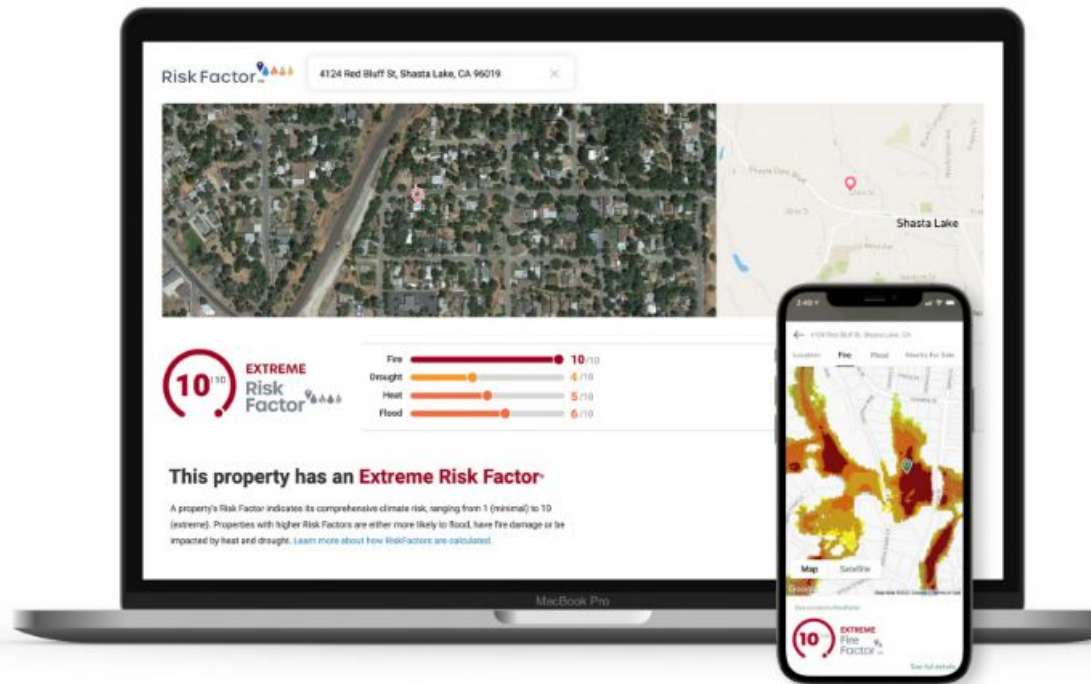


With climate-adjusted risk analyses for flood, wildfire, heat, etc., we can present property-specific data that makes those risks easier to understand, more widely understood and actionable for citizens, government and industry.

These data are also available to partners in bulk, which allows a wide range of analyses.

We have established data sharing agreements with many Federal government agencies to help facilitate climate action.

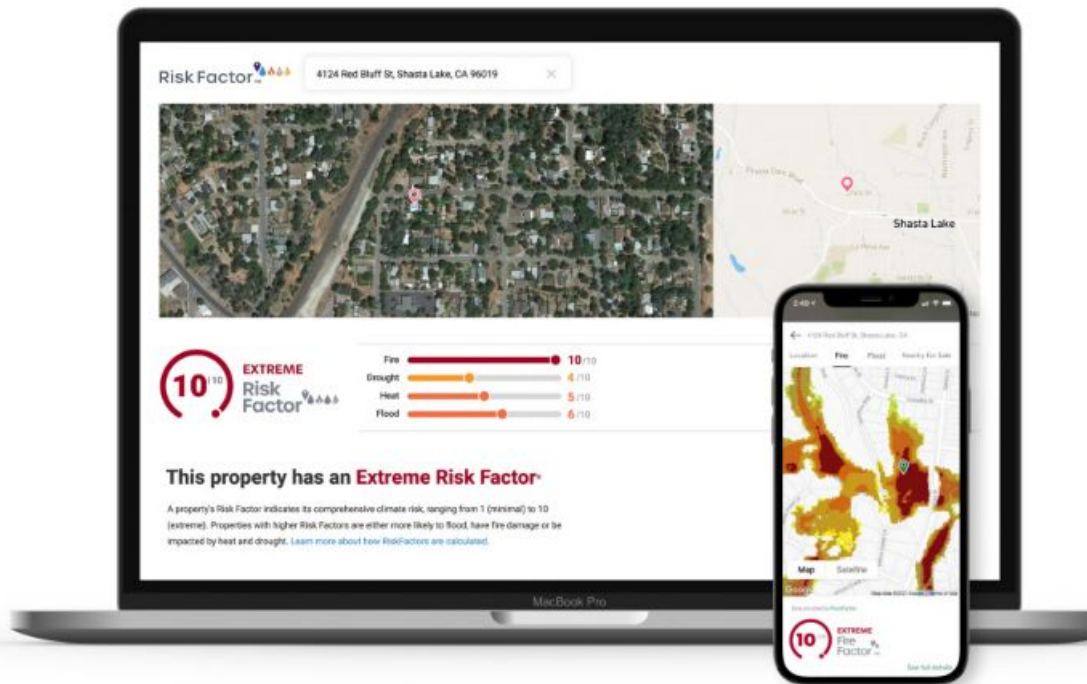
<https://firststreet.org/data-access/getting-started-with-first-street-data/>

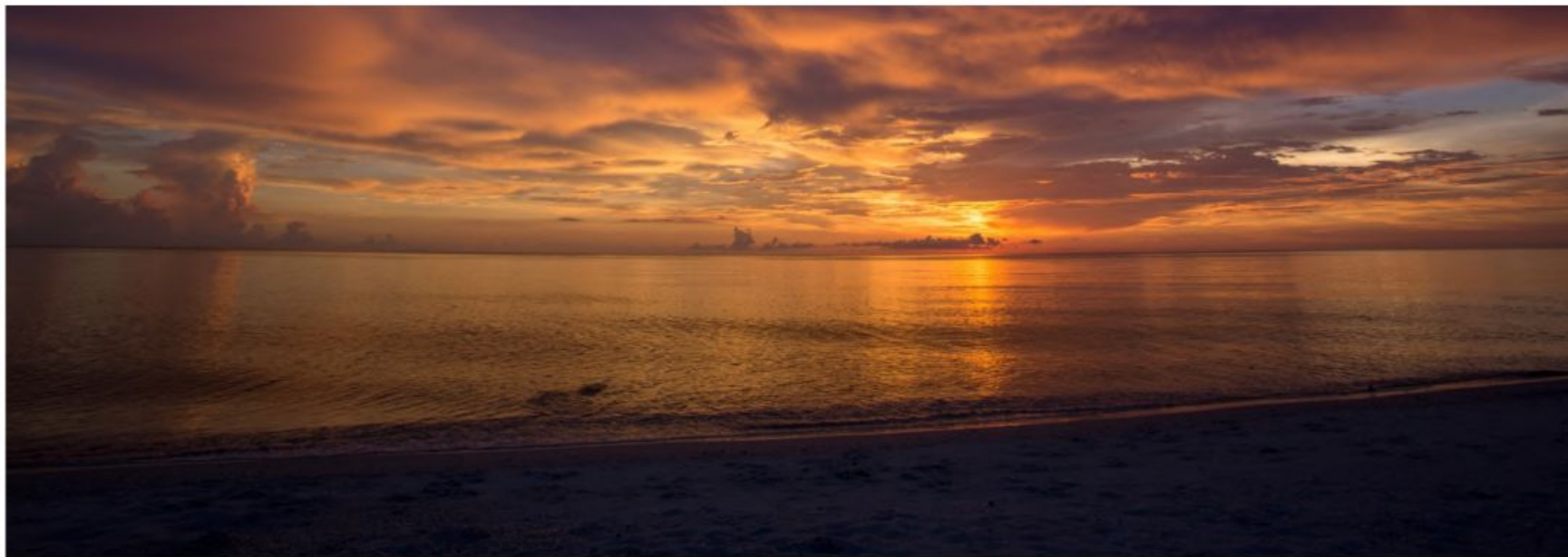


What are the best pathways for data and information products (particularly climate products) that have been created by the private sector and academia?

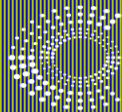
How can the creation of these information products be fostered and sustained?

What are the obstacles for 3rd party products for Federal use?





Thank you.



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An Iterative Approach to Developing, Conducting, and Using the Department of Homeland Security Capacity Assessment

Coreen Farris, Ph.D., Senior Behavioral Scientist, RAND
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Department of Homeland Security / [@DHSgov](#)



An Iterative Approach to Designing, Implementing and Using the Department of Homeland Security Capacity Assessment

Rebecca Kruse, Ph.D., U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Brodi Kotila, Ph.D., RAND Corporation

Coreen Farris, Ph.D., RAND Corporation

The material presented herein is based on a third-party assessment conducted under contract #HSHQDC-16-00007 Task Order 70RDAD21FR0000014.

The contents of this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Homeland Security, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government



Capacity assessment requirements

“...an assessment of the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of the statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis efforts of the agency”

	COVERAGE	METHODS	QUALITY	INDEPENDENCE	EFFECTIVENESS
EVALUATION	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue
STATISTICS	Light Blue	Medium Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
RESEARCH	Light Blue	Light Blue	Medium Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
ANALYSIS	Medium Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue

DIMENSIONS

COVERAGE: What evaluation, statistics, research, and analysis activities are happening and where are they happening?

METHODS: What methods are being used for these activities? Do activities apply appropriate methods; do these methods incorporate the necessary level of rigor?

QUALITY: Are data used of high quality with respect to utility, objectivity, and integrity?

INDEPENDENCE: Are activities carried out free from bias and undue influence?

EFFECTIVENESS: Do the activities meet their intended outcomes? Do they serve stakeholders needs? Are findings disseminated?



Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 interim capacity assessment

WHO	HOW	WHAT	WHY
Components	Component-level Focus Groups	Describe evidence building, data governance, and learning culture activities	Learn about "evidence" in DHS context
Program and Evidence Offices	Office-level Questionnaire		Preliminarily characterize capacity
Evidence and Data Leaders	Polling at Council Meetings	Describe staff, customers, collaborators, study foci, use, and needs	Inform a fulsome FY21 assessment
			Identify priorities for <u>FY21</u> capacity building



Lessons learned and planned changes



Lack of shared understanding and language for evidence building activities



- Define, bound, and socialize evidence building activities
- Clarify who should participate



Initial framework, methods, and data sources provided a limited view of capacity



- Use established frameworks/tools
- Expand methods and data sources



Lack of standardized scales and response options limit benchmarking



- Standardize data collection and analysis
- Couple with a maturity model



Components' identifications were masked



- Build Component-level profiles
- Highlight strengths and areas for improvement



Components were uncertain how to use the assessment



- Provide expectations for maturity
- Facilitate Components' use of assessment findings



Evidence building activities example

Evaluation	Excluded
<p>Capacity assessment focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Evaluation of programs, policies, regulations, or organization evaluation, including formative, process/implementation, outcome, impact, economic evaluation.- Project evaluation required by DHS grantmaking programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Audits- Continuous process improvement (Lean Six Sigma, Agile)- Compliance screening and inspections- Investigations for law enforcement or security purposes- "Test and evaluation" (of materials, devices, systems, etc.)



Component Level Capabilities (CLC) example

Coverage: What evaluation, research, analysis, and statistical activities are happening and where are these activities happening?



Discussion Groups and Doc Review

•Human Capital: leaders
•Leadership for evidence building in key roles

•Funding

- Budget for evidence building

•Infrastructure

- Data infrastructure (e.g., IT systems/tools)*

•Governance

- Policy and procedures for evidence building activities
- Policy and procedures for data governance*
- Data strategy/open data plan*
- Comprehensive data inventory*



Individual Survey

•Human Capital: staff

- Internal staff with sufficient expertise to conduct and commission
- Occupational groups
- Grades
- Years experience
- Professional learning/development opportunities
- Supports (time, support staff, training, other resources)



Study Inventory and Review

•Activities and operations

- Type and subtype of evidence-building activity
- Component/office leading study
- Question(s) addressed
- Focus of study (program, policy, etc.)
- Strategic objective
- Equity

*Not included in FY21 assessment

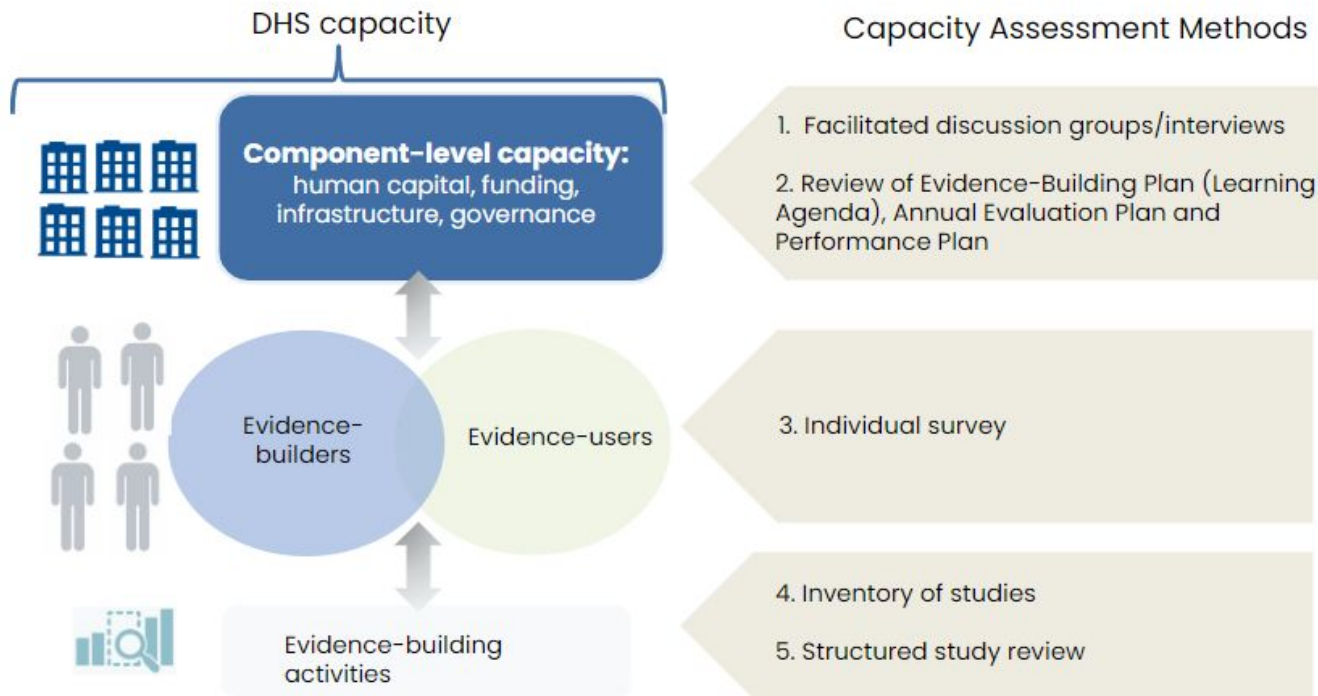


Generalized maturity model customized for each CLC

SCORE	MATURITY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
5	OPTIMIZING	The capability was fully embedded into the Component's operational structure and culture at the time of the FY 2021 capacity assessment and the Component was focused on continuous improvement in this area
4	COMPLETED	The capability was fully implemented at the time of the capacity assessment and long-term resources for that capability had been identified
3	IMPLEMENTING	The plans for that capability were finalized and approved as of the FY 2021 capacity assessment, initial resources were identified, and relevant activities were underway
2	IN PROGRESS	Some progress was underway to create that capability at the time of the capacity assessment
1	NOT INITIATED	Initial planning for that capability was not initiated at the time of the FY 2021 capacity assessment, or ad hoc activities were performed
0	NO BASIS FOR JUDGEMENT	When Component representatives provided no information about that capability for a particular evidence-building activity they identified as a most significant activity (e.g., in the context of group discussions), when a Component did not submit relevant plans or documents for assessment, or when ten or fewer responses were received to the two surveys described below.



Overall capacity assessed across three levels using five methods





Individuals invited to participate in capacity assessment

Leaders Whose **Primary**
Role/Responsibility is:

Supervising or Overseeing Evidence Building, Disseminating, or Support for Use of Evidence

- supervise personnel who build evidence
- have authority, budget, and staff
- formulate guidance, policy, plans, and/or strategy relating to evidence-building
- formulate or oversee budget and expenditures
- oversee or manage data infrastructure and governance structures

Staff Whose **Primary**
Role/Responsibility is:

Evidence Building, Disseminating, Support for Use of Evidence

- conduct or manage research, evaluation, analysis and/or statistical activities
- engage with internal or external stakeholders relating to evidence building and use
- disseminate evidence and related data to stakeholders
- provide facilitation or other support for evidence use

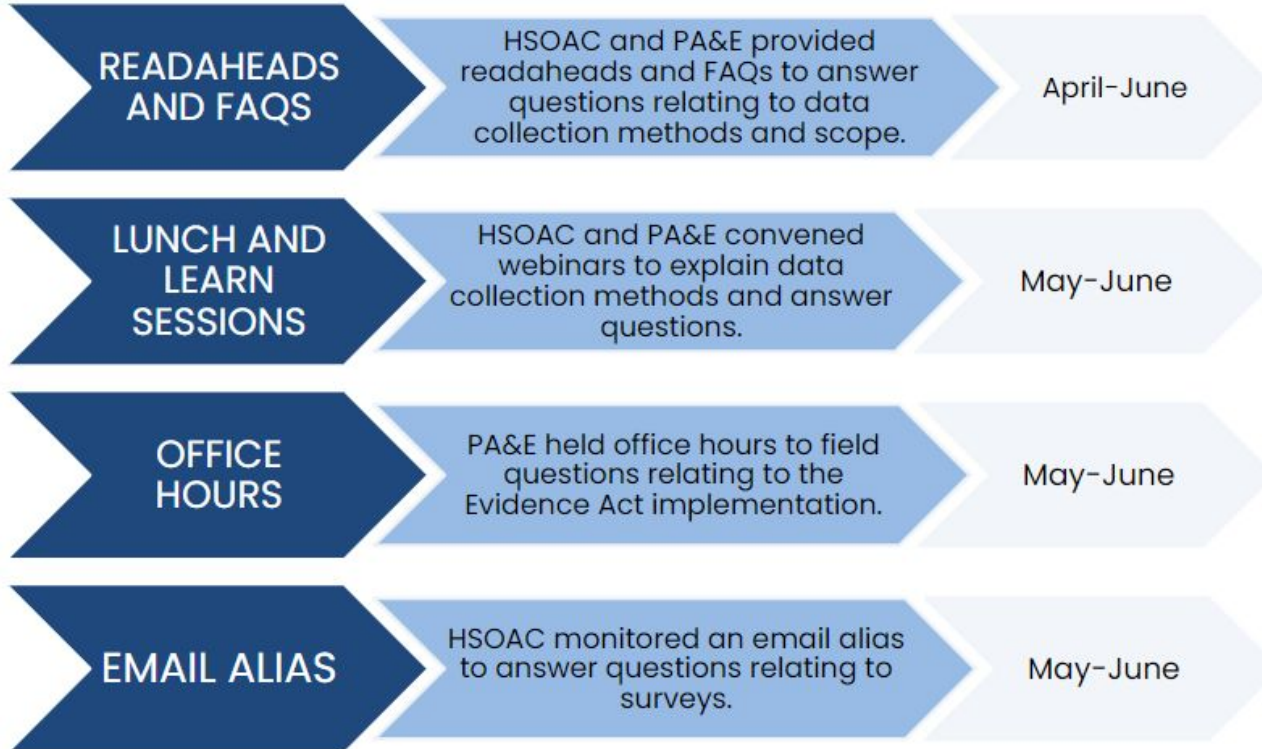
Capacity Assessment Methods

1. Discussion groups
2. Plan review

3. Individual survey
4. Inventory of studies
5. Study review



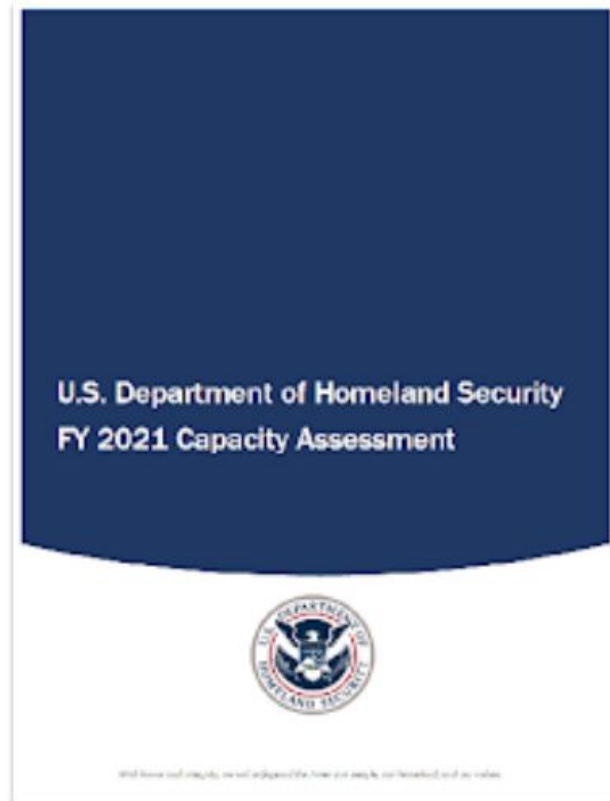
Support to Components





U.S. Department of Homeland Security FY 2021 Capacity Assessment

- Published report available at:
 - [Evaluation and Evidence Plans | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)
 - [Evaluation.gov | Capacity Assessments for Statistics, Research, Evaluation, and Other Analysis](#)





Published Findings and Recommendations



Coverage: Uneven and insufficient resources (staff, funding) and policies across the Department



- Dedicate funding
- Hire, train, and support qualified staff
- Assess need for additional policies and plans, fill high-priority gaps



Quality: Limited standards, compliance mechanisms and monitoring of quality



- Establish standards and monitor compliance
- Focus on continuous improvement



Methods: Methods may not be sufficient for summative purposes or causal claims



- Ensure specialized expertise is available to maximize rigor and scientific integrity



Independence: Most studies free from inappropriate influence though conducted by internal staff



- Establish resources for third-party evidence building
- Ensure independence and autonomy



Effectiveness: Most studies not disseminated; use not tracked



- Establish dissemination mechanisms
- Engage stakeholders and promote evidence use



Lessons Learned and Planned Changes



Lack of shared understanding and language for evidence-building activities



- Promote the importance of evidence-building
- Foster shared understanding through common terms and concepts



Participants' availability and preparation required down scoping assessment



- Expand timeframe for data collection
- Prepare participants in advance, and provide support



Missing perspective of evidence users



- Survey perspectives of evidence users to understand needs and effectiveness
- Align evidence-building to meet needs



Included operations research without clear definitions, standards, or practices



- Focus on statutory evidence-building systems with clear standards and practices



Objective, independent assessment of evidence building and data quality requires resources



- Deepen understanding of activities underway, funding, personnel, infrastructure
- Use consultants or expert panels in each of the assessed areas

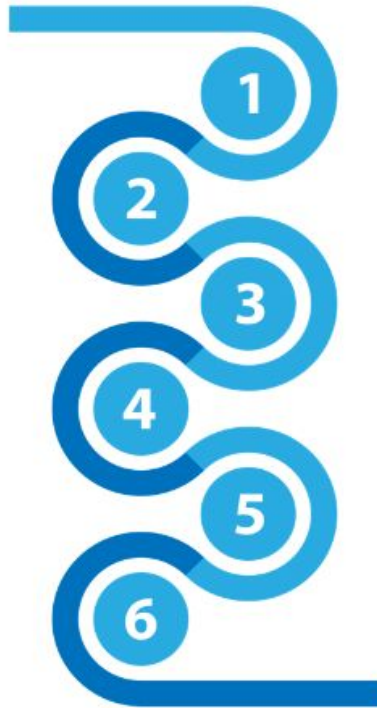


Increasing Component evaluation and evidence capacity

- Reviewed capacity assessments with Component staff
- Briefed the capacity assessments for DHS overall and 11 Components
- DHS Deputy Secretary issued the Policy Statement for Evaluation
- Conducted 12 Evaluation Capacity Building Workshops
 - Assigned pre-workshop readings
 - Collaborated to develop high-level plans to advance evaluation
 - Provided planning guides and worksheets to scaffold Components as they planned for implementation
- Planned Getting To Outcomes[®] and Evaluability Assessments
- Additional PA&E-led or facilitated capacity building



Strategic action planning workshops to advance evaluation capacity



1 Review current capacity and assess needs

2 Identify target goal and objectives

3 Identify team members and resources

4 Identify stages and tasks for objectives

5 Revisit challenges and success factors

6 Review and next steps



Support for implementation planning

Capacity-building guide and worksheets

Evaluation Capacity-Building | Action Planning Guide

Task 1 Refine the objective

- To develop your first action plan, start with one of the objectives from the capacity-building workshop. Enter this objective on Worksheet 1.
- Ensure the objective ties into and supports the goal for evaluation that it meets OMB expectations (see workshop read-ahead "OMB M-07-05 Expectations").
- Refine objective to ensure it is "SMART":
 - Specific:** Objective should describe precisely what is expected to
 - Measurable:** Objective should be formulated in a way that allows C the presence or extent of change
 - Achievable:** Objective should be feasible
 - Realistic:** Objective should be able to be accomplished with the av
 - Time-bounded:** Objective should be achieved in a specific timefr

Evaluation Capacity-Building | Action Planning Worksheet 2

Worksheet 2 Develop basic task list and action plan

Refined objective:

Tasks	Task specifics: what, how	Task specifics: who,
Example: Engage leadership and resource support	Example: Roll the objective's activities to the Component leaders	Example: Mission Training by our DR

Evaluation Capacity-Building | Action Planning Worksheet 3

Worksheet 3 Assess existing resources and gaps

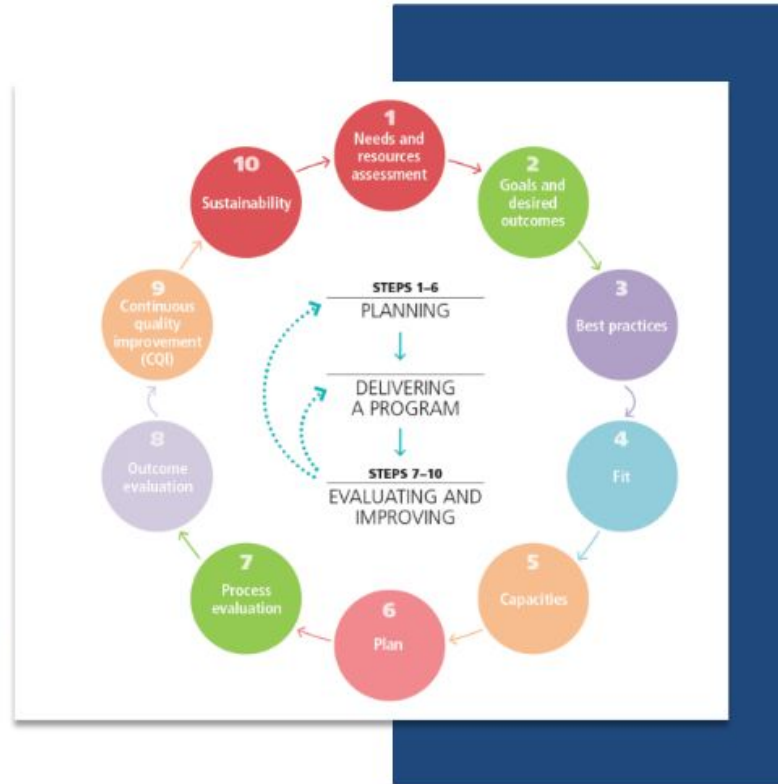
Available resources	Gaps	How to close gaps
Staff		
Leadership and stakeholder support		
Funding, information, and other resources		



Building program evaluation capacity

GETTING TO OUTCOMES®

- GTO is a user-friendly ten-step process for comprehensive:
 - planning,
 - implementation, and
 - evaluation of programs.
- Designed to help organizations run programs well and achieve their goals
- Provides training and technical assistance that teaches teams how to build an evidence-based program and conduct their own evaluations





Building program evaluation capacity

EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

Evaluability Assessment is a systematic method for determining:

- Whether a program (and its parent organization) is **ready** for evaluation
- The **type of evaluation** most suitable to assess the program
- The **changes** that are needed to increase readiness





Building enterprise evaluation capacity

EVALUATION OFFICER COUNCIL

- Coordination for Administration priorities
- In-government evaluation and research service providers
- Academic researchers' perspectives
- Peer strategy sharing

ENTERPRISE WEBINARS, WORKSHOPS, AND TOOLS

- Literature reviews
- Dissemination tools
- Engaging stakeholder perspectives
- Human Research Protections
- Equity and evaluation
- Evaluation Bootcamp
- 45+ evaluation process tools/templates

FACILITATING PARTICIPATION IN OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Evaluation Community Training and Events calendar
- APPAM Agency-Researcher matchmaking
- Multi-agency hiring



For questions or more information

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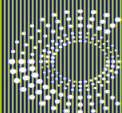
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5-minute Break

*Event will resume at
11:35 a.m. ET*





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Understanding Human Capital Needs for Expanding Data and Evidence Culture Using a Federal Data and Digital Maturity Survey

Maddie Powder, Research Associate, Partnership for
Public Service / [@publicservice](#)

Understanding Human Capital Needs for Expanding Data and Evidence Culture in Government

Results from a Federal Data and Digital Maturity Assessment



PARTNERSHIP
FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

BCG

About the Partnership for Public Service

We are:

- Nonpartisan
- Nonprofit organization

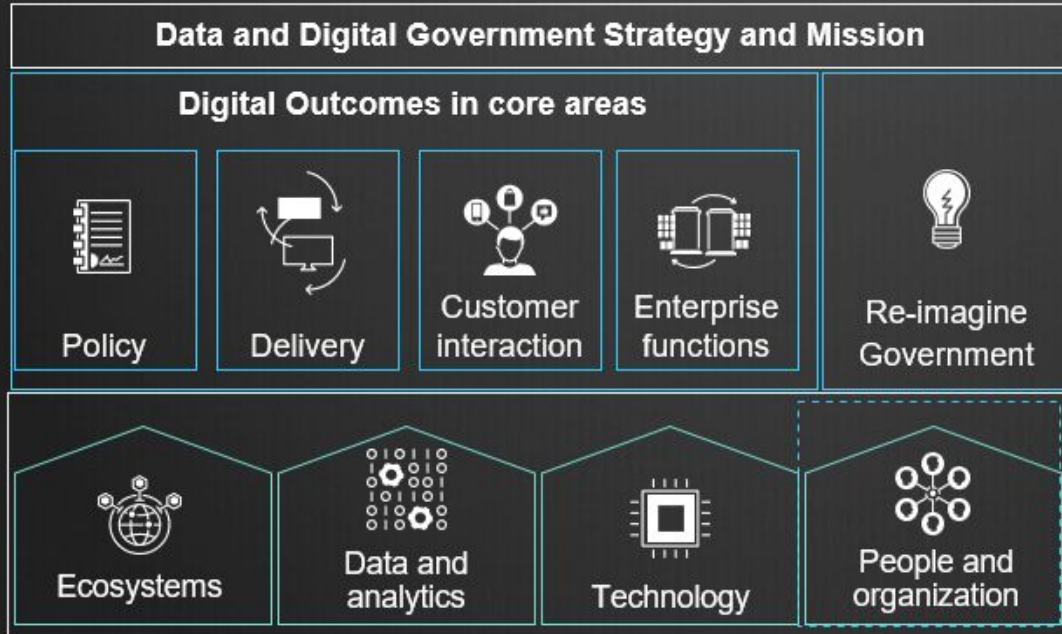


Our Mission:

- Building a better government and a stronger democracy



FDDMI Survey Methodology



Human capital deep dive

-  People strategy
-  Talent acquisition
-  People development
-  Performance, rewards, and engagement
-  Leadership & cultural change
-  Labor & employee relations
-  Organizational transformation



FDDMI Sample Question

Is your organization a leader in attracting and hiring digital talent and creating a talent ecosystem?

Starter

We have no partners in our talent ecosystem outside the organization to support us with the skills that we need on-demand. We have not thought strategically about how to hire, build, contract, or bring back talent to our organization. There is no (continuous) assessment of skill gaps in our current workforce.

Literate

We are addressing digital talent recruitment with a few initiatives, but we do not have a strategic workforce plan. We are reactive and ad-hoc in our approach. Also, we do not have a systematic workforce plan to retain critical talent.

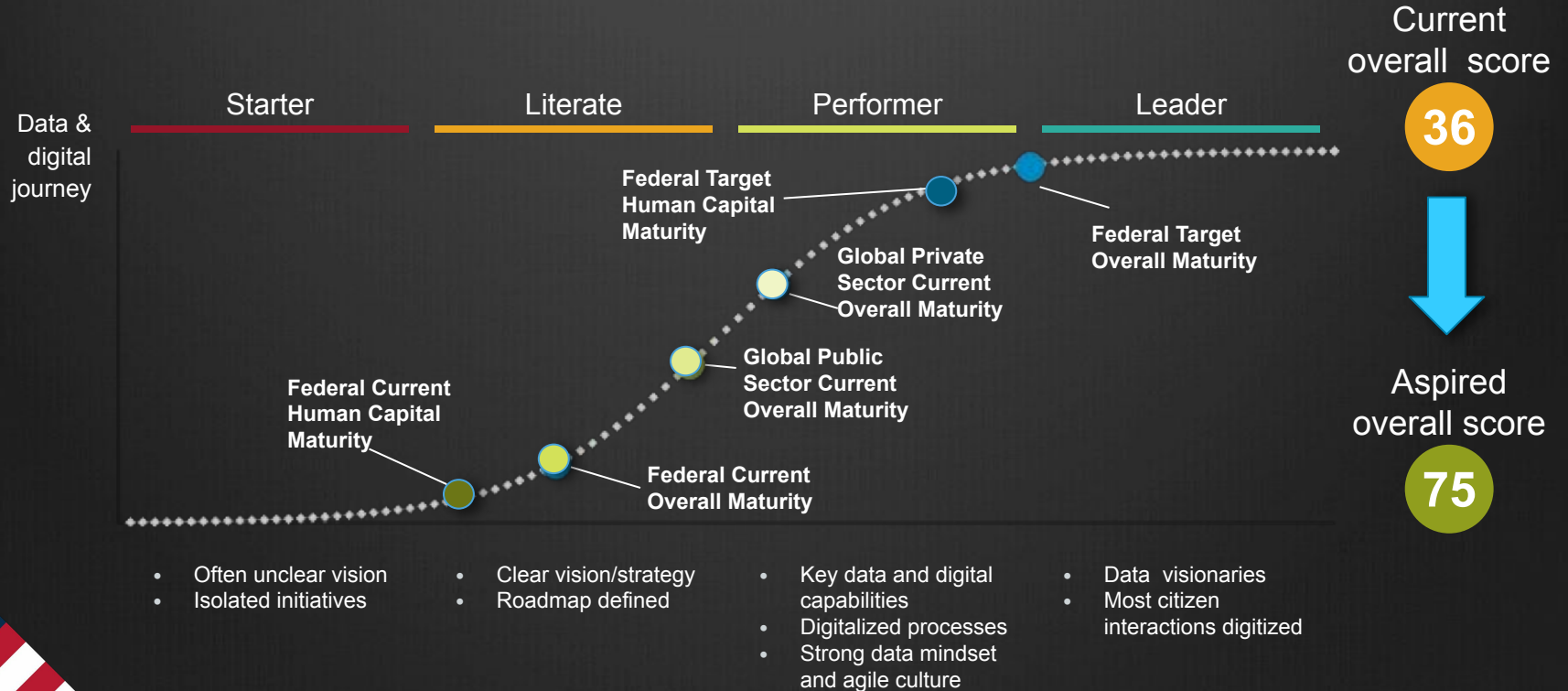
Performer

We have a dedicated people strategy to attract, develop, and retain digital talent. We do not have the ability to predict skill needs and adjust in real-time. We contract external talent but do not share talent, either across departments or externally.

Leader

We are among the top organizations for digital employer branding and hiring digital talent. We can share, hire, or contract talent from ecosystem partners as well as match the skills of our internal talent to the optimal roles faster. Also, we are continuously assessing our skill sets and needs to identify gaps to be filled.

Overall Data and Digital Maturity Scores



Human Capital Deep Dive Findings: View on current vs. aspired maturity

Current

People Strategy	29
Talent Acquisition	29
People Development	26
Performance, Rewards, and Engagement	28
Leadership & Cultural Change	30
Organizational Transformation	25



Aspired

People Strategy	67
Talent Acquisition	66
People Development	66
Performance, Rewards, and Engagement	66
Leadership & Cultural Change	68
Organizational Transformation	70

Current human capital score

28



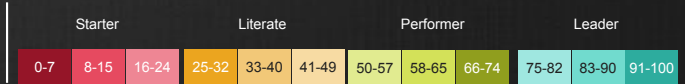
Aspired human capital score

67



Source: FDDMI survey; n = 111 for Federal Government

Data & digital maturity score



Human Capital Deep Dive: Key Takeaways



Human Capital Scores Lag Overall Maturity Scores



Government Has Ambition to Improve Human Capital Scores Drastically in the Next 5 years



Leadership and Cultural Change Category had the highest current score in the Human Capital deep dive



Organizational Transformation Category had the lowest current score in the human capital deep dive, but the highest target score.



Utilize Creative
Hiring
Authorities

Get Young People
Into Government
and Empower Them

Promote
Government's
Mission

Create Experiential
Onboarding
Programs

Invest in the Current
Workforce Through
Upskilling and Reskilling
Programs



Strategies to Improve Recruitment and Retention of a Data Workforce

Read Our Full Issue Brief

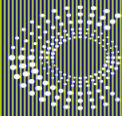




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An FAA Experience: Applying Intervention Research as a Change Management Approach to Implement Evidence-Based Management

Bob Young, Senior Advisor, Strategy, Risk & Engagement, Federal Aviation Administration Security & Hazardous Materials Safety Organization / @FAANews

Research Study:

Applying Intervention Research as a Change Management Approach to Implement Evidence-Based Management (EBMgt)

A design-based Intervention Study Leveraging
Nexus Analysis and Interdiscursivity

Bob Young
Senior Advisor
FAA Security & HAZMAT Safety

The Case Setting

- Legislation compounding but agency executives saw no pathway
- Needed org. change without draining cognitive attention
- Role as lead practitioner/researcher
- Case Study research methods most suitable

The Challenge



Evidence-Based Management

Making decisions through the conscientious, explicit, and judicial use of the best available evidence from various sources by asking, acquiring, appraising, aggregating, applying, and assessing to increase the likelihood of a favorable outcome

(Baba & HakemZaheh, 2012; Barends & Rousseau, 2018)

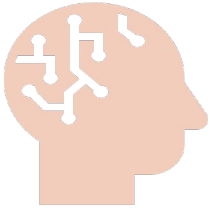
Three primary objectives where to answer these questions:



1. How could our leaders best determine whether System 1 (intuitive) or System 2 (rational & deliberative) thinking would be most effective?



2. What organizational intervention could we use integrate evidence-based management as the means to strengthen strategic decision-making?



3. How could we assess our collective readiness to adopt evidence-based management?

The thinking behind the methodology

Organizational Intervention.

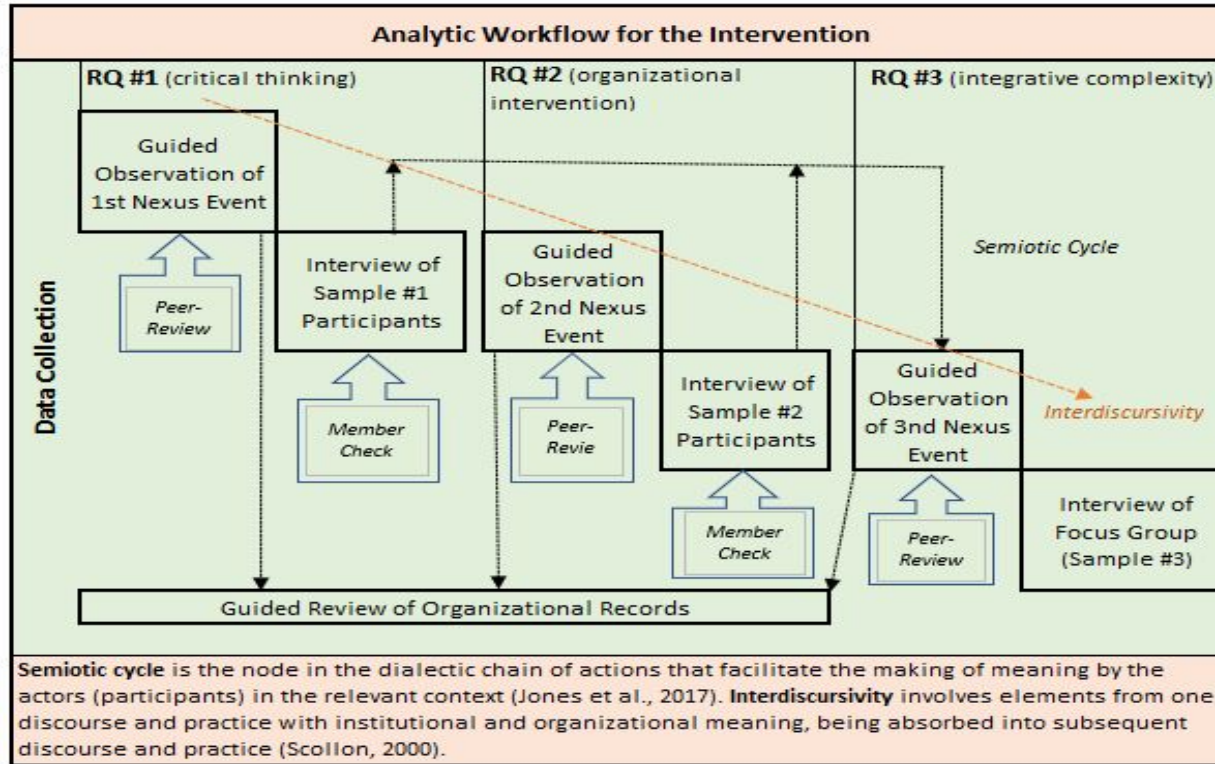
The intentional decisions undertaken by organizational members leading to actions that aim to reduce the distance between the organization and its environments while considering constraints (Harrison, 1970; Sarta, et al., 2020).

Intervention Research.

A methodology seeks to design changes through mediated action within organizations by enumerating the dynamics by which such changes are contextualized and formalized as an organizational routine (Jones, et al., 2017; Radaelli, et al., 2014).



How the work was unfolded



(Young, 2021)

Findings & Recommendations

1- Emphasize the **benefits achieved beyond just the process**. Throughout this journey, trust became pivotal. Lose the hearts; you lose the will to change.

2- Evidence alone will not persuade others. The new evidence should be presented in such a way as to **legitimize their change in rational judgment**.

3- Begin with a **baseline recognition of existing strengths**. Otherwise, the effort becomes a check-the-box activity with the most promising EBMgt practices not being captured.

Findings & Recommendations - continued

4- An organization's culture becomes primed to absorb EBMgt when those practices are surfaced and recognized. **Structured strategic discussions can to strategic outcomes.** It is not by happenstance.

5- Formal instruction and experiential learning can be helpful **but only to a point.**

6- The analysis identified the benefit how leaders are **making meaning during the shared experience.** Applying the analytical path of intervention research workflow proved beneficial.

7- Implementation leaders should restrain the urge to express their perception at the outset, to avoid simply pushing “the only right answer”. It's about **nudging and choice architecture.**

Findings & Recommendations - continued

8- Leaders are increasingly unaware of external forces breaching their spheres of expertise. Such a condition imposes risk and diminished effectiveness when leaders assume the breadth and depth of their expertise without realizing **other expert domains have crept into their praxis.**

9- Outside expertise or internal developed capabilities can help.

**Closing thoughts, comments, or questions
from you?**

Dr. Robert A. Young, GRCP, GRCA

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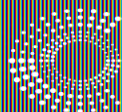
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15-minute Break

*Event will resume at
12:30 p.m. ET*





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Welcome back!



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12:35 p.m. – Advancing Equity through Evidence-Building, Data Integration, and Research Partnerships: A Local Government’s View from “The Other Washington”

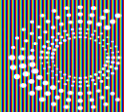
1:35 p.m. – Assessing the Quality of Impact Evaluations at USAID

1:50 p.m. – 5-minute break

1:55 p.m. – Approaches to Assessing Agency Capacity for Evidence Building

2:55 p.m. – Opportunity for Partnership – A Budget and Program Perspective on the Learning Agenda and Evidence Building Activities

3:55 p.m. – Closing remarks



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Advancing Equity through Evidence-Building, Data Integration, and Research Partnerships: A Local Government's View from "The Other Washington"

Claire Evans, Research Specialist, King County Metro Transit / [@KingCountyMetro](#)

Truong Hoang, Deputy Regional Administrator, Region 2 , Washington State
Department of Social and Health Services / [@waDSHS](#)

Maria Jimenez-Zepeda, ORCA Reduced Fare Project Program Manager,
King County Metro Transit / [@KingCountyMetro](#)

Christina McHugh, Housing and Adult Services Evaluation Manager,
King County Department of Community and Human Services

David Phillips, Associate Research Professor, Wilson Sheehan Lab for
Economic Opportunities, University of Notre Dame / [@LEOatND](#)

Advancing Equity through Evidence-Building, Data Integration, and Research Partnerships

A Local Government's View from "The Other Washington"



Truong Hoang

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Deputy Regional Administrator -
Community Services Division, Economic
Services Administration



Maria Jimenez-Zepeda

King County Metro Transit

Reduced Fare Program Manager,
Mobility Division



Christina McHugh

King County Department of Community and Human Services

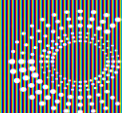
Housing and Adult Services Evaluation
Manager - Performance Measurement
and Evaluation Unit



David Phillips

Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic
Opportunities, University of Notre Dame

Associate Research Professor



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Assessing the Quality of Impact Evaluations at USAID

Irene Velez, Director, Monitoring Evaluation
Research Learning and Adaptation (MERLA),
Panagora Group / [@irene_velez](#)



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF IMPACT EVALUATIONS AT USAID

Irene Velez, Study Team Leader

June 22, 2022

IMPACT EVALUATIONS AT USAID

- 2011 Evaluation Policy drew greater attention to IEs within USAID
- Growing number of IEs → need for a formal quality review

Number of IE Reports, FY12-19



ASSESSING IMPACT EVALUATION QUALITY

- Developed **review instrument** to assess whether quality elements are included in IE report
- Removed subjective judgement about *adequacy* of these elements
- Inclusion of quality elements → IE provides credible information that can be used to make decisions

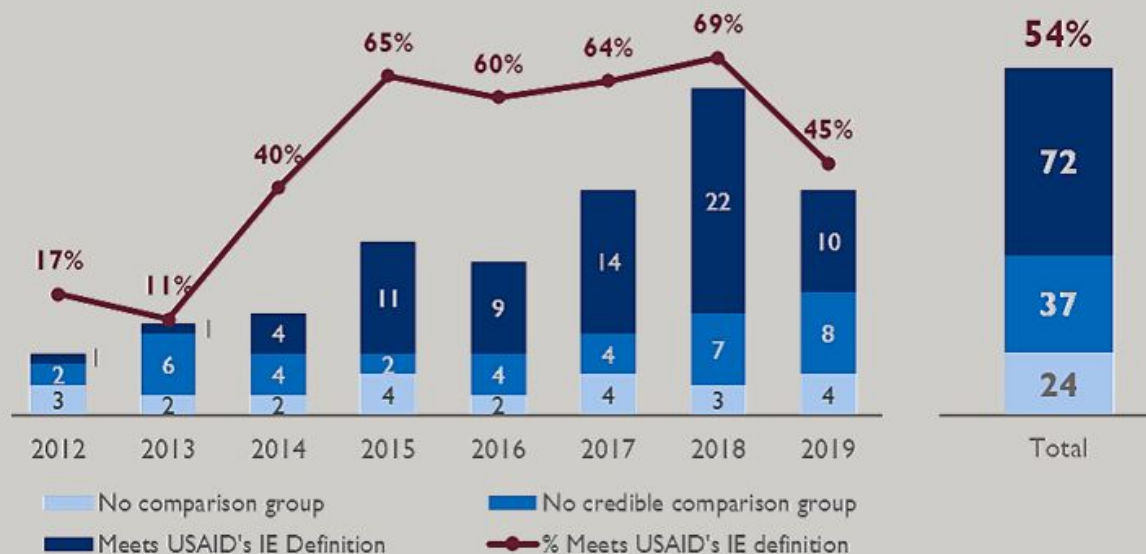
Six Domains

1. Sample size considerations
2. Conceptual framing
3. Treatment characteristics and outcomes definitions and measurement
4. Data collection and analysis
5. Common threats to validity
6. Reporting of findings

KEY FINDINGS: Meeting USAID's IE Definition

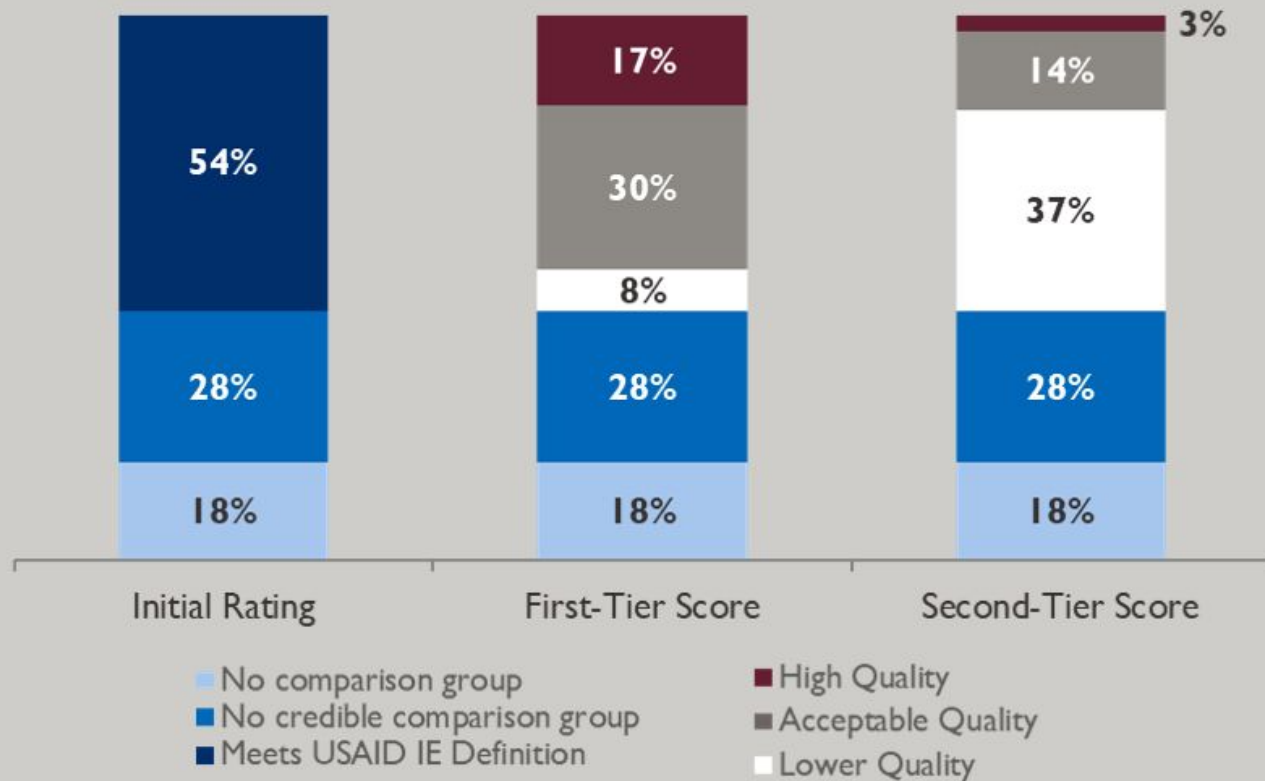
- Improvements post-2011 but decrease in 2019
- # of IEs that did not provide a credible counterfactual increased in the past two years

Number of IEs that Met USAID's IE Definition



KEY FINDINGS: Overall Quality

Overall IE Quality Scores



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure IEs are conducted only when a credible comparison group can be established and that statistical justification for validity of the comparison group is included**
- Update guidance on specific elements that should be included in final IE reports (e.g., *power calculations, theory of change, defined outcome measures, common threats to validity, discussion of null effects, practical significance of effect size*)
- Develop standard IE report template and review checklist
- Commission external peer reviews to assess quality of IE designs and draft reports when there are gaps in internal capacity
- Integrate implementation fidelity monitoring into IE SOWs
- Report more information to disentangle and explain effects
- Integrate ethical considerations as an IE standard to align with its Scientific Research Policy
- Integrate the Evaluation Policy's call for cost effectiveness as an IE standard

USAID RESPONSE

- Revisions to USAID's ADS 201 – program cycle operational policy
 - Expand on USAID's IE definition by explicitly stating that IEs *must* use an experimental or quasi-experimental design, both of which require comparison groups.
 - Explicit mention of specific elements that an evaluation report should include
 - Explicit mention of a cost-analysis for impact evaluations
- In process of developing an IE report template and review checklist (different from the PE template and checklist)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Final Report: Assessing the Quality of Impact Evaluations at USAID

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X78R.pdf

Action Recommendations Memo

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X7P5.pdf

Thanks to:

Management Systems International

USAID Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning





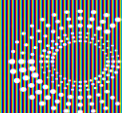
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5-minute Break

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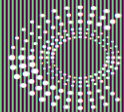
Approaches to Assessing Agency Capacity for Evidence Building

Tania Alfonso, Senior Evaluation Specialist, U.S. Agency for International Development / [@USAID](#)

Danielle Berman, Senior Evidence Analyst, Office of Management and Budget / [@OMBPress](#)

Susan Jenkins, Evaluation Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / [@HHSCov](#)

Christina Yancey, Chief Evaluation Officer, U.S. Department of Labor / [@USDOL](#)



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Opportunity for Partnership – A Budget and Program Perspective on the Learning Agenda and Evidence Building Activities

Darreisha Bates, Federal Portfolio Manager, Tyler Technologies & Former Director of Intergovernmental Relations, U.S. Government Accountability Office / [@tylertech](#)

Ed Brigham, Executive Consultant, Federal Consulting Alliance & AABPA Board Member / [@AABPA](#)

Jon Stehle, Councilmember, City of Fairfax, Virginia / [@JonStehle](#)

Courtney Timberlake, President, American Association for Budget and Program Analysis / [@AABPA](#)

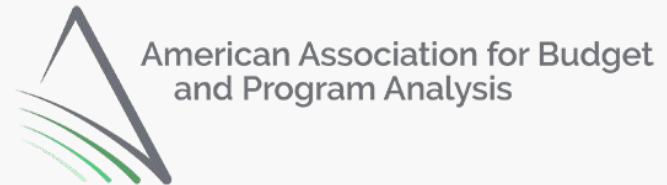
**OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIP – A
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE
ON THE LEARNING AGENDA AND
EVIDENCE BUILDING ACTIVITIES**



American Association for Budget
and Program Analysis

Speakers

- Courtney Timberlake, President, American Association for Budget and Program Analysis (AABPA) & Senior Vice President, The Craddock Group LLC
- Ed Brigham, Executive Consultant, Federal Consulting Alliance & AABPA Board Member
- Darreisha M. Bates, Federal Portfolio Manager, Tyler Technologies, Former Director of Intergovernmental Relations, U.S. Government Accountability Office & AABPA Board Member
- Moderator Jon Stehle, Councilmember City of Fairfax VA & AABPA Board Member



Who is AABPA

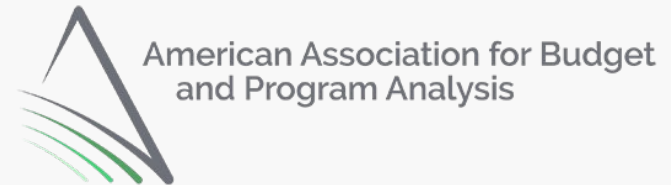
- AABPA was founded almost 50 years ago to elevate the profile of the Federal workforce, broaden their focus, and meet important mid-career needs, including professional interaction.
- AABPA partners with the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management (ABFM) to produce the Public Budgeting & Finance Journal, exploring key topics in the field.
- We work with the academic world to strengthen the profession by exposing both public and students and early-to-mid-career government employees to the complex issues surrounding budgeting, and providing forums for exchange of ideas.



American Association for Budget
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Evolution of the Budget Profession

- Lens of a Budget Analyst
- Technology Impact – moving from process to analytics
- Laws followed actions – locking in the use of data



Data and Budget in Process

- Data – where was it, where it has grown to
- Economic models
- Audit community – use of data within the process

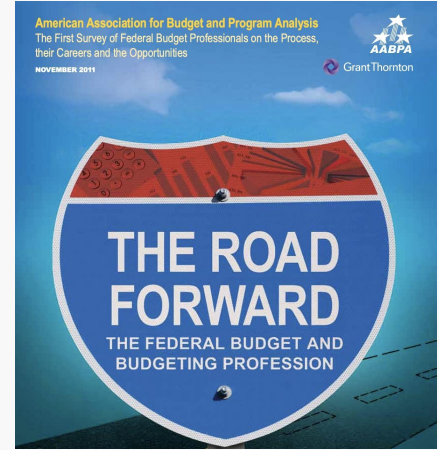


Table 3:
Frequency with which groups use integrated budget and performance information

Group	Frequency of use			
	Often	Occasionally	Never	N/A
Budget and financial managers and analysts	34%	49%	11%	6%
Program managers and analysts	30%	47%	13%	9%
Executive leadership	26%	52%	14%	8%
External stakeholders	24%	45%	14%	17%

“[Integrated budget and performance information] is probably the most important, little-used information in government.”



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Working with Leaders on Data

- Interpretation - not a common experience
- Responding to questions
- Technology impact
- State and Local Lens

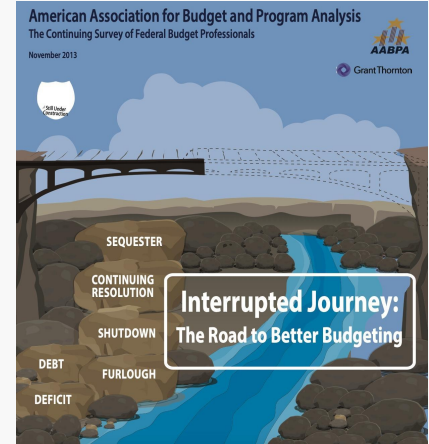
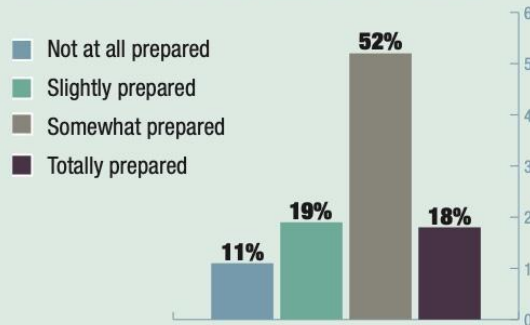


FIGURE 15
How prepared is your agency to have its strategic plan and performance plan align with the 2015 budget?



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How Skills have been Met

- Role of a collaborative community
- Budget Line of Business experience
- Trainings

FIGURE 18

What are the ideal attributes of new budget professional hires? (Select top 3)

	2013	2011
Analytic ability	81%	80%
Ability to write concisely and clearly	64%	56%
Ability to work cooperatively under pressure	38%	44%
Facility with numbers and Excel	36%	34%
Ability to communicate orally	18%	21%
Understanding how government works	15%	13%
Some work experience in budgeting	12%	11%



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Summary

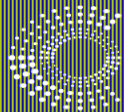
- 1) How has the evolution of the Budget profession highlighted the need for more analytical skills and how have those skills been met?
- 2) How have advancements in using data and data analytics impacted the budget process and the budget profession?
- 3) What lessons have budget and program analysts learned in working with both Congressional and Executive Branch leaders around data?

The “Road Forward”

- Data matters – understanding data for programs is helpful in supporting agency leadership in the budget process – providing solid justification for priorities
- Use of data, despite some examples, analytically is significantly greater than years ago, and it’s an ongoing process – getting better year by year, even if there is variation
- Importance of the diversity of thought and view– the lens we look at information – what we pick and choose will continue to be a focus

Links

- Links to Surveys
 - https://www.aabpa.org/assets/AABPASurvey/aabpa_2013survey.pdf
 - <https://www.govexec.com/pdfs/111711cf1.pdf>
- www.aabpa.org



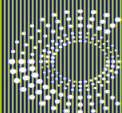
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- **Same Zoom link**
- **8 presentations**
- **ICF, Census Bureau, Black Equity Coalition, California Policy Lab, and more!**



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