

DATA
FOUNDATION

**U.S. Government
Accountability Office**

**ISSUES IN
EVALUATION:
IMPROVING
PERFORMANCE
MEASUREMENT AND
EVALUATION**

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Issues in Evaluation Panel: CEMI

- Center for Evaluation Method and Issues (CEMI), in the Applied Research Methods and Issues team at U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
 - Provides expertise in program evaluation methods that are used to study the implementation and effectiveness of government policies and programs;
 - Strengthens available evaluation methods, within and outside of GAO;
 - Promotes evidence-based policy and management;
 - Disseminates knowledge of program evaluation.

Issues in Evaluation Panel: CEMI Products

- Select Listing of Past CEMI reports:
 - *Designing Evaluations* (GAO-12-208G)
 - *Program Evaluation: Annual Agency-Wide Plans Could Enhance Leadership Support for Program Evaluations* (GAO-17-743)
 - *Program Evaluation: Some Agencies Reported that Networking, Hiring, and Involving Program Staff Help Build Capacity* (GAO-15-25)
- Current report: GAO-21-404SP, *Program Evaluation: Key Terms and Concepts* updates previous glossary (GAO-11-646SP) that compared Performance Measurement and Evaluation terms.

The image shows the cover of a report titled "Program Evaluation Key Terms and Concepts". The cover has a dark blue and green color scheme. At the top left, it features the GAO@100 logo and the text "A Century of Non-Partisan Fact-Based Work". Below this, the date "March 2021" is displayed. The central part of the cover is a light green horizontal band containing the title "Program Evaluation Key Terms and Concepts" in a large, dark blue font. To the left of the title, there is a vertical list of terms: "Strengthen", "Perform", "Identify", "Review", "Engage", "Develop", "Conduct", and "Create". At the bottom left, the report number "GAO-21-404SP" is visible. The background of the cover is decorated with faint, overlapping circles and gear-like patterns.

GAO@100
A Century of Non-Partisan Fact-Based Work

March 2021

Strengthen
Perform
Identify
Review
Engage
Develop
Conduct
Create

**Program Evaluation
Key Terms
and Concepts**

Ensure
Inform
Establish

GAO-21-404SP

Timeline of Relevant Statutes and Guidance Since 2009

- Helps provide the context for evaluation and evidenced-based policymaking in the federal government
- Expanded requirements for information about agency evaluation plans to be made public (2010, GPRAMA)
- Expanded requirements for standardization and reporting of government spending data (2014, DATA Act)
- Requirements for expanding agency evidence-building capacities (2018, Evidence Act)
- Requirements for making federal government data open by default (Title II of the Evidence Act, Open Government Data Act)

Program Evaluation: Key Terms and Concepts (GAO-21-404SP)

Useful guide both within and outside GAO:

- Facilitates conversations with GAO teams about potential criteria, evidence sources (including existing evaluations), and the design and selection of approaches and methods for a given project
- Expands and updates prior publication
- Publicly available as a reference and tool for teaching, learning about and conducting evaluation

Objectives, Scope, Methodology

- Objectives
 - Standardize a lexicon for our various communities of practice
 - Describe key products from recent legislation
 - Describe program evaluation's unique role alongside other complementary forms of evidence
- Methodology
 - Review of Statutes, OMB Guidance, academic literature, AEA guidance, and a significant body of GAO reports
 - Infographic

Enhancing Evidence Building Capacity

- Establishing a culture of evaluation...the long view
- Continuous learning practices: Data reviews, Reviews of performance measures, Meta-evaluation, Capacity assessment
- Conducting evaluations and embedding quality through Transparency, Independence, Ethics, Relevance, Rigor
- Use of evaluation in decision making

Discussant



Diana Epstein
Evidence Team Lead, the
White House Office of
Management and Budget

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Evidence Team Lead
Office of Management and Budget



OMB's Implementation of the Evidence Act

Phase 1: Learning Agendas, Personnel, & Planning

- Learning Agendas
- Chief Data Officers
- Evaluation Officers
- Statistical Officials
- Agency Data Governance Boards
- Chief Data Officer Council
- Evaluation Officer Council
- Interagency Council on Statistical Policy
- Agency Evaluation Plans
- Capacity Assessments
- Open Data Plans

Phase 2: Open Data Access & Management

- Make Data Open by Default
- Comprehensive Data Inventory
- Federal Data Catalogue
- Repository of Tools and Best Practices

Phase 3: Data Access for Statistical Purposes

- Make Agency Data Assets Available to Statistical Units
- Expand Users' Secure Access to Data Assets through Statistical Units
- Allow Recognition of New Statistical Units
- Standardize Application Process for Accessing Data Assets
- Codify Statistical Unit Responsibilities

Phase 4: Program Evaluation

- Program Evaluation Standards and Best Practices
- Program Evaluation Skills and Competencies (with OPM)

Ongoing Implementation & Reporting

- Budget Cycles
- Information Resource Management Plans
- Performance Plans
- Strategic Plans
- Federal Data Strategy Annual Action Plans
- Open Data Biennial Report
- Statistical Programs Annual Report
- Regulatory Planning
- Information Collection Review

Learning Agendas,
Personnel, & Planning

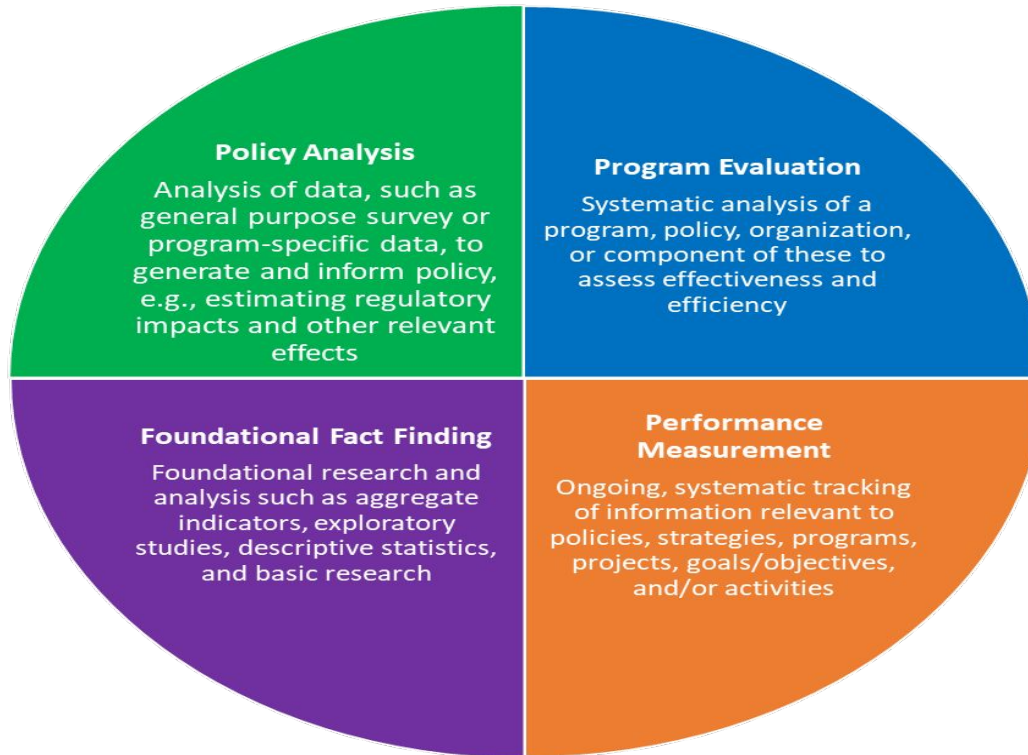
Open Data Access
& Management

Data Access for
Statistical
Purposes

Program
Evaluation

Ongoing
Implementation &
Reporting

Components of Evidence



Source: OMB M-19-23,
July 2019

Program Evaluation Standards and Practices

- OMB M-20-12, Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices (March 2020)
 - Relevance and Utility
 - Rigor
 - Independence and Objectivity
 - Transparency
 - Ethics
- Includes ten leading practices to support agencies' implementation of the standards

Discussant



Tom Chapel

Former Chief Evaluation Officer,
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention, HHS

DATA
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Trachtenberg School
of Public Policy
& Public Administration

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**VIRTUAL
DATA
SYMPOSIUM
2021**

May 18 – May 21, 2021

RSVP

Thank you for participating

Learn more at datafoundation.org

To view the new GAO publication, visit
<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-404sp>