

## LEARNING AGENDA

### Evidence-Building Staff

**Multi-Year Evidence/Evaluation Theme:** Leverage the Census Bureau's Data Linkage Infrastructure to assist Federal Agencies in evidence building

**Bureau:** Census

**Strategic Objective:**

4.2 Provide Accurate Data to Support Economic Activity

**Strategy:**

Engage Federal agencies to learn their data/evaluation needs, draft project proposals, acquire and link data for research, assist with disclosure avoidance, and provide overall project management support

**Rationale for Theme's Priority and How the Evidence/Evaluation Findings will be Used:**

Results will be used by Federal agencies to analyze the short and long run impacts of programs with the goal of improving program design and implementation as well as the allocation of resources across programs.

**FY 20 Related Evidence/Evaluation Projects:**

<https://www.census.gov/about/adrm/linkage/projects/EvidenceBuildingProjects.html>

*Projects Currently Scheduled to End in FY20*

- Labor Market Outcomes and Socio-Economic Well-Being of Army Personnel and Families (Army/OEMA)
- Study on Equitable and Impartial Relief Operations for the Individual Assistance (IA) Program (FEMA)

*Approved and Ongoing Projects*

- Substitution Bias and Generalizability in Housing Mobility Markets (HUD)
- Improving Income and Disability Measurement and VA Disability Compensation (DVA)
- Investigating the Link between Employment Status and Crime (BOP)
- Labor Market Outcomes of VA Program Beneficiaries (DVA)
- Effects of the Moving to Opportunity Housing Mobility Experiment on Health (HUD)

**FY 21 Priority Evidence/Evaluation Questions:**

*Projects in Development*

- Natural Disaster Mitigation and Response (Interagency)

Objectives:

- To compile and standardize data sets that can be used to demonstrate how mitigation investments reduce risk and explore the effectiveness of grants for mitigation investments, and plan for hazard mitigation, emergency operations, disaster recovery, and continuity of operations.
- To help agencies make better decisions about how to allocate scarce resources to reduce the risk and mitigate the impact of natural disasters.
- To facilitate knowledge sharing, cooperation, and coordination across agencies and levels of government.

**FY 22 Priority Evidence/Evaluation Questions:**

NA. Questions in FY 22 will depend on demand from other bureaus and agencies

**Methodology for Evidence/Evaluations:** Methodology will differ by individual project

**Data Source:**

Research leverages the full data linkage infrastructure of the Census Bureau, including census, survey, and administrative data holdings, as well as new administrative data acquisitions from partner agencies

**Resources for these Evidence/Evaluations:**

Work is currently being done in the Economic Reimbursable Surveys Division, primarily by the Evidence Building Staff and is assisted by the Data Acquisition and Curation Staff and the Business Development Staff. The Evidence Building Staff currently consists of six FTEs with approximately three FTEs of support from the other areas.

**Budget Implications:**

In the pilot/demonstration phase, the projects were a mix of joint statistical projects and reimbursable projects. The goal is to move to a fully reimbursable model for this work.

**Challenges:**

The biggest challenges are around data acquisition and access. The laws that establish many Federal programs generally do not anticipate the linking of program data for research and evidence building and it can be difficult to overcome the legal and policy hurdles necessary to acquire and link data for a project. It is not unusual for it to take years to acquire, process, and provision all of the data necessary for a particular project.

**Links to Prior Related Research:**

Research will be linked as it becomes available at:

<https://www.census.gov/about/adrm/linkage/projects/EvidenceBuildingProjects.html>

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