

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
Committee on National Statistics

WORKSHOP AGENDA
Principles & Practices for Federal Program Evaluation

October 27, 2016

Keck Center of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
500 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC
Room 100

Thursday, October 27, 2016

Open Session, 9:00am–4:30pm

9:00am Call to Order
Breakfast available outside the meeting room

Welcome and Introduction

Connie Citro, *CNSTAT Director*
Christine Fortunato, *Administration for Children and Families*

Purpose of the Workshop

Russ Whitehurst, *Committee Chair*

The steering committee for the workshop will facilitate discussion on principles and practices for federal program evaluation, to include reviews of extant policies issued by the Administration for Children and Families, the Institute for Education Sciences, the Chief Evaluation Office in the Department of Labor, and other federal agencies. Throughout the workshop we will consider ways to build upon these documents, including ways to institutionalize the principles, with the goal of bolstering the integrity and protecting the objectivity of the evaluation function in federal agencies, which is essential for evidence-based policymaking.

Scope of the Workshop: *Evaluations of interventions, programs, and practices intended to affect human behavior, carried out by the federal government or its contractual agents, domestic and abroad, and leading to public reports sponsored by the federal government that are intended to provide information on their impacts, cost and implementation.*

9:20am

History of Federal Program Evaluation

Moderator: Howard Rolston, Abt Associates (Committee Member)

Discussant: Jean Grossman, Princeton University; Ron Haskins, Brookings Institution, Larry Orr, Johns Hopkins University

History of federal program evaluation and its successes, challenges, and vicissitudes from a variety of perspectives, including formal federal government evaluation leaders, evidence-based policy advocates, and social policy researchers and producers.

10:20am

Break

10:35am

Review of Present Principles by Topic and Agency Coverage

Moderator: Brian Harris-Kojetin, CNSTAT Deputy Director

Discussants: Naomi Goldstein Administration for Children and Families (ACF); Jack Molyneaux, Millennium Challenge Corporation; Ruth Neild, Institute for Education Sciences (IES); Demetra Nightingale, Department of Labor (DoL)

Exploration of several prominent evaluation shops and their approaches to protecting the integrity and objectivity of evaluation work through formal guidance and other means.

11:30am

What More Do We Need to Understand/What's Missing from Current Evaluation Principles & Practices: A Discussion

Moderator: Russ Whitehurst, Brookings Institution (Committee Chair)

(For discussion panels, each moderator will open the session with initial remarks that will lay out a coherent framework for the task and issues at hand. The steering committee members will offer their opinions, and then attendees will have an opportunity to share their thoughts and insight. We encourage active audience participation during these sections.)

12:00pm

Lunch

1:00pm

Issues and Challenges for Implementing Principles & Practices: A Discussion*Moderator: Judy Gueron, MDRC President-Emerita (Committee Member)*

Although the five principles in current agency guidance – rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics – seem uncontested, challenges arise in balancing them, especially since advancing high quality evaluations requires both obtaining sustained funding and engaging the best talent. This discussion will focus on the components necessary to advance high quality evaluations, protect the infrastructure that supports them, and ensure that the evaluations produce results that a broad community of politicians, practitioners, and funders consider objective and useful.

2:00pm

How Do We Institutionalize the Major Principles? (Discussion)*Moderator: Bill Sabol, Westat (Committee Member)**Discussant: Bethanne Barnes (OMB)*

Even with broad support for enhancing the principles outlined in the previous discussion—quality, utility, transparency, independence and high ethical standards—these goals cannot be achieved by the efforts of evaluation staff alone. Rather, these principles need to be institutionalized into agency practices so that evaluators are protected against efforts to quash them. Similarly, ensuring an adequate funding base for evaluations requires agency-level commitments to developing knowledge both about what works and the circumstances under which something works or does not work. Institutionalizing these principles may require legislative changes to statutory authorities, new organizational entities, or new relationships between organizations. This discussion will focus on approaches that can be taken to institutionalize quality, relevance, and independence, the opportunities and challenges associated with various approaches, and pathways and priorities to implement the changes.

2:45pm

Break

3:00pm

Garnering Support and Maintaining Focus: A Discussion*Moderator: Rebecca Maynard, University of Pennsylvania (Committee Member)**Discussant: Jon Baron, Arnold Foundation*

Discussion will center on how to develop guidance that will directly serve the interests of evaluation offices within federal agencies, while simultaneously mitigating the potential resistance from offices and organizations whose interests may be threatened by the formation of such a document (e.g., advocacy organizations and special interest groups). The discussion will consider vehicles and resources that can maximize support for objective evaluation across federal, state, and local levels of government, including executive and legislative branches.

4:00pm

Future of Principles & Practices for Federal Program Evaluation: A Discussion about Next Steps

Moderator: Russ Whitehurst, Brookings Institution (Committee Chair)

This concluding session will focus on themes from the preceding sessions and consider potential future steps for articulating and strengthening principles and practices for federal program evaluation and the evaluation function itself.

4:30pm

Adjourn

Principles and Practices for Federal Program Evaluation

Workshop Steering Committee

GROVER WHITEHURST (Chair) is a Senior Fellow in the Center on Children and Families in the Economic Studies program at the Brookings Institution. He is also the Editor of the Evidence Speaks project. Prior to joining the Brookings Institution, Whitehurst was the first director of the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education. He is widely acknowledged to have had a transforming effect on the quality, relevance, and utilization of education research. Under his leadership, the Institute received numerous accolades, including a citation from the Office of Management and Budget for having, “transformed the quality and rigor of education research within the Department of Education and increased the demand for scientifically based evidence of effectiveness in the education field as a whole.” Whitehurst has also served previously as the U.S. assistant secretary for Educational Research and Improvement; chair of the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook; and academic vice-president of the Merrill-Palmer Institute. He is a widely respected and influential leader in education research and policy in the U.S. and around the world. His specializations include program evaluation, teacher quality, preschools, national and international student assessments, reading instruction, education technology, and education data systems. Whitehurst received his Ph.D. in experimental child psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

JUDITH GUERON is an Independent Scholar in Residence and president emerita at MDRC. Gueron joined MDRC as research director at its founding in 1974 and served as its president from 1986 through August 2004. At MDRC, Gueron directed many of the largest federal and state evaluations ever undertaken of interventions for low-income adults, young people, and families and was a pioneer in developing research methods that have made it possible to base social programs on rigorous evidence of effectiveness. Dr. Gueron is the author of *From Welfare to Work* (with Edward Pauly) and *Fighting for Reliable Evidence* (with Howard Rolston). She is past president of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), has served on several National Academy of Sciences committees and federal advisory panels, and has frequently testified before Congress. In 1988, Dr. Gueron was awarded the American Evaluation Association’s Myrdal Prize for Evaluation Practice in recognition of high-quality studies of employment issues. She is also a member of the board of directors of Alcoa (metals technology and engineering) and is currently also on the board of directors of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness. In 2004-2005, Dr. Gueron was a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation. In 2005, she received the inaugural Richard E. Neustadt Award from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In 2008, she received APPAM’s Peter H. Rossi Award for Contributions to the Theory or Practice of Program Evaluation. Dr. Gueron received her BA summa cum laude from Radcliffe College in 1963 and her PhD in economics from Harvard University in 1971.

REBECCA MAYNARD is a leading expert in the design and conduct of randomized controlled trials in the areas of education and social policy. She has conducted influential methodological research, including co-developing PowerUP! to support efficient sample designs for causal inference studies, and she has been influential in advancing the development and application of research synthesis methods. In 2016 Dr. Maynard stepped down from a 12-year tenure as director of the University of Pennsylvania's Predoctoral Training Program in Interdisciplinary Methods for Field-based Education Research. From 2010 through 2012, Dr. Maynard served as Commissioner of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). As Commissioner, she oversaw the Institute's evaluation initiatives, the What Works Clearinghouse, the Regional Education Laboratories, and the National Library of Education (including ERIC). Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania in 1993, Dr. Maynard was Senior Vice President at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. She received her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

MARTHA MOOREHOUSE is Director of the Education program at the Heising-Simons Foundation. The program focuses on children ages zero to eight. Dr. Moorehouse has extensive experience with research, practice, and policy concerning children and their families. Prior to joining the Heising-Simons Foundation, Dr. Moorehouse served as senior advisor for evaluation policy for human services at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and with the Evidence Team at the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President. She is the former director of the Children and Youth Policy Division at ASPE and she previously served on the psychology faculty at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Dr. Moorehouse received her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Cornell University in 1985.

HOWARD ROLSTON is a Principal Associate at Abt Associates. He has a 30-year history in the design and implementation of social policy experiments. Dr. Rolston is currently a Principal Investigator for two large-scale, multi-site random assignment evaluations: the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education project for the Administration for Children and Families and the Benefit Offset National Demonstration for the Social Security Administration. During a 28-year career at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), he acquired great experience evaluating welfare reforms, employment programs, early childhood interventions, and other social programs. Reflecting his experience evaluating welfare-to-work programs using random assignment, last year he and Judy Gueron completed a book on the subject, Fighting for Reliable Evidence. Dr. Rolston earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Harvard University in 1972.

WILLIAM SABOL is a Vice President at Westat, overseeing their Justice, Child Welfare, and Family Services project portfolio. Prior to joining Westat, Dr. Sabol was the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Dr. Sabol has more than 30 years of professional experience in criminal justice research and policy. As Acting Chief of the National Crime Victimization Survey Unit and Chief of the Corrections Statistics Unit, Dr. Sabol was responsible for managing data collection and statistical operations, developing

administrative records, publishing statistical reports, and coordinating and implementing comprehensive statistical program plans. He served earlier as Acting Director of the DOJ National Institute of Justice. Prior to his tenure at DOJ, Dr. Sabol was with the Government Accountability Office as Assistant Director, Homeland Security and Justice. His earlier experience includes Associate Director of the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University, and Senior Research Associate at the Urban Institute. While earning his Ph.D. in Policy Research and Analysis at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Sabol was a Fulbright Scholar at Cambridge University.

Presenters & Discussants

BETHANNE BARNES is the Special Advisor for Evidence-Based Policy at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Bethanne currently leads OMB's Evidence Team, which focuses on helping Federal agencies strengthen their capacity to use and build evidence to improve their effectiveness. She has served at OMB since 2010, and has worked on a variety of job training and social safety net programs, as well as cross-agency data access and evidence-building policy issues. Bethanne holds a Master's degree in public administration from the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, and a Bachelor's from The Evergreen State College.

JOHN BARON is Vice President of Evidence-Based Policy at the John and Laura Arnold Foundation. HE leads the Foundation's strategic investments in rigorous research aimed at growing the body of evidence-based social programs and scaling those shown to produce meaningful improvements in people's lives. Baron is the founder and former president of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that worked with federal policy officials from 2001 to 2015 to advance important evidence-based reforms, many of which were enacted into law and policy. Baron was twice nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the National Board for Education Sciences (2004-2011), and was the Board's chairman during the last year of his term. Baron previously served as Counsel to the House of Representatives Committee on Small Business, and is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Experimental Criminology, and a recipient of the Society for Prevention Research's Public Service Award.. He holds a law degree from Yale Law School, a Master's degree in Public Affairs from Princeton University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rice University.

NAOMI GOLDSTEIN is Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE). Goldstein joined ACF as Director of the OPRE Division of Child and Family Development in 2000. She became Director of OPRE in 2004 and Deputy Assistant Secretary in 2015. Prior to her appointment as Director of OPRE, Goldstein served as Director of the Division of Child and Family Development in OPRE. Previously, she directed the United States Postal Service Commission on a Safe and Secure Workplace, an independent commission that examined workplace violence affecting the postal service and the nation. She served as

project manager for the Urban Institute's Assessing the New Federalism project and as Executive Officer in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at HHS. Earlier in her career, she worked in the Massachusetts state government and developed infant mortality prevention programs at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Goldstein received a B.A. in philosophy from Yale University, a Masters in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy from Harvard University. She was awarded the Presidential Rank of Distinguished Executive in 2012.

JEAN GROSSMAN is on the faculty of Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and is a Senior Research Fellow at MDRC. She is an expert on programs serving disadvantaged youth, especially mentoring programs and out-of-school time programs. She has authored and co-authored over 15 reports on out-of-school time programming. She authored two of the mentoring fields most seminal evaluations based on the Big Brothers big Sisters program: Making a Difference and Making a Difference In School. Dr. Grossman also recently finished The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles; and Youth-Initiated Mentoring: Investigating a New Approach to Working with Vulnerable Adolescents. Along with Jean Rhodes and others, Grossman has also written a series of papers on the mechanisms of mentoring, exploring the role of the match length, rematching and the quality of the relationship. Prior to coming to MDRC, she worked at Public/Private Ventures and Mathematica Policy Research. In 2010-11, she was the Chief Evaluation Officer for the US Department of Labor overseeing all the department's program evaluations. Dr. Grossman has a Ph.D. in economics from M.I.T.

RON HASKINS is a senior fellow in the Economic Studies program and co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution and senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore. From February to December of 2002 he was the senior advisor to the president for welfare policy at the White House. Prior to joining Brookings and Casey, he spent 14 years on the staff of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, first as welfare counsel to the Republican staff, then as the subcommittee's staff director. From 1981-1985, he was a senior researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He also taught and lectured on history and education at UNC, Charlotte and developmental psychology at Duke University. Dr. Haskins was the editor of the 1996, 1998, and 2000 editions of the Green Book, a 1600-page compendium of the nation's social programs published by the House Ways and Means Committee that analyzes domestic policy issues including health care, poverty, and unemployment. He has also authored several books on welfare policy and economic mobility. His areas of expertise include welfare reform, child care, child support, marriage, child protection, and budget and deficit issues. Dr. Haskins holds a Bachelor's degree in History, a Master's in Education, and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, from UNC, Chapel Hill.

JACK MOLYNEAUX is an applied microeconomist and Director of Independent Evaluations at the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC.) He has implemented and managed impact evaluations for over 30 years. He lived and worked in Indonesia for over fifteen years, working

with the Rockefeller Foundation, the University of Indonesia, Statistics Indonesia (the Indonesian statistical agency), the RAND Corporation and the World Bank before coming to MCC. At the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program he coordinated impact evaluations of its sanitation and hygiene investments in five countries. His evaluation and analytic work has spanned the fields of health, reproduction, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, labor, education, agriculture, transportation and prices and wages. Molyneaux received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina.

RUTH NEILD is Deputy Director for Policy and Research at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education. Prior to her appointment as Deputy Director, Dr. Neild was Commissioner of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), one of the four centers that comprise IES. During her time at IES, Dr. Neild has reoriented the federal Regional Educational Laboratories network toward research-practice partnerships, increased the reach of the What Works Clearinghouse through improvements in dissemination and communication, and oversaw Federal evaluations. Prior to joining NCEE, Dr. Neild was a Research Scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools, where she worked on research projects that ranged from descriptive and correlational to studies of impact. Dr. Neild's work has appeared in peer-reviewed journals, popular journals for practitioners, and broadly disseminated research reports. Dr. Neild earned her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania and her A.B. in history and sociology summa cum laude from Bryn Mawr College.

DEMETRA NIGHTINGALE is the Chief Evaluation Officer for the U.S. Department of Labor. As the Chief Evaluation Officer, she is responsible for coordinating the Department's evaluation agenda and working with all agencies to design and implement evaluations. She is an expert in employment policy, workforce development, labor markets, and social policies and programs, and has conducted many evaluations of federal, state, and local programs aimed at increasing employment, skills, and income for workers and families. Dr. Nightingale is the author or co-author of several books and articles, including Repairing the U.S. Social Safety Net (with Martha Burt) and Reshaping the American Workforce in a Changing Economy (with Harry Holzer). Previously, she was a Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute, and has served on the faculty at Johns Hopkins University's graduate program in public policy. Dr. Nightingale also teaches Program Evaluation at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at the George Washington University. In addition, she has been a senior research consultant with the World Bank, has served on many boards and task forces, and was an expert advisor to the White House Welfare Reform Working Group in 1992-93. She received her B.A. in Political Science and Ph.D. in Public Policy, both from the George Washington University.

LARRY ORR is an Associate at the Institute for Policy Studies within the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University. He teaches Program Evaluation at Hopkins and works as an independent consultant on the design and analysis of evaluations of public programs. He currently serves as Evaluation Specialist on an evaluation of results-based aid in the education sector in Ethiopia, for the U.K. Department for International Development, and as co-

principal investigator for a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Orr has served as Project Director and Chief Economist at Abt Associates and in the U.S. government: first as a research economist at the Office of Economic Opportunity, then as Director of Income Security Policy Research, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and finally as Director of the Office of Technical Analysis, U.S. Department of Labor. In these positions, he was responsible for the design and oversight of a number of large-scale surveys and field studies, including the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and the National Job Training Partnership Act Study. He conceived and managed the Health Insurance Experiment and chaired the working group that developed the conceptual design for the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). After retiring from Abt Associates, Orr served on several Institute for Education Science (IES) projects within the U.S. Department of Education. He has authored and co-authored several books, including the graduate level text, *Social Experiments: Evaluating Public Programs with Experimental Methods*. Orr received his Ph.D. in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.