

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Using Evidence with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds



More Information



For More Information on Treasury COVID-19 Economic Relief & Recovery Programs:
<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus>

To Request State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:
Please visit www.treasury.gov/SLFRP

For General Inquiries on State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:
Please email SLFRP@treasury.gov

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is providing fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries and it:

- Continues programs started by the CARES Act in 2020 and Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2021.
- Adds new phases, allocations, and guidance to address issues related to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Creates new programs to address continuing pandemic-related crises, and fund recovery efforts as the United States begins to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Was passed by Congress on March 10, 2021, and signed into law on March 11, 2021.

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Overview

ARPA created the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program to deliver \$350 billion for state, territories, municipalities, counties, and Tribal governments much needed aid.

The key objectives for SLFRF are to:

- Support the urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control.
- Replace lost revenue for eligible recipients to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs.
- Support an equitable recovery through immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses
- Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the inequal impact of the pandemic on certain populations.

State and Local Fiscal Recovery: Reporting Guidance

The Reporting Guidance addresses priority areas to ensure a speedy and equitable recovery.



Equity Focused



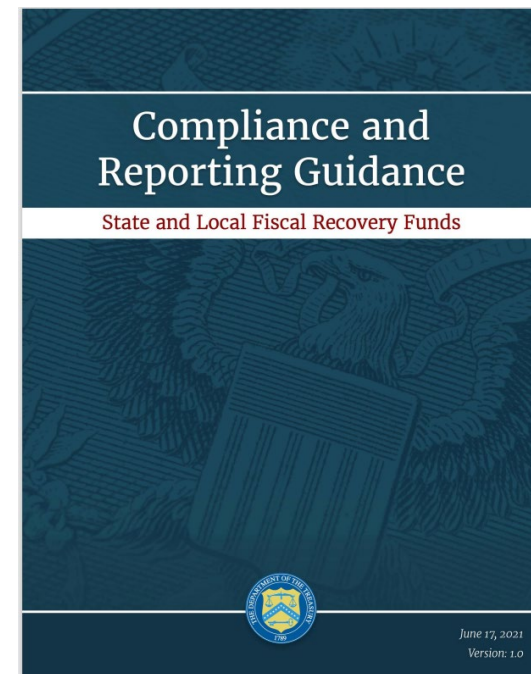
Community Empowering



Worker-Centered



Results and evidence focused



Detailed information on reporting requirements and deadlines is available at: www.treasury.gov/SLFRP

Annual Recovery Plan: Evidenced-Based Interventions

Identify amount of project funds allocated to evidence-based interventions OR if undergoing rigorous program evaluation.

Applies to most Expenditure Categories in:

- Public Health (EC 1)
- Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)
- Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC 3)

Encouraged to use Learning Agendas and relevant evidence Clearinghouses to assess the level of evidence for your interventions.

Evidence defined in Appendix 2

Building and Using Evidence

Building and Using Evidence

Diana Epstein
Evidence Team Lead
U.S. Office of Management and Budget



Federal Focus on Evidence

- Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (“Evidence Act”)
 - New statutory framework for agencies to strategically plan and organize evidence-building, data management, and data access
 - Learning Agenda → Strategic evidence building plan that highlights priority questions and focuses attention on building the evidence needed to solve big problems
- Presidential Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking (January 2021)
 - “It is the policy of my Administration to make evidence-based decisions guided by the best available science and data.”
- SLFRF requires recipients to report if (and how much) they use funds for evidence-based interventions and/or rigorous program evaluations
 - Investing in data capacity and program evaluations are allowable uses of funds

What is an Evidence-Based Intervention?

- SLFRF requires that prior studies of the intervention have demonstrated it has a **strong** or **moderate** evidence base
- **Strong evidence:** can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed with highest level of confidence
 - One or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes
- **Moderate evidence:** there is a reasonably developed evidence base that can support causal conclusions
 - One or more quasi-experimental studies with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR
 - Two or more nonexperimental studies with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes

Importance of Evaluation

- Evaluation is an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis intended to assess program/policy/organization's effectiveness and efficiency
- Certain questions can only be answered through evaluation
 - What is the impact of a program, i.e. did the intervention itself cause the observed change?
 - Which version of a program causes better outcomes?
- Need to plan for evaluation at the outset to ensure necessary data are collected, comparison group formed, etc.
- Evaluation promotes learning and improvement; not simply a tool for accountability, and not an up or down vote on the program's value

Evidence and the SLFRF

- Investing SLFRF funds in evidence-based policies helps ensure that dollars are used efficiently and effectively
- Maximize value of investments by using data and evidence to inform budgetary and programmatic decision making
- Encourages state and local leaders to invest SLFRF funds in most effective programs and policies, leading to improved outcomes for communities served
- Opportunity to test new strategies, or test strategies in new conditions, and conduct rigorous program evaluations to build evidence on what works, for whom, and how
- Use this opportunity to build a culture of evidence-based policymaking and learning and improvement that can far outlast SLFRF funds

Using and Building Evidence to Improve Decisions

- My goal is to address educational disparities
 - I could use funds to **invest in evidence-based educational services and practices** (and track outcomes)
And/or
 - I could **conduct an evaluation** of an evidence-based educational service or practice **with a new population**
And/or
 - I could **conduct an evaluation** of an **innovative** educational service or practice designed with my community's unique needs in mind
- Results can tell me if disparities are being addressed and how we might serve students even better

Resources

Evidence@omb.eop.gov

- OMB Evidence and Evaluation:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/evidence-and-evaluation/>
- Evaluation.gov Website (*Forthcoming*)
- Learning Agendas and Building a Culture of Evidence:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/M-21-27.pdf>
- Evidence Act Foundational Guidance, including Learning Agendas:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/M-19-23.pdf>
- Evaluation Standards and Practices: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-12.pdf>

Panel Discussion

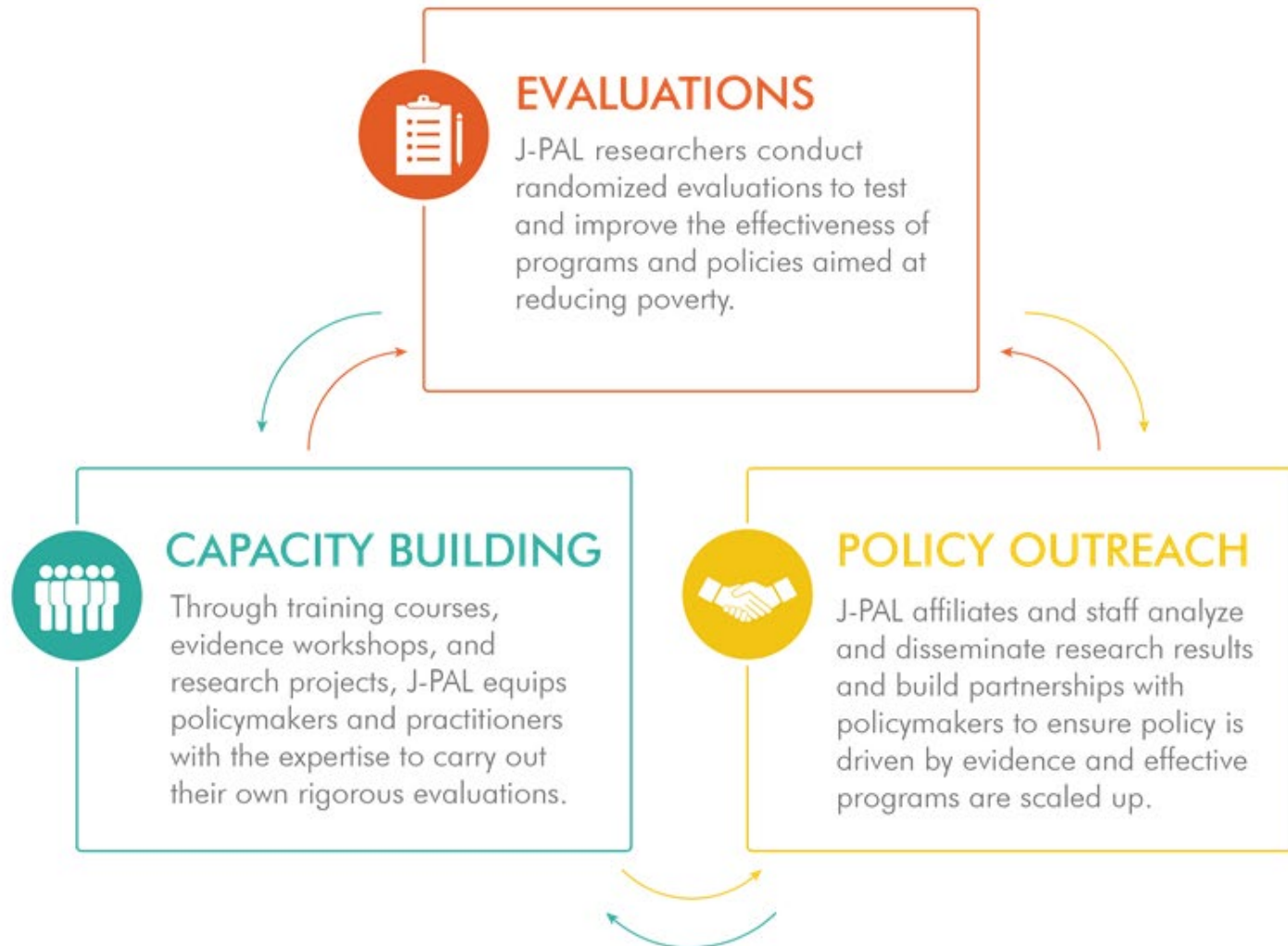
The Why and What of Evaluation

Rohit Naimpally
Senior Research & Policy Manager
J-PAL North America



J-PAL'S MISSION IS TO ENSURE THAT POLICY IS DRIVEN BY EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH IS TRANSLATED INTO ACTION

www.povertyactionlab.org



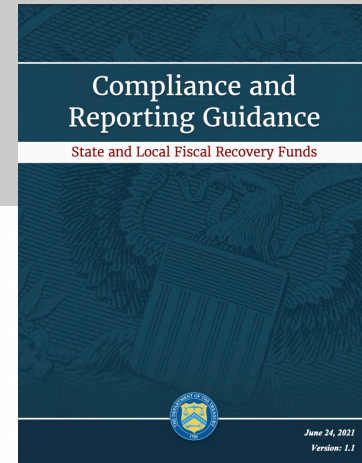
- I. Why Evaluate?
- II. What is Evaluation?
- III. How to Evaluate?



Compliance and Reporting Guidance



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY



6. Use of Evidence

The Recovery Plan should identify whether SLFRF funds are being used for evidence-based interventions²⁰ and/or if projects are being evaluated through rigorous program evaluations that are designed to build evidence. Recipients must briefly describe the goals of the project, projects conducted by the recipient. In such cases where a recipient is conducting a program evaluation in lieu of reporting the amount of spending on evidence-based interventions, they must describe the evaluation design including whether it is a randomized or quasi-experimental design; the key research questions being evaluated; whether the study has sufficient statistical power to disaggregate outcomes by demographics; and the timeframe for the completion of the evaluation (including a link to completed evaluation if relevant).²² Once the evaluation has been completed, recipients must post the evaluation publicly and link to the completed evaluation in the Recovery Plan. Once an evaluation has been completed (or has

Problem → Proposed solution

Problem: High rates of violence in some American cities

- Homicide and violent crime rates are far higher for youth being failed by the system, especially young men of color, than their peers.

Proposed solution: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- Becoming a Man (BAM) program encourages individuals to examine their automatic thought processes and responses

Clear, credible results

During the program year...

44% reduction in violent crime arrests

- 18 arrests per 100 youth → 8 arrests per 100 youth

31% reduction in overall arrests

- 52 arrests per 100 youth → 36 arrests per 100 youth

Why? *Follow-up experiment suggests the program helps students to slow automatic responses*

Policy attention

Chicago Mayor **Rahm Emmanuel** increased funding for BAM across the city after the first study.



Former President **Barack Obama** made federal funding available to expand BAM and mentioned BAM at the launch of the “My Brother’s Keeper” initiative.

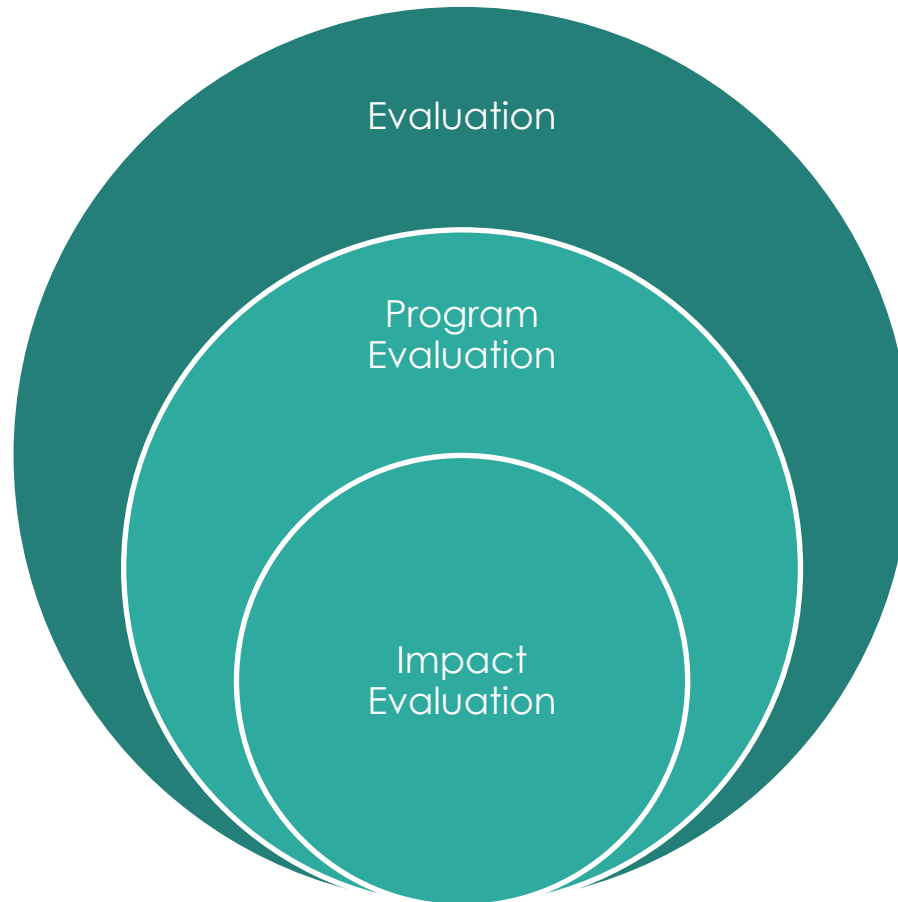
I. Why Evaluate?

II. What is Evaluation?

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Program evaluation



What is the causal effect of the program on outcomes?

How to measure impact?

Impact is defined as a comparison between:

What actually happened and

What would have happened, had the program not been introduced (i.e., the “**counterfactual**”)

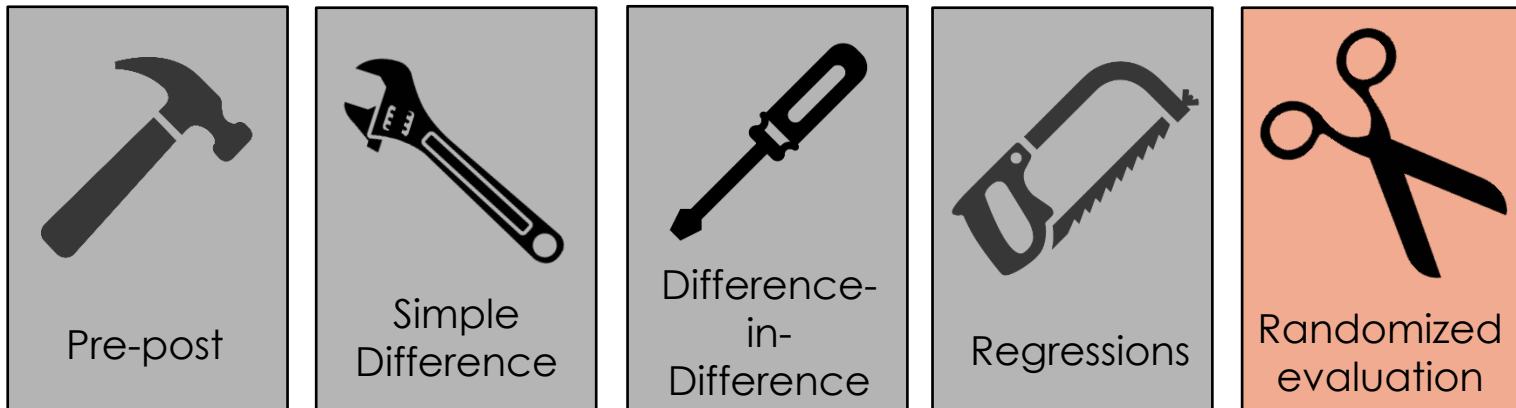
Selecting the comparison group

Idea: Select a group that is **exactly like** the group of participants in all ways except one—their exposure to the program being evaluated



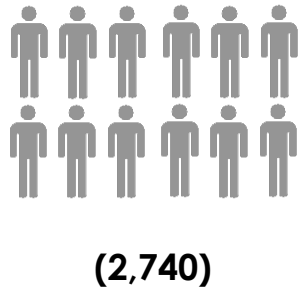
Goal: To be able to **attribute differences** in outcomes to the program (and not to other factors)

Methods as tools

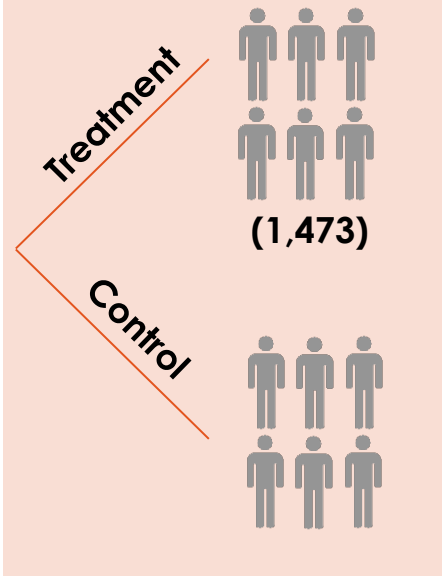


Randomized Evaluation of Becoming a Man (BAM)

1. Identify eligible participants



2. Random lottery



3. Measure outcomes

Intervention



No Intervention



- I. Why Evaluate?
- II. What is Evaluation?
- III. How to Evaluate?



Who?

- Internal evaluation groups:
 - E.g. Minnesota Management and Budget, The Lab @ DC
- Local universities:
 - E.g. California Policy Lab
- Evaluation firms:
 - E.g. MDRC, Mathematica



Evaluation Resources

Groups like J-PAL offer several resources:

- Trainings and workshops
- Toolkits and guides
- Technical assistance



Evidence Resources

The screenshot shows the IES What Works Clearinghouse website. At the top left, it says "IES : WWC What Works Clearinghouse" with a menu icon. To the right is a search bar with "Search" and "Go" buttons. Below this is a green banner with the text "Select topics to Find What Works based on the evidence". The main content area is a dark grey grid of 12 topic icons with labels: Literacy (book icon), Mathematics (math symbols), Science (flask icon), Behavior (person icon), Children and Youth with Disabilities (hand icon), English Learners (globe with EL), Teacher Excellence (hand holding paper), Charter Schools (school building icon), Early Childhood (Pre-K) (ABC block icon), K-12 Kindergarten to 12th Grade (K-12 text), Path to Graduation (graduation cap icon), and Postsecondary (classroom icon).



Photo: Shutterstock.com

STATE AND LOCAL POLICY AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES: A BLUEPRINT FOR FUTURE EVALUATIONS ON MOBILITY FROM POVERTY¹



THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

The Pew Charitable Trusts Results First Initiative

Sara Dube, Project Director
sdube@pewtrusts.org

SLFRF Evidence Webinar
August 11, 2021

Results First Clearinghouse Database

>

[Overview](#) | [Clearinghouses](#) | [Rating Colors & Systems](#) | [FAQ](#)

Categories ∨

Settings ∨

Rating colors ∨

Clearinghouses ∨

Legend

- Highest rated**
The program had a positive impact based on the most rigorous evidence.
- Second-highest rated**
The program had a positive impact based on high-quality evidence.
- Mixed effects**
The program had inconsistent impacts based on high-quality evidence. That is, study findings showed a mix of positive impact, no impact, and/or negative impact.
- No effects**
The program had no impact based on high-quality evidence. That is, there was no difference in outcomes between program

The Pew Results First Initiative created the Results First Clearinghouse Database to provide users with an easy way to access and understand the evidence base for programs in social policy areas such as behavioral health, criminal justice, education, and public health. More specifically, it allows users to see if there have been rigorous evaluations of a program and, if so, to review information on the program's effectiveness.

The database compiles and displays key information from nine national clearinghouses, including the rating they assigned to each program and the program's description, outcomes, setting, and target population (where available). It also contains a link back to the program's original source page on the clearinghouse website so that users can obtain additional details.

Clearinghouses develop this information by reviewing and summarizing rigorous evaluations of programs within their focus area. Then, they assign a rating to each program using their own methodology and terminology (such as top tier, effective, positive, and model).

The database applies color-coding to the clearinghouses' distinct rating systems, creating a common language that allows users to quickly see where each program falls on a spectrum from negative impact to positive impact. This coding consists of five rating colors that correspond to different levels of impact as shown below.

← Negative impact Positive impact →

Negative effects No effects Mixed effects Second-highest rated Highest rated

Evidence-Based Policymaking Resource Center

A collection of resources and promising state and county examples organized by key components



**Program
Assessment**



**Budget
Development**



**Implementation
Oversight**



**Outcome
Monitoring**



**Targeted
Evaluation**

Incorporating evidence into state programs

A current example in Minnesota

LifeSkills Training:

- Delivering an **evidence-based** social-emotional learning program to 14,000 students
- Conducting **fidelity monitoring**
- **Evaluating impact** through an experimental design study



Using evidence when allocating resources

Include sections on evidence and evaluation in budget proposal forms

Highlight evidence-based items for decision-makers

Minnesota Management and Budget
May 7, 2021



State agency evidence-based proposal form

1. Proposal & contacts

Budget proposal name	
Requesting state agency	
Contact Name(s)	

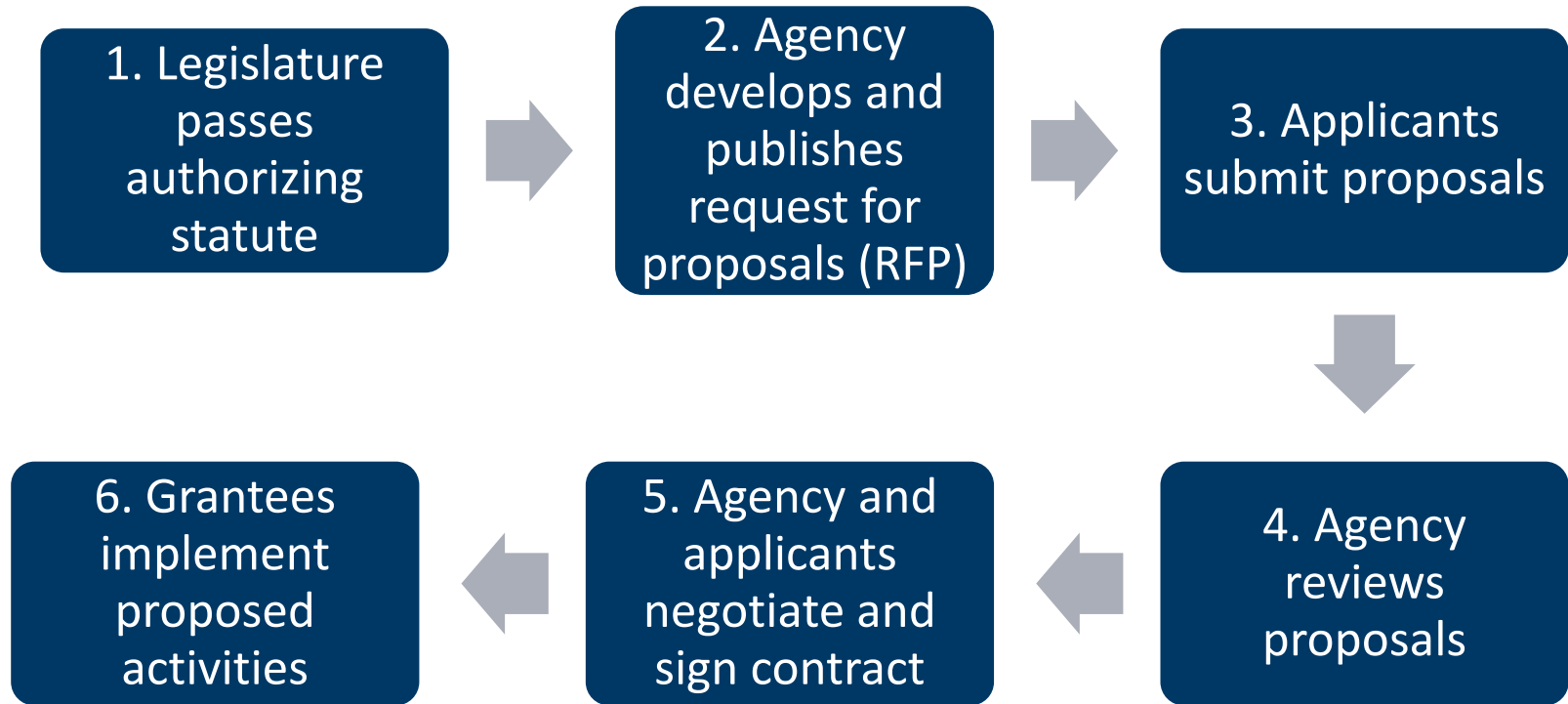
2. Evidence Use the space below to describe the evidence for the effectiveness of the activity(s) described in this change item. If needed, agencies may attach a brief supplementary memo for any relevant information that is not covered by this form.

Name of Activity	Summary of evidence, including expected impact on outcomes	Source of evidence (URL or citation)	Minimum % of \$ that will support these interventions
MMB to complete rating (see page 2 for rubric):	Proven Effective	Promising	Theory Based

Evidence-based items*

Agency	Change Item and Description	2021-2023			2024-2025		
		Gov	House	Senate	Gov	House	Senate
DEED	Paid Family and Medical Leave. Establishes a paid family and medical leave program funded by a premium on wages. Paid family leave has been found to increase labor force participation and improve child health.	11,416	11,416	-	-	-	-
DHS	Extend MA Postpartum Coverage. Extends the duration of postpartum health care coverage. This has been found to increase use of postpartum outpatient care which in turn is associated with lower maternal morbidity and mortality.	-	8,827	6,339	-	29,367	17,299
DHS	First Episode Psychosis (funding allocated from federal mental health block grant). Supports specialty care teams in collaboratively developing personal treatment plans that may include psychotherapy, medication management, family education and support, skills training, and work or education support. This has been found to improve mental health outcomes.	-	-	3,500	-	-	3,400
DHS	Integrated Community-based Housing Pilot. Provides support services to enable vulnerable populations to live independently. This has been found to reduce homelessness, health care costs, and crime.	-	-	1,175	-	-	24
DLI	Earned Sick and Safe Time. Provides employees with at least 1 hour of paid sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked. Paid sick leave laws have been found to reduce illness.	3,396	3,850	-	3,458	3,862	-
DOC	Alternatives to Incarceration Expansion. Expands access to community treatment options as an alternative to incarceration. This has been found to reduce recidivism.	-	640	640	-	640	640
DPS	Body Worn Cameras. Supports purchase of body cameras for peace officers employed by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Use of body worn cameras has been found to reduce officer use of force incidents.	634	634	634	442	442	442
DPS	Body Camera Grant Program. Supports purchase of body cameras by local law enforcement agencies. Use of body worn cameras has been found to reduce officer use of force incidents.	-	2,000	-	-	2,000	-

Using evidence in new or existing grant programs



Sample language

- “Evidence-based practices that **could be** supported with this funding include...”
- “Applications that employ licensed mental health professionals certified in any of the following early childhood **evidenced-based practices will be given preference**: Attachment Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT).”
- “**Responders must** propose to use grant funds to cover staff time for mental health providers to attend training and become certified in Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP), Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) and Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS).”

Effective Program Evaluations

The background of the slide is a photograph of the Louisville skyline at dusk. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange, with some clouds. In the foreground, there is a modern, curved walkway with a railing, illuminated by warm lights. The middle ground shows a large body of water, likely the Ohio River, with the Louisville Bridge spanning across it. The bridge is illuminated with lights, and its reflection is visible in the water. In the background, the Louisville skyline is visible, with several tall buildings, including the Freedom Center, illuminated. The overall scene is a beautiful representation of the city of Louisville.

August 2021

Grace Simrall

Office of Civic Innovation and Technology

Office of Performance Improvement

Louisville Metro Government

@Greendrv

@LouisvilleCIT

Establish Policy

Our commitment:

Louisville Metro values evaluation as a tool for program improvement and accountability, and therefore seeks to evaluate programs wherever possible. Evaluations, whether conducted internally or externally, should adhere to the following standards.

Standards:

1. Continuous Improvement
2. Accuracy
3. Equity and Ethics
4. Transparency



Evaluation in Action: F2ACT

Program Description:

F2ACT was created in July 2015 to meet a need for the Department of Corrections – there were inmates who would leave and often return to Corrections facilities. The program has evolved over time, but essentially assigns inmates who are considered at high risk for returning a case manager who helps plan their discharge through several avenues: ensuring they have housing, transportation, medication and insurance, bus tickets, an ID, and even a backpack with clothes and hygiene items.



Evaluation in Action: F2ACT

Purpose of the Evaluation:

To determine whether the F2ACT Program is having the intended impact of reducing recidivism

Recidivism is defined as having a greater number of bookings after release from the F2ACT Program

Success is defined as having fewer or equal number of bookings after release from the F2ACT Program

Complete Success is defined as having zero bookings after release from the F2ACT Program.



F2ACT

Engage stakeholders: Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	Known questions/interest	Involvement in evaluation	When	Use of evaluation results
Corrections leadership	Is the program effective?	Setting questions, deadline	Initial stakeholder meeting 8/23; update with first draft of final evaluation	Present at a conference in April 2020
F2ACT Program staff	How does the program affect subsequent bookings? What role does housing play? What role do other program components play?	Consulting throughout	Initial stakeholder meeting 8/23; ad-hoc as needed for data questions and feedback	Present at a conference in April 2020 ; use to make program changes
Corrections data analyst	What data exists? Are there gaps?	Pulling data; assisting with analysis	Initial stakeholder meeting 8/23;	Understand for implementation of next evaluation
F2ACT participants		n/a	n/a	Program improved to be more effective
Nationally accredited correctional facilities	Interest in program and results	None	April 2020	Evaluation results will be presented nationally at a conference in April 2020

F2ACT

Describe program: Logic Model

Inputs

F2ACT
program
staff

Community
partners/referral
agencies

Activities

Case management in
the following areas:

- Housing
- Medication
- Insurance
- Transportation
- ID
- Bus tickets
- Backpack
(clothes,
hygiene, etc.)
- Guardianship

Outputs

released
with housing

released
with
medication if
needed

released
with insurance

released
with
transportation
to housing

released
with
IDs/backpack
if needed

Outcomes

Participants have
somewhere to go
when they re-
enter and their
needs are met for
30 days post-
release

Stability allows
participants to avoid
crime and new
arrests

Impact

Reduced
costs to
Corrections

Reduced
recidivism

Better
outcomes for
inmates

Data Sources

Our Data



F²ACT program participant data

Source: program data in an Excel file

Data was pulled from July 1, 2015 to August 31, 2017



Booking records for the F²ACT participants

Source: XJail database

Data was pulled from July 1, 2013 to August 31, 2019

Methodology

Creating one dataset



Get unique number of participants



Join program data to booking data (two years before and after participation)



Calculate new variables and run descriptive and inferential statistics

Program Demographics

One-time participants

- 648 one-time participants
- Average age: 36.8

Category	Count	Percent
Male	426	65.7%
Female	222	34.3%
White	462	71.3%
Black	180	27.8%
Asian	3	0.5%
Hispanic	2	0.3%
Other	1	0.1%

Repeat participants

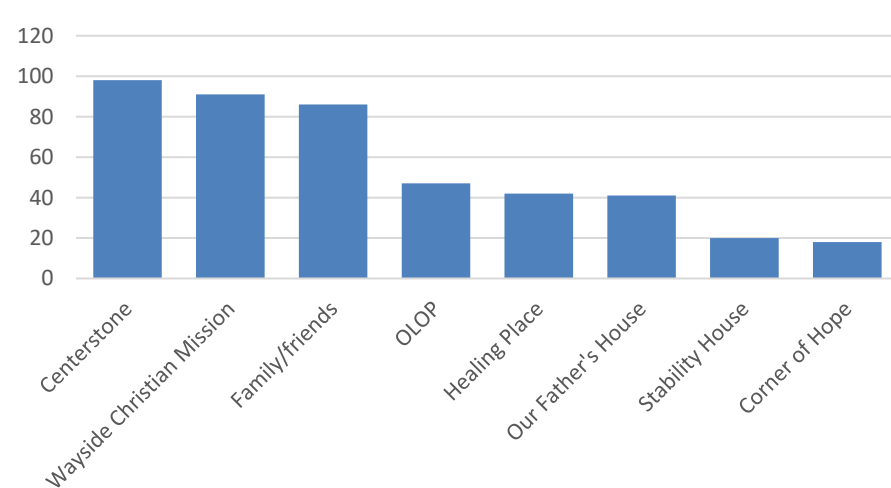
- 68 repeat participants
 - 60 participated 2 times
 - 8 participated 3 or more times
- Average age: 38.7

Category	Count	Percent
Male	53	77.9%
Female	15	22.1%
White	44	64.7%
Black	22	32.4%
Asian	1	1.5%
Hispanic	1	1.5%

Program Services – Housing

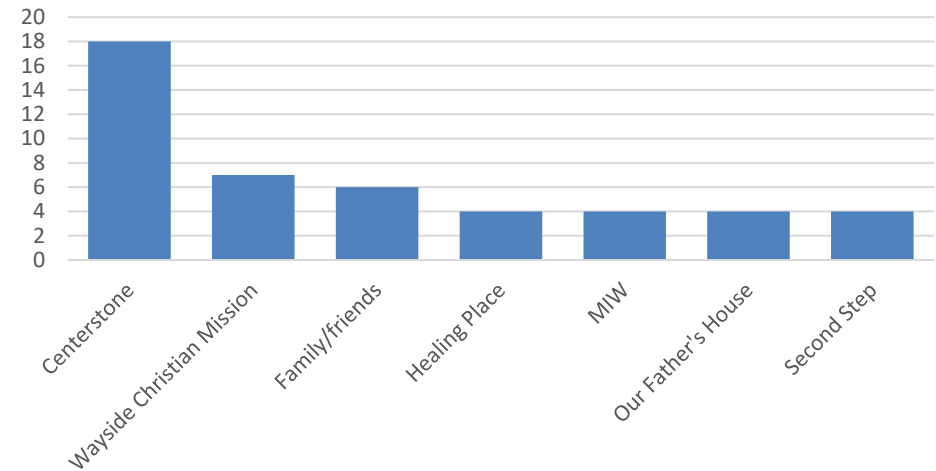
One-time participants

Top 8 Housing Placements



Repeat participants

Top 7 Housing Placements



Program Services – Other Services

One-time participants

Category	Count	Percent
Backpack	125	19.3%
Medication	109	16.8%
Insurance	53	8.2%
Identification card	21	3.2%
Bus tickets	19	2.9%

Repeat participants

Category	Count	Percent
Medication	15	22.1%
Backpack	10	14.7%
Insurance	2	2.9%
Identification card	1	1.5%
Bus tickets	1	1.5%

Results

Category	Count	Percent
Complete success: Zero Bookings since Release	161	22.5%
Success: Fewer Number of Bookings since Release	315	44%
Success: Equal Number of Bookings since Release	83	11.6%
Recidivism: Greater Number of Bookings since Release	157	21.9%

78%
success

Results

**Average days
booked**

**Before:
177.98**

**After:
121.53**

**Total days
booked**

**Before:
127,437**

**After:
87,012**

40,425 fewer days

Savings of \$2,906,961.75

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Q&A

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