HHS/ASPE Webinar Series: Developing and Using a Learning Agenda Approach to Evidence-Building

Webinar 6:

Emily Schmitt (Administration for Children and Families [ACF])
Wednesday, August 28, 2019
3:00–4:00 p.m. EDT
Webinar Logistics

- Mute phone, unless speaking
- Q&A
- Hand raising
- Closed-captioning (multimedia viewer)
# Agenda

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<td>3:00–3:05</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Jessica McNab (Mathematica)</td>
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<td>3:05–3:15</td>
<td>Recap of webinar series and events to date</td>
<td>Amanda Cash (ASPE)</td>
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<td>3:15–3:45</td>
<td>Speaker presentation</td>
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<td>3:45–3:55</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>3:55–4:00</td>
<td>Wrap-up and next steps</td>
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Meet the Speakers

Jessica McNab, Researcher and Task Lead (Mathematica)
Jessica leads curriculum development and facilitates shared learning for technical assistance projects focused on quality improvement and delivery system reform. In previous roles, she led a team of improvement specialists at a managed care hospital system and directed technical assistance focused on rapid cycle improvement in hospitals.

Amanda Cash, Acting Director, Division of Data Policy (ASPE)
Dr. Cash’s portfolio includes research on evaluation methodologies that are appropriate for complex federal programs. She co-leads the federal Task Force for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria. Her office is coordinating and leading implementation of Title I of the Evidence Act, which is focused on implementing evidence-building and evaluation plans. An epidemiologist by training, Dr. Cash now works primarily on evaluation, evidence, and antimicrobial resistance.
Meet the Speakers – Cont’d

Emily Schmitt, Deputy Director, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (ACF)
Ms. Schmitt works closely with ACF’s Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning, Research and Evaluation to plan and execute OPRE’s mission to build evidence to improve the lives of children and families.
Series Objectives

• The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is the policy think tank for the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Our office is leading the implementation efforts for Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act).

• The webinar series aims to do the following:
  – Consider the array of strategies to create and implement evidence-building and evaluation plans as required by the Evidence Act.
  – Support an ongoing, readily accessible resource for federal agency staff and others who may be implementing evaluation planning efforts.
  – Support the creation of a summary report that will draw from the webinar series and other relevant literature.
Series Recap

- **Webinar 1**: July 18, 2019 - NIH, Drs. Marina Volkov and Ajay Vatave
- **Webinar 2**: July 23, 2019 - USDA, FAS, Ellie Morefield
- **Webinar 3**: July 30, 2019 - CNCS, Dr. Mary Hyde
- **Webinar 4**: August 8, 2019 - NSF, Cynthia Phillips and Rebecca Kruse
- **Webinar 5**: August 13, 2019 – SBA, Brittany Borg
Polls: Baseline Data

- Learning interests
- Stage of implementation
Agency Profile - ACF

• ACF is a division of the Department of Health & Human Services. We promote the economic and social well-being of children, families, individuals and communities with leadership and resources for compassionate, effective delivery of human services.

• ACF administers more than 60 programs with an FY19 budget of more than $58 billion.

• Programs include: Child Care, Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Welfare, Child Support Enforcement, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Refugee Resettlement, and more.
Agency Profile - OPRE

• The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) builds, and disseminates knowledge about effective approaches to helping low-income children and families through rigorous research and evaluation projects including:
  • Evaluations of existing programs and innovative approaches to help low-income children and families
  • Research syntheses
  • Descriptive and exploratory studies
• OPRE also works to improve the quality, usefulness, sharing, and analysis of data to improve ACF programs and program participants’ outcomes
• OPRE conducts research and other activities in the areas where Congress has given us authority and funds.
Agency Profile – Evaluation Policy

- ACF seeks to promote **rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics** in the conduct of evaluations. ACF’s Evaluation Policy, which was established in 2012, addresses these five key principles to govern ACF’s planning, conduct, and use of evaluation.
Current Approach

- Consult with Stakeholders
  - Internal Stakeholders – consulted at least annually during research planning process
  - External Stakeholders – example efforts
- Produce Annual Research Plan
- Produce Annual Research Portfolios
- Create Learning Agendas
Current Approach – Con’d
Stage of Implementation

Multiple stages of implementation

- Planning
- In process
- Fully implemented
- Fully implemented and operational
Next Steps

• Produce an agency-wide, multi-year learning agenda
  – Start by documenting what we’ve done to date
• Take stock and consider areas for improvement
  – Consider additional avenues for stakeholder outreach
  – Consider expanding to additional program areas
  – Consider expanding to additional types of learning
Challenges and Strategies

**Challenge**

- Existing learning agendas → agency-wide learning agenda
- Existing resources and authorities don’t apply to all ACF program areas
- Research Agendas → Learning Agendas

**Strategy**

- Need to balance flexibility and structure in agency-wide learning agenda
- Take stock of where we are and ask for resources where needed
- Learn from program areas that are currently doing this well
Expected Impact

• Identify best practices and opportunities for improvement in our planning processes
• Better document how learning activities contribute to evidence-building over time
• Help identify gaps and priority learning questions
• Help communicate learning plans and priorities
Lessons Learned

• Learning is a helpful frame
• Learning agendas can help introduce ongoing activities to new program and agency leadership
• Learning agendas provide a useful framework for planning
Q&A

What questions do you have for Emily?
Wrap-up: Access to Materials
Wrap-up: Access to Materials – Cont’d
Wrap-up: Access to Materials – Cont’d
Wrap-up: Access to Materials – Cont’d
Wrap-up: Access to Materials – Cont’d
Wrap-up: Access to Materials – Cont’d
Webinar Evaluation

• Quality
• Expectations (objectives)
• Content
• Actionability
Wrap-Up


• Webinar 7: Demetra Nightingale (Urban Institute, formerly DOL) - Thursday, August 29, 12:00–1:00 p.m. EDT
Thank You!

Please send feedback, comments, or questions to the following address:

ASPE Evidence-Building Team
aspeevidencebuilding@mathematica-mpr.com