U.S. Department of Labor Evidence-Building Plan

2022

FISCAL YEARS

2026

U.S. Department of Labor

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Foreword

How can the Department of Labor (DOL) train vulnerable workers on health and safety practices to reduce workplace injuries? What are the policies that could support gainful employment for young adults with developmental disabilities? How can the Department of Labor encourage more participation in apprenticeships, especially among women workers of color? And can partnerships between the Department of Labor, state governments, and community-based organizations help expand access to unemployment insurance among eligible workers?

These are just a few of the research questions that DOL agencies plan to study over the next four years as summarized in our FY 2022-2026 Evidence Building Plan. The breadth of these questions—representing contributions from sixteen DOL agencies—affirms DOL's commitment to integrating evidence into agency functions, including policy development, budget and strategic planning, program administration, and performance management. These projects also highlight the close alignment between the department's evidence-building activities and the short, medium, and long-run objectives of each individual agency, the department as a whole, and the Biden-Harris Administration.

An especially important priority in preparing this plan has been meeting the groundbreaking charge issued to all federal agencies in Executive Order 13985. That Executive Order asks agencies to assess how federal programs, policies, and contracting opportunities reach historically excluded or marginalized communities, including people of color, women and persons with disabilities, and then to take steps to advance greater inclusion of those populations.

At the Department of Labor, we have already embarked on a number of activities in service of this charge, and this Evidence-Building Plan represents a particularly integral contribution. We need high-quality, timely evidence to first establish which populations may be excluded from departmental initiatives and benefits; to formulate policy shifts targeting activities, resources, and interventions to populations in need; and finally, to investigate whether and how those interventions meaningfully change the material conditions of underserved communities.

Taken together, the projects detailed in this plan speak to each step of the evidence-to policy lifecycle, thereby helping the Department of Labor deliver its programs and resources, and benefits more equitably to all workers.

ALEXANDER HERTEL-FERNANDEZ

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Evaluation

Summary

The Department of Labor's Evidence-Building Plan is a project-based learning roadmap, describing over 40 new activities to generate credible information in response to important short- and long-term strategic and operational questions. Credible information, or evidence, may stem from program evaluations, foundational fact-finding or research, policy analyses, or performance data. The Evidence-Building Plan is the cumulative product of each DOL agency's individual learning agenda, a prioritization process to identify information they need to know in order to achieve their agency and departmental mission. Sixteen DOL agencies have contributed to this document, coordinated by DOL's Chief Evaluation Office in consultation with the department's four Evidence Officials.

Evidence-building activities that DOL will conduct in Fiscal Years 2022-2026 are focused on DOL's five Priority Learning Areas: improving equity in employment and training programs, reducing barriers to women's employment, studying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, improving enforcement activities and protections for all, and strengthening unemployment to reemployment. In addition, the department commits to a number of cross-cutting activities to improve capacity to develop, access, understand and use evidence. Lastly, the department outlines potential topics for future evidence-building activities.

I. What is the Evidence-Building Plan and Who Should Use It?

The Evidence-Building Plan, also referred to as a "learning agenda" by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-19-23, is a systematic plan for identifying and addressing priority questions relevant to improving the programs, policies, and regulations of the Department of Labor (department or DOL). The plan identifies and prioritizes strategies to develop credible information to answer important short- and long-term strategic and operational questions.

All of the department's evidence documents, including the Evidence-Building Plan, Evaluation Plan, and Evidence Capacity Assessment, are developed collaboratively with the internal agency stakeholders, departmental leadership, and the department's Evidence Officials. Each internal agency develops individual learning agendas, which roll up to the department's evidence documents. These subcomponent learning agendas and processes provide an infrastructure to customize and monitor their own learning roadmaps, in addition to contributing to the broader departmental strategic mission.

Across the department, these evidence documents are useful in helping to:

- Build upon and scale prior successes, as well as for continuous improvement of DOL practices, policies, and programs;
- Identify new questions to advance understanding;
- Innovate and develop data-informed approaches to answer priority questions;
- Seek opportunities to coordinate evidence-building activities across the department and other federal agencies;
- Monitor and assess progress along complex and multidimensional learning goals; and
- Communicate to Congress, state and local partners, grantees, and the public about new and ongoing areas of investment for data-informed insights.

Defining Evidence

OMB defines evidence as the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. Evidence can be quantitative or qualitative and may come from a variety of sources. There are four types of evidence-building activities included in this plan, which align with the four interdependent components of evidence identified in OMB Memorandum M-19-23:

Policy Analysis. Analysis of data, such as general purpose surveys or program-specific data, to generate and inform policy (e.g., estimating regulatory impacts and other relevant effects).

Performance Management. Development, analysis, and reporting of performance measures and milestones related to the achievement of strategic goals and objectives.

Policy Analysis

Performance Measurement

Program Evaluation

Foundational Fact-Finding

Program Evaluation. Systematic analysis of a program, policy, organization, or a component of these to assess effectiveness and efficiency.

Foundational Fact Finding. Foundational research and analysis such as aggregate indicators, exploratory studies, descriptive statistics, and basic research.

Scope and Coverage of Activities in this Plan

DOL's Evidence-Building Plan provides key priority learning areas and corresponding activities planned for initiation during the same four-year time period as the department's strategic planning cycle for FY 2022-FY 2026. This planning document will remain iterative in its development, with annual refinements.

The department's mission is broad and diverse, touching the lives of unemployed, underemployed and working individuals, retirees, employers, and organizations that support employment, workforce information, training, security, benefits, and hiring and working conditions. Everything we do is based on a worker-centered vision for the department to empower all workers morning, noon and night. The agencies collectively working toward that vision through the activities in this plan are as follows:

- Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA)
- Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
- Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)
- Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS)
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM)
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP)
- Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)
- Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP)
- Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
- Wage and Hour Division (WHD)
- Women's Bureau (WB)

Evidence Officials at the U.S. Department of Labor

The department's evidence-building capabilities span performance measurement, statistics, policy analysis, data governance, and program evaluation. With the passage of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), the leadership roles overseeing those functions have been codified. The department's Evidence Officials guide efforts to build and use credible information at a departmental level, working in partnership with counterparts across the department and other federal agencies, with the goal of informing the policies and programs that improve the lives and safety of American workers. Although each Evidence Official has a distinct role, all support the development and use of the data the department needs to advance its mission, strategic goals, and priorities.

Chief Evaluation Officer

The Chief Evaluation Officer coordinates, manages, and implements the department's evaluation research program and leads the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy. CEO works closely with the department's agencies to conduct independent evaluation research and other rigorous data analyses that address priorities set by the Secretary and the agencies. The Chief Evaluation Officer is responsible for guiding the department's learning agenda, annual evaluation plan, and research capacity assessment; directing the department's Data Analytics Unit; overseeing the department's Evaluation Policy that governs this research; and coordinating the development of this Evidence-Building Plan. The Chief Evaluation Officer is Dr. Christina Yancey.

Chief Data Officer

The Chief Data Officer (CDO) in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy is responsible for data governance and lifecycle data management, and supporting the department in meeting the requirements of the Federal Data Strategy and Open Government Data Act. The CDO serves as chairman of the DOL Data Board, a departmental work group charged with leading efforts to improve the department's data management processes, ensure that data are fit for purpose, increase capacity to leverage data as a strategic asset, develop and guide data strategy, management, and policy, work with the Chief Information Officer to align infrastructure with mission and to support more optimal data governance, stewardship, architecture, and use. The Chief Data Officer is Scott Gibbons.

Director, Performance Management Center

The department's Performance Management Center (PMC), which reports to the Performance Improvement Officer, supports all of the department in results-driven management through strategic planning, continuous process improvement, and performance planning and reporting. Further, PMC ensures the department meets requirements from the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010. The Director of the Performance Management Center, and Deputy Performance Improvement Officer, is Dennis Johnson.

Statistical Official, Commissioner of Labor Statistics

The Statistical Official for the Department of Labor is the Commissioner of Labor Statistics, who leads the department's independent statistical agency, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). BLS provides critical statistical data on labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy to support widespread decision-making across public and private sectors, including the department's continuous improvement efforts. In the role of Statistical Official, the Commissioner provides statistical guidance to all department agencies and ensures that BLS, and thus the department, meets the requirements of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act, re-codified in the Evidence Act. BLS also participates with Statistical Officials across the Federal government to identify and enhance statistical capacity and a statistical learning agenda to ensure the highest-quality statistical process and content. The department's Statistical Official is Dr. William W. Beach.

II. Stakeholder Engagement

Prior to developing this plan, the department conducted activities to collect ideas and input on priority research topics from a wide range of stakeholders external to DOL that work with, use, or have an interest in labor-related research.

Targeted Engagement in the Workforce Development Field

Given the critical role of the department in supporting the public workforce system across the country, a diverse set of stakeholders were consulted on their evidence-building needs as part of the development of this Plan. From November 2020 to April 2021, the department sponsored unstructured group discussions and individual conversations with 104 individuals representing 53 organizations spanning the U.S. workforce development system (**see Figure 1**). The objectives of the meetings were to encourage participants to discuss what research, information, or evidence would be most useful to them to improve the services they provide, and to identify future research topics related to employment programs and services and the future of work. These efforts specifically targeted applicable areas of research relevant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).[1]

Figure 1. Type of Organizations Consulted about Public Workforce Evidence Needs	
Type of Organization	**No.**
Federal Agencies	2
Local Workforce System	10
State Workforce System	15
Business and Industry	10
Workforce Advocacy Groups	9
Organized Labor	4
Education or Community College	3
Total	**53**

[1] See: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/currentstudies/WIOA-Research-Portfolio

In addition to this broad-based engagement, the department convened an 11-member panel of highly-qualified experts in the workforce development field, including representatives from workforce boards, academics, nonprofit organizations that partner with or study the workforce system, and labor unions. The panel provided DOL with targeted input on high-priority research topics related to WIOA programs and services that could build on the current evidence base, fill key knowledge gaps, and could be potentially suitable for rigorous evaluation. A summary of the findings from these engagements is available on the department's website.[2]

Frequently raised topics during these engagements included: work-based learning and apprenticeships; career pathways, advancement, and stackable credentials; integrated services and co-enrollment; employer services and engagement; career planning and navigation; remote work and remote services; COVID-19-related job changes; changes in the value of credentials; data infrastructure; and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce training system and the world of work. Many key knowledge gaps and research needs for the workforce system raised by these stakeholders were considered for and are reflected in the evidence-building activities included in this plan.

Ongoing and Future Stakeholder Engagement

On July 8, 2021, DOL published and subsequently disseminated to DOL's half-million Twitter followers an invitation for public comment on the department's strategic planning activities, including the five priority learning areas included in this plan (**see Figure 2 next page**). The invitation was published in English and Spanish, with a deadline of August 6, 2021, for public comment.

On July 29, 2021, DOL's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs sponsored a Congressional outreach session. This session included a high-level briefing by the department on its strategic planning approach, including the five priority learning areas within this plan. Further, it allowed Congressional aids from both appropriations and authorizations to ask questions and to provide direct comment.

After February 2022, the department will engage in further targeted stakeholder feedback, to support ongoing evidence development and dissemination activity. As the Evidence-Building Plan is an evolving document, the department anticipates refining activities based on future stakeholder inputs. DOL is especially interested in ensuring perspectives from a diverse array of stakeholders who represent the communities our programs serve.

[2] See: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WIOA%20Portfolio%20Stakeholder%20Summary_508_FINAL.pdf

III. Planned Evidence-Building Activities by Priority Learning Area

This report describes DOL's planned evidence-building activities in three sections. This section describes the five Priority Learning Areas that the department will explore, as well as specific time-bound projects DOL intends to initiate that address each of the Priority Learning Areas. The next section (**Section IV**) describes overarching initiatives DOL plans to carry out during FY 2022-2026 that touch on many different themes and topics relevant to DOL's mission. The last section (**Section V**), describes future research topics that are of interest to the department that may inform DOL's future evidence-building commitments going forward.

A cross-cutting theme for all of these learning areas is the need to improve equity in access to, and participation in, DOL programs, benefits, and protections, reflecting the department's commitment to fulfilling the charge set out by this administration's focus on equity for underserved communities. Further, these initial offerings were co-developed with the department's strategic plan and will be updated as DOL continues to advance learning across its strategies and activities.

DOL has identified five Priority Learning Areas for this plan, as described in **Figure 2**. In the tables below, DOL has identified specific research projects it intends to initiate within FY 2022-2026 pertaining to each Priority Learning Area. By project, each table describes the objective, key research questions, the estimated fiscal year the project will start, its expected duration, expected data sources, possible methods and analytical approach, and anticipated challenges and solutions to those challenges. The plan includes a mix of short-term projects (of expected duration of one year or less) as well as medium- to long-term projects (more than one year).

Figure 2. DOL Priority Learning Areas for FY 2022-2026	
1	**Ensuring Equity in Employment and Training Programs**
2	**Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment**
3	**Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic**
4	**Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All**
5	**Strengthening Unemployment to Reemployment**

The evidence-building activities included in this plan contribute to departmental priorities identified in the department's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. **Appendix A** provides a mapping of how each proposed activity relates to DOL Strategic goals as well as the Priority Learning Areas.

The project descriptions below are limited to new evidence-building activities DOL plans to initiate over the time period covered by this plan. Details on all current and recently completed research studies supported by DOL can be found on the CEO website, as well as on several agency-specific websites on DOL.gov.[3]

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[3] See: www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation

Priority Learning Area 1:
Ensuring Equity in Employment and Training Programs

Table 1. Planned Evidence-Building Activities Related to Priority Learning Area 1

📁 Project 1*

Title: Analysis of Distance Learning Strategies (ETA).
To identify lessons learned for assisting customers with different levels of digital skills and differential access to high-speed Internet infrastructure to participate in distance learning. Could be supplemented with a synthesis under CLEAR, TBD.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last five years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs
3. Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are the lessons learned for assisting customers with different levels of digital skills and differential access to high-speed Internet infrastructure to participate in distance learning?
2. Can different types of training, including skilled trades instruction, be adapted to a distance learning format?

Data Sources: Administrative data

Methods/Approach: Descriptive Study and Behavioral/Experimental Pilot Test

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

📁 Project 2*

Title: Navigation Evidence Building Portfolio (ETA). ETA seeks to better understand the role of case management and navigators broadly in the workforce system, and specifically with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Navigator model, an initiative aimed at facilitating access to TAA-related services and benefits for eligible workers. For the broader workforce system, a study will examine how navigators are used, and to serve which populations. It will synthesize findings across relevant studies. For the TAA Navigator, the evaluation will identify the key components of promising navigator models, how they have been implemented, under what conditions, and for whom (such as underserved communities). As part of the feasibility study, methodological design options to estimate impacts of this program to understand the effectiveness of this strategy will be identified and assessed.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last five years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. How might case managers/navigators be helpful for the workforce system, more broadly?
2. In what ways can a navigator intervention help address barriers that disadvantaged populations face?
3. What specific navigator services are most helpful in engendering positive labor market outcomes?
4. Are they able to help improve long-term outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment?
5. What is the impact of Trade-Adjustment Assistance Program's Navigator on underserved communities?
6. What are the barriers that the dislocated worker population faces in accessing services?
7. For the feasibility study, what are the evaluation design options for measuring the differences in the outcomes of those served by TAA navigators compared to outcomes of TAA program participants without navigator supports?

Data Sources: TBD for the Descriptive Study; Interviews, focus groups, administrative data for the Implementation/Impact Evaluation

Methods/Approach: Descriptive study, Implementation/Impact Evaluation. Initial phases will include a feasibility study, followed by an impact evaluation.

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

An assessment must be conducted to determine the feasibility of an impact evaluation.

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* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 3*

Title: First Step Act Implementation (ETA). DOL will collaborate with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to develop an evidence-informed workforce development initiative to advance First Step Act (FSA) implementation and reduce recidivism risk in the reentering Federal prisoner population. This initiative will deliver workforce development services to prisoners, continuing with an intensive transition model, and ending with a transition to local service providers as prisoners are released. The First Step Act evaluation will rigorously evaluate this initiative and support its use of evidence-informed workforce development models.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2023 and last four years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
To what extent are prisoner outcomes (recidivism, labor market outcomes, etc.) impacted by the type, intensity, and duration of workforce development service provision?

Data Sources: Original data collection, federal administrative data sources

Methods/Approach: Qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct formative research, as well as an implementation and impact study.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

TBD.

Project 4*

Title: Disability & Employment Equity Analysis (ODEP). As a group, persons of color with disabilities have lower employment levels and earnings than non-Hispanic whites with disabilities, and may not be equitably served by the workforces system and other key disability employment programs. Yet there is little research on racial differences in employment and earnings for people with disabilities; on racial inequities in policy and program design and implementation; on program participation and outcomes for persons of color with disabilities; or on level of program access and cultural competence to ensure inclusive programs and services. This research project would review extant data on racial differences in employment, earnings, program participation, and program outcomes for people with disabilities, and consult experts and conduct field research to identify current knowledge gaps and inequities and promising practices.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are racial and ethnic differences in employment, earnings, program participation, and program outcomes for people with disabilities?
2. What are current research gaps related to how disability employment programs serve individuals from different racial and ethnic groups, and what are promising practices to address existing inequities?

Data Sources: Existing publicly available data sources, administrative data

Methods/Approach: This descriptive and exploratory study will rely on analysis of administrative data to build foundational knowledge about employment of persons of color with disabilities, seeking to fill in knowledge gaps currently not addressed by available survey data.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 5

Title: Research to Support Employment of People on the Autism Spectrum (ODEP). Professional services to support a project to build evidence regarding approaches to improve gainful employment for young adults with developmental disabilities, particularly those on the autism spectrum. The Project aligns with federal priorities under the Autism CARES Act of 2019 to expand access, opportunity, and quality of life for youth and adults on the autism spectrum. This work also supports broader efforts to enhance federal policy and practices to support neurodiversity at work and strengthen access to competitive integrated employment for youth and adults with disabilities.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2021 Q4 and last three years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
Project activities will explore major gaps in the autism research literature, including but not limited to:
1. Foundational questions, such as disability prevalence, participation in specialized employment services, and employment outcomes;
2. Outcomes of autism-focused hiring and recruitment programs;
3. Utility of accommodations, supports, and assistance programs to enhance work performance;
4. Participation in inclusive apprenticeships and related WBL activities, including focused strategies;
5. Use of accessible and assistive technologies for work and on-the-job training;
6. Support for mental health and well-being and general health needs (especially when considering secondary mental health and physical health conditions);
7. Economic well-being and financial literacy.

Data Sources: Disability Analysis File, Rehabilitation Service Administration Case Service Report

Methods/Approach: Descriptive study, Exploratory Study, Data Analytics

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

Project 6*

Title: VETS Employment Navigators Evaluation (VETS). Implementation evaluation to understand how Employment Navigators provide support to transitioning service members to find employment faster and/or obtain higher wages. It will also include a feasibility study for an impact evaluation. The study will examine the elements that distinguish a VETS employment navigator (if any) from other case management support to veterans, including supports from Consolidated Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veteran's Employment Representatives (LVER)s.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last five years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the impact of VETS employment navigator pilot program for transitioning service members?
2. What are barriers to TAP and other workforce services, particularly for those who may face a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, or discrimination?

Data Sources: Interviews, focus groups, administrative data

Methods/Approach: Implementation/Impact Evaluation

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

An assessment must be conducted to determine the feasibility of an impact evaluation.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 7*

Title: FARE Grants Implementation Study (WB).
Fostering Access, Rights, and Equity (FARE)
implementation/impact study to accompany FARE grant
to states and community-based organizations intended
to assist women in understanding and accessing their
employment rights and benefits.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022
and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs
2. Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. How are FARE grants assisting women in understanding and accessing their employment rights and benefits?
2. What are barriers that this population faces in accessing services?

Data Sources: FARE grant data

Methods/Approach: Implementation Study

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

Project 8*

Title: WANTO Descriptive Study (WB). The Women in
Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO)
grant program supports community-based organizations to
recruit, mentor, train and retain more women in Registered
Apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations. Grantees
provide technical assistance to address the significant
under-representation of women in apprenticeship programs
and in general in high-growth, high-wage Science,
Technology, Engineering, and Math-related occupations.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022
and last three years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Areas:
1. Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs
2. Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. For those Women in WANTO grants providing job related training, what best practices and challenges have been identified on successfully transitioning women into apprenticeships or nontraditional occupations by the end of the grant's period of performance?
2. What promising practices and challenges have been identified by WANTO grants in outreach, recruitment, and retention of women, in general, and in particular, from underrepresented communities in grant related activities? What are barriers that this population faces in accessing services?

Data Sources: WANTO grant data and WANTO site visits

Methods/Approach: Exploratory/Descriptive Study

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

The PRA process for a short study may be a challenge.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Priority Learning Area 2:
Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment

Note: Projects 7 and 8 above also support this area.

Table 2. Planned Evidence-Building Activities Related to Priority Learning Area 2

📁 **Project 9**	ℹ️ **Additional Information**
Title: Understanding the Lifetime Effects of Providing Informal Care – 2021 Update (WB). This project will update the never-published 2016 WB contracted study - Understanding the Lifetime Effects of Providing Informal Care to account for more current data and trends, the Covid-19 pandemic, and additional analysis by race and ethnicity. The updated Study will provide WB a better understanding of the effects of child, disabled, and adult caregiving on women's employment, earnings, savings, and retirement including projections of lifetime costs, the impact of the Covid-19, and the policy implications of these effects. The work will culminate in a series of written products including an updated Understanding the Lifetime Effects of Providing Informal Care Study; an executive summary of the updated Study; and public dissemination fact sheets highlighting key findings for a non-technical audiences.	**Priority Research Questions:** 1. What are the lifetime effects of providing informal caregiving on women's economic security? 2. What are the costs caregivers (child, disabled, elder care) have incurred including lost earnings, financial benefits and savings? 3. What are the projected costs that different cohorts of currently working women will incur over their lifetimes due to caregiving? 4. What have been the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic? 5. What are the projected future effects of the Pandemic? 6. What are the caregiving incidences and effects by birth cohorts, demographics of women (e.g. education, parental status-number of children, race and ethnicity), and type and length of caregiving? 7. What are implications for policies designed to improve women's economic security?
Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last six months.	**Data Sources:** SIPP, HRS, ACS, CPS, NLSY, PSID, DYNASIM
Strategic Goal: 1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All	**Methods/Approach:** Descriptive tabulations, regression analyses, projections using DYNASIM microsimulation model
Priority Learning Areas: 2. Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment 3. Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic	⚖️ **Anticipated Challenges & Solutions** None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 10*

Title: Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) Evaluation (WB). The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) provides 12 weeks of paid parental leave to certain Federal employees in connection with the birth of an employee's child or placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care. The law went into effect on October 1, 2020. Anticipated benefits of the law include increased time for bonding between parent and child, improved health of the birth mother and child, preservation of annual and sick leave balances for future family needs, increased retention and engagement of the Federal workforce, and a positive impact to the U.S. economy by addressing women's declining labor force participation. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that implementing FEPLA would cost $3.3 billion from 2021-2024. OPM and DOL will collaborate to answer questions surrounding the effects of FEPLA. For FY 23, the questions will focus on short-term uptake and effects of the law and will be dependent on data availability. Future evaluation questions may be proposed in the ongoing partnership.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
2. Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are FEPLA leave taking patterns, and do those vary by employee demographics? Are leave taking patterns equitable across demographic groups?
2. What is the effect of FEPLA on the number of days of leave taken, by leave type (e.g., FEPLA, Family and Medical Leave Act, sick leave, annual leave)?
3. What is the effect of FEPLA on short-term retention of employees following paid parental leave?
4. What is the effect of FEPLA on employees' career advancement, including promotions, salary, and performance ratings?

Data Sources: OPM and DOL will leverage existing data including payroll data (use of paid and unpaid leaves), employee personnel status data (for example, retention status, grade and step level, and pay rate), employee performance data (for example, award hours or pay and performance ratings), and employee demographic data (for example, gender, race and ethnicity, age, work schedule, and agency).

Methods/Approach: OPM and DOL will analyze secondary administrative personnel data that OPM maintains in its Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) and Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) databases, conducting descriptive analyses and comparisons of outcomes prior to and following implementation of FEPLA.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

1. Data quality and completeness. At the time FEPLA was implemented, there were no existing payroll codes for those using this leave; this data only started being reported with routine codes more than six months after implementation. There are also data quality issues within the payroll data, as agencies use differing payroll systems and approaches and do not have a consistent data cleaning procedure. To address this, we are proactively reviewing and cleaning FEPLA and leave data, while also working to improve the overall quality of payroll data.
2. Selecting the appropriate time period for comparison. For comparisons of before and after implementation of FEPLA, there are complicating factors regarding time periods for comparison, including the lack of payroll codes and the COVID-19 pandemic, which is anticipated to have an effect on childbearing and leave taking patterns. As such, we will carefully consider the appropriate time periods for both before and after comparison and will interpret findings with caution.

Project 11

Title: Women and Work Report (WB/OASP). This report will synthesize research and data on women's participation in the labor force and how it has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing recovery. It will include a discussion of the barriers women workers face to full and equal participation in the labor force and how these barriers were magnified during the COVID-19 crisis, especially for women of color and other disadvantaged groups. It will also discuss policy interventions that promote more equitable labor force participation for women, including assessing progress that has been made.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one year.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
2. Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment

Additional Information

Data Sources: CPS, Census Pulse, ATUS, NCS, and other labor force survey data; review of published research on related topics

Methods/Approach: Secondary data analysis; policy analysis

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Priority Learning Area 3:
Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Note: Projects 1 and 9 above also support this area.

Table 3. Planned Evidence-Building Activities Related to Priority Learning Area 3

📁 Project 12*

Title: Improving Planning and Operations to Deliver Services Study (ETA). To identify lessons learned from state and local practices that have found new and innovate ways to improve or more efficiently deliver services. The study will look at the current pandemic, as well as lessons learned from the Great Recession, to synthesize important practical takeaways.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last three years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
3. Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. How can the public workforce system react and respond to future economic disruptions to provide income support and assist workers upskill or reskill and return to work effectively?
2. What services and strategies are states using to help unemployed workers return to work as the US economy begins to recover? What strategies appear promising for different participants (dislocated workers, low-income and out-of-school youth)? What are state-of-the-art practices to support job search and reemployment?

Data Sources: TBD

Methods/Approach: Descriptive study/Implementation study

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

📁 Project 13

Title: Effects of COVID-19 on Bureau of International Labor Affairs technical assistance projects (ILAB). This cross-program evaluation will synthesize data and discern lessons learned and good practices pertaining to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation and outcomes.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 Q1 and last one year.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
3. Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are the effects and experiences the COVID-19 pandemic has had on programming from across different ILAB projects?
2. What good practices and lessons learned are emerging from implementing ILAB projects during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What future opportunities are emerging for ILAB projects to provide relevant technical assistance in the new landscape brought about by COVID-19?

Data Sources: Existing grantee reporting and administrative data, new qualitative data collection

Methods/Approach: Mixed methods study

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Title: Analysis of Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Requests related to Telework post Covid-19 (OASAM).
The OASAM Workplace Equality Compliance Office (WECO) processes RA requests for workplace flexibilities. With initial reentry plans in place, one of the avenues for employees to continue telework is through the Agency's RA process. WECO will analyze RA requests over the next 6-8 months to see if any trends can be gleaned from those requests such as: which agencies are requests coming from, which positions are requesting telework, what durations of telework are being requested and more.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one year.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal: A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Priority Learning Area:
3. Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Priority Research Question:
After more than a year of working remotely, are employees more likely to request telework related RAs in order to continue working remotely?

Data Sources: WECO Weekly Case Reports

Methods/Approach: Statistical Analysis

⚖️ **Anticipated Challenges & Solutions**

There should be no agency challenges since we're using data that we gather.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Priority Learning Area 4:
Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Table 4. Planned Evidence-Building Activities Related to Priority Learning Area 4

📁 **Project 15**	ℹ️ **Additional Information**

Title: Audit Quality Study (EBSA). EBSA will sample roughly 400 Form 5500 filings submitted in the Fall of 2021, as a quality assurance assessment of the CPA firms performing the audits. Once OCA performs its review, EBSA can compare the audit quality by firm characteristics, which can then be used to inform outreach and education. Moreover, since the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) is revising its standards, effective next year, a new audit quality study can provide a baseline compliance rate under which the new standards can be evaluated in the future.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one-and-a-half years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Priority Research Questions:
1. Has the overall quality of employee benefit plan audits improved since EBSA's prior audit quality study? Similarly, based on the results of a new study, we can evaluate whether actions taken by the accounting profession have had a positive impact on improving the work of plan auditors (e.g. enhanced peer review process, better technical guidance, stronger disciplinary actions).
2. What additional actions/activities can EBSA take to improve audit quality?

Data Sources: Form 5500 Reports

Methods/Approach: Statistical analysis of the quality of audits based on firm and/or plan characteristics.

⚖️ **Anticipated Challenges & Solutions**

Concerns regarding sampling to ensure we include both calendar and fiscal year plans. EBSA plans on working with contractors to develop a robust sampling approach.

📁 **Project 16***	ℹ️ **Additional Information**

Title: EBSA Enforcement Health Metrics (EBSA). EBSA seeks to develop health metrics in order to measure its impact and effectiveness in the health space. EBSA would like to identify how other health regulators measure their effectiveness, identify actions that need to be tied to an outcome measure, and develop ways investigators' work in this area can be measured for performance reporting purposes.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Priority Research Questions:
1. How can EBSA measure its influence on health outcomes?
2. Does EBSA enforcement positively influence individual health outcomes?

Data Sources: Measures of success used by other federal and/or state regulators in the health space

Methods/Approach: Exploratory Study/Descriptive Study

⚖️ **Anticipated Challenges & Solutions**

Many of the interventions and recoveries EBSA is able to achieve in the health space are difficult to measure. Moreover, investigations may result in prospective changes only to plan documents or procedures for specific conditions, which adds additional challenges to measuring the ultimate effect on the population benefitting from the change.

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* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 17*

Title: Identifying Non-Filing MEWAs (EBSA). In order to pre-emptively identify non-filing Multiple Employer Welfare Associations (MEWAs), many of which have a history of fraud and abuse and MEWA violations, EBSA would like to undertake a pilot program to use data scraping methods and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to identify MEWAs that have not filed Form M-1s. By identifying these plans while they are marketed to employers, EBSA can intervene early to make sure the plans are compliant and mitigate solvency risk.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one year.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What are tools for EBSA to enhance detection of non-filing MEWAs, who are a high risk for fraud and abuse?

Data Sources: TBD

Methods/Approach: Artificial Intelligence/Robotic Process Automation and Data Analytics

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

EBSA does not have any experience with data scraping. EBSA will need to identify terms that would be associated with marketing at risk products and developing the methodology to find these MEWAs. EBSA recommends a small pilot project which could then be expanded should it be successful.

Project 18

Title: Evidence to Action (Forced Labor Study - Argentina and Madagascar) (ILAB). This project will develop robust and replicable approaches to collecting and analyzing data on forced labor to inform evidence-based interventions. The project will provide new information on the prevalence and causes of forced labor in the garment sectors of Argentina and Madagascar; build capacity of national stakeholders to undertake and use such research; and catalyze actions to combat forced labor.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 Q1 and last one-and-a-half years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the prevalence rate of forced labor in garment sectors in Madagascar and Argentina?
2. Where do incidence of forced labor occur along the garment supply chain in Madagascar and Argentina?

Data Sources: Primary data collection

Methods/Approach: Household survey with probability sample; Respondent-driven sampling approach.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose risk to the timely completion of data collection activities, and the quality of the data. DOL will closely monitor the situations through regular check-ins with the grantee, and coordinate actions to mitigate the potential issues as they arise.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 19

Title: National Child Labor Survey of Mexico (ILAB).
ILAB plans to fund a National Child Labor Survey in Mexico under the proposed "Building a comprehensive government approach to combating child labor and forced labor in Mexico" project, which ILAB plans to award in the coming months.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2023 Q1 and last one-and-a-half years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the prevalence of child labor in Mexico?
2. How has this prevalence changed since 2019?

Data Sources: Primary data collection

Methods/Approach: Household survey with probability sample

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

The COVID-19 pandemic poses risk to the timely completion of data collection activities, and the quality of the data. DOL will closely monitor the situation through regular check-ins with the grantee, and coordinate actions to mitigate the potential issues as they arise.

Project 20

Title: Understanding the demographics of regulated mining community and potential workforce (MSHA).
To inform MSHA's equity analysis, outreach, and hiring strategies, MSHA is interested in continuing to understand the demographics of miners served (which changes over time) and potential workforce for the agency.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one to two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What are the demographics of the regulated mining community and potential workforce for MSHA and to what extent is there alignment with representation within MSHA?

Data Sources: American Community Survey, internal recruitment and hiring data

Methods/Approach: Data Analytics

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 21*

Title: Black lung incidence nationwide as a result of burning coal for heating, and how those areas intersect with mining and former mining communities (MSHA). The Navajo Nation has the highest incidence of non-mining black lung as a result of burning coal in homes for heat. This is an issue in certain areas of Appalachia as well. Understanding where those black lung cases occur and how they intersect with current and former mining communities could help inform MSHA of areas where undiagnosed miners may be at high risk and allow MSHA to target assistance.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. Where are cases of black lung occurring across the US as a result of non-mining activities such as burning coal for heat?
2. How do those align with former and current coal mining communities?

Data Sources: Black lung clinics, public health data

Methods/Approach: Exploratory study

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

Project 22

Title: Paid Family and Medical Leave for People with Disabilities (ODEP). Access to Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) is especially important for people with disabilities and their families who generally have lower income and fewer savings to rely on when taking leave. Like workers in general, workers with disabilities exhibit need for a variety of paid leave types and for people with disabilities who are not in the labor force, PFML provides income protection and support to their family members who may need to take time off work to care for them. This research project would analyze the access and use of paid family and medical leave by people with disabilities within several national datasets.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2021 Q4 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are the reasons for and lengths of time that people with disabilities use paid leave, and how can a national comprehensive paid family and medical leave program be designed to meet the unique needs of workers with disabilities or ongoing health conditions?
2. How can program design factors (such as coverage types, leave duration, wage replacement, job protection, benefits eligibility, and interaction with state leave programs) be evaluated to understand the specific implications on workers with disabilities?

Data Sources: American Time Use Survey, FMLA Employee Survey, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey

Methods/Approach: Data analytics

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

ODEP anticipates that in many nationally representative surveys that ask questions related to access and use of paid leave, disability status is not directly included or the sample of workers with disabilities will be relatively small. (Solution: in the short-term ODEP can use ongoing health conditions reported as a proxy for disability status and in the long term work with CEO to add disability status to the FMLA employee survey).

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

📁 Project 23

Title: Algorithmic Fairness (OFCCP). Technology is transforming how employers hire and make employment decisions. Employers are increasingly relying upon "machine learning," and algorithms to recruit, hire, and assess workers. OFCCP is well positioned to ensure safeguards in the use of hiring and other employment technology. Given substantial asymmetries in workers' ability to access information concerning how employment decisions are made, workers are often not in a position to file a complaint about these systems. OFCCP has a critical role to play in proactively and comprehensively assessing federal contractors' technology-driven employment systems as part of OFCCP compliance evaluations to ensure these systems are designed to promote equity rather than perpetuate bias in existing employment systems.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What standards should OFCCP consider for contractors to promote equity in algorithmic selection and decision-making systems and ensure meaningful oversight and accountability.

Data Sources: External Research

Methods/Approach: Meta-analysis or validation studies

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Lack of transparency on the operation of and equity impacts of assessment technology.

📁 Project 24*

Title: Construction Representation Benchmarks: Measuring the Potential Workforce Availability in Trades (OFCCP). OFCCP is currently exploring whether to update its construction regulations and is interested in better understanding the potential available workforce by race, gender and ethnicity as well as geographic area for different trades.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one year.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What data sources and methodologies should OFCCP rely on to identify the full potential workforce available by race, gender and ethnicity in the construction industry?

Data Sources: TBD.

Methods/Approach: Data Analytics

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Lack of current data reflecting the full scope of workers available to work in construction trades absent barriers to opportunity.

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* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 25*

Title: Using Data to Inform Scheduling and Enforcement (OFCCP). OFCCP seeks to continually improve its scheduling process to better identify risk factors for non-compliance.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one year.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What additional data sources can OFCCP utilize to improve its neutral scheduling process to select contractors that have greater risk factors for non-compliance?

Data Sources: Vets 4212, EEO-1, Census, Wage and Hour and OSHA data, etc.

Methods/Approach: Data Analytics

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Method should meet neutrality standard.

Project 26*

Title: Assessment of OLMS Financial Reporting Data (OLMS). The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) is interested in understanding how LM data can be used to characterize labor union density, mobilization, and penetration to better study the effect of unions on workplace conditions, local economies, and communities. This information could advance our understanding of the role that unions play in U.S. labor markets.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one year.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are opportunities for characterizing union density, mobilization, and penetration from LM data?
2. Are there ways to increase the utility of the data?
3. What are additional data sources (OLMS, other DOL, or external) that could be used as supplemental data or merged with the data to advance our understanding of the effect of unions on workplaces and local economies and communities?

Data Sources: Review of LM form data and other OLMS administrative datasets, external quantitative datasets, limited qualitative data collection

Methods/Approach: Exploratory Study/Data Analysis

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 27

Title: Impact of Algorithmic Management on occupational injuries and illnesses in the Warehousing and Storage Industry (NAICS 4931) (OSHA). Algorithmic management is a diverse set of technological tools and techniques to remotely manage workforces, relying on data collection and surveillance of workers to enable automated or semi-automated decision-making. In Warehousing, workers may be managed by algorithms that determine which items need to be picked, moved, stored, and shipped. Employees say they feel pressured to improve their "pick rate," a metric that calculates how many items are retrieved from the shelves every hour.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2024 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What is the impact of algorithmic management on occupational injuries and illness in the Storage and Warehouse Industry?

Data Sources: OSHA Injury and Illness Logs (OSHA Forms 300 and 301); Data from the BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illness (SOII); OSHA inspection data from inspections in the Warehousing and Storage Industry (NAICS 4931)

Methods/Approach:
1. Describe the nature, severity, and extent of occupational injuries and illness observed in establishments in the Warehousing Industry where algorithmic management is practiced.
2. Compare the nature, severity, and extent of occupational injuries and illnesses in establishments in the Warehousing Industry where algorithmic management is practiced to the nature, severity, and extent of occupational injuries and illnesses in establishments in the Warehousing Industry where algorithmic management is not practiced.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

TBD.

Project 28*

Title: Reaching Vulnerable Populations through Alliances (OSHA). Through the Alliance Program, OSHA works with organizations such as trade and professional associations, labor unions, educational institutions, community and faith-based groups, and government agencies to share information about OSHA's initiative and compliance assistance resources with workers and employers, and educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities. Alliance Program participants are committed to working closely with OSHA to develop and share information with workers and employers to help prevent injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in the workplace and to educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Participants in the Alliance Program support OSHA's strategic goals by developing Alliance agreements and implementing project plans that emphasize Raising Awareness of OSHA's Rulemaking and Enforcement Initiatives; Outreach and Communication; and Training and Education.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. Is the information OSHA provides to Alliance Participants getting to the most vulnerable workers?
2. How is that information getting to the most vulnerable workers?
3. Are some types of alliances more effective in getting safety and health information out than others?

Data Sources: OSHA's Compliance Assistance data base has information on activities related to OSHA Alliances. Limited information is available on some of the characteristics of program participants (e.g., temporary workers, youth, ethnicity, etc.) The groups with which OSHA has alliances may be able to provide information on members and participants in their programs.

Methods/Approach:
1. Survey participants in Alliance events to gather information on what they learned from participation in alliance-sponsored events and trainings. Participants getting to the most vulnerable workers?
2. Develop and implement a tool to measure the usefulness of the information participants received.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

The biggest challenge will be identifying the workers or participate in alliance-sponsored events and trainings. Many of these workers may not speak English well enough to complete a written survey. Focus groups may be required. OSHA's alliance partners should be able to assist with the data collection.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 29*

Title: Reaching Vulnerable Populations through training funded by OSHA's Susan Harwood Training Grants (OSHA). Susan Harwood Training Grants are awarded competitively to provide training and education programs for employers and workers on the recognition, avoidance, and prevention of safety and health hazards in their workplaces and to inform workers of their rights and employers of their responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act. The types of grants solicited each year vary and in the past have included Capacity Building grants, Targeted Topic, and Training Materials Development. Given the variety of grants, DOL would like to explore the feasibility of assessing this kind of program, and plans to conduct a descriptive study that can help inform future evaluations of the grant program.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2023 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. Is the training developed under the Susan Harwood Grant Program reaching vulnerable populations of workers?
2. What are the practices used by those who receive Grant awards for reaching vulnerable populations?
3. What are research options that OSHA can use to understand the implementation and impacts of this grant program in the future?

Data Sources: Data on who participated in trainings developed using the Susan Harwood Grants should be available from the Education Centers and other institutions that provide the training.

Methods/Approach: Solicit data on age, race, ethnicity, sex and language spoken from participants in trainings developed using the Susan Harwood Grants by survey or class registration.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

OSHA may have to modify the terms of the Susan Harwood Grants to require collection of the desired data.

Project 30

Title: Workplace Violence in the Healthcare Industry (OSHA). A workgroup developed criteria statements to operationalize program elements for workplace violence prevention programs together with a scoring system. Those statements distinguish high from low performing healthcare facilities, evidenced by substantial differences in scores between facilities that received 5(a)(1) citations and those that received only a hazard alert letter. The goal is to expand the use of this checklist/criteria statement-based approach to support both self-assessment and program improvements.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
Does the use of specific criteria statements make self-assessment by facilities and inspections by OSHA compliance officers more effective?

Data Sources: OSHA inspections in healthcare on violence or randomly selected healthcare facilities.

Methods/Approach:
1. Provision of criteria statements to compliance officers before and after the conduct healthcare violence inspections OR
2. Data collection through interviews of self-assessments by facilities;
3. Either way is coring based on pilot project scoring,
4. Examination of scores by whether CSHOs conducted their inspection with or without the checklist and outcome evaluation comparing to final OSHA enforcement action.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Access to CSHOs in a timely fashion after they complete their inspection. In addition, as the checklist is used, it may become more widely disseminated and grow into use.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 31

Title: DOL/OWCP Report on State-Level Workers' Compensation Systems to Identify Additional Areas of Coverage Needed (OWCP). Producing a report to gather new factual data to consider additional programs or legislative initiatives on behalf of the administration. The initiatives will be the result of OWCP's identification of areas of coverage that could be filled through the creation of a federal public option for certain categories of claims and claimants.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one to three years.

Strategic Goal:
3. Improve Administration of and Strengthen Worker Safety Net Programs

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What data can we cull from existing sources to produce a new data base?
2. What new data sources and tools can we develop for further analysis in state workers' compensation systems?
3. Once we have actionable data, what tools and methods can and should we employ to best analyze and utilize that data?
4. What coverage options should we implement for certain categories of claims and claimants once we have completed our data collection and analysis, and identified areas of insufficient coverage, for the creation of new federal coverage options?

Data Sources: State workers' compensation systems

Methods/Approach: Producing a data base used for further analysis

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Adequate legal authority for the funding of this project.

Project 32*

Title: FMLA Survey (WHD). This is a national survey to gain knowledge of how employees and employers understand and experience the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The survey would build on prior waves in 1995, 2000, 2012, and 2018.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022/2023 and last three to four years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are the employee experiences and knowledge of taking, needing, and accessing leave?
2. What are the employer experiences and knowledge levels with administering FMLA leave?

Data Sources: Prior FMLA surveys, survey samples

Methods/Approach: Questionnaire fielded to nationally representative samples of employers and employees

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Achieving targeted survey response rates: WHD would support a CEO-led convening of academics and researchers to discuss the challenges and solutions for addressing response rates.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 33

Title: Understanding the prevalence and costs of misclassification and potential remedies (WHD). This research will explore opportunity track the frequency of misclassification and costs to workers and government and effectiveness of different strategies (e.g. regulation, litigation, enforcement).

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Question:
What are opportunities for measuring the prevalence and cost of worker misclassification?

Data Sources: Potentially by drawing on DOL/other agency enforcement data, tax data, and state audits.

Methods/Approach: Exploratory and Data Analytics.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

TBD.

Project 34*

Title: Worker Survey (WHD). This is a worker survey designed to establish prevalence and severity of violations among selected worker populations, occupations, and/or industry subsectors. This survey will allow WHD to drill down to specific business models, business networks, and even enterprises by asking questions not listed in existing surveys, such as CPS.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last three to four years.

Strategic Goal:
2. Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces

Priority Learning Area:
4. Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the prevalence and severity of workplace violations among selected worker populations, occupations, and/or industry subsectors? How do these conditions vary by demographics and geographic factors? How can this data inform WHD's strategic planning process, specifically to predict violation prevalence?
2. To what extent are workers knowledgeable of wage and hour protections?
3. What is the worker experience with or awareness of wage and hour violations?

Data Sources: CPS, QCEW, AWCS (American Working Conditions Survey), LED Extraction Tool - Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), Social media advertisement for survey completion for design, survey samples for data collection.

Methods/Approach: Project would require sampling techniques and robust statistical analysis. Sampling methods may include stratified samples designed to collect information on specific worker populations and/or industry subsectors and innovative sampling techniques designed to reach worker populations not typically reached through federal surveys, yet that is representative.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

1. Resources to support survey design methodology, data collection, and analysis: WHD proposes using an outside vendor through CEO to design and implement the survey. In addition, WHD's Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics could partner with the vendor to review data and extract potential areas for focus in strategic planning.
2. Achieving targeted survey response rates: WHD would support a CEO-led convening of academics and researchers to discuss the challenges and solutions for addressing response rates. WHD's communications team could partner with an outside vendor to promote awareness of the survey and encourage participation.

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* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Priority Learning Area 5: Strengthening Unemployment to Reemployment

Table 5. Planned Evidence-Building Activities Related to Priority Learning Area 5

📁 Project 35*

Title: RESEA Evidence-Building Portfolio (ETA). ETA seeks to understand additional implementation, descriptive, and impact analyses to better understand effective Reemployment Services Eligibility and Assessment (RESEA) models that work, under what conditions, and for whom.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last five years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
5. Strengthening Unemployment to Reemployment

ℹ️ Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. Which RESEA program models, strategies, and program components are effective and/or demonstrate promising results for program participants? How do these vary by different characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, occupation/industry)? What is the emerging evidence on RESEA programs that states are implementing?
2. What are promising strategies to identify UI claimants who are in need of reemployment services to transition to new employment to participate in reemployment services, such as RESEA or other job search assistance? How might such strategies take into account those most likely to exhaust benefits? How should such models developed by states be adapted and updated to reflect changes in the labor market?

Data Sources: Interviews, focus groups, administrative data, longitudinal data

Methods/Approach: Data analytics; Implementation Study/Impact Study

⚖️ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 36*

Title: UI Navigation Descriptive Study (ETA). ETA seeks to build evidence on promising strategies of Unemployment Insurance (UI) navigator approaches to improve the connection and access to unemployment insurance benefits and related services for eligible workers, especially low-paid or historically underserved workers. Through an ETA discretionary grant program to states, the department anticipates funding between four and six UI Navigator Programs, for a total of approximately $15 million across the 36-month initiatives.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last five years.

Strategic Goal:
3. Improve Administration of and Strengthen Worker Safety Net Programs

Priority Learning Area:
5. Strengthening Unemployment to Reemployment

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the potential role of UI navigators in assisting with initial and continued claim filing and referral to additional services?
2. How do UI navigators affect potential inequities in recipiency and claims process?
3. Across states, how do navigators differ from case managers, and what are the elements (if any) that would distinguish these supports?
4. What implementations conditions are present, and/or which conditions need to be present, that allows for a rigorous impact research design (e.g., a randomized control trial or a regression discontinuity design)?

Data Sources: Interviews, administrative data

Methods/Approach: Exploratory Study/Descriptive Study/Impact Evaluability Assessment

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

For a potential impact analysis, it can be challenging to identify cohorts for a comparison group and to ensure necessary data to support a complete analysis. To mitigate this risk, the study will undertake a feasibility assessment.

Project 37

Title: UI Research Center (ETA). ETA seeks to support a research-to-action model partnership between the research grantee and their state UI agency(ies) through a competitive grant to an academic institution or consortium. A longer-term goal isto support the pipeline of researchers to work on UI policy and program administration-related projects to inform policy.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last five years.

Strategic Goal:
3. Improve Administration of and Strengthen Worker Safety Net Programs

Priority Learning Area:
5. Strengthening Unemployment to Reemployment

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What are the barriers different populations of workers face in accessing UI benefits and what are potential interventions that community groups, employers, states, and the federal government could deploy to reduce those barriers?
2. What are new indicators of access and use of UI benefits?
3. How can we measure the long-term impact of UI benefits on workers, their families, communities, and the economy?

Data Sources: TBD

Methods/Approach: Academic Grant

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

None identified.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Additional Planned Learning Activities

Table 6. Additional Planned Evidence-Building Activities

📁 **Project 38***	ℹ️ **Additional Information**

Title: Improving Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility (DEIA) within the Federal Workforce (Federal-wide Initiative with OPM). DOL will lead a rigorous interagency evaluation of strategies aimed at improving Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility (DEIA) within the Federal workforce. A coordinated cross-agency evaluation presents an opportunity to drive long-term, meaningful changes for the Federal workforce. DOL will lead this evaluation in close collaboration with the Office of Personnel Management and other agencies.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2023 and last three years.

Strategic Goal:
1. Build Opportunity and Equity for All

Priority Learning Area:
6. Other Learning Priorities

Priority Research Question:
1. What strategies are federal agencies using to improve diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility within the federal workforce?
2. To what extent are these strategies meeting their stated objectives?

Data Sources: Federal administrative records; potentially original data collection

Methods/Approach: Qualitative and quantitative methods

⚖️ **Anticipated Challenges & Solutions**

TBD.

📁 **Project 39**	ℹ️ **Additional Information**

Title: Diversity and Inclusion Barrier Analysis (OASAM). Identify barriers in recruitment and retention in underrepresented groups in the DOL workforce (for example: persons-with-disabilities (PWD)).

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last four years or more.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal:
A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Priority Research Question:
What are the barriers in recruitment and retention in underrepresented groups in the DOL workforce?

Data Sources: HRConnect; DOORs; Exit Survey

Methods/Approach: Focus Groups; Survey(s); Questionnaire(s)

⚖️ **Anticipated Challenges & Solutions**

Given that the some of the necessary data elements in the HR systems are submitted voluntarily, it's unclear if there are substantial gaps in completeness/accuracy of the data. Data cleaning and prospective policy updates/guidance may be needed to improve data quality.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 40

Title: Enterprise RPA capability (OASAM). Supporting automation capabilities at the enterprise level to allow for the rapid development and deployment of bots to automate manual tasks.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2021 Q4 and last two years.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal:
A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the optimal process for rapidly evaluating fitness of processes for automation?
2. How can we optimize computing to power multiple bots in production?

Data Sources: DOL data sources across agencies, other government data providers, third party data providers

Methods/Approach: OCIO will use the Agile Software Development Lifecycle, emphasizing iterative development, continuous improvement, and Human Centered Design. Both Agile and Human Centered Design are methods to continuously respond to customer feedback and optimize for project performance criteria.

⚖ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

1. Enterprise Adoption: to facilitate enterprise adoption, the initiative will emphasize use of Human Centered Design, and will implement change management through OCIO and the DOL Data Board.
2. Data Access and Data Quality: to ensure data access and data quality supporting the project, OCIO will undertake early and robust data profiling; clear communications with stakeholders; and coordination with the DOL Data Board on data governance and related improvements for data sources not immediately meeting data access or quality standards for the initiative.

Project 41

Title: Executive (CXO) Dashboard Project (OASAM). Create dashboards for agency and DOL management to enhance and standardize display of DEBS data, with analytics and visualization of key budget and performance results.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2021 Q4 and last one year.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal:
A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. What is the optimal process for using predictive analytics for agency budget execution to help focus our resources?
2. What is the optimal process for managing the data lifecycle supporting this data product?

Data Sources: Departmental e-Business Suite (DEBS) and other data assets from DOL component agencies supporting Goals M.1 through M.3 of the DOL Strategic Plan

Methods/Approach: OCIO will use the Agile Software Development Lifecycle, emphasizing iterative development, continuous improvement, and Human Centered Design. Use cases within the project will include a range of business intelligence and analytic requirements and methods, including but not limited to: program dashboards, and data products resulting from the data science lifecycle which will use both traditional and advanced analytics.

⚖ Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

1. Enterprise Adoption: to facilitate enterprise adoption, the initiative will emphasize use of Human Centered Design, and will implement change management through OCIO and the DOL Data Board.
2. Data Access and Data Quality: to ensure data access and data quality supporting the project, OCIO will undertake early and robust data profiling; clear communications with stakeholders; and coordination with the DOL Data Board on data governance and related improvements for data sources not immediately meeting data access or quality standards for the initiative.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 42

Title: Innovation Incubator (OASAM). Creating a controlled and secure environment to allow for the incremental exploration, development and investment in new technologies.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last two years.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal:
A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. How can we best establish a controlled process for delivering valuable technology solutions while balancing cost/investment?
2. What are the key metrics that will determine success? What information is required to make go/no-go decisions on new technology?

Data Sources: DOL data sources across agencies, other government data providers, third party data providers

Methods/Approach: OCIO will use the Agile Software Development Lifecycle, emphasizing iterative development, continuous improvement, and Human Centered Design. Both Agile and Human Centered Design are methods to continuously respond to customer feedback and optimize for project performance criteria.

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

1. Enterprise Adoption: to facilitate enterprise adoption, the initiative will emphasize use of Human Centered Design, and will implement change management through OCIO and the DOL Data Board.
2. Data Access and Data Quality: to ensure data access and data quality supporting the project, OCIO will undertake early and robust data profiling; clear communications with stakeholders; and coordination with the DOL Data Board on data governance and related improvements for data sources not immediately meeting data access or quality standards for the initiative.

* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

Project 43

Title: Strengthening DOL's SES Cadre (OASAM). Assess the development needs of all SES members to inform readiness decisions about hiring, career development, and executive reassignments and rotations.

Est. Start & Duration: Study will begin in FY 2022 and last one to two years.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal:
A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. Which ECQs do SES candidates struggle to demonstrate sufficient experience (ECQs most commonly disapproved by the QRB or returned for re-write)?
2. Which ECQs are DOL SES rated the lowest/highest?
3. What Technical Qualifications are applied across all DOL Agencies?
4. What are the Technical Qualifications that separate DOL Agencies?
5. What level of experience is needed to be successful in top DOL SES positions (DAS positions)?

Data Sources: QRB Results; Performance Results (Managerial-based ECQs); SES Focus Group (ERB+PRB)

Methods/Approach: Data analysis of Qualifications Review Board (QRB) results and feedback as well as Performance Review Board (PRB) results feedback. Participation in OPM's SES Assessment Center; Piloting a Talent Management Program; Focusing specific SES Vacancies (DAS Positions, Occupational Series)

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Reduce Focus on Technical Qualifications; Inflated Performance Ratings; Differences in DOL Agency Missions; DOL culture & traditions.

Project 44

Title: Feasibility of Linking Financial Data With Performance (OCFO). OCFO is interested in learning more about how other CFO Act agencies use of financial data and non-financial data interact to optimize operations.

Est. Start & Duration: TBD; will last one to two years.

Strategic Goal - Management Goal:
A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement

Additional Information

Priority Research Questions:
1. How do other CFO Act agencies manage and monitor their financial processes?
2. How can DOL agencies utilize financial data to make better decisions?

Data Sources: Qualitative interviews; Financial administrative data

Methods/Approach: Foundational fact finding; feasibility assessment

Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Timeline is unclear as financial systems are being updated, but OCFO will remain in close communication on changes to assess when to explore data.

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* Denotes a CEO-sponsored project that will be included in the DOL FY 2022-2023 Evaluation Plan.

IV. Cross-Cutting Evidence Building Activities

DOL Scholars Program

The department will engage the academic community in efforts to build evidence on labor issues of importance to the department through DOL's Research Scholars and Grants program.[4] Launched in 2012 by the Chief Evaluation Office, this program builds the capacity of university-based researchers, and particularly emerging scholars, to rigorously examine labor-related issues while improving awareness and understanding of these issues among program administrators, policy makers, and the public. CEO will work with DOL leadership and DOL agencies to select priority research topics for future rounds of DOL Scholars grants. DOL has identified an initial list of topics that may be of interest to explore via DOL Scholars grants or the Data Challenge for Emerging Scholars & Academics program described below. **Potential priority research topics for these grants can be found in the final section of this report (Section V).**

Data Challenge for Emerging Scholars & Academics

In March 2021, CEO launched DOL's first Summer Data Equity Challenge[5] competition, resulting in five awards. This program differs from DOL Scholars in its eligibility requirements, outputs, and timeline. The Summer Data Challenge requires research teams to include at least one emerging researcher as author or co-author (defined as a current Ph.D. candidate or researcher who completed their Ph.D. no more than five years prior). Research teams may also include established academics (researchers who received their Ph.D. more than five years prior) as long as the research is co-authored with an emerging researcher. DOL intends to conduct the Summer Data Equity Challenge as an annual grant competition.

The purpose of the Summer Data Challenge is to support rigorous research using public data, including DOL data, or other administrative data to examine how well DOL policies, protections, and programs serve traditionally underserved communities due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, income, geography, immigrant status, veteran and disability status, or other factors proposed by the applicant. Conducted on a faster timeline than the Scholars program, the Summer Data Challenge is intended to provide faster-turnaround insights and data that can inform specific DOL programs.

[4] See: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/topic-areas/research-scholars-grants

[5] See: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/currentstudies/Department-of-Labor-Summer-Data-Challenge

[6] https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/spm/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/fy21_hbcu

Increasing Diversity Among DOL-Funded Research Partners

DOL is currently identifying ways it can support researchers and organizations representing traditionally underrepresented groups in accessing and applying for research opportunities sponsored by DOL. To this end, CEO is currently developing a partnership with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct research projects through its Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Research Centers of Excellence initiative.[6] Given the close association between housing, community development, and labor-related issues, DOL will seek to partner with HUD to conduct innovative research on topics relevant to housing and labor through these centers. The research projects will focus on priority topics of interest to the department related to underserved communities and historically marginalized populations.

Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR)

CLEAR (clear.dol.gov) helps make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public to inform labor-related decision-making.

During FY 2022-2026, CLEAR will continue to produce different types of systematic evidence reviews to identify, evaluate, and summarize findings from all relevant individual studies in a particular evidence base in an accessible manner. These reviews primarily examine causal evidence, which sheds light on what interventions or strategies are most effective, while also providing information about the size of the evidence base and where gaps exist. Systematic reviews that also examine qualitative studies can answer questions about how those interventions work, facilitating the possibility of replication or scaling. These types of reviews can be structured around topic areas or dates. Systematic reviews driven by dates allow CLEAR to include the most up-to-date literature on a variety of labor topics of interest to DOL, regardless of the size of the evidence base. Other types of reviews – such as rapid evidence reviews – can help address time-constrained questions. Rapid reviews quickly summarize evidence on relevant programs and potentially promising strategies to support evidence-based decision-making in response to pressing labor issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In FY 2022, CLEAR will begin to address a variety of research questions of interest to DOL agencies through its evidence reviews, anticipating beginning up to 4 new evidence reviews in FY 2022 of interest across DOL agencies. Topic areas may include reemployment programs and retraining/reemploying workers as part of a transition to a sustainable energy economy; effective practices for securing employer compliance with workplace protections; and effects of paid leave policies on workers' employment and earnings.

CLEAR routinely conducts briefings and develops short syntheses upon completion of its evidence reviews for DOL staff, to support their ability to understand and use the results of the reviews to make evidence-based decisions. CLEAR is currently exploring how to build on past dissemination approaches to continue to support evidence-based decision-making, increase capacity to consume evidence, and refine or develop new types of relevant syntheses and dissemination approaches.

DOL Staff Capacity Building: Evaluation, Measurement, and Analytics Training Program

CEO is developing a training program to increase the capacity of DOL staff to generate, evaluate, assess, and use labor-related evidence. The training will include detailed courses on the introduction and application of concepts related to program evaluation and data analytics, resulting in certifications for DOL staff who have completed the program. The development of the curriculum is still underway and has been informed by findings from the DOL Evidence Capacity Assessment, including results from a DOL staff survey about use and knowledge of evidence-related topics, as well as staff focus groups.

Improved Measurement & Data Collection of Key Constructs

BLS, CEO, and several DOL sub-agencies plan to conduct activities during FY 2022-2026 to improve the way certain key labor concepts are measured, ultimately improving the quality of data available about these topics. DOL plans to conduct at least four initiatives of this type, as described below.

Review of Consumer Price Index (CPI) Measures
BLS frequently contracts with the independent Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT), a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, to examine new sources of data and improvements to processes. Currently, CNSTAT is reviewing the BLS Consumer Price Index to evaluate whether to take explicit steps to mitigate upper-level substitution bias, as well as best methods for estimating price change for complex topics, such as health insurance, owner-occupied housing, and durables. Separate from the CNStat review, BLS is exploring options for providing additional CPI indexes for sub-populations, including perhaps different income categories. As work in these areas continues, BLS will focus on testing, including focus groups, field testing, and other options to determine how best to implement change. Other work will be needed on systems, statistical methods, publication review, implications for data collection, and other aspects of the CPI process. Such work may provide evidence that can be helpful in ongoing equity-related policy discussions. Throughout FY 22-26, BLS expects to explore and potentially modify its current CPI processes to construct its indexes, possibly blending traditionally collected data with alternatively collected and sourced data.

Updating Supplements to the Current Population Survey (CPS)

- **Review of Contingent and Alternative Work Arrangement Measures.** A committee assembled by CNSTAT, the Committee on Contingent Work and Alternative Work Arrangements, released their findings and recommendations in July of 2020. In FY 22, BLS will focus on testing, including focus groups, field testing, and other options to determine how best to implement changes or the addition of new questions to the Contingent Worker Supplement to capture information on current and future work arrangements as the labor market continues to evolve. Going forward, other work will be needed on systems, statistical methods, publication review, and other aspects of the survey process to implement the changes.

- **Revisions to the CPS Disability Supplement.** In FY 2022 and FY 2023, and beyond, ODEP will collaborate with BLS, CEO, and internal and external stakeholders to engage in foundational research and analysis to revise a Disability Supplement that has been periodically fielded (FY 2012, FY 2019, FY 2021) as part of the CPS. This project will result in a detailed mapping of current data sources on individuals with disabilities and employment, identifying gaps in the data. It will also result in the development of new survey questions designed to more accurately capture the characteristics and labor market challenges of people with disabilities, including questions focusing on identifying a broader population of people with disabilities that may be used to augment or revise the current six disability questions included in the CPS. New survey questions developed as part of this project will be included in a CPS Disability Supplement fielded in July 2024.

- **Revisions to the CPS Veterans Supplement.** In March 2021, BLS solicited public comments on a proposed revision to the Veterans Supplement, which is supported by DOL's VETS sub-agency and is used by VETS and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as external researchers to study the labor force status of veterans. Changes to the survey instrument were informed in part by an expert panel of external stakeholders convened by CEO in 2019. The revised survey instrument eliminates outdated questions and adds additional items related to veterans' transition from active duty to civilian employment, details about working with service-connected disabilities, awareness of VA benefits, and work duties while in the Armed forces. The Supplement is expected to be conducted in August 2021, August 2022, and August 2023.

- **Update to the UI Non-Filer Supplement.** The UI non-filer supplement provides one of the only sources of information about unemployed workers who may be eligible for UI but do not apply for or receive benefits. The supplement therefore provides important information to support equity assessments of the UI system. As part of DOL's ongoing commitment to improving access to timely UI benefits, CEO will work with BLS, other units in DOL, and external stakeholders to understand how this supplement could be revised to provide timely and actionable information about barriers workers experience to claiming UI benefits—particularly in light of various changes to UI administration as part of the American Rescue Plan Act.

Improving Foundational Knowledge of Care Economy Workers

In FY 2022 and beyond, ODEP expects to work with BLS, CEO, and internal and external stakeholders, to assess how federal data collections can better identify workers in caregiving professions, including workers who provide homebased or community-based care to others. Caregiving workers are not always identified in existing federal datasets that provide occupational information. Improving and standardizing the way caregiving occupations are measured in data collections is a necessary step toward improving foundational knowledge about these workers.

Improving DOL's Data Infrastructure

DOL continues to make significant strides to improve data infrastructure in ways that bring significant value to internal and external users. These efforts are intended to make access to data more efficient and effective, and to ensure that data are fit for purpose, interoperable, comprehensible, and have utility for the widest possible set of users and uses. These efforts have benefited from active cooperating and coordination between the Chief Data Officer, Chief Information Officer, Evidence Officials, and the agency staff comprising DOL's Data Board. While some of this work involves technology, much of it involves culture change, and success will depend on closely aligning the proposed activities with Agency mission, existing and prospective departmental needs, and demonstrable value for all stakeholders.

Improved Access to Data

DOL has created a new consolidated data portal and Application Programming Interface (API) that provides on demand access to machine-readable data. The new data portal and API should give Federal, private and public data users outside the department easier ways to find DOL data, as well as simple, consistent, and repeatable methods to access data that integrate well with research, analysis and reporting functions. These services have gone live within the department and the service is being evaluated for its adoption and customer experience, and the ways in which agencies integrate the service into their operations to inform decisions about opening it up to the public. The goal of this work is to expand the convenience and functionality with which DOL data can be leveraged by researchers and members of the public.

Data Governance

DOL has been actively working to expand data management and governance to support departmental and administration priorities. DOL is leveraging its enterprise data inventory, network of data stewards, and analytical capabilities to assess the state of characteristic and demographic data across the enterprise, and develop plans to make that data more fully interoperable. The DOL Data Board is working towards adoption of a metadata standard and development of open source tools to manage that metadata and leverage it to assure data quality and conformity to adopted standards. DOL has set up shared services for address standardization, which will benefit data quality and strongly enhance our ability to perform entity resolution across different data sets and programs. All of these efforts are seeking to raise DOL's data capacity and expand and improve the potential use cases for our data.

DOL Restricted Use Data Access Program

DOL has extended the service it currently uses to support evaluation contracts and contractors to researchers. DOL has arranged data files and supporting documentation for selected prior evaluation studies and can, under specific circumstances, make those data sets available for secondary analysis. This capability can be extended as well to support primary or secondary analysis of agency data sets with sensitive or non-sensitive PII under specific circumstances. DOL will continue to work towards making the largest share of its data available, and supporting the appropriate analysis of DOL data to create insights about program impacts, stakeholder outcomes, and information that can support evidence based policymaking, resource allocation, and program administration.

Examination of BLS data collection and storage alternatives

A data lake is a cloud based data repository that allow users to store large amounts of unstructured/raw or structured data. BLS is moving forward in exploring the feasibility of using a data lake to enhance the efficiency of data collection and storage. After the proof of concept period, which included demonstrations from major vendors in the field, a successful pilot project is now moving forward to explore the feasibility of using a data lake to enhance the efficiency of data collection and storage. BLS is now exploring whether a data lake can be a cost effective path to expand use of alternative data and automate some of BLS' survey functions.

Technology Modernization Fund Data Modernization Initiative

OASAM is modernizing DOL's enterprise data infrastructure to deliver enterprise capabilities in data management, advanced analytics, and open data, leveraging the DOL IT Platform's Data Analytics Capability, to improve the use of data for generating evidence. As part of this initiative, OASAM is examining the optimal process for facilitating intra-agency data sharing using an existing modernized and consolidated data source, assessing what critical enhancements to enterprise data infrastructure could enable DOL data sources to be modernized, secured, and consolidated with data governance applied, and functioning effectively in production. OASAM is identifying the critical enhancements to enterprise data infrastructure to enable DOL agencies to use advanced capabilities (e.g. AI, ML, and/or Advanced Analytics).

Improving Accessibility of ETA Data Books

ETA is working to improve the accessibility and usability of data books that present information on the characteristics, services, and outcomes of individuals served by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Wagner-Peyser Act programs. This is intended to facilitate research conducted by states, local areas, and DOL, using administrative data. In past years, the data books have been produced in less accessible formats that were difficult for researchers and practitioners to utilize. This project will enhance the usability of the data, providing it in more customizable and accessible formats that will facilitate researchers' capacity to search, download, analyze, and create visualizations with the data.

V. Potential Future Evidence-Building Topics

In addition to the confirmed projects listed above, DOL has identified a short list of future evidence-building topics that are of interest to the department and/or DOL stakeholders. While DOL has an interest in exploring the topics, it has not yet identified a specific research project to do so. The following topics may be integrated into research activities described in Section IV (for example, as a priority topic for research grants), or they may inform DOL's future evidence-building commitments.

These topics include:

- The care economy & workforce (Possible partner agencies: WB, ETA, ODEP, others)

- Equity in the workplace: hiring, retention, promotion, wages, pensions, protections (Possible partner agencies: OSHA, OFCCP, WHD, EBSA, others)

- Vulnerable workers/migrant worker rights (Possible partner agencies: WHD, ILAB)

- The future of work, post-pandemic and pandemic effects, long-COVID-19/disability issues and recovery among vulnerable sub-groups (Possible partner agencies: ETA, ODEP, VETS, WB, others)

- Re-employment services for marginalized groups (Possible partner agencies: ETA)

- Labor-related data gaps on marginalized groups (Possible partner agencies: many)

- Understanding the prevalence of retaliation against workers and potential remedies, including effective strategies for increasing workers' awareness of their rights and deterring employer incentive for retaliation (Potential partner agencies: WHD, others)

- Inequality in hiring and employee management, retention, and promotion processes (potential partner agencies: OFCCP, others)

- Pay equity and analysis of data sources regarding pay (potential partner agencies: OFCCP, others)

- Job quality and essential occupations, including caregivers (potential partner agencies: ETA, others)

Appendix A. Mapping of Planned Departmental Evidence-Building Activities by DOL Strategic Goal

Note: Numbers correspond to Project numbers in body of the report.

DOL STRATEGIC GOALS	DOL PRIORITY LEARNING AREAS					
	1: Ensuring Equity in Employment & Training Programs	2: Reducing Barriers to Women's Employment	3: Studying Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic	4: Improving Enforcement Activities & Protections for All	5: Strengthening Unemployment to Reemployment	6: Other Learning Priorities
1: Build Opportunity and Equity for All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	1, 9, 12	22	35	38
2: Ensure Safe Jobs, Essential Protections, and Fair Workplaces	N/A	N/A	13	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34	N/A	N/A
3: Improve Administration of and Strengthen Worker Safety Net Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	31	36, 37	N/A
4: Statistical Goal – Produce Gold-Standard Statistics and Analyses	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	See Section IV
Management Goal: A Department Grounded in Evidence, Innovation, and Employee Engagement	N/A	N/A	14	N/A	N/A	39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44