

Brief: Implementing Title I of the Evidence Act

OMB Evidence Team – Spring 2022

Enacted in January 2019, the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (“[Evidence Act](#)”) marked a turning point in the Federal Government’s commitment to evidence-based policymaking. Building on existing efforts, the Act outlined new and expanded activities around Federal evidence building, open government data, and confidential information protection and statistical efficiency. The Evidence Act brought a new paradigm for agencies in how they build and use data and evidence, emphasizing leadership, collaboration, and systematic planning.

Agencies across the Federal Government reached a major milestone in Evidence Act implementation this month, publishing their Learning Agendas; Annual Evaluation Plans; Capacity Assessments for Research, Evaluation, Statistics, and other Analyses. These documents, along with the Evaluation Policies agencies published last year, reflect a multi-year process of engagement and strategic evidence planning.

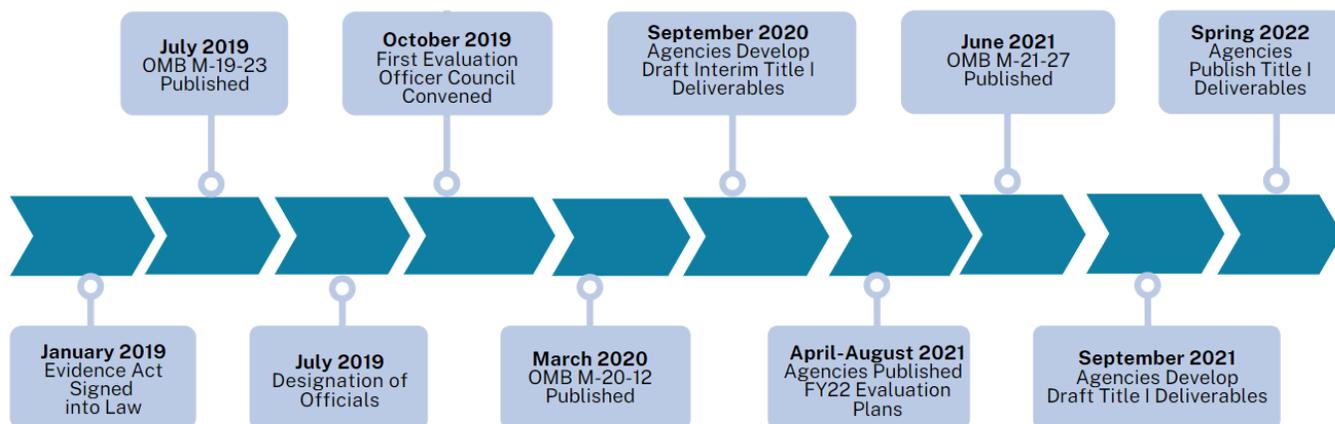
Building Evidence Systematically¹

The Evidence Act laid the foundation to instill important evidence planning processes and activities at Federal agencies through four central documents. A **Learning Agenda**, a systematic plan that identifies priority questions relevant to the programs, policies, and regulations of the agency and describes the agency’s plans for addressing them. An **Annual Evaluation Plan** is a public-facing document that describes the evaluation activities an agency plans to undertake in the subsequent fiscal year, and includes “significant” evaluations, as determined by the agency. A **Capacity Assessment** is an assessment of the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of the statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis of the agency. An **Evaluation Policy** is public-facing policy that presents the key principles that govern the agency’s planning, conduct, and use of program evaluations, consistent with the standards laid out in [OMB M-20-12](#).

Title I Requirements

-  Evaluation Officers and Statistical Officials
-  Learning Agenda
-  Capacity Assessment
-  Annual Evaluation Plan
-  Evaluation Policies
-  Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building

Key Accomplishments to Date



¹ The Evidence Act requires these planning documents for the CFO Act agencies; other agencies and sub-agencies are encouraged to develop these documents as well.

Turning Point in Evidence Act Implementation

The newly-published Learning Agendas, Capacity Assessments, and FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plans highlight the breadth, depth, and commitment of Federal agencies to building and using evidence. They serve to focus attention on areas of shared emphasis and opportunities for collaboration and investment. Taken together, these planning documents and capacity assessments provide novel insights into how agencies are building the evidence they need and provide a roadmap for action.

MORE THAN HALF OF AGENCIES IDENTIFIED QUESTIONS ON:



CLIMATE CHANGE



EVIDENCE AND DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

WORKFORCE



SERVICE DELIVERY



The Next Phase: Moving from Planning to Execution

Publishing these documents is a noteworthy achievement, but there is more to do as agencies move from planning to execution. Agencies now begin the important work to implement the activities outlined in these documents and use the information learned from these activities as critical tools to improve programs and policies in support of their operations and missions. Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans will continue to be updated in the coming months and years to reflect results and new questions. Using their Capacity Assessments, Federal agencies will begin to undertake efforts needed to build and expand their capacity to carry out the activities in these plans, by training and investing in staff and other resources.



Federal agencies are hard at work to execute on these plans and expand the reach of evidence-building activities, but they can't do it alone. Ongoing engagement with communities is key for informing how activities are prioritized and implemented. Agencies are also eager and open to the support of external researchers and academics to help answer their identified priority questions. [Evaluation.gov](https://www.evaluation.gov) is your one-stop home for all of these Evidence Act deliverables, and is a great place for those interested to identify opportunities to collaborate.

Stay Connected, Stay Tuned

This brief is the first in a series on Evidence Act implementation; future briefs will highlight the work unfolding as agencies implement their evidence building plans. OMB's Evidence Team continues to support agencies in building a culture of evidence to support the evidence planning process.

Find more information and learn how to get involved here:



Learning Agendas



Evaluation Policies



Capacity Assessments



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Annual Evaluation Plans