



November 10, 2022

Transmitted Electronically Via Email

The Honorable Nani Coloretti
Deputy Director
Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable Jason Miller
Deputy Director for Management
Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
Washington, D.C. 20503

RE: OMB Support for Evaluation Capacity

Deputy Director Nani Coloretti and Deputy Director for Management Jason Miller –

On behalf of the American Evaluation Association and the evaluation community, we want to offer our congratulations and thanks once again to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for its work to bolster federal evaluation capacity. Efforts over the last two years have been substantial, notable, and widely recognized by the evaluation community. As vocal supporters of OMB's ongoing efforts, we write to acknowledge this contribution and also encourage further progress on two fronts.

The first involves the recent movement of OMB's Evidence Team to the Office of Performance and Personnel Management (OPPM) under the leadership of Dustin Brown. We see this is an excellent move that helps to highlight the importance of evaluation capacity as a support for mission achievement of all federal agencies. OMB recognized this in a memorandum to agency heads designating evaluation as a critical mission function, and the move to OPPM aligns well with the designation in that OMB memo. We also encourage timely completion of another step in this reorganization, that is, the renaming of OPPM to signal OMB's recognition of the importance and broad scope of evaluation in the wider evidence community. Absent a new name, the inclusion of evaluation capacity within OMB's performance and personnel office may seem to signal, incorrectly, that evaluation work is relevant only to compliance reporting under requirements of the GPRA Modernization Act. Sending appropriate signals to the statutory Evaluation Officers established by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act and clarifying OMB's intent to the evaluation community more broadly offers valuable indicators about the intent that will help bolster capacity in the years ahead. We understand the challenges of reorganization and the associated name changes. Nevertheless, we look forward to a timely renaming of OPPM to better acknowledge the vital and distinct role of evaluation.

Second, we reiterate our past advocacy for OMB's continued efforts to encourage agencies to direct funding toward supporting and strengthening their program evaluation functions. We are grateful that OMB recognizes that evaluation is an essential function of an effective government to understand implementation and effects of programs and policies. Past and ongoing efforts on OMB's part will not bear the intended fruit, however, without adequate funding. OMB must include additional resources for the evaluation function in the FY 2024 Budget. We implore you to also acknowledge all Evaluation Officers have minimum staffing and capacity needs to be successful. Three years after enactment of the Evidence Act, we are aware that most agencies face no change in pre-enactment funding levels for resources dedicated to evidence generation, coordination, and use. Further, every Evaluation Officer needs more staff support to recognize the critical importance of the role and capacity needs. As you prepare for the Director's Review process this fall and write next year's budget submission to Congress, we appeal to you to finally match the resources that align with the President's January 27, 2021 memo that called for evidence to be at the center of the Administration's policies – ensuring that evaluators are actually in place to do this work in a real and meaningful way.

The American Evaluation Association is a professional association of evaluators, with the mission of improving evaluation practices and methods, increasing evaluation use, promoting evaluation as a profession and supporting the contribution of evaluation to the generation of theory and knowledge about effective human and government action. Evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programs, policies, personnel, products and organizations to improve their effectiveness.

Sincerely,

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