**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA): Implementing Requirements for Conducting Evaluations and Building Evidence**

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GRACE MCCALL: Please type in your questions or comments at any time. And welcome to "Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program, Implementing Requirements for Conducting Evaluations and Building Evidence." So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator for today, Larry Burns, reemployment coordinator, Office of Unemployment Insurance, ETA, United States Department of Labor. Larry?

LAWRENCE BURNS: Thank you, Grace. And welcome, everyone, to today's webinar. Thank you very much for taking the time to join us. I know there is a lot of anticipation for the recent guidance on evaluations and evidence and everybody's really excited about jumping into that. But before we get started, I just wanted to do a little bit of quick housekeeping and give you a heads up about some things that are coming down the pike.

First of all, I wanted to let you know that we booked a little bit of extra time on this webinar. Usually we book an hour. We have 90 minutes today. We have a lot to cover, but we are going to try to save some time at the end for questions. But as a heads up, if we don't have time to get to all the questions today we have booked a follow-up session to this event for state RESEA program managers and it'll be a set of office hours where we can answer some of the questions we may not get to today or other questions you have after this event.

So at the end of the presentation we'll talk about how to submit those questions. But that will be coming up in a couple weeks on December 4th. It's a Wednesday and it'll be at 2:00 p.m. Eastern time. So we'll bring this up again at the end but I just wanted to highlight that we'll have time for questions today and we'll have even more time a couple weeks from now.

Also, if you may have joined us earlier this summer on our previous RESEA evaluation of technical assistance webinars. We did an entire series. If you're not familiar with those, I just wanted to remind everyone that they are recorded and available online. So we'll be sharing that link at the end of the session as well so you can go back and revisit those. I think as we go through this guidance you may want to learn more or revisit some of that previous work we've done. So I just wanted to give you a heads up that everything we've done over the last couple months is available online and we'll be sharing links at the end of the presentation.

With that, I'd like to introduce our speakers today. I'm joyed by Gay Gilbert, administrator of the Office of Unemployment Insurance here at ETA U.S. DOL. I'm also joined by Megan Lizik who is the senior evaluation specialist and for the Chief Evaluation Office here at U.S. DOL. One of the things I wanted to keep a heads-up on is we have a few other people who may join us for the Q&A so you'll be hearing some different voices; don't be scared.

But with that, I just want to go over a few of the objectives we have today. We have a long list of things to cover. It's a very full agenda. First we're going to be providing an overview of the recent evaluation of evidence guidance that was issued as both an Unemployment Insurance Program Letter and a Training and Employment Guidance Letter.

Both were published on October 31st, 2019. I have included links in the webinar here so you can go back and revisit those, but we're going to start with a high-level overview of those documents and also what's included in those. We issued both a UIPL and TEGL for RESEA this go around and that will be our strategy moving forward to reflect the changing nature of the RESEA program and the greater dependence on integration across these and workforce programs. So you will be seeing in the future both the UIPL and the TEGL for RESEA guidance, the vast majority of it moving forward.

We'll also be talking a little bit about causal evidence ratings, which is a core component now of the RESEA program and we'll provide an overview of what that means and how it's defined and what the implications are for the RESEA programs. And we'll be wrapping up with some tips on conducting high quality evaluations and also as I mentioned before we have a lot of technical assistance and technical assistance that's ongoing. We have more things coming your way. I'm going to show you what those resources are and how to get to them.

So before we get started with the main substance of the evaluation guidance, we wanted to provide a brief background. And I know, given the subject matter of this presentation, most of you are already familiar with RESEA so we really wanted to just focus in on the key changes to the program that were made recently by the Bipartisan Budget Act which was passed in 2018. So the Bipartisan Budget Act amended the Social Security Act to create a new section 306 and this new section establishes RESEA as a permanent program. So we now have a permanent authorization.

In the past, RESEA was really a creature of the appropriations existing from year to year, but now we have a permanent authorization and some other requirements around the program that we'll be talking about. It's permanently authorized but it still is voluntary in the sense that states have to opt to participate. And you opt to participate by providing and submitting in RESEA state plan, similar to the applications we've done in the past. And there will be more information about the state plan forth coming.

The other key component we'll be talking about today is the tiered evidence approach and this tiered evidence approach is intended to promote states' use of evidence but also it has mechanisms in place to help grow the body of evidence available to support the RESEA program.

Another key change is that RESEA is no longer a prescriptive program. It promotes and rewards new and innovative service delivery strategies and innovations that improve employment outcomes and reduce the duration. In the past, RESEA had a pretty comprehensive list of the required activities, what RESEA should look like, when it should happen. But the new program provides a lot of flexibility to test innovation to try new strategies and interventions. So we wanted to highlight that as another one of the key changes that was made by the recent legislation.

Last in the background section, we wanted to talk a little bit about RESEA's goals. The new amendment to the Social Security Act defined four goals for RESEA. The first is to improve employment outcomes and reduce benefit duration or that the intervention or service delivery strategy are being evaluated to determine their effectiveness in achieving these goals. So basically, what this does is it links RESEA to evidence but more importantly, you see the connection here between duration and employment outcomes. So the intent here is to shorten duration here by improving employment outcomes.

There's also the goal of strengthening program integrity and reducing improper payments. That's been a long-standing goal of RESEA and its predecessor REA. There's also the goal of promoting integration with the provision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and establishing RESEA as an entry point to other workforce system partners.

The reason one is a goal, just go through these goals quickly before we get started is because everything in the RESEA program and all the new requirements link back to these goals. And as we go through and discuss some of the RESEA integration and evidence requirements, I think you kind of see the connection that feeds into these four goals that are defined for RESEA.

At this point, what we'd like to do is do a quick check-in and do a quick poll of how you would rate your knowledge of evaluations. As an FYI, you may have seen this question before early on when we were doing evaluation of technical assistance. We asked this at the very beginning and we're kind of curious to see if it's changed and just to get a gauge for who's in the room and your comfort level of evaluation, so I'll give you a minute to answer that.

Thanks for your feedback on that. I saw that it seemed like the majority are ready to learn or have some knowledge about that. So we kind of anticipated that people were going to be across the board in their experience with evaluations.

One of the things before we move on is I just wanted to highlight that in developing our technical assistance, we've really done it with the mindset of having technical assistance available, no matter where you are in the spectrum of evidence and evaluations, whether you're a beginner, if you've done them before. We feel the resources were designed in a way to get you to where you need to be for these RESEA evaluations, but that's kind of where we expected to be with this presentation.

And with that, I'm going to hand the presentation over to Gay Gilbert to talk a little bit about the requirements of the new RESEA program.

GAY GILBERT: Sorry. We're shifting chairs here so that we can be sure that you can hear.

Hi, everybody. Let me start out with on this slide sort of talking about one of the fundamental underpinnings of the, about the RESEA program and as required by statute. Essentially, all the funds that you spend on service delivery for RESEA need to be used for interventions, which are defined as service delivery strategies.

It must be demonstrated to reduce claim duration by improving employment outcomes, which is the goal that Lawrence just talked about. And then any interventions or strategies that you're using that are not backed by evidence must be under evaluation. And in fact, there's an interest in you having new interventions or strategies that you are evaluating so we can build a body of evidence.

And I think most of you know from our prior webinars or from the guidance that up to 10 percent of your state RESEA funds can be used for evaluations. And we've acknowledged in the past that this is not a huge sum of money, particularly in small states. And so we're going to be talking about some ways to think about that moving forward.

So let's talk about what a tiered evidence approach is. First of all, it's requiring that you use strategies that work. It ties funding availability to strategies with evidence. It provides incentive to provide new evidence around innovative strategies and it requires evaluations of strategies without evidence. So it's really weaving this whole thread of wanting to be sure that we are providing the best possible services that are built on evidence and that we continue to build the body of evidence.

Yes. So one of the reasons that it's very important for us to begin building evidence sooner rather than later is that beginning in FY 2023, states must us a minimum percentage of their funds on interventions with high or moderate causal evidence ratings and we're going to talk about sort of what that means more later in the webinar. But as you can see in the little chart below, the amount of your funding that has to be used in a given year, 2023 and beyond, it starts to increase over time. So again, that's a really important reason why we need to begin to build evidence sooner rather than later.

So what are the expectations for state RESEA evaluations? If you didn't take, I won't say this. One of the most important things we tried to communicate in the guidance that was just released is that states are expected to begin evaluations of RESEA interventions and service delivery strategies no later than during FY 2020. And there are multiple reasons for that. Our friends in Congress who drafted this legislation made it very clear to us that we could not forever rely on the Nevada study, impact study that we've relied on to date to suggest that this is a program built on evidence.

Also, RESEA is a new program. Larry was pointing out that we, it is no longer prescriptive. There's more flexibility and there are incentives for you to try new service delivery strategies and to shape the program based on the evidence and build new evidence. So we also, we need that new causal evidence with the high and moderate ratings in order to support funding requirements moving forward based on the slide we just talked about. We also know that rigorous impact evaluations are multi-year efforts. They aren't something you can produce overnight, so that, there's a timing, time sensitivity to get started on evaluations now.

And then also, Larry mentioned that this year you will be required for the first time to complete an RESEA state plan as a condition of your funding. One of the pieces and parts of that plan will, does require that you provide a description of how the state is meeting the evidence and evaluation requirements in your plan and/or your plans to meet them. So there is, we genuinely believe there is urgency to move this forward sooner rather than later. And again, we're looking to ask states to begin their evaluations in FY 2020.

So what are the evaluation parameters so to speak? So we want obviously to be aligned with the RESEA defined goals and the big one being that we want to reduce duration as a result of improved employment outcomes. So as you are framing your evaluations, you're going to be looking at both duration data and employment outcome data to sort of help assess the impact of your strategies. States must, may propose additional outcomes such as a participation or completion rate, but they still have to have those foundational elements in duration and employment outcomes.

There's an expectation that evaluations be made available to the public and to U.S. DOL, regardless of the outcomes. One of the things when you're building evidence that's really important is to also learn sort of what wasn't perfectly working but might also be tweaked to work better. It's, all of it is a body of learning that helps us advance how we think about the program and the service delivery.

We want to coordinate. We suggest that you coordinate your evaluations with WIOA mandated evaluation project is feasible. They are different. WIOA doesn't have the rigor quite as much demanded I guess by the status in the same way that RESEA does, but we also know that what you, and the way for RESEA is going to be really important learning of the entire workforce system, as we are testing out ways to provide service delivery to job seekers and we obviously serve those job seekers in many programs.

And then other types of evidence building may be appropriate places to start to ensure conditions are right for an impact study. One of the things we pointed out in the guidance, and Megan may talk more about this, is that there's implementation studies. There are feasibility studies. There are things that can help you build up to having a really strong and viable impact study. So as you're designing your evaluation plan, those are things to consider as you're moving forward.

So on this slide, I think again we point out the things that are, as you're thinking about what it is that you're evaluating. An intervention is defined as a service delivery strategy. Just a little bit of a circular definition, but generally I think we're looking at what are the ways you're designing your service delivery for this program and sort of what are those pieces and parts that might lead themselves to being a subject of evaluation.

We are in the guidance saying it is feasible for you to evaluate your whole program or any component of it. And you may have seen in the guidance a chart that we just provided some examples here on the slide that really kind of focuses in on some of the components that we think will be important to be evaluated, either collectively or individually.

So examples of those include, so how are you changing your service delivery strategies. And that's one I think states are really giving some serious thought to. It's obviously a bigger program, a better-funded program. You have opportunity to not, to move away from the fairly minimalistic RESEA and REA program interventions that we had before.

You have the opportunity to do more intensive services to introduce case management, to provide more extensive clear guidance and customize, individualize career guidance. You can spend more time helping a claimant actually develop a re-employment plan. So those are all types of service delivery strategies that you might want to not only consider for integrating into your program, but to also be the subject of your evaluation.

There are other things that are sort of wrap-around RESEA that are part of the intervention too. We also think that we have strategies that you might be using now to support research compliance would be a really good target. And I keep looking at RESEA and other enforcement mechanisms for work search. I know we have obviously the eligibility component, but also how do you help the claimant do what they're asked to do and how do you help them understand what the requirements are to meet those requirements?

Claimant selection can be a strategy as well and that's not only how you target, but when you target. And then how many sessions you have. This gets into if you decide to develop a case management model you may be seeing a claimant on multiple occasions or you may have a different way to frame that.

But we are again looking at a bigger and more well-funded program so there is an opportunity to think about multiple sessions and let me just say one caveat about this one because we don't think about multiple session in the new RESEA program in quite the same way we thought about them in RESEA where we had kind of a total remark concept of those sessions.

In this case, it's you have great flexibility in how you design what happens in those sessions and that can be part of your reemployment service delivery. It could be also bringing those back to redetermine their eligibility or some combination of those things. So if you have much more flexibility to think about what happens in multiple sessions.

And with that, I think Larry might have another polling question for you and I think then we'll be following up with Megan on some more evaluations information.

MR. BURNS: Yes. Thank you, Gay. Before I move on, we just want to do another quick check-in. So on this poll here, we're trying to get a feel for what your major concerns are, your top concerns about conducting evaluations, whether it's building capacity, coming up with questions, incorporating evaluation procedures, assessing necessary data, developing partnerships or just understanding and communicating the evaluation results.

Again, you may have seen this poll before. We've used it very early on in our technical assistance. We're kind of curious to see if there's been any changes and also to get a feel for what's on people's minds before we talk a little bit about technical assistance and evidence ratings. So we'll give you a minute to respond to this.

When Megan takes over, I'll pull through and start. OK. We'll give you a few more seconds to respond and then we'll keep on moving. OK. So it looked like the biggest concern, but not by much, was accessing necessary data and resources.

And we have done some technical assistance in the past specific to that topic and will continue to do so, but generally speaking it looked like everybody was kind of real spread across the different elements that people are concerned with, which is a good segue because we're going to talk a little bit about both how we're going to be looking at evidence and rating evidence, but also we're going to be moving into some discussion about technical assistance and some of the resources that are out there to help you get over some of these concerns.

So with that, we're going to move on to Megan.

MEGAN LIZIK: Great. Thanks so much, Larry. And I'm going to ask you guys to keep advancing the slides here for now. So we will pick up on the slide with causal evidence ratings and start today's discussion about causal evidence ratings by revisiting CLEAR, DOL's Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research. Next slide.

As those of you who attended our evaluation TA webinar series know by now, CLEAR is a central source of research and information on labor-related topics and its primary goal is to make labor research more accessible to audiences such as practitioners, policymakers, researchers and the public so that it can inform decisions about labor policies and programs.

Basically, CLEAR is a place you can go to see how big of a body of research is out there, what it says about particular programs or interventions reaching their goals, and how confident we can be in the findings in particular programmatic areas.

CLEAR does this by conducting systematic evidence review on labor topics, including studies funded by DOL as well as other studies and published reports and then summarizing the study methodologies, findings and policy or program implications. To date, CLEAR has conducted 19 evidence reviews across a variety of topic areas and summarized about 750 studies. One of these topics is the reemployment topic area, which was formed at the foundation for our new RESEA topic area.

CLEAR also rates causal impact studies as high, moderate or low according to the strength of the evidence they produced, which is a quick indicator of how credible the study is and how confident we can be in the results. In CLEAR, we use gas gauge indicators that indicate the rating of the study and I've put these here for your reference.

They also develop syntheses for topic areas. These provide a summary of the state of the evidence or distill the so what that comes out of the systematic evidence review. What we know, what the evidence base looks like, and where there are gaps for future inquiry. Going forward, CLEAR's RESEA topic area will also include RESEA intervention causal evidence ratings and summaries of new RESEA studies.

This means that every few years as new evidence is generated, CLEAR will conduct a systematic evidence review to find all the new studies of RESEA interventions that have been publicly posted, review and assign both the studies and intervention ratings, and add those to the existing evidence base already summarized in CLEAR.

Next slide. Let's dive more into the RESEA intervention causal evidence rating which you'll see in CLEAR. As you know, an RESEA intervention can be either the whole program, meaning whole unique bundles of services you're delivering, or a component of that program, meaning a single service or feature of the whole program.

We've taken a close look at the existing evidence base for RESEA and assigned one of the following four causal evidence ratings to each intervention: high, moderate, potentially promising, or no rating. Again, going forward, CLEAR will conduct periodic evidence reviews to find all the new studies and review and rate interventions. This is not something we'll be asking states to do on your own.

Next slide. This means that going forward in CLEAR's RESEA topic area, there will be two types of evidence ratings applied. First, CLEAR's causal evidence ratings will be assigned to each individual study. These describe the quality or credibility or the study and do not change once they're assigned. These are represented again by the gas gauge icon in clear. Second, based on the available evidence, CLEAR will also identify RESEA interventions and use the literature to assign causal evidence ratings to those interventions. These are represented by the thermometer icon in clear.

Unfortunately, the intervention ratings are based on how much credible evidence exists that shows an intervention is effective. This means that if multiple studies look at similar interventions, the evidence for all those studies can be used to identify the intervention as this rating. Also, importantly because new evidence will continuously be generated, these ratings can change as more evidence becomes available.

Next slide. Now, let's take a closer look at the standards for RESEA intervention ratings. A high causal evidence rating represented by the full thermometer icon in CLEAR requires at least two credible impact studies. That means studies that have gotten the high or moderate causal evidence rating. And that have each found favorable impact on employment and UI duration with a strong degree of statistical significance. This means that there is less than a five percent chance that the studies' results are due to chance and not actually the intervention.

A moderate causal evidence rating requires at least one credible impact study that has found a favorable impact on employment and, either in the same study or another study, favorable impact on UI durations with a modest degree of statistical significance. This means that there is less than a 10 percent change that the study's results are due to chance and not actually the intervention.

Next slide. DOL has also chosen to identify two other ratings for interventions that do not qualify for high or moderate ratings. First, a potentially promising rating can be assigned if there is at least one credible impact study that has found favorable impact on employment or UI duration with a modest degree of statistical significance.

And finally, a no rating can be assigned to interventions for which no credible impact studies of the intervention exist or to which interventions for which credible impact studies exist but where none of those showed particularly significant favorable impacts on the specified outcomes. These are represented by the last two thermometer icons.

What's important to note about interventions that receive these ratings is that they show where there are known gaps in the evidence base where just one additional study could potentially move your intervention to a moderate causal evidence rating. That could be a study conducted by you and your state's intervention.

Next slide. Now that you know more about the meaning behind the RESEA evidence and interventions that are rated in CLEAR, I wanted to take a minute to give you a brief demonstration of where to find this information in CLEAR. Here you can see CLEAR's landing page.

Next slide. You'll notice that we've pulled the new RESEA topic out of the topic area drop down menu where the other evidence reviews exist and given it its own topic area tab on the far right of the menu bar. Our hope is that this will make it easier to find every time you go to CLEAR.

Next slide. If you scroll down in the RESEA topic area tab, you'll see that we've identified all the studies from the reemployment evidence review that are relevant to RESEA, organized them by intervention category and assigned each intervention a causal evidence rating according to the criteria just described. Currently, five categories of interventions have received ratings: reemployment eligibility assessments, job search assistance services, profiling, more stringent work search requirements, and less stringent work search requirements.

Next slide. Again, each intervention's causal evidence rating, represented by the thermometer icon, is based on the findings of all the studies of that type of intervention. I've circled the ratings here so you can notice where they are. Remember every few years as the evidence base grows, CLEAR will conduct a new systematic evidence review to pick up all the new studies of RESEA interventions that have been publicly released during that time. That's why as Gay mentioned it's very important that the studies that you conduct are released publicly so we can find them.

CLEAR will summarize those here and assign study and intervention causal evidence ratings accordingly. During this process, these intervention ratings might change as you and other states add to the evidence base and you will see more interventions appear.

Now let's dive a bit more into what's included here. Next slide. You can expand each intervention category by clicking on the arrow to see a list of all the studies of that intervention.

Next slide. What you're looking at here are snippets of three study profiles in the REA intervention category. Remember, everything you see in the study profile, including the study's causal evidence rating and the outcomes, won't change over time. These are tied to the specifics of the particular study that was already conducted. As you scroll down the page, you'll see more studies of this intervention that are available to look at.

Next slide. You can also click on each study title to see the full summary profile of the study, including more information on the features of the specific intervention studied, the features of the specific study, its findings, its causal evidence rating and importantly considerations for interpreting those findings.

This was just a mini demonstration of what's new in CLEAR. For more information about CLEAR, what it is and a fuller demonstration of how to navigate the CLEAR website, please check out our recent evaluation TA webinar, using the clearinghouse for labor evaluation and research, a demonstration.

Next slide. Now that we've gone through the standards and where to find them, let's start thinking about what's next. Well there are certainly some existing studies in the RESEA evidence base, more high-quality evidence needs to be developed over time. More evidence can tell us things like what components of a program are driving impacts for people or how service components can be bundled most effectively to serve different types of populations that are important to you.

No one study can tell us all of these things, but through multiple studies that you and other states are conducting, we can all start to get a picture of what some of the answers to these kinds of important questions are.

As Gay mentioned, you can use 10 percent of your RESEA funds for these evaluations and DOL and our evaluation TA contractor, which I'll talk more about in a few minutes, are here to support you.

Next slide. Given all this, let's talk about a few things to keep in mind as you get started. The first step to achieving this rating is to develop credible evidence. If conditions are right to conduct an impact study, you will want to work with your independent evaluator to focus on conducting a high-quality impact study of your RESEA intervention, meaning one that achieves a high or moderate causal evidence rating. In other words, the top two levels of that gas gauge in CLEAR.

Next slide. There are three things you can do to help increase the likelihood of your RESEA evaluation achieving such a rating. First, have an experienced independent evaluator onboard. Second, use an academically rigorous design with comparison groups to ensure that you have a large enough sample.

Let's dive into each of these a bit more. Next slide. Thinking about conducting a high-quality evaluation that has enough sample to be able to demonstrate program effectiveness can be pretty daunting. Anyone who has conducted evaluations before that they can be technically complex and run into various challenges along the way.

This is why DOL strongly encourages states to partner with an experienced independent evaluator who has successfully conducted similar types of studies to the kind you're considering before. Experienced evaluators should be technically experts in an impact study design that you're considering and know how to help you determine the most rigorous and appropriate impact evaluation designs for your particular setting that can meet CLEAR standards.

You can verify an evaluator's qualifications in several ways. For example, by asking for descriptions of or reports of previously conducted studies using impact evaluation design, by asking for descriptions of their organization's capacity that demonstrate adequate technical, management and IT support are available, and by looking at TVs, resumes or biographies of proposed evaluations projects' stats and by reviewing recommendations from previous clients among other things. Ensuring that you have a strong evaluator conducting your evaluation greatly boosts your evaluation's chances of being high-quality and successful.

Depending on the kind of evaluation your state plans to conduct and like Gay said, not all states may have the right conditions right now to start right away on an impact study. There are many other kinds of studies that you can potentially consider, some of which are talked more about in the guidance. But today we're focusing primarily on impact studies.

You know, depending on the kind of evaluation your state decides to conduct, you may wish to have your state staff conduct the evaluation, again as long as they're independent meaning they have no responsibility for program administration or operations. You may wish to use an existing evaluation partner that you might have like a university or you may wish to procure an evaluation contractor that has this type of expertise and experience.

For more information on how to decide and select the right kind of independent evaluator for you, check out our evaluation TA webinar, Procuring and Selecting an Independent Evaluator.

Next slide. Next you want to make sure your impact evaluation uses an academically rigorous like random assignment or a quasi-experimental design. This is the only type of study that can detect impact or how much the intervention itself influences outcomes from what they would have been if they had not participated.

Importantly, impact is different from outcomes which is often what you're used to thinking about when you're looking at performance measures of a program. Participants' outcomes can be the result of many things like local labor markets or other resources like people's networks that might help them find a job in addition to your program where RESEA might be only one contributor to that outcome.

Outcome studies or performance data can be important pieces of evidence for you to consider when you're thinking about what kind of program you want to create. However, remember that RESEA intervention ratings are based on findings from impact studies where we can be confident the results come by the intervention itself and not anything else. These are what we're calling credible impact studies.

Next slide. To diva bit more into this, I've highlighted some key points about each of CLEAR's study rating levels. You'll notice that the higher the study rating, the greater the quality and the more confident you can be that the effects you see are from the program and are actually attributable to the program.

Again, this is the kind of evidence you want to build. You can learn more about what's behind these ratings by taking a look at CLEAR's causal evidence guidelines which we provide a link to later in the presentation.

Next slide. So how do you do that? Well, you'll want your impact study to use an academically rigorous design and, like random assignment or one of several quasi-experimental designs. Either can receive at least a moderate rating in CLEAR, but you can see from looking at the small table of studies that I've included here that are already in the RESEA topic area that random assignment design or randomized control trials has historically been conducted more often and more successfully than other types of design.

There are a number of reasons for this but generally speaking, our RCTs are less technically complex and require less sample sizes than QEDs. We'll talk more about the importance of sample sizes in just a minute.

The bottom line here is that you'll want to work with your experienced evaluator to help you determine what type of design is most appropriate and rigorous for your specific setting. And importantly, as Gay mentioned earlier, that the conditions are right for proceeding on an impact study. You can learn more in the evaluation TA webinars that I have included here.

Next slide. Finally, let's touch briefly on sample sizes. Exact sample sizes will vary depending on your research question and type of study. For example, what is a question that you want to be able to answer? Will you be evaluating your RESEA program as a whole or a subcomponent of it? How large or significant is that component and what outcome measures are of interest? How large of an outcome might you expect from the program you're delivering. Answers to these questions will indicate the type of impact evaluation design that is most appropriate and the amount of data or size of sample that you will need in order to assess the results.

For random assignment studies, the sample size needed is rarely less than a few thousand and often more than 10,000. Certain questions could also require sample sizes of 50 or even more than 100,000. Quasi experimental designs typically could even require larger sample sizes than that, though they have some tradeoffs in that they don't require a random assignment of participants.

Every type of impact study design has certain considerations, benefits and tradeoffs. Again, DOL wants to emphasize that working with an experience evaluator to plan your study will help ensure that you evaluation is set up for success.

Next slide. DOL does have supports in place as you begin your evaluations. Next slide. As most of your who've been watching our evaluation TA webinar series know, DOL's Chief Evaluation Office awarded a contract to apt associates and their partners at the Urban Institute and Capital Research Corporation to support implementing the evidence and evaluation requirements we're talking about today. Their team brings together highly qualified staff in the many areas this project requires, including and importantly evaluation of technical assistance.

Working closely with DOL's Chief Evaluation Office, ETA's Office of Unemployment Insurance and the Office of Policy Development and Research as well as the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, we've already held a series of evaluation TA webinars this past spring and summer that Larry mentioned earlier are posted on the RESEA reemployment connections community of practice on WorkforceGPS.

We'll also be hearing more from the project as the implementation progresses and the results from that evaluation identify options for both DOL and states to continue building the evidence base.

Next slide. If you'd like to revisit any of the webinars in our evaluation TA series, you can find them all posted online as I mentioned on the RESEA evaluation and evidence resource page on WorkforceGPS. We also have a few more office hour sessions coming up and other written products like the RESEA written evaluation toolkit. All of those will be posted there.

As Larry mentioned earlier, all of these resources have been designed generally to build evaluation capacity. In other words, to help meet and progress your evaluation plans from where you're at now, whether you're just starting to think about evaluation and evidence building or whether you've been doing continuous evidence-based program improvement for a while.

Next slide. In addition to these general resources, we also have some customized help available. For immediate evaluation-related questions, you can contact our RESEA evaluation TA team anytime through the helpline at this e-mail address. They can help with basic questions and provide suggestions for how to think through evaluation challenges.

DOL will also be offering more intensive evaluation TA for a subset of individual states or state evaluation consortia. States that volunteer and are chosen to participant will receive ongoing evaluation technical assistance at key points in your evaluation lifecycle. Importantly, this evaluation TA does not supplant the need to identify and work with your own independent evaluator.

However, DOL's evaluation TA contractor can help provide support for, to states and states' evaluators who are chosen to be part of this consortia process.

Next slide. Here we have summarized some other evaluation and data-related resources that are already available to you for reference. Larry, would you like to talk a little bit more about some of these?

MR. BURNS: Sure, Megan. Thank you very much. So on this page we really just wanted to have a reference for you to find some of the resources we've organized specific to RESEA. So Megan's mentioned CLEAR as one of your first stopping points to get information about studies and resources that's already available for you to look at.

And we've had a lot of questions about how to find studies. CLEAR is the place to look first and we've organized CLEAR to include a new specific RESEA topic area tab to help make things a little bit easier to find. So you'll be able to click on that tab and see some studies that are relevant to RESEA.

We've also included some just general guidance for beginning to randomize controlled trials. We know that's one thing people are exploring that there's a lot of questions about, so we wanted to make sure you had a link to those resources. And also, earlier on we asked about your top concerns about conducting evaluations and one of the highest-ranked ones was accessing data. So we've included some links there to the federal rules and requirements pertaining to data sharing.

Again, this website, this webinar will be online at our website, so you'll be able to come back and visit these links. But we just wanted to make sure we had them all in one place for you to reference later.

The other thing we wanted to highlight was that we made some reorganizations to WorkforceGPS. As you probably already know, everything RESEA-related is hosted on reemployment connections. Reemployment Connections is our resource page devoted to services to UI claimants and on that page we have a new RESEA landing page where anything related to guidance, technical assistance tools, upcoming events is all organized on this page now under four big buckets.

So we have operations, performance reporting, promising practices and evaluation evidence. So I really encourage you to visit this page, bookmark it and come back often. We will have any upcoming events and as resources are finalized and published, you'll be able to access everything through this site.

To wrap things up, we just wanted to give a high-level summary of some of the things we discussed before before we dive into questions. Some of the things we want you to be mindful of that first, impact evaluations will need to be rigorous to achieve a high or moderate rating. Since RESEA funds for the future will be linked to evidence with high or moderate ratings, this is a key point for all states to consider. We really need to start building evidence that meets that criteria.

Second, these evaluations are going to take time to complete. A rigorous impact evaluation takes at least three to four years to complete, so something to be mindful of. If we start building evidence immediately, in these future years when more and more funding is linked to the evidence basis we'll have the evidence in place. So really, timing is key here.

Also, rigorous impact evaluations require a large sample size. I know a lot of states are probably associating that problem with just being in smaller states, but even moderate size states and slightly larger states may have that problem as well. So something to be mindful of and as we discussed earlier, there's some ways to work around that such as partnering with other states.

You need to consider the availability and not just the availability but also the quality of the data you're collecting that can be used to support the evaluation. I know under RESEA, we did use data. It was data-driven but the intensity of that is just increasing with this new program.

And lastly, and this issue has come up quite a bit, states are limited to 10 percent of their funds for the evaluation set aside. So again, we've discussed some options during the summer. We did technical assistance talking about how to procure evaluations, how to design evaluations creatively to incrementally fund it over time. But again, with that 10 percent you're going to want to explore some options, including potentially looking to partner with other states.

So again, some of the strategies we've highlighted today about meeting those requirements including working with experienced evaluators to make sure you're meeting the rigor requirements and other requirements we've talked about today. Consider how to implement some of the tips Megan's provided during this presentation today and also go back and look at some of our previous webinars and technical assistance to help guide your planning process.

And again, all the previous TAs are available on our website that we shared earlier. You can access it through Reemployment Options webpage and the RESEA landing page. And again, we want you to consider conducting pooled evaluations with other states It allows you to combine the limited funding, allows for larger sample sizes, can potentially detect effects and demonstrate effectiveness within a more reasonable timeframe.

And also, earlier this week we sent out an e-mail to the states alerting everyone of an opportunity to receive customized technical assistance for those states that are looking to work together in some sort of consortium or partnership. So we have sent out that opportunity. We'll be talking more about that in the office hours that are coming up on December 4th. We'll be reaching out directly to states with information and logistics about that event. Once again, that's going to be open to state RESEA leadership and it'll be an opportunity to ask more questions or address more questions we don't get to today.

If you have any questions that come after the session that you wan to talk about through those office hours, please continue to send them to RESEA@abtassoc.com. That is our RESEA evaluation helpline and we continue to monitor it and use it and we'll use that as a collection point for any questions in this upcoming set of office hours.

And again, we have a technical assistance opportunity currently available to states. We sent out an e-mail on the 19th. There is a deadline of December 11th if you're interested in joining this technical assistance effort. The letters that come in, the letters of intent, aren't binding. It's something if you want to just explore and work with us to explore, that's a possibility. Again, those letters are due back to us on December 11th. The details are all contained in that e-mail and I'll also post that e-mail on Reemployment Connections so you can access it there.

After the 11th deadline, we are looking at doing another set of office hours for states that express interest in working on that TA initiative. So there would be a separate smaller set of office hours just for those states that are interested in exploring that option.

With that, we're going to open the door for some questions. We've received quite a few already. So one of the key questions that I've received a couple times, I'm going to hand it over to Gay to answer is people are curious about the joint UIGL TEGL strategy and they were curious. One, are guidance currently issued the same and will it be in the future? And can we more clearly identify that the guidance does mirror itself? So Gay?

MS. GILBERT: Sure. So for that in this case, they were identical pieces of guidance and they're designed moving forward that they will always be identical. We simply are trying to use the communication mechanisms that are most familiar to the differing groups who are interested in RESEA and that includes the UI world who is used to reading UIGLs and the workforce world, which is used to reading TEGLs. So we can look at putting in some language that says that as moving forward.

MR. BURNS: Thanks, Gay. There's another question related to RESEA and WIOA performance reporting. The question here is is there a discussion here in WIOA or DOL to incorporate RESEA into WIPS, so that is the WIOA Integrated Performance System, extracting data from the WIOA Title III PIRL file much like JBSG does?

And yes, there's conversations underway and we are already doing it. One of the key things about the WIOA data we want to highlight is part of the RESEA program requires co-enrollment with Wagner-Peyser and within the PIRL element there is a referral. I believe it's element 401 that you can identify individuals that have been referred to the system by RESEA. But hitting that flag, it allows us to excerpt some data from the WIOA system to look at performance information and other analytics.

So we will be using the WIOA data moving forward, one because it's something that's already being collected. And two, as we described earlier, everything ties back to those four goals, one of which is alignment with the vision of WIOA. So aligning with the WIOA data, using the WIOA data is something we are looking to do in the future moving forward and we're already starting to look at that now.

We will be doing some technical assistance in the next few weeks. We are working on a guide that will help states make sure that RESEA participants are being correctly identified within the WIOA system, the WIPS system.

OK. I have a question here where someone's interested. They understand what it means to evaluate whether or not a component of a service delivery is working, but they're not sure what it means to evaluate a whole service delivery system. So I think that's getting into our discussion earlier about interventions versus whole system design and they were wondering if you had some more information you could provide on that.

MS. LIZIK: Sure. This is a great question. So you know, like Gay had mentioned earlier, we're using the word intervention here because that's what the legislation uses. But more commonly or plain language, we talk about programs. And so, sometimes you might think about evaluating a whole program versus not. So what is the effect of somebody who is in my RESEA program an what do their outcomes look like versus somebody who did not get RESEA services, was not in the program. So that's the whole service strategy with a person who's in the treatment group and the person who's in the control group meaning they don't get services, whereas a service delivery component might just be one piece of your program.

So for example, some of you might be conducting RESEA programs that have more than one RESEA meeting, right? So maybe or maybe you want to pilot that in an area. It might be a good example of a component to say okay. Throughout out whole state, everyone will get one meeting as part of the RESAE program but in a select number of sites we're going to pilot the component of getting three meetings. And that's the service delivery piece that we'll test or other types of components that are mentioned in the grid that Gay gave the example for.

MR. BURNS: Thanks, Megan. We have another question from the WIOA side. We've had a WIOA program operator who receives a lot of program referrals from RESEA and is curious what would be the impactor of putting those individuals that need it into longer-term intervention such as training where they may exhaust their benefits.

MS. GILBERT: So this is Gay. Let me take that one. So what, as you heard at the front end of this webinar, one of the goals of RESEA is to be sort of a front door to UI claimants into the broader workforce system and all of its resources including training opportunities. Clearly, also one of the goals is to reduce duration so that and I know there's some concern that entering into a training opportunity could increase duration. It doesn't necessarily, but there's all ranges of training, right? There's short to short-term training that can help somebody quickly get a credential and move forward and there's also long-term training.

I think this is the same conundrum we face in any of the WIOA programs, but you have limited training resources. You probably want to target them to the ones who need them most. In the case of a UI claimant, you might want to consider training for those who are less likely to exhaust anyway, so that's not going to have a huge impact on your duration. But I wouldn't close off giving people access to training merely because you're trying to reduce duration.

Wayne Gordon is with us and has a comment on this one.

Wayne Gordon: Hi. This is Wayne Gordon with ETA's Division of Research and Evaluation. In the incidence of random assignment, an individual who has been described will also sort of have their twin in the control group as well. So in effect, those people cancel each other out. So there's no need to really worry about someone in the treatment group receiving services that might exhaust or lead to an exhaustion of their benefits. There's going to be a similar individual in the control group that does things that lengthen their time on UI. So statistically, that will be dealt with through random assignment.

MS. GILBERT: Thanks, Wayne.

MR. BURNS: Thank you. Megan, we had another question. There's a lot of curiosity about our, the relationship with our evaluation TA provider Abt Associates and what that relationship means for RESEA and what the nature of it is.

MS. LIZIK: Sure. So as I mentioned, DOL's Chief Evaluation Office contracted with Abt Associates to conduct a project for us that includes evaluation and technical assistance that we're providing to states and that includes the generalized evaluation technical assistance that I described as well as the more customized evaluation technical assistance that will be coming. So again, if you have an immediate question the help line is available. At any time you can e-mail the team and ask a question and as we progress further in taking a look at which states might be learning with DOL and doing some kind of consortia approach to evaluation, the evaluation TA contractor Abt Associates will be working with DOL and states to support the evaluations that are conducted under that opportunity.

MR. BURNS: Thanks, Megan. There's a lot of interest in the technical assistance opportunity we've been discussing about potentially partnering and receiving customized technical assistance but there's curiosity about what that means of the state's 10 percent set aside, so I'm going to hand that over to Gay.

MS. GILBERT: Hi. So as Larry mentioned, we are going to with the states that sort of raised their hands that they're interested in exploring this opportunity, we'll be talking about this in much more detail later. But our intent is that sort of what we bring to the table is the customized technical assistance. What states are committing to do in working in a consortium is pooling their 10 percent money to pay for the evaluator and other evaluation activities that support your evaluation. So you are counting on us for the technical assistance. That's something we're paying for. And you're still using your money for the things you need to do to conduct the evaluation, but you're doing it collaboratively with the other states.

And again, let me just really strongly recommend that all states consider this opportunity. We need, I think it's going to be important that we have all sizes of states and variation generally, so I really encourage all of you to consider this.

MR. BURNS: thanks, Gay. One of the things we're getting a lot of questions about and I think we're going to probably set these asides o we can get to more detail. A lot of particular questions about whether or not certain activities can be funded using the 10 percent evaluation set aside. So we'll be making note of those that'll be a topic we'll cover at the next set of office hours. I just want to make sure we provide a comprehensive answer on that because we have seen a couple questions related to that.

Next is just a couple general questions. A lot of people are curious. We mentioned for example the Nevada study a couple times and they were curious. Where's the best place to find that?

MS. LIZIK: Sure. So the Nevada study, the original publication is on ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research publication database. It is also summarized in CLEAR and you can link directly to that publication from CLEAR as well. So you can find it in either of those places.

[inaudible]

MR. BURNS: Thanks, Megan.

MS. GILBERT: And this is Gay. I just wanted to say there's several additional questions about what it means for the consortia technical assistance project. Again, we will be spending a lot of time with the states that express interest if you have questions in the main comments. Maybe the e-mail is probably the best way to get those answers if that helps you get your decision.

MR. BURNS: OK. So we have a lot of questions coming in. We'll just kind of put the lines on mute for a second and pull up a few more to answer.

So we think a lot of related questions about timing, so particularly we're into the new fiscal year and folks are curious about when they should start doing things because there's definitely more guidance and technical assistance to come but when should we start? And I'll hand that over to Gay.

MS. GILBERT: OK. So with regards to evaluations, you should start now with your planning and hopefully many of you will consider participating in our technical assistance opportunity. We essentially set up the expectation that you will begin evaluations in 2020. In order to do that, that requires your work to start immediately. Overall, with regard to RESEA implementation for 2020 and the operating guidance, we aren't currently able to present you with an exact when the guidance will be out. And so obviously, we'll address that with clearance and we hope that will be very soon.

But one of the things we do know about that guidance is it has the new state plan in it, including you need to identify what your plans are for evaluations. So you already know what the state plan kind of looks like because of our paperwork reduction act process because we've put it out for knows and comments.

And quite frankly, it actually mirrors the statute almost identically so you can simply look at the RESEA statute for what you need to include in the plan. So you're planning for RESEA overall operations should be going on now as well. Hopefully, you're also linking that to your WIOA state planning process as well.

MR. BURNS: So lately we've also received a lot of questions on partnering and what that might look like. And you know, people are curious if there's any examples or if we've done partnerships in the past. So I'll open that up to both Megan and Wayne if you have any input on what some of these consortiums might look like or jut some examples of how we've used them in the past.

MS. LIZIK: Sure. Thanks, Larry. So the evaluation consortia, you know, I think will have some elements of other consortia that you might have participated in in the past. You know, they'll require you to work together with other states toward a common goal. So in this case, that would be a common evaluation.

And so, while we don't want to say too much until we sort of see who might be interested about what those criteria might exactly be, we do know that some of the themes that are likely to be in the mix are things like do you have an interest in conducting an evaluation on general or types of programs or components of programs?

Do you have similar kinds of research questions? When you look at the numbers of UI claimants in the state, what kinds of evaluation questions might you have enough samples to answer with a good level of confidence to get you into those higher and moderate levels of quality for your evaluation? So that's sort of the high-level about what it might look like.

I think that there are other pieces to still be determined in terms of logistically. For example, how you might pool your funds toward funding that single evaluation or how you might be, you know, work together to stand up some other type of a governance structure, but that's the basics of it. We've seen it done in a couple other grant programs before and I'm glad if Wayne would like to chime in with any additional thoughts or examples.

WAYNE GORDON: I'll jump in. I actually, I do not have any readily available examples. But the ones that you'd mentioned, you know, I'd like to research more and see how they were addressed.

MS. LIZIK: We didn't know I think in the past grants enough to get all of the text in for any community college grants that we offered up over a period of years and encouraged consortia within states to work together.

And I think that might be a model that in the UI states we've obviously and in the world of IT monetization in this consortia, so we know some things about what helps make them function well and I thin part of what we will do with it as we move forward in our sort of iterative process to help states come together is to, as Megan said, they'll be a little more clear on some of those criteria and help you think about how you set up a governance structure so everybody gets what they need and that kind of thing.

So I think this will be an iterant process and again, I think once we know which states are sort of interested in pursuing it, we can work it out together.

MR. BURNS: Thank you.

MS. LIZIK: Sure.

MR. BURNS: So we're getting close to the end but we have a couple more questions and we've received a lot of questions related to the worker profile and reemployment services, the WPRS. As you know, RESEA can be used to meet WPRS requirements.

I just wanted to provide a little bit of background on that in the sense that when the Bipartisan Budget Act created the new section 306, making RESEA permanent, it did not change section 303 which is where WPRS sits. So they're still two separate programs, but we do give states the flexibility to meet the WPRS requirements if they structure RESEA in a manner that uses the profiling model and also gives priority to those that are profiled.

So we're receiving a lot of questions about how to structure evaluations around WPRS. Some people feel that it might be a barrier to making comparison groups if you have that profiling score but I think this is one thing that we're going to explore a little bit more at the next set of office hours because there's a lot of questions on this that each one is a little bit nuanced, especially since WPRS looks very different and the states that are operating it and the models they use are very different.

So this is something I just wanted to throw out there that it's on our radar and we are taking note of the questions that came in and it's something we're going to try to address later on in a little bit more detail since it is a very technical question. I will say that one of the things on our list of projects that we're working on is to update the WPRS guidance because it's in need of that. So we realize that RESEA and WPRS are paired together and we are looking at them together and trying to update both. And we'll provide a little bit more information in the future on how WPRS and the evaluations interact.

So again, we're just, we had a lot of questions we're looking through so we're just trying to review real quick and see. We'll be right back.

OK. So we still have questions coming in. We have quite a bit and, but they're a little bit more technical than we have time to really dig into in the last 10 minutes that we have reserved. So what we're going to do is we're taking record of all the questions that came in today.

And also, we still have the opportunity if you have some questions that pop up after this event when we start thinking a little bit more about the requirements and looking at the guidance, you can continue to send questions to that RESEA@abtassociates inbox.

And again, in a couple weeks on the fourth we'll be doing another set of office hours that we promoted just to take questions. So please feel free to as we wrap up put any questions in the chat box or send them to that inbox, but we're going to start wrapping up now.

And with that, we want to provide some contact information for just general questions. But again, we are planning to do some more events in the next couple weeks to handle questions so that RESEA helpline assistance inbox at the bottom there is your best bet to send any questions after this event that we can get to after those office hours.

So with that, I'm going to wrap things up. I'll hand it over to Grace to help us conclude out. Thank you again, everyone, for taking the time to join us today.

MS. MCCALL: All right. Excellent. I'd also like to thank all the participants.

(END)