



# **Focus Area 4: Government Data for Evidence Building**

**Anna Hui and Kenneth Troske, ACDEB Members**

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# Overview of Proposed Focus Area Scope

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## Scope of Topics

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- **Stakeholder needs:** How to address the needs of government at all levels (federal, state, local)—both to facilitate the transfer of government data into NSDS and to ensure the system supports evidence-based policymaking, evaluation, and monitoring?
- **Capacity building:** How to build workforce and user capacity? How to improve data literacy? What training and tools are needed?
- **Skills emphasis:** Professional experience and expertise in local, state, and federal relations, as well as intergovernmental relations; knowledge of the federal statistical system
- **Statistical system coordination:** What statistical system practices could be improved to ensure the entire system works well together? How to get all 13 statistical agencies to cooperate and participate?

# Initial Low-Hanging Fruit

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## Potential Quick Wins

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- **Stakeholder needs:** Assess data needed to fulfill the program compliance requirements versus the day-to-day program management/administration to see if there are overlaps that already exists where we can find an agreed upon starting point to improve data gathering/evidence-building needs for all levels of government (federal, state, local)
- **Capacity building:** Convene a panel of programs that have successfully helped train public sector staff on applied data analytics with examples of graduates utilizing what was learned to improve actual data collection, analysis and data-driven decision-making by the government entity
- **Statistical system coordination:** Explore what can be done now with existing system(s) so that data can be readily shared in both directions (from local/state up to federal government and back down again) to support evidence-based policymaking, evaluation, and monitoring. Identify a few programs as a possible pilot to see what level of effort this would involve.
  - **Potential pilot program: data from Unemployment System—both wage records and benefits**
    - Include standard outcome measure included in many evaluation projects
    - COVID has demonstrated the importance of these data for timely measures of economic performance as well as need to standardize data
    - Follow people through all stages of benefits
    - Follow people as they move

# Committee Discussion

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## Discussion Questions

- If we all recognize that data starts at the local/state level to feed up to the federal level, how do we make sure that support (financial and program/legal flexibility) reaches this foundational level so that it increases good quality data to be fed into any system from the start?
- How do we invest in data analytics training and support of staff who have to continue to adapt to changing public/citizen/consumer expectations and ever changing technology resources?
- Even though much data is collected through automated systems today, how do we make sure that the human factor is taken into account given the rise of self-service and artificial intelligence incorporated into IT systems that support program operations?