



September 8, 2023

TO: Agency Heads

CC: Evaluation Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Chief Data Officers, Statistical Officials

RE: Prioritization of Evaluation in FY 2025 R&D Budget Proposals

The August 17, 2023 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum ([M-23-20](#)) to agency heads outlines the Administration's multi-agency R&D priorities for fiscal year 2025 budget submissions. OMB specifically highlights the need for agencies to design and implement program evaluations to generate evidence, calling for agencies to:

"Design and implement rigorous experiments and evaluations, data sharing agreements, and prototyping exercises to answer critical policy questions by generating comparative evidence about how well different approaches can help us reach national goals more equitably, effectively, and expeditiously, with appropriate privacy protections in place."

Evaluation is a critical function of an effective government – and is crucial for generating evidence that informs policy and programmatic decisions across agencies. The American Evaluation Association applauds the inclusion of evaluation in the budget priorities. We also call on every agency to include new resources to support this R&D priority in the FY 2025 budget submissions to OMB. Recognizing the importance of agencies' support for relevant Evidence Act functions that relate to evaluation, we emphasize the importance of appropriate funding to ensure the successful conduct and use of evaluation.

The Biden Administration's various efforts to increase attention on evaluation are promising, including OMB's [declaration](#) that program evaluation is a core agency function and a "critical tool" for agencies to learn and improve. Reflecting these directives and OMB's latest memo, the American Evaluation Association strongly encourages thoughtful consideration and integration of evaluation and evidence-building activities throughout agencies' budget requests. The capacity within agencies to conduct and use evaluation is central to achieving agencies' missions and should be prioritized appropriately in funding requests.

We call attention to the fact that while OMB memorandum M-23-20 points to evaluation specifically as a mechanism for reducing barriers and inequality, program evaluation can and should be a fundamental component of all the research and development efforts noted in the memorandum. As agencies prepare to submit FY 2025 budget proposals, we highly recommend broader attention to evaluation to ensure necessary coordination of evidence activities across priority areas.

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. If our members can be of further assistance, please contact me (president@eval.org) or AEA's Executive Director Anisha Lewis (alewis@eval.org).

Sincerely,

Corrie Whitmore
President
American Evaluation Association