SECTION 290 – EVALUATION AND EVIDENCE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

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Summary of Changes

Provides additional guidance to agencies on implementing evaluation and evidence-building activities required by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (the “Evidence Act”), and describes the relationship of evaluation and evidence to the Federal Performance Framework, as well as the relationship between the various documents required by Title I of the Evidence Act.

290.1 To which agencies does this section apply?

This section is a requirement for CFO Act agencies and is strongly encouraged for all others.
290.2 How do the requirements in this section apply to sub-agencies, bureaus, and divisions within CFO Act agencies?

While the requirements in this section apply to CFO Act agencies, it is OMB’s expectation, as noted in OMB Memorandum M-19-23, that the deliverables discussed here (i.e., Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment) reflect activities across the agency (i.e., the entire Cabinet-level Department). To that end, the activities of sub-agencies, bureaus, and divisions within a CFO Act agency should be reflected in these documents. Thus, OMB expects that these sub-agencies, bureaus, and divisions be actively engaged in the process to meet these requirements. Additionally, as noted in OMB Memorandum M-19-23, OMB strongly encourages sub-agencies, operational divisions, or bureaus of CFO Act agencies, as well as non-CFO Act agencies, to develop and implement similar deliverables that tie into and are consistent with, but are not limited by, the agency-wide deliverables, as appropriate. For sub-agencies, operational divisions, or bureaus of CFO Act agencies that are already undertaking these evidence activities, the Evidence Act requirements should be used to strengthen or uphold their current processes, as well as tie into and inform agency-wide efforts.

290.3 What is the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (i.e., the Evidence Act), and what is its relationship to the Federal Performance Framework?

The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (or “Evidence Act”) advances data and evidence-building functions in the Federal government by statutorily mandating Federal evidence-building activities, open government data, and confidential information protection and statistical efficiency. The Evidence Act addresses about half of the recommendations of the bipartisan Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking and was enacted into law on January 14, 2019 as Public Law 115-435. Many of the Evidence Act’s provisions support the Federal Performance Framework, and the Act emphasizes the need for collaboration and coordination of agency staff and activities in order to achieve successful implementation. Two of the Act’s provisions (Learning Agendas and Capacity Assessments) modify what is required in agency strategic plans, and one provision (Annual Evaluation Plans) adds a new requirement concurrent with the performance plan cycle.

290.4 What new positions were created by the Evidence Act?

The Evidence Act created three new positions: Chief Data Officers (all agencies), Evaluation Officers (CFO Act agencies), and Statistical Officials (CFO Act agencies).

290.5 What is the role of agency Evaluation Officers, and how does the agency designate and notify OMB of the designation?

The Evaluation Officer is responsible for playing a leading role in overseeing the agency’s evaluation activities, learning agenda, and information reported to OMB on evidence, as well as collaborating with, shaping, and making contributions to other evidence-building functions within the agency. The Evaluation Officer is responsible for providing technical and methodological leadership to assess, improve, and advise evaluation activities across the agency. For agencies that are less mature in their evaluation activities, or for those agencies without additional evaluation expertise distributed throughout the agency, the Evaluation Officer may also be responsible for conceptualizing, prioritizing, and designing the agency’s evaluation activities. Each agency must have one Evaluation Officer to serve in this role for the agency as a whole (e.g., the entire Cabinet-level department). In addition, where appropriate, OMB strongly recommends that agencies consider building capacity in operational divisions, bureaus, or sub-agencies within the agency that also may have a need for an evaluation officer, with the agency-level official providing technical leadership and coordination across those officials.
Specifically, the Evaluation Officer serves as:

- Agency champion for, and educate agency staff and leaders about, evaluation, including what evaluation is, the value of conducting evaluations, how to discern high-quality evaluation from other types of analyses, and the importance of evaluation as a strategic investment;

- Senior advisor to agency leaders on issues of evaluation policy and practice, such as designing and undertaking evaluations, interpreting results, and integrating evaluation findings into day-to-day agency operations, management processes, budgeting, strategic planning, and other decisions;

- Senior agency contact on evaluation for agency-wide and cross-cutting evaluation efforts, both with external stakeholders and in coordination with senior officials responsible for other agency functions, including officials responsible for implementing privacy policy, the Chief Data Officer, the Chief Information Officer, the Statistical Official, the Performance Improvement Officer, additional evaluation and analysis units and personnel in the agency, and others as appropriate;

- Participant in the agency’s Chief Operating Officer-led efforts to review progress on Agency Priority Goals and other management priorities to ensure that evidence is included and used appropriately;

- Member of the agency Data Governance Body; and

- Member of the interagency Evaluation Officer Council.

The Evaluation Officer also oversees or conducts:

- Assessments of the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, objectivity, scientific integrity, and balance of the portfolio of evaluations, policy research, and ongoing evaluation activities of the agency, in consultation with other methodologists, such as the Statistical Official, when appropriate;

- Improvement of agency capacity to support the development and use of evaluation, coordinate and increase technical expertise available for evaluation and related research activities within the agency, and improve the quality of evaluations and knowledge of evaluation methodology and standards;


- Establishment and implementation of an agency evaluation policy that affirms the agency’s commitment to conducting rigorous, relevant evaluations and to using evidence from evaluations to inform policy and practice. The policy will provide the agency’s stakeholders with a clear understanding of the expectations related to key principles, such as evaluation relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency, and ethics;

- Required coordination, development, and implementation of the plans required under section 312 of the Evidence Act:
  - Learning Agenda (evidence-building plan) included as part of the Agency Strategic Plan;
  - Annual Evaluation Plan, submitted in conjunction with the Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Review; and
o Capacity Assessment, included as part of the Agency Strategic Plan.

- Development of new, or improvement of existing, processes to integrate evaluation findings into agency decision-making and other functions;

- Management of agency’s evaluation policies that uphold and adhere to the program evaluation standards in OMB Memorandum M-20-12 to ensure the scientific integrity, quality, and accountability of the agency’s evaluation activities; and

- Use and dissemination of evaluation results throughout the agency and to the public, as appropriate.

Agencies must provide any changes to their designated Evaluation Officer to OMB via email at EvidenceAct@omb.eop.gov and update their agency’s https://[agency].gov/data webpage accordingly.

290.6 Who supports the work of the agency Evaluation Officer?

The work of the Evaluation Officer is supported by the Statistical Official and Chief Data Officer, as well as program staff; other evaluation, statistics, analysis, data, enterprise risk management, and performance units and personnel in the agency; policy staff; regulatory staff; privacy and information law and policy personnel; and agency leadership. Further, it is OMB’s expectations that staff throughout the agency, including sub-agencies, bureaus, and divisions, will meaningfully support the work of the Evaluation Officer as they fulfill the requirements laid out in this section.

290.7 What is a Learning Agenda (i.e., “Evidence-Building Plan”)?

The Learning Agenda (i.e., the Evidence-Building Plan) is a systematic plan for identifying and addressing policy questions relevant to the programs, policies, and regulations of the agency. It identifies, prioritizes, and establishes strategies to develop evidence to answer important short- and long-term strategic questions (i.e., questions about how the agency meets its missions, including about how programs, policies, and regulations function both individually and in combination) and operational questions (i.e., questions about the agency’s operations like human resources, grant-making, and internal processes). Some learning agenda questions are best answered by program evaluation methods, while other learning agenda questions are best answered by other evidence building strategies such as foundational fact-finding, performance measurement, or policy analysis. Learning agendas should be iterative, flexible, transparent, and tailored to both meet an individual agency’s needs and address agency-specific challenges to developing evidence. For the purposes of implementing the Evidence Act, learning agendas do not refer to the professional development plans for employees’ human capital development.

Learning agendas should be prospective and highlight recent, existing, and future evidence-building activities, make an agency’s evidence-building plans transparent, and promote interest and buy-in to the studies, evaluations, and other learnings that will follow from them. Through the necessary consultations with stakeholders, learning agendas provide an opportunity to align efforts and promote interagency collaboration in areas of joint focus or shared populations or goals. For agencies with more mature evidence-building efforts, and which may already have comprehensive research plans, research roadmaps, enterprise learning agendas, or evaluation strategic plans, the learning agenda may highlight and prioritize existing efforts. However, they should not restate existing portfolios of work. For agencies with emerging evidence-building functions, the learning agenda may emphasize and help coordinate efforts to design and implement new evidence building activities. As a result, there is no single approach or format that will be effective for every agency.
A learning agenda is a systemic way to identify the data agencies intend to collect, use, or acquire as well as the methods and analytical approaches to facilitate the use of evidence in policymaking. They allow agencies to more strategically plan their evidence-building activities, including how to prioritize limited resources and how to address potential information gaps that may inhibit the agency’s effective mitigation of risks identified through their enterprise risk management processes. Learning agendas complement, but are distinct from research and development planning for the purposes of building the stock of knowledge and can also complement an agency’s submission to the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions regulatory planning process and published agenda by clearly documenting how an agency intends to build and use evidence to support its proposed regulatory actions.

**290.8 How, and how often, should an agency update its Learning Agenda?**

As noted in OMB Memorandum **M-19-23**, agencies must revisit their learning agendas at least annually and update them as needed to reflect progress toward meeting the agency’s original learning goals and objectives, shifting agency priorities, changing contexts within which the agency operates, and emergent needs. Learning agendas should also be updated to incorporate, when available, the results of the activities an agency undertakes to answer priority questions. However, OMB does not expect that agencies will rewrite or draft a new learning agenda annually. Similarly, while part of agency strategic plans, OMB recognizes that the Learning Agenda can be updated independently from those plans. OMB does not expect that updates to the Learning Agenda will also require updates to the full Strategic Plan document (see section 230.19 for information on how to update the Strategic Plan). Before publishing an updated Learning Agenda, agencies should submit it to OMB for review. Updated learning agendas should be submitted to OMB via email at EvidenceAct@omb.eop.gov, and posted on the agency’s website and uploaded to performance.gov.

**290.9 How does the Learning Agenda relate to the agency Strategic Plan?**

The Evidence Act requires that agencies’ strategic plans include a section on evidence building to be developed in conjunction with the agency’s process of updating its strategic plans every four years. This section is the Learning Agenda. The Learning Agenda should cover a four-year period aligned with the strategic plan and address priority questions across the entire agency (i.e., the entire Cabinet-level Department). The Learning Agenda should inform the other portions of the strategic plan, and vice versa. The knowledge gained through undertaking evidence-building activities should inform not only the agency’s current decision-making and operations, but should also help to shape future strategic plans.

The Learning Agenda must be a standalone component of the agency strategic plan. Agencies may include it as a separate section, chapter, or appendix. If an agency chooses to include the Learning Agenda as an appendix, they must summarize the Learning Agenda somewhere in the body of the strategic plan (see 210). As appropriate, agencies are encouraged to incorporate elements of the Learning Agenda throughout the strategic plan (e.g., the priority questions) in addition to the standalone document in order to create a coherent narrative throughout.

**290.10 How does the Learning Agenda relate to agency obligations under Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review?**

The Learning Agenda fully complements Executive Order 12866 (E.O.) and will support agencies in fulfilling their obligations under the E.O. The Evidence Act requires that agencies’ learning agendas include “policy questions relevant to…regulations of the agency.” Under Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review, agencies are directed to adhere to a set of principles for regulatory policymaking. Agencies should read the principles articulated in E.O. 12866 as fully consistent with the requirement to include priority policy questions about regulations in their learning agenda. Further, the principles laid out
in E.O. 12866 provide a framework for agencies to use as they think about how to address and include priority regulatory questions in their learning agendas. For example, one principle states that agencies should base decisions on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, and other information concerning the need for, and consequences of, the intended regulation (Section 1(b)(7)). To that end, agencies should use the learning agenda as an important tool to help them build evidence to gather that best reasonably obtainable information. Additionally, fully assessing both the costs and the benefits of the intended regulation as obligated by the E.O. (Section 6, (a)(3)), requires objective evidence and data. To support future cost-benefit analyses, agencies should include questions in their learning agenda related to the measurement and comparison of actual costs with anticipated costs prior to implementation of a regulation.

290.11 What is an Annual Evaluation Plan?

The Evidence Act requires agencies to develop an Annual Evaluation Plan, which describes the significant evaluation activities the agency plans to conduct in the fiscal year following the year in which it is submitted. It should include “significant” evaluations that would help answer priority questions on the Learning Agenda and any other “significant” evaluation, such as those required by statute. The significance of an evaluation study should be defined by each agency and take into consideration factors such as the importance of a program or funding stream to the agency mission; the size of the program in terms of funding or people served; and the extent to which the study will fill an important knowledge gap regarding the program, population(s) served, or the issue(s) that the program was designed to address. Agencies should clearly state their criteria for designating evaluations as “significant” in their plans.

Annual Evaluation Plans offer agencies the opportunity to methodically plan and document their approach to evaluation and, in particular, how their intended evaluations will support those questions on the agency’s learning agenda that are best answered by evaluation. These plans will describe the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics and outcomes of programs, projects, and processes as a basis for judgments, to improve effectiveness, and/or inform decision-makers about current and future activities. Annual Evaluation Plans support effective and efficient government by requiring agencies to think proactively and methodically about how they will use evaluation to help them operationalize and implement the activities needed to answer the agency’s significant evaluation questions, both those laid out in the learning agenda and others that may be required by mandate. Further, the publication of these plans likewise supports more effective government as it allows the public to understand what and how an agency plans to evaluate, and holds the agency accountable to undertake those activities.

290.12 How does the Annual Evaluation Plan relate to the agency’s Annual Performance Plan?

The Evidence Act requires agencies to develop an Annual Evaluation Plan to be submitted in conjunction with the agency’s Annual Performance Plan. The Annual Evaluation Plan describes the significant evaluations that the agency plans to conduct in the fiscal year following the year in which the Annual Evaluation Plan is submitted.

290.13 What is the Capacity Assessment for Research, Evaluation, Statistics, and Analysis that is required as part of the Evidence Act?

The Evidence Act requires agencies to submit a Capacity Assessment for Research, Evaluation, Statistics, and Other Analysis (hereafter referred to as “Capacity Assessment”) every four years as part of their Strategic Plans. Led by the Evaluation Officer, in conjunction with the Statistical Official, Chief Data Officer, and other agency personnel, this requires agencies to conduct and provide an assessment of the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of the statistics, evaluation, research, and
analysis efforts of the agency. Thus, agencies should assess their statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities against the following criteria:

- **Coverage**: what is happening and where is it happening?
- **Quality**: are the data used of high quality with respect to utility, objectivity, and integrity?
- **Methods**: what are the methods being used for these activities, do these methods incorporate the necessary level of rigor, and are those methods appropriate for the activities to which they are being applied?
- **Effectiveness**: are the activities meeting their intended outcomes, including serving the needs of stakeholders and being disseminated?
- **Independence**: to what extent are the activities being carried out free from bias and inappropriate influence?

For each of the areas of assessment - statistics, evaluation, research and analysis - OMB encourages agencies to consider the above criteria and think about how those criteria apply for each of these activities within the agency.

In considering the criterion above, agencies must also address the following as part of the Capacity Assessment for Statistics, Evaluation, Research, and Analysis:

- A list of the activities (e.g., programs, initiatives, etc.) and operations (e.g., administrative and support tasks) of the agency that are currently being evaluated and analyzed;
- The extent to which the evaluations, research, and analysis efforts and related activities of the agency support the needs of various divisions within the agency;
- The extent to which the evaluation, research, and analysis efforts and related activities of the agency address an appropriate balance between needs related to organizational learning, ongoing program management, performance management, strategic management, interagency and private sector coordination, internal and external oversight, and accountability;
- The extent to which evaluation and research capacity is present within the agency to include personnel and agency processes for planning and implementing evaluation activities, disseminating best practices and findings, and incorporating employee views and feedback; and
- The extent to which the agency has the capacity to assist agency staff and program offices to develop the capacity to use evaluation research and analysis approaches and data in the day-to-day operations.

These specific components tie directly to the criteria and address elements like coverage (i.e., the list of evaluation activities within the agency) and effectiveness (i.e., the extent to which these activities meet the needs of the agency and appropriately balance across those needs). In addition, these requirements touch on important areas like dissemination of findings from statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities (i.e., does the agency have processes and procedures in place to make sure findings are disseminated?), as well as the agency’s capacity to use the these findings (i.e., does the agency have processes, procedures, and trained staff in place to use the findings to support agency learning and improvement?). As agencies assess their capacity in the areas of coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence, it is important to consider not only whether and how the agency is doing those activities, but also whether they have staffing, infrastructure, and processes to do so. In that sense, this Capacity Assessment should be holistic, considering the agency’s current capacity, but also what future capacity might be needed.

The Capacity Assessment is expected to provide agencies with a baseline against which they can measure improvements to coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of their statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities. The Capacity Assessment will provide senior officials with information needed to improve the agency’s ability to support the development and use of evaluation, coordinate and increase technical expertise available for evaluation and related research activities within the agency, and improve the quality of evaluations and knowledge of evaluation methodology and standards.
In conducting the assessment, agencies should draw on existing OMB guidance and policies, including, but not limited to:


- **OMB Memorandum M-18-04, Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for Federal Departments and Agencies that Administer United States Foreign Assistance**;

- **Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Agencies**; and

- **OMB Statistical Policy Directives**.

In drafting the Capacity Assessment, OMB encourages agencies to use a format, process, and structure that best meets their specific context. There is no template or specific format for this document, but OMB expects that each agency’s assessment will include discussion and analysis of the five criteria (i.e., coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence) for their statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities, including those specific components listed above. The Capacity Assessment must be a standalone component of the agency strategic plan. Agencies may include it as a separate section, chapter, or appendix. If an agency chooses to include the Capacity Assessment as an appendix, they must summarize the Capacity Assessment somewhere in the body of the strategic plan.

**290.14 How do the Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment relate to one another?**

While the Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment for Statistics, Evaluation, Research, and Analysis are independent documents, the nature of their contents necessitates that they have complementary relationships with one another.

**Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans.** OMB expects that there will necessarily be some overlap between these two documents, but perfect overlap is not expected. That is, agencies should let the content of each document drive the overlap between the questions that appear in the Annual Evaluation Plan and those that also appear in the Learning Agenda. OMB expects that some “significant” evaluations from the Annual Evaluation Plan will appear on the Learning Agenda, and vice versa, but that the Annual Evaluation Plan may also include other “significant” evaluations depending on how the agency defines significant. For example, an agency may have a statutory requirement to conduct an evaluation of a particular program. This particular evaluation may not address a priority question on the Learning Agenda, but may nonetheless be considered “significant” if the agency includes Congressional mandate as one of the criteria to determine significance.

Conversely, OMB expects that the activities an agency includes on its learning agenda to answer priority questions will include non-evaluation activities, such as performance measurement, foundational fact finding, and policy analysis. As noted in OMB Memorandum M-19-23, the questions to be answered must drive the methods to be used (and not vice versa), and OMB expects that some questions on the Learning
Agenda are most appropriately answered by methods other than program evaluation. Thus, the Learning Agenda should include activities beyond those significant evaluations on the Annual Evaluation Plan.

There is also a timing consideration with these documents. While the Annual Evaluation Plan focuses on the activities that an agency plans to undertake in the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the plan is published, the Learning Agenda is a longer-term document that covers the full period of the strategic plan (i.e., not less than four years). Depending on how and how often an agency updates its Learning Agenda, “significant” evaluations listed on Annual Evaluation Plans published in the middle of the time period covered by the Learning Agenda (e.g., FY 2024 and FY 2025), may not be reflected in the Learning Agenda.

**Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment.** While the Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment are both components of the agency strategic plan, they are distinct documents with different purposes and content. However, the nature of each necessitates that they complement one another. For instance, the Learning Agenda will highlight the activities an agency plans to undertake to answer its priority questions. The Capacity Assessment, through its analysis of the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities, necessarily provides information about the extent to which the agency has the capacity to undertake the activities outlined in the Learning Agenda, as well as other evidence-building activities. OMB expects, for instance, that the activities discussed in the Learning Agenda might likewise appear under coverage within the Capacity Assessment as either the current capacity or capacity needed in the future.

**Annual Evaluation Plan and Capacity Assessment.** The Annual Evaluation Plan and Capacity Assessment are distinct documents that serve different purposes. However, as with the Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment discussed above, the nature of each of these two documents necessitates that they complement one another. For instance, the Annual Evaluation Plan includes the “significant” evaluations that an agency plans to undertake in the following fiscal year. This information will likely also be covered as part of the list of evaluation and analysis activities required in the Capacity Assessment. Similarly, the Annual Evaluation Plan requires agencies to discuss their plans to disseminate and use the findings from the significant evaluations included in the plan. OMB expects that this information may serve as one input to the agency’s assessment of its capacity to disseminate and use information resulting from its statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis activities as required in the Capacity Assessment. Thus, as is true of the relationship between other documents described here, OMB expects there will be some overlap in portions of the documents.


OMB Memorandum M-20-12, “Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices,” provides program evaluation standards and practices to guide agencies in developing and implementing evaluation activities, evaluation policies, and in hiring and retaining qualified staff. These standards inform both specific evaluations and the broader set of evaluation activities, including Annual Agency Evaluation Plans and other evaluations undertaken to address Learning Agenda priorities.

The standards are:

- **Relevance and Utility:** Federal evaluations must address questions of importance and serve the information needs of stakeholders in order to be useful resources.
- **Rigor:** Federal evaluations must produce findings that Federal agencies and their stakeholders can confidently rely on, while providing clear explanations of limitations.
Independence and Objectivity: Federal evaluations must be viewed as objective in order for stakeholders, experts, and the public to accept their findings. Evaluators should operate with an appropriate level of independence from programmatic, regulatory, policymaking and stakeholder activities.

Transparency: Federal evaluations must be transparent in the planning, implementation, and reporting phases to enable accountability and help ensure that aspects of an evaluation are not tailored to generate specific findings.

Ethics: Federal evaluations must be conducted to the highest ethical standards to protect the public and maintain public trust in the government’s efforts.

The practices are:
1. Build and Maintain Evaluation Capacity
2. Use Expert Consultation Effectively
3. Establish, Implement, and Widely Disseminate an Agency Evaluation Policy
4. Pre-Specify Evaluation Design and Methods
5. Engage Key Stakeholders Meaningfully
6. Plan Dissemination Strategically
7. Take Steps to Ensure Ethical Treatment of Participants
8. Foster and Steward Data Management for Evaluation
9. Make Evaluation Data Available for Secondary Use
10. Establish and Uphold Policies and Procedures to Protect Independence and Objectivity

The Program Evaluation Standards and Practices are designed to improve the quality and use of evaluation across Federal agencies, while recognizing that agencies must build policies, evaluation offices, and infrastructure that meet their distinct evaluation needs and responsibilities. As such, these standards and practices apply not just to Federal evaluation offices, but also have applicability to other Federal units that carry out or sponsor evaluation and to individual evaluators, including Federal evaluation staff, outside partners, and recipients of Federal awards that are performing work on behalf of the agency. OMB Memorandum M-20-12 Appendix B and C includes a more detailed explanation of the standards and practices.

290.16 How and when should agencies develop and publish their Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment?

Learning Agenda: Agencies should be in the process of developing and implementing the Interim Learning Agenda that is due in September 2020 (see section 200.24). Please note that while OMB is not requiring that agencies publish the Interim Learning Agenda, agencies are strongly encouraged to do so and should notify OMB of its publication, including its location on the agency’s webpage.

Annual Evaluation Plan: Agencies should be in the process of developing their first annual evaluation plan, which will cover “significant” evaluations planned for FY 2022. At a minimum, this plan shall describe evaluation activities for fiscal year FY 2022, including key questions for each planned "significant” evaluation study and key information collections or acquisitions the agency plans to begin.

Capacity Assessment of Statistics, Evaluation, Research, and Analysis: Agencies should be in the process of beginning to assess the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of their statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis efforts in preparation to submit the Interim Capacity Assessment in September 2020. This assessment should provide a comprehensive view of agency capacity. Please note that while OMB is not requiring that agencies publish the Interim Capacity Assessment, agencies are strongly encouraged to do so and should notify OMB of its publication, including its location on the agency’s webpage.
The table below provides an updated timeline for developing and publishing these requirements.

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<tr>
<th>Submission Date</th>
<th>Description/Deliverable</th>
<th>Submission Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September, 2020 (concurrent w/ FY</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review:</td>
<td>MAX “Submission Portal”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022 Budget submission)</td>
<td>- Interim Learning Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- draft FY 2022 Annual Evaluation Plan</td>
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<td>- Interim Capacity Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 11, 2021</td>
<td>For OMB review and clearance, agencies submit <strong>final draft:</strong></td>
<td>MAX “Submission Portal”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- FY 2022 Annual Evaluation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>February, 2021 (concurrent with FY</td>
<td><strong>Publish:</strong></td>
<td>Agency website/</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022 Budget release)</td>
<td>- FY 2022 Annual Evaluation Plan</td>
<td>Performance.gov</td>
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<td>30 days prior to release</td>
<td>The Interim Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment are not required to be publically available. If an agency chooses this, they must submit to OMB for review prior to publication</td>
<td>MAX “Submission Portal”</td>
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<td>June 4, 2021</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review:</td>
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<td>- annotated outline of updated agency Learning Agenda</td>
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<td>- initial draft Capacity Assessment</td>
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<td>September, 2021 (concurrent w/ FY</td>
<td>Agencies submit for OMB review:</td>
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<td>2023 Budget submission)</td>
<td>- full draft Learning Agenda</td>
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<td>- full draft Capacity Assessment</td>
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<td>December 23, 2021</td>
<td>For OMB review and clearance, agencies submit <strong>final draft</strong> (as part of Agency Strategic Plan):</td>
<td>MAX “Submission Portal”</td>
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<td>- Learning Agenda</td>
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<td>- Capacity Assessment</td>
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<td>January 14, 2022</td>
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<td>- FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan</td>
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<td>February, 2022 (concurrent with FY</td>
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<td>Agency website/</td>
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<td>2023 Budget release)</td>
<td>- Final Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment (as part of Agency Strategic Plan)</td>
<td>Performance.gov</td>
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<td>- FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan</td>
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290.17 What is OMB’s role with respect to the Evidence Act deliverables?

OMB will play a primary role in supporting agencies regarding the Evidence Act deliverables (i.e., the Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment for Statistics, Evaluation, Research, and Analysis) described in section 290. OMB will:

- Work with agencies as they develop these documents, providing technical assistance, clarifying direction, and support as needed;
- Review the agency’s draft documents, and provide feedback to the agency on those documents, including whether they adhere to OMB guidance, suggestions for improving the agency’s ability to build and use evidence, and the extent to which they reflect the evidence and learning needs of the agency; and
- Review the agency’s deliverables prior to publication to ensure that prior OMB feedback has been considered, and that the final documents and planned activities align with Administration policy and priorities.

290.18 What is the relationship between these activities and the agency’s budget submission?

An agency’s budget request should be supported by all available evidence. Agencies shall commit to building evidence in priority areas where it is lacking, and the results of these evidence-building activities shall inform future budget requests.