

Report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees FY 2010 Evaluation Operating Plan

This report provides the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Operating Plan for Evaluations authorized under Section 172 of the Workforce Investment Act (29 USC 2917 Sec. 172 et. seq.) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010. FY 2010 Evaluation funds are available for Federal obligation during Program Year (PY) 2010, which begins July 1, 2010, and ends June 30, 2011. The Operating Plan outlines ETA's planned allocation by major priority areas and activities, including those that will be supported with PY 2010 funds and those continuing activities that were funded with prior year and Recovery Act funds. The FY 2010 appropriation for Evaluation is \$9,600,000.

Investment decisions during PY 2010 will be guided by the following six priority areas¹ in the Five-Year Pilots, Demonstrations and Evaluation Strategic Plan for 2007-2012. It is important to note that the specific projects identified under each priority area will be planned in accordance with the availability of resources during PY 2010 as well as departmental and agency priorities. This plan covers investments in projects that began in prior years as well as new projects that are being considered for initiation during PY 2010. ETA also expects to identify additional projects in consultation with the Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Officer and ETA program offices.

Priority Area 1.) Integration of Workforce and Regional Economic Development

This priority focuses on measuring the success of integrating regional workforce investment and economic development, examining regional differences in economic performance and effectiveness, determining the drivers of "innovation hot spots" and job creation.

- No new projects will begin under this priority pending results of the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative.

Priority Area 2.) Methods of Expanding U.S. Workforce Skills

This priority focuses on increasing the skills of the workforce to help America retain its competitive edge. This research area is intended to measure the effectiveness of credentialing, research occupation projections, examine career ladders, explore the limitations on the capacity to train in certain occupational areas, and expand learning opportunities through the use of technology. Under this priority area, ETA plans to:

- Begin the Green Jobs and High Growth Health Care Initiative random assignment evaluation and implementation study.
- Continue the random assignment evaluation of YouthBuild.
- Examine the impact of the provision of technical assistance for the workforce system.
- Commission a design study to evaluate specific interventions in the Youth Program.
- Explore the feasibility of conducting a random assignment study of the impact of incumbent worker training.

¹ These priority areas were established under the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's five-year pilot, demonstration and evaluation strategic plan for 2007-2012 released in 2007. ETA is now beginning the process for preparing the required update to this plan.

- Continue an effectiveness assessment and cost benefit analysis of registered apprenticeship programs.

Priority Area 3.) Increasing the Labor Market Participation of Underutilized Populations

To meet the needs of the 21st century job market, every available segment of the U.S. population will need to be engaged, skilled, and prepared to enter or advance in the high-growth job opportunities afforded by the global economy. This priority area focuses on integrating underutilized segments of the population into the labor market and identifying successful strategies to increase participation and productivity. Under this priority, ETA plans to:

- Continue the Reintegration of Exoffenders (RExO) Impact Evaluation (formerly known as the Prisoner Reentry Initiative Impact Evaluation).
- Continue the Evaluation of the Young Parents Demonstration.

Priority Area 4.) Using State-Level Administrative Data to Measure Progress and Outcomes

This priority focuses on tapping into state-level administrative data for cost-effective research and evaluation purposes. Using administrative databases, rather than surveys, provides more longitudinal information; therefore, administrative data presents numerous advantages for conducting research.

- ETA has no projects starting in FY 2010 under this priority.

Priority Area 5.) Post-Secondary Education and Job Training

The 21st century knowledge economy demands a highly educated and skilled workforce. The fastest growing jobs, on average, require a post-secondary credential – a vocational certificate or other credential, or an associates or higher degree. This priority focuses on expanding access to post-secondary education and job training for workers. Under this priority, ETA plans to:

- Continue conducting the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.
- Consider funding the second phase of the “Improving America’s Workforce Through Enhanced Collaborations Between the Public Workforce System and Community College System” study pending the results of phase one.

Priority Area 6.) Unemployment Insurance (UI)

This priority focuses on the efficacy of the current UI system for the 21st century workforce and economy, examines the incentives and disincentives to work, and looks at workers covered and not covered by UI.

- ETA has no projects starting in FY 2010 under this priority with Evaluation funds, but is planning a study of UI Modernization activities with PD&R funds.