



Why and How to Submit an RESEA Evaluation Report for CLEAR Review

Victoria Wheat, Adam Travis, Jesse Wood,
and Andrew Clarkwest

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The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) aims to make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners and others who use evidence to inform program and policy decisions. States' evaluations of their Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs or program components will generate important new findings about the effectiveness of those reemployment interventions. States are encouraged to submit their completed evaluation reports to CLEAR for review and dissemination.¹ As more states submit findings from their RESEA evaluations to CLEAR for review, CLEAR's evidence base on effective reemployment interventions will continue to grow, making it easier for states to identify and deploy interventions that get Unemployment Insurance claimants back to work quicker. States will also be able to identify more interventions for which evidence is starting to emerge and that may be promising subjects for states' future evaluations.

This FAQ covers:

1. [Why should I submit my RESEA evaluation report to CLEAR?](#)
2. [How do I submit my RESEA evaluation report to CLEAR?](#)
3. [Once I have submitted my evaluation report to CLEAR, what happens next?](#)
4. [What type of evaluation reports are eligible for CLEAR review?](#)
5. [What can I do to make sure that my RESEA impact study is able to help inform the RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings?](#)
6. [What information should I make sure is included in my evaluation report to help ensure that my impact study receives the highest possible causal evidence rating?](#)
7. [What details about the intervention and the context in which it was implemented should I include in my final evaluation report?](#)
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¹ See page 21 of [Unemployment Insurance Program Letter \(UIPL\) 02-23](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Question #1. Why should I submit my RESEA evaluation report to CLEAR?

The [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018](#), Section 306, amended the Social Security Act to permanently authorize RESEA and introduced the requirement that states use interventions that have been rated by CLEAR as effective. To support states in meeting this requirement, [CLEAR](#) rates the effectiveness of RESEA interventions by [assessing the quality of causal evidence](#) generated by rigorous impact evaluations (see Box 1). States can use RESEA interventions with “high” or “moderate” effectiveness ratings to help meet their evidence requirement.

CLEAR also posts profiles of reviewed studies that summarize key study findings and the quality of the causal evidence provided by the studies.

CLEAR’s **RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings** and **study profiles** are valuable resources that can help states implement evidence-based best practices for their RESEA programs. As more evaluations of RESEA programs or program components are reviewed by CLEAR, the number of reemployment interventions with effectiveness ratings will grow. By submitting an RESEA evaluation report to CLEAR for review and dissemination, you are helping to grow the publicly-available evidence base from which CLEAR assigns its ratings, making it easier for *all* states to identify effective programs, potentially promising interventions, and see gaps where more research is needed.

Box 1. CLEAR’s Icons for RESEA Intervention Effectiveness Ratings



High: At least two credible impact studies have found favorable effects on UI duration and employment with strong statistical significance ($p < .05$).



Moderate: At least one credible impact study has found favorable effects on UI duration and employment (can be different studies) with modest statistical significance ($p < .10$).



Potentially Promising: At least one impact study (irrespective of study rating) found favorable impacts on UI duration or employment with modest statistical significance ($p < .10$).



No Rating: No impact studies of the intervention exist yet or studies that do exist do not show favorable impacts; more research is needed.

Source: [CLEAR Guidelines on Effectiveness of Reemployment Interventions](#)

Question #2. How do I submit my RESEA evaluation report to CLEAR?

Once you have a completed RESEA evaluation report in hand, submitting the report to CLEAR for review can help others learn from your evaluation. You can submit an evaluation report to CLEAR by emailing it to U.S. DOL’s CLEAR Helpline (CLEAR@abtassoc.com). To make your evaluation findings accessible for policymakers and other practitioners, it is helpful to also post your evaluation report publicly on the internet and include the URL for accessing the report in your CLEAR submission email.² Doing so will allow interested readers (including other states!) to have access to the full details of your study and its findings. CLEAR itself does not publish or house study reports. Instead, CLEAR study profiles provide links to study reports for users to readily access directly.

² For example, U.S. DOL’s Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) maintains a publicly accessible, online repository of [completed evaluation reports](#).

Question #3. Once I have submitted my evaluation report to CLEAR, what happens next?

Once you submit a completed RESEA evaluation report to CLEAR, the report will move through CLEAR's study review process. First, the report will be screened to ensure that it is eligible for CLEAR review. CLEAR only reviews studies that focus on eligible labor-related topics. Given their focus on reemployment interventions, evaluations of RESEA programs or program components should easily clear this initial hurdle.

Next, trained CLEAR contractors will read and review the evaluation report. The exact review process will depend on the type of study conducted and the methods used. For example, CLEAR has developed different guidelines for review of [causal impact studies](#), [non-causal implementation studies](#), and [non-causal descriptive studies](#).³

Only credible findings from rigorous causal impact studies are eligible to inform CLEAR's RESEA intervention evidence effectiveness ratings. A key part of the CLEAR ratings process thus involves reviewing evaluation reports to assign their impact studies a **CLEAR causal evidence rating**. This rating provides information about the extent to which a study's causal findings are credible (see Box 2). That is, a study's causal evidence rating indicates how confident we can be that the study's findings are attributable to the intervention being studied and not to other factors. Only findings from causal impact studies with high or moderate causal evidence ratings are used to inform CLEAR's RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings.⁴

Once the review of the evaluation report is complete, CLEAR will post a study profile summarizing the evaluation to its website. If you conducted a causal impact study of your RESEA program or a component of your RESEA program, the CLEAR study profile will include a causal evidence rating. If the study receives a high or moderate causal evidence rating, findings from the evaluation report will be used to update or expand the set of RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings, making it easier for all states to employ effective, evidence-based reemployment interventions.

Question #4. What type of evaluation reports are eligible for CLEAR review?

As noted above, CLEAR reviews causal impact studies as well as non-causal implementation studies and non-causal descriptive statistical studies. All these different study types can generate valuable new information about reemployment programs or components that supports a culture of learning and a cycle

Box 2. CLEAR's Icons for Causal Evidence Ratings



HIGH

High Causal Evidence:

Strong evidence the effects are caused by the examined intervention.



MODERATE

Moderate Causal Evidence:

Evidence that the effects are caused to some degree by the examined intervention.



LOW

Low Causal Evidence:

Little evidence that the effects are caused by the examined intervention.

Source: [CLEAR Policies and Procedures, Version 4.0](#)

³ For more information about RESEA implementation studies, see the RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance Brief by Trutko et al. (2023), *Implementation Studies*. For more information about research designs that might be used for impact evaluations of RESEA programs or program components, see Mills De La Rosa et al. (2021), [RESEA Evaluation Toolkit: Key Elements for State RESEA Programs](#).

⁴ For a discussion of research design or analysis issues that can make it challenging for a RESEA impact evaluation to receive a high or moderate causal evidence rating, see the RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance FAQ by Clarkwest and Wheat (2023), *Common Pitfalls in Designing RESEA Causal Evaluations*.

of continuous program improvement. For example, an implementation study report might provide important information about unanticipated administrative challenges that accompanied the rollout of a new RESEA program component. Likewise, a non-causal descriptive study might provide useful new information about the demographics of program participants or rates of program completion. These types of studies can still be sent to CLEAR upon completion.

However, only causal impact studies can generate evidence about the effect and effectiveness of RESEA programs or program components. These are the only study type that is assigned a causal evidence rating during a CLEAR review. And only findings from causal impact studies that are deemed credible enough to receive a high or moderate causal evidence ratings can be used to inform the RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings.

A wide variety of research designs are used to conduct causal impact studies. To be eligible for CLEAR review, the causal impact study must employ an established research design for identifying causal impacts. CLEAR reviews causal impact studies that use *experimental* research designs (i.e., randomized controlled trials). CLEAR also reviews most studies that deploy one of several widely used *non-experimental*⁵ research designs: interrupted time series designs, difference-in-differences designs, matching designs, and various regression analyses including regression discontinuity designs.⁶

Question #5. What can I do to make sure that my RESEA impact study is able to help inform the RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings?

First, you might aim for your study design to be able to receive a high or moderate causal evidence rating. Only findings from causal impact studies with high or moderate causal evidence ratings are eligible to inform the RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings. Causal evidence ratings are determined in part by the impact study's research design (see Exhibit 1). For example, only two research designs are currently eligible to receive high causal evidence ratings: randomized controlled trial and interrupted time series.⁷ Whether or not a study ultimately receives the highest possible causal evidence rating that it is eligible for depends on how the study was executed and whether or not the study authors were able to adequately address design-specific requirements set out in CLEAR's [Causal Evidence Guidelines](#).⁸

Second, CLEAR's RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings focus on whether reemployment interventions reduce Unemployment Insurance (UI) duration and improve employment and earnings outcomes for program participants. To inform the RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings, a causal impact study must receive a high or moderate causal evidence rating and must evaluate the intervention's impact on those core reemployment outcomes (i.e., UI duration, employment, and earnings). States are already required to include these core reemployment outcomes in their impact evaluations of RESEA programs or program components (for more, see DOL/ETA, 2019).

⁵ Non-experimental designs are also known as *quasi-experimental designs*. Either term is acceptable. The RESEA Toolkit refers to such designs as "quasi-experimental" or "QEDs"; CLEAR typically uses "non-experimental."

⁶ More information about how these different research designs might be used to conduct an impact study of an RESEA program or program component is provided in the [RESEA Evaluation Toolkit](#).

⁷ CLEAR is updating the causal evidence guidelines, including the guidelines for regression discontinuity designs (RDDs). It is anticipated that evaluations using a RDD approach might also become eligible to receive a high causal evidence rating. In the meantime, states may reference the What Works Clearinghouse's RDD guidelines to help ensure a rigorous design that is likely to meet CLEAR's standards (see Chapter IV of [What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 5.0](#)).

⁸ For a discussion of research design or analysis issues that can make it challenging for a RESEA impact study to receive a high or moderate causal evidence rating, see the RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance FAQ by Clarkwest and Wheat (2023), *Common Pitfalls in Designing RESEA Causal Evaluations*.

Exhibit 1: CLEAR Evidence Guidelines and Highest Possible Ratings, by Research Design Type

Research Design	Applicable CLEAR Guidelines	Highest Possible Causal Evidence Rating
Randomized controlled trial (RCT)	Randomized Controlled Trial	High
Interrupted time series (ITS)	Interrupted Time Series	High
Matched comparison group	Regression	Moderate
Difference-in-differences	Regression	Moderate
Fixed effects (group or individual)	Regression, with Special Criteria	Moderate
Instrumental variables	Regression, with Special Criteria	Moderate
Other regression methods	Regression	Moderate
Pre/post tests	Interrupted Time Series	Low
Noncausal (implementation studies, correlational or descriptive studies)	None	Not applicable

Source: CLEAR Causal Evidence Guidelines, Version 2.2, January 2022

Question #6. What information should I include in my evaluation report to help ensure that my impact study receives the highest possible causal evidence rating?

To ensure the most accurate review possible and to increase the likelihood that your impact study receives a high or moderate causal evidence rating, it is important to include certain technical details in your final evaluation report. Reporting these details clearly will allow the CLEAR review team to accurately assess whether the research design used in your impact study has addressed the relevant criteria laid out in the CLEAR [Causal Evidence Guidelines](#).

Exhibit 2 shows some of the most critical technical details to include in a final evaluation report, regardless of the research design of your impact study. Details included in your evaluation report should not be limited to this list. In general, the more information your report provides about the data, methods, and analysis, the easier it will be for CLEAR reviewers to determine the study's rating.

Exhibit 2: Key Information to Include in a Final Evaluation Report

Technical Detail	Description
Research Question(s)	What are the research questions that the evaluation has been designed to address?
Outcome(s) of interest	What the intervention is designed to change (e.g., Unemployment Insurance benefit duration; Q2 employment)
Population of interest	Who the intervention is designed to help (e.g., Unemployment Insurance claimants)
Time and location of study	- Where the study took place and when; number of sites - Contextual factors relevant to the intervention or outcomes, such as local labor market characteristics
Description of the intervention	- Details and history about the program, policy, or activity being studied - Theory of change
Treatment condition	- How the study participants who received the intervention were determined - Services or activities that were provided to them - Any changes or adjustments to the intervention over the course of the study
Comparison condition	What, if any, services the study participants who did not receive the intervention (the control/comparison group) were provided
Sample size	- How many participants were assigned to the treatment group and the control/comparison groups, respectively - How many of the members of each group are included in each analysis

Technical Detail	Description
Data sources and measures	• The information being used to measure the outcomes of interest and other relevant participant characteristics • How the information is being measured
Findings*	• The mean value or percentage (and standard deviation, if appropriate) of the outcome for the treatment group • The mean value or percentage (and standard deviation, if appropriate) of the outcome for the control/comparison group • The impact estimate for each outcome • The standard error or confidence interval associated with each impact estimate • The statistical significance of each impact estimate
Baseline characteristics for treatment group and for control/comparison group	• Observable characteristics used to determine the similarity between the treatment and control/comparison groups • Any potential unobservable characteristics • Mean (or average) value for each characteristic for each group, with the standard deviations • For any characteristics that change over time, values prior to the start of the intervention
Attrition counts/rates for each group (RCTs only)	• Number or percentage of participants who began but did not complete the experiment or whose outcome data are not available after the intervention • Number of participants assigned to the treatment and comparison groups • Number of participants in the two groups who have complete results

* Will vary by research design and analysis model

Question #7. What details about the intervention and the context in which it was implemented should I include in my final evaluation report?

Detailed **information about the intervention being evaluated** is essential. This information helps CLEAR reviewers develop an understanding of the program's impetus, goals, and target population. It also helps reviewers determine whether other evaluations of similar reemployment interventions have been reviewed by CLEAR. Details about the intervention are also valuable for policy and program audiences who might be interested in replicating or building on the intervention in other contexts. The following are examples of the details that are useful to include in an evaluation report when describing the intervention:

- where the intervention took place, including number of sites;
- the history of how the intervention was developed and why it was selected for implementation and evaluation;
- a detailed description of the intervention itself;
- a description of the group the intervention is intended to serve; and
- a description of any eligibility requirements that determine who is or is not able to access the intervention.

Information about the **context in which the intervention was implemented and evaluated** is also critical to include in an evaluation report. Providing detailed information about the context in which an intervention was implemented can help CLEAR reviewers determine whether the evaluation's research design is sufficient to disentangle the causal impact of the intervention from the impact of other factors that might also affect the study's outcomes. Providing information about the study's context can also help CLEAR reviewers and members of the public consider whether findings from your evaluation are likely

to apply in other settings.⁹ For example, it can be helpful to include information about the local labor market conditions that prevailed at the study site(s) during the period of the evaluation, or information about other relevant reemployment programs or interventions that study participants might have accessed during the period of the evaluation.

Pairing a causal impact evaluation with an implementation study can be an effective way to collect and report detailed information about the evaluation context and intervention features. However, even in cases when an implementation study has not been conducted, a comprehensive impact evaluation report should still include the core details.

Question #8. Where can I find more information about evaluating RESEA programs?

The [*RESEA Evaluation Toolkit*](#) provides comprehensive information about how to design and implement an evaluation of a RESEA program or program component. This toolkit is an important resource that can help you ensure that your impact study produces credible evidence about the effectiveness of your RESEA intervention.

More information specific to CLEAR can be found on [Workforce GPS/RESEA Evaluation and Evidence Resources](#), in particular the following:

[*Using CLEAR – A Demonstration*](#). This webinar includes a demonstration of the CLEAR website functionalities and explains how CLEAR can be used to find evidence relevant to states' RESEA programs.

[*CLEAR Causal Evidence Ratings Plain Language Tool*](#). This online tool supports states in their understanding and use of CLEAR to inform RESEA program design.

[*CLEAR's Causal Evidence Guidelines*](#). This document describes the standards used by CLEAR to rate causal impact studies.

[*CLEAR's Guidelines on the Effectiveness of RESEA Interventions*](#). These guidelines describe how CLEAR rates evidence of reemployment intervention effectiveness.

References

Clarkwest, A., & Wheat, V. (2023). *Common Pitfalls in Designing RESEA Evaluations*. RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance FAQ. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. Abt Associates. Available at: <https://d2leuf3vilid4d.cloudfront.net/-/media/B381C69EBBF64E1FBD6E6EF66AC3FDE7.ashx?rev=CE82CF4C87BF771BADBE4889EDE1A64C>.

Mills De La Rosa, S., Souvanna, P., Clarkwest, A., Kappil, T., Epstein, Z., Rothschild, L., Kuehn, D., Wall, A., Klerman, J., & Nightingale, D. (2021). *Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Evaluation Toolkit: Key Elements for State RESEA programs*. U.S. Department of Labor. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/resea_Toolkit_February2021.pdf.

⁹ For additional information about how to assess whether findings from another state's impact study are likely to apply to your state's context, see the RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance Tip Sheet by Travis (2023), *Considerations for the Applicability of Evaluation Evidence*.

Travis, A. (2023). *Considerations for the Applicability of Evaluation Evidence*. RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance Tip Sheet. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. Abt Associates. Forthcoming at: [WorkforceGPS - RESEA Evaluation and Evidence Resources](#).

Trutko, J., Nightingale, D., Trutko, A., & Copson, E. (2023). *Implementation Studies*. RESEA Evaluation Technical Assistance Brief. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. Abt Associates. Available at: <https://d2leuf3vilid4d.cloudfront.net/-/media/FAA77EDDFA294A48BB38EFC23C363EA5.ashx?rev=1FBAA0BB309B05CC86D19468C209CE29>.

DOL/ETA [U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration]. (2019). *Expectations for States Implementing the Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program Requirements for Conducting Evaluations and Building Program Evidence*. Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 1-20. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/unemployment-insurance-program-letter-no-01-20>.

About this FAQ

State agencies' evaluations of their RESEA programs are integral to expanding the evidence base of effective reemployment interventions. This FAQ is part of a series of resources developed to serve as a quick-reference tool for states planning, launching, and carrying out evaluations of their RESEA programs.

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Additional Resources and Information

DOL's RESEA Helpline: RESEA@abtassoc.com

Additional RESEA evaluation technical assistance resources are available here:

https://rc.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/07/30/17/32/RESEA_Evaluation_Evidence_Resources

Study reports, publications, and other materials are available here:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/completedstudies/RESEA-Evidence-Building-Implementation-Study>

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