**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Using the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) – A Demonstration**

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*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Menifee, CA*

GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "Using the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR); A Demonstration." So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today; Megan Lizik, senior evaluation specialist and project officer for RESEA Evaluation, United States Department of Labor chief evaluation office. Megan?

MEGAN LIZIK: Great. Thanks so much, Grace. And welcome everyone. My name is Megan Lizik and as Grace said, I'm a senior evaluation specialist at the U.S. Department of Labor's chief evaluation office and I am the project officer for the RESEA Evaluation as well as for CLEAR the Department of Labor's Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research.

We've mentioned CLEAR at various times throughout our evaluation TA webinars series. So it's been a few months since we spent some time looking at the studies and other resources housed in CLEAR. Today, the RESEA Evaluation TA team and I are excited to revisit this excellent resource with you all.

Before we begin discussing the substance of today's webinar, however, I wanted to provide a little background about the evaluation work being conducted by Abt Associates and their partners, which we discussed more during some of our earlier webinars.

In fall 2018, the Department of Labor chief evaluation office contracted with Abt Associates and its partners, the Urban Institute, Capitol Research Corporation, and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies to conduct a three year evaluation to develop strategies to support new RESEA evidence requirements.

As part of this project, the Abt team will assess the current state of the evidence of RESEA, conduct an implementation study of the RESEA program and provide evaluation, technical assistance to states to build your technical capacity to meet the new legislative requirements. This webinar is part of the project evaluation technical assistance and you can learn more about the study by clicking on the link on this slide.

Next, let's revisit this slide we've seen a few times now, which speaks to the goals of our RESEA evaluation technical assistance, and this webinar series. The evaluation process is an iterative, ongoing process. What you learn from an evaluation, either one you conduct or one another state conducts may lead you to think about changes you want to make to your RESEA program. In turn, you might want to evaluate that new program or component of your program to continue learning more about what's most effective in helping people get back to work quickly and so on.

This type of culture of continuous improvement or culture of evaluation and evidence building doesn't happen overnight and we recognize that many of you are already engaged in some type of a cycle like this in your state where you seek to use data and evidence to continually inform your program or policy decision.

This is why the RESEA evaluation TA we've been providing through these webinars as well as the other resources and tools our team is working on are geared toward a broad audience of states with RESEA respondents. We want to build capacity to use, understand, and develop evidence. These resources can ensure that everyone who is administering an RESEA program and everyone who's evaluating or considering an evaluation of their RESEA program has resources on key evaluation topics to either get started or progress from where you're at.

During our last webinar, we discussed evaluator selection and procurement. We talked about the types of evaluators states can work with to evaluate RESEA programs, competitive and non-competitive processes for evaluating their procurement, and considerations for assessing bids and selecting an evaluator.

We also spoke with Leslie Hirsch at the New Jersey Department of Labor and workforce development to learn more about the New Jersey partnership that they have with an research center at a state university to evaluate New Jersey programs. If you were unable to attend this webinar, you can watch the recording on workforce GPS by using the link on this slide.

In today's webinar, we will focus on reintroducing you to CLEAR, DOL Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research. We spent some time discussing CLEAR and how do you use it in some of our very earliest webinars.

Today we're going to spend more time reviewing its purpose and content with you, give you some helpful tips on how to interpret and use information from CLEAR to support your RESEA Program Development and evidence building efforts and give you a live demonstration of CLEAR with a focus on how to navigate the website to the resources most relevant to reemployment services.

I'll be joined today with Phomdaen Souvanna, senior analyst at Abt Associates and Lawrence Burns, reemployment coordinator at the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Unemployment Insurance. I'm now going to turn it over to Phomdaen to kick off today's presentation.

PHOMDAEN SOUVANNA: Thanks, Megan. Before kicking off today's webinar, I want to say thank you to everyone on the webinar today. We think this webinar will provide useful information on how to use this exciting tool. To get started, we would like to conduct a quick poll to gauge your current level of familiarity with CLEAR. In a moment, a poll window will pop up asking to rate your level of knowledge of CLEAR.

When the poll window pops up, please mark the option that best reflects your rating. We will give everyone about 20 seconds to make a selection. We would also like to know if you have experience using other federal evidence clearing houses. If you have, please enter the name of the clearing house in the chat box.

Great. So it looks like the majority of attendees are familiar with CLEAR but have not used it. Some have experience using CLEAR and some seem to not be quite sure what CLEAR is and based on the chat box responses, but some of the attendees have experienced using the what works clearing house from the Department of Education. We hope that after this webinar, you will know more about CLEAR and understand how to use it to support your RESEA program. Grace, let's go ahead and close this poll.

All right, our next poll asks, what type of evidence have you used to support program development and evaluation? Again, a poll window will pop up asking you to respond to this question. If you have used other types of evidence not listed here, please let us know what they are by typing in the chat box. We'll give everyone about 20 seconds to respond to this question.

All right. It seems like it's a fairly even split right now between information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics regional economic and labor reports as well as previous program staff experience. A few of you do have experienced using studies from CLEAR or the DOL website. And someone responded that they've used analysis of current program data to help support their program development and evaluation.

So we hope that, again, this webinar will help you to become more familiar with CLEAR and how to use that to support your own program development and evaluation. So I'll now turn it back to Megan to discuss CLEAR's content and purpose and other information about how you can use CLEAR.

MS. LIZIK: Thanks, Phomdaen. Now, let's dive in and talk a little bit more about what the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research is and what we can learn from it. CLEAR is a central source of research and information on labor-related topics and its primary goal is to make labor research more accessible to audiences both inside and outside of the Department of Labor. Practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public all can use CLEAR so that it can inform decisions about labor policies and programs.

Basically CLEAR is a place you can go to see how big of a body of research is out there, what it says about particular strategies or interventions reaching your goals, and how confident we can be in the findings in particular programmatic areas.

CLEAR does this by conducting systematic evidence reviews on labor topics including studies funded by DOL as well as other studies with published reports and then summarizing the study methodologies, findings, and policy or program implications. CLEAR's topics are determined by DOL chief evaluation office often in consultation with DOL agencies, CLEAR contractor project staff, CLEAR technical advisors, and topic area subject matter experts.

Every potential systematic review begins with a research question such as what is the impact of services to justice involved populations on their employment outcomes? The reviews are then guided by protocol designed to capture all research papers and reports that examine the research questions related to this topic area and guidelines appropriate to the study type making this process transparent, consistent, and of high quality across each evidence review or topic area.

Currently CLEAR has done evidence reviews across 19 labor topics and houses summaries of over 700 studies and continues to expand. Of these, topic areas that are most relevant to RESEA include the reemployment job search assistance and re-entry topic areas.

CLEAR summarizes many kinds of research including implementation, descriptive, statistical, and outcome analyses, and causal impact studies. Causal studies include experimental and non-experimental research studies that attempted to estimate the impact of a program, policy, or intervention on outcomes.

Study designs that fall within this category include Randomized Controlled Trial or RCTs, Quasi Experimental Designs which use comparison groups. An example of a QED is an interrupted time series design, and causal studies are the only study design that estimate the true impact of an intervention.

That is, big studies are the only ones that can determine how specific claimant or participant outcomes differ from what they would have been if it were not for the intervention. Causal impact studies are also the only studies that are currently rated in CLEAR as high, moderate, or low according to the strength of the evidence that they've produced, which is a quick indicator of how confident we can be in the results. And you can see our icons for that here. We'll talk more about that in a little bit.

Descriptive studies are studies that use statistical techniques and other quantitative approaches, but do not attempt to assess the causal impact of a program. Descriptive studies include outcome studies and as you may recall from our previous webinars, an outcome study analyzes observed characteristics of claimants following their participation in a program and assesses those characteristics against program goals across program implementations or locations or over time.

Outcome studies do not indicate how effective an intervention is in producing outcomes. Implementation studies examine the development and operation of a program. An implementational study can document how services are being delivered on the ground; while a process study can tell you more about how claimants flow through your RESEA program and document how they engage in services or in other words, implementation studies not only described what is happening but also assess whether the program or intervention was implemented as planned and explain why the program is operating as it is.

Findings from implementation studies can be helpful for identifying best practices as well as for conducting a viability assessment to determine if the program is ready to be implemented and studied in other ways such as an impact study.

All studies in CLEAR have what we call profiles. These are short, plain language summaries of the research that provide information about a study purpose, context, and findings. They also help identify the strengths and limitations of the research to help you interpret the study's findings.

The goal is to provide a succinct summary of the research so that CLEAR users can determine whether it's relevant for their purposes. If you'd like to find the original publication, CLEAR links to those in the profile as well.

For studies that estimate causal impact, CLEAR provides more information on the study's quality and the findings on the interventions impact on outcomes of interest. We'll dive deeper into these in a minute. In the future, CLEAR will also include information about RESEA intervention effectiveness.

Finally, CLEAR also developed syntheses of topic areas. These provide a summary of the state of the evidence or distill the so what that comes out of the systematic evidence review, things like what we know, what the evidence base looks like, and where are the gaps for future inquiry.

Now, let's spend more time talking about CLEAR's causal evidence ratings. As I mentioned previously, causal evidence ratings provide more information about the quality of a given impact study. CLEAR does not provide causal evidence ratings for descriptive and implementation studies.

It is also very important to note that the ratings pertain to the quality of the study itself, not the intervention studied. CLEAR finds the ratings after our careful assessment by independent experts that look at what methods were used in the study and how well those methods were implemented during the study.

The rating system indicates how confident you can be that the study's findings reflect the true impact of an intervention rather than something else. This is important if you're trying to inform your program design elements of an intervention that we have high confidence in having caused positive employment and earnings impacts for people, for example.

CLEAR's causal evidence rating system has three levels to describe the strengths as the causal evidence in the study; high, moderate, and low. In the future, CLEAR will house more information on causal evidence ratings for RESEA intervention, as I mentioned before. More information about this is forthcoming in OUI's guidance.

High rating means CLEAR is confident that the estimated effect are solely attributable to the intervention examined in the study. A high rating indicates that the analysis meets methodological standards and the results are credible. Two types of causal studies can receive a high rating.

Well-conducted RCTs – randomized control trials – that have low attrition and no other threats to steady validity and interrupted time series study designs with sufficient replication. Other causal studies can at most receive a moderate rating.

A moderate rating means CLEAR is somewhat confident that the estimated effects are attributable to the intervention studied, but there might be other contributing factors that were not included in the analysis. Finally, research that does not meet the criteria for a high or moderate rating receives a low rating which indicates that CLEAR is not confident that the estimated effects are attributable to the intervention studied. In these cases, other factors likely contributed to the estimated effects.

For example, let's say you are reviewing a study using a mash comparison group design on positive impacts on employment or received the low rating from CLEAR. CLEAR's low rating indicates that there is information to suggest that the impacts may be due to other factors besides the intervention.

For example, that members of the treatment and comparison group differed from one another, could be one of the important ways. Perhaps the individuals who received the intervention had higher levels of educational attainment or more stable employment histories than those who did not receive the intervention.

From the existing literature, we know that individuals with high educational attainment and stable employment history are more likely to be employed than those who do not. As such, in this study, it is possible that the difference in education level and employment history contributed to the better employment outcomes for those who received the intervention rather than the intervention that was tested.

Consequently, findings from a low rating should be interpreted with caution. However, this does not mean that studies that received moderate or low ratings are not useful. You may find that the intervention that was studied sounds like a promising one for you to evaluate, perhaps using a higher quality study such as one with a more rigorous design or that is implemented more carefully.

Let's pause for a moment and take a quick poll. If CLEAR gives an impact study of rating of high causal evidence, what does the high rating indicate? Please indicate your response in the pop-up window. OK. Looks like we're pretty much split. The correct answer is A, the study's findings are credible. Remember that the causal evidence only tells us whether or not we can be confident that the impact estimates are attributable to the intervention. It does not tell us whether the intervention was effective in producing the outcomes of interest.

Now, let's take a closer look at the effectiveness icons I mentioned earlier. CLEAR doesn't ask you to read the whole study on your own in order to figure out what the findings were. It provides a quick overview summary of the studies impact findings and is also working to assign these effectiveness icons to all study profiles.

As shown on the slide, there are five outcomes findings designations. Favorable, mixed, none, unfavorable, and not applicable. The outcome findings designations are provided for each outcome domain that the study examined. For example, if a study examined outcomes within the public benefit receipt in short term employment domains, CLEAR will provide an outcome finding designation for each of those domains.

The study may have a favorable rating for public benefit received and an unfavorable rating for short term employment, however. CLEAR does not indicate the specific outcome examined in the study. For instance, public benefit receipt could be TANF or UI benefits. You must review the study's profile summary in order to determine what specific outcomes were examined and whether or not the outcome is relevant to your RESEA program.

One topic area that includes studies that are particularly relevant to RESEA is the reemployment topic area. You may have already spent some time looking through this topic area when you were developing your RESEA program last year and in a few minutes Phomdaen will show you how to find it in our live CLEAR demonstration.

CLEAR's reemployment topic area examines studies of several different types of programs or services that aim to get UI claimants back to work faster. Specifically the reemployment research area includes impact studies that examine whether interventions reduce claims UI benefit receipt increased their reemployment rate or improved their longer term employment and earnings outcomes.

The reemployment topic area currently includes profiles of 46 studies published between 1978 and August of 2018. There are also several other topic areas that may be of interest to you such as our apprenticeship and on the job training topic area, which is currently under development, job search assistance, and low income adults.

Some of these evidence reviews are ongoing as I mentioned, so you'll want to check back periodically to see what new reviews and summaries CLEAR has done. Also during the live demo Phomdaen will show you where to find these and other topic areas. In the future, CLEAR is working to make changes to help make these and other RESEAs relevant resources easy to find on the website.

In addition to the study profile in the reemployment topic area, CLEAR has also developed a synthesis of research studies that examine the effectiveness of existing re-employment initiatives. The research synthesis highlights key findings from studies identified through CLEAR systematic evidence review, provides an overview of the evidence base, and identified gaps in the research.

The supplement takes a closer look at each group of studies in the reemployment topic area by intervention. There you can find groupings of all the REA studies, for example, or all the job search assistant studies.

A few of our key findings included in the synthesis are that the majority of interventions reduced weeks of benefit received and amount of benefits paid that reemployment forces worked in the short term and that lighter touch intervention has had more limited benefits. You can learn more by visiting the reemployment synthesis and supplement.

CLEAR can be helpful to states in a few key ways. First, CLEAR can help states find high quality evidence for interventions relevant to them – to the ones that they currently use or potentially ones they may want to adopt.

States can use the evidence to inform how they want to design or tweak your RESEA and potentially other programs that you have. Second, CLEAR's standards for high quality labor research can serve as a model for states own evaluation of their RESEA programs or interventions.

And lastly, CLEAR can help states identify gaps in the existing research literature and over time as more studies are conducted and completed, those gaps will begin to be filled. With the wealth of labor related research and evaluation information available in CLEAR, it may feel a little daunting.

For those of you who are not as experienced using CLEAR, you may be asking yourself where and how should I get started? A good place to start with finding RESEA relevant evaluation evidence is CLEAR's reemployment topic area as well as the reemployment synthesis and supplement which we discussed earlier. Next, you may want to review CLEAR's profiles for causal studies of the interventions that show impacts on UI leaks and employment as well as other outcomes you might be interested in it.

Once you become more familiar with CLEAR and the studies in its database, you can start to identify studies of interventions that are similar to your own or studies that examine similar outcomes by either conducting a search, using CLEAR search function, or looking within a specific topic area such as the reemployment topic area. Once you've identified relevant studies, you'll want to figure out what studies to look at first.

One approach is to focus on studies for which CLEAR has given a high or moderate causal evidence rating, which indicates you can be highly or reasonably confident that the effects of the studies found really do reflect the effects of the program rather than something else. You may also look at studies with low rating to learn more about what happened there. Remember, those studies are useful for some purposes.

For each of these studies, carefully review CLEAR study profile. You may also want to take a look at the original study manuscripts where you can to get even more detail. Thinking about what ways those things align or do not align with your RESEA programs can help you decide how those studies might provide evidence to suggest whether your RESEA program might also be effective. In other words, how likely you might be to see the same types of results.

Even if you don't see programs similar to yours, however, you can still learn from them. For example, you may also find that the programs of positive results have an interesting element or component you haven't tried yet but are interested in. In that case, you may consider making tweaks or changes to your program to potentially be more effective. Now I'll turn it over to Phomdaen to conduct our live demonstration for everybody.

MS. SOUVANNA: Great. Thank you, Megan. Now that you have a better understanding of CLEAR and how it can generally be used, let's take a look at the actual CLEAR website and see how we can go about and then finding relevant studies. Let's say we want to know what existing reemployment interventions have demonstrated positive impacts on unemployment and short- or long-term earnings.

In particular, we want to see how similar these interventions are to ours and use that information to think about whether we want to tweak our intervention. To do this, we will go to the CLEAR website to search for studies of interventions that have been found to be of high quality and to have favorable impacts.

So we begin by – we'll begin by entering our – the CLEAR's web address, which is clear.dol.gov into our web browser. All right. Now, as you can see here, this is the homepage of the CLEAR website.

At the top of the page is a navigation menu which I will discuss in a moment. Further down the page, CLEAR provides links to areas of the website that are likely to be of interest, website visitors. In this quick link section, the most popular studies and as well as study reviews that have been recently added to CLEAR.

There's also a short search form to the left here that you can use to search CLEAR's study database. This is one of two places that CLEAR provides for searching its database of studies. We will be conducting a search for potentially relevant studies in a moment. Before doing that, I would like to point out several things in the navigation menu that might be of interest to you.

As you can see on the navigation menu at the top here, the CLEAR website has sections for topic areas/reviews, search for studies, new reviews, and about CLEAR. There is also a section for RESEA relevant contents to the right of see about CLEAR link. This section is currently under development so we will not take a close look at it today.

We suggest you bookmark this section and make sure to go back periodically to see the updates to the section. In the meantime, let's review what is in the other parts of CLEAR. So by hovering over the topic areas link, you'll get a drop-down menu listing the 19 topic areas CLEAR has identified as relevant to labor policies and programs. You can click into a specific topic area to browse the studies that fall into that topic area. Or if you're not sure what types of studies are included in the topic area, you can click on the topic area link.

And this main topic area page will provide a description of each of the topic areas that are contained in CLEAR. And as Megan mentioned earlier, one of the topic areas that will be relevant to you is the reemployment topic area, which you can find here as well as in that drop down menu from the navigation menu.

And if you click into three employment topic area, you'll be able to see links to studies that fall into this topic area, a short description of the topic area as well as the synthesis reports and the link to the synthesis report that Meghan described earlier.

And going back up to the navigation menu, to the right of the topic areas, there is a section for flash reviews. Flash reviews are reviews of studies that have been nominated for review by members of the public and meet CLEAR's review criteria. The flash review is a mechanism that allows new important literature to be added to the CLEAR database without waiting for the systematic review process.

So we're going to just skip these two for now and talk about see about CLEAR section. The about CLEAR section of the website provides more information about CLEAR's processes and policies. As you can see here, CLEAR's process section provides – is divided into four sections. Under CLEAR's processes use – there's a visual representation and short description of the procedure CLEAR undergoes to develop the CLEAR database.

The Evidence Ratings Tab provides definitions of CLEAR's causal evidence ratings that Megan described earlier. In the What's in a Profile tab, there's a summary of the information CLEAR provides in each of the study profiles. Lastly, in the Referenced Documents Tab, you'll find links to download documents that describe CLEAR's policies and procedures as well as review guidelines used by CLEAR, and these are provided by study type.

So now let's return to the task at hand and search for some studies. As you saw earlier, there – you can conduct a search using the search for studies box at the bottom CLEAR's landing or homepage.

Another way to search the study database is to click on search for studies link in the navigation menu. These two search for studies forms are different from the search box that is located at the far right, which is right here, of the navigation menu. This search box, here, lets you type in a keyword to search the entire CLEAR website, not just the study database. For today, we want to search CLEAR study database. So we'll go ahead and click on the search for studies link in the navigation menu.

On this page there are two main areas. There's the search which we will come back to in a second, and then there's the icon keys section and the icon keys section, you'll find quick – the icon keys section serves as a quick reference guide to what each of the icons mean.

These include icons for the causal evidence rating, the study types, and the outcomes effectiveness, all of which were discussed earlier. The search section contains a form that we can use to enter our search criteria. So let's start our search first is the key words box. We will leave this blank for now as we want to keep our search open.

Of course, if you're interested in a particular intervention or outcome of interest, you can narrow your search by entering a relevant word or phrase here. Next is the topic area criteria. When we click on the topic area, we will get a drop down menu with the list of the 19 topic areas that are currently available in CLEAR. If we wanted to search all of the topic areas, we would select any.

For today, we are interested specifically in studies within the reemployment topic area. So for our search we will select preemployment, then we will select a study type. We are able to select one of the three study types reviewed by CLEAR; that's causal, descriptive, and then implementation.

For our search, we will select causal impact analysis. Once we select causal impact analysis, a box where the study evidence reading will appear to the rate of the study type box. Since CLEAR only provides a causal evidence rating for causal impact studies, you only see this box if you select causal impact analysis for the study type. For the study evidence rating, again, we have the option of selecting one of the three ratings, high, moderate, or low. For our purposes today, we are interested in studies with high causal evidence.

Finally, we will select the review type, which includes the action, a flash, or systematic review. We want to include both types of reviews in our search and so we'll select any. Once we have entered all of our search criteria, we will click on the search button. So here we have the results of our search.

Above the search form, CLEAR tells us, here, that our search returned 27 potentially relevant studies based on our search criteria and that's those studies are sorted by relevance. Below the search form is the list of studies that fall within – that meet our search criteria. The search results will provide quick information about the study including the study title, the topic area, study type, the causal evidence rating, the outcome findings, and the citation for the study.

So the first study on our list is a study entitled long-term effects of job search assistance, experimental evidence using administrative tax data. This study, as we can see, was a causal impact study rated with a causal evidence of high. We can also see that the study found favorable outcomes for public benefit receipt as well as short-term and long-term employments and earnings.

The next study on this list is also a causal impact study, which means our search criteria was a high causal evidence rating. This study, however, found favorable outcomes for public benefit receipts and short term employment, but no statistically significant impacts for short-term earnings. So you can continue to review the search results. And once you've identified a study that you want to learn more about, you can click on the study title to go to that study profile.

For today, let's take a closer look at the study profile for the evaluation of the Nevada REA initiative. And we'll do this by clicking on the link that is the title of the study. And that'll take us to the CLEAR's study profile for this study. And you'll see that the study profile is divided into several sections. At the top is the study citation, the link to the original publication, and any additional sources that are related to the study.

To the right, you'll find, again, another summary of the studies outcome effectiveness and the outcome effectiveness icons as well as the causal evidence rating. And then below the additional sources, you'll see that there are highlights from the study. And then below that is a short description of the program and then a description of the study itself. This is followed by a summary of the study findings.

And then things to consider or to keep in mind as you're thinking about the findings itself. There is also at the bottom a summary of the causal evidence rating and a short description of why the study received the rating it got. So based on the information that's in this profile, we can tell that the study and intervention is relevant to our purposes.

However, we'll need to take a closer look at the study report itself to see how the intervention was actually implemented and how this information can inform our thinking about our RESEA program.

So the profile told us that the study used a random assignment study design with a fairly large sample size. The intervention included job search and resume assistance, job matching against state and federal position databases, and provision of information regarding job training. And the study also found statistically significant effects on employment and earnings.

But again, we'll need to take a closer look at the reports for the study itself to see what the specific details about the program were, and how the study was actually conducted. And so to do this, we'll scroll back up to the top and under the citation, again, we have the link to the original publication and we'll click on this link here to go to that original publication.

And when you click on that button, a pop-up window will notify you that you're leaving the CLEAR website and clicking on the link in the pop-up window will take us to the original report, which we can then read in greater detail. So as we're going through CLEAR, we'll continue to repeat this process for the studies that came up in our search.

We'll then review the information we found and build an evidence base for effective intervention strategies that we can use to support modifications to our RESEA program. So that concludes our live demonstration today and I'm now going to turn it over to Larry Burns to discuss closing thoughts and next steps.

LAWRENCE BURNS: Thanks, Phomdaen, and thanks again to everyone on the webinar today. We want to reiterate that CLEAR is a very useful tool that states should look at to search for and review evidence on reemployment interventions. Information from evidence in CLEAR can provide important insights on potential future program development as well as help further your evaluation plans.

As you review CLEAR studies, we encourage you to remember the difference between causal evidence ratings for studies and interventions. Single studies can have a causal evidence rating tied to that study and then there are interventions themselves that are being studied.

Each study of a single intervention contributes to the body of evidence of both an intervention, which in turn begins to tell about the effectiveness of that intervention. This is how evidence based interventions develop over time. Ratings of interventions can tell you something about how much evidence exists that has found a given intervention as being effective in improving certain outcomes. Again, more information about how RESEA interventions will be rated are forthcoming in our guidance and will be included in CLEAR.

It is also helpful to remember that no single study is going to have all the information you were seeking. You should look at multiple studies. Examine findings across multiple studies will provide greater insight into the range evidence that exist. Lastly, keep in mind the CLEAR is always evolving and expanding.

New studies and research syntheses are as well as more RESEA related information will be added in the coming weeks and months. Additionally, DOL periodically makes changes to CLEAR to improve its functionality and enhance the user experience.

You may notice these changes happening over time when using CLEAR, however, the core functions of CLEAR will remain the same. CLEAR will continued to be the place to go for trusted information about Labor related research and evaluation.

For your reference, we included direct links to some of the resources we talked about here today and again this presentation will be available on our WorkforceGPS website. And we want to take this opportunity to remind you about some upcoming opportunities for RESEA Eval PA. RESEA grantees should keep an eye out for an opportunity to discuss their evaluation questions during two sets of office hours.

The first one held in August will cover assessing data and random assignment designs. The second office hour will be held in October and will cover quasi experimental designs and implementation studies. RESEA grantees should send their evaluation focus questions to resea@abtassoc.com.

Once again, email is resea@abtassoc.com ahead of these webinars that the eval team will be prepared to answer your questions. As a quick aside to this, these office hours are focused at the state grantees, we have had a blanket open sessions for some of our previous TAs, but we're really focused on the state grantees for these sessions.

Finally, please remember that you can find all the REC evaluation technical assistance webinars as well as other evaluation resources on workforce GPS. We are a new process of moving them and other resources to a single REC landing page, so please stay tuned for that.

With that, it looks like we have some time for questions, so I'll hand it back to Megan.

MS. LIZIK: Great. Thank you so much, Larry, and thanks to those of you that are writing in some really great questions. I'll go ahead and kick off with some of the ones we've gotten so far and please feel free to keep writing them into the Q&A box as we're going.

First of all, we've had a couple of questions come in sort of about wanting to make sure that you all – that the states are using the most current labor market information and evidence to support your programs and the people that you're serving. And I would just say that generally this is why we're doing this webinar today.

We are hoping that now after having heard a little bit about the purpose and how to read and use CLEAR and seeing the demo, that you have a clearer sense about how to go in there and find studies of interventions that are going to tell you more about this, how to find the evidence and evaluation that supports your programs and that helps hopefully get you the better outcomes for the people that you're serving.

I have another question here about someone is hoping to see discussion about the difference between using statistical techniques for analytics and evaluation and generating insights that meet at least the moderate evidence standard in CLEAR. This is a really insightful question. It's probably a little more detailed than we're going to get into today, but what I would point you to is an upcoming webcast that we're going to be posting in the next couple of weeks on Quasi-Experimental Designs followed by that office hour session that you just saw a minute ago.

You know, that is going to be a good place for everybody to sort of get at a high level some of the key points about Quasi-Experimental Designs and then also a chance to discuss and ask some questions directly of our evaluation TA team and up here at DOL to make sure that we're getting you the answers that you need.

Of course, if there's something more immediate going on, you are also welcome to reach out to our evaluation TA team to try to discuss your specific case more in depth. We have another question about sort of the potentially confusing nature of high, moderate, and low causal evidence.

And I think this is one that we agree this is potentially kind of confusing. I think CLEAR has been using some of these terms for a while. And I think in some ways it can be seen as something that in the labor field, the new legislation language could be very familiar.

And so I think what we're trying to do is work in CLEAR and through other evaluation TA resources to help make sure that it's clear when we're talking about causal evidence ratings for studies, which are the gas gauge ratings we talked about today and when we're talking about causal evidence ratings for interventions.

You know, the ratings for studies, again, are tied to the individual study, whereas the interventions tend to be giving you an indication of how this intervention is being studied across multiple evaluation. So more information is coming on that, but I think it's something that is good to remind everybody that there is a good distinction here and you want to try to keep it clear as you're moving forward.

The next question that have come in is about whether there are implementation studies in the reemployment topic area in CLEAR. And you'll notice that we have been prioritizing reviews of causal impact studies for resource and other constraints in some of our recent reviews, but we are at CLEAR currently also in the process of exploring new ways that allow us to include more implementation research as well so that you can start to look at both of those profiles together; the impact study and the implementation study for one intervention.

I would suggest in the immediate time taking a look at the intervention seizures part of the profile. That's the summary that we do of each study. And you'll see in there, it tells you a little bit about what the key features of that intervention that the study include. So that's a good place to start.

Next there's a question about, "Is there a way to search by filter date to see more recent studies?" This is a really excellent question and something that we are working on, on the CLEAR team. What I would suggest to you for the immediate time, what CLEAR's search function can do is actually export your search results into Excel.

So if you are in the search for studies box and you put some things in those dropdown menus, you'll notice when you scroll all the way down to the bottom, there's an orange button that says CSV. And if click that button when you put your search parameters in place, you will have an Excel spreadsheet pop up and there you can sort and filter by the date of the original publication of the study as well as by causal evidence rating study type and other fields, which I think are going to be of interest to folks here. And particularly those that like to play in Excel.

Larry, can I point to you, there's a question here about is there a plan to create a central location for states to see what other states are studying and facilitate partnership and increased sample places?

MR. BURNS: Sure. As you guys know, that new REC legislation requires that we transition to an RESEA state plan. We're currently working on finalizing the template for that plan. But one of the required elements of the state plan as described in the statute is that states are going to be asked to put in their evaluation plans, things they'd be evaluated in the previous year and things they're planning to evaluate in the upcoming year.

We are working on some changes to workforce GPS to create a new landing page for RESEA. And in the future when we start receiving those new REC state plans, we'll either make those plans themselves a public or a summary of the plans public. So it should help states coordinate if they're looking to partner with other states.

So there is a long-term plan as we transition to that new RESEA state plan moving forward. And again, hopefully, we're trying to implement that new state plan and FYI, 2020, it's going to really depend on how quickly we can get it approved. So it's a little bit tentative right now, but there is a plan for that.

MS. LIZIK: Great. Thanks so much, Larry. So we have another question that came in that's a great one. "Is it permissible to study interventions that were studied previously?" For example, increasing the number of work search contacts? The answer is yes. It's really great to build evidence and increase the amount of evidence that we have on different interventions. And as we mentioned earlier, this is part of what helps build an evidence based intervention. So it's a really great question and a really great thing to be thinking about.

Let's see. Yet, we also have another question. "When will the REA impact study being conducted by Abt Associates be released?" And this is a great thing to be looking out for. The REA impact study will be available on the DOL chief evaluation offices completed reports web page probably within the next two months. So please do check back there.

We will also work with OUI to be sure that if there's any other communications that we can let you know when it's out, we'll certainly try to do that. Well, I think that's about all the time we have for today. Does anyone else, Larry or Phomdaen want to ask any final words?

MR. BURNS: No. I, again, this is Larry from OUI; I just wanted, again, thank everybody for taking the time to attend these sessions. They're very valuable and there's a lot of information that we need to cover as we transition to the new program, so I really appreciate your attention and time and attending these.

MS. LIZIK: Wonderful. Thanks so much, Larry. I would echo what Larry just said. We're delighted to have you all join us today and here is our contact information.

If you have any specific questions that you'd like to follow up with as well as the inbox for the RESEA evaluation TA team.

So thank you so much and have a great rest of your week.

(END)