

Learning Agenda Overview

Cradle-to-Career Governing Board Meeting

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| February 25th, 2026

Introduction

What's a “learning agenda”?

A learning agenda helps to focus attention and activities on the evidence needed to solve big problems.

Building a learning agenda identifies evidence needs and gaps aligned with strategic goals and objectives by asking:

- What is it that our team needs to do?
- What do we need to know to do it best?
- What do we wish we knew?
- When do we need to know it?
- What type and standard of evidence will we need to convince whom?



Introduction

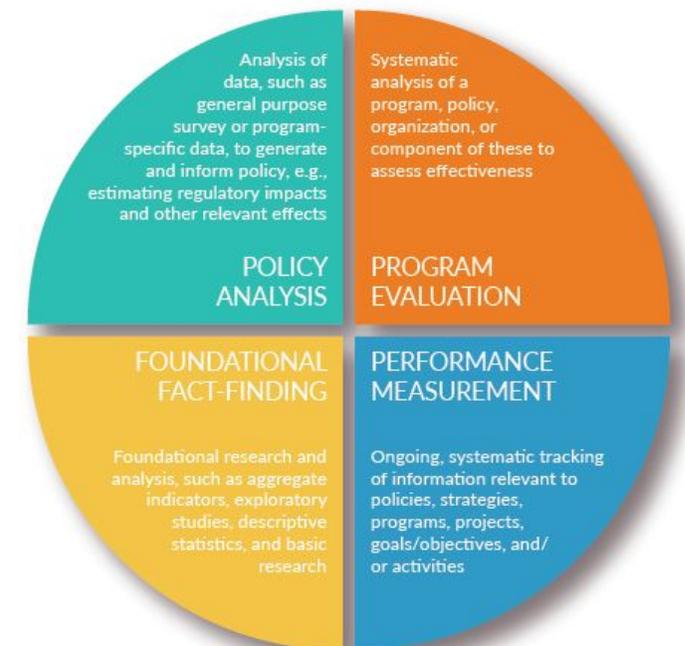
What's a "learning agenda"?

Thinking strategically about learning needs limits ad hoc/ scattered efforts, and the associated inefficient resource use, instead prioritizing those questions that, when answered, can inform pressing decisions and move the needle on high-priority goals.

Learning Agendas can help to inform "fit for purpose" assessment and evaluation

Reduce duplicative spend and provide anchor for investment (of dollars, effort)

Demand signal to often uncoordinated ecosystem



Background

Is this a real thing?

The bipartisan 2018 Evidence Act (signed by President Trump) made Learning Agendas a statutory requirement, anchored in the 2010 Government Performance and Results Modernization Act.

The Evidence Act requires Chief Financial Officers Act agencies to name an Evaluation Officer (EO) and Statistical Official (SO). It also mandates that all executive agencies appoint a Chief Data Officer (CDO). The EO is responsible for conducting an agency-wide capacity assessment and developing the learning agenda and Annual Evaluation Plan. In July 2019, the Office of Management and Budget released guidance on Phase 1 implementation (OMB M-19-23).



Complete these steps to ensure that your agency meets the key requirements of Phase 1 of the Evidence Act.

- Name designated officials (EO, CDO, SO)
- Establish a Data Governance Body
- Every four years: Publish a capacity assessment
- Every four years: Publish a learning agenda
- Annually: Revisit and update the learning agenda as needed
- Annually: Publish an Annual Evaluation Plan

Examples

But who uses “learning agendas”?

While required for all agencies, even prior to 2018 the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor offer great examples relevant to C2C topics:



HHS Strategic Goal 3: Strengthen Social Well-being, Equity, and Economic Resilience

HHS works to strengthen the economic and social well-being of Americans across the lifespan.

Human Services Priority Questions

- To what extent do HHS programs and policies provide effective and innovative pathways leading to equitable economic success for all individuals and families?
- What are the impacts of HHS programs and policies on strengthening early childhood development and expanding opportunities to help children and youth thrive equitably within their families and communities?
- What effective strategies or combinations of strategies expand access to high-quality services for older adults and people with disabilities, and their caregivers, to support increased independence and quality of life?



HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research first developed the HUD Research Roadmap in 2013 to guide its research priorities and investments.

For its first research roadmap, which guides the Office of Policy Development and Research priorities from 2014 to 2018, HUD solicited input from members of the academic community, practitioners, and federal, state, and local policymakers.

These conversations helped determine the most pressing research questions that HUD should pursue. **HUD recorded nearly 1,000 comments, which were narrowed down into distinct research projects to answer the prioritized research questions encompassing different aspects of the agency's mission:**

- **housing affordability (markets)**
- **housing affordability (programs)**
- **policy lessons from the Moving to Work expansion**
- **energy and resilience**
- **education, health, mobility, place-based strategies**
- **crosscutting/other**

In addition to guiding HUD's research projects, **the roadmap also helps inform fiscal year budget requests to Congress.**



Examples

But who uses “learning agendas”?

PMA Learning Agenda



Help the Federal Government answer critical research questions

The [Biden-Harris Management Agenda Vision](#) sets out key priorities for an equitable, effective, and accountable Government that delivers results for all Americans. A management-focused learning agenda in support of the President’s Management Agenda (PMA) identifies key questions to answer to support the PMA vision.

How can the Federal Government enhance the public’s trust?

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- What methods effectively measure trust in a public service environment? How and when can customer feedback on their trust in Government be most useful and accurate?
- How can agencies effectively share and use customer experience data and program results to promote trust with the public?
- How do various touch points between a person and Government services affect trust in Government? To what degree is trust affected by speed (e.g., short hold times for a phone call), transparency (e.g.,

What strategies improve retention, engagement, inclusion, belonging, and wellbeing among Federal employees, while reducing burnout and attrition?

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- How can the Federal Government be nimbler in understanding the Federal employee experience? What information do agency leaders need to improve employee engagement and retention? How can lessons from customer experience initiatives inform improvements to the Federal employee experience?
- Which inclusion and belonging interventions reduce burnout and improve wellbeing and retention, and under what circumstances?

Examples

But who uses “learning agendas”?



Critical questions and their intended goals

Critical Question (CQ)	Goal
<p>1. Education systems and transitions: <i>Are resources and access to educational opportunities distributed equitably across the Washington education system?</i></p>	Build an understanding of resources available to students as they journey through their educational pathways, whether those resources are equitably available, and inform what types of policies might support students at key transitions
<p>2. Outcomes and milestones: <i>How do outcomes and milestones in the Washington education system compare to similar populations who have equitable educational outcomes, particularly for historically marginalized or underserved student groups?</i></p>	Describe disparities across student groups to highlight the need for intentional policies aimed at reversing historic inequities, identify promising practices, or evaluate the success of existing policies to alleviate inequities
<p>3. Education workforce: <i>How well does the Washington education system attract, prepare, and retain a diverse education workforce that can meet current and future student needs?</i></p>	Examine educator workforce supply including composition and distribution, student access to educators and other school personnel, and identify how to attract, prepare, and retain the next generation of educators
<p>4. Education and Social Conditions: <i>How do state systems and social conditions in Washington impact student opportunities and outcomes?</i></p>	Provide a better understanding of how data from other fields, such as health or housing, can inform the educational system to increase equity and improve outcomes for students
<p>5. Data availability and usability: <i>What is the availability and utility of data to answer current and emerging education research questions in Washington?</i></p>	Evaluate the quality, reliability, and validity of education data and explore data from education and non-education agencies to enrich the education research infrastructure



MEMO: Labor & Workforce Development Agency Priorities for Expanding the Cradle-to-Career Data System

To: Mary Ann Bates, Executive Director, Cradle to Career Data System

From: Stewart Knox, Secretary, Labor and Workforce Development Agency

- Industry sectors
- Workforce program
- Receipt of support services

Research questions:

- How do outcomes compare for workforce program participants that do not receive training versus those who receive training?
- How do workforce program participants' education and employment outcomes compare to similar populations who did not participate in workforce programs?
- How do workforce program participants' education and employment outcomes compare to similar populations who participated in training programs provided by other state agencies?
- How many opportunity youth are there in California? What types of education and workforce program participation is associated with disconnected young people enrolling in postsecondary education or becoming employed?
- What are the education and economic outcomes of workforce program participants who are justice involved?
- How does participation in multiple programs or systems impact education and employment outcomes for workforce program participants?
- What educational experiences and public benefits are most often associated with workforce program participation and employment outcomes for workforce program participants?
- How do workforce program participation relate to educational attainment and types of institutions that people attend?



Examples

...have good things come from them?

Having a Child and Early Childhood

“I wish I had [support] when I was pregnant, in order to understand what all the programs mean. I still don't know all the things that are available to me.”
— Mom, North Carolina



DISCOVERY INSIGHTS

Framing for collective thinking about customer pain points

How might we factor in the physical goods that families need in the first year after childbirth to help people start their journey with essentials in hand?

How might we empower organizations and staff in local communities to help families have greater awareness and streamlined access to available benefits?

How might we help people have the right information at the right time about enrolling in benefits and the process to renew them as needed?



An implementation evaluation question!

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

About HHS RealFood.gov MAHA Programs & Services Grants & Contracts Laws & Regulations Radical Transparency

HHS > Health Care > Strengthening Maternal Health > Welcoming a New Baby > About the Newborn Supply Kit

About the Newborn Supply Kit

Support for You
Support for Your Baby
Support for Your Family
About the Newborn Supply Kit

Early findings

Our initial results show promising effects of the Kits on the health and well-being of new parents. Here are a few select findings to date:

Recipients are satisfied with the Kit and would recommend it for others. Nearly all (97%) of survey respondents reported being "extremely satisfied" or "satisfied" with their Newborn Supply Kit. Similarly, 98% of respondents reported that they would recommend that other new parents receive a Newborn Supply Kit. Among the data reported, the response was even stronger among Spanish-speaking recipients, with 100% of participants recommending the Kit.

"I think this is an incredible and life changing kit for so many families in a state where many people are struggling or worried about having the resources to care for their baby."

— New Mom, Digital Survey Feedback

Participants self-report that the Kit improves maternal mental health outcomes. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that receiving their Newborn Supply Kit helped to make them feel less anxious or worried. This trend was especially high for Spanish speakers, among whom over three-quarters (78%) said that they felt less anxiety or worry after receiving a Kit.

With a universal distribution approach, we're hitting our target populations. Among those hospital-based survey participants who opted to answer demographic information, one-third reported household income less than \$20,000 per year and the majority of Kit recipients make less than \$50,000 per year. Of the respondents, 31% are Hispanic, 28% are Black or African American, 27% of respondents were White, 5% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and the remaining 5% of participants reporting selected "other."

Receiving physical goods is decreasing financial stress for recipients. Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Newborn Supply Kit helped to decrease their financial stress. This trend was also particularly strong among Spanish-speaking recipients. As financial stress declines, the survey also asks if they would have otherwise had to purchase. Eighty-eight percent with this statement and nearly all (95%) of the Spanish-speaking measure as well.

"The Newborn Supply Kit takes a LOT of stress away, not just a deal with the hassle of going from one organization to another."

Self-reported trust in government is increasing because of public polling. Trust in government has declined for



Congresswoman Schrier Introduces Bipartisan Legislation to Support Mothers of Newborns

June 13, 2024 | [Press Release](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, Congresswoman Kim Schrier, M.D. (WA-08), alongside Congresswoman Julia Letlow (LA-05), introduced the Newborn Essentials Support Toolkit (NEST) Act. This bipartisan

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

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Arkansas legislators help assemble supply kits for new moms at

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Letlow Secures Support for Maternal Health Kits

February 3, 2026 [Press Release](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Julia Letlow has secured \$5 million in funding signed into law by President Trump to increase support for new mothers and infants through the distribution of newborn supply kits.



Discussion

How might C2C use a learning agenda?

- To elevate the questions your respective communities prioritize most
- To provide an additional opportunity to engage stakeholders to be bought in (and meaningfully shape) C2Cs efforts
- To prioritize external research data requests
- To prioritize which new data to pursue (or not)
- To matchmake partnerships between the state and external researchers

What else can you think of?

