Majority of Federal Evaluators Report Evidence Act Supporting Mission-Fulfillment, New Survey Finds
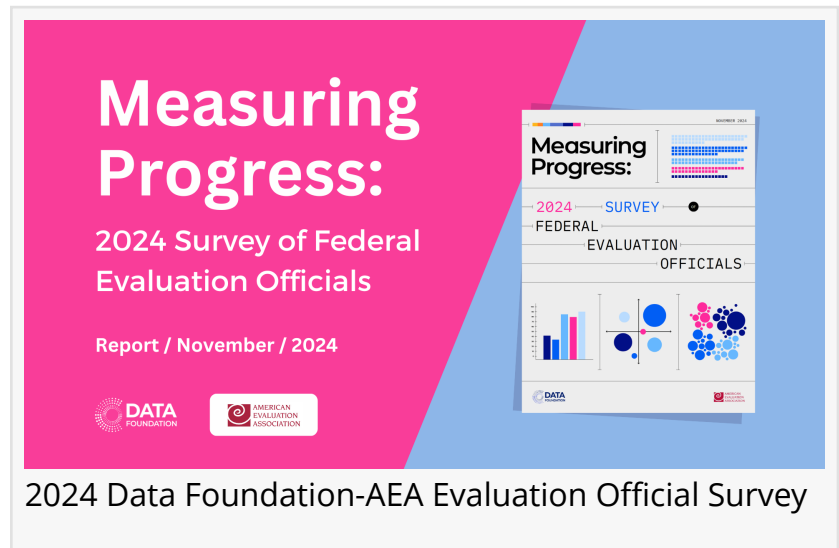
Measuring Progress: 2024 Survey of Federal Evaluation Officials provides insights into the evolving role of federal evaluation officers

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, November 15, 2024 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The Data Foundation announced results from a recent survey, conducted in partnership with the American Evaluation Association, which found that federal evaluation officials made

2024 Data Foundation-AEA Evaluation Official Survey

significant progress implementing the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act ("Evidence Act), although opportunities remain for further institutionalizing evidence-building cultures.

"The evaluation community is making significant progress in building, growing, and enhancing its capabilities five years after the Evidence Act became law," said Nick Hart, President & CEO of the Data Foundation and Chair of the American Evaluation Association's Evaluation Policy Task Force. "While evaluation officials are successfully advancing evidence-informed decision-making across federal agencies, they need continued support and resources to fully realize the vision of the Evidence Act. In the year ahead, Congress and the Executive Branch must take steps to ensure evaluators are resourced to provide the evidence they need to make informed decisions about policies and programs."

Measuring Progress: 2024 Survey of Federal Evaluation Officials provides insights into the evolving role of federal evaluation officers and the growth of evaluation capacity since the implementation of the Evidence Act. Evaluation officials across the federal government report they are successful in their evaluation missions, and find the Evidence Act's implementation greatly enhances the influence of evaluation in key areas of agency decision-making. However, evaluation officials face challenges due to varying levels of resources, leadership support, and managing competing responsibilities in their roles.

Key findings from the survey include:

--Evaluation officials are optimistic about mission success. Respondents reported increased influence of evaluation findings on agency decision-making since 2021, with findings most impacting regulatory actions, strategic planning, and operational decisions. However, resource sufficiency remains a concern for many officials, who report that evaluation findings are much less influential in budgetary decisions.

--The Evidence Act greatly enhances evaluation activities and needs continued support. A majority of respondents (83%) reported the Evidence Act helped them achieve their missions, although less than half reported "sufficient" staffing and non-staff funding.

--Learning agenda implementation faces challenges yet yields clear benefits. Key challenges for formulating learning agendas include determining question scope, understanding purpose, managing timelines, and collaborating externally. Despite difficulties, the process encourages evidence use, fosters an evidence culture, and improves inter-agency collaboration.

--Artificial intelligence (AI) adoption is a low priority for respondents. Across a range of questions, respondents indicated a lack of involvement in AI adoption now and in the future. A majority (52%) reported only "a little" current use of AI in their organizations, with 74% responding "unsure" or "not applicable" when asked about AI adoption in the coming year.

--Evaluation officials are increasingly clear on their roles and responsibilities. Most respondents (81%) are clear about their responsibilities, despite only 39% being dedicated full-time to evaluation activities. However, 67% perceive their agency peers are less clear about their role.

The full report, including all recommendations, is available on the Data Foundation website: https://datafoundation.org/news/evidence-act-hub/13/13-Measuring-Progress-2024-Survey-of-Federal-Evaluation-Officials

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About the Data Foundation: The Data Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. that seeks to improve government and society by using data to inform public policymaking. Our research and educational activities proactively and rapidly address relevant, emerging data-related needs in the country with the goal of devising realistic solutions, accelerating policy coordination, and advancing innovation. The Data Foundation values diversity and transparency in pursuit of an equitable, data-informed society. In 2024, the Data Foundation was recognized by Candid Guidestar with the Platinum Seal of Transparency and received 4-Stars from Charity Navigator. To learn more, visit www.datafoundation.org.

About the American Evaluation Association: The AEA is a professional association of evaluators

devoted to the application and exploration of evaluation as a profession. The AEA prioritizes the advancement of evaluation best practices in multiple types of evaluation, including program evaluation, personnel evaluation, evaluation in education, evaluation in government, independent consulting, and more. To learn more, visit www.eval.org.

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