

October 13, 2009

Board of Advisors

MEMORANDUM

TO: Federal Agency Officials/Staff and Other Interested Parties
FROM: Jon Baron
RE: Coalition supports OMB's new government-wide evaluation initiative

As you may know, last week OMB Director Peter Orszag announced a major new government-wide initiative to advance rigorous evaluations of program impact in social, educational, economic and related program areas (posted [here](#)). We strongly support this initiative, which advances many of the concepts that our organization – the nonprofit, nonpartisan Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy – has promoted through our work with OMB and agencies over the past several years (as described on our [website](#)).

A key element of this new effort is a voluntary evaluation initiative, under which OMB will allocate a limited amount of funding for agencies that (i) show how their funding priorities are evidence-based, (ii) propose new high-priority evaluations for funding, (iii) assess their evaluation capacity and suggest ways to strengthen it, and (iv) identify statutory impediments to rigorous evaluations. Agencies choosing to participate must provide a submission to OMB by November 2.

Consistent with our nonprofit mission, and with funding support from the William T. Grant, MacArthur, and Clark Foundations, we are available to provide advice and assistance (without charge) to agencies in preparation of their submissions to OMB. As part of our mission, we have worked closely with OMB and the agencies in advancing rigorous evaluations over the past several years, and have developed a number of concrete, practical approaches. We have no affiliation with any programs or program models, enabling us to serve as a neutral, independent resource on evidence-based reform.

The OMB guidance allows agencies, in developing their submissions, to consult on key aspects with outside experts. If such assistance is of interest, please let me know (jbaron@coalition4evidence.org, 202-380-3570).

Thanks,
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