

**Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training  
Grant Program: Round 3  
Technical Assistance for Developing Detailed Evaluation Plans**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program requires grantees to retain a third-party evaluator who will design and execute a rigorous evaluation of each funded project. The third-party evaluation contractor must oversee the design of the evaluation, the impact/outcomes analysis, the implementation analysis, data collection and analysis, and development of the interim and final reports.

The TAACCCT Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA PY12-10) required applicants to submit a summary evaluation plan with their grant applications, including their plans for: 1) a participant impact or outcomes assessment; and 2) a program implementation assessment. Applicants were encouraged to consider randomized controlled trials, although non-experimental designs are allowed as long as they meet evidence standards and provide a convincing argument for how the alternative design (e.g., quasi-experimental designs such as regression discontinuity) would allow for drawing causal inferences about the effects of the program.

SGA PY12-10 also required those awarded grant funds to submit a detailed evaluation plan. The detailed evaluation plan must reflect an expansion of the summary evaluation plan, incorporate feedback received from DOL on the summary plan, and discuss the required components of the evaluation detailed in SGA PY12-10. The plans should be double-spaced, use 12-point font, and be no more than 30 pages in length.

Below is a suggested framework and outline for the detailed evaluation plans with column names defined as follows:

- **Component** – Labels the elements of the suggested detailed evaluation plan outline. (Note: numbering is not associated with the numbering in the SGA).
- **Description** – Offers a description of what to include in this section of the plan.
- **Reference** – Indicates which components are required and cites the specific language in the SGA. Where no reference is provided, the component is recommended, but not required.
- **Recommendation/Tip** – Provides information on expectations for a high-quality evaluation plan and offers some tips on the development of the plan.

For additional resources, please see the TAACCCT Evaluation SharePoint site at <https://sp-rc.urban.org/ibp/taaccct/default.aspx> (log-in required). You need to sign up to access SharePoint by emailing [TAACCCTeval@urban.org](mailto:TAACCCTeval@urban.org).

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION/TIP
<b>I. Table of Contents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of sections and any tables and figures in the detailed evaluation plan with page number references</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tip: The Table of Contents does not count against the suggested 30-page limit</li> </ul>
<b>II. Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What the evaluation will try to achieve</li> <li>What the goals of the evaluation are</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include an introduction that provides a high-level summary of the evaluation design, outlining the research questions, data, methods, and reporting that will be provided</li> </ul>
<b>III. Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What the intervention is and how it is supposed to effect change for the target population</li> <li>How the funded programs build institutional capacity</li> <li>What part of the intervention will be evaluated</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss whether funded program is using a particular evidence-based model and describe model</li> <li>Describe ancillary components of each intervention, such as coaching, job placement assistance, and tutoring</li> <li>Describe each intervention that will be evaluated (if the grant is funding more than one)</li> <li>Tip: The SGA provides potentially useful references for understanding the evidence base for selected models</li> </ul>

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<b>IV. Implement- ation Analysis Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the third-party evaluator will analyze the steps taken by the institution to create and run the training program</li> <li>• How the third-party evaluator will assess the operational strengths and weaknesses of the project after implementation</li> <li>• How the third-party evaluator will suggest how implementation might be strengthened within appropriate timing so as not to interfere with the impact/outcomes analysis</li> </ul>	SGA, p. 60-61, section V.C.1.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a conceptual framework for implementation analysis (e.g., theory of change, logic model) and describe how conceptual framework will be used to guide the implementation analysis</li> <li>• Examine fidelity to the model, including whether program, processes, and systems are operating as intended, and, if not, how and why</li> <li>• Tip: Changes may be needed to a program, but they should be described as part of the evaluation</li> <li>• Tip: For new programs, it may make sense to delay the impact analysis until after adequate timing has been allowed for implementation and model adjustments</li> </ul>
<b>IV.A. Implement- ation Analysis Research Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research questions that will guide the evaluation</li> <li>• <u>Required research questions</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How was the particular curriculum selected, used, and/or created?</li> <li>2. How were programs and program designs improved or expanded using grant funds? What delivery methods were offered? What was the program administrative structure? What support services and other services were offered?</li> <li>3. Was an in-depth assessment of participants' abilities, skills, and interests conducted to select participants into the grant program? What assessment tools and processes were used? Who conducted the assessment? How were the assessment results used? Were the assessment results useful in determining the appropriate program and course sequence for</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	SGA, p. 61, section V.C.1.b.1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take into account all of the required research questions from the SGA, but include additional questions as appropriate based on the intervention being tested</li> <li>• Include questions regarding efforts to expand institutional capacity</li> </ul>

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<b>IV.A. Implement- ation Analysis Research Questions (continued)</b>	<p>participants? Was career guidance provided, and if so, through what methods?</p> <p>4. What contributions did each of the partners (employers, workforce system, other training providers and educators, philanthropic organizations, and others as applicable) make in terms of: 1) program design, 2) curriculum development, 3) recruitment, 4) training, 5) placement, 6) program management, 7) leveraging of resources, and 8) commitment to program sustainability? What factors contributed to partners' involvement or lack of involvement in the program? Which contributions from partners were most critical to the success of the grant program? Which contributions from partners had less of an impact?</p>	<p>See previous page</p>	<p>See previous page</p>
<b>IV.B. Implement- ation Analysis Data Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of data sources that will be utilized to address the research questions</li> <li>• How data will be collected and analyzed</li> </ul>	<p>SGA, p. 60-61, section V.C.1.b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include interviews with staff and stakeholders, which are critical for obtaining information for the implementation analysis</li> <li>• Use other methods/sources, where feasible, including surveys, observations, document review, focus groups, etc.</li> <li>• When measuring capacity building, include a description of the indicators that will be used</li> </ul>

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<b>V. Outcomes/ Impact Analysis Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan for rigorously evaluating the participant outcomes or impacts, including a complete description of the study methodology</li> <li>• How the methodology proposed is the most rigorous for the participant outcomes or impacts, given the number of participants (including TAA-eligible workers) the project intends to serve</li> </ul>	SGA, p. 60, section V.C.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justify the selected strategy, whether experimental or non-experimental impact analysis or outcomes-only analysis will be conducted</li> <li>• If small sample sizes prevent from using a treatment/comparison cohort design, identify other strategies for benchmarking the program’s outcomes or consider pre/post tests to measure changes over time</li> <li>• Tip: Only impact analyses with carefully designed comparison groups can be used to assess the effectiveness of TAACCCT-funded programs</li> <li>• Tip: For programs with small sample sizes, benchmarks could include outcomes of other similar programs for the target population</li> </ul>
<b>V.A. Outcomes/ Impact Analysis Research Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research questions the evaluation will use to guide the data collection and analysis for this component</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the SGA does not specify questions to be answered, it does indicate that the purpose of the outcomes/impact analysis is to rigorously evaluate participant outcomes and impacts. Thus, research questions should be developed to guide this analysis.</li> </ul>
<b>V.B. Outcomes Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes to be analyzed, expanding on or refining what was discussed in your summary evaluation plan</li> <li>• How the nine outcomes required in the SGA will be used in the evaluation</li> </ul>	SGA, p. 60, section V.C.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer hypotheses for how the intervention will affect the outcomes of interest</li> <li>• Specify how/when outcomes will be measured</li> <li>• Include an analysis of outcomes, whether it is an outcomes or impact study</li> <li>• Tip: The SGA provides a list of nine required outcomes, but grantees may add others as deemed appropriate (See SGA Appendix F)</li> <li>• Tip: Study the size of the earnings change, in addition to if there was an earnings increase</li> </ul>

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<b>V.C. Experimental Design (if selected method for impact analysis)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the recruitment plan will yield a sufficient number of qualified applicants (both program and controls) to produce valid estimates of these key outcomes: program completion, credential attainment, placement into employment, and employment retention (Outcomes # 2, 5, 7, and 8 in Appendix F), as well as average earnings for those who retain employment</li> <li>• How random assignment will be performed</li> <li>• What procedures will be in place to ensure compliance with random assignment procedures (i.e., that all eligible individuals that apply and who are randomly assigned to treatment can receive it and those who were assigned to the control do not receive the treatment)</li> <li>• What procedures will be in place to ensure the fidelity of implementation (i.e., that the features of the intervention occurred in the treatment condition as intended and did not occur in the control condition)</li> </ul>	SGA, p. 60, section V.C.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on why grantee believes it will be able to recruit enough people for the study based on their past experience or their plans for expanded outreach</li> <li>• Describe how TAA-eligible workers and veterans will be treated in the evaluation</li> <li>• Indicate if different programs or colleges will be merged in the analysis, and describe if and how merging them will allow the detection of impacts</li> <li>• Tip: Different evaluation approaches may be needed for TAA-eligible workers and veterans, who cannot be randomly assigned</li> </ul>
<b>V.D. Non-Experimental Design (if selected method for impact analysis)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument for how the design (e.g., quasi-experimental designs such as regression discontinuity) will allow for drawing causal inferences about the effect of the program</li> <li>• Comparison Group Design               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The source of the comparison group(s) and how individuals are selected for the comparison group</li> <li>2. If matching across groups is used (e.g., demographics, pretest scores, level of education), the statistical techniques for matching should be described, including an</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	SGA, p. 60, section V.C.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on why the comparison group was selected and why the third-party evaluator/grantee believes it is similar to the treatment group</li> <li>• Provide information on the treatment group: 1) How is entry into the treatment group determined? 2) Will there be placement tests? 3) Are there other explicit or implicit mechanisms underlying allocation to the treatment group? 4) Do college staff play a role in determining entry into the treatment group?</li> <li>• Describe statistical techniques that will be used to</li> </ul>

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<b>V.D. Non-Experimental Design (continued)</b>	<p>explanation of how these techniques are appropriate for the sample size</p> <p>3. The procedures that will be in place to ensure the fidelity of implementation (i.e., that the features of the intervention occurred in the treatment condition as intended and did not occur in the comparison condition)</p>	See previous page	<p>correct for possible selection bias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a power analysis such as minimum detectable effect analysis to guide determination of appropriate sample sizes</li> <li>• Collect as much pre-program data and characteristics at entry as possible, especially data on pre-program earnings and employment</li> <li>• Indicate if different programs or colleges will be merged in the analysis, and describe if and how merging them will allow the detection of impacts</li> <li>• Tip: Since treatment and comparison group members need to be as similar as possible, a broad set of variables is preferred to match on observable characteristics. If feasible, include variables related to attitudes/motivations, especially if there is strong treatment group self-selection. Note that a broader set of variables requires larger sample sizes.</li> </ul>
<b>V.E. Outcomes/ Impact Data Collection and Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The data collection methods and data source(s) that will be used for the outcomes/impact analysis</li> <li>• How the anticipated follow-up data will be successfully collected from participants and the control/comparison group (if using experimental or non-experimental design)</li> <li>• The plan for data analysis, including the statistical methods that will be used to measure impacts of the training on participants</li> </ul>	SGA, p. 60, section V.C.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specify source of data on employment outcomes and plans for collecting unemployment insurance wage records or other state data</li> <li>• Indicate whether outcomes will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and/or or causal analysis</li> <li>• Describe variables to be used for estimation models</li> <li>• Describe any subgroup analysis to be conducted, such as by program, college, year of funding, or any demographic subgroup</li> <li>• Discuss planned sensitivity analyses to determine the robustness of the findings</li> <li>• Tip: Analysis could be conducted regarding how sensitive results are to the selection of covariates, comparison groups, and timing of the outcomes</li> </ul>

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<b>VI. Limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The challenges and limitations likely to be encountered throughout the execution of the evaluation and their implications for findings</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss limitations related to such issues as the ability to collect certain data, small sample sizes, inability to assure that the comparison group is sufficiently similar to the treatment group, or other factors that might affect the analysis</li> </ul>
<b>VII. Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans to submit a final evaluation report, due to the Department at the end of the grant period of performance.</li> <li>Plans to submit at least one interim report to include an evaluation design and on evaluation findings to date at a time determined by the grantee.</li> <li>A timeline for transmitting these reports</li> </ul>	SGA, p. 59, section V.C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a discussion of evaluation activities and milestones in the timeline in addition to the reports</li> <li>Discuss how the outcomes/impact analysis results and implementation analysis findings will be integrated</li> <li>Describe how the third-party evaluator will provide information on the evaluation to the grantee for the purpose of quarterly report submission</li> </ul>
<b>VIII. Reference List</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of literature that was cited in the detailed evaluation design plan</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tip: This does not count toward the suggested 30-page limit</li> </ul>