

**Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program
Round 4 Grant Third-Party Evaluations
Technical Assistance for Developing Your Detailed Evaluation Plan**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program requires Round 4 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/DFA PY-13-10) 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 PY13-10 also required those awarded a grant to secure a third-party evaluator and then submit a detailed evaluation plan. The detailed evaluation plan must rely on the expertise of the third-party evaluator and 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/DFA PY-13-10. 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.

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

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IV. Implement- ation Analysis Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the third-party evaluator will analyze the steps taken by the institution to create and run the training program • How the third-party evaluator will assess the operational strengths and weaknesses of the project after implementation • 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 	<p>SGA, p. 79, section V.D.1.b (for overall implementation analysis)</p> <p>SGA, pp. 78-79, section V.D.1.a (for fidelity to the model)</p> <p>SGA, p. 79, section V.D.1.b (for implementation changes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a conceptual framework for implementation analysis (e.g., theory of change, logic model) and describe how the conceptual framework will be used to guide the implementation analysis • Examine fidelity to the model or approach implemented, including whether program, processes, and systems are operating as intended, and, if not, how and why • Tip: Suggestions for changes to the program design that may be needed to strengthen implementation should be discussed in the interim evaluation report(s), including the timing of and reasons for changes. Please note that changes to implementation should be made within the appropriate parameters so the impact/outcomes analysis is not affected. • Tip: For new programs, it may make sense to delay the impact analysis until after adequate timing has been allowed for full implementation and any adjustments made to the model/program design
IV.A. Implement- ation Analysis Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research questions that will guide the evaluation • <u>Required research questions as articulated in the SGA:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How was the particular curriculum selected, used, or created? 2. How were program/program designs improved or expanded using grant funds? What delivery methods were offered? What was the program administrative structure? What support or other services were offered? 3. Are in-depth assessment of participants' abilities, skills, and interests conducted to 	<p>SGA, p. 79, section V.D.1.b.i-iv</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take into account all of the required research questions from the SGA, but include additional questions as appropriate based on the intervention being tested • Include questions regarding efforts to expand institutional capacity

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IV.A. Implement- ation Analysis Research Questions (continued)	<p>select or enroll participants into the program being evaluated? What assessment tools and processes were used? Who conducted the assessments? How were the assessment results used? Were the assessment results useful in determining the appropriate program and course sequence for participants? Was career guidance provided? If so, through what methods?</p> <p>4. What contributions did each of the partners and other key stakeholders (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 affected partners' involvement or lack of involvement? Which contributions from partners were most critical to the success of the grant program? Which contributions from partners had less of an impact?</p>		
IV.B. Implement- ation Analysis Data Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of data sources that will be utilized to address the research questions • How data will be collected and analyzed, including which methods will be utilized 	SGA, p. 79, section V.D.1.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include interviews with staff and stakeholders, which are critical for obtaining information for the implementation analysis • Use other methods/sources, where feasible, including surveys, observations, document review, focus groups, etc. • When measuring capacity building, include a description of the indicators that will be used • Tip: It is important to provide a plan for ensuring

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			<p>human subjects' rights are protected (addressing consent procedures, participant confidentiality, protection of personally identifiable information (PII), data security procedures, Institutional Review Board (IRB) review if needed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip: discuss the reliability of the data being collected
V. Outcomes/ Impact Analysis Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan for rigorously evaluating the participant outcomes or impacts, including a complete description of the study methodology • 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 	SGA, p. 78-79, section V.D.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justify the selected strategy, whether experimental or non-experimental impact analysis or outcomes-only analysis will be conducted • Describe the estimated sample size and provide power calculations. If small sample sizes prevent from using a treatment/control group or treatment/comparison group design, identify other strategies for benchmarking the program's outcomes or consider pre/post tests to measure changes over time • Include an analysis of outcomes, whether it is an outcomes-only or impact study • Tip: Only impact analyses with carefully designed comparison groups can be used to assess the effectiveness of TAACCCT-funded programs • Tip: For programs with small sample sizes, benchmarks could include outcomes of other similar programs for the target population
V.A. Outcomes/ Impact Analysis Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research questions the evaluation will use to guide the data collection and analysis for this component 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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V.B. Outcomes Analysis (if most rigorous method selected)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no control or comparison group will be used, an outcomes only analysis must be fully justified as the most rigorous analysis feasible. • Outcomes to be analyzed, expanding on or refining what was discussed in your summary evaluation plan • How the nine outcomes required in the SGA will be used in the evaluation 	SGA, p. 78-79, section V.D.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer hypotheses for how the intervention will affect the outcomes of interest • Specify how/when outcomes will be measured including a discussion of how the measures are valid, appropriate and reliable • Tip: The SGA provides a list of nine required outcomes, but grantees may add others as deemed appropriate (See SGA Appendix L) • Tip: Per the ninth outcome, study the size of the earnings change, in addition to if there was an earnings increase
V.C. Experimental Design (if selected method for impact analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 L), as well as average earnings for those who retain employment • How random assignment will be performed • 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) • 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 	SGA, p. 78-79, section V.D.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on why grantee believes it will be able to recruit enough people for the study (given the need to randomly assign individuals to a control group) based on their past experience or their plans for expanded outreach • 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) What is the point of random assignment? • Describe how TAA-eligible workers and veterans will be treated in the evaluation • Use a power analysis such as minimum detectable effect analysis to guide determination of appropriate sample sizes • Collect as much pre-program data and characteristics at entry as possible, especially data on pre-program earnings and employment • 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

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	control condition)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip: Different evaluation approaches may be needed for TAA-eligible workers and veterans, who cannot be randomly assigned • Tip: It is important to provide a plan for ensuring human subjects' rights are protected (addressing consent procedures, participant confidentiality, protection of personally identifiable information (PII), data security procedures, IRB review if needed)
V.D. Non-Experimental Design (if selected method for impact analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Comparison Group Design <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The source of the comparison group(s) and how individuals are selected for the comparison group 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 explanation of how these techniques are appropriate for the sample size 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) 	SGA, p. 78-79, section V.D.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on why the comparison group was selected and why the third-party evaluator/grantee believes it is similar to the treatment group • 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? • Describe statistical techniques that will be used to correct for possible selection bias • Use a power analysis such as minimum detectable effect analysis to guide determination of appropriate sample sizes • Collect as much pre-program data and characteristics at entry as possible, especially data on pre-program earnings and employment • 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 • Tip: Since treatment and comparison group members need to be as similar as possible, a broad

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			<p>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.</p>
<p>V.E. Outcomes/ Impact Data Collection and Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data collection methods and data source(s) that will be used for the outcomes/impact analysis • How the anticipated follow-up data will be successfully collected from participants and the control/comparison group (if using experimental or non-experimental design) • The plan for data analysis, including the statistical methods that will be used to measure impacts of the training on participants based on participant-level data • Indicate how personally identifiable data will be transmitted securely to the third-party evaluator 	<p>SGA, p. 78-79, section V.D.1.a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify source of data on employment outcomes and plans for collecting unemployment insurance wage records or other state data • Specify the frequency and schedule for data collection • Include a discussion regarding handling PII and data security • Discuss strategies for addressing missing data • Indicate whether outcomes will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and/or causal analysis • Describe variables to be used for estimation models • Describe any subgroup analysis to be conducted, such as by program, college, year of funding, or any demographic subgroup • Discuss planned sensitivity analyses to determine the robustness of the findings • Tip: Analysis could be conducted regarding how sensitive results are to the selection of covariates, comparison groups, and timing of the outcomes
<p>VI. Limitations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenges and limitations likely to be encountered throughout the execution of the evaluation and their implications for findings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss limitations related to such issues as internal and external validity (e.g., attrition or non-response bias, selection bias, cross-contamination), 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

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VII. Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to submit a final evaluation report, due to the Department at the end of the grant period of performance • 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 • A timeline for transmitting these reports 	SGA, p. 76-77, section V.D.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a discussion of evaluation activities, milestones, and reports in the timeline • Discuss how the outcomes/impact analysis results and implementation analysis findings will be integrated • Describe how the third-party evaluator will provide information on the evaluation to the grantee for the purpose of quarterly report submission • Discuss the independence of the third-party evaluator, including with respect to publications and release terms
VIII. Reference List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of literature that was cited in the detailed evaluation design plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip: This does not count toward the suggested 30-page limit