

Guidance for Round 4 TAACCCT Grantees and Evaluators on Final Evaluation Reports

February 2018

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program is a \$2 billion federal workforce investment aimed at helping community colleges across the nation increase their capacity to provide education and training programs for in-demand jobs. One of the goals of this investment is to use the results and lessons from the grant projects to support innovative workforce education and training and to offer important lessons learned to policymakers and practitioners across the higher education and public workforce systems. To help accomplish this goal, the TAACCCT grantees, through the work of their third-party evaluators, are required to submit an interim¹ and a final evaluation report to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).²

The over 200 final evaluation reports from across the four grant rounds will build the evidence of the effectiveness of the grant strategies and how those strategies were implemented. The findings from these reports can help inform program improvements and federal workforce investments and policy that can be useful for community college leaders and other workforce stakeholders on the approaches that may work for their colleges and the workforce system. Because of this diverse audience, the final evaluation reports need to be informative for a non-technical audience, yet still provide enough detail on the technical aspects of the evaluation to be useful for assessing the strength of the evidence produced. Findings from these reports will be synthesized by the TAACCCT National Evaluation team. The reports will also be shared widely, and should be of the highest quality possible.

This document provides brief guidance to TAACCCT grantees and their third-party evaluators on developing and submitting the final evaluation report. It is accompanied by a [recommended outline for the executive summary](#) for the final evaluation report to help ensure that the findings from the evaluation are accessible to a wide audience.

Timing and Submission of the Final Evaluation Report

The final evaluation report must be submitted to DOL **no later than September 30, 2018**, which is the end of the grant's period of performance. Due to TAACCCT grant restrictions on evaluation expenditures, all evaluation activities, including the final report, must be completed by this date,

¹ Grantees should have already submitted an interim report, which was to include an updated evaluation design, early findings on the implementation, and early outcomes of the TAACCCT grant projects (as feasible).

² For more information on the TAACCCT third-party evaluations, see the Compilation of TAACCCT FAQs at https://taaccct.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/08/29/13/25/Compilation_of_TAACCCT_FAQs.

even if some data were not obtained in time to be included in the final report.³ The report should be submitted to the grantees' Federal Project Officer and the main TAACCCT email (taaccct@dol.gov), with a copy to the National Evaluation team (taacccteval@urban.org). DOL also encourages grantees to upload their final evaluation reports to SkillsCommons.org (see the last section for more information).

Structure and Content of the Report

The third-party final evaluation reports are intended to describe the TAACCCT innovations and evaluation methodologies, summarize findings across the implementation and outcomes/impact studies, and highlight implications. The grant solicitation outlines the questions that should be addressed for both the implementation study and the outcomes and/or impacts study.⁴ The points below offer guidance and tips for developing the final evaluation report.

- **Watch evaluation webinars on the TAACCCTeval.org website.** In addition to this report guidance, the prerecorded webinar entitled, "[Developing Your TAACCCT Final Evaluation Report](#)," provides an overview of the expectations for your final evaluation report and offers tips and ideas for developing a useful final report for the grantee, DOL, and the field. (Note: please use the due dates provided in this document rather than the ones cited in the webinar, which was first used for Round 3 grantees.) In addition, you can access a webinar on [data visualization](#) that can help you develop effective ways to present your evaluation findings.
- **Use the [recommended executive summary format](#).** While there is no required report structure, including an executive summary in the final report is important to ensure that high-level findings are effectively conveyed to a wide audience, especially non-experts. DOL strongly encourages TPEs to use the recommended format for the executive summary that accompanies this guidance. This will also allow for findings across TAACCCT evaluations to be better understood to build a body of evidence on particular approaches or within certain settings. The recommended format contains a short description of the TAACCCT project, the evaluation design (e.g., methods, data), the implementation findings (high level summary if these findings are in a separate report), the outcome and/or impact findings, and the implications for workforce development policy and future research. The executive summary outline may also be used as a model to organize the report.
- **Provide findings from both the implementation and outcomes/impact analyses in the final report.** It is important to ensure that readers get a full understanding of the TAACCCT project by including both implementation and outcomes/impact findings in the final report. While the final report may focus primarily on the outcomes/impact analyses, the report should also include implementation findings so that readers understand the

³ Grantees cannot pay for evaluation activities during the closeout period so all evaluation activities must end by the end of the period of performance. Questions about the evaluation requirements should be directed to the grantee's Federal Project Officer.

⁴ See requirements for the TAACCCT third-party evaluation in the Round 4 grant solicitation: <https://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/SGA-DFA-PY-13-10.pdf>.

goals and activities of the project and have a better understanding of the participants' outcomes.

- **Include information on the evaluation methods used.** The report should succinctly describe the strengths and limitations of the evaluation methods and data used to be able to assess the strength of the evidence presented.⁵ It may be useful to provide additional technical details on the evaluation methods in an appendix.
- **Remember that the third-party evaluation should be an objective assessment of the TAACCCT grant.** Findings should highlight both the successes and challenges of the TAACCCT project to help others understand how to replicate what went well and to avoid or address any difficulties that are likely to arise in implementing a similar project. Grantees are testing new approaches and developing innovations from which the findings of third-party evaluations can inform ongoing implementation and sustainability for grantees and replication by others, so it is expected that not all strategies or activities are always successful for everyone. It is important that the findings reflect the full breadth of the TAACCCT project, based on the work of the third-party evaluator, to ensure the findings are credible to readers. As such, DOL will not use the evaluation reports to assess the performance of the grants.
- **See how other third-party evaluators organize their reports and present findings.** It may be useful to review examples of reports completed from earlier TAACCCT third-party evaluations and other evaluation projects, as well as webinars providing reporting tips, at www.TAACCCTEval.org. Below are examples on the following:
 - [Executive summaries following the recommended format](#)
 - [Implementation findings](#) in TAACCCT evaluation reports
 - [Outcome & impact findings](#) in TAACCCT evaluation reports
 - [Tables of TAACCCT findings](#)
 - Sample reports from evaluations other than TAACCCT (under the [Examples of Evaluations](#) tab and on [Workforce System Strategies](#))
 - Discussing evaluation limitations (see [General Methods and Resources](#))

Publication of the Reports and Communication of Findings

DOL will consider publishing the final evaluation reports on [Workforce System Strategies](#), the WorkforceGPS site that hosts workforce-related evidence-based and emerging practices, and may publish them elsewhere. The final evaluation report may also be reviewed and rated by the [DOL Clearinghouse on Labor Evaluation and Research](#) (CLEAR), which examines topics of interest to the Department and assesses the strength of the evidence produced by causal, descriptive, and

⁵ Third-party evaluators may want to review guidelines from the Clearinghouse on Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) (<https://clear.dol.gov/about> under the “Reference Documents” tab) to help understand the type of information on methods that are important to include in the final evaluation report.

implementation studies according to CLEAR guidelines. Independent evaluations selected for CLEAR, either for a systematic or flash review, will be posted to the [CLEAR website](#).

In addition to submitting the final evaluation reports to DOL, grantees should upload their final third-party evaluation reports to [SkillsCommons.org](#) along with their Open Educational Resources (OER) grant deliverables. Third-party evaluation reports provide important context for the OER grant deliverables stored within the SkillsCommons repository. Interim reports may be posted as well, if appropriate for this purpose. While evaluation reports are not considered OER grant deliverables, we encourage you to post your third-party evaluation report as a machine-readable portable document file (PDF), for accessibility purposes and to make the content more easily discovered online. When uploading your third-party evaluation report to SkillsCommons, please select "Final Program Report" from the list in the "Material Type" field. The SkillsCommons Support Center provides step-by-step details on the upload process and file preparation, including how to apply a Creative Commons license. SkillsCommons staff are available to answer more detailed questions at support@skillscommons.org.

DOL also encourages grantees and third-party evaluators to post the final report on their respective websites so learning from the TAACCCT grants can be shared as widely as possible. Grantees and third-party evaluators may also want to present evaluation findings at conferences and meetings, so colleagues and partners can learn from the TAACCCT experiences. For the earlier rounds of TAACCCT grants, DOL and the National Evaluation team will provide opportunities for sharing evaluation findings with TAACCCT colleagues in other rounds.

Contact Information

For more information on the grant requirements related to the third-party evaluation, please contact your Federal Project Officer and/or TAACCCT@dol.gov.

For information and advice on developing your final evaluation report, please email TAACCCTeval@urban.org.