

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Researcher Interest Meeting

Evidence Project Portal

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Background on the Evidence Project Portal:

- This SLFRF project is part of an effort that the OMB Evidence Team is leading using the Evidence Project Portal. The portal is intended to help make connections and build partnerships between the federal government and external researchers. The Evidence Team works with agencies across the federal government to identify opportunities for evidence-building projects to share with the research community via the portal.
- SLFRF project is the latest in many projects that will be shared in the Evidence Project Portal.

Slideshow presentation:

- Office of Capital Access: Learning Agenda includes questions on:
 - o How did recovery funds stimulate an equitable economic recovery?
 - o How equitable was the impact of recovery funds on Americans most in need of assistance?
 - o What have we learned that can be applied to the development of future economic recovery programs?
- The definition of equity is: the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment
- Research designs include descriptive evaluations, process evaluations, impact evaluations, and other tools (data analysis, performance metrics, qualitative methods, and additional tools for examining the implementation and outcomes from programs)
- SLFRF was authorized by the American Rescue Program to distribute \$350M to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency to more than 30,000 state, territorial, local, and Tribal government recipients.
 - o Funds can be used to invest in housing, support workers, stimulate economic growth through small businesses, investments in key infrastructure, and responding to public health needs
- Existing research studies how to best assist recipients. Treasury used the research on low-capacity governments to inform how to change and improve their approach.
- Treasury is interested in using the research conducted through the Portal to learn how to promote an equitable economic recovery.
- Evidence Project Portal: Open Data Opportunity
 - o There is no funding available for this research
 - o Data includes SLFRF reporting data (demographic distribution of SLFRF funds), state plans posted on Treasury's website, and Qualified Census Tracts
 - o Treasury may provide briefings to researchers about the program, including information on program structure

- Anticipated deliverables include regular meetings with Treasury program and evaluation staff; an evaluation plan; and an evaluation report
- Treasury will use research results to tell the SLFRF story; it will inform program improvement and best practices to effectively help SLFRF recipients; inform federal government long-term policy development for future Treasury programs to assist and provide aid during economic crisis

Q&A

- Q: Would certain datasets that are not otherwise publicly available be made available?
 - A: Researchers will have the same access allowed to anyone making an information request under FOIA.
- Q: Can you collaborate with other researchers?
 - A: Yes.
- Q: Is Treasury exploring international partnerships to support this research?
 - A: No, that is not within the scope of the learning agenda.
- Q: Are government entities eligible to apply?
 - A: Yes, government entities can be research partners within the scope of the appropriation of funds. Treasury does not currently have the funds to support research efforts.
- Q: Without funding, is the intent that Treasury will supply
 - A: Treasury will provide support to a limited support. Treasury cannot require participation in research efforts. Treasury can promote matchmaking efforts to cultivate an ecosystem of learning that is related to recovery programs and SLFRF.
- Q: Who is the audience for the deliverables?
 - A: Treasury expects that the research results will be available to policymakers, Treasury employees that are administering future programs, and economic recovery program professionals who are implementing these programs on a local level.
- Q: Is Treasury open to suggestions?
 - Yes, but Treasury is not looking to revise their learning agenda as it already went through a review process.
- Q: Would a research partner be able to conduct interviews with stakeholders?
 - A: Yes, but Treasury would have to do some partnership building efforts first. While these are voluntary efforts, there are many engaged professionals across the country.
- Q: How consistent is the definition of equity across SLFRF programs?
 - A: The definition of equity is sufficiently broad to cover a range of definitions and communities.
- Q: If there are active research projects that align with Treasury’s learning agenda, what is the best way to share the research?
 - A: Researchers can share active research efforts that align with these efforts to the Treasury email address.
- Q: Will you be able to partner interested researchers with state, local, and tribal government recipients?
 - A: Yes, this would be part of Treasury’s “matchmaking” efforts.
- Q: Can you speak more about the available datasets?

- A: On the SLFRF homepage on the Treasury site, researchers can find the latest available public data. The data shows the obligated and spent funds, as well as ongoing projects.
- Q: Does this opportunity only apply to retrospective studies or does it also apply to prospective studies?
 - A: This study can apply to either as long as it is addressing the need described in the opportunity description.
- Q: Can you describe the process of matchmaking?
 - A: Treasury may be able to connect researchers to individuals that are implementing these programs on the ground and other stakeholders.
- Q: If someone wanted to do a case study, what would that look like? How would you get in touch with the communities that are receiving the funds?
 - A: It would depend – Treasury may be able to pair researchers with recipients of the funding.
 - A: Researchers should note specific approaches and dependencies in their expression of interest.
- Q: How do you envision this work interacting with other ongoing ARPA evaluation efforts?
 - A: Treasury recommends researchers to reference the learning agenda for more information.
- Q: What is the timeline for research projects?
 - A: Researchers should include proposed timelines in their expression of interest. It is up for discussion between Treasury and the researchers, but initial research products would be completed in 2024 to allow findings to be used to inform future implementation. Longer term impact evaluations are also of interest to Treasury.
- Q: Are there any ongoing evaluation efforts on SLFRF within Treasury?
 - A: Treasury has project and expenditure reports that are due on a quarterly and annual basis. This research opportunity will provide stakeholders lessons learned on the SLFRF program.
- Q: Some of the larger cities and counties have been hiring evaluators to assess the impact of their use of funds. Can researchers get funded outside of Treasury?
 - A: Treasury welcomes researchers to attain funding from recipients that are hiring evaluators to assess the impact of the funds.

Next steps

- Researchers should submit an expression of interest by March 1, 2024.