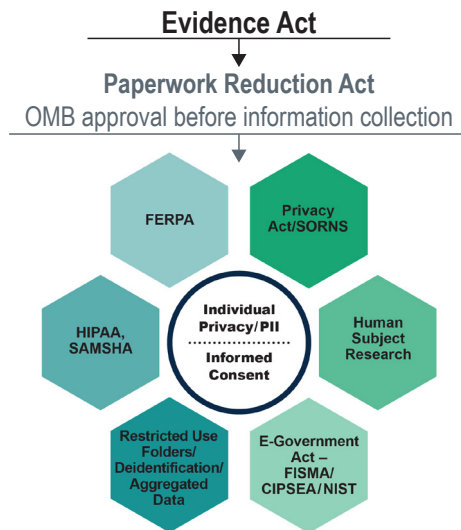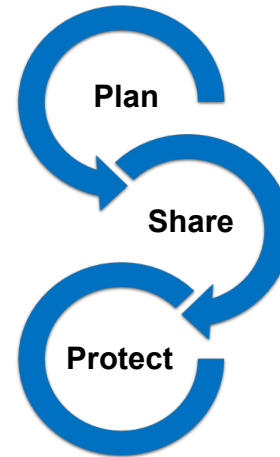# Data Privacy Seminars

As part of its support of Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is committed to collecting and creating information in a way that supports data sharing and dissemination. Toward that end, DOL's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) hosted a series of three seminars during August 2022 on topics directly relevant to sharing data, protecting confidentiality, and building a culture to support sharing and responsible use.

Data Sharing to Support Program Improvement at DOL: Regulatory Landscape and Implications

Data sharing is critically important to building evidence and supporting program improvement at DOL. This session provided a high-level overview of the regulatory landscape for data sharing and protection with particular focus on the implications of the Evidence Act and requirements about participant privacy and consent. The session also explored examples of current DOL data sharing through public-use files as well as plans for building a program for sharing restricted-use data files.

Protecting Shared Data: Traditional Strategies and New Developments

Federal agencies that share data are obligated to protect the confidentiality of those entities whose data are included. There is a trade-off between the level of confidentiality data custodians can provide and the analytic utility of a data set. This session discussed both traditional techniques and new frontiers in limiting statistical disclosure and their potential application to DOL data sets, as well as the role of restricted-use data files in balancing analytic utility and preserving confidentiality.

Data Re-Use and Privacy: Perspectives Across Agencies

Agencies throughout the federal government are making efforts to strengthen the culture of evidence building and reinforce the importance of secure data sharing. This panel discussion featured representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and the Social Security Administration. Discussions centered on their current activities, ongoing challenges, and promising strategies in this area, including programs for sharing restricted-use data files.

Chief Evaluation Office
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Mathematica
Progress Together

Data Sharing to Support Program Improvement at DOL: Regulatory Landscape and Implications

Presenters

Hillary Lewis: Hillary Lewis, J.D., is vice president and chief information security officer at Mathematica where she is responsible for information and technology risk management and leads strategy for embedding digital trust—information governance, security, and ethics—into Mathematica's digital transformation initiatives. Before joining Mathematica in 2021, Lewis led the cyber capabilities and governance function for the Freddie Mac Information Security Program. She helped develop the Freddie Mac enterprise risk management taxonomy and framework, helping establish the risk appetite and enable directed investments aligned with risk management efforts. She previously worked as senior official for privacy and as information security branch chief for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General. Lewis also supported the development of a data management strategy and plan for the Military Health System. She holds a J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center.

Andrew Wiegand: Andrew Wiegand, Ph.D., is the president and chief executive officer at Social Policy Research Associates (SPR). He previously served as SPR's vice president of research and business development. During nearly 20 years of program and evaluation research, he has developed specialized expertise in quantitative analysis, survey methods, impact and outcomes evaluations, and technical assistance designed to improve data collection and accountability. He has led numerous multi-year evaluations of workforce development programs for both disconnected youth and adults for DOL. He also has presented papers at several national conferences, including the American Psychological Society and Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. Of particular importance, Weigand leads the SPR team responsible for developing public-use data files for ETA using records from the Workforce Integrated Performance System.

Protecting Shared Data: Traditional Strategies and New Developments

Presenters

John Czajka: John Czajka, Ph.D., is currently an independent consultant and was previously a senior fellow at Mathematica. His research has focused on statistical applications of program administrative data and the analysis of survey data from large national samples, smaller-scale panel studies, and specialized surveys. His numerous projects have included comparative analyses of income and asset reporting in federal surveys, the application of statistical disclosure limitation to public-use files of individual tax data, the creation of a multi-year database of unduplicated Medicaid enrollees, an analysis of the quality of Social Security number reporting in Medicaid administrative data, the use of linked survey and administrative data to study the composition of households containing participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, an analysis of the dynamics of health insurance coverage, and a study of the feasibility of using Internal Revenue Service records to count the U.S. population. Czajka is an elected fellow of the American Statistical Association and a recipient of that organization's Founders Award, which honors service to the Association. He has served on six review committees for the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academy of Sciences, most of these focusing on Census Bureau programs.

Data Re-Use and Privacy: Perspectives Across Agencies

Facilitator

Ruth Neild: Ruth Neild, Ph.D., is a nationally known education leader with a wide range of expertise in both research and practice. Across a diverse set of research and leadership roles in universities, nonprofits, and government, she has emphasized rigorous, useful, and clearly communicated research designed to answer the important questions that arise from practice. Neild joined Mathematica after serving as the director of the Philadelphia Education Research Consortium, a research–practice partnership with the K–12 public education sector in the city. Previously, she held leadership roles at the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, including as delegated director from 2015 to 2017. During her time at the institute, she led the Regional Educational Laboratory program's pivot to research–practice partnership work and supported improvements to the What Works Clearinghouse and the Education Resources Information Center, including the implementation of new data architectures that increased their flexibility and ease of use. Across all of the institute's knowledge utilization programs, Neild championed plain writing and a wider array of research products and dissemination strategies.

Presenters

Bethanne Barnes: Bethanne Barnes, M.P.A., joined the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in 2019 as the director of the Division of Data and Improvement. This division focuses on increasing the quality, usefulness, sharing, and analysis of data to improve Administration for Children and Families programs and program participants' outcomes. She previously served as the director of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. She also worked as special advisor for evidence-based policy at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). As head of OMB's evidence team, she helped federal agencies strengthen their capacity to use and build evidence to improve their effectiveness. She also worked on a variety of job training and social safety net programs at OMB, as well as cross-agency data access and evidence-building policy issues.

Matthew Soldner: Matthew Soldner, Ph.D., has served since 2018, as the commissioner for the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) for the Institute of Education Sciences, the statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. NCEE conducts large-scale evaluations of education programs supported by federal funds, provides technical assistance, and supports the development and use of research and evaluation throughout the United States. In his role, Soldner also serves as the Department of Education's chief evaluation officer. His expertise includes the design and implementation of complex, mixed-methods evaluations; innovative practices designed to improve student outcomes after high school; postsecondary competency-based education; federal financial aid; and federal statistical policy and practice. Previously, he was a principal researcher at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), where he focused on postsecondary education, including transitions from high school or the workforce to college, undergraduate persistence and attainment outcomes, college financing and federal student aid programs, early labor market outcomes, and career and technical education at the postsecondary level. Prior to his position at AIR, Soldner was a senior technical advisor at the National Center for Education Statistics.

Christopher McDermott: Christopher McDermott, B.A., serves as deputy associate commissioner for the Office of Data Exchange, Policy Publications, and International Negotiations at the Social Security Administration (SSA), where he provides executive-level, enterprise-wide oversight of data exchanges. His work ensures timely and appropriate publication of agency policies and instructions and guides negotiation and administration of bilateral social security ("totalization") agreements with foreign countries. He was previously a senior advisor in SSA's Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs where he provided consultation and support for Congressional briefings and legislative development. McDermott began his career in 2006 in SSA's Office of Central Operations, serving as a frontline technician, instructor, and mentor. In 2009, he joined the Office of Public Service and Operations Support, where he spent a decade performing data analysis, developing and improving the agency's 150+ programmatic business processes, and leading extensive collaboration across the agency to support the frontlines in delivering exceptional public service.