

# U.S. Department of Homeland Security FY 2021 Capacity Assessment



*With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.*

## About this Report

The *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018* (“Evidence Act”) requires that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security conduct and report a capacity assessment describing the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics efforts of the Department.

The *DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment* describes the Department’s initial effort to assess its capacity to build and use evidence from evaluation, statistics, research, and analysis, consistent with implementing guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The capacity assessment provides a baseline understanding of the Department’s strengths and weaknesses and lays the foundation to improve the infrastructure and culture for evaluation, evidence building, and organizational learning within DHS.

As required, the *DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment* is published at the [DHS public website](#) and at [Evaluation.gov](#) with the Department’s other Evidence Act plans and reports.

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## DHS Capacity Assessment Highlights

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Evaluation Officer in the Division of Program Analysis & Evaluation (PA&E) oversees periodic assessments of DHS capacity to build and use evidence, with the aim of helping the Department and its Components<sup>1</sup> identify concrete steps for continuous improvement. For the fiscal year (FY) 2021 assessment, PA&E developed technical requirements for a task order awarded to the Homeland Security Operations Analysis Center (assessment team)<sup>2</sup> to design and conduct an actionable assessment.

This assessment included 14 DHS Components in the Department’s strategic plan. It reflects data collected through discussion groups and surveys with selected DHS staff and reviews of evidence documents. The assessment was designed to advance unity of effort in the Department’s implementation of the Evidence Act and embody a continuous improvement mindset for assessing and expanding the Department’s capacity to produce and use evidence.

PA&E and the assessment team collaborated to develop this summary report of the most actionable findings. The findings were determined to a great extent by whether personnel whose input was vital to the capacity assessment were prepared and able to participate in the assessment, not just as informed respondents but as collaborators on sampling. While the data were incomplete, the findings from multiple methods and data sources offer insights on baseline patterns and opportunities to improve capacity for evidence building and use going forward.

## Summary of Findings

Conducting the capacity assessment provided an opportunity to discover, describe, and assess the Department’s evidence-building capacity and activities, determining where current evidence capacity is and is not sufficient to meet future needs and where capacity-building efforts should be targeted.

Overall DHS lacked shared understanding – common terminology and concepts – related to evidence-building as defined by the Evidence Act and OMB. Most Components did not have coordinated Component-level perspective on staff, funding, and other infrastructure for evidence building or for evidence-building activities (studies) underway in FY 2021. All four evidence building activities (i.e., evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics) were underway across the Department with varying levels of maturity on the assessment dimensions (coverage, quality, methods, independence, and effectiveness), as summarized in Exhibit 1. Capacity was uneven across Components, nascent in some places, but developing.

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<sup>1</sup> This report uses “DHS” or “Department” when referring to the overarching entity of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and “Component” when referring to individual components and offices.

<sup>2</sup> This third-party assessment was funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and conducted by the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC), a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) operated by the RAND Corporation under contract with the Department of Homeland Security under Contract #HSHQDC-16-00007 Task Order 70RDAD21FR0000014. The contents of this publication provide a summary of HSOAC’s findings and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Homeland Security, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government. The assessment is led by the Project Director, Dr. Brodi Kotila (HSOAC).

### Exhibit 1. Maturity of DHS Evidence Building on Assessed Dimensions, by Activity

Dimension	Activity				Maturity Model
	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	5 = Optimizing
Coverage	Implementing	In progress	Implementing	Implementing	4 = Completed
Quality	Implementing	In progress	Implementing	In progress	3 = Implementing
Independence	Completed	Completed	Not rated	Implementing	2 = In progress
Effectiveness	In progress	In progress	Implementing	In progress	1 = Not initiated
Notes: Maturity for the Methods dimension is incorporated in the quality dimension maturity score. Specifically, the quality dimension assesses: "do these methods incorporate the necessary level of rigor?"					0 = No basis for judgement

**Coverage Summary Finding:** DHS had some staff, funding, and policies in place, and evidence-building (studies) underway in FY 2021, but they were distributed unevenly across the Department and considered by many Component representatives to be insufficient to fully achieve all the objectives defined in the Evidence Act.

**Quality Summary Finding:** DHS-wide policies and guidance outlined quality standards for some activities, though compliance with these standards varied across evidence building activities. Department-level evidence plans were relatively mature. Components did not have equivalent policies and plans for their evidence building activities. FY 2021 studies met some quality standards but the percentage of studies meeting standards varied by activity and by standard.

**Methods Summary Finding:** DHS evidence-building addressed a balance of formative and summative aspects, and studies used a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data, data collection, and analysis methods. The levels in which certain data and methods were used may limit the Department's ability to make credible inferences and fulfill summative purposes, especially for quantitative, customer-centric determinations of effectiveness (outcomes and impacts), cost-effectiveness, or equity that result from DHS mission delivery.

**Independence Summary Finding:** Most FY 2021 studies were performed by internal staff. Information provided for studies suggests that the majority of evidence-building activities were conducted free from inappropriate influence.

**Effectiveness Summary Finding:** While DHS lacked policies that outlined requirements for stakeholder engagement and dissemination, some Department-wide and Component mechanisms existed to gather stakeholder needs, input, and feedback for evidence building, to disseminate findings of evidence building, and to use evidence for decision making and improvement. Some organizational contexts, including Component culture, practices, and technology resources, exist that support evidence building and its use in day-to-day operations.

## Opportunities for Improvement

The findings suggest the following areas for improvement.

**Establish a strong foundation for evidence building and use.** DHS capacity building efforts should continue to (1) foster shared understanding of evidence-building through common terminology and concepts consistent with the Evidence Act and OMB guidance to which DHS is accountable; (2) deepen Component-level understanding of personnel, funding, and other infrastructure available for evidence-building as well as evidence-building activities that are underway within the Department; and (3) promote the importance of evidence building and use.

**Assess the Department's evidence needs and align evidence-building efforts and resources with those needs.** Beyond the DHS learning agenda, developing Component-specific learning agendas and evaluation plans would enable DHS to comprehensively assess Components' short and long-term evidence needs, measure Component capacity against those needs, and appropriately allocate resources to build evidence while targeting gaps in capacity.

**Build and sustain evidence building capabilities at the Component level and DHS-wide.** To ensure that evidence building adheres to principles of scientific integrity and rigor, DHS needs to hire personnel with specialized expertise for evidence building, provide training and time to develop staff, and establish sufficient budgets to support evidence building activities and procure external researchers for evidence building. DHS should empower certain evidence-building staff (or external researchers they manage) with sufficient independence and autonomy to design, conduct, and appropriately disseminate findings, methods, and data from evidence building.

**Aim for continuous improvement of the evidence-building enterprise.** DHS should implement and monitor compliance with existing plans and policies for evidence building and use, and establish new plans, policies, and mechanisms where needed. Department-wide, evidence building teams should make plans to improve their efforts, targeting areas identified for improvement in this assessment.

**Promote the dissemination and use of evidence.** DHS should consult evidence users and a broad range of stakeholders to inform evidence-building policies, plans, and activities so they are relevant and useful. Existing continuous improvement processes should leverage all types of evidence. DHS and Components should establish new or formalize existing practices to promote more consistent use of evidence in programs, policymaking, and business processes. Improving existing dissemination mechanisms to enable timely release of products and findings to the broadest audiences possible, including publicly releasing evidence, is a necessary precursor for ensuring its use in learning, improvement, and accountability to the American public.

## How Findings Will Be Used

The assessment team and PA&E disseminated findings to, and obtained feedback from, Components and used findings as the basis of facilitated Component-specific capacity planning activities. The assessment provided opportunity for a collective and concerted effort to improve Component and DHS capacity to use and produce evidence, and for building on the foundation the assessment team has documented in the *DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment*.

## Overview

### Introduction

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has a diverse and complex mission to prevent attacks and mitigate threats against the United States and our allies, respond to natural and man-made disasters, and advance American prosperity and economic security. Since DHS was established from its predecessor agencies in 2003, the Department has continued to expand and mature capabilities to use data and analysis in shaping strategy and operations.

DHS developed this *DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment* to discover, describe, and assess the Department's evidence-building, determining where current evidence capacity is and is not sufficient to meet current and future needs and where capacity building efforts should be targeted. The capacity assessment supports the Department's implementation of the *Foundations for Evidence Based Policymaking Act of 2018*<sup>3</sup> (Evidence Act) by providing a baseline understanding of Department's capacity to build and use evidence. This baseline can guide decisions and next steps for maturing capacity.

The DHS Evaluation Officer, in PA&E, oversees the periodic assessments of DHS capacity to build and use evidence, with the aim of helping the Department identify concrete steps for continuous improvement. For the FY 2021 assessment, PA&E developed technical requirements for a task order awarded to Homeland Security Operations Analysis Center (HSOAC, herein assessment team) to design and conduct this assessment.

### Guiding Principles of Design

The *DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment* fulfills the specific requirement to assess the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of the Department's evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics efforts. The assessment team worked closely with PA&E to design an assessment that would allow the Department to understand the maturity of its evidence-building enterprise and lay a foundation for strengthening these capabilities over time, while balancing complex statutory requirements, diverse missions and capabilities across the Components, and utility. The assessment team used the following principles to guide the design of the assessment activities:

- **Support unity of effort.** The assessment team designed assessment activities to expand awareness of the Evidence Act and develop a shared understanding of evidence- building activities and their utility and importance across the Department.
- **Plan for iteration and improvement over time.** The assessment focused on Components' most significant evidence-building activities and a limited set of foundational capabilities that can feasibly be addressed now to mature evidence building. The assessment identifies opportunities for improving capacity and future assessments of capacity.

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<sup>3</sup> [Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529](#) (2019)



- **Demonstrate usefulness to the DHS Components.** The assessment team collected and analyzed DHS- and Component-level data, generating findings at DHS and Component levels, to support DHS- and Component-specific planning activities aimed at maturing capacity for evidence building and use.
- **Tailor Evidence Act requirements to DHS context.** The assessment team organized and addressed Evidence Act and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements to (1) allow for systematic assessment, across organizations and time, and generation of useful and actionable findings; (2) gather information from staff to understand capacity at organizational, individual, and study levels; and 3) minimize the burden on participating staff while building capacity to sustain this effort long term.

## Evidence Building

Informed by a review of the Evidence Act, all applicable OMB guidance, the interim capacity assessment conducted by DHS in FY 2020, and other relevant materials, PA&E developed a list of evaluation, research, analysis, and statistical activities (activity subtypes) that should be included in or excluded from this assessment. Exhibit 2 lists and describes activity subtypes.

### Exhibit 2. Assessed Evidence-Building Activities and Activity Subtypes

Evidence-Building Activity	Activity Subtypes
Evaluation	Evaluation of programs, policies, regulations, or organization evaluation (also termed program evaluation), including formative, process and implementation, outcome, impact, and economic evaluation
	Project evaluation of ongoing or completed grantee projects required by DHS grantmaking programs
Research	Basic research: experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts
	Applied research: original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge, directed primarily toward a specific practical aim or objective
	Foundational research: describes and documents programs, policies, services, or interventions currently implemented in the field or eligible and impacted populations and their characteristics
	Exploratory research: examines correlational relationships between program- or policy-relevant constructs to identify logical connections that could form the basis for future programs, policies, services, or interventions or frameworks to measure their results
Analysis	Policy and regulatory analysis, typically using cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis
	Operations research: the development of mathematical models, statistical analyses, simulations, and analytical reasoning to understand and improve real-world operations
	Performance measurement and monitoring: ongoing and systematic tracking of data and information relevant to policies, strategies, programs, projects, or activities, which can include indicators for context, inputs, process, efficiency, outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes
Statistics	Statistical activities: The use of data to describe outcomes and descriptors of interest, such as through estimates of population characteristics, summaries of test results, indices of economic activity, measures of environmental conditions, and incidence rates for a wide variety of events

The team designed the assessment to gather information and report of assessment findings by activity and, in some instances, activity subtype. Appendix B outlines the Evidence Act and OMB requirements and how they were operationalized in the DHS capacity assessment.

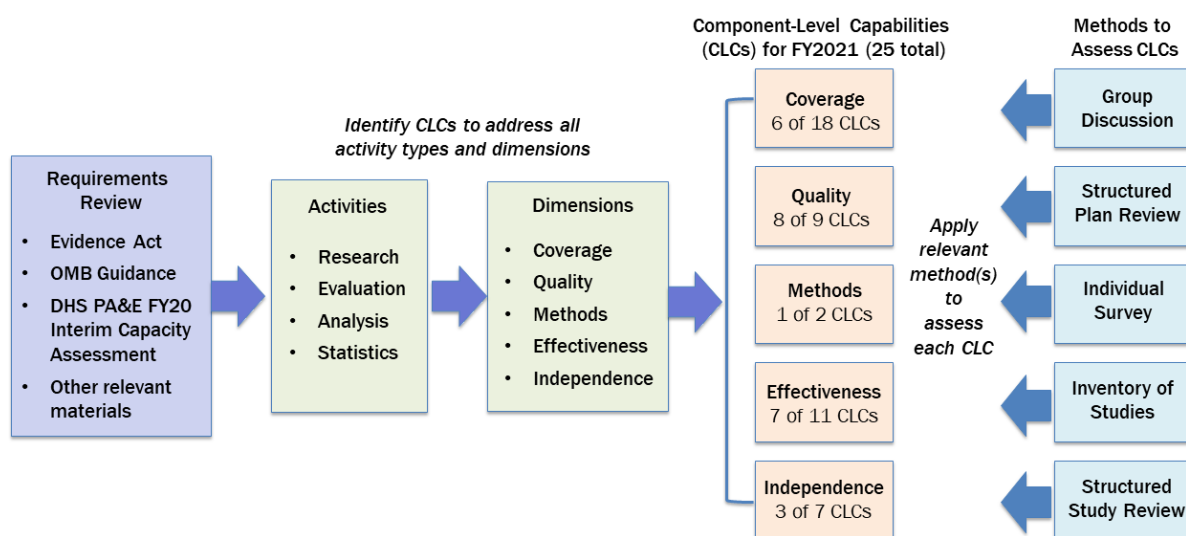
## Capacity Assessment Approach

Informed by a review of the Evidence Act, OMB guidance, the interim capacity assessment conducted by DHS in FY 2020, and other relevant materials, the assessment team designed:

- a comprehensive set of 49 capabilities (called Component-Level Capabilities, or CLCs herein) that unpack various elements of each of the Evidence Act and OMB requirements and that can be flexibly applied across evidence building activities.
- a structured maturity scoring system tailored to each CLC that is based on a general maturity model; and
- a multimethod approach (e.g., uses discussion groups, web-based surveys, evidence document reviews) focused on understanding CLC maturity and triangulating across the most appropriate data sources to develop a complete picture of the maturity of DHS capacity to build and use evidence.

Exhibit 3 provides a summary of the process used to establish the capacity assessment plan and to conduct the FY 2021 Capacity Assessment.

### Exhibit 3. Overview of DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment Approach



### Component-Level Capabilities

For each of the five statutory dimensions (coverage, quality, methods, independence, effectiveness), the assessment team developed multiple Component-Level Capabilities (CLCs) to unpack various elements of the dimension. The FY 2021 Capacity Assessment focused on a subset of CLCs developed (25 of 49) that could feasibly provide

“... an objective accounting of an agency’s capacity (the sufficiency of, e.g., the agency’s staffing, funding, infrastructure, and processes) to carry out the evidence-building activities needed to meet its agency functions and its capacity to disseminate and use evidence.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans, M-21-27](#) (OMB, 2021)

Subsequent sections provide short descriptions of the CLCs in relation to the methods used to gather data about them.

## Maturity Model

To guide the systematic rating of these capabilities, the assessment team used a maturity model approach. Informed by the general capability maturity model shown in Exhibit 4, the assessment team customized the data analysis method(s) and the maturity scoring rubric for each CLC and the data collected for it. Generally, for each CLC, the maturity ratings roughly translate in accordance with the general capability maturity model.

### Exhibit 4. Overview of the General Capability Maturity Model

Score	Maturity Level	Description
5	Optimizing	The capability was fully embedded into the Component's operational structure and culture at the time of the FY 2021 capacity assessment and the Component was focused on continuous improvement in this area
4	Completed	The capability was fully implemented at the time of the capacity assessment and long-term resources for that capability had been identified
3	Implementing	The plans for that capability were finalized and approved as of the FY 2021 capacity assessment, initial resources were identified, and relevant activities were underway
2	In progress	Some progress was underway to create that capability at the time of the capacity assessment
1	Not initiated	Initial planning for that capability was not initiated at the time of the FY 2021 capacity assessment, or ad hoc activities were performed
0	No basis for judgement	When Component representatives provided no information about that capability for a particular evidence-building activity they identified as a most significant activity (e.g., in the context of group discussions), when a Component did not submit relevant plans or documents for assessment, or when ten or fewer responses were received to the two surveys described below.

## Sample

The DHS Components and Offices listed below participated in some or all capacity assessment activities:

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Secret Service (USSS)
- Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD)
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)
- Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A)
- Management Directorate (MGMT)
- Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans (PLCY)
- Science & Technology Directorate (S&T)

To help prepare Component representatives to participate in the capacity assessment, the assessment team and PA&E developed guidance defining the evidence-building activities, structured requests to gather sampling information from Components, a list of frequently asked questions, and materials for webinars. The assessment team and PA&E hosted webinars, office hours, and monitored a dedicated email alias to provide assistance to capacity assessment participants before and throughout the data collection period.

The assessment team convened preparatory meetings (pre-meetings) May 3-14, 2021 with Component representatives to help them identify the most significant evidence-building activities conducted in the Component, the DHS federal personnel to participate in capacity assessment data collection activities and evidence building activities (studies) to inventory. For an activity deemed most significant, the Component would generally be expected to have a portfolio of evidence products and activities that are conducted on a recurrent basis. The information gathered following the pre-meetings is summarized below.

All participating Components reported that they conducted analysis. Most Components conducted evaluation and research. Fewer than half of Components identified statistics as a most significant activity. The number of participating Components conducting each evidence-building activity is summarized in Exhibit 5.

#### **Exhibit 5. Number of Participating DHS Components Conducting Evidence-Building Activities, Total and by Activity**

Category	Total	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics
Participating DHS Components	14	12	11	14	6

Exhibit 6 summarizes the number of DHS evidence-building personnel and studies identified by Components. Components identified 143 federal personnel whose primary roles and responsibilities included supervising or overseeing evidence-building activities or budget, governance, and infrastructure for evidence-building, or any combination of these (indicated in Exhibit 6 as Leaders). Components identified 340 federal personnel whose primary roles and responsibilities include conducting evidence-building, disseminating evidence, and/or supporting the use of evidence (indicated in Exhibit 6 as Staff). Components identified 368 studies to inventory (indicated in Exhibit 6 as Studies). For 76 individuals, the Component indicated they conducted more than one evidence-building activity. For 103 individuals and 65 studies, the Component did not initially specify an evidence-building activity.

#### **Exhibit 6. DHS Evidence-Building Personnel and Studies, Total and by Activity**

Category	Total	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	More Than 1	Unspecified
Leader	143	8	4	50	6	75	N/A
Staff	340	30	38	142	26	1	103
FY 2021 Study	368	54	72	150	27	N/A	65

Note: "N/A" indicates that this was not applicable.

## Assessment Methods

The assessment team used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and multiple data sources to inform maturity ratings for CLCs. This section describes the focus, timing, and sample for each of the study methods: group discussions, structured plan review, individual survey, study inventory survey, and structured study review.

### Group Discussions

The capacity assessment draws on group discussions with DHS Headquarters and Component evidence-building leaders, supplemented with a review of relevant documents collected from Components by PA&E and the assessment team. The assessment team conducted group discussions with nine Components and one crosscutting discussion with representatives from multiple organizations in DHS HQ, between May 24 and June 11, 2021. Additionally, two Components provided written input instead of joining a group discussion.

The assessment team gathered information using a group discussion protocol and used this information to develop capability maturity ratings and explanatory rationales for the ratings. Group discussions and supplementary document review explored the following:

- budget for and investment in evidence building;
- strategic and evidence plans;
- policies and guidance for planning and conducting evidence building;
- policies and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement to support evidence building, including mechanisms to gather evidence users' needs and feedback;
- processes to integrate evidence in decision making;
- continuous improvement or learning cycle process that use evidence; and
- policies and mechanisms for disseminating findings to external stakeholders and the public.

### Structured Plan Review

The assessment team assessed the presence and quality of Department and Component-wide evidence plans, including evidence-building plans (or learning agendas), evaluation plans, and performance plans, against statutory and OMB requirements for each type of plan.<sup>5</sup>

The Department was in the process of developing its FY2022-2026 learning agenda and FY2023 annual evaluation plan, but the assessment team identified three relevant DHS-wide documents:

- interim learning agenda (internal document)
- *DHS Agency Evaluation Plan*<sup>6</sup> for FY2022
- *Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Years 2020-2022*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Learning Agendas, Personnel, and Planning Guidance, M-19-23](#) (OMB, 2019); [Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget, Circular A-11](#) (OMB, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> [FY 2020-2022 Annual Performance Report Appendix C: DHS Agency Evaluation Plan](#) (DHS, 2021)

<sup>7</sup> [U.S. Department of Homeland Security FY 2020-2022 Annual Performance Report](#) (DHS, 2021)

Components had no formal plans in place at the time of this assessment. One Component strategic plan that contained performance measures with annual targets was reviewed, but the results are not reported here.

### Individual Survey

The assessment team administered a web-based survey to Components' identified evidence-building staff (EBS). The individual survey was fielded between May 14 and June 1, 2021 to a total of 483 individuals, including all individuals identified by Components as evidence-building Leaders or Staff. The survey explored respondents' perspectives of the following:

- personal knowledge of core evidence-building competencies, including procurement and management of external organizations for evidence building;
- relevance of core evidence building tasks to their job;
- training and other organizational supports for evidence building and use; and
- Component context.

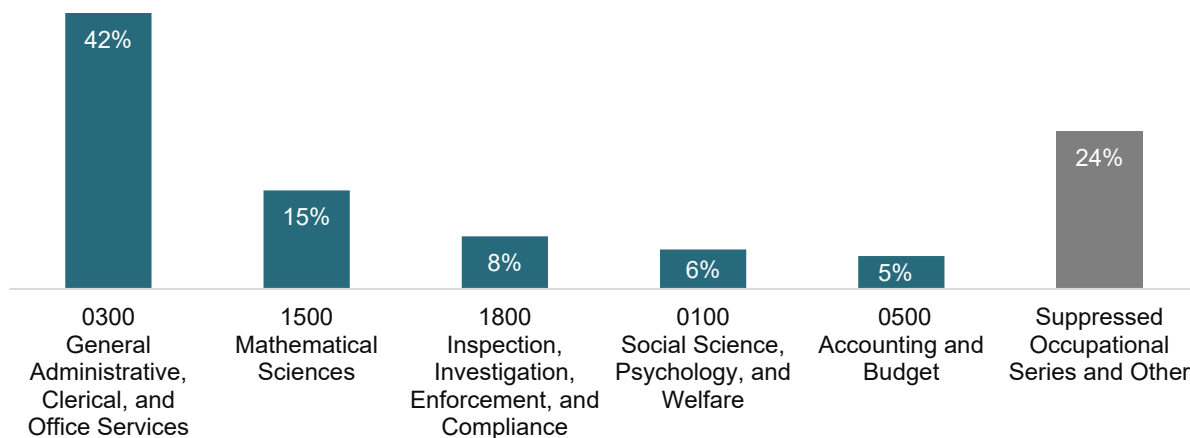
Evidence-building staff completed 191 surveys (40 percent of the 483 fielded surveys). Findings from the survey must be interpreted keeping these limited response rates and the potential for bias in mind; findings do not generalize beyond the respondents. Exhibit 7 presents the survey sample total distribution (counts) across evidence-building activities.

### Exhibit 7. Individual Surveys Fielded and Completed, Total and by Activity

Category	Total	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	More Than 1	Unspecified
Fielded	483	38	42	192	32	76	103
Completed	191	30	20	95	26	N/A	N/A

Notes: Total includes 20 respondents that selected "I do not conduct any of these activities as *primary* functions of my job." "N/A" indicates that this was not applicable.

Exhibit 8 summarizes the distribution (percentage) of respondents across occupational groups. Data from categories with fewer than 10 responses have been suppressed to protect confidentiality. Individual survey respondents were distributed across 13 (of 24 possible) occupational groups and 'Other;' however, '0300 General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services' was the largest group (42 percent).

**Exhibit 8. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Occupational Groups**

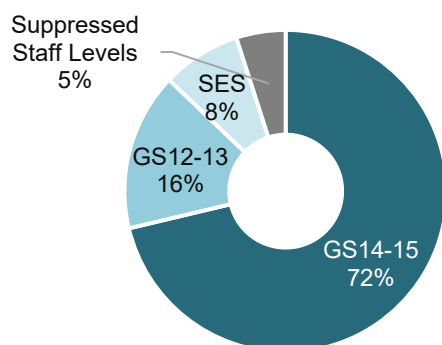
Note: n=190

Source: Individual Survey Q52.

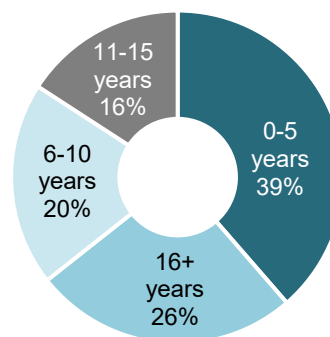
Exhibit 9 summarizes the distribution (percentage) of respondents across staff levels and years of experience. Respondents were distributed across multiple staff levels; however, 'GS14-15' was the largest group (72 percent). Respondent experience ranges from 0-16+ years; however, '0-5 years' was the largest group (39 percent).

**Exhibit 9. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Staff Levels and Years of Experience**

Staff Levels



Years of Experience



Note: n=191

Source: Individual Survey Q53 and Q54.

**Inventory of Studies**

The capacity assessment included a survey-based inventory of FY 2021 evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics studies. The survey was fielded May 20 – June 11, 2021 to federal personnel identified by Components as managing FY 2021 studies.

The assessment team used the study inventory survey to collect factual information from study managers about FY 2021 studies, including but not limited to the following:

- evidence building activity and subtype;
- DHS strategic objectives and Component missions addressed by the study;
- types of study purposes and foci of the evidence building;
- types of data sources, data collection methods, and analysis used in evidence building;
- types of claims or judgements made;
- use of input from and dissemination to stakeholders external to the research team;
- protections for the safety and privacy of participants; and
- study plans and reports, to allow for the independent structured study review.

The study inventory survey and structured study review rating guides (described below) were developed based on applicable OMB guidance that outlined the quality standards and best practices for federal evidence building.<sup>8</sup> The study inventory survey was also designed to collect data relating to multiple Evidence Act and OMB requirements, including a list of Department operations and activities evaluated and analyzed (see Appendix C).

The assessment team fielded surveys for 368 studies that Components identified as underway in FY 2021. Study managers responded to the survey for 244 studies (66 percent). This total included 86 total surveys where the respondent indicated that a study was not conducting in-scope evidence-building activities (34 surveys) or was conducting performance measurement (52 analysis surveys); in these instances, the survey concluded without collecting more information. Respondents completed surveys for 158 studies (43 percent of the 368 studies). Findings from the survey must be interpreted keeping these limited response rates and the potential for bias in mind; findings do not generalize beyond the reported studies. Exhibit 10 summarizes the total number of surveys fielded and completed surveys received across DHS as a whole, as well as by evidence-building activity.

#### Exhibit 10. Study Inventory Surveys Fielded and Completed, Total and by Activity

Number of Surveys	Total	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	Unspecified	No in-scope evidence building activities
Fielded	368	54	72	150	27	65	N/A
Completed	244	34	57	92	27	N/A	34

Notes: "N/A" indicates that this was not applicable. Counts in the Fielded row represent Component-assigned evidence building activity. Completed row represent evidence-building activity of studies as reported by respondents.

<sup>8</sup>For example, [Regulatory Analysis, Circular A-4](#) (OMB, 2003); [Regulatory Impact Analysis: A Primer, Circular A-4](#) (OMB, 2011); [Professional Work in the Mathematical Sciences Group](#) (OPM, 2005); [Statistical Policy Directive No. 1: Fundamental Responsibilities of Federal Statistical Agencies and Recognized Statistical Units](#) (OMB, 2014); [Guidance for Providing and Using Administrative Data for Statistical Purposes](#) (OMB, 2014); [Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices, M-20-12](#) (OMB, 2020)



## Structured Study Review

The assessment team planned to draw a sample of FY 2021 evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics activities to independently rate the quality and independence of submitted study plans or reports using the study inventory survey questions and study review rating guides. Only four of the 51 documents submitted by respondents contained information that was sufficient for the assessment team to conduct an independent review. Although the independent review could not be completed as planned, the assessment team was able to analyze self-reported survey responses to arrive at maturity ratings for seven CLCs. Exhibit 11 summarizes the criteria used for rating study quality and independence.

## Exhibit 11. Criteria Used for Rating Study Quality and Independence

Quality and Independence Criteria
<b>Evaluation and Research</b>
<i>Rigor:</i> Did the evaluation or research (1) make claims that do not go beyond the data; (2) use data collection methods that specifically cover content that has direct bearing on the question being addressed; (3) acknowledge relevant limitations; and (4) attempt to mitigate at least some of the limitations
<i>Relevance and utility:</i> Extent of connection between the evaluation or research and the missions of the Component
<i>Transparency:</i> How findings and methods are being disseminated (or planned to be disseminated)
<i>Independence and objectivity:</i> Extent to which the evaluation or research team did not modify the study based on input from individuals outside of the research team in which there was conflict of interest present
<i>Ethics:</i> Extent to which the evaluation or research team protects the safety and privacy of the participants and other affected entities
<i>Improvements:</i> Whether the evaluation or research team is looking to improve its work going forward
<b>Analysis</b>
<i>Statement of need:</i> Whether the analysis has a statement of need specifying a problem to be solved
<i>Monitors goals:</i> Whether the analysis facilitates a judgment about whether the goals of the activity were met
<i>Examines costs and benefits:</i> Whether the analysis makes judgments about the advantages and disadvantages of the activity being analyzed
<i>Examines alternative approaches:</i> Whether the analysis considers other possible approaches besides the activity being assessed
<i>Utility:</i> How findings and methods are being disseminated (or planned to be disseminated)
<i>Improvements:</i> Whether the analysis team is looking to improve its analysis going forward
<b>Statistics</b>
<i>Relevance to policy:</i> Extent to which input is collected on statistical methods and outputs from data users and experts
<i>Credibility among data users:</i> Extent to which statistical information is disseminated through multiple channels, in various forms that are appropriate to lay persons and experts, reflects limitations, and is made available in a way that maintains confidentiality
<i>Trust among data providers:</i> Extent to which data are protected, such that they are analyzed under a pledge of confidentiality and cannot be used for administrative, regulatory, law enforcement, or any other nonstatistical purpose
<i>Independence from political and other undue external influence:</i> Extent to which statistical personnel are authorized to refuse to disseminate identifiable data, choose when to release data and how; and choose how to maintain and store data
<i>Improvements:</i> Whether the statistical team is looking to improve its data and statistics going forward

Exhibit 12 maps the assessment dimensions and CLCs to the relevant methods used for data collection and analysis.

### Exhibit 12. Assessment Dimensions and CLCs Mapped to Methods

Dimensions and CLC Brief Descriptions	Group Discussion and Document Review	Structured Plan Review	Individual Survey	Inventory of Studies	Structured Study Review
Coverage					
Internal staff with sufficient training and specialized expertise to conduct evidence-building activities			■		
Internal staff with sufficient training and specialized expertise to procure and manage external organizations, groups, or experts to support evidence-building activities			■		
Evidence-building staff (EBS) receive the supports necessary (e.g., time, support staff, training) to conduct evidence-building activities			■		
Budget for and investment in evidence-building activities in this fiscal year	■				
Policies and guidance that specify how to plan and conduct evidence-building activities	■				
Inventory of studies with key information and progress of evidence-building activities planned, in progress, and completing in this fiscal year				■	
Quality					
Policy outlines quality standards for evidence-building activities, and compliance is regularly monitored	■				
Presence and quality of Department-wide and Component-wide learning agendas (LAs) for strategic priorities for statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis	■	■			
Presence and quality of Department- and Component-wide annual evaluation plans (EPs) that specify significant evaluations for subsequent FY	■	■			
Presence and quality of Department- and Component-wide annual Performance Plans (PPs) that specify annual performance measures and targets that support the strategic plan	■	■			
Research quality: Rigor, relevance and utility, transparency, independence and objectivity, and ethics of research studies				■	■
Evaluation quality: Rigor, relevance and utility, transparency, independence and objectivity, and ethics of evaluation studies				■	■
Analysis quality: Included statement of need, monitoring of goals, examination of costs and benefits, examination of alternative approaches, and utility				■	■
Statistical quality: Relevance to policy issues, credibility among data users, trust among data providers, and independence from political and other undue influence				■	■
Methods					
Inventory of methods used for evidence building activities				■	
Independence					
Research independence and objectivity				■	■
Evaluation independence and objectivity				■	■
Statistical independence from political and other undue influence				■	■

Dimensions and CLC Brief Descriptions	Group Discussion and Document Review	Structured Plan Review	Individual Survey	Inventory of Studies	Structured Study Review
<b>Effectiveness</b>					
Policy outlines requirements for evidence-related stakeholder engagement plans and compliance is regularly monitored	■				
Mechanisms have been implemented to assess evidence user needs, input, and feedback; input and feedback informs evidence-building	■				
Processes have been implemented to integrate evidence into business processes, program activities, and organizational decision-making	■				
Continuous improvement processes or learning cycle processes have been implemented to use evidence for improvement	■				
Policy outlines requirements for evidence dissemination plans and compliance is regularly monitored	■				
Mechanisms exist for effectively disseminating evidence products to internal and external stakeholders	■				
Mechanisms have been implemented for timely public release of evidence products	■				

## Maturity Ratings and Synthesis of Findings

The assessment team applied the CLC-specific maturity scoring rubric and analysis methods to the data collected for each CLC to produce a maturity rating for the CLC by evidence-building activity and/or crosscutting (across all rated evidence-building activities). For CLC ratings based on information gathered during discussion groups, the assessment team generated preliminary maturity ratings and an accompanying explanatory rationale for each rating. Components reviewed and could provide additional documentation to inform the assessment team's review and, potentially, adjustments to the preliminary ratings.

Components were provided an opportunity to review and provide feedback on their draft Component profile. Once Component profiles were finalized, the assessment team synthesized findings across Components to document baseline capacities within each of the assessment dimensions for DHS as a whole.

The assessment team produced a comprehensive two-volume report containing their detailed analysis, findings, and recommendations from which this public summary report, a set of internal Component profiles, and DHS- and Component-level briefing materials were drawn. From November 2021 to February 2022 the assessment team conducted twelve briefings on assessment findings with DHS HQ and Component representatives. Participation in a DHS-wide briefing and eleven Component briefings, delivered in the context of their capacity planning activities, was coordinated by Components. These reports and briefings provided the information needed to initiate informed discussions with Component leaders about a desired future state that is most appropriate for each Component's mission, operations, resources, and needs, and the appropriate milestones to achieve that future state from the baseline capacity documented in this assessment.

## Challenges and Limitations

The assessment team's use of qualitative and quantitative methods and multiple data sources were complementary, and while incomplete, converged toward common findings. Several limitations should be considered when reviewing the findings.

- **Complexity.** The dimensions, evidence-building activities, and CLCs assessed were complex and overlapping, requiring understanding and judgements around the terms, definitions, and uses that were difficult even for technical experts. Variation of evidence-building capabilities and organizational characteristics (for example, mission, structure, and philosophy on centralization) between and within Components contributed additional complexity. Complexity added to the overall challenge of fostering unity in how evidence-building and maturity are defined across the four broad activities and how to assess and continuously improve capacity for evidence.
- **Sampling and response.** The data reflect perspectives and factual information provided by DHS federal personnel who contribute to Components' most significant, in-scope evidence-building activities.<sup>9</sup> The resulting findings were determined to a great extent by whether personnel whose input was vital to the capacity assessment were prepared and able to participate in the assessment, not just as informed respondents but as collaborators on sampling. Despite efforts to prepare, support, and provide alternatives to optimize participation, issues persisted through the data-gathering and analysis phases that led to sampling and response limitations. Findings from the survey must be interpreted keeping limited response rates and the potential for bias in mind.
- **Operations research as an analysis activity.** The inclusion of operations research as an analysis activity, given there is no existing federal or DHS guidance for operations research, introduced limitations in the analysis findings and how they should be interpreted. Specifically, inclusion of operations research may have had the effect of lowering some analysis maturity ratings, because many of the CLCs tied to guidance or standards.
- **Objectivity of Quality and Independence dimension measures.** The assessment team could not complete an independent review of studies due to the insufficient documentation (study plans and reports) provided by respondents in connection to FY 2021 studies. Instead, they used information reported by respondents in the study inventory survey to assess studies' quality and independence and to establish respective maturity ratings. Although respondents had access to significantly more information related to the quality and independence of each effort, these data may also be similarly affected by issues related to complexity, sampling, and response or other bias.

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<sup>9</sup> The assessment intentionally did not seek perspectives of a broader group of DHS federal personnel as *users* of evidence. The Government Accountability Office's 2020 Survey of Federal Managers summary of DHS managers' responses provides this additional perspective. See [2020 Federal Managers Survey: Results on Government Performance Management issues, Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#) (GAO, 2021)

## Findings

A high-level snapshot, or scorecard, of maturity across DHS evidence-building activities and statutory dimensions is shown in Exhibit 13. The remainder of the section presents an overview of CLC maturity ratings and findings, organized by the five assessment dimensions (i.e., coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, independence).

### Maturity of DHS Evidence Building Activities

Conducting the capacity assessment provided an opportunity to discover, describe, and assess the Department's evidence-building, determining where current evidence capacity is and may not be sufficient to meet current and future needs and where capacity building efforts should be targeted.

Overall DHS lacked shared understanding – common terminology and concepts – related to evidence-building as defined by the Evidence Act and OMB. Most Components did not have coordinated Component-level perspective on staff, funding, and other infrastructure for evidence building or for evidence-building activities (studies) underway in fiscal year (FY) 2021. Despite this, the assessment team determined that all four evidence building activities (i.e., evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics) were underway across the Department with varying levels of maturity on the assessment dimensions of coverage, quality, methods, independence, and effectiveness, as summarized in Exhibit 13. DHS capacity for evidence-building and use was uneven across Components, nascent in some places, but developing. Given the participants were restricted to individuals for which evidence building was relevant, these findings suggested opportunities to improve in the future.

### Exhibit 13. Maturity of DHS Evidence Building on Assessed Dimensions, by Evidence-Building Activity

Dimension	Activity				Maturity Model
	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	
Coverage	Implementing	In progress	Implementing	Implementing	5 = Optimizing
Quality	Implementing	In progress	Implementing	In progress	4 = Completed
Independence	Completed	Completed	Not rated	Implementing	3 = Implementing
Effectiveness	In progress	In progress	Implementing	In progress	2 = In progress
					1 = Not initiated
					0 = No basis for judgement

Notes: Maturity for the Methods dimension is incorporated in the quality dimension maturity score. Specifically, the quality dimension assesses: "do these methods incorporate the necessary level of rigor?"

## Coverage

The Coverage dimension addresses the question: *What evaluation, research, analysis, and statistical activities are happening, and where are these activities happening?*

The assessment team defined Coverage in terms of organizational and individual capacity to plan and conduct evidence building and the evidence-building activities (studies) underway in FY 2021. The Coverage CLCs captured the extent to which Component staff had that conduct evidence building as primary functions of their jobs, whether staff have expertise and training around evidence-building and were provided with appropriate supports to conduct their activities, levels of funding budgeted for and invested in evidence-building, and whether DHS Components had Component-wide policies and guidance in place to plan and conduct their primary evidence-building activities. One CLC collected information on all FY 2021 evidence-building activities (studies). This section presents findings from the discussion group and accompanying document review, individual survey, and study inventory survey.

### COVERAGE:

- Staff with training and expertise for evidence building
- Staff with training and expertise for procuring and managing external groups for evidence building
- Organizational support for evidence building
- Budget and expenditures for evidence building
- Policies and procedures for planning and conducting evidence building
- Inventory of FY 2021 evidence-building activities (studies)

## Overview of Coverage Findings

DHS received a range of maturity scores between ‘1’ (not initiated) and ‘3’ (implementing) across the Coverage CLCs. Exhibit 14 presents DHS maturity ratings for these CLCs by evidence-building activity (per CLC and overall) and crosscutting (across all evidence-building activities). Coverage CLCs (average) ratings reflect the average maturity ratings (scores) for the rated activity specific CLCs.

The assessment team did not assign a CLC maturity rating for the inventory CLC; instead, they provided DHS a structured inventory of FY 2021 studies and also summarized study characteristics in dimension-specific findings sections. Appendix C includes a list of selected evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics studies from the assessment team’s inventory of FY 2021 studies that were or expect to be disseminated to the public. PA&E supplemented the list with studies from the Department’s annual evaluation plans (FY 2022 and FY 2023) and the unified regulatory agendas (FY 2021 and FY 2022) that were not included in the inventory of the FY 2021 studies. To ensure the list was useful as an inventory of studies, PA&E also incorporated studies identified through a search of DHS, Component, and DHS-sponsored entities’ websites.

**Exhibit 14. Coverage Maturity Ratings, by Activity and Crosscutting**

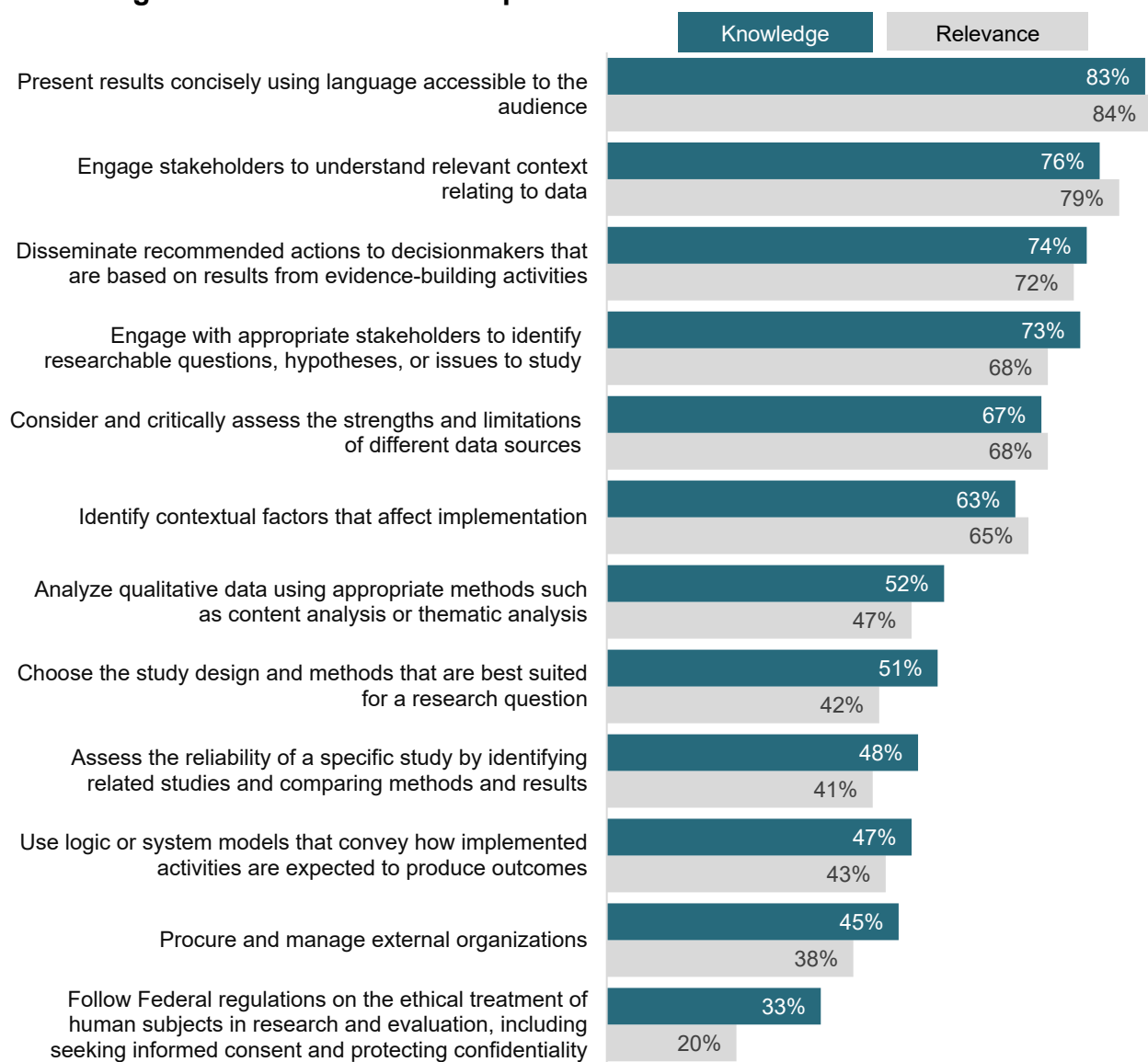
CLC Brief Description	Activity				
	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	Crosscutting
Internal staff with sufficient training and specialized expertise to conduct evidence-building activities	3	3	3	3	3
Internal staff with sufficient training and specialized expertise to procure and manage external organizations, groups, or experts to support evidence-building activities.	2	3	2	2	2
Evidence-building staff (EBS) receive the supports necessary (e.g., time, support staff, training) to conduct evidence-building activities	3	3	3	3	3
Budget for and investment in evidence-building activities in this fiscal year	2	2	2	3	2
Policies and guidance that specify how to plan and conduct evidence-building activities	3	1	3	2	2
Inventory of studies with key information and progress of current and planned evidence-building activities	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Coverage CLCs (average)	3	2	3	3	2

**Coverage Summary Finding:** DHS had some staff, funding, and policies in place, and evidence-building (studies) underway in FY 2021, but they were distributed unevenly across the Department and considered by many Component representatives to be insufficient to fully achieve all the objectives defined in the Evidence Act.

- DHS had staff with primary responsibilities for evidence building, but the size of the evidence-building staff varied across Components and activities.** Components identified 483 individuals who support Components' most significant evidence-building as a primary function of their job. Personnel were distributed unevenly, from eight in one Component to 128 in another. Component-level survey response rates varied from 16 percent to 77 percent.
- Respondents reported some knowledge of core evidence-building competencies though they deemed many competencies only somewhat relevant to their jobs.** The percentages of respondents that self-reported higher levels (rating of '4' or '5') of knowledge and relevance to their job varied widely (33-83 percent for knowledge and 20-84 percent for relevance). For 16 of the 20, core evidence-building competencies assessed, fewer than 70 percent of respondents reported higher levels of knowledge and relevance. For nine competencies, fewer than 50 percent of respondents considered them relevant to their jobs. Exhibit 15 summarizes a subset of the assessed competencies, including those with the six highest and six lowest percentages of respondents reporting higher levels of both knowledge and relevance to their job. Appendix D provides the full set of items and responses.



### Exhibit 15. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Higher Levels ('4' or '5') of Knowledge and Relevance for Competencies



Notes: n=186-190. Rating scales were 1 (No knowledge) to 5 (Extensive knowledge/expertise) and 1 (Not relevant) to 5 (Central to my job or position).

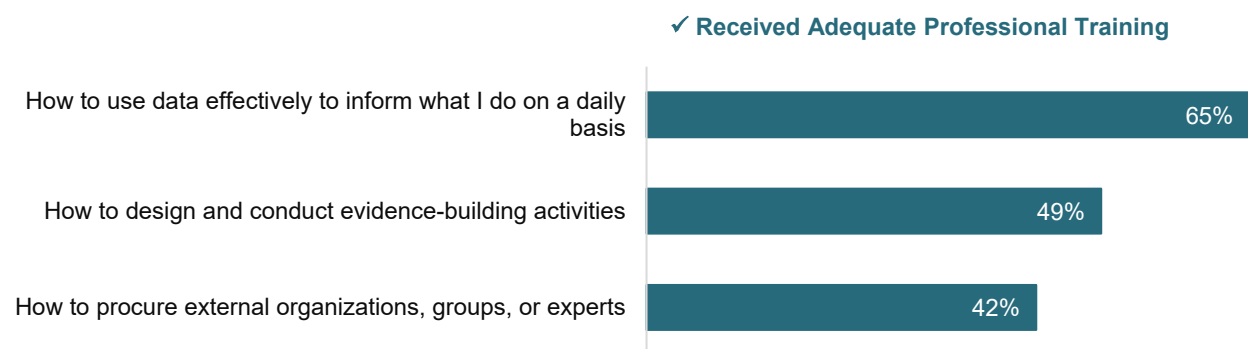
Source: Individual Survey Q2-Q21 (a subset are shown here).

Respondents reported higher levels of knowledge and relevance for presenting results concisely (83 percent), engaging stakeholders to understand relevant context (76 percent) or to identify researchable questions (73 percent), and disseminating recommended actions to decisionmakers (74 percent). Fewer than half of respondents reported higher levels of knowledge for assessing the reliability of a specific study (48 percent), using logic or system models (47 percent), procuring and managing external organizations (45 percent), and following federal regulations on the ethical treatment of human subjects in research and evaluation (33 percent).



- **Majority of respondents reported they did not receive adequate professional training for how to design or conduct evidence building or procure external organizations for evidence building.** Fewer than 70 percent of individual survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed they received adequate professional training on how to use data effectively (65 percent), how to design and conduct evidence-building activities (49 percent), and how to procure and manage external organizations, groups, or experts for evidence building (42 percent). Exhibit 16 summarizes responses to adequacy of training.

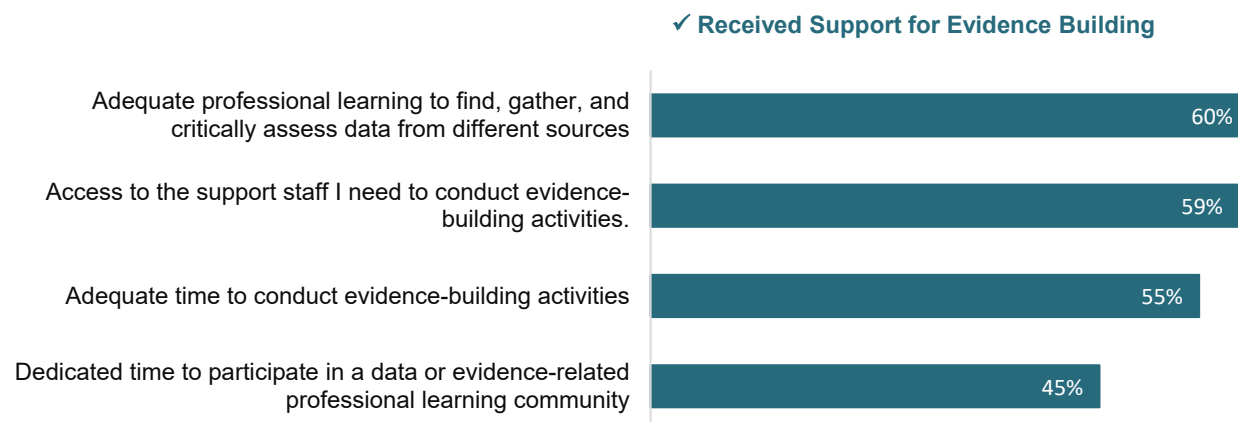
#### Exhibit 16. Percentage of Respondents Reporting ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly’ Agree to Receiving Adequate Professional Training



Notes: n=190. Rating scale was Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.  
Source: Individual Survey Q24, Q27, and Q28.

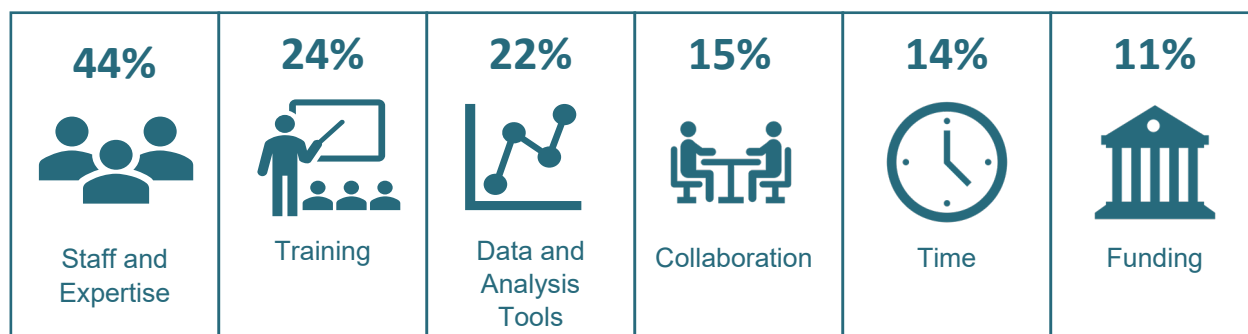
- **Respondents received some of the necessary supports to conduct evidence-building activities.** Fewer than 70 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they had support for evidence building, including training to find, gather and assess data (60 percent); access to support staff (59 percent); and time to conduct evidence building activities (55 percent) or participate in a professional learning community (45 percent). Exhibit 17 (next page) summarizes responses to support for evidence building. Appendix D provides the full set of items and responses used in Exhibits 16 and 17.
- **DHS may not have enough dedicated staff, or enough staff and contractors with specialized expertise, to effectively conduct evidence-building activities.** One hundred fifty-eight (158) respondents described what resources they need to effectively conduct evidence building activities. Of those, many respondents reported the need for more staff (44 percent), and specifically, more professional staff, contractors, and subject matter experts with specialized expertise in evidence building. Respondents also reported needing training for existing staff (24 percent), access to data and tools for analysis (22 percent), collaboration (15 percent), time to conduct evidence-building activities (14 percent), and funding (11 percent). Twelve percent of respondents indicated no resources were needed. Exhibit 18 (next page) summarizes responses to what resources are needed.

### Exhibit 17. Percentage of Respondents Reporting 'Agree' or 'Strongly' Agree to Receiving Support for Evidence Building



Notes: n=190. Rating scale was Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.  
Source: Individual Survey Q22, Q23, Q25, and Q26.

### Exhibit 18. Percentage of Respondents Describing Additional Resources Needed

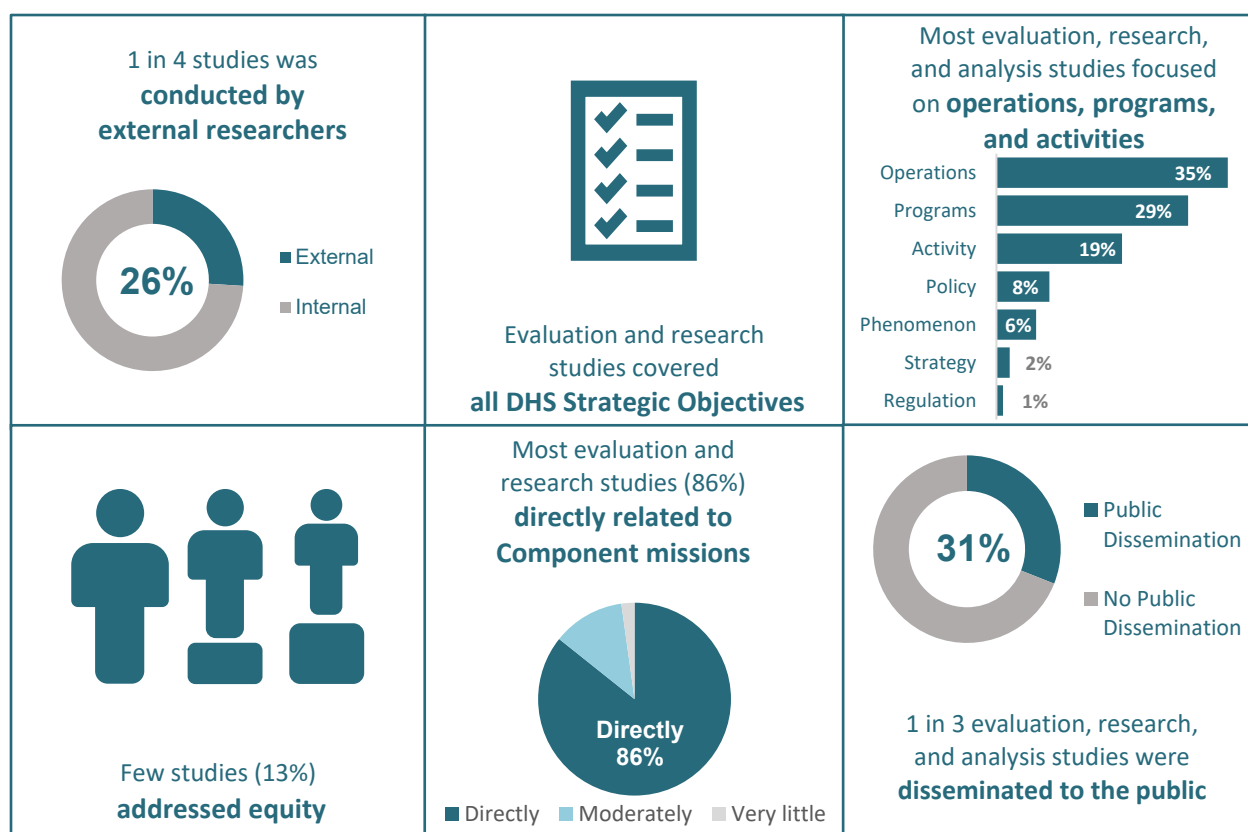


Notes: n=158. Does not show 4% that responded with 'resources' or 12% that reported 'none' or 'no resources needed'. Respondents could state all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%.  
Source: Individual Survey Q29.

- The size of budgets to support evidence building varied by Components and by activity and many Component representatives reported their budgets were insufficient to meet all the Evidence Act objectives.** One Component reported a Component-wide funding structure for evidence-building with funds both budgeted and invested for evaluation, research, and analysis activities. Some Components had substantial funding for one or more evidence-building activities, often statistics. Representatives of six Components reported in discussion groups that they had insufficient funds to support evidence-building activities. They noted that as a result, the Component could not fully achieve all the objectives defined in the Evidence Act.

- **DHS-wide policies provided relevant information to plan and conduct evidence-building activities, but Components did not have equivalent policies and guidance for various evidence-building activities.** DHS-wide policies and guidance for evaluation and some analysis activities (e.g., regulatory analysis, and performance measurement) provided relevant information on how to plan and conduct those evidence-building activities. Six Components reported they did not have any policies or guidance in place specifying how to plan and conduct any evidence-building activity. Five Components had policies or guidance in place for at least one activity. While some Components were in the process of developing such policies and guidance, others highlighted challenges, including culture, associated with creating additional, centralized guidance to inform evidence-building at the Component level.
- **DHS had a portfolio of evidence-building and the size of the evidence-building portfolio varied across activities and Components.** Components identified 368 studies underway in FY 2021. Studies were distributed unevenly, from zero studies in one Component to 74 in another. Component-level survey response rates for the study inventory varied from eight percent to 71 percent, excluding the 86 surveys where the respondent indicated no in-scope evidence building activities or performance measurement.
- **Trends in the characteristics of FY 2021 studies suggested other areas in which DHS coverage may not be sufficient to meet key objectives of the Evidence Act.**
  - DHS evidence-building activities should support the Department’s strategic plan, address all divisions’ needs, and consider equity, a key Administration priority. Evaluation and research studies supported the full range of DHS strategic objectives (data not shown), with the largest percentages of studies aligned to “responding during incidents” (27 percent); “secure and manage air, land, and maritime borders” (26 percent) and “maintain U.S. waterways and maritime resources” (24 percent). Studies were submitted by more than 70 DHS divisions. Most evaluation and research studies (86 percent) directly related to Component missions. Very few studies (13 percent) addressed equity issues.
  - DHS should meaningfully engage and collaborate with external stakeholders (such as public, state, and local agencies, and non-governmental researchers) throughout the evidence lifecycle. Yet only one in four reported studies (26 percent) was conducted by external organizations and about one in three (31 percent) reported studies disseminated information to the public. The Independence and Effectiveness sections report these data in greater detail.
  - DHS should use evidence to improve programs, policies, regulations, strategies, and operations. Greater percentages of studies focused on operations (35 percent), programs (29 percent), and activities (19 percent) compared to policies (eight percent), strategies (two percent), and regulations (one percent).

These study characteristics are summarized in Exhibit 19.

**Exhibit 19. Selected Characteristics of FY 2021 Studies**

Notes: n=157-158 for all studies; n=90-91 for evaluation and research studies; and n=130-131 for evaluation, research, and analysis studies.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q4, Q13, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q27a (research); Q29, Q37, Q40, Q41, Q42, Q52a (evaluation); Q54, Q62, Q70, Q75a (analysis); Q85, Q92a (statistics).

**Quality**

The Quality dimension addresses the question: *Are the data used of high quality with respect to utility, objectivity, and integrity?*

The assessment team focused on what capacity existed for and whether evidence building activities were conducted in such a way as to deliver high quality information. The Quality CLCs focused on the extent to which DHS and Components had established, activity-specific quality standards consistent with federal guidance and adhered to those standards when planning and conducting evidence-building. Rigor of study methods is assessed in study quality CLCs, and so maturity of the Methods dimension is subsumed in the Quality dimension maturity rating. This section presents findings from the discussion groups, accompanying document review, the study inventory survey, and structured study review.

**QUALITY:**

- Policies and guidance outlining quality standards
- Presence and quality of evidence plans
- Quality of evidence-building activities and improvement actions underway, including rigor

### Overview of Quality Findings

DHS received a range of maturity ratings between ‘1’ (not initiated) and ‘5’ (optimizing) across the Quality CLCs. Exhibit 20 presents DHS maturity ratings for eight CLCs.

### Exhibit 20. Quality Maturity Ratings, by Activity and Crosscutting

CLC Brief Description	Activity				
	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	Crosscutting
Policy outlines quality standards for evidence-building activities, and compliance is regularly monitored	2	1	3	2	2
Presence and quality of Department- and Component-wide learning agendas (LAs) for strategic priorities for statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	3
Presence and quality of Department- and Component-wide annual evaluation plans (EPs) that specify significant evaluations planned for subsequent FY	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	5
Presence and quality of Department- and Component-wide annual Performance Plans (PPs) that specify annual performance measures and targets that support the strategic plan	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	3
Evaluation quality: Rigor, relevance and utility, transparency, independence and objectivity, and ethics of evaluation studies; actions underway to improve	3	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Research quality: Rigor, relevance and utility, transparency, independence and objectivity, and ethics of research studies; actions underway to improve	Not rated	3	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Analysis quality: Included statement of need, monitoring of goals, examination of costs and benefits, examination of alternative approaches, and utility; actions underway to improve	Not rated	Not rated	2	Not rated	Not rated
Statistical quality: Relevance to policy issues, credibility among data users, trust among data providers, and independence from political and other undue influence; actions underway to improve	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	1	Not rated
Quality CLCs (average)	3	2	3	2	Not rated

Maturity ratings for the first CLC (policy outlines quality standards) represent an average of DHS Components’ maturity scores for the evidence-building activities and crosscutting scores. ‘Not rated’ and gray shading indicate that a CLC was assessed only on an activity-specific or crosscutting basis. Quality CLCs (average) ratings reflected the average maturity scores for the rated activity specific CLCs, adjusted to account for additional information provided by DHS HQ as appropriate.

**Quality Summary Finding:** DHS-wide policies and guidance outlined quality standards for some activities, though compliance with these standards varied across evidence-building activities. Department-level evidence plans were relatively mature. Components did not have equivalent policies and plans for their evidence-building activities. FY 2021 studies met some quality standards but the percentage of studies meeting standards varied by activity and by standard.

- **DHS-wide policies and guidance specified quality standards for some activities, but Components did not have equivalent policies and guidance.** DHS had department-wide policies and guidance for evaluation and certain analysis activities (i.e., regulatory analysis and performance measurement) that provided relevant guidance on quality standards. The Department also had broad directives for scientific integrity and quality of scientific, statistical, and financial information and was developing policies to improve the quality of certain statistical activities. No DHS Component reported a Component-wide policy that outlined quality standards for any evidence-building activity at the time of the assessment, though five Components were in the process of developing such policies.
- **DHS monitored compliance with quality standards for certain activities.** Across the Department, representatives reported that robust processes were in place to facilitate quality and consistency in planning and building evidence for two analysis activities (i.e., regulatory analysis and performance measurement.) These processes included internal and external review of evidence-building against established quality standards and federal best practices. The assessment team could not confirm the extent to which DHS-wide evaluation, research, and information quality standards were implemented and monitored for compliance in Components.
- **Department-level evidence plans were relatively mature, but Components did not have equivalent plans.** Department-wide evidence-building plans met the majority of assessment criteria (data not shown). The interim learning agenda (LA) and evaluation plan (EP) provided clear, concrete, and actionable guidance for developing and using evidence to inform DHS activities and consultation with internal stakeholders, but lacked consultation with external stakeholders.<sup>10</sup> The annual performance report included target and actual performance measures from FY 2016 to present and planned targets for FY 2021 and FY 2022 but was not sufficiently aligned with the strategic plan. DHS Components had no formal evidence plans in place at the time of this assessment,<sup>11</sup> which limits the Department's ability to assess current capacity against evidence needs and appropriately allocate resources to address needs and capacity gaps.

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<sup>10</sup> Consultation with external stakeholders occurred during the course of this capacity assessment for development of the Department's FY2022-2026 learning agenda, but information about these efforts were not available to the assessment team.

<sup>11</sup> The assessment team reviewed a Component strategic plan that included annual performance targets. The results of the plan's review are not provided in this report.

- **Study inventory data suggested reported FY 2021 studies met some quality standards, but the percentage of studies meeting standards varied by activity and by standard.** Study contacts' responses to questions related to quality (six multi-part questions for each of evaluation, research, and analysis, and five for statistics) suggested higher percentages of evaluation and research studies met quality standards than did analysis and statistical studies. The percentage of studies meeting quality standards are summarized in Exhibit 21. Strengths and weaknesses are also described in the three findings that follow.

**Exhibit 21. Percentage of FY 2021 Studies that Met Quality Standards, By Evidence-Building Activity**

<b>EVALUATION STUDY QUALITY</b>		<b>RESEARCH STUDY QUALITY</b>	
	Met Standard		Met Standard
<b>Ethics</b> .....	91%	<b>Relevance and utility</b> .....	98%
<b>Relevance and utility</b> .....	82%	<b>Ethics</b> .....	95%
<b>Independence and objectivity</b> .....	76%	<b>Independence and objectivity</b> .....	93%
<b>Rigor</b> .....	41%	<b>Rigor</b> .....	44%
<b>Transparency</b> .....	32%	<b>Transparency</b> .....	30%
<b>Met four of five elements</b> .....	47%	<b>Met four of five elements</b> .....	60%
<b>Looking to improve</b> .....	68%	<b>Looking to improve</b> .....	58%
<b>ANALYSIS STUDY QUALITY</b>		<b>STATISTICS STUDY QUALITY</b>	
	Met Standard		Met Standard
<b>Statement of need</b> .....	60%	<b>Independence from political or undue external influence</b> .....	37%
<b>Examines costs and benefits</b> .....	48%	<b>Credibility among data users</b> .....	33%
<b>Examines alternative approaches</b> .....	48%	<b>Trust among data providers</b> .....	15%
<b>Monitors goals</b> .....	43%	<b>Relevance to policy</b> .....	11%
<b>Utility</b> .....	30%		
<b>Met four of five elements</b> .....	30%	<b>Met four of four elements</b> .....	8%
<b>Looking to improve</b> .....	60%	<b>Looking to improve</b> .....	70%

Notes: evaluation n=34; research n=57; analysis n=40; and statistics n=27. Source: Study Inventory Survey.

- **Most reported FY 2021 evaluation and research studies met standards for relevance and utility, independence and objectivity, and ethics; however, fewer studies met standards for rigor and transparency.** The percentage of evaluation and research studies that met relevance and utility, independence and objectivity, and ethics standards ranged from 76 percent to 98 percent. The comparatively low percentages for transparency (about 30 percent for both evaluation and research) indicated that study findings, methods, and data (either in full or summary form) were not routinely released to the public or other key stakeholders. The low percentages for rigor (about 40 percent for both evaluation and research) indicated that studies did not attempt to mitigate at least some identified limitations (for research) or made claims that go beyond the data (for evaluation).
- **Majority of reported FY 2021 analysis studies, which were predominantly operations research,<sup>12</sup> did not meet criteria for quality.** Respondents self-reported that fewer than half of the 40 analysis studies examined costs and benefits, examined alternative approaches, assessed whether goals were met, and had utility.<sup>13</sup> Analysis studies scored lowest on criteria related to utility, indicating that DHS did not regularly release findings and methods, including deidentified analysis data, so that laypeople and experts can understand the analysis.
- **Majority of reported FY 2021 statistical studies<sup>14</sup> did not meet criteria for quality.** Of the four criteria used to determine the quality of statistics, relevance to policy and trust among data providers received the lowest scores. Of the three elements examined for relevance to policy, the most common weakness was collecting input on statistical methods and outputs from both data users and experts. Of the two elements assessed for building trust among data providers, the most common weakness was analyzing data under a pledge of confidentiality. Respondents for 70 percent of the reported statistics products indicated teams were looking to improve their data and statistics in the future. This suggests that many DHS evidence-building staff who conduct statistics recognize the need to improve on their work and address gaps.

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<sup>12</sup> The study inventory survey was not completed for performance measurement activities and few policy or regulatory analysis studies were reported; thus, the quality of studies reflected *primarily* operations research.

<sup>13</sup> OMB guidance for analysis activities consistently referenced ‘utility’ as a criterion of quality, described as data’s utility for intended users and for its intended purpose, including downstream use and reproducibility.

<sup>14</sup> DHS does not have any designated statistical agencies or activities that are required to comply with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018 (CIPSEA).



## Methods

The methods dimension addresses the questions: *What are the methods being used for these activities, do these methods incorporate the necessary level of rigor, and are those methods appropriate for the activities to which they are being applied?*

The assessment team incorporated rigor of methods (or equivalent concept) in the Quality dimension CLC maturity ratings, so it is not rated separately here. This section presents a partial summary of the methods inventory, as reported by 158 study inventory survey responses across 14 Components, and findings. The responses and documents provided by respondents were not sufficient to examine the appropriateness of the methods to specific Component divisions, or to questions, purposes, or claims made for a specific study. However, this section illustrates, with evaluation, how summary information about study purposes, claims, and methods can still be useful in considering appropriateness of methods for an evidence-building activity.

Two important concepts in this section are study purpose and study claims. A formative purpose is one that informs or improves the design or implementation of an activity. A summative purpose is one that determines what goals, outcomes, or impacts have been achieved as a result of implementing an activity. Some studies only describe people, events, or incidents. Other studies make claims such as inferences, such attempting to show a relationship between activities and measurable outcomes. Studies may make other claims, often derived from the inferences made. The credibility of inferences is dependent on the specific data, methods, and study designs used to address the questions.<sup>15</sup>

## Overview of Methods Findings

**Methods Summary Finding:** DHS evidence-building addressed a balance of formative and summative aspects, and studies used a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data, data collection, and analysis methods. The frequencies with which certain data sources and methods were used may limit the Department's ability to make credible inferences and fulfill summative purposes, especially for quantifying effectiveness (outcomes and impacts), cost-effectiveness, or equity that relates to or results from DHS mission delivery.

### METHODS:

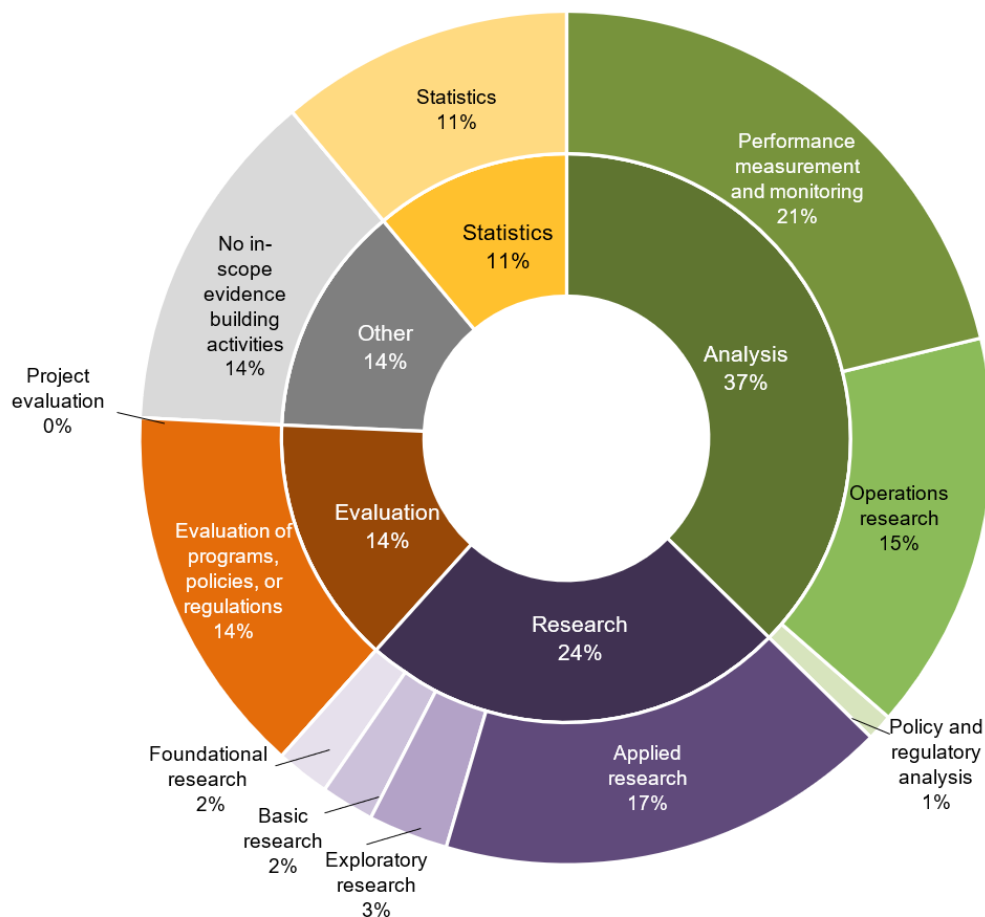
- Evidence building activity and subtype
- Focus and purpose of the evidence building
- Data sources, data collection methods, and analysis methods used in evidence building
- Nature of claims and judgements made

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<sup>15</sup> OMB guidance indicates that questions of effectiveness or efficiency should be answered by evaluation and claims of effectiveness and impact must be supported by study designs that can credibly generate causal evidence when well executed. Impact evaluations include experimental (i.e., randomized control trials) and quasi-experimental designs and may necessitate direct data collection and long-term or multi-year participant follow-up. See [Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans, M-21-27](#) (OMB, 2021)

- **The sample of reported FY 2021 studies reflected a range of evidence-building activities and subtypes.** The survey responses mostly reflected studies conducting applied research (17%), operations research/analysis (15%)<sup>16</sup>, evaluation (14%), and statistics (11%). Exhibit 22 summarizes how respondents categorized the studies they reported in the study inventory.

**Exhibit 22. Percentage of Studies Reporting Evidence-Building Activity and Subtype**



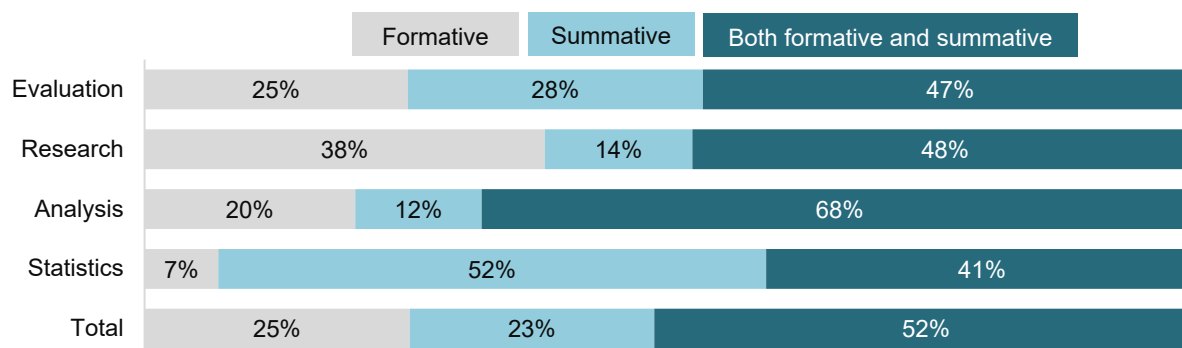
Notes: evaluation n=34; research n=57; analysis n=92; and statistics n=27. Project evaluation is evaluation of ongoing or completed grantee projects required by DHS grantmaking programs.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q1.

<sup>16</sup> The study inventory survey was not completed for performance measurement activities and few policy or regulatory analysis studies were reported; thus, the methods of studies reflected *primarily* operations research.

- **Study purposes varied by evidence-building activity but were balanced in addressing formative and summative purposes overall.** The percentage of studies that addressed some summative purposes varied across research (62 percent), evaluation (75 percent), analysis (80 percent), and statistics (93 percent). Overall, they were balanced in addressing formative and summative purposes: 75 percent of studies had some summative aspects and 77 percent of studies had some formative aspects. Exhibit 23 summarizes percentages of studies reporting purpose, by activity and total.

**Exhibit 23. Percentage of Studies Reporting Purpose, Total and by Activity**



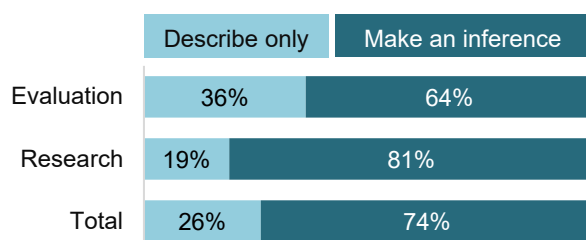
Notes: evaluation n=32; research n=56; analysis n=40; and statistics n=27.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q11a (research); Q36a (evaluation); Q61a (analysis); and Q83a (statistics).

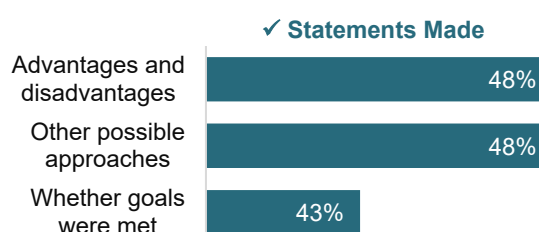
- **Most reported evaluation and research studies attempted to make an inference, though most analysis studies did not make judgements about activities studied.** Exhibit 24 indicates that most research (81 percent) and evaluation (64 percent) studies attempted show a relationship between implemented activities and measurable outcomes (make an inference). Fewer than 50 percent of analysis studies made statements about the advantages and disadvantages of an activity (48%), other possible approaches to the activity (48%), or whether the goals of an activity were met (43%).

**Exhibit 24. Percentage of Studies Reporting Claims, Total and by Activity**

#### Evaluation and Research



#### Analysis

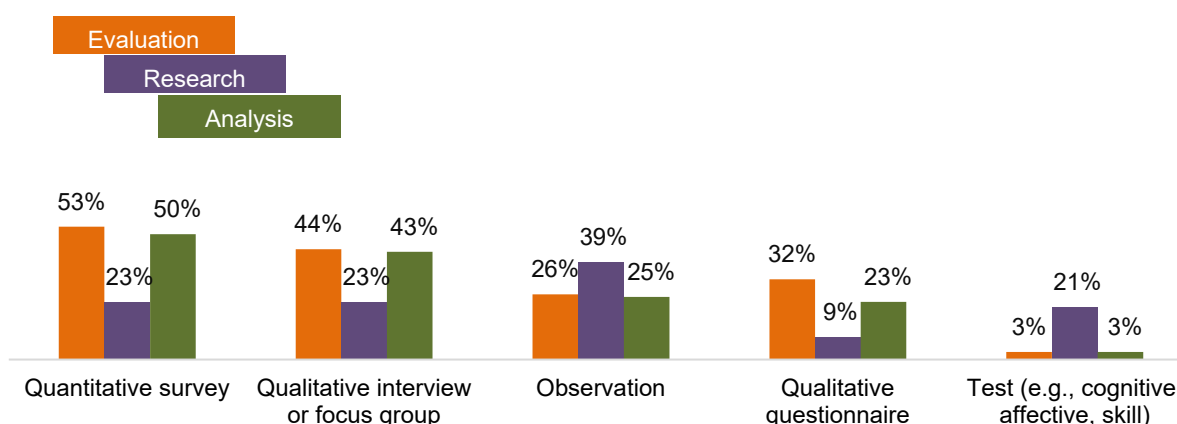


Notes: research n=57; evaluation n=33; and analysis n=40.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q13 (research); Q38 (evaluation); and Q65, Q66, Q69 (analysis).

- Studies used a variety of methods to collect data directly from individuals, and many used qualitative methods only or mixed qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.** Across reported evaluation, research, and analysis studies, 34 percent used qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews or focus groups, observations, and questionnaires. Twenty-nine percent of studies combined qualitative methods with other quantitative methods, such as surveys (of a census, statistical sample, or non-statistical sample) and tests of cognition, attitudes, or skills. Fewer studies (19 percent) relied on quantitative methods only and 18 percent did not collect data directly. Exhibit 25 reports the most common data collection methods across studies, by evidence-building activity.

**Exhibit 25. Percentage of Studies Reporting Direct Data Collection Methods, by Activity**

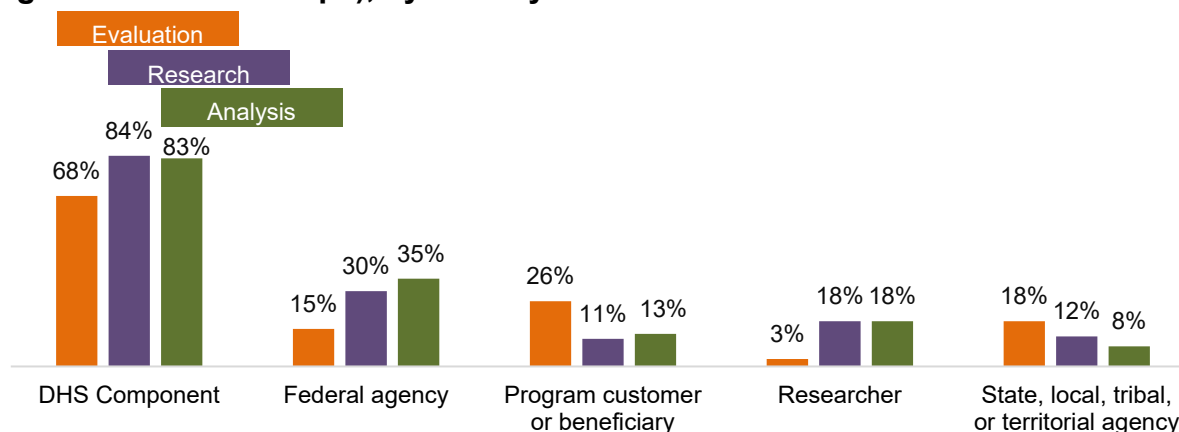


Notes: evaluation n=34; research n=57; and analysis n=92. The most common methods across all reported studies are shown. Quantitative survey combines three categories: survey of census (program's population), survey of statistical sample, and survey of nonstatistical sample. The following methods were less common across all studies though percentages varied by activity: 'log, journal, or diary,' 'journey/process mapping,' 'non-written artifact,' and 'other.' Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q27b (research); Q52b (evaluation); and Q75b (analysis).

- Most FY 2021 studies collected data directly from individuals within DHS Components, while fewer studies collected data from DHS customers and external partners.** Nearly 80 percent of reported evaluation, research, and analysis studies collected information directly from individuals within DHS. Comparatively fewer collected data directly from external stakeholders, such as individuals of other federal agencies, program customers, non-government researchers, or state, local, tribal, or territorial (SLTT) agencies. Exhibit 26 reports the most common direct data sources across studies, by evidence-building activity.

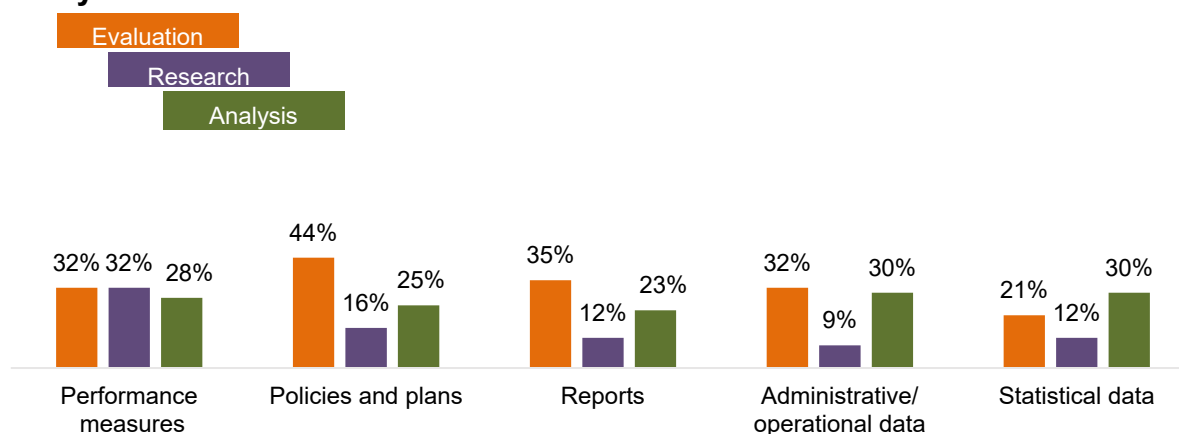
### Exhibit 26. Percentage of Studies Reporting Direct Data Sources (Individuals from Organizations or Groups), by Activity



Notes: evaluation n=34; research n=57; and analysis n=92. The most common sources across all reported studies are shown. DHS Component(s) combines two categories: Submitting Component and Other DHS Component. The following were less common across all studies though percentages varied by activity: 'federal grant recipient,' 'industry or trade group,' 'nongovernmental or nonprofit organization,' 'professional association,' 'interest or advocacy group,' 'American public,' and 'other.' Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%. Source: Study Inventory Survey Q27c (research); Q52c (evaluation); and Q75c (analysis).

- Studies used a wide range of existing federal data sources to support evidence building.** Greater than 60 percent of reported evaluation, research, and analysis studies used existing federal data and information to support evidence building. Performance measures, administrative and operational data, federal statistical data, policies, plans, and reports from reviews, assessments, or evaluations were most common. Exhibit 27 reports common existing federal data sources by evidence-building activity.

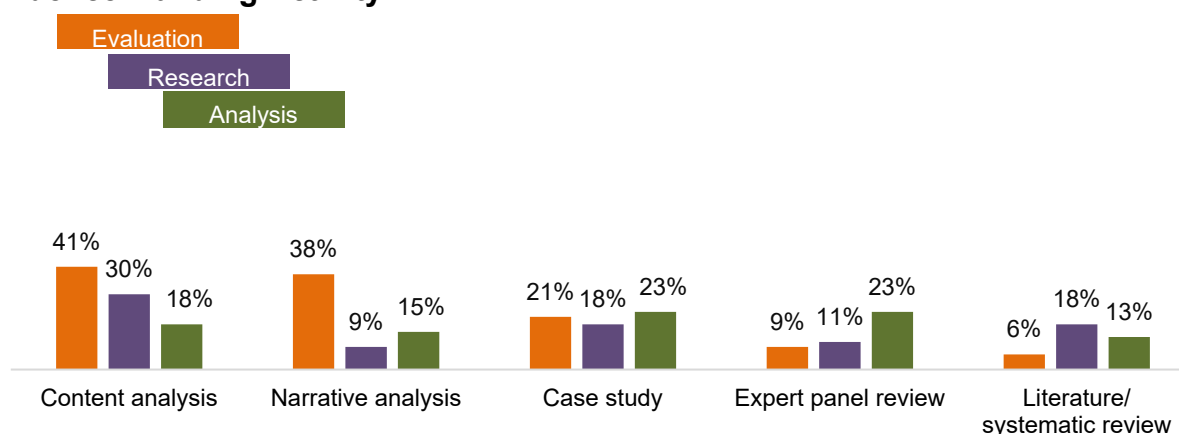
### Exhibit 27. Percentage of Studies Reporting Existing Federal Data Sources, by Activity



Notes: research n=57; evaluation n=34; and analysis n=92. The most common sources across all reported studies are shown. The following data were less common across all studies though percentages varied by activity: 'physical and technological infrastructure data,' 'financial data,' 'sensor or telemetry data,' 'personnel data,' and 'other.' Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%. Source: Study Inventory Survey Q27d (research); Q52d (evaluation); and Q75d (analysis).

- Qualitative analysis, in particular content and case study analysis, was common across evidence building; however, fewer studies used advanced qualitative analysis methods.** More than 60 percent of reported evaluation, research, and analysis studies used qualitative analysis to support evidence building. Content analysis and case study analysis were common across evidence building activities. Comparatively, lower percentages of studies reported using advanced methods such as thematic framework analysis, grounded theory, interpretive phenomenological analysis, and ethnographic analysis.<sup>17</sup> Exhibit 28 reports common qualitative analysis by evidence-building activity.

### Exhibit 28. Percentage of Studies Reporting Qualitative Analysis Methods, by Evidence-Building Activity

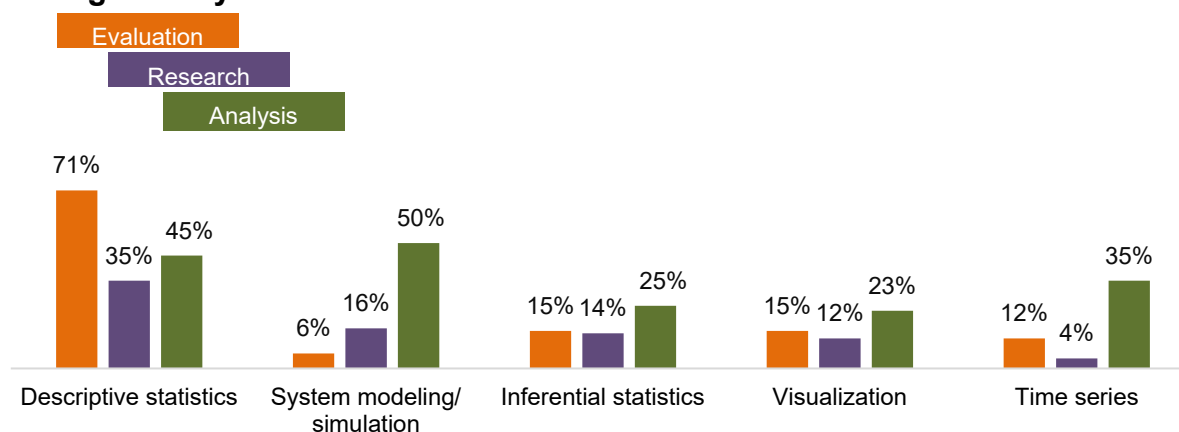


Notes: research n=57; evaluation n=34; and analysis n=92. The most common methods across all reported studies are shown. The following methods were less common across all studies though percentages varied by activity: 'thematic or thematic framework analysis,' 'interpretive phenomenological analysis,' 'grounded theory,' 'ethnographic analysis,' and 'other.' Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%.  
 Source: Study Inventory Survey Q27e (research); Q52e (evaluation); and Q75e (analysis).

- Quantitative analysis, in particular descriptive statistics, was common across DHS evidence building. Fewer evaluation, research, and statistics studies used advanced quantitative analysis methods compared to analysis studies.** Nearly 80 percent of reported evaluation, research, and analysis studies used quantitative analysis to support evidence building. Compared with analysis studies, lower percentages of evaluation, research, and statistics studies reported using advanced methods such as system modeling, inferential statistics, time series modeling, and economic analysis. Exhibits 29 and 30 report common quantitative analysis methods by evidence-building activity.

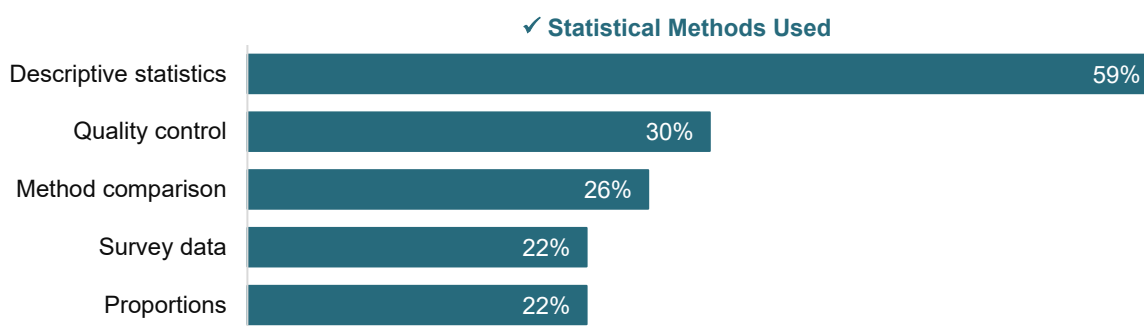
<sup>17</sup> OMB expects agencies to draw on a full range of methodological approaches, including qualitative research, ethnography, and other inclusive methodologies such as participatory, emancipatory, and community-based research that are informed by social and behavioral sciences. Such methodologies use many of the advanced analysis methods. See [Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans, M-21-27](#) (OMB, 2021)

### Exhibit 29. Percentage of Studies Reporting Quantitative Analysis, by Evidence-Building Activity



Notes: research n=57; evaluation n=34; and analysis n=92. The most common methods across all reported studies are shown. The following methods were less common across all studies though percentages varied by activity: 'economic analysis,' 'network analysis,' 'data mining and analytics,' 'multiple criteria decision analysis,' 'text mining and analytics,' 'meta-analysis,' and 'bibliometric or scientometric analysis,' and 'other.' Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%. Study Inventory Survey. Q27e (research); Q52e (evaluation); and Q75e (analysis).

### Exhibit 30. Percentage of Statistics Studies Reporting Statistical Methods



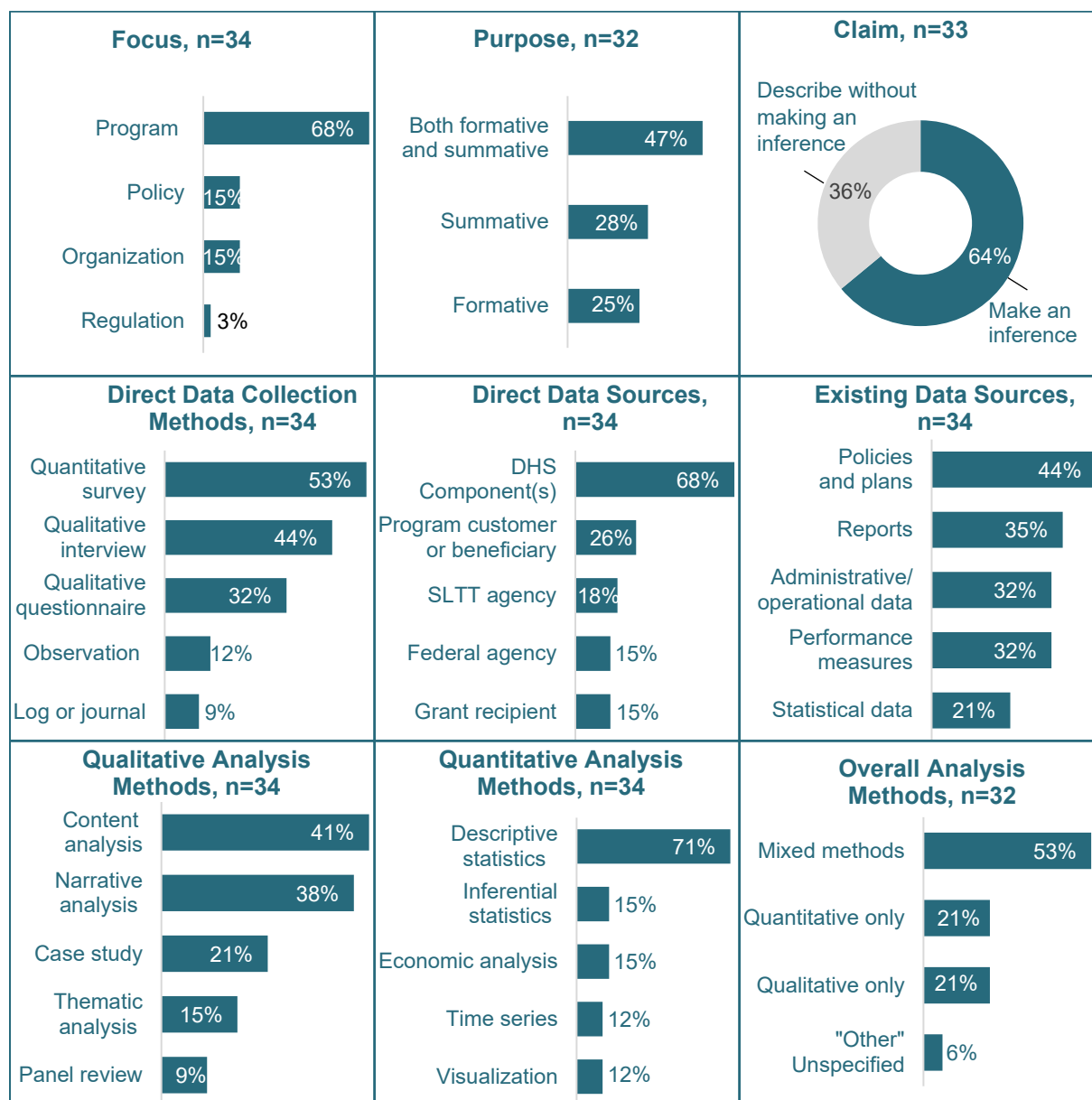
Note: statistics n=27. The most common methods across reported studies are shown. Methods used in lower percentages were 'operations research,' 'correlation,' 'two-way tables,' 'regression,' 'multivariate analysis,' 'forecasting,' 'design of experiments,' 'time series,' 'meta-analysis,' 'distribution fitting,' 'appraisal,' and 'other'. Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%. Source: Study Inventory Survey Q93 (statistics).

### Using the Methods Inventory: Appropriateness of Evaluation Methods

The section illustrates, for evaluation, how summary information about study purpose, claims, and methods may still be useful to the Department for considering limitations of current methods used and identifying opportunities for improving future evidence-building.

Exhibit 31 provides a partial activity-specific snapshot of the evaluation methods inventory. The exhibit summarizes characteristics of the FY 2021 reported evaluation studies, including focus, purpose, and claims, as well as data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis that respondents reported in the highest percentages.

### Exhibit 31. Evaluation Methods Inventory



Notes: evaluation n=34. For data collection, data sources, and analysis, the most common responses are shown. Focus and Overall Methods do not add to 100% due to rounding. For data collection methods, data sources, and analysis methods, respondents could select all that apply, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q29, Q36a, Q38, and Q52b-e (evaluation).



- **The low percentages with which certain data and methods were used in evaluations may limit the Department's ability to make credible inferences and fulfill summative purposes at the levels reported, including quantifying effectiveness (outcomes and impacts), cost-effectiveness, or equity that relates to or results from DHS mission delivery.**
  - Most reported evaluation studies were focused on programs (68 percent), had some summative purposes (75 percent), and attempted to make an inference (64 percent). This means most reported evaluations aimed to determine what goals, outcomes, or impacts were achieved as a result of implementing a program and attempted to show relationships between program activities and measurable outcomes.
  - Low percentages of reported evaluations collected data directly from program customers or beneficiaries (26 percent) and other external stakeholders (18 percent SLTT agency, 15 percent each for federal agency and grant recipients), as compared with personnel from DHS Components. Direct data collection from customers and external stakeholders provides evaluation-specific data that is not available in administrative data, such as experiences, barriers, unmet needs, outcomes, and adverse consequences of interacting with DHS programs, to inform customer- and results-centric design and delivery.
  - Low percentages of reported evaluations used advanced qualitative data analysis, such as thematic analysis (15 percent), grounded theory, interpretative phenomenology, and ethnography (all 0 percent, data not shown), despite 74 percent conducting some form of qualitative analysis. Such methods enhance the rigor of interpretations of qualitative data in relation to the theoretical frameworks guiding program designs (such as logic or system models) and in relation to customers' lived experiences with and without the program or the sociocultural contexts in which they receive program services.
  - Although half of reported evaluations conducted some form of quantitative data collection, low percentages of evaluations used advanced quantitative analysis methods, such as inferential statistics (15 percent), time series modeling (12 percent), and economic analysis (12 percent). These methods, combined with certain study designs, enable determinations under what circumstances a sample of individuals represents the broader program population or society; if and how much differences between two or more groups, changes over time, or associations between variables can be attributed to (or considered caused by) an implemented program when compared to its absence or alternative programs; and whether it is the most cost-effective alternative.

Federal evaluation standards indicate evaluations should use the most advanced methods and study designs appropriate to address evaluation questions, while balancing goals, scale, timeline, feasibility, and available resources, to provide greater confidence in the results. Since the Evidence Act Title 1 elevates evaluation as an essential mission function, the issues related to the rigor and appropriateness of data and methods used in evaluation studies are important for future capacity building and assessment activities.

## Independence

Independence dimension addresses the question: *To what extent are the activities being carried out free from bias and inappropriate influence?*

To assess the independence of evidence-building activities across DHS, the assessment team used the structured study review protocols to analyze data provided by Component representatives through the study inventory survey. The study inventory survey asked respondents questions related to addressing conflicts of interests and inappropriate influence in conducting and disseminating studies, consistent with activity-specific principles for independence in federal guidance. The assessment team checked whether the studies were conducted by researchers independent from the Department but did not use these data in the maturity rating. Independence standards allow evidence building by internal staff who operate with an appropriate level of independence from program, regulatory, and policymaking activities,<sup>18</sup> so these findings are reported for context only.

### INDEPENDENCE:

- Who conducted the study
- Extent of modifications of the study based on input from individuals for whom there was a conflict of interest (COI) present
- Authorization to refuse to disseminate identifiable data, choose when to release data and how, and choose how to maintain and store data

### Overview of Independence Findings

**Independence Summary Finding:** Most FY 2021 studies were performed by internal staff. Information provided for studies suggests that the majority of evidence-building activities were conducted free from inappropriate influence.

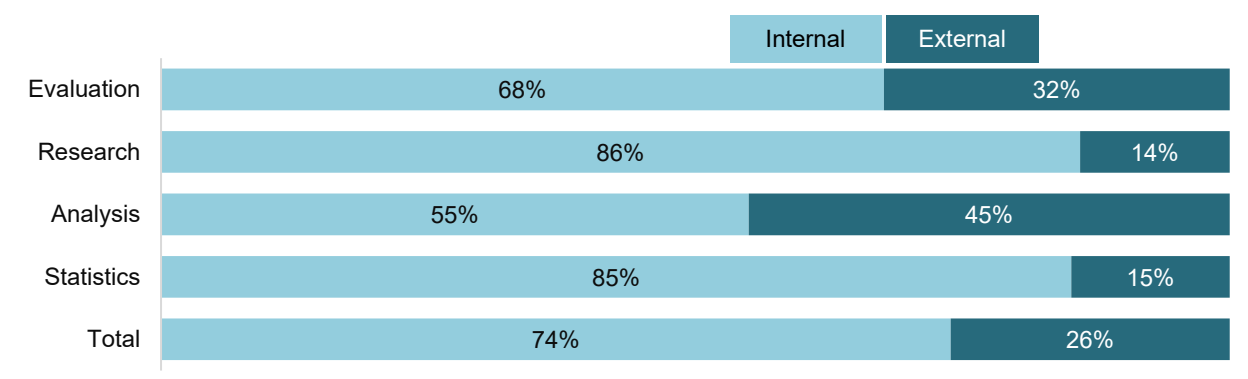
DHS received two maturity ratings of '4' (completed) and one maturity rating of '3' (implementing) across the CLCs. DHS scores for three CLCs, each of which represents only one evidence-building activity, appear in Exhibit 32. The 'Not rated' and gray shading indicates that a CLC was assessed only on an activity-specific basis from an average of all respondents' data who reported their study was conducting the given activity, so there are no crosscutting ratings.

CLC Brief Description	Activity				
	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	Crosscutting
Evaluation independence and objectivity	4	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Research independence and objectivity	Not rated	4	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Statistical independence from political and other undue influence	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated	3	Not rated

<sup>18</sup> For example, see [Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices, M-20-12](#) (OMB, 2020)

- **About one in four reported studies were conducted by researchers independent from DHS.** The majority of reported studies (74 percent) were conducted by internal staff in the Component or in another DHS Component and 26 percent by independent researchers, or an external firm, organization, or group. Exhibit 33 summarizes the percentage of studies reporting who is conducting the study, whether internal or external researchers.

### Exhibit 33. Percentage Studies Reporting Who Is Conducting Study, By Evidence-Building Activity and Total



Notes: evaluation n=34; research n=56; analysis n=40; statistics n=27; and total n=157.

Source: Study Inventory Survey Q27 (research); Q52 (evaluation); Q75 (analysis); and Q92 (statistics).

- **Study inventory data suggested the majority of FY 2021 studies were conducted independently and objectively, free from inappropriate influence, and the study teams were looking to improve the independence and objectivity of evidence-building studies moving forward.** The extent to which evidence-building activities were conducted free from inappropriate influence varied by activity type, with greater percentages of evaluation and research reporting indicators of independence. Summarized previously in Exhibit 21, the assessment team reported the following:
  - A majority reported evaluation (76 percent) and research (93 percent) did not modify the study based on input from individuals outside of the research team, or made modifications based on input from individuals with no conflicts of interest.
  - Only 40 percent of statistical studies indicated at least two of the three criteria for independence of the study team: authorized to refuse to disseminate identifiable data; choose when to release data and how; and choose how to maintain and store data.

Respondents who reported modifying the design or results of studies (typically, evaluations) based on outside input reported having done so to coordinate findings among other agencies and stakeholders, to promote inclusivity and collaboration, or to solicit the feedback of subject-matter experts to improve the rigor of the work. Such rationale are consistent with federal standards for evaluation.

## Effectiveness

The Effectiveness dimension addresses the question: *Are the activities meeting their intended outcomes, including serving the needs of stakeholders and being disseminated?*

Effectiveness CLCs included whether policies for evidence-building activities outlined requirements for stakeholder engagement plans and reporting, and mechanisms were established to assess evidence consumer and user needs, input, and feedback to inform evidence building. Effectiveness CLCs also included whether processes were implemented to integrate evidence in business processes, program activities, and organizational decision making. One CLC examined whether continuous improvement or learning cycle processes have been implemented to use evidence for improvement. Effectiveness CLCs also examined whether policies for evidence-building activities outlined requirements for dissemination plans and authorities, and mechanisms were established to disseminate evidence products to internal and external stakeholders, including the public. This section presents findings from the discussion groups and accompanying document review.

### EFFECTIVENESS:

- Policies for stakeholder engagement in evidence building
- Mechanisms for assessing user and stakeholder needs to inform evidence building
- Processes for integrating evidence
- Continuous improvement or learning cycle that uses evidence
- Policies and guidance for dissemination of evidence
- Mechanisms for dissemination to internal and external stakeholders, including the public

Although the assessment team checked whether the study findings were made available and to whom, these data were not used in the maturity rating and are reported for context only.

Finally, the individual survey gathered respondents' perceptions of their Component context. Component context, including Component culture, practices, and technology resources, can affect capacity to effectively use evidence. These data were not used for any CLC maturity ratings in the FY 2021 capacity assessment; however, these data may provide an important baseline measure of the extent to which supportive organizational context exists for evidence use in day-to-day operations.

## Overview of Effectiveness Findings

**Effectiveness Summary Finding:** While DHS lacked policies that outlined requirements for stakeholder engagement and dissemination, some Department-wide and Component mechanisms existed to gather stakeholder needs, input, and feedback for evidence building, to disseminate findings of evidence building, and to use evidence for decision making and improvement. Some organizational contexts, including Component culture, practices, and technology resources, exist that support evidence building and use in day-to-day operations.

DHS received a range of maturity scores between ‘1’ (not initiated) and ‘3’ (implementing) across the Effectiveness CLCs. Analysis was more mature than other activities across most CLCs. Ratings for the seven CLCs, by evidence-building activity (per CLC and overall) and crosscutting (across all evidence-building activities), appear in Exhibit 34. Effectiveness CLCs (average) ratings reflected the average maturity scores for the rated activity specific CLCs.

### Exhibit 34. Effectiveness Maturity Ratings, by Evidence-Building Activity

CLC Brief Description	Activity				
	Evaluation	Research	Analysis	Statistics	Crosscutting
Policy outlines requirements for evidence-related stakeholder engagement and compliance is regularly monitored	1	1	1	1	1
Mechanisms have been implemented to assess evidence-user needs, input, and feedback; input and feedback informs evidence-building	2	2	2	2	2
Processes have been implemented to integrate evidence into business processes, program activities, and organizational decision-making	2	2	3	3	3
Continuous improvement processes or learning cycle processes have been implemented to use evidence for improvement	2	1	3	2	2
Policy outlines requirements for evidence dissemination and compliance is regularly monitored	1	1	3	1	2
Mechanisms exist for effectively disseminating evidence products to internal and external stakeholders	2	2	3	3	3
Mechanisms have been implemented for timely public release of evidence products	1	2	3	2	2
Effectiveness CLCs (average)	2	2	3	2	2

- Overall, DHS lacked policies or procedures that outlined requirements for engaging a broad array of individual and external stakeholders in evidence building activities.** DHS implemented and monitored compliance with Department-wide guidance for regulatory analysis (one of multiple analysis subtypes) stakeholder engagement and reporting. While the Department-wide instruction for evaluation also provided guidance relating to stakeholder engagement, compliance was not yet monitored across the Department. No Component-wide policies or procedures were in place that outlined requirements for stakeholder engagement plans and reporting in evidence-building.

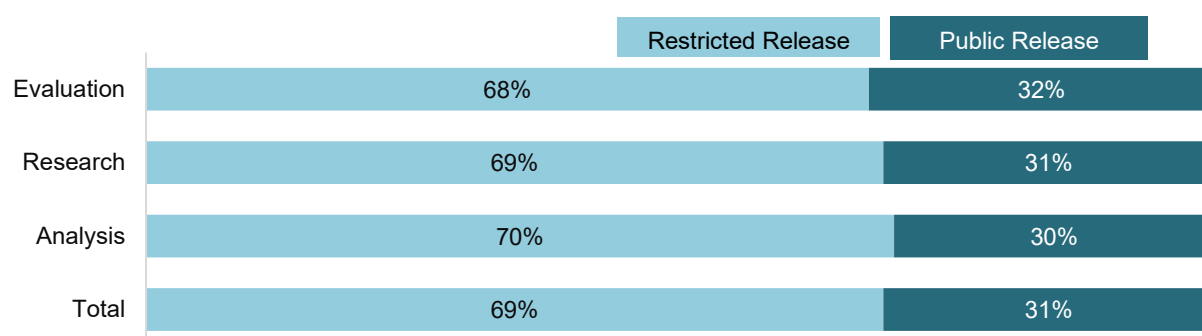
- **DHS has implemented some mechanisms to assess evidence user needs, but these mechanisms were not used consistently to plan evidence-building activities or to inform programs, policies, regulations, or organizations.** Nine Components reported some mechanisms were in place to assess evidence users' or consumers' needs and seek input and feedback from users or consumers (or both) for at least one type of evidence-building activity; however, these mechanisms were used irregularly to plan evidence-building activities or to inform programs, policies, regulations, and organizations. Of the nine Components that reported having some mechanisms in place to assess evidence consumers' needs, eight had mechanisms pertaining to analysis and four Components had mechanisms in place specifically related to one or more of their evaluation, research, and statistics activities.
- **Leaders and staff across the Department somewhat consistently used evidence in business processes, program activities, and organizational decision making, with strengths in the use of regulatory analysis and performance measurement information.** Seven Components provided information that informed a maturity score of 3 (Implementing) or higher. Other Components noted that products derived from evidence-building activities were occasionally used to inform ongoing processes, program activities, and organizational policies, practices, and decision making but that the use of such data was inconsistent. In some of these cases, the process for integrating evidence into their activities was in a "nascent stage." Components reported having a more robust process for integrating some evidence but not for all four activities. According to Component representatives who participated in discussion groups, evidence from analysis and statistics was used more regularly than other evidence types.
- **DHS established performance measurement processes that serve as continuous improvement or learning cycle processes; although, most Components had not implemented their own continuous improvement processes to focus on Component-specific improvements.** DHS reported well-established strategic review process through which the Department synthesized available evidence to assess program progress in achieving DHS's priority goals. The strategic review process used performance measurement information; however, the assessment team could not determine whether and how other types of evidence, including DHS-sponsored evaluation, research, statistics, or other forms of analysis, informed the strategic review process. Operational and some support Components participated in these efforts, but some support Components did not participate. Most Components did not have equivalent formal continuous learning processes to identify promising practices, problem areas, causal factors, or areas for improvement specific to their missions. However, several Components reported informal processes or activities used for other purposes that also helped to support this objective.

- **DHS had Department-wide policies and guidance that outline requirements and authorities for dissemination of regulatory analysis and performance measurement products, as well as some policy and guidance in place for evaluation and research for which compliance was not monitored. Components generally did not have equivalent policies.** DHS had department-wide policies and guidance for research (scientific integrity), evaluation, and certain analysis activities (e.g., regulatory analysis and performance measurement), certain aspects of which are relevant to dissemination. Components were required to adhere to these policies and either participate in or feed equivalent activities into HQ-coordinated activities. No DHS Component reported having in place Component-wide policies or procedures that outlined requirements and authorities for evidence dissemination plans. However, two Components reported that they were in the process of developing such policies and procedures for one or more evidence-building activities.
- **DHS had some mechanisms in place to disseminate evidence products and findings to internal and external stakeholders, but mechanisms were not in place across all Components for all evidence-building activities.** DHS representatives consistently reported that DHS follows all applicable statutory and federal guidance pertaining to regulatory analysis, which requires certain regulatory analyses, including methods, findings, and data, be disseminated to the public so that interested parties can replicate analyses. Similarly, DHS followed federal guidance relating to performance measurement, annually publishing performance and accountability reports, including the DHS annual financial report, annual performance report, and the DHS summary of performance and financial information on DHS's public website. All Components participating in discussion groups reported either that they had some mechanisms in place for at least one activity or that they were in the process of developing such mechanisms for at least one activity. Components provided examples of internal and external mechanisms for dissemination, including issuing information on internal and public websites, blogs, social media, white papers, and dashboards.
- **Although DHS had some mechanisms in place to publicly release completed products from certain evidence-building activities, mechanisms were not in place across all Components and for all types of evidence-building activities.** DHS had established Department-wide practices for public dissemination of regulatory analysis and performance measurement products and findings. Half of the DHS Components that participated in the FY 2021 capacity assessment did not have any mechanisms in place for publicly releasing completed products from evidence-building activities in a timely manner. For the seven Components that reported having mechanisms in place, those mechanisms were somewhat mature though maturity varied by evidence-building activity.



- About one in three reported evaluation, research, and analysis studies were disseminated to the public.** Across all four evidence-building activities, most reported studies (69 percent) were made available to restricted stakeholder groups that include one or more members of the analysis team, internal (DHS) stakeholders, and external stakeholders. External stakeholders often included federal and SLTT agency partners, relevant members of private industry, and those conducting oversight (e.g., Congress, OMB, Government Accountability Office). Only about one third of all reported studies (31 percent) released all or some portion of study findings, methods, and deidentified data to the public. Exhibit 35 presents a summary of the reported release of studies.

**Exhibit 35. Percentage Studies Reporting Release of Study Information, By Evidence-Building Activity and Total**



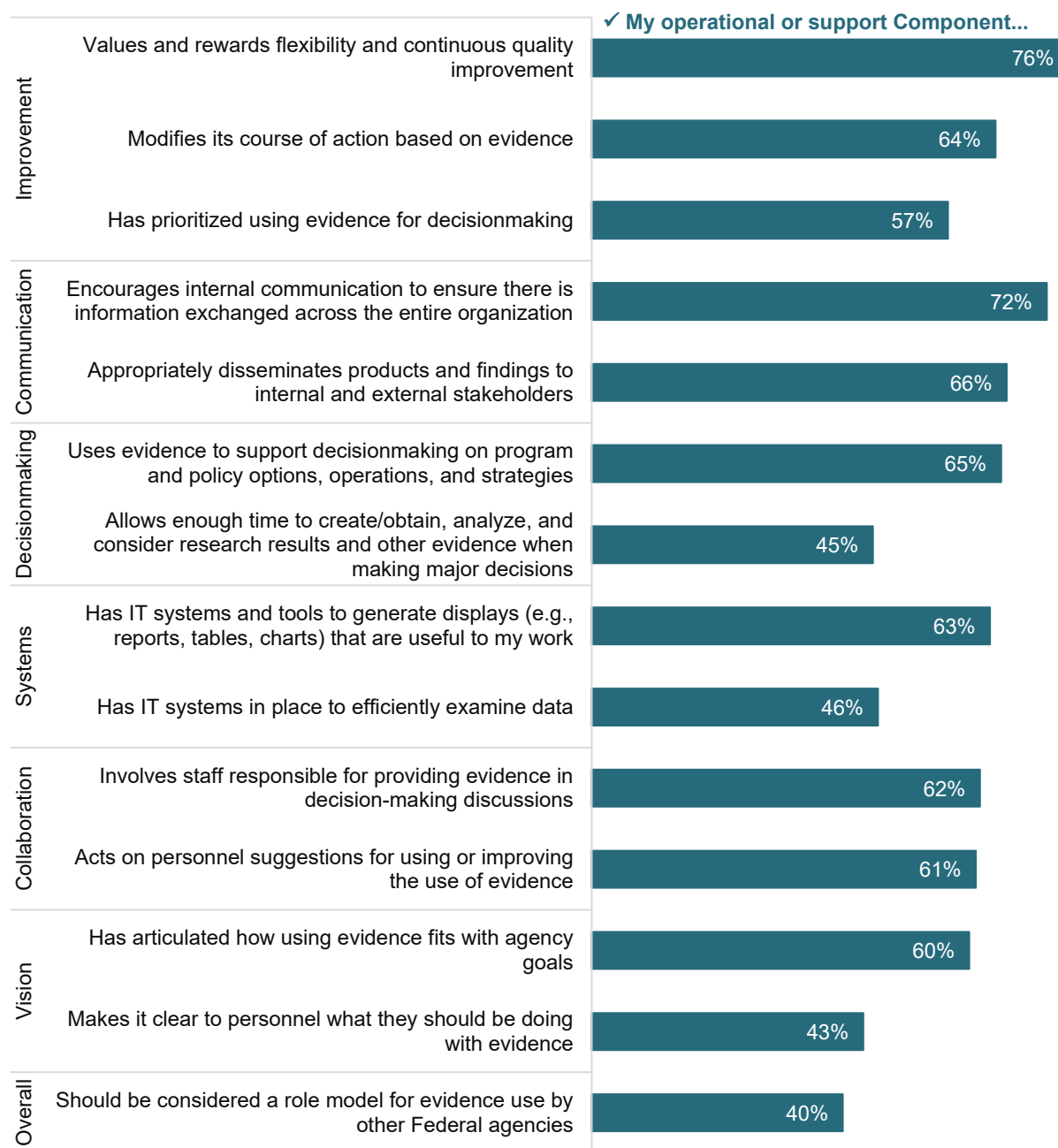
Notes: evaluation n=34; research n=55; analysis n=40; and total n=129. 'Public Release' combines three response options. 'Restricted Release' combines three responses.

Source: Study Inventory Survey. Q17 (research); Q42 (evaluation); and Q70 (analysis).

- Some organizational contexts, including Component culture, practices, and technology resources, already existed to support evidence production and use in day-to-day operations, but most respondents reported their Component should not be considered a role model for evidence use.** For 12 of the 14 items used to assess Component context, fewer than 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed their Component had these characteristics. Most respondents reported that Components valued and rewarded continuous improvement (76 percent) and encouraged information exchange across the organization (72 percent). Fewer respondents perceived that Components made it clear what staff should be doing with evidence (43 percent), had IT systems to efficiently examine data (46 percent), allowed enough time to integrate evidence in major decision making (45 percent), or prioritized evidence in decision making (57 percent). Exhibit 36 summarizes the levels of agreement among individual survey respondents with statements about their Component context. Appendix D provides the full set of items and responses.



### Exhibit 36. Percentage of Respondents Reporting ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ on Component Context



Note: n=187-191.

Source: Individual Survey Q37-Q50.

While most of the capacity assessment focuses on infrastructure for evidence building, these data provide important perspective on aspects of organizational culture and practices that can be targeted in future capacity building efforts to facilitate evidence building and use.

## Opportunities for Improvement

Across all four activities, the assessment team found that capacity for evidence-building and use is uneven across DHS Components and nascent but developing in some places. Drawing on these findings, the assessment team presented recommendations that DHS could adopt to strengthen its evidence-building enterprise.

**Establish a strong foundation for evidence building and use.** DHS capacity building efforts should continue to (1) foster shared understanding of evidence-building through common terminology and concepts consistent with the Evidence Act and OMB guidance to which DHS is accountable; (2) deepen Component-level understanding of personnel, funding, and other infrastructure available for evidence-building as well as evidence-building activities that are underway within the Department; and (3) promote the importance of evidence building and use.

**Assess the Department's evidence needs and align evidence-building efforts and resources with those needs.** Beyond a Department-wide learning agenda, developing Component-specific learning agendas and evaluation plans would enable DHS to comprehensively assess Components' short and long-term evidence needs, measure Component capacity against those needs, and appropriately allocate resources to build evidence while targeting gaps in capacity.

**Build and sustain evidence building capabilities at the Component level and DHS-wide.** To ensure that evidence building adheres to principles of scientific integrity and rigor, DHS needs to hire personnel with specialized expertise for evidence building, provide training and time to develop staff, and establish sufficient budgets to support evidence building activities and procure external researchers for evidence building. DHS should empower certain evidence-building staff (or external researchers they manage) with sufficient independence and autonomy to design, conduct, and appropriately disseminate findings, methods, and data from evidence building.

**Aim for continuous improvement of the evidence-building enterprise.** DHS should implement and monitor compliance with existing plans and policies for evidence building and use, and establish new plans, policies, and mechanisms where needed. Department-wide, evidence building teams should make plans to improve their efforts, targeting areas identified for improvement in this assessment.

**Promote the dissemination and use of evidence.** DHS should consult evidence users and a broad range of stakeholders to inform evidence-building policies, plans, and activities so they are relevant and useful. Existing continuous improvement processes should leverage all types of evidence. DHS and Components should establish new or formalize existing practices to promote more-consistent use of evidence in programs, policymaking, and business processes. Improving existing dissemination mechanisms to enable timely release of products and findings to the broadest audiences possible, including publicly releasing evidence, is a necessary precursor for ensuring its use in learning, improvement, and accountability to the American public.

## Appendix A. Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection	LA	learning agenda
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency	MGMT	Management Directorate
CLC	component-level capability	n	number of respondents (for individual survey) or studies (for study inventory survey)
COI	conflict of interest	N/A	not applicable
CWMD	Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office	OMB	Office of Management and Budget
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security	OPM	Office of Personnel Management
EBS	evidence-building staff	PA&E	Program Analysis and Evaluation Division
EP	evaluation plan	PLCY	Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	PP	performance plan
FFRDC	federally funded research and development center	SLTT	state, local, tribal, and territorial
FLETC	Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers	SOP	standard operating procedure
FY	fiscal year	S&T	Science and Technology Directorate
HQ	headquarters	TSA	Transportation Security Administration
HSOAC	Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center	USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
I&A	Office of Intelligence and Analysis	USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement	USSS	U.S. Secret Service

## Appendix B: Addressing Evidence Act and OMB Requirements

### Evidence Act Overview

The *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018* ("Evidence Act"),<sup>19</sup> signed into law on January 14, 2019, aims to improve the availability and use of evidence to make critical decisions about government strategy and operations. The Evidence Act emphasizes collaboration and coordination in developing and using evidence, better use of existing federal data in evidence-building activities, and open government data. It calls upon the Department to integrate evidence building into routine practices and policies and to institutionalize using evidence for organizational learning, continuous improvement, and decision-making. Coupling better use of evidence building activities with the Administration and Department priorities, through the strategic plan and other transformative initiatives, will further advance the Department as a learning organization.

The Evidence Act requires agencies to conduct assessments of their capacity to build and use evidence, concurrent with the renewal of the strategic plan. The assessment team designed the capacity assessment to help the Department meet statutory requirements and OMB's intent that the assessment

"...provide agencies with a baseline against which agencies can measure improvements to the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of statistics, evaluation, research, and analyses... The Capacity Assessment will provide senior officials with information needed to fulfill the Evidence Act's intent to improve the agency's ability to support the development and use of evaluation, coordinate and increase technical expertise available for evaluation and related research activities within the agency, and improve the quality of evaluations and knowledge of evaluation methodology and standards."<sup>20</sup>

Collectively, these efforts can improve how the DHS builds and uses evidence, and can better align management functions, including strategic planning, program and performance management, resource management, policymaking, data, and evidence-building activities across the enterprise.

### Evidence Act and OMB Requirements

The *DHS FY 2021 Capacity Assessment* provides information about the extent to which the Department has the capacity to undertake the activities outlined in the learning agenda and other evidence-building activities. Exhibit 37 lists Evidence Act and OMB requirements for the capacity assessment and demonstrates how they have been operationalized for the DHS capacity assessment.

<sup>19</sup> [Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529](#) (2019)

<sup>20</sup> [Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Learning Agendas, Personnel, and Planning Guidance, M-19-23](#) (OMB, 2019)

**Exhibit 37. Crosswalk of Requirements and DHS Capacity Assessment**

Evidence Act Dimensions	Evidence Act Elements	OMB Circular A-11	Operationalization in the DHS FY2021 Capacity Assessment
Coverage	<p>(A) a list of the activities and operations of the agency that are currently being evaluated and analyzed</p> <p>(B) the extent to which the evaluations, research, and analysis efforts and related activities of the agency support the needs of various divisions within the agency</p> <p>(C) the extent to which the evaluation research and analysis efforts and related activities of the agency address an appropriate balance between needs related to organizational learning, ongoing program management, performance management, strategic management, interagency and private sector coordination, internal and external oversight, and accountability</p> <p>(E) the extent to which evaluation and research capacity is present within the agency to include personnel and agency processes for planning and implementing evaluation activities...</p>	What is happening and where is it happening?	<p>Organizational and individual capacity to plan and conduct evidence building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff with expertise and training to plan and conduct evidence building</li> <li>• staff with expertise and training to procure and manage external organizations for evidence building</li> <li>• staff with supports necessary to conduct evidence building</li> <li>• funding and investment in evidence building</li> <li>• policies that outline procedures for planning and conducting evidence building</li> </ul> <p>Data collected but not rated for maturity: Inventory of FY 2021 evidence-building activities (studies) attached as Appendix C Extent to which FY 2021 studies address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS strategic objectives</li> <li>• Component mission objectives</li> <li>• Range of foci (e.g., operations, programs, activities, strategies, policies, regulations, phenomena)</li> <li>• equity</li> </ul>
Quality		Are the data used of high quality with respect to utility, objectivity, and integrity?	<p>Organizational capacity to adhere to activity specific quality standards and best practices in planning and conduct of evidence building to ensure information quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy with quality standards and compliance monitored</li> </ul> <p>Presence of evidence plans and adherence to statutory and OMB requirements and guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Agenda (LA) in OMB M-19-23</li> <li>• Annual Evaluation Plan (EP) in OMB M-19-23</li> <li>• Annual Performance Plan (PP) in OMB Circular A-11</li> </ul> <p>Extent to which FY 2021 studies adhere to activity-specific quality standards and best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluation and research in OMB M-20-12</li> <li>• analysis in OMB Circular A-4</li> <li>• statistics in OMB Statistical Policy Directive #1 and OMB 14-06</li> </ul>

Evidence Act Dimensions	Evidence Act Elements	OMB Circular A-11	Operationalization in DHS Capacity Assessment
Methods	(D) the extent to which the agency uses methods and combinations of methods that are appropriate to agency divisions and the corresponding research questions being addressed, including an appropriate combination of formative and summative evaluation research and analysis approaches	What are the methods being used for these activities? Do these methods incorporate the necessary level of rigor? Are those methods appropriate for the activities to which they are being applied?	Extent to which FY 2021 studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• address formative and/or summative purposes</li> <li>• collect data from direct data sources (individuals)</li> <li>• use existing data sources</li> <li>• use data collection methods</li> <li>• use qualitative data analysis methods</li> <li>• use quantitative data analysis or statistical methods</li> <li>• make certain claims and judgements</li> </ul>
Independence		Independence: to what extent are the activities being carried out free from bias and inappropriate influence?	Extent to which FY 2021 studies adhere to activity-specific independence standards and best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluation and research in OMB M-20-12</li> <li>• statistics in OMB Statistical Policy Directive #1</li> </ul> Data collected but not rated for maturity: Extent to which FY 2021 studies are conducted by external researchers.
Effectiveness	(E) the extent to which evaluation and research capacity is present within the agency to include... disseminating best practices and findings, and incorporating employee views and feedback  (F) the extent to which the agency has the capacity to assist agency staff and program offices to develop the capacity to use evaluation research and analysis approaches and data in the day-to-day operations	Are the activities meeting their intended outcomes, including serving the needs of stakeholders and being disseminated?	Organizational capacity to address stakeholder needs, disseminate and use evidence building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policies and guidance for stakeholder engagement plans</li> <li>• mechanisms for assessing user and stakeholder needs, input, and feedback to inform evidence building</li> <li>• processes for integrating evidence in decision making</li> <li>• continuous improvement or learning cycle process that use evidence</li> <li>• policies and guidance for dissemination plans</li> <li>• mechanisms for disseminating evidence to internal and external stakeholders, including the public</li> </ul> Data collected but not rated for maturity: Extent to which FY 2021 study information is disseminated to the public Organizational context that affects capacity to effectively use evidence (e.g., vision, collaboration, systems, communication, decision making, and improvement)

## Evidence-Building Activities

The Evidence Act states that evidence comes from evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics. OMB provided Agencies with guidance and information to support their interpretation these broad terms, to include program evaluation, performance measurement, policy analysis, and research or statistics conducted for foundational fact finding as well as other “activity subtypes” suggested by OMB’s descriptions of those activities. Drawing from the Evidence Act’s definition of evidence and all available OMB guidance, PA&E developed a list of evaluation, research, analysis, and statistical activities subtypes that should be included or excluded from this assessment. The in-scope activity subtypes are listed and described in Exhibit 38.

### Exhibit 38. Assessed Evidence-Building Activities and Activity Subtypes

Evidence-Building Activity	Activity Subtypes
Evaluation	Evaluation of programs, policies, regulations, or organization evaluation (also termed program evaluation), including formative, process and implementation, outcome, impact, and economic evaluation
	Project evaluation of ongoing or completed grantee projects required by DHS grantmaking programs
Research	Basic research: experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts
	Applied research: original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge, directed primarily toward a specific practical aim or objective
	Foundational research: describes and documents programs, policies, services, or interventions currently implemented in the field or eligible and impacted populations and their characteristics
	Exploratory research: examines correlational relationships between program- or policy-relevant constructs to identify logical connections that could form the basis for future programs, policies, services, or interventions or frameworks to measure their results
Analysis	Policy and regulatory analysis, typically using cost–benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis
	Operations research: the development of mathematical models, statistical analyses, simulations, and analytical reasoning to understand and improve real-world operations
	Performance measurement and monitoring: ongoing and systematic tracking of data and information relevant to policies, strategies, programs, projects, or activities, which can include indicators for context, inputs, process, efficiency, outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes
Statistics <sup>21</sup>	Statistical activities: The use of data to describe outcomes and descriptors of interest, such as through estimates of population characteristics, summaries of test results, indices of economic activity, measures of environmental conditions, and incidence rates for a wide variety of events

Notes: The Evidence Act and OMB guidance do not consider use of data for non-statistical purposes (any administrative, regulatory, law enforcement adjudicatory, or other purpose that affects the rights, privileges, or benefits of an identifiable respondent) evidence. Notable other activities that were excluded from this capacity assessment, informed by OMB guidance, were (1) Audits, inspections, and evaluations conducted by the DHS Inspector General, Government Accountability Office and other external auditors; and (2) Experimental development that is directed at the production or improvement of materials, devices, and systems or methods, including the design, construction and testing of experimental prototypes and technology demonstrations.

<sup>21</sup> DHS does not have any designated statistical agencies or activities that are required to comply with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018 (CIPSEA).

## Appendix C. Evidence-Building Activities and Operations Evaluated or Analyzed

This list includes selected evaluation, research, analysis, and statistics activities that were conducted, commissioned, or sponsored by DHS since the passage of the Evidence Act that serve as recent evidence assets for decision making. This list includes a selection of studies identified in the assessment team’s inventory of FY 2021 studies, the DHS annual evaluation plans (FY 2022 and FY 2023), and the Unified Regulatory Agenda. The list also includes studies and analysis identified by PA&E through a search of DHS, Component, and DHS-sponsored entities’ websites. The list is not intended as an exhaustive list; rather it serves to illustrate a variety of evidence products (formal reports, analytic documents, statistical summaries, and interactive data products) that provide decisionmakers and the public with evidence about the Department’s activities, operations, and the contexts in which they occur. In addition, nearly 3,000 DHS data sets are also available at [data.gov](https://data.dhs.gov).

‘In progress’ studies included in this list were reported in the study inventory survey—accompanied by a scoping document or study plan and indicating that public release was expected—or were identified as “significant”<sup>22</sup> evaluations or analyses from the DHS annual evaluation plans and the Unified Regulatory Agenda.

### Exhibit 39. List of Selected DHS Evidence-Building Activities

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
Strategic Objective 1.2 Detect and Disrupt Threats			
DHS Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program Evaluation	In Progress	Evaluation	S&T
<a href="#">Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (OTVTP) FY 2016 Grant Evaluations</a>	2021	Evaluation	S&T
<a href="#">Evaluation of a Targeted Violence Prevention Program in Los Angeles County, California</a>	2021	Evaluation	S&T
<a href="#">Multiagency Programs with Police as a Partner for Reducing Radicalisation to Violence</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">The Use of a Scenario-Based Nominal Group Technique to Assess P/CVE Programs: Development and Pilot Testing of a Toolkit</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Cognitive and behavioral radicalization: A systematic review of the putative risk and protective factors</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Counter-narratives for the prevention of violent radicalization: a systematic review of targeted interventions</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Police programs that seek to increase community connectedness for reducing violent extremism behavior, attitudes and beliefs</a>	2020	Research	S&T

<sup>22</sup> For the annual evaluation plans, criteria for “significant” evaluation include addressing learning agenda priorities or responding to mandates for evaluation from Congress, OMB, Government Accountability Office, or Inspector General, and other criteria. At the recommendation of the DHS Chief Economist, “significant” analysis includes economically significant rulemaking for which an economic impact analysis is required.



Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
<a href="#">Practical Terrorism Prevention: Reexamining U.S. National Approaches to Addressing the Threat of Ideologically Motivated Violence</a>	2019	Research	PLCY
<a href="#">Leveraging a Targeted Violence Prevention Program to Prevent Violent Extremism: A Formative Evaluation in Los Angeles</a>	2018	Evaluation	S&T
<a href="#">Countering Violent Extremism: The Application of Risk Assessment Tools in the Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation Process (Literature Review)</a>	2018	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 1.4 Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction and Emerging Threats			
Jack Rabbit (JR): Large Scale Ammonia Release Response	In progress	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Master Question List for African Swine Fever Virus Monthly Report</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Master Question List for COVID-19 (caused by SARS-CoV-2) Monthly Report</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Supplemental Reference for SARS-CoV-2 Delta Variant</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Estimated Surface Decay of SARS-CoV-2 (virus that causes COVID-19) Calculator</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Estimated Airborne Decay of SARS-CoV-2 Calculator</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">COVID-19 Vulnerability by Immigration Status: Status-Specific Risk Factors and Demographic Profiles</a>	2021	Statistics	PLCY
<a href="#">COVID-19 Vaccine Early Skepticism: Misinformation and Informational Needs among Essentials Workers in the USA</a>	2021	Statistics	S&T
<a href="#">COVID-19 Vaccine Concerns about Safety, Effectiveness and Policies in the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Italy among Unvaccinated Individuals</a>	2021	Statistics	S&T
<a href="#">Disinfection and Reuse of Personal Protective Equipment</a>	2020	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Evaluation of Disinfectant Efficacy Against SARS-CoV-2</a>	2020	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Applying Lessons Learned from COVID-19 Response to a Future High-Consequence Food or Agriculture Incident</a>	2020	Research	CWMD
<a href="#">Small Unmanned Aerial System Adversary Capabilities</a>	2020	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Regulatory Assessment and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis for the Interim Final Rule: Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) Rule</a>	2018	Analysis	CBP
Strategic Objective 2.1 Secure and Manage Air, Land, and Maritime Borders			
<a href="#">Tactical Mapping of Border Security Impacts: El Paso Sector</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Mexican and Northern Triangle Perspectives on Mass Migration: Identifying and Assessing Strategic Narrative Alignment</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Southwest Land Border Encounters</a>	2021	Statistics	CBP
<a href="#">Nationwide Encounters</a>	2021	Statistics	CBP
<a href="#">Assaults and Use of Force Statistics Fiscal Year 2021 to Date</a>	2021	Statistics	CBP

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
CBP Enforcement Statistics	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	CBP
Custody and Transfer Statistics	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a>	Statistics	CBP
Migrant Protection Protocols	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a>	Statistics	CBP
<a href="#">Modeling the Impact of Border-Enforcement Measures</a>	2020	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Collection of Biometric Data From Aliens Upon entry To and Exit From the United States Initial Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	2020	Analysis	CBP
<a href="#">Border Security Metrics Report</a>	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
Nonimmigrant Admissions to the United States	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
Family Unit Actions Reports	<a href="#">July 2020</a> <a href="#">June 2020</a> <a href="#">May 2020</a> <a href="#">April 2020</a> <a href="#">March 2020</a> <a href="#">Feb 2020</a> <a href="#">Jan 2020</a> <a href="#">Dec 2019</a> <a href="#">Nov 2019</a> <a href="#">Oct 2019</a>	Statistics	PLCY
<a href="#">Characterization of the Synthetic Opioid Threat Profile to Inform Inspection and Detection Solutions</a>	2019	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 2.2 Extend the Reach of U.S. Border Security			
Modeling Push-and-Pull Factors in Cross-Border Migration with Deep Learning	In progress	Research	S&T
<a href="#">The Road Less Traveled: Bolstering the Absorptive Capacity of Southern Central American States to Facilitate the Southern Flow of Northern Triangle Immigrants</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Laying the Foundation for Regional Cooperation: Developing a Regional Approach to Managing Migration Flows from the Northern Triangle through Mexico to the United States</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Human Smuggling and Associated Revenues: What Do or Can We Know About Routes from Central America to the United States</a>	2019	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 2.3 Enforce U.S. Immigration Laws			
Alternatives to Detention Program Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	ICE
Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Fiscal Year Enforcement and Removal Operations Report	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	ICE

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
Immigration Enforcement Actions: Annual Flow Report	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) by the Numbers: Annual Report on International Student Trends	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	ICE
Strategic Objective 2.4 Administer Immigration Benefits to Advance the Security and Prosperity of the Nation			
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations (RAIO) Foundations Training Program Pilot Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	USCIS
Rescission of "Asylum Application, Interview, & Employment Authorization" Rule and Change to "Removal of 30-Day Processing Provision for Asylum Applicant Related Form I-765 Employment Authorization" Regulatory Impact Analysis	In progress	Analysis	USCIS
Modernizing H-1B Requirements and Oversight and Providing Flexibility in the F-1 Program Regulatory Impact Analysis	In progress	Analysis	USCIS
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Final Rule Regulatory Impact Analysis	In progress	Analysis	USCIS
Procedures for Credible Fear Screening and Consideration of Asylum, Withholding of Removal and Cat Protection Claims by Asylum Officers Final Regulatory Impact Analysis	In progress	Analysis	USCIS
<a href="#">Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals NPRM Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	2021	Analysis	USCIS
<a href="#">Procedures for Credible Fear Screening and Consideration of Asylum, Withholding of Removal and Cat Protection Claims by Asylum Officers Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	2021	Analysis	USCIS
<a href="#">Trends in Naturalization Rates: FY2018 Update</a>	2021	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">Characteristics of People Who Naturalized Between FY2015 and FY2019</a>	2021	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">Monitoring EB-5 Program Changes on Form I-526 Receipts</a>	2021	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">Historical National Median Processing Time (in Months) for All USCIS Offices for Select Forms by Fiscal Year</a>	2021	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">H-2A Nonimmigrant Temporary Agricultural Worker Trends Report: FY 2017 – 2020</a>	2021	Statistics	USCIS
Report on H-1B Petitions: Fiscal Year Annual Report to Congress	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USCIS
Characteristics of H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers: Fiscal year Annual Report to Congress	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USCIS
Characteristics of H-2B Nonagricultural Temporary Workers: Fiscal Year Report to Congress	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USCIS
Impact of the Homeland Security Act on Immigration Functions Transferred to the Department of Homeland Security	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a>	Statistics	USCIS

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
	<a href="#">2018</a>		
Fiscal Year Appropriations Reporting Requirement Refugee Data	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a>	Statistics	USCIS
Estimates of the Lawful Permanent Resident Population Residing in the United States	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2019</a>	Statistics	PLCY
Temporary Protected Status: Calendar Year Annual Report	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a>	Statistics	USCIS
Annual Report on Immigration Applications and Petitions Made by Victims of Abuse	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a>	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">U VISA Report: U VISA Demographics</a>	2020	Research	USCIS
<a href="#">Arrest Histories of U Visa Petitioners</a>	2020	Research	USCIS
<a href="#">Trends in U Visa Law Enforcement Certifications, Qualifying Crimes, and Evidence of Helpfulness</a>	2020	Research	USCIS
<a href="#">U VISA Report: U Visa Filing Trends Report</a>	2020	Research	USCIS
<a href="#">U VISA Technical Appendix</a>	2020	Research	USCIS
<a href="#">E-Verify Customer Satisfaction Survey</a>	2020	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">Annual Report on the Use of Special Immigrant Status for Citizens or Nationals of Afghanistan or Iraq</a>	2020	Statistics	USCIS
U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: Annual Flow Report	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
Refugees and Asylees: Annual Flow Report	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
U.S. Naturalization: Annual Flow Report	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	PLCY
USCIS Statistical Annual Report Final	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USCIS
H-2B Nonagricultural Temporary Worker Visa and Status: Semiannual Report to Congress	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">Registration Requirement for Petitioners Seeking to File H-1B Petitions on Behalf of Cap-Subject Aliens Final Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	2019	Analysis	USCIS
<a href="#">H-1B Authorized to Work Population Estimate Report</a>	2019	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">F-1 Students obtaining Another Nonimmigrant Classification: FY 2008-2018 Approvals</a>	2019	Statistics	USCIS
<a href="#">DACA Requestors with an IDENT Response: November 2019 Update</a>	2019	Statistics	USCIS
Yearbook of Immigration Statistics	<a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USICS
Strategic Objective 3.1 Secure Federal Civilian Networks			
High Value Asset (HVA) Program Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	CISA

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
High Value Asset (HVA) Program Evaluation			
Strategic Objective 3.2 Strengthen the Security and Resilience of Critical Infrastructure	In progress	Evaluation	CISA
All-Hazards Communications Unit Position-Specific Training and Stakeholder Communication Unit Program	In progress	Evaluation	CISA
CISA Exercises Program Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	CISA
CISA Stakeholder Engagement Division Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) National Convening Activities Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	CISA
<a href="#">Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) Monthly Statistics</a>	2021	Statistics	CISA
<a href="#">Building a More Resilient ICT Supply Chain: Lessons Learned During the COVID-19 Pandemic</a>	2020	Research	CISA
<a href="#">Retrospective Analysis of the 2007 Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards</a>	2020	Analysis	CISA
Strategic Objective 3.3 Assess and Counter Evolving Cybersecurity Risks			
<a href="#">Analyzing a More Resilient National Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Capacity</a>	2021	Analysis	CISA
<a href="#">Cost of a Cyber Incident: Systematic Review and Cross-Validation</a>	2020	Research	CISA
<a href="#">Assessment of the Cyber Insurance Market</a>	2018	Research	CISA
<a href="#">Maritime Cybersecurity Project</a>	2018	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 4.1 Enforce U.S. Trade Laws and Facilitate Lawful Trade and Travel			
<a href="#">Assessment of Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) Program</a>	2021	Evaluation	S&T
<a href="#">Addressing Cross Border E-Commerce Challenges with Emerging Technology</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Mandatory Advance Electronic Data (AED) for International Mail Shipment IFR Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	2021	Analysis	CPB
Mandatory Advance Electronic Data (AED) for International Mail Shipment Final Rule Regulatory Impact Analysis	In progress	Analysis	CPB
<a href="#">Trade Statistics</a>	2021	Statistics	CBP
CBP Trade and Travel Fiscal Year Report	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	CBP
Strategic Objective 4.2 Safeguard the U.S. Transportation System			
<a href="#">TSA Checkpoint Travel Numbers (Current Year Versus Prior Year(s)/Same Weekday)</a>	2021	Statistics	TSA
<a href="#">The Risk Mitigation Value of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC)</a>	2019	Research	USCG
<a href="#">Behavior Detection Visual Search Task Analysis Project Visual Search Battery Report</a>	2018	Research	TSA
Strategic Objective 4.3 Maintain U.S. Waterways and Maritime Resources			
Accident Statistics	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistic	USCG

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
National Life Jacket Wear Rate Observational Study	<a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	USCG
<a href="#">National Recreational Boating Safety Participation Survey</a>	2020	Statistics	USCG
<a href="#">National Recreational Boating Safety Exposure Survey</a>	2020	Statistics	USCG
<a href="#">Predictive Port Resilience Tool to Assess Regional Impacts of Hurricanes</a>	2019	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 5.1 Build a National Culture of Preparedness			
Homeland Security Grant Program Evaluation and Case Studies	In progress	Evaluation	FEMA
<a href="#">National Flood Insurance Program: Standard Flood Insurance Policy, Homeowner Flood Form Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	In progress	Analysis	FEMA
<a href="#">USFA Topical Fire Report Series</a>	Recurring	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">Protective Actions Research</a>	Recurring	Research	FEMA
<a href="#">Developing Metrics and Scoring Procedures to Support Mitigation Grant Program Decisionmaking</a>	2021	Research	FEMA
<a href="#">A Comparative Analysis of Hazard-Prone Housing Acquisition Programs in US and New Zealand Communities</a>	2021	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Fire Incidents for States and Counties</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">U.S. Fire Statistics</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
National Household Survey	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a>	Statistics	FEMA
Flood Mapping Monthly Notice to Congress	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a>	Statistics	FEMA
Data Sources and Methodology Documentation for the USFA Topical Fire Report Series	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">Cost of Assistance Estimates in the Disaster Declaration Process for the Public Assistance Program Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	2020	Analysis	FEMA
<a href="#">A National Evaluation of State and Territory Roles in Hazard Mitigation: Building Local Capacity to Implement FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants</a>	2020	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Hurricane Floyd/ Hurricane Matthew Empirical Disaster Resilience Study</a>	2019	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Developing Consequence Thresholds for Storm Models through Participatory Processes: Case Study of Westerly Rhode Island</a>	2019	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Plan integration for resilience scorecard: evaluating networks of plans in six US coastal cities</a>	2019	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Resilient Design Education in the United States: Current and Emerging Curricula in Colleges and Universities</a>	2018	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Homeowner Acceptance of Voluntary Property Acquisition Offers</a>	2018	Research	S&T

Study/Report Title	Year	Evidence	Organization
Strategic Objective 5.2 Respond During Incidents			
<a href="#">Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance Regulatory Impact Analysis</a>	In progress	Analysis	FEMA
<a href="#">Disaster Declarations for States and Counties</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">Disaster Declarations for Tribal Nations</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
Strategic Objective 5.3 Support Outcome-Driven Community Recovery			
<a href="#">Disaster Housing Assistance (historical data)</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">Public Assistance Program Summary of Obligations</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">Historical Flood Risk and Costs</a>	2021	Statistics	FEMA
<a href="#">Measuring Successful Disaster Recovery</a>	2018	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Homeowner Acceptance of Voluntary Property Acquisition Offers</a>	2018	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Plans that Disrupt Development: Equity Policies and Social Vulnerability in Six Coastal Cities</a>	2019	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 5.4 Train and Exercise First Responders			
<a href="#">Situational Awareness Enhanced through Social Media Analytics: A Survey of First Responders</a>	2019	Research	S&T
Strategic Objective 6.1 Strengthen Departmental Governance and Management			
Implementation of DHS Directive 026-06, Rev 2, Test and Evaluation, 01 October 2020 Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	S&T
DHS Annual Performance Reports	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Analysis	DHS HQ
DHS Annual Performance Reports: Appendix A (Methodology)	<a href="#">2021</a> <a href="#">2020</a> <a href="#">2019</a> <a href="#">2018</a>	Analysis	DHS HQ
Strategic Objective 6.2 Develop and Maintain a High Performing Workforce			
Virtual Bomb Factory Scenario Evaluation	In progress	Evaluation	FLETC
Human Performance: Evaluation of Operational Readiness	In progress	Research	FLETC
De-escalation Behaviors in Patrol Officer-Citizen Encounters	In progress	Research	S&T
<a href="#">Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty Members</a>	2021	Research	USCG
<a href="#">Improving Gender Diversity in the U.S. Coast Guard: Identifying Barriers to Female Retention</a>	2019	Research	USCG
<a href="#">Balancing Quality of Life with Mission Requirements: An Analysis of Personnel Tempo on U.S. Coast Guard Major Cutters</a>	2019	Research	USCG

## Appendix D. Summary of Individual Survey Data

This appendix provides the full set individual survey Expertise, Supports, and Agency responses to items reported in the capacity assessment.

### Expertise

Respondents were asked to rate how relevant each item is to their job or position from 1 (Not relevant) to 5 (Central to my job or position) and how knowledgeable the respondent is about each item from 1 (No knowledge) to 5 (Extensive knowledge/expertise). The questions ask about respondents' experience with evidence-building activities, by which we mean evaluation, research, statistics, and analysis as defined above.

ID	Item	Scale	Responses (n)	Missing (n)	Percentage of Responses				
					1	2	3	4	5
Q2	Use logic or system models that convey how implemented activities are expected to produce outcomes	Knowledge	189	2	9%	19%	25%	26%	21%
Q2		Relevance	187	4	14%	15%	28%	19%	24%
Q3	Identify contextual factors that affect implementation	Knowledge	189	2	4%	11%	22%	35%	29%
Q3		Relevance	187	4	5%	10%	19%	32%	33%
Q4	Engage with appropriate stakeholders to identify researchable questions, hypotheses, or issues to study	Knowledge	189	2	5%	5%	16%	31%	42%
Q4		Relevance	187	4	9%	7%	16%	27%	41%
Q5	Formulate research questions to guide evidence-building activities.	Knowledge	189	2	10%	11%	22%	28%	29%
Q5		Relevance	187	4	16%	18%	20%	19%	27%
Q6	Look for research in peer-reviewed journals (that is, by subscription, Internet, or library access)	Knowledge	188	3	9%	14%	26%	22%	29%
Q6		Relevance	186	5	32%	24%	24%	9%	11%
Q7	Look for information on websites that collate and assess the level of evidence for a specific approach (e.g., untested, promising, best practice) presented in research studies	Knowledge	188	3	9%	14%	20%	27%	29%
Q7		Relevance	186	5	23%	20%	23%	19%	15%
Q8	Choose the activity to build evidence (e.g., descriptive research, policy analysis, performance measurement, or program evaluation) that is best suited for a research question	Knowledge	188	3	5%	12%	26%	30%	28%
Q8		Relevance	186	5	10%	10%	27%	26%	27%
Q9	Choose the study design and methods that are best suited for a research question, considering factors such as the range of designs and methods, resources available, and the evidence needed	Knowledge	188	3	11%	15%	23%	22%	29%
Q9		Relevance	186	5	15%	21%	23%	17%	25%



ID	Item	Scale	Responses (n)	Missing (n)	Percentage of Responses				
					1	2	3	4	5
Q10	Ensure a study plan aligns with the intended purpose(s) and scope of the study	Knowledge	187	4	10%	11%	20%	23%	35%
Q10		Relevance	186	5	14%	13%	17%	25%	31%
Q11	Consider and critically assess the strengths and limitations of different data sources	Knowledge	188	3	4%	8%	21%	28%	39%
Q11		Relevance	186	5	5%	8%	19%	26%	42%
Q12	Follow Federal regulations on the ethical treatment of human subjects in research and evaluation, including seeking informed consent and protecting confidentiality	Knowledge	189	2	34%	11%	22%	16%	17%
Q12		Relevance	188	3	60%	11%	9%	5%	15%
Q13	Analyze quantitative data using statistics such as descriptive statistics, correlations, comparison of means, and regression	Knowledge	190	1	9%	14%	23%	19%	36%
Q13		Relevance	188	3	16%	13%	15%	22%	34%
Q14	Analyze qualitative data using appropriate methods such as content analysis or thematic analysis	Knowledge	190	1	9%	14%	25%	22%	30%
Q14		Relevance	189	2	13%	15%	24%	20%	28%
Q15	Use data visualization techniques to communicate data and support interpretation	Knowledge	189	2	5%	5%	26%	32%	31%
Q15		Relevance	188	3	6%	5%	16%	30%	43%
Q16	Engage stakeholders to understand relevant context relating to data	Knowledge	190	1	3%	3%	18%	25%	51%
Q16		Relevance	188	3	2%	5%	14%	26%	54%
Q17	Interpret study results in light of limitations of the design and methods used	Knowledge	190	1	10%	11%	16%	28%	35%
Q17		Relevance	188	3	13%	10%	18%	26%	34%
Q18	Assess the reliability of a specific study by identifying related studies and comparing methods and results	Knowledge	190	1	13%	13%	25%	22%	27%
Q18		Relevance	188	3	19%	14%	26%	20%	21%
Q19	Present results concisely using language accessible to the audience	Knowledge	190	1	3%	3%	12%	26%	56%
Q19		Relevance	188	3	4%	3%	10%	21%	63%
Q20	Disseminate recommended actions to decisionmakers that are based on results from evidence-building activities	Knowledge	190	1	4%	4%	19%	28%	45%
Q20		Relevance	188	3	4%	5%	19%	21%	51%
Q21	Procure and manage external organizations, groups, or experts to execute a study	Knowledge	190	1	17%	18%	20%	17%	28%
Q21		Relevance	188	3	26%	17%	20%	18%	20%

Note: Percentages reporting '4' and '5' may differ from the summed total in Exhibit 15 by 1% due to rounding.

## Supports

Respondents were asked to rate how much they agree with each item describing the resources at their agency for evidence-building activities from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree).

ID	Item	Responses (n)	Missing (n)	Percentage of Responses			
				1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
Q22	Access to the support staff I need to conduct evidence-building activities.	190	1	15%	26%	45%	14%
Q23	Adequate time to conduct evidence-building activities	190	1	16%	28%	45%	10%
Q24	Received adequate professional learning on how to use data effectively to inform what I do on a daily basis	190	1	9%	26%	46%	19%
Q25	Dedicated time to participate in a data or evidence-related professional learning community	190	1	17%	38%	36%	9%
Q26	Received adequate professional learning to find, gather, and critically assess data from different sources	190	1	12%	28%	44%	16%
Q27	Received adequate professional training on how to design and conduct evidence-building activities	190	1	14%	37%	36%	13%
Q28	Received adequate professional training on how to procure external organizations, groups, or experts	190	1	22%	36%	32%	10%

Note: Percentages reporting 'agree' and 'strongly agree' may differ from the summed total in Exhibits 16 and 17 by 1% due to rounding.

**Agency**

Respondents were asked to rate how much they agree with each item below regarding their operational or support Component from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree).

ID	Item	Responses (n)	Missing (n)	Percentage of Responses			
				1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
Q37	Has articulated how using evidence fits with agency goals	190	1	10%	30%	45%	15%
Q38	Makes it clear to personnel what they should be doing with evidence	190	1	12%	45%	32%	11%
Q39	Acts on personnel suggestions for using or improving the use of evidence	190	1	10%	29%	51%	11%
Q40	Should be considered a role model for evidence use by other Federal agencies	188	3	18%	42%	32%	7%
Q41	Has prioritized using evidence for decision making	189	2	10%	33%	41%	16%
Q42	Values and rewards flexibility and continuous quality improvement	190	1	7%	17%	59%	16%
Q43	Modifies its course of action based on evidence	187	4	9%	27%	53%	11%
Q44	Allows enough time to create/obtain, analyze, and consider research results and other evidence when making major decisions	188	3	17%	38%	37%	8%
Q45	Uses evidence to support decision making on program and policy options, operations, and strategies	189	2	8%	26%	56%	10%
Q46	Involves staff responsible for providing evidence in decision-making discussions	188	3	12%	27%	49%	13%
Q47	Appropriately disseminates products and findings to internal and external stakeholders	188	3	10%	24%	52%	14%
Q48	Encourages internal communication to ensure there is information exchanged across the entire organization	188	3	6%	22%	57%	15%
Q49	Has IT systems in place to efficiently examine data	189	2	14%	40%	36%	10%
Q50	Has IT systems and tools to generate displays (e.g., reports, tables, charts) that are useful to my work	188	3	11%	26%	48%	15%

Note: Percentages reporting 'agree' and 'strongly agree' may differ from the summed total in Exhibit 36 by 1% due to rounding.