SUMMARY

The mission of the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) is to promote and achieve compliance with labor standards to protect and enhance the welfare of the nation's workforce. To help achieve this mission, WHD implements strategies to protect the workforce and assist employers with compliance. Data and research inform WHD's compliance strategies and help the agency monitor and evaluate how effectively it uses those strategies. As part of this effort, DOL's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), in partnership with WHD, contracted with Mathematica to conduct the *Wage and Hour Division's Compliance Strategies Evaluation* to gather evidence on effective methods WHD might use to design impact evaluation studies of its compliance strategies. This study does not assess WHD's capabilities or data system themselves but focuses on potential opportunities to evaluate compliance strategies.

The study includes multiple publications. ***WHD Employer Compliance Strategies: A Framework for Future Research*** examines information from a literature and database review that identified knowledge gaps, discussions with WHD about compliance strategies, and discussions with a panel of experts about compliance strategies. The researchers then developed a framework for WHD and other agencies to consider when designing processes for monitoring and evaluating strategies and outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Developing a theory of change (TOC) can be used to help clarify a strategy** and construct measures that can be used to continue to assess and/or evaluate strategy outcomes.
- **Identifying what is needed to increase compliance will allow identification of what needs to be measured,** both in monitoring a strategy's performance and in determining if it is achieving desired outcomes.
- **There are five factors that should be considered when designing a process to monitor and evaluate a strategy,** to ensure they each provide useful information:
  - Monitored activities should be well-defined and stakeholders should be committed to monitoring and evaluating.
  - Outcomes should be measurable.
  - Monitoring data should be available and appropriate.
  - Evaluation should be conducted after the strategy implementation is integrated into infrastructures and is part of a regular routine.
  - Evaluation should account for factors that may influence outcome results.

- **Agencies should consider the following steps to help ensure that future monitoring and evaluation of strategies yields useful information**:
  - Build a data infrastructure that is suitable for monitoring and evaluation, including building capacity that ensures data quality; consider ways to ensure the internal validity of data; and link to large or external data to improve analytics.
  - Specify performance measures for agency staff and data collection needs that support evaluation goals.
  - Develop a consistent system to monitor and evaluate strategies based on a detailed, evidence-driven TOC for each strategy and an evaluation plan developed before implementation to obtain better data.
- **Designing and supporting meaningful monitoring and evaluation can build on existing features of a strategy**, agency processes, or resources.
- **Monitoring and evaluation can be made unproductive by strategies** features, agency processes or resources.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

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