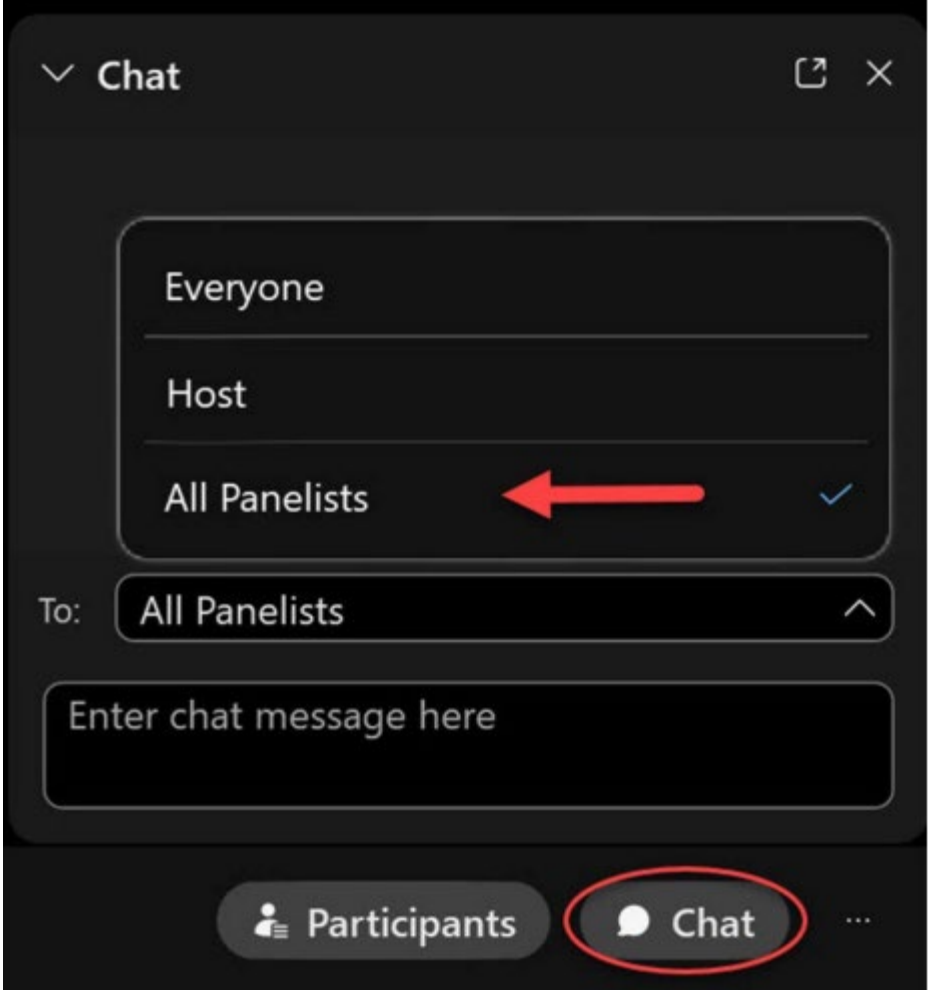




# **CLEAR 101: An Introduction to CLEAR**

## **CLEAR 10 Year Anniversary Webinar Series**

# WebEx Logistics



# Welcome and Introductions

# Your Presenters



**Kuang-Chi Chang, PhD**  
CLEAR Project Officer



**Rosemarie O'Conner, PhD**  
ICF CLEAR Principal Investigator



**Kristin Abner, PhD**  
ICF CLEAR Dissemination Lead





# Welcome

## Megan Lizik

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Chief Evaluation Office (CEO)  
CLEAR Team Lead

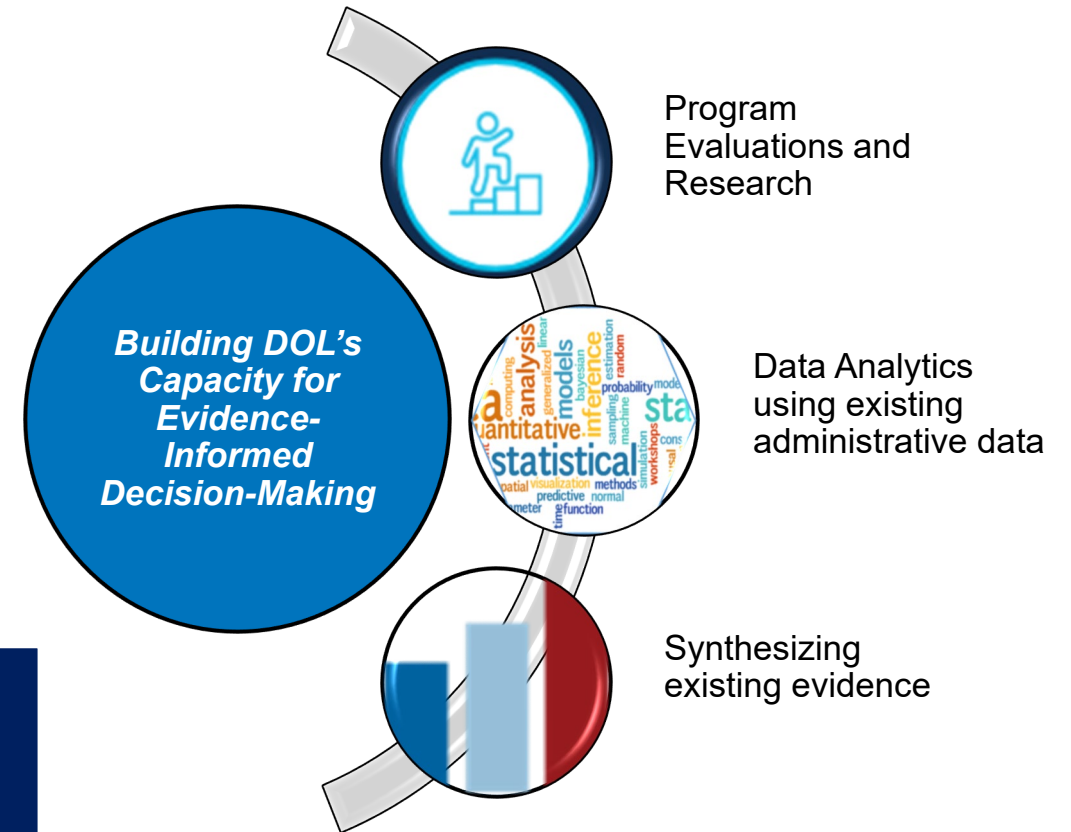


# About DOL's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO)

- Established in 2010 to coordinate, manage, and implement the DOL's evaluation program
- Independent evaluation office in DOL
- Works closely with DOL offices and agencies to develop and implement evaluations that advance evidence about DOL programs and priorities
- Approximately 60 projects

CEO does a bunch, click here to learn more:

- [CEO's webpage](#)
- [CEO's current studies](#)
- [CEO's completed reports](#)



# Goals of Today's Webinar

**In this webinar, session attendees will:**

- Hear from the Chief Evaluation Office on the history of CLEAR
- Learn CLEAR fundamentals
- Understand what evidence is and how to best utilize CLEAR's website and information

To Learn More Visit:

- CEO's webpage: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/about>
- CLEAR project summary on CEO's current studies webpage: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/currentstudies/8>
- CLEAR: <https://clear.dol.gov/>

# Presentation Plan

- **What is CLEAR?**
  - CLEAR's systematic evidence review process
  - CLEAR's study quality and outcome effectiveness ratings
  - CLEAR's icons
- **Leveraging CLEAR for decision making**
  - CLEAR's products
  - What's in CLEAR now and what we're working on
- **Navigating CLEAR**
- **Q&A**



# About CLEAR

# What is CLEAR?

- CLEAR's Mission: To **make research on labor topics more accessible** to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public so that it can inform decisions about labor policies and programs
- CLEAR accomplishes this by conducting systematic **evidence reviews** of research and evaluation reports

Visit CLEAR:  
[clear.dol.gov](https://clear.dol.gov)

The screenshot shows the CLEAR website homepage. At the top, it says "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR" and "CLEAR Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research". There is a search bar and a navigation menu with options: HOME, TOPIC AREAS, SEARCH FOR STUDIES, NEW AND TRENDING RESEARCH, ABOUT CLEAR, and RESEA. Below the navigation is a mission statement: "CLEAR's mission is to make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public more broadly so that it can inform their decisions about labor policies and programs. CLEAR identifies and summarizes many types of research, including descriptive statistical studies and outcome analyses, implementation, and causal impact studies. For causal impact studies, CLEAR assesses the strength of the design and methodology in studies that look at the effectiveness of particular policies and programs." A featured article titled "Registered Apprenticeship program significantly boosts jobs, earnings" is displayed. It includes a graphic with a dollar bill icon, a brief description: "Compared to nonparticipants, workers in the program earned up to \$6,595 more per year and increased their employment rates by nearly 9 percentage points.", and a "MORE" link. To the right of the article is a graphic with a briefcase icon and the text "Increased employment rates by 9%". At the bottom of the featured article, there is a red arrow pointing up with the text "Earned up to \$6,595 more per year". Below the featured article are three navigation options: "Quick Links", "Most Popular", and "New Reviews".

# What types of studies are included in CLEAR?



## Causal studies

Attempt to estimate true impact of an intervention



## Descriptive studies

Describe a program, policy, or intervention using qualitative or quantitative methods

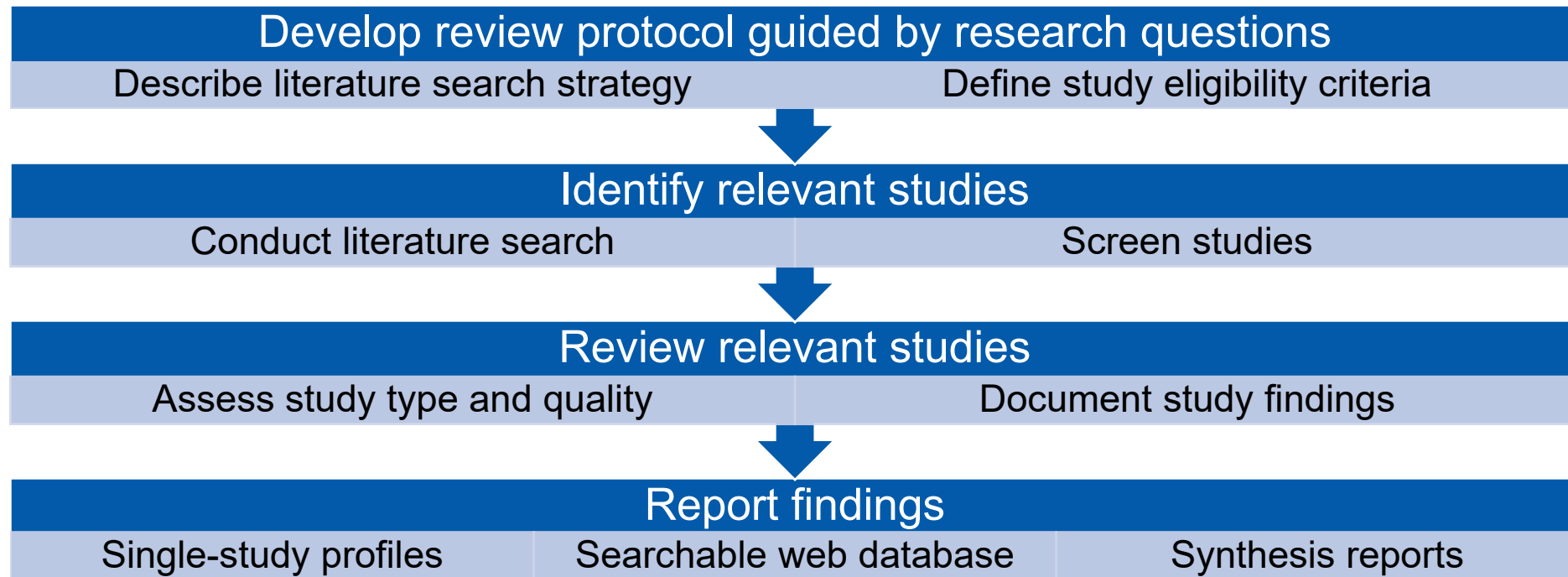


## Implementation studies

Examine the development and operation of a program, policy, or intervention

# What does CLEAR do?

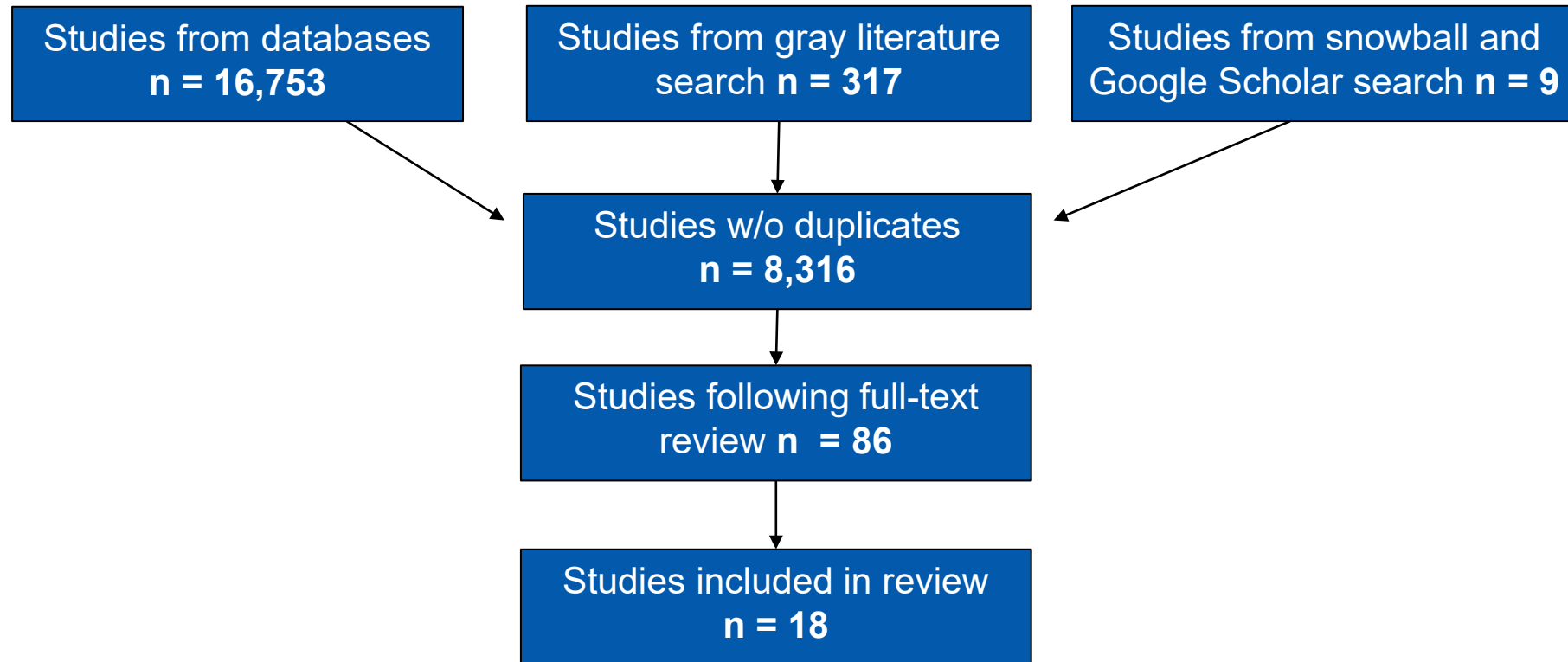
CLEAR answers research questions on labor topics by conducting systematic reviews of labor-related research and evaluation reports.



# What does a search look like?

## Example: Apprenticeship & Work-Based Training (WBT)

Research question: What is the evidence on impacts of interventions with a work-based training component delivered in a workplace or job-like setting?



# How does CLEAR rate study quality?



CLEAR has 3 study quality ratings



Describes the strength of the methods used and how well the study was carried out



Does NOT describe whether the intervention had positive findings

To Learn More Visit CLEAR's Causal Evidence Guidelines:  
<https://clear.dol.gov/reference-documents/causal-evidence-guidelines-version-21>



# Why is study quality important?

- Well designed and implemented impact studies will produce credible evidence
  - Establishes cause-and-effect relationship between an intervention and an outcome
- Ratings provide a level of confidence for the reported effects of a program, policy, or intervention on outcomes
  - Greater confidence in study findings for high quality studies
- CLEAR reviews experimental and nonexperimental research
  - Uses an objective, transparent, and replicable process
  - Identifies degree to which the research establishes the causal impact of the intervention

# What are the causal ratings for RESEA?

- Ratings for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) interventions indicate how much good-quality evidence is available showing that an intervention is effective
  - They apply only to the RESEA topic area
- CLEAR will assign 4 causal evidence ratings for RESEA interventions:
  - High
  - Moderate
  - Potentially promising
  - No rating



To Learn More Visit CLEAR's RESEA Topic Area Tab:

<https://clear.dol.gov/reemployment-services-and-eligibility-assessments-resea>



# How can I distinguish CLEAR's causal evidence ratings?





- CLEAR has 3 study causal evidence ratings:
  - High causal evidence
  - Moderate causal evidence
  - Low causal evidence



- CLEAR has 4 RESEA intervention causal evidence ratings:
  - High
  - Moderate
  - Potentially promising
  - No rating



# What are CLEAR's icons for outcome effectiveness?

	<p><u>Favorable</u>: At least 1 favorable impact &amp; no unfavorable impacts</p>		<p><u>Mixed</u>: Some favorable &amp; some unfavorable impacts</p>
	<p><u>None</u>: No statistically significant impacts</p>		<p><u>Unfavorable</u>: At least 1 unfavorable impact &amp; no favorable impacts</p>



# How does CLEAR summarize studies?

## Testing rapid connections to subsidized private sector jobs for low-income individuals in San Francisco: Implementation and early impacts of the STEP Forward program (Walter 2017)

**Findings**

- Earnings and wages
- Education and skills gains
- Employment

**Evidence Rating**

- High Causal Evidence

**Find More**

[Apprenticeship and Work-Based Training](#)

**Review Protocol**

[Employment and Training Review Protocol](#)

**Review Guidelines**

[Causal Evidence Guidelines, Version 2.1](#)

**Absence of conflict of interest.**

### Citation

Walter, J., Navarro, D., Anderson, C., & Tso, A. (2017). Testing rapid connections to subsidized private sector jobs for low-income individuals in San Francisco: Implementation and early impacts of the STEP Forward program. OPRE Report 2017-103. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Find Original Publication](#)

### Highlights

- The study's objective was to examine the impact of STEP Forward on employment, earnings, and education outcomes.
- The authors used a randomized controlled trial to estimate impacts of enrollment in STEP Forward, using administrative data on enrollees and enrollees' self-reported data.
- The study found that people enrolled in STEP Forward were more likely to become employed and earned more after random assignment than people in the control group. There were no significant differences between the groups in their education outcomes.
- The quality of causal evidence presented in this report is high because it was based on a well-implemented randomized controlled trial. This means we are confident that the estimated effects are attributable to STEP Forward, and not to other factors.



# How does CLEAR summarize findings?

- **Topic Area Syntheses**
  - Provide a summary of the state of the evidence in the topic area



**CLEAR**  
Clearinghouse for  
Labor Evaluation  
and Research

## Research Synthesis

JANUARY 2022

**What do we know about the effectiveness of community college-based interventions?**

Community colleges offer a variety of affordable programs that lead to educational attainment and further education and in some cases improved employment outcomes. Employment-focused community college programs, in particular, may provide students with industry-recognized certificates, credentials, and associate degrees that can lead to improved labor market outcomes.

This synthesis highlights key findings from studies identified through a CLEAR systematic evidence review that examined the impacts of community college-based interventions on education, earnings, and employment outcomes.<sup>1</sup> CLEAR found 193 reports of 238 distinct studies published from January 1994 to October 2019.<sup>2</sup> Of these studies, 67 received a high or moderate causal evidence rating which means that we have a good degree of confidence that the studied interventions caused the measured impacts on individuals' education and labor market outcomes.<sup>3</sup> This synthesis presents a summary of the evidence from these 67 high and moderate-rated studies.<sup>4</sup>

Table 1 illustrates the broad types of interventions found in the studies. Studies of community college-based interventions examine the extent to which they improve academic persistence, degree/certificate completion, and labor market outcomes.

**Table 1. Types of community college-based interventions examined**

Intervention	Description
Linked learning community	A program in which students are placed in cohort groups with shared curricular goals.
Accelerated learning	An approach that allows students to complete courses in a shorter period of time than a traditional semester. Sometimes referred to as "fast track" programs.
Paid performance incentive	A program that provides students with financial rewards for exhibiting behaviors associated with student achievement.
Transition programs and support services	An approach that prepares students for community college and beyond using a variety of activities and services such as: academic preparation; basic skills support in mathematics, reading, and writing; and student support services such as counseling, tutoring, time and resource management (e.g., financial aid), study skills, and child care services.
Career pathways	A series of structured and connected education and training programs that enable students to secure a job or advance in a high-demand industry or occupation with multiple entry and exit points.
Work-based learning	A program in which community college classroom instruction is paired with workplace experience, allowing participants to gain or enhance their skills while employed or while engaged in an experience similar to employment.
Blended interventions funded by Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) grants	TAACCT was a federal capacity-building grant program designed to increase the ability of community colleges to provide education and training to adults for in-demand jobs by funding strategies such as industry-aligned curriculum, competency-based education, credit for prior learning, contextualized instruction, stacked and latticed credentials, educational technology, hands-on experiences, and student support services. Blended interventions funded by TAACCT were implemented and evaluated by community colleges and/or consortia of community colleges and included a variety of services such as career pathways and work-based learning; however, they are analyzed separately here given the integral nature of their capacity-building feature.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on CLEAR, including how CLEAR conducts systematic reviews, see <https://clear.dol.gov/>.  
<sup>2</sup> See the CLEAR Community College Review Protocol (<https://clear.dol.gov/reference-documents/community-college-review-protocol>) to learn more about the literature search parameters and the specific criteria used to determine which studies were eligible for inclusion in the systematic review.  
<sup>3</sup> See the CLEAR Causal Evidence Guidelines, Version 2.1 (<https://clear.dol.gov/reference-documents/causal-evidence-guidelines-version-21>) for information on the evidence guidelines used to determine the causal evidence ratings.  
<sup>4</sup> All results from CLEAR's Community College systematic evidence review can be found on the CLEAR website: <https://clear.dol.gov/topic-area/community-college>. Information from the 171 studies that received a low causal evidence rating are included in the supplement to this synthesis.

ICF prepared this synthesis in January 2022. The U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office funded this synthesis and the underlying systematic review. The contents do not represent the views or policies of the Department.

[1]



# How does CLEAR summarize findings? (continued)

- **Rapid Review Syntheses**
  - Identify the most credible existing or emerging evidence on strategies to improve labor-related outcomes



**Rapid Evidence Review**  
**Equitable Recovery**

VERSION 1, JUNE 2022<sup>1</sup>

**What strategies effectively and equitably support labor market outcomes and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic among those facing the greatest barriers?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an economic recession that disproportionately impacts women and Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), many of whom were already underrepresented in the labor market (Madgavkar et al., 2020).<sup>2</sup> Such unequal effects are attributable in part to job losses in industries that were more adversely affected by the pandemic, such as hospitality and health care, which employ large percentages of women and BIPOC (Holder et al., 2021). Additionally, COVID-related shutdowns closed schools and childcare providers across the United States (U.S.), contributing to childcare issues for working parents, especially women. In addition to experiencing exceptionally high levels of unemployment during the pandemic, BIPOC have had the highest rates of infection and death from the virus (Carnevale, 2020). Recovery of the workforce has been particularly sluggish for women of color (Jones, 2021).

Discrimination and exclusion have contributed to persistent disparities in economic outcomes between women and men and among BIPOC. For instance, even before the pandemic, Black and Hispanic families had substantially less wealth than White families, with median wealth estimated at, respectively, \$24,100, \$36,100, and \$188,200 (Bhutta et al., 2020) and women earned 82 cents for every dollar a man made, on average (Semega et al., 2020).<sup>3</sup> In 2021, women earned, on average, 83 cents for every dollar a man made. The gap is even wider for women of color. While White women earned 80 cents for every dollar a man made, Black women earned 63 cents and Hispanic women earned 58 cents (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2022).

The objective of this rapid review is to identify and synthesize evidence on effective interventions that support or could support equitable labor market outcomes as those facing the greatest barriers recover economically from the recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. **The review reflects the terms used by the authors of the included studies, so people considered to be BIPOC may be referred**

**Equity** in the context of labor market outcomes refers to fairness and justice in employment, education and training, and earnings. It is distinct from equality in that equity accounts for the fact that not all populations start from the same place, and interventions that promote equity adjust to counteract imbalances related to bias, discrimination, or other systemic barriers.

**Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC)** and women may experience discrimination and exclusion because they belong to groups that have less social, political, and economic power. People may also experience marginalization based on their sexual orientation, disability status, immigration status, religion, and income level.

Equity definition from: National Association of Colleges and Employers. (n.d.). Equity. <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/equity-definition/>

## Rapid Review Examples

- Remote service delivery strategies
- Strategies from the Great Recession
- Worker health & safety during COVID-19
- Remote compliance assistance and enforcement
- Emergency return-to-work strategies
- Emergency employee retention strategies
- Emergency response strategies
- Equitable recovery
- Remote postsecondary education

# Leveraging CLEAR for Decision Making

# When to use CLEAR?

- **To find “what works...”**
  - ...when developing or funding new programs
  - ...when looking for ideas to better serve target populations
  - ...when developing technical assistance efforts for grantees or employers
- **To make evidence-informed decisions**
  - Find evidence to inform policymaking and support budget priorities
- **To build high quality evidence**
  - Understand where we need to build new evidence, where to replicate and test interventions, or how to design and implement high quality studies of various types

# What are ways to use CLEAR?



## Policymaker

Identify credible, quality studies of promising programs to help draft legislation, policy language or regulatory guidance or set budgets



## Practitioner

Identify, implement, or adapt programs/ interventions for continuous improvement, identify where to spend limited resources for greatest potential impact



## Researcher

Reference CLEAR guidelines when planning and executing a program evaluation to ensure highest quality and methodological rigor for the study design



# What is in CLEAR?

- Research on labor-related topics defined by:
  - Population
    - *e.g., Low-income Adults, Veterans, Older workers, Dislocated Workers*
  - Outcome
    - *e.g., Literacy, Reemployment, Equitable Post-COVID Recovery, Health & Safety*
  - Intervention type
    - *e.g., Apprenticeship & Work-based Training, Remote Service Delivery Strategies*
- Forthcoming evidence reviews, summaries and syntheses, and website enhancements.

# Navigating CLEAR



# CLEAR home page

CLEAR navigation tabs

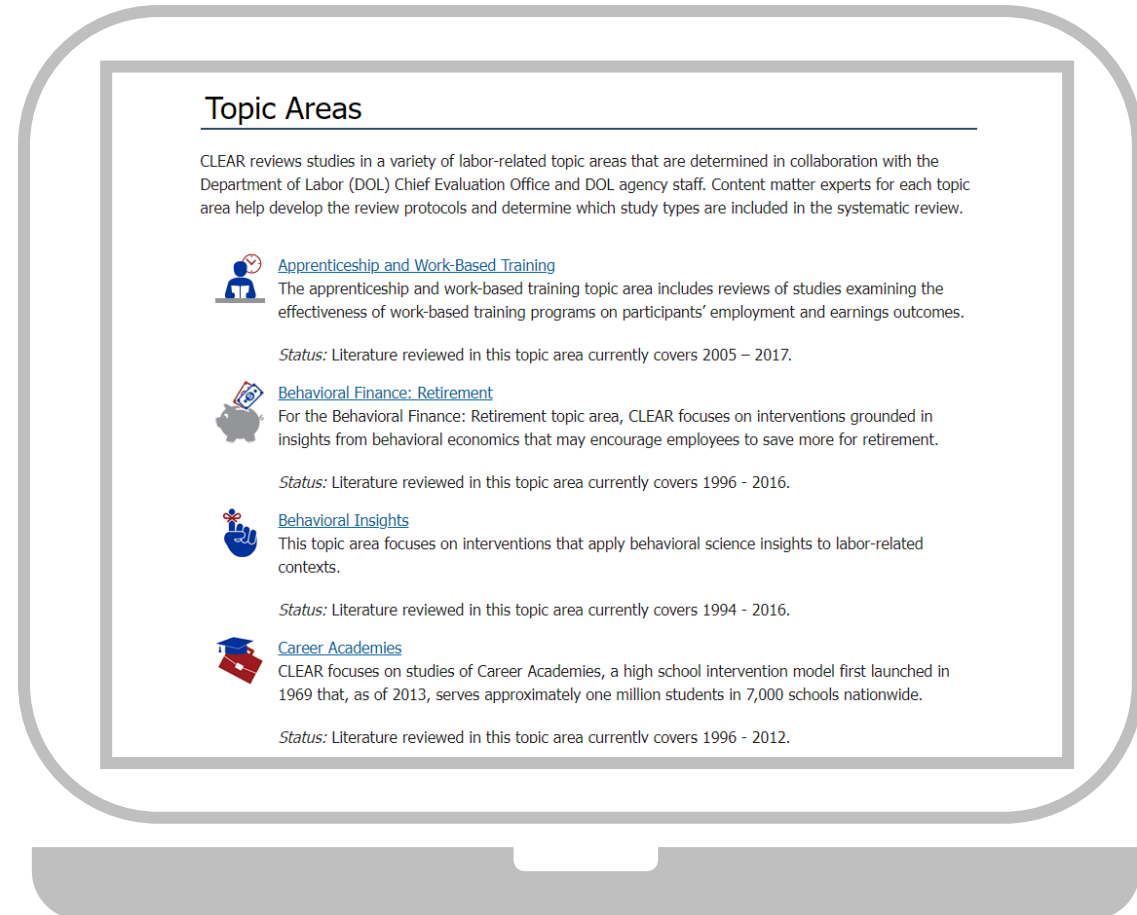
Topic area drop-down menu

Search for studies page

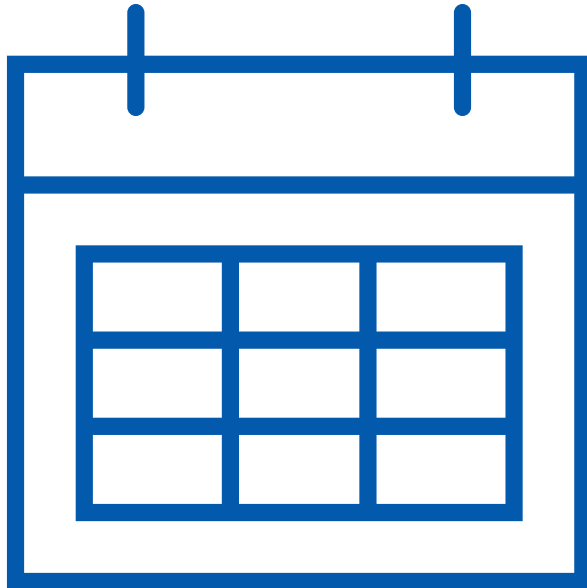


# How can I find research?

## Option 1: Using topic area menu







Join us for upcoming sessions as part of  
**CLEAR's 10 Year Anniversary Celebration**  
Webinar Series!

**NOVEMBER 16, 2022**

How to Use CLEAR for Decision-Making

**DECEMBER 13, 2022**

Using CLEAR to Find Strategies that Address Equity

# Additional CLEAR resources

- Find out more about [CLEAR](#)
  - See our list of [Policies and Procedures](#)
  - See our [FAQ](#)
  - See our [Study Review Guide for Casual Reviews](#)
  - See our [How CLEAR conducts rapid evidence reviews on trending research](#)
  - See our [CLEAR Topic Tagging Protocol](#)
  - See our [Causal Evidence Guidelines](#)
- Find out more [about CEO](#)
  - See our list of [current studies](#)
  - See our [completed reports](#)
- Check out DOL's [Evidence Hub](#) to learn more about how we implement the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018
- DOL's [Evaluation Policy](#) outlines the 5 key principles that govern DOL's evaluation program: rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics
- Access [public use data](#)
- Find out more about DOL's [academic engagement](#)

Chief Evaluation Office  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



**CLEAR** **10**  
YEARS  
Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research

Q&A



# Thank you!

**Contact us:**

DOL CEO, [ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov](mailto:ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov)

**Chief Evaluation Office**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR 

Visit the Department's **Clearinghouse on Labor Evaluation and Research** ([CLEAR](#)), for evidence syntheses and reviews of 1,200+ labor-related studies.

[Sign up for CEO's newsletter](#), **Building the Evidence Base**, to stay up to date on our latest research.