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Show Me the Evidence: Obama's Fight for Rigor and Results in Social Policy

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Two Major Parts of Obama Evidence-Based Strategy

- Federal Agencies (PART)
- Federal Grants

Obama Evidence-Based Strategy for Federal Grant-Making

- Competitive grants (not formula)
- Maximum number of grant dollars spent on evidence-based programs
- High quality evaluations of all programs

Type of Evidence Required in Six Obama Evidence-Based Initiatives

| <i>Initiative</i> | <i>Statutory requirement</i> | <i>Agency evidence review or funding opportunity announcement requirement</i> |
|---|---|--|
| Home Visiting | “Significant” “positive outcomes” from “randomized controlled” or “quasi-experimental” research designs | At least one high- or moderate-quality impact evaluation |
| Teen Pregnancy Prevention | “Proven effective through rigorous evaluation” | At least one high-or moderate-quality impact evaluation |
| Investing in Innovation (i3) | Language about effects that programs must have demonstrated in order to be considered eligible | Evidence from RCTs or quasi-experimental designs |
| Social Innovation Fund (SIF) | Evidence from “rigorous evaluations of program effectiveness” | Must have evidence of impact; definitions of evidence are consistent with those for i3 |
| Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) | “Evidence-based strategies,” but type of study not defined | Three tiers of grants, each tied to specific level of evidence |
| Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) | No language on evidence | Strong evidence, defined as a “study or multiple studies whose designs can support strong, causal conclusions” |

Overview of Six Evidence-Based Initiatives

| <i>Evidence-based initiative</i> | <i>Initial funding</i> | <i>Administering agency</i> | <i>Date of first awards</i> |
|---|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)* | \$110 million | HHS | September 2010 |
| Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting* | \$1.5 billion | HHS | July 2010 |
| Investing in Innovation (i3) | \$650 million | Department of Education | August 2010 |
| Social Innovation Fund (SIF) | \$50 million | Corporation for National and Community Service | July 2010 |
| Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) | \$2 billion | Department of Labor | September 2011 |
| Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) | \$125 million | Department of Labor | June 2012 |

*HHS identified evidence-based programs

Obama Evidence-Based Initiatives: Number of State and Local Projects

| Initiative | Number of programs |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Teen Pregnancy | 102 |
| Home Visiting | 48 |
| Investing in Innovation | 117 |
| Social Innovation Fund | 221 |
| Workforce Innovation Fund | 26 |
| TAACCCT | <u>185</u> |
| Total | 699 |

Why the Obama Evidence-Based Initiative Worked

- Stellar leadership
- Relentless focus on using evidence
- Clever and persistent legislative strategies
- Competitive grants
- Tiered grants
- Decent review panels

Signs of Success

- Initiatives survive the 2015 and 2017 transitions
- Culture of evidence is established
- Early positive outcomes are achieved
- In case of failure, programs improve based on evidence

Issues

- Role of RCTs
- When a program fails, what's next
- Innovation vs. evidence
- Implementation
- Do we have enough good model programs?

Programs with “Top Tier” or “Near Top Tier” Evidence, Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

| <i>Early Childhood</i> | <i>K-12 Education</i> | <i>Employment & Training</i> | <i>Postsecondary Education</i> | <i>Youth Development</i> | <i>Crime & Violence Prevention</i> | <i>Health Care Financing and Delivery</i> | <i>Obesity and Disease Prevention</i> | <i>Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment</i> | <i>Housing & Homelessness</i> |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Nurse-Family Partnership | Career Academies | Nevada’s Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment* | H&R Block College Financial Aid Application Assistance | Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program | Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care | Transitional Care Model | Healthy Living Partnerships to Prevent Diabetes* | Life Skills Training | Critical Time Intervention |
| Child First* | Success For All | | | | Parent Management Training—The Oregon Model* | | | Staying Free | |
| Triple P System* | Annual Book Fairs for Elementary Schools* First-Grade Classroom Prevention Program* Promise Academy Charter Middle School* | | | | | | | PROSPER* | |

*Near Top Tier