

## FLASH REVIEWS PROTOCOL

### Highlights

- Flash reviews are quick-turnaround reviews of studies that have been nominated and fall within CLEAR's eligibility criteria. The same review procedures and evidence guidelines are used for flash reviews as for all other studies reviewed by CLEAR.
- The study must be nominated for review either by a CLEAR user through the Contact Us section of <http://clear.dol.gov> or by a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) agency.
- Flash reviews can include studies with causal designs, implementation studies, and descriptive approaches.

### Nomination process and eligibility

CLEAR flash reviews are designed to quickly assess—using existing CLEAR procedures and guidelines—research that has been nominated for a review and meets eligibility criteria. In contrast to other research reviewed by CLEAR, research reviewed as a flash review need not be part of a *systematic* review of studies in a topic area, though it could later be incorporated into one.

CLEAR will accept nominations for flash reviews primarily through the Contact Us section of its website, found at <http://clear.dol.gov>. All members of the public can suggest a study for review. In addition, CLEAR will accept nominations from DOL agencies that have an interest in a particular study.

The CLEAR team will screen the nominated research to ensure eligibility and that a flash review of it would advance CLEAR's mission. Specifically, the team will determine whether the research **focuses on a program or policy designed to influence employment or earnings**. Although these labor-related outcomes are of primary interest to CLEAR, research that does not examine such outcomes will be reviewed if the program or policy could reasonably be expected to influence them. For example, research that examines the educational attainment and criminal justice involvement of youth who participated in a summer jobs program would be reviewed.

CLEAR will conduct flash reviews as nominations are received, subject to resource availability. If nominations exceed resources, CLEAR will prioritize conducting flash reviews of research that (1) was nominated by DOL staff who require the review to support their decision making and (2) has gained significant public attention.

### Determining the review protocol

The team will use an existing topic area protocol, if possible, to review studies that are eligible for review. If a study is not eligible for review under an existing topic area protocol, the team may use related topic area protocols to inform the review of the study. For instance, if a study evaluated the effectiveness of a substance dependence treatment program on later employment outcomes, it would be reviewed under the protocol for general employment and training interventions.

In general, the outcomes of interest to CLEAR fall in the following domains:

- Education and/or training receipt
- Employment
- Earnings
- Public benefit receipt

Flash reviews will also include selected outcomes outside these domains when the study authors highlighted them. For instance, a flash review of an after-school program for youth at high risk of criminal justice activity would also include criminal justice outcomes.

### **Review procedures**

The CLEAR team will review the research eligible for a flash review using the same procedures as for all other CLEAR reviews. Studies with causal designs will be reviewed according to CLEAR Causal Evidence Guidelines, Version 2.0. Implementation studies will be reviewed according to CLEAR Implementation Study Guidelines. Quantitative descriptive studies will be reviewed according to CLEAR Descriptive Study Guidelines. All guidelines and a description of CLEAR's review policies and procedures are available at <http://clear.dol.gov>.

The key difference between flash reviews and other reviews conducted by CLEAR is that the flash reviews need not be part of a *systematic* review of studies in a topic area. For systematic reviews of the literature, CLEAR develops a review protocol in consultation with content experts, thoroughly searches the literature to find all relevant studies, reviews each study against applicable guidelines, and then synthesizes the findings across all studies reviewed. In contrast, flash reviews will be conducted of nominated and eligible research, regardless of whether it fits under an existing topic area. However, they could later be incorporated into a topic area systematic review.

CLEAR will make every effort to conduct flash reviews of eligible studies and post the profiles to the website within three weeks of the studies' nomination.