

1.0 Overview of CLEAR

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) serves as a central source of research and information on labor-related topics for a broad audience that includes practitioners, policymakers, researchers, the media, and the general public. CLEAR's primary goal is to make labor research more accessible to help inform decisions about labor policies and programs. The clearinghouse identifies, summarizes, and synthesizes relevant research and posts on its website, <https://clear.dol.gov/>.

This document describes CLEAR operations, including the criteria and processes for including studies, rating the quality of the evidence, and summarizing their content.¹ These policies and procedures provide transparency and information on current CLEAR approaches. Previous versions of CLEAR Policies and Procedures are available on the CLEAR website.

2.0 CLEAR Systematic Evidence Reviews

Evidence reviews can help busy policymakers, practitioners, and others quickly understand large and ever-evolving bodies of evidence. CLEAR's systematic evidence reviews identify, evaluate, and summarize findings from relevant individual studies across labor-related topic areas. In conducting evidence reviews, CLEAR prioritizes inclusion of causal impact studies but may also include implementation and descriptive studies. Reviews examining causal evidence can help shed light on what interventions or strategies are most effective, while reviews examining other types of studies can answer questions about components those interventions include, how they were implemented, and how to interpret results. Together, the resulting study summaries or profiles and research syntheses can help inform the development of programs, policies, and research, and facilitate specific choices about what interventions to replicate, scale, modify, or further test.

CLEAR has established transparent evidence review guidelines for certain methodologies, which it uses to review causal impact studies, descriptive statistical and outcome analyses, and implementation studies identified through its systematic evidence reviews and related protocols.² These guidelines can also serve as a guidepost for the development of high-quality research and evaluation studies conducted by DOL, its contractors and grantees, and others in the field. For causal studies that estimate impact, CLEAR uses its guidelines to provide ratings of study quality, which are an indicator of how much confidence one can have in its findings.

¹ As of this version of the CLEAR policies and procedures document, most reviewers are CLEAR program staff at ICF Incorporated and Abt Associates. If a study is authored by a CLEAR contractor's firm, to avoid any perceived or potential conflict of interest, it is reviewed by the other CLEAR contractor firm or by an independent subcontractor not employed by either firm. This approach for independent study reviews has been in place for all past contractors supporting CLEAR. Instances in which a conflict of interest was avoided using this approach are noted in individual study profiles, as appropriate.

² For guidelines on CLEAR's review of causal studies, see: <https://clear.dol.gov/Reference-Documents/Causal-Evidence-Guidelines-Version-22>. For guidelines on CLEAR's review of implementation studies, see: <https://clear.dol.gov/reference-documents/clearinghouse-labor-evaluation-and-research-clear-guidelines-reviewing-0>. For guidelines on CLEAR's review of descriptive studies, see: <https://clear.dol.gov/reference-documents/quantitative-descriptive-guidelines>.

2.1 Evidence Review Process

CLEAR typically conducts systematic evidence reviews around a given labor topic or for a given time period, such as a publication year, which may contribute new studies across multiple topic areas.³ Both topic area and annual reviews begin with a comprehensive literature search to identify studies of labor interventions using electronic databases, other research clearinghouses, grey literature searches of select websites, customized Google Scholar searches, and snowball methods. Each source, search strategy, and results are documented. Trained CLEAR staff subsequently conduct a two-level eligibility review, first reviewing study abstracts against the topic area-specific eligibility criteria and then, for those passing the initial screening, reviewing the full report.

Trained CLEAR staff review each eligible causal study to rate the quality of the evidence using the Causal Evidence. See sections 2.2-2.3 for a description of this process. Some reviews may include other types of studies, such as implementation or descriptive studies. Implementation and descriptive studies do not receive causal evidence ratings and are reviewed using the Guidelines for Reviewing Implementation Studies and the Guidelines for Reviewing Quantitative Descriptive Studies, respectively. See section 3.0 for a description of the process to include implementation and descriptive studies.

Topic area-focused systematic reviews allow CLEAR to find and review the most credible publicly available studies in a given topic (such as apprenticeship or mine worker health and safety) within a specified time period. CLEAR identifies topic areas of interest in collaboration with DOL's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO). During this process, the CEO consults with multiple experts, including various DOL agencies, other federal departments, CLEAR contractor project staff, and the CLEAR technical work group (TWG) of advisors to develop and define the topic area. In choosing topics, the CEO considers factors such as the importance of the topic to CLEAR audience, the relevance of the topic to current policy issues, and the availability of research to address the topic. CLEAR is designed to include research relevant to many of the agencies within DOL. After a broad topic area has been identified, CLEAR staff conduct a feasibility assessment to determine the size and type of literature in the topic's evidence base, that informs which topic area reviews ultimately move forward. Topic area reviews focus on specific labor-related topics as described in each topic area review protocol. The review protocol details the scope of the review, the outcomes of interest, the eligibility criteria for study inclusion, the literature search strategy, and topic-specific applications of the evidence review guidelines (e.g., control variables or attrition standards). Updates to an existing topic area in CLEAR also follow the protocol.

CLEAR's **systematic annual search and review process** focuses on identifying labor-related research published in a specific time period (such as the most recent calendar year) across multiple topic areas. When conducted on an annual basis, this evidence review approach allows CLEAR to include the most up-to-date evidence in its existing topic areas for specific publication years, and to identify additional research in new and emerging topic areas, regardless of the size of the evidence base. These reviews are guided by the Systematic Annual Search and Review Protocol, which details the steps by which CLEAR identifies, screens, and reviews studies across a broad range of labor-related topics released in a given year (the "target year").⁴

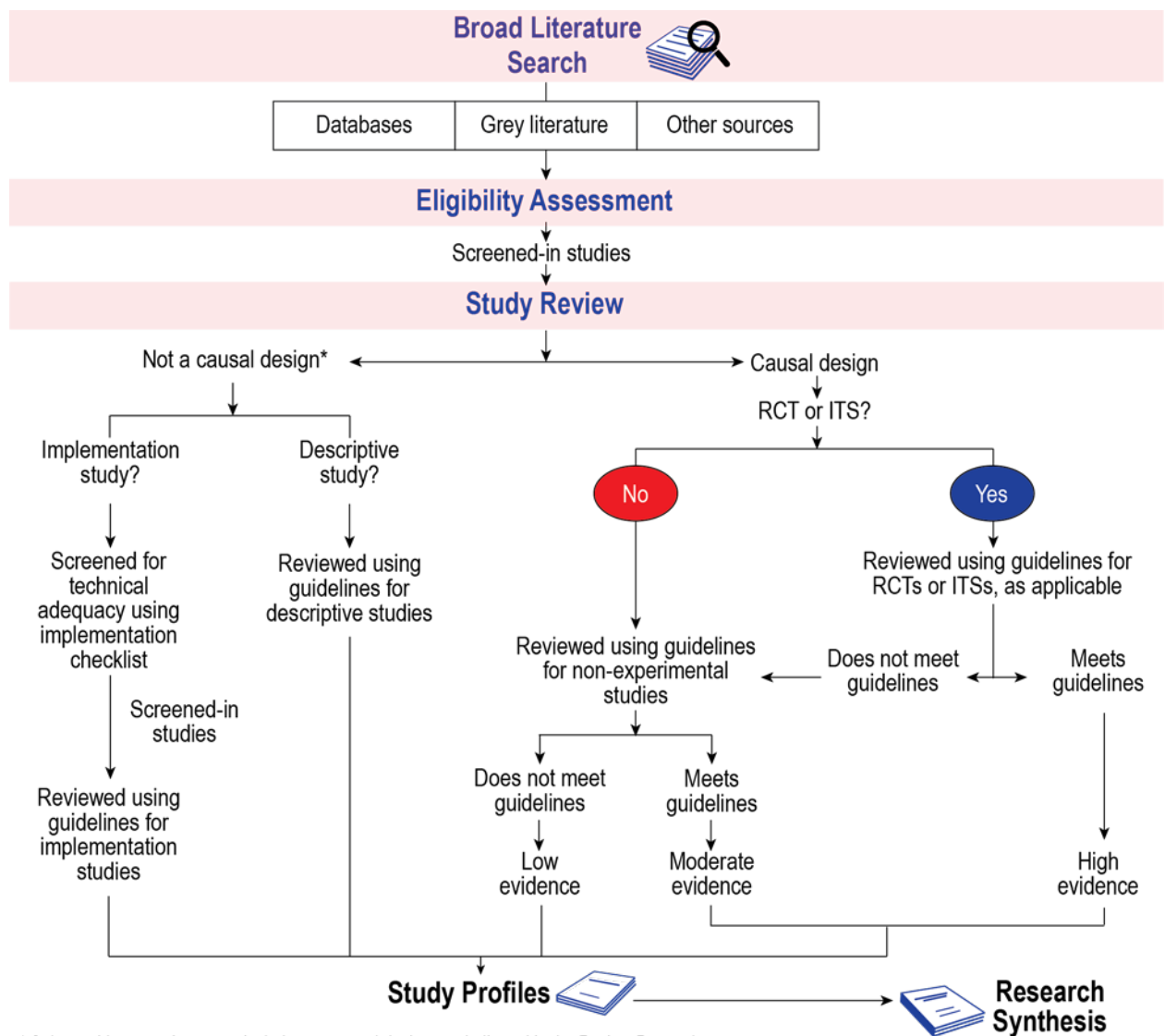
³ All of CLEAR's evidence reviews are conducted by independent contractors and include subject matter expert input and review.

⁴ For CLEAR's systematic annual search and review protocol, see: <https://clear.dol.gov/Reference-Documents/Systematic-Annual-Search-and-Review-Protocol>

As appropriate, CLEAR also conducts other types of evidence reviews as priorities arise and as resources allow. For more information, see section 4.0.

All studies in CLEAR have profiles, which are short summaries of the research written in plain language that provide information about a study’s purpose, context, and findings. For studies that estimate causal impact, CLEAR provides information on the study’s quality and the intervention’s impact on outcomes of interest. Study profiles also help identify the strengths and limitations of the research to help interpret the study’s findings. The goal is to provide a succinct summary of the research so that CLEAR users determine whether it is relevant for their purposes. CLEAR profiles also provide links to the original publications.

Exhibit 1. Systematic Evidence Review Process



* Select evidence reviews may include non-causal designs as indicated in the Review Protocol

Typically, findings from causal studies that rate high or moderate are incorporated into the research synthesis. In some cases, findings from causal studies that rate low, as well as findings from implementation and descriptive studies that examine an intervention of which there is also a causal study, are also included in the research synthesis.




RCTs are randomized controlled trial designs, and ITSs are interrupted time series designs.

2.2 Assessing the Quality of the Evidence

Once a study is determined eligible for inclusion in CLEAR, trained reviewers conduct a detailed assessment to determine the quality of the evidence according to the CLEAR Causal Evidence Guidelines using a Study Review Guide (SRG). CLEAR assigns causal evidence ratings only to studies with causal impact designs. In assessing the quality of the evidence, CLEAR uses ratings of high, moderate, and low as summarized in Exhibit 2. Icons provide visual representation of these ratings on the CLEAR website.

Only two types of studies may receive a high rating: well-conducted randomized controlled trials (RCTs) with low attrition and no obvious confounds to the RCT design; and interrupted time series (ITS) designs with sufficient replication wherein the researcher intentionally manipulates the intervention condition.^{5,6} A high causal evidence rating means CLEAR is confident that the estimated effects are solely attributable to the intervention that was examined. RCTs and ITS designs that cannot be classified as providing high causal evidence can be evaluated against CLEAR evidence guidelines for non-experimental designs.

Exhibit 2. Summary of Causal Evidence Ratings

Rating	Rating definition
High causal evidence 	There is strong evidence that the estimated effects are solely attributable to the program or policy being examined. <i>This rating only applies to RCTs and ITS designs.</i>
Moderate causal evidence 	There is moderate evidence that the estimated effects are attributable at least in part to the program or policy being examined. However, there might be other factors that were not accounted for that might also have contributed to the estimated effects. <i>This rating applies to non-experimental designs. It can also apply to RCTs and ITS designs that do not meet the criteria for a high causal evidence rating.</i>
Low causal evidence 	There is little evidence that the estimated effects are attributable solely to the intervention; other factors are likely to have contributed. <i>This rating applies to all causal designs that do not meet the criteria for high or moderate causal evidence ratings.</i>

The full set of CLEAR causal evidence guidelines is available at <https://clear.dol.gov/Reference-Documents/Causal-Evidence-Guidelines-Version-22>.

Research designs that receive a moderate causal evidence rating indicates there is evidence that the study establishes a causal relationship between the intervention being examined and the outcomes of interest, but there might be other factors that were not included in the analysis that also could affect the

⁵ See the CLEAR Causal Evidence Review Guidelines for more detailed on what qualifies for a high and moderate rating.

⁶ CLEAR is in the process of developing guidelines for reviewing regression discontinuity design (RDD) studies and currently reviews these designs using the Guidelines for Reviewing Quantitative Descriptive Studies. A RDD uses a cutoff value rather than random assignment to place individuals into treatment and comparison groups. RDD measures the difference in outcomes clustered, to some degree, around the defined cutoff value. A break in the regression line (i.e., the difference in outcomes between those above and below the cutoff value) indicates the presence of an intervention or treatment effect.

outcomes of interest. Research that does not meet the criteria for a high or moderate rating receives a low causal evidence rating which indicates that CLEAR cannot be confident that the estimated effects are attributable to the intervention being examined.

It is important to note that CLEAR causal evidence ratings refer only to the quality of *causal evidence* and not to the quality or effectiveness of the intervention.⁷ Studies with a high or moderate causal evidence rating might show that an intervention being studied had positive, null, or negative effects. In addition, some studies might provide interesting and important descriptive evidence, which is not factored into the CLEAR causal evidence rating. These aspects of the studies are discussed in CLEAR study profiles but are not factored into the causal evidence rating itself. Finally, in some cases, the author(s) might use the most rigorous or innovative quantitative methods feasible, but nevertheless receive a low causal evidence rating because of the study's data limitations or some other factor outside the authors' control. A low rating does not imply a poor quality study or mean that the study's results are not useful for some purposes. However, the results should be interpreted with caution as there are factors that impact the ability to draw causal conclusions.

2.3 Reviewers and the Review Process

CLEAR reviewers undergo a comprehensive training process to ensure that they apply the CLEAR policies and procedures and evidence review guidelines with fidelity.⁸ Reviewers are tasked with reviewing, evaluating the quality of the evidence, and summarizing key features of the study. The result of this process is a study profile that summarizes the core elements of a study. The study profiles are posted to CLEAR with a hyperlink to the full citation.

A single study's report (citation) reviewed by CLEAR may result in multiple study profiles posted to CLEAR's database in certain circumstances, such as if the study examines and reports findings from an intervention in more than one location, more than one time period, or more than one version of an intervention. In these instances, CLEAR reviewers prepare separate study profile summaries and include hyperlinks to each of the study's profiles on the CLEAR website.

Similarly, a study's examination of an intervention or program can result in multiple reports (citations) that analyze the impacts of a program (for example, an interim report with short-term impacts and a final report with long-term impacts). In such cases, CLEAR reviews each of these study reports separately, each resulting in a study profile that is hyperlinked to related profiles on the CLEAR website for easy access. If there are multiple reports or citations from a study, CLEAR reviews the latest publication and cross-references to other sources in the study profile. For example, if a study is published as a report on an organization's website and subsequently in a journal article, CLEAR will review the most recent of the two and list the other as a source of additional information.

Developing the Causal Study Profile. To develop the study profile for causal studies, CLEAR reviewers apply the causal evidence guidelines and complete a CLEAR SRG in order to develop a causal evidence rating for each study. Reviewers then draft a summary of the study that includes highlights of its findings, a description of the intervention examined, the population(s) studied, the study's methods,

⁷ CLEAR only rates Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) interventions under the Reemployment topic area. See section 5.0 for a discussion of CLEAR's process for rating the quality of interventions.

⁸ No specific educational attainment is required for CLEAR reviewers, although some graduate-level training on statistical methods is recommended for those who review causal studies. All CLEAR reviewers undergo a comprehensive training and additional training as new tools and/or CLEAR policies and procedures are developed.

the quality of causal evidence (the rating), and considerations for interpreting the findings.⁹ For studies that receive a high or moderate causal evidence rating, a second trained CLEAR reviewer completes a comprehensive, independent review of the study to resolve any discrepancies, confirm the high or moderate rating and that other information is accurate and verifiable, and clarify key points of the study profile as needed. For studies that receive a low causal evidence rating, the reason for the rating is confirmed by a second reviewer, but a comprehensive review of the study is not conducted.

Although reviewers systematically apply causal review guidelines, they might occasionally encounter concerns about the study design that are not clearly specified in the guidelines. When this rare situation occurs, the reviewer summarizes the issue and its implications for the causal evidence rating and submits that summary to the topic area principal investigator (PI). The PI recommends how to handle the issue and rate the study's causal evidence. This recommendation is reviewed—and either affirmed or refined—by a committee of senior CLEAR staff that includes the project director, the senior advisor, a statistical methods expert, and at least one PI from another topic area that reviews studies with similar designs. When the committee reaches a resolution, the topic area PI communicates the decision back to the study reviewer, who documents the concerns about the design and describes the resolution in the CLEAR profile. For consistency, the CLEAR leadership team also logs the decision, informs reviewers across the project, and updates the Causal Evidence Guidelines with a clarification, if needed.

Author Queries. When a report containing causal research does not contain sufficient information to determine its causal evidence rating, CLEAR may contact the study author(s) to gather this information; whether this step occurs depends on the age of the study and the quantity of information that the reviewer would need to gather (so as not to overly burden study authors).

When needed, CLEAR contacts the author(s) to request the missing or supplemental information. Authors are given two weeks to respond, and reasonable requests for extensions are typically granted. If the authors provide the information, it is incorporated into the review and factored into the causal evidence rating. If the authors do not provide the relevant information or respond by the end of the two-week (or extended) period, the design is given the highest rating that can be determined with the information available in the report. All author queries are documented in the individual study's SRG.

If a study author disagrees with the CLEAR causal evidence rating, they may contact CLEAR to obtain more detailed information about the review and SRG. As needed, the study will undergo a blinded review by an independent subcontractor trained in applying the CLEAR causal evidence guidelines. CLEAR staff will examine the independent party's causal evidence rating for consistency with the original rating, and the independent reviewer will then review the study profile. If the independent reviewer supports the original rating and the conclusion in the original CLEAR profile, the rating and the profile will remain the same. If the independent reviewer's rating differs from the original rating, or the independent reviewer notes that the study profile needs clarifications or other edits, the profile will be updated accordingly. In both cases, the author will receive a full explanation for the original causal evidence rating and the findings from subsequent independent reviews.

3.0 Additional Study Designs

CLEAR prioritizes the review of causal impact studies but may opt to include other types of studies including descriptive statistical studies, outcome analyses, and implementation studies for select topic

⁹ CLEAR focuses its reporting on the main research group in the study and examines subgroup analyses only if the authors' report does not present results for the combined group.

areas to expand the information available to CLEAR users. The inclusion criteria and selection and review process are documented in the appropriate topic area protocol. Descriptive and implementation studies do not receive a causal impact rating and are reviewed and summarized in a profile posted to CLEAR as described below.

Descriptive Studies. These designs use statistical techniques and other quantitative methods but cannot assess the causal impact of a program. Descriptive studies include cost-benefit analyses; analyses of means and distributions of outcome variables; analyses of trends in outcomes; comparisons of outcome means and trends by subgroups and/or between program exiters and target populations; correlational analyses; and meta-analyses.

Descriptive studies are reviewed using CLEAR's Guidelines for Reviewing Quantitative Descriptive Studies.¹⁰ In reviewing descriptive studies, CLEAR uses a descriptive study rubric that assesses study design, data quality, data collection, study sample, analysis methods, and conclusions/findings. Profiles for descriptive studies include highlights of the findings, a description of the intervention examined, the population(s) studied, the study's methods, and considerations for interpreting the findings. Descriptive studies are not subject to a rating system under CLEAR, nor is there a minimum bar of quality or rigor that the research must meet. The purpose of the review of technical qualities is to ensure that the findings reported in the research appear accurate and appropriate for the design.

Implementation Studies. These types of studies examine the process of conducting an intervention, describing how programs were designed, what happened when they were carried out, who participated, and in what contexts. Implementation studies may be conducted on their own, particularly to learn about new programs or pilots, or in concert with impact studies; in those cases, knowledge from an implementation study may help interpret impact study findings. However, implementation studies alone cannot draw causal conclusions.

CLEAR includes both independent implementation studies and those associated with a causal impact study, based on the review protocol for a given topic area. CLEAR uses the Guidelines for Reviewing Implementation Studies to review reports that describe the implementation process of an intervention, or that measure implementation inputs and outputs to assess the fidelity of a planned intervention's implementation.¹¹ An implementation study profile includes a link to the CLEAR profile(s) for its companion impact study (as applicable), highlights of its findings, a description of the intervention examined, the population(s) and site(s) studied, the study's design including measurements of fidelity as applicable, and considerations for interpreting the findings. Implementation study profiles do not include a causal evidence rating.

In 2021, CLEAR's systematic evidence reviews began including implementation studies routinely, as described in each review protocol. However, given the often-large sizes of implementation research in various evidence bases, and the resource intensity required for CLEAR to conduct reviews of implementation studies, CLEAR cannot include all implementation studies in a given evidence base in its reviews. Therefore, in reviewing potential implementation studies for inclusion, CLEAR pre-screens

¹⁰ The descriptive study guidelines were developed and synthesized from several sources on assessing quantitative descriptive research by senior CLEAR contractor staff, independent technical working group members with expertise in the appropriate research methods, and DOL staff with technical methods training.

¹¹ The Guidelines for Reviewing Implementation Studies were developed and synthesized from several sources on assessing qualitative and implementation research by senior CLEAR contractor staff, independent technical working group members with expertise in the appropriate research methods, and DOL staff with technical methods training.

studies using its Implementation Checklist.¹² The checklist, included in the Implementation Study Review Guide (I-SRG), identifies the components necessary for a high-quality implementation study. High-quality implementation studies that meet the criteria in the pre-screen checklist then go on to a full CLEAR review using the Guidelines for Reviewing Implementation Studies. Again, specific details on the approach undertaken by each evidence review are described in the protocol.

Implementation research is not subject to a rating system under CLEAR. The purpose of the review of technical qualities is to ensure that the findings reported in the research are accurate and appropriate for the design. The criteria for technical adequacy help identify the strengths of the research and important limitations. This information is used in the CLEAR profile (in the section for “Considerations for Interpreting the Findings”). In some cases, these considerations might be well-aligned with the limitations reported by the authors; for others, the considerations noted in the CLEAR summary might go beyond what the authors describe.

4.0 Other Types of Reviews

Rapid Evidence Reviews. Rapid evidence reviews focus on a specific topic for immediate review and synthesis. Rapid evidence reviews are streamlined to meet a more stringent time requirement; therefore, these reviews use a different process than CLEAR’s documented systematic approach. The process typically involves a literature search of select databases and/or sources using a specified timeframe and select search terms and outreach to independent experts in the field to identify study reports (citations) and/or specific promising or emerging programs or strategies to be included in the review.¹³ Once studies are selected for inclusion, CLEAR staff categorize them as causal, descriptive, or other (such as literature reviews); summarize key information from each study; and create a living Rapid Evidence Review Synthesis which may be periodically updated as appropriate, particularly for evidence bases that may be rapidly growing or evolving (such as the COVID-19 pandemic). The rapid evidence syntheses, posted on the CLEAR website, summarize the available evidence, identify gaps in the research, and recommend additional areas for examination.¹⁴



Flash Reviews. In addition to identifying studies as part of the systematic annual search and review process, CLEAR conducts limited “flash reviews” of research that meets eligibility criteria. Members of the public can suggest a study for review through the [Contact Us](#) section of the CLEAR website. CLEAR also accepts nominations from DOL agencies that have an interest in a particular study. The process for determining eligibility and reviewing studies follows that described in sections 2.1-2.3 and is detailed in the CLEAR Flash Reviews Protocol on the website.¹⁵



RESEA Intervention Effectiveness Ratings. Currently, CLEAR reviews Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) interventions under the Reemployment topic area to assess the effectiveness of these interventions in reducing Unemployment Insurance (UI) duration and improving earnings and employment outcomes. To do so, CLEAR reviews studies included in CLEAR’s

¹² The Implementation Checklist was developed from CLEAR’s Guidelines for Reviewing Implementation Studies and reviewed by senior CLEAR contractor staff, independent technical working group members with expertise in the appropriate research methods, and DOL staff with technical methods training.

¹³ For information on the rapid evidence review process, see <https://clear.dol.gov/Reference-Documents/How-CLEAR-Conducts-Rapid-Evidence-Reviews>.

¹⁴ For current Rapid Review Syntheses, see <https://clear.dol.gov/trending-research>.

¹⁵ For recently added flash review study profiles, see <https://clear.dol.gov/flash-reviews>.

reemployment systematic evidence review that received high and moderate causal evidence ratings for the *study*, and assigns intervention effectiveness ratings of high, moderate, potentially promising, or no rating to the *intervention*.

To receive a high rating for intervention effectiveness, a program must have demonstrated significant favorable impacts on both UI and earnings/employment outcomes in two or more studies rated by CLEAR as having a high or moderate causal evidence rating. CLEAR assigns a moderate intervention rating to programs if at least one study in CLEAR has found a significant favorable impact on each of the UI duration and employment/earnings outcome domains. An intervention is considered potentially promising if one CLEAR study has found significant impacts in one of the two domains. CLEAR assigns no rating if none of these criteria is met.¹⁶

Exhibit 3. RESEA Intervention Effectiveness Ratings



CLEAR conducts periodic reemployment systematic evidence reviews to identify new, publicly available studies of RESEA interventions. As such, ratings of RESEA interventions may change as more evidence becomes available. The list of rated interventions may also change and expand as more studies are completed, to reflect new or newly defined intervention definitions.¹⁷

5.0 CLEAR Website and Reporting

CLEAR maintains a website (<https://clear.dol.gov/>) to disseminate the results of its evidence reviews. The CLEAR website includes CLEAR study profiles/summaries, landing pages for specific evidence reviews (for example, those by topic area), research syntheses, and other products. The website transparently houses background documents such as this Policies and Procedures document, review guidelines, review protocols and procedures, and other relevant materials, including:

- 1. Searchable Research Database.** The CLEAR website includes a searchable database of all the studies reviewed and summarized in CLEAR so that users can easily identify research across different evidence reviews that are relevant to their needs.¹⁸ Users can narrow search parameters by entering specific key words or phrases, and/or filter CLEAR’s database by specific outcomes, target populations, geographic settings, study designs, year of publication, and/or causal evidence ratings (as applicable to causal studies).
- 2. Study Profiles.** Study profiles include a summary of the study’s findings and other features

¹⁶ For additional details on how CLEAR reviews and rates RESEA interventions, and how CLEAR’s causal evidence ratings for studies differ from its RESEA intervention effectiveness ratings, see the Guidelines of Effectiveness of RESEA Interventions https://clear.dol.gov/sites/default/files/CLEAR%20guidelines%20on%20effectiveness%20of%20reemployment%20interventions_final_Jan%202021.docx.pdf.

¹⁷ For the most up-to-date information on RESEA evidence reviews and intervention ratings, see <https://clear.dol.gov/reemployment-services-and-eligibility-assessments-resea>.

¹⁸ To search for studies on the CLEAR website, see <https://clear.dol.gov/study-database>.

about the study, intervention, and population studied, as well as considerations for interpreting the findings. Causal impact study profiles also include an evidence rating of low, moderate or high. The website contains a feature whereby users can export the information contained in profiles of interest to an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis.

3. **Research Syntheses.** Research syntheses draw on CLEAR’s causal evidence reviews to summarize the state of the evidence base and to identify research gaps in the existing literature. Research syntheses are developed in consultation with independent subject matter experts and DOL staff, as appropriate, and typically reflect study findings from high- and moderate-rated studies.¹⁹ As described in Section 4.0, research syntheses for Rapid Reviews may include a broad base of literature on the review topic and may not be limited to causal research.
4. **Reference Documents and Other Resources.** CLEAR also includes reference documents such as individual evidence review protocols, study review guidelines, the SRG template, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

6.0 Inquiries

CLEAR responds to inquiries received via its [Contact CLEAR](#) feature on the website. Anyone wishing to submit an inquiry must do so through the CLEAR website. CLEAR can help users by:

- Answering general questions about CLEAR
- Taking nominations for studies to receive CLEAR reviews
- Addressing questions or concerns about a study’s inclusion in CLEAR
- Addressing questions or concerns about CLEAR’s review of a study

CLEAR uses a set procedure for responses to support handling such inquiries consistently, transparently, and objectively. Staff log all inquiries and typically will confirm receipt and resolve inquiries in a timely fashion. Inquiries from study authors with questions or concerns about CLEAR’s review of their study(ies) may require a more in-depth investigation and response according to the author query process (see section 2.3).

¹⁹ In some cases, findings from causal studies that rate low, as well as findings from implementation and descriptive studies that examine an intervention of which there is also a causal study, are also included in the research synthesis. The kind of evidence base being synthesized is described in each report.