

How does CLEAR conduct rapid evidence reviews on trending research?

The Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research ([CLEAR](#)) conducts rapid evidence reviews to quickly summarize evidence on relevant programs and potentially promising strategies that can help policymakers, program administrators, government agencies, and others make evidence-based decisions in response to pressing labor issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. 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. These rapid evidence reviews include four steps:

CLEAR is an initiative of the Chief Evaluation Office, U.S. Department of Labor. Its mission is to make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public so that it can inform their decisions about labor policies and programs. For more information about CLEAR, visit <https://clear.dol.gov/about>.



Feasibility assessment. The rapid evidence review process starts with a feasibility assessment to identify potential strategies related to a pressing labor issue, and to identify search terms that CLEAR will use to search for studies examining the effectiveness of these strategies. CLEAR conducts an initial search within two search engines (Google Scholar and Google). After assessing the search results, CLEAR requests feedback from independent experts to ensure the selected topics, strategies, and search approach will uncover the most useful research. CLEAR staff then revise the approach as needed.



Database search and screening. Based on the feasibility assessment, CLEAR conducts a literature search in Business Source Corporate Plus and Google Scholar. The team then reaches out to independent experts to seek input on additional studies to include in the review. Next, the team identifies additional citations based on the references of the most relevant studies identified. Finally, the CLEAR rapid review team screens the abstracts of the identified studies and groups studies by topic.



Study reviews. After selecting the relevant studies for review, the rapid review team uses a short rubric to summarize information for each study. Each study is classified by type:

- **Causal** research assesses the effectiveness of a strategy—in other words, whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the strategy and the results or impacts.
- **Descriptive** research does not determine cause-and-effect relationships but uses quantitative methods to identify trends, correlations, projections, and costs and benefits of actions taken. CLEAR also categorized qualitative studies on strategy implementation within this category for the purposes of these rapid reviews.
- **Other** research can include opinion pieces by subject matter experts and literature reviews. This type of research does not aim to identify cause-and-effect relationships but can be useful to identify trends in research or emerging strategies potentially worthy of replication and additional study.



Living synthesis of evidence. CLEAR synthesizes the evidence on the identified strategies in Rapid Review Synthesis Reports. These reports, reviewed by independent experts, summarize the body of evidence, highlight gaps in the literature, and suggest areas in which further research would help policymakers. To ensure rapid reviews capture the most recent research, CLEAR requests feedback from independent experts and conducts periodic searches to identify newly released and relevant research and periodically updates Rapid Review Synthesis Reports.