

2012

American Evaluation Association

External Evaluation Panel



[INFLUENCING FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY: REVIEW OF THE EPTF]

The findings of the External Evaluation Panel on the activities and achievements of the American Evaluation Association's Evaluation Policy Task Force

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In February 2012, the Board of the American Evaluation Association (AEA), as part of its normal efforts to evaluate innovative projects, invited a panel of three external evaluation experts to review the work of the Evaluation Policy Task Force (EPTF). The purpose of the external expert panel evaluation was to provide an independent assessment that will inform the Board in its decision as to whether to move the EPTF to ongoing funding, continue temporary funding, or terminate the activity. The Board charged the expert evaluation panel (“the panel”) with addressing four research questions:

1. To what extent (if at all) are the EPTF’s activities appropriately targeted for the objective of influencing federal evaluation policy?
2. To what extent (if at all) has the EPTF influenced federal evaluation policy?
3. Relative to the EPTF’s cost, how substantial are its results?
4. What recommendations does the external panel have for next steps in terms of continuing funding and strategic directions (if appropriate)?

METHODOLOGY

Based on guidance from the AEA Board, the panel conducted a review of the Briefing Book compiled by the EPTF and an analysis of the survey results from one hundred and fifty-six (156) individuals who had responded to an Internet survey conducted by the AEA of AEA members indicating an interest in evaluation policy. Between March and May of 2012, the panel conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 current and former members of the EPTF and nine interviews with key informants representing five federal organizations.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall, the panel found that the EPTF has been successful in its original intent to get a seat at the federal evaluation policy table; however, to advance the efforts will require continued resources and an adjusted approach.

- *THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EPTF WERE APPROPRIATELY TARGETED FOR THE OBJECTIVE OF INFLUENCING FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY, BUT WITHOUT EXPANSION AND CONTINUED EFFORTS WILL NOT BE SUSTAINABLE .*
- *THE EPTF HAS HAD MODERATE INFLUENCE ON FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY. HOWEVER, THE INFLUENCE WILL WANE WITHOUT RESOURCED AND ONGOING EFFORTS.*
- *THE BENEFITS OF THE EPTF OUTWEIGH THE COSTS ALLOCATED TO DATE. HOWEVER, THERE IS LIKELY A DIMINISHING RETURN ON INVESTMENT WERE AEA TO PURSUE THE SAME STRATEGY MOVING FORWARD.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the panel's review of all data, the panel recommends the following:

- Continue the EPTF as a Task Force for the next two years, with a mandate to make a clear recommendation to the board about either disbanding or institutionalizing policy work.
- Proceed with the expansion of the EPTF to draw additional volunteers to the work.
- Establish clearer parameters for engaging in influential policy debates and identify whether to pursue an influencing role through more of a policy-shaping approach or a general education approach.
- Articulate a theory of change framework that will guide EPTF influence activities, with corresponding performance measures to track progress and success.
- Consider developing more action-oriented position papers because federal legislative and executive agencies are in need of very practical "how-to" guides that both make a specific case and provide guidelines.
- Consider identifying and comparing the policy-shaping strategies and practices of other associations that likely have a broad policy mandate such as the American Psychological Association, the American Political Science Association, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the American Enterprise Institute.
- Continue to update the Roadmap¹, or provide companion pieces. This may include adapting it for State and Local government use and relating it to non-profits and other organizations that receive federal funding.
- Continue to use the EPTF to promote awareness to the AEA membership of the importance of federal evaluation policy.
- Consider deeper engagement of AEA members in advocacy activities. For example, engaging the Topical Interest Groups to have a more relevant role for members by monitoring policies related to their specific interests, thereby more deeply engaging members. At a minimum, AEA could use more member "crowd sourcing" to gain intelligence on areas for potential influence.
- Consider partnerships with other associations or entities that might be able to leverage AEA positions and expertise within their general policy advocacy.

CONCLUSION

The Evaluation Policy Task Force achieved moderate influence with few resources within a short amount of time. Its guidance has advanced the American Evaluation Association as a voice in federal evaluation discussions and policymaking. To be successful in the future the AEA will need to ensure that influence activities are:

- Systematic and less opportunistic and ad hoc
- Ongoing with frequent and regular interactions and engagements
- Resourced with appropriate consultant capacity
- Updated regularly
- Proactive by anticipating federal evaluation needs

¹ The EPTF developed, and the AEA membership subsequently approved, The Evaluation Roadmap for a more Effective Government

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In February 2012, the Board of the American Evaluation Association (AEA), as part of its normal efforts to evaluate innovative projects, invited a panel of three external evaluation experts to review the work of the Evaluation Policy Task Force (EPTF). The EPTF, established in 2008, has been funded by AEA as a short-term project, referred to as a Schedule 2 project. The purpose of the external expert panel evaluation was to provide an independent assessment that will inform the Board in its decision to move the EPTF to ongoing funding (Schedule 1 project), continue temporary funding, or terminate the activity. The Board selected the panel chairperson, who then selected the members of the panel. The three evaluators for this project were:



Ann Doucette, Director
The Evaluators' Institute
<http://tei.gwu.edu/>

Dr. Doucette has worked with a wide range of organizations including federal and state organizations, universities, community groups, public schools and foundations. Her expertise includes the development of performance and outcome measurement systems that target accountability, quality monitoring and outcomes for system level intervention. She has served on several technical advisory panels, including for the American Psychological Association and American Medical Association.



Ted Kniker, Executive
Director
The Performance Institute
www.performanceweb.org
Panel Chairperson

Mr. Kniker is a recognized expert in developing performance frameworks for hard to measure programs, integrating both evaluation and performance measurement. For eight years he served as Chief of Evaluation for the U.S. Department of State's public diplomacy, where his evaluation office was recognized for exemplifying best practices, and as a consultant over the last six years has conducted performance and evaluation activities at over 20 federal agencies.



Jared Raynor, Director of
Evaluation, TCC Group
<http://www.tccgrp.com/>

Mr. Raynor, is an expert in evaluation, capacity building, and organizational structure and design. He is co-author of *Building an Effective Advocacy Organization: A Framework for Examining Advocacy Organizational Capacity*. He has worked with various aspects of evaluating policy and advocacy work, including with the California Endowment and the Atlantic Philanthropies. His work at TCC has included evaluations of capacity building initiatives, multi-site cluster evaluations, strategic planning, organizational structuring and design, and strategic organizational assessment.

The Board charged the expert evaluation panel (“the panel”) with addressing four research questions:

1. To what extent (if at all) are the EPTF's activities appropriately targeted for the objective of influencing federal evaluation policy?
2. To what extent (if at all) has the EPTF influenced federal evaluation policy?
3. Relative to the EPTF's cost, how substantial are its results?
4. What recommendations does the external panel have for next steps in terms of continuing funding and strategic directions (if appropriate)?

The Board requested that the panel review a briefing book compiled by the EPTF as a reflection of its achievements, results from a survey about the EPTF and its perceived impact administered to the EPTF and members from the AEA Government’s Evaluation Policy Topical Interest Group (TIG) and Evaluation in Government TIG, and to gather its own data through interviews with the EPTF members and federal evaluation policymakers.

METHODOLOGY

During the project, the panel met weekly via conference call. After initial review of the charge and research questions, the panel used a design matrix to map the research questions and data collection methodology. The panel added sub-questions to three of the research questions to focus the inquiry around best practice approaches the panel had discussed from its combined experience and expertise.

Original Research Question	Added Sub-Questions
To what extent (if at all) are the EPTF’s activities appropriately targeted for the objective of influencing federal evaluation policy?	a. Does EPTF have a clear rationale for targeting policy influence activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Did the EPTF use a theory of change model for its work? ■ What policy advocacy “role” does the EPTF assume? b. In light of potential scope, how strategic were the EPTF’s decisions about where to target influencing activities? (i.e. legislative vs. executive activities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How were targets selected? c. In what ways do the EPTF activities align clearly to the broader mission of AEA? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What evaluation message was delivered? ■ To what extent did the EPTF prioritize the approach based on guidance from the board (e.g. being opportunistic)?
To what extent (if at all) has the EPTF influenced federal evaluation policy?	a. Has the EPTF influenced legislative language that was enacted? b. Has the EPTF influenced executive branch language that was enacted? c. Has the EPTF influence (if any) extended beyond direct targets of the intervention? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Including AEA, TIGs, general AEA membership, others? d. To what extent is federal policy decision-makers and evaluators uptake of the Roadmap and Roadmap principles attributable to EPTF influencing (as opposed to natural developments likely to have occurred)?
Relative to the EPTF’s cost, how substantial are its results?	a. What was the level of investment of the EPTF in both real dollars and time spent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What were the opportunity costs – what could AEA have been doing in lieu of this activity? b. To what extent did the EPTF engage additional partners/resources to leverage its own efforts (foundations, TIGs, etc.)? c. To what extent does AEA and the EPTF have the institutional capacity to continue substantive policy influencing? d. What, if any, alternatives exist to achieve the outcomes of the EPTF and what are those associated costs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What comparators exist for similar policy advocacy work? Is there an ability to benchmark? ■ What are reasonable expectations for influence based on scope, resources and time (i.e. capacity)—where should EPTF be in terms of outputs and outcomes?

What recommendations does the external panel have for next steps in terms of continuing funding and strategic directions (if appropriate)?	None added
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The panel conducted a review of the Briefing Book compiled by the EPTF and an analysis of the EPTF survey results. One hundred and fifty-six (156) individuals responded to an Internet survey conducted by the AEA of AEA members indicating an interest in evaluation policy. An invitation to respond to the survey was sent to 1217 individuals with viable email addresses drawn from the AEA’s Government Evaluation and Evaluation Policy Topical Interest Groups and the EPTF’s discussion list. The survey used a 5-point Likert response option ranging from “not at all familiar” to “extremely familiar” or “not at all satisfied” to “extremely satisfied.” Only the polar ends of the response scale were defined.

Between March and April of 2012, the panel conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 current and former members of the EPTF. Due to individual schedules of the panel members and the EPTF members, a longer time frame to conduct the interviews was needed in order to include appropriate EPTF members. This added several weeks into the project timeline. Interviews generally lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and followed the protocol included in [Appendix 1](#). In addition to conducting content analysis on the responses, the panel also used the results of the interviews to refine the final interview protocol for the federal evaluation policymaker key informant interviews.

Between April and May of 2012, the panel reached out to 14 federal evaluation policymakers and evaluators, but was only able to secure interviews with nine. Several of the invitees were no longer working at their organizations and follow-on contact information was difficult to obtain. The panel selected individuals, identified in the Consultants Log of Outside Meetings and Contacts in the EPTF Briefing Book, who represented a range of organizations, roles within their organizations, policy content areas, and dates spanning from 2008 to 2011. These nine represented five federal organizations, including The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the Congressional Research Service. One of the interviews was conducted as a group interview, but individual responses were captured separately. As with the EPTF member interviews, scheduling interviews with the federal evaluation policymakers took longer than expected and added several weeks to the project. The semi-structured interviews generally lasted 45 to 60 minutes and followed the protocol included in [Appendix 2](#).

Limitations of the Data: Several limitations to the data emerged. While the representation of EPTF members and EPTF-generated data were comprehensive, it is self-reported data and may contain a bias toward continuing the EPTF activities and an exaggeration of the extent of impact their activities have had. The representation of key informant was not inclusive of all who were touched by the EPTF, nor was it representative of all of the efforts, topical areas, and attempts made to influence evaluation policies. This limitation was compounded by the number of potential respondents who no longer encumber the positions they occupied when they interacted with the EPTF. Since so many people are no longer in their same positions or even at the same organizations, it was more difficult to gauge the true extent of influence. The EPTF should consider developing an

outreach strategy that takes into account target audience mobility and use this to stay engaged with both the individuals and the organizations they represent. This way they can maintain contact with the individual and when it becomes known that she or he is leaving or has left, engage that person at her or his new organization as well as find out who the replacement is at the former organization and engage that person.

The panel considered the survey data as informative input, but was not confident in considering it representative of the TIG or AEA membership, given the relatively small response rate of 12.8 percent, with confidence level of 95 percent and confidence interval of plus or minus 7.33 percent. Second, approximately 45 percent of respondents characterized themselves as unfamiliar with the work of the EPTF, but answered most survey questions, rendering an opinion on the effectiveness of the EPTF activities. The “hard to say” responses across survey items ranged from 33.8 percent to 73.0 percent indicating that one to two thirds of respondents had a difficult time assessing the work of the EPTF. Even those who answered 3, 4, or 5 on the five-point familiarity scale, indicating familiarity with the EPTF, had “hard to say,” responses ranging between 10 percent and 57 percent across survey items.

Despite the limitations, the panel found clear themes regarding the EPTF, its accomplishments, and recommendations for moving forward.

FINDINGS

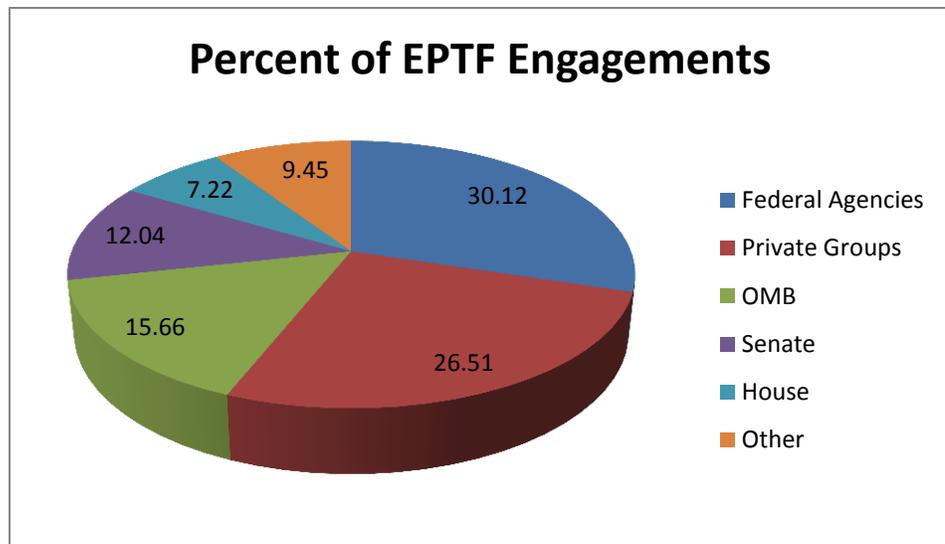
Overall, the panel determined that the EPTF efforts to date were appropriately targeted, had an influence, and the benefits achieved outweigh the costs incurred to date. The findings section of the report is organized by original research question and then by the sub questions, as appropriate.

TO WHAT EXTENT (IF AT ALL) ARE THE EPTF'S ACTIVITIES APPROPRIATELY TARGETED FOR THE OBJECTIVE OF INFLUENCING FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY?

KEY FINDING: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EPTF WERE APPROPRIATELY TARGETED FOR THE OBJECTIVE OF INFLUENCING FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY, BUT WITHOUT EXPANSION AND CONTINUED EFFORTS WILL NOT BE SUSTAINABLE.

Between December 2007 and November 2011, the EPTF, usually through the consultant, was part of 87 engagements (e.g. meetings, phone calls, conferences, presentations) averaging nearly two (1.81) per month. The highest percentage of engagements occurred with federal agencies at 30.12 percent of the meetings, but generally there were no more than four with any single entity. The second highest percentage of engagements was with "private" groups. For the purpose of this evaluation, the category of private groups comprises a range of organizations including lobbying firms, foundations, universities, and non-profit organizations. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) held the third highest percentage of engagements (15.66%), and was the most frequently engaged single entity. This was slightly outdone by the total outreach to Congressional appointments (House and Senate combined) which accounted for nearly 20 percent.

As may have been expected in the early years of the initiative, engagements with potential partner advocates was low at 9.45 percent. Only a handful of meetings took place with the "Good Government" groups (e.g. the IBM Center for the Business of Government), network groups/associations (e.g. Federal



Evaluators, WREN), and other interested parties, such as the Brookings Institute. For the future, the EPTF should consider collaborating more extensively with potential advocates, such as the Coalition for Government Performance and its membership, the National Academy of Public Administration, and others who host events, and engage with federal policymakers around issues of performance and evaluation to extend the EPTF's capacity to spread its message.

Does EPTF have a clear rationale for targeting policy influence activities? In light of potential scope, how strategic were the EPTF's decisions about where to target influencing activities?

There is general consensus among the 10 EPTF interviewees that the EPTF took an appropriate, targeted and broadly strategic approach. The panel asked the members to rate how strategic the group was on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being fully strategic). The respondents provided a range of 5 to 10 (average 8), noting that while they had a strategic plan and settled on directions, much of the work was opportunistic. The EPTF identified two important strategic considerations very early on, (1) a focus on federal policy, and (2) to target the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The focus on federal policy provided parameters for the EPTF efforts. The effort to influence policy was to convey that evaluation can be used to answer different types of programmatic questions (not only does the program work?), and that methodologies for evaluation should be matched to the program and the evaluation questions that are asked. This was primarily in response to what was considered a rigid and sometimes inappropriately applied, gold standard argument for Randomized Control Trials (RCTs). The EPTF's goal was to promote rigorous and credible designs that included alternatives to RCTs, and comprehensive principles of evaluation.

The OMB focus was opportunistically designed to hit at the heart of the federal system, to have the greatest potential for impact across the federal system. The concentration on OMB, which was the focal point for performance and evaluation, was thought to be a strategic choice. The OMB focus enabled the EPTF to gain some credibility and visibility quicker than might have been expected, as the EPTF was approached in several instances to provide input, though not directly cited in terms of contribution. In turn, the EPTF raised the visibility of AEA within the policy-making sphere. While there may be questions about the relative impact of the EPTF's work, it did raise the visibility of AEA as an entity that could provide a valuable perspective on evaluation policy. This is evidenced by agencies soliciting the input/engagement of AEA, which allowed the EPTF to be reactive. However, key informants from OMB and one other of the federal agencies noted that they had not interacted with the EPTF or AEA in "a couple of years," and did not rely on AEA as a primary source for evaluation guidance in working with federal agencies. They noted that the Roadmap was reviewed when it was published, but did not acknowledge recent use of the document. The OMB invited and would welcome more follow-up from and collaboration with AEA.

All of the EPTF members commented that decisions on whom and what to target were discussed thoroughly, but acknowledged that no theory of change model was used. Several respondents indicated that they worked as if a model existed, but an explicit depiction was not developed or shared. The group acknowledges that there were certain paths for influence that were discussed but rejected due to time or resources (e.g. Education and No Child Left Behind (NCLB)). There was consensus across the 10 interviewees that the opportunistic approach also allowed them to influence policies in a consultative way with individual agencies. Several expressed surprise that the first inroads made were in the international development area. Most noted that having a consultant who spent time scanning what was happening in the area of evaluation was important because he could bring to the group ideas for targeting and could be a focal point for contact with agencies and policy makers. Some EPTF members felt they could have been more strategic in terms of anticipating opportunities. Additionally, a few of the EPTF members expressed opinions about the role of the AEA President and the EPTF. It was mentioned by some that the President² generally has too many other issues to participate effectively in the deliberations of the EPTF, and that the changing annual focus can have an impact upon how quickly and strongly the AEA may respond to federal issues that affect evaluation. Moving forward it is likely critical for some more overt filtering criteria and a more specific theory of influencing federal evaluation policy to be in place to guide

² It must be noted that no individual President was cited, but the comments referenced the responsibilities of the President and the role of generating an annual theme.

the work of the EPTF. The panel strongly recommends that as the EPTF move forward, it develop and articulate a theory of change framework that will guide its influence activities. Along with the theory of change, the panel recommends the EPTF develop corresponding performance measures to track progress and success.

The creation of the Roadmap document in the view of most interviewees allowed the EPTF to develop something that would outlast any of their individual participation and could/would provide a foundational framework to influence and inform federal evaluation policy and structure. The Roadmap was an influential document that has been widely distributed and referenced. The value of the Roadmap lies in its ability to convey complex evaluation principles in an accessible and understandable manner. It was successfully able to articulate a perspective on rigorous and credible evaluation that was broader than a singular reliance on randomized control trials (RCTs), and it gave guidance about how to position evaluation within federal programs. The Roadmap, a document produced and distributed by AEA, provided an opportunity for the engagement of the broader AEA membership, and also allowed AEA to be seen by policy-makers as having an influential voice in shaping evaluation policy. Its institutionalization is evident in its citation in academic articles and reported use in educational settings. However, the Roadmap may have limited policy influence if it becomes a static document, without an ongoing and deliberate plan for dissemination about how it can be used, and explicitly applied. Further, most policy-makers reported looking for more concrete guidelines of how actually to implement/do things, with the implication that the Roadmap was perceived to be too philosophical.

According to the responses from the Key Informant interviews, the extent of appropriate targeting of the EPTF's efforts is inconclusive. The majority (8 of 9) of the interviewees were minimally familiar with the EPTF and AEA, or how the activities were targeted. The key informants did indicate that the decision to engage OMB as the central agency was correct, but noted there are limits to what can come from just targeting there. Several informants noted the need for broader engagement, emphasizing that to influence evaluation policy the EPTF and AEA would need to reach actual evaluators and researchers in the agencies as well as policymakers. One informant described this as a "grassroots type campaign" reaching out to a wide range of decentralized evaluators within agencies as well as a top down approach of trying to reach policy makers and creating a community of interest to bring both together. The key informants reported that the one-on-one interactions were very effective, but limited. They explained that the EPTF seemed to lack the cultivation of internal "champions" or higher prestige individuals that could advocate for different evaluation policy. The ripple, or multiplier, effect approach of one agency leading change in another agency was verified between USAID and the Department of State. However, this is more likely due to similarities and existing close relationships between the two organizations than to a genuine ripple effect. Interviewees indicated that individual attention needs to be given at a deeper level at every place that AEA would desire to have influence. It appears that the underlying message from the informants is that more people at each location need to be engaged, and the EPTF cannot rely on only one or two people to spread the influence. The panel recommends that where there are good connections at an organization, use a snowball technique to generate "leads" for further engagement within the organization, and look for opportunities to bring policymakers and practitioners (if they are different) together. This may be done using an approach of "How to respond to X mandate."

The key informants indicated that AEA did not seem to assert itself with a clear enough agenda to raise its profile. Instead, it played the consummate educator role, which appears to have less traction in the policy debate. Almost all acknowledged the RCT influence is present and to be effective and helpful, the AEA should:

- Provide information and examples that are practical/applicable, more than articulating principles of evaluation, or only being reactive to the RCT debate.
- Adjust the message from being reactive and talking about why RCTs don't work in all cases, to how to strengthen RCTs through other methods.
- Offer more concrete guidance on how to choose the appropriate method for the evaluation question.
- Provide more guidance on what questions evaluations can answer other than just, "does the intervention work?" - and how to use that information for decision-making and resource allocation.
- Follow up either through meetings or with documentation (including the Roadmap). Several key informants expressed uncertainty about what the EPTF or AEA are currently doing.
- Play a more intensive training role for government in order to gain influence. This may be outside the level of investment that AEA is willing to provide.

Key informants related two issues that are problematic for AEA's continued influence in the evaluation policy area. First, a few of the respondents indicated that having only one person working part time on this effort was not sufficient to influence policy and couldn't cover the range of opportunities needed. With only a part-time individual, there is no way to cover all the territory necessary to make the influence. In addition, the approach does not give the kind of public outreach that other groups may have, like the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. There was consensus from the EPTF members and the Key informants who met with George Grob, that the AEA-supported EPTF consultant (George Grob – paid consultant) was very effective. Mr. Grob played a critical role within the EPTF, often spending more hours on EPTF activities than his AEA contract supported. Interviewees had consensus regarding the need for someone with similar skills to Mr. Grob to maintain the effectiveness of EPTF/AEA policy influencing work. Continued AEA support for an individual with professional credentials, credibility within the federal government (like Mr. Grob) is likely required for AEA to be successful in continuing its policy influencing work.

Second, the mandate for EPTF seems to have been too ambiguous to have specific lasting influence within the federal government. Because the AEA represents such a broad discipline and series of approaches, and incorporates the diversity of its membership, this may weaken the message the AEA is attempting to advocate. A few of the respondents indicated that either the AEA or the EPTF may want to consider having subcommittees that articulate more specific (narrowed) points about evaluation and policy, for example, having a subcommittee that works on promoting the use of qualitative methods.

In what ways do the EPTF activities align clearly to the broader mission of AEA?

While the federal policy work enjoyed some broad strategic success, it is less clear what the strategy was that related to the public presence of the EPTF. For example, though the EPTF efforts were aimed primarily at the external federal environment, there was less consensus among the interviewees regarding the EPTF's role in influencing how federal evaluation policy was perceived internally within the AEA membership. While most reported that the EPTF helped raise awareness of the importance of federal evaluation policy within the AEA membership, and helped make AEA more relevant to some sub-groups, the interviewees seemed less confident in how the work of the EPTF is positioned within AEA, or what the level of support internally should be. Emphasis on the public presence of the EPTF's work appeared less systematic and somewhat haphazard. A listserv, newly formed Topical Interest Group (TIG) and the *PolicyWatch* newsletter was used to inform the

AEA membership of the task force's work; but the intent of these activities is not clear and appears patchy beyond just raising the general visibility of evaluation policy as important. There was consensus that engaging the broader AEA membership was not feasible. As a result, the public presence of the EPTF's work did not provide the membership with a clear idea of how they could be engaged in policy work. Results from the membership survey appear to bear this out.

Twenty-six percent of the respondents indicated that they were unfamiliar with the work of the EPTF, 10% indicated extreme familiarity (the remaining respondent proportions in decreasing order of familiarity were 22%, 25%, 18%). It is important to note that those respondents indicating no familiarity with the EPTF did not refrain from responding to the survey items in terms of their satisfaction with the EPTF's efforts; therefore caution should be taken in interpreting survey results.

In general, those respondents with more familiarity with EPTF efforts had more positive responses. Respondents (N=100) were generally satisfied with the appropriateness of the EPTF's efforts to influence federal evaluation policy (mean scores ranged from 4.32 to 3.50, extreme satisfaction to extremely low satisfaction). Only 49% (N=77) of the respondents shared their perspective on the effectiveness of the EPTF in "*collecting, synthesizing and presenting feedback from AEA members to OMB regarding Paperwork Reduction Act.*"

The panel recommends that AEA continue to use the EPTF to promote awareness to its membership of the importance of federal evaluation policy. While this should not be the primary focus of the EPTF, the EPTF could be a source to help develop information campaigns for the AEA membership on how federal evaluation policy affects evaluation in various sectors.

TO WHAT EXTENT (IF AT ALL) HAS THE EPTF INFLUENCED FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY?

KEY FINDING: THE EPTF HAS HAD MODERATE INFLUENCE ON FEDERAL EVALUATION POLICY. HOWEVER, THE INFLUENCE WILL WANE WITHOUT RESOURCED AND ONGOING EFFORTS.

For this section, the panel has combined the sub questions for ease of the reader.

Influence on Federal Evaluation Policy. The interviewees generally reported moderate influence on federal evaluation policy overall, but significant influence in context to the resources invested and the time it took from start up to a level of involvement. The EPTF had a number of significant policy outcomes. The evidence of influence is cited as being an organization that is now sought out for advice and the Roadmap as a document that has informed other policies (USAID, State) and evaluations (GAO studies). The extent of the EPTF's influence is hard to document. Notwithstanding, there is solid evidence that the EPTF did influence evaluation policy in several areas, including OMB, USAID, the State Department, and a provision of the healthcare act. Such influence is significant, especially within the short timeframe that the EPTF has been operating. Perhaps one of the most lasting outcomes of the EPTF is the "cover" that it provided to evaluators within the federal government who can reference an external authoritative document (the Roadmap) in their daily work. There were some interviewee assertions that OMB policy would have remained much more closely linked to RCTs had it not been for the EPTF.

There was consensus among the interviewees representing several federal agencies (many of

whom participated in discussion with George Grob and/or EPTF members) that the EPTF had some influence on federal evaluation policy, however, perceptions revealed that influence was indeed variable within and across federal agencies, and over time, not extending much beyond themselves. External informants cited the importance of having a credible and authoritative position advocating alternatives to RCTs – what had become in some agencies, the only permissible evaluation design. The Roadmap was described as a support, something to cite, a document that provided trustworthy terminology that could be referenced in the debates regarding the primacy of the RCT design.

Respondents to the AEA Survey regarding the perceived effectiveness of the EPTF efforts indicated they felt the EPTF was effective in influencing U.S. federal evaluation policy (N=81; mean range: 4.03 to 3.00). Those survey respondents answering these items expressed agreement that the EPTF was effective in informing evaluation policy within USAID and the State Department; and in providing advice to HHS. The respondent mean for effectiveness in influencing insurance reform, USAID, State Department, and HHS are 3.55, 3.86, 3.89, and 3.69 respectively.

Survey respondents also expressed satisfaction with how the EPTF represented AEA to leadership in the federal government (N=98; mean range: 4.38 to 3.80); and, the EPTF's effectiveness in representing AEA in deliberations with the federal government regarding evaluation policy (N=89; mean range: 4.26 to 3.65).

The EPTF members, when asked to rate their success on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being extremely successful) reported a range of 8.5 to 10, with an average of 9.3. The interviewees related that the high score was due to the perceived extent of influence within a short time and with limited resources.

Uptake of the Roadmap. The EPTF members interviewed perceived the Roadmap to be effective, citing influence on OMB, the State Department, and USAID. Many of the EPTF interviewees characterized efforts as opportunistic, the ability to take advantage of opportunities as they surfaced, and having the expertise at hand to engage in meaningful discussion. External respondents also acknowledged the wide circulation of the Roadmap, and how initially it was considered an influential document that could inform and sometimes did inform evaluation policy. The importance of evaluation, set-aside funds for evaluation and the consideration of RCTs as one approach among other rigorous designs (quasi-experimental) were among the examples of the Roadmap's influence that were provided by interviewees – both EPTF and key informants. The Roadmap was not, however, without criticism. The key informant interviewees characterized the Roadmap as static, “without a long shelf-life,” not able to be sustained, if not periodically updated and reflective of current evaluation thinking. Many of the key informants thought that early influence had waned. A considerable flaw was the absence of sufficient examples or constructive suggestions that would enable federal agency staff readily to use the Roadmap. For example, some respondents suggested that the Roadmap did not go far enough in making the case for evaluation, with examples highlighting the rigor of its diverse approaches.

RELATIVE TO THE EPTF'S COST, HOW SUBSTANTIAL ARE ITS RESULTS?

KEY FINDING: THE BENEFITS OF THE EPTF OUTWEIGH THE COSTS ALLOCATED TO DATE. HOWEVER, THERE IS LIKELY A DIMINISHING RETURN ON INVESTMENT WERE AEA TO PURSUE THE SAME STRATEGY MOVING FORWARD.

What was the level of investment of the EPTF in both real dollars and time spent?

Relative to the cost and time involvement, results have been good. While only 48% (N=75) of the survey respondents answered the item asking about appropriateness of the EPTF's activities in "producing desired results" given the available resources, those responding indicated that the appropriateness was moderately high (mean range: 4.18 to 3.79). The costs of the EPTF's work include a part-time contractor (Mr. Grob), staff support, and volunteer time from committed senior people within the evaluation community. Despite the difficulties of asserting attributable change as noted above, there are a clear set of outcomes of the work, both internal and external.

EPTF Cost-Benefit Table														
Costs		Benefits												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant and management costs 		Internal Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small increase in awareness of evaluation policy as important among members Small to medium increase in visibility of AEA to policymakers Development of policy statement of evaluation for the field External Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMB Impact Evaluation Policy Evaluation Policies in the Federal 2011 and 2012 Budget Guidances U.S. Global HIV/AIDS Appropriations Guidance Evaluation Requirement of the Global Health Initiative Requirements for oversight of Health Care Reform GAO Review of International Food Assistance Programs Using Criteria Developed from the Roadmap 												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2007-2008</td> <td>\$35,897.31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2008-2009</td> <td>\$42,993.29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009-2010</td> <td>\$50,719.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010-2011</td> <td>\$47,022.95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>\$176,632.83</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		FY	Total	2007-2008	\$35,897.31	2008-2009	\$42,993.29	2009-2010	\$50,719.28	2010-2011	\$47,022.95	Total	\$176,632.83
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*This can be monetized at a modest daily rate of \$1,200 for a total of \$345,600. However, given that there is relatively minimal opportunity cost to the Association of having the volunteers participate (not something else they would have been doing to benefit the Association, and in some cases the experience seems to have deepened the commitment to AEA), it is our assessment that such a monetization for cost-benefit purposes is not appropriate.

Internal costs. The initial start-up phase of any policy initiative will have start-up costs. For the EPTF, this included the development of contacts within the federal system, developing and testing messages (including the Roadmap) and establishing internal processes. Internal interviewees provided compelling evidence that the workings of the committee were quite efficient and that the group functioned at a very high level. This likely minimized some of the start-up costs and allowed for deeper engagements.

The engagement of EPTF members varied in terms of availability and in terms of time spent on activities. Members of the EPTF reported spending as little as a couple of hours per month to as much as several days per month. While the need for designated support for the EPTF is clear (paid

consultant/staff), the EPTF members did not perceive engagement on EPTF-related activities as an undue burden and many indicated they would readily continue serving. The EPTF as a group seemed to operate effectively, with the group having a strong sense of unity, identity and affinity. The task force structure took an approach that allowed the task force to react more quickly than previous AEA efforts at public affairs/outreach. Given the level of available EPTF resources, being opportunistic and flexible was important.

The decision-making structure appeared to work well given the limited mandate undertaken by the EPTF. The EPTF acknowledged the AEA Board's responsibility to set policy as the elected representatives of AEA. There was some concern about endowing an ad hoc group (EPTF) with the authority to speak with the authority of the association. This concern grew out of the need for the EPTF to respond rapidly to opportunities to influence federal evaluation policy. In response to this concern, the EPTF established a prioritizing process whereby some things were clearly designated as needing full Board oversight, while other EPTF decisions needing a more rapid and adaptive response were also possible via a more streamlined review. As noted, the EPTF needed to be able to act nimbly, something that previous AEA efforts had reportedly lacked. To ensure that the EPTF did not over-step bounds or jeopardize AEA's credibility, it was critical that the group have credibility based on constitution rather than on action. This was accomplished via the range of representatives on the EPTF, nearly all of whom had broad extant credibility within the AEA community – former presidents, academics, government representatives, etc. In addition, the Board was represented on the EPTF, providing another level of oversight.

At this point in the EPTF's life-cycle, through these now-sunk-costs, the EPTF has established a fairly strong infrastructure that can be built upon should AEA move forward with efforts in this area.

Consulting costs. Regarding the composition of the task force, there was particular emphasis on the importance of the consultant, which was mentioned by several of the interviewees as being crucial to the success of the EPTF. The consulting costs were reasonable and appropriate for this work and AEA seems to have derived very good value for money with the consultant, especially since he often spent more hours than his contract supported. Internally, Mr. Grob's work was widely praised and externally he appears to have been effective at opening doors and engaging federal employees. The consultant was named by almost everyone as having the right connections, experience, skills, and interpersonal abilities to make headway into the federal area quickly. Using a consultant affords the Association some cost savings as compared to a full-time staff person. The primary criticism of the consulting, both from internal and external interviewees, is that a part-time person is not enough. For example, external key informants most familiar with the EPTF and AEA noted that only providing a part-time consultant to do this work would not result in long-term sustainable influence. In principle, we agree with the assessment for the longer-term, though for this start-up phase the part-time role was most appropriate.

Partnerships costs. The EPTF did relatively little in regard to engaging additional partners and/or resources. It did have one foundation early on with which it worked directly successfully to influence policy in two areas. The level of effort was quite small for the partnership, especially given that AEA was approached from the partner and brought some additional resources. The EPTF does not appear to have engaged significantly with other foundations, associations, partner organizations, think tanks or topical interest groups.

Cost Summary. The costs for the EPTF were fairly modest as regarding a large advocacy initiative. The level of volunteer support was significant and evidence indicates that such support would

likely continue and could even be expanded in strategic ways. In lieu of this activity, AEA could have placed a greater onus on the topical interest groups to pursue policies, but this would have lacked the broad weight of the Association. Further, AEA could have taken an initial education approach, attempting to only educate policy-makers. This likely would have reduced the time costs of EPTF members and necessitated a less active consultant. However, AEA seemingly lacked the credibility to do this initially and seeking points of specific policy influence as entry points was effective in building some of that credibility.

Internal benefits. While not broadly recognized within the AEA membership (e.g. 19 percent of survey respondents (which was a sample of members most likely to know of the EPTF) indicated having little if any familiarity with the EPTF), the work did raise the awareness of a number of AEA members about the importance of federal policy and deepened the commitment of some members to focusing on federal policy (e.g., the development of the Evaluation Policy TIG). Additionally, there are a number of sources that seem to indicate that work in policy increases the relevance of AEA to some members, particularly those who work in government. Finally, work like the Roadmap has increased AEA's visibility in the broader public environment, as evidenced by its use in classrooms and citations in articles. This serves to strengthen the credibility of the organization.

It is hard to quantify these benefits and the Board will need to place a value-assessment on these types of internal benefits. It is our assessment that these are important benefits and that their value might be deepened through clearer goals surrounding the internal work. The existence of the EPTF does appear to have raised pockets of consciousness throughout the Association that evaluation policy is an important consideration, and that having a policy presence is generally good for the membership. There are likely a number of opportunities that AEA could pursue in order to provide the membership deeper involvement in policy work, where desired (see recommendation below).

There is some question within the group of interviewees about the extent of success and ability when compared to other membership associations. Only one interviewee mentioned directly the other main influencer (lobbying) of evaluation policy, and expressed not wanting the EPTF to move in the direction of becoming a lobbying kind of organization with a simple and slick approach. As the expert panel, we raise some significant caution related to comparing AEA's federal policy efforts to other groups. This stems primarily from the potential scope associated with AEA's issue that is not limited to a few select realms of the federal bureaucracy, but extends to every part of the broad federal system. This complicates efforts to engage in policy influencing from a scope perspective, raising the imperative of a clear theory of influence. AEA should look to the Coalition of Evidence-Based Policy and perhaps a similar association that would have an expansive view of government like the American Political Science Association as comparators for broad-based governmental influencing. With regard to direct comparisons with the policy-influencing activities of the Coalition of Evidence-Based Policy, it is important to recognize that the Coalition's mandate is very narrow, enhancing its ability to succinctly target its messaging. The work scope of this panel did not support specific benchmarking or analysis of cross-organization, policy-influencing activities.

External benefits. The previous section described a number of the outcomes that could be documented resulting from the EPTF's work. While spotty within the grand scheme of the federal government, these do seem to represent important inroads. External key informants were unanimous in stating that an active AEA, advocating the benefits and value of evaluation, and providing either case examples or fictional accounts of how different types of methodologies answer different evaluation questions, would be very welcome. Relative to other sources of data/advocates related to evaluation policy in general, the Coalition of Evidence-Based Policy appears to yield more influence than AEA, but AEA is now a recognized player and has made a

valuable contribution.³ It is our assessment that the level of influence and visibility was far greater than the investment in the first few years and then leveled off. AEA did not seem to assert itself with a clear enough agenda to significantly raise its profile. Instead, with a couple of notable exceptions such as the Affordable Car Act, AEA tended to play the educator role, which appears to have less traction in the policy debate. In order to maintain or improve its external benefits, the EPTF needs to be much clearer on its goals and figure out how to engage a broader swath of the federal system or put a laser focus on one or two levers of change (e.g. OMB).

Benefits Summary. It is hard to monetize the benefits of the EPTF's work, with the significance of the outcomes being a matter of expectations and subjective value. The work seems to have far exceeded the expectations of those participating in it, a positive indicator of the benefits achieved. The fact that the EPTF remained so actively engaged and positive is an indicator of benefit at some level, especially given the profile of the task force. The policy benefits were significant in the sense that influencing any aspect of federal policy is very difficult. The fact that there are some visibly attributable changes in some policies is a clear victory for the EPTF.

Cost-Benefit Analysis. Given the investment to date, reasonable expectations for influence include achieving relatively minor policy changes and increasing awareness of the issue. Should AEA continue this approach, it might expect more of the same and may start to see some ripples of their work. Should AEA wish to see a more significant impact, concerted effort needs to be placed on large, more risky bets, such as OMB. It is not inconceivable that AEA could continue at the same level of investment and continue to make inroads. Currently the capacity is sufficient as the efforts are more or less responsive and can opportunities can be taken or ignored based on capacity. Should the efforts be more targeted, the flexibility would go down, but so to would the potential scope of engagement. As AEA's reputation grows, it is likely that the demands placed on the part-time consultant will be overwhelming and AEA may suffer from not having a more dedicated staff for stability. Further, more deliberate outcomes and dedicated resources are likely necessary to increase membership interest and engagement in policy. Such activities could be done in a limited way on a volunteer basis (i.e. other members, such as those on the task force), but such engagement would likely be spotty. One potential alternative approach for AEA is for AEA to work in partnership with other associations that might have an interest in establishing federal guidelines for policies in their area. AEA could then work with these organizations directly and avoid direct government engagement regarding specific policies.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DOES THE EXTERNAL PANEL HAVE FOR NEXT STEPS IN TERMS OF CONTINUING FUNDING AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS?

From the experience of the panel, sustainable policy influence requires far more resources than have been invested in the EPTF, or that the EPTF has utilized. It is clear from the data collected that although the EPTF had initial, and relatively quick, success, without continued support, the influence will wither and definitions of evaluation will be defined by others. While it was not in the scope of the panel to research and benchmark other influencing types of organizations, some models exist that may shed light on future directions.

One approach is to emulate the type of influencing efforts of the Coalition for Evidence-Based

³ Other sources listed by external interviewees include: the Washington evaluators group; the Office of Foreign Development Assistance group within the federal government and the Coalition of evidence-based policy.

Policy.⁴ While it is understood the Coalition has significant private funding and grants, certain approaches that are used by the Coalition resonated with some of the key informants, including the publication of frequent white papers and policy proposals, development of clearinghouse of examples of the type of methodology they advocate, and resource websites. The Coalition has at least five full-time staff and a clearly defined focus. It also appears to focus primarily on partnering with the Office of Management and Budget and with a few key legislators to assure its message is incorporated into policy. It then works with agencies willing to embrace its approach.

An alternative model may be found in larger professional associations such as the American Psychological Association (APA). The success of APA has been a result of a systematically supported effort with a designated staff housed in the APA's Practice Directorate. The Practice Directorate functions to promote the practice of psychology and the accessibility and availability of psychological services through legislative and judicial advocacy, public education and marketplace initiatives. The Practice Directorate is staffed by salaried professionals, PhD psychologists, attorneys, administrative support and interns. APA engages policy makers on issues, and focuses its efforts this way, attempting to influence policy and regulation that is of interest to psychologists on topics including education, healthcare, terrorism and welfare reform.

While it may be easy to draw a direct comparison in terms of outcomes for the APA in contrast to the AEA, there are several important differences to consider. The focus of APA is the practice of psychology, though diverse, it is likely not as multifaceted as the practice of evaluation. In addition, the organizational structure and the membership dues are quite different, with the APA far exceeding AEA in terms of membership dues, ranging from approximately \$250 to \$400 per year, which supports the APA organizational structure. That being said, it is nonetheless important to consider what it takes to advocate successfully an effective and favorable policy agenda for evaluation. Salaried staff has the ability to monitor policy shifts, anticipate and take advantage of opportunities as they arise, while volunteers do not have that flexibility -- but it comes with a cost. For the APA, given the goal of making psychology practice and benefits prominent, the changes in coverage for psychological services and the impending healthcare reform, the potential gains are substantive. Given the breadth of evaluation practice, the return on investment may be more challenging to address succinctly and to estimate in terms of investment and cost.

Based on the data collected, these comparisons, and the panel's experience with the practice of advocacy and influence activities, the panel found four areas of recommendations for the AEA board to consider in moving forward.

Sustainability

- Continue EPTF as a Task Force for the next two years, with a mandate to make a clear recommendation to the board about either disbanding or institutionalizing policy work. Despite its history, the work of the EPTF is at a critical point as it turns from broad start-up activity, or proof-of-concept, to a more specific agenda. In our opinion, this transition makes it too early to call for institutionalization of the task force at this time. However, the task force is now well positioned to articulate a specific agenda, pursue that agenda and identify whether there is a role, writ large, for AEA to play in the policy arena.
- As the EPTF moves forward, it should develop and articulate a theory of change framework that will guide its influence activities. Along with the theory of change, the panel recommends the EPTF develop corresponding performance measures to track progress and success.

⁴ The Coalition was selected primarily because it was the most frequently mentioned influencer of evaluation policy at the federal level.

Outreach Strategy

- Establish clearer parameters for engaging in influential policy debates. While up to this point a more broad-based approach has been merited, primarily as AEA has established an advocacy reputation and developed some of its own messaging, further engagement needs to be seen through a more proactive and deliberate strategy. At the least, AEA should identify whether it wants to pursue an influencing role through more of a policy-shaping approach or a general education approach. These require widely different skill sets, different messages and distinct points of intervention.
- Consider developing more action-oriented position papers. While the Roadmap was a useful document to lay out underlying principles, it is clear that federal legislative and executive agencies are in need of very practical “how-to” guides that both make a specific case and provide guidelines. AEA might decide that it is not possible to do this with its broad-based membership, in which case significant additional work needs to be done to hone its messaging toward concrete, actionable policy. It might be said that the Roadmap was not pithy enough to wield direct influence in the policy realm.
- Consider identifying and comparing the policy-shaping strategies and practices of other associations that likely have a broad policy mandate such as AEA, in addition to those already mentioned. This might include the American Political Science Association. Organizations like the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the American Enterprise Institute might also provide insight on how AEA might pursue a broad policy agenda. This may inform and provide insight on how AEA could adapt the strategies used by other organizations to support its efforts in influencing federal evaluation policy.
- Proactively follow up with the people already engaged to continue dialog and to help AEA clarify its message and provide services that will resonate with the target audiences.
- Develop an outreach strategy that takes into account target audience mobility and use this to stay engaged with both the individuals and the organizations they represent. Maintain contact with the individual and when it becomes known that she or he is leaving or has left, engage that person at her or his new organization as well as find out the replacement at the former organization and engage that person.
- Use a snowball technique to generate “leads” for further engagement within an organization based on existing good connections and look for opportunities to bring policymakers and practitioners (if they are different) together. This may be done using an approach of “How to respond to X mandate.”
- Continue to use the EPTF to promote awareness to its membership of the importance of federal evaluation policy. While this should not be the primary focus of the EPTF, the EPTF could be a source to help develop information campaigns for the AEA membership on how federal evaluation policy affects evaluation in various sectors.

Roadmap Changes

- Continue to update the Roadmap, or provide companion pieces. This may include adapting it for State and Local government use and relating it to non-profits and other organizations that receive federal funding.
- Consider putting out publications that focus on successful examples of multiple types of methods that address the interests of federal policymakers and how to do it. Provide decision-making guidelines on selecting appropriate methods.

Operational

- Consider deeper engagement of AEA members in advocacy activities. It is clear that AEA as an association cannot possibly cover all the potential areas of evaluation policy in the federal government, much less international or state/local policy. As such, AEA will need to hone its approach (described above) from an overall institutional perspective. However, more could likely be done to catalyze aspects of AEA to use broad Association materials (such as the Roadmap) in targeted advocacy activities. For example, this would be a good example of how the Topic Interest Groups could have a more relevant role for members by monitoring policies related to their specific interests, thereby more deeply engaging members. At a minimum, AEA could use more member “crowd sourcing” to gain intelligence on areas for potential influence.
- Proceed with the expansion of the EPTF. It is our assessment that the proposed expansion of the EPTF is appropriate to draw additional volunteers to the work. We recommend that the composition remain fairly high level, include government representatives and provide opportunities for other active AEA members.
- Consider partnerships with other associations or entities that might be able to leverage AEA positions and expertise within their general policy advocacy. While evaluation might not be at the top of their list, the imperative of effectiveness in today’s political landscape means that questions of what constitutes effectiveness will be central to the debate. In this way, AEA might help other associations provide credible and well-articulated guidelines around assessment in their particular issue area.
- Consider establishing the EPTF function separately from the role of the President so that longer-term focus can be maintained and influence within the AEA organization is less tied to a particular President’s interests or attention.

CONCLUSION

The Evaluation Policy Task Force achieved moderate influence with few resources within a short amount of time. Its guidance has advanced the American Evaluation Association as a voice in federal evaluation discussions and policymaking. From the panel's limited data collection efforts, it is apparent that no other organization provides the breadth and depth of knowledge that could be accessed by federal policymakers and evaluators. However, the influence cannot be sustained, if the EPTF is not adequately supported. The panel believes that the AEA, through the EPTF, should continue its efforts to influence federal evaluation policy. However, if continuation is to happen, the panel strongly suggests that future efforts be:

Systematic

As noted, the EPTF is at a critical juncture and it should now shift to having a more targeted approach, with regular activities. The panel suggests the use of a theory of change approach to advocacy and outreach and moving toward a defined, strategic approach, and less reliance on opportunistic, ad hoc efforts.

Ongoing

The EPTF must have frequent and regular interactions and engagements. The marketing adage that effective communication requires seven times in seven ways, but not spaced seven months apart seems applicable. It was clear from the key informant interviews that lack of follow-up and engagement can result in a lack of attention. There is a strong element of relationship management within the federal influence area, and to remain relevant, one must persist through continuous messaging.

Resourced

From the data, it is clear that the capacity of the consultant was essential to the success of the EPTF. This not only includes the time resources, but the skills, contacts, and ability to generate rapport and trust. It is essential that the Board identify someone who can fulfill a large commitment to leading the advocacy work.

Updated Regularly

Some of the key informants indicated they often look for "the most recent" piece of information and without revisions, "new releases," or companion pieces, documents like the Roadmap, while accepted, may become forgotten. The EPTF could also play a role in updating the AEA membership about policies, regulations, legislation, etc. that can have a significant impact upon the field and practice of evaluation.

Proactive

To move forward, the EPTF should transition its role to anticipating federal evaluation needs, rather than primarily reacting to evaluation threats or ideas generated by others. A suggested goal for the EPTF is instead of fighting to get a seat at the table, should be seen as the beginning of the conversation about evaluation and measurement of public policy and programs.

APPENDIX 1: EPTF MEMBER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How and why did you personally choose to get involved with the EPTF?
2. What has been your role in the EPTF?
 - a. How much time have you spent, on average, each month?
 - b. What kind of activities were you involved in?
3. What do you think have been the 1 or 2 largest accomplishments of the EPTF to date?
 - a. Influence legislative language?
 - b. Influence executive language?
 - c. Uptake of the roadmap and roadmap principles?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how successful has the EPTF been? Why do you give it that assessment?
 - a. Has AEA gotten it's "money's worth" out of EPTF?
 - b. The EPTF worked in a number of policy areas. Of these, would you consider any of them to have a broader catalytic effect extending beyond the direct targets?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how strategic has the EPTF been? Why do you give it that assessment?
6. How would you characterize the evaluation message that the EPTF wanted to convey?
7. The potential field of advocacy for evaluation is quite spacious. How did the EPTF decide how and where to focus its work?
 - a. Was there a theory of change?
 - b. Was there clarity on the type of change sought/influence targets?
 - c. Was there a clear advocacy "role" the EPTF envisioned?
 - d. How were targets selected?
 - e. To what extent did the EPTF prioritize the approach based on guidance from the board (e.g. being opportunistic)
 - f. What were the priorities of the EPTF?
8. Can you talk a little bit about the relationship between EPTF activities/goals and the role of AEA as a broad membership organization?
 - a. What has been the role/potential role of non-EPTF AEA stakeholders?
 - i. Board
 - ii. TIGs
 - iii. Foundations/Researchers/Nonprofits/etc.
 - iv. General AEA membership
9. To what extent do AEA and the EPTF have the institutional capacity to continue substantive policy influencing?
 - a. What has been the role of the EPTF committee in relation to the hired consultant and the AEA staff?
10. What are some of the key lessons learned you feel have emerged from AEA's experience with EPTF, including how, if at all, AEA should continue the work of the EPTF?
11. Given all we've discussed, how would you summarize your role and influence in EPTF?

12. Recommendations

APPENDIX 2: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol: External Key Informants (Federal Agencies – Assumed to have been involved with the EPTF)

1. Tell me a little about what you do at (*specify interviewee's agency/organization*).
2. Can you talk a little about the role of evaluation within your agency/organization?
3. Have you been involved with the American Evaluation Association?
 - a. If Yes: Can you tell me about that?
4. Are you familiar with the AEA's *Evaluation Policy Task Force* (EPTF) or the AEA's policy statements or guidelines – *Evaluation Roadmap for a More Effective Government*?

If Yes:

 - a. How did you become familiar with the EPTF/Guidelines? Listen for references to the Roadmap or policy statements, principles, guidelines, etc.) – Probe for details.
 - b. Did you have an opportunity to talk with any of the AEA and/or EPTF members?
 - c. Did your familiarity with, and/or discussions/interactions with the EPTF/AEA have an effect on your work at (*specify interviewee's agency/organization*)
 - i. PROBE for descriptive information
 - d. Please describe if the Roadmap or policy statements, principles, guidelines are being used by others in your (*agency/organization*)
 - i. PROBE for details on diffusion
5. Are there other external organizations, associations, etc. you interact with to provide you information on program evaluation or evaluation policy?
 - a. If Yes: Who are these organizations?
 - b. How effective is the EPTF in comparison to these organizations?
6. How could the EPTF and/or AEA be more helpful to (*specify interviewee's agency/organization*)?
7. Do you believe that organizations like AEA can be effective in shaping evaluation policy within the federal government?
 - a. If so, ask: What strategies or approaches would you suggest?
8. If you were advising the AEA EPTF on working with agencies/organizations like your own, what advice would you give to optimize the impact of their efforts to influence evaluation policy?
 - a. Where should they target their efforts?
 - b. What resources would your agency/organization need to promote and sustain the efforts of the EPTF?
 - c. What would you advise the EPTF NOT to do?
 - d. If evaluation results are not used, ask for reasons, etc.
9. Are there any other comments you'd like to make about anything we've talked about or perhaps something that I haven't mentioned?