## Funding What Works

Tiered evidence grants reward approaches backed by rigorous evidence

AN OVERVIEW OF GAO-16-818

THE CHALLENGE: **Targeting** federal grants to fund projects that work while **Encouraging** innovative new

approaches.



Do agencies always know how well the projects they're funding are working?

Tiered evidence grants can help agencies target grant funds more effectively

by directing more funding to projects that show evidence that they work



and less to

projects that











Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program at the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services

Goal: To provide resources and skills for at-risk families

States, tribal entities, and nonprofit organizations can apply for two types of awards:



to replicate an existing home visiting service (for applicants with strong supporting evidence)



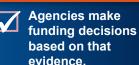
to develop a promising but untested home visiting service (for applicants with less supporting evidence)

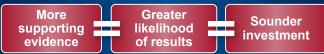
Total program funding in FY 2015: \$400 million

What are tiered evidence grants and how do they work?



Applicants provide evidence of how well they expect their project to address a problem.





**Tiered Evidence Grant Model** (The size of grant awards is linked to the strength of the evidence provided in the application.)



Tiered evidence grants can spur innovation by funding the development of new projects and practices at the lower tiers.

The highest tier allows large-scale implementation of the most promising projects.

Several federal agencies have used a tiered evidence grant model, including:









What kind of evidence do grant applicants need to provide?

According to a 2013 OMB memo, evidence includes:







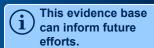
other relevant data analytics and research studies

How do these grants change the federal grantmaking process?

Tiered evidence grants require evidence and evaluation requirements as part of the federal grant life cycle.



**Grantees submit** evidence as they apply, which builds the evidence base.





Clearinghouses—agency repositories of evaluation findings—can make research easier to access.

What are some factors for successful tiered evidence grantmaking?

## **Agencies**

- Capacity to comprehensively oversee and provide technical assistance to grantees throughout the grant life
- Evaluation and program offices that
- Top leadership support and commitment

## **Grantees**

- · Capacity to fulfill evidence and evaluation requirements, such as: · Implementing the project as planned
  - Conducting rigorous evaluations

