

Research and Evaluation

Overview

The National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) at FHI 360 conducts high-quality research and evaluation to inform policies, practices and program models in education, employment, social services, and community systems. Our expertise is cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary. Our approach combines methodological rigor with deep content knowledge and a commitment to collaboration.

Collaboration We design research studies and evaluations in tandem with clients and partners. Together we home in on questions, outcomes and methodologies that respect local norms and deliver actionable results. Our data collection and reporting techniques are designed to build comfort and capacity with data among our clients and partners, so that the results of our evaluations are always more than a report.

Rigor We provide comprehensive research and evaluation services, including environmental scans and literature reviews; study design; survey development and administration; interviews, focus groups and observations; accessing and managing large data sets; and data analysis and reporting. We carefully select the right mix of methodologies to arrive at valid and reliable results that can drive decision-making.



Relevance We tailor how we communicate results so that educators, families, program managers and policy makers can readily understand and act on salient findings. We believe it is crucial to produce compelling visuals that bring data to life.

Literature Reviews, Needs Assessments, and Environmental Scans

Sometimes the biggest question is where to start. Research can identify the scope of the problem, the universe of potential solutions and where innovation is needed. To help partners shape priorities, NIWL conducts needs assessments, literature reviews, and environmental scans.

AmeriCorps Alumni Engagement Formative Research

To help the Corporation for National and Community Service build a robust alumni program, NIWL researchers conducted literature reviews, environmental scans of similar programs, and interviews with AmeriCorps members and alumni and outside experts. The research informed a comprehensive set of recommendations to support program development.

Afterschool Coordination Follow-Up Study

This study investigated the sustainability and expansion of afterschool systems in large U.S. cities. In telephone and online surveys, FHI 360 researchers explored the adoption and sustainability of key components that are fundamental to afterschool system-building.

Southeast Arkansas Community Blueprint for Prevention

Collaborating with Phoenix Youth and Family Services, NIWL gathered data on violence and crime risk factors and mapped community assets to develop a blueprint for preventing youth

arrest and incarceration. This community blueprint is now being implemented with support from the Walmart Foundation.

Formative Assessments and Case Studies

Continuous improvement requires careful and ongoing attention to key milestones and data. Constructive insights from a critical friend can help. As a formative evaluator, NIWL reports on key progress indicators and stakeholder feedback. In case studies, NIWL documents community stories and lessons learned.

Evaluation of the Tiwahe Initiative

This Bureau of Indian Affairs demonstration initiative centers Tribal communities in developing coordinated strategies to address interrelated economic, health and wellbeing challenges. As evaluator, NIWL worked closely with six pilot Tribal communities to tailor appropriate evaluation protocols, understand nuanced community stories, and document the positive outcomes of the five-year initiative.

Going the Extra Mile: A Case Study of Rural Reentry in Arkansas

This case study examines Phoenix Youth and Family Services' approach to supporting young adults who are reentering their communities from involvement with the criminal justice system. The study documents how Phoenix has excelled on key reentry outcomes.

Evaluations of Bridge to Employment, Pathway to Success, and WiSTEM²D

As the internal evaluator for Johnson & Johnson community programs focused on college and career readiness, STEM, and employee engagement, NIWL manages a complex data set of quantitative and qualitative program and outcome measures from sites worldwide. We provide program managers key findings to inform decisions.

Summative Evaluations and Impact Studies

When quantifiable evidence of effectiveness is called for, NIWL designs randomized controlled and quasi-

experimental studies, including sampling methods, power calculations and complex analysis plans.

Evaluation of Pennsylvania Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)

For more than a decade, we have assisted Pennsylvania's statewide GEAR UP program to design evaluation plans that meet Federal guidance, align program goals to activities and intended outcomes, and collect and report on evidence of impact. The rigorous design compares GEAR UP participants against a matched cohort to deepen understanding of the program's effects.

Evaluations of Junior Achievement's More than Money and Building a Financially Capable Generation

Our mixed-methods evaluations of Junior Achievement's financial literacy programs apply quantitative and qualitative analyses. Regression analyses of pre- and post-surveys examine the effect of participation on knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy among students and volunteer instructors while interviews explore the experiences of volunteers and staff.



About NIWL: FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL) focuses on two key drivers of individual well-being - education and employment -to improve lives. The beneficiaries of our programs are underserved and marginalized populations, those impacted by poverty, displacement from school or employment, involvement with the justice system, and systemic and institutional inequities. Working with foundations, government agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, businesses, community-based organizations, and the workforce system

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