

# Formative Evaluation of the National Science Foundation's Career-Life Balance (CLB) Initiative

Client: National Science Foundation

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## Project Overview

Insight is developing a formative evaluation for the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Career-Life Balance (CLB) Initiative. The CLB is a 10-year initiative that supports family-friendly policy solutions that intend to promote work-life balance among science and engineering graduate students, postdoctorate fellows, and faculty at institutions of higher education. Supplemental grants can be used in a variety of ways including hiring temporary staff to maintain research while investigators are on family leave, dual-career hires, and research and dissemination of family-friendly best practices. The overall goal of the CLB Initiative is to increase the retention of women in tenure-track science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) faculty positions, particularly women of color, and serve as a leader in family-friendly policies internationally.



This 18-month formative evaluation contract is designed to assess the CLB Initiative after the first 3 years of implementation. The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the implementation of the initiative, analyze the policy adoption among grantees, and gauge the CLB's progress towards its program goals.

This multiphase evaluation includes the following components:

- Coordinate with an Expert Committee composed of professionals with expertise on issues related to gender, STEM, career-life balance, and evaluation design to review the evaluation plan, focus group protocols, and interview protocols.
- Identify current literature on the issues of women in STEM and career-life balance policies through a document and environmental scan.
- Conduct focus groups with NSF program directors to document the structure of the supplemental grants, program activities to date, communication and outreach by NSF, and successes and challenges in implementation and operation.
- Conduct in-depth interviews with more than 50 grantees to provide a series of case studies focusing on policy adoption and overall perceptions of initiative implementation, successes, and barriers.

The findings will present the CLB Initiative's successes and challenges to date and make recommendations for improvements. This will allow NSF to receive feedback and improve the effectiveness of the initiative. The results also will inform the creation of an impact evaluation plan, which will be implemented following the completion of a formative evaluation.

## Core Activities

Logic Model Reviews; Expert Committee Panel; Literature Reviews and Environmental Scans; Data Collection; Focus Groups; In-Depth Interviews; Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Primary and Secondary Data; Report Development and Presentation

## Products

- Evaluation mid-point progress report
- Final report summarizing evaluation findings and a plan for an impact evaluation