



Spice Up Your Skills
in the **BIG EASY**



NLPES Professional Development Seminar 2024 AGENDA

Hotel Monteleone • New Orleans • Oct. 8-10, 2024

Monday, Oct. 7 – Registration at the Hotel Monteleone

4-6 p.m. <i>Queen Anne Mezzanine</i>	Registration and Information Desk Beat the rush and check-in early. Don't forget your badge and meeting packet!	
4-5:30 p.m. <i>Queen Anne A</i>	NLPES Executive Committee Meeting Presiding, Jennifer Sebren, deputy director, Mississippi PEER Committee	

Tuesday, Oct. 8 – All Sessions at the Hotel Monteleone

8 a.m.-4 p.m. <i>Queen Anne Mezzanine</i>	Registration and Information Desk Check-in, get your badge and meeting packet before the sessions start!	
8:30-9:30 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	Plenary Session: Welcome to NOLA and Legislative Perspectives This plenary session will kick off the PDS with presentations from Louisiana's Legislative Auditor (Mike Waguespack) and area legislators who will speak on the value of audits and evaluations Moderators: Mike Waguespack, legislative auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Karen Leblanc, director, Performance Audit Services, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Members of Louisiana Audit Advisory Council	Plenary
9:30-9:45 a.m. <i>Queen Anne Foyer</i>	Beignets and Café Au Lait Grab a morning snack and enjoy some southern hospitality with beignets and café au lait.	Snack
CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
9:45-10:45 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	Strategic Audit Planning A successful audit begins with a well-thought-out plan. But how do we get there? How do we know if we are evaluating the right areas the right way? States will share how their offices choose audit topics, their processes to plan effective and efficient audits, and the lessons they have learned along the way. Moderator: Kristen Jacobs, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: McKenzie Cantlon, lead auditor, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General Ashley Brecheen, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Nehemiah Chinavare, assistant principal performance auditor, Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau	Track Junior Evaluators

<p>9:45-10:45 a.m. <i>Royal Salon</i></p>	<p>Evaluating our Work: Measuring Impact Panelists will discuss ways they assess the impact of their work, including follow-up processes, calculating financial benefits, and other qualitative and quantitative measures that demonstrate the value of their work.</p> <p>Moderator: Krista Baker-Hernandez, performance audit manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Nina Frant, performance audit quality assurance director, Colorado Office of the State Auditor Marcus Morgan, director, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services Becky Beachy, audit manager, Texas State Auditor’s Office</p>	<p>Track Senior Evaluators</p>
<p>9:45-10:45 a.m. <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Evaluating Elections This session will focus on three recent audits of elections. Utah’s review of the 2022 election found no evidence systematic problems, widespread errors, or significant fraud. Wisconsin’s evaluation focused on a broad range of elections administration topics, Louisiana’s audit addressed controls to ensure the accuracy of voter registration data, and the state’s implementation of best practices from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.</p> <p>Moderator: Mohri Exline, senior auditor, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit Speakers: Julie Floyd, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Leah Blevins, audit manager, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General Ross Ryan, principal performance evaluator, Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>
<p>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</p>		
<p>11 a.m.-Noon <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i></p>	<p>Gathering Evidence/Developing Conclusions and Findings Collecting and determining how much evidence is needed is vital to successfully developing well supported conclusions and findings. This panel will be an interactive experience where participants will be provided different evaluation scenarios and asked to brainstorm ways to collect sufficient evidence and then how best to develop findings and conclusions based on that evidence. To include different perspectives, the panelists represent states that both follow and do not follow Government Auditing Standards (known as the "Yellow Book").</p> <p>Moderator: Gina Brown, performance audit manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speaker: Rachel Kelly, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Patrick Dean, assistant director, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services</p>	<p>Track Junior Evaluators</p>
<p>11 a.m.-Noon <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Beyond Audits and Evaluations: How We Help in Other Ways Panelists from Washington, Maryland, and Utah will share examples of assignments and initiatives that support efficient and effective government functioning beyond audits and evaluations. Short presentations will be given on 1) The Center for Government Innovation in Washington; 2) Evaluating in real-time: The COVID vaccination experience; and 3) Utah’s high-risk list and best practices handbooks.</p> <p>Moderator: Melanie Stidham, research analyst, Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee Speakers: Darin R. "DRU" Underwood, deputy auditor general, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General Michael Powell, director, Maryland Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability Jolene Stanislawski, performance auditor, Washington State Auditor’s Office</p>	<p>Track Senior Evaluators</p>

<p>11 a.m.-Noon <i>Royal Salon</i></p>	<p>Evaluating Vulnerable Populations: Methods and Ethics Evaluating programs for vulnerable populations—such as those with severe mental illness, incarcerated people, and nursing home residents—can be challenging, especially when performance data are lacking. Evaluators must select methods that are defensible, practical and ethically sound. In this session, panelists will share insights from evaluations of state psychiatric hospitals, child protection services and correctional programs, highlighting key lessons learned.</p> <p>Moderator: Jason Juffras, senior analyst, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor Speakers: Jodie Debetaz, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Drew Dickinson, chief legislative analyst, Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission David Kirchner, evaluation coordinator, Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>
<p>12:15-1:15 p.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i></p>	<p>Lunch Plenary: NLPES Awards Ceremony Grab a po’boy and sweet tea and let’s recognize and celebrate the winners of this year’s Outstanding Achievement Award, Excellence in Evaluation Award, Excellence in Research Methods Awards and Certificates of Impact (see awards list on the app for winners).</p> <p>Presiding: Jennifer Sebren, NLPES chair 2024-2025, Mississippi Jeanine Brown, NLPES Awards Committee chair, 2023-2024 Speaker: John Snyder, NCSL Staff Chair, Kentucky</p>	<p>Plenary</p>
<p>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</p>		
<p>1:30-2:30 p.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i></p>	<p>Designing Meaningful Surveys-Roundtable Surveys are an efficient means to gather information and collect opinions simultaneously from a large number of people, but their effectiveness depends on the quality of their design. Because evaluators are using surveys much more frequently, it is important to consider how well we are designing them. A well-constructed survey not only motivates a high response rate, but helps to ensure the responses themselves are valid, reliable and can add value to our evaluations</p> <p>Moderator: Amanda G. Sanford, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Savana Griffin, policy lead, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services Sam Rebenstorf, assistant principal performance evaluator, Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau Lauren Bailey, senior evaluator, Idaho Office of Performance Evaluations</p>	<p>Track Junior Evaluators</p>
<p>1:30-2:30 p.m. <i>Royal Salon</i></p>	<p>IT Related Issues and Reviews This session will focus on a broad array of IT evaluation topics, including auditing practices in cybersecurity, IT project oversight, and assessing data reliability from existing IT systems. It will cover Utah's Office of Legislative Auditor General's 2023 audit of the cybersecurity posture of government agencies, highlight findings from the Arizona Auditor General's performance audit of the state government IT project oversight, and introduce tools for assessing data reliability per Yellow Book standards.</p> <p>Moderator: Micaela Fischer, deputy director for program evaluation, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Speakers: Kade Minchey, auditor general, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General John Clinch, senior performance audit manager, New Hampshire Miguel Caro Mateus, performance audit manager, Arizona Auditor General</p>	<p>Track Senior Evaluators</p>

<p>1:30-2:30 p.m. <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Workforce Development Evaluations Workforce development encompasses a wide range of programs and services to help employees improve their job skills, career opportunities and earnings, and to help employers fill workforce shortages and avoid layoffs. Federal and state government investments in workforce development make it imperative that states and agencies implement effective programs with measurable outcomes, including those focused on at-risk populations. Presenters from three states will share challenges, findings and recommendations from their respective workforce development program evaluations.</p> <p>Moderator: Jennifer Sebren, deputy director, Mississippi PEER Committee Speakers: Tori Hall, principal evaluator, Maryland Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability Sarah Dinces, principal program evaluator, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Chris Magee, data analytics manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>
CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
<p>2:45-3:45 p.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i></p>	<p>From Draft to Impact: Transforming Reports with Purpose Discover strategies to refine reports that engage different audiences, emphasize core ideas and communicate with clarity and precision.</p> <p>Moderator: Patrick Dean, assistant director, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services Speakers: Macie Smith, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit Kristen Jacobs, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Olha Bilobran, Washington State Auditor’s Office</p>	<p>Track Junior Evaluators</p>
<p>2:45-3:45 p.m. <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Innovative Research Methods – Winners of 2024 Methodology Awards Listen to evaluators from Alabama and Kansas talk about their award-winning methodologies and get inspiration for how you can adapt them to your state’s needs. This year’s Excellence in Research Methods Award Winners will talk about how their innovative methods allowed them to leverage data from across state government to answer questions specifically related to education.</p> <p>Reports discussed: A Follow-Up Evaluation of the Teacher Workforce, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services Estimating the Cost of K-12 Education, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit</p> <p>Moderator: Courtney Stevenson, senior research methodologist, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Marcus Morgan, director, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services Cade Graber, senior auditor, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit Savana Griffin, policy lead, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services</p>	<p>Track Senior Evaluators</p>
<p>2:45-3:45 p.m. <i>Royal Salon</i></p>	<p>Auditing Organizational Culture The culture of an organization impacts efficiency, effectiveness and the ability of an entity, such as a state agency, to fulfill its mission. In this session, you will hear about recent projects that evaluated organization culture of agencies in Louisiana and Utah including the Department of Children and Family services, state prisons, and smaller agencies. We will discuss strategies, such as surveys and interviews, for obtaining evidence to evaluate organizational culture and have time for Q&A.</p> <p>Moderator: Julie Floyd, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Brian Dean, deputy auditor general, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General Emily Dixon, performance audit manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>

4:30-6 p.m. <i>Royal Ballroom</i>	Certificate of Impact Award: Poster Session and Happy Hour Learn about this year's Certificate of Impact winning reports. Grab a refreshment and nosh while you chat and check out the posters!	Plenary
6 p.m.	Explore the French Quarter and Grab Dinner on Your Own	

Wednesday, Oct. 9 – All Sessions at the Hotel Monteleone

8 a.m.-4 p.m. <i>Queen Anne Mezzanine</i>	Registration and Information Desk Check-in, get your badge and meeting packet before the sessions start!	
7-8 a.m.	Breakfast on Your Own	
8-9:15 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	Staying Relevant in a Divided Society As the country faces increasing polarization, auditors and evaluators can serve a critical role for state legislatures operating in a divided environment. The former legislative auditor for Washington state will reflect on his career and provide suggestions for how auditors can stay relevant and assist legislatures in these challenging times. Speaker: Keenan Konopaski, Washington state legislative auditor (retired) and 2024 NLPES Outstanding Achievement Award Winner	Plenary
CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
9:30-10:30 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	Conducting Effective Interviews Our goals for this session are to explain what an effective interview is, take you through the process of preparing for the interview, conducting the interview and documenting the interview. Plus, tips and tricks to help you become a better communicator. Finally, we will tie together all these facets in hopes they can be used to create and document your audit findings more effectively. Moderator: Lauren Whatley, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: John Holland, assistant principal performance evaluator, Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau John Harrington, management and program analyst manager, Montana Legislative Audit Division Stephanie Winzeler, performance audit supervisor, Colorado Office of the State Auditor	Track Junior Evaluators
9:30-10:30 a.m. <i>Royal Salon</i>	Developing a Training Curriculum: Roundtable This roundtable will include a discussion on how states develop training that meets the needs of all their staff. Each panelist will discuss the training in their offices, advantages and challenges in assessing and planning training, and innovative or unique ideas around training. Moderator: Marcia A. Lindsay, deputy director, South Carolina Legislative Audit Committee Speakers: Jenny Page, director of strategic operations, Colorado Office of the State Auditor Jodi Munson Rodriguez, deputy legislative auditor, Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor Krista Baker-Hernandez, performance audit manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor	Track Senior Evaluators

<p>9:30-10:30 a.m. <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Evaluating Medicaid Each state’s Medicaid program involves many levels of administration and impacts different groups of stakeholders. Panelists will discuss different approaches they have taken to auditing their states’ oversight of Medicaid, with areas of focus ranging from beneficiary access to services, monitoring providers and managed care organizations, and holding the state accountable for fulfilling its overall responsibilities.</p> <p>Moderator: Lauren Pendas, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Chris Magee, data analytics manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Ryan Langrill, interim director, Idaho Office of Performance Evaluations Brent McDougall, performance audit senior data analyst, Louisiana Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>
CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
<p>10:45– 11:45 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i></p>	<p>Making Fieldwork Work (and Even Fun!) Crossing the fieldwork finish line into reporting can sometimes seem like a daunting task, especially when walking the fine line between completing work on time and producing a quality, impactful end product. Participants will leave this panel with tips on how to overcome common challenges faced during fieldwork based on actual evaluations.</p> <p>Moderator: Gina Brown, performance audit manager, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Mohri Exline, senior auditor, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit Misty Perry, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Mackenzie Moss, senior evaluator, Idaho Office of Performance Evaluations</p>	<p>Track Junior Evaluators</p>
<p>10:45- 11:45 a.m. <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Working with Specialists: When, Why and How Panelists will share examples of working with external specialists who offer special skills and expertise. The discussion will include the various roles these experts play in the audit and evaluation process and how to manage risks involved in engaging outsiders.</p> <p>Moderator: Michael Powell, director, Maryland Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability Speakers: Tina Chamberlin, associate management and program analyst, Montana Legislative Audit Division Lonnie Edgar, deputy director, Mississippi PEER Committee Nathan Clubb, senior analyst, Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts</p>	<p>Track Senior Evaluators</p>
<p>10:45- 11:45 a.m. <i>Royal Salon</i></p>	<p>Capital/Infrastructure Projects Capital and infrastructure projects, which can last for years or even decades, represent a substantial commitment of public resources and can face intense political and regulatory scrutiny. Evaluating these projects poses unique challenges due to their size, technical and political complexity, and long timelines. Panel members with diverse evaluation experiences including transportation, port, school and prison projects, will offer insights on overcoming obstacles and effectively evaluating capital and infrastructure projects</p> <p>Moderator: Matt Fahrenbruch, senior performance auditor, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit Speakers: Irina Hampton, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Casey Petti, principal evaluator, Idaho Office of Performance Evaluations David Kirchner, evaluation coordinator, Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>

<p>Noon-1:15 p.m. Queen Anne/Parlor</p>	<p>Lunch with Patrick Goldsmith: Lessons Learned from the Other Side</p> <p>Get a plate of N’Awlins grub and sit down for a talk with Patrick Goldsmith. He’ll give his insights about communicating with the executive branch and what he came to appreciate about the legislature after crossing over... to the other side.</p> <p>Speaker: Patrick Goldsmith, deputy commissioner, Louisiana Division of Administration, former director of the Louisiana House Fiscal Division and former director of Performance Audit at the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.</p> <p>* Tribute to Greg Fugate will also take place. Presented by Nina Frant with the Colorado Office of the State Auditor</p>	<p>Plenary</p>
<p>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</p>		
<p>1:30-2:30 p.m. Queen Anne/Parlor</p>	<p>How to Succeed as a Junior Evaluator-Roundtable</p> <p>This roundtable discussion on the qualities of successful Junior Evaluators, will consider the unique expectations and challenges faced by new evaluators and opportunities to support their growth and development.</p> <p>Moderator: Emily Braun, staff performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor</p> <p>Speakers: Dean Swenson, deputy state auditor for performance evaluation, Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau Drew Johnson, analyst, Mississippi PEER Committee Jodi Munson Rodriguez, deputy legislative auditor, Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track Junior Evaluators</p>
<p>1:30-2:30 p.m. Queen Anne B</p>	<p>Enhancing Our Results - Use of Different Report Formats</p> <p>Looking for ways to present your results that will affect more positive change in government? Unlock the potential to enhance your results by discovering alternative approaches and products that member offices use to report audit work. This session will discuss innovative approaches to expand beyond the traditional hard copy report and potentially reach a wider audience.</p> <p>Moderator: Jeanine Brown, senior management analyst, Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts</p> <p>Speakers: Janna Abraham, management analyst III, Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts Sarah Carlson, senior management and program analyst, Montana Legislative Audit Division Alison Butts, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor</p>	<p>Track Senior Evaluators</p>
<p>1:30-2:30 p.m. Royal Salon</p>	<p>Evaluating Education</p> <p>In this session, panelists will present different methods they use to evaluate education in their states. They will use their experience and expertise to provide ideas for other states about what data is useful, what’s actually important and what’s not, and how this information can be shared.</p> <p>Moderator: Courtney Stevenson, senior research methodologist, Louisiana Legislative Auditor</p> <p>Speakers: Jennifer Sebren, deputy director, Mississippi PEER Committee Darin “DRU” Underwood, deputy auditor general, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General Marcus Morgan, director, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>

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2:45-4 p.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	<p>Managing Partisan Culture & Conflict in the Legislative Evaluation Lifecycle This session will explore practical ways to build and stabilize a supportive organizational culture amidst the many partisan pressures, conflicts, and difficult conversations regularly occurring for professional legislative program evaluators.</p> <p>Speaker: Andrew Marin, PhD, senior advisor, The Clearing Inc.</p>	Plenary
5:30-6:30 p.m. <i>Royal Ballroom</i>	<p>Networking Happy Hour with NALFO Let the Good Times Roll! Gather for a networking happy hour in the Royal Ballroom with our colleagues from the National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices (NALFO)!</p>	Social Event

Thursday, Oct. 10 – All Sessions at the Hotel Monteleone

8 a.m.-Noon	Information Desk	
8-9:15 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	<p>Evaluating for Impact: Rebuilding Public Trust In an era when polling tells us that public trust in government is hovering near historic lows, legislative oversight is more important than ever. Join Jim Townsend, director of the Carl Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy, for a discussion of the important role performance evaluation plays in legislative oversight and the potential it has to demonstrate program effectiveness, improve governance and rebuild public trust in our institutions.</p> <p>Speaker: James Townsend, director, Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy</p>	Plenary
CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
9:30-10:30 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i>	<p>Creative Data Analytics In this session, experts from various states will share insights on their innovative use of data analytics on recent audits. Kansas used machine learning applications and will share how it used a neural network to evaluate fraud in unemployment insurance claims. Louisiana has used both internal and external datasets to detect inefficiencies, fraud, mismanagement and errors. Colorado used a variety of techniques on an audit of its Enterprise Zones Tax Credit.</p> <p>Moderator: Mukta Pathak, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Brent McDougal, performance audit senior data analyst, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Trey Standley, performance audit and tax expenditure evaluation manager, Colorado Office of the State Auditor Cade Graber, senior auditor, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit</p>	Track Junior Evaluators
9:30-10:30 a.m. <i>Royal Salon</i>	<p>Enhancing Morale and Engagement-Roundtable What strategies can offices use to create a workplace where employees are engaged, productive, and fulfilled? Join our roundtable discussion and explore how states have made their offices of different sizes great places to work. We will discuss creating a culture of accountability that normalizes feedback, communicating effectively, generational differences in motivation, encouraging a work-life balance, and, of course, what can make offices fun!</p> <p>Moderator: Kristen Jacobs, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Marcus Morgan, director, Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services Becky Beachy, audit manager, Texas State Auditor's Office</p>	Track Senior Evaluators

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<p>9:30-10:30 a.m. <i>Queen Anne B</i></p>	<p>Auditing Natural Resources and Environmental Issues Effective management and oversight, as well as sustainable use, of natural resources are crucial for protecting both the public and the environment in our states. Panelists from Colorado, Kansas, and Utah will discuss challenges they encountered when evaluating water management and gas pipeline safety in their states, how they overcome these challenges, and why these types of evaluations are important.</p> <p>Moderator: Irina Hampton, senior performance auditor, Louisiana Legislative Auditor Speakers: Jenny Page, director of strategic operations, Colorado Office of the State Auditor Madison Hoover, performance audit supervisor, Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General Sarah Middendorf, auditor, Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit</p>	<p>Track What We Evaluate</p>
<p>10:45-11:45 a.m. <i>Queen Anne/Parlor</i></p>	<p>Plenary Session: Teambuilding Activity Lead by Louisiana Host State Staff During this session, we will work together to create something that each attendee can take home as a reminder of his/her time in New Orleans. The activity mimics several aspects of team project work while highlighting how everyone's piece of the puzzle is important in creating the big picture. * This team-building exercise will use the canvas tote bag that everyone received at check-in. Please do not pack it away or discard it if you plan on participating in this activity.</p>	<p>Plenary</p>
<p>Noon</p>	<p>SEMINAR CONCLUDES</p>	