

Ashweeta Patnaik

PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATE

EDUCATION

2007 M.P.H., The University of Texas Health Science Center

2004 B.Sc., Life Sciences, University of Mumbai

CERTIFICATIONS

2023 What Work Clearinghouse Certified Reviewer in Single-Case Design Standards (Version 5.0)

2023 What Work Clearinghouse Certified Reviewer in Group Design Standards (Version 5.0)

2009 SAS® Certified Base Programmer for SAS® 9

EXPERIENCE

Ashweeta Patnaik joined MEF Associates (MEF) in June 2022. She brings seventeen years of experience in program evaluation, policy research, and data analytics across a wide policy portfolio, including workforce development, post-secondary training, post-secondary access and completion, financial empowerment, and economic mobility. Ashweeta is an expert in quantitative research methods, data visualizations, and administrative data linkage. She also has extensive experience leading projects, providing evaluation technical assistance, designing data collection plans, designing longitudinal databases, and communicating data insights to diverse audiences. Before joining MEF, Ms. Patnaik was a Research Associate at the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources (RMC) at the University of Texas at Austin, where she designed and conducted program evaluations that leveraged administrative data to support the continuous improvement efforts of local and state human service programs and interventions. Ashweeta is keen to use data to build evidence and translate research into actionable insights that help programs create pathways out of poverty.

RELEVANT CURRENT PROJECTS

Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR). The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) funded Abt Associates, with MEF as a subcontractor, to maintain and develop CLEAR, which provides accessible information on research on labor topics and evidence about the effectiveness of related policies and programs. Ms. Patnaik is the Project Director and leads the MEF team in conducting systematic evidence reviews and quality assurance reviews of key topic areas in labor research, contributing to systematic annual reviews of relevant research, and contributing to syntheses of CLEAR's evidence reviews.

Evaluation of the Tennessee TANF Opportunity Pilot Initiative. The Tennessee Department of Human Services funded MEF to evaluate the TANF Opportunity Pilot Initiative. This multi-faceted project is focused on implementing, measuring, and testing innovative approaches to developing an effective safety net. Ms. Patnaik is the Data and Analysis Task Lead, and directs administrative, survey, and grantee management information systems data collection. She also leads the impact analysis component of the evaluation using randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

Sacramento County My Empowerment (M.E.) Project. This project, funded by the Office of Child Support Services, seeks to understand whether providing interventions such as educational support,

career training, and healthy relationships curriculum will change the attitudes and behaviors of youth around parenthood. Sacramento County's Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is collaborating with the Boys and Girls Club of Sacramento County to implement the intervention. MEF is evaluating implementation and outcomes and supporting intervention design and program partner engagement. Ms. Patnaik is the Project Director and leads MEF's work.

Strengthening the Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funded MDRC, with MEF as a subcontractor, to study ways to help Responsible Fatherhood programs overcome implementation challenges using an iterative "learning cycles" approach. Ms. Patnaik is a senior researcher on the MEF team. She provides evaluation technical assistance to Responsible Fatherhood grantees and local evaluators.

RELEVANT EARLIER PROJECTS

Integrating Financial Capability and Employment Services. ACF funded MEF, with Urban Institute as a subcontractor, to study financial capability interventions offered within the context of employment and training programs. This study sought to understand better the extent of financial capability interventions in employment and training programs, the key features of such programs, the factors that have led to their inclusion, and existing evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions. Ms. Patnaik was a senior researcher on the MEF team. She collected data through site visits, interviews, and focus groups. Ms. Patnaik also analyzed qualitative data using thematic coding and coauthored briefs and reports for ACF.

The Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse: The What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising Approaches to Move Welfare Recipients to Work. This project, funded by ACF, sought to make information on evidence about effective employment and training strategies to help improve employment outcomes and self-sufficiency among populations with low incomes more accessible through an evidence clearinghouse. MEF was a subcontractor to Mathematica Policy Research on this project. Ms. Patnaik conducted case studies of innovative interventions that had not been rigorously evaluated.

Study of Pathways Taken by Opportunity Youth. JPMorgan Chase funded RMC to conduct a study of Opportunity Youth (OY) in the metro areas of Texas. The study sought to identify OY in Texas, study their trajectories, study OY-serving systems, and measure the outcomes and impacts of OY-serving programs. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She developed the research plan and led administrative data linking across multiple state agencies.

Central Texas Student Futures Project. This project was a research partnership of RMC, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, Skillpoint Alliance, and Central Texas school districts. The project used student surveys linked to administrative data to assess the success of school districts in preparing students for higher education and employment. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She designed a longitudinal database, led survey and administrative data linking, and led the annual longitudinal data analysis to study the education, employment, and earnings trajectories of high school graduates in Central Texas.

Evaluation of Community Workforce Plan (CWP): The CWP aimed to engage community-based organizations and educational institutions to efficiently match employers' skill needs and successfully prepare economically disadvantaged residents for family-sustaining careers in the Austin metro area. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher for RMC's evaluation of the CWP. She designed a longitudinal database, led the program participation and administrative data linking, and led the annual longitudinal data analysis to study the education, employment, and earnings trajectories of low-income training program participants in the Austin metro area.

America's Job Center of California (AJCC) Evaluation: The Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) partnered with RMC to evaluate the effectiveness of the AJCC system using a mixed-methods evaluation. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She led the design and creation of a longitudinal database using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data for California.

Evaluation of Project QUEST. Project QUEST provides financial, academic, and personal supports to help adults with low incomes obtain postsecondary educational credentials and access well-paying jobs in strong sectors of the local economy. In 2005, Economic Mobility Corporation (Mobility) conducted an RCT of Project QUEST to assess its impacts on individuals pursuing healthcare careers. In 2018, funded by Arnold Ventures, Mobility partnered with RMC to examine whether the program's impacts were sustained eleven years after study enrollment. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She led program participation and administrative data linking to analyze the impacts of Project QUEST on earnings and education outcomes.

Data Linkage for LEO's Texas Research Study. In 2020, the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) at the University of Notre Dame began RCTs to test self-sufficiency programs being implemented across Texas. Partners included Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston, the Goodwill Excel Center in Austin, Catholic Charities of Dallas, Jewish Family Services, NPower, Combined Arms, and Lubbock County, and the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition. LEO partnered with RMC to leverage administrative data to support this research. Ms. Patnaik was the Principal Investigator and directed RMC's work. In addition to managing the project, she led program participation and administrative data linking to analyze program impacts on outcomes such as earnings, employment, and public benefit usage.

Data Linkage for Padua™ Program Evaluation. Catholic Charities Fort Worth's Padua Program aims to move clients permanently out of poverty by providing them with intensive, wrap-around case management services. LEO evaluated the Padua Program with an RCT and partnered with RMC to leverage administrative data. Ms. Patnaik was the Principal Investigator and directed RMC's work. In addition to managing the project, she led program participation and administrative data linking to analyze program impacts on earnings, employment, and public benefit usage.

Administrative Data Research and Evaluation (ADARE) Alliance's SNAP Study. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service funded the multi-state ADARE Alliance to study how the SNAP and Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs worked together during the Great Recession. Ms. Patnaik was Co-Principal Investigator. She led longitudinal administrative data linking and conducted data analyses. Ms. Patnaik co-authored a chapter examining SNAP and UI interactions in Texas for a book published by the Upjohn Institute.

Evaluation of Austin Community College's (ACC) Rainy Day Savings Program. RMC evaluated a Rainy Day Savings program implemented by ACC and funded by the Trellis Foundation. Ms. Patnaik was the Co-Principal Investigator and led the project. She developed the quasi-experimental research design and the data collection and analysis plan. She linked program participation, survey, and administrative data to analyze program participation patterns and outcomes.

Evaluation of the California Community College Chancellor's Office's (CCCCO) Financial Literacy Pilot Initiative. The CCCCCO funded RMC to evaluate its Financial Literacy Pilot Initiative at sixteen California community colleges. Ms. Patnaik was the Co-Principal Investigator and led the project. She developed the quasi-experimental research design and the data collection and analysis plans. She linked program participation and administrative data to analyze outcomes and impacts. She also provided evaluating technical assistance to participating colleges.

Evaluation of ACC's Strengthening Institutions Program grant. RMC conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of a multi-year financial aid texting intervention implemented by ACC, funded by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She developed the quasi-experimental research design and the data collection and analysis plan. She linked program participation, survey, and administrative data to analyze program participation patterns and outcomes.

Evaluation of the Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce (GMACW). With funding provided by DOL's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) program, CSW partnered with RMC to evaluate the GMACW, which included four community colleges in Tennessee and Arkansas. Ms. Patnaik was the Co-Principal Investigator and led the project. She designed and conducted the impact evaluation component of this mixed-methods evaluation using quasi-experimental methods. She linked program participation and administrative data to analyze the grant's impact on education and labor market outcomes. She also provided evaluation technical assistance to the colleges and supported continuous quality improvement. In addition, she supported the implementation evaluation and collected qualitative data through site visits, focus groups, and interviews.

Evaluation of the Gulf Coast Information Technology (GCIT) Pathways Consortium. The Aspen Institute partnered with RMC to evaluate the GCIT Pathways Consortium, a DOL TAACCT grant that included nine community colleges in Mississippi and Louisiana. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She designed and conducted the impact evaluation for this mixed-methods evaluation using quasi-experimental methods. She linked program participation and administrative data to analyze the grant's impact on education and labor market outcomes.

Evaluation of Growing Regional Opportunity for the Workforce (Project GROW). Funded by DOL's Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) initiative, RMC conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of Project GROW, an initiative to transform the workforce development system along the Texas-Mexico border. Ms. Patnaik was the lead quantitative researcher. She designed and conducted the impact evaluation component of this mixed-methods evaluation using quasi-experimental methods. She linked program participation and administrative data to analyze the grant's impact on education and labor market outcomes. She also supported the implementation evaluation and collected qualitative data through site visits, focus groups, and interviews.

Child Care Cost of Quality Modeling Study. RMC studied the cost of providing quality child care in Texas, in partnership with the Texas Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing (TICFW). The study included surveys to capture important quality factors and pricing information from home- and center-based child care facilities. Ms. Patnaik was a quantitative researcher on the team; she led the survey, administrative data, and publicly available data linking and conducted data analyses.

Local Rule – Integrated Child Support System (ICSS) Evaluation. RMC conducted a program evaluation to measure the impacts of the Integrated Child Support System (ICSS) that required those getting divorced or separated to be referred to the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) for child support services. Operating under a waiver from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) in 17 counties, the ICSS changed the default action from opt-in to opt-out. Using a combination of random assignment and comparison site evaluation designs, the research team measured the impacts of the waiver. Ms. Patnaik served as the lead quantitative researcher. She linked longitudinal administrative data and conducted analyses.

SELECT RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Elkin, S., Patnaik, A., Perales, L., Hearn, S., Treskon, M., Fung, L., Sonoda, P., & Wagner, L. (2024).

Understanding financial capability interventions within employment-related contexts for adults with low-incomes: Final Report. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Patnaik, A. & Perales, L. (2024). *Integrating financial capability and employment and training services: Participant perspectives.* OPRE Report 2024-002. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Patnaik, A. & Heilman, B. (2023). *Sacramento My Empowerment Project: Design highlights.* Arlington, VA: MEF Associates.

Patnaik, A. (2023). *Economic Mobility Pathways' Mobility Mentoring®.* OPRE Report #2023-115. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce. (2022, September). *Evaluation of America's Job Centers of California.*

Patnaik, A. & Cumpton G. (2022). *Research Study of Austin Community College's Rainy Day Savings Program: Year One Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources.

Cumpton, G., Juniper, C. & Patnaik, A. (2021). *Austin Metro Area Community Workforce Plan Year Three Evaluation Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources

Patnaik, A. & Cumpton G. (2021). *Evaluation of Austin Community College's Strengthening Institutions Program grant: Final Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources.

Patnaik, A., Cumpton G., & Juniper, C. (2021). *Evaluation of the CCCCCO Financial Literacy Pilot: Final Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources

Schroeder, D. & Patnaik, A. (2019). SNAP and UI as Components of a Joint Safety Net in Texas. In O'Leary, C.J., Stevens, D., Wandner, S., & Wiseman, M.(Ed.), *Strengths of the Social Safety Net in the Great Recession: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance and Unemployment Insurance.* Kalamazoo, MI: WE Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Patnaik, A., and Prince, H. (2018). *Greater Memphis Alliance for A Competitive Workforce (GMACW) TAACCCT Round 4 Grant: Impact Evaluation Final Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources.

Schroeder, Daniel G., and Ashweeta Patnaik. *Texas Integrated Child Support System: Final Evaluation Report.* 2016.

Patnaik, A., and Prince, H. (2016). *Retraining the Gulf Coast through Information Technology Pathways: Final Impact Evaluation Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources.

Patnaik, A., Dan O'Shea, and Prince, H. (2016). *Growing Regional Opportunity for the Workforce (Project GROW): Final Evaluation Report.* Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources

SELECT RECENT CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Patnaik, A. (2024, May). *Understanding how financial capability interventions are provided in employment and training contexts.* Paper presented at the Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS) 2024, Washington, DC.

Patnaik, A., & Prince, H.J. (2017, November). *Impact evaluations of TAACCCT grants: quasi-experimental*

approaches, challenges and lessons learned. Panel presented at the 31st American Evaluation Association (AEA) Annual Conference, Washington, DC.

Patnaik, A., Prince, H.J., & Carandang, J. (2017, November). *Using Me&E data to evaluate the impacts of an integrated and holistic international development model.* Panel presented at the 31st American Evaluation Association (AEA) Annual Conference, Washington, DC.

Patnaik, A. (2015, November). *Using integrated data systems for multi-site evaluations—benefits, challenges, and lessons learned.* Paper presented at the 29th American Evaluation Association (AEA) Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

MEF Associates	Principal Associate	2024-Present
	Senior Research Associate	2022-2023
Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, The University of Texas at Austin	Research Associate	2021-2022
	Research, Evaluation, and Learning Associate	2019-2021
	Social Science Research Associate V	2013-2019
Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University	Research Associate	2010-2013
	Research Assistant	2007-2010
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston	Graduate Research Assistant	2005-2007

SELECT RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

What Works Clearinghouse single case design training, 2023, DOE's Institute of Education Sciences

What Works Clearinghouse group design training, 2022, DOE's Institute of Education Sciences

Applied Data Analytics, January 2022, Coleridge Initiative

Presenting Data and Information, October 2016, Edward Tufte.

JPAL101x: Evaluating Social Programs, 2015, Massachusetts Institute of Technology through edX.