Library Evaluation for Grant Writers (and Others)

Evaluation for Grant Writers (and others)

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This webinar will cover ...

• What is project evaluation and why is it important to grant writers?
• Using logic model to plan evaluation
• Developing evaluation questions
• Collecting data
• Analyzing data
• Writing the report

http://www.info.gov/applicants/basics.htm

What is evaluation?

• Measure something’s worth or merit
• Conducted for a purpose...
  – provide accountability
  – increase effectiveness
  – build capacity
  – solve problems
  – increase engagement and ownership

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Evaluation in project planning

Evaluation is good management
– Setting goals
– Planning activities
– Measuring implementation
– Fixing problems

What gets measured gets...
– done?
– or just measured?

Ways of focusing evaluations

• Effectiveness
• Goals-based
• Intervention-oriented
• Needs assessment
• Accountability
• Appreciative inquiry
• Capacity-building
• Cost-effectiveness

Two (of many) types of evaluation

Formative
– occurs during project development, implementation, progress
– assess ongoing activities
– monitor and improve project
– aka progress reporting

Summative
– occurs after the fact
– assess success in reaching goals
– aka outcome or impact evaluation

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Program evaluation questions

- Were project activities implemented as planned?
- Was project successful? Strengths, weaknesses?
- Did project meet overall goals?
- Did participants benefit? In what ways?
- What components were most effective?
- Were results worth cost?
- How effective were collaborative partnerships?

Logic models

- What is a logic model?
  - Describes relationships among project elements
  - Illustrates details of project plan
- Benefits
  - document inputs, activities, outcomes
  - clarify understanding
  - facilitate planning

*Please take out your logic model template now*

Elements of a logic model

- **Resources**
  - aka inputs
  - funding, personnel, facilities
- **Activities**
  - specific actions that make up program
- **Short-term outcomes**
  - outputs
- **Long-term outcomes**
  - impact

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Example of a logic model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Short-term outputs</th>
<th>Long-term outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Develop lesson</td>
<td>10 students reached</td>
<td>Growth in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>Teach students</td>
<td></td>
<td>Change in behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Assess learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>User satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constructing a logic model

Example program

- After-school program for at-risk youth
- Overall goal: help teens learn how to make good choices, stay out of trouble, and succeed in life
- Public library partnership with local law enforcement, juvenile court, family services agencies, and high school
- Book discussion, reflection, creative writing, information literacy for various life skills, 1x/week for 10 weeks

Library role: teach information literacy for life skills such as how to find information on employment, GED study, parenting, health information

Resources (aka “inputs”)

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Resources (aka “inputs”)

• Grant funds
• Personnel
• Meeting room
• Materials & supplies: gift books, handouts, refreshments
• In-kind contribution (time, expertise) from partners

Activities

• Train staff
• Develop curriculum
• Conduct program

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Outcomes: Short-term “outputs”

• Number of teens served
• Number of hours attended
• Number of leaders trained
• Number of hours of preparation time

Outcomes: Long-term

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Outcomes: Long-term

- Growth in awareness of good decisions
- Growth in problem-solving skills
- Growth in life skills
- Change in behavior, attitude
- Growth in awareness of information resources, information literacy skills

Which leads to our evaluation questions...

What do I want to know?

Use logic model to chart evaluation plan

* Please take out your evaluation planning matrix handout now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Evaluation questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader training &amp; preparation</td>
<td>Was training adequate? Hours of preparation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project activities</td>
<td>Were users satisfied with each activity? Did activities meet leader expectations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term outputs</td>
<td>Were output objectives met? Program attendance, level of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term outcomes</td>
<td>Change in teen self-awareness/knowledge/skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Make it measurable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was training adequate?</td>
<td>Hours of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effectiveness of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were program activities appropriate? (specific activities)</td>
<td>User/leader satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did short-term outputs meet expectations?</td>
<td>Program attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of participation (hours, accomplishments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were long-term outcomes met?</td>
<td>Change in teen self-awareness/knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in information literacy skill level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection techniques

- **Program records**
  - activities, attendance, participation
- **Surveys**
  - users, leaders
- **Interviews**
  - users, other stakeholders
- **Observation**

Data collection matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Data collection tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours of preparation time</td>
<td>Staff reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User/leader satisfaction</td>
<td>Satisfaction surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program attendance</td>
<td>Attendance logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of participation (hours, accomplishments)</td>
<td>Participation records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in teen self-awareness/knowledge/level</td>
<td>Pre- and post assessments (surveys); follow up interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in behavior: stay in school, graduate,</td>
<td>School/probation/ social services records; follow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get/keep a job, stay off drugs, stay out of</td>
<td>interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justice system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Surveys

Advantages:
• Collect a lot of information from a lot of people
• Cover a wide range of topics
• Inexpensive
• Analyze with variety of software

Disadvantages:
• Self-reports may be biased
• Data may lack depth
• May not provide much context

Interviews

Advantages:
• Explore complex issues
• Opportunity for follow up
• Establish rapport

Disadvantages:
• Interviewer bias
• Training and analysis is time consuming
• Smaller samples

Developing user survey questions

• Tailor your survey to the specific goals of your program
• Address questions from funders
• Address issues in proposal

In general, your survey should cover:
• Did you accomplish what you expected to accomplish?
• Did your users get what they wanted?
• What could be improved?
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Some example user survey questions

Pre- &/or post-assessment on information literacy skills

Tell us how much you agree with the following:
(scale: 1=agree strongly/5=disagree strongly)

1. I know how to find information on things I am interested in
2. I know how to find information on how to get a job
3. I know how to find information on finishing high school
4. I know how to find information on applying for community college
5. I wish I knew more about: ________________________

Odd or even?

agree – disagree (even)
agree – disagree – don’t know (odd)

Data collection tips

• Take advantage of the “captive audience”
• Build time into project schedule for evaluation

On survey question preparation...

• Keep it simple! And short!
• Look for existing questions but don’t forget your unique evaluation needs
• Get input from partners
• Use familiar language
• General to specific
• Pretest!

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Making sense of your data

Explore your numerical data:
- count up responses, calculate percentages
- mean (average)
  example: 1 = agree, 2 = disagree; add up responses and divide by N
- range (high, low)
- create categories for qualitative data
  ✪ how do you create categories?

Coding qualitative data

• Read all responses
• Summarize main topic for each response in a “code” – a word or short phrase
• List of code words = categories
• Number of categories should be small (<10)
• Every response belongs to at least one category
• Responses can belong to more than one category
• If you have enough responses, count up responses in each category

Rules of the road

• Be systematic
• Percentages as well as raw count
• Include N
• Explore graphical displays! Bar graphs, pie charts, etc.
• Share analysis with colleagues right away

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Writing the report

First things first:
• Who is your audience?
• What do they want to know?
• IMLS performance reporting

Outline of a formal report

• Summary
• Background
• Evaluation study questions
• Study methods
• Findings
• Conclusion and/or recommendations

Optional:
• References
• Appendix: survey instruments, data tables

Summary

• Short summary of the report
• Essential main points
• Purpose, findings, outline of methods, major findings
• Relate conclusions to larger context if appropriate

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Background

- Problem addressed
- Stakeholders and their information needs
- Participants
- Project objectives
- Activities and their components
- Resources used to implement the project
- Expected measurable outcomes

Evaluation study questions

- Identify stakeholders’ specific information needs
- Draw from proposal, updated as necessary
- Lots of questions are possible; limit this section to those questions actually addressed
- Point out questions that could NOT be addressed and why

Study methods

- Who participated
- Sampling strategy (if applicable)
  - How representative?
- Measures used
- Type of data collected
- How data was collected
- Instruments used
- How data were analyzed

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Findings

- Results of the analyses
- Use Evaluation Study Questions to organize findings
- Address each question, whether or not findings were satisfactory
- Include a summary at the end to present major conclusions

Conclusions and recommendations

- Summary of findings from a broader perspective
- Relate findings to overall program goals
- Recommendations for further study or future projects
- Base recommendations on solid data, NOT anecdotal evidence, no matter how persuasive!

Writing the report

- Ahead of time: Background, Study questions, Study methods
  - Include descriptions from original proposal, updated as needed
- Last steps: Findings, Conclusions, Summary
  - Get feedback from colleagues

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IMLS Performance Reports
Check IMLS website - requirements differ

• Interim & final reports
• Part 1: narrative on project activities, achievements
• Grant products (evaluation report, other deliverables)
• Part 2: quantitative outputs

http://www.imls.gov/recipients/administration.html

That’s it!
Questions?
For more information...
see the Resources handout
Thank you for attending this webinar!
 Contact:
jennifer.sweeney@comcast.net

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