

# Program Evaluation for Success!!

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*Remember that the grant makers instructions or guidelines are of TOP importance over any and all other considerations. You, as the grant proposal writer, must absolutely, positively follow ALL of the grant maker's directions exactly, precisely and painstakingly.*

## The Problem Statement

**All projects must start with a problem statement.  
It is the basis for your project.  
It is your connection with the grant maker.  
You must BOTH want to solve the same problem.**

## **Project Planning: A Review**

There are many ways to organize your project, but even if they are called by other names there must always be **goals and objectives**. The only change may be in nomenclature such as “outcomes” used instead of results, or “strategy” instead of methodology but the reality of the need for project organization will not change.

So what do you do to organize your project? Most grant makers will want a project that is organized in a logical manner. Go back to basics, like when your high school teacher taught you how to write a small essay. Follow the progression in the following boxes and you will recognize some of the steps from your school days.

| 1                 | 2                                                   | 3                                  | 4                                        | 5                                             | 6                                                                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WHAT will happen? | HOW will it happen?<br>(approach, method, strategy) | WHEN will it happen?<br>(Timeline) | WHO will be responsible, who will do it? | For HOW many of your clients or for how much? | <b>With WHAT result, outcome or benefit to your clients or mission.</b> |

## **THE EVALUATION PLAN**

Remember that funding agencies want to solve problems. Your connection with the funder is that you want to solve the SAME problem. You have developed a “a solution” which is your project and evaluation is the process necessary to see if your project is a success. Most funders will require that you produce a detailed evaluation plan that is linked to the goals and objectives of our project. Accountability is the key to getting funded, so this is one of the most important parts of your proposal. Evaluation needs to

show the success (or failure) of your project and remember that learning also comes from times when you fail.

**The Main Concepts are:**

- Connect to goals and objectives through outcomes or results of each
- Must be measurable, use numbers, percentages and stats
- Document everything and maintain documentation throughout the term of the grant
- Report progress---submit periodic reports to the funding agency
- Have an internal evaluation team even for small projects
- If the grant is for a significant amount, then hire an outside evaluator

**Purpose of Evaluation is to:**

- ❖ See how effective the project has been
- ❖ Demonstrate the level of success or failure (summative)
- ❖ Provide feedback for course corrections
- ❖ To improve the project as it goes along (formative)

**Note: Most grant makers want both a summative and a formative approach to the evaluation process. Both quantitative data (numerical on a scale) and qualitative data (words or opinions) should be used.**

| 1                                                         | 2                               | 3                        | 4                                            | 5                                             | 6                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>WHAT was your expected result, benefit or outcome?</b> | HOW did you measure the result? | WHEN did you measure it? | WHO was responsible, who collected the data? | For HOW many of your clients in what programs | Information presented to WHOM, when and how? |

**Lets look at each step:**

1. **The result, outcome or benefit is very important and it came from item 6 in your Program Planning Matrix. This is the reason for the objective and for all of the activities in the first place.** How was the problem solved “better” for your clients? What was the result of doing all of this work? The benefit was to your constituency, and it provided the motivation for your work. You must have a CLEAR, MEASURABLE BENEFIT, or outcome that solves the problem for your community, your clients, and your participants before you began your project. **Always define clearly, and measurably, the desired outcome before beginning.** Examples: Incidents of substance abuse and violence decrease 50% and health care issues decline, Positive parental involvement increases by 100%, Improve health and wellness of participants as measured on the Elderly Fitness Scale, Participants express increased satisfaction with available social activities, Sufficient space and facility preparation to perform all fire department activities as determined by an end of project survey. **THE RESULT IS WHAT YOU WILL BE “GRADED” UPON AT THE END OF YOUR PROJECT. You will be funded by this grant maker to solve “the problem”, so a “measurable” success is very important to your project proposal.** It is now the basis for your

- project evaluation and it may determine if you will receive any grant funding from a particular grant maker. This is a basic WHAT statement, simply stated, of something that did happen. Examples: Training of necessary personnel, Provided supplemental academic activities, Recruited tutors, Tailored activity experience for each participant to meet individual needs, Developed and implemented single point of entry to services to the elderly, Developed neighborhood fire prevention program. (NOTICE: Vocabulary such as monitored, developed, provided, evaluated, managed, hired, recruited, trained, informed, involved, communicated, determined, collected, obtained, analyzed etc are all ACTION words in the past tense that indicate that something has been accomplished.)
2. This is the HOW of it all. How did you accomplish this task? These should be the measuring tools that you used to measure the success of your objectives and activities that came from those objectives. They may include tools such as Surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, progress chart, reviews and observations. You can use both quantitative and qualitative data but it should be data driven.
  3. WHEN? You should use the exact dates if you know them. Connect the data collection to the time frame of the activities such as at the beginning or end of a program session, daily tallies, every three months or every six weeks, etc.
  4. There are two aspects to the WHO. Who is responsible for the management of the collection of the evaluation data? Second, who actually collected and formulated the data? The same person may have both responsibilities. Remember that if you cannot name “who did” this activity then it implies that it did not get done. You should have established an internal evaluation committee supervised by a Board member or by your ED.
  5. HOW MANY? State precisely how many clients were involved, how many participants you reached, how many people were trained, and how often, such as monthly, per quarter, per year, per meeting, per workshop. Examples: 47 community outreach programs were held per year, 3 direct mail distributions were completed per year, 22 junior mentor programs in 18 schools were completed with 120 students in each school, space for client activities to accommodate 30 participants at each session was built.
  6. Presented to WHOM? Once you have collected the information, who will review it? Will it be your supervisors, case managers, Board members or your clients? When will they review it; daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc? And in what format will it be presented such as a narrative summary, chart, table, map, description, graph, etc.

**You should have noticed by now that if you have PLANNED your project well the evaluation is an extension of that plan. That is why it is one of the areas that all funding agencies are concentrating on as they read your proposal. They are investing in you as a means to “solve a problem” and they want to know how successful you were because your success indicates how good of an investment you are and success can lead to more funding.**

**Resource:** “How to Write a Grant Proposal” by Cheryl Carter New, James Aaron Quick, 2003, Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Hoboken, New Jersey

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