Tips for Effective Evaluation Sections of Grant Proposals

Be Clear About Expectations and Requirements

- Know the source—Federal (NSF, NIH, USDOE, CDC etc.) vs. State vs Foundation vs Other. Do they **require** an external evaluator? Do they have expectations for the background, education and experience of the person(s) conducting the evaluation? Do they have evaluation resources?
- Page limits! (1/2, 1, 2, 5?)—Is extra information allowed to be submitted as an Appendix?
- Be clear on the purpose/role of the evaluation. Read between the lines—Are they looking for established procedures, measures and tools or are they open to funding the development of these? By "evaluation" do they really mean research, performance measurement, monitoring, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, developmental evaluation or something else?
- Review previously funded proposals if possible. What level of detail is expected?
- Follow the directions! Provide what they request.

Draft the narrative/program description/goals and objectives FIRST.

- The evaluation should reflect the language of the proposal content and purpose and align to the key elements of the project design. The complexity and depth of the evaluation should also align to the resources available.
- Be clear about what roles the evaluator and staff will play. Will the evaluator be responsible for all data collection and analysis or will program be part of that process? Will the evaluator be more of a technical advisor or completely independent assessor of the value and worth of the program or something blended or in between?

Keep the Evaluation Section Clear and Simple (KISS)

- Evaluation often has to serve an "accountability" function. Funders may require evaluation in order to know their money was well-used.
- Use specific examples that reflect the content. Steer away from looking "too" cookie cutter (AND, it's OK to use standard evaluation language).
- The evaluation section is stating a case for "enough" to show that the proposed work was done, that the goals and objectives were achieved (or not), and, ideally, that the evaluation process and procedures will help the staff make improvements and good decisions about what to do next.
- Don't over promise. Under-promise and over-deliver results.
- If you can cite data or results from previous work, definitely include even if a foot or endnote.

Negotiate support from others.

- Some evaluators will help you with the evaluation section if they're named in the proposal. If not, be prepared to pay them for their time.

'EVALUABILITY'

KEY QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATION PLANNING

STEP 1: What's the Question?

- Define Purpose of Program and Audience of Evaluation
  - Why are we doing the program? Why are we doing an evaluation?
  - Who wants to know what we've done? Who will use the information?
  - What's the point?
  - What do we want to accomplish?

STEP 2: What Information will Help Answer the Question?

- Identify Target Outcomes/Impacts (changes in program participants, changes in system?) and Target Audience(s) of Program
  - What are the desired results?*
  - e.g., social, economic, environmental, political (program and policies), cognitive (public opinion, awareness, knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirations), health (quality of life?), behavioral, etc.
  - What do we want folks to DO, VALUE, FEEL, KNOW?
  - *compared to what/whom?

STEP 3: Who or What will Provide the Data?

- Identify Sources of Data
  - Who will we ask?
  - Who can answer our questions and provide evidence?
  - Where else can we get information (e.g., archival data?)
  - What are human subjects/IRB requirements?

STEP 4: How will We Gather the Data?

- Specify Measures (tools) and Sampling Design
  - How will we know "it" when we see "it?"*
  - How are we going to know if we were successful?
  - Develop components of surveys
  - Consider what data you might gather before, during, immediately after and "long" after the program
  - Consider breadth/depth/accuracy needs when planning sampling design

* Combine previous research + commonsense conceptions to create an exhaustive list of all possible indicators and consider what "it" is NOT.

STEP 5: What Might the Results Look Like?

- Imagine Actual Results
  - How are we going to report the data?
  - Map out/ draft outline to show to people.
  - Make guesses about the possible types of results you could get from your surveys/interviews, etc.

STEP 6: Will the Results Answer the Original Question?

- Imagine Possible Answers
  - Make predictions in order to cross-check with Steps 1-5
  - Do these answers logically follow from the questions, issues and procedures?
  - Who will receive the report? Will it answer their questions?
  - Will the results be defensible?
  - What "threats" will damage the integrity of the data and the conclusions we want to draw?

STEP 7: Write an Implementation Plan

- Draft Implementation Plan
  - We know where we want to go, so how do we get there?
  - Who will gather the data? (Plan for buy-in ahead of time)
  - Who will do the evaluation? (A team? An individual? An outside consultant?)
  - What resources will be necessary to accomplish our goals? (e.g., Time, $, People)

Sample Evaluation/Data Design Matrix

Goal or Objective of Project	Question	Information Required	Source of Information	Data Collection Method(s) and Tasks	Analysis	Comments
List the overall *purpose* or *specific objective* to be addressed	What explicit evaluation question(s) will this piece of data collection address? Example key words: Who? What? Why? How? When? Where? How Much? To What Extent?	Broadly speaking, what is the *nature* of type of information that is needed to address the question? Pre/Post assessment of knowledge (post then pre?); client satisfaction; policies; archival documents; observations, etc.	More specific example of the sources used to acquire the information needed to answer the question (e.g., Who will provide what?) e.g., evaluator conducted focus group; agency-provided budget information from the past 3 years; standardized survey; etc.	What tasks will occur to collect and work with the data? Example key words: Interview Review Develop/administer / Analyze (e.g., mail questionnaire, structured interview, focus group) Obtain Describe Calculate Verify Contact Analyze Survey	Describes the analytic techniques to be used to summarize the data collected. Examples could include: Descriptive statistics Frequency Percentage Compare Identify List Cross-tabs Time series Regression analysis	Anything else that needs to be included in order to plan well. Examples could include comments about --data availability and quality --time (to collect data, do analyses, build models, etc.) --limitations to generalizability of findings --known reality in contrast to assumptions made in the original request

Adapted from *Applied Research Design* by Hedrick, Bickman & Rog (1993).

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SAMPLE

Workshop Feedback Form

Evaluation Tips for Grant Writers

1 December 2016

Participant Feedback

Please provide your perspective on the following reflection questions:

Something I appreciated most about today's workshop…..

Some ways I plan to use today's information….

Question(s) I still have….

Wish (es) for future workshops or follow-up would be….

(continued on back)

Read the following statements about the learning you may have gained from this workshop and indicate your level of agreement by choosing one of the responses.	Strongly **Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	Strongly **Agree**
I learned new approaches to use for evaluation section writing.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I learned new approaches for asking evaluation questions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel more confident about writing an evaluation section of a grant proposal.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am more familiar with evaluation concepts after today's workshop.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would recommend this workshop to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comments:				

Please rate your satisfaction with this workshop as a professional development opportunity for staff.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

0= Not at all Satisfied

⇧

5= This was an average workshop based on my experience

10= This was one of the most outstanding workshops I have ever experienced.

Any other suggestions for ways to improve the workshop experience?

Thank you for taking the time to provide your candid feedback!

Grant Professionals Association

Southern Arizona Chapter

First Workshop for 2017 – You Are Invited!

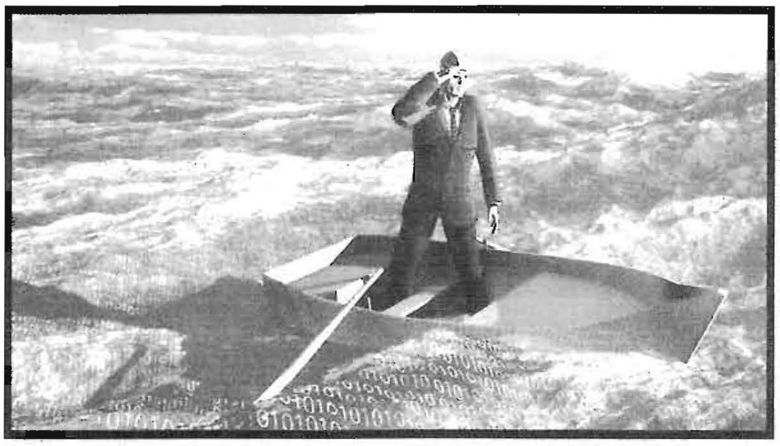
Topic: "Knowledge for Need" How to find statistics to support your grant requests
When: Thursday, February 16, 2017 (3-4:30pm)
Where: Diamond Ventures Community Room, Habitat for Humanity, 3501 N. Mountain Ave.

*This workshop will help you navigate the sometimes murky waters of statistics to find the most relevant data to support your grant proposals!

Presenters from the U of A's MAP project will provide information on their site and how to get the most from the useful but complex US Census site and Brian Chanecka from the Pima Library will share about statistical resources available at the library.

Please bring your statistical challenges and specific questions to the meeting to use as examples

* Free to GPA members; $20 fee for non-members.



RSVP for workshop to gpasouthernazchapter@gmail.com