



How to Write an Evaluation Plan and Report

Overview for AmeriCorps Grantees

Office of Research & Evaluation

Session Purpose



- Provide a basic understanding of the key components of an evaluation plan and report

Session Overview



- What is an evaluation plan and why develop one?
- Key components of an evaluation plan
- What is an evaluation report?
- Key components of an evaluation report

What is an evaluation plan?

- A written document that details the program model being evaluated
- Describes and justifies the evaluation approach selected
- Provides instructions for the evaluation / a guide for each step of the evaluation process

Why develop a written plan in advance?

- Creates a shared understanding between CNCS, the grantee, and the evaluator (if applicable)
- Helps decide what information is needed to address the evaluation objectives
- Helps identify methods for getting the needed information
- Helps identify potential issues and think through strategies to overcome these challenges
- Helps determine a reasonable and realistic timeline for the evaluation

What are the key components of a plan?

- I. Introduction
- II. Description of intervention/impact theory (logic model)
- III. Evaluation methods (design, data collection, analysis)
- IV. Data analysis
- V. Timeline
- VI. Budget



I. Introduction

- A. Overview of program model and problem definition
- B. Existing research or practice grounded in evidence and practitioner knowledge about the program and/or similar programs
- C. Purpose of current evaluation
- D. Scope of current evaluation

I. Introduction (Continued)

- A. Overview of program model and problem definition
- What is the problem or issue that your program is designed to address?
 - Briefly describe the program model, including key information about:
 - Stage of development/program maturity
 - Target population or beneficiaries
 - Key components
 - Anticipated outcomes

I. Introduction (Continued)

B. Existing research or practice grounded in evidence and practitioner knowledge about the program and/or similar programs

- What is known about the program or similar interventions?

Include information about:

- When the study was done and who conducted it
- Program population involved in the study
- Evaluation approach or methods used
- Brief discussion of findings
- Performance data (outputs, outcomes)
- Field experience

I. Introduction (Continued)

C. Define the purpose of your evaluation

- What is the purpose of the evaluation?

Consider the following:

- Who wants the evaluation?
- Why do they want it?
- How do they intend to use it?
- Example: Improve the design and performance of your program
- Example: Assess the effectiveness of your program

I. Introduction (Continued)

D. Define the scope of your evaluation

– What is the scope of your evaluation?

- *Define scope based on decisions about what the evaluation will cover such as:*
 - What time period?
 - Which of the intervention's activities?
 - Which of the program's sites?
- *Consider the following:*
 - What resources are available for the evaluation?
 - What is the purpose of the evaluation and what information is needed?

II. Description of intervention/program theory

Your Planned Work

What **resources** you need to implement your program and what **activities** you intend to do.

- **Resources/Inputs** include the human, financial, organizational, and community resources a program has available for doing the work.
- **Activities** are the processes, tools, events, and actions that are used to bring about the intended program changes or results.

Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook (2004)

II. Description of intervention/program theory (Continued)

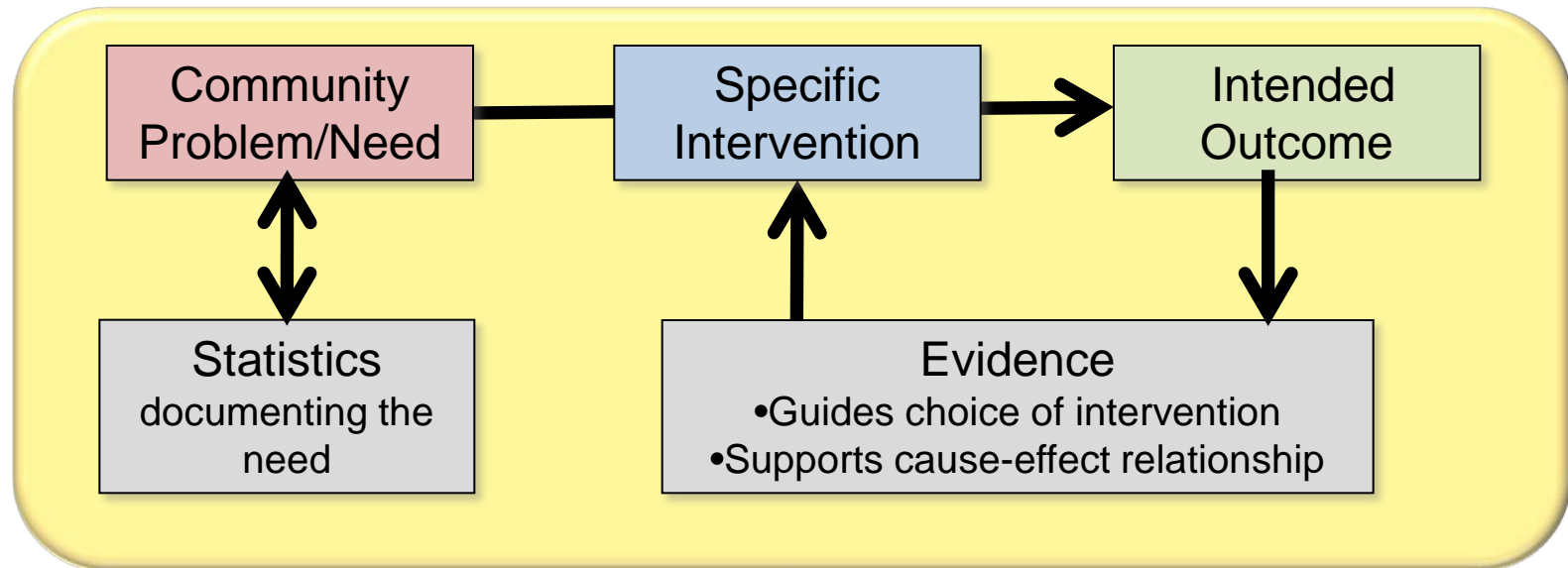
Your Intended Results

All of the program's desired results (**outputs, outcomes, and impact**).

- **Outputs** are the direct products of program activities and may include types, levels and targets of services to be delivered by the program
- **Outcomes/Impacts** are the specific changes in program participants' knowledge, attitude(s), and behavior(s)
- **Long-term goal** is the intended or unintended change occurring in organizations, communities or systems as a result of program activities over time

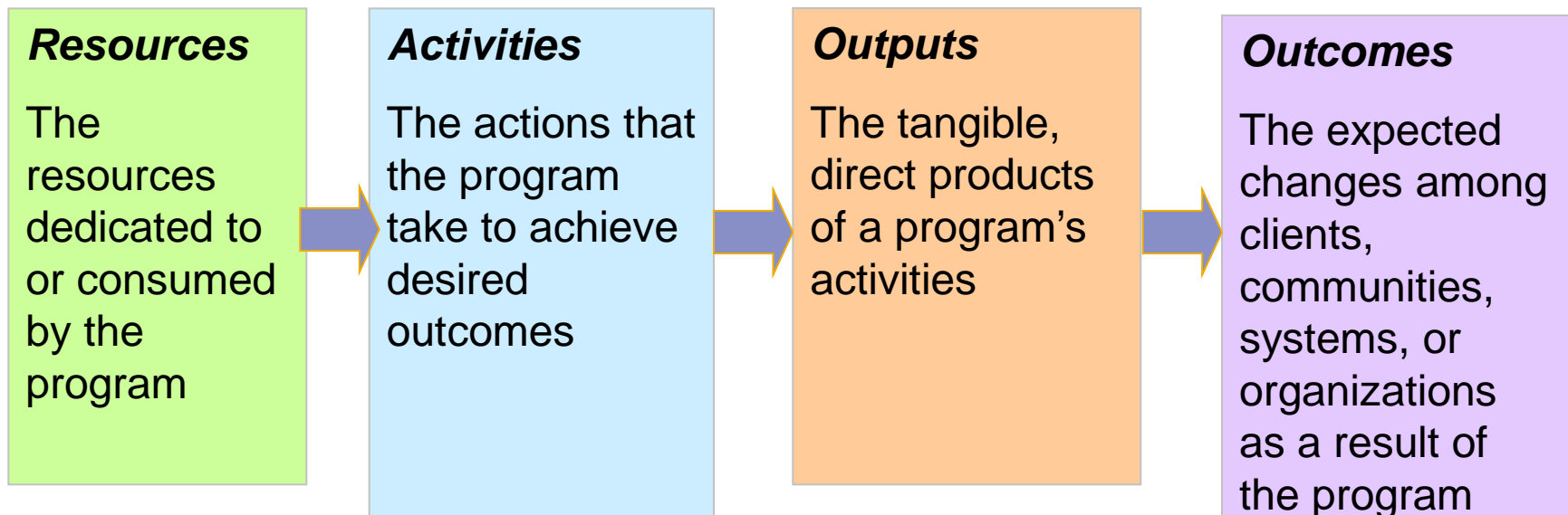
Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook (2004), Modified

Basic Theory of Change Components



II. Description of intervention/program theory (Continued)

- **Problem:** The issue being addressed by the program
- **Goal(s):** intended aims or impacts over life of the program



Rationale and Assumptions: What are your underlying assumptions and rationale around the intervention and how it works

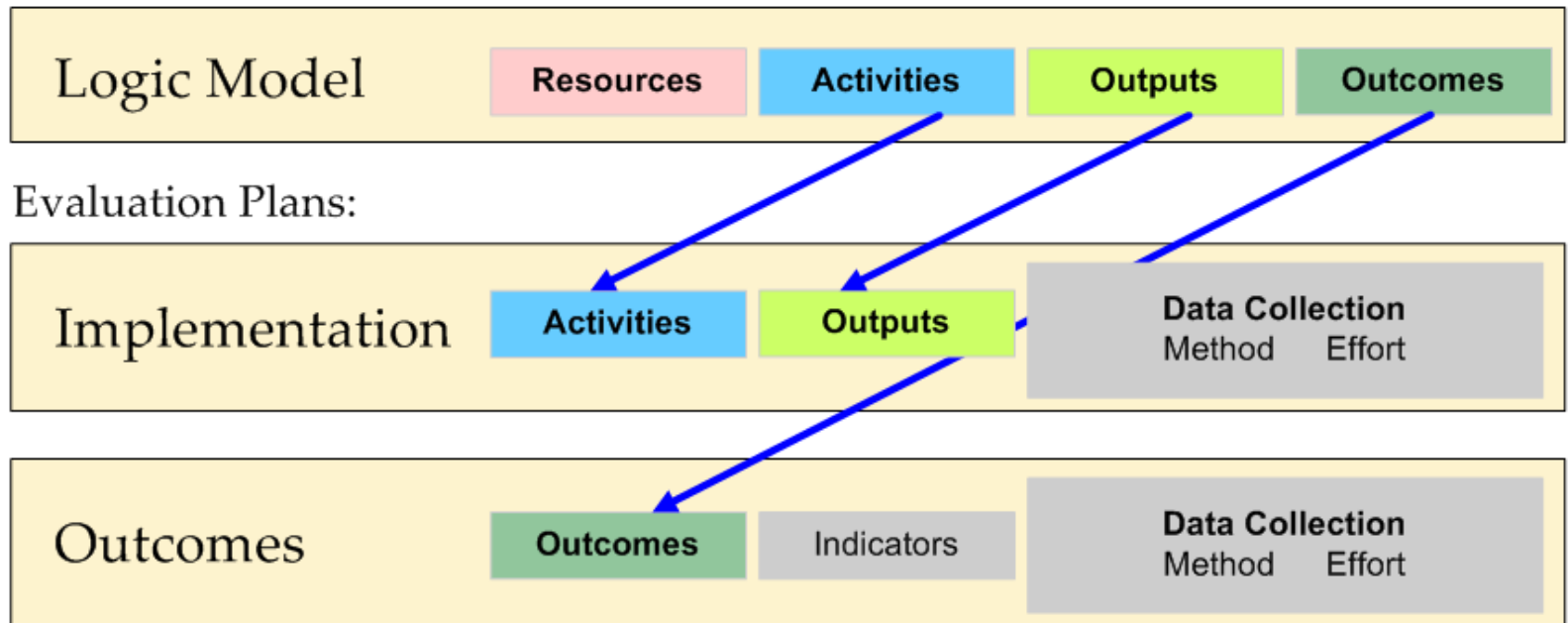
External Factors: what else might affect the program

III. Evaluation methods (design, data collection, analysis)

It should include detailed information about the following:

- A. Evaluation questions
- B. Evaluation design
- C. Data collection methods

Core Evaluation Plans



III. Evaluation methods (Continued)

A. Evaluation questions should be **clearly stated**, **measurable**, and **align** with your program's **logic model**

- Example questions related to *process/implementation*:
 - Are the activities being performed as planned?
 - Is the project reaching the intended target population?
 - How satisfied are the participants with their involvement in this project?
- Example questions related to *outputs*:
 - Is the project reaching the intended number of participants?
 - Is the project providing the planned services?
- Example questions related to *outcomes/impacts*:
 - Did the participants experience any changes in their knowledge, attitude(s), and behavior(s)?
 - What are the effects of the project on the organization (e.g., organizational pride, enhanced networking, and partnerships)?

III. Evaluation methods (Continued)

B. The type(s) of evaluation design selected

- The evaluation design that is selected should be based on and aligned with the following:
 - **Objectives** and **priorities** of the project
 - **Purpose** of the evaluation and the evaluation questions
 - **Time frame** for conducting the evaluation (i.e., during or after the project)
 - **How**, and by whom, the **results** will be **used**
 - **Budget** for the evaluation
- Common types of evaluation design are:
 - *Process/Implementation designs* which examine how well the program matches the theory behind its creation, and what the program actually does on the ground.
 - *Outcome/Impact designs* address how a program is related to changes in its participants or beneficiaries, and ideally provide evidence about whether the program causes the observed changes.

III. Evaluation methods (Continued)

C. Data collection methods

- Each of your evaluation questions, should address the following:
 - What will be collected?
 - How collected? Instrumentation?
 - Surveys
 - Interviews/focus groups
 - From whom collected? Who or what provides information?
 - Program participants
 - Program staff and stakeholders
 - Comparison/control group
 - Existing datasets / administrative data

III. Evaluation methods (Continued)

C. Data collection methods (Continued)

- Each of your evaluation questions, should address the following:
 - When collected and by whom?
 - Specific dates, times, persons?
 - How data are to be analyzed?
 - Statistical analysis for quantitative data (mean, median, chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, regression)
 - Content analysis for qualitative data (cross-site analysis, case study analysis)



IV. Timeline

- Key activities to consider in developing a timeline:
 - Study planning;
 - Institutional Review Board (IRB), if applicable;
 - Sampling/comparison group identification;
 - Data collection instrument creation;
 - Data collection;
 - Analysis;
 - Report writing; and
 - Report deadlines

V. Budget



- Common cost categories for creating a program evaluation budget are:
 - Staffing
 - Materials and supplies
 - Equipment
 - Travel
- What resources are needed to conduct the evaluation? Consider the following:
 - Who will conduct the evaluation?
 - If an **external evaluator**, consider what services are and are not included in their cost/budget
 - If your **own staff**, consider the costs of time spent on the evaluation in relation to their programmatic tasks
 - What will the evaluation include and how will it be conducted?
 - When and where will the evaluation take place?

Evaluation Plan



Any questions regarding how to develop an evaluation plan?

What is an evaluation report?

- A written document that objectively describes all of the steps involved in completing the evaluation
 - Program background
 - Evaluation purpose, methods and procedures
 - Evaluation results
 - Programmatic achievements
 - Lessons learned
- Provides a transparent basis for:
 - Understanding the program's accountability to its theory of change
 - Decision-making on policies and programs
 - Drawing lessons for program improvement

Key Components of a Report

- I. Executive summary
- II. Background and purpose
- III. Evaluation methods (design, data collection, analysis)
- IV. Results
- V. Conclusions and recommendations
- VI. References and appendices

I. Executive Summary



- The executive summary is a short section, usually two pages or less at the beginning of the report.
- It is a condensed version of the report and should provide a brief understanding of the purpose of the evaluation and the key findings.

II. Background and Purpose

III. Evaluation Methods

- For these sections of the report, you should be able to draw on the write-up of the corresponding sections of the evaluation plan, editing it to reflect changes in methods used as necessary.
- Your report should contain sufficient detail to enable others to replicate the evaluation approach and objectively understand the findings.



IV. Results

A. Basic guidelines in reporting evaluation results

- Organize results such that they clearly answer each evaluation question/objective
- Present objective (unbiased), clear, and factual results
- Consider using tables or charts to present quantitative results if easier to interpret

IV. Results



B. Acknowledge limitations of the study

- Specify the main limitations of the evaluation design and methods and a rationale for why
 - How reliable are your results based on the design you used?
- Explain the implications of each limitation and how it affects interpretation of the evaluation results
- Connect the study’s limitations to suggestions for further research
 - Explain how you might want to address any unanswered questions in a future study

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Basic guidelines in reporting conclusions and recommendations:

- Answer the evaluation questions/objectives
 - Explain which program objectives were and were not met
 - Give possible reasons why
- Support conclusions with factual evidence from study results
- Recommend future program improvements

VI. References and Appendices

- References
 - Provide complete citations of any reports or publications cited in the body of the report
- Appendix
 - Provide a copy of all data collection tools (e.g., questionnaires and interview protocols)
 - Detailed documentation about the program (e.g., copy of program logic model)
 - Detailed documentation about the evaluation methodology (e.g., power analysis calculations, statistical models)

Evaluation Report



Any questions regarding how to write an evaluation report?

Resources

- **The American Evaluation Association**
 - <http://www.eval.org>
- **The Evaluation Center**
 - <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/>
- **Innovation Network's Point K Learning Center**
 - <http://www.innonet.org>
- **Digital Resources for Evaluators**
 - <http://www.resources4evaluators.info/CommunitiesOfEvaluators.html>

Session Feedback Form



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/77shots/5703602800/>



Thank you for your participation!