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# Member Newsletter

*A service to the members of American Grant Writers' Association, Inc.*

SUMMER 2018

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## From the Executive Director

### Workspace

The federal government application process known as Workspace has been in effect for 6 months. Hopefully many members have had an opportunity to work through this new process. Share your frustrations or successes with this new application process.

### New Government Initiatives

Each change in administration brings new and different funding priorities. Get involved with your Field of Interest group to keep up on current grant funding priorities.

### Member Services

Remember to take advantage of the Grant Coaching services thatcare available to AGWA Members only.

- Review Coach for a Foundation Grant
- Review Coach for a Government Grant
- Grant Writing Coach for a Foundation Program or General Operating Grant
- Grant Writing Coach for a Government Grant

To learn more, login to Members Only, then click on "Grant Coaching for Members Only.

Submitted by John G. Porter, Ph.D.
Certified Grant Writer®
Executive Director

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# Congratulations Certified Grant Writers®

The following members earned the Certified Grant Writer® professional credential in 2018:

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CGW Group Photo in Houston March 2018

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# Grant Awards

The City of Trimont, MN was awarded $160,944 from the MN D.O.T. to build a trail from the south of town to the north end of town. Congratulations to Brenda Nielsen who was the sole grant writer.

I Will Survive, Inc., Atlanta, GA was awarded $5,000 from the Fulton DeKalb Hospital Authority. Congratulations Anisa Palmer, CGW, the lead grant writer.

Sentinels of Freedom of San Ramon, CA was awarded $120,000 over a 2 year grant period from the Newmans Own Foundation. This award will assist wounded and injured, post 9/11 veterans in their efforts to become productive and self-sufficient members of their communities. Congratulations to Rhonda Poppen, CGW, lead grant writer.

The Village of Reeseville, WI was awarded a $500,000 CDBG from WI Department of Natural Resources for replacement of a watermain and a sanitary sewer. Congratulations to Tammy Hampton, CGW, sole grant writer.

The Luzeme County Transportation Authority was awarded $240,00 from the PA D.O.T. This funding will help replace all of the bus stop signs in their transportation network. This is the first time this funding was ever awarded to public transit in NE PA. Congratulations Kathleen Bennarek, sole grant writer.

Magic Valley Parametics in Twin Falls, ID was awarded $13,500 from the ID Department of Health and Welfare. The grant project provided a Stryker gurney and loading system for an ambulance. Congratulations Justin Vipperman, sole grant writer.

The Charleston SC Animal Society was awarded $120,000 ($60,000 each) for Maddie's Robust Foster Apprenticeship and Maddie's Managing Shelter Health Apprenticeship, from Maddie's Fund. These projects work with companion animals. Congratulations Lisa Pearce, Grant Administrator

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# Agriculture SIG

## Project Design for Farmer's Market Projects

Greetings from Florida! Here are some tips, suggestions, and guidelines for writing the project design that will raise excitement and interest from the grantor about your project.

We all enjoy a weekend trip to the local Farmers Market for fresh fruits, vegetables, breads, pastries, and the local honeys, plants, and entrepreneurs selling their all-natural products. Most people would think that this would be a typical weekend trip, however the truth is many people do not have access to a local Farmer's Market. As people are looking for ways to improve health and live longer, Farmer's Markets are becoming more popular. I have recently participated in creating a local Farmer's Market for the Paramore Community, located in Orlando. The community is a low-income neighborhood with high crime rates and limited access to fresh foods. The area does have a community garden, where space is limited, and some people are willing to sell their harvest, but many trade with other growers to expand the fresh foods they can provide for their own families.

When developing the Project Design for a Farmer's Market project, the text should be clear and focus on the specific issues. The logic model is a great tool to use for preparing this section, to organize the project for the grantor. Here are some tips for the Logic Model.

Address any assumptions that could derail the project. For example, the people who live in this area of town are on government assistance, have low-income, and will not be able to afford to pay for fresh foods. A way to address that assumption might be to include a plan for WIC, SNAP or similar programs which allows them to provide double dollars.

Another assumption might be, "Why would people in that community want fresh foods when they are more likely to spend their money at the local fast food restaurant." A way to address that assumption might be to show the number of fresh food locations available to the community. Is the community a food dessert with one fast food restaurant after? These were all assumptions that were considered and addressed in the Paramore project design.

Another part of the Logic Model includes the possible community influences or barriers. For example, using the assistance of a government official to support a project can be good for business in both funding and media attention. Using existing partnerships with the local health department, WIC office, or Food Stamp office to help vendors understanding the paying system if they choose to accept alternate payment methods to cash. A barrier might be that vendors are not willing to provide a service in that area of town due to crime rates or negative press surrounding the area of interest. Developing partnerships with the local community centers, faith-based organizations, and businesses that could advertise the upcoming market or be a vendor is another great way to keep it local. In the project design for Paramore, the local community garden was given an area to use to trade and sell the fresh foods from their harvest.

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Specific resources are needed to begin, operate, and sustain the project; for example, the vendor payment tools, staff from the government assistance offices, local growers, vendors that the community will embrace, security if a concern, a location that is easily accessible by walking, bus or car, and a repeat customer program to keep the community returning. Knowing what permits and licenses that will be needed as well as the agency to acquire them is another important resource.

A potential outcomes the local Farmer's Market could be to provide fresh foods for the community, which will improve the health outcomes that are currently negatively impacting the community. The local Farmer's Market will also provide local farm raised items that are not readily accessible for this community. Utilizing evidence-based resources that will assist in driving the project from a dream to reality is also important to include.

The saying goes "If they build it they will come". This is not always the case. The best media team could advertise the event, the local venues and stores be on board and ready to provide, however if the locals have no reason to try something new or the what's in it for me if I attend questions, attendance could be low. The event might come and go without impacting the community or creating a positive memory. For the Paramore Project a local musician was used to draw the crowd to the location, WIC and SNAP benefits were accepted, and the draw of the local community garden being in attendance.

The Paramore Project has been open for a few weeks and has been a great success from the first weekend of operation. The use of social media, local attention by word of mouth, and faith-based organization supporting the new market, participation continues to grow each time the market is open for business. In addition to that, each month an activity is used to draw the crowds; activities like-local artist, local musicians, and kids' events that tie into events the community center is providing at that time. The sustainability portion of this project was a big challenge due to the area of interest for the project design. Through partnerships, local vendors willing to provide to this community and government officials support the project, were all important in making this project come to life. This project was in planning and design for about a year.

The partnership that provides the biggest piece is the local newly opened community center which provides the space for the Farmer's Market to be held on the second Saturday of the month. The vendors are able to accept alternative payments and the community members are able to bring home fresh foods for their families to enjoy at a price that is budget friendly for these families. Just because the project has started does not mean that progress stops here. The idea to double WIC and SNAP benefits is in the works as well as to double cash dollars for repeat customers. So, a families $20 budget can easily be turned into $40 of fresh foods for them to enjoy at home.

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**Grant Opportunities**

- USDA. Farmers Market Promotion Program https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp
- USDA. Local Food Promotion Program https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants
- USDA-NIFA. Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program https://nifa.usda.gov/program/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program
- USDA. Specialty Crop Block Grant Program https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp
- USDA. Specialty Crop Multi-State Program https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scmp

# Faith Based SIG

## Soup Kitchens: Evaluating Project Goals and Impact

Soup kitchens and meal delivery programs, such as Meals on Wheels, can be found in almost every city in America. These programs would be unable to fulfill their missions without the support received from in-kind donations, donated volunteer hours, and most importantly, grants.

Most funders require an evaluation plan. The evaluation plan gives the funder the opportunity to see the success of several aspects about the grant program applied for and / or funded, such as:

- Was the money well utilized within the scope of the program objective?
- Program Objective – To serve hot, nutritious meals to (a specific number of) homeless population in (enter community name), reducing the population going a day without food by 20%.
- What are the short-term goals that were met?

*Short-term Goal* – To host and serve at least two hot lunches to at least 600 homeless people in the community area each month.
*Short-term Goal* – To deliver at least to two hot meals to 500 disabled and impoverished individuals in the community each month.

- Are the long-term goals on target for being accomplished?

Long-term Goal – To serve over 3,000 hot lunches over a year.
Long-term Goal – To deliver at least 2,500 hot meals over a year.
Long-term Goal – To see a XX% reduction in the number of homeless, impoverished, and disabled people going more than a day without a full, balanced meal.

- What changes need to be made going forward?
- Did we exceed or come short of our short-term goals?
- Do we need more funding, volunteers, in-kind donations, etc.?
- Is this program worth funding again?
- What impact was made in the community or serving area?

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Program impact can be ascertained by having volunteers in the dining room with questionnaires, have trained staff ask one or two pertinent questions upon entry, send a questionnaire out with meal deliveries and pick it up upon next visit, etc.

Impact Question – During the program's 5-year period of 2015-2020, was a XX% decrease seen in the number of homeless, impoverished, and disabled people going more than a day without a substantial meal?

The overall goal of the evaluation plan is to inform the funder, before funding, how this program will be audited and measured.

A good evaluation plan will not only benefit the funder, but will also help those over the program to analyze the inner workings of the project/program being funded. It is important not to develop a narrow view or focus of the project at hand, but to be adaptable to change and have a critical eye for what could be done better moving forward. Some important questions to ask are:

- Is the program/project exceeding the goals set forth at the program's start?
- Is our mission statement being met?
- What are areas that are lacking and why?
- Is this program fixing the root problem or is it just treating the symptoms?
- Are other programs already operational in the area and is this one needed?

Objective
1. During the project 50% of the vegetables will be sourced locally from the kitchen's community garden
# of vegetable inventory being bought
2. During the project 20% of the meat served will be harvested by or donated from volunteer hunters
# of meat inventory being bought

Data to Gather
# of vegetable inventory being harvested
# of meat inventory being donated

Method / Time Frame
Inventory report / Monthly

By Whom
Project Manager

**Additional Resources:**

- Mission Possible: How To Start and Operate a Soup Kitchen http://www.startasoupkitchen.org/resources.htm
- Helping the Needy https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/foodbanks/
- How Does a Soup Kitchen Make Money? https://pocketsense.com/soup-kitchen-money-5664.html

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**Grant Opportunities:**

- Newman's Own Foundation http://newmansownfoundation.org/what-we-support/
- The Campbell Soup Foundation https://www.campbellsoupcompany.com/about-campbell/corporate-responsibility/grant-guidelines/
- Jewel-Osco Companies http://national.albertsonscompaniesfoundation.org/get-funded/grant-funding-guidelines-jewel-osco/
- Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/hpnap/
- Food Bank of Central New York https://www.foodbankcny.org/partner-agencies/grants-and-opportunities/

# Food and Nutrition

## Community Garden Projects: Budget Considerations

This article will focus on writing the Budget Section of a grant proposal, and ideas you should focus on related to Community Gardens Projects and the budget considerations for those. We will discuss:

- Budget considerations for personnel
- Non-personnel expenses
- In-kind contributions and how to include those in the budget
- Indirect Costs
- Budget Narrative- how to describe the project

Community Garden Programs are becoming more and more common, especially in areas around schools or food-deprived regions. A community garden typically provides the opportunity for local residents to contribute to the care of a garden and then be able to take advantage of the harvests. Members of the community can work together to essentially help feed each other. Funders may be especially interested in a program such as this because it hits home for many local foundations and has the opportunity to get people working together who may not normally have done so. To be sure to secure funding for a program like this, it is important to have the research done to know exactly (or a very close estimate) of the cost of supplies and time for this project, and accurately display it in the budget.

Direct expenses include both personnel and non-personnel expenses. It is very common to ask a funder to cover some cost for personnel/ salaries. Depending on your project, you may have a part-time employee dedicated to the project, or you may have multiple full-time employees contributing in-kind, all or part of their time to the program. You need to carefully determine how much time and energy will be applied to the project prior to applying. It needs to be relevant to the project and appropriate for the funder as well. Budgets ask you for the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of each employee involved. To calculate this, consider 1.0 FTE to be 100% full time equivalent at 40 hours a week. Therefore, an employee at 0.5 FTE is half-time, 20 hours a week; and 0.25FTE is quarter-time, at 10 hours a week. You

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may also adjust this depending on the budget constraints. For example, you may have an employee who makes $40,000 a year (1.0 FTE). At 0.5FTE, $20,000 in salary would be included; but if you only have $4,000 in the grant available, you can allocate that person at 0.1 FTE. If it is allowed to include costs for Fringe in the personnel section, be sure you do so. Fringe rates may be dependent on the funder, or possibly your organization. A fairly standard Fringe rate to include is an additional 25%. This helps cover costs for employees' taxes, insurance, retirement plans, paid days off, etc. for the employee.

Non-personnel expenses are essentially everything else related to the project besides salaries. This includes several categories including equipment, supplies, rent, printing, travel, consultant fees, furniture, insurance, postage, etc. For a project concerning community gardens, you most likely would potentially have non-personnel costs for trainings, travel, garden supplies (seed, dirt, shovels, gloves, etc.), lot/ land lease, printing of brochures, and maybe a few other things. Calculate the costs of all of these things per year, or grant cycle to include in the budget. In the generic budget template, total everything in each category. You will divide everything out and provide more detail in the budget narrative. For example, say you have seeds ($100), dirt ($200), shovels ($150), and gloves ($50). In the budget template, you include Supplies $500, and break it down in the budget narrative. If you need to plan for travel reimbursements, look up the costs of what you can, but for variable costs, it is good to use the CONUS IRS reimbursement rates. Mileage would be at the allowable rate (currently at $0.54 per mile) within other IRS guidelines. There would not be any other travel or meal expenses for a Community Garden program.

In-kind contributions are essential to a project like this one. There may be a great deal of in-kind opportunities in a community garden project. These could include volunteers to tend to the crops and land, the land itself, supplies from community farmers or stores, many possibilities. You will want to show this in your application narrative, budget, and budget narrative. It looks good to funders to see that the applicant organization is engaging committed volunteers to help the cause of the project. The average value of volunteer time by the hour is about $24, depending on your state. This can add up significantly. If you have 5 volunteers all willing to contribute 5 hours a week for a 3 month (12 week) community garden, that equals (5*5*12*$24)= $7,200 alone in in-kind volunteer time. To calculate a land donation to the project, you may work with a local realtor and accountant to help determine the value of the land, and how to document that appropriately. Remember that in-kind is entered both as as Revenue and as an Expense.

The Indirect rate is another component to the budget that may get confusing. Indirect costs are expenses which are not direct to the function of a specific program but are required to keep the doors of the applicant organization open. Some funders want to see how this money is spent, especially when the amount is large. Indirect costs are usually fractional amounts of operational costs such as insurance and taxes, which are not a direct pert of the specific program.

Some applications make it easy and either state that no indirect can be included, or a specified rate is provided. This is incorporated into the whole budget amount. For example, if you are applying for a grant with a ceiling of $25,000, you want to make sure your Direct and Indirect costs do not go above

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that in your grant request. Say the application allows you to incorporate an Indirect rate of 10%. This would mean that your Direct costs is calculated at one point the indirect rate, or in this case it would 1.1. Therefore, $25,000 divided by 1.1 gives a Direct Expense of $22,727. Then 10% of the Direct amount is $2,273 (rounded). This way the Total Direct plus the Total Indirect equals the total grant request.

Unless otherwise specified in the grant application, always submit a Budget Narrative. This provides a detailed description of all the costs listed with your project. It also provides you an opportunity to explain how these costs were realized. The better and clearer the explanation provided, the more likely they will be to accept the budget without changes or red flags. The Budget Narrative can be either in paragraph or spreadsheet format. Regardless of the format you use, make sure that each item is described clearly and reasonably. Tell the funder what you are purchasing, how many, how much the cost is for each, how much the cost is in total, and how it all totals to equal the grant request. For example, say you need to order 5 sets of gloves. You could show it like this:
Gloves- 5 pairs- $10 each- $50 total- Grant Request $50 (if this were the only item).

You will also use the Budget Narrative to explain your personnel expense. This could mean explaining the FTE and why it was chosen at that amount, small description of the duties of the job position, and the fringe amount. It is usually a good standard to explain that Fringe rate will cover those costs mentioned earlier- costs for insurance, retirement plans, paid days off, etc. for the employee. As a general rule, the budget form itself is only one page for most applications. The Budget Narrative, however, may be multiple pages depending on the format you choose and the level of detail you provide. Be sure to check on federal grant applications whether the Budget Narrative is included in the page limit. If it is, you may choose to use a format that will minimize the number of pages you have to submit. If you are not sure what the page limit should be and there is a contact for the application, reach out to that person. They are well versed in the requirements of the application and are there to answer questions.

**For Further Information:**

- 2018 General Services Administration (GSA) CONUS Per Diem Rates. https://www.perdiem101.com/conus/2018
- iGrow SDSU Extension; Community Gardens: Budgets and Fees; http://igrow.org/community-development/local-foods/community-gardens-budget-fees/

**Grant Opportunities**

- The Awesome Foundation; Awesome Foundation Grants http://www.awesomefoundation.org/
- Simply Organic; Simply Organic Giving Fund https://www.simplyorganic.com/community/about/giving-back/grant-application
- New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund https://grassrootsfund.org/dollars
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education; Partnership Grants https://www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Partnership-Grant
- Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust Grant https://www.instrumentl.com/grants/stanley-smith-horticultural-trust-grant

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# Grant Management Indirect Rates

Anyone who applies for federal funds knows that grant money will never pay for all costs related to the program. Experienced grant managers know that the true cost of programs include things like rent, utilities, technology support, consulting, and even a portion of the grant manager's salary are shared across different programs within the organization. These costs are defined as indirect costs and gaining reimbursement for these costs continue to be one of the biggest challenges facing a grant manager. Calculating the full cost of any program is a prerequisite for preparing accurate budget forecasts and financial statements, along with ensuring the organization is fully reimbursed for any costs associated with the program. Of course, this is not always the case with all grant makers. Some Foundations and corporate grant makers provide small allowances, or not allowance at all, for the reimbursement of indirect costs. On the other hand, government funders rarely ever not accommodate provisions for indirect costs in their agreements, but you must understand how rates are calculated.

To gain access to an indirect cost rate for your organization, you are provided two options by 2 CFR Part 200. There is the de minimis rate and a negotiated rate using the proposal method. The OMB provides an opportunity for first-time award recipients to receive a de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs if the entity never had a negotiated indirect cost rate.

In CFR Part 200.414(f), guidance dictates that "nonfederal entities that have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except those covered in Appendix VII(D)(1)(b), may elect to charge a rate of 10% of modified total direct cost, which may be used indefinitely. If this method is chosen, it must be used consistently for all federal awards until the entity chooses to negotiate for a rate."

If your organization decides your indirect cost rate warrants a higher rate than 10%, then you must work with the federal entity to negotiate an acceptable rate. To begin the process, it will be up to you and your organization to develop an indirect cost proposal that will be submitted to the federal entity for review and consideration. At a minimum, your standard indirect cost proposal needs to include the following sections:

- Introduction
- Cost Allocation Methodology
- Direct Costs
- Indirect Costs
- Cost Pool and Base for Distribution
- Supporting Financial Statements
- Salaries
- Fringe Benefits
- Non-Salary Costs
- Computation of Base and Pool Costs
- Rate
- Funding of Rate
- Supporting Schedules

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Let's dive into a few of the items listed above to gain a better understanding of the information required.

The Introduction section should be short, sweet, and to the point. Describe your organization in one paragraph max.

The Cost Allocation Methodology should be written as follows:
"This proposal is for an indirect cost rate based on the nonprofit's actual costs, for its fiscal year beginning XX/XX/XXXX and ending XX/XX/XXXX. The proposal is based on the non-profit organization's audit report for the year ending XX/XX/XXXX. This proposal addresses all elements of cost incurred by name of organization and identifies shared costs that require allocation.

The non-profit treats all costs as direct costs except general administration and general expenses. Joint costs are prorated individually as direct costs to each category and to each award using a base most appropriate to the particular cost being prorated. Therefore, any direct allocation method has been used in allocating costs."

Under the Direct Costs section, state all of the direct costs related to the program/project. Typically, these costs have been approved by the federal entity when you submitted your program budget.

Under the Indirect Costs section, state which costs are being used to calculate the requested rate. Many times these costs are grouped into a common pool. Ex. Administrative Services

Under Cost Pool and Base for Distribution, you will need to further detail the common pool(s) you detailed in the indirect costs section. For example: "The non-profit has created an Administrative Services Pool consisting of salaries, fringe benefits, and non-salary costs. The Administrative Services Pool is charged with all the indirect costs as defined above. The pool is distributed to the various program activities on the basis of direct salaries, including vacation, holiday, and sick pay but excluding other fringe benefits expended on this activity. "

Under the Financial Statement section, make sure to include a copy of your organization's audited financial statements.

Under both the Salaries and Fringe Benefits sections, list all the positions, salaries, and benefits that comprise the pool(s) detailed in the earlier section(s). These will be used in a later section as part of the development of your indirect rate formula.

Under the Non-Salary Costs section, detail each category of non-salary expenditures that will be used in the computation of the proposed indirect cost rate.
Under the Computation of Base and Pool Costs section, you will provide both the total direct costs and the indirect costs for the program/project. These numbers will be used to create your proposed rate.
Under the Rate section, you will propose your organization's indirect cost rate. For example, "Adjusted indirect costs (pool) $382,200/Total direct salaries (base) $$1,111,342= 34.4%"

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Under the Funding of Rate section, you will provide a breakdown of the computed rate across the programs/projects currently being served by the organization. For example:

| | Direct Salaries | Indirect Salaries | Indirect Cost Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Health Services | $1,275,000 | $326,350 | 25.60% |
| Education | $2,460,000 | $256,000 | 10.41% |
| Social Services | $877,000 | $189,650 | 21.62% |

Now that you have completed your indirect rate proposal, the next step will be to submit the document to the federal agency to await approval as submitted or start the negotiation process after receiving the feedback from the agency. Remember to keep in mind that an approved cost rate doesn't necessary guarantee full cost recovery. Many federal agencies have caps put in place for cost recovery.

# Health Care

## Project Design for Dental Health Projects

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research defines oral health as "being free of chronic oral-facial pain conditions, oral and pharyngeal (throat) cancers, oral soft tissue lesions, birth defects such as cleft lip and palate, and scores of other diseases and disorders that affect the oral, dental, and craniofacial tissues, collectively known as the craniofacial complex" (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, 2000). Physicians and healthcare clinics understand that the importance of oral health cannot be ignored because oral health means much more than healthy, clean teeth. There is a proven causal relationship between poor oral hygiene and chronic health problems such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory infections, kidney disease, infertility, arthritis, and even dementia. However, the development of a project to address oral health as a social problem requires a time-sensitive and evidence-based need that must be justified during the design phase of the project.

A project considered worthy of funding is one that meets a need in the community. The appearance of a need without any actual evidence to support the need will not suffice. In other words, if a board member of staff person wants to start a project, it might sound like a great idea, but with no evidence to support the need, the project is dead in the water. On the other hand, if that board member or staff person can support the need for the project, it is more likely that the project could be considered an option, both in terms of the organization continuing with the design phase and in terms of gaining the interest of prospective funders.

Establishing an evidence-based need begins by identifying a problem within a geographic area served by the organization. Often, the prevalence of that problem can be narrowed down to a group of people with shared demographic characteristics, such as age, race, gender, or income. Resources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Institutes of Health that publish statistical data, are useful to providing evidence of a problem. However, data from these sources may be outdated or too broad to

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pinpoint a rapidly growing problem that exists in a small community, so data may need to be collected from local or municipal sources. Case studies, surveys, and news reports are valuable secondary sources.

Once the service area and target population are identified, there is still preliminary research that must be done to gauge whether the project will propose a solution to the problem. Will the project be a quick-fix for a problem that has an underlying root-cause? Alternatively, will the project tackle the cause of the problem at the source? Is there another organization in the community that provides the same or similar services? How successful is the project? Would a collaboration add value to an existing project? Answering these questions will help the grant writer understand if the need is prevalent enough to warrant the organization's involvement in a new project.

If there is a definite need for the project, is the organization the most suitable entity to carry-out the proposed project, or would a collaboration be in the best interest of the target population? For instance, the service area may have a higher rate of tooth decay among children as compared to the state average, but the organization proposing the project does not provide services to children. Or, maybe they do provide family dental services, but the project would be more effective as an educational outreach initiative that targets families of lower socio-economic status. Consider how the target population will access the services provided. Is the clinic located in an area accessible by public transportation or are they willing to hire and train staff to provide mobile screenings? Before committing, strongly consider whether the organization is able and willing to spearhead the proposed project.

Too often, grant writers rush through the planning process and dive right into developing the project description without considering all variables. Approaching the project design, and subsequent proposal writing, in this manner often leads to costly mistakes. Unforeseen barriers or overlooked influences can dismantle a project before it begins, which is why it is essential to use a program matrix such as the Logic Model. The Logic Model is a graphical depiction of the planned work and intended results. It is one of the most useful tools for assessing the overall effectiveness of a proposed project because it provides a macro-perspective of the project lifecycle. The Logic Model provides a framework that should be used during the project design process, but before drafting a project description.

The most widely used form of the Logic Model highlights the relationship between project inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The Logic Model is typically developed on an assumption basis since, during the design stage, no indicators are present to measure the success of the project. The inputs identified in the Logic Model are any resources necessary to operate the project, including staff, money, or equipment. The activities section lists what activities will be undertaken, while the outputs section reflects the immediate result of completing those activities. For instance, the activity might be to develop an educational program while the output would be the number of workshops the organization will host. The outcomes and impact sections are often combined into one section and list how the project will benefit the target population or make a change in the community. Not only does the Logic Model pinpoint potential strengths and weaknesses of the proposed project, but it can add value to insights gained throughout project implementation and evaluation as indicators become available.

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When developing the Logic Model, it is important to consider possible barriers to conducting the project. For instance, if an application must be made to the board of education for permission to host a dental screening for elementary school students, but the school year is ending, there might be insufficient time to process the application and coordinate the event. That would certainly be a barrier to the proposed project. However, since the barrier has been identified, a new strategy can be developed, whether that means collaborating with another community organization, applying for the next school year, or finding a different way to approach the target population. There might even be a few community influences that can aid in the success of the project.

When completing the Logic Model, it is advisable to include all relevant stakeholders. Their involvement is often piecemeal as the target population contributes ideas, and concerns are addressed with the directors, board members, staff, and volunteers. Receiving feedback about the overall direction of the project will ensure that severe obstacles to completing the proposed activities are not overlooked and that the organization has the available resources to carry out all processes. Once the Logic Model is final, start to identify the scope and activities of the project that will be important to developing the project description part of the proposal.

Before starting the project description for the dental health project, dedicate some time to brainstorm ideas that could potentially add more value to the outcome of the project. Is there a unique way that the organization can bring in other sources of income to support the project? Who will manage the project? Who will be the key staff involved and what will be their roles and responsibilities? Can the organization coordinate with another dental health organization to have an even more significant impact? Moreover, is there a succession plan in place? If it is a one-time project, would the organization consider orchestrating another project if the first one is successful? These are all critical questions that cannot go unanswered during the design phase if the project is going to be a success and have an impact.

**Additional Resources**

- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. (2000). Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Retrieved January 24, 2018, from https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/DataStatistics/SurgeonGeneral
- https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/DataStatistics/
- https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/dental.htm

**Grant Opportunities:**

- American Dental Association Foundation, Give Kids A Smile® Continuity of Care Grants, https://www.adafoundation.org/en/how-to-apply/access-to-care
- American Dental Association Foundation, Samuel D. Harris Fund for Children's Dental Health Grant Program, https://www.adafoundation.org/en/how-to-apply/education
- The Foundation of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children Grants, https://www.healthysmileshealthychildren.org/what-we-do-apply/
- Patterson Foundation, Oral Health Grants, http://pattersonfoundation.net/apply
- Walmart Foundation, Northwest Arkansas Giving Program, http://giving.walmart.com/northwest-arkansas-giving-program

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# Volunteers

## Evaluation Plan for Volunteer Programs

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) have become a major aspect of program management. The impetus for this came in the early 1990s in wake of a shift in emphasis from process to desired outcomes in the management of human and social services (Kellogg Foundation, 2010). Since then, many government agencies and non-profit organizations have been emphasizing M&E in service delivery. However, many non-profit organizations operating volunteer programs still pay lip-service to this issue, especially where they re
y on fundraisers or dollars from "dependable" sources and donors who do not insist on knowing the results of the programs and contributions of volunteer as is the case of a faith-based nonprofit organization that I am affiliated with as a Board member. But in recent years, an increasing number of funders of volunteer programs now want to be assured that that their dollars will be (or have been) well-spent to achieve the agreed results and that the volunteers will make (or have made) a difference (Minnesota DHS, 1997). One way of convincing donors that this will be the case is to have a robust M&E plan. The purpose of this article is to provide guidance for preparing an M&E plan for a volunteer program with emphasis on the volunteer management component. The concept of an M&E plan will first be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the reasons why a volunteer program manager needs to prepare an M&E plan. The last section outlines the steps for preparing an effective M&E plan.

In this article, the terms M&E plan, performance management plan (PMP), and evaluation plan (EP) will be used interchangeably, although the latter is a narrower concept. Technically, monitoring is a continuous, or ongoing assessment, of a program or project aimed at providing funders, program managers and other stakeholders with early detailed information on the progress of the program or project. The purpose is to determine if the expected results and planned schedules are being met so that corrective actions may be taken as needed to address any deficiencies and bring the program on course as soon as possible. On the other hand, evaluation is a systematic evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, outcomes, impact, and implementation issues of a program or project at a particular point in time, ie. end of a year. The purpose is to learn, make recommendations, and reporting about the progress and performance of the program to funders and other stakeholders.

Technically, there are two types evaluation: formative and summative evaluations. A formative evaluation is when the program manager works with the stakeholders to develop the questions that funders may want to ask about the program. It is held at set regular frequency (usually quarterly) when data are collected and analyzed to answer questions that assist in identifying weaknesses or problems with program implementation and strategies and which in turn assist program managers to take quick corrective actions. Thus, formative evaluation is almost like monitoring.

On the other hand, summative evaluation occurs near or at the end of the period donor funding. Some of the questions to be addressed by a summative evaluation include: What are the accomplishments of

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the program vis-à-vis the program goals, objectives and targets? What differences did the program make in the target community or within the target population? Can the program be scaled up or replicated elsewhere or can it be sustained without further donor funding or is it worth further funding by the donor? In some cases, a funder may require that the organization conduct a mid-term evaluation

While monitoring focuses on outputs, evaluation focuses on outcomes and impact. Monitoring and evaluation are like Siamese twins – they go together. Hence, the term monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and the rationale for a combined M&E plan. In fact, the word evaluation is sometimes used to envelope monitoring. With this in mind, an evaluation plan for a volunteer program can be defined as a document that explains to a potential funder how your organization plans to measure and evaluate the success of the program, including the efforts of the volunteers and the difference they are making. An evaluation plan for a volunteer program should include the following:

• The program goal (strategic objectives), objectives (intermediate results), performance indicators and targets.
• How you will know whether the goal and objectives have been achieved, i.e. how you will measure and track the goal and objectives
• They type of information that will collected, sources of the information, methods of collecting the information, frequency of collecting the information and who will collect the information.
• How the information will be analyzed, who will analyze the information, how the results/reports will be compiled and disseminated, i.e., who will get what type of report.

Most evaluation plans have monitoring and evaluation components (Evaluation Toolbox). While the monitoring component of the plan is usually conducted or managed by in-house staff, the summative evaluation component can be conducted by in-house staff or an external (third party) evaluator.
Why do managers of volunteer programs need to prepare an evaluation plan for their programs? The first reason is that many funders of volunteer program now requirement grant applicants to include an evaluation plan (or a monitoring and evaluation plan or a performance management plan) as part of the narrative of the grant application. For instance, a performance management plan (PMP) was a requirement in the request for application (RFA) for the USAID-funded American Educators for Africa Program which was implemented by a US-based nonprofit organization I was affiliated with as program director and grant writer in the early 2000s through 2013. The second reason why an evaluation plan is needed is that it will guide the organization in the monitoring and evaluation its program and provide useful information needed for its website, newsletter, annual reports and other publications which can be disseminated to funders, donors, and other stakeholders to enhance its fundraising efforts. A third reason is that the evaluation plan will enable the organization to learn and improve on its program and service delivery by providing useful information to assist in decision making

Now what are the steps and requirements for a good evaluation plan for a volunteer program? The first step is to identify the audience of the evaluation plan. The most important audiences are the funder of the program, followed by managers and staff of the program, the volunteers, beneficiaries, partners, and other stakeholders. The plan should address the specific needs of the key audiences of the plan.

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The second step is to identify the evaluation questions and associated information required. Examples of questions that must be answered include: Did the project meet its goals? What worked well and what did not? What were the unintended consequences? Was the project cost effective? Can the program be scaled up or replicated? Is the program sustainable without donor funding? Are our volunteers satisfied with their working environment? Are the regular staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders satisfied with the volunteers? Are the volunteers getting the support they need? Are the volunteers making a difference? What is the contribution of the volunteers to the results of the program? How much did the organization save as a result of the volunteers' efforts? What is the unit cost of services provided with the use of volunteers compared to what it would have been without volunteers (market rate)? How did the use of volunteers increase the scope or outreach of the program? The information needed can easily be identified from the program logic model – the graphic blueprint of the program which includes the inputs, activities, expected outputs, outcomes and impacts of the program.

The third step which runs pari-passu with the second step is to identify the performance indicators which can easily be derived from the logic model. For each of these, performance indicators should be identified. For example, volunteers can be regarded as inputs, and one of the indicators of volunteer efforts will be number of volunteers engaged or man-hours of volunteers employed during a specific period of time. An activity may be training of volunteers, and an indicator for this could be the number of training sessions or hours of training provided to volunteers. An output of a volunteer program such as a feeding program would be the number of meals prepared and served daily by volunteers or number of beneficiaries (from previous period, new, total) while an outcome will be a decline in nutrition-related diseases among the target population (homeless in the community) and indicator will be the incidence of nutrition-related diseases among homeless/poor reported. For each of the identified performance indicator, you have to identify the information you need for the variables such as hours worked, meals served, number of beneficiaries, etc in day, week, month, quarter or year.

The fourth step is to identify the sources of required information. This will include forms designed to capture information for the program such as volunteers' time record sheet which will include the date, time in and time out, hours work, tasks performed, achievements/deliverables, and volunteer's close-out form to be completed whenever a volunteer completes his or her assignment with the organization. The closeout form should include a summary of the volunteer's achievement, his or her observations, his or her likes and dislikes during the tenure, recommendations, and success stories. Other sources of information for evaluation of a program include: a) Focus group discussions with volunteers and with staff; b) Surveys/questionnaires; c) interviews; d) and case studies; and e) secondary sources including published data and online sources. The frequency of collecting each type of information and from each source, such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual, should be clearly stated in the plan.

The fifth step is to identify who will be responsible for collecting the information as well as for analyzing the information and computing values for the performance indicators. The sixth and final step is to identify the types of reports that will be produced, the frequency of producing the reports, the responsible person(s) as well as who will receive such reports and mode of dissemination.

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Some funders have evaluation plan templates for grant applicants to use. You should decide whether to present the plan in the form of a narrative or in the form of a table (matrix). There are some funding foundations that provide grants to non-profit organizations to hire external evaluators to assist in conducting the evaluation of programs of nonprofits in order to identify and learn from their shortcomings and improve service delivery and overall performance. Finally, it is also important to note that you will be held accountable for the plan. Thus, it must be realistic and implementation. This means that you should only achievable targets and information that can be collected.

**References**


- Evaluation Toolbox. Available at http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_rubberdoc&view=category&id=22&Itemid=55
- Minnesota DHS (1997). Measuring the differences volunteer make. http://www.volunteertoday.com/pdf/measuring_the_difference.pdf
- Gotlieb, l (2011). Evaluation: Your tool to volunteer program success. https://charityvillage.com/cms/content/topic/evaluation_your_tool_to_volunteer_program_success
- HealthCOMpass. How to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan. Retrieved from https://www.thehealthcompass.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2010). The step-by-step guide to evaluation. Retrieved from https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2010/w-k-kellogg-foundation-evaluation-handbook


**Other Resources**


- Corporation of National and Community Service. Types of volunteer program evaluation. Available at https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/moodle/vista_advanced_volunteer_management_topic_07/view6521.html?id=1083&chapterid=496


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