Ideas and strategies for developing an evaluation plan for your grant proposal

2021/2022 Grant Writing Series
November 30, 2021, 1:00 – 2:30pm
Today’s Panel

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Reflection Questions posed to Panel of Experienced Grant Makers

• What are your top 3 pieces of advice for new grant writers relative to evaluation planning?

• What do you know now that you wish you had known before writing one of your grants about evaluation planning?

• What are you glad you did on one of your grants relative to evaluation planning?
Where your talents and the needs of the world cross; there lies your vocation.”
~ Aristotle

“Your calling is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”
~ Frederick Buechner

Where does your calling to research meet the needs in your community?
Read the RFP
• Read the RFP
  • All the way through & several times
  • Evaluation requirements usually toward the end
  • Need the whole picture for meaningful evaluation planning
  • Can’t be an afterthought
• Review previously funded projects
• Seek advice or feedback from senior researchers and mentors.

Review Formerly Funded Projects
Think Ahead Logistically

• Talk to your HUB / College research administration person if you plan to contract / subcontract early in the proposal process.

• Prompt early discussion in proposal team meetings about the project evaluation process.

• Connect early on with university resources (e.g. BioStats faculty, research hub/college support).

• Over time, develop relationships with program evaluators (internal/external) with a range of experiences across grant types and connections with community partners.

• Outline the evaluation plan in the earlier phase of the grant writing proposal (ideally, as you finalize your specific aims) to allow time to modify as needed to fit the research aims, meet the RFP requirements, and include input from partners.

• Allocate sufficient time for evaluation planning.
• Use a logic model.

A picture that links outcomes (both short- and long-term) with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the program.

Basic elements: Resources/inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact

• Some funding agencies prefer theory driven evaluation. Make sure the theoretical framework for your research and evaluation plans is well described in your evaluation section.

• Try to build in formative assessments into your evaluation plan process.

• Plan to use multiple sources of data for triangulation.

• Pilot new instrument ahead of time.

• Calculate the number of participates needed using G-power.
Consult Relevant Standards

• 30 professional evaluation standards.
  • Utility Standards (8)
  • Feasibility Standards (4)
  • Propriety Standards (7)
  • Accuracy Standards (8)
  • Evaluation Accountability Standards (3)

• Use Checklist for designing evaluations.
  ➢ The CIPP Evaluation Model workshop: https://www.evaluationconference.org/Programs/Workshops

• What Works Clearinghouse
  A leading federal source of evidence-based information about education programs, policies, and interventions that show promise for improving student outcomes.
Choose your Evaluation Team Strategically

• Choose an evaluator/evaluation team that will:
  1. Fulfill the RFP evaluation criteria (and they will write the specific evaluation plan)
  2. Work closely with the grant team regarding a formative evaluation.

• Be sure your evaluator/evaluation team is reputable and responsive.

• If budget is limited, scholars in your study area, especially at other universities, may have the necessary qualifications and can also participate / guide an advisory committee.
• Carefully consider what is expected, how much time it will take, and have evaluator break down their costs. These details are necessary for the budget justification.

• Direct the evaluation team to utilize funds to engage in more formative evaluation measures. (e.g. Project with team from University of Washington) and to utilize the budget based on your project needs.
Collaborative Evaluation Team

• Consider teaming up with external evaluators in the initial stages of grant development. In fact, meet with prospective evaluators *before* selection.

• Work with the evaluation team to tightly align the grant objectives and multiple metrics for measure.

• Establish an on-going communication plan with the evaluation team.

• Think of the evaluation as iterative and formative—not just an ends or summative.
Tell YOUR Story

• The evaluation team should work side-by-side with the grant team to communicating the story of the work.

• Publish studies along the way, not at the end of the grant.
  • Include non-academic authors.
  • Establish regular writing times/data reviews along the way.
  • Move presentations to papers.

• Think of the emergent findings of the work as a baseline for the next iteration of your grant.
• Kellogg Foundation resources for evaluation—logic model: https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resources/2004/01/logic-model-development-guide
• The CIPP Evaluation Model Book: https://www.amazon.com/CIPP-Evaluation-Model-Improvement-Accountability/dp/1462529232
• Evaluation checklists:
• The American Evaluation Association
• Consultants and Evaluation Firms
  • GrantProse
  • Cynosure