Evaluation

» Why evaluate?

• Not merely an accountability measuring stick imposed on projects.
• Not simply to prove a project worked, but also to improve the way it works.
• A management and learning tool for projects, foundations, and others in the community.
• Important to review these principles as you develop grant report questions.
• Important to communicate these principles to grantees so they understand why they are completing the report or need to evaluate their programs.
• Evaluation can be extremely costly – sometimes 10% of grant amount. It also can be costly in terms of staff time. If you want to measure:
  ➢ Realize the implications on the project (less students served to allow for reporting time).
  ➢ Pay for it!

» Questions to Ask

• What will evaluation measure (process and/or outcomes)?
  ➢ Are we measuring how much we did, how well we did it, or if anyone is better off? e.g. RBA’s Performance vs. Population Indicators.
• Who will pay for it?
  ➢ Will the foundation pay for the evaluation or will the grantee?
• Who will conduct it (foundation, grantee, third party)?
  ➢ Will the foundation conduct evaluate the evaluation or will the grantee?
Is it an outside evaluator removed from the program or is it program staff reflecting on their program’s processes and outcomes.

1. Staff evaluations can be extremely helpful and easy to implement, however, they may be biased.

2. Outside researchers, professional evaluators and consultants can conduct evaluative efforts. However, the evaluator must: be unbiased; understand the scope and scale of the project; understand the subject matter; and be a good match for the grant, the grantee, and the foundation.

• What Process will be used”
  ➢ Is the process on-going (formative) and the evaluator engaged throughout the process or is it at the end of the grant (summative)?

• How will results be used (by foundation, grantee)?
  ➢ Will results be used for future grants, to monitor progress, to celebrate success?

• How will results be shared (with whom, by whom, for what)?
  ➢ Will results be shared and to what end?

In the Grantmaking 101 Resource folder, you have two resources that go more in depth into evaluation: GrantCraft’s Making Measures Work for You, and Grantmakers for Effective Organization’s (GEO) Evaluation as Pathway to Learning are excellent resources. We also recommend the W.K. Kellogg Foundations Evaluation Handbook.