

Grants to States: 5-Year SLAA Evaluation Guidelines

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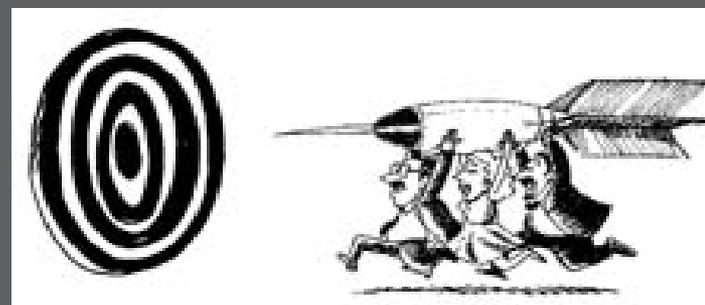
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1. Context
2. Guidelines
3. Evaluation
4. Methodology
5. Consumer Tips
6. Q&A

I. CONTEXT



Improving Results-Based Management (Outcomes Based Planning and Evaluation) in the Grants to States Program: Measuring Success



Guiding Principles

1. Objectives
 - a. Greater transparency and sharing of data
 - b. Better accountability
 - c. Improved program improvement
2. The new approaches balance national level needs within the jurisdictions of the SLAAs
3. Cooperative process between SLAAs and IMLS.

Where does FY 2017 Five-Year Evaluation Fit Into the Larger Transition?



- End of five-year planning cycle coincides with completing transition to new SPR.
- The “five-year” evaluations cover three reporting years: FY 2013, FY 2014 and FY 2015
 - Implications for pilots
 - Implications for non-pilots

II. FY 2017 5-Year Evaluation Report Guidelines

1. Overall objectives
2. Terminology
3. Retrospective questions
4. Process questions



- 5. Evaluation methodology
- 6. Independent evaluator requirements

5-Year Evaluation Plan Report Objectives

- Section 9134 (c) of IMLS' authorizing legislation directs SLAAs to “**independently** evaluate, and report to the (IMLS) Director regarding, the **activities** assisted under this subchapter, prior to the end of the 5-year plan.”
- Guidelines focus on more directly linking five year SLAA evaluations to improved results-based reporting for making better assessments at national and state jurisdictional levels.
- The linkage is made around two substantive sets of questions:
 - (1) *Highlight effective past practices (“Retrospective Questions”)*
 - (2) *Identify processes at work in implementing the activities in the plan, including the use of performance-based measurements in planning, policy making and administration (“Process Questions”)*

Retrospective Question 1

- To what extent did an SLAA Five-Year Plan's activities make progress towards each goal?
 - (a) Organize findings around each goal.
 - (b) Categorize goals as either achieved, partly achieved or not achieved.
 - (c) Identify key factors (e.g., budget) associated with goals that were not achieved

Retrospective Question 2

Question

- To what extent did an SLAA Five Year Plan's activities achieve results that addressed national priorities associated with Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

Focal Areas and Intents

- Institutional Capacity (3 intents)
- Information Access (2 intents)
- Lifelong Learning (2 intents)
- Human Services (3 intents)
- Employment & Economic Development (2 intents)
- Civic Engagement (2 intents)

Retrospective Question 3

Question

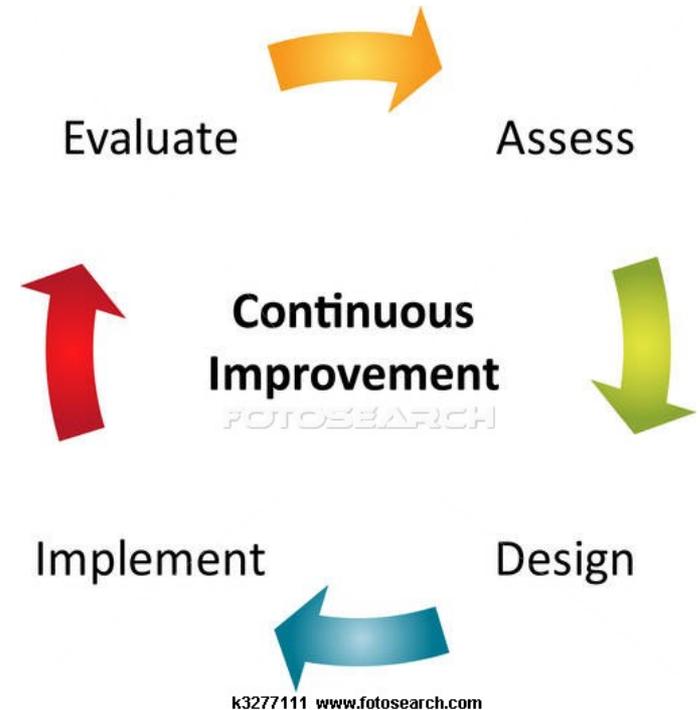
- Did any of the following groups represent a “substantial focus” of an SLAA Five-Year Plan’s activities?
- For those who answer YES to any of these groups, please discuss what extent each group was reached.

Groups

- Library workforce
- Individuals living below the poverty line
- Ethnic or minority populations
- Immigrants/refugees
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with limited functional literacy of information skills
- Families
- Children (aged 0-5)
- School-aged youth (aged 6-17)

Process Questions

- 1) How has an SLAA used data from the old and new SPR and elsewhere to guide activities in its Five-Year Plan?
- (2) Specify any changes made in the Five-Year Plan and why these occurred??
- (3) How and with whom did an SLAA share data from the old and new SPR and from other evaluation (data) resources?



3. Evaluation Methodology



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Six Types of Data Collection Sources

- 1. Administrative Documents:
 - Strategic and other plans
 - Budgets
 - Memos
 - Legislation, administrative rule changes
 - Correspondence
- 2. Administrative data (e.g., SPR data)
- 3. Interviews and Focus Groups
- 4. Surveys
- 5. Published evaluations and other studies (e.g., audits)
- 6. Media (e.g., newspaper stories, PSAs, etc.)

Three Types of Data Analysis

- 1. Quantitative Analysis
 - Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, quartiles, distributions)
 - Inferential statistics
- 2. Qualitative Analysis
 - Coding
 - “Content analysis”
 - “Exemplars”
- 3. Other Types of Analysis
 - Surveys (closed-ended and open-ended questions)
 - Case Studies

Evaluation Methodological Strategies

1. Let the type of question direct the type of method to use.
 - (a) Some questions are best answered with only quantitative methods.
 - (b) Some questions are best answered with only qualitative methods
 - (c) Some questions are best answered by other methods (e.g., case studies)
 - (d) Many questions are best answered by mixing a combination of methods.
2. IMLS guidance advises on the sources of data and the types of analysis to consider for evaluators to use to answer the various questions.

Independent Evaluations

- IMLS Authorization requires “independent” evaluations.
- Independent evaluations are rigorous and objective (carried out free from outside influence).
- The independent evaluations can be done in-house if those conducting the evaluations are not directly reportable to those with managerial responsibilities for LSTA-funded services.
 - Thus, the evaluations can be done by competent third-parties or in-house (if there are adequate organizational arrangements and resources).
- Institutional Review Boards are used to ensure that the proposed evaluation methods adequately protect “human subjects.”
 - These boards are comprised of peers with adequate training in the various evaluation methods.
 - If your organization does not have an IRB, contact an IMLS evaluation officer for advice.
- For further assistance, consider reviewing the ethical guidelines of the American Evaluation Association.

One Consumer Tip: Considerations in Choosing Between Third-Party and In-House Evaluators

Criteria:

1. Independence
 2. Understanding of organizational perceptions, experiences and values (“common sense”)
 3. Expertise
 4. Credibility
 5. Adoptability/transferability
 6. Cost and manageability
- Guiding Principle: Maximize Validity and Usefulness....



Guideline's Evaluation Methodology Questions

- Guiding Principle: Maximize validity and usefulness
 1. How did you select an independent evaluator?
 2. What types of statistical and qualitative methods were used in conducting the five-year evaluation? Assess their validity and reliability. (That is, how well were they designed and implemented?)
 3. Describe the stakeholders involved in the various stages of the evaluation and how they were engaged.
 4. Discuss how the SLAA will share the key findings and recommendations with others.

Evaluation Strategies with Data

- Maximize utility of SPR administrative data and secondary documents and datasets (e.g. Census data).
- In effectively answering the questions, plan to collect and analyze data using other methods, particularly surveys and interviews/focus groups, and possibly case studies.
- Presume descriptive statistical analysis will suffice for quantitative data.
- Presume content analysis will suffice for qualitative data.
- Summarizes the methodology in a section within the body of the report.

More Consumer Tips

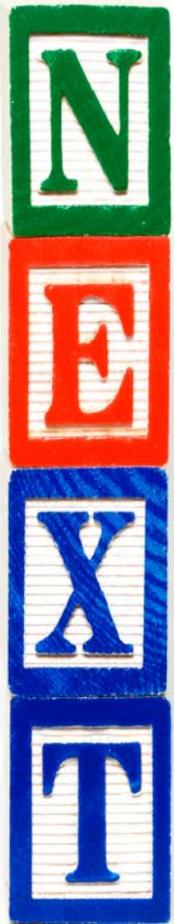
- (1) Develop a good evaluation plan before the evaluation starts.
 - * *Get the important questions answered upfront.*
- (2) Make sure the evaluators let you know about the implications of the methodological and other choices and is transparent in summarizing them in the report.
 - * *Cardinal rule: another evaluator should be able to see how to copy the protocols followed, execute them, and obtain the same results.*
- (3) Balance your agency needs with those of other stakeholders.
 - * *Let larger public interest drive resolution to any conflicts.*
- (4) Use results-based management principles in working with the evaluators.
 - * *Set up key deliverables and interact with evaluators around the milestones.*

Final \$.02

- Good monitoring and measurement means it is assessing meaningful theory....ask solid questions.
- Good evaluators address concerns for validity AND usefulness.
- Keep some buffer to be able to anticipate and adapt to the unexpected.



Follow-Up



- Contact IMLS state program officers and evaluation officers for questions

Q & A



Thank You!

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