Evaluation Methods for Rural Health Programs

- Evaluation 101 – theory & SORH reality
- Focus on SORH – other rural health programs
- Resources – including each other
- Look at your workplans

Project Evaluation

“A systemic approach of social research procedures”

“To ascertain or fix the value”

OR

So far so good so what?!

Why does program evaluation matter to SORH?

• Golden rule!

• Management tool for improving your program.
  - Engagement, budget, strategic use of resources

• Documents your success!
  - Dissemination activity
Key questions about evaluation for SORH

- What is required?
- What is "budgeted"?
- What data do we have or can we easily get?
- What do we want to know about what we do that we don’t know now?

Evaluation 101: Steps
(in theory according to CDC)

1. Engage Stakeholders
2. Describe the Program
3. Focus on the Evaluation Design
4. Gather Credible Evidence
5. Justify Conclusions
6. Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned

Sources: CDC

Evaluation 101: Reality Starting point for SORH
the needs of rural communities and providers

Sources of Data and Engagement:
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Federal, state and county data
- Provider data
- Key Informant Interviews
- Focus groups
- Community meetings
- Foundations
- Economic development authorities
- Human service agencies
- Medicaid – CHIP
- State legislatures
- Associations
- Universities
- Research centers
- Other funded projects
Evaluation 101: Evaluation Design Reality for SORH

• What’s required: SORH core activities & PIMS measures
• Identify what resources can be "put in" to make a difference on those needs
• Determine the desired outcome
• Strategize the activities which will achieve the desired outcome

Logic Model - a graphical depiction of the relationships between the resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of a program


Evaluation 101: Evaluation design & logic model

• “If-Then”
• IF the resources are available for a program, 
  THEN the activities can be implemented,
• IF the activities are implemented
  THEN certain outputs and outcomes can be expected
Evaluation 101: Evaluation design selecting the measures (theory)

- Output measures – “process” activity
  - Did you do what you say you were going to do?
    - Example – conduct webinar for rural health facilities
- Outcome measures – result of activity
  - What difference did it make? Short, intermediate, long-term
    - Example – rural health clinics report new knowledge on NHSC resources
- Impact measures - change
  - So what?
    - Example – rural health clinics uses NHSC SLRP funds as a recruitment tool and successfully recruit a PA

Evaluation 101: Evaluation design in the work plan

Work Plan should be clear, coherent and aligned with the goals and objectives described in the Methodology section. To accomplish this, applicants are strongly encouraged to present a matrix that illustrates the following:

- Activity
- Date of completion
- Staff (or responsible entity)
- Progress or Process measures
- Outcome or Impact

Evaluation 101: Workplan is evaluation design
Evaluation 101: Evaluation design in workplan

• Goals are general broad statements (use core activities)
• Objectives are operational statements (SMART)
• Activities are what you will do

Evaluation 101: Evaluation design in the narrative

EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY
• Applicant must describe the strategies and measures that will be used to evaluate performance during the project period. The applicant should describe how progress toward meeting grant-funded goals will be tracked, measured, and evaluated. Explain any assumptions made in developing the project work plan and discuss the anticipated performance measures and desired outcomes of grant-funded activities. Describe the data collection strategy to collect, analyze and track data to measure performance and determine impact or outcomes. Explain how the data will be used to improve performance. Discuss use of any automated or web-based performance measurement reporting system (i.e. TruServ).

Evaluation 101 – Evaluation design in the program narrative

“The project will be evaluated by systematically examining and collecting data on outputs and short term outcomes which can be achieved in the project year.”
- Who will be responsible for data collection
- What data will be collected from where
- When will the data be collected and compiled
- Who and when will the data be analyzed
- How will the results of the data analysis be used?
Evaluation 101: How important is evaluation design for SORH?

- Criterion 3: Evaluative Measures - 5 points
  The extent to which the application clearly describes the strength and effectiveness of the method proposed to monitor and evaluate the project results and provides specific evidence that the evaluative measures will be able to assess to what extent the program objectives have been met.

- Criterion 4: Impact - 5 points
  The extent to which the activities proposed in the Work Plan are clear, specific and contribute to the accomplishment of each objective; and reasonably achievable, given the level and experience of staff, resources available and length of the project period to carry out the proposed activities.

Evaluation 101: Gather credible evidence

- Appoint a staff person to lead and encourage
- Regular timeline for compiling and analysis
- Use Tru-Serve to track (or set up spreadsheet and a file folder)
Evaluation 101: Gather credible evidence

ORHP Performance Measurement Information System (PIMS)

- ORHP has developed a broad range of performance measures based on past grantees’ focus areas to assess the impact that ORHP programs have on rural communities and to enhance ongoing quality improvement. ORHP created the Performance Measurement Information System (PIMS) as a requirement for all ORHP grant programs in order to achieve programmatic objectives. Grantees are required to report on the PIMS through HRSA’s Electronic Handbook (EHB) after each budget period.

- Grantees must submit responses to #1 and #2 (below) directly into PIMS via the Electronic Handbook (EHB) no later than 60 days following the end of each twelve month budget period.

1) Report the total number of technical assistance (TA) encounters provided directly to clients within your State by SORH. Provide a breakdown of different types of TA provided. Any type of TA not listed in EHB should be counted as ‘other’.

2) Report the total number of clients (unduplicated) within your State that received technical assistance directly from SORH. Provide a breakdown of different types of clients that received TA. Any type of client not listed in EHB should be counted as ‘other’.

Evaluation 101: Ensure Use & Share Lessons Learned

From Alana Knudson

- Analyze Program Trends
  - Measure Performance Over Time
  - How Are We Doing Compared with Last Year?
  - What Goals Do We Want to Set for Next Year?

- Educate and Engage Staff
  - What Can We Realistically Achieve?
  - What Specific Areas Can We Improve?

- Engage Stakeholders, Policy Makers and Funders
  - Use Data to Tell the Story of How You are Making a Difference
  - What is the Impact of our Program?
Suggestions from Leadership Institute
NORC (Alana Knudsen)

- The Community Toolbox:
- CDC:
- GAO:
- South Carolina:
- AAP: http://www2.aap.org/commpeds/htpcp/EvalGuide2.pdf

TASC Resources

- Flex Program Evaluation Toolkit
- Logic Model Webinar
- Logic Model Example
- Logic Model Flow Chart

From Rural Assistance Center

  Explains what program evaluation is and its importance. Discusses conducting an evaluation, interpreting the results, reporting the findings and using the evaluation to improve programs. (2010)
  Source: Administration for Children and Families
  Resource Type: Publication

- Program Development and Evaluation: Logic Model
  Provides templates for creating a logic model for program development, implementation and evaluation.
  Source: University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension
  Resource Type: Tool or Website

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
  Provides information about using logic models to bring together program planning, evaluation and action to demonstrate the effectiveness of a program.
  Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation
  Resource Type: Tool or Website
From NOSORH

- Performance Measures Project Final Report (12/09) includes logic model
- Health-Related Project Planning & Evaluation Toolkit focused on improving evaluating health promotion programs
- Seeking Rural Health Data: A Toolkit a compendium of rural health data resources