PROGRAM EVALUATION

The landscape has evolved. Now it is common for funding agencies to **require** an **evaluation plan** as part of a proposal, including **NSF** proposals.

Funding agencies are interested in:

- the **outcomes** of your project
- a plan for **assessing impact**

They want be sure you will **accomplish your proposal objectives** and that your project will have important **impacts** that fit with funding priorities.

CAREER proposals are expected to address evaluation.

CAREER Solicitation Quotes - Evaluation:

The Project Description…should include: … *a description of the proposed educational activities,* **including plans to evaluate their impact on students and other participants***…*

*Education activities examples: "****implementing innovative methods for evaluation and assessment****".*

A CAREER proposal must indicate the **goals and objectives** of the proposed education activities, how it will be **integrated** with the research component, and the criteria for assessing how these goals will be met. Principal investigators are strongly encouraged to **describe how the impact of the educational activities will be assessed or evaluated.**

ALSO: A helpful document for information on evaluating educational activities is the NSF publication *The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation.*

Elements Described in the NSF Evaluation Handbook

- Logic Model Approach/Perspective
- Focus on Project Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts
- Overarching Evaluation Questions
- Formative and Summative Evaluation
- Research-based Evaluation Methods
- Comprehensive Program Evaluation

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Logic Model Approach

- **Evaluation is aligned with your Logic Model**
- **The Logic Model is a foundation for project planning**

Situation	Inputs ▶	Activities ▶	Outputs ▶	Short-Term Outcomes ▶	Medium-Term Outcomes ▶	Long-Term Outcomes
<u>Need</u> <u>Problem</u> <u>Situation</u>	<u>Resources</u> <u>Partners</u> <u>Collaborators</u> <u>Facilities</u>	<u>Research:</u> <u>Education:</u> <u>Outreach/ Dissemination:</u>	<u>Research products:</u> <u>Education products:</u> <u>Outreach/ Dissemination products:</u>	<u>Knowledge</u> <u>Skills</u> <u>Tools</u>	<u>Behavior</u> <u>Actions</u>	<u>Condition</u> <u>Situation</u>

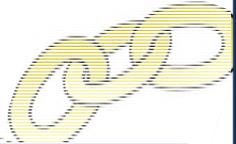# Strategies for Proposal Development Related to Evaluation

For any proposal:

- A good **project plan** supports meaningful **evaluation**

- Study the **priorities** of the RFP and understand the **mission** of the funding agency

- Carefully develop **your goals**, objectives , anticipated outcomes - - aligned with the RFP/Solicitation

- Develop **your plan** – activities to accomplish your objectives – the project activities and anticipated outputs and outcomes

- Recognize proposal development as **planning process**

Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation

Goal of evaluation is to:

- Improve project through ongoing feedback

- Provide sound evidence on outcomes & impacts of the project

- Provide guidance to ensure long-term impact to a broader audience and society

Research-based evaluation methods include:

- Multiple evaluation approaches
  - Observations
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Web-based surveys
  - Checklists
  - Document analysis
- Both qualitative & quantitative methods
- Triangulate data for more robust findings where possible

Resources for Evaluation and Proposal Development

- **Expectations** regarding the evaluation plan and evaluation resources are different for each RFP/Solicitation

- OEIE can provide **advice** regarding your proposal and evaluation resources

- **Other/specific resources**:
    - American Evaluation Association Website
    - NSF publication: *The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation*
    - *For surveys:* Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). Internet, Mail and Mixed- Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, 3rd edition. John Wiley: Hoboken, NJ.
    - For focus groups: Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

OEIE Background and Experience

- Evaluation services for over 250 projects totaling over $250 million, including large-scale grants funded by NSF, USDA, USDE, Dept. of Defense, USAID, etc.

- Staff of 14 full-time professionals including our evaluation team, technology team, development team; as well as part-time GRA/UGRA research assistants.

Good luck on your CAREER or other PROPOSALS!

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