Performance Measures and Program Management

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Justice Research and Statistics Association

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Topics

- BJ A resources for performance measurement and evaluation
- Best practices in performance measurement and management
- FAQs for performance measurement and evaluation
- Q & A from the audience
BJ A Resource: BJ A Center for Program Evaluation

- Assist users in conducting evaluations and developing program performance measures in criminal justice
- Program Areas
- Evaluation and Performance Measurement Resources
- Technical Assistance (Table at conference)
- BJ A-Required Performance Measures
- Newsletter
Practices to Avoid

1. Can’t demonstrate all significant accomplishments
2. Data collection overwhelms other program/project tasks
3. Measures selected without prior permission or ability to collect
4. Outcome measures dissimilar to those of like programs/projects
5. Confusion about what/how to report
6. Results are used only to fulfill requirements
7. Don’t know what questions funders/policy-makers have about your program/project
Best Practices

- Demonstrate all significant accomplishments
  - Use a logic model
  - Select process and outcome measures for significant activities and objectives

- Data collection fits with other program tasks
  - Pilot test measures and data collection
  - Examine time to collect data
  - Train staff
  - To address insufficient resources
    - Hire more staff
    - Training issue?
    - Sample rather than population
    - Change frequency of data collection
    - Eliminate paper and pencil forms
Best Practices (cont.)

- Outcome measures should be similar to those of like programs/projects
  - Like programs are those with similar activities or objectives
  - Helps with data aggregation (like BJA does across funding streams)
  - Facilitates comparison of accomplishments
- Clarity about what/how to report
  - Pilot test
  - Training
  - Provide instructions and definitions on the form
  - Don’t use abbreviations
  - Conduct reliability checks
Best Practices (cont.)

- All results should be used and shared internally and externally
  - Share good and bad results to facilitate learning
  - If possible, share data for comparison and replication

- Can you collect the desired/required measures?
  - BJA required measures are in the solicitation
  - Have you identified the resources required to collect?
  - Have you obtained the necessary agreements prior to collection?
**Best Practices (cont.)**

- Be aware of questions funders/ policy-makers have about your program/project
  - Differences b/w intermediate (state/local) and end (federal) funders regarding detail desired and how data are used
  - Be able to aggregate and split out numbers by geography, population served etc.
  - Educate on what the program can reasonably accomplish
  - Be aware of budget cycle when providing information
  - Usually more interested in the what rather than why
FAQs

Did I pick the right measures?

- Create a logic model
- Qualities of good measures:
  - Objective
  - Relevant
  - Clear
  - Reliable
  - Valid
  - Practical
  - Indicate gradations of success
  - Used by similar programs
  - Appropriate for clients and program
  - Ethical
FAQs (cont.)

- My program/project wasn’t implemented as planned, what should I do?
  - Detail how and why in progress and final reports
  - Consider and report implications on outcomes
  - Did similar programs have the same challenge?
  - Consider making changes to program design

- How do I convince my funder (or community) that my program/project caused the outcomes?
  - Comparison group
  - Knowledge of external factors on program
  - Share qualitative data with quantitative data
  - Consistency in results over time
FAQs (cont.)

- **How do I know if data are being manufactured?**
  - Triangulation
  - Request documentation/suppor for data
  - Reliability checks
  - Discourage submission of fake data—help programs not accomplishing objectives

- **What can I do to encourage people to take data collection seriously?**
  - Discuss why and how data are being used
  - Tell implications for missing data (e.g., affects funding)
  - Solicit input in data collection planning
  - Ensure data collection process is well-planned
  - Training
FAQs (cont.)

When should a funding agency decide not to fund a program based on performance?
- Make a performance-based funding plan
- Include plan in RFP
Elements of a Performance-Based Funding Plan

- Initial program funding decisions are evidence-based
- Provide minimum benchmarks based on program type
- Funder reviews benchmarks periodically during award
- Funder provides technical assistance to programs failing to reach benchmarks
- Allow time (approx. 6 mo. to 1 year) for improvement after technical assistance
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