

EVALUATION PLAN GUIDELINES

An evaluation plan is an integral part of a grant proposal that provides information to improve a project during development and implementation.

Not all grant proposals require an evaluation plan; however, many program announcements and funding opportunities stipulate and evaluation strategy with specific milestones are important elements that should be considered. If an evaluation plan is required, it will generally be listed in the program announcement. Most often, larger, more involved grant proposals will require an evaluation plan, while a smaller, single-investigator proposals will not.

The evaluation process can be broken down into a series of steps, from preparation to implementation and interpretation.

- Develop a conceptual model of the project and identify key evaluation points. This ensures that all participants and stakeholders understand the project's structure and expected outcomes, and helps focus on the project's most important elements.
- Create evaluation questions and define measurable outcomes. Outcomes may be divided into short-term and long-term, or defined by the more immediate number of people affected by the project versus the overall changes that might not occur until after the project's completion.
- Develop an appropriate evaluation design. A successful evaluation both highlights the most useful information about the project's objectives and addresses its shortcomings. In developing an evaluation design, you should first determine who will be studied and when, and then select a methodological approach and data collection instruments. The NSF-sponsored Online Evaluation Resource Library provides step-by-step instructions for developing an evaluation plan.
- Collect data.
- Analyze data and present to interested audiences.