Intermediary Development Series

Measuring Outcomes

Compassion Capital Fund

The National Resource Center gratefully acknowledges the following expert and experienced practitioners who assisted in the development of *The Intermediary Development Series* guidebooks:

Acquiring Public Grants
Building Multiple Revenue Sources
Delivering Training and Technical Assistance
Designing Sub-Award Programs
Establishing Partnerships
Identifying and Promoting Best Practices
Managing Public Grants
Measuring Outcomes

This work was created by Dare Mighty Things, Inc. in the performance of
Health and Human Services Contract Number HHS-100-02-0020 for use by the
Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center.
(703) 752-4331 | Fax (703) 752-4332
E-Mail: Resource_Center@DareMightyThings.com
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccf/

Table of Contents

Introduction

Welcome to *The Intermediary Development Series—a* multi-volume series designed to outline the key steps and elements necessary to help intermediaries build capacity in the faith-based and community-based organizations (FBO/CBOs) they serve. This series represents more than the sharing of information. It represents a common commitment to an intermediary's ideals—providing the most effective services in a more efficient manner to the grassroots organizations that are reaching those in our country with the greatest needs.

Who is the audience for *The Intermediary Development Series*?
An *intermediary* is something that exists between two persons or things, or someone who acts as an agent or mediator between persons or things. An intermediary organization, then, exists between the people with the resources and the organizations needing the resources—namely finances or information.

The Compassion Capital Fund, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, helps FBO/CBOs build capacity and improve their ability to provide social services to those in need. In this context, an intermediary acts as a mediator between the Federal government and grassroots organizations to help accomplish these goals. This series will prove useful to both existing and emerging intermediaries (those currently funded through CCF as well as an expanded audience of potential recipients) and the FBO/CBOs they serve.

What is *The Intermediary Development Series*?
Think of it as help when and where it's most needed—a ready reference for common priority issues and comprehensive answers to critical questions. It was developed as a key component of the Compassion Capital Fund in response to the questions and concerns consistently posed by intermediaries representing all areas of expertise and experience levels. The following titles are included in this eight-volume series:

Acquiring Public Grants
Building Multiple Revenue Sources
Delivering Training and Technical Assistance
Designing Sub-Award Programs
Establishing Partnerships
Identifying and Promoting Best Practices
Managing Public Grants
Measuring Outcomes

How is *The Intermediary Development Series* used?
It is intended to be used as a practical guide for intermediaries to help FBO/CBOs in a variety of tasks including securing more funding, providing services more effectively or on an increased scale and also helping them operate more efficiently. As such, it's flexible—readers who wish to use it as a self-guided reference for specific questions are likely to keep it nearby. Key terms (bolded within the text) are defined in a glossary of terms included in the appendix of each

guidebook. It's also comprehensive—emerging intermediaries may find the volume, *Delivering Training and Technical Assistance*, especially helpful for more in-depth assistance. Finally, regardless of the audience, its user-friendly format makes it easy to share with the variety of organizations intermediaries serve.

Who developed *The Intermediary Development Series*?
This series was developed for the Department of Health and Human Services by the National Resource Center—an information clearinghouse designed to provide customized technical assistance, specialized workshops and other useful tools to help increase intermediaries' scale, scope and effectiveness. Expert practitioners were enlisted to develop and field-test each topic in *The Intermediary Development Series*, ensuring each volume would provide accurate and, most of all, *practical* answers to common questions.

Measuring Outcomes

By reading this particular volume in *The Intermediary Development Series*, intermediary organizations and the **faith-based** and **community-based** organizations they work with will learn key concepts about increasing their capacity to evaluate the extent to which they are achieving their intended results and to conduct outcome measurement by creating and implementing an outcome measurement plan for their program. After reading this guidebook, they will better understand the key elements required to develop an outcome measurement plan and accurately measure their program's outcomes including how to:

- Define realistic program outcomes
- Create a logic model that identifies the resources and activities necessary to accomplish these outcomes
- Identify specific measures to examine in order to determine the extent to which an organization achieves its outcomes
- Design a practical and sustainable plan for collecting data on these measures

This guidebook will help organizations answer these key questions:

- What is outcome measurement?
- What should intermediaries do to prepare for outcome measurement?
- What are the key steps in implementing outcome measurement?

A forthcoming second volume regarding Outcome Measurement will focus on implementation and testing your measurement system, data management and analysis, reporting, using results and training and technical assistance. It will include how to:

- Prepare the data you gather for analysis
- Communicate the findings from your data collection to better tell the story about your program and its results

It will also address these key questions:

- What are effective methods for communicating outcome information to funders and the community?
- What can intermediaries do to provide faith and community-based organizations with assistance on outcome measurement?

Measuring Outcomes Overview

Although there are many uses for the information generated by **outcome** measurement, organizations often enter into it because they are required to do so. They are asked to be accountable for the use of their grantmaker's funds. This includes foundations and grantmaking organizations such as United Ways, as well as federal, state or local governments.

In 1993, Congress enacted the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) to ensure that the Federal government focuses programs on performance. Federal departments are now required to assess the effectiveness of their programs. In 2001, the current Administration introduced a number of management reforms, including the Budget and Performance Integration initiative, which requires Federal agencies "to identify high quality outcome measures, accurately monitor the performance of programs, and begin integrating this presentation with associated cost"[1]. As a result of these efforts, Federal departments increasingly ask for outcome-related **data** in their reporting requirements. For example, recipients of Compassion Capital Fund support are required by the Department of Health and Human Services to:

> "*Develop, with guidance from and in consultation with ACF, a plan within six months of receipt of award for working with sub-awardees to develop outcome measures and to evaluate the activities supported by the sub-awards made with Federal funds under this announcement.*"
>
> CCF Program Announcement, 2003[2]

In addition to meeting your program reporting requirements, outcome measurement serves other important needs. Everyone in your organization should understand what is going on in your program and what it is intended to achieve — frontline staff, management and board. Outcome measurement helps to clarify your understanding of your program. But the most important reason for undertaking the effort is to understand the impacts of your work on the people you serve. More important still is for you to use that information to improve the effectiveness of your efforts.

Every organization hopes to deliver quality services. Outcome measurement will help you understand whether or not you do. With the information you collect, you can determine which activities to continue and build upon and which you may need to change in order to improve the effectiveness of your program.

[1] Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President. *The President's Management Agenda*. Washington, D.C., FY2002, p.29.

[2] Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services. *Compassion Capital Fund Demonstration Program Announcement*. Washington, D.C., June 26, 2003.

What Is Outcome Measurement?
Accredit, adjudge, analyze, appraise, appreciate, assay, assess, audit, check, classify, consider, critique, determine, estimate, examine, evaluate, find, gauge, grade, inspect, investigate, judge, measure, monitor, rank, rate, referee, report, review, score, scrutinize, study, test, validate, weigh.

There are countless words used in the world of evaluation and a fair amount of confusion and debate about precisely what each word means. This guidebook uses the phrase "outcome measurement" to describe one approach to exploring the impacts or results of a program and to distinguish outcome measurement from more elaborate or complex types of evaluation.

Outcome measurement is "a systematic way to assess the extent to which a program has achieved its intended results. The main questions addressed are: What has changed in the lives of individuals, families, organizations or the community as a result of this program? Has this program made a difference? How are the lives of program participants better as a result of the program?" (The Evaluation Forum, 2000, p. 9)[3]

During the last 30 years or so, most of the reporting required of groups receiving government or charitable funds has focused on *what staff do*. How many people they serve. How many hours of service they deliver. Outcome measurement asks, and attempts to answer, the question, *So what*?

> So what if you provide an organization with 10 hours of technical assistance on fundraising techniques? Is the organization better able to raise money? Do they?
>
> So what if you train an organization on how to develop a strategic planning process? Can the organization effectively perform the steps involved? Do they?
>
> So what if your staff work with five faith or community-based organizations on developing partnerships? Do those organizations actually follow-through and increase their collaboration efforts? Do those efforts results in new partnerships?

Outcome measurement is most commonly used in the not-for-profit world; a similar phrase, "***performance* measurement**," is used more often in the business and government arenas. In essence, they mean the same thing.

"**Compliance monitoring**" is another phrase in use today, referring most often to the contractual arrangements made between an organization and its grantmaker on the use of funds. Compliance monitoring keeps records on what and how much service a program delivers, the clients it serves and how much money it expends in relation to what the organization agreed to with the funder. It may, but does not necessarily, include information on the outcomes of the program.

3 Evaluation Forum. *Outcomes For Success*!. Seattle, WA: Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg & Associates, Inc., 2000.

The term "**evaluation**" is used broadly to cover an entire range of activities, including studies where the steps undertaken can specifically and with more certainty show that the results the program achieves are attributable to it and not to other factors. A typical definition of program evaluation reads: "the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation and utility of health or social interventions."[4]

Evaluation research focuses on "causation," proving that the activities provided through the program are the reason why change occurred for the people receiving the service. This requires considerably more time and effort, and this is the basis for the distinction in this guidebook between outcome measurement and evaluation:

> Outcome measurement will explore what your program provides, what its intended impacts are and whether or not it achieves them. It will *not* prove that the changes that take place are a result of your program.

People often get stuck in the outcome measurement process because of all the terminology. Is it an **outcome**, an accomplishment, an achievement or a result? Is it a **goal** or an **objective**? Is it an **indicator** or a performance measure? Some people see goals and objectives as interchangeable; others see outcomes and objectives as the same.

To keep it simple, this guidebook uses three terms consistently.

- **Goal**: broad statement of the ultimate aims of a program
- **Outcome**: the changes in the lives of individuals, families, organizations or the community as a result of the program
- **Indicator**: the specific, measurable information collected to track whether an outcome has actually occurred

You should not let semantics stop you from moving ahead with your outcome measurement work. This guidebook uses the term "**outcome measurement**" but also may use the words "evaluate" or "**evaluation**" to cover the broad concept of exploring the changes that take place as a result of a program. The glossary in the Appendix clarifies many of the terms used frequently in outcome measurement and evaluation work. You likely will need to "translate" some of the terms you encounter.

Effective Outcome Measurement Practices

This guidebook is not meant to make you an expert in evaluation or research methodology. Rather, it will provide you with the basics you need to conduct outcome measurement. Having said this, however, it is important to recognize that the outcome measurement work you undertake (and the outcome-related work of faith and community-based organizations who receive

[4] Rossi, Peter H., et al. *Evaluation*: *A Systematic Approach*. 6th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999.

your support and assistance) must meet certain standards. Four program evaluation standards have been developed by The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994). They are commonly accepted as guiding principles for any effective evaluation work, including outcome measurement. The standards include:

- **Utility**: the information generated must serve the needs of the intended users
- **Feasibility**: the process undertaken must be realistic, prudent, diplomatic and frugal
- **Propriety**: the evaluators must behave legally, ethically and with due regard for the welfare of those involved and affected
- **Accuracy**: the findings must reveal and convey technically accurate information

Without attention to these standards, your work and your results will not be credible or useful and, ultimately, will not help you continually improve your program.

An Outcome Framework

The guidebook provides information useful to both you, as an intermediary, and to the faith-based and community-based organizations you serve. The outcome measurement steps are the same, regardless of who conducts the work, and regardless of the type of program. The examples included in the guidebook generally apply to functions performed by both groups (e.g., grants acquisition, grants management or partnership development).

As an intermediary, your outcomes focus on increasing the capacity of the grassroots organizations to deliver high quality services. Ultimately, these organizations focus on improving the quality of functioning and life for the participants, clients, consumers or customers they serve and the communities in which they operate. One way to visualize the relationship between you and the grassroots organizations with whom you work is shown on the following page and demonstrates how your success on your outcomes contributes to the success of the faith-based and community-based organizations.

An Outcome Framework

Intermediaries provide training and technical assistance to FBO/CBOs

To increase FBO/CBOs' knowledge and skills in key topic areas

Your outcome measurement is likely to focus here

To bring about positive changes in FBO/CBOs' organizational practices

And here

To improve the quality of service FBO/CBOs provide to their participants, clients, consumers or customers

To improve the quality of life for service recipients and in their communities

Getting Started

Your outcome measurement efforts will benefit greatly from some planning at the front end. Before you jump in, bring together the staff that will be involved in the outcome measurement process and discuss the questions outlined below:

Where Should We Focus?
In starting out, it's particularly important not to try to measure too much. Start slowly and learn from your experience. Don't try to perform outcome measurement at the same time for everything you do—pick one program or service as a beginning. Questions that will help you figure out where to begin include: Is a funder, board member or staff person requesting that you look at a particular program? Do you have a new program with an unproven track record? Do you have an existing service with shaky performance?

What Do We Want to Accomplish?
Once you have decided what program to evaluate, explore the purpose for the outcome measurement processes. There are often a variety of reasons underlying the decision to carry out outcome measurement related to your programs. Which of the options below apply most directly to the program you intend to examine?

- To identify what constitutes success for a program and how it will achieve that success (often as part of a program design process prior to funding and implementation)
- To determine whether the program theory underlying the program is correct (often as part of a program redesign when new research indicates that the assumptions underlying the program cannot be substantiated)
- To describe how you intend to measure a program or service's impacts (often as part of a funding request)
- To report on a program's impact (often as part of a staff or board planning process)
- To determine whether the program has been effective in achieving its intended outcomes (often as part of a funder's request for evidence that the program merits continued funding)
- To determine whether to continue the program and allocate ongoing funding (often as part of internal budget-related priority setting)
- To make improvements in how the program is delivered (often as part of program-wide or organization-wide quality improvement effort)

Your Outcome Measurement Team
Once you have decided what you want to learn, it's time to make it operational. You can start by putting together a small team of people to manage the process. As you think about the roles of the team, consider who on your staff possesses the following skills:

- **Project coordination**, including laying out tasks in a sequence, informing other staff of their roles and assignments, providing assistance to people as they complete their parts of the evaluation process and ensuring that the work is being done

- **Service or program knowledge**, including the ability to identify the relationship between the activities being provided and the intended impacts and an understanding of the types of outcomes your program could achieve
- **Computer skills**, including expertise in formatting surveys and other data collection **instruments**, creating spreadsheets or databases and entering data

Don't take on outcome measurement work alone. Create a group within your organization to share the decision-making and responsibilities.

Like any organizational activity, someone must be in charge of outcome measurement to make sure it proceeds smoothly and according to a timeline. Among the team members, who should be designated as the team leader? Outcome measurement is more difficult to implement successfully when it is an unbudgeted add-on to a staff person's full-time job. Your outcome measurement work will go much more smoothly if you carve out the time for the lead staff person to manage these efforts. If you start with an outcome measurement focus on one program, estimate that the team leader managing your evaluation will require about one day per week to accomplish the work.

Do We Need to Get Help?

Often smaller organizations feel they do not have the staff capacity to implement outcome measurement activities. It is possible to contract out for help. You can hire an individual experienced in evaluation to design and/or implement your outcome measurement efforts. You may have someone on your board with the expertise you need. You may be able to seek assistance from a local university or community college or advertise for a volunteer with evaluation skills. You may not need them to take on the entire evaluation; perhaps you need an outside person just to help your staff with some of the more technical aspects of the work (like survey design, data analysis, etc.).

Checklist for Getting and Using Outside Help

- ❏ Do we need specialized expertise to carry out the outcome measurement tasks, and what specific expertise do we need?
- ❏ How much control should this individual have as compared to our outcome measurement team? How flexible is this person going to be?
- ❏ Do we know any other organizations who have obtained outside help? Can they provide any recommendations?
- ❏ What *exactly* do we need help to do? What specific tasks should we contract out?

How Can We Make This a Participatory Process?

Once you have clearly identified why you are carrying out your outcome measurement process and put a team in charge of carrying it out, you can decide on involving others in the process. Frontline staff may find outcome measurement threatening. Many people have experienced a punitive approach to evaluation and may feel their programs are under attack. You can allay people's concerns about outcome measurement by involving them in the process. Outcome measurement results have the greatest likelihood of being used (for the intended purpose(s) you have identified above) if the people most directly affected have meaningful participation in the design and implementation of the process. When deciding whom to invite into the evaluation process, consider the various tasks and roles needed and the following options:

- Program director
- Frontline staff directly involved in providing the service
- Participants or clients who use the program
- Staff from other programs or organizations working with you
- Volunteer researchers or students from a university, if available

You might want to include local funders. They can be very helpful in identifying the programs to focus on and in articulating the key questions to answer.

What Resources Will We Need?

Outcome measurement does require resources. The categories below will give you some idea of what to consider when planning your budget:

- Staff time
- Consultants
- Communication (e.g., postage and telephone)
- Supplies and equipment
- Printing

A standard many organizations use for estimating the cost of evaluation is five percent of a program's budget. However, once an outcome measurement system is put in place, it costs less to maintain over time.

Most organizations include the cost of outcome measurement as part of their administrative overhead, but funding to support the work may be available from other sources. Program funders often are willing to support a portion of the outcome measurement cost, particularly if you have built these costs into the funding request at the front end or the funder has placed a high priority on outcome measurement as part of its funding cycle. Some funders specify an amount or percentage of their grants that must be used for evaluation. In addition, organizations wishing to evaluate a program more deeply may seek funding specifically for that purpose. (For more information, see the *Acquiring Public Grants* guidebook, part of the National Resource Center's *Intermediary Development Series*.)

Timing

Developing an outcome measurement plan likely will take you a number of months. For organizations first learning outcome measurement, it may take as long as three years to develop a comprehensive, smoothly-running outcome measurement system. The first year may be a learning year; the second year may be devoted to testing your systems. It may not be until the third year of data collection that staff sense the results are valid and meaningful. It may take you

> **Checklist for Getting Started**
>
> ❏ What program will you start with?
>
> ❏ Who will be involved in the outcome measurement team for planning and implementation?
>
> ❏ Who will manage the process?
>
> ❏ Will you need outside help with your work?
>
> ❏ What additional costs do you anticipate and how can you budget for them?
>
> ❏ What resources are available to conduct outcome measurement?
>
> ❏ What is the timeline for your outcome measurement process?

much less time, but be patient! United Way of America's *Measuring Program Outcomes* manual (1996)[5] includes a section on timing and a template you can use to lay out a timeline for your outcome measurement work.

Timing also is important to funders. Make sure you consider when your funders' reporting cycles are so that you are producing outcome measurement results at a time that aligns with their requests for information about your programs' impacts.

There are times when conducting outcome measurement may not be a good idea. If your organization is in crisis, people cannot give their attention to evaluation tasks. If the organization is in severe financial trouble, people must focus on solving that problem. If this is true for you, and if you have any leeway in terms of reporting requirements, consider delaying your outcome measurement work until it can get the attention it deserves.

Next, we will look at the key steps in the outcome measurement process and provide information to help you prepare for and conduct outcome measurement. The steps include the following:

1. Identify meaningful, relevant and realistic outcomes
2. Create a logic model for your program
3. Identify indicators to measure success in achieving outcomes
4. Select data collection methods and create data collection instruments
5. Design a practical and sustainable data collection plan

Outcomes and Outcome Chains

Outcomes define what you want a program or service to accomplish. As an intermediary organization providing assistance to smaller FBOs and CBOs, your intended outcomes focus on the impacts or changes that the organizations experience as a result of your help. Here are some examples from the National Resource Center Guidance for CCF Sub-Award Assessment Plans (2003)[6].

5 United Way of America. *Measuring Outcomes: A Practical Approach.*Alexandria, VA, 1996.
6 National Resource Center. *Guidance for CCF Sub-Award Assessment Plans*. Washington, D.C., 2003.

The faith or community-based organization has:

- Expanded and enhanced service delivery
- Increased fund development capabilities
- Increased fund development opportunities
- Increased financial management expertise
- Strengthened organizational structure
- Improved coordination and/or collaboration in service with others

Sometimes providers of technical assistance believe that outcomes only relate to an *end-user* (e.g., clients, individuals or families participating in a program provided by an organization with whom you are working). These are outcomes for the programs operated by the FBOs and CBOs, *not* for you as the organization providing technical assistance.

In this example, your client is the FBO or CBO and your outcomes relate to increasing that organization's capacity. Here are two questions to help you think about this important point:

- Who is the recipient of the technical assistance and/or funding I am providing?
- What is the intended impact or change I want this assistance to produce?

Another trap many organizations fall into when identifying outcomes is to describe what *they* have done (i.e., the activities they carried out) rather than the impact of these activities on the *client organization*.

When you review your draft outcomes, ask yourself these two questions:

- Do they focus on my client (the organization) and not the client's client (the individual, group, community, etc.)?
- Do they describe the intended changes for the client organization, not what I am doing to achieve that impact?

The table below provides sample outcomes for several of the types of technical assistance you may be providing through your intermediary. It is a good idea to determine your outcomes before you develop your program or as a part of program development. However, if you have an existing program, you may want to adapt these outcomes to fit the specific activities you provide.

Type of Assistance	FBO/CBO Outcomes
Program Evaluation	Increased ability to identify measurable outcomes Improved capacity to implement internal procedures to track outcomes
Information Technology	Increased understanding of the components of information technology Increased use of computer capacity to manage operations
Board Development	Improved understanding of board oversight role Increased stability of board

As you become familiar with outcomes, remember that you are not going to measure very many. You'll want to pick a couple that are the most directly connected to the assistance you are providing.

> *"We try to get people to start measuring one outcome. If they get sold on it, they'll do more. People who are really excited about it want to measure all their outcomes. We try to get them to start small and build on what they learn."*
>
> Faith in Action Initiative
> United Way of Massachusetts Bay Initiative

Writing an outcome statement can take a number of forms — the more straightforward, the better. Here are two typical formats you might use:

Type of Change	**In What**	**For Whom**
Increased	ability to raise funds	among FBO/CBOs receiving training
Who	**Will Change**	**What**
FBO/CBOs receiving training	will increase	their ability to raise funds

Using Outcome Chains

Outcome chains can help you organize your thinking about what you hope to achieve. They require you to put your program theory to work and articulate how your activities will bring about the impacts in the organizations with whom you are working. Outcome chains create a logical progression of the short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes that lead to your goals. The outcome framework depicted in the Measuring Outcomes Overview is an example of an outcome chain. Here is another example:

Training and Technical Assistance Lead to:		
Reactions:	Feedback	How useful was the assistance provided? (*Was the client satisfied with the service?*)
Learning:	Changes in knowledge or skill	What gains were made in knowledge or skills? (*Did the client learn from it?*)
Behavior:	Changes in behavior	How has their behavior changed? How have they applied their knowledge? (*Did the client use it?*)
Result:	Improvements in the organization	What has changed for the organization as a result? (*Did it produce return-on-investment for the client?*)
Goal Attainment:	Achievement of organizational goals	What results are evident in the community? (*Did it benefit the community where the client was located?*)

Sometimes organizations only measure the first level of outcome in the chain (in this case by getting feedback on customer satisfaction). At other times, they may measure outcomes at all levels. Your decision regarding the "length" of your outcome chain depends to some degree on the type of and the extent of the services you provided. If, for example, you sponsored a brief orientation about board development, you might only seek *Reaction* from the participants in the session (the first outcome in the chain). If, however, you provided a series of workshops on board development and people attended them all, you likely would measure *Learning* and *Behavior* (the next two levels on the outcome chain). If you also provided one-on-one technical assistance on board development, you might measure the *Result* in terms of what changed in the organization. You probably will decide not to measure *Goal Attainment*.

Outcome Chain Example

Technical assistance in needs assessment and planning with clients (FBO/CBOs) and their communities leads to:

Increased understanding of steps involved in conducting a needs assessment

Which leads to

↘

Improved ability to complete a needs assessment process

Which leads to

↘

Improved understanding of community needs

Which leads to

↘

Increased focus of program development activities on priority needs

Outcome Checklist

- ❑ Are the outcomes related to the "core business" of your program?
- ❑ Is it within your control to influence the outcomes?
- ❑ Are your outcomes realistic and attainable? Are your outcomes achievable within the funding and reporting periods?
- ❑ Are your outcomes written as change statements—will things increase, decrease or stay the same?
- ❑ Have you moved beyond client satisfaction in your outcomes?
- ❑ Is there a logical sequence among your short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes?
- ❑ Are there any big "leaps" in your outcomes (i.e., gaps in the progression of impacts)?

Logic Models and Program Theory

Presented in a clear graphic format in precise language, the **program logic model** is a representation of the linkages between program activities and the changes those activities will produce.[7] It helps you see whether there is any "logic" to your program—whether the connections between what you do and what you hope to achieve make sense. It provides greater clarity about and helps tell the story of your program.

You can create a logic model to organize a great deal of information about your technical assistance services. As you can see from the example below, a logic model is a great way to "tell your story." It describes the resources you need, the activities you plan to carry out, the products of those activities and the resulting impact you intend to achieve. It is often helpful to use the development of a logic model as a program planning or design tool, as it can help you think through what it will take to achieve the outcomes you have in mind.

> *"If you give people enough support and time to think through how they can personalize it (outcome measurement) to their program, it is a strong program development tool. It requires them to really think about whether the activities they are offering lead to the outcomes they care about most."*
>
> Faith in Action Initiative
> United Way of Massachusetts Bay

This connection between the activities you provide and the outcomes you hope to accomplish is known as the program theory; it articulates the assumptions about the ability of certain activities to drive particular changes. Many non-profit providers, including FBOs and CBOs, use logic models as a tool to reflect the program theory underlying their programs. One contribution outcome measurement can make in your own organization is to demonstrate whether or not the program theory underlying your technical assistance efforts is valid. There is a great deal of research available regarding methods of achieving different types of organizational capacity. By referring to these studies, you can make sure you build a program design based on sound theory.

Here's an example, along with a sample logic model, that shows how you might display a technical assistance program:

Example: There is a great deal of research available that describes effective methods for disseminating knowledge and skills. This research reveals the relationship between the complexity of the information being transferred and the transfer method. The findings from the research indicate that the more complex the information being transferred, the more important in-person training and coaching become. In designing effective technical assistance for capacity building, you need to think about how to build such research findings into your practice.

[7] Evaluation Forum. *Outcomes For Success!*. Seattle, WA: Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg & Associates, Inc., 2000, p.28.

Technical Assistance Program Goal			
Inputs or Resources	**Activities**	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**
Resources available to the program that allow and support provision of technical assistance, including money, staff, volunteers, clients, materials or equipment	*The technical assistance methods carried out by staff*	*The product delivered or unit of technical assistance provided, usually described numerically, such as number of organizations served or number of hours of service*	*The changes that occur for FBO/CBOs, as a result of the technical assistance provided*
CCF funding Staff expertise Training manuals FBO/CBO clients	Provide one-on-one financial management coaching Conduct board development training workshops Develop content-specific manuals Provide phone and email follow-up after training	# of one-on-one coaching sessions # of hours of coaching # of training workshops # of FBO/CBO staff trained # of hours of training # of manuals # of follow-up phone calls	Increased FBO/CBO compliance with financial management requirements Improved FBO/CBO understanding of board roles Increased FBO/CBO ability to define and measure outcomes

Look at the elements that make up the logic model and use the questions below to help you define the elements of your technical assistance program:

- **Inputs/Resources**: What **inputs** or ingredients do you need to operate your program? How many staff? How large a budget? How many FBO/CBOs do you need to have as clients?
- **Activities**: What will you do? What methods will you use to deliver your technical assistance? What content areas will you cover? What level of assistance will you provide (e.g., six one-on-one coaching sessions for executive directors)?
- **Outputs**: What will be the tangible products of your assistance? To how many FBO/CBOs will you provide coaching? How many sets of financial policy guidelines will you produce? How many hours of training will you provide? How many people will you train?
- **Outcomes**: What impact will your technical assistance have on your FBO/CBO clients? What is reasonable to expect in the way of change?

Resist the temptation to create logic models that show a one-to-one relationship between each Resource, Activity, **Output** and Outcome. It may be true that you can create a single Output related to each Activity, but it generally requires a comprehensive array of Resources in order to deliver the Activities, and it may take several or all of the Activities to produce the Outcomes.

Tip for Creating a Logic Model

Similar to the development of outcome chains, creating logic models works well as a group activity.

- ❏ Take large pieces of newsprint and hang them on the wall.
- ❏ Write down one component of the logic model on each sheet (i.e., resources, activities, outputs, outcomes) in the logic model's order.

Begin with the outcomes first; it's important to decide what you want to achieve in the way of impacts before you define what and how much of your technical assistance activities will be necessary to accomplish them.

View your program logic models as working documents that are subject to change as you learn more about what works. You'll find the logic model to be a useful program planning tool in incorporating changes and improving your technical assistance program over time.

Logic Model and Program Theory Checklist

- ❏ Have you included all of the Resources you will need? Are the following items listed?
  - ___ Service providers: staff, volunteers
  - ___ Program setting: community settings, agency facilities
  - ___ "Service technologies": curriculum/class material, treatment plans
  - ___ Funding sources: private or public funding, donations, fee for service
  - ___ Participants: client organizations
- ❏ Are all of the Activities included and described in some detail? (e.g., number and length of coaching sessions, types of computer training)
- ❏ Have you described an Output, product or unit of service for each activity? (e.g., number of FBO/CBOs trained, number of hours of training each organization received, type of computer assistance, etc.)
- ❏ Have the participants been counted and described in your Output column? (e.g., 9 FBO/CBOs, 54 staff, 88 board members, etc.)
- ❏ Is the **intensity** of the activities appropriate for the type of organization with whom you are working? Organizations with greater needs require more assistance (e.g., six four-hour coaching sessions on fundraising rather than two four-hour sessions). (You will need to develop your outcomes before you can answer this question; that's one reason to create the outcomes first. If you don't know your clients' needs or abilities at the outset, you may not know the answer to this question and will have to come back to it later.)
- ❏ Is the **duration** of the activities appropriate for the type of organization? Higher needs organizations will take longer to absorb and implement the improvements you are helping them make (e.g., you may be providing coaching for 12 months rather than six). (Once again, you'll need to define the impacts you hope to make before you can assess how much assistance your clients will require, and you may need to come back to this question if you don't know about your clients' needs or abilities.)
- ❏ Are your Outcomes directly related to your activities? Is it possible to achieve the results you have listed with the type and amount of activities you are planning to deliver?
- ❏ Do the Outcomes address changes in knowledge, perceptions, attitude, skills or behavior?

The completion of your logic model signifies your success in accomplishing the first phase in conducting outcome measurement. You have articulated what you want to accomplish and how you plan to go about making it happen. Further, your outcome chain describes why you believe your planned technical activities will produce the impacts you intend. A worksheet to assist you with creating logic models is in the Appendix.

Performance Indicators

The next phase in putting together an effective outcome measurement system focuses on deciding how you are going to make your intended outcomes measurable, that is, defining a set of indicators, identifying the data collection methods to gather information about these indicators and organizing your data collection activities into a concrete plan. The sections that follow describe the steps involved in this phase:

- Step One: Developing good performance indicators
- Step Two: Determining the appropriate data collection methods
- Step Three: Creating a feasible outcome measurement plan

As written, outcomes are usually too broad to enable data collection tools to be developed directly from them. Remember, the purpose of outcomes is to describe the intended impact the client organization experiences. For this reason, indicators are used to serve as a bridge between intended outcomes and the actual data collection process. Indicators enable you to determine whether the FBO/CBOs you work with have, in fact, changed in the specific ways that indicate your intended outcome has occurred.

Indicators must be specific and observable. They answer questions like: How will you know when changes have occurred? How will know when you have achieved the outcomes? Thinking ahead to possible data collection methods will tell you if your indicators are specific enough. Ask questions like these to determine whether your indicators will work:

- How can I see the change? (*Through what kind of observation?*)
- How can I hear the change? (*Through interviews? Focus groups?*)
- How can I read the change? (*Through surveys? In records?*)

For example, look at one of the outcomes we discussed in the Outcomes and Outcome Chains section:

Outcome: *FBO/CBOs have increased fund development capabilities and opportunities*

- How will you know whether an organization has increased its *fund development capabilities*? What will you look for? What questions will you ask? When you think about becoming better at fund development, what comes to mind?

- Similarly, what will you include as a measure for *increased fund development opportunities*? What is a fund development opportunity? A phone call to a potential donor? A fundraising event? Subscribing to a philanthropy magazine? How will you decide whether the organization is pursuing more fundraising than it used to pursue?

- Overall, what will you look at to see whether your technical assistance has helped the organization bring in additional funds through their fund development efforts?

In order to serve effectively as a bridge to data collection, indicators must be *specific* items of information that describe *observable*, measurable characteristics or changes in corresponding outcomes. Indicators must be measures that can be seen, heard, counted, reported or enumerated using some type of data collection method.

Creating Appropriate Indicators

- Attempt to "define" the characteristics of an outcome as a way of identifying possible indicators. For example, the characteristics of "increased fund development capabilities" could include the amount of money obtained in additional support and the diversity of those funding sources. The specific measures related to these two characteristics for "increased fundraising ability" might be: 1) the number and percent of FBO/CBOs who raise additional funds this year as compared to last year and 2) the number and percent of FBO/CBOs who show an increase in the number of sources of funding for their programs.

- Look for indicators that are "indicative" of an outcome rather than a predictor or a result of an outcome. If the relationship between an outcome and its proposed indicator sounds like an "If…Then" statement, then it is probably not the right indicator for that outcome.

For example, "If" an organization attends grant writing training, "Then" it is more likely to bring in additional grant funding. In this example, attending grant writing training is not an indicator for increased fund development capabilities but may rather be a predictor of increased success. A more indicative indicator of increased grant funding would be "the number and percent of organizations whose budgets show an increase in the number of grants and/or an increase in the amount of support from grants."

- Apply the "means that" rule in assessing your indicators. In theory, the accomplishment of an indicator "means that" you have achieved an outcome. For example, if an organization has completed, submitted and obtained approval for 501(c)(3) status (indicator), it "means that" it has a stronger organizational structure (outcome). In contrast, an organization having an expanded service area for more clients (indicator) does not mean the organization has improved its coordination and/or collaboration in service with others (outcome).

One to three indicators is usually a realistic number for each outcome you have identified. Some straightforward outcomes can be quantified easily through the use of only one indicator. Other more complex outcomes will necessitate two or three.

Outcome/Indicator Example	
Outcome:	Increased awareness of basic financial management practice
Indicator:	Number and percent of organizations that can articulate the components included in financial management Number and percent of organizations' boards that perform at least quarterly monitoring of the agency's financial performance Number and percent of FBO/CBOs that comply with board-approved policies for capital and operating reserves

In the second example, one indicator alone will not provide sufficient information. As you look at what indicators you need to adequately describe your progress in achieving your intended outcomes, it's important to use the fewest number of outcomes possible. It takes time and money to gather and analyze the data for each one. What's important is not quantity but quality. What's the best way to see, hear or read about the change?

Here are some things to consider as you prioritize your indicators:

- Select indicators for which you can get the data
- Select the indicator that is most useful to you and gives you the most useful information about the outcome
- Select the indicator that is most feasible for staff to measure within the time and money resources available to you

When developing indicators, you may wonder about setting a specific level of achievement. This is called a "**target**." In addition, you may be interested in comparing your performance on the indicator to other organizations or time periods. This approach is known as a "comparative standard." Here is how outcomes, targets and **comparative standards** fit together in outcome measurement.

Outcomes statements: describe an increase, decrease, maintaining, etc. of a behavior, skill, knowledge, etc.

Example: Improve fund development capabilities

Target statements: specify a particular level of achievement related to the outcome

Example: Raise $20,000 in foundation funds during 2004

Comparative statements: include comparative targets, usually related to standards, other time periods or organizations

Example: Increase the organization's funding from non-governmental sources by 30% as compared to last year

Targets and comparisons will be useful to you over time as you gain a better sense of where your client organizations are at the beginning of your technical assistance process. It's important to establish a **baseline** for the indicators you plan to measure over time. A baseline is information collected to give you a starting place (something to measure against in the future). A baseline will allow you to set reasonable targets and measure the FBO/CBOs' progress against them. For organizations that have not collected data on indicators in the past, the first round of data collection will establish the baseline.

Similarly, comparisons are useful when you want to measure your performance against something—either another time period, another organization or an established set of standards. Although there are comparative standards in some fields (health, for example) where infant mortality rates and other morbidity rates have been established nationally, there are few standards in human services that organizations can use for comparison purposes. Some national human service organizations are beginning to establish standards specific to their own programs. More likely, however, you will use your previous performance as a standard, comparing your success last year to this year or this year to next year.

Performance Indicators Checklist

- ❏ Do your indicators *make sense* in relation to the outcomes they are intended to measure?
- ❏ Are your indicators directly related to the outcome? Do they *define* the outcome?
- ❏ Are your indicators *specific*?
- ❏ Are your indicators *measurable* or observable? Can they be seen (i.e., observed behavior), heard (i.e., participant interview) or read (i.e., client records)?
- ❏ Is it *reasonable* that you can collect data on the indicators? Is it likely within your resources to do so?

At the outset, it's important to stick to the basics of outcome measurement—defining outcomes and the indicators that make them measurable. You'll have time to move on to targets and comparisons later. A worksheet to assist you with identifying indicators is in the Appendix.

Data Collection Methods

Your data collection will include attention to all the elements of your logic model: what resources you had available, what activities you actually provided, how many of each output you delivered and to what degree you accomplished your outcomes. For all of these elements, except the outcome and indicator data, your organization's records should provide the information you need. However, in collecting indicator data, you have other options. Intermediaries are likely to use one or more of four methods for collecting data: surveys, interviews, observation and record or document review. In selecting the best method for data collection, you will need to consider the advantages and disadvantages regarding:

- Type of information needed: some outcomes and indicators lend themselves to one particular method; in other cases, data could be collected in more than one way
- **Validity** and **reliability**: some methods generate more accurate and consistent information than others
- Resources available: including staff availability and expertise, time and money
- Cultural appropriateness: using the broadest definition of culture to ensure the methods fit language, norms and values of the individuals and groups from whom you are collecting data

Surveys

Surveys are standardized written instruments that can be administered by mail, email or in person. The primary advantage of surveys is their cost in relation to the amount of data you can collect. Surveying generally is considered efficient because you can include large numbers of people at a relatively low cost. There are two key disadvantages. If the survey is conducted by mail, response rates can be very low, jeopardizing the validity of the data collected. There are mechanisms to increase response rates, but they will add to the cost of the survey. Written surveys also provide no opportunity for respondents to clarify a confusing question, again creating a problem with the validity of their responses. Good pre-testing of a survey instrument can reduce the likelihood that problems will arise.

Examples:

- Survey to track grassroots organizations' use of and satisfaction with technical assistance services you provide
- Survey of all organizations receiving technical assistance to learn about changes in their fundraising tactics and the results of their efforts to raise more money

Interviews and focus groups

Interviews also use standardized instruments but are conducted person-to-person either in person or over the telephone. In fact, an interview may use the same instrument created for a written survey, although interviewing generally provides the advantage of having the opportunity to explore questions more deeply than does a written survey. You can ask more complex questions in an interview, since you have the opportunity to clarify any confusion. You also can ask the respondents to elaborate on their answers, eliciting more in-depth information than a survey provides. The primary disadvantage of interviews is their cost. It takes considerably more time and, therefore, more money to conduct telephone and in-person interviews. This usually means you are able to collect information from many fewer people. The reliability of interviews also can be problematic if interviewers are not well-trained, since they can ask questions in different ways or otherwise bias the responses.

Examples:

- Interviews at different grassroots organizations to learn about the way in which they are applying new knowledge of partnership development
- Interviews with individuals within an organization to explore their perceptions of changes in capacity and ability to deliver services

A *focus group* is a particular type of interview conducted with a small group of people to obtain information in a defined area of interest related to your outcomes and indicators. While interviews with individuals are meant to solicit data without any influence or bias from the interviewer or other individual, focus groups are designed to allow the participants to discuss the questions and share their opinions. This means that people can influence one another in the process, stimulating memory or debate on an issue. The advantage of focus groups lies in the richness of the information generated. The disadvantage is that you can rarely generalize or apply the findings to your entire population of participants or clients. Focus groups often are used prior to creating a survey to test concepts and wording of questions. Following a written survey, they are used to explore specific questions or issues more thoroughly.

Examples:

- Structured meetings with staff in a faith or community-based organization to learn more about their grants management practices, what worked during the year and what did not
- Structured meetings with staff from several organizations to explore their use of computer technology for tracking financial data

Observation

Observations can be conducted of individual behaviors or interactions among individuals, of events or of physical conditions within a site or facility. They require well-trained observers and detailed guidelines about whom or what to observe, when and for how long and by what method of recording. The primary advantage of observation is its validity. When done well, observation is considered a strong data collection method because it generates first-hand, unbiased information by individuals who have been trained on what to look for and how to record it. Observation does require time—for development of the observation tool, training of the observers and the data collection— making it a more costly data collection method than some of the others.

Examples:

- Observation of individuals participating in training to track the development of their skill in the training topic
- Observation of community meetings sponsored by grassroots organizations to learn about their partnership-building techniques and collaborative behavior

Record Review

Record or document review involves the systematic collection of needed data from internal, organizational records or official records collected by other groups or institutions. Internal records available to an intermediary might include financial documents, monthly reports, activity logs, purchase orders, etc. The advantage of using records from your organization is the ease of data collection. The data are there and no additional effort needs to be made to collect it—depending on if the specific data you need are actually available and up-to-date.

If the answer is yes, record review is a very economical and efficient data collection method. If the answer is no, it is likely well worth the time to make improvements to your data management system so that you can rely on internal record review for your outcome measurement work. Just a few changes to an existing form can make it into a useful data collection tool. Just a small amount of staff training can increase the validity and reliability of internally-generated data.

Examples:

- Sign-in logs from a series of workshops to track attendance in training, measuring consistency of attendance as an indicator of organizational commitment to learning.
- Feedback forms completed by workshop participants to learn about satisfaction with training provided

Official records can include federal, state or local government sources such as the U.S. Census, health departments, law enforcement, school records, assessor data, etc. Record review from institutional sources may be of little value to intermediaries in the outcome measurement work related to the Compassion Capital Fund. It might, however, be useful for other types of evaluations you conduct. If the data are relevant to your outcomes and indicators and are accessible, then official record review is very low cost. But the questions about relevance and accessibility are major ones.

Instrument Development and Pre-Testing

This guidebook does not include information on how to create the instruments you'll need for data collection, although there are many resources available to help with this task (see the the Appendix). The Appendix also has a checklist you can use to assess survey and interview instruments and two examples of surveys related to organizational capacity-building.

You need to pre-test each data collection instrument you create. To pre-test, you try out your tools with a small group of people who are representative of those you intend to include in your data collection. For a survey or interview, you must include people who are like those who will complete the survey or interview during your actual data collection. For observation, you must try out your form with individuals who will complete it during data collection. For record review, you must test the record extraction form with the individuals who will do the work to pull information from your records.

During the pre-test phase, you want people's help in checking the wording of questions, the content, the clarity of instructions and the layout and format. You'll also want to know how long it took and whether any problems arose. Most importantly, you want to see if you get the responses you expect and the information you need.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two critical concepts in implementing effective outcome measurement systems. Validity is the accuracy of the information generated. The validity of a data collection instrument is how well it measures what it is supposed to measure. Putting in the time to create good instruments, carefully considering what is being measured and pre-testing the instruments will help increase their validity.

Reliability refers to consistency, or the extent to which data are reproducible. Do items or questions on a survey, for example, repeatedly produce the same response regardless of when the survey is administered or whether the respondents are men or women? Bias in the data collection instrument is a primary threat to reliability and can be reduced by repeated testing and revision of the instrument.

You cannot have a valid instrument if it is not reliable. However, you can have a reliable instrument that is not valid. Think of shooting arrows at a target. Reliability is getting the arrows to land in about the same place each time you shoot. You can do this without hitting the bull's-eye. Validity is getting the arrow to land on the bull's-eye. Lots of arrows landing in the bull's-eye means you have both reliability and validity.

This checklist can help you decide which data collection methods are most appropriate for your outcome measurement.

Checklist for Selecting Data Collection Methods[8]		
Surveys		
1. Do I need data from the perspective of the participant, client, beneficiary or customer?	Yes	No
2. Do I have a way to get it from these individuals in a systematic way?	Yes	No
3. Do I need data that are standardized so that statistical comparisons can be made? (For example, will I need to report percents or other statistics?)	Yes	No
4. Will participants be able to understand the survey questions? (Consider age, cultural backgrounds, etc.)	Yes	No
5. Do participants have the necessary knowledge or awareness to accurately answer questions about the outcomes?	Yes	No
If you have answered YES to questions #1 through 5, surveys may be appropriate for collecting data on your outcomes and indicators.		
Interviews		
6. Are more in-depth answers necessary to adequately measure the indicators or to get information on what is needed or what should change?	Yes	No
7. Will it be necessary for someone to personally ask participants questions (either on the phone or in person) in order to collect the information related to this outcome? (Consider age, cultural backgrounds, as well as state of mind or receptivity of participants.)	Yes	No
If you have answered YES to questions #6 and 7, interviews may be appropriate for collecting data on your outcomes and indicators.		
Observations		
8. Is it difficult to accurately measure the indicators by asking people questions about opinions or perceptions?	Yes	No
9. Can this outcome or indicator be assessed accurately by someone trained to observe it in action — can something actually be observed?	Yes	No
10. Do you have the staff resources for someone to observe events, conditions, interactions or behaviors?	Yes	No
If you have answered YES to questions # 8, 9 and 10, observation may be appropriate for collecting data on your outcomes and indicators.		
Internal Record Review		
11. Do you have individualized records, reports, logs or other systematic ways that you track things in your program or services?	Yes	No
12. If an information system exists, are the data consistently entered into it in a timely way?	Yes	No

[8] Evaluation Forum. *Outcomes For Success!*. Seattle, WA: Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg & Associates, Inc., 2000, pp. 94–97.

Checklist for Selecting Data Collection Methods (continued)		
Internal Record Review (cont.)		
13. If a system exists, can information be extracted from it easily?	Yes	No
If you have answered YES to questions #11, 12 and 13, internal record review may be appropriate for collecting data on your outcomes and indicators.		
Official Record Review		
14. Do official records exist which track the data you need on your outcomes and indicators?	Yes	No
15. Are the data accessible to you — will it be possible to get the cooperation of outside agencies or institutions in order to get access to official records?	Yes	No
If you have answered YES to questions #14 and 15, official record review may be appropriate for collecting data on your outcomes and indicators.		

Creating a Plan for Your Outcome Measurement System

Once you have identified the data collection methods you intend to use, you need to decide when you will collect the data and how often. Then consider the procedures you need to put in place to ensure your outcome measurement system is sustainable and produces quality data.

Frequency and Scheduling of Data Collection
The table below describes the five approaches or designs you are likely to use for your data collection.

Data Collection Designs		
Type of Design	**Collection Frequency**	**Example**
Post-only Measures	Data are collected once: at the end of the program, service or activity	*Level of participant knowledge on a survey after a training workshop*
Pre/Post Measures	Data are collected twice: at the beginning to establish a baseline and the end of the program	*Comparison of an organization's documented fundraising success before and after receiving technical assistance*
Time Series	Data are collected a number of times: during an ongoing program and in follow-up	*Monthly observations of an organization's collaboration meetings to track changes in partnership development and communication*
Measures with a Comparison Group	Data are collected from two groups: one group that receives the intervention and one that doesn't	*Comparison of data on skill development from individuals who participated in training and those who have not yet taken your workshop*
Measures with a Comparative Standard	Data are collected once: at the end of the program, service or activity and are compared with a standard	*Comparison of this year's data on organizations' success in fundraising as compared to last year's data* *(Did it benefit the community where the client was located?)*

The first three approaches in the table are fairly self-explanatory; the last two approaches need a little discussion. *Comparison groups* can be very useful in demonstrating the success of your intervention. The main question is can you find a group of people or organizations that is just like the group with whom you are working? In order to provide a valid comparison, the two groups must have the same general characteristics. A similar group may be difficult to find. However, if you are working with different groups at different times and the groups are similar, this approach may work for you. Or if, as the example of using a comparison group shown above, you have people on a waiting list for training who are similar to the people who have trained already, they may make a good comparison group. Or perhaps you might compare FBO/CBOs receiving sub-awards with those who applied but did not receive them.

Comparative standards are standards against which you can measure yourself. There are standards of success in some fields (e.g., health mortality and morbidity rates, student achievement scores, teen birth rates). For intermediaries, however, there are unlikely to be many regarding your program outcomes or indicators. You can, however, compare your results for one time period to an earlier one, as shown in the example of using comparative standards in the prior table. You collect data for the first time period as your baseline and use it as your standard in the future.

When considering which approach is best, these questions may help you make a decision:

Checklist on Data Collection

- ❏ When would change occur—immediately, gradually or over a long period of time?
- ❏ Are there milestones that can be measured along the way to the outcome you are trying to achieve?
- ❏ What is the frequency of contact with the organizations with which you are working—once, weekly, monthly or at some other interval?
- ❏ When will data be available? (When are some of your internal records available)?
- ❏ Are there any groups that might serve as comparison groups?
- ❏ Do you have baseline data you can use as a standard?
- ❏ Are you accountable for short-term outcomes or longer-term impacts?

Data Collection Procedures and Planning

To finish your planning work, a number of procedural issues need to be considered. First, who will collect the data? How will you recruit these data collectors? What steps will they need to take to collect the data? How will you train them? Finally, who will be responsible for monitoring the data collection process to ensure you are getting what you need? It's important to answer each of these questions during your planning. You don't want to be surprised halfway through the process to discover your three-month follow-up surveys were not mailed out because you didn't identify who would do so!

Have you prepared your clients (the FBOs and CBOs you work with) for data collection? Do they know that you will be collecting data, either at the time of service or in follow-up? Do they understand why it is important to you and how you intend to use the data? Organizations often have outcome reporting requirements themselves, so they usually are responsive if they have been alerted to your needs ahead of time. Advising them in advance about your data collection plans will help increase their willingness to participate during implementation.

Finally, when you put together your outcomes, indicators, data collection methods, frequency and schedule of data collection as well as your procedures, you will have created your plan for outcome measurement. Worksheets to assist you with your evaluation planning are in the Appendix.

Outcome Measurement Plan

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	WHAT DATA COLLECTION METHOD?	WHEN WILL DATA BE COLLECTED?	WHO WILL COLLECT DATA?	WHAT WILL THEY DO?	HOW WILL DATA COLLECTED BE MONITORED?
Increased ability of FBO/CBOs to raise funds for program services	# and % of organizations who put new fundraising practices in place	Survey of organizations receiving fundraising technical assistance	Once: three months after completion of technical assistance services	Technical assistance staff	Mail survey to organizations 3 months after the completion of technical assistance services. Send reminder postcards to organizations who do not return the survey within two weeks.	Program manager will track completion of services, mailing of surveys and response rate to the survey and notify staff if additional follow-up is needed
Increased ability of FBO/CBOs to raise funds for program services	# and % of organizations whose budgets demonstrate new $ raised	Record review of budget information of organizations receiving fundraising technical assistance	Twice: during technical assistance and at the beginning of the year following technical assistance	Technical assistance staff	Request submittal of prior year's budget during technical assistance and subsequent year's budget at beginning of the year after TA	Program manager will track receipt of budgets and notify staff if follow-up is needed

Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Anonymous and confidential do not mean the same thing. **Anonymous** means you do not know who provided the responses. **Confidential** means you know or can find out who provided the responses, but you are committed to keeping the information to yourself.

You must ensure that you protect the confidentiality of any individual's data or comment. It is easy to make your surveys anonymous, but if you want to track people over time, you'll likely need to attach ID numbers to each person from whom you collect, keeping a list of the names and numbers in a locked file.

It is important to inform people that you are measuring your program's outcomes and may use data they provide in some way. You must let them know that their participation is voluntary and explain how you will maintain the confidentiality of their data.[9]

Planning Checklist[10]

- ❏ Is the data collection method (survey, interview, observation, internal records, official records) appropriate for the outcomes and indicators?
- ❏ Does the plan rely on external sources of data or require collaboration with other agencies? If so, will it be possible to get the data?
- ❏ Have the tools/questions been pre-tested?
- ❏ Are the measurement approaches and tools culturally relevant?
- ❏ Can the approach/tools likely be implemented within available program resources?
- ❏ Does the data collection schedule include time point(s) that follow completion of services or program activities?
- ❏ Does the frequency of data collection match time points when realistic progress can be expected from participants?
- ❏ Does the frequency of data collection match the level of contact with participants? (e.g., greater frequency with greater level of contact)
- ❏ Are the roles and responsibilities clear for all the staff involved in collecting data?
- ❏ Is there a staff person (or staff team) responsible for managing and monitoring the process to assure the work is completed on time and is of high quality?

[9] A sample consent form can be found in United Way of America's *Measuring Outcomes: A Practical Approach*, Alexandria, VA, 1996.
[10] Evaluation Forum. *Outcomes For Success*!. Seattle, WA: Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg & Associates, Inc., 2000.

Summary

Measuring outcomes will help you gauge your effectiveness in providing technical assistance to faith-based and community-based organizations and give you the feedback you need to make ongoing improvements in your program.

Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- **Outcomes are coming!** Although HHS/ACF does not now require you to report on the outcomes of your capacity-building work, there is every indication that they will in the future. And they're not likely to be the only funder who will ask you for this information; many local and state governments, as well as United Ways throughout the country, want to measure the impact their resources are having.

- **There is a difference between outcome measurement and evaluation.** Outcome measurement explores what your program provides, what its intended impacts are and whether or not it achieves them. It is not meant to prove causality, that is, the changes taking place are a result of *your* program and not of other factors. Proving causality is an expensive and much more complex activity.

- **Outcome measurement takes planning, time and patience.** Sometimes the entire process can look overwhelming, but the individual steps are not complicated. If you take it step-by-step, you can manage it and create a comprehensible whole. Careful planning at the front end of your implementation of outcome measurement is critical; line up your staffing, pay attention to the financial resources necessary to complete your evaluation plan and stay in regular contact with FBO/CBOs about the demands you will be making on their time.

- **Create options for yourself.** If you create options at each step, your efforts are more likely to be fruitful. Brainstorming many outcomes helps people think broadly about the purpose of a program. Identifying several indicators for each outcome will allow you to choose those that are most readily available and useful. Considering all types of data collection methods will give you choices. It's important to tailor your evaluation plans to your unique situation; having options helps you to consider different possibilities and make good choices.

- **Be flexible.** The steps in outcome measurement can be done by grassroots organizations. They can learn the concepts and apply them. They can measure outcomes within limited budgets. With training and one-on-one technical assistance to help them keep their plans practical and realistic, they can incorporate the work into their operations. But they have many things on their plates and potentially many capacity-building needs. Outcome measurement may not be their highest priority.

- **Stay open to better ideas.** Use trial runs and continuous improvement steps to test your ideas and plans. Be ready to go back to the drawing board—maybe all the way back to your outcomes and logic model. As you learn, you will find better, easier and most efficient ways to manage your outcome measurement process. Remember, your program theory is one of your most important program assets; use outcome measurement to see whether it's valid.

- **Strive to become a learning organization.** Being open to what your outcome measurement results show is one of the most important steps you can take in becoming a learning organization. Be sure you are consistently using data to make decisions, improving your programs and providing the highest quality service to your clients.

Steps in Developing an Outcome Measurement System

1. Prepare for your outcome measurement work by considering the staffing and participation you need, a timeline for implementation and the financial resources available
2. Identify outcomes that are meaningful, relevant and realistic for your program
3. Create a logic model that lays out all the elements of your program and demonstrates the theory underlying your program
4. Identify specific indicators you can use to measure the extent to which you succeed in achieving your intended outcomes
5. Select data collection methods that are appropriate for your program and create valid and reliable instruments for data collection
6. Design a practical and sustainable plan for carrying out your data collection; clarify the data collection procedures needed for implementation

Appendix

Resources

Online Resources: Survey and Questionnaire Development

A Brief Guide to Questionnaire Development, Frary, Robert B., Office of Measurement and Research Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, http://ericae.net/ft/tamu/vpiques3.htm. This guide covers such topics as the advantages and disadvantages of open-ended and objective questions, sample size, questionnaire design and format and more.

Basics of Developing Questionnaires, McNamara, Carter, Ph.D., through The Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits, St. Paul, MN, http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/questnrs.htm. Provides a brief checklist of issues to consider when designing a questionnaire, including how the questionnaire is worded, consent and confidentiality issues and communicating the purpose of the questionnaire.

Essentials of Survey Research and Analysis, Workbook for Community Researchers, Polland, Ronald Jay, Ph.D., developed for the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Grant, Duval County Health Department, Jacksonville, FL, 1998, http://www.tfn.net/%7Epolland/qbook.html. Contains a primer on surveys, including choices relating to the design of survey questions, information on accessing validity and reliability, sampling considerations and testing your tool.

Other Online Resources

American Evaluation Association, 2003, http://www.eval.org, includes links to resources and tools for evaluation.

BJA Evaluation Website, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Washington, D.C., 4/22/03, http://www.bja.evaluationwebsite.org/index.html, provides a "roadmap" to evaluation and includes useful tools and links to evaluation resources.

CDC Evaluation Working Group, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA. http://www.cdc.gov/eval/resources.htm, contains many links related to evaluation, logic models, tools and other evaluation-related resources.

Taking Stock: A Practical Guide to Evaluating Your Own Programs, Bond, Sally L., Sally E. Boyd, and Kathleen A. Rapp. 1997, http://www.horizonresearch.com/reports/1997/taking_stock.php, an online guide to program evaluation.

Glossary

Activities – The methods of service delivery carried out by staff.

Anonymous data – Information where you do not know who provided the responses. See Confidential Data below.

Baseline – Data gathered to provide a comparison for assessing program changes or impact.

Comparative standard – Data used as a comparison or a standard of achievement for a specific indicator or outcome.

Compliance monitoring – Tracking and reporting information on what and how much service a program delivers, the clients it services, how much money it expends and, possibly, the outcomes it achieved, in relation to what an organization has agreed upon, generally referring to contractual arrangements made between an organization and its grantmaker on the use of funds.

Confidential data – Information where you do know, or can find out, who provided the responses but keep the information to yourself.

Data – Information collected in a systematic way that is used to draw conclusions about a program or its outcomes.

Evaluation – The systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation and utility of health or social interventions.

Goal – Broad statement of the ultimate aims of a program, generally beyond the ability of one organization to achieve on its own.

Indicator – The specific, measurable information that will be collected to track success of an outcome. Another commonly used phrase is "performance measure."

Inputs – The resources available to the program that allow and support service delivery, including, for example, money, staff, volunteers, materials or equipment.

Instrument – A tool used to collect data, including survey questionnaires, interview guides, observational checklists and written record extraction forms.

Objective – A specific, measurable accomplishment within a specified timeframe.

Outcome – The changes in the lives of individuals, families, organizations or the community as a result of this program; benefit for participants during or after their involvement in a program; the impact of the program on the people it serves.

Outcome evaluation – Systematic examination of the impact of the program and what resulted for the participants, clients, consumers or customers. Another commonly used phrase is "summative evaluation." See Process evaluation.

Output – The product delivered or the unit of service provided by the program, usually described numerically, such as number of people served or number of hours of service delivered.

Outcome measurement – A systematic way to assess the extent to which a program has achieved its intended results; generally used in the not-for-profit world.

Performance measurement – Similar to outcome measurement but generally used in business and government arenas.

Process evaluation – Systematic examination of the degree to which a program is operating as intended, looking at what service it provides, how is it provided, who receives services and how much service is delivered. Another commonly used phrase is "formative evaluation." See Outcome evaluation.

Program logic model – A representation of the linkages between the inputs to a program, the resources available to it and the activities carried out and the outputs and outcomes those resources and activities are believed to produce.

Qualitative data – Numerical information gathered in a structured way.

Quantitative data – Descriptive or subjective information provided in narrative terms.

Reliability – The extent to which data collected are reproducible or repeatable.

Target – Specific level of achievement for an indicator or outcome.

Validity – The accuracy of information collected.

Sources for Glossary

Development Leadership Network, *Success Measures Guidebook*, 2000.

The Evaluation Forum, Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg & Associates, Inc. *Outcomes For Success*, 2000.

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Outcome Evaluation Strategies for Domestic Violence Programs*, 1998.

Rossi, Peter H., et al., *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 1999.

United Way of America, Measuring Program *Outcomes: A Practical Approach*, 1996.

PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

Using this worksheet, or the one on the next page, you can create a logic model for your program with an outcome chain of short-term, intermediate and longer-term outcomes.

Agency: ______________________________ **Program Name:** _________________________________

Program Goal:

Program Logic Model					
Input or Resources	**Activities**	**Outputs**	**Short-Term Outcomes**	**Intermediate Outcomes**	**Long-Term Outcomes**
Resources available to the program that allow and support service delivery, including money, staff, volunteers, clients, materials or equipment	*The methods of service delivery carried out by staff*	*The product delivered or unit of service provided, usually described numerically, such as number of people served or number of hours of service delivered*	*The first changes that occur for the individuals, families, organizations or the community as a result of this program*	*The subsequent benefit for people during or after their involvement in a program*	*The eventual impact on individuals, families, organizations or the community for which the program is accountable*

Outcomes and Indicators

Transfer the outcomes from your logic model into the first column of this worksheet and then use the remaining columns to identify up to three potential indicators for each outcome.

Agency: ______________________________ **Program Name:** _________________________________

Outcomes and Indicators			
Outcomes	**Indicators**	**Indicators**	**Indicators**
Select the most meaningful, relevant, important outcomes from your logic model and write them here	*For each outcome, identify the specific, measurable information that will be collected to track success toward that outcome*	*Is there another possible indicator?*	*Another?*

Evaluation Plan: Part I

Select outcomes and indicators from the previous worksheet and identify for each one the data collection methods you will most likely use and the schedule for your data collection.

Agency: ______________________________ **Program Name:** _________________________________

Evaluation Plan: Part I			
Outcome	**Indicator**	**What Data Collection Method?**	**When Will Data Be Collected?**
Select the outcomes that will be measured and write them below	*Identify which indicator(s) will be measured for the outcome and write them below*	*Identify which type of data collection method (survey, interview, observation or record review) will be conducted*	*Describe the timing and frequency of data collection*

Evaluation Plan: Part II

Transfer the information on data collection methods from the previous worksheet to the first column in this worksheet and identify for each one the data collection procedures you believe will help you manage your data collection process.

Agency: ______________________________ **Program Name:** _________________________________

Evaluation Plan: Part II			
What Data Collection Method?	**Who Will Collect Data?**	**What Will They Do?**	**How Will Data Collected Be Monitored?**
Write the data collection methods from Part I of the Evaluation Plan below	*Identify who will be responsible for collecting the data*	*Describe the steps they will take to implement the data collection*	*Identify who will monitor the data collection process for quality and consistency and how they will do so*

Getting the Best Results from Surveys and Interviews

Adapted from the Survey Workbook, The Evaluation Forum, Seattle, WA, 2002

Purpose

- ❏ Do you know what you want to learn from the survey or interview?
- ❏ Have you thought about why you need the information?
- ❏ Have you identified who you need to ask to get the information?
- ❏ Have you thought about the different audiences for the information?
- ❏ Have you thought about how you will use the information?
- ❏ Have you identified the objectives of your data collection and/or research questions?

Design and Method

Reasons for using written surveys:

- ❏ Are resources or volunteer time limited?
- ❏ Do you need to collect data from a sizable number of people?
- ❏ Is interviewer bias a concern?
- ❏ Is privacy necessary?
- ❏ Are quantifiable rankings or priorities necessary?
- ❏ If it is to be done through e-mail or the Internet, do respondents have access to those technologies?

Reasons for using interviews:

- ❏ Do you have the time necessary to conduct interviews?
- ❏ Can you find and train the interviewers?
- ❏ Is education or literacy an issue for participants that make interviews more appropriate?
- ❏ Are questions likely to be complex?
- ❏ Will you need visual aids? Is it important that every question be answered?
- ❏ Is it difficult to know what the range of responses might be?
- ❏ Do you have the resources necessary to conduct interviews?

Getting the Best Results from Surveys and Interviews (continued)

Adapted from the Survey Workbook, The Evaluation Forum, Seattle, WA, 2002

Language

- ❏ Is each question meaningful?
- ❏ Is the language simple, clear and concrete?
- ❏ Does it use language familiar to the participants?
- ❏ Are the instructions understandable?
- ❏ Are checklist choices relevant?
- ❏ Are the scales simple and understandable?
- ❏ Do the scale choices have clear distinctions between them?
- ❏ Do the scales have a clear mid-point, if appropriate?
- ❏ Is any of the wording judgmental or leading to a desired answer?
- ❏ Are timeframes specific?
- ❏ Does each question include just one thought?

Format

- ❏ Is it easy to read and follow?
- ❏ Is it as short as possible?
- ❏ Are the checklist boxes easy to select?
- ❏ Are the scales easy to read and apply?
- ❏ Do participants prefer numeric scales or wording scales?
- ❏ Do the contingency questions guide the reader appropriately?
- ❏ Is the typeface large enough for participants to read?

Cultural Appropriateness

- ❏ Is the method you have chosen appropriate for your client group?
- ❏ Are the types of questions appropriate for your client group?
- ❏ Is the content of the questions acceptable?
- ❏ Can the questions be translated easily, if needed?
- ❏ How does the meaning of questions change in translation?

Getting the Best Results from Surveys and Interviews (continued)

Adapted from the Survey Workbook, The Evaluation Forum, Seattle, WA, 2002

Pre-Test

- ❏ Has the instrument been pre-tested?
- ❏ Did participants interpret the meaning of the questions correctly?
- ❏ Were participants able to follow the format?
- ❏ Did any questions appear to make respondents uncomfortable?
- ❏ Did any questions consistently go unanswered?
- ❏ Did the instrument appear appropriate for the client group?
- ❏ Did you get back the information you thought you should?

Response Rates

- ❏ Will the survey be announced ahead of time?
- ❏ Will a cover letter be included with the mailing?
- ❏ Are respondent addresses up-to-date and accurate?
- ❏ Is the return address included on the survey?
- ❏ Have you provided a stamped and addressed return envelope?
- ❏ Can you do multiple mailings?

- ❏ For phone interviews, has a concise introduction been written?
- ❏ Are phone lists up-to-date and accurate?
- ❏ Are several phone attempts made on different days and times?
- ❏ Are holidays and other events avoided?

Technical Assistance Survey Template

Adapted from materials developed for AIDS Housing of Washington's Technical Assistance Program, Clegg & Associates, Inc., Seattle, WA, 2003

In the following section, please check the appropriate box in response to each statement, followed by any comments you may have. If you are not familiar with a particular area, please check "Not Sure." Thank you!

1. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of our services?

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not Sure
Knowledge demonstrated by staff					
Responsiveness of staff to your needs					
Usefulness of information/assistance provided					
Overall quality of the service provided					

Comments:

2. How can we improve our service delivery to you?

Technical Assistance Survey Template (continued)

Adapted from materials developed for AIDS Housing of Washington's Technical Assistance Program, Clegg & Associates, Inc., Seattle, WA, 2003

3. To what degree to you feel you have improved your knowledge or skills in the following areas as a result of your work with us?

	No Improvement Whatsoever	Minimal Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Large Improvement	Not Sure
[Complete one line for each topic or skill area addressed by the training and/or technical assistance you provided]					

Comments:

4. To what degree do you feel <u>your organization</u> has improved its knowledge or skills in the following areas as a result of your work with us?

	No Increase Whatsoever	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase	Large Increase	Not Sure
[Complete one line for each topic or skill area addressed by the training and/or technical assistance you provided]					

Comments:

Technical Assistance Survey Template (continued)

Adapted from materials developed for AIDS Housing of Washington's Technical Assistance Program, Clegg & Associates, Inc., Seattle, WA, 2003

5. To what degree do you feel your organization has improved its capacity in the following areas as a result of your work with us?

	No Increase Whatsoever	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase	Large Increase	Not Sure
[Complete one line for each topic or skill area addressed by the training and/or technical assistance you provided]					

Comments:

6. What do you feel is the most valuable result of your work with us?

7. What additional assistance do you think would help your organization right now?

8. Any other comments or suggestions?

References

Babbie, Earl R. *The Practice of Social Research*. 8th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1997.

Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services. *Compassion Capital Fund Demonstration Program Announcement*. Washington, D.C., June 26, 2003.

Development Leadership Network. *Success Measures Guide*. Boston, MA: 2000.

Evaluation Forum. *How to Manage and Analyze Data for Outcome-Based Evaluation*. Seattle, WA: Organizational Research Services, Inc., 2000.

Evaluation Forum. *Outcomes For Success!.* Seattle, WA: Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg & Associates, Inc., 2000.

Fink, Arlene (editor). *The Survey Kit Series*, 9 volume set. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995.

Herman, Joan (editor). *The Program Evaluation Kit Series*, 9 volume set. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1987.

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. *The Program Evaluation Standards, Second edition: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994.

Morgan, David L. and Richard A. Krueger (editors). *The Focus Group Kit Series*, 6 volume set. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

National Resource Center. *Guidance for CCF Sub-Award Assessment Plans*. Washington, D.C., 2003.

Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President. *The President's Management Agenda*. Washington, D.C., FY2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/mgmt.pdf.

Oregon State University Family Policy Program. *Building Results III: Measuring Outcomes for Oregon's Children, Youth, and Families.* Salem, OR: Oregon Commission on Children and Families, 1998.

Patton, Michael Quinn. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text.* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

Rossi, Peter H., et al. Evaluation: A Systematic Approach. 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999.

United Way of America. *Measuring Outcomes: A Practical Approach*. Alexandria, VA, 1996. Copies of the manual are available from United Way of America at http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/.