

Enriching Lives



**EVALUATION MADE EAS[IER]
APPLYING FOR AN ARTS COMMISSION GRANT
CRITERION 4: PROJECT EVALUATION**

Supplemental Resources

Kamella Tate, MFA, EdD
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EVALUATION BASICS

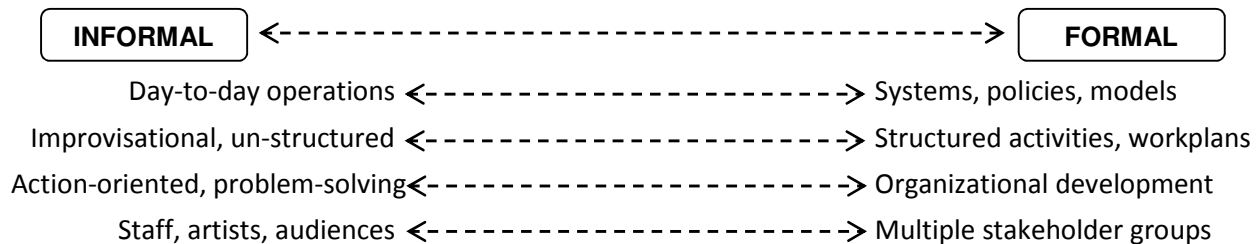
EVALUATION is a systematic investigation of the merit (i.e. quality, excellence), worth (i.e. value, cost-effectiveness), and/or significance (i.e. importance, impact) of a project.

What is evaluation? Evaluations are processes designed to assess and analyze how well a program, organization, staff member, policy, etc. **is performing or has performed.**

- Why do we evaluate?**
- If we don't evaluate, how can we tell success from failure?
 - If we can't tell success from failure, how do we learn, grow and change?
 - If we can make your results visible, we can advocate for our mission, values, practices and organization.

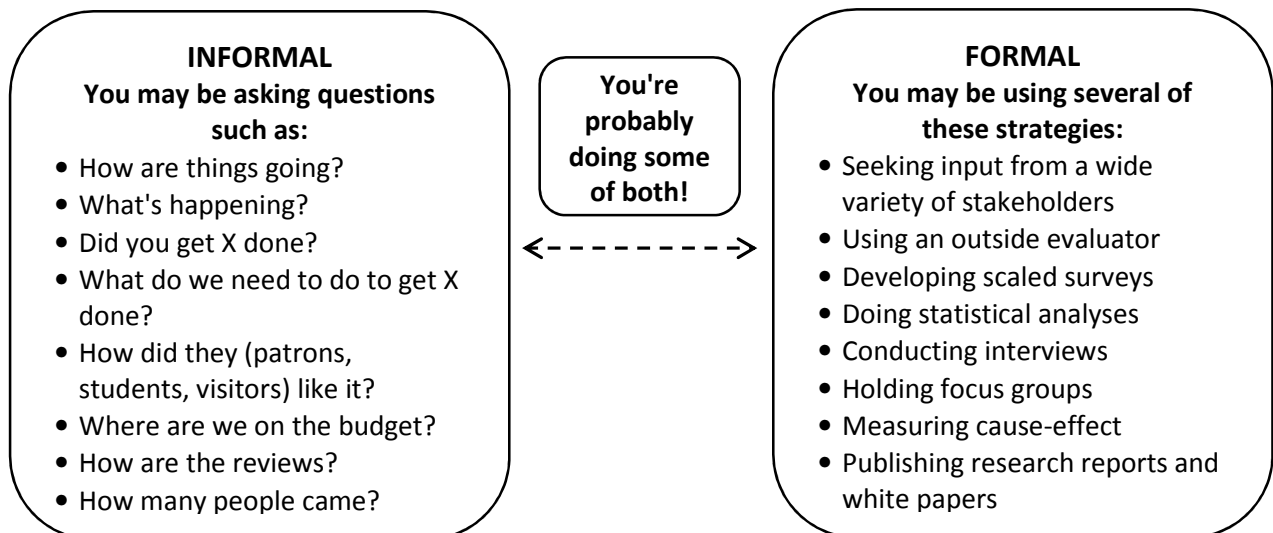
FORMAL, INFORMAL, IN BETWEEN?

Measurement and evaluation can take place anywhere on a continuum of activities and approaches, from **informal to formal**. You may be thinking "we don't really do evaluation" – but if you discuss your project at staff meetings, trade emails about challenges and solutions, talk with patrons about their experiences . . . **you are evaluating!**



Where do your evaluation activities land on the continuum?

Knowing will help you clarify your purposes and ask the right questions.



Needs Assessment
Identify & validate

- Needs
- Goals
- Gaps between ACTUAL and DESIRED

Our target population has a **DEMONSTRATED NEED**

"We don't have..." "We want to..."
"We lack..." "Help."
"Help!"

Org Self Assessment
What resources do we have?

- Time?
- Skills?
- Staff?

We make a **PLAN**

- Research
- Data
- Evidence

Literature Review
What works?

- What are other people doing?
- Can we do that?
- Theory of Change
- Logic Model

Process Evaluation
What's happening?

- Who, what, when, where, why, how...

We do things

- STRATEGIES
- ACTIVITIES
- TASKS

Implementation Evaluation
How well are we doing what we said we'd do?

Formative
How are we doing so far?

So that we can realize our

OBJECTIVE →
OBJECTIVE →
OBJECTIVE →
OBJECTIVE →

We do some more things

- STRATEGIES
- ACTIVITIES
- TASKS

Formative
Can we improve?

Ongoing Assessment
Process, Context, Gaps, Implementation...

So that we can achieve our

Ongoing Assessment
Process, Context, Gaps, Implementation...

OUTPUT GOALS

- Numbers
- Things
- Artworks
- Materials

STUFF!

OUTCOME GOALS

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Impact
- Valuing

CHANGE!

Impact Evaluation
EFFECT on participants

Performance Evaluation
Results relative to INDICATORS

Outcomes Evaluation
Compare ACTUAL to DESIRES

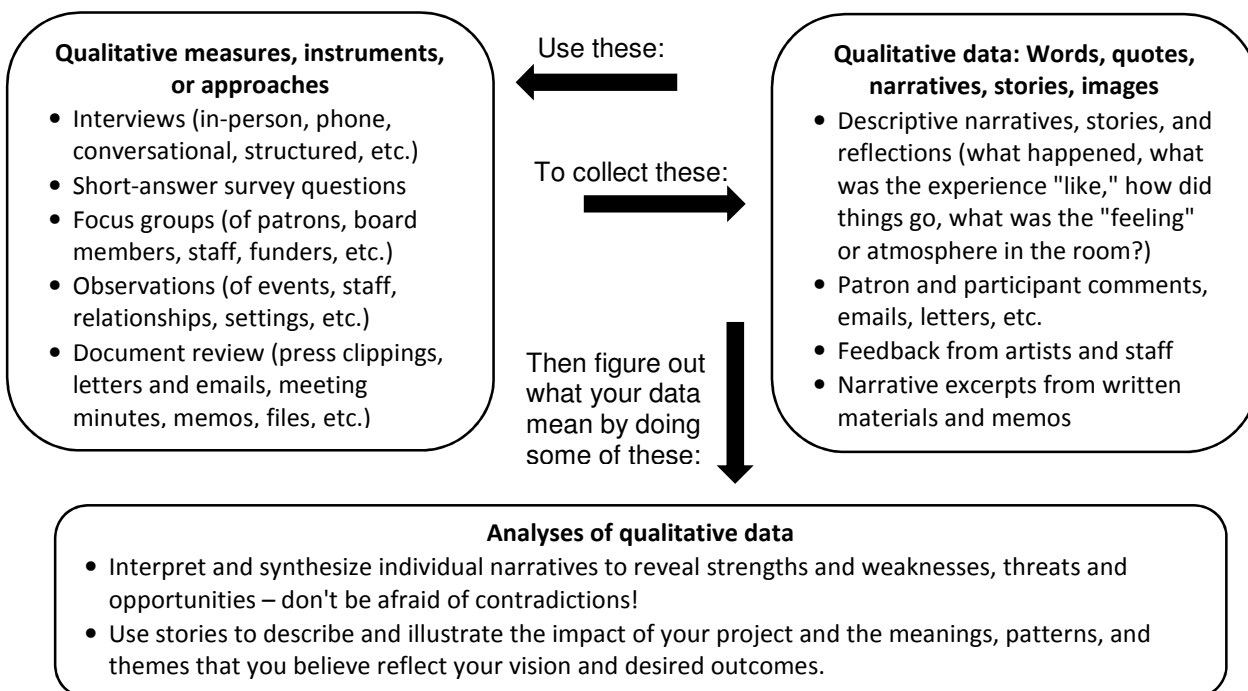
Summative
Did it work?

- Why or how did it work?
- Were we effective?

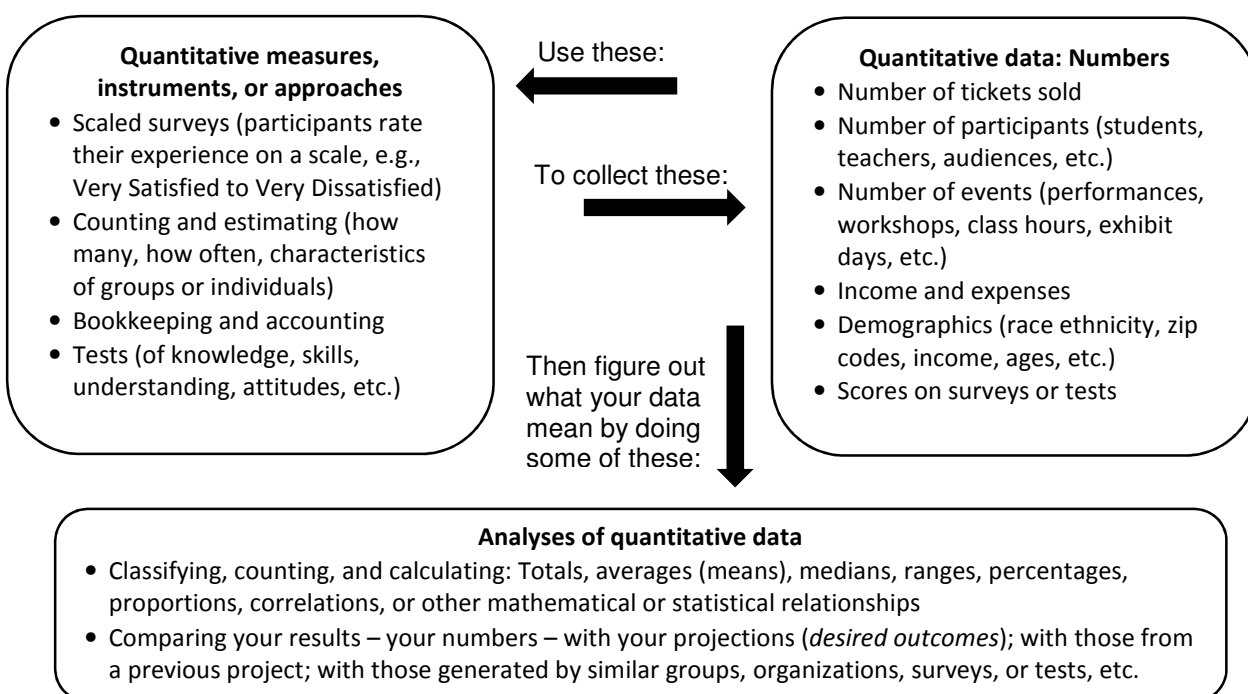
ANSWERING THE QUESTION

Your evaluation approaches, activities, and questions will involve some type(s) of *measure(s)* and generate some type(s) of *data*.

→ **Qualitative** measures – also called *instruments* – generate and/or collect **textual data**, which is then analyzed to produce **information** about experiences, qualities, processes, and themes.



→ **Quantitative** measures – also called *instruments* – generate and/or collect **numerical data**, which is then analyzed to produce **information** about effectiveness.



SAMPLE SCENARIOS

- What do you want to know?
- How are you going to find out what you want to know?
 - What does success look like?
- How are you going to identify challenges?
- How are you going to design solutions?

What evaluation activities are appropriate to your goals, feasible for you to undertake, and will help you find out what you want to know about your project?

SAMPLE SCENARIO 1: Staff Salary Support

We are using our Arts Commission grant to support the salary of our current executive director. In addition to her day-to-day operational responsibilities, she will be implementing and overseeing activities associated with these **Sustainability** strategies:

- To increase paid attendance by 3 percent per year for each year of our grant
- To continue our long-term planning process
- To grow our board from 5 to 10 members

Instruments and data for projects like this might include:

- Job description, CV or short bio of the staff member, and written performance goals that will be used to evaluate her achievements (QUAL)
- Attendance records showing total number served and numbers served by individual programs or events; comparison data collected from both projections and previous FYs (QUANT)
- Establish benchmarks for board growth: How fast, how many need to be new, what skills or connections are needed. Measure performance against benchmarks and make adjustments as challenges or issues arise (QUAL/QUANT)
- Annual performance evaluation (led by the board of directors): Scaled rubrics can be used to "rate" staff on desired criteria (i.e., Unsatisfactory - 0, Below expectation - 1, Satisfactory - 2, Above average - 3, Outstanding - 4; QUANT); short-answer questions can be developed for board and staff to describe their perceptions of the staff members strengths and weaknesses relative to **clear and agreed-upon** expectations (QUAL)
 - Some possible areas of inquiry: Quality of work, volume of work, effectiveness, initiative, independence, judgment, teamwork, service, management/supervision.
 - Fair standards: Make sure criteria and expectations are clear and agreed on from the beginning by everyone involved!
 - If appropriate, seek "360 degree" input – staff, artists, board, funders, patrons, other stakeholders.
- Self-evaluations allow staff members to provide input on challenges and achievements that may go un-remarked in the stress of day-to-day operations. Multiple choice, scaled assessments of desired competencies, and short-answer questions are all useful for self-evaluations (QUANT/QUAL)

- Simple but effective are "yes-no/1-0" checklists of agreed-upon activities, tasks, proficiencies, and short-term goals; analyze for both means of all items and clusters where deficiencies appear most often (QUANT)

SAMPLE SCENARIO 2: Consultant or Contracted Vendor

We are using our Arts Commission grant to hire a fund development consultant who will implement strategies and activities associated with the goal of **Organizational Capacity**. We want to increase our contributed revenues by 10 percent over the two-year grant period; to build relationships with at least 5 new funders; and to develop an individual donor campaign.

Instruments and data for projects like this might include:

- Consultancy description and brief narrative of hiring process; CV or short bio of consultant; LOA with deliverables, workplan, and timeline (QUAL)
- Financial records showing contributed revenues from funding agencies for Year 1 compared with 1) such revenues from past years 2) projections (QUANT)
- Records of contacts and meetings with new funders; files of proposals (QUAL); archives of individual donor materials, including mailing lists, donor characteristics, response rates, follow ups, revenues generated, etc. (QUANT and QUAL)
- Formal/informal progress reports from consultant(s) comparing deliverables, workplan, and timeline "as contracted" with "as implemented" (QUANT and QUAL)
- Written reports on activities, achievements, challenges, and recommendations (QUAL)
- Phone interviews with board development committee members regarding quality of interactions with and responses to consultant(s) (QUAL)
- Formal/informal conversations with new funder contacts regarding quality of interactions with and responses to consultant(s) (QUAL)

SAMPLE SCENARIO 3: Arts-Based Project/Program

We are using our Arts Commission grant to partly support several new **Artistic Capacity** initiatives designed to grow and enhance our "Artsapalooza" arts fair. Funds have been earmarked for facility charges, artist and production fees, and marketing costs. Our goals are: A 10 percent increase in attendance by students and older adults over the two-year grant period; a measurable expansion of participation from new neighborhoods and artists; and increased interest in the festival by key stakeholder groups (participants, vendors, artists, etc.)

Instruments and data for projects like this might include:

- Number of attendees and their demographics, the latter collected using zips and Census data; comparison data collected from both projections and previous festivals (QUANT)
- Number of actual exhibitors, demonstrations, workshops, and/or performances compared with projections and with past festivals (QUANT)
- Records of marketing and outreach activities that target new neighborhoods and demonstrate culturally responsive/appropriate approaches (QUANT/QUAL)
- Response rates by zip code or Census tract: How many people attended compared with type and volume of new outreach efforts? (QUANT)
- Artists' materials: Biographies, resumes and work histories, mailers, press and reviews, etc., used to demonstrate "global arts" dimension of the festival (QUAL)

- Scaled and short-answer survey of attendees administered on-site by volunteers to determine quality of experience, expectations, future interest, etc. (QUANT/QUAL)
- Phone interviews with cultural and neighborhood "champions" involved with the project to identify value-added components and effectiveness of new outreach (QUAL)
- Post-festival focus group with staff and artists to identify what worked, what didn't, and how to make things better next year (QUAL)

SAMPLE SCENARIO 4: Other Project/Program

We are using our Arts Commission grant to support a broad-based marketing/fund development initiative that includes hiring an outside consultant/firm, conducting a market and fund development needs analysis, designing and implementing a comprehensive revenue-generating workplan, and performing iterative assessments of progress and results that inform ongoing improvements. Our desired **Organizational Capacity** outcome is greater financial self-reliance (the ability to generate resources and maintain a healthy funding base). Initiative- and agency-level goals include organizational learning (knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes), institutionalization of new strategies, increased demand for services and attendance at events, and improved brand recognition.

Instruments and data for projects like this might include:

- Rubric developed to assess quality of workplan documents developed by contracted vendor (QUAL)
- Board and senior staff review interim progress reports, comparing contracted goals and strategies with work products and short/intermediate-term objectives (QUAL/QUANT)
- Tracking and monitoring indicators of interest
 - Measurements of learning: Surveys, checklists, self-tests, minutes from task force meetings or other staff/board convenings, self-assessments of knowledge and skills, observations of activities, interviews with senior managers, etc. (QUAL/QUANT)
 - Measurements of financial health: Accounts, budgets, annual report, monthly financial statements, vital signs, actual/variance comparisons, etc. (QUANT)
 - Measurements of attendance: Ticket sales, head counts, demographics (who are they are where are they coming from?), no-shows, exchanges, groups, subscribers/members or single ticket buyers, donors, etc. (QUANT)
 - Measurements of awareness and value: On-line surveys, response cards, focus groups, point-of-sale questionnaire, etc. (QUAL/QUANT)

SAMPLE SCENARIO 5: Arts Education Project – Residency

We are using our Arts Commission grant to support increased **Accessibility** to our See!Draw!Paint! visual arts education program for 4th and 5th graders going to schools serving low-SES communities. Funds have been earmarked for teaching artist fees, professional development for educators, and classroom supplies. We expect to provide four 8-week residencies serving 120 students and their teachers each year of the two-year grant period. We want participants to increase their visual arts knowledge and skills and to develop positive attitudes toward artmaking.

Instruments and data for projects like this might include:

- Number of actual instructional hours compared with projections (QUANT)

- Number of participating students and their demographics compiled from the CDE website (QUANT); number of participating teachers, school administrators, and parents (QUANT)
- Revenues and expenses compared with projections/equivalent past programs (QUANT)
- For students: A scaled survey developed to measure attitudes and knowledge before and after participating in the residencies, using student resources, field trips, etc. (QUANT); two short-answer questions used to gather stories and insights about students' personal experiences and responses (QUAL)
- For students: VAPA-aligned assessments of knowledge and skills (QUAL/QUANT)
- For schools: Phone interviews with principals/assistant principals and teachers used to gather information and stories about attitudes, knowledge, barriers to participation, and other areas of interest (QUAL)
- For your organization: Focus group with teaching artists and staff used to generate knowledge about achievements, problems, solutions, "promising practices," and anticipated changes (QUAL)
- For your organization: On-line survey (scaled and short answer) of artists, managers, technicians, and other project personnel to identify strengths and weaknesses, problems and solutions, successes and failures (QUAL/QUANT)

RESOURCES

- American Evaluation Association. (2006). Guiding Principles for Evaluators. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(3), 293-294.
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- Rossman, G. B., & Wilson, B. L. (1995). Numbers and words revisited: Being shamelessly "eclectic." *Quality & Quantity*, 28(3), pp. 315-327.
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- W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (1998). *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook*. Available at www.wkcf.org
- U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *Evaluation primer: Ensuring evaluations yield valid and reliable findings*. Available at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/primer6.html>

On-Line Resources

- The Evaluation Center at the Western Michigan University <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr>
- Wendy Tackett's *Useful and Free Evaluation Websites*: <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Eval-Cafe-Useful-and-Free-Evaluation-Websites2.pdf>
- The American Evaluation Association <http://www.eval.org/> ; <http://aea365.org/blog/>
- Visitor Studies Association (VSA) <http://visitorstudies.org/>
- CARE (Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation) <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/professional-networks/care>
- <http://www.healthycity.org>
- <http://www.EZAnalyze.com>
- <http://factfinder2.census.gov/main.html>