

# Meeting Requirements, Exceeding Expectations: Understanding the Role of Evaluation in Federal Grants May 25, 2016

Michael Lesiecki - The recording indicator has lit up and we are live it's my pleasure to turn the presentation over today to today's moderator Ann Beheler, Ann will you take us forward.

Ann Beheler - Sure happy to, Lori next slide.

## **Webinar Details**

Ann Beheler - Thank you, I think we've already covered a lot of this; it's my honor to welcome you this afternoon and to be the moderator for this very important topic. I think you will learn a great deal, I've had the opportunity to work with Lori Wingate several times and I will introduce her formally here in just a minute. I think we've covered all of this except that this particular webinar is sponsored by the Centers Collaborative for Technical Assistance which is a national science foundation grant it's also sponsored by the EvaluATE grant that Lori happens to be responsible for and the ATE centers grant which is in fact Mike Lesiecki's grant, next slide.

## **The CCTA is Led By**

Ann Beheler - The CCTA is led by five centers one is mine at the top the National Center for Convergence Technology and that is by the way just IT and communications it's a kind of a fancy name for it. The South Carolina ATE center, the Florida ATE center, the Bio-Link center out in San Francisco and the Network's Resource center at the Maricopa Community College District in Phoenix, next slide.

## **CCTA Purpose**

Ann Beheler - The purpose of the Centers Collaborative for Technical Assistance is to respond to a request from the Department of Labor to have the ATE centers under NSF provide technical assistance to DOL TAACCCT grantees and actually we realized that the activities that we are doing our very relevant to DOL grants, NSF grants and just to work force oriented programs of all kinds we do offer webinars both live and recorded and I would invite you to at the end of this presentation go look at what's already out there if you have not on the ATE center's website and we also have some best practices we have two so far that are complete and we have convenings as we will at the end of July and we'll talk more about that a little bit later, next slide.

## **Today's Presenters**

Ann Beheler - I am pleased today to introduce Dr. Lori Wingate she happens to be Director of Research at the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University and this is a very important national science foundation grant the EvaluATE grant at her center and we all contribute information to them once a year and they do a roll up for the National Science Foundation and I'm going to let Lori introduce her other presenters.

Lori Wingate - Well thank you Ann, yeah Leslie Goodyear, I'm so pleased to have let Leslie on she's a Principal Research Scientist at EDC in Boston and she's here today because she has experience as a program officer at the National Science Foundation so she doesn't speak for NSF but she has some insider experience there so I want to thank her for being there with us.

### **Poll: Your Affiliation**

Lori Wingate - So we have a poll I think you're going to do this part Ann.

Ann Beheler - Actually Mike will take over. I went on mute, Mike is going to do it, you will see that the poll is up would you please vote regarding your affiliation with NSF, DOL or both or neither we just like to kind of know who our audiences as we go into these presentations will give it a few seconds Mike I'll leave it to you to turn it over.

Michael Lesiecki - Thank you Ann, I can see lots of polling coming in, I'm just giving people just a few more seconds and then we'll launch the results here hold on just one second.

Ann Beheler - Thank you.

Michael Lesiecki - Ok folks I'm gonna give you a little countdown 54321 I'll go ahead and close that poll and then we'll take a look at the results.

Ann Beheler - I'm not, there we go

Michael Lesiecki - Here we go thank you Ann, so look at this we have a quite a mixture of folks here but here's the fascinating thing many people aren't directly involved with that NSF or TAACCCT grant isn't that amazing to have that interest in this topic today.

Ann Beheler - Well and I think that's very very good it's good to understand evaluation well before one goes after a grant, so that's great. Laurie will give it back to you.

### **EvaluATE**

Lori Wingate - Alright so yeah welcome everybody so Ann mentioned I'm at Western Michigan University, I'm a Director of EvaluATE which is the evaluation resource center for the National Science Foundation advanced technological education program I'm here in Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo we have a lot of great info on evaluation lots of resources on this topic on the EvaluATE website as well as the evaluation center so if you haven't visited us I hope that you will.

### **Meeting Requirements Exceeding Expectations**

Lori Wingate - The point of today's webinar is really to help you understand how to decipher the language in the requirements related to evaluation and federal grant programs and I hope you leave this webinar not only understanding and being able to respond to those requirements, but may be also being a little motivated to go a little beyond those minimum requirements because sound evaluation that's integrated into your project is really critical for continuous improvement and it's also going to give you a competitive edge when you're seeking funding.

### **Overview**

Lori Wingate - The webinar has three main parts first I'm going to briefly review some evaluation fundamental to make sure we're on the same page about what we're talking about today and then we'll look at some excerpts from some actual federal grant solicitation and focus in on the key elements of evaluation plans for federal grant proposals. And finally I'll address what are often the first questions that I get about evaluation which are how do I find an evaluator and how much is it going to cost me? And in this last part we're also going to talk about how to integrate past evaluation results into future grant proposals and I think that maybe one of the most important things you should be

thinking about as you develop evaluation plans for work that you're proposing after each section will hear comments from Dr. Leslie Goodyear and Leslie has a wealth of experience in conducting evaluations as well as being a program officer at NSF so following her comments will have a question break.

### **Let's Play**

Lori Wingate - But first we're going to play a little game many of you are probably familiar with the game two truths and a lie well this is two lies and a truth you're going to be asked to use your poll buttons again so I'd like you to read each of these statements and then use your poll button to identify which you believe is the one true statement I'll just give you a second to read over those and mark your answer. Mike I'll let you decide when we're ready to show those results.

Michael Lesiecki - Thank you Lori, I see quite a few people are login I think I'm going to make my own vote to, hope I'm right this isn't a particularly hard one folks is which is the true statement federal evaluation policy dictates, we should be evaluation literate and/or all federal grant programs require project level evaluation. Lori we've got almost the total audience participating let's do a countdown and then I'll show you the results 5 4 3 2 1 folks hit those buttons I'm closing the poll and now I'm going to share the results. What do you make of those?

Lori Wingate – Excellent I can see that well yeah you everybody got pretty much got the right one there. So I'm going to go through these excellent.

Michael Lesiecki - I'm going to close that poll Lori right now.

### **Which is the truth?**

Lori Wingate - Yeah ok so we had over half people half of the people selecting B and you are right so those of you who did not select A as the as the true statement not all federal grant programs oops federal policy requires dictates requirements for project a lot of level evaluation there are different federal policies and act out of the office of management and budget in the White House like the government performance results acts called gift from and those certainly influenced evaluation priorities at the agency level but evaluation requirements that trickled down to the ground level are really quite variable so you need to look closely at requirements of the particular program that you're seeking funding from. And this last statement uh that all federal program will require evaluation that is also false if you're doing something that straight up pure research but you're actually doing something mainly focus on getting people to know something different to do something differently chances are there's an evaluation requirement when bringing about changes in people is involved. So the one true statement is that all federal grant seekers and grantees should be evaluation literate so that means you're going to know the language you know that evaluation is something you need to build into grant proposals early you know how to budget for evaluation and access evaluation expertise and illiterate grant evaluation illiterate grant seekers going to be someone who thinks they can just tack on a paragraph about evaluation at the end of a grant proposal. As any proposal reviewer or federal program officers going to tell you its really obvious when a proposer didn't understand the importance of evaluation to their funding application. So importantly an evaluation literate person is really understands those fundamental purpose and nature of evaluation and why it's important in this federal grant context.

## **Evaluation**

Lori Wingate - And for those of you who may not quite be on board with that the next few slides are going to be your crash course. So this is the basic definition of evaluation it's the kind of definition you'll see if you look in the dictionary. When we're talking about evaluation in a professional context the program evaluation it's important that were systematic and when we are systematic about evaluation first we have to determine what it is we're going to evaluate and we communicate that by articulating important questions about the project's processes and outcomes and will gather evidence so that we can answer those questions with confidence and validity and cultural relevance and although a lot of people tend to stop there we also need to interpret those data and actually answer the evaluation questions and there really isn't a point in doing any of this if the information isn't going to be used. So it's really important that we use the information for accountability to sponsors to improve our work and of course to plan our next step.

## **Evaluation/Research/Assessment**

Lori Wingate - Now a common question about evaluation is well is it the same as research is it the same as assessment most people work in this area seem to agree that you know they agree on the basic definition of evaluation and that research tends to emphasize the production of generalizable knowledge as opposed to project specific knowledge. But there is debate about the finer grain distinctions between research and evaluation and how and when they overlap. Now assessment is a term that is often used interchangeably with evaluation we talk about assessing things and evaluating things and that's fine but assessments often associated with the process of determining student learning. So we just really the point of this is to acknowledge that there are overlaps in these concepts not everyone agrees on the distinctions and the definition and you should just follow your funder's cues about how they conceptualize or distinguish between these activities.

## **A federal evaluation policy dictates the requirements for project –level evaluation**

Lori Wingate -Let's take a look at this lie about the federal policy dictating the project level evaluation requirements that isn't true but it is true that some federal agencies have agency or program specific guidance on evaluation and research.

## **Untitled**

Lori Wingate - So for example if you're seeking from NS funding from NSF you want to make sure you're familiar with the NSF user-friendly handbook for project evaluation. And if you're seeking grants from the CDC you'd want to know the framework for program evaluation and public health. And if your evaluation does start to feel like research if you're using experimental designs and testing hypotheses for example you'll definitely want to know the common guidelines for education research and development which were put forth by NSF and the institution Institute for Education Sciences at the Department of Ed. These aren't for evaluation per se but when the line between research and evaluation starts to blur and it often does you want to know these guidelines. And some particular program sponsored by different agencies will have their own evaluation guidance and you just need to carefully review their program solicitations and their website to see if there are guidance documents that are really specific to the program that you're applying to.

## **All federal grant programs require project-level evaluation**

Lori Wingate - So the other lie was about a blanket requirement for project-level evaluation and many of you knew that was not true. But there are good reasons to evaluate even if you don't have to.

### **Why some federal programs require projects to be evaluated**

Lori Wingate - So let's first consider why some federal programs do require evaluations of certain types of projects well in enables a high degree of accountability so the individual grantees are held accountable for their use of federal resources and the information helps agencies be accountable to Congress to justify continued support and it helps projects improve as they are being implemented. And this is in the agency's own interests, they want to make sure they're getting as good as outcomes as possible from their investments and project evaluation can really help with that. And finally it supplies agencies with evidence to help them identify effective programs and practices that may or may not warrant further investment on their part.

### **Why you should evaluate your project if even you don't have to**

Lori Wingate - So project evaluation helps the agencies do their jobs better but it also has big benefits at the project level. It really does serve the same three purposes I'm going to argue that improvement evidence are really the most compelling reason for a project to invest in evaluation even if it isn't a formal requirement. Some people think that evaluation just happens at the end of a project just retrospectively but that's a bad idea. If you're only evaluating at the end you're missing out on a huge opportunity to identify ways to improve as you're implementing your project and if you do that you will increase the likelihood of reaching your goals and bring about the outcomes that you're seeking. It also will generate evidence about your outcomes and successes and when you're seeking new funding and you have evidence of what you're able to achieve with your past funding or even from unfunded initiative that is really going to give you an edge in the proposal review process. So even if you're applying to a program that doesn't require evaluation I would say include at least a modest evaluation plan it's going to impress reviewers and really set the stage for you to get evidence of your successes and your lessons learned. So that's a very high level view of evaluation in the federal landscape and why you should care about it.

### **Solicitation**

In the next part of the webinar we're going to drill down farther into actual program solicitation and those are the official documents that explain grant opportunities and they go by different names so NSF mainly calls the program solicitation the CDC called the funding opportunity announcements or FOAs and other agencies may have other terms as you can see here. But they all explain the purpose of a program, its requirements, how to apply and lots of other details and every program officer I've ever talk to you so that's the person at the agencies who is overseeing the grants the grantees they always say that the most important thing a person can do who's seeking a grant is to read the program solicitation. Now that may seem kind of obvious I'm sure it does seem obvious to many of you but I don't think we keep hearing this advice over and over if there weren't lots and lots of people failing to pay attention to the details of solicitations when they're preparing a proposal. And these can be very dense documents to the background image for this slide is one page of a 15 page NSF solicitation.

### **"eval"**

Lori Wingate - And embedded in these documents is where you're going to find the requirements or guidelines for grant level of evaluation the first thing I do when faced with the task of developing an evaluation plans for a proposal is to open the electronic version of the document and search on E, V, A, L eval just to be sure that I don't miss any mention of anything related to evaluation.

### **Grants.gov**

Lori Wingate - Now all these documents are found on the agency websites but all these opportunities are also listed on the grants.gov website which is the online portal for information about federal grants

and as you can see here a few weeks ago I found 1700 opportunities from 25 different agencies so obviously we can only scratch the surface of these today in this webinar.

### **We'll look at examples from**

Lori Wingate -So we're going to look at some examples from these agencies, we saw earlier that about half of you are involved with NSF and Department of Labor but many of you are involved with either of these so I hope you find something that's relevant to you today. But before we get into that we're going to take a break so you can hear from Leslie Goodyear on the role of evaluation at NSF as she experienced it and after her comments, I will take your questions. So I'll just go ahead and turn it over to Leslie now.

### **Comments**

Michael Lesiecki – Leslie, you do want to unmute your phone.

Leslie Goodyear - Thanks Mike, I of course forgot. Thanks for inviting me to be part of this webinar it's really terrific to hear all of this great information I keep nodding my head as I'm listening. So as Lori said I was a Program Officer at the National Science Foundation in the Division of Research on Learning which is part of the Education and Human Resources Directorate which is actually the home of the Advanced Technological Education program at NSF. So I worked on other programs at NSF including Informal Science Education and the Innovative Technologies Experiences for students and teachers and actually the program that funds research on evaluation called Prime. So the role of evaluation at the National Science Foundation is really as Lori was mentioning earlier it's most applicable to the education and outreach programs which mostly happen in the Education and Human Resources Directorate as NSF. If for example like Lori mentioned you're writing a proposal to do research in the large hadron collider you're likely not going to have to hire an evaluator your instead going to be expected to published in peer-review journals about your scientific findings. But when you're doing an education proposal to NSF or an education outreach proposal you will be expected to have some sort of evaluation for most of the program solicitations and as Lori mentioned too, it's true that at NSF there is no agency-wide guidance about evaluation it's really program-specific. And so some programs have very detailed guidelines for evaluations while others really leave it up to the principal investigators and their evaluators to frame and evaluation even though it's required. So for example programs like the DRK-12 program will have guidance about evaluation that is very very different than the informal science program the advancing informal STEM learning program. The informal STEM learning program allows for example for proposals to include a supplemental document that gives more detail about the evaluation plan that is actually included in the proposal or it has in the past I'm not sure whether the current solicitation does but other programs do not they really expect you to describe the evaluation in full in the in the 15 pages of the proposal. So to Lori's point earlier it's really important that you read the program solicitation in the NSF program solicitation you can find most of the evaluation guidance toward the end of the solicitation although Lori's tip is really important that you should search for eval in the document. Program officers use project level evaluation to help them judge what's going on as the project progresses and they use it in a number of ways one is just to make sure that everything is going the way it that the P.I. says it is so it's sort of a checks and balances or accountability. Often when they contract program evaluators, so for example when the ATE program is evaluated by an external evaluation group maybe at some point other than those at Western Michigan those folks would look over the project evaluations to see what's being measured to see if there are commonalities across projects those types of things. And also program officers for example the ASEL program created a database of project evaluation that's accessible by the grantees and the public in order to help people understand the state of the field of informal science. So there are lots of uses for

those project level evaluations and in fact when programs have done work like building a database like informal science then a lot can be learned about the quality of evaluation as well. Lori.

### **Questions**

Ann Beheler - I think it's time for questions this is Ann, we are going to provide a recording and copies of slides, I know I've got a couple of questions about that. Secondly there's another question regarding where is the requirement for evaluation specified, I think you've answered that Lori but is there something else that you would like to say about that.

Lori Wingate - Yeah we'll get into that actually in this next section, so if there is another question.

Ann Beheler – Yes, another question Leslie what fraction of a proposal review score might be attributable to the evaluation component if it is required?

Leslie Goodyear - That's a great question and for those of you who've put in an NSF proposals you know that there's not a scoring approach as there is for example with IES proposals so you're going to get an excellent, very good, good, fair or poor from NSF rather than getting a point rating like you do from IED, but an NSF proposal, evaluations are really important I don't know if I can give them a percent importance what I've usually found as a program officer is that an evaluation so if your proposal is amazing and your ideas for your actual content work for your proposal are amazing having an ok evaluation plan isn't going to kill your proposal. The proposal the program officer will likely come back and ask you to beef up your evaluation plan and make it much more robust but um if you don't have a fabulous idea for your proposal and you don't have a great evaluation plan it's not going to help you. If you have a terrific evaluation plan it can help your proposal move along because then the program officer knows that you're going to be contributing to the field and learning more about what's going on in your project and accounting for how you're spending the funds. Does that answer the question?

Ann Beheler - Thank you Leslie, thank you very much. Lori you want to get into section two?

Lori Wingate – Oh, sure let's move on.

### **Overview**

Lori Wingate - So in this part of the webinar we're going to look at some excerpts from federal program solicitations we'll get to that question about where do you find these. In reviewing several of these documents I found a lot of variability in the level of guidance on evaluation ranging from almost no guidance to very detailed guidance.

### **Guidance Gauge**

Lori Wingate - So I invented this guidance gauge is that cool so we're going to look at examples from both ends of the spectrum in terms of what these documents say about evaluation requirements and expectations.

### **Evaluation Plan**

Lori Wingate - So about where you're going to find these Leslie gave the general guidance that you'll find NSF solicitations you'll find them near the end, I really I'm very serious I search eval to find every little bit that I can find so that's what I do I searched it and I pull out all the discussions of evaluation and I put it in one document to make sure I don't miss anything. So that they can be it can be

interspersed so in any solicitation that requires a culture evaluation you're going to come probably come across the phrase evaluation plan but the degree to which these documents spell out what should go in an evaluation plan is going to vary immensely.

### **Evaluation Plan**

Lori Wingate - So here's an example from a CDC FOA that offers very little guidance about what should go in the evaluation plan in the proposal. So all we can really tell from this is that the evaluation is for determining quality and effectiveness but that really doesn't give us a lot to go on.

### **Evaluation Plan**

Lori Wingate - Here's one with a little bit more guidance from NSF and we can tell the plan should include indicators of success in relation to achieving goals and objectives and a time frame but still not a whole lot of guidance.

### **Evaluation Plan**

Lori Wingate - And I know some of your trying to read this content in here don't worry it's in the slides and I'm just trying to give you a high level view of the different ways evaluations presented in the in the solicitation. This example is very different it includes a lot of detail about what should go into an evaluation plan for this Department of Ed program proposal. And as you can see here I'm highlighted it with seven elements including the types of data that should be collected it's not telling you what should be collected they want you to explain in the plan the types of data that will be collected, when and using what methods and instruments the data will be collected, how the data will be analyzed, when the results will be available and how the results will be used.

### **Performance Evaluation**

Lori Wingate - Here's another example that offers a lot of guidance and I find this one interesting because it really emphasizes the grantees intended use of the results and this one's from the Department of Labor. So this isn't just about the agency getting accountability information out of the grantee the agency really wants proposers to show they're committed to using evaluation using the results so in addition to this the typical things you're going to see about data this program wants to know how the grantee will document the lessons learned how they will use evaluation to identify effective models and how they'll use data to inform their work in an ongoing way. And in the second to last bullet you can see they want to know how program participants will be involved in evaluation activities. So, very different approach very much higher level of detail in this example.

### **Evaluation Plan Elements**

Lori Wingate - But every program really is different and they'll the information varies widely and if you just rely on these bits of information that they offer in there solicitations about what should go in an evaluation plan you may leave out some critical elements. So here's my list of 10 elements that I think should be included in any evaluation plan.

### **Learn more by checking out related resources**

Lori Wingate - And as I go over these elements you'll see icons like this from time to time which will indicate that I have a related resource where you can learn more and I have a list of resources on the EvaluATE website it's also on the last slide of my presentation. So just be aware of that.

## **Evaluation Plan Elements**

Lori Wingate - So first evaluation questions you may think that's weird that wasn't listed in any of these examples we saw and its true but I think that's a huge mistake because it's really important to clarify what aspects of the project will be evaluated. I once saw an evaluation report that only gave the results of the survey of a project advisory committee about their opinions about how their meetings were going now I really don't think that's what the funder had in mind when they were looking for project evaluation. Sometimes people assume the evaluations about goals being met, so there's an implicit question about goals being met and that can sometimes be ok but if goals only focus on activities or products and not changes the projects bring about you're not ever going to get to the outcome level which is important. So the point is that you need to at first clarify what aspect of the project will be evaluated and this can be done by presenting evaluation questions just like research tis framed by research questions. So indicators we saw this term in one of the examples those indicators are the things you're going to measure in order to answer the evaluation question. This isn't the same as data sources for example an indicator of the quality of this webinar could be the degree of participant engagement and but our data source could be a transcript of the chat text or we could ask you directly how engage you were there's different ways of measuring that so we don't want to just jump to data sources assuming that it's clear about what it is that being measured. So I recommend first talking about indicators what you will measure before you talk about methods or data sources, so that's going to help ensure that your data are actually indicative of something important about the project. The other data elements in my list are pretty typical of what we saw in the last two examples so formal reviewers want to know the data sources, how the data will be collected and using what instruments. Less typical but very important I think are how the data will be analyzed in order to derive meaningful interpretation and conclusions from the information. So to show there's a plan to get timely and useful information from the evaluation briefly describe the products that will be generated by the value of activities. People mainly think of reports here but there may be other products like a more detailed an actionable evaluation plan and specific data collection instruments. An overall timeline for the evaluation will demonstrate that it's going to be feasible to get the information you need in a timely way and the evaluative activities should be really should be spread out through a project and align with project milestones like major events in the project or when reports are due to funders, you don't want to have all the evaluation just happening at the end of a project. Personnel is something that we didn't see in examples that many funders will want to know who is conducting the evaluation there may be requirement that an external evaluation consultant be involved and sometimes evaluation responsibilities will be divided between people internal and external to a project and NSF likes to see biosketches for evaluation consultants to make sure that they're qualified and experienced. Another element that we didn't see in the examples was budget you may not need to give a dollar amount in the narrative part of the evaluation section but you'll need it to be represented in your budget and your budget description we'll talk a little bit more about budget in the next part of the webinar, you just want to make sure you have resources allocated appropriately to support what you're proposing for the evaluation. And finally a plan for using the results we saw that really emphasized in that last example but if it's not requested by the funder you don't need to go into a lot of detail here but you want to show your intention and commitment to use the results of the evaluation. Remember one of the reasons that evaluation is required by many programs is so that projects do have access to timely information that they can use to improve what they're doing as their work is unfolding. So you want to show you're prepared to do that. It's really essential that you tailor these elements to your specific project I really can't overstate this. Funders are looking for close alignment of the evaluation to the proposed project if you have a cookie cutter evaluation plan that could have been plopped in to any proposal it's not going to review well. Chances are your section about data and your data collection plan is really going to be given the most scrutiny by proposal

reviewers so it's really important that concrete details are provided here and that the plan is clearly tied to the project actual activities and intended outcome and the next slide I'm going to give you two well not quite the next slide.

### **Be the Reviewer**

Lori Wingate - It's the new game called me the reviewer and I am going to give you two examples to excerpts from data collection plans from evaluation sections of grant proposals and I'm going to ask you to identify which you believe is the stronger data collection plan. Now I realize now that when Mike brings the poll up that this screen goes away so fix in your mind which is A, which is B so you know what you want to answer. I'll give you a little bit of time to read through these examples put on your reviewer hat and decide which you think is the stronger plan stronger description for data collection.

Michael Lesiecki - Lori, its Mike, just let me know when you want me to launch the poll. You're right we'll give them a minute to look at this.

Lori Wingate - Yeah should take about 30 seconds less than that at this point.

Michael Lesiecki – Maybe 20

Lori Wingate - Yeah right, it'll give me a chance to get drink water.

Michael Lesiecki - Ok

Lori Wingate - Ok so you've probably had a chance to read through both of those so decide which one you want to vote for cause yeah the polls up and make cast your vote which is the better data collection plan.

Michael Lesiecki - So they know what they're going to do it won't take them long to click that radio button and then hit submit on their screens, I see a bunch of data is coming in now over seventy-five percent of the attendees have already voted so let's give them just another moment. Ok now we're up to eighty percent of the attendees let me count down Lori, then I'll show the results 5 4 3 2 1 closing the poll and now I'm going to share the results here they think it's B .

Lori Wingate - Oh good for you guys excellent I'm glad that you are not seduced by that sexy evaluation language in example A they talked about using great stuff mixed methods qualitative and quantitative data is going to be formative and summative look at merit and worth use best practices and it was going to be rigorous scientific based research that sounds fantastic but you saw right through that good for you. It actually doesn't provide any of the key information about the types of data that need to be collected, how from what sources all that it's just fluff you know it's a very cookie cutter generic description of a data collection plan so that's not what you want for your proposal. In contrast example B and please don't like I'm not saying this is a model but there's some concrete details in here it's clearly tied to a specific project and its activities.

### **Data Collection Planning Matrix**

Lori Wingate - So an efficient way to present the details of data collection in particular is to put the key elements in a matrix like this one so at the top you see we have the evaluation question and then there's a column for the indicators those pieces of information we're going to collect and then the next

column I columns identify the data sources, the methods, who's responsible, when it will happen and how the data will be analyzed. So it covers a lot of territory in a pretty small space so this is an alternative way to communicate details about a data collection plan.

### **Logic model**

Lori Wingate - Another term you may come across as logic model so not all grant programs require logic models as part of their evaluation plan and we honestly don't have enough time to get into them in depth I just want to you know for those of you who aren't aware to make you aware of these basically a logic model is a graphic depiction of the project inputs to the resources that being brought into the project the activities or what it's going to do, outputs which are the products of things creating an outcome for the changes its bringing about that communicates this logical progression of resources translating into impact.

### **Logic Model Example**

Lori Wingate - And here's one example which happens to be from EvaluATEs last grant proposal and I just want to call your attention to how we've mapped on our evaluation questions on to this logic model so people often link logic models with evaluation and this is the way logic models can be used for evaluation you're actually mapping on your evaluation questions on to different components of the logic model and then you can tie in your data collection as well. So in this way a logic model can serve as a foundation for a project evaluation.

### **Untitled slide**

Lori Wingate – So lots of other terms you may come across the webinar is just isn't long enough to go into all of these in-depth if you have certain questions about specific terms we can certainly address those at the break I have a couple of resources that are really good glossary for evaluation. Before we move on to our question break though we're going to hear from Leslie again, so I'm asking Leslie specifically to comment on what she's seen in grant proposals in terms of strengths and weaknesses of evaluation plans.

### **Comments**

Leslie Goodyear – Thanks Lori, great presentation on that I'm a huge fan of those tables like you just displayed those data source tables the evaluation question with all of the information about it and in fact that makes a really terrific addition to an evaluation piece of a proposal. It's actually a very concise way to put a lot of information in that you don't need to then put in narrative. And you're also right that you can smell of a sort of cookie cutter evaluation plan a mile away and really reviewers are looking for tailored evaluation plans that show that the evaluator has actually been in conversation with the P.I. before the proposal went to the federal agency. And so before you can often see that an evaluator and a P.I. haven't had much conversation because the proposal is written in one way and the evaluation section is written as if it is if that person never talked or never saw the proposal ahead of time before writing it. So what makes a great evaluation section is one that's tailored, one that's specific, one that really suggests the types of data and types of findings that there going to be reported and that matches the scope and scale of the project. If the scope and scale of the project is broad and far-reaching but the evaluation is really only targeting one of the site that might be a problem or if the project itself is really very in depth but really only satisfaction surveys are being given out and that's probably a problem too. And you're right to that NSF reviewers do like to take a look at biosketches for evaluators to make sure that they're qualified and they know something about evaluation and probably something about the kind of content that's being proposed in the proposal.

## Questions

Ann Beheler - Thank You Leslie and Lori we have way more questions than we're going to get to fit in here, however, I'll pick a couple of them that I think are very very relevant one of them has to do with the fact that one of the participants says that their grants office is now saying that they have to go out for bid for all their evaluation services and if they are going to have to request bids, how do they get an evaluator to work with them effectively on putting the proposal together in the first place?

Leslie Goodyear – Lori, I have experience with this but if you want to take it you go ahead.

Lori Wingate - Oh no please take it.

Leslie Goodyear - While I was at National Science Foundation we had a bunch of these questions and in fact a few proposals that came in with one evaluator bid on the proposal the proposal was funded and then the P.I.'s organization institutions said you have to bid it out and that became a problem and so there's a couple ways that NSF program officers have suggested people think about this, one is to talk to your institution about the ways in which that could risk you getting an actual grant because of when you put in a proposal with an evaluator that proposal that those reviewers are judging the quality of that proposal in that evaluation based on who you bid and then if you're going to go out and bid it out to other people and take for example the cheapest person which your institution may require then that may not be the best person and may have a different plan than what the reviewers thought they were funding. And then on the flip side of it this does happen to me as an evaluator occasionally and my organization and others I know work with P.I.s to develop sort of teaming agreements ahead of time to agree that we're going to work together and often those can help an organization get around the need to bid them out later by actually signing an agreement to collaborate ahead of time and it would be pretty tough for an evaluator to agree to be part of a bit if you knew that you could end up not getting it in the end because it means money up front that you don't get back.

Ann Beheler - Thank you, I'm going to combine a couple of other questions here, one has to do with to put together a detailed evaluation plan at least one of our listeners has suggested that they put most of the detail in the supplementary area which the reviewers are not necessarily required to review and then refer to it within the page limit. How does that work? And then secondly when you do an evaluation timeline should that be separate from the project timeline or is it ok to integrate the two? Lori or Leslie I don't care.

Lori Wingate - I think Leslie be great at this.

Ann Beheler – Okay, great.

Lori Wingate – She has seen more than I have.

Ann Beheler – Leslie it's yours.

Leslie Goodyear - Thank you, I think to answer the second one first which is easier you can I you're fine I would think integrating the timelines and in fact it might be nice to show the project timeline with evaluation embedded in it or overlaid on it because it shows where the evaluation is actually giving feedback to the project and that might be a really nice indicator to the reviewer that you're using the evaluation for your own continuous improvement. And now of course remind me of the first question just a quick reminder.

Ann Beheler - Separating out the detail for the evaluation plan into supplemental documents, instead of in the page limits.

Leslie Goodyear - So not very many and Lori maybe you have the answer for this because I don't know the ATE program as well but not very many of the programs in DRO or in EHR allow supplemental docs anymore but if they do sometimes what they do allow is a logic model or an evaluation plan and as Ann mentioned reviewers do not have to read those documents and though good reviewers do read them but they really do not have to and so it's kind of a weighing in considering situation where if you really feel like the information about your project is more important in the proposal than the detail about the evaluation you can put that stuff in the in the supplemental doc but just know that they're not required to look at it, even if you cite it multiple times in your proposal. So you can say please see supplemental doc 1 for this information and they're going to say meh I don't have to so um but be careful with that and that's just because some reviewers when crunched for time are going to read just the 15 pages.

Ann Beheler - Thank you, I'm going to make a judgment call and let's go on section 3 and then finish up with the remaining questions with the time that we have available. Lori.

### **Overview**

Lori Wingate - Ok well thank you Ann and I'm so happy Leslie's here she has all the answers, those are wonderful answers but she speaks from a great experience. So in this last part of the webinar addition to touching on staffing and budgeting for evaluation I'm going to wrap up by talking about why you should be thinking ahead integrating evaluation results in the future grant proposals and how you can do that.

### **Evaluation Staffing and Budgeting**

Lori Wingate - So addressing both staffing and budgeting this is an excerpt from NSF ATE program solicitation which is the program that Ann and I are both funded through so with regard to staffing it states that the funds to support an evaluator independent of the project must be requested so it's also talking about budgeting but the key thing is there's the evaluators independent of the project.

### **Evaluators in the ATE Program**

Lori Wingate - Now in fact in ATE program eighty-four percent of funded projects and centers has reported in 2015 that they had an external evaluator and eleven percent said they had only internal evaluators, so I know at least a few of those cases they had made arrangements with their program officer because of special circumstances and just five percent said they didn't have an external evaluator and there may have been special circumstances there as well and interestingly nineteen percent of ATE projects and centers had both an internal and external evaluator. And I know that was a topic of interest that we address today we don't have time to go into it I do have some resources for you in a resource list. But overall the ATE program grantees take the external evaluation requirement pretty seriously.

### **Locating an Evaluator**

Lori Wingate -And not all programs require external evaluation specifically but if you don't have internal evaluation expertise it is a good idea to bring on a specialist um unfortunately you can't just look in the yellow pages and find evaluator listings but the American Evaluation Association does maintain an evaluator directory which you can search by state or specific keywords and if you're

funded already you could post an RFP and the career section of AEA's website and seek proposals for the work that way. University evaluation centers like the one here at WMU where I work are another place to look so you can see if there's that such a center in your general geographic region a travel costs can really eat up in a small evaluation budget so it's nice if you can find somebody relatively close by to work with. There aren't any you know credentials or licenses or anything that says someone is qualified to be an evaluator nor is there an NSF approved list of evaluator so many people ask about that I'm so I strongly suggest you ask for recommendations from colleagues or other program grantees or if you find somebody you think you want to work with I would I still suggest asking that person for references you really do need to take care to ensure the person you work with is experience is really willing to tailor their approach to your contexts and their someone you feel you can work with.

### **Evaluation Staffing and Budgeting**

Lori Wingate -So back to this excerpt it also touches on budgeting here it just says that the requested funds for the evaluation must match the scope of the proposed evaluation activities. So it's not giving you a certain dollar amount or a percentage.

### **Evaluation Budgeting Rule of Thumb**

Lori Wingate - But in general the rule of thumb is that ten percent of a project cost should be allocated for evaluation so that's just a place to start right and then you can go up or you can go down from there depending on the level of evaluation that's needed for your project and how much is going to be done internally. But I do want to encourage you to think of evaluation as an investment in your project and your future work so if you invest adequate time and money up front it will pay dividends in the form of information you can use to improve your work and good evidence of the quality and impact of your completed work. And even if the results aren't as favorable as you hope you're going to have evidence of your lessons learned about what is and isn't effective which is also going to give you something to build on in the future.

### **Evaluation Utilization**

Lori Wingate - So with regard to evaluation utilization which is really important um I sat there are at least four ways you should plan on using your evaluation results. First you definitely want to plan on using them you know in an ongoing way to improve your work, so in my project EvaluATE, we're constantly evaluating what we're doing and using that information to tweak and do better work and on that note, I want to point out there is going to be a survey at the end of this webinar that you're going to be asked to provide feedback on the survey give it so I really hope you will do that please. Keep in mind it is a webinar evaluation so I'm sure you wouldn't consider not doing this survey right? Ok back to the regularly scheduled program um it's a good idea as you're getting this vital information into your project to feed it back to your project participants your partners, your other stakeholders that's really going to demonstrate that you are valuing the information that they're providing to you for the evaluation it's going to keep them apprised of your progress and it helps build trust and transparency among the stakeholders. And most likely as a federal grantee you're going to be expected to include your full evaluation reports or at minimum your key findings in your annual report to your funder so that one sort of obvious. And finally and this is where I'm going to spend a little more time um you definitely want to plan on including your evaluation results in future funding proposal so even if you aren't convinced of the immediate value of evaluation to your project being able to report on your outcomes with evidence is going to be critical when you seek new funding.

### **Results from Prior NSF Support**

Lori Wingate - For NSF grants this is a requirement if you received NSF funded in the past five years you have to include a section in your proposal called results from prior NSF support in which you describe your outcomes in terms of broader impacts and intellectual merit which are the NSF merit review criteria and basically broader impacts are benefits to society that the project has brought about contributions to bring about good social outcomes and intellectual merit mainly about advancing our knowledge and understanding.

### **Untitled slide**

Lori Wingate - Let's take a look at broader impacts first, so here's just some examples it's not an exhaustive list so you know do you have evidence that you served groups that have been under represented in STEM. So mainly that's going to mean, women and certain racial and ethnic minorities. Do you have evidence that you've made substantive and sustainable improvements in STEM education, are you contributing to building us a diverse workforce, have you expanded partnership between industry and academia, I'm sure you have read ahead, you can see these examples. Really we're talking about tangible improvements and how people learn, how they do their work and in the broader conditions affecting our institutions and communities.

### **New knowledge or improved understanding**

Lori Wingate - Now in contrast intellectual merit is about what we know, so our collective scientific knowledge this is really about pushing the boundaries of what we know and in this domain NSF is also interested in developments that are especially innovative or transformative. So good evidence of intellectual merit is going to be like peer reviewed publications and referee presentations so evidence that you're really adding to and advancing the knowledge base in your field or other field.

### **Advice from EvaluATE blog contributor, Amy Germuth**

Lori Wingate - So Amy Germuth who's an independent evaluator she recently wrote a blog for EvaluATE in which she provided some really practical advice for communicating results of prior support in proposals. So here's the actual example that she included in her blog, so first she says state the project goal, so in this example the goal was to increase the number of women earning associate's degrees in welding. And next she says to identify the target audience and in this case was women about to complete or just having completed similar programs. And then she says to describe the impact on the target audience so along with evidence of the impacts, so you can see because I've highlighted here the bulk of this example that she's provided is providing the actual evidence not just making claims.

### **Results from Prior NSF Support**

Lori Wingate - In addition, I would suggest that you really do focus on outcomes over activities to really emphasizing the changes you helped bring about rather than just documenting what you did the activities that you did with your with your grant dollars. And it's not sufficient to just make claims about outcomes you really do need to include evidence to be convincing. And show how the work that you're proposing is building on what you learned in your prior efforts and importantly don't really don't gloss over what didn't work nothing ever works out perfectly so demonstrate your use of evaluation results to improve your work.

## **Resources**

Lori Wingate - Now here's that resource list it is on the EvaluATEs website, it's on the slide so I just want to remind you that it is here and I want to call your attention to this particular webinar that we did in March.

## **Webinar: Small Project Evaluation: Principles and Practices**

Lori Wingate - Because it went way more in depth and some of the topics we briefly touched on today plus it included demonstrations of evaluation budget development, logic model development, evaluation questions development, internal and external evaluation so it's just I want to highlight this and I hope that you will check it out if you want to learn more on those topics.

## **Comments**

Lori Wingate - I want to pass it off to Leslie again for her comments.

Ann Beheler - And Leslie how about just about a minute or so on comments here and then I'll do my wrap up and then we'll do questions till the very end.

Leslie Goodyear - Perfect and that was great Lori and thanks Ann and the description of how to deal with the um result of prior work is really important because more and more of those sections of NSF proposals are being expected to be connected to the current work being proposed so having served on review panel's since being at NSF I've noticed more and more reviewers saying things like I'm noticing that their proposal isn't connected at all to their prior work that they're talking about. And to Lori's point it really should be outcome focused and evidence focused not we were funded to do this. And I totally agree about don't gloss over the negative findings or things that didn't work so well while I was at NSF I thought for a while I should invest in some sort of road show with a soapbox to go around the country and telling NSF P.I.s it's okay to say that it didn't work the way that you planned it to work because that's new knowledge for the field. So even in the result of prior work saying you know our outcomes were that we didn't get what we were hoping for but we learned X so here we are presenting proposing to do Y, because it's the next step. Thanks.

## **Questions?**

Ann Beheler -Ok alright Lori lets skip the question slide and come back to it.

## **Join Us- All Webinars 3 pm Eastern**

Ann Beheler - I would like to invite you, thank you so much Lori and Leslie for this presentation, I've learned a great deal and I've been doing grants for a very very long time so you have added to my body of knowledge for sure. I would like to call your attention to the next webinar it's going to have tips for managing large consortiums, I actually had experience leading one across multiple states as some of these other folks did, next slide. We'd also like to invite you on the next slide.

## **Join us in Pittsburgh, PA!**

Ann Beheler - To the HI-TEC conference in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania July 25th through the 28th there are workshops on the 26<sup>th</sup>, the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26th and then we have a conference on the 27th and 28<sup>th</sup> and then, next slide.

## **Register for HI-TEC and DOL and NSF Workforce Convening**

Ann Beheler - We also have a free convening after HI-TEC for DOL and NSF workforce issues and some of these issues could well be issues that could come up the program is a little bit of fluid at this point

because it's responsive to the people that actually register. If you wish to come to this session it's free but you do need to register in advance and the information on how to get to the registration is there.

### **Questions?**

Ann Beheler -So now let's do questions, the thing that seems to be concerning people most is that the uniform guidance is thing is that we do in fact have to bid the evaluator contract and I know that I have had to do that in the past at my college, how do we work with this Leslie I know you said that it could potentially be a problem, can we bid them in advance, what can we do?

Leslie Goodyear – Wow, Lori, have you dealt with this?

Lori Wingate - I can jump in with an alternative, I mean I it that may be it may be a special thing when you're working with independent consultants because we've at the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University we have been written in to proposals and sub-awards and that's just a different scenario. I mean no one's gonna you're not going to bid out your sub-award, that's its just very different. So I think it's a topic that needs for you know to be investigated further people every week there's no, I think Leslie gave some great options and I think people have to work with in there at their particular institutions with their rules and you know both sides have to be educated I think at this point that all we can say. The funders and the institutions.

Leslie Goodyear – Right.

Ann Beheler - And another very short question, what does external mean does have to be external to the institution or external to the project?

Lori Wingate – In the ATE program I can tell you that it at can be external to the unit proposing the project that that is allowable it may be different for other programs and agencies but so there's sort of two kinds of external so external to your particular unit and then external to your institution and in the ATE program both are allowed.

Leslie Goodyear - And then just to piggyback on that one thing that as a program officer you always look for is how the money flows and how the supervisory control flows and so if external to your unit or external to your organization within an institution might be possible but unless of course somebody who is in charge of the project also is in charge of the evaluator by some organizational tree.

Ann Beheler – Okay, well I'm sorry we did not get all the questions answered, we do have a contact slide at the end of that Lori can move forward to.

### **Contacts**

Ann Beheler –And I this is how you would get a hold of Lori and Leslie and me, although I think if you're asking an evaluation question Lori and Leslie are certainly the people you want to talk to. I'd like to thank you for attending today we had great attendance. Thank you Lori, thank you Leslie for presenting this very valuable information.

### **Webinar Survey**

Ann Beheler - And now please take a moment to complete the evaluation survey or the webinar survey thanks very much.

Michael Lesiecki - Ann its Mike,

Lori Wingate -There's a survey link in your in the chat window right.

Michael Lesiecki - Thank you Lori, I was just going to say that if you look at your actually the question window is where it will appear for attendees just click on that link and it will open a new browser window and then just take a moment just a couple of questions on the survey and then go ahead and submit them. Lori, Leslie, Ann thank you very much for the presentation today. Perfectly on time lovely, lovely Ann I am like you I learned a lot too. So colleagues that officially ends our presentation for today, we will leave the system open for a few minutes as you complete the surveys. I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording now. Lori, Leslie, Ann thank you again go ahead on to mute and we'll just leave the system alone for a few minutes. Goodbye everyone.