Webinar Series
Assessing Project Performance: Building Blocks of Evaluation and Performance Measurement

Presented by OJJDP
in conjunction with the
National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center
a project of the Justice Research and Statistics Association

Panelists: Mary Poulin and Carrie Williamson, JRSA
Moderator: Stan Orchowsky, JRSA
Moderator

Stan Orchowsky
Research Director
Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA)
Webinar Objectives

• Become familiar with basic concepts and key terminology related to evaluation and performance measurement

• Develop preliminary understanding of the concept and value of logic models
Poll Question #1
Today’s Topics

• What is evaluation?
• What isn’t evaluation?
• What about performance measurement?
• Key terms
PART ONE

Evaluation

Mary Poulin
Senior Research Associate
Justice Research and Statistics Association
What is Evaluation?

• Evaluation assesses the *effectiveness* of a program in achieving its objectives

  AND

• Determines whether activities related to a program, policy, or practice caused the outcomes
What ISN’T Evaluation?

- Data collection
- Counts of activities completed
- Anecdotes of successful clients
Types of Evaluation

• **Process evaluation** - examines the development and operation of a program

• **Outcome evaluation** - examines the effect of program activities on program outcomes
Examples of Questions Addressed by a Process Evaluation

• Was the intervention delivered in the way it was intended?

• If any changes were made in service delivery, why were those changes made?
Examples of Questions Addressed by a *Process Evaluation*

- Were policies applied equally to all members of the target population? If not, what adjustments were made and why?
Examples of Questions Addressed by an *Outcome Evaluation*

- Did the program have the intended effect?
- How strong was the effect of the program?
Examples of Questions Addressed by an *Outcome Evaluation*

- Was the program, policy, or practice more effective for some participants than others?
Comparing Evaluation and Performance Measurement

- Performance measurement tells us about program inputs, outputs, and outcomes.
- Evaluation extends the focus to include factors that affect how well the program was implemented and how well it functions.
Poll Question #2
Alcohol Treatment Example

Performance Measurement shows:

• **Process:** Number and percent of participants receiving minimum treatment sessions per week

• **Outcome:** Number and percent of participants reporting reduced alcohol consumption after program completion
Alcohol Treatment Example

Evaluation involves:

• **Process:** Analysis of the type of treatment received by program participants, including education/training of treatment providers

• **Outcome:** Analysis of the effect program activities have on reducing alcohol consumption for program participants
Performance Measurement is NECESSARY but not SUFFICIENT for Evaluation
What is an “Effective” Program, Practice, or Policy?

• Achieves objectives, and ultimately, goals by having the intended effect on the target population

• Evaluation has demonstrated that program activities caused outcomes
Why Evaluate a Program?

• Evaluation results can be used to improve a program
  – Change program design or function to achieve positive results or increase strength of effect

• Determine which components of the program had the greatest effect on the outcome
Why Evaluate a Program?

• Secure future funding
  – With increasing budget cuts, greater demand for proven programs
  – Include evaluation results in grant applications
Why Evaluate a Program?

• To link program activities to outcomes
  – Were results caused by program activities?
• To determine whether a program was more effective for some participants than others
How Do I Know If My Program is Evidence-based?

• Multiple definitions of “evidence-based”
• Generally, requires a body of well-designed evaluation studies demonstrating program effectiveness
• Resources: OJJDP’s *Model Programs Guide* and *Crimesolutions.gov*
PART TWO
Performance Measurement

Carrie Williamson
Research Associate
Justice Research and Statistics Association
What About Performance Measurement?

- Performance measurement provides valuable information about program implementation and outcomes/results
- Ensures *fidelity in implementation*
Fidelity in Implementation

- Program activities follow program plan
  - Frequency of interaction/treatment/etc.
  - Type of interaction/treatment/etc.
  - Properly trained staff, resources
Performance Measurement

• Performance measurement should occur throughout the course of a program
• Consistent performance measurement provides the foundation for evaluation
• Program staff can collect performance measures, while evaluation may require the assistance of an outside expert
• Evaluation and performance measurement answer many of the same questions:
  – How well was the program executed? Did it follow the plan?
  – What are the outcomes for program participants?
• Evaluation goes one step further by ruling out other explanations for program outcomes.
What Are the Benefits of Performance Measurement?

- Provides valuable information about program operations
- Objective and systematic way to track program activities
Benefits of Performance Measurement

• Evaluation is not always feasible
  – Cost of hiring an outside evaluator
  – Time-intensive
  – Resources, skills, training to conduct analysis

• Less time- and resource-intensive than evaluation
Benefits of Performance Measurement

• Demonstrate that program is following plan and objectives are being met

• Adhere to federal, state, and local grant requirements
  – All OJJDP grantees report performance measures
Benefits of Performance Measurement

• Compete for funding
• Facilitate efficient resource allocation and budgeting
Benefits of Performance Measurement

• Modify program design and implementation to improve outcomes
• Maintain data for a future evaluation
Poll Question #3
Questions submitted during the presentation will now be addressed!
PART THREE
Key Terms in Evaluation and Performance Measurement

Mary Poulin
Senior Research Associate
Justice Research and Statistics Association
Key Terms in Program Logic

- **Goals** speak to the overarching mission of a program and are generally limited to one. May not be reached during program operation.
Key Terms in Program Logic

- **Objectives** are measurable, identify the target population, offer a timeframe for completion, and provide expected direction of change.
Key Terms in Program Logic

- **Activities** are very specific tasks pursued during the program’s operation.
Activities vs. Objectives

• Plan to do... Activities
• Want to do because... Objectives
Key Terms in Performance Measurement and Evaluation

- **Baseline data**: data collected before the program or intervention begins
  - defines the problem
  - provides starting point for comparison after program has been completed
Key Terms in Performance Measurement and Evaluation

- **Target population**: group for which program is designed
  - Correct age, gender, etc.
  - Exhibit problem behaviors targeted by intervention
Key Terms in Performance Measurement and Evaluation

- **Inputs**: resources needed to execute the program
- **Implementation fidelity**: program execution is consistent with the plan
Key Terms in Performance Measurement

• **Process (a.k.a. Output) Measures**: assess program implementation
  – Linked to activities

• **Outcome Measures**: assess program results
  – Linked to objectives
Key Terms in Evaluation Design

- **Comparison group or control group**: subjects in study who don’t receive intervention or treatment.
- **Statistical significance**: whether the program/policy is likely to have caused the desired result/change.
- **Effect size**: how much of a change the program/policy caused.
Key Terms in Evaluation Design

• **Experimental design**: individuals are randomly assigned to treatment or control groups
  – Also called “randomized control trial” or “RCT”
  – Gold standard of evaluation design
PART FOUR

Logic Models

Carrie Williamson
Research Associate
Justice Research and Statistics Association
Program Logic

• What are you trying to accomplish?
• What is the plan to accomplish this?
• How do program activities accomplish your goal?

Activities → Objectives → Goal
Logic Models

• Present the program plan to stakeholders, including funders
• Examine program function internally
• Specify *outputs* and *outcomes* to demonstrate what your program is accomplishing and where you can improve
Elements of a Logic Model

• Logic models should include:
  – Goal (at least one)
  – Objectives
  – Activities
  – Measures
For more information, attend the second webinar of this series:

Introduction to Program Logic
February 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2012

Advanced Program Logic
February 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 2012

Visit the NJJEC website at http://www.jrsa.org/njjec/
Questions submitted during the presentation will now be addressed!
Please take 5 minutes to fill out the online evaluation which will be available immediately upon exiting WebEx.
Webinar Archives

Approximately 10 business days after the webinar, you can access the slide presentation, audio recording and transcript at www.nttac.org.
For more information, please contact:

OJJDP’s National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC)

http://www.nttac.org
Please take 5 minutes to fill out the online evaluation which will be available immediately upon exiting WebEx.