We Won a TAACCCT Grant!
Now what about the Third-Party Evaluation?

Informational Webinar
November 5, 2014
To Ask Questions
Evaluation Requirement

Necessary Evil or Great Opportunity?
Goals for Today

1. Encourage you to consider the opportunity that the evaluation provides

2. Provide steps that can ensure you get the most out of the evaluation

3. Generate ideas (through examples) for designing your evaluation to meet your unique needs and address challenges

4. Highlight tradeoffs between the financial investment and benefits of evaluation
IMPAQ International

- Presenters

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ms. Eileen Poe-Yamagata</th>
<th>Dr. Manan Roy</th>
<th>Dr. Karen Armstrong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Associate</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>Senior Research Associate</td>
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Ms. Eileen Poe-Yamagata

Dr. Manan Roy

Dr. Karen Armstrong

www.impaqint.com
IMPAQ International

- Premier Social Science Research and Evaluation Firm
- Offices in Maryland, DC, California, and Hawaii
- Third-party Evaluator for 12 DOL TAACCCT and WIF Grantees in 16 States
- Grant Evaluations Focus Areas Include:
  - Biosciences
  - Disadvantaged Youth
  - Information Technology
  - Mining
  - Communications
  - Energy
  - Logistics
  - Retail Management
  - Cyber Security
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Manufacturing
  - Transportation

Ms. Eileen Poe-Yamagata
“Students who major in these subjects have a 7% less chance of moving back in with their parents after graduation.”
What Can an Evaluation Do for YOU?

Audit?

Assessment?

Evaluation?
What Can an Evaluation Do for YOU?

Audit?

Knowledge for the Field

Assessment?

Continuous Improvement

Value!!!
What Has Evaluation Done for You Lately?

- Ensure that you are doing all you can to be successful
- Convince others that this is a useful and successful program
- Help others replicate the program and even improve upon your initial design
Steps for Ensuring You Get the Most from Your Evaluation
Step 1: Figure Out What You Want to Know

Brainstorm with your team and earlier grantees.

- What questions do we have about building our program?
- What are our biggest concerns about our program?
- What are the unique characteristics of our program?
- Whose perspective do we want to hear from?
Step 2: Talk to Your Procurement Office

- Range of Types of Solicitations
  - Sole Source
  - Full Competition
- Funding Structures
  - Cost plus fixed fee
  - Firm fixed price
- For more resources from ETA on procuring evaluations, see: https://etagrantees.workforce3one.org/page/resources/1001235252826360515
Step 3: Consider How Your Interests Can Complement DOL Requests

“Fred, rumor has it you’re closing in on some profound, elemental truths about the universe, and I wanted to remind you that our research funding specifically prohibits that!”
Step 3: Consider How Your Interests Can Complement DOL Requests

Required:

- Impact or Outcomes Analysis
  - “The most rigorous and appropriate approach”
- Implementation Analysis

Not Required but may want to consider:
- Cost/Benefit Analysis
Impact/Outcome Studies
## Impact/Outcome Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental ($$$$$)</th>
<th>Quasi-Experimental ($$$)</th>
<th>Outcomes Study ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>Comparison Group</td>
<td>No Comparison Group</td>
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| Randomly Selected    | Intentionally selected --As close to treatment group as possible | • Pre versus Post  
• Actual versus Expected |
| Strong Causal Inference | Weakened Causal Inference | No Causal Inference |

- Fairly straightforward and easy when program is oversubscribed
- No need to turn anyone away from the program
- No other group needed

- If not oversubscribed, hard to justify denying services
- Very hard to find comparable group
- Impossible to attribute positive outcomes to program participation

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Dr. Manan Roy

www.impaqint.com
Case Study 1: Comparison Groups

The Challenge: Randomizing students wasn’t feasible but no good comparison group within institution

The Solution: Evaluator worked with other institutions to identify a more suitable comparison group
Case Study 2: Too Few Participants

The Challenge: A single Institution Grantee had too few participants for experimental or quasi experimental design

The Solution: Evaluator developed a rigorous outcomes study that studied the relationship between program activities and outcomes
Lessons Learned---Data

The Difficulty: Acquiring wage data from state workforce agencies takes much longer and requires more steps than usually anticipated.

The Lesson: Grantees who establish data sharing agreements early are able to meet DOL requirements in a timely manner.
Implementation Studies

Is this where they're conducting the focus groups?

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12/30
Implementation Studies

- Methodology depends on the structure of your program and the questions you are most interested in

- Methods:
  - Document Review
  - Interviews
  - Surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Observations

What is it about my program that will make a difference?
Implementation Studies

Case Study 3: On-line Classes

The Challenge: A consortium moved to online classes but wanted to ensure that students were still engaged.

The Solution: In addition to interviews with faculty and students, the evaluator planned observations of face to face and on-line classes at the beginning and end of the grant period using a systematic observation protocol; Student focus groups are conducted online allowing data to be tracked and analyzed systematically.
Implementation Studies

Case Study 4: Assessing Competencies

The Challenge: Employers wanted feedback on alignment of certificate with specific competencies.

The Solution: The evaluator developed a student and employer short survey that assessed perceptions of competencies at beginning of program and at 3 months after completion of certificate.
Implementation Studies

Lessons Learned - Stakeholder burden

The Difficulty: The same stakeholders are asked repeatedly for information - surveys, interviews, and grantee monitoring trips.

The Lesson: Evaluators commit to consolidating data collection activities and coordinating with the grantee for data collection opportunities.
Step 4: Determine Level of Collaboration with Your Evaluator

“This collaboration would work better if you kept your ideas to yourself.”
Step 4: Determine Level of Collaboration with Your Evaluator

A continuum of ways to interact with evaluator

Autonomous  Collaborative
Autonomous

Evaluator works behind the scene

Creates evaluation plan and develops instruments *without* your input

May miss important nuances of program design

Low risk of influencing program design

No benefit during implementation

Requires *less* financial and time resources

Collaborative

Evaluator work is fairly transparent

Creates evaluation plan and develops instruments *with* your input

Greater likelihood of being well aligned with intervention

Opportunity for continuous improvement

Consider Additional Deliverables

Requires *more* financial and time resources
Collaboration

Case Study 5: Survey Response

The Challenge: Student survey needed but difficult to get completed surveys; Faculty reluctant to support evaluator.

The Solution: Evaluators worked closely with college coordinators to plan survey administration process. Coordinators decided whether to administer the surveys or have the evaluator administer them. The coordinators had input on survey items and used some of the results for their own program purposes.
Case Study 6: Benefit to Program

The Challenge: Difficult for program personnel to achieve any benefit from evaluator data collection activities.

The Solution: Evaluators have prepared continuous improvement reports, conducted webinars, led interactive theory of change sessions, and created conference presentations. Value of reports improve over time.
Collaboration

Lessons Learned - Resources Matter

The Difficulty: The grantee desires more interaction with the evaluator than the evaluator ‘scope of work’ and budget allows.

The Lesson: Grantees determine what they want to get out of the evaluation, provide clear expectations about the level of collaboration and the deliverables required in the evaluator solicitation process, and are prepared to allocate the resources needed.
Step 5: Choose Selection Criteria

- How well does a prospective evaluator’s evaluation design match your expectations based on what you want to know?
- What is their experience in evaluating similar grant activities?
- How easy is the evaluator to work with?
Even if it’s a struggle, the evaluation allows someone to learn and build from your experience.

“What happened between design and development?”
Questions/Discussion
Review and Contacts

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