

GETTING FUNDING FOR EVALUATION

Where does the money come from?

Evaluation, even self-assessment requires financial resources. Usually the cost to do a good evaluation is equivalent to about 10 – 15 percent of the costs to operate the program effectively (i.e., a program with an operational budget of \$265,000 per year would require about \$25,000 - \$40,000 to evaluate for one year). Actual expenditures may be less if the evaluation is more participatory, but other organizational costs may be associated. For example, if program staff are involved in evaluation data collection, there are still resource needs to cover the costs associated with their program work. Most of the funds for evaluation pay for the professional time of those who develop evaluation designs and data collection tools, collect data, analyze data and summarize and present evaluation findings. Other expenses include overhead and direct costs associated with the evaluation (e.g., supplies, computer maintenance, communication, software).

It is bad practice to assume there is a standard fixed evaluation cost (e.g., \$10,000) regardless of program size or complexity, and it is dangerous to fund an evaluation project that does not clarify how evaluation funds will be used. *Participatory Evaluation Essentials 2010* provides instructions for specifying an evaluation timeline, projecting task-specific level of effort (i.e., estimating how much time it will take each person to complete each evaluation-related task) and calculating associated costs. There is also a sample evaluation budget following and in the guide.

There are two ways to project evaluation costs:

- 1) Identify a reasonable total amount of funds dedicated for evaluation (see cost percentages above) and then develop the best evaluation design given those resource requirements (i.e., work backwards from a fixed available amount for evaluation).
- 2) Develop the best evaluation design for the subject program and then estimate the costs associated with implementing the design. Negotiate design changes if costs exceed available funds.

To obtain funds to use for evaluation purposes:

- **Write evaluation costs into project development budgets** (i.e., add the projected cost of evaluation into the total cost of operating the project). Requests for Proposals (RFP's) often include a section on evaluation. Take it seriously. Rather than inserting the perfunctory fixed amount, try to estimate what it would really cost to do good evaluation* and include that figure as a line-item on the project budget. Then use the money accordingly if the project is funded.
- **Set aside funds for evaluation on a percentage basis into the organizational budget** (e.g., each year set aside 5% of all organizational funds to use for evaluation purposes). Develop a plan to use these funds. For example, each year plan to conduct comprehensive evaluation of some programs (e.g., those that are newer or problematic) and then require more limited data collection/review for others.
- **Obtain funds solely for the purposes of evaluation.** Some grantmakers will provide dedicated funds for evaluation, or capacity-building which includes evaluation capacity-building or evaluative thinking enhancement. These are usually accessed through response to an RFP or other proposal development.*
- **Consider sharing and/or pooling resources** with other departments or organizations involved in evaluation.

* If you need help to estimate evaluation project costs or to specify a good design, consider contacting an evaluation technical assistance provider. Some evaluation consultants will do this "on-spec" in return for the opportunity to conduct the evaluation if the project gets funded.

Proposed Workplan for the Beehives Project, Phase I		STAFF ASSISTANCE				
Submitted to: One Economy Submitted by: Evaluation Inc.		Project Director	Project Staff	Admin. Asst.	Client Input	TOTAL
July - November, 2009	TIMELINE					
Discuss sampling, administration* and final reporting strategies	by 7/24	0.5			✓	
Locate Host for E-Surveys	by 7/29	0.5				
Design Draft Survey Instrument						
Develop draft with questions for Beehive, Money and Jobs users	by 7/27	1				
Review with One Economy mgmt and key staff	by 7/31		0.5		✓	
Conference call regarding revisions/piloting	by 8/5	0.25	0.25		✓	
Address Incentives						
Discuss incentives during conference call re:revisions	by 8/5	0.25			✓	
Devise incentives options plan, obtain incentives	by 8/10	0.25		0.5		
Conduct Mock Survey Launch						
Convert draft paper survey to electronic format	by 8/10		1			
Review and annotate mock e-survey	by 8/10	0.5				
Launch mock survey and obtain feedback from One Economy	8/10 - 8/15	1	0.5		✓	
Revise and Pilot Survey Instrument**						
Review and finalize electronic format	by 8/20	0.5				
Acquire pilot respondent list	by 8/20	0.5			✓	
Launch pilot	by 8/21	0.5	0.5			
Close out pilot, produce summary report including suggested rev	by 8/23	1	0.5			
Launch Survey for 30 Days	9/1 - 9/30					
Make final revisions to survey text, launch	by 8/26		1			
Develop analysis plan, obtain approvals	by 8/26	0.25	0.25		✓	
Determine follow-up strategy	by 8/26	0.25				
Survey site management	as needed	0.5	2			
Conduct follow-up activities	10/1 - 10/5	1	1			
Develop Survey Results Summary ***						
Draw down e-survey data	by 10/7		1			
Convert data as necessary	by 10/8	0.5	0.5			
Analyze data according to plan	by 10/12	1.5	1			
Produce results summary	by 10/15	2				
Develop Survey Report ****						
Draft report	by 10/31	2	1	1	✓	
Final report	by 11/30	1	1			
Presentation of Findings	by REQUEST					
Team Meetings/Management	ongoing	1	1	1		
Total Personnel		16.75	13	2.5		
Daily Rates (NonProfit)		\$800	\$500	\$150		
TOTAL PERSONNEL\$		\$13,400	\$6,500	\$375		\$20,275
OTHER THAN PERSONNEL						
Travel (2 trips to Philly, 1 trip to DC, via train)						\$250
Other Direct Costs (duplication, postage, phone, computers \$100/mo)						\$500
Vendor Costs (survey service, web hosting)						\$750
Incentives						\$2,000
SUBTOTAL OTP						\$3,500
GRAND TOTAL						\$23,775
* All figures are based on a census sampling strategy, with 3000 names						
** The initial version of the survey will be in English only, with a loop to capture email addresses of those wanting a Spanish language version 1 to sort respondents + with general beehive questions, 1 with money+jobs questions, 1 with just money, and 1 with just jobs.						
*** Results summary will be an unbound, brief document. Distribution will be electronic only						
**** Draft and final reports will be produced. Draft reports will be electronic only, 1 electronic, PDF file copy + 5 hard copies of Final Report						