

Montana



21st Century

Community Learning Centers

Local Evaluation Guide

GUIDE FOR REPORTING YEAR 2016-17

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Evaluation Guide is to assist Regional, Grantee and Center level Program Directors and grant partners in understanding their local evaluation and to share tips, tools and best practices to support the implementation of the evaluation at the local level. It is organized into two different topics: 1) Conducting a Local Evaluation: This is designed to assist you in planning, implementing, and using the results of your local evaluation. Resources are provided for additional support. 2) Local Evaluation Report Template: This section provides a template for a local evaluation report. Note that this document describes only the minimum reporting requirements (per State) for the annual local evaluation report and does not preclude additional reporting. Programs are encouraged to add any information that highlights the program's operations and successes, or guides program improvements or sustainability.



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CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION¹

WHAT IS AN EVALUATION & WHY?

Whenever you think to yourself "Did that go well?" or "Could I improve this?" you are essentially evaluating! Evaluation is the process of collecting and using information for decision-making. Successful completion of evaluation requires selecting measures and measurement schedules that practically meet the needs of local decision-makers. The final step of a successful evaluation is using information that has been collected to refine and improve upon your programs and to share your results via local evaluation dissemination documents and presentations.



WHY DO WE DO THEM?

The main purposes of evaluations are to make judgments about a program, to improve its effectiveness, and/or to inform programming decisions (Patton, 1987). Specifically, evaluations are typically conducted to:

- Improve programs – use findings to identify what is working and what is not, and to develop action plans for improving.
- Target activities/services to the needs of participants (needs assessment)
- Demonstrate accountability to stakeholders (Feds, OPI, parents, students, community, partners, etc.)
- Help you "sell" your program -- communicate and use findings for future funding/grant applications (sustainability)



¹ Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, The National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, The Project Resource Guide: From Start-Up to Sustainability, Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, Mass., 2007.

Algozzine, B., Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Barrett, S., Dickey, S. R., Eber, L., Kincaid, D., et al. (2010). Evaluation blueprint for school-wide positive behavior support. Eugene, OR: National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support. Retrieved from www.pbis.org.

University of Michigan MEERA Project: <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/evaluation-what-it-and-why-do-it>

Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. Out of School Time Program Evaluation: Tools for Action - <http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/ost-tools.pdf>

WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD EVALUATION?



- Good evaluations are well-planned and carefully executed as opposed to thrown together hastily and retrospectively. Though you may feel that you lack the time, resources, and expertise to carry out an evaluation, learning about evaluation early-on and planning carefully will help you navigate the process.
- Good evaluations start with a set of important questions that can be answered during the actual evaluation. The State Evaluation Plan contains the evaluation questions that provide the framework for the Montana 21st CCLC Evaluation. However, grantees are encouraged to identify their own evaluation questions that are of interest or important given local contexts.
- Good evaluations have SMART² objectives and indicators that measure outcomes aligned to grant goals and activities. Good evaluations also measure data over time, and examine trends to inform practices, policies, and procedures.
- Good evaluations don't end. They evolve and continue to provide timely and meaningful analysis that informs improvements and changes that optimize the potential for positive student outcomes.

HOW DO I MAKE EVALUATION AN INTEGRAL PART OF MY PROGRAM?

Making evaluation an integral part of your program means evaluation is a part of everything you do. You design your program with evaluation in mind, collect data on an on-going basis, and use these data to continuously improve your program.

Developing and implementing such an evaluation system has many benefits including helping you to:

- better understand your target audiences' needs and how to meet these needs
- design objectives that are more achievable and measurable
- monitor progress toward objectives more effectively and efficiently
- learn more from evaluation
- increase your program's productivity and effectiveness

To build and support an evaluation system:

² SMART indicators are: Specific (to the change being measured), Measurable (and unambiguous), Attainable (and sensitive), Relevant (and easy to collect), Time bound (with term dates for measurement).

- Couple evaluation with strategic planning: As you set goals, objectives, and a desired vision of the future for your program, identify ways to measure these goals and objectives and how you might collect, analyze, and use this information. This process will help ensure that your objectives are measurable and that you are collecting information that you will use. Strategic planning is also a good time to create a list of questions you would like your evaluation to answer.
- Create, Revisit and update your local logic model: An important first step is to adapt the State 21st CCLC Logic Model so that it includes local activities, objectives and indicators that are important to your local stakeholders. Update this document on a regular basis, adding new strategies, changing unsuccessful strategies, revising relationships in the model, and adding unforeseen impacts of an activity. NOTE: While you cannot remove a state level objective (all grantees are accountability for each of these), you can add and adapt your activities to meet each, and add new objectives.
- Build an evaluation culture by rewarding participation in evaluation, supporting evaluation activities, communicating a convincing and unified purpose for evaluation, and celebrating evaluation successes.

LEVELS OF EVALUATION AND REQUIREMENTS



The evaluation of every 21st CCLC program is taking place on three levels simultaneously. In addition to local program evaluations (first level) there is also the federal evaluation and the State evaluation, all of which have data collection and reporting requirements. As part of this federal evaluation of the 21st CCLC grant, sub-grantees are required to report data about their programs, including performance data on their participants following each program term, including the Summer Term (June 1-August 31), Fall Term (September 1- December 31), and Spring Term (January 1 – May 31). For federal accountability purposes, each center must submit Annual Performance Report (APR) spreadsheets (Activities, Staffing, and Attendance) to the OPI Data Control Specialist (Amanda Domino) for each of these terms. For the 2015-2016 year, the reporting spreadsheets for each term were due in the Data Control Specialist's Office as follows:

Reporting Due Dates by Term:

- Summer (June 1-August 31, 2016): Due Sept 8, 2017
- Fall (September 1 – December 31, 2017): Due Jan. 12, 2018
- Spring (January 1 – May 31, 2018): Due June 15, 2018

The Data Control Specialist (**Amanda Domino**, adomino@mt.gov, (406) 444-1964) will provide all reporting submittal times and details as they become available.

There is also a State-level evaluation in every state receiving 21st Century funds, supervised by the state agency managing these funds. Montana OPI has set requirements, including data collection and reporting, for local evaluations beginning for the 2015-16 program year. The local program level evaluation requirements outlined in this manual have been mandated by the OPI to support the likelihood that programs achieve their intended goals by following a more rigorous evaluation process and providing them with actionable data based information on which to base program decisions.

THE ROLE OF A LOCAL EVALUATOR



A local evaluator is an important partner, and a vital resource in both sustaining and improving a 21st CCLC program. The role of the evaluator is not to judge the program a success or failure, but rather to provide information and expertise that can be used to aid in your decision-making to support program improvement.

Where to find an evaluator:

- Other local agencies, especially agencies implementing similar programs or doing similar work to a 21st CCLC program. Many public agencies employ evaluators, and may be able to make a recommendation.
- Faculty at local colleges and universities, particularly from the social sciences, sometimes provide evaluation services, and their knowledge of research methods and expertise in their field may be a good fit for a 21st CCLC program.
- Professional associations. The American Evaluation Association (<http://www.eval.org>) and the Indiana Evaluation Association (<http://www.indianaevaluation.org>) are resources to locate a qualified evaluator.

All grantees were required to set aside, at minimum, \$2000 for local evaluation purposes.




EVALUATION BEST PRACTICE TIPS AND RESOURCES

- **Planning Your Evaluation.** Your evaluation should not be considered a one-time event. There are many resources available to help you and your key stakeholders to identify the evaluation questions that will guide the local evaluation, develop a logic model, allocate evaluation resources, and complete your evaluation report (see page 8). It is strongly encouraged that review of evaluation resources be an ongoing practice and that your evaluation plan / logic model be reviewed at least annually.
- **Set up your evaluation for success.** Assign your most experienced and “data savvy” staff members to the evaluation and data collection, and provide them with adequate time, training, and money. In addition to directly improving your chances for success, this investment will communicate your commitment to program evaluation. Also, give stakeholders and staff a voice in the planning process. Receiving feedback from a variety of sources (including site administrators and staff) will increase buy-in and result in a more effective, user-friendly plan.
- **If adding measures, look at how others have assessed particular elements; don’t reinvent the wheel.** It is likely that someone else has thought about assessing a particular program component that you would like to assess. Review the research and see how other programs have assessed the outcomes you are looking for to see if you can adapt their methodologies. Keep in mind that if you wish to add items to the State 21st CCLC battery of surveys (teacher, student, etc.), it must be available for all grantees within a region and should contain validated items.
- **If adding measures, assess/evaluate outcomes that the program is addressing.** It is important to focus research and evaluation efforts on the specific outcomes on which the program focuses. For example, if the program has a strong academic component, it’s appropriate to measure academic improvement. If the program only focuses on improving socioemotional skills, however, you would only expect to see improvements in

that area. It is also important to interpret your findings accordingly. Similarly, don't try to measure everything. Use your strategic plan to identify the critical variables that will determine success for each of your program's major activities and/or goals.

- **Check for accuracy and completeness.** Successful program evaluation needs to accurately reflect reality. Make sure to review your proposed data collection tools and incorporate quality control mechanisms and audits into the data collection process.
- **Understand the limitations of your program evaluation system.** No data collection method is perfect. Learn the strengths and limitations of the one you are using, reexamine and revise it as necessary and combine two or more methods when necessary. Feel free to contact the State evaluator for tips on how to collect data effectively and efficiently.
- **Use results for program improvement.** As part of the local evaluation, for administrators, staff, and other relevant stakeholders need to ask themselves: "What does all this data tell us?." Indeed, throughout this local evaluation template, there are reflection and guiding questions to encourage a continuous improvement process. One systematic way to go about continuous program improvement is by using the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" cycle (also known as the Deming Cycle). The "Check" and "Act" phases in particular are where evaluation data enter the picture.



"PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT" APPROACH TO CONTINUOUS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND PROBLEM SOLVING	
 PLAN	You will have done planning during your preoperational phase. While your program may look somewhat different than it was presented in your grant application or original work plan, you will still have goals to reflect upon once you get to the ACT phase.
DO	This is the program implementation phase. Your program has been up and running for a time, giving you a chance to observe it.
 CHECK	During this phase, you are gathering and analyzing data. You will want to review relevant program goals at this point to determine to what extent they have been accomplished (as the data allow).
 ACT	<p>Based on what the data are saying, program staff must consider how to respond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and set priorities among necessary changes (changes relating to program goals and safety are paramount) • Look for opportunities to help with solutions (e.g., new partnerships or channels of communication) • Educate and train staff as needed • Update policies as necessary <p>Now is also a good time to determine if your PLAN needs modification.</p>
Continue to DO, CHECK, ACT	This process is ongoing. Set regular intervals (e.g., semi-annually or annually) for systematic review of your program.

- **Share, share, share!** In addition to it being a requirement to share your evaluation results (must be made publically available), it is a best practice. There are many different reporting methods that can be used to present data. It is important to carefully choose the method that will best convey the information you want to the audience you want. For example, you can chose to write an abstract or give a briefing of data that provides a quick summary of findings that are presented in a larger report. Some other reporting methods include brochures, fact sheets, news releases, newsletters, posters, and videos.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Recorded webinar "21st CCLC Program Evaluation with Y4Y"
<https://y4y.ed.gov/webinars/21st-cclc-program-evaluation-with-y4y/>
- Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. Out of School Time Program Evaluation: Tools for Action - <http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/ost-tools.pdf>
- SEDL's website on Afterschool Programs includes 20 resources on school accountability and afterschool program outcomes, and information on methods of evaluation, data-collection procedures, standards, and testing. - <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/fam95/evaluation.html>
- Harvard Family Research Project. *Afterschool Evaluation 101: How to Evaluate an Expanded Learning Program* - <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/afterschool-evaluation-101-how-to-evaluate-an-expanded-learning-program>
- Harvard Family Research Project's database contains profiles of out-of-school time (OST) program evaluations, which are searchable on a wide range of criteria. It is available in the OST section of the HFRP website at <http://www.hfrp.org/OSTDatabase>.
- Harvard Family Research Project. *Performance measures in out-of-school time evaluation* - <http://www.hfrp.org/PerformanceMeasuresinOSTEvaluation> and *Detangling data collection: Methods for gathering data* - <http://www.hfrp.org/DetanglingDataCollection>
- Developing your own logic model: There are many very good (and free) guides to logic modeling, and there are many forms of logic models. The Kellogg Foundation was among the first not-for-profit organization in the US to adopt logic modeling. Their free guide can be downloaded at: www.wkkf.org/knowledgecenter/resources/2006/02/wk-kellog-foundation-logic-model-development-guide.aspx .
- Evaluation Handbook Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation Website: www.wkkf.org
- Child Trends (Research-to-Results Brief, 2007). *Why Conduct a Program Evaluation? Five Reasons Why Evaluation Can Help an Out-of-School Time Program* - http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/child_trends-2007_10_01_rb_whyprogeval.pdf
- Child Trends (Research-to-Results Brief, 2008). *Process Evaluation: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Practitioners* - <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/Process-Evaluation.pdf>
- Child Trends (Research-to-Results Brief, 2008). *Outcome Evaluation: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Practitioners* - http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/Child_Trends-2008_01_07_OutcomeEvaluation.pdf

ANNUAL LOCAL EVALUATION REPORT TEMPLATE

PURPOSE: The 21st CCLC Local Evaluation Report is a written report summarizing annual evaluation findings pertaining to state and local program objectives and indicators, program operations, partnerships, teacher surveys, progress towards sustainability, and recommendations based on findings from the annual evaluation. To assist grantees with meeting the local evaluation requirements, Montana OPI has implemented a standardized form for local evaluations of the 21st CCLC Programs.

REQUIREMENTS

- **DUE DATE:** The 21st CCLC Local Evaluation Report must be sent to Mary Ellen Earnhardt (MEarnhardt@mt.gov), Amanda Domino (adomino@mt.gov), and Miriam Resendez (miriam@jemrllc.com) **by April 30, 2018.**
- **REPORTING PERIOD:** The report should include data for the **Summer of 2016 through the 2016-2017 School Year**. This aligns the report with the federal reporting timelines.
- **REQUIRED DATA ELEMENTS:** All required data elements are included within the template, starting on the next page. Please note that some tables/sections share data from *each Center* whereas others can include data at the grantee level. *Default is grantee level information.*

IMPORTANT NOTES

- The evaluation reports are public documents and as such are available for public review. **Do not include any personal information** about students or families (e.g., names, social security numbers). Programs must secure and maintain appropriate authorization from all individuals or their parent/guardian whose picture is included within their report.
- This document describes only the minimum reporting requirements for the evaluation report and **does not preclude additional reporting**. Programs are encouraged to add any information that highlights the program's operations and successes or guides program improvements or sustainability.
- **Please note that data should only be reported for 21st CCLC Programs and students as defined below:**

A 21st CCLC program, regardless of the multiple funding streams that might contribute to it, is defined as:

A center operating during non-school hours which, as part of the typical programming, has at least three³ of the following components, one component of which must include core academic enrichment or academic support activities that are aligned to local, state, and federal academic standards and local curricula designed to improve student academic achievement (activity 1).

1. REQUIRED: Academic enrichment learning programs, mentoring programs, remedial education activities, and tutoring services, that are aligned with the State academic standards and any local academic standards; and local curricula that are designed to improve student academic achievement.
2. Well-rounded education activities, including such activities that enable students to be eligible for credit recovery or attainment;
3. Literacy education programs, including financial literacy program and environmental literacy program.
4. Programs that support a healthy and active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical activity programs.
5. Services for individuals with disabilities.
6. Programs that provide after-school activities for students who are English learners that emphasize language skills and academic achievement.
7. Cultural programs.
8. Telecommunications and technology education programs.
9. Expanded library service hours.
10. Parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy;
11. Programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled to allow the students to improve their academic achievement.
12. Drug and violence prevention programs and counseling programs.
13. Programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) including computer science, and that foster innovation in learning by supporting nontraditional STEM education teaching methods.
14. Programs that partner with in-demand fields of the local workforce or build career competencies and career readiness, and ensure that local workforce and career readiness skills are aligned with Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

21st CCLC Students: A student who participates in a 21st CCLC program as defined above; this must include participation in an academic enrichment or academic support activity. **THESE ARE THE ONLY STUDENTS THAT SHOULD BE ENTERED INTO THE APR ATTENDANCE SHEET.**

³ Note that, ideally 21st CCLC programs will have most or all of the listed elements. That said, to be considered a 21st CCLC program for purposes of reporting and counting students attending it, the program must meet the minimum criteria specified above.

LOCAL EVALUATION REPORT CHECKLIST



The checklist serves as a list of required elements and provides a tracking tool for completion. The completed local evaluation report should be saved with the filename **<Grantee - 21st CCLC MT 2016-17 Local Eval Report >**

Local Evaluation Report Element	Complete?
1. Title (Grantee Name) and File Saved with Correct Nomenclature	<input type="radio"/>
2. Cover Page	<input type="radio"/>
a. <i>Basic Information Table</i>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Overview & History of the Program	<input type="radio"/>
4. Program Characteristics & Program Implementation	<input type="radio"/>
a. <i>Students Served</i>	<input type="radio"/>
b. <i>Program Activities</i>	<input type="radio"/>
c. <i>Program Operations</i>	<input type="radio"/>
d. <i>Partnerships</i>	<input type="radio"/>
e. <i>Sustainability</i>	<input type="radio"/>
f. <i>Summary</i>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Outcomes	<input type="radio"/>
a. <i>21st CCLC State Objectives & Indicators Tables</i>	<input type="radio"/>
b. <i>Local Objectives & Indicators</i>	<input type="radio"/>
c. <i>Student Success Story</i>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Summary and Recommendations	<input type="radio"/>
a. <i>Summary of Results</i>	<input type="radio"/>
b. <i>Dissemination of local evaluation</i>	<input type="radio"/>



We have included information, when applicable, on where you can find the requested information (see "Sources").

Guiding "questions to consider" will help you in writing each narrative section.

Directions for completing your report:

- ◆ As you will see, all data / results have been provided with just a couple of exceptions: 1) under the Partnership section, you need to indicate whether a partner is current (based on last year's eval report) and whether you have any new partners, and 2) if there is any missing data, you will see the words "**No data provided**". Please note that this may be perfectly legitimate (e.g., you have no summer program, therefore, no attendance data is provided for summer) -- we strongly encourage you to go through the report and change any of these designations to "**Not applicable**" if the data is missing because the item does not apply. Otherwise, please leave as is so that true missing data can be easily identified by OPI.
- ◆ Throughout the report, you will see items highlighted in yellow such as: **(Insert here)**. These are all items that you must complete / respond to prior to submitting to OPI. If the item does not apply, please type "NA" in its place and remove the highlighting. **There should be NO highlights in the final version of your report.**
- ◆ In the Outcomes section, please make sure to complete the LAST column in the table labeled "Action Plan", especially if the target was not met in recent year. **Your report will not be accepted if this is not complete for ALL red (not met) indicator results.**
- ◆ There is an optional section (III.B.. Local Objectives and Indicators) whereby you can note any local objectives and results. Please feel free to use this section to make note of other successes or challenges/weaknesses you have data on; however, if you did not collect additional information, **please note "None" in the table.**