RESOURCES FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES

Outcomes measurement is a critical task and one that presents challenges for many human service programs. It begins with a clear delineation of the program model and the overall service goals and objectives, and requires identification of indicators, data sources, and measurement timeframes. The resources below are intended to help a broad range of programs prepare for, plan, and implement outcomes measurement and performance management activities.

Getting to Outcomes®

http://www.rand.org/health/projects/getting-to-outcomes.html

Getting to Outcomes (GTO) is both a *model* for carrying out programming with quality, and a *support* intervention aimed at enhancing practitioners' capacity. GTO does not advocate for any specific prevention program. Rather, communities should use the best program available that meets their needs, evidence-based or otherwise. GTO then provides supports to improve the quality of that program with the goal of achieving positive results. The GTO *model* focuses on 10 steps describing activities required to obtain positive results from any prevention program. Each set of activities has been shown to make prevention programs successful. Steps 1-6 involve various planning activities (needs assessment, goal setting, choosing programs, ensuring appropriate capacity and fit, planning program details); steps 7-8 cover process and outcome evaluation; and steps 9-10 focus on the use of data to improve and sustain programs. The GTO website include a section with manuals and summaries.

Point K Learning Center

http://www.innonet.org/pointk

Operated by the Innovation Network, this online resource center offers a wide range of resources to support nonprofit organizations in planning and evaluation activities. A resource search feature allows users to search by keyword, content focus, document type, and resource date. Point K also offers interactive tools including a logic model builder and an evaluation plan builder that provides users with a structure for developing measureable indicators for desired program outcomes. These tools are supported by a logic model workbook and evaluation plan workbook. Tool use requires that users register an organization or identify themselves as members of an already-registered organization. For the purposes of registration, an "organization" can be a formal entity such as the user's employer or may be a more informal group of people (or even one individual) with a particular interest. The registration feature allows users to share logic models and evaluation plans with internal and external stakeholders who are also registered on Point K.

Building a Common Outcome Framework to Measure Nonprofit Performance

http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/411404-Building-a-Common-Outcome-Framework-To-Measure-Nonprofit-Performance.PDF

From 2004 to 2006, Urban Institute and the Center for What Works (since incorporated into the Rensselaerville Institute), worked together to develop a set of outcome indicators for each of 14 categories of nonprofit organizations, as well as a common framework of outcome indicators applicable to any nonprofit organization. Employment training programs are one of the 14 categories. Although training programs likely differ in a number of important ways from grantees' programs, the outcomes indicators identified for this sector may still be of some interest to grantees as a result of a shared focus on increased employment. An overview of the common indicators is provided, and the document concludes with a set of recommendations on using the materials. A detailed employment training program outcomes sequence chart and list of outcome indicators with suggested data sources are provided in *Candidate Outcome Indicators: Employment Training/ Workforce Development Program*.

Measuring Outcomes

http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/MeasuringOutcomes.pdf

This 2010 document was developed by the National Resource Center for the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF), a 2002 to 2009 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) grant program intended to develop nonprofit capacity. Because of the nature of the CCF, many of the examples provided relate to organizational—rather than individual—change (e.g., the number of *agencies* reporting average program participant employment retention rates of 6 months or more, rather than the number of *program participants* employed for 6 months or more). However, the content of the document is applicable to programs interested in measuring outcomes at the participant level. The document provides detailed guidance on the processes of planning, implementing, and using outcomes evaluations, with a number of targeted tools including a decision aid for selecting data collection methods; a table comparing standard evaluation designs; a review of the descriptive statistics and a few basic statistical tests commonly used in outcomes evaluation; worksheets to aid in the development of logic models, indicators, and data collection plans; and an appendix with links to online resources for additional reading.

PerformWell

http://www.performwell.org

A joint venture of the Urban Institute, Child Trends, and Social Solutions, this website offers a range of resources for performance management in human services. These resources include specific performance assessment tools, guidance on identifying outcomes in a variety of service settings, including employment, and an active performance management webinar series with archived events available for download.

Key Steps in Outcome Management

http://www.urban.org/research/publication/key-steps-outcome-management

This 2003 document from the Urban Institute provides nonprofit organizations with a step-by-step guide to developing, implementing, analyzing, and utilizing outcomes measurements. Content includes guidance on developing and implementing outcomes management working groups; recommendations for implementing a variety of data collection strategies, such as focus groups, surveys, and direct observation; and examples of reporting formats. A 2004 report from the same series, titled *Using outcome information: Making data pay off*; reviews approaches to using outcome data for both internal organizational processes (e.g., identifying areas for improvement and motivating staff and consumers) and external stakeholder reporting and engagement. Material in this document was drawn from two earlier Urban Institute reports: *Making use of outcome information: Recommendations for nonprofit organizations* and *How and why nonprofits use outcome information*. Both of these documents may be of interest to readers seeking additional details on this topic.

Identifying Program-specific Indicators

In planning evaluations, it is helpful to know what outcomes and indicators have been measured within your program's service sector. The resources below provide evaluation-planning guidance specific to employment programs and programs serving people experiencing homelessness.

Supported Employment: Evaluating Your Program

http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA08-4365/EvaluatingYourProgram-SE.pdf

This document, part of SAMHSA's *Supported Employment Evidence-Based Practices KIT*, offers content on process and outcomes evaluation for Supported Employment (SE) programs. Although the document was designed for use specifically with SE programs, much of the material may be of interest to programs providing other models of employment services. The document begins with an overview of the arguments for conducting program evaluation and then provides a discussion of organizational readiness assessment, fidelity assessment, and outcomes measures and their use. The document provides a list of potential categories of outcome measures and review considerations in both designing such measures and in developing a data collection strategy. A separate section focuses on strategies for sharing results with program and agency stakeholders and using results to launch quality improvement processes. An appendix offers a model consumer-level outcome report form and guidelines for its use.

Quality Indicators for Competitive Employment Outcomes

http://www.worksupport.com/resources/viewContent.cfm/631

This document was developed by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation and Research Training Center (VCU RRTC), which works to advance employment among people with disabilities. The document is intended to offer guidance to Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) providing Supported Employment (SE) services. Although CRP service settings differ from HVRP grantee settings, the seven broad outcomes indicators identified in this document are well-aligned with the SE model specifically and more generally with programs seeking to assist consumers in finding and keeping competitive, integrated employment. The document offers a set of three or four consumer-level outcomes for each indicator and provides a set of strategies for improving agency performance on each indicator. VCU RRTC also provides a model measurement form that includes scoring and quality improvement prioritization strategies.

Getting To Outcomes® in Services for Homeless Veterans

http://www.endveteranhomelessness.org/sites/default/files/GTO_Homelessness_Manual.pdf

This 2011 resource from the National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans applies the Getting to Outcomes (GTO) model to Evidence Based Practices (EBPs) for veterans experiencing homelessness. Drawing in large part from a RAND Corporation GTO report, this resource is structured using GTO's 10 key steps, here applied to the processes of program goal setting, planning, evaluating, and improving. Established grantee programs may be interested in the sections relating to program planning and goal setting, as there is content intended to help the reader consider ways of applying these processes to existing programs. The evaluation section provides a model outcome evaluation tool and a step-by-step guide to using it; a table comparing the attributes of a variety of data collection approaches; a brief overview of the issues of informed consent and confidentiality; and a discussion of interpreting results. The final section of the document offers guidance on using evaluation results to implement a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Homelessness Analytics

http://www.homelessnessanalytics.org

This online resource, a joint venture of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affair, the National Center on Homelessness among Veterans, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, draws from a range of publicly available datasets to provide information on homelessness and contextual factors. A data mapping feature allows users to specify indicators of interest—including counts and rates of veteran homelessness and general unemployment rates—and examine them over time and at the national, state, and local (county and/or Continuum of Care) level. Indicators may also be viewed in table and chart form. This resource may be useful to grantees interested in describing homelessness in their communities, better understanding their communities' needs, or providing context for their programs' outcomes.

Engaging Program Participants in Evaluation

Program participant involvement is a key but often-overlooked element of the evaluation process. The resources below provide information on a variety of rationales for involving participant in the evaluation process and offer models for doing so.

Introduction to Evaluation: Participatory Evaluation
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/participatory-evaluation/main

Participatory evaluation approaches are those that fully involve the people most affected by the program being evaluated. This section in the University of Kansas Work Group for Community Health and Development Community Tool Box provides a description of participatory evaluation, a review of the benefits and challenges of these approaches, and step-by-step guidance on designing and implementing a participatory evaluation. The section also includes a checklist and a PowerPoint presentation that each offer an overview of the key points and a discussion of issues related to team data collection.

Consumer Integration and Self-Determination in Homelessness Research, Policy, Planning, and Services
http://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/p3.pdf

This document, a product of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development sponsored 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, offers a synthesis of the descriptive and research literature on consumer involvement in mental health and homelessness research, policy, and service provision and planning. Sections on barriers to, strategies for, and implications of consumer involvement may all be of interest to programs seeking to integrate service recipients in their evaluation or performance monitoring processes.

Participating in Homeless Management Information System

Programs receiving Continuum of Care (CoC) funding—as well those receiving funding from a number of other U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and VA programs—are required to participate in their community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Homeless services providers and organizations that are not required to participate in HMIS are still encouraged to do so. Grantees interested in the possibility of participating in HMIS can find more information on HMIS and its components in the documents below.

HVRP and Continuums of Care: Making Services Work Better
http://www.nvtac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/NVTAC_HVRP_CoC.pdf

This 2011 National Veterans Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC) discusses collaboration between HVRP grantees and their CoCs, including participation in HMIS. The document includes a profile of a CoC that integrated its HVRP outcomes into HMIS and a review of the alignment between HOMES and HMIS.

Coordinated Assessment: Improving Access to Services for Veterans
http://www.nvtac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Coordinated-Assessment-Final-D1-FINAL-06-15-151.pdf

This NVTAC document provides an overview of the coordinated assessment requirements that CoCs are responsible for meeting, highlighting the benefits of the data sharing elements of the coordinated assessment system. The document concludes with recommended next steps for HVRP grantees interested in participating in their CoC's coordinated assessment process.

VI-SPDAT Manual for Single Person Households

http://www.orgcode.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/VI-SPDAT-Manual-2014-v1.pdf

This 2014 manual from Community Solutions and OrgCode Consulting, Inc. provides information on and instructions for using the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), an assessment instrument that has proven to be a popular choice among CoCs seeking a universal assessment tool. In addition to providing item-by-item instructions on conducting the VI-SPDAT, the manual offers an overview of the instrument and its use, as well as a set of FAQs on its implementation.