



# Counting on Success: Program Evaluation for Animal Protection

*Above all, we need to continually assess what differences we are making. Are we accomplishing all that we can to reduce the total universe of animal pain and suffering? – Henry Spira*

As advocates for social change, we address complex challenges with comparatively limited resources. Whether working to end the overpopulation of dogs and cats, make plant-based eating the norm or save threatened wildlife, we face entrenched behavior and, often, considerable opposition. **Are we getting the most from our time, talent and dollars? Evaluation helps us learn how to use what we have to do more for animals.**

Organizations within and beyond animal protection using evaluation include the American Red Cross, the ASPCA, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, The Humane Society of the United States, PETSMART Charities, United Way and YMCA of the USA.

## Benefits of Evaluation

- ▶ Identify which efforts are most effective and efficient, so that they can be utilized more widely
- ▶ Determine where improvement is needed, so that alternative approaches can be employed
- ▶ Document what's been tried and to what end, so that new personnel build on rather than replicate what's gone before
- ▶ Highlight which activities to increase or scale back, so that the most productive work garners resources
- ▶ Meet the reporting requirements of current funders and develop a more compelling case on your program's effectiveness for future funders, so that you secure more financial support
- ▶ Suggest ways to capitalize on key strengths, so that an organization can enhance its contribution to the field

This guide provides an introduction to evaluation, as well as other resources to help you define, measure and improve your programs and campaigns.

### **The Strategy Description**

You've probably heard the saying, if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. In order to measure effectiveness you have to be clear on what your program or campaign is trying to do. The strategy description documents a subset of the elements that should be addressed in a full program or campaign strategic plan.

#### **Why is there a need for this program or campaign?**

Clearly describe what negative(s) you are working to correct with your program, campaign or organization. Use data to document the scope of the problem as much as possible. Organizational statistics or community data can help you present the magnitude of the problem.

#### **What behavior(s) will people adopt if you are successful? What other key outcomes such as changes in skills, knowledge or attitudes will support the behavior change?**

The bottom-line to helping animals is to change people's behavior. Although creating awareness, changing attitudes and sharing knowledge can be important steps in the process – and should often be measured – they are not enough.

#### **Who are your target audiences and what are their needs or wants from your program?**

When asked about target audience, many animal advocates respond "everyone." Realistically, however, we don't have the resources to reach and impact everyone. Therefore, good program design includes defining a target audience - the subset of people you will prioritize. Ways you might identify subsets or segments of your

audience include:

**Demographics.** General objective factors such as male / female, age, income, animals in the home, etc.

**Psychographics.** Attitudinal factors such as interest in animal issues, motivation for education, belief in the importance of community involvement, etc.

**Incidence.** Groups for whom the problem is most prevalent, such as neighborhoods with the greatest populations of feral cats.

**Decision-making stage.** One of the most powerful ways to segment people (define subsets) is based on their stage in the decision making process in respect to the behavior you are trying to affect:

Aware – Interested – Deciding – Acting – Taken Action and Evaluating

*For more on defining your target audience, see the Selected Resources at the end of this guide.*

Once you're defined your target audience, briefly describe their needs or wants from the program.

#### **How will the program's activities get your target audience to adopt the new behavior(s)?**

People choose to act when they have a satisfactory answer to the question "what's in it for me?" They will only change when they expect benefits - physical, emotional, convenience, monetary, avoid consequences – to exceed barriers – time, money, energy, inconvenience, negative emotions.

### *How might factors in your organization or the external environment affect the program?*

**External environment.** The context within which your program operates can have important impact on your results. For example, a fundraising campaign taking place right after the 2004 tsunami disaster would likely perform differently than one just before. It would be important to keep this major event in mind not only in interpreting the results of the campaign, but also in trying to draw conclusions that you would apply to future campaigns.

**Internal environment.** Organizational factors can also come into play. Is the program run by someone new to the organization? Is the program a key priority and getting a lot of resources and attention? Positive or negative, you'll want to highlight any key influences. Be careful not to get too distracted with long lists of internal concerns; briefly describe those that are most significant.

### **Evaluation Use** *What is the purpose of your evaluation?*

Begin by defining why you are conducting the evaluation. Refer back to the benefits of evaluation section at the beginning of this guide for ideas and add your own. Try to be as specific as possible to your situation.

Your evaluation can serve multiple purposes, but be careful not to overdo it. If you are hoping to address several purposes, you may need to prioritize which are the most important, in order to focus your evaluation work.

### *Who are the audiences for the evaluation and what are their needs?*

Potential audiences for your evaluation may include:

- ▶ Program manager
- ▶ Organizational leadership (executive staff, possibly board of directors)
- ▶ Other staff
- ▶ Funders
- ▶ Other people working on your issue and / or similar efforts
- ▶ Local, state or federal government
- ▶ Community leaders or other influentials
- ▶ Program participants
- ▶ Media

For each audience, briefly describe what they may want from the evaluation. How will they use the results? What information do they need? How will they want it communicated?

### **The Logic Model**

You're working in animal protection because you care about making the world better for animals. Therefore you want to know about results! If your results fall short, you'll want to know where in the process your strategy or implementation may have broken down. A logic model helps you evaluate your process and the results by showing the relationships between a program's inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. According to the University of Wisconsin's "Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models" site, the logic model:

- ▶ Brings detail to broad goals; helps in planning, evaluation, implementation, and communications.

- ▶ Helps to identify gaps in our program logic and clarifies assumptions so success may be more likely.
- ▶ Builds understanding and promotes consensus about what the program is and how it will work
- ▶ Helps to clarify what is appropriate to evaluate, and when, so that evaluation resources are used wisely.
- ▶ Enables effective competition for resources. (Many funders request logic models in their grant requests.)

Source: Taylor-Powell, E., Jones, L., & Hennert, E. (2002). "Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models." Retrieved February 2005, from University of Wisconsin-Extension-Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation Unit Web site: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/#>

### Definitions

The following definitions for components of the logic model are similar to those supplied by the United Way, the W.K Kellogg Foundation and the University of Wisconsin-Extension, leaders in program evaluation.

- Impact** The end result or benefit that will occur if your program is successful.
- Outcomes** Behaviors, attitudes and knowledge that your program seeks to change and that lead toward your desired impact. You may want to divide your outcomes into immediate, interim and long-term to suggest the sequence of results, defining the interim and long-term periods appropriate for your program.
- Outputs** The direct products of the programs.

**Activities** The major steps or services that take place to transform the inputs into outputs and outcomes.

**Inputs** Resources used for the program. They include dollars, time, skills, materials, equipment, technology and facilities.

#### Logic Model Example: Urban wildlife initiative on expanding the availability of humane control services

- Impact**
  - Humane wildlife control services are widely available
- Outcomes**
  - Wildlife control companies believe they can offer humane services profitably
  - Wildlife control companies know how to implement humane solutions
  - Wildlife control companies offer humane services as an option, convert all their services, or are founded as new humane solutions providers
- Outputs**
  - Marketing materials for wildlife control companies showing benefits of humane solutions, including profit impact
  - Humane solutions instructional materials
  - # of wildlife control companies and service technicians receiving training
- Activities**
  - Research and document effectiveness of humane solutions
  - Develop materials
  - Contact and meet with wildlife control companies
  - Develop and deliver training programs
- Inputs**
  - Staff time and expertise
  - Money
  - Web site capacity
  - Training facility

### **Tips for Choosing Outcomes**

You're working in animal protection because you care about making the world better for animals. Therefore you want to place special emphasis on defining and measuring outcomes.

- ▶ Choose outcomes that reflect the program's intended benefits. Be realistic about whether the program can meaningfully affect the outcome.
- ▶ Select the highest priority outcomes, weeding out those that are duplicative, overlapping or clearly less important.
- ▶ Remember the audiences you described for the evaluation and see if you've included outcomes that would be important to them as measures of the program's success.
- ▶ Review your list of outcomes and see if they address the purpose(s) you defined for the evaluation.
- ▶ Don't choose outcomes based on your current ability to measure. You'll want to creatively consider ways to measure an important outcome before abandoning it.

### **Sidebar: Return on Inputs**

Defining and quantifying inputs help you analyze whether you are producing results efficiently. For example, if an off-site location produces 200 additional quality adoptions over a 6-month period, is it a success? That depends. How much did the effort cost in money and time?

Enhance your evaluation work by tracking program inputs and compare them to outcomes. You may want to work with your internal accounting area or external service provider to better track revenue and expenses by program.

### **Getting Started With The Logic Model**

The information in your strategy description should help you begin defining your logic model. It's often easier to start with your intended impact and work backwards through outcomes to outputs, activities and inputs. Look at the resulting draft of the model and see if it appropriately describes the relationships of how your program converts input to activities that will generate outputs that produce outcomes and impact. You may find it helpful to involve a group or to develop a model and then review with others for feedback.

*See the Selected Resources at the end of*

*this guide for a site from the University of Wisconsin that provides a detailed tutorial on developing a logic model.*

### **Measures, Data And Analysis**

Once you've defined your logic model, you should have a good sense of what results and elements of your program you want to measure. The questions that follow provide a look back at a program or campaign to help you measure what occurred. However, by thinking about these questions when planning your program, you can be sure to collect the appropriate data. For example, if you want to assess improvement in dog behavior from a training class, you need to establish some sort of baseline before the training begins in order to compare. You can therefore use these questions to evaluate past programs or to plan for future evaluation.

### **Inputs**

We'd all like to have more resources: more money, more time and more skills. However your evaluation needs to include a realistic assessment of the inputs. Here are sample questions you might ask about program inputs:

- ▶ What was actually invested? Remember to consider not only dollars spent, but also time and other resources.
- ▶ How did the actual investment compare to what was anticipated?
- ▶ Was the investment sufficient for the program's activities and outputs?
- ▶ Did the personnel have the right skills to deliver the program?
- ▶ What facilities or equipment were involved and did these appear to affect the program's activities, outputs or outcomes?

**Activities**

Next you'll want to document the program's activities.

- ▶ What activities took place, including services to participants?
- ▶ How did actual activities compare to anticipated activities?
- ▶ What was the quality of the services provided to participants?
- ▶ What unexpected developments may affect how the program performed?

**Output - Participant Profile**

One immediate output of your program or campaign may be the participants you attracted, for example to an event, a web site or a hotline. In your strategy description, you defined a target audience. You'll want to collect data to compare your actual participants to your intended audience using the descriptive factors noted previously:

- ▶ Demographics
- ▶ Psychographics
- ▶ Incidence
- ▶ Decision-making stage

...or other factors you may have identified

The profile of your actual participants is important not only to see if your efforts to reach your target audience were successful, but also to interpret the outcomes and impact you achieved.

**Other Outputs**

You'll want to measure the quantity and sometimes the quality of key outputs. Examples could include:

- ▶ Materials produced – for example how many brochures
- ▶ Number of sessions offered, participants satisfaction and comments on what worked well or could have been better
- ▶ Number of participants - people and / or animals
- ▶ Evaluations – participant satisfaction ratings and comments
- ▶ Media coverage - # of stories, estimated readers or viewers reached

**Outcomes and Impact**

For each outcome you've identified, you'll need to determine what to measure and when.

Example: Feral cat trap / neuter release program

Outcome	What to Measure	When
Residents know what to do when they see feral cats	Percent indicating they would call Happy Humane for trap-neuter-release	Annually

Example: Labeling program to improve humane treatment of farm animals

Outcome	What to Measure	When
Improved farm animal care	Changes implemented by program participants (farmers and ranchers) to earn or maintain program certification	At initial and annual inspections, with follow-up through logs of required changes

### Establishing Baselines

Understanding the level of an outcome prior to implementing a program is called establishing a baseline. The baseline helps you understand what change the program helped create. Of course you'll also need to consider other factors that may have contributed to these results as part of your analysis.

### Comparing to a Control Group

Although it is often difficult to determine precisely how much an outcome is attributable to your program, a *control group* can help. A control group is a similar population that does not participate in your program. You then compare the outcomes for the control group to the group in your program to see what differences occur. For example, if you targeted efforts in one community to increase the number of animals licensed, you would analyze the change for a similar community where you did not implement such efforts. If you see a meaningful difference vs. the control group, you can have greater confidence that the improvement was a result of your initiative. If both communities had comparable increases, you might look for factors outside the program, such as an economic upturn making more people feel they could afford the licensing fee.

### Investigating Benchmarks

Benchmarks are indicators or practices that you obtain from other organizations in order to compare your performance or activities. For example, you might benchmark your euthanasia rate per thousand by looking at the results in communities of similar size and make-up.

For each outcome, you should note whether you need to establish a baseline or should research benchmarks to help you interpret your findings.

### Data Collection

For each area – inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact – you will need to gather information to answer your evaluation questions. There are two main types of measures and data.

**Quantitative** measures and data are numbers that represent quantities, answering the questions how many and how much. Note that numerical responses from a small number of people are not highly meaningful and you shouldn't read too much into their accuracy.

**Qualitative** measures and data provide non-numerical information that addresses the quality of a process or outcome, capturing impressions, providing explanation and suggesting themes.

There are numerous sources of evaluation data, including information you may already collect.

- ▶ Records
- ▶ Reports
- ▶ Databases
- ▶ Observation
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Interviews
- ▶ Surveys
- ▶ Case studies
- ▶ Participant journals
- ▶ Photo or video
- ▶ Drawings

*See the Selected Resources section for information on common sources of data.*

You may need assistance with collection methods such as surveys and focus groups. Seek volunteer assistance in your community or see the *Selected Resources* at the end of this guide, including information on the Humane Research Council.

### Data Analysis

Once you've collected your evaluation data, the fun – or the hard work – of analysis begins. You'll need to review the information and then:

- ▶ Make calculations, such as percentages of participants who exhibit a desired behavior
- ▶ Categorize qualitative information to look for key themes. For example is there a lot of negative feedback from potential adopters on the wait time to see a counselor?
- ▶ Look for relationships. For example do elementary school teachers bring you in for multiple humane education sessions more often than high school teachers do?
- ▶ Consider what may be causing change. Are contributions from major donors up because of the new program you implemented to strengthen their relationships with your organization or simply because the economy has improved?

*See the Selected Resources section for more help on both qualitative and quantitative analysis.*

### Communication And Budgeting How do I communicate my findings to others?

The content, format and length of your evaluation report or presentation depend on how it will be used. Here are just a few of the communications formats you might use:

- ▶ Paragraph text
- ▶ Bullet points
- ▶ Diagrams (such as your logic model!)
- ▶ Graphs
- ▶ Tables
- ▶ Photos

### How much should I spend on evaluation?

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation states that an evaluation typically costs between 5 and 10 percent of the program's total budget. An article at [charitychannel.com](http://charitychannel.com) says that some federal grants require 10 to 15 percent allocation for evaluation. Although you may be concerned about spending money on evaluation that could go toward the direct provision of services, remember that the point of evaluation is to maximize your results. If the other 90-95% of your resources aren't getting the intended results, don't you want to know so that you can make changes?

*See the Selected Resources for more on budgeting.*

### Better Evaluation, Better Results

*We owe it to everyone... to gauge as accurately as possible the effects of what we do and the lessons that can be drawn from those efforts.*

– *Hodding Carter III President and CEO, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, in Foundations and Evaluation, Marc T. Braverman, Norman A. Constantine and Jana Kay Slater editors.*

You want to be sure you're doing the most you can for animals. Savvy funders, board members and community representatives want to know if the money you spend is making a difference. Defining and tracking program and campaign measures will help you not only see how you're doing, but also spread the word and improve results. This guide and the resources that follow should help you ask important questions and make even better decisions to advance change.

## Selected Resources

### Evaluation

For a companion worksheet to this guide in Microsoft Word, email [cginsberg@priorityventures.com](mailto:cginsberg@priorityventures.com).

“Measuring Effectiveness;” Priority Ventures Group and Humane Society University; provides a more in-depth treatment of the materials in this guide, with additional examples, additional topics, activities and extensive resources; <http://www.hsonline.org>.

Program Evaluation: A Field Guide for Administrators, Robert L. Schalock with Craig V.D. Thornton, Plenum Press, available new and used at Amazon.com or possibly through your local library.

### Defining a Target Audience

“Targeting the Audience,” Tools of Change, <http://www.toolsofchange.com/English/firstsplit.asp> Click on “Planning Guide” at left and then the “Targeting the Audience” link.

### Logic Model and Outcomes

"Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models," University of Wisconsin Extension, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/>

United Way Outcome Measurement Resource Network, <http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/>

### Collecting and Analyzing Data

Common sources of data with pros and cons, MAP for Nonprofits, [http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl\\_eval.htm#anchor1585345](http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1585345)

“Analyzing Quantitative Data” and “Analyzing Qualitative Data,” University of Wisconsin-Extension, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evaldocs.html>

### Marketing Research that Won't Break the

Bank, Alan Andreasen, <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787964190.html>

The *Humane Research Council* provides affordable market research services to animal protection organizations, <http://www.humanersearch.org>.

### Budgeting

Budget framework, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, <http://www.wkkf.org/Programming/Extra.aspx?CID=281&ID=25>

*Priority Ventures Group helps nonprofits identify and act on what matters most to advance social change.*

*To learn more about how your organization can achieve better results using program evaluation, please contact Caryn Ginsberg at [cginsberg@priorityventures.com](mailto:cginsberg@priorityventures.com) or (703) 524-0024.*

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