Guidance for Local Evaluations of Maryland 21st CCLC Programs
January 13, 2011

Each grantee must undergo a periodic evaluation to assess its progress toward achieving its goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment. The results of the evaluation must be: (1) used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program and to refine the performance measures; and (2) made available to the public upon request, with public notice of such availability provided.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

1. Each grantee must use an external evaluator to conduct a local program evaluation.
2. Evaluation plan in the original proposal is used to guide the actual evaluation, or, if needed, is amended with approval of MSDE staff.
3. Evaluator has the necessary background and credentials to conduct the evaluation, including demonstrated experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative evaluations within the education field and demonstrated knowledge of out-of-school-time programming.
4. Each grantee must submit a written annual evaluation report and a final (summative) evaluation report to MSDE.
5. Evaluation questions guide the evaluation and are relevant and appropriate for the program, including assessment of the project objectives that were identified in the approved proposal and are reported in state and federal program reports.
6. The evaluation report is accurate and free of errors.

EVALUATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

7. Evaluator does the following:
   a) Communicates regularly with Project Director (or designee) about the evaluation
   b) Provides an overview of the evaluation and data collection activities to program staff
   c) Observes the program in action
   d) Oversees data collection
   e) Presents findings and recommendations to Project Director (or designee) and key stakeholders.

REQUIRED EVALUATION REPORT COMPONENTS

8. Evaluator reports include the following components:
   a) Executive summary
   b) Purpose of the evaluation
   c) Brief description of the program, including an explanation of the program's theory of action/logic model
   d) Evaluation questions
   e) Demographic and attendance data on participants
   f) Evaluation design and methodology
   g) Data analysis results
   h) Conclusions

Note: This document was created in partnership by Measurement, Inc. and MSDE. Portions of this checklist were adapted from *"Guidance on Evaluation Reports to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, A Checklist for Evaluators"* (2009), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

    i)   Recommendations

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

9. The evaluation design is clearly laid out so that the Project Director can see how the evaluation questions, data collection and analysis are linked together to determine program impact.
10. Data collection instruments are selected that are psychometrically sound; information is included on validity and reliability of instruments, if available. Instruments measure the main outcome areas targeted by the program (e.g., academic improvement, student engagement with school, positive behaviors, developmental assets).
11. Procedures are in place to ensure data quality.
12. Design is ethical and includes appropriate safeguards of confidentiality and treatment of participants. Evaluation abides by the American Evaluation Association's *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*.
13. Evaluation design includes appropriate features that allow the evaluation questions to be answered. These may include (but not be limited to), as feasible, comparison groups, repeated measures/longitudinal analysis, randomization, or regression discontinuity.
14. Both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used as appropriate, with the highest level of rigor for both.
15. As needed to answer evaluation questions, evaluation may include measures of program implementation, fidelity, and/or quality.
16. Where comparison groups are used, data are analyzed to assess equivalence of groups prior to participation in the program.
17. Results from the statewide evaluation instruments, such as the parent and student satisfaction surveys, are incorporated into the local evaluation where available and relevant *for this grant*.

DATA ANALYSIS

18. Appropriate analysis techniques are used for the data that include tests of significance where possible. Analysis techniques used are fully described and easy to understand.
19. Analyses are performed for indicators directly relevant to the program.
20. Analysis includes examination of data by attendance level where feasible/appropriate (e.g., less than thirty days, 30-59 days, 60 or more days).
21. Analyses may examine site-specific data where these are of interest to the evaluation study, but *must also* aggregate the data across program sites within a given grant.
22. Where appropriate, data analysis should examine the relationship between measures of program implementation, fidelity, and/or quality, and measures of program outcomes, using appropriate statistical analyses.

RESULTS

23. Results should permit evaluator, project director and stakeholders to determine if the program is effective at achieving its goals.
24. Results should be displayed in formats that are meaningful and that facilitate interpretation, including tables, charts, and graphs as appropriate.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Limitations to the evaluation are discussed. These may include threats to the validity of the interpretation of evaluation findings, such as statistical conclusion validity (e.g., low statistical power and violated assumptions of statistical tests), internal validity (e.g., selection bias, history and maturation effects, and attrition bias), construct validity (e.g., treatment diffusion), and external validity (e.g., unique response of setting participants that would not generalize to other settings or participants).
26. Conclusions and recommendations are presented and are clearly supported by the data analysis results.
27. Evaluation questions are adequately addressed by the conclusions and recommendations.
28. Recommendations address the potential impact of the program.
29. Recommendations are specific, practical and realistically attainable.

USE OF EVALUATION TO SUPPORT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

30. Evaluation findings and recommendations are shared with key stakeholders in appropriate formats.
31. Grantee uses findings to improve/adjust program.
32. Grantee appraises the evaluator's work and the evaluation process annually and makes necessary adjustments.