

FAQ – Frequently asked questions

What is a Needs Assessment?

When seeking funds, a specific problem area or need should be addressed. This is a critically important section of the proposal. Information based on objective research, not subjective impressions, should be provided to justify the need or problem. This data, however, should not be voluminous, but sufficient to demonstrate that a problem or need exists. A problem statement or needs assessment should meet the following criteria:

- Describes the target population to be served
- Defines the community problem to be addressed and the need in the geographical area where the organization operates
- Is related to the purposes and goals of the applicant agency
- Is of reasonable dimensions - not trying to solve all the problems of the world
- Is supported by relevant statistical evidence
- Is supported by relevant anecdotal evidence
- Is supported by statements from authorities
- Is stated in terms of clients' needs and problems - not the applicant's
- Is developed with input from clients and beneficiaries
- Is not the "lack of a program", unless the program always works
- Makes no unsupported assumptions
- Is as brief as possible
- Is interesting to read
- Is free of jargon
- Makes a compelling case

What is an Evaluation?

Proposals must include a plan for determining the degree to which objectives are met and methods are followed. This section is extremely important as funders pay particular attention to evaluation methods since they need help determining whether a proposed project represents an intelligent investment for them. The evaluation section should meet the following criteria:

- Presents a plan for evaluating accomplishment of objectives
- Presents a plan for evaluating and modifying methods over course the program
- Tells who will be doing the evaluation and how they were chosen
- Clearly states evaluation criteria
- Describes how data will be gathered
- Explains any test instruments or questionnaires to be used
- Describes the process of data analysis
- Shows how evaluation will be used for program improvements
- Describes any evaluation reports to be produced