

United Way of Greater Augusta Organizational Yardstick Training

Outcome Measure Definition:

- Determination and [evaluation](#) of the [results](#) of an [activity](#), [plan](#), [process](#), or [program](#) and their comparison with the intended or projected results.

Ten Tips for Developing Your Outcome Measurement Strategy

- **Measure what you can, and measure what you should:** Consider your project's objectives to ensure that they are actually measurable. When assessing the progress of your organizations, measure that which is most vital to the intended results of your program.
- **Plan the evaluation and the programs together:** If possible, flesh out your evaluation plan and your program design concurrently, rather than waiting to devise an outcome measurement strategy as an afterthought when your program activities have already begun.
- **Consult the standards:** If there is no expert on your staff to competently identify measures and indicators, consult the generally accepted tools, models and standards to define your own.
- **Get the know-how:** You may wish to acquire the expertise in measuring outcomes that your staff may lack through partnerships, not just through hiring or contracting.
- **The "before" snapshot:** When your strategy consists of taking "pre-test" and "post-test" measurements, the "pre-test" snapshot of your sub-awardee is known as a baseline profile. Baseline profiles help organizations tailor their program activities to address the technical assistance needs of organizations.
- **Take the baseline profile early:** Capture the sub-award baseline profiles as soon as possible to ensure the most accurate measurement of the program's impacts.
- **Integrate the baseline profile:** Integrate your means of capturing the baseline profile, such as a survey tool, within the application. This will make the "pre-test" portion of your assessment seamless to the applicant.
- **Flesh out the details of the baseline:** Many organizations find it helpful to augment self-administered surveys with staff-conducted interviews, site visits, etc.
- **Full Service or Self-Serve?** Self-administered baseline surveys are fine for collecting quantitative data. But staff administered baseline surveys, which are more time and resource consuming, can yield more forthright, accurate and qualitative data
- **The Cycle of Refinement:** Assessment shapes programs; programs shape assessment, and so on. Periodically revise your work plans and technical assistance efforts according to the information yielded from your evaluative activities.