How to Develop an Evaluation Set-Aside Application

Evaluation Special Interest Group (Eval SIG)
February 11, 2009
1:00-3:00PM

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Evaluation Branch Overview

EB Mission:
To facilitate and enhance NIH's evaluation capability

Key roles include:

1. Managing and administering NIH's Evaluation Set-Aside (ESA) Program
   - Working with two trans-NIH committees to review applications
2. Providing hands-on technical support, online guidance, and evaluation training
3. Assisting ICs and OD offices to plan high quality evaluations of programs and trans-NIH initiatives

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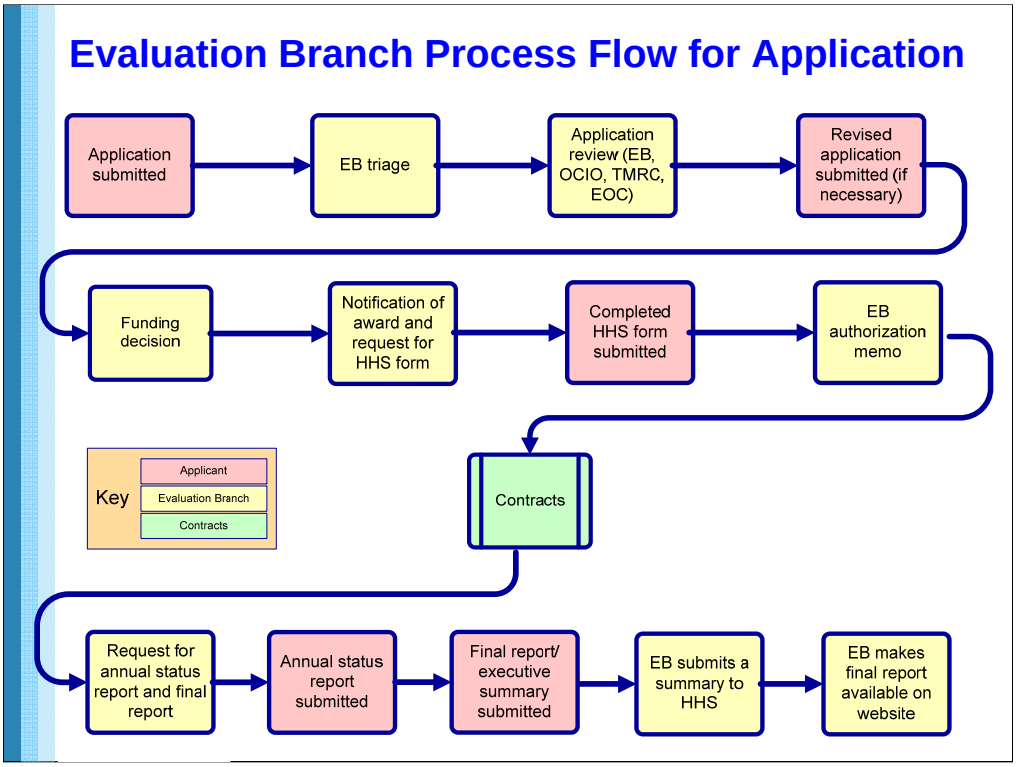
• The Evaluation Branch processes and reviews evaluation proposals, but its main objective is to enhance NIH's ability to conduct quality, state-of-the-art evaluations by providing technical assistance and evaluation training



• The applicant, with consultation from their P&E officer, writes and submits an application to EB.

• EB conducts triage to check for completeness, compliance, and eligibility before beginning the review process.

• Depending on the amount of funds requested and the purpose of the request, the application is reviewed by EB, OCIO, TMRC, and EOC as needed.

• If revisions are requested, the applicant makes changes and resubmit.

• Again depending on the amount of funds requested, EB, TMRC and/or EOC makes a funding decision.

• If awarded, a notification is sent with a request to complete the HHS Study Description Sheet.

• The applicant completes and submits the HHS Study Description Sheet.

• Upon receipt of the HHS Study Description Sheet, EB sends an authorization memo with CAN number to the applicant.

• The issue of choosing a contractor will be discussed in more detail later in the presentation.

• After a project is funded, EB requests annual status report and final report from the project officer.

• The project officer of a funded project submits an annual status report until completion of the project.

• Upon completion, the project officer submits a final report and executive summary.

• EB then submits a summary of the project and its main findings to HHS and make the final report available on its website.

Abbreviations:

EB = Evaluation Branch

OCIO = Office of the Chief Information Officer

TMRC = Technical Merit Review Committee

EOC = Evaluation Oversight Committee

Application Do's and Don'ts

Lessons Learned from Past Reviews of Applications

Types of Program Evaluations Eligible for Funding

- Needs Assessment
- Feasibility Study to Design a Process or an Outcome Evaluation
- Process Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation

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This presentation focuses on developing an application for an eligible program evaluation. For assistance in preparing an application for an eligible evaluation-related activity, please contact EB.

Definitions of eligible types of evaluation:

- Needs Assessment – determine the nature and extent of the problems that a proposed or existing program should addressed.
- Feasibility Study – determine whether conducting a process or outcome evaluation is appropriate, develop a feasible design for the evaluation, and/or determine whether the evaluation can be conducted at a reasonable cost.
- Process Evaluation – assess program operations to determine whether a program is being conducted as planned, whether expected output is being produced, and/or how program-critical processes can be improved.
- Outcome Evaluation – assess program accomplishments and effects to determine the extent to which a program's intermediate and long-term goals have been achieved.

Part 1 – Title and Contact Information

Project Title

- Title of the proposed evaluation

Applicant

- Applicant's name, affiliation, and contact information

IC P&E Officer

- P&E Officer's name, affiliation, and contact information
- New applications must be reviewed by a P&E Officer before submission

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Due to time constraint, this presentation focuses on developing a short application (an "Express Award") requesting $50,000 or less. However, most of the information will apply to the regular application for larger requests.

Project Title

• Use a short, descriptive title

Applicant

• If more than one applicant, include all their names and contact information.

• All EB communications about an application will be sent to those listed as the applicants and the P&E officer, regardless of who submits the application.

IC P&E officer

• P&E officer should review and approve an application before submission to EB.

• An OD applicant in an office without its own P&E officer is encouraged to submit a draft for EB to conduct a pre-submission review; otherwise, indicate "N/A" in this section (no need to include the information for EB chief).

Part 2 – NIH Program to be Evaluated: NIH Program/Activity

- For established programs (generally in the context of a process evaluation, outcome evaluation, or feasibility study):
  - *Where* is the program located in the IC?
  - *When* was it established?
  - *What* does it do?
  - *What* is its annual budget?
- For new programs (generally in the context of a needs assessment):
  - *Why* is it needed?
  - *Who* is involved?
  - *What* is it expected to accomplish?
  - *What* resources are being utilized?

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• Information about program history helps reviewers determine whether the proposed evaluation is consistent with program maturity and needs.

• Information about program size and budget helps reviewers assess the reasonableness of the evaluation budget. Typically, program evaluation should not exceed 10% of the program's annual budget.

Part 2 – NIH Program to be Evaluated (continued): Program Goals

- Examples of program goals:
  - Facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration between cancer researchers and nanotechnologists
  - Integrate nanotechnology into the research and clinical practices of cancer
  - Improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer
- Don't put mission as program goals
  - Example of mission: Help low-income mothers and their children build a successful life
  - Example of program goal: To help mothers in school locate affordable and appropriate care for their children
- Identify program goals that are relevant for the proposed evaluation

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• Definition of programs goals: The intended effects of a program (usually found in authorizing legislation or other documents written when the program was established).

• Types of program goals:

- Process goals describe how the program should operate and what levels of output should be expected. (Example: Facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration between cancer researchers and nanotechnologists)
- Intermediate goals describe specific outcomes the program should achieve in the near term. (Example: Integrate nanotechnology into the research and clinical practices of cancer)
- Long-term goals describe the ultimate outcomes the program is designed to achieve. (Example: Improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer)

• Program goals are <u>not</u> optional. Even when there are no official or documented program goals, there are usually "implicit" goals that stakeholders can articulate and make explicit.

• Definition of mission: The overall purpose or general aims of a program.

• Clearly identifying the program goals relevant for the proposed evaluation helps reviewers determine the appropriateness of the evaluation questions and design. Also, grouping program goals by type is helpful when (a) the program has many goals and/or (b) the proposed evaluation has separate components addressing different program goals.

Part 3 – Purpose of the Evaluation: Type of the Evaluation

- Identify the type of evaluation
  - Needs Assessment
  - Feasibility Study
  - Process Evaluation
  - Outcome Evaluation

Part 3: Purpose of the Evaluation *(Guide: Section 2, Appendix A)*

Type of Evaluation – Indicate the type(s) of evaluation proposed (check all that apply):

☐ Needs Assessment ☐ Feasibility Study
☒ Process Evaluation ☐ Outcome Evaluation

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• It is acceptable for a project to encompass more than one type of evaluation. If more than one box is checked, reviewers will look for relevant information for the each component and assess its merits separately and in conjunction with the other.

Part 3 – Purpose of the Evaluation (continued): Purpose of the Evaluation

- Describe the main objectives in conducting the evaluation
  - **Needs Assessment**
    - Example: To design a program that can provide reliable health information on the genetics of common diseases, genetic testing, and genome scans for the general public and healthcare professionals
  - **Feasibility Study**
    - Example: To develop an outcome evaluation design for a program
  - **Process Evaluation**
    - Example: To determine whether a program and its components are being implemented as planned
  - **Outcome Evaluation**
    - Example: To determine the extent to which the program's goals have been achieved

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• Purpose should be consistent with the type of evaluation proposed.

Example of inconsistency: Applicant proposes to conduct an outcome evaluation of a 10-year-old training program, but the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation questions are primarily focused on how well the program is operating and how it can be improved.

• Indicate if the proposed evaluation is part of a larger or multi-phase effort. This information helps reviewers understand the context in which the evaluation will be undertaken, especially for larger requests to evaluate highly visible programs.

• If a program is complex and has multiple components that need to be evaluated, do not develop a separate application for each component. To evaluate a complex program effectively and efficiently, there has to be coordinated planning and execution. A "piecemeal" approach is generally cause for concerns. Reviewers need to know the overall design and methods for evaluating the different components, how the results will complement each other, and how everything will add up to provide an accurate picture of the program's operations, progress, or achievements.

Part 3 – Purpose of the Evaluation (continued): Purpose of the Evaluation

From a feasibility study proposal:

Purpose of the Evaluation –
The type of evaluation proposed is a feasibility study. The purpose of this study is to develop an outcome evaluation design for the CPTC program. The study will determine the overall feasibility of conducting an outcome evaluation by:

- Identifying appropriate study questions, key variables and performance measures
- Reviewing existing data to provide information (if available)
- Identifying new data collection efforts and performance measures (if required)
- Determining need for clearance requirements (if any)
- Developing an outcome evaluation plan

From a process evaluation proposal:

Purpose of the Evaluation

This evaluation is intended to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current Project Team/program management structure of this Roadmap program, and elicit comments from the participating NIH staff and PIs about their ideas for more effective management going forward. It is also worth capturing an estimate of the level of effort in terms of NIH program staff time that has been devoted to this program, in order to adequately budget for the next term of funding.

Part 3 – Purpose of the Evaluation (continued): Rationale for the Evaluation

Examples of why the project is needed now:

- Congressional mandate
- Executive Order
- National commission report
- Strategic plan or other policy document
- IC advisory council
- Management
- Advocacy groups

Rationale for the Evaluation All three components' RFAs are eligible for reissuance this fiscal year. As part of the reissuance process, the IC requires an assessment of each component. Following guidelines established by the IC, the proposed process evaluation is intended to inform the IC Advisory Council in deciding whether to reissue any of the RFAs (please see Appendix A for IC guidelines).

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- Reviewers are concerned when the rationale does not adequately explain:
  - An apparent mismatch between the type of evaluation selected and the program's life cycle or needs (e.g., proposing to conduct an outcome evaluation for a program that has not operated long enough to expect measurable changes)
  - Why a proposal is requesting funds for a project when a similar one was done in the recent past (e.g., requesting funds to conduct a process evaluation less than two years after a process evaluation was completed)

Part 4 – Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results: Key Questions to be Addressed

- Develop questions that address the program goals relevant for the evaluation

Process goal: Facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration between cancer researchers and nanotechnologists

Evaluation questions:

- Are the resources and processes to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration between cancer researchers and nanotechnologists adequate?
- How many cross-disciplinary collaborations have been established since the inception of the program?

Outcome goal: Integrate nanotechnology into the research and clinical practices of cancer

Evaluation questions:

- Since the inception of the program ten years ago, to what extent has nanotechnology been integrated into the research and clinical practices of cancer?
- Has the use of nanotechnology improved the treatment of cancer in clinical and community settings?

Part 4 – Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results (continued): Key Questions to be Addressed

- Clearly link the questions to program goals

From a process evaluation proposal:

Key Question	Relevant Program Goal
1. Structure	
1A. What are the defining features and components of each program component, and how do they align with the program goals? Are there program goals that are not being adequately addressed?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
1B. Given the program goals, is the distribution of resources within each component and across components appropriate?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Management	
2A. Has each program component been implemented in a manner consistent with its stated objectives as well as the program goals? Are there other mechanisms or models that should be considered?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2B. Are there specific barriers that are hindering the performance of each program component?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

- Avoid vague or broad questions
- Do not confuse evaluation questions with questions from data collection instruments

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• Questions that are too vague or too broad will not provide sufficient focus and structure for the evaluation.

Too broad: How should the program be improved?

Revision: Is the medical information distributed by the program reaching the intended audience? If not, what are some strategies to improve service delivery?

• Do not confuse evaluation questions with survey/interview/focus group questions used for data collection.

Evaluation question: Is the information generated by the program being used by the scientific community?

Survey question: How often do you access the program's web portal to download information relevant for your research?

Part 4 – Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results (continued): Study Design

- Explain why the chosen design is appropriate
  - Experimental
    (e.g., randomized experiment)
  - Quasi-experimental
    (e.g., non-equivalent control group designs, interrupted time-series designs)
  - Non-experimental
    (e.g., correlational study, case study)

Don't despair – call EB!

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• Example of experimental design:

Randomly assigning post-doctoral trainees to two different curricula on writing successful grant proposals to determine which curriculum leads to a higher success rate.

• Example of quasi-experimental design:

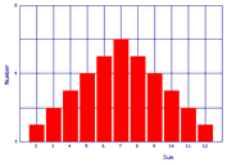
Comparing funded and unfunded applicants to evaluate the NIH Director's Pioneer Awards program.

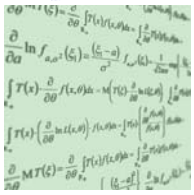
• Example of non-experimental design:

Conducting an environmental scan of genetics curricula guides and conducting focus groups with medical school students, faculty, and administrators for a needs assessment to develop a comprehensive web portal on medical genomics for medical school students and faculty.

Part 4 – Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results (continued): Study Design

- Describe the data collection methods
  - Strategies to generate new data: focus groups, surveys, interviews, etc.
  - Strategies to utilize existing data: data extraction, document reviews, etc.
- Describe the data analysis plan
  - Quantitative
    - Descriptive statistics
    - Inferential statistics
  - Qualitative
  - Mixed methods





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• If surveys or interviews will be used to collect data, it is helpful to include sample items (or include them in an appendix).

• Quantitative data analysis

- Descriptive statistics – used to tabulate, depict, and describe collections of data (e.g., means, median, range).
- Inferential statistics – used to make inferences about quantitative aspects of a population by examining a sample of data from that population (e.g., regression analysis, survival analysis, hierarchical linear modeling).

• Qualitative data analysis – used to examine data that are in the form of words rather than numbers (e.g., data from focus groups, personal interviews, observations).

• Mixed methods – using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions.

Part 4 – Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results (continued): Study Design

- Indicate whether special permission is needed and how it will be obtained (e.g., OMB clearance, IRB approval, Privacy Act compliance)
- Use the Evaluation Design Matrix as a tool for developing the evaluation proposal

Appendix A: Evaluation Planning Matrix

Key Questions (s) to be addressed	Information Required	Information Source(s)	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Limitations	What the analysis will allow you to say.
1A. What are the defining features and components of each Alliance program, and how do they align with the Alliance goals? Are there Alliance goals that are not being adequately addressed?	Program logic and features of each program; Alliance goals	PA/RFAs, OTIR Program Staff	Document Review, Interviews	Logic modeling; Comparison of goals and components; Qualitative analysis; Expert judgment	Logic modeling is somewhat subjective but well established; interviews will be used to allow program staff to confirm initial findings or raise objections	Anticipated output will be a matrix that maps program components against goals. The normative question will ultimately be answered by the expert panel in reference to the matrix.
1B. Given the program goals, does the distribution of resources within each program and across programs appear to be appropriate?	Program Budgets	Alliance Progress Report	Document Review	Budget analysis; Expert judgment	Budget information represents anticipated rather than actual expenditures	Again, the normative question will be answered by the expert panel based on the budget information.

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OMB Clearance Requirements

- Paperwork Reduction Act: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/laws/paperwork-reduction/
- NIH's Project Clearance Branch: http://odoerdb2.od.nih.gov/oer/policies/project_clearance/pcb.htm
- HHS resources on information collection: http://www.hhs.gov/ocio/policy/collection/index.html

Privacy Act Requirements

- Privacy Act of 1974: http://www.archives.gov/about/laws/privacy-act-1974.html
- NIH resources on the Privacy Act: http://oma.od.nih.gov/ms/privacy/privacyact.html

Part 4 – Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results (continued): Dissemination/Use of Results

- Include
  - What reports and other products will be produced?
  - To whom & why?
  - How will they be disseminated (e.g. website, briefing to stakeholders, conference)?

- Describe how the evaluation will support program management or policy-making

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• Given that ESA funds are intended to support evaluations to inform program management and policy-making, reviewers are interested in how the project will support these objectives, especially when the evaluation may have trans-NIH relevance.

• The purpose of evaluation at NIH is to assess progress toward achieving program objectives, identify any adjustments that may enhance program operations, and examine a broad range of information on program performance and its context. Based on the results of the evaluation, recommendations can be made to provide appropriate level of support to a program, restructure program components, reconceptualize program goals, and support other program activities.

Part 5 – Project Management and Budget Estimate: Estimated Timeline

- Align with activities described in previous sections
- Account for time needed to obtain special permission to collect data

Study Week	Task
Week 1	Award contract and hold kickoff meeting to review project management plan with milestones
Week 3	Develop survey instruments, focus group and interview protocols, and procedures for data collection
Week 5	Develop procedures for using database to track and update PI and collaborator information
Week 6	Review survey instrument, interview protocols, and analytic techniques
Week 7	Initiate focus groups and interviews
Week 9	Develop Web site to pretest survey instrument
Week 11	Initiate pretest of survey instrument
Week 13	Complete call-backs to survey pretest respondents and implement improvements in the instruments, instructions, format, etc.
Week 15	Submit OMB clearance package and accompanying survey instruments and documentation; submit OMB package to IC Project Officer for submission to OMB
Week 16	Initiate bibliometric analyses
Week 26	Complete bibliometric analyses
Week 38	Complete all analyses of interview and focus group data
Week 40	Initiate survey implementation; begin collecting and analyzing data from surveys
Weeks 44-46	Prepare and analyze survey data
Week 48	Complete survey data analyses
Week 52	Submit draft report
Week 54	Revise draft report
Week 56	Submit final report and documentation

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• The more complex the evaluation, the more detailed the timeline should be.

• Timelines that are too brief and/or too ambitious raise concerns for reviewers.

• Example of an inadequate timeline

- For an 18-month project estimated to cost more than $300,000, the following timeline was included:

  2008 | 2009

  Interviews with participants

  Site visits

  Review of annual reports

  Expert panel

  Bibilometric analyses

  Interviews with NIH staff

  Analysis of non-participant surveys

• Developing a realistic timeline is a helpful exercise to prepare for the contract phase. A timeline is considered realistic when the time allocated for each major task is reasonable given its complexity and the level of effort required (e.g., 6-9 months to obtain OMB clearance).

Part 5 – Project Management and Budget Estimate (continued)

Project Implementation

- Describe how the evaluation will receive sufficient oversight and obtain relevant areas of expertise

  (e.g., Evaluation Advisory Committee required for applications requesting more than $250,000)

- Note that Evaluation Set-Aside funds may not be used to:
  - Hire an NIH grantee to evaluate a program from which the grantee is receiving support

Funding Amount Requested

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• Evaluation Set-Aside funds are primarily used to hire external contractors to help with NIH evaluation activities.

Developing a Budget Estimate

- **Budget Template 1 – Simple and Low Cost**
  - Direct Labor Costs are loaded with Fringe Benefits
  - Not applicable for projects that involve Consultants and/or Subcontractors

	A	B	C	D	E	F
4						
5						
6			**Evaluation Budget**			
7						
8	**Labor Costs (Includes - Fringe Benefits)[1]**					
9		*Labor Category*	*Hourly Rate [2]*	*Hours*	*Amount*	*Totals*
10					$ -	
11					$ -	
12					$ -	
13					$ -	
14		**Subtotal Labor Costs**				$ -
15						
16	**Other Direct Costs [3]**				*Amount*	
17		Misc. Supplies and Materials [4]			$ -	
18		Travel			$ -	
19		**Subtotal ODC**				$ -
20						
21		**Subtotal Labor and ODC**				$ -
22						
23	**Other Indirect Costs [5]**					
24	**General and Administrative (G&A) Cost**		*Percentage*			
25		(% of Labor and ODC)			$ -	
26		**Subtotal Labor, ODC and G&A**				$ -
27						
28			*Percentage*			
29	**Fee [6]**	Profit (% of total cost)			$ -	
30		**Subtotal Labor, ODC and G&A**				$ -
31						
32	**Total Estimated Costs**					$ -
33						
35						

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• The budget estimate provides a detailed listing of the costs associated with conducting the evaluation.

• Indicate the total estimated cost of the proposed evaluation, the amount of Evaluation Set-Aside funds requested, and any amount to be provided by the sponsoring IC(s). For costs that will be covered with ESA funds, include a detailed breakdown in the budget estimate.

• There are some costs that are not allowable, such as entertainment, salaries and travel of NIH employees, etc. For a detailed list of unallowable costs, please visit the OAMP website at http://oamp.od.nih.gov/dfas/unallowables.asp

Developing a Budget Estimate (continued)

- **Budget Template 2 – Detailed Labor Cost**
  - Direct Labor Costs are NOT loaded with Fringe Benefits
  - Travel costs are broken down by individual trips
  - Applicable for projects that involve Consultants and/or Subcontractors

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
6		Evaluation Budget					
7							
8	Direct Labor (DL) Costs [1]						
9		*Labor Category*		*Hourly Rate* [2]	*Hours*	*Amount*	*Totals*
10						$ -	
11						$ -	
12		Subtotal Direct Labor Costs					$ -
13							
14	Indirect Labor Costs [3]			*Percentage*			
15		Fringe Benefits (% of DL)				$ -	
16		Subtotal Labor Costs (Direct + Indirect)					$ -
17							
18	Other Direct Costs (ODC) [4]		*No. of People*	*Cost*	*No. of days*	*Amount*	
19		Misc. Supplies and Materials [5]				$ -	
20		Honoraria [6]				$ -	
21		Travel Costs [7]:					
22		*Trip A - [Insert Location]*					
23		*Transportation*				$ -	
24		*Lodging (per night)*				$ -	
25		*Meals and Incidentals*				$ -	
26		*Trip B - [Insert Location]*					
27		*Transportation*				$ -	
28		*Lodging (per night)*				$ -	
29		*Meals and Incidentals*				$ -	
30		Subtotal ODC					$ -
31							
32		Subtotal Labor and ODC					$ -
33							
34	Other Direct Labor Costs [8]			*Hourly Rate*	*Hours*	*Amount*	
35		*Consultants* [9]					
36							$ -
37							
38							
39		*Subcontractors* [10]					
40		Subcontractor A				$ -	
41							$ -
42							
43		Subtotal					$ -
44							
45	Other Indirect Costs [11]			*Percentage*			
46	General and Administrative (G&A) Cost	(% of Labor and ODC)				$ -	
47		Subtotal Labor, ODC and G&A					$ -
48							
49				*Percentage*			
50	Fee [12]	Profit (% of total cost)				$ -	
51		Subtotal Labor, ODC, G&A and Fee					$ -
52							
53	Total Estimated Costs						$
54							

23

• The budget estimate provides a detailed listing of the costs associated with conducting the evaluation.

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Developing a Budget Estimate (continued)

- **Budget Template 3 – Multiple Tasks/Periods**
  - Proposed project is divided into multiple tasks or time periods
  - Direct Labor Costs are NOT loaded with Fringe Benefits
  - Travel costs are broken down by individual trips
  - Applicable for projects that involve Consultants and/or Subcontractors

5							
6					Evaluation Budget		
7							
8				Task/Period 1		Task/Period 2	
9	Direct Labor (DL) Costs [1]						
10		Labor Category	Hourly Rate [2]	Hours	Total	Hours	Total
11			$ -		$ -		$ -
12			$ -		$ -		$ -
13			$ -		$ -		$ -
14			$ -		$ -		$ -
15		Subtotal Direct Labor Costs	0	0	0	0	
16							
17	Indirect Labor Costs [3]		Percentage				
18		Fringe Benefits (% of DL)			0		
19		Subtotal Labor Costs (Direct + Indirect)			0		
20							
21	Other Direct Costs (ODC) [4]		Rate	Quantity	Total	Quantity	Total
22		Misc. Materials & Supplies [5]					$ -
23		Honoraria [6]			$ -		$ -
24		Travel Costs [7]:					
25		Transportation			$ -		$ -
26		Lodging (per night)			$ -		$ -
27		Meals and Incidentals			$ -		$ -
28		Subtotal ODC			$ -		
29							
30		Subtotal Labor and ODC			$ -		
31							
32	Other Direct Labor Costs [8]						
33	Consultants [9]		Hourly Rate	Hours	Total	Hours	Total
34		Consultant A		4		4	
36	Sub-Contractor [10]						
37		Sub-Contractor A			$ -		$ -
38							
39		Subtotal Other Labor Costs			$ -		$ -
40							
41		Subtotal			$ -		$ -
42							
43	Other Indirect Costs [11] General and Administrative (G&A) Cost		Percentage				
44		(% of Labor and ODC)			$ -		$ -
45		Subtotal Labor, ODC and G&A			$ -		$ -
46							
47			Percentage				
48	Fee [12]	Profit (% of total cost)			$ -		$ -
49							
50	Total Estimated Cost				$ -		$ -
51							

24

• The budget estimate provides a detailed listing of the costs associated with conducting the evaluation.

• Indicate the total estimated cost of the proposed evaluation, the amount of Evaluation Set-Aside funds requested, and any amount to be provided by the sponsoring IC(s). For costs that will be covered with ESA funds, include a detailed breakdown in the budget estimate.

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What Reviewers Look For in an Application

All sections are complete.

There is no “guesswork” for reviewers.

The purpose of the evaluation is clear.

All parts of the application are consistent and logical.

(e.g., program goals are linked to study questions and variables; project scope and activities are consistent with timeline and budget)

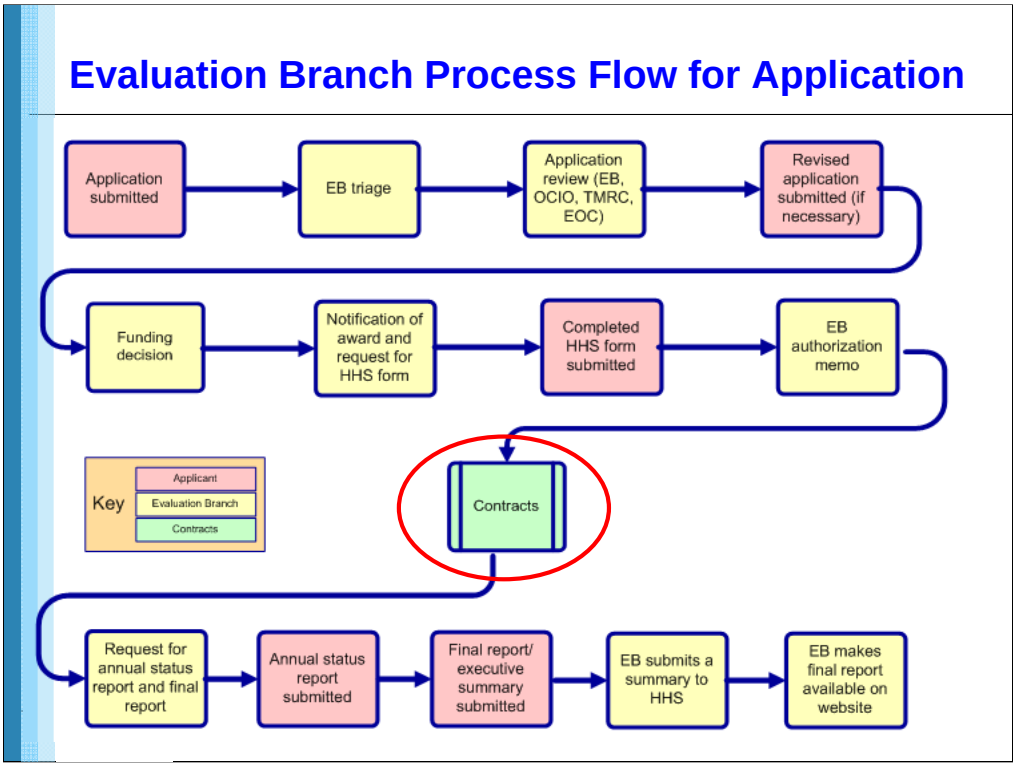
The design is feasible and likely to produce valid results.

It addresses all requirements and regulations.

(e.g., Paperwork Reduction Act, Privacy Act, Protection of Human Subjects)

There is sufficient project oversight and expertise in evaluation and other areas.

The evaluation aims to support program management and policy-making.



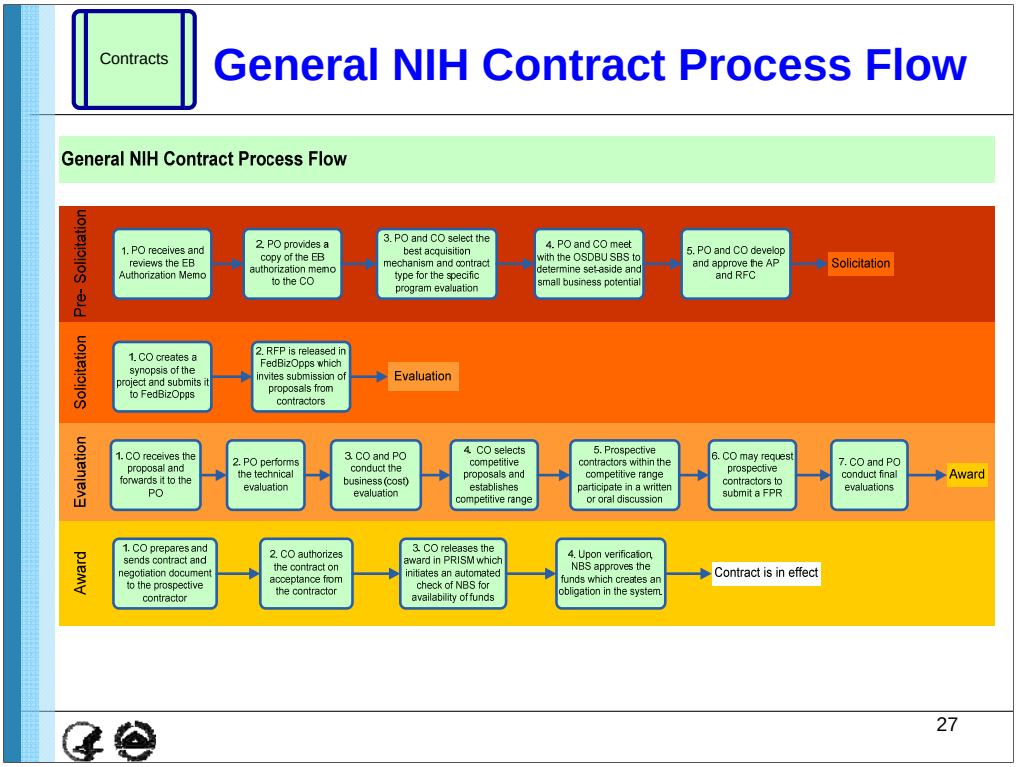
Abbreviations:

EB = Evaluation Branch

OCIO = Office of the Chief Information Officer

TMRC = Technical Merit Review Committee

EOC = Evaluation Oversight Committee



Abbreviations

AP: Acquisition Plan
CO: Institute or Center Contracting Officer
EB: Evaluation Branch
FedBizOpps: Federal Business Opportunities
FPR: Final Proposal Revision
NBS: NIH Business Systems
OSDBU: Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
PO: Institute or Center Project Officer
RFC: Request For Contract
RFP: Request For Proposal
SBS: Small Business Specialist

Adapted from:

DHHS Project Officer's Handbook
NIH Policy Manual 6315-1
A Guide to NIH Acquisition Process
NIH Contract Award, Obligation and Payment Cycle Memorandum (Sept 30, 2008)
DHHS Acquisition Regulation (HHSAR)
Office of Acquisition Management and Policy (OAMP) Acquisition Process Mapping website http://acq-map.oamp.od.nih.gov

Link to the Office of Acquisition and Contracting Officer:
http://oamp.od.nih.gov/AcquisitionOffices/OA_Customer.asp

Note: This is a working document and created for illustration purposes only. Please contact your Contracting Office for timelines and further details.

Technical Assistance Available

- Application Support
  - Please contact us if you are:
    - Planning to apply for funding
    - Unsure which application form to use
    - Looking for help in preparing an application
    - Interested in having a draft of your application reviewed before submission
- General Evaluation Support
  - Guidance is available if you are:
    - Interested in learning more about evaluation and how it supports program planning and management
    - Developing an evaluation plan for your program
    - Prioritizing your program's evaluation needs
    - Trying to develop skills and/or resources to support evaluation
    - Unsure whether your evaluation activity is eligible for funding

HHS Examples of Projects Not Eligible for "Set-Aside" Funds

- The evaluation of individual local projects.
- On-site review and monitoring of local projects.
- The evaluation of individual 'R&D' experiments and demonstration projects.
- The continuing operation of management information systems or ongoing monitoring systems.

  The use of evaluation funds to finance the initial design and development of management information systems is limited to a maximum of two years.

- The continuing collection of baseline data.
- The assessment of prospective policies, where no programs yet exist.
- The planning and implementation of meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars or symposia not related to evaluation.

Contact Us

For information about the
NIH Evaluation Set-Aside Program:

- Visit our website

  http://dpcpsi.nih.gov/eb/

- Send e-mail to:

  evaluate@mail.nih.gov