

A Team Approach to Evaluation Design
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Uniqueness of Pennsylvania's 22 million \$ Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program
Management Entity (ME) housed in Department of Food Science
Programs implemented by both non-profit organizations (urban) and CES (rural)
CES has programs in 29 counties and accounts for 1/3 of total budget
15 subcontractors conduct programs in 8 counties, representing 2/3 of total budget
Subcontracts range from \$14,214 to \$2,147,735 in federal reimbursement

Evaluation responsibilities are shared by individual projects and Management Entity.
Objectives for each project are assessed locally while ME has responsibility to assess statewide impact.
CES-based NEP projects have successfully adopted elements of the state/federal EFNEP reporting system, but external subcontractors have generally not found this system appropriate for their needs.

Evaluation Unit within Management Entity:

Evaluator [Alison Harmon, Ph.D., RD (.75)]
Evaluation Associate, [Judy Gromis, MS, RD (1.00)]
Additional support provided under contract by the PSU Survey Research Center

Evaluation Associate – Reviews and provides feedback to projects on their quarterly technical reports. These reports contain the reporting information required by FNS. She also takes part in project site reviews.

Evaluator – Visits projects to discuss evaluation issues with project evaluators and project directors, develops state-level evaluation plan, conducts evaluation training for local projects. Collaborates with SRC on focused evaluation projects.

Our initial state level evaluation project is focused on newsletters distributed to food stamp eligible clients by the various NEP projects.

More than half (53%) of PA's match comes from State Food Purchase Program (SFPP).

Most newsletters are written and distributed by agencies using SFPP as match.

Who provides input to the PA NEP Evaluation Unit?

- PA NEP PI and Manager
- NEP Standing Committee of the PA NEN (Newsletter Evaluation Task Force)
- NEP Project Directors, staff and clients
- NEP Project Evaluation Consultants
- Social Science Research Institute (David Johnson and graduate students)
- Cooperative Extension Evaluation Specialist (Nancy Ellen Kiernan)
- FNS (MARO)
- Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Why PA NEP has adopted a team approach to evaluation

- Diverse areas of expertise result in better questions
- Different policy perspectives result in more relevant questions
- Different clients react to different evaluation strategies
- Different program objectives need to be evaluated in different ways
- People don't like to have evaluation designs "imposed" on them by "experts"

The Challenges

Find common impacts across very different programs serving diverse audiences.

Find realistic ways to measure and report those impacts

Assure local projects an opportunity to measure and report what is meaningful to them