

Evaluating Your Age-Friendly Community Program



AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities
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Presenter: Margaret B. Ne

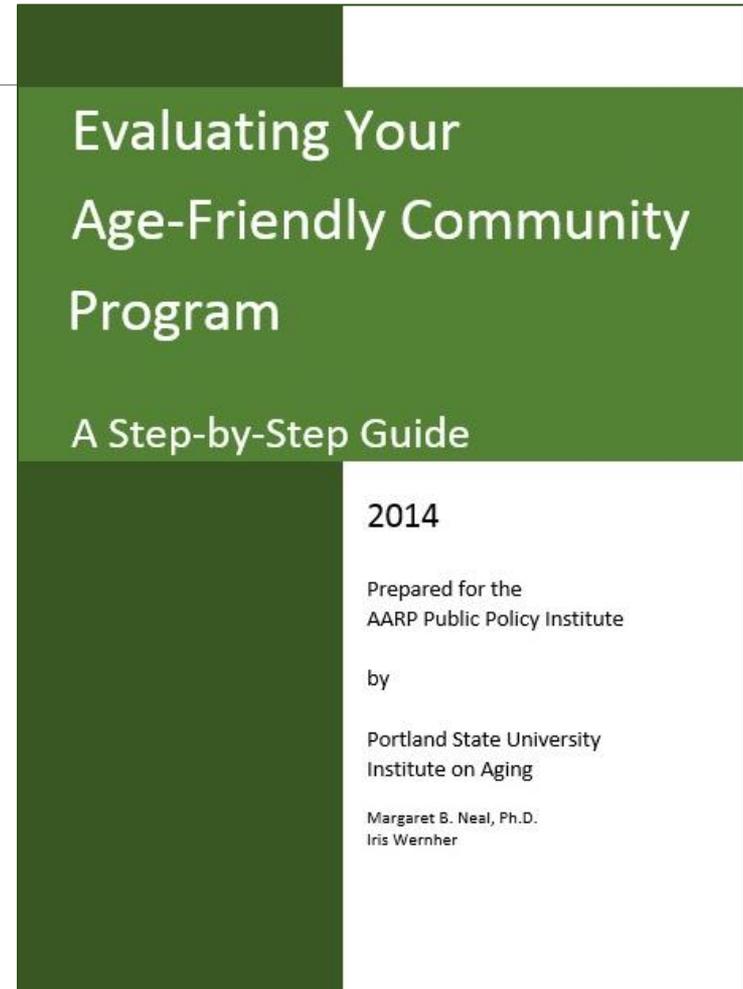


Portland State
UNIVERSITY

Institute on Aging

The Step-by-Step Guide

- Created upon request of AARP
- Based on our experience in Portland and experience as program evaluators
- Developed to help you document and evaluate your community's progress in becoming more age friendly



“Evaluating Your Age-Friendly Program”

“...often the language used in evaluation can be challenging, but with a small dose of courage and the embracing of a few key terms, the building blocks of evaluation can come alive and help guide your work.”

- Jenny Campbell



Why evaluate?

To answer important questions!

- Did your community make progress in the areas you intended to improve? How much?
- Which areas still need improvement? For whom or which groups or places?
- Were there barriers/facilitators to the implementation of your action plan? If so, how can they be dealt with/utilized in the future?
- Have your initial goals changed over time? If so, why and how? Should new indicators be used to measure these new goals?

Why else should we evaluate our programs?

- Inspire momentum, commitment, and creativity in those involved
- Help attract supporters who are not involved yet
- Gain a better understanding of how to focus your efforts or change your strategies
- Share your experiences to help other communities to be successful with their initiatives

When evaluate?

- ***From the very beginning!***
- The earlier you begin to document your activities and track the changes that your initiative makes or does not make (yet), the more efficiently you can adapt your plans, strategies, and efforts.

What to evaluate?

Inputs

= The resources that are put into a program or factors that facilitate its success

Outputs

= The type and amount of program-related activities

Outcomes

= The changes, or results, that are hoped to be achieved through program activities; the desired goals

Some terms relevant to our Network:

Baseline assessment

= The measurement of the status quo before any actions are taken

Action plan

= Document that describes actions planned to improve the status quo

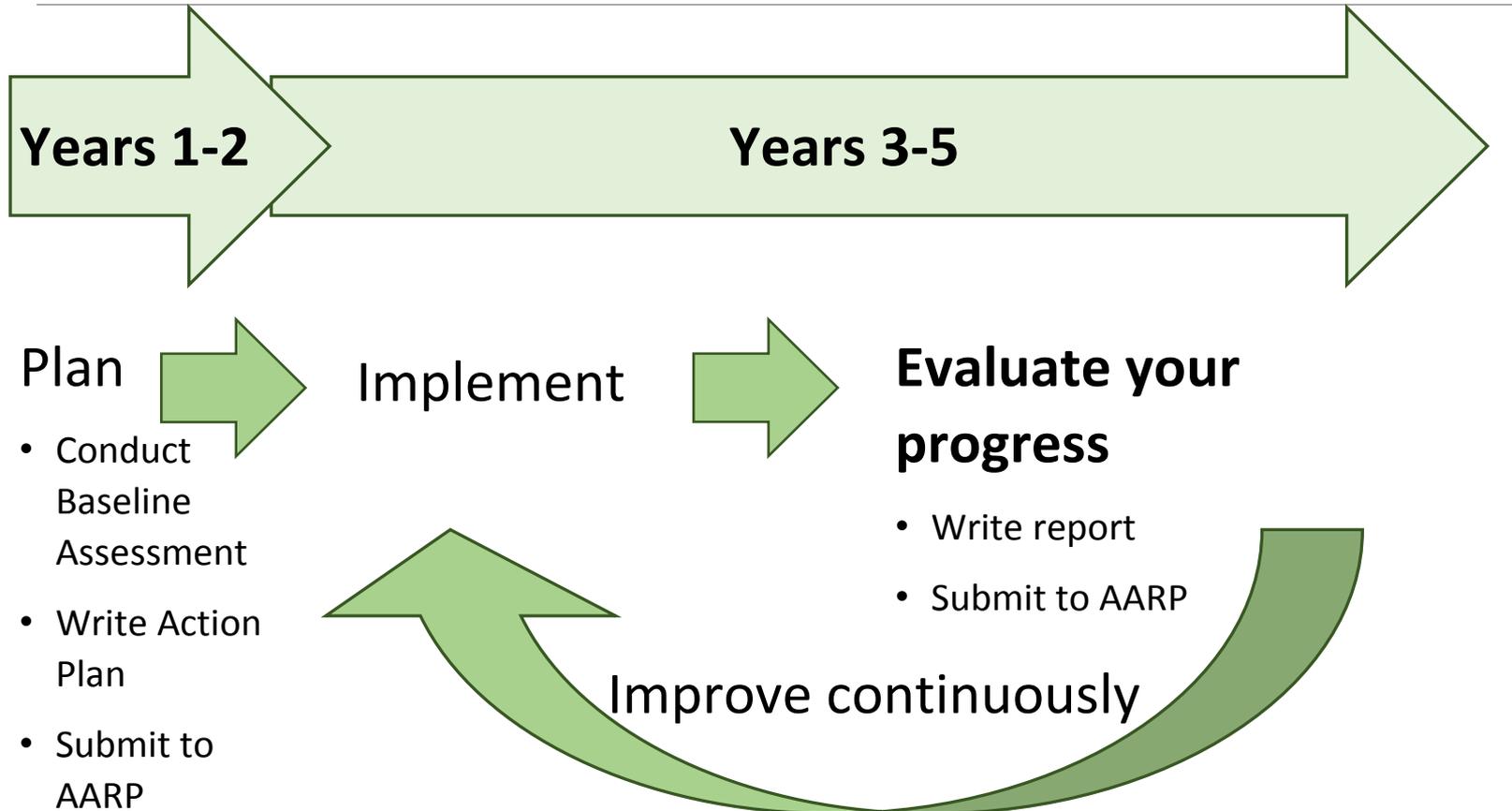
Indicators of success

= Measures that describe whether or not a program/activity has led to the expected results, and if it has, to what extent

Cycle of continual improvement

= Continuous sequence of planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving a program (iterative refinement process)

The AARP Network Program Cycle



The Action Plan

- Is a living document
- Revisions and amendments are a sign of program improvement and progress

Example:

Improvement among some groups' social inclusion but not others, SO

→ New specific activities developed and implemented to address

Action Plan for an Age-Friendly Portland



Prepared by:

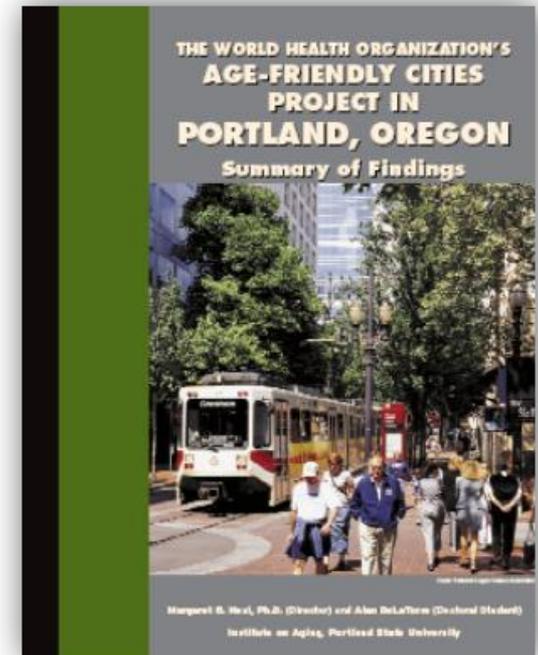
The Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council

October 8, 2013

Inputs – definition and examples

Resources put into your initiative and/or factors that facilitate its success:

- Time (e.g., staff - hours devoted)
- Funding (e.g., paid staff, project funding)
- Commitment and involvement of stakeholders, including older adults (e.g., advisory council with engaged, collaborative members who represent all relevant sectors - # of members, % participating, hours devoted, types of expertise represented, #/types of sectors represented)
- The results from your baseline assessment



Outputs

Everything launched or “produced” through the inputs: activities, policies, programs (action steps taken)

- The activities undertaken – examples:
- Action plan itself developed and approved
- Program designed to create awareness of the value of older adults
- Policy created to encourage development of affordable housing
- Program to assess businesses’ age friendliness
- Installation of benches in parks



Outcomes

What happened as a result; the changes, results that occurred

Short-/Medium-Term Outcomes – Examples:

- Improved awareness of the value of older adults
- More units of affordable housing
- More businesses certified as age friendly
- More benches in parks
- Designated seating in public transportation
- % of time seats are yielded to older adults

Outcomes (cont.)

What happened as a result; the changes, results that occurred

Long-Term Outcomes – Examples:

- Improved mental health of older adults
- Improved intergenerational relations/community cohesion
- Improved economic well-being



thecoolhunter.net

Important characteristics of indicators

Measurable – can the indicator be quantified or observed in some way?

Meaningful – does the indicator link to a goal or action of the initiative?

Possible to influence locally – is the indicator subject to influence by the local government or private sector? (If the indicator is measured only at the state or national level, it will not be very useful for tracking change at the local level)

Sensitive to change – can the indicator be expected to change over time (1-5 years) in an observable way?

Possible to disaggregate – can subgroup comparisons (e.g., by age group, gender, income level) be made?

What kind of data will you use to measure improvement?

Quantitative (numbers) or Qualitative (personal stories, photos) Data?

- **Use numbers** (quantitative data) to show the reach of the program (e.g., number of participants, costs versus benefits of program, satisfaction ratings)
- **Use personal stories** to convey the difference a program component has made in individuals' lives – the initiative's personal impacts



Source: cav-upv.blogspot.com



Credit: Bridge Meadows

Will you use secondary or primary data?

Secondary data = Existing data

- Census data, program administrative records, Walkscore ratings

Primary data = Data you collect specifically for the purpose of evaluating your community's age-friendly initiative

- Special survey, interviews, focus groups, program records kept for this specific purpose

How do you decide which type to use? The data's:

- Ease/cost
- Timeliness
- Appropriateness

Writing your evaluation report

– Sample outline

I. Program Description (including inputs)

- a. Background (initiation, people and partners involved, available and expended resources)
- b. Baseline assessment (methods and findings)
- c. Program goals/desired outcomes, proposed activities/strategies, and corresponding indicators (from action plan)

II. Program Implementation (description)

- a. Activities/strategies implemented to date
 - b. Factors facilitating implementation
 - c. Barriers/setbacks to implementation
 - d. Description and explanation of deviations from program
 - e. Plans for future avoidance/handling of program impediments
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Writing your evaluation report – Sample outline (cont.)

III. Methods for Evaluating the Program

- a. Evaluation team
- b. Data used

IV. Findings – Program Outputs (and outcomes, if available)

- a. By domain, using indicators in action plan or developed subsequently; quantitative and qualitative; where possible, compare to baseline assessment
- b. Other outputs
- c. Outcomes (if data are available)

Writing your evaluation report – Sample outline (cont.)

V. Conclusions

- a. Program strengths, accomplishments
- b. Program weaknesses, areas for improvement
- c. Plans for future improvement
- d. Lessons/material to share with Network
- e. Suggestions for Network to improve
- f. Plans for publication of evaluation results

The next cycle of continual improvement begins

- Refine your action plan
 - Note action items accomplished
 - Modify action items partially accomplished, as needed
 - Add new action items
- Learn from other communities' experiences, successes, cautionary tales!
- Celebrate your successes!
- Share your lessons learned!

Questions? Comments?

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Please check out the Age-Friendly
Portland website:

www.agefriendlyportland.org