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Assessing agency program evaluation methods in a municipality

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ASSESSING AGENCY PROGRAM EVALUATION

METHODS IN A MUNICIPALITY

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the status of program evaluation methods in agencies offering services to children, youth, and families in a municipality. Telephone interview and existing data were used to gather information on 29 agencies. Agency characteristics such as size and funding streams were determined as well as methods that the agencies use to evaluate effectiveness of services. Overall, some agencies (34.5%) were scored 'Poor', a few (10.3%) were scored 'Average', and the majority scored (55.2%) scored 'Above Average' in their program evaluation methods. Agency size was not found to be associated with program evaluation sophistication. Suggestions for ensuring agencies are utilizing quality program evaluation methods in their programs are discussed. Recommendations for future research include testing interventions aimed at improving the quality of program evaluation among agencies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to our research advisor, Dr. Laurie Smith, Director of the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino, for the useful comments, remarks and engagement through the learning process of this research project. Furthermore, we would like to thank the City Council of the surveyed municipality which allowed us the privilege of employing this study for the purposes of community development. Also, we would like to thank those agency representatives who participated in the survey, who have willingly shared their time during the process of interviewing. Finally, we would like to thank our loved ones, who have supported us throughout the entire process. We are forever grateful for your love and support.

DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate the project, "ASSESSING AGENCY PROGRAM EVALUATION METHODS IN A MUNICIPALITY", to the children, youth, and families residing in the municipality. It is our hope that the success of the agencies offering services to the community will transcend into the lives of those they serve.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Our nation's most recent economic downturn affected every American and caused up to a nine percent unemployment rate nationwide as well as significant losses in corporate revenues and stock evaluations (Salamon, 2009). The non-profit sector has been impacted by the economic downturn and forced to adjust to the new reality. Salamon (2009) mentions a recent study in which 80 percent of the non-profit agencies in the nation experienced a negative fiscal impact as a result of the recession. For example, Salamon identified a 150 year-old non-profit organization, which for the first time in the duration of its operation, experienced the possibility of closure. Adjusting to the new economic circumstances has meant cutting back on spending while agencies serving children youth and families continue to serve this population to the best of their ability (Salamon, 2009). Ultimately, reduced financial resources impair the impact the agency is able to have on serving the needs of the people represented in the community.

Problem Statement

Due to the recent recession, authorities who oversee government funding at the city, state, and national levels have had to make difficult decisions when making necessary cuts in the budget. As a result of these cuts in the budget, city government administrators may determine there is a significant need to identify what types of programs are offered to constituents in the municipality to understand the network of agencies offering needed services to children, youth, and families within the community and to assess the impact of those services.

Agencies, previously receiving significant assistance from government grants, are now facing financial hardships as well. In fact, many non-profit agencies are suffering and some have closed down (Silverman, 2009). The financial deficit experienced by many nonprofits are, in part due to the lack of available government funds, yet are predominantly caused by experiencing an overall reduction from all sources of financial assistance, including the amount of financial assistance received from private donors, fundraising, board member contributions, and most other forms of economic development. Authorities, who oversee the allocation of government funds, are now more carefully deciding which agencies will continue to receive funds and at what amounts, as well as deciding which agencies they will cease from supporting financially altogether. The requirement that agencies show how their programs are impacting community members is increasing as this information is heavily influencing which agencies will receive future funding. Because of this, competition is likely to increase amongst agencies who are applying for these funds.

Since there is limited research which assesses the effectiveness of agency programs applying for government funding, this research study will begin to explore this topic. Because the economic downturn has impacted government funding all over the United States, this research will benefit municipalities across the nation. Now that funding has become more limited, it is likely that it will become more imperative for agencies to take more seriously the need to track how their programs are benefiting constituents of the community they serve. Because of this, it is critical to begin researching this topic to better equip authorities overseeing government funds when making difficult decisions that may lead to a drawback of resources for some agencies, and potentially a vast drawback of agencies themselves.

In addition to this, the study will assist a local city council representing the municipality to be aware of what services are offered in the community, the quality of evaluation methods utilized in assessing these services, and where there are gaps or overlaps in services in the city.

In summary, three predominant factors led to this project of assessing programs that serve children, youth, and families in a municipality: increased budget cuts as a result of the failing economy, the demand for agencies to provide reports on program effectiveness, and the lack of research that is currently available on this type of evaluation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the state of development of program evaluation methods among agencies, which provide services to children, youth, and families in a municipality. This information will be used to provide city council members who oversee community resources and government funding with information about the quality of agency program evaluation methods in the pool of agencies. The citizens of the municipality will also be served by the information offered from this research as they will have access to the research outcomes documented in public record. The clients of these city-funded programs should know how the programs in which they participate will affect their lives. Furthermore, this knowledge should be based on the application of evidence-based practice that organizations follow in their programs. City-funded agencies will more frequently be required to provide objective results on outcomes revealing how their programs are directly impacting their clientele. Consequently, this research will provide increased avenues of accountability for city-funded organizations and programs.

In previous years, agencies have not been required to provide detailed evidence to substantiate their claims showing the effectiveness of their programs. Recent budget cuts have influenced city council members in a nearby municipality to look at the effectiveness of agency programs in order to determine which agencies may receive future funding as well as to become aware of where there are gaps or an overlay of services in the community. Moreover, city council members are concerned with the lack of information that has been provided by agencies they have previously funded. Now agencies will be expected to provide ample evidence to show the effectiveness of their programs when applying for future government grants and other funds. When agencies present the results of their programs, they will give city council members reason to continue funding their programs because this will show how their programs are better serving children and families in their community. City council members, and other authorities who oversee the allocation of government funding, have determined that areas of accountability need to be strengthened when choosing which agencies will receive future funds.

The mission statement of the local city council describes their promise to develop, implement, and sustain a process while evaluating present programs and assuring policies are effectively assisting their community members. In an effort to keep their agreement to the constituents represented in the municipality they serve, the city council members have extended a pilot study, previously researched last year, exploring how city-funded agencies utilize the funds given them. In addition, they are using this research to further develop the criteria of eligibility for future agencies who apply for funds.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

Evaluating the effectiveness of programs that serve children, youth, and their families is vital because the progress of our clients is only as good as the programs in which they participate. How do we know if we are better serving children and families in the community if we do not have avenues of assessing the programs to which we refer them? We cannot. In an effort to make substantial progress with children and families in the community, we must know that the programs we are choosing to fund are effectively helping them towards success. With the decline of the economy, key decision makers increasingly have to make decisions to cut programs and they want to make that decision responsibly. In order to do this, they need information. They need to know the facts when it comes to how city-funded agencies are utilizing the financial support given them. The results of this research may change the way the municipality makes future decisions on where they should allocate funds and how they go about doing so. While there are many negative aspects of the downfall of the economy, one positive factor remains clear: it has caused key decision-makers to be even more careful with the funding they do have, and that is a beneficial to the overall community.

As a result of this research, macro social work practitioners will have increased opportunities for working alongside cities and counties in an effort to make in-depth assessments for key-decision makers. In the future, this may lead to changing standards for cities and counties, requiring increased accountability measures and records when determining where to allocate funds. This will change the way organizations evaluate their own programs and will cause them to take program effectiveness more seriously. It will further assist city-funded programs in being more responsible with the financial support they receive. The research of this project will also contribute to the development of better research assessments conducted by city-funded agencies towards their programs.

While we will be using all seven steps of the generalist model throughout this project, the main step of focus will be assessment. In the previous academic school year, MSW students conducted a pilot study which focused on engaging the community agencies by gaining identifying information for the major agencies involved. This included categorizing the agencies by the different services they provided to children and families, which included: educational services, hospital/medical services, child welfare services, counseling services, case management services, legal services. In this phase of the project, we will be assessing how the different types of city-funded agencies utilized the funds granted to them by the City of Redlands. Specifically, we will be assessing the extent to which these agencies measure the impact of their program on clients. After this phase is completed using a standardized measurement tool, the city may implement a strategy choosing which programs they will continue to financially support and what they will require from agencies applying for city-funds in the future.

This area of research is relevant to child welfare practice in that it provides further research towards the effectiveness of programs that serve child welfare clients. Many of the agencies include those agencies that serve child welfare clients such as: day care agencies, schools in both of the public and private sectors, counseling centers, medical clinics, and hospitals. This research will help ensure that children within child welfare are being served effectively in the community. In essence, the research project will evaluate to the extent possible the effectiveness of city-funded programs that service children, youth, and their families with in the municipality. It will also summarize the degree to which program evaluation methods are used in community agencies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following literature review encompasses an overview of the professional literature related to assessing program evaluations conducted in agencies that serve children, youth, and families. Although research that considers this topic is limited, there is some professional research by government authorities who oversee the allocation of federal, state, and/or city funding for qualifying agencies which reviews program evaluations. The chapter will include the following topics and subsections: the impact of government funding on program evaluation methods, the importance of employing quality program evaluation methods, and accountability of government funds. The chapter will go on to review commonly used program evaluation models and tools. The final section of the chapter will consider the theories which guided the conceptualization of this research study.

The Impact of Government Funding on Program Evaluation Methods

When assessing agency program evaluation methods in a municipality, it is important to consider the impact of financial funding on the development of program evaluation methods. The accessibility of government funds may affect the quality of program evaluation methods an agency employs over program assessment and program development. In addition to the limited amount of government funds received by an agency, the reductions an agency has over the total operational budget may also contribute to not prioritizing funds towards employing different types of program evaluation methods. As budget cuts continue to increase throughout city government administrations as well as nonprofit and other business models, there may be less money allocated to evaluating existing programs. The research conveyed in this section of the literature considers how government financial assistance contributes to the quality of agency program evaluation methods in a municipality.

In his exploratory research study, Stalebrink (2009) discusses how intergovernmental dependencies, or agencies which largely rely on governmental funds, impact the outcomes of Program Assessment Rating Tools (PART) in situations when federal funds are dispersed to applying agencies in cities, counties, and states within the national government. Evidence presented in the research supports the hypothesis that funded programs under these situations score considerably higher on portions of the PART instrument. On July 16, 2002, the President's Management Council established the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) which was designed to evaluate government-funded programs for the purpose of ensuring federal money was being spent to effectively support programs.

The PART was included in the President's budget and performance integration initiative which requires federal agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs in four assessment components: program purpose and design, strategic planning, program management, and program results and accountability. The assessment of programs is divided into categories based on the met criteria, including: ineffective, adequate, moderately effective, or effective. Moreover, the identifier of results not demonstrated (RND) is also used if the OMB determines the program lacked adequate performance measures to categorize its effectiveness utilizing the PART method.

This research examined the impact of two types of intergovernmental dependencies: the ability and willingness of federally-funded agencies to align their program goals with national performance goals and to review the responsiveness of these agencies to fulfill the requirements outlined by PART. The requirements identified in PART are for federally-funded agencies to provide accurate reports on how funds were used in their programs and to utilize the managerial procedures listed in PART. Programs which received federal block grants were included in the sample because these programs are generally given greater responsibility in comparison to others that receive federal funds.

The PART method-design was used to assess 793 programs between 2003 and 2007 (Stalebrink, 2009). Within these programs, 507 received one of the rankings and 284 of the programs sampled were categorized as RND. Researchers tested the null hypothesis and found there was a significant difference in scores received by block grant programs and other programs that are not as dependent on intergovernmental cooperation. These findings give statistical significance to the results of the study with agency programs other than block grant programs, substantiating the need to increase accountability measures across all types of agency programs applying for government financial assistance.

The study concluded that the dependency on federally-funded agencies had a sizeable impact on the overall PART score with more than 50 percent of responses relating to the cooperation of federally funded agencies. In comparison to examining evaluation methods among agencies in the City surveyed for Stalebrink's research project, the findings indicate that the response of agency participants has a direct influence on the improvement of the agency program evaluation methods. Based on this research, agencies that are willing to adhere to the program evaluation methods of their funder are more likely to have better quality evaluation methods and to receive future federal funds.

Another current study (Hendricks & Barkley, 2012) assesses the distribution of funds by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001 (MCKV) to local education agencies (LEAs) which have not provided evaluation outcomes of their financial assistance programs since its establishment nearly a decade ago. Because of a lack of available research on this topic, authors Hendricks and Barkley outlined a systems-theory framework in their article, "Necessary, but Not Sufficient: The McKinney-Vento Act and Academic Achievement in North Carolina". Researchers evaluated the academic standing in reading comprehension and mathematics of students in grade 6 who received funding from LEAs in order to assess the impact of this financial support towards academic progress. These researchers also used a control group by analyzing the academic progress of other homeless students in grade 6 who did not receive this financial support. Researchers found students who received financial support from LEAs scored similarly in end-of-grade EOG exit testing scores as students who did not receive supporting funds from LEAs. Although the MCKV was established as a federally funded initiative and purposed to improve the academic scores of homeless students, this research study found there to be no difference in the outcomes of funded and non-funded homeless students. The failure of MCKV authorities to evaluate the academic programs extended to homeless students through LEAs is considerable in regards to questioning the accuracy of how the agency is evaluating the impact of financial assistance on the academic achievement of homeless students. Based on the findings of this research, it will be critical for program authorities, who have received federal funds, to accurately evaluate their programs effectively and consistently. When programs are evaluated, problems in program development or ineffective strategies surface, which allows program authorities the opportunity to restructure and improve the development of their programs. If program authorities do not invest in quality program evaluation, they are not able to gauge current or potential issues as accurately, and are then risking the ineffectiveness of their programs.

The Importance of Employing Quality Program Evaluation Methods

As an introduction to the current research on the importance of employing quality program evaluation methods, peer-reviewed articles are presented which study the assessment of program evaluation methods in agencies which offer varied types of services, such as: program evaluation in healthcare settings, educational settings, and in youth mentorship settings which are the categories most representative of the agencies surveyed in this study.

In a recent study, researchers Alkon and Cole (2012) illustrate key National Health and Safety Standards (NHS) outlined in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs and compare this to the Indiana Health and Safety Checklist exercised in their health care setting in Indiana. This research was employed in order to determine the measurement of reliability over their agency's programs as categorized by the Indiana Health and Safety Checklist. This checklist was used to improve the California Childcare Health Program's, "Health and Safety Checklist", which catalogs 87 items and 11 subscales. Researchers compared these checklists in an effort to improve the quality of Indiana's health and safety standards while serving children. Researchers assessed 82 ECE programs by comparing their current checklist to the California Childcare Program's Health and Safety Checklist. After this comparison, researchers found 13 of the 87 items did not meet the NHS criteria in over 50 percent of the agency's total ECE programs. The findings from assessing the agency's program evaluation methods assisted the agency in restructuring their programs so that they could better serve their clients. This research provides a current example of how agencies, which provide healthcare services to children, can assess their programs by comparing their standards of care to a reliable tool accredited by evidence-based research. In the discussion segment of the article, the researchers determined the California Childcare Program's Health and Safety Checklist was an instrumental tool which assisted in identifying what was lacking within health and safety standards across numerous counties in Indiana. This research was utilized to improve health and safety standards for children and families in healthcare facilities located in Indiana cities and counties.

Authors of the article, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Homework Centers in Libraries", Huffman and Rua (2008), evaluate the influence of library homework centers on academic achievement. After annual academic testing yielded poor scores in the Maple Heights School District of Ohio, the community decided to develop an after school program in their public library that would academically assist those students who needed help to improve their low test scores. This after school program was named the "Homework Center" and was later established as a tutoring center predominantly run by volunteers in the community and utilized very limited funding. Program facilitators began administering various interventions, including: reading time, homework time, and other educational activities which extended tutoring to other children in the community. As the amount of participants steadily increased, the center began to keep track of client attendance and to employ pre-test and post-test evaluations and educational programs and services. The center was able to earn additional funding after keeping record of their program evaluations because it allowed their funder to see how the center was benefiting the children who received services from the agency.

Researchers Huffman and Rua (2008) conducted a study reviewing the program evaluations employed in nine homework centers in an Ohio county. These centers served a combination of 818 individual students, held 12,225 total student visits, and 3,735 total student tutor sessions. The parents of the participating students filled out a pre-test and post-test exam for each student enrolling in the program. Upon entering and exiting the homework center, parents were asked to respond on a scale of one through seven, one meaning, "No, not at all" and seven meaning, "Yes, absolutely" to statements designed to help the researcher's track the child's current academic standing, ability to complete homework assignments and tasks independently, to what extent the child needed assistance improving his/her grade, how often the child complains about school, the level of behavioral issues the child is exhibiting at school and at home, how often the child is attending school, and to what extent the parent is assisting the child at home with homework assignments and other school-related activities.

Children who received services from the center were also asked to submit a voluntary survey as a response to their experiences from participating at the center (Huffman & Rua, 2008). This survey asked students to respond on a scale of one through seven to the above mentioned criteria asked of the parents. The children surveyed were able to indicate on the survey to what extent they were able to complete academic tasks and assignments independently, how often they are attending school, and if they would recommend the 'Homework Center' to their friends.

Children participants were also allowed to write any additional comments regarding their experience at the center on a space indicated below the following statements. The participating sample for this research study included 39 parent/guardian participants, grades K-10, 51 percent male students, and 49 percent female students (Huffman & Rua, 2008). One-hundred percent of participating parents identified their children comprehending their homework assignments better, 79 percent identified improved grades for their children, and 79 percent indicated their children spent more time on their homework assignments on a daily basis. While 49 percent of parent participants indicated that their children complained less about school, 38 percent identified that their children did not complain about school preceding enrollment in the Homework Center.

This study shows the importance of employing quality program evaluations as it gives insight to how these evaluations directly affect the funding an agency receives. Agencies are progressively being expected to reveal how their programs are impacting their clientele. This new development is contributing to a higher standard for agencies to reflect in their program evaluation methods. Furthermore, the article depicts how the advancement of program evaluation methods resulted in higher measures of accountability for government authorities when distributing funds as well as for agencies who receive financial support. Competing agencies seeking federal funds may also benefit from receiving financial governmental support if they are prepared to assess their current methods of program evaluation and improve them so that they clearly defend how their programs are impacting their clients.

Accountability in Distributing Government Funds

In addition to reviewing research which substantiates the need for agencies to evaluate their programs and considering the impact of government funding on the quality of program evaluation methods, it is also significant to consider how accountability measures over the distribution of government funds impact the standards agencies place over their funded programs. This section will introduce peer-reviewed literature which discusses the how accountability in distributing government funds impacts an agency's employment of quality program evaluation methods.

Kasdin evaluates how government authorities use incentive-based performance measures as a way of influencing program authorities to promote the effectiveness of their programs (2010). The article further reviews methods that could be used to motivate a higher quality of program effectiveness in agencies. One goal outlined in this article is performance budgeting which assists program authorities in developing quality programs by helping them learn how to effectively allocate government funding into their programs and program evaluation methods. This assistance provided for more funds being used towards program evaluation and the quality of programs within the agency. One limitation of this study was that the incentives were more motivating for agencies than others. Because of this, performance outcomes varied greatly among agencies. In regards to this research, agencies may also benefit from receiving assistance in developing a structured budget. This may contribute to their effectiveness in utilizing government funds towards a higher quality of program evaluation and to the quality of their programs overall.

The analytical procedure applied to program evaluation presented by Hall (2008), addresses how agencies steward their resources and how agencies fulfill the goals outlined in their mission statement to their program performance measures. Moreover, the strategy presented in the study considers how agencies, which were previously funded, have allocated the funds granted to them the year prior. In order to evaluate a program in an effective manner, there is a need for City government administrators to evaluate a programs' progress throughout its stages (Skinner, 2010). One of the key components to evaluating the programs within the City is to identify vulnerabilities and strengths within agency programs. Identifying the traits that are functioning or not within the youth and children agencies will assist the City in properly distributing funds to programs. Also, the evaluation of these agencies will assist in assessing the effective usage of the current funding and whether there is gap or overlay of services being provided. Furthermore, in a current study (2011), Dorius presents a study which substantiates the use of an analytical approach to evaluating agency programs, showing the usefulness of utilizing measures of accountability in agency program evaluation methods. He also suggests utilizing predictive claims based on recent analytical figures, will also work to establish better accountability measures within an organization. This proactive approach will assist the City in effectively assessing these agencies which are competing for City funds. If an agency can expect they will be held accountable for the funds given them, it is likely the agency is more apt to monitor how their programs are impacting the clients who participate in their programs and aim to ensure their programs are indeed benefitting their clients. This research is valuable as a model for assessing the effectiveness of agency program evaluation methods based on their statement of purpose to fulfill the agency mission when applying for funds.

Current City Council Tools

In order to evaluate programs that serve children, youth and families that are being funded by the municipality of the City, "The Ten Tools" will be utilized (Gardner, 2005). The ten tools are a list of criteria which an administration may utilize to evaluate the effectiveness of an agency, such as: taking inventory, keeping score, monitoring program performance, mapping the local economy as it effects families, identifying the universe of need, tools for targeting, using a collaborative values inventory, framing issues in ethical terms, structuring direct feedback processes, and deliberative democracy methods. This model is being used as the guiding source of reference throughout this research study. Because the first phase of this model has already been applied, the second phase will be focused on for the purposes of this research (See Appendix B). Few cities have placed this model into practice. Taking this model into practice requires lengthy strategic planning to address all children and family programs (Gardner, 2005). The city council of the municipality has decided they would like to also use steps one through three of this tool in measuring program effectiveness of city-funded programs. City council members plan on applying the next steps of this model following the results of this pilot study. Project outcomes will continue to be monitored and effectiveness of city-funded-programs will begin to be considered.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

In application to the professional helping relationship between City government administrators who disperse funds to applying agencies, the basic premise of

Power-Dependency Theory is that social service agencies are dependant upon those who provide them with financial support. Peter Blau, who conceptualized this theory in 1964 (Hardina, 2003), determined that a power struggle is inevitable in all helping relationships. As later described in his text, Hardina presents a diagram depicting this helping relationship. The diagram shows the relationship between government or other funding agencies, to the organization receiving financial assistance and the organization's relationship to the clients who receive the services they provide. The organization which receives resources from the government or other funding agency has an obligation to the funder to fulfill the agreement that was made when receiving the funds.

Likewise, clients who receive resources and/or services from the organization have an obligation to fulfill their agreement to the organization. For instance, a client who receives services from an agency may agree to provide certain information to the agency or to pay a certain amount for the services they receive. The organization has the obligation to fulfill the agreement of their contract made with their funder.

Moreover, clients have an obligation to fulfill the requirements outlined in their agreement while participating in services with the organization. This theory directly correlates with the topic of this research study as agency representatives agree to use the funds distributed to them as outlined in their application for government funds and clients agree to participate in services as documented in the agreement they make with the agency from which they are receiving services.

City-funded organizations have an obligation to the City, their funder, to fulfill the agreement of their contract when utilizing the funds granted to them. Additionally, these City-funded organizations also have an obligation to provide services that are beneficial to the clients they serve. This, in part, has to do with the organization's original agreement to provide helpful services to children, youth, and their families: However, it also relates to the organization's responsibility to the client to provide effective services in which the client agrees to participate.

Summary

In summary, the research studies cataloged in the literature review reflects how receiving government funds contributes to an agency's quality of program evaluation methods, the importance for agencies to evaluate their programs effectively while keeping record of how their programs are impacting their clients, as well as considering how City government accountability over distribution of funds affects an agency's quality of monitoring their programs and fulfilling any agreement made with an agency's funder when receiving funds. Future applicants may be expected to meet higher standards when applying for City funds. This new expectation may also encourage agencies to take greater accountability measures towards their programs and to develop more structured approaches of monitoring how their agency programs are affecting children, youth, and families whom are recipients of their services.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, we will review the methods utilized to conduct our study of how agencies serving children, youth, and families within a municipality evaluate their programs. Moreover, we will describe our study design, sampling process, data collection and instruments used and procedures. Additionally, we describe how we protected human subjects by providing a descriptive informed consent, and how we conducted data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to provide city council members with information describing the quality of evaluation methods of agencies within their municipality that serve children, youth, and families. This information provided city council members the information they needed in order to make imperative decisions regarding which agencies and programs they will continue to fund, make adjustments to current funding amounts, or disregard agencies from funding in the future altogether.

This study employed qualitative and quantitative survey design as well as secondary data analysis retrieval. The survey design was reciprocated from the method used in the previous year when the first phase of collecting identifying information for each agency was gathered in a pilot study by MSW students during the prior academic year. During the pilot study conducted in the first phase of the project, general identifying information for each agency was collected, such as: agency name, types of services offered, primary population served, percentage of children served, percentage of youth served, percentage of families served, whether the agency was a non-profit, for-profit, or public agency, types of funding received, and percentage of funding received. For both the first phase and this second phase of the research project surveys were initially electronically administered through email correspondence to approximately 73 agencies within the municipality.

The initial email included an informed consent form which made each agency aware of the information requested of them in the attached survey. The content of the email included a letter of introduction as well as contact information for the researchers, so the agencies responded to the forms and forwarded any and all questions and/or concerns. Emails were sent out individually in order to maintain confidentiality across agencies. Information was also extracted from tax forms or other agency documents that currently exist in public record. Each agency was made aware within the informed consent form that the information they presented would be reported to city council members. The sampling criterion for the research study consisted of a pre-formulated list of 73 agencies within the municipality that serve children, youth, and families.

This method was chosen because of the high volume of agencies which were included in this study. Not only was this more convenient for the researchers, but was also more convenient for the personnel in the agencies being surveyed due to restrictively limited time frame. For those agencies which did not respond to email correspondence, phone interviews were scheduled in order to obtain a response to the survey questionnaire form. Additionally, we asked the appropriate personnel within these agencies how they evaluated their programs and we categorized their answers based on specific criteria listed in Appendix A and Appendix B. Tax forms and other forms agencies used to keep track of how they evaluated their programs are examples of forms from which we extracted numbers and figures to help us identify funding sources and to categorize the quality of evaluation each agency utilized.

This research study sought to discover the level and quality of evaluation methods employed by agencies serving children and families in a municipality. Each agency surveyed was categorized under specific criteria which determined how elaborate the evaluation of their programs toward benefiting children and families.

Sampling

In a previous study directly-related to this research, a sample of 73 agencies in the municipality was identified and surveyed in regards services provided and demographic information. These agencies were categorized into eight categories which included: educational, hospital/medical, child welfare, counseling services, case management, legal services, housing services, and recreational services. As requested by city council members in the municipality, this same sample was further surveyed in this subsequent phase of the research study. This population was pre-determined due to convenience, but primarily because the research sought to study a specific pool of agencies: any agency serving children and youth in the specific municipality.

Data Collection and Instruments

The study design utilized a survey included thirteen questions of which considered two distinct topics: one being the identifying characteristics of the agency and the other section listed questions in regards to the level of quality of program evaluation types used by the surveyed agencies. For example, the first section, cataloging identifying information for each agency, asked the respondent about agency name, location, type of services and programs provided, annual number of clients, percentage of clients classified as 'younger children' who participate in services at the agency (ages 0-5), percentage of clients classified as 'children' (ages 6-13), percentage of clients classified as 'youth' (6-18), percentages of clients classified as 'families' (ages 0-100+), annual number of volunteers, total annual agency operational budget, and types of federal funding.

The second portion of the survey presented questions inquiring as to the type of program evaluation used, if the agency conducts initial assessments with their clients, if clients are seen multiple times, if the agency keeps track of how their programs are impacting their clients, and if the agency conducts any follow-up procedures for their clients. In addition to having identified the evaluation methods each agency used for their programs, we also distributed surveys to each agency with the purpose of finding all avenues of financial assistance as well as how much they receive from each fiscal sponsor. The emphasis of this study was to categorize the level and quality of evaluation methods of the sample of agencies that serve children and families within the municipality.

Sidney Gardner's study (2005) on children, youth and family programs demonstrated a well thought out criteria by utilizing surveys to evaluate program efficiency given the respective needs of an agency. A survey of detailed questions (See Appendix C), was the instrument which allowed researchers to categorize the level and quality of the agency's evaluation methods.

The instrument was created by the researchers to conduct this study. Because this research study was promoted through the City Council of the municipality, the instrument was further developed by associates of the city council and the researchers. There was no existing instrument available to use. The instrument was identified as a quantitative and qualitative survey design and met the requirements of the City Council that employed this study. The instrument was tested for reliability with the availability of the 990 IRS forms that confirmed the responses to the questions pertaining to budget and funding allocations. The questions in the survey were considered valid as the primary City Council member overseeing this project informed us of the information the City Council was requesting. In addition, further consultation with Dr. Laurie Smith was executed in order to ensure the questions were phrased with normalized language for the agencies that were surveyed.

It is understood that there may be agencies within the population that do not have current program evaluation methods in use. Even if an agency conducted a form of evaluation, it is understood that the agency may not have been keeping track of their evaluation process.

However, there may be agencies which do not conduct *any* form of evaluation procedure on their programs. Criteria were chosen in order to determine the level of quality characteristic of agency program evaluation methods utilized by each agency.

Some of the information requested on the survey is listed in public record and was easily accessible, specifically in regards to the financial data for nonprofit agencies. The City Council requested information regarding the proximity of the agencies and respective clients so that they could determine gaps and overlap of services within the municipality on a map. As agencies are expected to have procedures for maintaining the privacy and confidentiality for any identifying information of their clients, it may be difficult to receive any client contact information in regards to locations of clients' residence. Agencies were not able to give us this information without a release of information from each client.

As categorized in UCLA's Center for Health Policy and Research Model (See Appendix A) the tool plans to gather the agency name, client demographic, and location of the agency. Also the questions requested information regarding service provision assessment methods, effectiveness of agency service, client screening strategies and the objective of the agency. Additionally, the instrument inquired funding sources, quantity of funding from multiple funding sources and agency method of displaying results. Lastly, we asked if there were volunteers at the agency, so we could identify if the agency was saving on expenses through volunteer hours. Sidney Gardner's "Ten Tools" displays a more thorough questionnaire to identify the consistency of the quality evaluation the agencies were conducting within their agencies (See Appendix B). The questionnaire inquired the type of evaluation method, the level of evaluation within their feedback tool, and efficiency of service delivery. Also, we inquired regarding the agencies pre-test/post-test, frequency of agency service evaluation, and the different types of service evaluation within the agency.

Procedures

Initially, the study was conducted via email survey distribution to the agencies in the sample. If, however, the agencies did not respond to the survey via email, then the researchers conducted telephone interviews with agency representatives. Finally, if contact was not accomplished through telephone interviews, the researchers scheduled face-to-face interviews with agency contact personnel.

The student researchers approached the agency participants by using normalized language in an effort to maintain clear communication and to invite the most accurate responses possible. The city council of the municipality allowed researchers to reference the city council in the instrument by using their letter head to give authority to the researchers employing the study. The expected time frame to collect all information from all 73 agencies was approximately six weeks during the academic winter quarter of 2013.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study did not require a confidentiality contract as the information requested was required to be listed in public record. Also, the study inquired about information on agency evaluation methods, which did not require the need to protect human subjects. However, the study did employ an Informed Consent form which made agency participants aware of the benefits, risks, duration of participation and others. Risks were described to agency respondents by making them aware that the survey responses would be presented to the local city council who oversees the distribution of granting city funds and may impact the continuance of receiving future city funding. The benefit for agency participants in being considered for future city funds was described in the Informed Consent form. The city council provided access to the 990 tax forms of the non-profit agencies in their municipality, which informed us on the funding information and amounts from these agencies for the specified tax year. The study was submitted and approved by the International Review Board before the researchers conducted the outlined procedures for the study.

Data Analysis

The research study employed quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to identify the quality of evaluations currently being employed by agencies that serve children, youth, and families. The quantitative data analysis of the study identified each source of funding and the specific amounts provided to them. This helped determine the agency's budget including the allocation of funds to agency programs. Also, as part of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the researchers determined the relationship between funding and program evaluation methods of each agency. The quantitative data provided the municipality with a more accurate understanding of each agency's total funding amounts. The qualitative portion of the survey enabled the participant to describe the sophistication of their agency evaluation method. Data also identified whether they were actually benefiting from the development of their programs and consequently the children and families they serve. Information regarding the existence of an evaluation method before and after service was gathered. The opportunity to describe the sophistication of the agency evaluation method was provided in an effort to identify the type of tool implemented within each agency.

Once the data was gathered, measures of central tendency were analyzed within the results section. Calculating the mean of the results allowed the study to discover the average expense associated with receiving services from these agencies and the most common services provided to children, youth, and families in the municipality. The median of the results was calculated to investigate the point average agency, wherein we evaluated where half of the agencies fall under. Analysis of the median assisted in understanding where possibly a majority of the funding usage along with the services that were being provided.

Summary

This was a survey of agencies in a municipality. Data was gathered through phone interviews and from the public record. Questions on the survey focused on characteristics of the agency (types of services offered, number of clients who participate in services, types of program evaluation employed used by agencies, frequency of program evaluation utilized over duration of client participation within the agency, and total operational budget) and characteristics of any program evaluation used at the agency. From the latter information, the agency type of program evaluation methods used were characterized as poor, average, above average, or unknown.

Frequencies and measures were provided to summarize agency characteristics. Frequencies overly used to summarize the status of program evaluation at agencies. Some informational statistics were performed to look for relationships between agency characteristics and program evaluation status.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

In this section, the results of the data analysis are presented. First will be descriptive information on the number and types of agencies evaluated and numbers and types of clients served. Next will be the results of questions regarding program evaluation practices. Lastly will be presentation of the final categorization of program evaluation quality based on the answers agencies gave to the program evaluation practices questions and analysis to determine if agency size is related to program evaluation quality.

Of the 73 agencies included in the pool of participants, twenty-nine agencies completed and submitted the survey, estimating an estimate of forty percent response rate. The researchers attempted to make contact with each of the 73 agencies included in the surveyed pool; however, it is difficult to determine an accurate percentage of agencies contacted, as some of the listed avenues for contacting the agencies were inoperable. There were some agencies, which appeared to be running, as these agencies had operable websites, but did not have working phone numbers or email addresses.

Presentation of the Findings

The completion of Phase II (assessing agency program evaluation methods) concluded with information from 29 agencies in the municipality that serviced the identified populations of children, youth, and families. The results indicated the range of clients served within the agencies surveyed is 7,302. The majority of the agencies reported having returning clients due to ongoing services. Four of the agencies resulted to provide youth mentorship programs. Two agencies served family support services, two agencies provided mental health counseling, and two agencies provided tutoring. The rest of the agencies were only identified once in the responses for types of services offered. Within these types of services were: comprehensive homeless services, housing, delinquent youth services, career planning, burial services, and adult education.

Information from the 29 agencies was divided into multiple sub-categories. These categories included: agency name, type of services provided, agency location, number of clients served annually, number of returning clients, percentage of clients served in the agency whom identify themselves as children, youth, or families, percentages of funding sources for the fiscal year, number of annual volunteers, total annual operational budget, how clients benefit from services, agency record of impact programs have on clients, agency record of client feedback responses, initial assessment, follow-up services offered, and if the agency offers pre- or post-test program evaluation methods to clients served by the agency.

Table 1. Age Groups Served by Participant Agencies

Variable (N = 29)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Younger Children (0-5)	11	48.3%
Children (6-13)	15	27.6%
Youth (14-18)	11	34.5%
Families (0-100+)	11	48.3%

Note: agencies may serve more than one population

Forty-eight (48.3%) percent of the agencies surveyed reported they serviced the population identified as younger children, between the ages of 0-5. The larger type of organizations in this category fell into the service section of childcare and/or preschool organizations. Twenty-seven percent (27.6%) of the agencies surveyed reported they serviced the population identified as children, between the ages of 6-13. The largest type organizations in this category fell into the service section of childcare and/or preschool organizations. Thirty-four (34.5%) percent of the agencies surveyed reported they serviced the population identified as youth, between the ages of 14-18. The larger type of organizations in this category included: Career Planning Community Resource Program, Female Youth Mentorship Program, and Municipality Youth Community Center. Approximately forty-eight (48.3%) percent of the agencies surveyed reported they serviced the population identified as families. This category was defined as any agency providing services for families in general. For example, a Municipality Pre-School is an agency that offers a service to both children and families. The pre-school also provides day care services. The clients participating at the center are children and parents benefit by having a day care service available when needed; therefore, the agency is providing a service for families in a general sense. Age group percentages do overlap in this category as some agencies serve more than one age as stated above.

The majority of the agencies surveyed were reluctant and/or unable to provide the specifics of their funding sources. The only conclusive observation made was that approximately 62.1% percent of the agencies surveyed are either partially or fully supported by federal and/or state grants. Non-profit organizations contacted frequently indicated their private funding was often insufficient to sustain operations and their funding was supplemented by state or federal grants.

Table 2. Non Profit, Private, and Public Agencies

Variable (N = 29)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Non Profit	23	79%
Private	2	7%
Public	4	14%

Twenty-three of the twenty-nine (79%)agencies surveyed were Non-Profit. These non-profit agencies identified as Hospitals/Medical Clinics, Children's Clubs & Local Municipality Family Resource, and Children. Two

(7%) of the agencies responded as private and described their services as parenting and foreign language proficiency services. Four (14%) of the agencies identified themselves as Public and services provided were described as a community museum, transitional living assistance, crisis intervention team and career development services.

Table 3. Do You Keep Track of How Your Services Impact Your Clients?

Variable (N = 29)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	75.9
No	7	24.1

Twenty-two of the agency representatives who responded to the survey, indicated that they did keep track of how agency services impacted their clients, creating a seventy-six percent response rate of agencies that do keep track of how their services are impacting clients served. The other seven representatives who responded to the survey indicated that they do not keep track of how their programs are affecting their clients, reflecting that twenty-four percent of the agencies surveyed do not keep track of how their services are impacting clients who participate in agency programs.

Table 4. Does Your Agency Conduct an Initial Assessment?

Variable (N = 29)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	62.1
No	11	37.9

Eighteen (62.1%) of the twenty-nine agency respondents indicated that they did offer an initial assessment to their clients while eleven agencies indicated that they did not offer this service to their clients. Agency representatives who responded to the survey indicated five different types of initial assessment which were placed into the following categories: initial circumstances assessment, comprehensive intake assessment, parent instructors vary on structure, initial program mandated, and initial qualifying services assessment.

Table 5. Does Your Agency Assess Clients at the End of Services?

Variable (N = 29)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	51.7
No	14	48.3

Fifteen (51.7%) of the twenty-nine agency respondents indicated that they did employ an assessment at the end of services with their clients while fourteen agencies indicated that they did not offer this assessment to their clients at the end of services. Agency representatives who responded to the survey indicated twelve different types of end of services assessment which were placed into the following categories: efforts to outcomes, exit assessment, a combined post-test and exit assessment, parent instructors evaluation assessment, closure survey, program mandated post-assessment, upon youth education completion, satisfaction survey, ongoing youth services, post-treatment assessment, post-program evaluation forms, and standardized tests assessment.

Table 6. Agency Score Based on Evaluation Method

Variable (N = 29)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Poor	10	34.5
Average	3	10.3
Above Average	16	55.2

Ten (34.5%) of the agencies surveyed received the rating of 'Poor' in regards to the current program evaluation methods used by the agency. The criteria for a 'Poor' rating was given if the agency only used one type of program evaluation method with the frequency of one time for the duration of client participation in programs offered by the agency. Three (10.3%) of the agencies surveyed received the rating of 'Average' in regards to the current program evaluation methods used by the agency. The criteria for an 'Average' rating was given if the agency used at least two types of program evaluation methods with the frequency of at least twice for the duration of client participation in programs offered by the agency. Sixteen (55.2%) of the agencies surveyed received the rating of 'Above Average' in regards to the current program evaluation methods used by the agency.

The criterion for an 'Above Average' rating was given if the agency used three to four types of program evaluation methods, one of which needed to include a pre- or post-test type of program evaluation. Additionally, the criterion included that the frequency of program evaluation methods used needed to occur at least three times for the duration of client participation in programs offered by the agency, one of which must have included a follow-up contact for clients whom received services from the agency.

The researchers hypothesized there would be a significantly positive relationship between the number of clients served and the agency evaluation quality. The researchers conducted a one-way ANOVA test on the relationship between the number of clients served and the agency's quality of evaluation score. The results were not statistically significant.

Summary

Overall, the findings identified the number and types of agencies within the municipality that service children, youth, and families. The descriptive statistic results helped specify the variety of programs available in the community and whether agencies monitor the quality of their services before and after services. Agency's described the sophistication of their program evaluation method, which enabled the researchers to determine the program evaluation quality based on agency responses. Finally, researchers determined there is no significant statistical relationship between the quantity of clients served and the quality of the agency program evaluation method.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section will begin with an explanation of the initial phase of the project then will include an overview and description of the main findings of the second phase of the study. In latter subsections, the limitations of the research as well as the recommendations of the researchers will be discussed for future study on the topic, "ASSESSING AGENCY EVALUATION METHODS IN A MUNICIPALITY".

Discussion

Phase I of the Project

In the previous phase of this project, researchers developed a list of agencies which offer services to children, youth, and families in the municipality. During this phase, the researchers utilized secondary data analysis to collect identifying information for each agency included on the list of agencies created by the researchers. During this initial phase, the researchers utilized quantitative data analysis on the survey which asked agency representatives to specify the amounts of funding received annually, the types of services and programs they provided to clients, and the amount of clients served annually which wee children, youth, or families.

Phase II of the Project

The second phase of the project reviewed the status of program evaluation sophistication in the agencies which were considered during the initial phase of the project in the previous year. Data from the initial phase of the project, telephone interviews, and information accessed via public record, were used to gather information on the 29 agencies included in the study. The survey employed during the second phase of the project presented thirteen questions to the agency respondents. These questions were divided into two categories: general identifying information and characteristics reflecting the status of program evaluation used within the agency.

An example of the information placed into the first category included data regarding the size of the agency, number of clients served in the agency, and total annual operating budget. Characteristics outlined in the second category included the types of program evaluation methods employed by the agency and frequency of utilizing those methods. Overall, 34.5 percent of the agencies were scored 'Poor', 10.3 percent were scored 'Average', and 55.2 percent of the agencies scored 'Above Average' in the ratings for their program evaluation methods. After running a One-way ANOVA, it was determined that agency size was not found to be correlated with program evaluation sophistication. Suggestions for ensuring agencies are utilizing quality program evaluation methods in their programs are discussed.

City Council Consultation

The researchers sought advisement periodically from the local City Council to ensure the study would provide further the needed information requested by the municipality administrators. Findings of the study indicated there is no significant relationship between the amount of clients served and the sophistication of the agency client tracking method. Also, many of the agencies reported initial service assessments, but lacked post service tracking methods. Therefore, the researchers concluded there would be need for further research regarding expert assistance to enhance the program service assessment sophistication. Studies have demonstrated program evaluation methods enhance client service and improve agency reliability.

Research Implications

After analyzing the data, the researchers found that a significant amount of agencies could benefit from advancing their program evaluation methods. The information gathered from Alan and Cole's study (2012) may assist in modifying health and safety programs in the City as it may provide a measurable comparison to current assessments which are being used in health and safety clinics in the community. This article provides information which demonstrates the use of a reliably-tested checklist tool exercised to measure program effectiveness in healthcare programs for children. A similar method design could be considered by the municipality healthcare program authorities when evaluating Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. The results of this research study also demonstrate how the assessment of these evaluation tools bettered the effectiveness of the agency program and quality of services the client received. In addition to reviewing studies reviewing program evaluation methods in healthcare settings, other fields should also be examined, as the object of the study will assess program evaluation methods in a variety of settings that service children, youth, and families in a municipality.

Limitations

There are four significant challenges identified which the researchers encountered during the development of the research study which included: receiving communication responses and survey submissions from the surveyed agencies, identifying operable forms of communication from the agencies, hesitancy from some agency representatives to participate in the project, and receiving accurate data from the agency respondent.

Limitations of Telephone Interviews

There were differing limitations that occurred when conducting a survey design and secondary data analysis. For instance, when sending a survey via email correspondence, it was likely for response rates to be relatively low. Because of this expected limitation, phone interviews were scheduled if and when there was no response from participants within the sample population. As a last resort, face-to-face interviews were scheduled in order to exhaust every effort in gaining the information needed for the study. For those participants that responded via email correspondence, one critical limitation was that the researchers were not able to observe any non-verbal communication. Most of the public agencies were hesitant to provide any detailed information on the survey questionnaire. After the researchers explained the purpose of the project was to assist the local City Council to have a better understanding of programs and services offered to municipality constituents, many public agency representatives continued to question the reasons and purposes of the project and were very brief in their responses.

Correspondence with Agency Contact Personnel

The validity of the research is highly dependable on the accuracy of the data collected for this project. Data collection reductions were not necessarily an indicator of an agency's level of willingness to participate, but rather a matter of identifying the agency contact person who has the knowledge to access the needed information. Many of the organizations contacted utilized a workforce of non-paid volunteers. While many were very willing to help, many were not typically familiar with how to find the data requested. The researchers frequently experienced a difficulty in being directed to the appropriate agency contact representative. Upon following up with agency contact representatives, the researchers were often asked to resend the initial email which included the introductory letter and survey. Many of the agency contact representatives explained that it was likely that the initial email had accidentally been sent to the 'junk mail' box and perhaps was deleted, as it may have appeared to be 'spam mail'.

Hesitancy to Participate

Some agencies were resistant to participating in the second phase of the project, and/or hesitant, or were unable to provide the data requested for the represented agency. For example, one agency surveyed opted out of participating as the agency representative explained they did not consider themselves to be an agency that serves children, youth, and families, but rather a, "community service organization that raises funds to help support many local and international service projects". Although this agency does not offer any *direct* service to children or youth, the agency does offer direct financial assistance and advocacy for women. This agency could be considered a quasi-service provider due to their philanthropic interactions with local city agencies. Furthermore, if the agency keeps track of the household size of the women they assist, they may find that the direct services provided by the agency are also assisting the families of the women. There were other organizations that were unwilling to participate by providing data.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Recommendation for Social Work Practice

In regards to recommendations for social work practice, the findings of this project reflect an ongoing opportunity for city government administrators to collaborate with macro social work practitioners to nurture public and social service coordination. There are many opportunities for macro social work practitioners to assist in developing collaboration, identifying the needs representative of the constituents in the municipality, networking and building a lasting partnerships between city government administrators and agency executives and directors in a joined effort to better serve the needs of community members. Overall, this presents a substantial opportunity for social workers to apply macro social work practice models for the purposes of providing needed community organization services.

Recommendation for Policy

It is suggested that agencies which were rated in the 'Poor' and 'Average' categories consider drafting a policy in regards to implementing a thorough assessment over the effectiveness of their active program evaluation methods. Moreover, it is recommended for city government officials to refer agencies to macro social work practitioners who specialize in the development of program evaluation sophistication. Agencies which are willing to receive assistance and identify with a need to benefit from restructuring their program evaluation methods may benefit from an expert in program evaluation methods. Providing this assistance to agencies serving children, youth, and families may help to fulfill the purpose of city government administrators in their efforts to ensure the needs of the community are being met by agencies which offer needed services in the municipality.

Considering that the economic recession has influenced stricter accountability measures over the limited funds available for agencies, it is suggested that agencies carefully consider strengthening their program evaluation sophistication. Outcomes which result from applying a higher level of program evaluation can be used as a strategy when applying for new funding opportunities. Additionally, it would be imperative for macro social work practitioners who specialize in program evaluation methods to provide an assessment of agency program evaluation methods as well as a development plan for restructuring the sophistication of agency program evaluation methods based on the types of services offered by the agency. This would be an asset for agencies in need of this assistance as it would help agencies to execute a plan for adapting their programs based on the results and responses from applying restructured program evaluation methods and models.

Recommendation for Research

In regards to providing a recommendation in response to the limitation of reciprocal communication among agencies during the research process, it is suggested that for future phases of this project, researchers send the initial email through the municipality email server requesting to schedule a time to talk with the appropriate agency contact. This may help the researcher receive more responses from agency representatives. It may also help to write a section at the top of the email indicating that, if the email is not received by the correct representative within the agency, to please forward the email to the correct agency representative and to copy the researcher so that the researcher will be able to follow-up with the correct agency personnel in a timely manner. Also, if the survey is sent through the municipality email server, there will be no question as to the authority of the researcher to conduct the survey. The researcher can still prepare the Introduction Letter, Survey Questionnaire, and draft the Letter of Approval. To gather data from a larger sample size, it may be important to conduct a survey that measures the reasons as to why some agency representatives expressed resistance to participate in the study.

Creating a Clear Incentive

On a larger scale, it is also recommended for the City to consider employing a survey designed to identify the reasons why agencies were hesitant to participate in the project and to discover the needs representative of each of the agencies. This may assist the City Council in identifying how they can provide clear and motivating incentives to agencies they wish to participate. For instance, if an agency indicates they need more volunteers, the City may consider coordinating volunteer opportunities with constituents in the community who have a vested interest in serving with the City.

Further Research for Macro Social Work Practitioners

Finally, the researchers recommend that additional study be conducted on indications of quality program evaluations methods. It is also recommended that further research is employed evaluating program evaluation sophistication as it relates to the type of service provided. For instance, professional research should be evaluated in different settings, including: educational, youth mentorship, counseling, housing, transportation, children and youth centers, and family resource centers.

Conclusions

After reviewing the first and second phases of the project, the researchers provided a discussion on the project, presenting the limitations and recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research. Additional phases of this project are recommended to complete a thorough assessment of the overlap and gap in services representative of the municipality. The City is encouraged to consider including other experts in program evaluation methods in establishing a multidisciplinary team to fulfill the planning and implementation of the project.

APPENDIX A

UCLA'S CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH MODEL

UCLA's Center for Health Policy Research Model

Define community boundaries

This phase includes acquisition of a municipality map, identification of city boundaries, and the boundary's relation to the neighboring county. Although the municipality is located in San Bernardino County, it is also very close to Riverside County on its Southern boundary line.

Identify and involve partners

Partners involved in this project are primarily the city council members of the municipality, California State University San Bernardino's School of Social Work, and California State University San Bernardino's School of Geography. Several partners within the municipality play a significant role in the success of this assessment, including the City Manager's Office, the Quality of Life Department, the City Police Department, City Councilman of the municipality, and the City GIS department. Identification of other community partners is likely to occur during the project. These community partners may have access to additional organizations and data that will aide in the assessment. It is anticipated that some of the larger organizations that are contacted may be encouraged to become more involved with the assessment and ideally the improvement of services for children, youth, and families within the City. Involving these organizations beyond the research phase would be beneficial due to their daily contact with the project's target populations, and additionally these organizations will be able to provide the best insight regarding specific services that are needed, which services are underutilized, and which services are being utilized most within the City.

Determine types of assets to include

This project seeks to identify assets that are most important for children, youth and families. By researching the organization's functions, services, and funding, it will be possible to identify the most needed assets in the community. As the list of organizations that provide services to our target populations is created, the assets identified as the most utilized will be listed in one or more of the following categories; education, recreation, childcare, financial assistance, mentoring programs, and community resource directories. An understanding of the value, utilization, and importance of each asset to this population is necessary to provide an accurate assessment of services available in the City.

List the assets of groups

Assets of the identified groups will provide children, youth, and families, the opportunity to obtain appropriate services, and will also provide additional information when allocating funding to programs utilized most by the target populations. The community's organizations will have the ability to provide services specifically tailored for the target populations. In addition to the benefits provided to the target population by listing assets of groups, the California State University San

Bernardino's School of Social Work will be rewarded. This assessment project for the City allows students to practice social work research skills. As students invest time in the research process, the students will also gain invaluable research experience. The alliance created between the City and the CSUSB School of Social Work will establish a partnership that will ideally allow for future projects.

The City desires to service their community by using professional knowledge, and funding when available, to improve the quality of life for the residents in the City. Asset evaluation is the most salient factor in this project. The willingness of the community's organizations to provide asset information is not only essential to the completion of this research project, it is also an important asset the City. With the cooperation of the community's organizations, acquisition of accurate data and information allows the community to evaluate project proposals and ideally experience positive improvement in the availability of services in the City.

List the assets of individuals

Individuals benefit through community assets such as education, recreation, childcare, financial assistance, scholarships, mentoring programs and community service directories. Assets provided by the represented City Councilman and CSUSB School of Social Work Director Dr. Laurie Smith enabled the creation of this project. The City Councilman and Dr. Smith bring professional experience, enthusiasm, and resources that allow CSUSB social work students the opportunity to research the assets of the municipality, and present research findings that will benefit the community.

Organize assets on a map

A GIS technician may create large maps with several different layers, each layer representing specific assets. Each organization researched shall be represented on the map by its geographical location. In addition, maps will include layers that represent the organization's funding sources, populations served, quantity of patrons served, age groups served, and the specific type of organizations represented on the maps. Detailed maps will assist in the presentation of the project's findings. Maps will also help in visualizing the following:

1. Areas of the City that have sufficient services for children, youth, and families
2. Areas of the City in need of additional services for children, youth, and families
3. Types of organizations located in each geographical area within the City
4. Types of organizations receiving their majority of funding from the City
5. Types of organizations receiving the majority of funding from the private sources

APPENDIX B

SIDNEY GARDNER'S TEN TOOLS

Sidney Gardner's Ten Tools

Taking inventory

This first phase involves the building of a data base that lists funding and other resources which will enable the City to follow and eventually guide the currents of funding that enter the City from external funding sources that are designated for children and families. This step is complete.

Keeping score

Using the City and San Bernardino County outcomes as community indicators will annually track the well-being of children, youth, and families by the use of key indicators. This task would ideally take place during a second or third phase of this project. Preliminary data has been collected and the evaluation of community indicators at this time is in the beginning phase.

Monitoring program performance

To determine the effectiveness of programs designed to meet the needs of children, youth, and families in the City, the use of outcomes at the agency and program level is necessary. In addition, data should be collected to determine the funding sources of these agencies including local government funding, funding from other jurisdiction's agencies, or another source of funding. Although determining the effectiveness of such programs is premature, data is being collected when available, specifying the funding sources for the organizations in the City that serve children, youth, and families.

Mapping the local economy as it affects families

The local economy affects the quality of life for children, youth, and families within the City. By assessing potential sources of new employment, child, youth, and family-friendly workplaces, regional trends in new businesses and employment, trends in employment layoffs and local unemployment rates, the City will have a tool to comprehend, respond to, and forecast the changes of the local economy. Details of this task would be addressed in future phases of this project by obtaining more specific data related to family incomes and employment trends.

Identifying the universe of need

To adequately service the children, youth, and families in the City, consideration should be given to the establishment of programs that are developed in response to a specific need. Specified programs may not have the ability to meet the full range of needs that will adequately aid children, youth, and families in experiencing an improved quality of life. In order to serve specific needs that require specialized services, a survey may be conducted to identify overlapping populations with specific needs to ensure they receive appropriate attention.

Tools for targeting

Identifying limited resources that will benefit specific population is important, and may be conducted by using information tools such as geo-coding, and data-matching. Geo-coding is performed by the utilization of geographic information systems (GIS), and data-matching will identify populations that access multiple programs, and benefit programs available to specific populations.

Using a collaborative values inventory

Clarifying the values of specific populations may be used to measure an organization's and/or a program's willingness and ability to collaborate with other entities. Surveys, documentation of values, and review of an organization's self-assessment tools may reveal a trend in similar or incongruent values. This task would likely take place at a later phase in this project.

Framing issues in ethical terms

Some tools used to assess the issues of children, youth, and families, originated from tools created for use in the health field. These tools will allow the City to consider the values of specific populations when making decisions that will effect local organizations. This will most likely take place during a later phase of this project.

Structuring direct feedback processes

Gathering feedback on services provided by the City, and the County of San Bernardino may be collected by using on-line surveys, public opinion surveys, focus groups, informal interviews, and other methods. Although this task is not an immediate focus of the current phase of the project, feedback from organizations is being noted for future use when obtaining feedback from the public.

Deliberative democracy methods

Tools that assess consensus-building around values consist of various methods that may increase partnerships of community involvement in the shaping and opinions related to policy choices. This type of cooperative work is essential when addressing regional needs that effect more than the children, youth, and families of the City.

APPENDIX C

AGENCY PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Agency Participation Survey

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this follow up survey based on last year's project with the City of Redlands. The student researchers from the California State University San Bernardino and Redlands City Council extend their appreciation for your participation and cooperation in this study.

Agency Name: ______________________________

Type of Service Provided: ______________________________

Agency Location (i.e. zip code): ______________________________

1. How many people/clients does your agency serve annually? ______________

2. Are some of the clients in your agency seen multiple times?

   [Yes] [No]

   a. If so, please explain.

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

3. Identify the percentage clients in your agency fall into the following categories:

   a. Younger Children? [0-5] ______%

   b. Children [6-13] ______%

   c. Youth[14-18] ______%

   d. Families [0-100+] ______%

4. How many volunteers does your agency use annually? ______________

5. What percentage of funds does your agency receive annually from each of the following sources?

   a. Federal ______%
   b. State ______%
   c. City ______%
   c. County ______%
   e. Private ______%
   f. Fundraising ______%
   g. Other ______%

6. What is the total annual operational budget of your agency? ______________

7. Please describe how your clients benefit from your services:

   ____
   ____
   ____
   ____

8. Do you keep track of how your services impact your clients?

   If yes, please describe.

   ____
   ____
   ____
   ____

9. Do your customers provide feedback on how your services are affecting them?

   If yes, please describe.

   ____
   ____
   ____
   ____

10. Does your agency conduct an initial assessment?

    [Yes] [No]

    a. If so, what is assessed and how is it assessed?

    ____
    ____
    ____
    ____

11. Does your agency assess clients at the end of services?

    [Yes] [No]
    If yes, what is assessed and how is it assessed?

12. Do you have an annual report?

    [Yes] [No]

13. If so, can we obtain a copy of that annual report?

    [Yes] [No]
    a. If not, please explain:

Developed by: Esmeralda Huizar and Rachel Dyer

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

   Team Effort: Esmeralda Huizar & Rachel Dyer

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

   Team Effort: Esmeralda Huizar & Rachel Dyer

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

   a. Introduction and Literature

      Team Effort: Esmeralda Huizar & Rachel Dyer

   b. Methods

      Team Effort: Esmeralda Huizar & Rachel Dyer

   c. Results

      Team Effort: Esmeralda Huizar & Rachel Dyer

   d. Discussion

      Team Effort: Esmeralda Huizar & Rachel Dyer