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Program Evaluability assessment of the East Lake YMCA Youth and Teen
Development Center Program: The Young Women's Leadership Academy

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Abstract

Evaluability Assessment: Eastlake Youth and Teen Development Center-Young Women's Leadership Academy

By

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Evaluability Assessments and Program Evaluations are valuable tools used to provide organizations seeking to strengthen their programs and improve outcomes. The purpose of this program evaluability tool is to support the YMCA leadership with information needed to guide their funding and resource allocation pertaining to the Young Women's Leadership Academy. The Eastlake Young Women's Leadership Academy was created to provide young adolescents female's opportunities to gain positive life skills and realize their leadership potential by exposing them to professional women and men that can inspire and encourage them to pursue and achieve their dreams.

This program evaluability assessment was conducted to answer questions about the program's effectiveness, and provide direction for improving this developing program.

The literature review suggests that youth programs that emphasize mentoring as a focus of leadership produce positive outcomes for their participants. The YMCA organization has a profound reputation for leadership, mentoring and positive youth development. The Eastlake Young Women's Leadership Academy is an example of one such program implemented through the YMCA. This assessment was conducted through interviews, review of program documentation and direct observation of the program. The evaluability assessment was conducted after one year of program implementation and during a time of program re-structuring. The YMCA is a successful organization with a strong foundation in leadership training and youth development which can support the success of the Young Women's Leadership Academy. This assessment concluded with tools that will support and guide the Eastlake YMCA stakeholders in the successful continuation and building of the Young Women's Leadership Program.

Program Evaluability assessment of the East Lake YMCA Youth and Teen
Development Center Program: The Young Women's Leadership Academy

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Summary Statement

A program evaluability assessment is a valuable tool for programs seeking to strengthen the quality of their programs and improve outcomes for the youth they serve (“CDC”, 2016). The purpose of this program evaluation tool is to provide YMCA leadership the information needed to guide their funding and resource allocation. This program evaluability assessment tool will seek to answer questions about the program’s effectiveness, identify the program’s strengths and weaknesses and provide direction for improving this developing program.

The program evaluability assessment tool will be developed using evidence and/or theory based research; through the use of evaluation framework and modeling. A qualitative data analysis will be conducted on the information collected through this evaluability assessment tool. Once the data is analyzed a report will be developed and disseminated to the stakeholders.

The evaluability assessment tool will influence decision-making and better communicate the program’s impact to the staff, YMCA leadership, it will also help build the program’s capacity for an evaluation and provide the stakeholders with methods and tools for assessing the effectiveness of the program. I will also help to build a valuable

platform for an evaluation which can help attract and retain current and potential funding.

Introduction and Rationale

Evaluability Assessment (EA) is a systematic process that helps identify whether program evaluation is justified, feasible, and likely to provide useful information. It not only shows whether a program can be meaningfully evaluated, but also whether conducting the evaluation is likely to contribute to improved program performance and management (“Better Evaluation”, 2016).

The overall purpose of an evaluability assessment is to decide whether an evaluation is worthwhile in terms of its likely benefits, consequences and costs (“CDC,” 2016). Also, the purpose is to decide whether a program needs to be modified, whether it should go ahead or be stopped.

The Eastlake Youth and Teen Center opened in June, 2013. The focus of the youth and teen center is to procure leadership development, build positive life-shaping skills in a nurturing environment (“ymcareport10,” 2016). The teen center provides programs for teens between the ages of 12-17. Financial assistance is available to ensure that no teen is turned away regardless of the ability to pay.

One of the programs at the teen center is the Young Women’s Leadership Academy. The Young Women’s Leadership Academy provides opportunities for young women to gain positive life skills and realize their leadership potential by exposing teens to professional women and men that can inspire and encourage them to pursue and

achieve their dreams. The Young Women's Leadership Academy is a program that was developed under the Eastlake Family YMCA and the Atlanta Metro YMCA. The program is located at 1765 Memorial Drive SE, Atlanta, GA 30317 and the meetings are held in a 21,000-square-foot facility for teens ages 12-17. The Y is a powerful association of men, women and children committed to bringing about lasting personal and social change. With a focus on nurturing the potential of every child and teen, improving the nation's health and well-being and providing opportunities to give back and support neighbors, the Y enables youth, adults, families and communities to be healthy, confident, connected and secure.

In the U.S., the Y is comprised of YMCA of the USA, a national resource office, and 2,700 YMCAs with approximately 20,000 fulltime staff and 600,000 volunteers in 10,000 communities across the country.

The Y engages 9 million youth and 13 million adults each year in the U.S. Worldwide, the Y serves more than 45 million people in 119 countries. Ys across the U.S. play an integral role in strengthening the leadership and youth programs of the Y around the world.

Members, staff and volunteers of the Y include men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life.

The Y offers programs, services and initiatives focused on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, according to the unique needs of the communities it engages.

The Y is accessible to all people. Financial assistance is offered to individuals and families who cannot afford membership. The Y is guided by four core values: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility” (ymca.net, 2018).

Besides helping to guide decision-making around the allocation of resources for evaluation, an evaluability assessment clearly raises the question of what evaluation should be used for. Uses of an evaluability assessment vary greatly, from gauging program effectiveness, to supporting and strengthening program efforts. The approach taken in this study is to evaluate the needs and the status of the program. Ultimately, this evaluability assessment should be used to strengthen the program efforts of the Young Women’s leadership academy as well as provide useful information.

There were a few limitations experienced while CONDUCTING the evaluability assessment. The assessment was conducted at the end of the program’s first year. Addressing the need, purpose and plans for evaluation should be done in the early stages of program planning so that the findings can be considered and integrated into the program. There were also, program leadership changes as well as a decision made to temporarily stop the implementation of the program.

Theoretical Framework

The empowerment theory is a theory that can be applied to youth development programs. The empowerment theory as a process in leadership education is seen as fundamental to community development and growth. According to Pigg (2009) the empowerment theory suggests that individuals can empower themselves through

personal knowledge, positive attitudes and behavior. The empowerment theory is centered on self-empowerment. According to Page, 1999 the empowerment theory is a “multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their lives. It is also a process that fosters a sense of power in people for use in their community. Empowerment is both a “value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one’s life, organizational functioning, and the quality of community life” (Zimmerman, 2000). The empowerment theory can be successfully applied to the Young Women’s leadership Academy. The YWLA wants to empower young women to be successful citizens and keepers of their communities.

Program Theory

The Young Women’s Leadership Academy provides opportunities for young women to gain positive life skills and realize their leadership potential by exposing teens to professional women and men that can inspire and encourage them to pursue and achieve their dreams. The Young Women’s Leadership Academy takes place at the Eastlake YMCA Youth and Teen Development Center, in Atlanta, GA. The YMCA Youth and Teen Development Center is 21,000-square-foot facility for teens ages 12-17. Youth and teens are supported through positive interpersonal interactions with positive role models and mentors, supervised in an environment with positive peer and adult relationships. YMCA teen programs help strengthen commitment to service, learning, and positive values and empower youth to make decisions, plan, lead, and help others

(“ymcaatlanta”2016). A logic Model was developed to provide the YMCA stakeholders with a visual flow of the YWLA program.

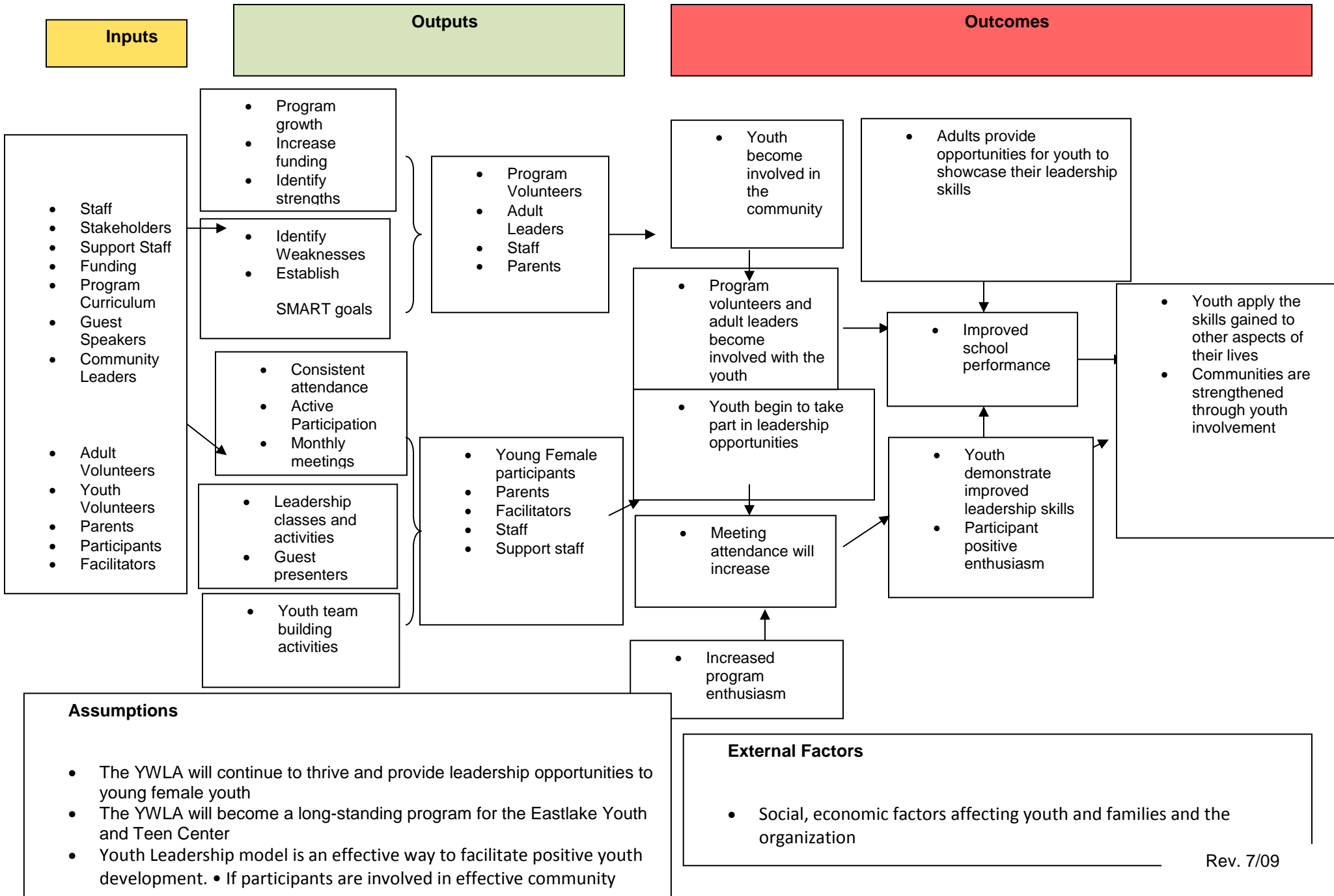
The logic model was developed through conversations with staff and facility leadership. It was also developed through direct observation when I provided program assistance and mentorship for female adolescents in the Young Women’s Leadership Academy from August 2015-January 2016 during my MPH practicum.

Logic Model is a valuable tool that can be used to develop and tell the performance story for a program. Logic Models are often used by program evaluators. The Logic Model describes the flow of a program through its, inputs/ resources, activities, outputs, participates, and short, medium and longer term outcomes/goals([McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999](#)). The logic model provides a scope of a program and helps to ensure systematic decisions are made regarding what is measured. It also helps to identify and organize indicators of the program. The CDC evaluation model explains the importance of the data collection process, the analysis method and data interpretation. Reporting of the data and the dissemination strategy are important in ensure that the information gathered is distributed to those who will make the most of the results. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide was used develop the proposed logic model for the YWLA ([“wkkf.org”](#), 2017).

The components of the logic model for this evaluability assessment are outlined below as well.

Program: Eastlake YMCA Youth and Teen Development Center Program

The Young Women's Leadership Academy- Logic Model



Inputs

Inputs include persons and things needed to communicate the quality of the program. The inputs consist of the following:

Staff (1 full-time, 5 part-time employees), Stakeholders (YMCA board, Eastlake YMCA Director); Funding (community partners, YMCA); Program curriculum; Adult Volunteers; Youth Volunteers, participants, participants parents, and guest speakers and facilitators; community leaders

Outputs

Outputs reflect the productivity of the program activities. Consistent attendance, active participation, program growth, increases funding, and identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Activities

Activities are those actions needed to implement; reflect what the program does and make the program.

Monthly meetings; Youth community outings; community services; provide tutoring service to peers; leadership classes and activities; Guest presenters; youth team building activities; Establishing SMART goals for the program; adults will provide leadership opportunities and give increased responsibility to the youth

Participation

Participation is a description of the persons who will take part in the program or help administer the program.

Young Female adolescents; Program Volunteers; Adult Leaders; Program participants, facilitators/guest speakers, staff and parents of participants.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes that occur as a result of the program activities. It also reflects the programs described goal achievement.

Short

Short term outcomes reflect changes in the participant's knowledge, motivation, and attitude. These outcomes include:

Youth become involved in the community; Program Volunteers and Adult leaders become involved with the Youth; Youth begin to take part in leadership opportunities; Meeting attendance will increase; Increased Program Enthusiasm

Intermediate

Intermediate outcomes reflect changes in the participant's behavior and actions. The intermediate outcomes are listed below.

Improved school performance; and participants' positive enthusias

Long

Long-term outcomes reflect the ultimate goals of the program; as evidence by modifications in behavior and program goal attainment. Long-term outcome focus will include the following:

Youth apply the skills gained to other aspects of their lives; Communities are strengthened through their involvement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this evaluability assessment is to decide whether or not a program evaluation would be beneficial and cost effective to the Eastlake YMCA's Young Women's Leadership Academy Program in Atlanta, Georgia. It will also provide information that will enhance the program capacity for an evaluation. The program evaluation assessment will help determine if the program needs to be modified, should go forward or be terminated.

This evaluability assessment will help enable the Eastlake YMCA to continue a long-standing and productive program for young women and create an evaluation tool that will be useable by the stakeholders to evaluate the program's effectiveness as well as enable them to attract ongoing funding, which are important priorities to the Eastlake YMCA administration. The timing of this evaluability assessment is during a period of leadership change and program re-evaluation. The evaluability assessment was undertaken at the suggestion of me, N. Renee Cook, Emory Rollins School of Public Health, MPH student and with the support of the Eastlake YMCA director.

Again, the purpose of this evaluability assessment was to help determine ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the YWLA and to develop an in-house evaluation tool that can be used to attract funding as well as produce a long-standing program. The evaluability assessment purpose, logic model were used in developing the design of this assessment and identifying evaluation questions. The evaluation questions will provide important information for the stakeholders regarding the program. A couple of important questions to be answer include how can the effectiveness of YWLA be

documented and what are the opportunities for program improvement. Other questions of value to the YMCA stakeholders include:

Are there plans to continue the program?

- Is there funding available?
- Are you in search of new funding opportunities for the program?
- Are you interested in developing an evaluation tool for the program?
- Were you and are you satisfied with the implementation and current direction of the program?
- When are the meetings?
- How often are the meetings?
- When did the meetings re-start?
- How is program funded?
- What is the purpose/goal of the YWLA?
- Do you take meeting attendance?
- Who can participate in the program?

Definition of Terms

1. YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) (hereinafter referred to as "The Y") is a leading nonprofit organization for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

2. YWLA-Young Women's Leadership Academy

3. Young Female-adolescent females between the ages of 12-17

4. Director of the EASTLAKE YMCA-Person responsible for the daily operations of the Eastlake YMCA organization.

5. Director of the Youth and Teen Development Center- Person responsible for the daily operations of the Eastlake Youth and Teen Development Center organization.

6. Eastlake Youth and Teen Development Center- "The YMCA Youth and Teen Development Center is a 21,000-square-foot facility of new and renovated space that includes an outdoor family aquatic center, gymnasium, cyber café, digital and media center and teen wellness area. Here, teens ages 12-17 have the opportunity to make friends, have fun, get active and discover who they are and what they can achieve" (ymcaatlanta.org/ymca-locations/atlanta-teen-center), 2017).

7. The "Y" refers to the YMCA.

8. Mentoring- defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person assists another in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth

9. Evaluability Assessment- is a systematic process that helps identify whether program evaluation is justified, feasible, and likely to provide useful information.

10. Program Evaluation- systematic application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement or outcomes of a program

11. YWCA-Young Women's Christian Association

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

The resources and literature I found helpful and pertinent to the evaluability assessment consisted of theory based information about mentoring, evaluation, youth leadership, youth development, and young women and leadership. Youth programs are fairly common in the world today. There are far greater than 5000 mentoring programs in United States today (“nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org”, 2016). In the programs adolescents are usually paired with an adult volunteer. These programs are usually focused on perceived at risk youth. The focus on positive youth development has increased through research rather than the prevention of at-risk behaviors. Youth Mentoring programs have become easier to implement because it identifies a problem and solution at the personal level (DuBois et al, 2011). Evaluation is a scientific method that can be useful to assess a programs design, implementation and productivity (Rossi, 1999). Program evaluations are useful tools for organizations and evaluability assessments are valuable precursors to evaluations.

Mentoring

Formal youth mentoring was initiated in the 19th and 20th century in the U.S. in response to major social movements such as the great depression and the civil rights movement. Youth mentoring drew on the concerns from volunteers regarding disadvantage youth brought to attention by authorities. Over the years youth mentoring has evolved through theory based practice paradigms to focus on prevention and intervention (Allen et al, 2008). Allen et al, discovered through their research on youth mentoring that relationships between mentor and mentee can promote the development

of life-skills, positive attributes and abilities. The success of mentoring relationships and programs must take into consideration several aspects such as: the purpose is the mentoring is meant to serve, reasons people become mentors, the manner in which the mentor/mentee relationship develop and how the mentoring relation effect youth development, and what has lead the mentee to the program or relationship (Allen et al,2008)

“Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person assists another in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person’s professional and personal growth”
(management-mentors.com), 2017

There is not one single definition to the word or concept of mentoring. Mentoring is a term that usually describes a relationship between a less experienced person, called a mentee or protégé, and a more experienced person known as a mentor. Mentoring is described as a dyadic, face-to-face, long-term relationship between a supervisory adult and a less experienced student that guides the mentee’s professional, academic, or personal developments (Donaldson, Ensher, & Grant-Vallone, 2000).

Mentoring is used in many different aspects for various programs. According to Lakind, et al, the concept of mentoring is used to prevent or decrease high school dropout rates, decrease teen pregnancy, increase academic achievement, career development, promote positive self-identity, and also reduce risky behaviors. Due to the broad application of mentoring and influence it has led to conflicting various definitions and perceptions. Mentors have commonly seen the problems that youth display as

byproducts of their environments, and individual strengths and weaknesses as existing “in spite of” environmental inputs (Lakind, Atkins and Eddy, 2015). Even though there is a lot of information about mentoring, there is little statistical data available. Most of the information available is based on theory alone. Because mentoring is structured in human relationships, it can be more difficult to quantify. However a well-designed program can lead to an increase in knowledge and trust that can build on a positive supportive mentoring relationship (<https://www.management-mentors.com> 2018).

According to Allen and Eby (2008), in spite of the various definitions, literature has shown that mentoring plays an important role in positive youth emotional well-being, academic and personal development. Mentoring provides various guidance and support in many areas of life. Allen and Eby also stated that mentors can fulfill many roles for their mentees'. If these roles are not nurtured properly it can lead to various negative effects on adolescents, therefore youth mentoring is delicate and should not be undertaken lightly. Youth mentoring can take place informally or through a formally developed program. Informal mentoring is usually a relationship between the youth and a family member, neighbor, teacher, religious leader or friend. Formal mentoring is guided through a community organization, school, federal, or religious organization(["The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspectives Approach edited by Tammy Allen and Lillian Eby," 2009](#)).

Mentoring programs are more effective when both theory-based and empirically based “best practices” are utilized. Theory guided and evidence (empirically) based practice are similar in goals which is making the right decision and establishing the most effective solution to a problem. Theory guided practice is based on rational

perception and evidence based practice follows empirical knowledge. Examples of evidence based practice include prevention services, programs, and practices include clinical trials and observational studies (Duerden, M. D. Gillard, A., 2011).

Mentoring programs also have a greater impact when strong positive relations develop between the youth and mentor (Duboise, et al. 2002). The DuBoise, et al, meta-analysis of various mentoring programs showed that youth from high environmental risk and disadvantage benefit most for mentoring programs. Outcomes for at-risk youth do to personal environment were noted to end adversely when the mentoring program was poorly implemented.

Evaluation

There are several definitions that encompass Program evaluation. One such definition is the systematic application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement or outcomes of a program(Rossi, 1999). Collaboration with the program stakeholders is essential for a successful program evaluation. A general goal of program evaluation is to provide useful feedback to organizations regarding the adequate functioning of their programs (Rossi, 1999).

There are different types of evaluations that can be conducted depending on the request or desire of the organization. A formative evaluation evaluates programs feasibility, before it is fully implemented. A formative evaluation is usually conducted at the beginning of a new program when or when a program is being modified. Another type is process evaluation which determines if program activities have been implemented as intended. An outcome evaluation measures a program's effectiveness by assessing the progress of outcomes and assessing whether the objectives of the program

have been achieved. Lastly, an Impact evaluation assesses a program's effectiveness in achieving its goals ("CDC", 2016).

There are instances when a program is more suited for an Evaluability assessment. An evaluability assessment is a systematic process that helps to identify whether a program evaluation is justified, and feasible ("National Criminal Justice Reference Center.gov", 2017). An evaluability assessment is an early review of a new program or proposed program. The assessment is to determine whether the program objectives are clearly defined and ascertained ("Better Evaluation", 2016). The evaluability assessment will also determine whether an evaluation will benefit a program and be cost-effective ("cdc.gov/eval/tools/evaluability_assessments", 2016). Evaluability assessment is a formal process that is conducted that can determine the type or necessity of a program evaluation in an assessment of a programs performance. Your literature review should also cover previous evaluations of similar types of programs, some of the challenges in evaluating programs of this type as well as evaluation findings.

Youth Development/Youth Leadership

Youth development and youth leadership are at times used interchangeably. Youth leadership and development programs are both designed to build skills necessary for successful adolescent and adult life. YMCA's across the country offer Leadership Clubs that help develop youth between the ages of 12 and 18. The YMCA promotes leadership in their programs while fostering a culture of service. With the training offered to adult employees, teens are provided role models and mentors who will have a positive impact on their lives as they grow to be a positive force in the community ("YMCAONLINE.org", 2018).

According to Wehmeyer et al, “youth development is a process that prepares a young person to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood and achieve his or her full potential”. Youth development is fostered through activities and experiences that encourage youth development socially, ethically, emotionally, physically, and cognitively. Youth leadership is part of the youth development process. It supports young development through: (a) a person’s own strengths and weaknesses, gives them the ability to set personal goals, encourage positive the self-esteem, self- confidence, and motivation. (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998).

Youth development programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of youth and focus on those needs. These programs are important because they help foster experiences and activities necessary to navigate through childhood and adolescence successfully. Youth leadership programs offer opportunities for youth to develop independence and autonomy ([Kress, 2006](#)). According to the YMCA USA, youth development encompasses several attributes. The YMCA supports youth development through holistic programming. The YMCA supports all youth with the tools and resources they need to succeed in life (ymca.net/youth-development ,2018).

“Through the leadership and academic enrichment programs such as mentoring, Youth and Government and college preparation, the Y ensures that every child has an opportunity to pursue a positive future, and to take an active role in strengthening his or her community” (“YMCAONLINE.org”, 2018).

Woyach and Cox (1997) identified 12 principles deemed to produce effective leadership programs. The 12 principles state that youth leadership should encompass the following:

1. Help youth learn specific knowledge and skills related to leadership.
2. Enable youth to understand the history, values and beliefs of their society.
3. Facilitate the development of individual strengths and leadership styles.
4. Facilitate the development of ethics, values and ethical reasoning.
5. Promote awareness, understanding, and tolerance of other people, cultures and societies.
6. Embody high expectations of, confidence in, and respect for the teens served.
7. Emphasize experiential learning and provide opportunities for genuine leadership.
8. Involve young people in service to others to their community, their country and their world.
9. Facilitate self-reflection and processing of learning both individually and cooperatively.
10. Involve youth in collaborative experiences, teamwork and networking with peers.

11. Involve youth in significant relationships with mentors, positive role models, or other nurturing adults.

12. Be developed around stated purposes and goals.

It is not expected that leadership programs will be able to address all 12 principles; however these principles represent a set of standards against which programs can be assessed.

Young Women and Leadership

Traditional approaches to leadership development are usually based on Eurocentric, patriarchal ideas located in frameworks aligned to adult learning that may not be culturally or contextually relevant, or fail to pay attention to the needs of young women leading within their communities ([McNae, 2015](#)). It is also challenging to engage young women in conversations about themselves in a positive light, detailing their personal strengths. Therefore, it is important to find ways to engage young women in dialogue about their leadership. According to ([Mullen & Tuten, 2004](#)) socialization patterns suggest that opportunities for developing females as leaders coexist with the constraints of sex role stereotyping. Focus on leadership development of young women is an important piece involved in female adolescent development.

According to McNae (2015) it is essential to: “Establish appreciative audiences and higher levels of agency amongst participants so that traditional discourses that marginalize young women and their voices in leadership practice and preparation are challenged”.

With the increased awareness of women's issues organizations such as the "me too" and "equality now" have made a positive impact on the communities they serve. The "me too" movement which was established in 2006 to help young women of sexual assault; the YWLA is also an important program to help empower young women. The "me too" movement was created for young women of color in low-income communities who survived sexual violence. One of the goals of the program is to let young women know that they are not alone in their journey. Another mission of the "me Too" movement is to bring awareness and increase dialogue around sexual violence (metoomvmt", 2018).

Equality Now is an anti-sex-trafficking organization that works with grassroots organizations around the world to decrease the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls. Equality Now uses a broad human rights framework that addresses the root causes of gender inequality and the exploitative nature of the commercial sex industry ("equalitynow.org", 2018).

--Women and girls make up 96% of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation
"Gender inequality and discriminatory laws that trap women in poverty and fail to protect them from violence, render them vulnerable to prostitution and trafficking"
("equalitynow.org", 2018)

YWCA has been working on some of the most pressing social movements that impact women for more than 160 years. Some of those movements include: voting rights, civil rights, equal pay, violence prevention, racial injustice and empowerment and economic advancement of women and girls, as well as health

and safety promotion. The YWCA has several programs geared toward young women leadership.

YWCA's Onward and Upward Girls Leadership Program (YwOU) is a good example of a leadership program for youth. It is a peer leader program that teaches girls to plan, develop and implement programs and activities for their peers. During this process they learn leadership skills. The program knows that there are many factors that put teen-age girls at risk for low achievement, poor school attendance and dropping out of school. So, the YwOU program equips young girls with the tools to positively achieve both personally and academically. According to YWCA research teens become and remain engaged only if they perceive themselves as the "activity drivers". YWCA organization believes taking control feels good to adolescents and there is a "direct relationship between having power to influence events and taking responsibility for your own behavior". The training sessions for the YwOU program inspire girls to be true to themselves. And the program is based on an "emotional intelligence-centered curriculum (recognizing and reacting to those around you in a productive manner) and incorporate assertive self-expression and the importance of developing healthy relationships within each unit" ("ywca.org", 2018).

Another program of the YWCA is the Alice Paul Leadership Programs. This program introduces girls to successful women leaders from the past and present. The goal of this program is to help the girls gain the skills needed to develop their own leadership style ("ywca.org", 2018).

Girl Talk is another young women leadership program that in which the YWCA participates. Girl Talk was developed in the fall of 2002. Girl Talk is a national organization based in Atlanta, GA, It is a "student-to-student mentoring program that offers fun, positive weekly meetings, community service projects, and friendship-building activities for middle school girls". The mission of the program is to help young women "build self-esteem, develop leadership skills, and recognize the value of community service". Girl Talk is a successful program as demonstrated by the following statistics: reached over 35,000 girls through the existing Chapters in 43 states; participants across the U.S. have completed over 312,000 of community service ; 83% of middle school girls who attend Girl Talk have become Girl Talk Leaders in high school; and participants have shown an academic improvement of 14% in math and 24% in language arts ("mygirltalk.org", 2018).

Another good example of a young women's leadership organization is Young Women for Change (YWFC) a program of the Michigan Women's Foundation. YWFC is youth leadership development and philanthropy program. YWFC engages high school girls in leadership training, community service, gender issues, philanthropy and grant making skills. It also gives participants an opportunity to impact their communities as decision-makers in the grant making process. Some of goals and objectives of the YWFC program is to prepare young women for leadership in philanthropic endeavors, and "promote systemic change that expands the girl's potential and capacity of for leadership" and promote skill and leadership building. The YWFC curriculum includes, diversity, leadership, community service, social change, team building, Fundraising and grant making to name a few("miwf.org",2018),

Summary

According to the literature reviewed an evaluability assessment is a valuable tool for organizations wanting to discover ways to determine programs effectiveness and an evaluation is a great evidence based practice to evaluate a program. Mentoring is also a well-established form of guidance in enhancing the likelihood of successful youth development. There are many young women leadership programs and organizations available that are making an impact in their communities through mentoring as describe in the literature. The YMCA's interchangeable use of youth development and youth leadership are intertwined in their success with youth. Youth development and Youth leadership programs are primary tools utilized in positive youth intervention and prevention. Youth leadership programs focused on young women provide a profound level of self-confidence and positive development for success. The young women leadership organization and movements described can be used as invaluable resources for the YWLA. These leadership programs can also serve as a guide for developing the program.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

The evaluability assessment of the Eastlake Young Women's Leadership Academy will guide the stakeholders in re-establishing and refining the Young Women's Leadership Academy. The Evaluability assessment can assist the program with continued leadership opportunities for young female youth. . The evaluability will help enable YWLA to become a long-standing program for the Eastlake Youth and Teen Center. The youth leadership model is an effective way to facilitate positive youth development ("ymca.net/youth-development", 2016). Applying the principles of Joseph F. Wholey's six step process to evaluability assessment was used to accomplish this report.

Population Sample

The Young Woman's Leadership Academy program was started for young women between the ages of 12-17. The program was started to provide young women in metro Atlanta community positive leadership skills and mentorship. The program met on every other Saturday at the Eastlake Youth and Teen Center. There was approximately 50 young women were enrolled in the program. On average the Young Women's Leadership Academy would have 20 girls in attendance for the meetings. The Young Women's Leadership population consisted of predominately African American young girls. On average there were 1 or 2 non-African-American participants that attended the meetings.

Assessment/ Research Design

The methodology used to perform the evaluation is that of Joseph F. Wholey's Six Step process of an evaluability assessment. The six step process1) involve intended users and current stake holders 2) clarify the program design 3) explore program reality/feasibility 4) assess the plausibility of the program goals 5) explore the need for alternative evaluation design and /or changes 6) reach agreement on the intended use of the evaluation([Newcomer et al., 2015](#)).

The six step process approach involved conversations and interviews/One-on-One via the telephone and in person with staff, the director of the Eastlake YMCA, and the new director of the youth and teen center. It also involved direct observation of the program and review of the program literature and documents.

Procedures/Instruments

The One-on-One phone and in-person interviews were conducted based on questions developed using evaluability assessment criteria. The questions were formulated to gain a greater understanding of the purpose and direction of the assessment. Per the Eastlake director, the program was off to a good start and the main goal was to establish a positive, effective, fruitful, and long-standing program.

A review of the current and past program literature was conducted. These documents help to identify areas in need of improvement as well as the current foundation in which the program was developed.

Review of Program documentation

The program documentation consisted of a program description, a list of activities, sponsors, speakers, attendance list, and limited budget accounting.

The program description stated the “Young Women’s Leadership Academy (YWLA) will provide opportunities for young women to gain positive life skills and realize their leadership potential by exposing Y teens to professional women and men that can inspire and encourage them to pursue and achieve their dreams Youth and teens are supported through positive interpersonal interactions with positive role models and mentors, and are supervised in an environment with positive peer and adult relationships. YMCA teen programs help strengthen commitment to service, learning, and positive values, as well as empower youth to make decisions, plan, lead, and help others.

The program agenda detailed the activities to take place and a list of presenters for the program. The agenda detailed the day and time of topics to be discussed during the meeting term. The YWLA meetings were held once or twice a month at the YMCA Teen and Youth development center usually on the weekend. The average length of a meeting was one to two hours depending on the activities for the day.

The attendance list was a sign in sheet used to keep track of participant attendance. The attendance sheet was a paper and pencil sign in with columns for name, age and school. Program attendance was not being tracked consistently.

The budgeting documentation that was available consisted of limited accounting of expenses for the program. The budget documentation available to me consisted of

expense accounting of food and utensils provided to the participants during the meetings.

Program design parameters were documented. There was a clear audience defined for the program as well as the type of mentoring relationships desired. The program focus was established and documented as was when the program session would take place.

Program outcomes were not well defined and general in nature. There was also an absence of an evaluation plan and written policies and procedures to support the program. However, the organizational structure and management of the program was defined and consisted of a primary facilitator/director and secondary facilitator/program associate. A program financial plan was not available during my assessment. Program stakeholders were clearly identified.

Interview with the stakeholders

An interview was conducted with the Eastlake YMCA director, and the secondary facilitator/program associate, and the current program director. The primary facilitator/program director that started/ initiated the program was not available. I was not able to interview any participants or their parents because at the start of this evaluability assessment the program was not being conducted.

Limitations of the Assessment

At the time of the Evaluability assessment initiation the Youth and Teen Development center was going through a period of leadership transition and program

re-development. For this reason many program documents were not available for review.

The original grant application was not available for review, therefore a clear understanding of the original budget and goals of the program were not available for review; which prevented a checks and balances review of what was stated to be implemented versus what was actually being conducted.

An accounting of monies being spent on the program for activities, outings and administrative needs was very vague. There was a spread sheet reviewed with very limited accounting of the money being spent. Again, a budget analysis is essential in evaluating a program for current and future funding opportunities.

Chapter 4 Results

Introduction

The primary goal of this evaluability assessment was to decide whether or not a program evaluation would be beneficial and cost effective to the Eastlake YMCA's Young Women's Leadership Academy program in Atlanta, Georgia. This assessment will also determine if the program needs to be modified and what the modification would include.

Summary

The objectives of the YWLA are clear. However, the implementation of the program is not documented clearly. The YWLA was developed for young female adolescents. The program was established to provide opportunities for young women to gain positive life skills and realize their leadership potential by exposing Y teens to professional women and men that can inspire and encourage them to pursue and achieve their dreams ("ymcaatlanta.org", 2016). The documentation available was not sufficient in determining a clear implementation plan. In order to have continuous access to pertinent and vital program implementation documents; documents can be scanned into a computer data specifically assigned to the program. Access to the documents can be housed under password protection with access to limited personnel. This will ensure program information availability for future evaluations and reviews.

There was no baseline data available to track change results at the time of the assessment. A future recommendation would be to track participant attendance utilizing an excel spreadsheet that can be entered into a database after each gathering by a support staff member. The program can also utilize a paper survey with open-ended responses and yes/ no questions to be handed out to each participant after a meeting. Using a paper survey will allow for greater honesty from the participants and anonymity and less bias. Also holding Focus Groups at the beginning and end of the programs fiscal year using both appreciative inquiry and nominal group techniques would be ideal. This is a way to explore the best of what is happening in the program and can be used to find ways to enhance those things which can encourage best practices. As AI's are conducted, the stories shared within the group can be used to identify themes that can continue to be used by the program. NGT/brainstorming can be used to engage the program attendees in being creative ideas of solving issues that face the program.

Monitoring data is not currently being collected but it is part of the program assessment recommendation. A data monitoring planned should be implemented to track performance indicators.

As a result of this evaluability assessment and the present stage of program execution a program evaluation would not be feasible, credible or useful. As previously stated this assessment was being done after the program inaugural year and was not being conducted due to program restructuring.

YMCA organization can provide the funding to continue the program through other disbursement of funds. The YMCA organization has access various funding outlets

through the parent organization, the Metro Atlanta YMCA and annual funding campaigns.

Chapter 5 Recommendations

Introduction

The program recommendations gathered were based on best program practices within the literature. Focus groups, surveys and SMART goal development are useful tools in establishing and maintaining a successful youth program. The data used for this evaluability assessment was limited in nature and reviewed during a time of program restructuring.

Summary of Evaluability Assessment

The purpose of this evaluability assessment was to provide the Eastlake YMCA leadership the information and guidance needed to determine the effectiveness of the Young Women's Leadership Academy program and ways to improve this developing program. It was also to determine if a program evaluation would be beneficial and cost effective at this time in the program.

The methodology used was helped to establish guidance in completing the assessment. Wholey's et al six step process included the use of interviews and direct observation to complete the assessment. A logic model was developed to help guide the Eastlake leadership with successful program implementation.

While the Young Women's Leadership Academy had an established purpose it lacked goal measurement and adequate program documentation for measurable effectiveness. The funding for the overall program was not a primary problem seen by the YMCA leadership at this time. However for future varied funding attainment

adequate and clear program documentation will be necessary. SMART goal strategy development was provided for the Eastlake Leadership to guide their future implementation of the program.

Depending on the direction and ultimate organization goal for the program I would recommend the following:

- a. Modify the YWLA using the SMART goal strategy. The program goals should be clear, easily identified and feasible.

S - specific, significant, stretching

M - measurable, meaningful, motivational

A - agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented

R - realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented

T - time-based, time-bound, timely, tangible, trackable

Establishing goals for the program will help maintain successful implementation. Setting goals can bring structure and track ability to the program. The goals for the program can be simple but specific i.e.: Establish with whom, where, when, how and what do you want to achieve within the program). Next the goal should be measurable. Meaning the goal must identify what you will see within the program. An attainable goal is when it is acceptable and possible to achieve. Then your goal should be realistic; why is the goal important to the program. And lastly, the goal should be timely. The program should have well established time lines for the participants, staff,

stakeholders, volunteers. The time lines should be achievable and flexible. Using SMART objectives will help identify needed elements for an evaluation plan and performance measurement (kean.edu/sites/default/files/u7/SMART%20Objectives.pdf, 2018).

I would also recommend the use of a Logic Model for use as a guide. I have included a Logic model based on my understanding of program elements. A Program Logic Model is a useful planning and communication tool as it will describe the purpose and proposed outcomes the program.

A community needs assessment can also assist in assuring that a program implemented in a community is actually meeting the needs of that community. According to “youth.gov” (2016), development of successful youth programs should consist of assessing the needs of the community in which one wants to develop the program. Such as a community assessment, community surveys, or researching other youth programs in the area. During my assessment I was not provided with any documentation regarding research of the community.

Per this evaluability assessment program SMART goal establishment would be most beneficial; as it would guide the program into successful implementation. Through the use of SMART goal strategies the program can develop long standing program implementation that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. Goal establishment will help maintain an effective leadership program.

Through adequate and clear program documentation the program can then be measurably evaluated for effectiveness, which is one of the primary reasons for this evaluability assessment. Clear and meaningful program documentation and also help

establish a performance portfolio for attaining varied types of outside program grant funding. Examples of such funding would include but not limited to grants that supply travel expenses, outings, and educational opportunities for young women,

The use of focus groups and surveys can provide the program stakeholders with real-time performance feedback from the program participants. This can help guide the implementation of the program to ensure that it is meeting and align with the program established SMART goals. I have included sample survey templates as well as a hyperlink to a sample Focus Group curriculum.

Conclusion

The Eastlake YMCA youth and teen development center is a very successful entity with national recognition within the YMCA and youth development community. The Young Women's leadership Academy is a small product of their success. With the above stated recommendations the YWLA will grow and succeed in its mission, to ultimately positively enrich the lives of young adolescent women. A Program evaluation would not be feasible at this time based on the evaluability assessment conducted. However, tools and information have been provided for future evaluations and reviews.

Since the start of this evaluability assessment the Young Women's Leadership Academy has been re-established at Eastlake Youth and Teen Center as of late 2017. The

information in this assessment will be used to guide the YMCA stakeholders in future program development and implementation.

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Appendices

A. Stakeholder Interview Questions

B. Focus Group Curriculum Sample

C. Sample Program Survey

Appendix A

Evaluability Assessment: Stakeholder Question Responses

1. Are there plans to continue the program?

We are currently planning for a fall start for the Women's Leadership Institute. Current planning details are for the program to follow the school calendar

2. Is there funding available?

The inaugural program was funded in whole by the Sara Blakely Foundation (Founder/CEO of Spanx). We currently don't have funding for the fall but believe we can make it work under an abbreviated format and efficiency model. Ideally, we will approach the foundation again next year (their funding protocol is does not support consecutive year funding) for a renewal.

3. Are you in search of new grant opportunities for the program?

We have a fairly robust fund development group at our association office that has been extremely productive in identifying and securing funding for various programs at the Youth and Teen Development Center. They have agreed to identify and secure small-level support for this program to cover outstanding costs (staff, supplies and transportation) that we've identified we'd need help with.

4. Would you like the Young Women's Leadership Academy to become a long-standing program at the teen center?

We believe this (as well as the boys' equivalent) program can be hallmarks for the Youth and Teen Development Center.

5. Are you interested in developing an evaluation tool for the program?

Our goal is to do so as we don't have that aspect nailed down currently. The evaluation tool is critical to our ability to attract ongoing funding.

6. Were you or are satisfied with the implementation and current direction of the program?

Year 1 was not bad but certainly revealed major opportunities for improvement.

Meeting with the current Youth and Teen Development Center Director:

1. When are the meetings?

Every second Saturday of the month (with the exception of June and July).

2. How often are the meetings?

Once per month

3. When did the meetings re-start?

October 2017

4. How is program funded?

Young Women's take place with volunteer speakers and our Annual Giving Campaign "WHY It Matters

5. What is the purpose/goal of the YWLA?

To assist young women in pursuing and achieving their goals, building a career plan and to help build a foundation of skills and service other and the community, Everything is done in tiers building youth to become self-sufficient

6. Do you take meeting attendance? If so, how is it taken?

Yes, sign in and entered into the Y data system.

7. Who can participate in the program?

Any facility member of the Y ages 11 - 17

Appendix B

Link to Focus Group Curriculum Sample: Using Focus Groups in
Program Development and Evaluation-UK Cooperative Extension service

<https://psd.ca.uky.edu/files/focus.pdf>

Appendix C

Sample Program Survey Questions:

Potential Program Evaluation Questions

1. What skills did you learn today in this program that you can use?
2. How will you apply the skills you learned in this program?
3. What changes will you make in your operation/situation based on today's program?
4. How do today's program goals meet your needs?
5. In what way was this program useful to you?
6. How will this program help you set production goals?
7. What goals have you set based on today's program?
8. What changes did you make in your operation/situation as a result of programs you attended in the past year?
9. Why did you participate in this program/workshop?
10. What are you doing today in your operation that you did not do prior to this educational program? (Specify the program/context).
11. What result do I expect from using information gained from this workshop/program?
12. What problems will be addressed by you being involved in this program?
13. What practices you currently use will be discontinued as a result of this program?
14. What new practice (s) will you implement as a result of this program?

15. In what way has decision-making been made easier by participation in this program?
16. What is the best thing that can happen if you use the information from this program?
17. What immediate steps/actions will you take as a result of this program?
18. What specific assistance would be helpful to you in implementing the new practices presented in this workshop/program?
19. What will it take for you to implement the new practices/information provided in this program/workshop?
20. What result(s)/impact(s) do you expect from participation in this program?
21. What was the result/impact of your participation?

¹Prepared by Robert A. Martin, Department of Agricultural Education and Studies. Evaluation questions that specify impact. 10/2

Appendix C

Program Evaluation Form at Anytown Public Library, we continually strive to improve our programs. Your input into the program you recently attended will assist us with this process.

Program Location: Branch XXX Branch XXX Branch XXX Program Attended: Presenter's Name:

_____ Date: _____ Your Name

(optional): _____ Phone or email: _____

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following:

Program met my expectations..... poor fair satisfactory good excellent

Program content..... poor fair satisfactory good excellent

Ability of presenter to communicate content..... poor fair satisfactory good excellent

Content and usefulness of handouts..... poor fair satisfactory good excellent

Area in which program was held..... poor fair satisfactory good excellent

Convenience of program day and time poor fair satisfactory good excellent

Overall, how would you rate this program poor fair satisfactory good excellent

If you answered "poor" or "fair" to any of the above please indicate your reasons:

Did you use library resources or check out material as a result of this program? Yes No

Would you recommend this program to friends or family? Yes No

How did you hear about this program?

What changes, if any, would you recommend for this program?

Do you have any suggestions for future programs?

Additional Comments: Thanks for providing your feedback!