# RALPH N. KLEPS AWARD FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURTS PROGRAM EVALUATION TIP SHEET

These program evaluation materials will help court staff complete a Kleps Award nomination form and prepare for a Kleps Award Committee site visit, in accordance with the guidelines below. A list of definitions used in these materials can be found on page 4.

The Kleps Award nomination form for 2012–2013 includes several eligibility criteria. One of these is that a nominated program *must* have measurable results, outcomes, or benefits that have demonstrated its impact on the court and the public it serves.

The nomination form lists four questions under the category of program evaluation and impact:

a. How do you know the program is successful?

b. Who are the major beneficiaries of your program?

c. How are you measuring the impacts of the program?

d. What are the program's evaluation results, outcomes, or benefits?**

Kleps Award Committee members will consider only those nominated programs that fully meet the eligibility criteria, based on the written narratives that are submitted. When visiting nominated programs, committee members will develop ratings that address the extent to which evaluation activities have been conducted and the results of those efforts.

**Evaluation criteria include:**

The program:

- Documents its stated goals, outcomes, or benefits;
- Adequately measures its impact on stated goals, outcomes, or benefits; and
- Uses the results of its evaluation to improve the program.

**Impact criteria include:**

The program:

- Demonstrates improvements to job efficiency or quality of work; and
- Demonstrates delivery or improvement of services.

## Why Evaluate Your Program?

1. See if the program is having the intended impact—*Are you accomplishing what you promised?*
2. Check program effectiveness—*Are you doing what you think you're doing?*
3. Make decisions that provide for continuous improvement—*Do you need to make changes?*
4. Report program effectiveness for funding—*Can you sustain effective activities?*

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## OVERALL EVALUATION TIPS

- Evaluation is an organized, planned way to verify if your program is having the impact that you intended. What difference are you making and how will you know it?
- You must organize and plan for evaluation of the program and be convinced that the plan is reflective of your program's activities and desired results.
- You should want to evaluate your impact more than anyone else. If you don't know how you're doing, you can't improve the program's your impact.
- Start designing your program evaluation plan early.
- An evaluation plan needs buy-in from key players—managers, data collectors, staff, partners, volunteers, etc. Share it, explain it, and refer to it often.
- Evaluation methods can vary, from the routine collection and management review of performance indicators on a regular basis to intensive, one-time evaluations involving considerable labor and time to conduct.

## LOGIC MODEL TIPS (Find an in-depth example of a logic model on Serranus (password protected) at *http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/grants.)*

- Create a logic model diagram (usually on one page) for your program to show the chain of events that links inputs to results (what the program is intended to accomplish). It will help bring detail to broad, fuzzy goals; clarify the difference between activities and outcomes; and summarize the key elements of your program. It helps you focus on what to evaluate.
- A logic model should not be created in a vacuum. It is best developed as a participatory process. Don't create it in isolation—involve other stakeholders.
- Readers of your Kleps Award nomination can usually tell when the program isn't hanging together. Things sound a bit muddled or too mechanical. Creating a logic model will clarify the purpose, connections, and desired results.
- Describe your activity with enough detail so the reader gets a picture of what staff are doing and what the program's participants receive. Include information such as how participants are selected, the amount of service required for a participant to change his/her knowledge, behavior, or attitude, and the roles and activities of staff.
- It is important that you understand the difference between outputs and outcomes. Outcomes are all about significant, measurable change. It doesn't matter how many brochures you distributed (output), unless the information in the brochure was read and there is a change in knowledge, behavior, or attitude (outcome).
- Take the time to create a logic model for your program—it will help. (Yes, we said it twice!)

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## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TIPS

- Know before the program starts that you need to collect baseline data. These data should not be collected after the activity has started.
- Sometimes data collection may be under your control, and sometimes it may not. Because adequate and accurate data are essential to evaluation, always identify where you can get the needed data, who will give it to you (or how you will get it), and when you need it.
- Get written agreements from those supplying data to you about what and how much data you expect and when you expect it. This is especially important when you do not control the data source. Getting data late or not at all can jeopardize your entire program.
- The measurement tool should not be selected until you identify results (outputs, outcomes) and indicators. Problems can arise when you select a measurement tool and try to force it into your program. The indicator dictates the measurement tool—not the other way around.
- No matter how hard you try to make it fit, the wrong measurement tool will always be the wrong tool. It will never produce the quality of data needed.
- Pilot-test measurement tools. This is especially true for "homemade" tools. Far too often the data collection has already begun when you realize that other data elements should have been captured as well.
- Have a written description of how data for each measurement tool will be collected, compiled, and analyzed.
- Even if you are getting data from another source, chances are that you will need to have some kind of measurement tool for collection and a plan for analysis.
- Spot-check data collection activities to ensure that the data collection is being done correctly and that the data are accurate.
- Start early and weave evaluation throughout the program.

## WHAT MIGHT THE KLEPS AWARD COMMITTEE WANT TO SEE ON A SITE VISIT?

- A well-designed logic model. (Find an in-depth example of a logic model on Serranus (password protected) at http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/grants.)
- Evidence that you followed the logic model, perhaps with a process evaluation.
- That the measurement tools in your logic model have been completed and analyzed.
- Evidence that the program achieved the target for success—perhaps an outcome evaluation that includes the amount of outcome data collected and the findings.

# RALPH N. KLEPS AWARD FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURTS EVALUATION DEFINITIONS

**ACCURACY**
The extent to which the information or data you collect about your program is valid and based on a sound data collection methodology.

**ACTIVITY**
The planned activities or interventions selected to be used to bring about desired results.

**EVALUATION PLAN**
A document detailing the evaluation design—purpose, roles, data collection methods, timelines, analysis, and reporting.

**INDICATOR**
A specific observable and measurable item that shows progress toward achieving a specific result.

**INNOVATIVE**
Creating or significantly enhancing a concept, goal, and/or objective that improves the performance and practices of the court relative to its size, community, and available resources.

**INTERVENTION** (See Activity).

**LOGIC MODEL**
A visual way to present the relationship among inputs, resources needed to operate the program, planned activities, and changes expected. (Find an in-depth example of a logic model on Serranus (password protected) at *http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/grants.)*

**MEASURABLE**
The output or outcome is able to be quantified through credible means. The changes can be calculated. Note: Qualitative data can be quantified by placing it into categories or themes.

**OUTCOMES**
Measurable changes in knowledge, behavior, or attitude that are the results of a program's influence. It is not a simple count, such number of participants or pamphlets distributed.

**OUTCOME EVALUATION**
Collection of data to assess the impact of a program's activities, conclusions about their worth, and recommendations for improvement.

**OUTPUT**
The direct products or services of program activities—immediate measures of what the program did. Output does not address changes or benefits.

**PROCESS EVALUATION**
Collection of information to assess how a program was implemented and operated, conclusions, and recommendations for process changes.

**RESULTS**
Outputs or outcomes resulting from your activities.

**SAMPLE**
A subset of the population. The subset is selected intentionally as a representation of the population being studied.

# Examples of How to Evaluate Activities

Most court programs know *what* they want to achieve (the desired result). The challenge is how to *demonstrate* what has been achieved. Clearly, the activity you design to achieve the desired result is primary to your ultimate impact. Assuming you have already designed an activity that you believe will produce the desired result, the next step is to develop a plan to collect evidence of your activity's impact. The examples in this table will give you some suggestions for how to map a path from your desired result to your target for success.

Keep in mind the following things as you design a plan to collect the data needed to demonstrate what your program has achieved.

1. All of the items in the table (see samples below) should be detailed in your logic model. These examples are meant only to show possibilities. Your program and desired results will be different.
2. Every output and outcome in your logic model needs to have an indicator, measurement tool, and target for success.
3. Whether you use paper and pencil or a computer to compile and analyze your data, you still need a measurement tool with which to collect the needed data (such as surveys, questionnaires, or data collection sheets).
4. In certain circumstances, data sampling can be an appropriate way to gather information or data needed to gauge progress. However, there are standards and methods to sampling that need to be understood and followed in order to produce valid results. Before using sampling, be sure it is necessary and get professional assistance.
5. You must use measurement tools for outputs and outcomes for specific activities. These tools are directly related to a particular program and its activities. A measurement tool can be an attendance roster, a log of presentations, a test, a satisfaction survey, a group comparison checklist, or a form to summarize case file data, to name a few. Remember, selecting the right tool for your evaluation depends on your indicator.

**Following is a brief description of each item included in the table on the following page.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Program Activity Title:** | Simply the title of the activity. Your activity should be well described in your logic model. |
| **Activity:** | What your program will be doing to change a particular situation and achieve your desired result. |
| **Desired Result:** | What your program hopes to achieve from conducting the activity. There are two general types of results:<br>*Output:* What your program will do, produce, or create.<br>*Outcome:* What your program will achieve. Outcomes are all about what will *change*. |
| **Indicator:** | The specific tangible item you'll look at to gauge progress toward the result. Are things progressing as planned? |
| **Measurement Tool:** | The tool to collect the data you need. The indicator will be very helpful in selecting the right tool. |
| **Target for Success:** | The amount of change needed for you to consider your program successful. |

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**EXAMPLE 1 Program Activity Title: Staff Training**

| Desired Result | Indicator | Measurement Tool | Target for Success | Things to Consider |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output**<br>Staff trained in new cash handling procedures | Number of staff trained | Training Attendance Sheets | 40 staff will complete training | •Easy and inexpensive to administer.<br>•Simple count of staff at training. |
| **Outcome**<br>Increase in cash handling accuracy of staff | Percentage of balanced cash audits | Log of Balanced Cash Audit Reports | 20% increase in *balanced* cash audit reports | • In order to know that you increased the percentage, you must know the baseline percentage.<br>•In this case, baseline percentage is compared to current percentage. |

**EXAMPLE 2 Program Activity Title: Litigant Self-Help Centers**

| Desired Result | Indicator | Measurement Tool | Target for Success | Things to Consider |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output**<br>Increase number of self-represented litigants using self-help center | Number of litigants served in self-help center | Log of Self-Represented Litigants | 5% increase in litigants served | •Easy and inexpensive to administer.<br>•Double counting should be avoided.<br>•In order to know that the number increased, you must have a baseline number. |
| **Outcome**<br>Self-help center litigants receive appropriate referrals to other services | Percentage of center litigants that volunteers refer to appropriate services | Litigant Referral Form<br>(with approval sign-off) | 75% of volunteers' referrals will be *approved* by the center supervisor or attorney the first time | •Center supervisor/attorney must define and maintain a clear standard in approving referrals.<br>•Resist the temptation to "correct" referrals to gain approval signature.<br>•The referral can be corrected but not counted in the target. |
| **Outcome**<br>Self-help center litigants assisted to submit complete and accurate legal forms packets | Percentage of litigants to submit complete and accurate legal forms paperwork | Legal Forms Cover Sheet<br>(with rating scale) | 70% of Legal Forms Cover Sheets submitted rated as "complete and accurate" by court supervisor or attorney | •Center supervisor/attorney must define and maintain a clear standard for cover sheets.<br>•Resist the temptation to correct cover sheets to gain a higher rating.<br>•The legal forms can be corrected, but not counted in the target. |

**EXAMPLE 3 Program Activity Title: Enhanced Drug Court**

| Desired Result | Indicator | Measurement Tool | Target for Success | Things to Consider |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output**<br>Increase successful drug court program completions | Number of successful graduates compared to total program terminations for any reason | Log of Terminations (listed by reason for all program admissions) | 15% increase in graduation rate<br>(terminations due to graduation) | •Easy to administer.<br>•Need comprehensive list of reasons for termination in likely event that additional data analysis is warranted.<br>•In order to know that the percentage of graduations increased, you must have a baseline percentage—for example, the current year's graduation rate is 50%. |
| **Outcome**<br>Decrease number of drug court program graduates who reoffend and go back into the criminal justice system | Percentage of enhanced drug court graduates who are rearrested within one year of graduation | Summary Sheet of Graduate's Follow-up<br>(to record criminal history search results) | 75% of graduates will not have a rearrest for a misdemeanor or felony charge within one year of graduation | •The "failure" criterion must be defined *before* data collection—i.e., what is a failure: arrests; convictions; local, state, or national history search; exclusions, etc.<br>•Can be very labor intensive to conduct searches for follow-up.<br>•Be sure that you can get the data you need. |