Flex Program Evaluation Webinar Series: Designing Measurable Outcomes that Demonstrate Program Impact

February 20, 2024

National Rural Health Resource Center

The Center's Purpose

The National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining and improving health care in rural communities. As the nation's leading technical assistance and knowledge center in rural health, The Center focuses on five core areas:

- Transition to Value and Population Health
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Performance Improvement
- Health Information Technology
- Workforce

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This work was supported by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under cooperative agreement grant #5U27-RH01080. The information, conclusions, and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and no endorsement by FORHP, HRSA, or HHS is intended or should be inferred.

Purpose of the Flex Program Evaluation Webinar Series

What to Expect

- **Each 60-minute webinar**
  - Brief presentation on the day's topic by the Flex Monitoring Team and TASC
  - Engaging conversation on Q&A and application of the topic

Understanding Program Evaluation & Basics	Understanding the Theory of Change & Logic Model	Accessing & Analyzing Data for Decision Making	Designing Activities & Describing Output & Outcome Measures	Designing Measurable Outcomes that Demonstrate Program Impact
NOV 1	NOV 30	DEC 12	JAN 9	FEB 20
Recording Link	Recording Link	Recording Link	Recording Link	

Flex Monitoring Team

A Performance Monitoring Resource for Critical Access Hospitals, States, & Communities

Designing Measurable Outcomes that Demonstrate Program Impact

John Gale, MS

Megan Lahr, MPH

Flex Monitoring Team

February 20, 2024

Learning Objectives

- Review concepts of evaluation covered in previous webinars
- Explore a funding cycle approach to identifying measurable outcomes that demonstrate program impact
- Use program planning and evaluation as the foundation for demonstrating program impact
- Discuss new work plan template and reporting requirements

Managing Information and Evaluation

- Utilize a framework for program evaluation
- Tell the story of the state Flex Program's impact and direction to various audiences
- Understand evaluation basics and definitions
- Utilize SMART goals based on needs
- Access and analyze data for decision making
- Ensure data reporting deliverables built into contractual agreements with consultants
- Utilize process measures and short-, interim-, and long-term outcome measures to assess program progress and plan for the future
- Describe measurable outcomes about the state Flex Program's activities that demonstrate impact

Speaking of Evaluation…

- **Please take a moment to complete the pre-polling.**
- **At the conclusion of today's webinar, we will share a feedback form with you to gather your input on this webinar series. This will help us inform the rest of the series – please take a moment to complete it, even if you didn't attend the prior webinars.**

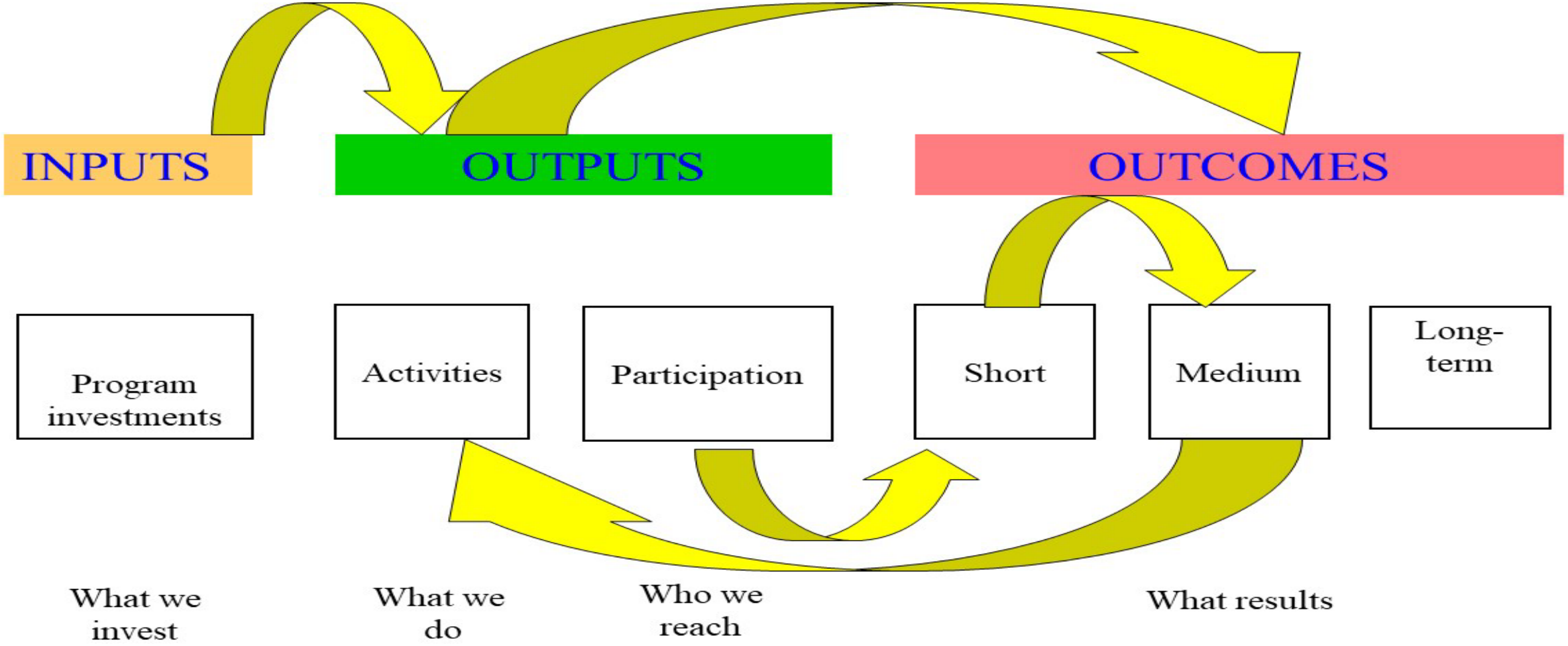
Importance of Evaluation

- Evaluation is critical to being able to track activities and see where an impact is being made
- Evaluation is a Core Competency of the Flex Program
- An integral part of program management and improvement and is a tool to help inform the actions of your organization
- Documents program outcomes and supports annual performance reporting requirement
- Will be an important component of upcoming Flex Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for State Flex Programs

Evaluation as a Management Tool

- Importance of integrating evaluation starting with the planning phase of a project
- Consistent tracking throughout course of a project
  - Track outputs
  - Track data and outcomes
  - Keep work plan updated
- Using results to revise project to achieve desired results
- Update outcome measure to reflect revised project

Programs aren't linear – feedback loops and dimensions

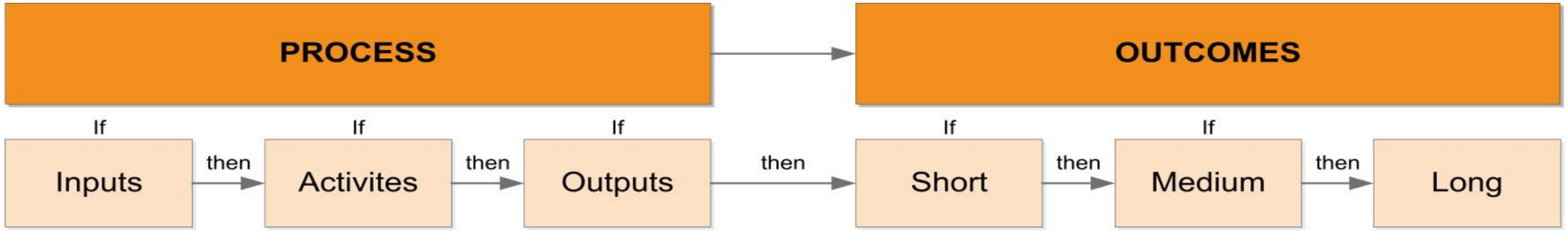


Reminder – Key Terms

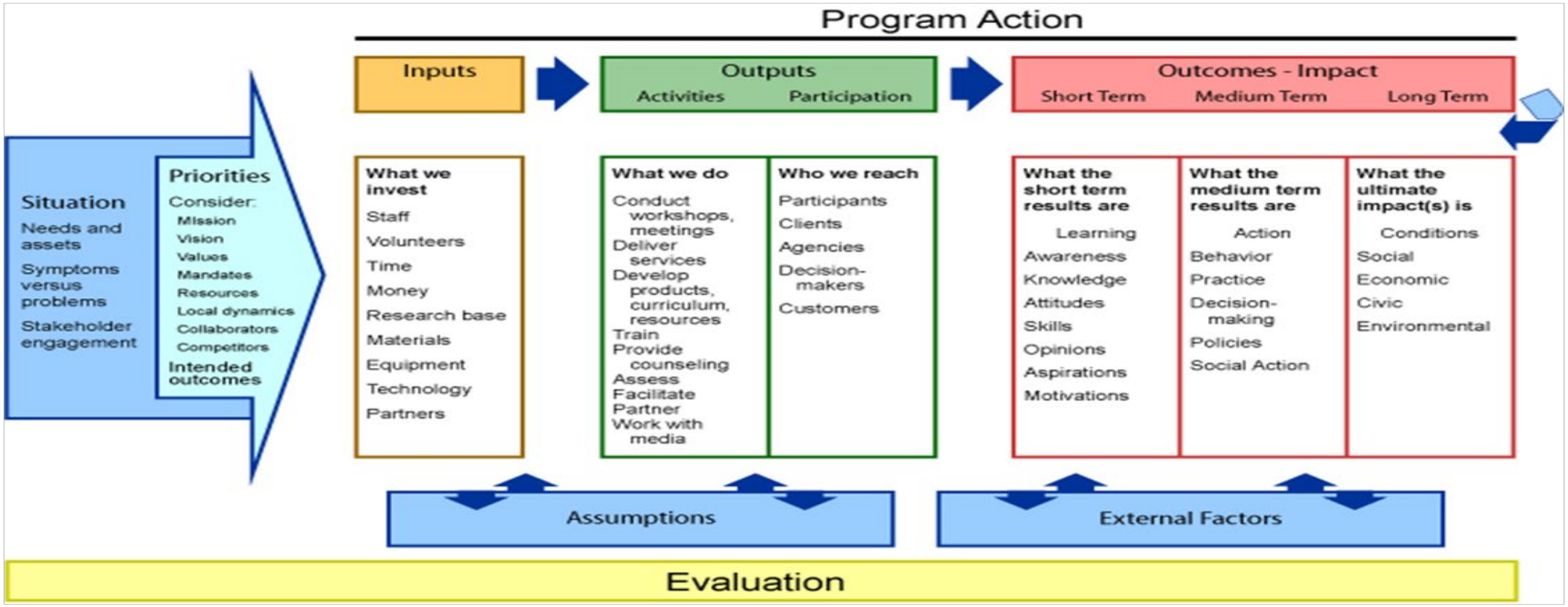
- Evaluation:
  - A continuous process that begins with identifying needs, challenges, and gaps, and continues through implementing a project
  - Is used to determine impact by measuring where you are, where you have been, and where you want to go.
- Outcomes
  - Measurable change resulting from an activity or series of activities. Outcomes can be short-term, intermediate, and long-term.

Outputs vs. Outcomes

- Outputs – Used to monitor program activities
  - # of CAH personnel attending financial training
  - # of participants who report improved knowledge from training
- Outcomes – Used to monitor benefits to participants
  - % improvement in CAH margins
  - % reduction in days in accounts receivable



PLANNING: start with the end in mind



What do you want to know? **How will you know it?**

EVALUATION: check and verify

Source: Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (2002). Assessment vs. Research: Why We Should Care about the Difference. About Campus, 7(1), 16-20.

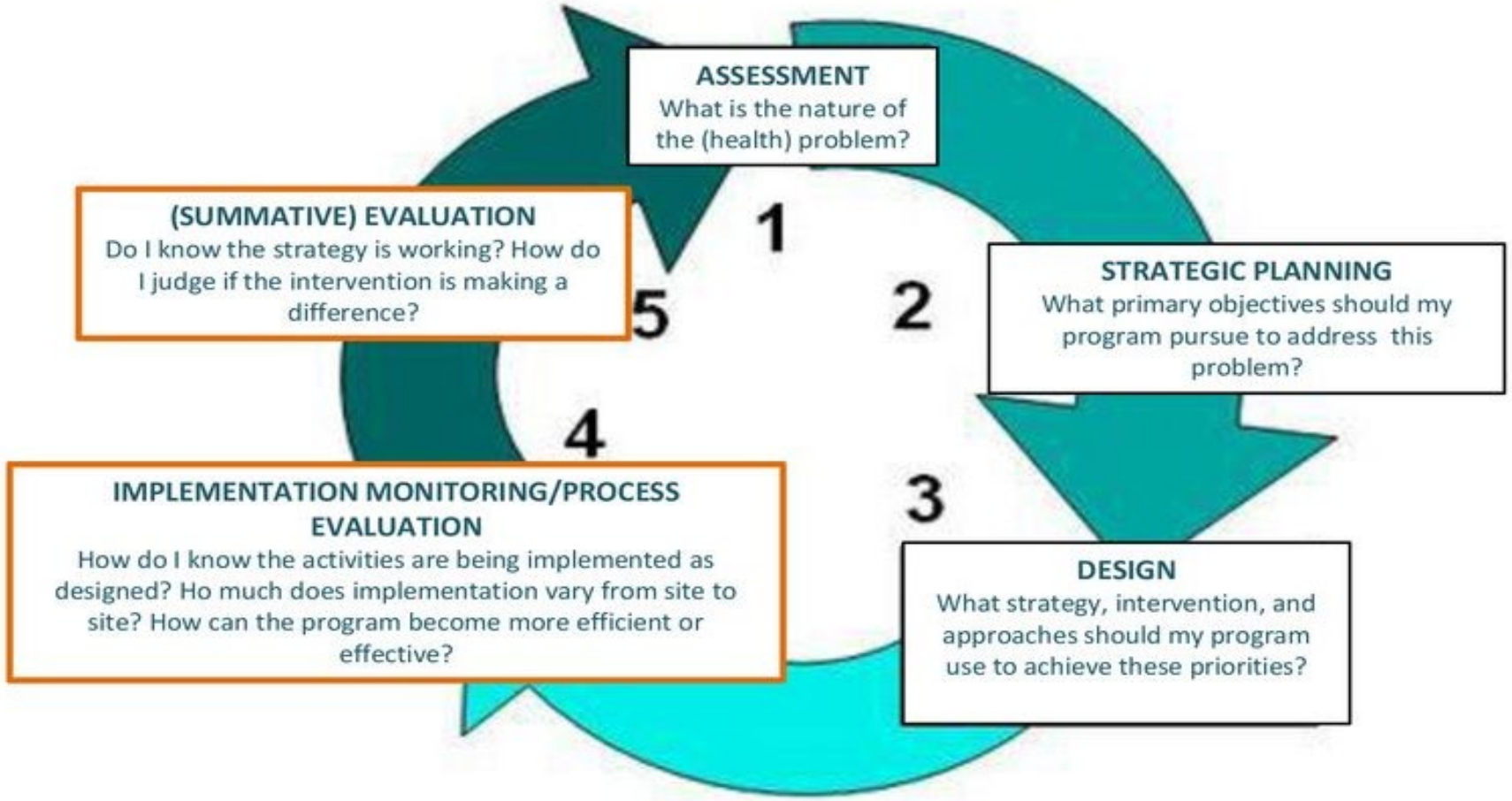
Funding Cycle Approach

- Year 1
  - Focus on assessment, identification of a cohort participants, capacity building, and activity implementation
  - Measurement strategy - establishing baseline data, process measurement, building capacity to engage in activities
- Years 2 - 5
  - Identify sequential steps in project activities for each project year and build on those steps in subsequent years
  - Measurement strategy – focus on short and intermediate-term measures for activities in each project year, review progress against plans and baseline data, adjust activities and measures accordingly

Connecting the Dots Across the Funding Cycle

- A project's theory of change is the starting point that reflects:
  - Clear definition of the problem to be solved and participants to be engaged
  - Evidence-based activities to address identified problems
  - Activities that build upon one another across the funding cycle
  - Schedule, scope, and cost of activities are defined at the start
- Evaluation
  - Identifies progress towards short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes throughout the project funding cycle
  - Accommodates change that could not be Identified during project design
- Update project activities as needed
  - Re-assess and reset activities and outcomes as needed from year-to-year

Monitoring and Evaluation Across Program Life Cycle



[Caro 2009, Adapted from Measure Evaluation]

Activities with Outcomes

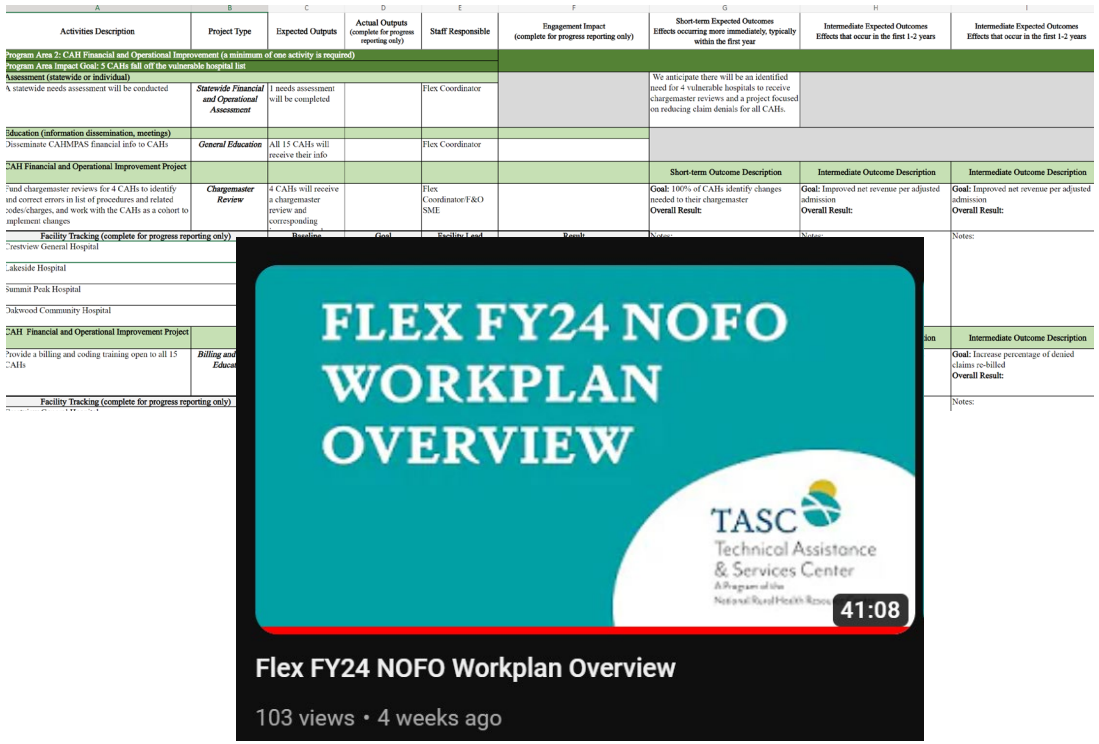
- All activities are not the same
  - Some may not have outcomes in the first year
  - Some may have different outcomes to measure for each facility
- Simplify this process
  - Use best practices/examples provided
- Tailor outcome measures to phase in the program life cycle
  - Early phases – focus on capacity building
  - Later phases – activities that directly CAH performance and improve outcome metrics

Activities with Outcomes – Improving Patient and Family Engagement (Cohort-Based)

- Short-term (capacity building)
  - % participation by CAH cohort members in program activities
  - % improvement in participant surveys measuring understanding of PFE metrics, how to implement and why
- Intermediate-term (agency performance improvement)
  - % of completed admission checklists per CAH
  - % of completed bedside shift reports per CAH
  - % of liaison engagements with patients and families per CAH
- Long-term (system performance improvement)
  - % improvement in pre-discharge patient satisfaction surveys per CAH
  - % improvements in HCAHPS scores by CAH
  - % increases in patient utilization of services

Flex Work Plan Template

- FYs 24-28 Flex Program Work Plan Template
- FYs 24-28 Flex Program Work Plan Template with Examples
- Flex Program Work Plan Template Overview Video



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Tools to Use

- New Work Plan Template
- Flex Program Logic models (includes theory of change)
- FMT briefs on outcome measurement for financial and operational performance improvement, EMS, and population health
- Flex Performance Management/Evaluation Guide

Questions?

Flex Monitoring Team

A Performance Monitoring Resource for Critical Access Hospitals, States, & Communities

Thank you!

John Gale, john.gale@maine.edu

Megan Lahr, lahrx074@umn.edu

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Small Group Exercise

- You will meet in a randomized breakout room with a small group of participants. If you participated in the last webinar, you will not be in the same group
- Review the data on the screen and the work completed in the previous webinar by following the prompts of the facilitator from TASC or FMT
- Complete the logic model as a group
- 15 minutes in breakout room to complete the activity and then we will return for sharing results and announcements

Access Key Flex Evaluation Resources

https://www.ruralcenter.org/resources/flex-program-evaluation-resources

Please complete the feedback form.

Contact us with questions!

TASC tasc@ruralcenter.org

John Gale john.gale@maine.edu

Megan Lahr lahrx074@umn.edu

Flex Monitoring Team | University of Minnesota
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Southern Maine

ruralcenter.org

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