AIVRS PROGRAM EVALUATION CHECKLIST AND EXAMPLE

The "AIVRS Program Evaluation Checklist and Example" is intended to aid AIVRS Program Directors/Managers in the development of an evaluation plan specific to their AIVRS Program. This evaluation checklist provides suggestions and items to think about when developing an evaluation plan for your program.

Establishing a clear actionable evaluation plan helps program staff (1) identify what types of data they will be collecting and who is responsible for organizing information, (2) establish a consistent method of collecting and analyzing data, (3) identify successes and challenges of their AIVRS Program, and (4) make decisions about program practices based upon the evaluation.

As individual AIVRS Programs differ in program design, and to meet the particular needs of respective tribal communities, use of this checklist is designed to help you think about and develop appropriate content for your evaluation plan.

The "AIVRS Program Evaluation Checklist and Example" contains the following two sections.
- **Section 1** is a checklist covering the types of information to consider when developing or refining an AIVRS Program Evaluation Plan.
- **Section 2** presents an example of an Evaluation Plan that may be included within a grant proposal. Your evaluation plan may look like the example or it might look a little different.

You may have to refer to various resources to find the various components included in your evaluation plan. For example, you may need to refer to your approved grant proposal, including the narrative and budget, to locate the stated goals and objectives. You may also need to refer to the following documents to obtain information to use in your evaluation plan.

> Annual Performance Reports
> 524B: Budget and Executive Summary Report
> Policies and Procedures
> Consumer Case Files
> Consumer Case Budget
> AIVRS Program/State VR MOU
> AIVRS Five-Year Work Plan (included in the Quality of the Management Plan section)

Prior to continuing, please navigate to:
- AIVRTTAC Toolkit Program
    - Scroll down to "Review Your AIVRS Program Grant Award," choose **"Third, Evaluation Plan"** (the third dropdown) and download the *APR-Example-2019* and *Consumer-Satisfaction-Survey-Example* documents.
- AIVRTTAC Products and Tools
    - Download the *AIVRS Case File Review Tool* (Word or Excel)

Disclaimer. The contents of this AIVRS Program Evaluation Checklist and Example were developed under a grant from the Department of Education (PR/Award #H250Z150002). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3 and 3474) AIVRTTAC will make updates and corrections to the material in order to ensure legal sufficiency, accuracy of information, and accessibility.

Section 1

Review Evaluation Section of Grant Application. To begin, review the most current evaluation section of your AIVRS Program grant application to identify what evaluation pieces were included in the grant application. Review pages 6-7 of the *APR-Example-2019*. Look for whether measures are categorized as the following.

> **GPRA.** Measures established for reporting to Congress under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
> **Program.** Measures established by the program office for the particular grant competition
> **Project.** Measures established by the grantee (AIVRS Program that received funding)

Identify Current Progress. Using the measures identified in the proposed project evaluation, identify your current progress.

> Have data been collected in each of the areas identified?
> How does your current information compare to what was proposed in your grant?
>> What is your program doing well?
>> Identify which program practices need to be maintained for progress to continue in these areas.
>> What improvements should be made based on the data?
>> Identify which program practices need to be changed for progress to be made in these areas.

Identify Formative Measures. Formative measures are generally part of an ongoing evaluation process and can be used as a management tool for program improvement. These measures can help you make decisions about which program practices will need to be changed, improved, or maintained. This can include the following types of measures.

> **Case File Reviews.** AIVRTTAC has a case file review tool that can be used by programs to help them identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their VR processes. Review the case file review tool and the webinar (link is below) for more details.
>> o Refer to *AIVRS Case File Review Tool*
>> o View webinar Conducting AIVRS Consumer Case File Reviews
>
> **Personnel Evaluations.** Both formal and informal performance appraisals help staff members identify where they are doing well and where they might improve, as well as how staff actions impact the work with consumers.
>
> **Quarterly Reporting.** Regular updates to the Tribal Council give staff an opportunity to assess where they are in relation to their annual grant goals and objectives.
>
> **Talking Circles and Focus Groups.** Talking with the consumers about their perception of how the AIVR services did or did not contribute to their success in achieving an employment outcome can help the program identify where they might make changes.
>
> **Consumer Satisfaction Surveys.** Consumer feedback provides another opportunity to understand the consumer perspective of AIVR services. Refer to *Consumer Satisfaction Survey Example*.

Identify Summative Measures. Summative measures provide an overall appraisal of the program activities and outcomes that are reflected in the RSA Annual Performance Report (APR). This can include the following types of measures.

    Annual Reporting (refer to *APR-Example-2019*)

    Consumer Employment and Education Outcomes

    Consumer Eligibility of Determinations
- Number Applied
- Number Determined Eligible
- Time Required for Eligibility Determination

    Consumer IPE Development
- Number of IPEs Developed
- Dropout Rate
- Time Required for IPE Development

    Competitive Employment Outcomes
- Number Closed Successfully in Employment
- Average Number of Hours Worked per Week
- Average Weekly Earnings
- Number Closed Unsuccessfully
- Case Duration

Identify a Work Plan for Collecting and Analyzing the Evaluation Information.

    Identify a Timeline for Data Collection. Look at the five-year work plan in the grant proposal to identify how often you need to collect and analyze each of the data elements. Some might be on an ongoing basis and will need to be fit into your VR process with consumers, such as following up with consumers to identify Weekly Earnings. Others might be done on an annual basis, such as Personnel Reviews or Talking Circles and Focus Groups.

    Identify Who Will Collect Information. Identifying a designated individual to lead data collection for each element will help avoid confusion and overlap in data collection.

    Identify How to Collect and Analyze Information. Some data, such as the employment outcomes, can be collected and easily summarized using a case file review system, such as Bocotek or AWARE. Other data, such as consumer feedback surveys, will need to be entered into a spreadsheet and then summarized.

Identify How to Make Decisions Based on Your Evaluation. What are your data telling you? How might you change program practices to improve the results of your consumer feedback surveys? How might you change program practices to decrease the number of consumer dropouts after the application phase?

Section 2

EXAMPLE EVALUATION PLAN: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

The AIVRS Program believes that a thorough evaluation of its program performance is necessary to provide effective and efficient programming. The AIVRS Program ensures the following evaluation methods are feasible and appropriate to the goals and outcomes of the proposed project.

1) Personnel Evaluations. It shall be the responsibility of the Program Director/Manager to ensure that the performance of each employee is reviewed on a continuing informal basis and that formal performance appraisals are carried out annually. Employees can expect ongoing informal review discussions to take place thirty (30) and sixty (60) days from hire. A formal performance evaluation will take place ninety (90) days from the date of hire and annually, thereafter. The performance evaluation ensures that staff is meeting job performance objectives written in their job description.

2) Tribal Audits. An independent accounting firm performs the AIVRS Program Financial Audit annually. This audit covers the Vocation Rehabilitation Services Projects for American Indians with Disabilities.

3) Quarterly and Annual Reporting. The Program Director/Manager will produce monthly reports that identify progress toward program goals. Quarterly reports will be created for Tribal Council that address whether the goals and objectives are being met. The Program Director/Manager will use the RSA Annual Performance Report Form to prepare and submit the annual AIVRS program reports in January of each year.

4) Case Reviews. The AIVRS Program Director/Manager will perform quarterly case reviews to assess the progress of consumers who are achieving successful employment outcomes and to ensure consumer services are appropriate and meet the goals and objectives of the grant.

5) Disability Awareness Forums will be held monthly and surveys and evaluations will be provided after each forum.

6) Talking Circles will be held quarterly by the AIVRS Program to identify services needed by consumers and their families.

7) Consumer satisfaction surveys will be sent out after intake, after eligibility, and after case closure, and then yearly, thereafter. The AIVRS Program staff will begin developing consumer satisfaction surveys to be filled out by attendees at the quarterly meetings and monthly disability forums. These satisfaction surveys will be utilized to better serve VR consumers and increase staff awareness to the needs of consumers.

8) Internal Evaluator. The AIVRS Program will use an internal evaluator to verify that the AIVRS Program is following the approved grant proposal. The internal evaluator will assess whether program activities fall within the grant scope and budget, as well as evaluate the efficiency of program policy and procedure and compliance of case files to regulations. [Author's Note: Some AIVRS Programs choose to contract with external evaluators. If your program chooses to do this, make sure to budget for contractual services using RSA funds.]

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

The methods to analyze evaluation data are in place at the present time and provide the AIVRS Program a means of evaluation for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies through the use of objective data. These methods include the monthly monitoring of project activities (implementation strategies), formative review by the internal or external evaluator, monthly recommendations from staff regarding project implementation strategies, monthly Talking Circles that will give consumers an opportunity to participate in general policy development and implementation, and use of consumer satisfaction surveys. These procedures lead to changes in the project implementation strategies, as needed, on a continuous basis. The evaluation will emphasize and document outcome measures.

The data gathered from the evaluation methods described will be utilized in reporting both quarterly and annually for tribal council review, as well as RSA's reporting tool as required by grant terms and conditions. The evaluation methods include performance measures that are clearly related to the AIVRS Programs' intended outcomes. The evaluation methods will produce both quantitative and qualitative data. The internal evaluator will verify the data.

Quantitative data produced will include the following.
> Number of consumer applications
> Number of consumers determined eligible
> Number of consumers served with an IPE
> Number of client services
> Demographic data provided in Consumer Satisfaction Surveys and Case File Reviews
> Impact of services provided through Consumer Satisfaction Surveys and Disability Awareness forums
> Number of successful closures

Qualitative data produced will include the following.
> Consumer input/interviews
> Disability forum recommendations
> Staff evaluations and interviews
> Employment status of consumers

The AIVRS Program evaluation methods allow for continual assessment of the AIVRS project. These methods allow for program adjustments to ensure program effectiveness. AIVRS Program staff will use these data to adjust the program while still meeting program goals, objectives, and activities. AIVRS Program consumer satisfaction surveys, disability awareness forum surveys/evaluations, and personnel evaluations are designed for consumer feedback and offer the respondent a chance to answer questions fashioned in an open-ended manner. The evaluator will utilize quantitative and qualitative data to develop an evaluation report to submit to the AIVRS Program Director/Manager. The evaluation report will be utilized to make programmatic changes ensuring program goals and objectives are being met. Finally, performance data will be provided to RSA for periodic feedback.

3. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Based upon the comprehensive plan of operation, internal and external evaluation procedures, and the plan for collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, the AIVRS Program has provided a plan which (1) periodically assesses the progress of achieving project objectives; (2) provides methods available to revise project activities, if needed; (3) implements a monitoring system to assure those project activities are being completed; and, (4) has developed instruments to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data that have proven successful in the past. In conclusion, the evaluation of AIVRS Program is a major concern of the AIVRS during the entire grant period. Through proper evaluation processes and activities, the value of this project can be documented and disseminated for further replication.