

Directorate for Education  
and Human Resources



Division of Research,  
Evaluation and Communication  
National Science Foundation



# **The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook**

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## **for Project Evaluation**

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# **The 2002 User Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation**

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NOTE: Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the official views, opinions, or policy of the National Science Foundation.

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# I NTRODUCTION

This Handbook was developed to provide managers working with the National Science Foundation (NSF) with a basic guide for the evaluation of NSF's educational programs. It is aimed at people who need to learn more about both what evaluation can do and how to do an evaluation, rather than those who already have a solid base of experience in the field. It builds on firmly established principles, blending technical knowledge and common sense to meet the special needs of NSF and its stakeholders.

The Handbook discusses quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods, suggesting ways in which they can be used as complements in an evaluation strategy. As a result of reading this Handbook, it is expected that program managers will increase their understanding of the evaluation process and NSF's requirements for evaluation, as well as gain knowledge that will help them to communicate with evaluators and manage the actual evaluation.

To develop this Handbook, we have drawn on the similar handbooks and tools developed for the National Science Foundation (especially the 1993 *User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* and the 1997 *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed-Method Evaluations*) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. However, special attention has been given to aligning the Handbook to NSF's unique needs and experiences. In addition, several NSF program areas have been selected to provide concrete examples of the evaluation issues discussed. The Handbook is divided into four major sections:

- Evaluation and types of evaluation
- The steps in doing an evaluation
- An overview of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods
- Strategies that address culturally responsive evaluation

We have also provided a glossary of commonly used terms as well as references for those who might wish to pursue some additional readings. Appendix A presents some tips for finding an evaluator.

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## References

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