Using Benchmarks to Monitor Community Progress

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Why OCD Wants Benchmarks:

- To monitor your progress
- To document the program s successes
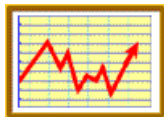

How can benchmarks be useful to you?

- Keep a workplan
- Reporting to Board and public
- Keeping OCD off your back

What Are Benchmarks?

- Statements that define:
  - Your goals
  - Your starting point
  - Your target for accomplishment
  - How you will measure progress
- They can also include:
  - Assignments of responsibility
  - Plans for resources
  - Timetables

Did you ever think about using them to evaluate progress?

What An Evaluation Can Do

- Keep your plan accountable
- Build confidence among partners
- Show what works, what doesn t
- Keep public informed and supportive
- Build enthusiasm, buy-in
- Keep community on focus
- Improve management

Questions Your Evaluation Can Answer

- Are you meeting your timetable?
- Are vision and goals still right?
- Do recent changes affect the plan?
- Should the plan be changed?
- Can you benefit from new options?
- Can management be strengthened?
- Can resources be used better?

Key Steps in Your Evaluation

- Look at your numbers
- Get public input
- Ask key questions

Looking at the Numbers

- Run reports from Benchmark Management System
  - What percent are complete?
  - What percent of target has been reached?
  - How does progress compare with the timetable?
  - How diverse are the resources used?
  - How well were EZ/EC grants leveraged?

Publish a Scorecard

- Report status by benchmark
- Compare this year vs. last year
- Compare your community vs. others
- Show how plans have changed since last year
- Show what s new starting this year

Get Public Input

- Report on benchmark status and outcomes
- Tell a story about your progress
- Hold a Festival of Renewal to revisit the plan
- Collect community reactions, ideas
- Look outside the community for new ideas, comparisons

Ask Key Questions

- How good is the plan?
- How well is it being administered?
- How do you compare with other communities?
- How can the plan be improved?
- Are you progressing toward sustainability?

How Good is the Plan?

- How has the community changed?
- Has the plan caused these changes?
- Have outside events caused changes?
- How do changes affect strategic goals?
- Do you need to change benchmarks?
- Do you have the right targets?
- What should you do next after the first goals have been achieved?

Good Benchmarks are Important

- Goals must be specific so you know when you meet them
- Measures must reflect what you're trying to achieve
- E.g.,
  - Poor-- Establish 3 programs
  - Better-- Train 150 youth in business skills

Is it Well-Administered?

- Are task forces overloaded?
- How closely are benchmarks linked?
- Is the community building on its successes?
- Are you incorporating "best practices"?
- How realistic, helpful are benchmarks?
- Do benchmarks need revision?
- How effective is public participation?

How Can You Improve?

- Make benchmarks meaningful
- Ask leaders to explain slow progress
- Apply lessons to other projects
- Seek new ideas where progress is slow
- Make leadership jobs conditional on progress
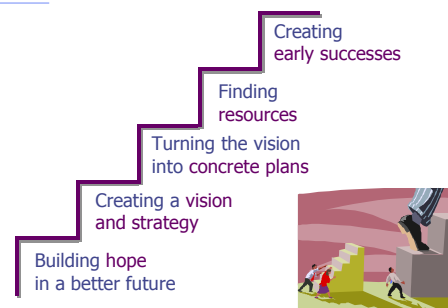- Publicize performance widely
- Reward successes publicly

How Do You Compare?

- Are you using all the funding sources others are?
- Are you progressing as well as others?
- Are your benchmarks as well-written?
- How does your staffing differ?
- What "best practices" do others use?
- What useful methods do others employ?

First steps on the empowerment staircase

Creating early successes

Finding resources

Turning the vision into concrete plans

Creating a vision and strategy

Building hope in a better future

Next steps in building empowerment

- Sustainable development
- Building community capacity
- Leveraging non-Federal funds
- Revising plans to meet changes
- Making projects sustainable

Are You Moving Toward Sustainability?

- Have your leadership and management skills progressed?
- Are you recruiting and training new leaders?
- How good is public participation?
- Are volunteer opportunities being created and filled?
- Should the strategy be changed to better meet the vision?
- Will progress be sustainable after graduation?