



## EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR GRANT PROJECT

If you receive money for just about anything these days, you'll be asked to demonstrate that the money is talking AND walking. Funders want to know that your work not only educates, but is causing your target audience to actually do something positive as a result.

As part of the reporting requirements of the PACD mini-grant program, we ask that you include an evaluation tool. This tool can be useful for Conservation Districts, as project grantees, and PACD in identifying whether your project goals have been accomplished and to what degree. While an event-day survey is the most common evaluation tool used in the mini-grant program, pre and post-project tests, direct observation reports, and follow-up surveys are additional options. Let's take a look at event-day surveys, their benefits and limitations, and then we'll discuss a few other options.

What follows are two types of questions that are typically included in event-day surveys:

### Set One:

1. How did you hear about this event?
2. Overall, how would you rate this event?
3. How would you rate the facilities and meal?
4. What types of conservation events would you be interested in attending in the future?

### Set Two:

1. Do you currently implement no-till practices on your farm?
  - a. If not, as a result of today's workshop, do you plan to implement no-till practices?
  - b. If you do till, what roadblocks do you see to converting to no-till?
2. Please list a few ideas or concepts you learned today that will influence your decision-making with regard to application of chemicals:
3. Does your organization partner with local municipalities in project planning?
  - a. If not, as a result of today's workshop, do you plan to partner with your local municipality in project planning?
4. Do you plan to install a rain barrel in your yard as a result of today's workshop?

While the questions in set one are helpful for planning more effective events in the future, they don't provide feedback on how your efforts have helped the participant increase their understanding

of the topic and be prepared to take steps to change their behavior (in farm or household practices, decision-making, etc.). By including at least a few types of the questions found in set two, your survey will begin to evaluate the success of your project.

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However, asking questions on the day of the workshop such as, "Do you plan to convert to no-till?" or "Will you install a rain barrel?" only measures *intention*. Whereas, a measure of *behavior* can be achieved by gathering

data *after* an event through asking questions such as "Since our event, how many acres have you converted to no-till?" or "How have our educational materials affected your use of de-icer?" Post-event feedback is a more objective means of evaluating your project's success and aids in answering the questions, "Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Did we provide an educational experience that ultimately led to helping to reduce nonpoint source water pollution?"

When your project involves youth, a show-me type of evaluation can also be helpful, such as asking them to communicate what they have learned (and what actions they have taken) through a poster, essay, presentation or video.

In some situations, evaluating your project effectiveness can come from data you might already collect. For instance, have you received an increased number of requests for assistance (or use of a particular educational aid) from your target audience since holding your event? As long as it measures behavior change on the part of your target audience, it is relevant.

One final role for the evaluation tool lies in what can be done with the resulting data. Demonstrating outcomes that correlate positively to your successful educational efforts not only speaks to the success of *your* project, but works to increase the likelihood for continued funding of *similar* educational projects.

If you have questions about how to construct your evaluation tool in a manner that provides useful feedback for your purposes, helps measure your project outcomes, and meets PACD requirements, please feel free to contact PACD at 717-238-7223 and ask for the Education Specialist .