

## **SILC Duties**

### **(B) Monitoring, Review and Evaluate the Implementation of the State Plan**

The council utilized its committee and SPIL evaluation process along with support from SPIL evaluator Alan Krieger to complete the 2015 NY SPIL evaluation (second year of the 2014-2016 SPIL). It should be noted that since this was a SPIL formulation and development year, the Executive Committee undertook the SPIL evaluation responsibilities for the SPIL Committee.

## **Summative Analysis**

### **Overview:**

Most of the objectives in the SPIL initially look to be very straight forward to evaluate. They are written in measurable and specific terms and generally relate to whether or not certain activities took place, how many people participated in the activity, what the impact was of the activities, and/or how often or to what degree the activity was accomplished. On a deeper review some questions emerge. Some of the objectives were technically met, i.e. the numbers of activities/people served were achieved. However, the impact in some cases appears to be minimal and not what the objective's intention was.

The reverse is also true, some of the targets that the committee felt were "not met" due to data problems or technicalities were actually partially met when the data was examined more closely and the intention was looked at. In some cases, by writing the objectives too specifically the evaluation shows that the objective was technically not met, although the intention appears to have been met. Similarly, by writing some of the objectives too broadly, the objectives were technically met although the impact appears to be minimal and not what was hoped for.

In this report I generally went with the technical rating – did the objective, as written literally get met. I also added comments where I felt a different rating would actually be more accurate.

There were 10 objectives in the 2014-2016 SPIL. One of the objectives (#8 – Capacity Building) was carried over from the prior SPIL for only one year, so was inactive this year. The 9 remaining objectives had 47 specific measurable performance targets set for this year. The Council has adopted a range of ratings for each target and each objective including: exceeded, fully met, substantially met, partially met, not met/no progress. This reflects the understanding that even when an objective is not fully met, if there was substantial progress, that has substantial impact and is worth noting.

Overall, the council fully met two objectives (#4 and 6) and exceeded the goal on a third one (#2). Four of the nine active objectives were substantially met (objectives 1, 3, 5 and 10) and the rest were partially met (# 7 and 9). The fully completed rate of 33% is less than last year (44%) and equal to the year before. Seven of the nine (78%) were at least substantially met, meaning the overall SPIL was substantially met for the past year.

For the nine active objectives, there were a total of 47 active performance targets. Nineteen exceeded the target and ten met the target, so 29 out of 47 active targets were accomplished, a rate of 62%, and falling short of the ambitious goal of 90%. This is a decrease from last year and a slight increase over the year before.

## **Formative Analysis**

The above analysis of the results of each objective focuses on "summative" evaluation, or evaluation strictly of numerical results. Formative evaluation looks at using the data to inform and

improve the operation of the projects. In the current state plan, the Council made an effort to shift from objectives that were more activity based (measuring numbers served, numbers of events) to those that are more impact or outcome based (how the situation was overall improved). Some targets in the old plan were overly specific and detailed and were changed in the new plan to focus more on outcomes rather than specific outputs or activities – they indicate how things might change as a result of the plan’s efforts, not just what was done or what was produced.

A number of the objectives show a clear shift in the direction of impact based performance targets and/or outcomes. This is a very challenging shift to make and the Council should be applauded for the progress made. From initially having no objectives, to in the last SPIL having 14 objectives, each with multiple performance targets that were mostly activity oriented, to now having a smaller number of objectives that are more outcome focused, is a large step forward. In the next SPIL the Council has taken this further, further prioritizing the objectives to a smaller number. This reflects a better sense of the Council’s role in the SPIL, an effort to maximize impact in light of the reduced funding due to the sequester. Continuing to include “value added” elements that focus on outcomes is a good strategy for continuing this development to more outcome based evaluation.

Developing a SPIL is a very large and challenging undertaking. The process rightly focuses primarily on how resources should be allocated. The time for writing objectives and performance targets is at the end when there is little time for reflection and revision. Committees may wish to begin the evaluation process on the first day of the plan implementation by looking at each objective and performance target and discussing upon what they would base their evaluation. If it’s not clear in the objective itself, the committee may want to develop a more specific set of targets and negotiate these with the contractors involved, so everyone is clear what will be evaluated right from the start.

The Council’s evaluation process focuses more on assessing “yes” or “no,” was the objective met or not? It could be helpful to also look at “why” an objective was met, exceeded or fell short. Was it due to poor planning, poor implementation, or unexpected factors, or influences outside the control of those running that program? Whatever the reason, what can be done in the following year to address these issues (including possibly revising unrealistic targets or objectives)?

Some of the objectives far exceeded their targets. For these, the questions need to be asked as to whether the targets were too low, were the providers exceptionally effective, or were additional resources made available? As these questions are answered, successes can be analyzed and future plans can have more accurate targets. In a number of these cases, adding quality criteria to the target (e.g. action alerts that are responded to), will bring down the number of “successful” outcomes, perhaps tying it more closely to what was envisioned in the plan. The Council’s increased role in monitoring project implementation will help answer some of these questions.

Value added: a number of objectives had “value added” components. In some cases, these components measured additional outcome results, and in some cases they dug deeper to measure impact oriented outcomes. As these questions were answered, more clarity could be seen as to the true impact of the programs and initiatives. This is the primary area for continued growth for the Council in terms of evaluation: how to evaluate whether the programs and initiatives they support are making a difference in furtherance of the mission.

Learning from the prior SPIL, the Council has built in more development time for some of the objectives. This may need to be expanded to all the objectives. All new initiatives need time not only for the RFP process, but for establishing the program, developing tools and procedures, building networks, etc. One strategy discussed earlier is to consider year 1 of the plan a startup phase and then extend the project into the following plan to allow it time to gear up and operate for 3 years.

The Chairs of each of the committees serve on the Executive Committee. Therefore, it was decided last year to use the Executive Committee to help evaluate the evaluation process overall and the work of the evaluation consultant. That was not done this year, but might be helpful to repeat next year.

## **Recommendations**

As the NYSILC committees continue to analyze and evaluate each of the objectives, they can continue to assess whether the targets are properly set, resources appropriately allocated, and systems effectively in place to ensure the best use of funds and the greatest impact on plan goals. Continuing to work to increase targets that focus on the impact of these objectives will help with this process, as will conducting conversations and/or surveys with providers and consumers to gather more detailed data in areas where performance fell short.

In some cases, where an objective or target was “substantially met” they may want to consider whether the target was overly optimistic and needs to be scaled back or if there are strategies for improving outcomes in future years.

Link to the entire 2015 NY SPIL Evaluation:

[http://www.nysilc.org/images/Final\\_SPIL\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2015.docx](http://www.nysilc.org/images/Final_SPIL_Evaluation_Report_2015.docx).