

# Evaluating Educational Programs: Using Formative Evaluation for Ongoing Program Improvement

Georgia Compensatory Educational Leaders, Inc.  
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## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS





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# Session Description

This session will cover *evaluation planning* and *formative evaluation*. Formative evaluation occurs prior to or during program implementation with the aim of improving program design and performance. Topics covered in this session will include: an introduction to *theory of change* and *logic models*, *needs assessments*, *planning and conducting formative evaluations*, and *using evaluation results to improve education programs* during the school year. This session is designed to be beneficial to those working with educational programs regardless of prior experience with evaluation.

# Assessing Your Needs and Interests



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- **Expectations** and goals for the workshop
- **Experience** with evaluation



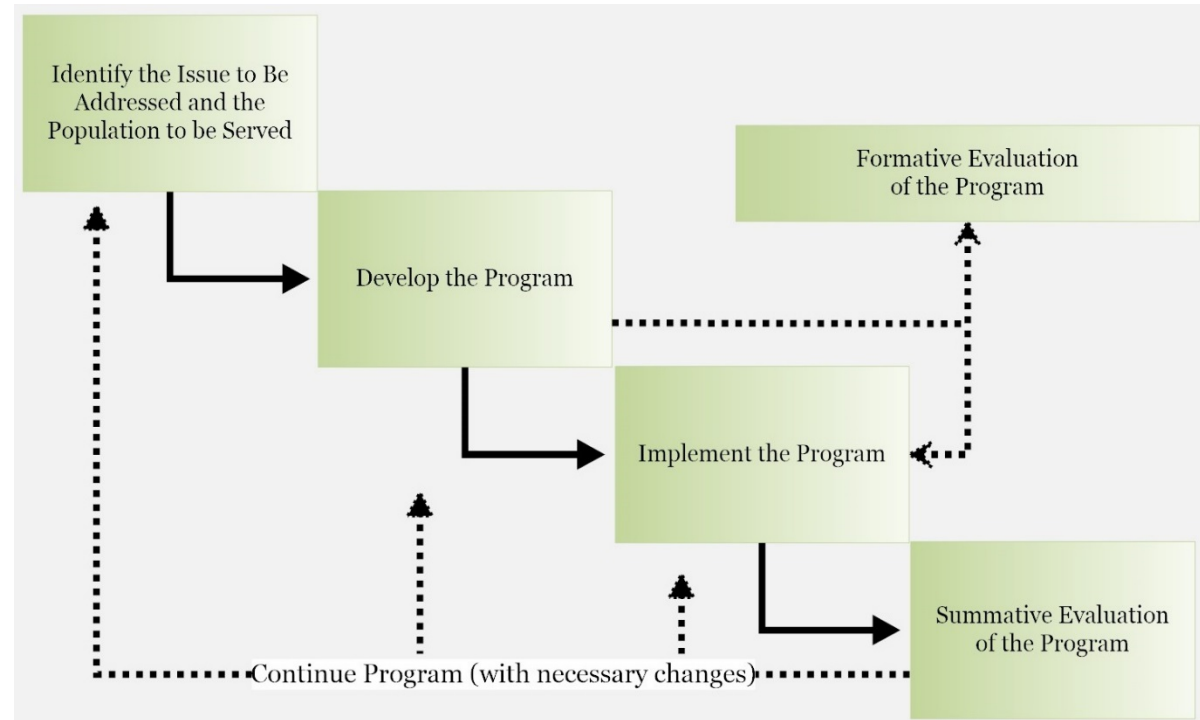
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# Session Topics

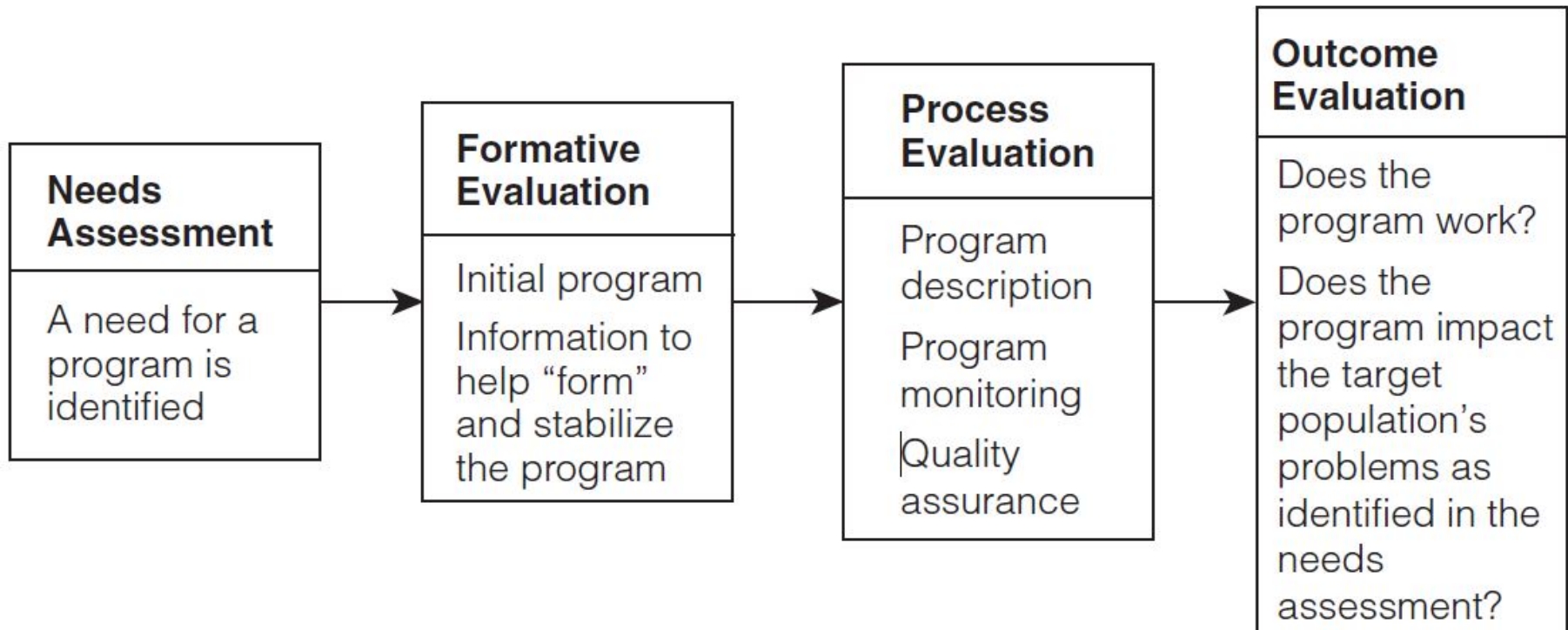
- Program life cycle framework
- Mission statements, goals, and objectives
- Logic models, theory of change, theory of action
- Formative evaluation
- Process evaluation

# Program Life Cycle Framework

1. **Identify** the issue to be addressed and the population to be served.
2. **Develop** the program
3. **Implement** the program
4. **Evaluate** the program
5. **Determining** success and future of program



# Overall Evaluation Plan





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# Mission Statements, Goals, and Objectives

- Mission statements
  - Explain what the agency or program is all about
  - Provide a common vision for the organization (along with vision statement)
- Goals
  - Specify a program direction based on values, ideals, mandates, and program purpose
  - Speak to aspiration of the work
  - Provide focus, orientation, and direction
- Objectives
  - Specific and precise
  - Allow for measurement of progress toward goals
  - Should have a single aim or result that is clearly verifiable

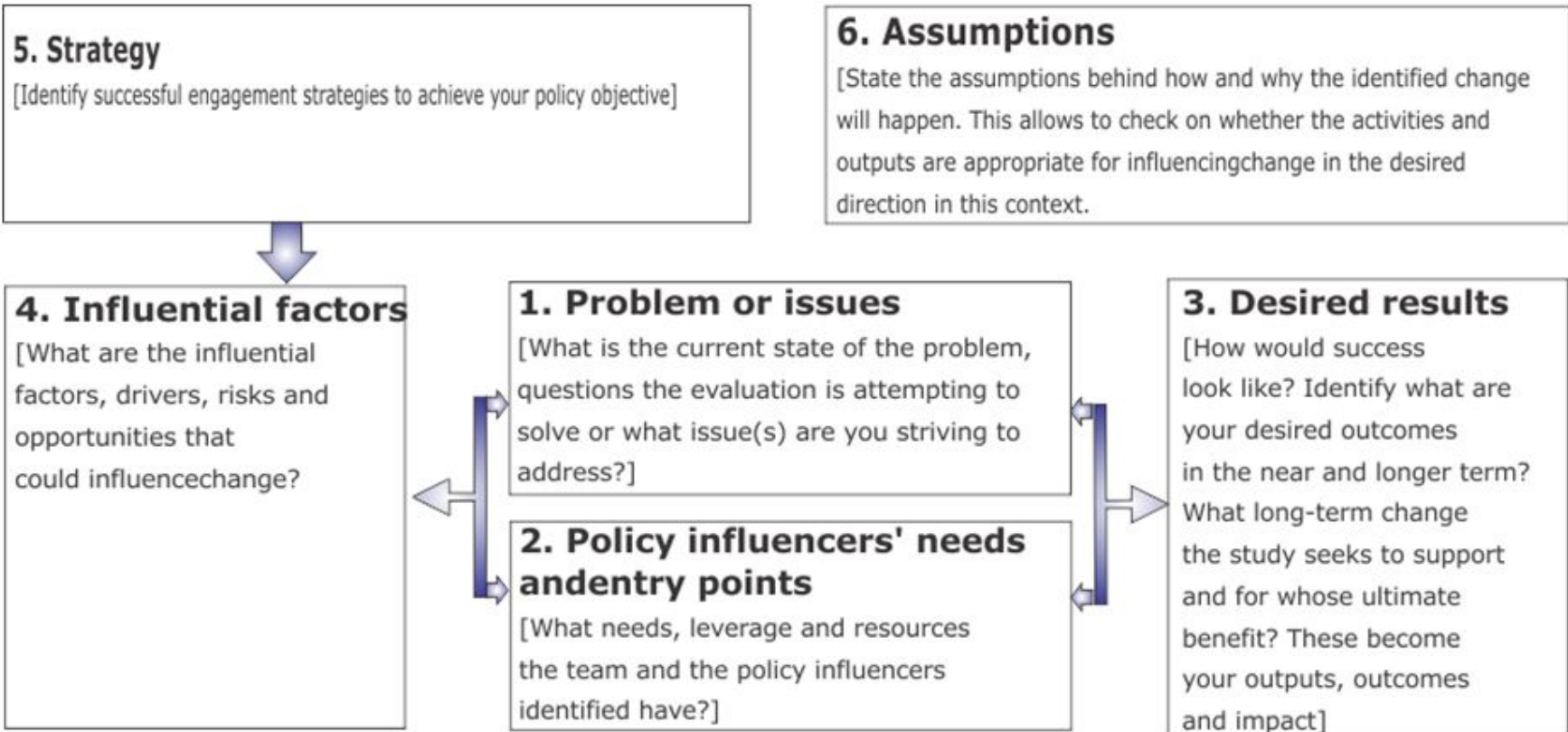


# Logic Models

RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT (Long-term)
<p>In order to accomplish our set of activities we will need the following:</p> <hr/>	<p>In order accomplish our objectives for the program we need to do these activities:</p> <hr/>	<p>We can monitor our activities by counting or recording these events or products:</p> <hr/>	<p>We expect our program of activities will lead to the these changes:</p> <hr/>	<p>We expect that the program will eventually lead to these changes:</p> <hr/>

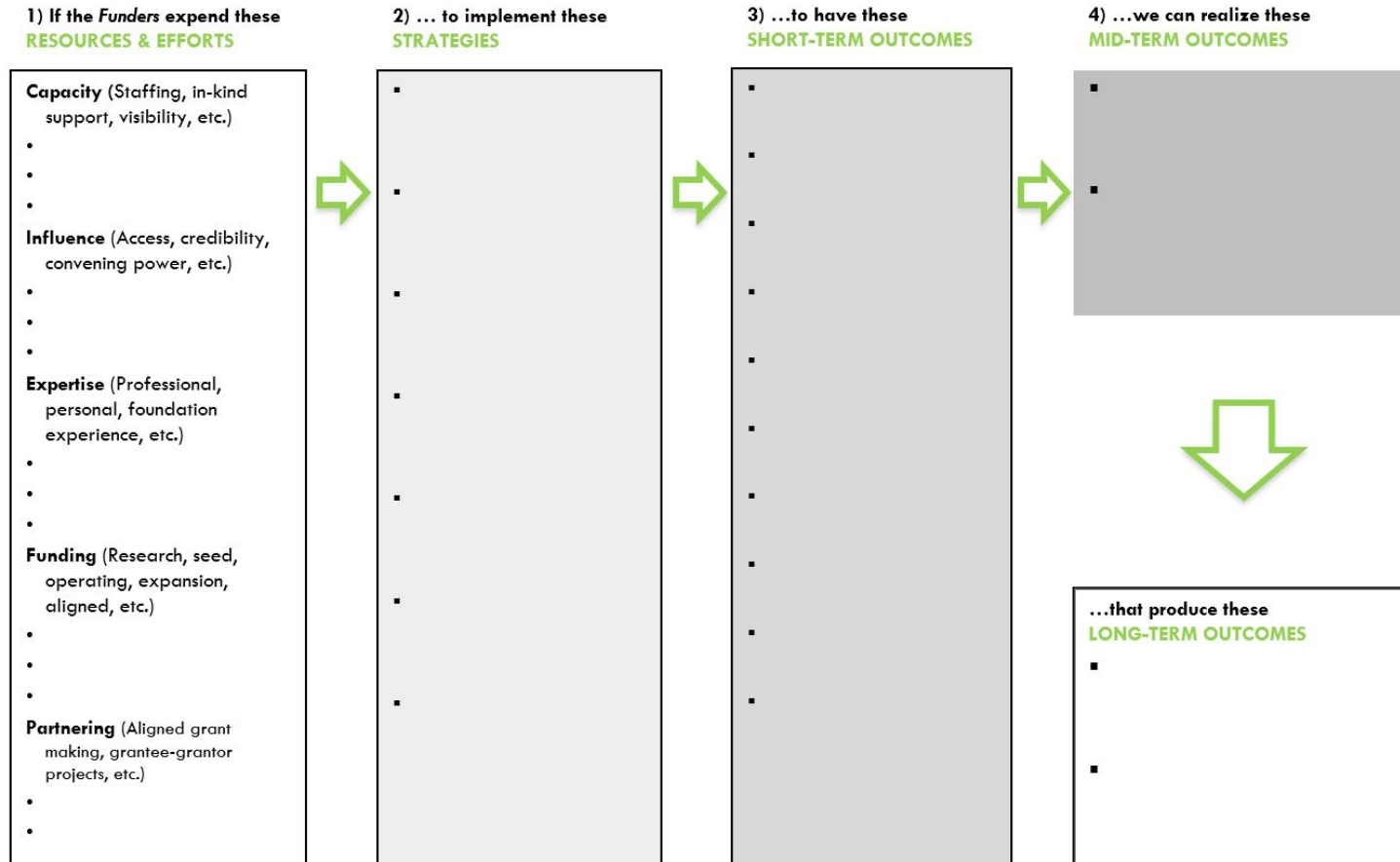
Adapted from: Kellogg Foundation (2004)

# Theory of Change



Adapted from: Kellogg Foundation (2004)

# Theory of Action



Adapted from: <http://dovetailing.us/theory-action-template>



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# Formative Evaluations

- Seeks to influence the initial development of a program
- Focus is on qualities of the program itself, not program outcomes
- Allow for adjustments and improvements to program



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# Conducting a Formative Evaluation

- Approach 1: Locate model standards
- Approach 2: Get expert consultation
- Approach 3: Form an ad hoc evaluation committee



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# Process Evaluation

- Can be conducted anytime during a program
- Used to identify what was learned during program implementation
- May help determine if program failure was due to a poor program model or intervention or if it was the result of program implementation

# Process Evaluation: Purpose and Goals



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- Program description
- Program monitoring
- Quality assurance



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# Guiding Questions

- Is the program serving the right target group(s)?
- Are potential clients rejecting the program or dropping out? Why?
- Is the program being implemented in accordance with the program design?
- Is the program producing the expected outputs (such as services or products)?
- Is the program meeting its standards of quality?
- What implementation obstacles are being encountered? What implementation differences exist among site locations?
- Are significant internal or external events affecting the program, its staff, or its clients?





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# Challenges to Avoid During Evaluations

- Starting Data Collection too early in the life of a program
- Failure to clarify program expectations about what can be learned from the evaluation
- Inadequately training data collectors
- Inappropriate involvement of program providers in data collection.

# Group Activity:

Designing and Implementing Your Formative Evaluation



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# Closing Thoughts: What We Have Learned

- How has your understanding of evaluating a school-based program been enhanced?
- In what ways can you use what you have learned to improve your program?



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# Resources

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