

Funder-Ready Evaluation Checklist

10 questions every community-serving organization should be able to answer before their next grant report or renewal

Funders don't just want to know that your program happened — they want evidence that it reached the right people and made a real difference. This checklist helps you see how evaluation-ready your organization is right now, so you can walk into your next report, renewal, or proposal with confidence. Answer honestly. Every gap you find here is one you can close before a funder finds it for you.

Outcomes & Evidence

1	Can you clearly state the outcomes your program is meant to produce? Not activities or outputs — the actual change in people's lives you're aiming for.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
2	Do you have a logic model or theory of change that connects your activities to those outcomes? A clear line from what you do to why it matters.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
3	Are you collecting data that actually measures those outcomes — not just attendance or units served? Funders can tell the difference between 'we served 200 people' and 'here's how those 200 people changed.'	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐

Community Voice & Reach

4	Can you show that the people you intended to reach are the people you actually reached? Intended population vs. who walked through the door.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
5	Is the voice and experience of your community captured in your data — not just numbers? Interviews, listening sessions, or feedback that lets the community speak for itself.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
6	Were community members involved in shaping how success is defined and measured? The people served should help decide what 'working' looks like.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
7	Are you collecting disaggregated data to see whether your program serves everyone equitably? Outcomes broken out by race, language, geography, or other factors that reveal who's being left behind.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐

Funder-Readiness & Sustainability

8	Could you produce a clear, funder-ready summary of your impact in the next two weeks if asked? Not raw data — a story a funder can act on.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
9	Do your findings include honest limitations and clear, actionable recommendations? Funders trust organizations that name what didn't work, not just what did.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐
10	Do you have a sustainable system to keep measuring impact after this grant ends? Evaluation built into your operations, not bolted on at report time.	Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No ☐

How Ready Are You?

Score each: Yes = 2 • Somewhat = 1 • No = 0 | Total possible: 20

15–20 Funder-Ready. You can document and defend your impact. Let's talk about deepening your evaluation and telling an even stronger story.

8–14 Almost There. You're doing the work but gaps could cost you at renewal. A focused evaluation plan will get you ready.

0–7 At Risk. Your impact may be invisible to funders even if your program is working. Let's build your evaluation foundation before your next report.

Found gaps? That's exactly what we fix.

The Lighthouse Consultancy helps community-serving organizations measure what matters to the people they serve — and prove it to the people who fund it. Book a free 30-minute consultation to talk through your results.

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