# Application for Evaluation Set-Aside Funds
# to Support a Program Evaluation

## Applying for Funds

To be considered for Evaluation Set-Aside (ESA) funding, please complete the application (including the cover page, abstract, appropriate budget template, and budget justification worksheet) and submit it to Evaluate@mail.nih.gov by the established deadline.[1] Note: Your application will not be accepted if you did not submit the required Letter of Intent (LOI) for review by the NIH Evaluation Policy and Oversight Committee (EPOC) or if you were informed by the DPCPSI Office of Program Evaluation and Performance (OPEP) that your LOI was for a project ineligible for ESA funding.

Please note:

- ✓ The application may not exceed 12 pages in length, exclusive of the cover page, abstract, and appendices.
- ✓ The application must be in Microsoft Word and use at least 11 point type with one inch margins.
- ✓ Prior to submission, the application must be cleared by a Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Officer of the lead IC or OD Office sponsoring the evaluation.[2]

All applications will be reviewed for adherence to eligibility requirements and completeness. Ineligible or incomplete applications are not considered for funding. Eligible and complete applications will be further reviewed by OPEP and members of the NIH Technical Merit Review Committee (TMRC). Based on the review results and funding availability, the EPOC Chairperson will make the funding decisions. For detailed information about the review process, please see the *Guidance for Requesting NIH Evaluation Set-Aside Funds*.

## Terms of Use for Approved Projects

**Pre-Award:** If an application is approved for ESA funding, the award recipient will receive a notification from OPEP. The notification will include the **HHS Study Description form**, which the award recipient must complete and submit to Evaluate@mail.nih.gov before OPEP will provide a CAN (common accounting number) for the award. (Note: If ESA funding level for the fiscal year is unknown at the time funding decisions are made, the award notification will be conditional pending the availability of funds and no CAN will be provided.)

**Post-Award:** The award recipient should work with an appropriate acquisition official to finalize a formal Statement of Work (SOW) (consistent with the approved project) and related documents needed for procurement. After ESA funds have been obligated, the award recipient must provide OPEP with a copy of the **final SOW or other items that document the use of ESA funds**. Awarded funds that are not obligated by September 15 (subject to change) of the fiscal year will be rescinded at OPEP's discretion.

Additionally, the award recipient is responsible for completing the **Yearly Status Report form** for every year that the approved project is ongoing, and for submitting a **Section 508-compliant**

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[1] Deadline is typically around mid-February of the fiscal year. Actual deadline will be determined annually and posted on the OPEP website.

[2] Note to P&E Officers: If your IC or OD Office has assigned the clearance of applications to someone not listed on the P&E roster, please notify OPEP by sending an email to Evaluate@mail.nih.gov.

**final report and the Final Report Executive Summary form** upon completion of the project. The forms may be obtained by e-mailing Evaluate@mail.nih.gov. (Typically, OPEP will send an annual reminder to award recipients about these reporting requirements, until OPEP has received the final report and Final Report Executive Summary form.)

## Application for Evaluation Set-Aside Funds to Support Program Evaluation

| For OPEP Use Only |
|---|
| Date Submitted:<br>Version #: |

# COVER PAGE

1. **Reference Number:** *Include the reference number that was assigned to the Letter of Intent.*

2. **Project Title:** *If appropriate, use the same title provided in the Letter of Intent.*

3. **IC/OD Office:** *Specify the primary IC or OD Office sponsoring the evaluation. List co-sponsor(s), if any, under item 6 (below).*

4. **Name and contact information of the applicant.** *If multiple individuals are listed, indicate the person who will serve as the project officer if funding is approved.*

   ☐ Check this box if the applicant/project officer is different from the IC/OD contact listed in the Letter of Intent.

5. **Name and contact information of the P&E Officer who reviewed the application.** *If you do not know the P&E Officer(s) for your IC or OD Office, please contact OPEP at Evaluate@mail.nih.gov.*

6. **Other IC(s), OD Office(s), or organization(s) that are co-sponsoring the evaluation.** *List any IC(s), OD Office(s), or organization(s) that will provide financial and/or in-kind support to the evaluation. Indicate "None" if not applicable.*

7. **Type of Evaluation:**

   ☐ Needs Assessment ☐ Process Evaluation ☐ Outcome Evaluation

   ☐ Feasibility Study (for designing a process and/or outcome evaluation)

8. **Estimated Cost:** *Complete the table below to indicate whether Evaluation Set-Aside funds will be supplemented by IC funds and/or other funds. The information below should be consistent with the information in the budget template attached to the application.*

| | **Estimated Amount from Each Funding Source** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Project Cost** | ***Evaluation Set-Aside Funds*** | ***Funds from Primary IC/OD Office*** | ***Funds from Other Source(s)**** |
| $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

*Specify other source(s):

## Application for Evaluation Set-Aside Funds to Support Program Evaluation

**Abstract** [Note: The abstract may not exceed one page.]

1. **Program Summary:** *Identify the program that is to be evaluated. Briefly describe its organizational location within NIH, fiscal year it was established, key activities and goals, and approximate size in terms of annual budget. [3-4 sentences]*

2. **Evaluation Objectives:** *State the primary purpose for conducting the evaluation. If the proposed study is part of a multi-phase evaluation project, identify the phase(s) of the proposed evaluation for which funding is requested. Specify the primary intended users. Briefly describe how they will use the evaluation results to make critical decisions about the program. [3-4 sentences]*

3. **Evaluation Design:** *Briefly describe the technical approach for evaluating the program, including the data needed to address the evaluation questions and the plans for collecting and analyzing the data. [4-5 sentences]*

4. **Clearance Requirements[3]:** *Indicate what approvals, if any, must be obtained prior to collecting certain data or implementing specific components of the evaluation. [1-2 sentences]*

5. **Estimated Timeline:** *Indicate the expected duration of the evaluation. [1 sentence]*

[3] Some data collection efforts are subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (also known as OMB clearance) and/or Institutional Review Board (IRB) review/approval. Additional requirements may apply to specific components of the evaluation; see *Guidance for Requesting NIH Evaluation Set-Aside Funds* (page 14, footnote 3) for examples.

# Application for Evaluation Set-Aside Funds to Support Program Evaluation

## Section 1: Program to be Evaluated

*Describe the program that is the focus of the proposed evaluation.*

- *Specify the program's organizational location within NIH, the fiscal year it was established and the approximate size of the program in terms of staff and annual budget. (Annual budget refers to the amount of money needed to operate the program, including but not limited to costs associated with personnel, grant funding, etc.) If the program is not yet established (in the case of a needs assessment designed to determine the nature and extent of the problems that a proposed program should address), indicate when it is likely to be established and provide estimated annual budget, if available.*

- *Describe the program's key activities and goals. (Program goals are usually found in authorizing legislation, funding opportunity announcements, or other documents written when the program was established. In some cases, additional program goals may be found in documents created after the program was established, such as program briefings and meeting minutes.) Discuss how program activities help to achieve the stated goals, and how the goals support the mission and/or priorities of the IC or OD office. Indicate which of the goals are relevant to the evaluation (e.g., relevant outcome goals for an outcome evaluation). If program goals will be developed as part of a needs assessment, identify any program goals that have been proposed; otherwise, indicate why no program goals have been specified.*

- *If a conceptual framework (or logic model) has been developed to illustrate how the program is intended to work to achieve its goals, you may attach it to the application and list it as an appendix in Section 5.2. If a conceptual framework will be developed as part of the evaluation, indicate this and include the conceptual framework as a planned product in Section 2.2.*

## Section 2: Evaluation Objectives

### 2.1 Purpose and Timeliness of the Evaluation

*State the primary purpose of the evaluation. Discuss why it is appropriate to conduct the evaluation at this time. Include any compelling reason for prompt action (e.g., Congressional mandate, request from IC leadership or advisory council).*

*If the evaluation is part of a multi-phase evaluation project, identify the phase(s) of the proposed evaluation for which funding is requested. Also state the primary purpose(s) of the other phase(s).*

*If the program described in Section 1 was previously evaluated, summarize the primary purpose(s) of the previous evaluation(s), the evaluation results, and how they were used. Discuss why the proposed evaluation is timely and necessary in light of the previous evaluation(s). You may attach the final report(s) for previous evaluation(s) of the program to your application. Make sure to list the final report(s) in Section 5.2.*

### 2.2 Use of Results

*Specify the primary users of the evaluation results, and discuss how they will apply the results to address evidence gaps and make critical decisions about the program described in Section 1. Describe the primary users' role(s), if any, in the planning, design, and/or implementation of the evaluation to ensure that it will generate information that meets their needs.*

*Indicate when the evaluation results are needed to support critical decision-making, and what products (e.g., final report) will be generated from the evaluation. Provide sufficient information in Section 4.3 to illustrate that the evaluation and its products will be completed in time to provide the needed information.*

### 2.3 Trans-NIH Relevance

*In addition to the primary IC or OD office sponsoring the evaluation, discuss how the evaluation and its results will or may be relevant to other IC(s) and/or OD office(s). Identify any individuals or groups of individuals (e.g., program officials, trans-NIH working groups) who may be interested in or be affected by the evaluation results. Summarize the plans for sharing the evaluation and its results with all interested parties.*

*For working definitions of trans-NIH relevance, see the Guidance for Requesting NIH Evaluation Set-Aside Funds (page 3).*

### 2.4 Review of Related Studies

*Describe any formal or informal review conducted of relevant studies (e.g., evaluation(s) of similar programs conducted by other ICs or federal agencies, articles that discuss current evaluation approaches and/or best practices that are relevant to the proposed evaluation), and summarize any findings that have informed the design of the evaluation described in Section 3. If no review was conducted, explain why it was not feasible or necessary (e.g., a formal review will be done as part of the proposed feasibility study to design a process evaluation).*

## Section 3: Evaluation Design

*Before preparing this section, it may be helpful to use an evaluation design matrix to lay out the evaluation questions and associated elements. Additionally, you may want to include the matrix as an appendix in Section 5.2, as some reviewers have found the matrix to be a helpful visual aid for reviewing the corresponding narrative. If you choose to include the matrix as an appendix, the information presented here should be consistent with the information in the matrix.*

Evaluation Design
Matrix 1-14-14.docx

### 3.1 Evaluation Questions

*State the questions the evaluation is designed to answer. (Do not confuse these with interview or survey questions to be used for data collection.) Make sure the questions align with the relevant program goals (described in Section 1), and the evaluation objectives (described in Section 2) can be achieved by answering the questions.*

*Describe the target population(s) about which information is needed to answer the evaluation questions. A target population may consist of one or more groups of individuals (e.g., grant applicants) or objects (e.g., grant awards, academic institutions) having certain characteristics. For each population, indicate its approximate size, general characteristics, and any subgroups within the population that will be studied.*

### 3.2 Data Sources and Data Collection Strategies

*Specify the data sources that will provide the information needed to answer the evaluation questions. Briefly describe each data source and categorize it as follows:*

- *Archival data – Information previously collected for another purpose (also referred to as secondary data).*
- *New data – Information that will be collected specifically for the evaluation (also referred to as primary data).*

*For each data source, describe how the data will be gathered.*

- *Summarize the process that will be used to collect the data, including how respondents, documents, records, observations, or other data elements will be selected.*
- *Identify each data collection instrument that will be used, such as questionnaire, interview guide, focus group discussion guide, coding sheet, or data table.*
- *If a new data collection instrument will be developed expressly for the evaluation, describe the purpose of the instrument and the process for designing and pilot-testing the instrument and data collection procedures.*
- *If the same type of data will be collected by multiple individuals (e.g., 2 or more interviewers or coders), describe how they will be trained and monitored.*
- *If sampling will be used, describe the sampling strategy and why it is appropriate. Include the estimated sample sizes and response rates. When appropriate, include plans for increasing response rates and reducing bias.*
- *If a comparison group will be used, describe the comparison group and why it is appropriate. Include how the respondents or other data elements within the comparison group will be selected. When appropriate, include plans for increasing response rates and reducing bias.*
- *If an expert panel will be used, explain why it is appropriate. Describe how the panel will be selected, what information will be reviewed and discussed by the panel, how the meeting/deliberation will be conducted, and what products will be generated by the panel. See the Guidelines for Using Expert Panels for a list of issues to consider in using expert panels.*

- *Describe the plans for ensuring that the data collected are as accurate and complete as possible, as well as any steps that will be taken to enhance data reliability and validity and reduce bias.*

*Provide sufficient information in Section 4.3 to illustrate when new data collection instruments will be developed and pilot tested and when each data collection effort will begin and end.*

### 3.3 Data Preparation and Data Analysis

*Describe how the different types of data will be prepared for analysis, such as verification, quality control, coding procedures, and other necessary steps to ensure data quality and completeness.*

*Describe the planned analysis that will be used to answer each evaluation question. Common types of data analysis methods include statistical analysis (e.g., descriptive statistics, inferential statistics), cost analysis (e.g., cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis), and qualitative analysis, Discuss how the planned analyses will provide the information needed by the primary users of the evaluation results (described in Section 2.2).*

### 3.4 Design Limitations and Challenges

*Discuss any known limitations about the evaluation design and potential challenges in implementing the evaluation design (e.g., target population is small and hard to engage, which may lead to low response rate and render certain analyses unfeasible; some self-reported data to be collected from participants may be incomplete or unreliable). Describe the strategies that will be used to mitigate or overcome these limitations and challenges (e.g., conduct outreach and follow-up activities to boost participation; implement procedures to verify self-reported data against data from other sources).*

### 3.5 Clearance Requirements

*Indicate what approvals, if any, must be obtained prior to collecting certain data or implementing specific components of the evaluation.*

*If data will be collected from 10 or more non-Federal employees, you will need to obtain OMB clearance prior to data collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995. If an existing generic clearance will be used, include the title and OMB clearance number. For guidance about PRA requirements, contact your IC's Project Clearance Liaison or the NIH/OER Project Clearance Branch.*

*Whether collecting data from Federal or non-Federal employees, your evaluation may need to be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that the rights and welfare of individuals who participate in your evaluation will be protected. An IRB can determine whether or not your evaluation is exempt from Federal policy for the protection of human research subjects. If your evaluation is not exempt, you may not implement the evaluation until IRB approval is obtained.*

*Additional requirements may apply to specific components of your evaluation; see the Guidance for Requesting NIH Evaluation Set-Aside Funds (page 14, footnote 3) for examples. For instance, if personally identifiable information maintained by NIH will be used, make sure your evaluation complies with the Privacy Act of 1974. For guidance about Privacy Act requirements, contact your IC's Privacy Coordinator.*

*As a general rule, consult with the appropriate IC/OD offices and work with your evaluation contractor to ensure that your evaluation will comply with all applicable legislative, regulatory, and administrative requirements.*

## Section 4: Project Management

### 4.1 Project Implementation

*Identify the primary individual who will serve as the project officer of the evaluation. Discuss the knowledge, experience, and/or training that will enable them to understand the technical requirements of the evaluation and to identify the type of expertise needed to conduct the evaluation effectively.*

*Indicate whether a contractor has been identified to implement the evaluation. If yes, indicate whether the contractor has previous experience that is relevant to the proposed evaluation. If not, describe how the contractor will be selected. Whether or not a contractor has been identified, summarize the plans for overseeing the work of the contractor.*

### 4.2 Evaluation Advisor or Advisory Committee

*Indicate whether an evaluation advisor or advisory committee will be used. Using an evaluation advisor or advisory committee is recommended but not required. A committee with the appropriate mix of expertise (evaluation methodology and program content area) may be particularly helpful in designing and implementing a large and/or complex evaluation.*

*If an evaluation advisor or advisory committee will be used, identify the individual(s), and describe each individual's expertise and how he/she will contribute to the evaluation. Discuss how the advisor or committee will serve technical and practical functions (e.g., provide methodological expertise, help the evaluator understand the program context, obtain input from stakeholder, and interpret the evaluation findings). Indicate how often the project officer will meet with the advisor or advisory committee over the course of the evaluation.*

### 4.3 Estimated Timeline

*Provide a proposed timeline for conducting the evaluation. The timeline should clearly illustrate when each major task will begin and end, and the deliverable associated with each major task. If applicable, allocate sufficient time for obtaining the necessary clearances and approvals (e.g., OMB clearance, IRB approval).*

### 4.4 Estimated Budget

*Review the attached budget guidance for estimating the various cost components, as well as the four standard budget templates and the budget justification worksheet embedded within the guidance. Provide a detailed budget estimate by completing (1) the budget template that is most appropriate for your evaluation, and (2) the budget justification worksheet. Attach both as separate appendices to the application and list them in Section 5.1.* [Download ESA Budget Guidance document]

## *Section 5: Appendices*

### *5.1 Required Appendices*

*Complete the Required Appendices table below. Include both the budget template and budget justification worksheet (described in Section 4.4), and, if applicable, a document detailing any substantive changes to the LOI previously submitted (see note beneath the table). If needed, add rows below the "Budget Justification Worksheet" row to include any supporting materials that explain or document specific cost(s) referenced in the worksheet.*

| ***Required Appendices*** *All applicants are required to use the naming convention listed below.* | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Appendix #*** | ***Title*** | ***Filename*** |
| *R1* | *Budget Template* | *R1_Budget Template* |
| *R2* | *Budget Justification Worksheet* | *R2_Budget Justification Worksheet* |
| *R2a* | *(When applicable, list budget justification documents in separate rows, e.g., "R2a", "R2b", etc.)* | *R2a_* |
| *R2b* | | *R2b_* |
| *R3** | *LOI Explanation of Changes* | *R3_LOI Explanation of Changes* |

**If the purpose and/or scope of the proposed evaluation has changed since the LOI was submitted, provide a separate document (one page maximum) summarizing the changes and why they are necessary and justified. Note: Changes related (but not limited) to project cost estimate, applicant, applicant contact information, and/or project title do not require an explanation. If there are no substantive changes to the LOI, enter "N/A" under filename.*

## 5.2 Supplemental Appendices

*List other appendices in the Supplemental Appendices table below. Provide the appendices as separate attachments. Use filenames that are consistent with the document titles.*

| **Supplemental Appendices** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Appendix #** | **Title** (as listed in the document) | **Filename** |
| *Ex: S1* | *Logic Model* | *S1_Logic Model* |
| *Ex. S2* | *Evaluation Design Matrix* | *S2_Evaluation Design Matrix 01-25-14* |
| S1 | | S1_ |
| S2 | | S2_ |
| S3 | | S3_ |