**ORT**

**Vertical Prosecution Grant Program**

# **Local Evaluation Plan**

# Title of Project

Submitted by (Name of grantee):

Prepared by (Name(s) & Contact information of author or entity):

Date:

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## Overview of Local Evaluation Plans, Purpose, and Suggestions for Drafting

All BSCC grants require grantees to conduct an evaluation of how funds were spent and if project goals were met. The evaluation provides an opportunity to understand how the project was implemented; how the project evolved from the time that it was proposed to the time that it was completed; and what the outcomes of the project were. The BSCC uses this information to better understand how limited grant funds should be spent in the future and to develop more appropriate means to assist grantees in achieving what they set out to do with the funding.

The BSCC approach for evaluation asks the grantee to submit two documents. The Local Evaluation Plan (LEP)-- submitted near the start of the grant period—which outlines how each grantee plans to conduct the evaluation. The Local Evaluation Report (LER)-- submitted at the end of the grant period-- sums up the results of the evaluation. The LEP, the focus of this template, describes how the implementation and outcomes of the project will be monitored.

This template provides guidance for writing a LEP for your project. The sections that follow (“Project Background,” “Project Logic Model,” “Process Evaluation Method and Design,” and “Outcome Evaluation Method and Design”) will provide considerably more detail about the components, but they are summarized here:

1. Project Background: In this section, you will provide an overview of what you plan to do with the grant funds. This may include hiring staff (e.g., District Attorney Investigator, Administration staff, Research/Criminologist Analysts, etc.).
2. Project Logic Model: In this section, you will create a visual depiction of your project. The logic model summarizes how the project operates, including the resources you need (e.g., funding, staff); the core project activities (e.g., establishing structure and functions of ORT Vertical Prosecution (VP) model and/or team/unit; participating in or conducting ORT prosecution and investigation training; implementing a web-portal or database to manage case referrals related to ORT; or establishing analytical and investigative processes to identify and aid in ORT case filings). Developing the logic model will also help form the backbone of your evaluation.
3. Process Evaluation Method and Design: A process evaluation focuses on understanding how the project was implemented. For example, if you set out to use a web-portal or database to manage case referrals related to ORT, were you able to? Did anything get in the way? What made it possible? This section will walk you through the steps of developing a process evaluation plan using your logic model as a guide.
4. Outcome Evaluation Method and Design: An outcome evaluation focuses on determining whether your project achieved its goals. For example, did you actually increase the number of ORT case referrals received? Increase in number of ORT cases filed? This section will walk you through the steps of developing an outcome evaluation plan using your logic model as a guide.

Note: BSCC does not prescribe the research design or methodological rigor of your evaluation. Each grantee should design an evaluation that meets their needs and capabilities.

## Project Background

In this section you’ll provide information essential to understanding the nature and motivation for the project (i.e., the activities supported by the grant). Critical components of the project background and questions to address include:

* What information can you provide that is essential to understanding the need for the project and the project itself, including information about:
* The problem(s) that the project is intended to address or the need(s) within the community.
* The purpose of the project as it relates to the identified problem(s)/need(s) and the grantee.
* What is the scope of the project?
* What activities and/or services will the project provide and what was the process for determining those activities and/or services?
* Are there or have there been similar projects with other community-based organizations or government entities (if known)? If so, describe them and explain how this project is or is not different.
* How will the project’s activities and/or services address the problem(s)/need(s) described?
* Who/what area is the target of the project? Is it aimed at a certain city, county, retail area? Specific retailers in need of ORT prevention/deterrent? If your project includes a diversion program, how many participants is your program expected to serve?
  + What is the process for determining target areas and what they need and will receive?
* What are the project’s goals and objectives (these were the ones you outlined in your application and contract for the grant)?
  + Goals are defined by broad statements of what the program intends to accomplish, representing long-term intended outcome of the program.
  + Objectives are defined by statements of specific, measurable aims of program activities. Objectives detail the tasks that must be completed to achieve the goals.
  + Examples:
    - **Goal:** Increase investigations and prosecutions of ORT in Example County
      * **Objectives:** 1) establish ORT Vertical Prosecution Team/Unit, 2) Conduct a formal retailer outreach initiative, 3) conduct monthly meetings with local law enforcement, and 4) utilize digital evidence technology to more rapidly analyze key evidence.
    - **Goal:** Improve rate of ORT cases prosecuted in Example County
      * **Objectives:** 1) use Vertical Prosecution Model for ORT cases, and 2) successfully prosecute ORT in Example County.
    - **Goal:** To prosecute all ORT cases in Example County using a Vertical Prosecution model.
      * **Objectives:** 1) the same prosecutor makes the first appearance and all significant appearances, such as: preliminary hearing, trial, sentencing, contested motions affecting bail, admissibility of evidence, dismissal of charges, change of venue, motions to sever or consolidate, discovery, setting aside the verdict or motions concerning search warrants, and 2) establish ORT VP Team/Unit.
    - **Goal:** Develop infrastructure necessary to successfully establish, implement, and track the ORT VP case filing and prosecution.
      * **Objectives:** 1) hire and/or structure necessary staff, 2) develop and track ORT cases with case management system, and 3) train staff on ORT VP model and processes.

Start your narrative for the Background section here.

## Project Logic Model

The logic model is a visual representation of the project. It demonstrates how the project functions, including the resources needed to operate the program and the activities that the program offers. It also depicts how these project activities are expected to contribute to the program’s goals or expected outcomes. All of the project goals should be represented in the logic model in some way (typically in the expected outcomes and/or impacts). The goals will likely be reflected in the outcomes column, as they reflect the outcomes you hope to achieve through your project. The objectives will likely be reflected in the activities/outputs, as they reflect the tasks that must be completed to achieve the goals. It is valuable to develop a logic model for your project because it helps to guide evaluation efforts. In Appendix A, we provide a more comprehensive set of examples of what might go into each logic model category.

Logic models typically include the following categories:

* Inputs/Resources:
  + - What resources are being used to support the project? This should include anything the project uses to operate grant-funded activities. Common examples: staff, funding, partners, etc.
* The ORT VP Grant funds are one resource. Are you drawing on other funds? Will you be partnering or contracting with another agency, such as a community-based organization, police department, sheriff’s department, probation department? Will staff time be needed to execute the project and activities?
* Activities:
  + What does the project do with the inputs or services (in alignment with project goals)?
  + For example, for a project that is designed to prosecute all ORT cases in Example County using a Vertical Prosecution model., you might include “Hiring of staff essential to ORT VP team/unit (e.g. Admin staff, Research/Investigative staff, Analysts, etc.)” as an activity. For a project that is designed to increase investigations and prosecutions of ORT in Example County, the activity might be “establish analytical and investigative processes to identify and aid in ORT case filings.”
* Outputs:
  + - The outputs section typically quantifies what happens as a result of the activities. For example, if the project accomplishes the activity of hiring of staff essential to ORT VP team/unit, then the output might be the number FTE staff assigned to ORT cases over the course of the grant. If the project sets out to implement web-portal or database software to manage case referrals related to ORT, the output may be number of ORT referrals received and processed per year of the grant. If the project plans to provide ORT case filing, investigation, or prosecution training, the output may be the number of ORT cases filed per year of the grant.
* Questions you might ask yourself to identify outputs include: As a result of the activity, how many of X is the project expected to deliver throughout the grant or per year of the grant? How will I know when the activity accomplished what it set out to do (e.g., all staff were trained on ORT case filing processes; all staff were trained and understand the ORT VP model our agency conducts).
* Outcomes:
* What immediate, specific, and measurable changes are expected to be observed due to the project?
  + - If the outputs are achieved, then this is the change we expect to see.
    - Outcomes can be grouped by:
      * Short-Term: occur during the grant cycle; observable over weeks or a couple of months.
      * Medium-Term: occur during the grant cycle; observable over several months or years.
    - If your project is increasing investigations and prosecutions of ORT in Example County then the outcome might be things like increase in ORT prosecutions, increase in ORT cases filed. If your project is to prosecute all ORT cases in Example County using a Vertical Prosecution model, a short-term goal might be improvement in timeliness and organization of ORT cases or increased probability of successful prosecution due to VP model, and the medium-term goal might be improved conviction rates for ORT cases.
* Impacts:
* How is the project expected to affect the community, city, and/or county?
  + - This can include fundamental, intended or unintended, changes that occur in organizations, communities, or systems because of the project activities beyond the grant cycle.
    - Impacts are societal/economic/civic/environmental-focused and may be the same or similar to long-term outcomes (typically occurring beyond the grant cycle). This is where you might think “big picture” about the downstream effects of your program.

**Sample Logic Model:**

**Examples:**

- Establish structure and functions of ORT VP unit

- Utilization of Vertical Prosecution Model

- Hiring of staff essential to ORT VP team/unit (e.g. Admin staff, Research/Investigative staff, Analysts, etc.)

- ORT case filing, investigation, or prosecution training

- Utilization of Diversion programs

- Web-portal or database managing case referrals related to ORT

- Establish analytical and investigative processes to identify and aid in

ORT case filings

### Outcomes

Activities

Impacts

Outputs

Inputs

**Examples:**

- Financial support (e.g., ORT VP Grant funding)

- Staff time dedicated to ORT cases

- Database and/or Investigative tools (e.g., case management systems, data collection and tracking tools, etc.)

- Partners (e.g. police departments, sheriff departments, etc.)

- Other (e.g., resources that are unique to your program, the region, state, etc.)

Intended Result

Planned Work

**Examples:**

- Improved economic outcomes

> Business decrease in shrink/loss

> Business stay in neighborhoods/communities

- Reduced recidivism

- Safer community through reduced ORT crimes

**Examples:**

- Increase in ORT prosecutions

- Increase in ORT cases filed

- Increased probability of successful prosecution due to VP model

- Improvement in timeliness and organization of ORT cases

* Improved conviction rates for ORT cases

- Improved quality and timeliness of information sharing between DA offices, law enforcement, and local and online retailers

- Increase in reported ORT incidents from businesses

**Examples:**

- 20 ORT prosecutions per year of the grant

- 40 ORT investigations per year of the grant

- 3 FTE staff assigned to ORT cases over the course of the grant

* Quarterly meetings with law enforcement agencies or local and online retailers

- 30 individuals provided alternatives to incarceration per year of grant

* 100 ORT referrals received and processed per year of the grant

- 50 ORT cases filed per year of the grant

**Provide a logic model for your project.**

The template for the logic model is provided below as an option. Use of this template is not required but may help save some time when developing the project’s logic model.

**Sample Logic Model:**

### Outcomes

Activities

Impacts

Outputs

Inputs



Intended Result

Planned Work

## Process Evaluation Method and Design

A process evaluation documents the services and activities that were implemented. It aims to determine if the program was implemented as expected. Process evaluations typically focus on the first three columns of your logic model: inputs/resources, activities, and outputs. Process evaluations often answer questions such as:

* What resources were needed to implement the project?
* What activities were offered during the course of the project? What was the intensity of activities (e.g., how many trainings were offered, how often were diversion programs used, how often did the web-portal or database used to receive referrals)? Did the activities offered align with the expected activities?
* Who were the target(s) of the activities that were offered (e.g., how many staff were trained? How many staff did you hire? How many hours did it take you to establish a process to identify ORT cases)? Did the number of staff and hours of the project align with expectations?
* What were the barriers or challenges to implementing the program? What facilitated implementation of the program?

In this section of the LEP, you should cover the following topics:

* What are the inputs/resources, activities, and outputs that you will be assessing?
* What is the specific data element you’ll be looking for to measure each of those inputs/resources, activities, and outputs? Examples might be number of ORT prosecutions per year of the grant, ORT investigations per year of the grant, or ORT cases filed per year of the grant.
* What data sources will you use for each data element? Some possibilities include case management information system, agency database and other tracking systems/software.
* How often will you collect the data?
* If implementation goes as expected, how will you document project facilitators – that is, the factors that were in place that helped you to be able to execute this project (e.g., presence of certain staff members, availability of funding, collaboration with external partners)? If implementation does not go as expected, how will you document project barriers or challenges?

To create this plan, it is highly suggested you create an evaluation matrix based on the input/resources, activities, and outputs column of your logic model. In this table, there is a single column for you to indicate the inputs/resources, activities, and outputs from your logic model; a column to identify the data element; a column to indicate the data source; and a column to indicate the frequency of data collection.

Additionally, your LEP must answer the following items in narrative form:

* What is the process evaluation research design to be used (Mixed Methods, Quantitative, Qualitative, Descriptive, etc.)?
* What is the project oversight structure and overall decision-making process for the project? Who will be responsible for leading the team(s) and making project-level decisions?
* How will the project components will be monitored, determined effective, and adjusted as necessary? Who will be responsible for these processes? Perhaps the project lead in conjunction with an informed outside evaluator will direct these steps.
* What are the procedures which ensure that the project will be implemented to fidelity?
* How will all quantitative and qualitative process data will be analyzed? Include a description of the statistical tools used to analyze quantitative data (e.g., descriptive statistics, chi-square, etc.) and your method used for analyzing qualitative data (identifying themes, content analysis, etc.).

For example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Input/Resource/Activity/Output** | **Data Element(s)** | **Data Source(s)** | **Frequency of Data Collection** |
| 20 ORT prosecutions per year of the grant | # of ORT prosecutions | Case management system | Each time a case is closed |
| 40 ORT investigations per year of the grant | # of ORT investigations | Case management system, Investigative Software | Each time an action/event occurs throughout duration of case investigation |
| 3 FTE staff assigned to ORT cases over the course of the grant | # of staff assigned to ORT | Employment records, Case management system | Annually throughout duration of grant |
| Hiring of staff essential to ORT VP unit | When staff has been hired | Employment records | Annually throughout duration of grant |
| Web-portal or database managing case referrals related to ORT | # of case referrals | Case management system | Each time a case referral occurs throughout duration of grant |
| Utilization of Diversion programs | # of individuals diverted, provided alternatives to incarceration | Case management system | Each time an individual is provided alternative to incarceration throughout duration of grant |
| 50 ORT cases filed per year of the grant | # of ORT cases filed | Case management system | Each time a case is filed |
| Improved conviction rates for ORT cases | # of ORT prosecutions and # of ORT cases filed | Case management system | Each time a case is closed |

Start matrix and narrative for the Process Evaluation Method and Design section here.

## Outcome Evaluation Method and Design

An outcome evaluation examines the project’s results, or outcomes and impacts. It answers the questions such as:

* Did the project achieve its expected changes at the targeted area, city, community, or county level?
* Was there anything you learned during the process evaluation that might explain outcomes? For example, if you hired a staff essential to ORT VP team/unit (e.g. Admin staff, Research/Investigative staff, Analysts, etc.) but then had difficulty retaining those positions, does it explain how effective you were able to establish structure and functions of ORT VP unit.

Your outcome evaluation will focus on the short-term and medium-term outcomes identified through your logic model, as you likely will not have the opportunity to observe the long-term impacts during the grant period. If you will not be able to measure the long-term impacts during the grant period, you can simply include it in your description but indicate why it cannot be observed.

In this section of the LEP, you should cover the following topics:

* What are the outcomes that you will be assessing? For example, this might be “increase in ORT cases filed.” Or “improved conviction rates for ORT cases.”
* What is your definition of the outcome? For example, to define “improved quality and timeliness of information sharing between DA offices, law enforcement, and local and online retailer,” you might specifically look for changes in collaboration between agencies in gathering information and evidence to file ORT cases. To define “improved conviction rates for ORT cases,” you might look for changes in the number of ORT convictions in relation to the number of ORT cases filed.
* What data source will you use? For example, when measuring changes in the number of ORT convictions in relation to the number of ORT cases filed, what database or software tracking system will you use? When measuring improved quality and timeliness of information sharing between DA offices, law enforcement, and local and online retailer, will you track results based on the number of partnerships, joint activities, and/or time it took for the case to be filed? Are the data sources you describe currently available through existing records or systems, or are they new ones proposed for the project?
* How often will data be collected?
* How will you know that the change was due to the project, and are there any limitations to your approach?
  + For example, the goal of increasing ORT cases filed might be due to other factors that were not an expected output from your activity. Will you track the number of ORT cases filed as a result the added staff and be able to compare it to when you did not have the staff? Do you have the resources to compare with a control group possibly, so you can see if the change was a direct result of your hiring of new staff.
  + As another example, should you want to improve timeliness and organization of ORT cases, measuring the number the time it took to file an ORT case before and after allotting additional resources to those efforts would be the ideal way to determine if the change (increase) seen was a result of these efforts and not some outside influence.
* How will you analyze data, if relevant? Will you simply compare over time? Do you have staff capability or expertise that would allow for any more sophisticated statistical analysis?

To create this plan, it is highly suggested you create an evaluation matrix based on the outcome and impacts columns of your logic model. You may also be able to draw on the program goals and objectives as described above, as the goals might map onto the “outcomes” and the objectives might map onto the “definitions.”

Additionally, your LEP must answer the following items in narrative form:

* What is the outcome evaluation research design to be used (Mixed Methods, Quantitative, Qualitative, Descriptive, etc.)? This design may be the same or similar to the process evaluation research design, but each should be detailed in the narrative.
* What is your project’s evaluation questions? These must include the goals and objectives from the original proposal. And align with the intent of the LEP and evaluation matrix.
  + What are the estimated number of activities accomplished?
  + What are the criteria for determining the activity completion and/or success in the project? What steps must be accomplished for the project to deem that activity successfully completed (e.g. one training session is conduced, an ORT case is opened, one ORT case is prosecuted using VP model, the ORT VP unit/team is formally established)?
* How will all quantitative and qualitative outcome data will be analyzed? Include a description of the statistical tools used to analyze quantitative data (e.g., descriptive statistics, chi-square, etc.) and your method used for analyzing qualitative data (identifying themes, content analysis, etc.). This description may be the same or similar to the process evaluation methodologies, but each should be detailed in the narrative.
* What is the strategy for determining whether outcomes are due to the project and not some other factor(s) unrelated to the project? Was a comparison group used? Was a review of policy and system changes outside of grantee efforts reviewed and noted throughout the project?

For example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Definition** | **Data Source(s)** | **Frequency of Data Collection** |
| Increase in ORT prosecutions | Increases in the number of ORT cases that are prosecuted and convicted of ORT in accordance to the relative ORT penal codes | Case management system | Each time a case is closed |
| Increase in ORT cases filed | Increase in the number of ORT cases filed | Case management system | Each time a case is filed |
| Improved conviction rates for ORT cases | Increase in the number of ORT convictions in relation to the number of ORT cases filed. | Case management system | Each time a case is closed |
| Improved quality and timeliness of information sharing between DA offices, law enforcement, and local and online retailer | Increase in collaboration between agencies in gathering information and evidence to file ORT cases | Case management system | Each time a case is filed |
| Improvement in timeliness and organization of ORT cases | Increase in the number of ORT cases filed and decrease in the amount of time a case goes through court processes | Case management system | Each time a case is filed |

Start matrix and narrative for the Outcome Evaluation Method and Design section here.

## Appendix A: Additional Logic Model Guidance

In this section, we provide additional guidance for developing your logic model. If you find that the information above contains too much evaluation jargon, or you are having a hard time articulating the inputs/resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of your project, some of the applied examples in this section might help.

Inputs/Resources: Describe the resources that you will be using for your project. One key resource is grant funding through the ORT VP Grant Program. Are there other resources you will be drawing on? For example, is there a specific evidence-based programming curriculum you plan to use? Partnerships for joint activities, establishment of ORT VP unit/team, training, and/or referrals? Are staff going to be trained on the ORT VP model, the identification and filing of ORT cases? What systems will be used to collect data for evaluation? These would all be listed as inputs/resources.

Activity: Put into a sentence, your primary intention (or *activity* in classic evaluation-speak) might be, for example, “Hiring of staff essential to ORT VP unit;” “3 FTE staff assigned to ORT cases over the course of the grant;” or “Implement Web-portal or database to manage case referrals related to ORT.”

Outputs: Next, think about what would happen if you performed the activity as intended. In classic evaluation-speak those results are known as *outputs*. We are not talking about the ultimate consequences of the activity (such as better outcomes), but instead, merely describing what is supposed to happen as a result of the activity. For example, the output might be “50 ORT cases filed per year of the grant;” “35 individuals provided alternatives to incarceration through Diversion programs;” “40 ORT investigations per year of the grant;” or “20 ORT prosecutions per year of the grant.” An obvious purpose of the LER will be to inform BSCC of the degree to which these outputs were actually achieved and to describe the reasons for any shortfall.

Outcomes: Then, think about the immediate reason for the outputs if they are in fact achieved. You didn’t seek grant funds simply to spend money hiring people, building infrastructure of teams/units, etc. Instead, you were hoping to achieve some sort of tangible purpose (*outcomes* in evaluation-speak). Outcomes might be stated as “increase in ORT prosecutions,” “increase in ORT cases filed”, “improved conviction rates for ORT cases.”

Identifying outcomes is a very important aspect of a logic model and development of an LEP because they pinpoint areas that might serve as datapoints for measuring progress towards project goals and objectives. For example, one could compare conviction rates of ORT cases prior to the hiring of essential staff of the ORT VP team/unit. An increase in that value would be evidence that the project had moved towards its goals and objectives. Note that a final report that described a stable number or a decrease would not necessarily be a negative finding. It could have been, for example, that the rate of convictions of ORT decreased or stayed stagnant, resulting in the newly staffed unit being insufficient in light of the need for their purposes. It could also be that various issues delayed the hiring for so long that when the new officer assumed their position, there was little overall change. Similarly, a high number or increase in the number of ORT cases filed heavily influenced the conviction rates. It is important that the grantee documents why expectations were not met.

Impacts: Finally, consider the high-level, broader results (*impacts* in evaluation-speak) of the grant if the outputs are achieved as hoped for and the outcomes evidence progress. These are the potential long-term effects of the grant project, which may involve your organization, your participants, your community, or even the criminal justice system. Unlike outputs and outcomes, your LER may not be reporting on whether impacts are actually achieved as intended, in part because they might not happen for within the duration of the grant period, and in part because they can be extremely difficult to measure. Nevertheless, describing potential impacts is a helpful thought-exercise and provides policymakers with a long- term perspective of what grants like the one(s) you’ve received might accomplish. Don’t be afraid to consider potential impacts that are not necessarily positive.

Examples of impacts might include safe community as a result of reduction in ORT; or improvements economic outcomes due to business growth and decrease in shrink losses, as well as reduced recidivism for repeat offenders in ORT cases from Diversion programs.