SUSTAINING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

EBPs

EBPs

JRSA
Justice Research and
Statistics Association

BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

NCJA
NATIONAL CRIMINAL
JUSTICE ASSOCIATION

Introduction

Initial funding for the adoption and implementation of evidence-based programs is often limited to a few years (Ackerlund, 2000; Scheier, 2005). This seed money is an investment in scientifically-proven programs that are intended to be sustained after the grant funding is exhausted. According to one review of sustainability studies, about 60% of the programs examined continued at the end of their initial grants (Scheier, 2005). More recently, a study of programs funded by the Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA) reported that roughly 20% of grantees discontinued their programs after funding ended (Aharoni, Rabinovich, Mallett & Morral, 2014). With increasingly scarce government resources and fiscal oversight, government funding agencies are more concerned than ever about the sustainability of programs once their initial investments end.[1]

The sustainment of evidence-based programs may also be seen as a matter of ethical responsibility to the participants, the agency staff, and the community these programs serve (Akerlund, 2000; Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2008; Mancini & Marek, 2004). After establishing a program that provides benefits such as reductions in recidivism, juvenile delinquency, or substance abuse, the abrupt removal of the program can be devastating to the community (Akerlund, 2000). Poor sustainability may also dissuade future funding and community support for other types of programs (Alatrum Institute, 2009; Goodman & Steckler, 1987/88).

This briefing examines the sustainability of evidence-based programs, which is a growing concern for State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) and their grantees. The briefing describes sustainability and how it relates to evidence-based program implementation, and presents a number of factors and strategies from the research literature for achieving program sustainment.[2]   Although most of the research comes from other fields, these sources offer valuable guidance to SAAs and their grantees for sustaining criminal justice programs.

What is Sustainability?

"Sustainability" is defined here as the maintenance, after initial funding is exhausted, of evidence-based program components that have been developed and fully implemented.[3] Program sustainment is one of several stages in a program's life cycle (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman & Wallace, 2005; Scheier, 2005). Beginning with the initiation stage, in which a program idea is conceived, programs move through stages of adoption, imple-

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[1] Over the last decade, a number of organizations have developed web resources on program sustainability. For interested readers, the Appendix contains a list of some of these resources; others can be found in the reference list.

[2] For more information about implementation, see the JRSA briefing Implementing Evidence-Based Practices.

[3] The research literature contains numerous definitions of sustainability with some focusing more broadly on whether the community continues to benefit from the program or the level of institutionalization (see Scheier, 2005). Although more restrictive, the definition presented in this briefing is compatible with these other definitions.

mentation, and sustainment (Scheier, 2005). As with implementation, however, sustainment is not one single event or characteristic of a program. It is an evolving and concomitant process that begins with the early adoption of a program and continues after implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005; Pluye, Potvin, Denis, Pelletier & Mannoni, 2005; Scheier, 2005).

Implementation: The Key to Sustainability

Sustainability is so intertwined with implementation that some implementation science scholars include sustainment as the last stage of the implementation process (e.g. Aarons, Hurlburt & Horwitz, 2011; Fixsen et al., 2005). A program's likelihood of sustainment can be significantly enhanced through several aspects of implementation: maintaining fidelity to core program components, articulating clear goals and developing a plan to achieve them, and demonstrating program success with measureable results and program evaluation.

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Implementation research shows that fidelity to the core components of evidence-based programs is essential for achieving the intended results of the program. For instance, in Lipsey's (2009) review of juvenile justice programs, he found the higher the quality of implementation the greater the reduction in recidivism. Researchers at the National Implementation Research Network at the University of North Carolina define "core components" as the essential aspects of a program required to achieve the expected positive results (Fixsen et al., 2005). Although implementation as intended should be complete, many programs fail to reach full implementation by the end of their initial funding (Goodman & Steckler, 1989; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998). Without full implementation, programs fail to wholly adopt and administer all of the essential components of the program, which is a key ingredient for their success (Scheier, 2005). Often the length of an initial funding stream is inadequate to reach full implementation and to produce measureable outcomes. When this occurs, sustainability is more difficult because the programs are less likely to demonstrate positive results.

Another factor related to implementation is the articulation of clear program objectives and plan for achieving them. Logic models are particularly useful for demonstrating the relationship among a program's activities, objectives, and the ultimate goal a program is trying to achieve. A logic model displays the connections between a program's services and its intended outcomes.[4] Logic models not only help programs to achieve

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[4] For more information on logic models, see JRSA's Logic Model Toolkit for Juvenile Justice Providers.

fidelity to their core components, but can also be useful mechanisms for effectively communicating the value of programs to potential funders and community stakeholders (The Finance Project, 2002).

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Finally, as with implementation, sustainable initiatives can demonstrate program success through measurable results and program evaluation. Programs are more likely to continue when they can show through established indicators and performance measures that the program benefits stakeholders (Johnson, Hays, Center & Daley, 2004). In 2002, federal grant funds for the Charleston County Drug Court in South Carolina were ending and their local county council initially denied funding (Reilly & Pierre-Lawson, 2008). After suspending admissions of new program participants for 10 months, the drug court team organized a presentation for the county council that included drug court graduates and demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of the program. The new presentation convinced the council to support the program through a combination of increased fees in probate court and drug court participant fees.

Conducting program evaluations and continuing to collect data after full implementation allows grantees to provide proof that the program benefits the community. Measuring progress toward the initiative's goals also allows program leaders to establish accountability to the community and to show potential funders the program uses limited resources effectively (The Finance Project, 2002).
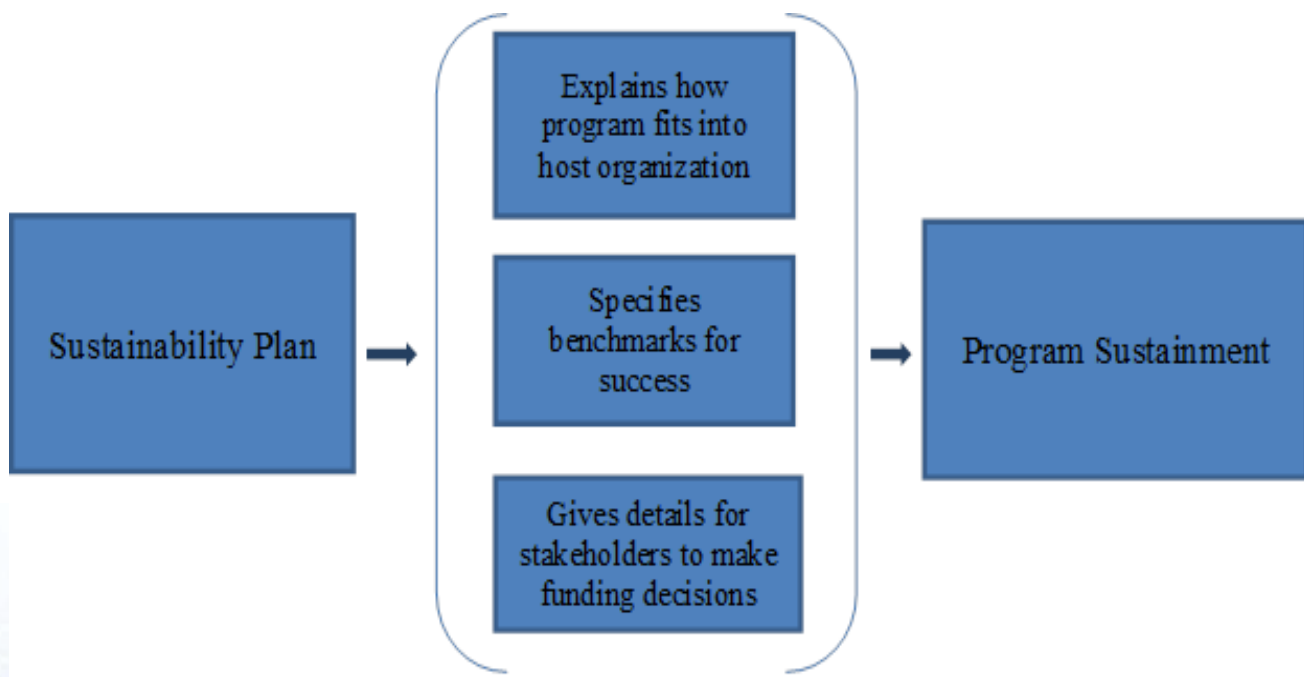
Sustainability Planning

Sustainability should be planned for in the early stages of program adoption and considered at each step of implementation. Research finds that grantees with sustained programs tend to plan early in their program life cycle, well before the end of their initial grant funding (Mancini, Marek & Brock, 2009). Sustainability plans assist grantees with developing diverse funding sources, so that when one source is exhausted, others can fill the gap. For instance, in a study of foundation-funded programs, 76% of the sustained programs sought multiple funding streams during the first year of the grant (Stevens & Peikes, 2006). Developing a sustainability plan is one of the most effective strategies for ensuring the availability of adequate and stable funding once the initial grant ends.

Creating and implementing a sustainability plan increases the likelihood of program continuation in several ways; see diagram below (Fixsen et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2004; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998). First,

the comprehensive plan clarifies where to take the initiative in the future. Achieving sustainability becomes more realistic if there is a concrete and specific idea of how the program will look and fit into the organization's mission, structure, and activities. Second, the sustainability plan provides benchmarks for determining whether initiatives are successfully reaching their goals. Developing specific measures and collecting data are essential in evaluating not only the success of the program, but also in identifying potential problems that need to be corrected. Third, sustainability plans assist policymakers and others in deciding whether and how to support a specific initiative. Articulating the specific plan for long-term continuation of the program provides the necessary details for stakeholders to determine if the program offers a social return on future funding investments.

Several agencies offer toolkits to assist grantees in developing a strategic sustainability plan. For example, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)'s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) has published, *Sustaining Grassroots Community-Based Programs: A Toolkit for Community- and Faith-Based Service Providers.*[5] The toolkit focuses on several important aspects of sustainability

Sustainability Plan	→	Explains how program fits into host organization		
		Specifies benchmarks for success	→	Program Sustainment
		Gives details for stakeholders to make funding decisions		

planning, including: the strategic planning Each of these areas assists grantees with developing strategies to promote characteristics that are often related to program sustainability in the research literature. The CSAT toolkit includes a number of self-assessment and planning worksheets, which can be particularly useful for identifying

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[5] The Appendix includes a list of additional toolkits and resources.

strengths and weaknesses of programs and their host organizations. The toolkit also provides a number of marketing and fund sustaining strategies.

Factors Related to Program Sustainability

Although seeking new funding is important for program maintenance, research on program sustainability identifies a number of key factors related to the continuation of a program after the initial grant. These features of sustained programs relate to the program's characteristics and actions that facilitate sustainability, and the program's relationship to its larger organization and to the community.

Program Characteristics and Actions that Facilitate Sustainability

Adaptability/Responsiveness. A sustainable program is one that adapts and responds to changes in its environment, while at the same time maintaining fidelity to the core components that make it evidence-based. Programs operate in continuously evolving organizational and community contexts. Organizational budgets shrink, leadership changes, staff leave, and organizational priorities shift. These types of changes in the host organization are common threats to a program's survival. Programs that are flexible and responsive to their environments are more likely to be sustained (Mancini & Marek, 2004). In Scheier (2005)'s comprehensive review of 85 sustainability studies of public health programs, she found that modifiability was a significant factor in program continuation. Similarly, research on BJA-funded programs found modifiability to be among the most significant predictors of program sustainment (Aharoni et al., 2014). These findings are not surprising given the dynamic settings in which programs operate.

Program adaptation, however, should be approached strategically and with caution (Justice Research and Statistics Association [JRSA], 2014). The essential features of a program are often difficult to identify, and the further a program moves away from its original form, the higher the risk of losing the positive effects associated with an evidence-based program. As researchers at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence have aptly stated, "local adaption may well increase the likelihood of sustaining a program, but if it renders the program ineffective, this is not a desirable outcome. Both fidelity and sustainability are necessary to an effective prevention effort" (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004, p. 51). Programs are more likely to continue if they can be tailored to an emerging contextual need *without altering the core program components.*

In addition to organizational changes, the community in which the program is embedded may also change. Social, economic, and political shifts can lead to policy developments that hinder the continuance of a program or offer an opportunity for funding stability. The ability to monitor and rapidly respond to a trans-

forming environment is essential to program sustainability. Program maintenance and continuation is easier to achieve when grantees are able to overcome the resulting obstacles and take advantage of opportunities when presented. For example, in the late 1990s a number of states received public health funding from tobacco litigation. In Maine, politicians and community advocates followed the development of these new funding streams. By the time the tobacco settlements were paid, the state legislature had already established a fund to support family and children's services programs (The Finance Project, 2002).

By monitoring a program's community environment, programs can enhance their responsiveness. In Kansas, a school district initially used seed money from a federal school safety initiative to establish a learning center as an alternative graduation program for high school drop outs (Anderson & Blaisdell, 2013). Growing problems in the community, such as teen pregnancy, poverty, and DUIs, prompted the center to expand its services to adults and to offer other types of classes. As long as the school district continued to manage the program, many of the center's costs were covered by state funds for adult education. Expanding the program's services to meet changing needs in the community environment provided new funding opportunities.

Grantee organizations and program leaders are more likely to be aware of changes in the criminal justice field and the community by keeping up-to-date on research and data on the community's economic, demographic, and social conditions. Some potential strategies for effectively monitoring changes include participating in listservs, joining coalitions, monitoring social media, and subscribing to relevant publications (The Finance Project, 2002). These types of strategies enhance the ability of program and organizational leadership to effectively respond to changes in their environment and to sustain their initiatives.

Program Leadership Competence. Another program-related characteristic for sustainment is the presence of competent program leadership. Strong program leaders utilize some of the same skills and strategies that are essential for effective program implementation: setting program goals and objectives, engaging in ongoing program planning, and developing implementation and program evaluation plans (Mancini & Marek, 2004). The sustainability literature suggests that leadership competence is significantly related to other elements of sustainability. Mancini and Marek (2004) found a high correlation between leadership competence and the ability to demonstrate program results. Similarly, strong program leaders build relationships with members of the local community (e.g. volunteers, local officials and agencies, other non-profits), cultivate program staff who are committed to program goals, and involve staff in important program decisions. When staff are committed to program goals and invested in program outcomes (see below), and when programs are well-known in the community, replacing program leaders who leave the organization with other highly qualified managers, either internal or external to the program, is much easier to accomplish.

Staff Involvement. As with implementation, the sustainability research concludes that staff buy-in and

commitment can impact whether a program is sustained. Staff are more likely to pursue program goals and work toward long-term sustainability when they are involved in important program decisions and can readily perceive the benefits of the program (Johnson et al., 2004; Scheier 2005). In short, staff become invested. Staff participation contributes to an organizational culture that emphasizes collaboration in working toward program sustainability (Mancini & Marek, 2004). Leadership can increase staff involvement by sharing positive program results, providing staff training and education consistent with program goals and needs, and recognizing and rewarding staff for their program work. In these types of organizational environments, staff are committed to program success and staff turnover, one of the challenges to sustainability, is reduced (National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, 2012).

- **Organizations with institutional strength are stable and mature with well-developed organizational structures.**

- **An organization's managerial structure establishes a hierarchy of responsibility and control over the organization's operations.**

- **Organizational processes are the mechanisms the organization engages to achieve its purpose and goals.**

Relationship to Larger Organization

A program's relationship to its host organization influences the sustainability of a program. Several sustainability researchers note the importance of this relationship (Johnson et al., 2004; Scheier, 2005; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998, Stevens & Peikes, 2006). For instance, based on their review of the sustainability literature, Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) suggest that factors such as institutional strength, managerial structure, and organizational process are all related to program sustainment. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2004) concluded that an organization's infrastructure is a key factor in program sustainability and should be considered in sustainability planning. A program's organizational context is so strongly related to its survival that some scholars include organizational stability and capacity in the definition of sustainability (e.g. Cassidy, Leviton & Hunter, 2006).

Many of the same organizational characteristics that foster high quality implementation also enable sustainability. Implementation science has demonstrated the importance of administrative support, the integration of program activities, and the presence of strong leadership for effective program implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005). As with implementation, a program that is part of an organization with strong internal systems, integrated program activities, and internal program champions is more likely to be sustained over time.

Strong Internal Systems. Similar to the factors relevant for the implementation process, program sus-

tainment is more likely to be achieved in an organization with strong internal systems. Established systems pertaining to fiscal management, information and technology, and personnel promote effective and efficient operations and use of resources. Building robust internal systems also helps grantees respond and adapt to their environments (York, n.d.).

Organizations with strong fiscal management systems engage in strategic financial planning, seek funding from diverse sources, and have expertise in fundraising strategies. The elimination of funding for a particular program or initiative is a common reason provided by organizations for discontinuing the program or initiative. In the study of BJA-funded programs, almost half of respondents indicated the program did not continue because funding ended or the organization lacked internal resources (Aharoni et al., 2014). Research also confirms the importance of funding stability and diversity for program sustainability (Marek et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2004; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998).

Information and technology systems provide the necessary support for data collection. Data is essential for being able to tell the program's story to stakeholders, to inform internal decision-making, and to monitor the program's adherence to the core components. Established personnel systems ensure the program has qualified and well-trained staff and that staff assessments are connected to program effectiveness and delivery. When these internal organizational systems are firmly established, initiatives are better equipped to document their results, demonstrate their soundness to potential funders, and garner support from the community.

Program Integration. The core components of a program are more likely to be sustained after full implementation and when program activities become integrated into the larger organization. Sustainability research shows that when a program's components are integrated with existing organizational activities and structures, the program is more likely to continue after the initial funding for implementation is exhausted (Shediac-Rizallah & Bone, 1998). Some sustainability models place levels of integration (from no integration to high integration) on the same continuum as levels of sustainability (from no sustainability to high sustainability) (e.g. LaPelle, Zapka, and Ockene, 2006; Pluye et al., 2005). That is, the more a program is integrated into the organizational processes, the more likely the program will be sustained. Program components can become so embedded in day-to-day processes of organizations that a distinct "program" is no longer even apparent (Scheier, 2005).

Several strategies assist with integrating program components into an organization. Organizations can include the program into the organizational budget so that the funding is "hard" money (Scheier, 2005, Yin 1981). Another mechanism is to place program activities into other personnel job descriptions in the organization rather than using program-specific positions (Scheier, 2005). By distributing the program activities in multiple job descriptions, a program is better equipped to adapt to staff turnover. To further integrate the program activities, program-related skills should be provided in routine training and become part of professional stan-

dards. Finally, integration into the organization is further enhanced by specifying program use in organizational manuals, policies, and procedures (Yin, 1981). These types of strategies increase the institutionalization of the program components into the organization.

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Another way that integration into the organization affects sustainability is by the degree to which a program "fits" into an organization's core mission and addresses an organizational need. For example, a bullying prevention program in a school would be consistent with its educational mission because the program contributes to a positive school climate that is conducive to learning. When programs are congruent with the organization's core mission, they are more likely to become integrated into the organization's day-to-day operations and maintained in the long-term (Scheier, 2005). A program is also more likely to continue after the initial funding period if the motivation for initiating the program was to fulfill a strong internal organizational need, as opposed to an external "push" like funding availability from an outside granting agency (Scheier, 2005).

Internal Program "Champion." Sustainability research consistently finds that the presence of at least one internal program "champion" is associated with program sustainment beyond initial funding. For example, an empirical study of 189 heart health promotion programs concluded that the presence of a program champion was a significant predictor of program continuation (O'Loughlin, Renaud, Richard, Gomez & Paradis, 1998). These types of findings are typical in the sustainability literature. In one review of sustainability studies, over three-fourths of the studies cited an internal program champion as an essential element for program sustainment (Scheier, 2005). Internal program champions promote continuation of the program and build organizational capacity to further support the program activities.

Although internal program champions are often program leaders, program champions in organizational leadership roles are particularly helpful for achieving program sustainability. For instance, in a case study of six social programs researchers found that the sustained programs had leaders in the host organization acting as program champions (Savaya, Spiro & Elran-Barak, 2008). Organizational leaders are often in a position to institutionalize the program into the host organization. When organizational leaders are program champions, the program becomes a high priority and its core components are integrated into the organization's structure. Internal program champions can be critical actors in a program's survival.

Relationship with the Community

The same program implemented in one community may be more difficult to sustain in another. Political, economic, and social conditions in the broader community influence program sustainability. For example, disadvantaged communities often have many social problems—poverty, crime, homelessness, substance abuse—that compete for the resources required to sustain evidence-based programs (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998). A number of studies on program sustainability find that program continuation is tied to building a broad base of community support. A study of 92 youth-at-risk programs found that all of the programs continuing 2½ years after the initial funding relied on some type of community support (Marek et al., 2009). Based on her comprehensive review of public health studies, Scheier (2005) concluded that one of the key elements for a program's continuation was its strong connection with the surrounding community. The support of local stakeholders is a critical element of a program's ability to endure past its initial grant funding.

> The Hardin County Drug Court in Kentucky, a recipient of BJA's Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program, adopted a multifaceted community partnership approach to program sustainment. To expand program capacity and secure staff funding from the local government, program leaders demonstrated the court's successes and the cost-savings for the county jail. The drug court team also developed partnerships with local community agencies to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment for drug court participants (Reilly & Pierre-Lawson, 2008)

Maximize Resources. A broad base of community support contributes to a program's sustainability with financial, social, and political resources. Forming collaborations with other organizations in the community is a useful strategy for maximizing and pooling resources. For example, the Anaheim City School District in California, a grantee for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, built stronger partnerships with the local YMCA, a non-profit mental health agency, the police department, and the district attorney. This community partnership led to the community mental health organization providing funds for ongoing data collection and a data entry person (Anderson & Blaisell, 2013). Other organizations can provide in-kind resources such as expert advice in fundraising, volunteers, and political support (Scheier, 2005). Additionally, local professionals (e.g. attorneys, accountants, and physicians) may volunteer their services to support an initiative if they are invested in the program. When community stakeholders support the goals of the program, it is more likely to be maintained in the future.

Community and Political Support. The ability to develop new community partnerships while main-

taining existing relationships is essential for widening a program's scope of community support (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2008). Social marketing is a particularly useful strategy for increasing awareness of a program's benefits and for creating partnerships with members of the community (e.g. volunteers, elected officials, non-profits). Relationships can be built by holding events such as open houses and program tours, so that public officials, church leaders, business owners, and volunteers can learn more about the program's services and facilities (The Finance Project, 2002). For example, problem-solving court programs (e.g. drug courts, mental health courts) can build community relationships by inviting local and state officials and other policymakers to witness their court sessions in action (Thompson, Osher & Tomasini-Joshi, 2007). Brochures and social media are also vehicles for communicating the program results. A local program for at-risk youths could use social media to provide the preliminary results from its program evaluation to potential supporters in the community. Finally, community relationships can be built by working in tandem with other community organizations to host events in public spaces such as festivals, fairs, and exhibitions. Using these kinds of strategies increases program awareness and builds connections with the local community that can lead to additional resources and political support.

A program leader who builds strong relationships with the local community and an external program champion increase a program's sustainability. According to a recent study of BJA-funded programs, a well-connected project leader in the community significantly predicts whether a program continues after its funding expired (Aharoni et al., 2014). Project leaders with strong community relationships are more likely to find political support, future funding, and other resources that lead to program sustainment.

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External Program Champion. In addition to an internal program champion, a number of studies find that having an external program champion in the community is helpful for sustaining programs (Scheier, 2005). A study of foundation-funded programs reported that 89% of the sustained projects had an external program champion (Stevens & Peikes, 2006). External program champions can generate support for the program and ensure that the necessary resources are available for the program to survive. Leaders from businesses, faith-based institutions, government, and other parts of the community can be valuable assets. When an initiative has broad community support and faces a funding cut, the mobilization of community leaders behind the program is often

what saves it (The Finance Project, 2002). State agency leaders, in particular, can be important advocates and brokers of the program to other decision-makers (Johnson et al., 2004). In a study of mental health initiatives, for example, researchers found that 8 out of the 14 programs had a designated staff person with the state mental health authority acting as their program champion (Jones, Bond, Peterson, Drake, McHugo & Williams, 2014). These types of relationships are necessary for obtaining the resources and support required to continue program activities and to produce their benefits.

How Can Grantors Facilitate Sustainability?

Achieving program sustainability is more realistic when grantors and grantees collaborate. Although grantees ultimately bear the burden of continuing their programs when the initial funding ends, grantors can utilize several strategies to facilitate project sustainability in the grant-making process and during the funding period: encouraging sustainability planning, improving organizational capacity, and enhancing programs' relationships with their larger environment.

Sustainability Planning

As part of the request for proposal (RFP) process, the funding agency can require the grantee to provide a sustainability plan or to include information on the factors associated with program continuation. For example, in a community health initiative funded by SAMSHA, the agency required applicants to describe their plan for maintaining the program infrastructure and services over time (Alatrum Institute, 2009). Grantees were expected to develop a strategic sustainability plan during the first year of a six-year grant period.

Grant-making agencies can also offer technical support and resources to assist grantees with sustainability planning. The CSAT toolkit referenced earlier includes information designed to help grantees develop sustainability plans. Similarly, AmeriCorps and one of their administrating organizations produced a toolkit designed to assist AmeriCorps-funded service providers with building organizational capacity for program sustainability (Alatrum Institute, 2009). Through these strategies, funding agencies encourage grantees to engage in strategic sustainability planning early in the program's life cycle, which increases their chances of implementing an enduring program.

Organizational Capacity

Funding agencies can help build a grantee's organizational capacity for sustaining a program with technical assistance and funding to improve implementation fidelity, strengthen internal systems, and enhance leadership competence. In addition to requiring an assessment at each stage of the project, grantors can offer technical assistance with some of the implementation drivers like staff training and program evaluation. To assist with program evaluation, funding agencies could facilitate partnerships with local evaluators and universities and offer funds for hiring an evaluator. For example, with initial grant funding, the University of New Orleans entered into partnerships with several local juvenile justice agencies in Louisiana to provide data collection and analysis support. These partnerships resulted in a number of evaluation projects that facilitated community and stakeholder support for juvenile justice programs (Childs & Frick, 2013).   In their research of at-risk youth programs, Mancini, et al. (2009) found that a number of sustained programs reported that receiving evaluation assistance from a local university enhanced their programs' credibility.

Internal systems and leadership competence can be improved with funding and training as well. Grantors, for instance, could offer funding to establish or improve the technological infrastructures that facilitate data collection and financial management. Training may be provided that enhances skills in leadership, management, fundraising, and strategic financial planning.

Relationship to Larger Environment

Grantors can collaborate with grantees to enhance relationships with their larger environments by improving responsiveness, developing external program champions, and facilitating community relationships. Funding agencies can use social media or create listservs to send information about policy shifts and new funding opportunities. State agency grant managers can serve as external program champions for the programs they monitor. Finally, grantors can facilitate partnerships and community relationships by organizing events and sponsoring program awareness campaigns. These strategies create opportunities for grantees to network and provide potential stakeholders with information about program benefits and needs. By collaborating with grantees in these ways, grantors increase program viability.

Summary

As government budgets become more constrained, the sustainability of evidence-based programs is a growing concern for funding agencies and their grantees. To produce the intended effects of evidence-based programs, a program's activities and benefits must be sustained after the initial funding period. Sustainability planning should begin early in a program's life cycle and be part of a data-driven organization. In developing a strategic sustainability plan, grantees should consider the numerous programmatic, organizational, and community factors identified in the sustainability research, many of which are also critical to the implementation process. Funding agencies can increase the return on their investments by requiring sustainability planning, providing technical assistance and funds to build organizational capacity, and enhancing grantees' relationships with their organizational and community environments. If grantors and grantees collaborate and engage in multiple sustainment strategies, granting agencies are more likely to see a return on their investments while communities reap the benefits of evidence-based programs.

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