



# State of Evaluation 2010

EVALUATION PRACTICE AND CAPACITY IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

State of Evaluation:  
Evaluation Practice and Capacity in the Nonprofit Sector

OCTOBER 2010

Researched and written by Ehren Reed and Johanna Morariu



202.728.0727 *phone* • 202.728.0136 *fax*  
[www.innonet.org](http://www.innonet.org) • [info@innonet.org](mailto:info@innonet.org)

© Innovation Network. All rights reserved. May not be produced whole or in part without written permission from Innovation Network.



Identification of the sample and contact information was sourced from [www.GuideStar.org](http://www.GuideStar.org) and used in this report with permission from GuideStar, USA Inc. GuideStar does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy, quality, completeness, currency, or validity of any information on the GuideStar Site (including, without limitation, database accessible via the Site and its content) or linked from the GuideStar Site. Financial data are taken from the IRS Business Master File, IRS Forms 990, Forms 990-EZ, Forms 990-PF, or information provided to GuideStar by organizations that are not required to file returns with the IRS.

## FOREWORD

---

It is my great pleasure to introduce the inaugural publication of the State of Evaluation, a project of Innovation Network. The State of Evaluation is a resource and reference for those who are interested in how evaluation is perceived and used by nonprofit organizations in the United States. We are proud to be a part of the nonprofit sector and to have served its evaluation needs since our founding in 1992. As evaluators, we were concerned about the lack of an ongoing, nationwide study of evaluation practice, and decided to fill the gap ourselves.

The State of Evaluation is based on data obtained through a survey sent out to a representative sample of nonprofits across the country. We were delighted and amazed to receive over one thousand responses to the survey. These responses document the nonprofit sector's evaluation capacities and experiences more broadly than has ever been attempted before. Findings from this survey provide a baseline; our intention is to conduct a similar survey every other year to systematically capture the evolution of evaluation in the sector.

**The State of Evaluation is a resource and reference for those who are interested in how evaluation is perceived and used by nonprofit organizations in the United States.**

Innovation Network is grateful to all the individuals who took the time to respond to the 2010 State of Evaluation survey and shared their organizations' experiences with us. We hope they find these results interesting, useful for their work, and beneficial to the sector as a whole. I would also like to acknowledge our exceptional team at Innovation Network: They made this project possible with their hard work, enthusiasm, ingenuity, and commitment.



Lily Zandniapour, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Innovation Network, Inc.

## NOTE ON SURVEY DATA

---

The statistics and findings of this report are drawn from a national sample of 1,072 501(c)3 public charities. N values (the number of responses for specific statistics and findings) are given throughout the report for clarity and transparency. For example, the finding “Only 13% of nonprofit organizations have at least one full-time employee dedicated to evaluation, n = 899,” means that 899 individuals answered the question. For the majority of statistics and findings (those with an n value greater than 600), there is a margin of error of plus or minus 4%.

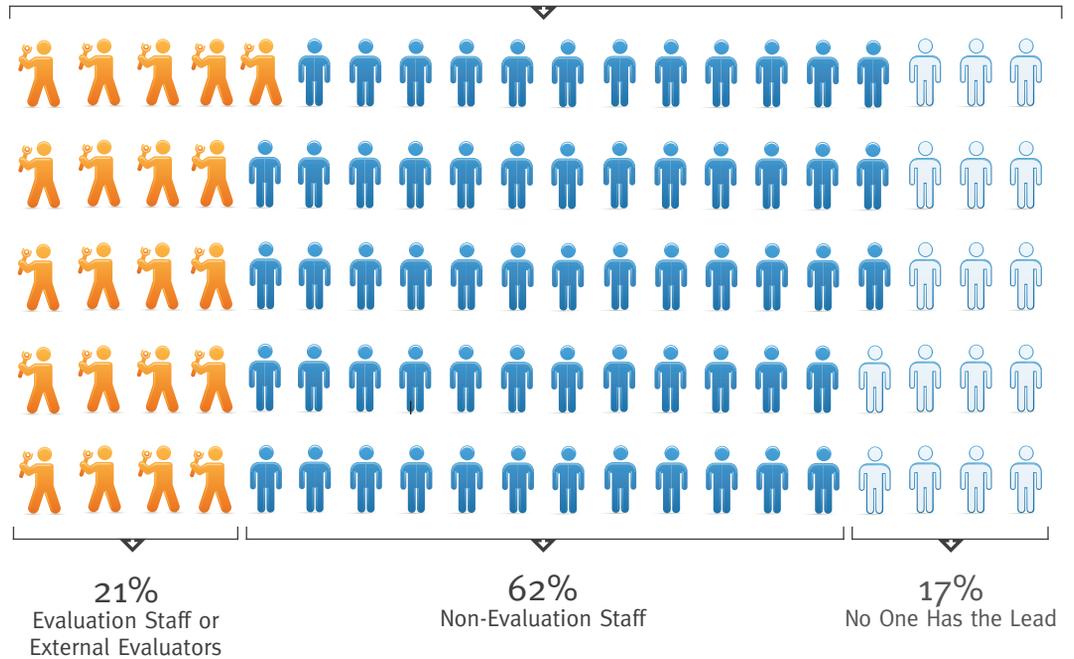
Throughout the report we break out statistics for small organizations (annual budget less than \$500,000) and large organizations (annual budget greater than \$5 million). We provide the contrast between small and large organizations when the two groups noticeably differ from the average. Medium-sized organizations accounted for about a third of survey responses. We have not overlooked them in our analysis; they simply fall closer to the average.

The findings contained in this report are based on reported data for 2009.

# WHO: ROLES AND ENGAGEMENT IN EVALUATION

**85%** of organizations have evaluated some part of their work in the past year (n = 1043)

Professional evaluators are responsible for evaluation in only 21% of organizations. (n = 899)

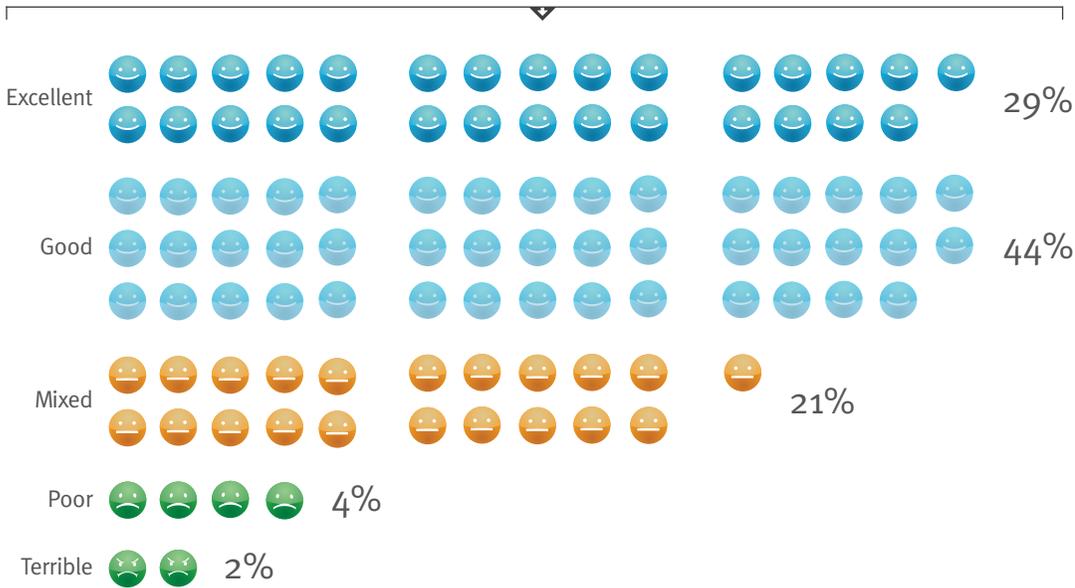


Only **13%** of nonprofit organizations have at least one full-time employee dedicated to evaluation. (n = 899)

For **more than half** of nonprofit organizations, evaluation is the responsibility of the organization's leadership or board. (n = 899)

Only **27%** of nonprofit organizations worked with an external evaluator in 2009. (n = 867)

Organizations that have worked with an external evaluator were strongly positive about the experience. (n = 232)



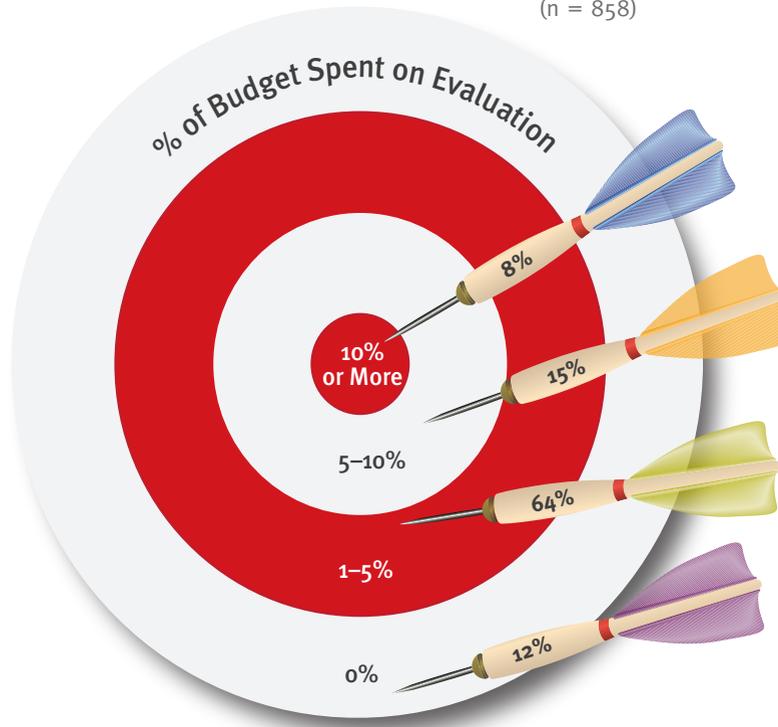
Large organizations (budgets >\$5M) were more likely to...



# WHAT: EVALUATION PRACTICE

Last year, **1 in 8** organizations spent **no money** on evaluation.

(n = 858)



Less than a quarter of organizations devote the minimum recommended amount of 5% of their budget to evaluation.

(n = 858)

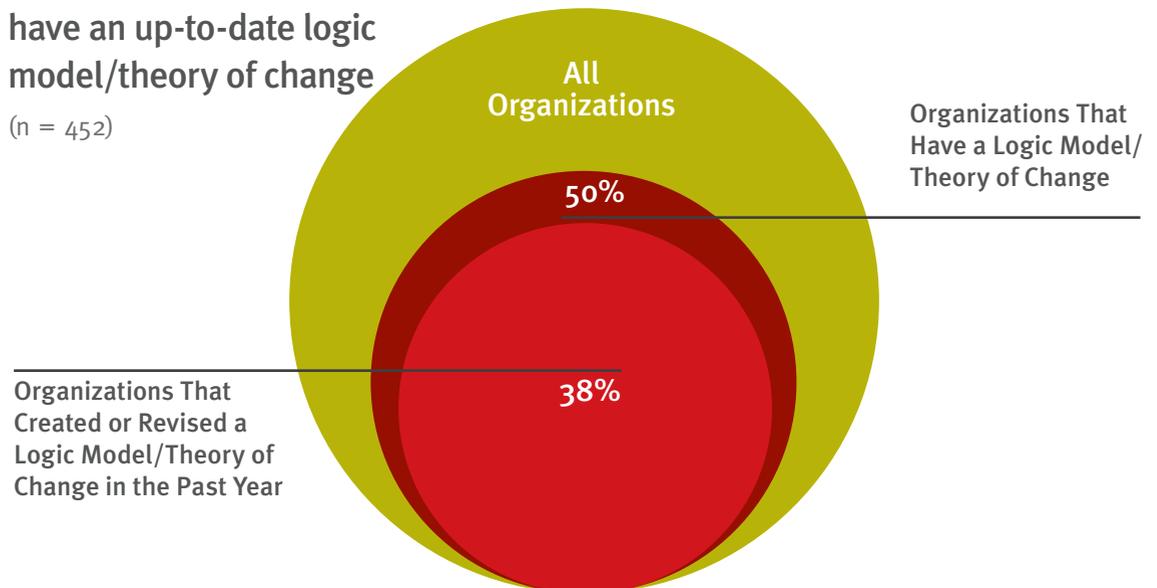
Half of organizations reported having a logic model or theory of change, and **more than a third** of organizations created or revised the document within the past year. (n = 452)

56% of large organizations

vs.

34% of small organizations have an up-to-date logic model/theory of change

(n = 452)

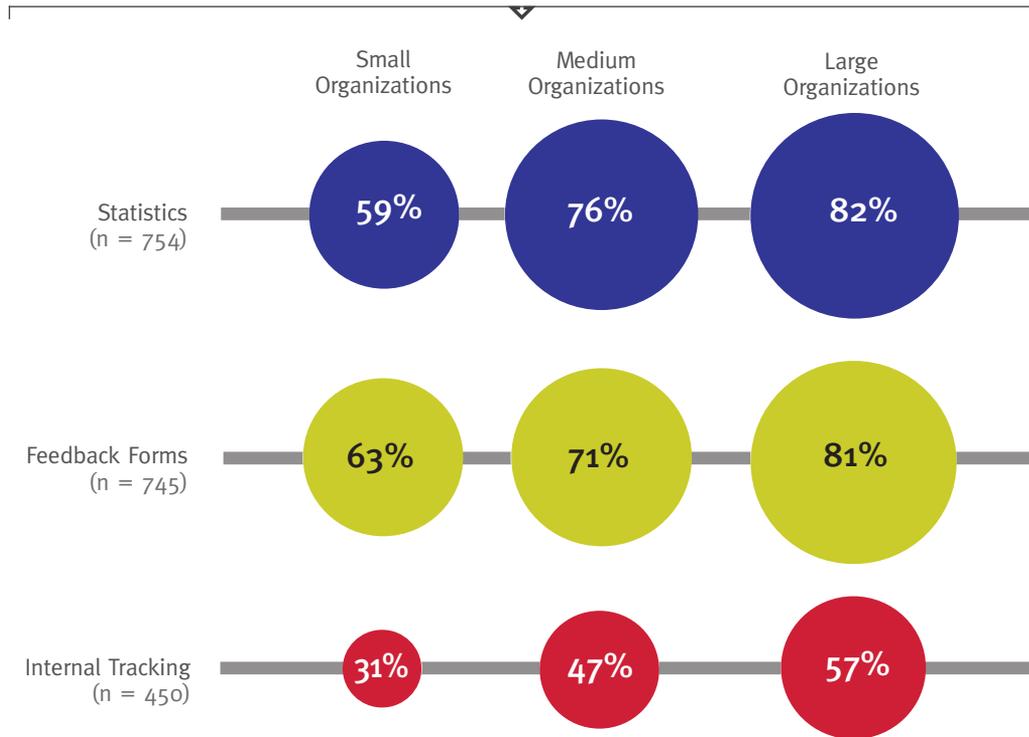


Organizations That Created or Revised a Logic Model/Theory of Change in the Past Year

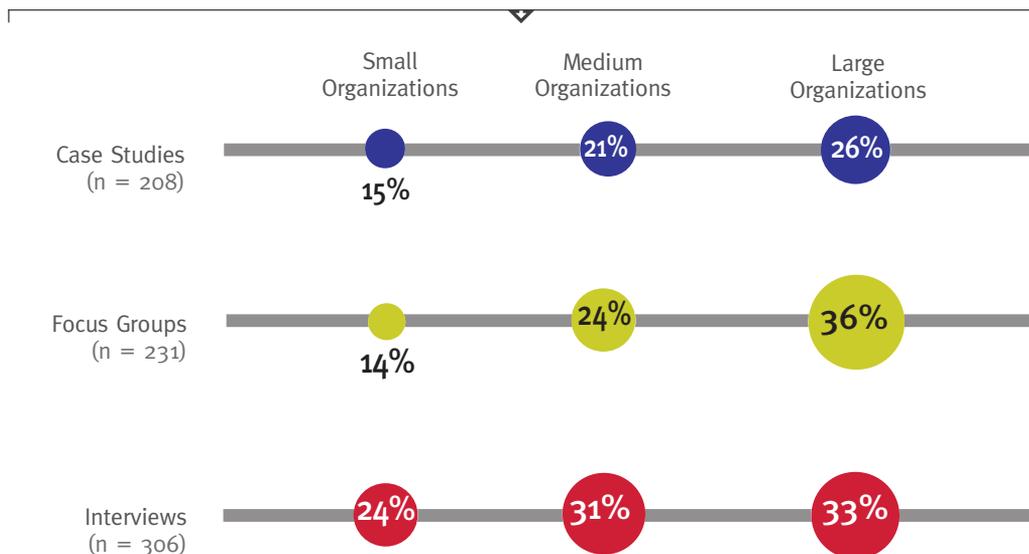
Organizations That Have a Logic Model/Theory of Change

# Quantitative evaluation practices are used more often than qualitative practices.

## Reported Use of Quantitative Evaluation Practices



## Reported Use of Qualitative Evaluation Practices

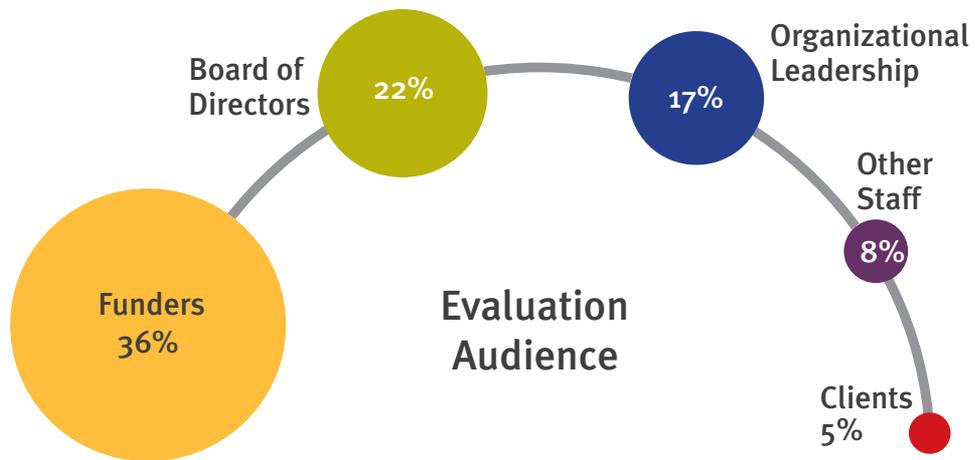


# WHY: EVALUATION PURPOSE

Nonprofits rank **outcomes/impact** evaluation as the highest priority. (n = 782)



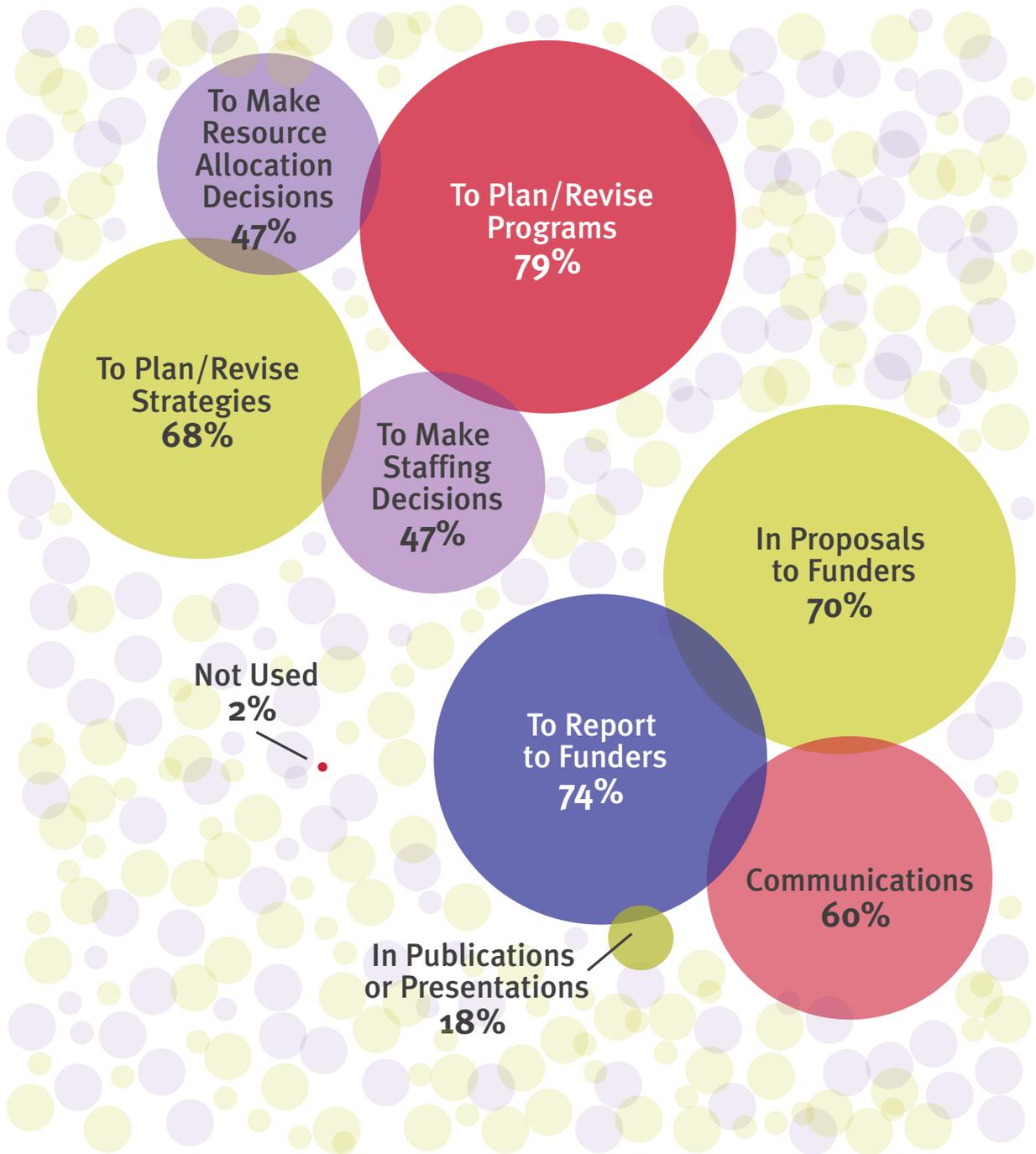
**Funders** were named the highest priority audience for evaluation. (n = 786)



**Seven times** more respondents named funders as the primary audience for evaluation, compared to clients.

98% of organizations have used their evaluation findings. (n = 850)

Reported Use of Evaluation Findings



# WHY NOT

## WHY NOT: BARRIERS TO EVALUATION

Limited staff time, limited staff expertise, and insufficient financial resources are barriers to evaluation **across the sector.**



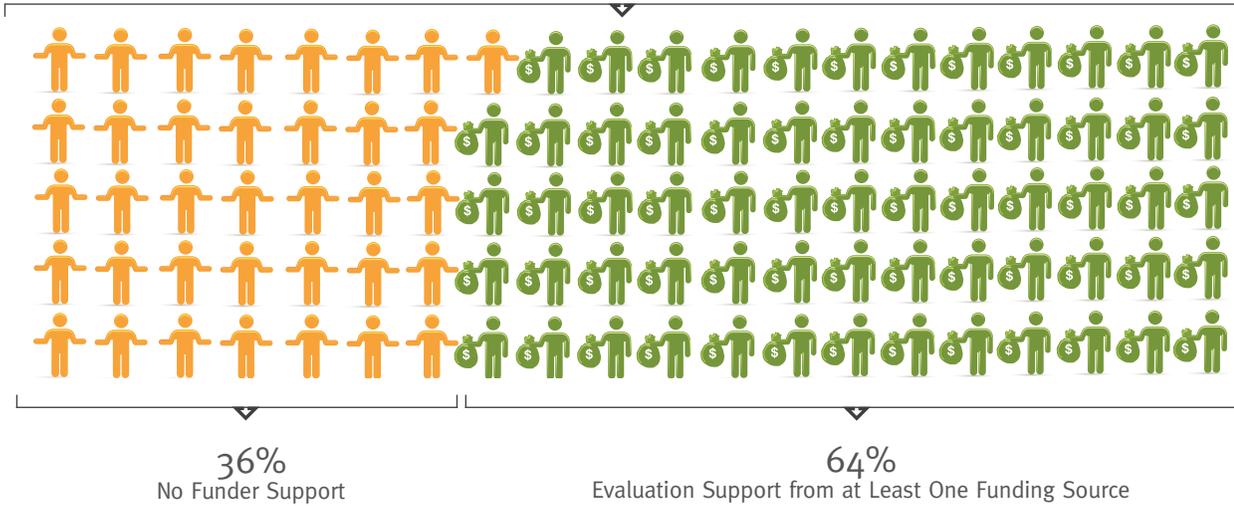
The encouraging news—leadership support is less of a challenge. (n = 1043)

Evaluation is the **second lowest organizational priority**—only more important than research. (n = 753)

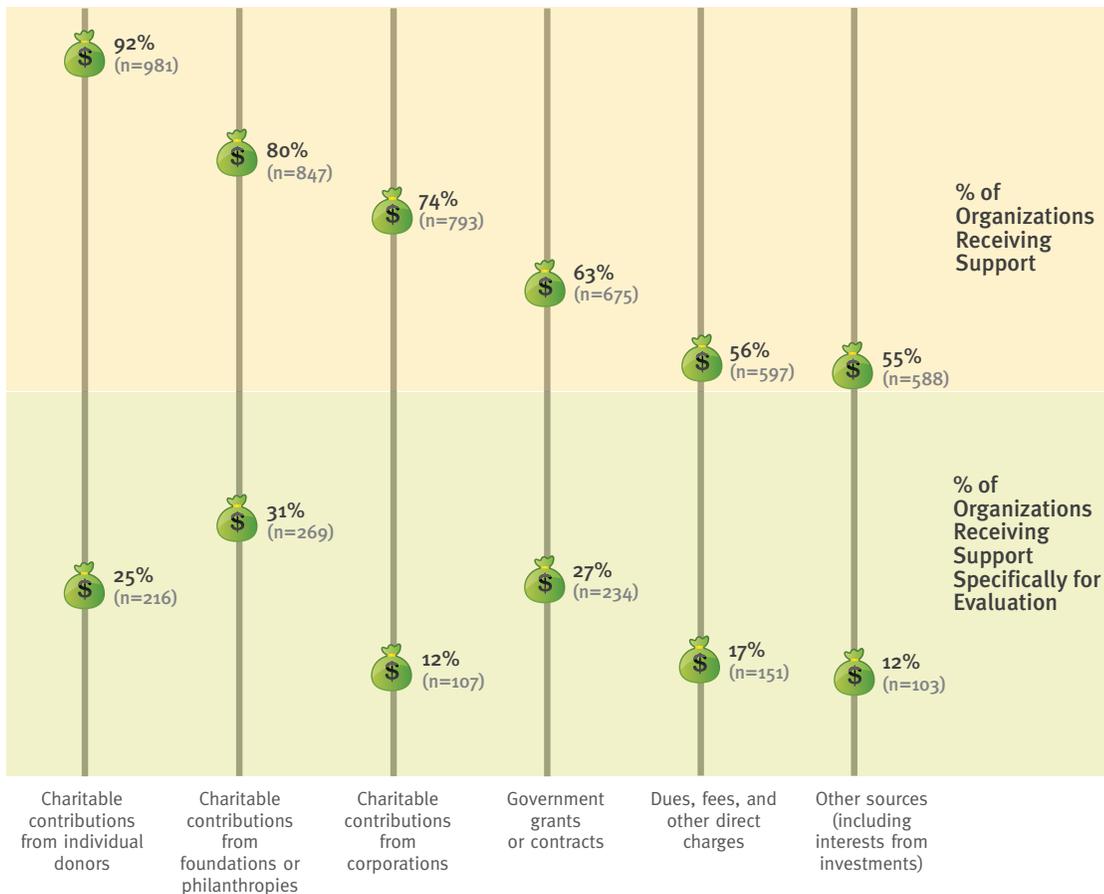


36% of nonprofit respondents reported that **none** of their funders supported their evaluation work. (n = 858)

Reported Receipt of Funding for Evaluation



Philanthropy and government sources are **most likely** to fund nonprofit evaluations.



# METHODOLOGY

The State of Evaluation project is the first nationwide project that seeks to systematically and repeatedly collect data from U.S. nonprofits about their evaluation practices. We hope the survey results will build understanding:

- For nonprofits, to see how their evaluation practices compare to their peers.
- For donors and funders, to better understand how they can support evaluation practice throughout the sector.
- For evaluators, to have more context for the existing evaluation practices and capacities of their nonprofit clients.

The population of interest for this study was a representative from each U.S.-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Using GuideStar data, the sampling frame was 501(c)3 Public Charities that had updated their IRS Form 990 in 2007 or more recently, and had provided a contact name and email address. A total of 36,098 organizations met the criteria and were invited to participate in the survey.

The survey was available online from May 18, 2010 to June 4, 2010 and received 1,072 complete responses from representatives of nonprofit organizations. The survey response rate calculated on complete responses was 2.97%. Two reminders were sent while the survey was open.

We compared our sample to the sample reported on in The Nonprofit Sector in Brief (Wing et al., 2010) drawn from Urban Institute’s National Center for Charitable Statistics data based on budget size. Our sample was composed of organizations that were on average larger than the sample used by Wing et al.

**Figure 1: Comparison of Sample by Budget Size**

Budget Size	State of Evaluation Sample (percentage)	The Nonprofit Sector in Brief Sample (percentage)
Under \$100,000	6.6%	45.2%
\$100,000 to \$499,999	31.9%	28.8%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	16.9%	8.4%
\$1 million to \$4.99 million	31.1%	11.3%
\$5 million to \$9.99 million	6.9%	2.6%
\$10 million or more	6.6%	3.8%
Median budget size	\$500,000 to \$999,999	\$100,000 to \$499,999

Survey results are generalizable to U.S.-based nonprofit organizations, with a margin of error of plus or minus 4%. The following are a few facts, analyses, and decisions that are the basis for the margin of error:

- **We excluded partial responses.** In addition to the 1,072 complete survey responses, we also received 152 partial responses. We analyzed the data with and without partials and found very slight difference. Descriptive statistics for ten survey questions contained values that varied by 1%, and the descriptive statistics for one survey question contained a value that varied by 2%. We decided to exclude partial responses because, though they could be included in descriptive statistics, they lacked data for later survey questions, rendering them unusable for crosstab analysis.
- **A plus or minus 4% margin of error is applicable to a majority of findings.** In 2008 there were 974,337 501(c)3 Public Charities (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2009). Based on that population, a confidence level of 95%, and a sample size of 1,072, we have a margin of error of plus or minus 3%. Since many of the findings are based on statistics with a smaller n value, for example n = 858, we recommend readers consider the findings using plus or minus 4%. This margin of error is generally applicable to findings with an n value of 600 or greater.

We look forward to future iterations of this survey—the next scheduled for two years from now—to continue to test our data and findings.

# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 2: Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents (n=1060)

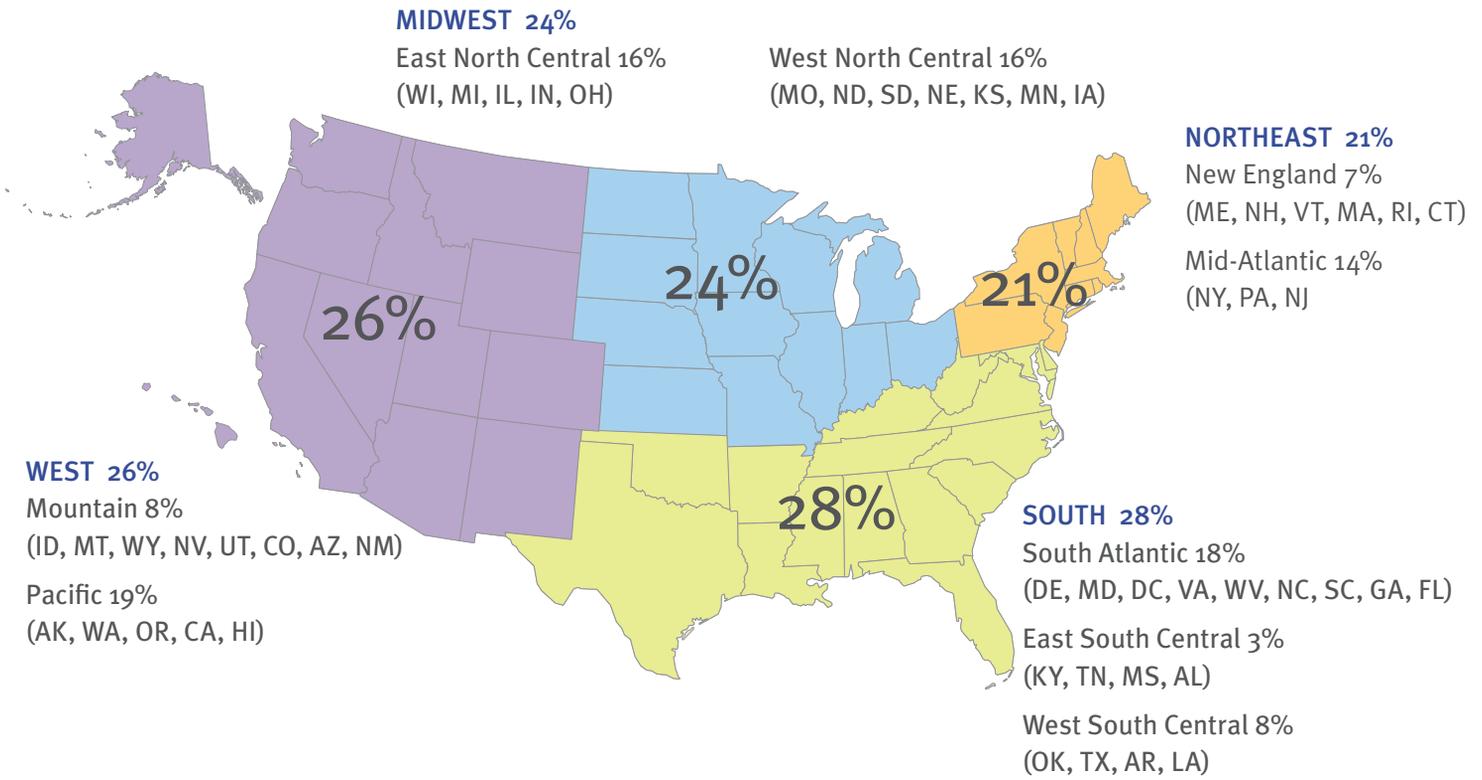


Figure 3: Staff Size Including Full and Part Time Employees (n=1051)

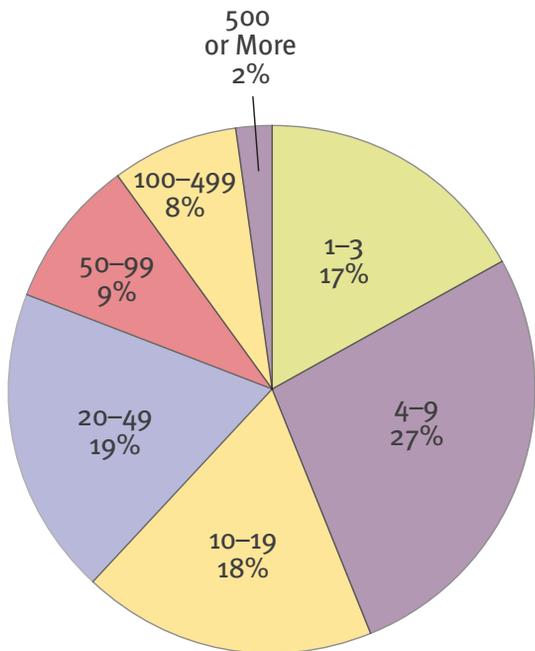
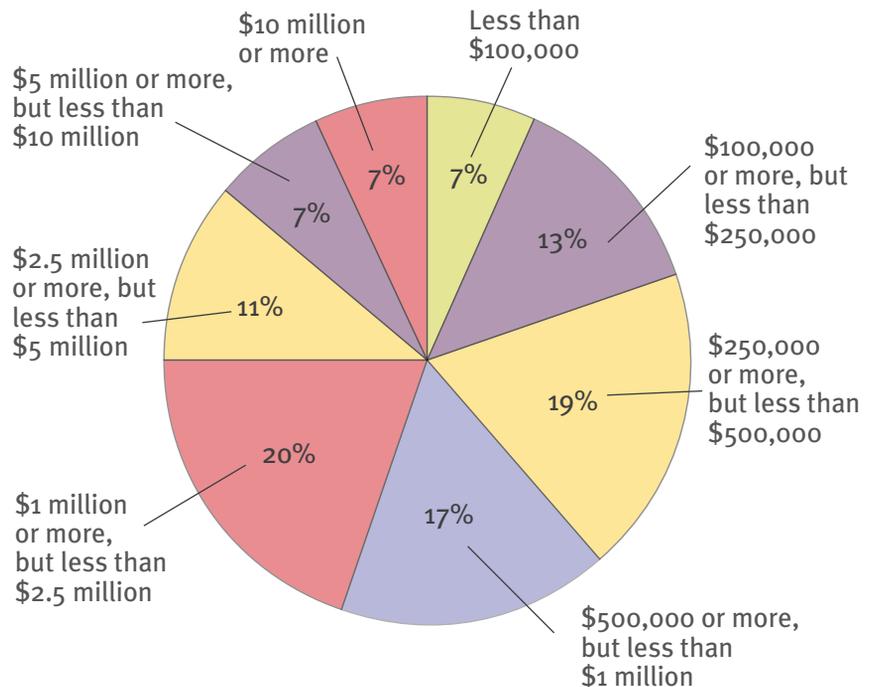


Figure 4: 2009 Annual Budget (n=1062)



# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 5: Funding Sources (n=1072)

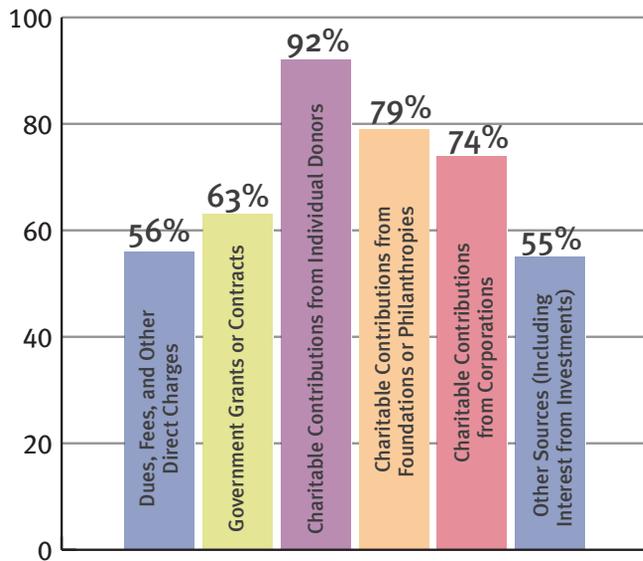


Figure 6: Engagement in Advocacy (n=1072)

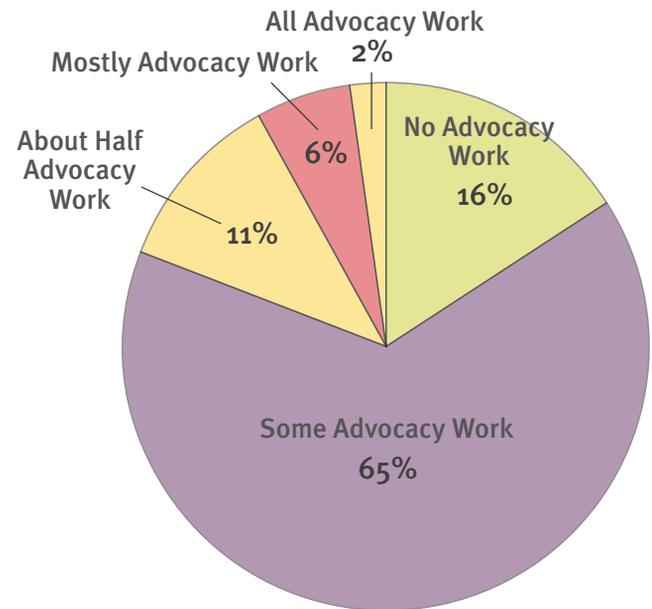


Figure 7: National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) Classification (n=1062)

Issue Area	State of Evaluation Percentage	NCCS Percentage
Arts, Culture, and Humanities	11%	12%
Education	14%	19%
Environmental Quality, Protection, and Beautification	3%	3%
Animal-Related	2%	2%
Health	6%	6%
Mental Health, Crisis Intervention	2%	2%
Diseases, Disorders, Medical Disciplines	2%	2%
Medical Research	1%	1%
Crime, Legal Related	1%	2%
Employment, Job Related	1%	1%
Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition	1%	1%
Housing, Shelter	7%	4%
Public Safety	Less than 0.5%	2%
Recreation, Sports, Leisure, Athletics	Less than 0.5%	10%
Youth Development	7%	2%
Human Services—Multipurpose and Other	25%	11%
International, Foreign Affairs, and National Security	1%	2%
Civil Rights, Social Action, Advocacy	2%	1%
Community Improvement, Capacity Building	3%	5%
Philanthropy, Voluntarism, and Grantmaking Foundations	4%	4%
Science and Technology Research Institutes, Services	Less than 0.5%	1%
Social Science Research Institutes, Services	1%	0%
Public, Society Benefit—Multipurpose and Other	2%	2%
Religion Related, Spiritual Development	1%	6%
Unknown	2%	0%

National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), 2009

# FINDINGS

To our knowledge, the State of Evaluation Project is the largest, most comprehensive inquiry into nonprofit evaluation practices and capacities to date. It builds on many years of study and research conducted by our colleagues in the field. For a comprehensive literature review of nonprofit evaluation research, please see Carman and Fredericks (2008) *Nonprofits and Evaluation: Empirical Evidence from the Field*.

## WHO: ROLES AND ENGAGEMENT IN EVALUATION

**Responsibility for evaluation.** Who is responsible for evaluation is important. If evaluation were a staff person’s sole pursuit, evaluation would be likely to be done. When it is one of any number of important, competing priorities, it would be likely to be overlooked more often. The good news is that in at least 85% of organizations some evaluation was completed in the past year, even though only 13% of organizations had at least one full-time employee dedicated to evaluation.

It is encouraging to know that a majority of organizations engage in evaluation on an annual basis. But quality of evaluation—not just quantity—is also important. The sobering news is that in only 21% of organizations are professional evaluators (internal or external) responsible for evaluation. So while evaluation is being completed, it is not necessarily being done by individuals with the requisite professional expertise and experience. In fact, 54% of the time, evaluation falls under the purview of the Executive Director/CEO/President and/or the Board of Directors (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Responsibility for Evaluation (n=899)**

Staff Role Responsible for Evaluation	Percentage
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>54%</b>
Executive Director/President/CEO	37%
Other leadership/management staff	10%
Board of Directors	6%
Shared between staff and Board of Directors	1%
<b>PROFESSIONAL EVALUATORS</b>	<b>21%</b>
Full-time, internal evaluator	13%
External evaluator	6%
Quality Assurance/Improvement staff	1%
Other data/research/evaluation staff	1%
<b>NON-EVALUATION STAFF</b>	<b>9%</b>
Program/project manager/director	6%
Development, communications, and/or grants staff	2%
Other	1%
<b>NO ONE INDIVIDUAL HAS THE LEAD</b>	<b>17%</b>

These findings agree with the most recent findings by Carman and Fredericks (2008). Carman and Fredericks found that in 92% of organizations, the staff person responsible for evaluation was executive or management staff or the Board of Directors; and that in only 4% of organizations was there a dedicated internal evaluator. An older study completed by Fine, Thayer, and Coghlan (2000) asked the question differently, and received widely different responses: for 51% of recent evaluations, internal staff had the primary responsibility for the evaluation (n = 140); for 40% of recent evaluations, external contractors had the primary responsibility, and for 9% of recent evaluations, a combination of internal staff and an outside contractor had the primary responsibility for the evaluation. Due to differences in inquiry approach, sample size, and age of the research, we believe our findings and Carman and Frederick’s to be better indicators of who is responsible for evaluation throughout the nonprofit sector today.

# FINDINGS

---

**External evaluators.** In 2009, only 27% of nonprofit organizations worked with an external evaluator. While working with an external evaluator is by no means a requirement, external evaluators do afford a few valuable benefits. They bring highly specialized skills and experience from evaluating a range of other efforts. Since evaluation consultants are brought into the work for the explicit purpose of performing the evaluation, their time and attention is wholly devoted to evaluation tasks. An evaluation consultant provides a more objective point of view, and his/her outsider status may allow for more questioning and testing of hypotheses and assumptions.

External evaluators can be paired with internal staff, too. A team approach may be chosen to build internal staff capacity for evaluation, to increase capacity for evaluation, or to access the external evaluators' specialized evaluation knowledge.

Organizations that worked with an external evaluator were strongly positive about the experience—nearly three-quarters of organizations rated their experience as excellent or good. This is encouraging news for evaluation professionals!

**Large organizations fare better.** Unsurprisingly, large organizations (budgets greater than \$5 million) were more likely to evaluate their work and have a full-time staff person dedicated to evaluation than small organizations (budgets less than \$500,000). Ninety-four percent of large organizations compared to 80% of small organizations evaluated their work in 2009. And three times as many large organizations (31%) had a full-time staff person dedicated to evaluation than did small organizations (only 9%). Clearly, size matters.

## WHAT: EVALUATION PRACTICE

The question of nonprofit evaluation practices is equally important. We define evaluation practices as the approaches, tools, and processes (including budget!) nonprofits employ to complete their evaluation.

**Use of logic models/theories of change.** We defined logic models/theories of change as documents that communicate the relationship between the work completed by the organization and the changes that occur as a result of the work. We also noted these documents go by other names, such as program plan or log frame. Half of organizations reported having a logic model or theory of change, and more than a third of organizations created or revised the document within the past year. The percentage of nonprofits reporting the use of a logic model-type document is twice that of Carman and Fredericks (2008), where only 23% of organizations reported designing program logic models. The difference may be due to difference in language (our organization focus versus their program focus). And again, large organizations fared better: 56% of large organizations compared to 34% of small organizations reported working on (updating or creating) their document within the past year.

**Quantitative evaluation practices preferred.** As evaluation professionals, we must be comfortable with an assortment of data collection tools to do our jobs well. And sometimes we take that familiarity for granted. In the interest of better understanding the evaluation tools and methodologies nonprofits use, we asked respondents to select from a list all of the “practices related to evaluation” that their organization used in the past year (see Figure 9). The clear message of the results stunned us. Qualitative data collection methods are used far less than we expected.

Across the board, survey data show that nonprofits are more likely to employ data collection approaches for monitoring and tracking (compiling statistics, surveys, grant reports) than they are for providing the richer analysis and context (interviews, focus groups, observation, case studies). And when you look at the comparison between small and large organizations, large organizations are more likely to be engaged in more evaluation practices.

**Figure 9: Evaluation Practices Used in the Past Year (n=867)**

Evaluation Practice	Percentage
Compiling statistics	84%
Feedback forms, questionnaires, or surveys	83%
Completing grant reports	75%
Internal tracking forms	50%
Document review	38%
Interviews	34%
Focus groups	26%
Structured observation	25%
Case studies	23%
An evaluation workgroup	18%

**Funding for evaluation.** Philanthropic and government institutions recommend that organizations dedicate between 5 and 10% of their resources for evaluation-related expenses (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008; ETR Associates, 2010; Bruner Foundation, 2010; Global Fund/World Health Organization, 2008). Less than a quarter of organizations are dedicating at least the minimum recommended amount of 5% to evaluation. And, last year, one out of every eight organizations did not spend a single dollar on evaluation.

**WHY: EVALUATION PURPOSE**

In addition to helping develop our understanding of which activities nonprofits include in their definition of evaluation, the survey helped us understand why nonprofits choose to conduct an evaluation and how they use the evaluation results.

**Outcomes vs. process evaluation.** At Innovation Network, we often describe three simple questions commonly answered through a typical evaluation:

- How much? For example, how many clients were served? How much service was provided?
- How well? Or, in other words, were clients satisfied? Were the services provided of high quality?
- What difference did it make? How were clients’ lives affected by the services provided? What changes did the work bring about?

The first two questions describe a process evaluation, while the third question describes an outcomes evaluation.

In the survey, we asked respondents to rank these three questions by order of importance to their organization. Not surprisingly, and continuing a trend in recent decades, nonprofits reported that an outcomes evaluation was most important. “What difference did it make?” was ranked #1 by 51% of nonprofits and received an overall average ranking of 1.72. “How well?” followed second with an average ranking of 1.96, and was ranked #2 by 51% of respondents. And “How much?” was third (with an average ranking of 2.19, and was ranked #3 by 48%). This echoes the findings reported in the 2000 survey by Fine, Thayer, and Coghlan. In their survey, 56% of recently completed evaluations were designed primarily to measure outcomes or impact; only 9% assessed program implementation, and only 4% measured client satisfaction.

# FINDINGS

**Audience for evaluation.** When asked who was the primary audience for their evaluation, funders were chosen most often (36%), followed by the organization’s Board of Directors (22%) and other organizational leadership (17%). Other staff (8%) and clients (5%) were rarely mentioned as the primary audience.

**Using evaluation results.** While nonprofits most frequently pointed to funders as the primary audience for their evaluations, their responses to a question regarding using evaluation results told a more complete story (see Figure 10). Only two percent of organizations that conducted an evaluation in 2009 reported that they had not used any of their evaluation findings.

**Figure 10: Uses for Evaluation Findings in the Past Year (n=907)**

Evaluation Uses	Percentage
To plan/revise programs	79%
To report to funder(s) on grants and/or contracts	74%
In proposals to funders	70%
To plan/revise strategies	68%
In communications and reports to stakeholders	60%
To make resource allocation decisions	47%
To make staffing decisions	42%
To present at conferences or publish journal articles	18%
We have not used evaluation findings.	2%

## WHY NOT: BARRIERS TO EVALUATION

In their 2008 article on nonprofits and evaluation, Carman and Fredericks posit that nonprofits tend to think about evaluation in three ways. For one, nonprofits see evaluation as an opportunity to promote their organization to external audiences. Second, nonprofits see evaluation as a tool for strategic management. Our survey data—as evidenced by both the primary audiences and the uses for the evaluation identified by survey respondents—clearly echoes these statements.

The third way in which nonprofits tend to think about evaluation, according to Carman and Fredericks, is as a resource drain and a distraction. Unfortunately, as evaluators, we understand the cold, hard truth that evaluation is not always fully appreciated by the nonprofits we serve. We also understand that nonprofits often find it difficult to set aside the time and the money to engage in evaluation. In order to develop appropriate solutions, we thought it was important that our survey help us better understand how nonprofits define these barriers to evaluation.

**Challenges to evaluation.** In the survey, we asked nonprofits to identify which of four common barriers to evaluation inhibited their ability to engage in evaluation in 2009. According to respondents:

- 96% percent of nonprofits reported limited staff time (74% of which said this was a significant challenge)
- 84% percent of nonprofits lack sufficient financial resources (57% of which said this was a significant challenge)
- 81% percent of nonprofits do not have enough in-house evaluation expertise (43% of which said this was a significant challenge)
- 42% percent of nonprofits lack sufficient support from organizational leadership (29% of which said this was a significant challenge)

**Organizational priorities.** When considering how to spend organizational resources, the leader of a nonprofit organization often has to weigh a number of competing internal priorities (from fundraising to governance, human resources and IT). In the survey, we asked respondents to rank in order the importance of ten internal priorities commonly associated with organizational capacity. According to nonprofits, evaluation is not a top priority. When asked to rank on a scale of one to ten, 62% of nonprofits ranked it in the bottom half (six to ten). As compared to other priorities, evaluation stood ninth out of ten; only research fared worse.

**Insufficient financial support.** In addition to evaluation not being a top priority, it is not sufficiently funded. More than one third of nonprofits (36%) reported that none of their funders supported their evaluation work. When nonprofits do receive funding support for their evaluation efforts, it is most likely to come from government sources or charitable foundations. For both, more than thirty percent of grantees reported that they received funding from that source for their evaluation work in 2009. Of all funding sources, corporations are the least likely to cover evaluation expenses (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Percentage of Nonprofits That Receive Evaluation Support, By Funding Source**

Funding Sources	Percentage
Government grants or contracts (n=675)	35%
Charitable contributions from foundations or philanthropies (n=847)	32%
Dues, fees, and other direct charges (n=597)	25%
Charitable contributions from individual donors (n=981)	22%
Other sources (including interest from investments) (n=588)	18%
Charitable contributions from corporations (n=793)	13%

These findings are consistent with earlier surveys of nonprofit evaluation practices. According to a report by the United Way in 2000, only 40% of their respondents reported having sufficient staff time available to engage in evaluation, and 62% of respondents reported a concern with the cost of measuring outcomes. And, according to the research conducted by Carman and Fredericks in 2008, only 8% reported that funding for evaluation was included in their grants or contracts while 63% were forced to use internal or operating funds to underwrite their evaluation efforts.

## CONCLUSION

**W**hat is the overall State of Evaluation in the nonprofit sector for 2009? We would call it “fair.” Too few organizations have the support, capacity, and expertise they need to harness the power of evaluation. Richer, qualitative data is being passed over in favor of more easily collected and analyzed quantitative data. Evaluation isn’t being used to paint the full picture of effectiveness, progress, and outcomes—or the lack thereof.

And yet the news isn’t all bad: Organizations are using the data and findings they generate in ways that strengthen their organizations and improve the likelihood of having impact. Their assessment efforts include a focus on both outcomes and impact, as well as on outputs and satisfaction—which is how it should be. Importantly, in more than half of organizations, there is leadership support for evaluation.

Again, this 2009 survey is the baseline for the State of Evaluation study. Our hope is that this report and our findings will invigorate people and organizations throughout the nonprofit sector to strengthen their evaluation practice—and that the benefits of evaluation will continue to spread throughout the field.

## WORKS CITED

---

- Bruner Foundation. (2010). *Evaluative Thinking: Getting Serious about Evaluation*. Retrieved on September 14, 2010, from <http://www.brunerfoundation.org/ei/docs/EvaluativeThinking.bulletin.4.pdf>.
- Carman, J.G. and Fredericks, K.A. (2008). Nonprofits and Evaluation: Empirical Evidence from the Field. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 119, 51 – 71.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008). *State Program Evaluation Guides: Developing an Evaluation Plan*. Retrieved September 14, 2010 from [http://www.cdc.gov/dhds/state\\_program/evaluation\\_guides/evaluation\\_plan.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/dhds/state_program/evaluation_guides/evaluation_plan.htm).
- ETR Associates. (2010). *Choosing and working with an external program evaluator*. Retrieved September 14, 2010, from <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/node/17547>.
- The Global Fund/World Health Organization. (2008). Guide to Operational Research in Programmes Supported by the Global Fund. Retrieved on September 14, 2010, from [http://www.who.int/entity/hiv/pub/operational/or\\_guide\\_gf.pdf](http://www.who.int/entity/hiv/pub/operational/or_guide_gf.pdf).
- Fine, A.H., Thayer, C.E., and Coghlan, A.T. (2000). Program Evaluation Practice in the Nonprofit Sector. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 10(3), 331 – 339.
- National Center for Charitable Statistics. (2009). *Number of Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, 1998 – 2008*. Retrieved September 14, 2010, from <http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/profile1.php>.
- United Way of America. (2000). Agency Experiences with Outcome Measurement.
- Wing, K.T., Roeger, K.L., and Pollak, T.H. (2010). *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering*, 2009. Retrieved September 14, 2010, from <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412085-nonprofit-sector-brief.pdf>.
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2010). *Budgeting FAQs*. Retrieved September 14, 2010, from <http://ww2.wkkf.org/Default.aspx?tabid=90&CID=281&ItemID=2810024&NID=2820024&LanguageID=0>.

# SURVEY PROTOCOL

## SECTION ONE: About Your Organization

1. What was your organization's zip code on December 31, 2009?

2. How many employees (including part-time and full-time employees, but not volunteers) did your organization have on December 31, 2009?

- 1 – 3                                       10 – 19                                       50 – 99                                       500 or more  
 4 – 9                                       20 – 49                                       100 – 499

3. The NTEE (National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities) classification is used for classifying nonprofit program areas/missions. It is similar to how you would describe the topic or focus of your organization's work—your primary programmatic area. What was your organization's NTEE (National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities) classification? If you are unsure, select the category that best represents your work.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ANIMAL-RELATED                            | <input type="checkbox"/> INTERNATIONAL, FOREIGN AFFAIRS & NATIONAL SECURITY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARTS, CULTURE & HUMANITIES                | <input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL RESEARCH                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL RIGHTS, SOCIAL ACTION & ADVOCACY    | <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH & CRISIS INTERVENTION                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUTUAL & MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CRIME & LEGAL-RELATED                     | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILANTHROPY, VOLUNTARISM & GRANTMAKING FOUNDATIONS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISEASES, DISORDERS & MEDICAL DISCIPLINES | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC & SOCIETAL BENEFIT                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC SAFETY, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RELIEF       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT                                | <input type="checkbox"/> RECREATION & SPORTS                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONMENT                               | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION-RELATED                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD, AGRICULTURE & NUTRITION             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH CARE                               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL SCIENCE                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HOUSING & SHELTER                         | <input type="checkbox"/> YOUTH DEVELOPMENT                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HUMAN SERVICES                            | <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN   |

4. We define advocacy as "a wide range of activities conducted to influence decision makers at various levels." This means not only traditional advocacy work like litigation, lobbying, and public education, but also capacity building, network formation, relationship building, communication, and leadership development. Approximately how much of your organization's work in 2009 was advocacy work?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No advocacy work.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly advocacy work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some advocacy work.       | <input type="checkbox"/> All advocacy work.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About half advocacy work. | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know.         |

5. What was your organization's annual budget for 2009?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$100,000                          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1 million or more, but less than \$2.5 million |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 or more, but less than \$250,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2.5 million or more, but less than \$5 million |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250,000 or more, but less than \$500,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 million or more, but less than \$10 million  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500,000 or more, but less than \$1 million | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 million or more                             |

6. In 2009, what were the sources of funding for your organization? (Select all that apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dues, fees, and other direct charges            | <input type="checkbox"/> Charitable contributions from foundations or philanthropies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government grants or contracts                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Charitable contributions from corporations                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charitable contributions from individual donors | <input type="checkbox"/> Other sources (including interest from investments)         |

7. If you received charitable contributions from foundations or philanthropies in 2009, please name the three foundations or philanthropies that made the largest contribution to your organization in 2009. (If you did not receive charitable contributions from foundations or philanthropies in 2009, please leave the answer blank.)

8. In 2009, did your organization evaluate any part of its work (not including staff performance evaluations)?

- Yes                                       No                                       I don't know

## SECTION TWO: About Your Organization's Evaluation Approach

9. How does your organization define evaluation?

10. In 2009 did your organization have at least one full-time employee dedicated to evaluation?

- Yes                                       No                                       I don't know

# SURVEY PROTOCOL

11. If you selected “no” or “I don’t know” for question #10, who was primarily responsible for conducting evaluation work for your organization?

- Executive Director/President/CEO
- Evaluator(s) from outside of the organization
- The organization’s Board of Directors
- No one individual has the lead
- I don’t know
- Staff person: please specify title

12. This question asks how much your organization spent on evaluation in 2009. In your estimate, please include all expenses spent in support of evaluation, expenses such as staff time, software for evaluation, evaluation consulting contracts, etc. Approximately what percentage of your organization’s budget was spent on evaluation in 2009?

- 0%
- More than 0%, but less than 2%
- 2% or more, but less than 5%
- 5% or more, but less than 10%
- 10% or more, but less than 15%
- 15% or more, but less than 25%
- 25% or more
- I don’t know

13. Which, if any, of the following supported your organization’s evaluation work in 2009? (Select all that apply.)

- Dues, fees, and other direct charges
- Government grants or contracts
- Charitable contributions from individual donors
- Charitable contributions from foundations or philanthropies
- Charitable contributions from corporations
- Other sources (including interest from investments)
- None of our funders funded our evaluation work.

14. In 2009, who was the primary audience for your organization’s evaluation work?

- The organization’s CEO/ED/management
- Other staff within the organization
- The organization’s Board of Directors
- The organization’s funder(s)
- The organization’s client(s)
- I don’t know
- Other, please specify

15. In the past year, how has your organization used evaluation findings?

- To make resource allocation decisions.
- To make staffing decisions.
- To plan/revise programs.
- To plan/revise strategies.
- To report to funder(s) on grants and/or contracts.
- In communications and reports to stakeholders.
- In proposals to funders.
- To present at conferences or publish journals/articles.
- We have not used evaluation findings.
- Other, please specify:

16. If your organization worked with an external evaluator in 2009, what was your experience?

- 1 – Horrible
- 2 – Poor
- 3 – Mixed
- 4 – Good
- 5 – Excellent
- We did not work with an external evaluator
- I don’t know

17. Nonprofit organizations often have a document that communicates the relationship between the work that the organization completes and the changes that occur as a result of that work. Some common names for these types of documents are logic model, theory of change, program plan, log frame, etc. Does your organization have a logic model, theory of change, or other similar document?

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know

18. In 2009, did your organization create or revise a logic model, theory of change, or other similar document?

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know

19. The following answer choices represent common practices related to evaluation. Organizations may use a combination of these practices. It is unlikely that one organization would employ all of these practices Please select the practices that your organization has used in the past year: (Select all that apply.)

- Case studies
- Compiling statistics
- Completing grant reports
- Document review
- An evaluation workgroup
- Feedback forms, questionnaires, or surveys
- Focus groups
- Internal tracking forms
- Interviews
- Structured observation
- Other, please specify

---

20. Most evaluations typically seek to answer one or more of the following questions. Please rank the questions based on their importance to your organization during the past year. ("1" being the most important and "3" being the least important).

How much?: How many clients served, how much service provided, etc.

How well?: Were clients/participants satisfied, were the services provided high quality, etc.

What difference did it make?: Were clients/participants lives changed, what changes did your work bring about, etc.

21. Please rank in order of importance ("1" being the most important and "10" being the least important) the following list of internal priorities that competed for resources in your organization last year:

Communications

Evaluation

Financial Management

Fundraising

Governance

Human Resources

Information Technology

Research

Staff Development

Strategic Planning

### SECTION THREE: Challenges to Evaluation

For the next four questions please indicate the degree to which each of the following challenges inhibited your organization's ability to conduct evaluation in 2009:

22. Insufficient financial resources

Not a challenge

Minor challenge

Significant challenge

23. Limited staff time

Not a challenge

Minor challenge

Significant challenge

24. Limited staff expertise in evaluation

Not a challenge

Minor challenge

Significant challenge

25. Insufficient support from organization leadership

Not a challenge

Minor challenge

Significant challenge

26. Please share any other challenges that inhibited your organization's ability to conduct evaluation that were not noted above:

27. Additional feedback: Please share any additional thoughts or information relevant to this topic:

---

Image: EVALUATION DEFINED (back cover)

The design on the back cover, or "wordle" (a visualization of words or phrases, using font size as an expression for frequency) was generated from data received in response to the question, "How does your organization define evaluation?"

