

Evaluation Rubric for Rounds 2 & 3 of the Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC2/SCC3) Grantee Third-Party Evaluations (Updated April 2023)

This document provides guidance to Rounds 2 and 3 of the SCC grant recipients (SCC2 and SCC3 grantees) in the development of their evaluation design plans and evaluation reports. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will use this rubric to assess the evaluation plans that SCC grantees submit as a requirement of the SCC Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and will provide feedback to grantees based on consistency with the rubric.

Section I.G of the SCC2/3 FOA (pp. 20-21) states: “After procuring a third-party evaluator, grantees must submit a Draft Detailed Evaluation Design from their evaluator, which must be revised and submitted as a Final Detailed Evaluation Design, based on feedback provided by the Department. DOL will review the submissions to ensure that the designs are feasible. In the evaluation design, grantees must include plans to submit Interim and Final Implementation Reports from their third-party evaluator by the milestones specified below.”

Deliverable	Timeline	SCC2 Due Date	SCC3 Due Date
Submit a Draft Detailed Evaluation Design from the evaluator, using guidance provided by the Department.	No later than Month 9	June 30, 2023	November 30, 2023
Submit a Final Detailed Evaluation Design in collaboration with the third-party evaluator.	No later than Month 12	September 30, 2023	February 29, 2024
Ensure that the third-party evaluator carries out the evaluation and completes all tasks and deliverables and provides ongoing input and consultation.	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout
Submit the evaluator’s Interim Implementation or Developmental Evaluation Report to the grantee’s Federal Project Officer (FPO) and Program Office using the suggested format or similar layout, provided after grant award.	No later than Month 27	December 31, 2024	May 31, 2025
Submit the evaluator’s Final Implementation or Developmental Evaluation Report using the suggested format or similar layout.	No later than Month 48	September 30, 2026	February 28, 2027

Grantees should submit all evaluation deliverables via email to their FPO, with a copy to the SCC mailbox (SCC@dol.gov).

Note that the FOA required applicants to submit a logic model as part of their applications. We anticipate that some grantees, in conversation with their evaluators, may wish to update their logic models to reflect project design developments. Such revisions are acceptable so long as they remain consistent with the project design as described in the original statement of work (SOW); otherwise, the proposed change(s) may require an SOW modification. Logic models should be incorporated into the submitted evaluation plans.

The table below breaks down the components expected in an evaluation plan, describing each component and providing a checklist to assist both evaluators in meeting the fully addressed standards and reviewers in providing actionable feedback. The evaluation plan is intended to act as a *stand-alone document* and should include all of the necessary information to ensure readers have a complete understanding of the program and its evaluation. Grantees should design the required evaluation plan to ensure that both interim and final reports cover each of these components thoroughly. When developing the evaluation plan, please incorporate the listed components as **subheadings** within the body of the plan to ensure completeness and ease of reading.

In addition, as part of the final report, DOL requests that grantees provide briefing slides that summarize the evaluation findings. Grantees should use the criteria contained in the checklist for the introduction and background component to assist in developing both the introduction and background sections and the requested briefing slides. In particular, the criteria should serve as both the outline for the introduction and background and the specific topic areas for the slides. As there are five criteria for this component, DOL requests that grantees develop a minimum of five slides that address the topic areas.

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Introduction and Background	
The first section of the evaluation plan should be an Introduction followed by a Background section. The Introduction should provide a summary explanation of the evaluation study plan, including the purpose, approach, design, questions, data sources/data collection, and potential analyses. This section should also introduce the third-party evaluator(s) conducting the study. It should be a high-level summary of what the reader will encounter throughout the document, ensuring alignment and clarity. The Background section provides context of the SCC program of interest, or the evaluand, for the reader. This section should include high-level introduction and description of the participating institutions, the rationale for the program, the purpose and/or goals of the program, and the broad activities the program will do to reach those goals. Additionally, the Background section should include a timeline of the program.	✓ An opening statement, with brief SCC program information and name of the evaluand program and introduction to third-party evaluator(s) ✓ High-level summary of the evaluation’s purpose, approach, and design ✓ High-level summary of anticipated data sources, data collection activities, and analyses ✓ 2-3 paragraphs describing the evaluation and program, including the name and location of participating institutions, target sample population, program partners (e.g., employers, etc.), goals, and activities ✓ Brief description of the timeline and overarching outcomes of the program

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Logic Model The logic model should graphically represent the evaluation and program and show the intended relationship between the program's inputs (Resources and Strategies and Activities) and the expected results (Outputs and Short- and Long-term Outcomes). Long-term impacts should also be included on the far-right, though will not likely be assessed in the evaluation plan. The logic model should explain how access to and application of resources and strategies will result in a program that reaches the intended target participants and, when these populations are reached by the program, how unmet needs will be met and circumstances will change. The logic model should display the focus or purpose of the evaluation. If the intended evaluation is a <i>process</i> or <i>implementation</i> evaluation, the logic model should include the specific inputs, activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes associated with implementation of the program. This could include examining the relationship between activities, including sequencing, dosage, and timing, as well as how the activities link to outputs and short-term outcomes. A logic model for an <i>outcome evaluation</i> should incorporate all the logic model components for the program with alignment to the short- and long-term outcomes. Outcomes should be feasible and measurable. If the intended evaluation is a <i>developmental evaluation</i>, a theory of change may be better suited for the program depending on its current design and implementation status. The graphic should highlight an evidence-based pathway between the program's context, goals, strategies, and activities as they relate to the desired results of your program but are subject to change as the program evolves.	✓ Include a brief narrative introducing/explaining the logic model and its alignment across the components. ✓ <i>Problem identification</i> or the issue your program is intended to address or the gap it will fill ✓ <i>Inputs</i> are the resources, personnel, materials, technologies, and other factors that must be in place to implement the program's strategies. This should include SCC grant funding. ✓ <i>Strategies and activities</i> that are designed to achieve outcomes, with important consideration to sequence and order of activities, clustering of activities, and dosage ✓ <i>Outputs</i> or what is done or directly results from activities (data can capture size and scope, describe or count strategies and activities such as participation rates, the number of orientations held, number of materials developed, etc.) ✓ <i>Outcomes</i> or what the implementation of resources, strategies and activities is expected to have on participants. ○ Short-term outcomes are most immediate and measurable and can be attributed to strategies and activities. These are typically observable and measurable changes in <i>skills, attitudes, and knowledge</i>. ○ Long-term outcomes are more distant, though anticipated, results of participation in strategies and activities. These are typically observable and measurable changes in <i>behavior and decision-making</i>. ○ Impacts are the outcomes of long-term implementation of strategies and activities and may be affected by conditions beyond the program's scope of strategies. These are typically broader in scope and include changes in <i>status, life conditions, systems, and/or policies</i>.

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Evaluation Objective(s) and Type/Approach	
Clearly define your evaluation objective(s), or what the study hopes to accomplish and why. Your objective(s) should summarize what you hope will be achieved by the study. A well-defined evaluation objective(s) will narrow and focus the evaluation and ensure that the findings are relevant to decision-makers. This will drive all aspects of the methodology, including evaluation data collection, analysis, and recommendations. The objective(s) also drives the evaluation approach or type that will be applied and the rationale and connection should be made clear. An evaluation type is the framework from which the evaluation is conducted and reflects evaluation objective(s), uses, values, and the level of stakeholder involvement. Evaluation types including <i>developmental evaluations</i>, <i>process evaluations</i>, <i>implementation evaluations</i>, <i>formative evaluations</i>, <i>outcome evaluations</i>, <i>summative evaluations</i>, and <i>impact evaluations</i> (see supplemental material on evaluation types). The SCC program evaluation does not need to nor should incorporate all these evaluation types. The evaluation plan should identify the appropriate type(s) of evaluation based on the program context and evaluation purpose, the rationale for selecting that type(s), and any limitations of conducting that type(s) of evaluation. Evaluators may conduct the evaluation using a particular approach that is best suited for the program context, stakeholder needs, and/or target program participants. Approaches might include <i>participatory evaluation</i>, <i>collaborative evaluation</i>, <i>empowerment evaluation</i>, <i>culturally responsive and critical evaluation</i>, and/or <i>utilization-focused evaluation</i>, among others. If applying a particular evaluation approach, the evaluation plan should identify and describe the approach, including its purpose, framework, and application. The plan should also provide a rationale for the application of the evaluation approach and any limitations.	Your Evaluation Objective(s) should include: ✓ A summary of what you hope will be achieved by the study ✓ Clear and aligned to the program's needs and goals ✓ Realistic and feasible (achieved within the expected timeframe and resources) Your Evaluation Type(s)/Approach(es) should include: ✓ Identification and explanation of the type(s) of evaluation proposed (e.g., process, implementation fidelity, outcome, etc.) ✓ Clear rationale for selection of evaluation type(s) and potential limitations ✓ Alignment between the evaluation type(s) and the program context, implementation status, and goals ✓ If applying a particular approach, identification and explanation of the approach(es) proposed (e.g., participatory, empowerment, culturally responsive and critical, etc.) ✓ Clear rationale for evaluation approach(es) noting any potential limitations and/or challenges

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Evaluation Questions	
Building on your evaluation objective(s) and logic model, your evaluation questions should reflect specific information about what can be learned by the evaluation. Your evaluation question(s) should narrow down your broad idea to a topic that can be investigated and reflect a feasible research process. Your questions should be lines of inquiry to explore in trying to solve the overarching research objective. This section should include between one and four broad evaluation questions with evaluation subquestions, if necessary. Evaluation questions should drive the remainder of the evaluation plan, including the study design, sample, data collection, and analyses. Questions should also support the evaluation type(s) and objective(s). For instance, <i>implementation evaluations</i> should develop evaluation questions examining whether the program services were enacted as intended, to what extent program activities led to outputs and short-term outcomes, and/or whether and how program activities changed over time. <i>Developmental evaluations</i> should be grounded in questions related to the dynamic shifting and building of the program, to what extent the program's values and principles influenced activities and short-term outcomes, and/or whether and how the broader system and environment was responding to the program. <i>Outcome evaluations</i> should be led by questions assessing the effectiveness of a program in producing desired changes. Examples include questions addressing the magnitude of changes, differences in changes experienced by different groups, and/or the aspects of the program that were most beneficial to the changes.	Your evaluation question(s) should be: ✓ Focused on a single problem or issue ✓ Researchable using primary or secondary data ✓ Feasible to answer within the timeframe and practical constraints ✓ Specific enough to answer thoroughly ✓ Complex enough to develop the answer over the space of a report ✓ Relevant to the funding agency ✓ Flexible and adaptable enough to be modified as unforeseen constraints require ✓ Aligned to the evaluation objective(s) and logic model. ✓ Broadly experienced in 1-4 overarching questions with potential subquestions, if desired/necessary. ✓ Driving the remainder of the evaluation plan, including the study design, methods, and data collection.

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Study Design Your study design serves as the plan for executing your evaluation type and approach, as identified in the section above. It should address the overall strategy and integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way. Doing so will ensure that you will effectively address the research objective(s). It is a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The study design should align to the evaluation’s purpose (e.g., measuring processes, measuring outcomes, etc.) and should be supported throughout the rest of the evaluation plan. Examples of specific study designs include <i>descriptive study, multiple case study, treatment-group only study, time-series design, pre-post study, explanatory mixed methods designs, correlational, causal, quasi-experimental study</i>, and/or <i>randomized-controlled trial study</i>. The evaluation plan should clearly identify and explain the specific study design, including rationale and limitations. Likewise, some evaluations may call for a phased approach that utilizes more than one design. If so, this component should be delineated by phases with explanations for each phase’s design. The study design should be feasible given the resources (e.g., time, funding, personnel, etc.) provided.	The proposed study strategy should do the following: ✓ Be appropriate for meeting the identified evaluation objective, type, and approach. ✓ Provide a convincing argument for different features of the design. ✓ Align to the remainder of the evaluation plan. ✓ Be clearly defined and supportive of descriptive/observational, correlational, or causal objectives. ✓ Provide enough rigor for the purpose of the study and ability to lead to the measurement of identified outcomes. ✓ Identify limitations of the design and implications for interpreting its findings.

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Evaluation Measures Data collected using appropriate evaluation measures will tell you how well your program activities have met your expected program outputs and outcomes. Informed by both the logic model and evaluation questions, evaluation measures, or indicators, help guide the selection of data collection methods and the content of data collection instruments. Qualitative or quantitative data may inform these measures. This component should comprise of a table matrix that aligns the evaluation measures to the activities and/or outcomes they are designed to assess. The table matrix should clearly align all of the components of the table and address validity, as well. The evaluation plan should also include a paragraph explaining the table, including brief descriptions of the categories or types of measures. Measures associated with program inputs include such things as organizational characteristics, staffing structures, and service delivery supports. Measures associated with contextual factors and implementation outputs include such things as content developed; quantity or intensity of the services provided; quality and delivery mode of intervention; quantity of participants reached. When evaluating <i>program implementation fidelity or program process</i>, quantitative measures reflect performance and success against predetermined goals and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) outcomes. When conducting <i>developmental evaluation</i>, measures act as a tracking mechanism allowing outcomes to quickly emerge and can change throughout the evaluation as the process unfolds. When conducting <i>outcome evaluations</i>, measures should assess whether the program is achieving the expected changes in the short, intermediate, and long term (if feasible). Qualitative measures can also provide valuable information relevant to all types of evaluations and can include such things as program challenges, perceived barriers to success, shared vision, communication, program leadership, and organizational structure.	✓ At a minimum, measures must address the outcomes identified in Exhibit 1. ✓ Measures should be displayed in a table matrix that aligns the activities and/or outcomes with each measure, as well as explanations for the validity of the measures. ✓ Measures can be developed for activities (process indicators) and/or for outcomes (outcome indicators). ✓ There can be more than one measure for each activity or outcome. ✓ The measure must be focused and must measure an important dimension of the activity or outcome. ✓ The measure must be clear and specific in terms of what it will measure. ✓ The change determined by the measure should represent progress toward implementing the activity or achieving the outcome. ✓ Include an explanatory paragraph describing the contents of the table matrix.

Exhibit 1. Required Outcomes for SCC2 to Be Addressed by Both Single Institution and Consortium Grantees

Capacity-Building Outcomes	
<i>Capacity-Building Outcome #1</i>	✓ Must develop capacity-building outcomes and outcomes targets specific to the grant project.
<i>Capacity-Building Outcome #2</i>	<i>Each capacity-building outcome:</i> ✓ Must be tied to a career pathway program to be built or enhanced using SCC grant funds. ✓ Must be tied to the Core Elements (Advancing Equity, Accelerated Career Pathways, Results-driven Project Design, and Sustainable Systems Change) ✓ May address individual, interpersonal, institutional, and/or systemic-level outcomes ✓ Must be connected to positive workforce outcomes. ✓ Must incorporate and/or reflect: ○ Outcome statement ○ Type/direction of change (e.g., increase, decrease) ○ Unit of measurement ○ Outcome target ○ Current state or baseline ○ Specific grant-funded program(s) of study ○ Target population ○ Definition(s) that demonstrate(s) or explain(s) when the project achieves the outcome target ○ Timeframe ○ Description of how the increased capacity will be sustained
<i>Capacity-Building Outcome #3</i>	✓ Must describe the evidence-based rationale connecting the key aspect capacity building, logic model, and equity goals ✓ Must be represented in the logic model
Equity Outcomes	
<i>Equity Outcome #1</i>	✓ Must develop equity outcomes and outcomes targets specific to the grant project. <i>Each equity outcome:</i> ✓ Must be grounded in previously-administered equity gap analysis ✓ May address different aspects of the same identified primary equity gap or address separate equity gaps ✓ Must be connected to specific sectoral or occupational workforce shortage ✓ Must be aligned with a career pathway approach to address worker demand ✓ May address individual, interpersonal, institutional, and/or systemic-level outcomes

<i>Equity Outcome #2</i>	✓ Must be connected to positive workforce outcomes ✓ Must incorporate and/or reflect: ○ Outcome statement ○ Type/direction of change (e.g., increase, decrease) ○ Unit of measurement ○ Outcome target ○ Current state or baseline ○ Specific grant-funded program(s) of study ○ Target population ○ Definition(s) that demonstrate(s) or explain(s) when the project achieves the outcome target ○ Timeframe ○ Description of how the increased equity will be sustained ✓ Must describe the evidence-based rationale connecting the key aspect to the equity gap analysis, logic model, its contribution to target populations' improved employment outcomes, and capacity-building goals ✓ Must be represented in the logic model
---------------------------------	--

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Data Sources and Data Collection	
Driven by the evaluation questions, the logic model, and evaluation measures, this component should clearly identify and provide a high-level description of all proposed data sources. When examining the same or similar measures across multiple data sources, the data should be triangulated, or compared, to reinforce the finding. Your evaluation measures may be informed using new data, which involves primary data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews), or existing data which involves secondary data collection (e.g., administrative data, program data). Your chosen data collection methods should consider both the 1) feasibility of collecting the data (e.g., evaluation resources, timeliness of data collection), 2) utility (e.g., data collection frequency vs. point in time, data credibility), 3) propriety (e.g., characteristics of respondents, degree of intrusion to participants, other ethical issues) and 4) accuracy (nature of the issue, sensitivity of the issue, respondent knowledge). Provide a high-level description of preliminary data collection activities and secondary data sources, including those under development as a function of the study design or approach. The description should include the purpose/use of the data, anticipated methods, and potential limitations. Provide any additional information related to data sharing agreements, either secured or in process, or data acquisition concerns. Include in the Appendix of the evaluation plan a table matrix or data crosswalk aligning the data sources to the evaluation questions, measures, and outputs/outcomes, as well as anticipated timeline or timing of collection, where feasible.	✓ Describe preliminary data collection and secondary data availability at a high-level. ○ Consider feasibility, utility, propriety, and accuracy ○ Describe the strengths and weaknesses of each data source. ✓ Describe how data collection reflects sound and systematic methods of producing reliable data considering the following: ○ Interview methods and recording practices ○ Quality assurance practices (e.g., recording interviews, review of notes by second interviewer) ○ Pending IRB approvals and/or data sharing agreements ○ Areas of potential bias (e.g., onsite interviews of program staff) ○ Provide the intended sample or participants ✓ Describe limitations associated with data sources or data collection and implications for findings. ✓ Include a Data Crosswalk or Table Matrix in the Appendix that displays the alignment of the data sources to the evaluation questions, measures, outputs/outcomes, and timing.

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards														
Sampling Strategy Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest to yield the most relevant information with potential for generalization, if feasible. Since it is often impossible and not practical to enroll the entire population in your study, your evaluation may include more than one sample and can occur at multiple levels (e.g., evaluation sites, stakeholders selected for interviews, participants selected for survey). Choosing a 'correct' sample means making sure that your sample is large enough and representative of the population. Given the early stages of program design and implementation, it may be likely that the evaluation cannot yet determine the potential sample size or type. In that case, the evaluation plan should include proposed sampling criteria with estimated sample sizes, noting that they may alter based on implementation. However, the evaluation plan should include descriptions of the site(s) in which the program will be implemented and sample will be drawn, such as community college departments, faculty, and/or work-based partners. Sampling methods include: <table border="1" data-bbox="273 857 1037 1291"> <thead> <tr> <th>Probability</th><th>Non-Probability</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Simple random sampling</td><td>Quota sampling</td></tr> <tr> <td>Stratified random sampling</td><td>Purposeful sampling</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cluster sampling</td><td>Systematic sampling</td></tr> <tr> <td>Multistage random samples</td><td>Convenience sampling</td></tr> <tr> <td>Systematic random sampling</td><td>Snowball sampling</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Volunteer sampling</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Probability	Non-Probability	Simple random sampling	Quota sampling	Stratified random sampling	Purposeful sampling	Cluster sampling	Systematic sampling	Multistage random samples	Convenience sampling	Systematic random sampling	Snowball sampling		Volunteer sampling	✓ Explain and justify the rationale for site selection strategy by describing the following: ○ Design and methods used for selecting sites included in the study ○ The criteria and rationale used in site selection ○ Limitations of site selection ✓ Clearly define and defend methods/strategies for drawing samples from data sources by describing the following: ○ The method/criteria for selecting a sample of respondents ○ The method for identifying most appropriate respondents for qualitative research ○ Potential for missing observations and implications for the findings ○ Potential recruitment challenges anticipated ○ Note whether different samples will be drawn for different data sources/collection activities, and why
Probability	Non-Probability														
Simple random sampling	Quota sampling														
Stratified random sampling	Purposeful sampling														
Cluster sampling	Systematic sampling														
Multistage random samples	Convenience sampling														
Systematic random sampling	Snowball sampling														
	Volunteer sampling														

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Proposed Analyses This component should include your <i>proposed</i> analysis plan for the evaluation type and study design. While detailed models are not necessary, the evaluation plan should include descriptions of the approach and methods for conducting any quantitative and/or qualitative analyses and their alignment to the evaluation questions. Quantitative analysis descriptions should include potential approaches (e.g., ANOVAs, descriptive statistics, regressions, etc.), including a rationale and limitations for the approaches. Where possible, include the anticipated software to be used to conduct the analyses. Qualitative analysis descriptions should include how coding schemes will be developed, the coding process, strategies for ensuring reliability, and identification of themes. Potential examples of analytic approaches including <i>content analysis</i>, <i>thematic analysis</i>, <i>discourse analysis</i>, etc.	
	✓ Describe all analysis methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), including the use of analytic software. ✓ Describe any statistical approaches proposed to analyze quantitative data. ✓ As appropriate, provide multiple and/or alternative perspectives and/or triangulation processes. ✓ Demonstrate how the plan will apply consistent and systematic coding processes across data sources. ✓ Describe how the evaluator will develop a coding scheme, coding process, and theme identification strategy. ✓ Ensure alignment with evaluation questions and study design, as well as measures.

Component Overview	Checklist for Fully Addressing Standards
Appendices	
To ensure completeness of the plan, as well as conciseness of the narrative, each plan should include a series of appendices to expand on the written plan. Appendix A: This appendix should include the data crosswalk matrix aligning the data sources/collection activities to the evaluation questions, evaluation measures, and outputs/outcomes, as well as high-level timing. Appendix B: This appendix should include an evaluation implementation timeline intending to broadly explain the overall timing of the evaluation, including data collection activities and interim and final reports. Appendix C: (Optional) Any other related documents	✓ Matrices are clear and concise for ease of reading and alignment ✓ Evaluation timeline provides a broad overview of major evaluation milestones, including interim and final reports, as well as data collection activities.

Appendix A:
Data Matrix Template

Evaluation Questions	Activities	Indicators/Evaluation Measures	Data Sources/Data Collection
<i>Example:</i> To what extent is the program team meeting its intended outcomes?	• <i>Developing a workforce partnership board using shared leadership</i> • <i>Weekly meetings with employer partners in X region</i>	• <i>Number of active regional employers on the board</i> • <i>Number of board members representing different employer types</i>	• <i>Project-level documents including attendance records</i>