Community Assistantship Program

Program Goals Evaluation Plan Narrative
CAP is a cross-college, cross-campus University of Minnesota initiative coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

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Program Goals
Evaluation Plan Narrative
For
July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009
Southwest Initiative Foundation
Program Goals Evaluation Plan Narrative
For
July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline a course for evaluation over the next 12-18 months, based on the objectives set forth by program staff in the SWIF FY07-11 strategic plan. This evaluation plan aims to identify common themes among programs and sketches out measurement tools that may be useful in carrying out evaluation activities. The intended audience for evaluation information includes: staff, board members, funders, and constituents in the 18-county SWIF region.

Ideally, evaluation is done to examine the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of a nonprofit’s programs and/or the organization itself. Evaluation can be defined as an assessment of the extent to which an organization (or program) accomplishes its intended results (outcomes) and achieves measurable impacts (Kettner et al 1999). However, nonprofit leaders often struggle to respond to the need to truly evaluate programs and measure success. The inability to evaluate programs and projects can lead to failure in measuring overall organizational effectiveness.

When determining the scope of evaluation, many organizations first decide if their priorities are for process-based evaluation (often called formative) or outcomes-based evaluation (often called summative). Process-based evaluations are designed to better understand how a program works. These evaluations are useful to help determine how to change or improve program delivery. Outcome-based evaluation looks at impacts/benefits/changes to constituents (as a result of program efforts) during or after their participation in the programs. Outcome evaluation can examine these changes in the short-term, intermediate term and long-term. Outcomes are considered a measurable change. They are often confused with program outputs (e.g. the number of clients who went through a program.) Both output data and outcome data is collected during evaluations.

SWIF program staff have indicated interest in collecting data for both process and outcomes, depending on program area, as some programs have considerable longevity and others are in their pilot stages. Through small-group program team meetings staff mapped out their most important measurement indicators, both process and outcome-based.
II. Background and Context

The Southwest Initiative Foundation is a regional community foundation dedicated to advancing southwest Minnesota through leadership, relationship building, program development, and philanthropy. The Foundation works to ensure that southwest Minnesota is a highly productive and engaged region where growing numbers of people choose to live. To date, the Foundation has contributed over $43 million to southwest Minnesota through grants and loans.

*Our Mission:* To be a catalyst, facilitating opportunities for economic and social growth by developing and challenging leaders to build on the region’s assets.

*Our Vision for Southwest Minnesota:* A highly productive and engaged region where growing numbers of people choose to live and work.

*Our Vision for the Southwest Initiative Foundation:* To be the best regional community foundation for people, businesses and institutions that want to actively advance and support southwest Minnesota.

In 2006, SWIF completed a 5-year strategic plan for FY07-11. The plan articulates the Foundation’s vision through the following program goals:

*Program Goal 1: Renewable Energy.* Increase the wealth, prosperity, and vitality of southwest Minnesota by facilitation development of its renewable energy asset sector.

*Program Goal 2: Leadership and Community Development.* Help leaders improve their communities through internal and external connections that drive successful change.

*Program Goal 3: Build Regional Capacity.* Through its leadership, SWIF will build the region’s capacity for social and economic success by improving cooperation and collaboration, mobilizing initiatives, eliminating inefficiencies and redundancies, and solidifying a regional identity and voice for southwest Minnesota.

This evaluation plan focuses on Program Goals 1 and 2. Please refer to the strategic plan, and specifically the strategic plan program matrix (revised in spring 2008) for a detailed account of program objectives, strategies, and activities listed under each goal. Due to staffing changes in the spring of 2008, the evaluation plan for the third program goal will be developed at a later time.

III. Evaluation Scope and Parameters

This evaluation will focus on the program activities and resulting outcomes of SWIF during fiscal year 2009 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009). The staff also identified a need to look back at FY 2008 outcomes and may use some evaluation tools to help measure progress and outcomes of FY 2008.

Key audiences for evaluation information include SWIF board members, constituents in the 18 county region (implemented through communication strategies), and funders (including principal funder McKnight Foundation). SWIF program staff are not only an audience of information, but also key change agents that use evaluation information to improve program initiatives and celebrating success.
Recognizing the integral role of program staff and the need to be efficient with staff resources, this evaluation plan generally centers around short-term performance measures that program staff can easily collect themselves. Additionally, as some outcomes cannot be achieved in a 1-year time frame or using current staffing resources, the plan outlines some longer-term measurement indicators that may be accomplished either at a later date (beyond FY09) or with external evaluation support.

The evaluation will strive to identify and document:
- Program highlights & progress in meeting intended goals and objectives
- Program gaps and barriers
- Lessons learned
- Outcomes and impacts of program initiatives
- Recommendations for program improvement

The Southwest Initiative Foundation views evaluation as a methodology for continuous learning and improvement. The overall purpose of the evaluation will be to assess the Foundation’s progress towards meeting its program goals.

IV. Evaluation Questions

The comprehensive evaluation questions identified below are not intended to be representative of all program objectives. Rather, they have been identified, through a series of small group meetings and retreats with SWIF program staff, as the most important questions for understanding and assessing the foundation’s overall success in accomplishing its program goals.

1. What direct assistance and services are provided by SWIF to constituents in the 18 county region of southwest Minnesota?

2. How and to what extent are the services:
   - Meeting the articulated need of constituents?
   - Helping local and regional constituents/partners to be successful in their vision, objectives, and activities?

3. To what extent do participants value the direct services provided?
   - What types of direct services/assistance are valued most/least? Why?
   - How do constituents/partners rate the quality of facilitation and coordination by SWIF?

4. What are the success stories telling us about the best practices for organizing/convening initiatives?

5. What are important lessons learned to incorporate into program development?

6. What kinds of community/economic/civic impacts are made by constituents/partners that have been served by SWIF programs?
V. Organizational Measurement Indicators

Overall Measurement Indicators:

During the 2007-2008 winter, SWIF program staff convened for a staff retreat, work plan sessions, and a series of small group meetings by program area, to discuss current approaches to program work and the links between them. Important to note are the common themes among program areas. Generally, programs are already tracking:

- Number and kind of workshops/events activities held
- Number of constituents served
- Event/Workshop evaluation forms (most distribute an event/workshop evaluation form following each activity which asks about value of programming and event logistics).

The Foundation seems to have a good handle on who is being served and can often provide “off the cuff” examples of how SWIF has impacted lives in the region.

The program staff has also acknowledged general areas where better evaluation can and should be implemented:

- Success Stories. Many staff can recall great examples of the kinds of impact that SWIF program have on the lives of constituents in southwest Minnesota, but these stories are not being collected in any systematic fashion and we could be losing opportunities to communicate both intermediate and long term outcomes.

- Intermediate and Long-term impacts on community engagement and leadership. Some programs are relativity new, but all programs have indicated some need for better tracking of how SWIF related program services directly or indirectly affect constituents behavior in the communities (job created, civic position held, etc.)

- Action Plans. Some program workshops/events encountered challenges tracking changes (that related back to objectives) where SWIF has little to no follow-up planned. Having participants create short action plans offers a way to follow-up (in 6 weeks, 6 months, or 1 year) to see how and to what extent action plans were implemented.

- Resources (staff/time). Some programs (e.g. Micro-loan, E.I/) track specific time/resources spent serving constituents, but this isn’t common among all program initiatives. Some programs would like to get more specific in tracking staff resources by program or activity area to help with better understanding of inputs into the activity and with grant applications.

Common interests to explore:

- Aging – how issues around aging (workforce, contributors, etc) cross through program initiatives and how they might be developed more.
- Leadership – what core components of leadership are demonstrated through program initiatives and how they might become more systematic in delivery.
## Question & Objective Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Key Measurement Indicators</th>
<th>Data Collection Tool(s)</th>
<th>Responsibility (Who)</th>
<th>Timeline (When)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What direct assistance and services are provided by SWIF to constituents in the 18 county region of southwest Minnesota?</td>
<td># and types of services; # served changes in # and types of services over time increases in services to minority clients</td>
<td>-program records</td>
<td>Program Staff</td>
<td>Tallied after each event/workshop/class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How and to what extent are the services:</td>
<td>% (and change in %) of completed/ implemented visioning and action plans retained and new participation</td>
<td>-evaluation surveys/ questionnaires -program records</td>
<td>Program Staff</td>
<td>Bi-annually or annually depending on program area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting the articulated need of constituents?</td>
<td>% and rating of client-recognized value and satisfaction among participants</td>
<td>- Interviews and/or - Evaluation surveys</td>
<td>External Evaluator and/or Program Staff</td>
<td>Annually and/or upon completion of key program milestones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helping local and regional partners/ constituents/ to be successful in their objectives and activities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. To what extent do participants value the direct services provided?</td>
<td>staff identification of successful outcomes &amp; common best practices; participant identification of success stories</td>
<td>- Focus Groups; Interviews; Self-Report log</td>
<td>Program Staff and External Evaluator</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What types of direct services/ assistance are valued most/least? Why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do partners/ constituents/ rate the quality of facilitation and coordination by SWIF?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What are the success stories telling us about the best practices for organizing/convoking initiatives?</td>
<td>staff identification of key lessons learned; kinds of recurring themes of challenges and opportunities</td>
<td>-Self-Report – Log or Staff Focus Group (at all staff levels)</td>
<td>Program Staff and External Evaluator</td>
<td>On-going review; plus systematic review annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What are important lessons learned to incorporate into program development?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. What kinds of civic community/economic impacts are made by constituents/ partners that have been served by SWIF programs?</td>
<td>kind and amount of change in community engagement (e.g. volunteer positions held; job created and retained; community leadership duties).</td>
<td>-Focus Groups and/or Structured Interviews</td>
<td>External Evaluator and/or Program Staff</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. Program-level Evaluation Strategies

SWIF core program initiatives include:
- Connected Communities Partnership
- Designated Funds & Community Funds
- Early Childhood Initiative
- Entrepreneurship Initiative
- Micro-enterprise Loans
- Renewable Energy

The following pages highlight specific measurement indicators for each major program area. The program initiatives are labeled by where they are located in the SWIF FY07-FY011 the strategic plan (goal and objective).

Then, key outcomes for each program area are identified using revised work plans documents, strategic plans documents, and staff notes. There seems to be some confusion on original definition intent between strategies, activities, progress, and outcomes. This is likely due to both plan and staffing changes between the strategic plan’s development and current implementation. During updated strategic planning sessions, it is recommended that staff be involved to help reframe outcomes using standardized and agreed upon language and definitions of each concept.

Measurement Indicators, with notes of possible tools, are compiled below each program area. The table format uses 2 column headers: 1) Short-term, Staff Driven Measurement Indicators and 2) Long Term Measurement Indicators.

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Connected Communities Partnership

Found in Goal 2: Leadership and Community Development
Help leaders improve their communities through internal and external connections that drive successful change.

Objective 2.2: Partner with communities to deliver programs through strategic, relational and asset based initiatives.

Key Outcomes: Focus of CCI is changing away from 4 components to focus on CCP. Therefore, outcomes for program will be changing too. These are outcomes from strategic plan, program outline, and staff notes.

Connected Communities Program Outcomes (Pilot Stage)
1) Illustrated broad range engagement of core team including varied personal, professional, and cultural backgrounds and diverse ages at beginning of each CCP.
2) Retained at least 90% participation of core team throughout sessions in each CCP community.
3) Increased shared, active leadership development in core team members (traditional and nontraditional leaders).
4) Achieved leadership niche through “high impact” collective action that resulted from community teams.
5) Completed identified strengths and assets in ten sectors of community life within each pilot community and their surrounding areas.
6) Defined set of positioning statements that describes the role the CCP community plays in relationship to other communities in the region.

**Nonprofit Leadership Management**

Staff has determined adequate tools are in place to measure program. In-depth evaluation already completed by external evaluator.

1) Build the organizational capacity of nonprofit organizations through topical educational training sessions.
2) Provide networking opportunities and exchanging of information among nonprofit professionals. Ex: volunteer networks and certification programs, allowing time at training sessions for peer interactions.
3) Increase awareness and understanding of how to develop and manage volunteer programs in nonprofit orgs. MAVA Volunteer Certification Training and regular volunteer networking meetings.

### Measurements/Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff-driven short term implementation of Measurements (FY-09)</th>
<th>Long-term Measurements (Staff-driven or External Evaluator)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Measure success of broad base participation by comparing ideal sectors/criteria against actual core-team attributes</td>
<td>• Formal evaluation of CC program between pilot and institutionalized stages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track core team retention and change in CCP core team(s)</td>
<td>• Develop tool that measures how participation and leadership changes from facilitator perspective. May include: short instrument of check boxes that helps you note leadership changes over the course of the project. Check could rank participation during the session, involvement in between sessions, “non-traditional leaders taking on leadership role. Could be in Microsoft excel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff journaling to collect stories, note observed changes in core team, track processes that work/don’t work and why. (a few simple questions such as: How are you feeling at the end of this session? (this is a good oral evaluation question); What was most useful/least useful during this session; Reflect on you leadership skills during this session; Reflect on the leadership skills on someone else in the core group - what stands out to you. Develop a simple self reflection tool where core team can assess leadership changes over time. Collect all related press stories, editorials, clippings related to CCP project (even when SWIF isn’t mentioned)</td>
<td>• Consider mid-term phone check-in and post funding follow-up w/ CCP group, advisors, and unaffiliated community members to discuss project success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Designated Funds

Found in Goal 2: Leadership and Community Development: Help leaders improve their communities through internal and external connections that drive successful change.

Objective 2.2: Partner with communities to deliver programs through strategic, relational and asset based initiatives.

Key Outcomes: Community Funds (CF) Success means CF leaders are committed and engaged.
- By FY10, conduct assessment of CF success.
- By FY10, conduct Annual Assessment of growth of CF

Aging Trust Fund (ATF)
- By FY10 have strategic vision and plan for future of ATF, including support of other SWIF program areas. (Goal: 3 program areas will use ATF funds by FY10)
- The Parish Nurse (PN) program keeps seniors engaged in community.
- PN programs sustain themselves post SWIF funding.

Designated Funds
- All Scholarship funds remain in compliance with federal standards. Other designated fund goals to be developed at a later date.

Measurements/Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff-driven short term implementation of measurements</th>
<th>Long-term Measurements (Staff-driven or External Evaluator)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CF</strong></td>
<td><strong>CF</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track % growth of each fund annually.</td>
<td>• Develop a “CF success measurement scorecard” to measure leader commitment through survey and/or staff notes which may include: 1. If board meets regularly. 2. If CF board raises $$ for fund. 3. If leaders hold office. 4. If at least 75% of board attends CF bd mtgs. 5. Measure board turn-over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track Increase in $$ spent from fund.</td>
<td>• Consider written evaluation report from CFs that distribute money (revisit by FY11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with development team to determine short and long-term program connection with measurement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATF</strong></td>
<td><strong>ATF</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track # seniors served and % change in seniors served in SWIF programs (perhaps standard demographics survey at events) FY09</td>
<td>• Determine new, specific program evaluation based on developed strategic vision for ATF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gather stories about individual impacts on seniors participating in ATF funded programs. FY09</td>
<td>• Measure “senior engagement” through focus group or interview with each PN program; how many seniors remain in homes; possible isolation/loneliness surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track # of PN Programs funded annually; # of seniors served through each program; # of hours spent with seniors by PN; etc. partially FY08, FY09</td>
<td>• Follow-up survey with formerly funded PN programs to find out which have been sustained; how they have changed; where they get current funding. FY09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scholarship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Internal Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track that scholarship funds are approved &amp; meets compliance standards FY08</td>
<td>• Develop efficient tracking of staff hrs into ATF, CF, and specific funds FY09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Childhood Initiative – Evaluation Plan Notes

Found in Goal 2: Leadership and Community Development
Help leaders improve their communities through internal and external connections that drive successful change.

Objective 2.2: Partner with communities to deliver programs through strategic, relational and asset based initiatives.

Key Outcomes:
1) ECI (Coalitions and Thrive) continues to be productive and effective contributors to early childhood awareness in Southwest Minnesota.
2) Leadership networks
3) In FY09 SWIF will increase ECI Coalition/Thrive communities and continue working with 12 existing coalitions.
4) In FY09 fund up to $90,000 in ECI Coalition and Thrive projects and activities that implement coalition visions. In FY10, fund up to $85,000 and FY11 fund up to $40,000 in a decreasing scale.

Measurements/Indicators

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<th>Staff-driven short term implementation of measurements</th>
<th>Long-term Measurements (Staff-driven or External Evaluator)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECI Coalitions and Thrive</strong></td>
<td>To assess Coalition success, measures will include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue tracking # of coalitions, # of team members, annual increase in coalitions, kinds of number of projects completed, number of community members reached by coalition activities, etc. FY09</td>
<td>• 6-month and 12 to 18-month revised evaluation forms that measure coalition progress and success as measured by: leadership growth, vision development completion, project implementation, connection between projects and original vision. FY10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff journaling to note stories, progress and changes in ECI coalitions FY09</td>
<td>• Leadership growth of coordinators (regional team) as measured leadership skills self-assessment survey and SWIF evaluation notes. FY10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collect press stories, editorials, clippings related to ECI projects FY09</td>
<td>• Sustainability and planning after 3-years of SWIF funding and technical support as measured by: group continuation, local fundraising activities, continued coordination. FY10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much evaluation of ECI is and will be measured through the success of the Coalitions, specifically how their activities linked back to their vision and goal setting process. These evaluation measures will be to:

• Develop uniform “check list” tools that quickly evaluate common ECI Coalition projects. FY09
• Work with ECI Coalitions to develop evaluation templates for coalition events. (especially pre-post to measure change). FY09
• Set up template that will help track new #s and total #s of families reached in coalition activities FY09

To assess SWIF’s role in forming these coalitions, measures will include:

• Effectiveness of regional coordinator team and online tools through coordinator survey. FY10
• Successfulness of SWIF role through interviews or focus groups with key ECI participants (coordinators and team members) and communities members (school superintendents, resource providers, families served). FY11 School Supts FY08/09.

To assess greater impact of ECI programs, measures will include:
Entrepreneurship Initiative:

Found in Goal 2: Leadership and Community Development
Help leaders improve their communities through internal and external connections that drive successful change.

Objective 2.3: Connect communities and their businesses to effective economic advancement resources and opportunities in the region.

Key Outcomes: Key outcomes are from strategic plan and performance agreement and development plan and include:
- In FY08 & FY09 successfully launch four Step Up Your Business networks: 2 in Hutchinson, 1 in Marshall, and 1 on Redwood/Renville- for six to ten members in each group.
- In FY08 and FY 09 achieve least 80% retention of Step-Up Your Business participants for duration of each year-long program.
- In FY09 at least 4 of 5 Entrepreneurship Academy work plan sub-programs implemented

Measurements/Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff-driven short term implementation of Indicators/Measurements</th>
<th>Long-term Measurements (Staff-driven or External Evaluator)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step-Up Your Business</strong></td>
<td><strong>Step-Up Your Business</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to track number of individuals participating and retention rates. FY08</td>
<td>• Consider Mid-term and/or Final check ins by phone with each member of program. Use mid-term to assess any changes needed for last half of program. FY09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track success by recording how individual goals are met using action plans from meetings. (e.g &quot;Increase my business by 10% in 6 months&quot; – was that goal met?) Track raw numbers: # of goals set; # achieved - # in progress; # missed). (Consider reviewing these plans every 2-3 months – have written evaluation). FY09</td>
<td>• Consider oral evaluation process with program facilitators to gauge program success and challenges FY09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop short standard evaluation for</td>
<td>• Use check-ins and annual survey to assess continued connectedness, capture stories, testimonials, etc. FY09</td>
</tr>
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</table>

• ECI’s connection to greater community involvement through interviews or surveys with United Ways and other targeted groups FY10
• ECI’s connection to decisions made on all day/everyday kindergarten through interviews with school superintendents. FY09 and annually
• Consider tracking change over time in key indicators of early childhood development (in coalitions areas) such as: school readiness, etc. FY10
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>SWIF Programs Evaluation Plan</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurship Academy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to track participation numbers and retention rates in Academy work plan groups. FY08 &amp; 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue using evaluation measures with core group (as done in original academy) – (e.g. that ask if goals and objectives were met). FY08 &amp; 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collect all related press, stories, clippings for reporting. FY09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use existing “close-out report” that evaluates academy success. FY08 &amp; 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long term measurement of Entrepreneurship Academy may include:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider evaluation measurements of each sub-program work plan (are goals being met? Successes? Challenges?) AFTER 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As some work plans are multi-year in scope, consider annual follow-up focus group or survey with academy core group and with people impacted by action plan – to ask about success and challenges. AFTER 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Programs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to track number of client class time hours; # of people served; # of staff hours. Track % increase in FY09 &amp; FY10. FY08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue using evaluation surveys at each event. FY08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track number of entrepreneurship clients using participating in multiple SWIF education programs (to gauge higher levels of commitment); # of people who indicate interest in further support/education FY09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track overall progression of clients to microloan program (e.g. 50 came to workshops; 4 business started; 1 SWIF micro loan). FY08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long Term Measurement of Education Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow-up with CORE 4 participants (and other education participants as relevant) with survey 6-12 months after completion of program to measure follow-through with business plan Include indicators such as: How did they follow plan? How did they implement what they learned? (Tool to be developed: email or phone survey). AFTER 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow-up with Resource Providers in survey or focus group to learn stories of how they used knowledge from May 08 workshop in their work with entrepreneurs – stories (successes, challenges) AFTER 09</td>
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</table>
Micro Enterprise Loans

Found in Goal 2: Leadership and Community Development  
Help leaders improve their communities through internal and external connections that drive successful change.

Objective 2.3: Connect communities and their businesses to effective economic advancement resources and opportunities in the region.

Key Outcomes: The following outcomes were developed from the *strategic plan matrix and staff goals*.

Financing for southwest Minnesota businesses will be available to grow and sustain the regional economy.

1. By FY09, ML portfolio will add 30 new loans. By FY10, ML portfolio will add 35 new loans. (Increase in total loans will be contingent on staffing with FT Specialist and Program Officer)

2. By FY10, increase portfolio percentage of minority loan customers from 15% to 20% of micro enterprise loan portfolio. Increase in total minority loans will be contingent on staffing for minority business assistance.

3. By FY10 minority customers will represent 30% of all clients served and 45% of SWIF technical assistance time. Increase in technical assistance to minorities will be contingent on staffing for minority business assistance.

4. By FY10 at least 90% of all micro-enterprise customers rank assistance received as good to excellent as measured in client satisfaction surveys

### Measurements/Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff-driven short term implementation of Indicators/Measurements</th>
<th>Long-term Measurements (Staff-driven or External Evaluator)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Micro-enterprise loan (ML) staff already extensively tracks demographics of clients, # of clients that receive loans and # that do not receive loans, hours spent with clients in technical assistance and classroom training, Required for quarterly SBA reports – the program will continue to track this information.</td>
<td>What happens to loan customers businesses post-loan period? What are some of the long term outcomes of these businesses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ML Staff will continue to set and track milestone goals for # of new loan clients, # of total clients, # of classroom training hours offered, etc.</td>
<td>• Follow-up focus group, interview, or survey with former customers to assess current business operations; number of staff retained; # of jobs created of lost; etc.</td>
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<td>• ML Staff will continue to note key success stories and lessons learned for SBA reports, WIRE newsletters, board reports, website stories, and other communications.</td>
<td>• Find the personal stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ML Staff will track % of loans to minorities.</td>
<td>What is the impact these former customers have on their communities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ML Staff will track % of technical assistance time to minority clients</td>
<td>• Community Impact Assessment. Follow-up with former clients with a survey or interview to assess civic or social engagement in community (looking at leadership roles, volunteer areas, support of local businesses, collaborations, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ML Staff will develop and implement a</td>
<td>• Find the personal stories.</td>
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FY10 & beyond
customer satisfaction survey in FY09 to be delivered to loan customers.

- ML Staff will continue to assess education programs and technical assistance offerings through evaluation surveys of clients after training sessions.
- ML or Communication Staff will note any feedback from marketing materials and in what languages materials have been requested – to be reviewed and updated annually.  

Renewable Energy

Found in Goal 1: Increase the wealth, prosperity and vitality of southwest Minnesota by facilitating development of its renewable energy asset sector.

Objective 1.4: Support Community-based renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.
Objective 1.3: Connect the region’s current and future workforce to career opportunities in renewable energy: Strategy 1.3.1: Youth Energy Summit

Key Outcomes: Program outcomes are dependent on secured funding and renewed passage of tax credit legislation. (The following outcomes are from the Bush Narrative Proposal, strategic plan, and staff goals)

The ultimate goal of REDI is to maximize rural economic development and stabilize rural economies by increasing the income of local residents and increasing local tax revenues. This initiative will help rural communities be ready to benefit from local economic opportunities through renewable energy and energy efficiency. The objectives of this initiative are to:

- Raise awareness of the economic, community and environmental benefits of community-based energy development and energy efficiency
- Organize and form investor group wind energy projects and provide them with the technical assistance needed to successfully complete these projects. By 12/31/09 at least 12 projects will have completed feasibility studies.
- Increase the knowledge of community energy opportunities and issues through a variety of workshops targeted to local and statewide constituents such as landowners, attorneys, financiers, rural electric cooperatives and associations. By 12/31/09 at least X targeted workshops will be held
- Explore the potential for transferring the wind energy development model to support the development of other renewable energy projects such as solar, biomass and geothermal.

The Youth Energy Summit (YES) developed in partnership with Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center is part of SWIF’s strategy to introduce the region’s youth to renewable energy

- Maximize partnership strengths in the delivery and success of the Youth Energy Summit (YES). By 07/01/08 have a clear direction on the success and challenges of the pilot YES program and articulated goals, expectations, and roles for year 2 YES.
### Measurements Indicators

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Staff-driven short term implementation of Indicators/Measurements (FY-09)</th>
<th>Long-term Measurements (Staff-driven or External Evaluator)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>REDI program – organizing and technical assistance</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Track # of assessment projects started; # or % completed feasibility study; # or % paperwork/successful assessment; geographic representation of projects;&lt;br&gt;• SWIF recognized expertise statewide: collect stories on who is contacting SWIF and what kinds of expertise SWIF is providing&lt;br&gt;• Staff journaling to start a &quot;lessons learned; what works/doesn't program efficiencies&quot; for REDI program – to support future toolbox. (develop a tool for ease in journaling)&lt;br&gt;• Collect all related press stories, editorials, clippings related to REDI project (even when SWIF isn’t mentioned but had indirect involvement) for reporting&lt;br&gt;• Measure development of “Regional Contacts” (in other I.Fs or other orgs) – how many and to what extent this exists by 10/08; 10/09&lt;br&gt;• # of individuals/businesses expressing interest in private investment; # and $ amount of private investment (if known)</td>
<td><strong>Long term measurement of wind energy success &amp; REDI program (at least 3+ yrs out) may include:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Stronger industry support(Increase in parts manufactures in upper midwest; note decrease in time between parts ordered and parts received)&lt;br&gt;• Private investment in projects (estimates only before 12/31/09)&lt;br&gt;• Short-term/long-term jobs created&lt;br&gt;• Megawatts developed from projects&lt;br&gt;• # and % of local ownership in wind projects (need to define how local/small ownership applies when it may cross geographic boundaries)</td>
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<td><strong>Education Programs</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Evaluate increased knowledge from educational programs doing pre-post evaluations at workshops (measure knowledge gained)&lt;br&gt;• Track # of people served in education programs; # of people who indicate interest in further support/education</td>
<td><strong>Long term msrmnt of education may include:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Simple action plan development during workshop (what next); and email or survey check-in 6 months later - on actual use/follow-through&lt;br&gt;• Track land sale prices of over time (follow-through on workshops for landowners, city officials, and hometown attorneys)</td>
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<td><strong>Unfunded Education Programs (fully develop if implemented)</strong>&lt;br&gt;• # of energy audits completed by small businesses; # of action or change plans developed from audit activity</td>
<td><strong>Long-term Unfunded Education Program (fully develop if implemented)</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Changed practices from energy audits:&lt;br&gt;- Env. Impacts (energy saved; carbon emissions decreased)&lt;br&gt;- Economic Impacts ($ saved energy bills)</td>
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<td><strong>YES Program</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Prairie Woods, with SWIF input, is taking lead on compiling YES evaluation for pilot program.</td>
<td><strong>Process Evaluation</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Consider formal evaluation of the renewable energy wind program model and to help development of other R.E. programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
VI. Evaluation Timeline and Next Steps

Next Steps:
- Staff will develop short-term/staff driven tools for FY09 measurements between April 15, 2008 and July 1, 2008 using currently consultant support as needed.
- Staff will begin implementing measurement tools that support evaluation questions in spring 2008.
- Senior Staff will determine funding and staff resources to implement long-term evaluation and select priority areas.

Milestones:
- May 2008 Complete evaluation budget decisions for FY 09
- July 1 2008 Begin FY09
- July 2008 Staff compile FY08 data for McKnight Report
- Aug 2008 Compilations and narrative written for McKnight
- September 2008 McKnight report due
- December 2008 Mid-term check-in on data gathering
- June 2009 Finish first full fiscal year of evaluation data gathering
- July 2009 Write evaluation report in conjunction with McKnight Report deadlines.

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