

Building Evaluation Capacity (BEC) - UPDATED 1/2015	
Project History & Context	The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's 2005 strategic planning process identified a need to support evaluation and evaluative thinking among their grantees. The Building Evaluation Capacity (BEC) program was adapted from the Rochester Effectiveness Partnership, by the Hartford Foundation Nonprofit Support Program (NSP), to provide comprehensive evaluation training and coaching to nonprofit leadership and staff. To date, more than 145 people in 44 organizations in Hartford, CT have developed enhanced evaluative capacity and a fifth class is planned.
Duration	Long-term: 18 – 24 month cycles – Basic + Advanced training 12 month Alumni cycles
Participants & Selection Process	Participant agencies were selected by Hartford Foundation NSP staff from a pool of existing Hartford Foundation grantees and potential grantees. The class of 2008 included 12 agencies; the class of 2010 included 10 new agencies; the Class of 2013 included 12 new agencies; the Class of 2015 included 11 new agencies (each with 3 – 4 leaders and staff attending). A 5 th class is planned. (Note that a 1-year hiatus was planned between the Class of 2010 and the Class of 2013 to allow for BEC project modifications and to boost enrollment). The alumni group continued through the break year.
Project Design	<p>Year 1 (36 hours total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation design and evaluative thinking training (six 4-hour sessions with homework, one full day session, and one hour of technical assistance or coaching) • Reporting and sharing (final conference – presentation of an evaluation design) <p>Year 2 (24 hours total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of evaluation design (four sessions, five technical assistance or coaching consultations) • Completion of an evaluation project • Reporting/Sharing Results (final conference - presentation of evaluation findings by each organization) <p>Class of 2013 training was modified to include six 3.5-hour sessions, one 1- hour consultation and a final conference Year 1 (24 hours); followed by four 3.5-hour sessions, five 1-hour consultations, one final conference Year 2 (21 hours) plus one completed evaluation per organization. A new alumni group was added for Class of 2013 grads. Class of 2015 operated according to the same schedule as the Class of 2013 and will have an alumni group Fall 2015 through Spring 2016. A new class, which may include members from former classes expected to start January 2016.</p>
Alumni Study Group	Alumni from each class met monthly for 2-hour sessions. Advanced evaluation topics alternated with consultations with a professional evaluator. Alumni opted in, and were required to have an active evaluation project. All organizations brought new staff to the group to extend evaluative capacity. Groups met from 2008 through 2014. Initially there was a combined alumni group for classes 2008 and 2010. That group ended spring 2012. An alumni group for the Class of 2013 was conducted throughout the 2013-14 academic year. A new alumni group is planned for the Class of 2015.
Funder	Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG)'s Non-Profit Support Program (NSP) www.hfpg.org
Costs	Total investment for evaluation personnel = \$360,000 for 4 classes + alumni (~\$90,000/class). Administrative support & space

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	provided by funder.
Key Capacity Building Components	Basic Evaluation Training, Advanced Evaluation Training, Applied Learning: Evaluation Design or Implementation, Technical Assistance and Coaching, Networking, Alumni Study Groups
Evaluation Consultants	Each session was led by <i>Anita Baker, Evaluator</i> .
Prior Experience with Evaluative Thinking	Individual exposure to evaluation varied but was mostly limited. Agencies that continued with alumni study had to include members who had completed BEC basic and advanced evaluation training.
Key Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants gained or honed evaluation-related skills such as: ability to ask clear evaluation questions, design and select data collection methods, analyze data, summarize and share findings that inform ongoing program operations. • Every BEC organization conducted initial assessments of evaluative thinking, formulated plans to enhance it and extend (Ripple) what they learned about evaluation. All organizations completed evaluations of their own designs which included collection and analysis of data, summarization and presentation of findings, and development of proposed action steps. • Participants generated more than 5 dozen rigorous evaluation projects. • All organizations in the alumni group involved new participants in the training. Alumni organizations initiated two or more comprehensive evaluation-related projects. Seven of the 10 Class of 2010 organizations, and all but one of the original Alumni Group participants elected to continue guided evaluation work with the BEC trainer as part of the Alumni Group 2010-11. Seven of the 12 Class of 2013 organizations elected to continued guided evaluation work as part of the Alumni Group 2014. • The BEC Initiative demonstrated that replication of the REP-like evaluation capacity building design is possible.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the needs and interests of participants with different skill levels and exposure to participatory evaluation was difficult. • Some participants found it challenging to stay focused on their assignments and projects while also managing other organizational demands. • It was also challenging to help participants deal with the rigor required to analyze evaluation data and summarize findings for evaluation reports/other external communications. • Ensuring that Alumni Group participants got meaningful opportunities to analyze real data from their own organizations and continued to successfully plan for and conduct evaluations required considerable technical support. • Continued support is need to institutionalizing evaluation capacity and use of multiple “Ripple” strategies (e.g., applying knowledge to other evaluation needs, involving others in evaluation, providing training to others about evaluation).
Evaluation Products	<p>Read the <i>BEC FINAL EVALUATION REPORT 2006 - 2008</i></p> <p>Read the <i>BEC FINAL EVALUATION REPORT BEC 2008 – 2010</i></p> <p>Read the <i>BEC EVALUATION REPORT 2012</i></p>
Related Resources	<p>Read <i>PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION ESSENTIALS: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations and Their Partners</i></p> <p>See <i>BUILDING EVALUATIVE CAPACITY: A Powerpoint Presentation</i> to be used in conjunction with our guide.</p>

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Read *INTEGRATING EVALUATIVE CAPACITY INTO ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE*.

See *APPLYING EVALUATIVE THINKING TO DATA COLLECTION: SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS, RECORD REVIEWS* (used for Alumni study)