

## **Introduction to Program Outcomes Grant Programs for Veterans – FY2010 Department of Veterans Affairs**

The FY2010 grants request for proposals require that grant applicants provide measurable outcomes in their grant applications.

An outcome evaluation system will help you describe the benefits to veterans that are a result of your program and it is relatively easy to implement. The main reason to implement an outcome evaluation program is to help you learn what works well in your program and what could be improved. Implementing an outcome evaluation system and using it regularly will help you make your program more effective over time.

To establish an effective outcome evaluation system, you will need to be able to identify the following things about your program:

- **Inputs-** Any resources that are used in your program, like staff and volunteers, equipment, money, etc.
- **Activities-** What you will do with and for the veterans that you work with. Activities are described using words like “teaching, counseling, assisting, managing,” etc.
- **Outputs-** The units of service created by your program. For example, the number of veterans who received help with finding housing. Outputs are often measured by what your program staff or volunteers do for and with the people you serve.
- **Outcomes-** The changes in the lives of veterans that are a result of your program. For example, the number of veterans who actually found housing (as opposed to the number who received help finding housing).
- **Outcome targets-** The numeric goal attached to a particular outcome. For example, “20 veterans will find housing between September 1, 2008 and August 31, 2009”. Another example of an outcome target would be, “80% (16) of the veterans who found housing will maintain in their housing for at least one year.”
- **Outcome indicators-** Outcome indicators help you measure progress toward your outcome targets. Indicators are things that can be seen, heard or read. They provide “proof” to you that the outcome has been achieved. Questionnaires and surveys can be useful outcome indicators. Data, from a variety of potential sources, is a very common outcome indicator.