

Colorado State Library Mini-Grants Outcomes–Based Evaluation (OBE) Information

The 2014 Mini-Grant Program focuses on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), the theme of the 2014 Summer Reading Program. Libraries can use mini-grant funds to purchase STEM-related books for any age, and/or STEM-related equipment to use in outreach and in-house programs or to circulate.

Outcomes Based Evaluation (OBE) focuses on the key questions:

- “How has my program made a difference?”
- “How are the lives of the program participants better as a result of my program?”

NOT: how many books circulated, how many school visits completed, how many children completed the Summer Reading Program, or how many people attended STEM programs.

These are **Outputs**, and are still good numbers to collect!

Colorado Statewide Mini-Grant Outcomes for 2014

- Youth develop interest in STEM and STEM learning activities
- Youth develop capacities to productively engage in STEM learning activities
- Youth come to value the goals of STEM and STEM learning activities

(These outcomes correspond to those recommended in The Afterschool Alliance’s 2013 research report, [“Defining Youth Outcomes for STEM Learning in Afterschool.”](#))

1. Set the targets first. These will drive what you do.

- Will you focus on a particular age group? Which one?
- Will you focus instead on reaching parents? Or teachers?

2. Plan the outcomes. These need to be *specific and measurable* (see Sample OBE Statements below on p. 2 for examples).

- Will you focus on STEM-related books or equipment?
- What do you want to have happen?
- What stories or numbers could help the library grow, be better, or more visible?

3. During the program, evaluate. There are different ways to do this:

- Survey participating parents of younger children before and after the program to measure changes in their children’s behavior and knowledge.
- Survey older kids and teens directly about their interest in and knowledge of STEM.
- Compile the results and create percentages.

4. Collect and tell the stories

- Talk to participants and their families, and the community. Collect the stories that you hear, and record them in written format (or have the participants tell their own stories by audio or video).
- Have 3 terrific examples or stories to tell anyone who’ll listen.

5. Send it on

- Complete your Mini-Grant report by September 18, 2014.
- Present a report to your management and administration about your successful SRP. BRAG!!!
- Do an “elevator speech” with 3 WOW things that happened in your SRP; give the speech whenever you can!
- Tell the community how wonderfully the kids and families did!

Sample Outcome-Based Evaluation Statements and Measures

OBE Statements need to be specific and measurable. “Children will be more interested in STEM and think it’s fun” and “Teens will be more knowledgeable about science careers” are great goals, but as they are, there’s no way to measure your success in reaching those goals. The statement “By July 1, 25% of elementary-aged students participating in the SRP will be able to form a simple hypothesis and name the steps of the scientific method” is both specific and measurable. Many OBE outcomes can be measured through a survey to participating parents, a survey directly to older children and teens, and/or through structure observation. Here are some sample STEM-related OBE statements:

1. Target: Preschool-aged children

- Outcome 1: 85% of parents of 3-6 year old participants will report that their children are more interested in and curious about their natural environment (animals, rocks, weather, etc) after participating in the early literacy SRP, as observed by their activities and questions.
- Outcome 2: 75% of parents of 3-6 year old participants will report that they engage more actively in explorations of STEM principles and the natural environment at home after seeing these activities modeled in the library over the summer.
- Measure: Responses from parents of young participants on a written survey

2. Target: Teens (or adults!)

- Outcome 1: 50% of teens will report they have sought out additional STEM reading material for their personal interest after participating in the SRP.
- Outcome 2: 20% of teens will report they are interested in a STEM-related career, service learning project, or activism of some kind after participating in the SRP.
- Outcome 3: 20% of teens say they will change their behavior in some way to help the environment after participating in the SRP.
- Measure: Responses on a survey given to participating teens.

3. Target: Schools, preschools, childcare centers, and/or homeschooling groups

- Outcome 1: 50% of teachers that the library reached reported learning about the library’s STEM collections and equipment, and say that they will use these collections/equipment in their classroom and/or bring their students to the library to use them at least once during the upcoming school year.
- Measure: Responses on a written survey given to teachers/homeschooling parents.

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		http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/SummerReading/minigrants.htm