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# Sustainability

A True Measure of Meaningful  
Programs and Projects



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## Presenters

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## Sustainability

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What is sustainability....really?

Sustainability is about maintaining and continuing programs/services after the grant funding period has expired.



## Sustainability

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- ❑ Sustainability means having supported programs become a viable community resource.
  
- ❑ Sustainability means not starting over with the next available grant.



## Sustainability

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- ❑ Sustainability means the investment made into a program, will offer the community and stakeholders long-term value.
- ❑ Sustainability doesn't always mean a program will continue void of changes or modifications.



## Sustainability

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- ❑ New programs, projects and/or initiatives are key elements of an evolving and improving community resource system.
- ❑ Positive change is fostered through the development, implementation and evaluation of new programs, projects and/or initiatives.



## Developing Sustainability

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- Sustainability Requires:
  - structural transformation: moving resources from lower to higher productivity
  - effective governance: competence, accountability and accessibility to information.
  - inclusion
  - involvement and investment of self advocates



## Developing Sustainability

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- We must embrace opportunities offering long-term benefits and collaborations.
  
- We must identify and make decisions based on possibilities, opportunities and challenges.



## Developing Sustainability

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- ❑ Requires a shift in thought and behavior.
- ❑ Ideally, sustainable programs address the needs of participants and community interest.
- ❑ Support must be offered to programs not simply based on a plan of action, but rather an ongoing transformational process.



## Ongoing Transformational Process

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- ❑ Once a program/project is funded, it should start a transformational process, which ultimately leads to sustainability.
- ❑ Overtime, through methodical and strategic actions, a program should evolve and reach a point of financial self-sufficiency.



## Developing Sustainability

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- Sustainability is about change
- Implementing change is easy
- Sustaining change is difficult



## Developing Sustainability

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- Change is a process
  - Timing is everything
  - Expect the unexpected
  - Use your head and trust your heart
  - Knowledge is power
  - Social marketing and salesmanship
  - There are no endings, only new beginnings



## Sustainability

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- Sustainability efforts differ for different types of programs/projects.
- There will always be competing interests/priorities
- There will always be multiple views of a program's/project's goal.



## Goals of Sustainability

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- Integration into the community
  - Accepted by the community
  - Well used by the community
- Inclusion into local systems
  - Part of the larger network of services and resources



## Goals of Sustainability

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- Extension program relationships and long-term networks
  - Develop new partnerships
  - Enhance existing relationships
  - Program evolution and development
    - Diversify, specialize
    - Strategize, evaluate



## Steps to Sustainability

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### 1. Program Visibility

Ensure people are aware of the program/project from the beginning.

Promote the program

Promote program results

Develop program leadership

Incorporate social marketing strategies



## Steps to Sustainability

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### 2. Community Involvement

Involve people from all parts of the community

- Create opportunities for participation, collaboration and resource sharing
- Communicate openly
- Educate and inform the community
- Provide opportunities for training and leadership



## Steps to Sustainability

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### 3. Create a diverse base from program funding and support.

Seek financial support from multiple sources and multiple levels.

Note: Reduce reliance on sole source of funding.



## Steps of Sustainability

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### 4. Promote Systems Change

Identify how your program/project can improve the existing community structure.

Do people understand how the current system works and why change is needed?

Are proposed changes realistic?

It is best to start with small changes at many different levels.



## Strategies for Sustainability

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- Acknowledge the importance of program and evaluation data
  - Use data to solicit interest and support
  
- Promote spillover effects
  - Identify benefits to the community resulting from the services/supports provided



## Sustainability

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- Sustainability isn't simply a financial matter, as it is linked to:
  - Continuous relationship building
  - Capacity building
  - Meeting an ongoing identified need
  - Diversification of funding sources
  - Flexibility
  - Collaboration



## Sustainable Relationships

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- Sustainable relationships are built on the following:
  - Communication
  - Trust
  - The Norm of Reciprocity
  - Commitment
  - Shared Goals
  - Investment



## Diversification of Funding Sources

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- Sustainable programs/projects ideally offer evidence of the following:
  - Grants and contracts from other sources, e.g. private sources
  - Fees for services
  - Reimbursable service provision
  - Volunteers, donations, in-kind contributions
  - Active and methodical fundraising activities



## Funding Reality...

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- Programs/Projects require financial resources in order to support activities/service provision.
  
- Programs/Projects void of the capacity to develop ongoing sources of revenue– ARE NOT SUSTAINABLE.



## Sustainability

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- ❑ Participants and the greater community must be interested and invested
- ❑ Stakeholders must be supportive
- ❑ Contractors must be willing to work collaboratively
- ❑ Ideally, sustainable programs do not simply duplicate services/programs/projects



## Promoting Sustainability

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Sustainability does not happen by accident....

Programs/projects require a strategic investment, which fosters sustainability.

Sustainability must be taught.

Sustainability is fostered through accountability and clear communication of “time limited resources.”



## Promoting Sustainability

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- ❑ Sustainability must be connected to program/project development activities and include a long-term focus.
- ❑ Ongoing program evaluation activities must address sustainability activities and ask the question... “How will this work continue once the funding period expires?”



## Tips to Support Sustainability

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- ❑ Require a sustainability plan as part of the RFP process
- ❑ Provide regular and consistent education to grantees.
- ❑ Incorporate sustainability reports into quarterly reports and hold grantees accountable.



## Tips to Support Sustainability

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- ❑ Celebrate program/project outcomes with the community to foster investment from other funding sources.
- ❑ “Serve as a Champion” for programs/projects you support and use your influence to network the program/project with other funding sources.



## Tips to Support Sustainability

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- ❑ Develop practices inhibiting repetitive funding.
- ❑ Provide technical assistance to programs/projects centering on all facets of sustainability to increase capacity of grantees.