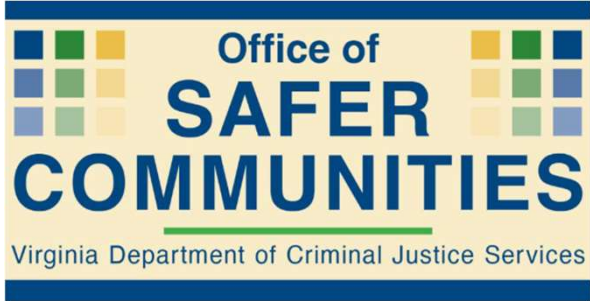
 **VCU** Center for Public Policy  
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# DATA COLLECTION

Tips for Grantees

Developed for The Department of Criminal Justice Services'  
Office of Safer Communities



**Office of  
SAFER  
COMMUNITIES**  
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

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## DR. AMY K. COOK

**Amy K. Cook**, PhD is a Professor of Criminal Justice and a Senior Consultant within the L. Douglas Wilder School's Center for Public Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her current research investigates the complex correlates of substance abuse and its impact on overdose rates and criminal behavior. Before entering academia, Amy served for 14 years as a probation officer with the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, supporting delinquent youth, families, and survivors of intimate partner violence. A dedicated advocate for community safety, Amy was also a founding member of the Henrico County Fatality Review Team, analyzing intimate partner and family-related homicides.



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## TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Ensuring grantees have the knowledge and skills necessary to collect data effectively.

By the end of this training, you will...

- Understand the basics of data collection
- Determine how to develop goals and objectives
- Learn how to align goals to data collection
- Explore resources for data collection best practices



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## PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL



## WHAT IS DATA COLLECTION?

- A process - systematically collecting information (or data) that tracks and measures anything of interest.
  - Age, race, gender, survey results, crime rates, etc.
- A resource -
  - Track grant progress or ensure compliance
  - Evaluate outcomes or demonstrate effectiveness or impact
  - Guide decision-making
  - Strengthen proposals and stakeholder communication
- Provides evidence of activities, impact, and effectiveness

## TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION

- **Primary** - gathering new, original data directly from a source.
  - Can be tailored to specific needs
  - Useful if data does not exist elsewhere
    - Surveys or questionnaires
    - Interviews or focus groups
    - Intake forms
    - Pre/Post tests
- **Secondary** - existing information that has already been collected
  - Government records
  - Crime statistics
  - Court records

## TYPES OF DATA

### Quantitative:

- Numerical data
- Countable or measurable
- What or how much/many?
- Number of participants, crime rates, satisfaction levels, etc.

### Qualitative:

- Descriptive, non-numerical data
- Focus on understanding
- Why or how?
- Perceptions of programs, experiences, explanations

Many projects will rely on **both** categories to fully capture all of the important information.

## DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- **Goals** - broad, long-term aims focused on overall purpose
  - Describes **what** we want to achieve
  - Example - reduce youth involvement in violent crime
- **Objectives** - specific, measurable steps to achieve the goal
  - Describes **how** we will achieve the goal
  - Example - provide 12 conflict resolution workshops to at-risk youth

**Clear objectives can make it easier to decide  
what data to collect and how to measure success.**

## DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Think **SMART!**

- **Specific** - is this clear and concise?
- **Measurable** - how will we track progress?
- **Achievable** - is this realistic?
- **Relevant** - does this align to my goals?
- **Time-bound** - what is the timeline/deadline?



## DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Think **SMART!**

- **Specific** - think about what will change, for whom, and how
    - Be specific, precise, and focused
    - Use concrete terms
    - Avoid ambiguous, broad, or vague terms
- ✘ Increase the juvenile workforce
- ✔ Implement a 2-week summer training program in the City of Richmond to secure employment for 50 youth.

## DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Think **SMART!**

- **Measurable** - what does success mean?
    - Baseline and continued tracking
- ✘ Teach job training skills
- ✔ Increase job skills by 50%, measured by a pre and post test.



## DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Think **SMART!**

- **Achievable** - is this doable with our resources?
  - Be realistic
  - Consider staff availability, knowledge, and work requirements
    - ✘ Secure a 100% employment rate upon program completion
    - ✓ Secure 50% employment rate upon program completion

## DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Think **SMART!**

- **Relevant** - will this help meet the goal?
  - Objective should match the intended goal
  - Consider target population
    - ✘ Include adults in the program
    - ✓ Maintain focus on juveniles. Only youth will be recruited into the program.

# DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Think **SMART!**

- **Time-bound** - when will the objective be accomplished
  - Timeline and deadlines should be established and clear
  - Consider the target population
    - ✗ No timeline
    - ✓ Begin the program over the summer, with sessions over a two-week program

# APPLYING THE SMART FRAMEWORK

Idea: Reduce violent behavior among youth		
Specific	What? Who? Where? When? Why?	
Measurable	How will you track progress? What is success?	
Achievable	Is this realistic? Do we have enough staff/time?	
Relevant	Does this help meet our goal?	
Time-bound	Start date? End date? Deadlines?	
Objective:		

## APPLYING THE SMART FRAMEWORK

**Idea:** Reduce violent behavior among youth

**Goal:** Reduce youth involvement in violent behavior in the local community by 10% within the next 12 months through education, mentorship, and community engagement programs.

**Objective 1:** Train 50 community mentors by the end of the first quarter who will work directly with at-risk youth to provide mentorship, positive role models, and conflict resolution skills.

**Objective 2:** Implement monthly community workshops on conflict resolution for 100 youth, with at least 75% reporting improved skills in managing conflict and stress by the end of the year.

## DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Data collection should be aligned with our goals and objectives

- Why are we collecting data?
- What data should we collect?
- How and when will the data be collected?
- Who is responsible for collecting and managing the data?
- What will happen to the data upon collection?

## DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Why are we collecting data?

- To track progress and evaluate success

What data should we collect?

- Demographic (Age, gender, race)
- Attendance
- Pre/post test scores
- Participant satisfaction
- Crime data

## DATA COLLECTION PLAN

How and when will the data be collected?

- Beginning, middle, and end
  - Establish a baseline
- Primary - Tests, surveys
- Secondary - crime rates, school records
- Qualitative
- Quantitative

## DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Who is responsible for collecting and managing the data?

- Identified staff
- Third party partner
- Are they trained?

What will happen to the data upon collection?

- Data storage, access, security
- Analysis Plan
- Reporting requirements
- Translation, communication, publication

## BENEFITS OF DATA COLLECTION

- Support when applying for additional sources of funding
- Track progress towards goals and objectives
- Show evidence of success
- Improve program quality
- Adjusting internal strategies
- Deploying resources where needed
- Identifying training and professional development for staff
- Informing and engaging community leaders of the work being done
- Engage stakeholders

## BEST PRACTICES FOR DATA COLLECTION

- Start collecting data as soon as the grant begins
- Develop a data collection plan that includes the specific data to be collected along with the appropriate methods
- Determine who collects data and an appropriate timeline for when the data should be collected
- Share performance measures with those who are responsible for data collection

## BEST PRACTICES FOR DATA COLLECTION

- Provide data collection training to those involved with data collection
- Set up tracking and case management systems to help with data tracking
- Establish data collection agreements with others, if applicable
- Tie the data you collect and report to the program's goals and objectives
- Ask for help from DCJS to ensure consistency, if you need it

## RESOURCES

- [BJA Guide on Data Collection](#)
- [Establish Data Protocols to Optimize Data Collection](#)
- [Incorporate Technology for Data Collection](#)
- [SMART Objectives: Creating Your Grant Work Plan](#)
- [SMART Goals for Grant Applications](#)
- [Data Visualization Course](#)



## JOIN US FOR MORE TRAINING!

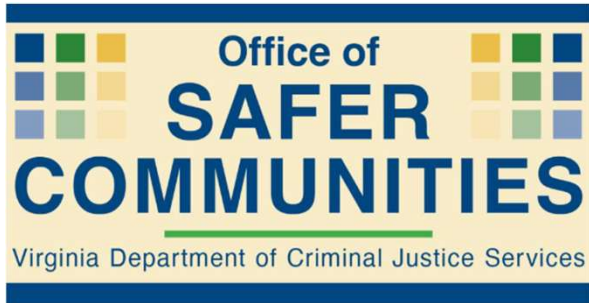
- February 17: [Creating One-Pagers](#) - Learn how to summarize and present data in a clear, compelling format
- February 24: [Visualizing Data](#) – Learn techniques for turning data into visuals that tell a story
- March 3: [Prevention Evaluation Techniques](#) – Learn about methods for assessing program effectiveness
- March 10: [Using Data for Growth and Sustainability](#) – Learn about leveraging insights to strengthen and sustain your initiatives



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Learn more about the services and resources from the Center for Public Policy at [cpp.wilder.vcu.edu](http://cpp.wilder.vcu.edu).



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