

# Program Review

When do you end a program, change it, or put more resources toward it?



Karen La Forge

[karenlaforge@outlook.com](mailto:karenlaforge@outlook.com)

804-241-4226

**NISENSON**  
*Consulting*



# Agenda

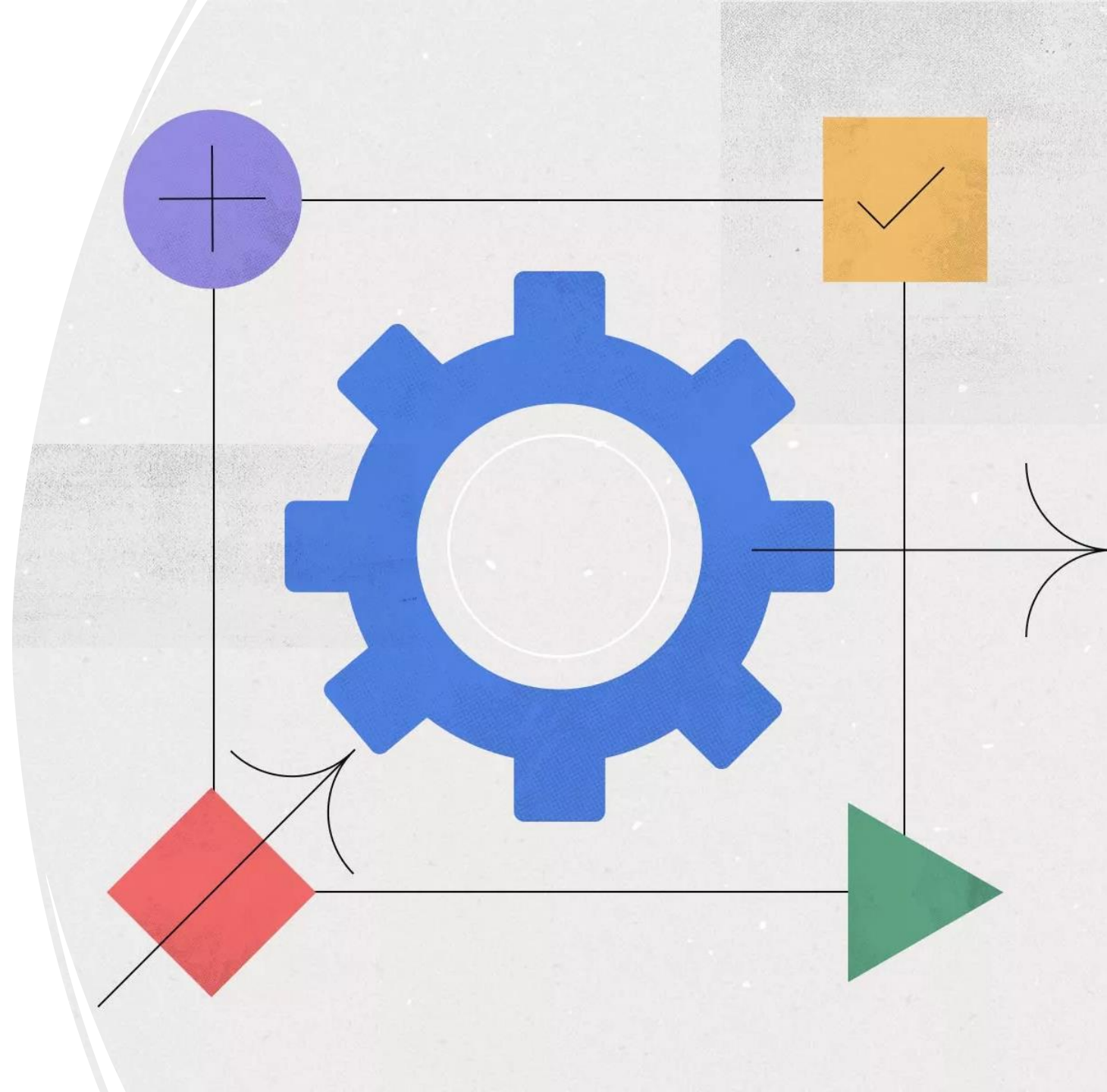


- **Welcome**
- **The importance of program review**
- **Program review tools**
- **Let's give it a try**
- **Discussion**
- **Wrap Up**

# What is a program review?

---

*The process of gathering data about a specific program or programs to help make informed decisions.*



*We've always  
done it this way.  
Why do we have  
to change?*



Program evaluations help to answer questions about the effectiveness and impact of your program. You can use evaluations to determine if programs are helping your organization fulfill your mission and understand the impact that your programs are having on those whom you serve.



## A story of...

- Stretched resources
- Lack of impact
- Services not current with best practices
- Frustrated staff



# How do you know your organization is making a difference?

*Impact is the difference your nonprofit makes.*

There's the work you do, and the results that flow from it. More and more nonprofits, grant makers, and government partners are focusing on outcomes, rather than "outputs."





VS



## Outputs

- The things we do
- Deliverables, projects, etc, that help us to work towards our goals
- We hope it brings success but doesn't guarantee it
- Might change if it doesn't bring results

## Outcomes

- The results I hope to get after doing something
- Measurable results defined as success of the goal
- Shows the success loud and clear!
- Stays the same until achieved

# Outputs – Outcomes - Impact

## Outputs

- Program staff teaches financial management skills to low- income families.
- The annual VCSB conference disseminates information on best practices for boards.

## Outcomes

- Low-income families are better able to manage their resources.
- Board members know the best practices and use it to make their boards more effective.

## Impact



Another way to look at the difference between outputs and outcomes:

- Outputs:** Is the client served?
- Outcomes:** Has the client's situation improved?



# Program evaluations help to answer questions about the effectiveness and impact of your program.

## Why?



Fulfill your mission



Determine the impact on those you serve



Measure success in meeting goals and objectives of programs



Determine efficiencies and improvements



Look for growth opportunities

## Why not?



Founder still involved



We've always had this program



Our board and/or volunteers love this program



Lack of time and expertise



Fear of change – lost jobs, funding, etc.

# Where to start

---

- Stakeholder Analysis
- Program Evaluation Table
- Sustainability Model
- Theory of Change
- Mix and Match





# Stakeholder Analysis

Ask the people who know your services best

- Those you are serving
- Board Members
- Volunteers
- Staff
- Partners
- Community
- Other

# Program Evaluation Table

## Where to start?

---

- How will you use the data? What is the goal?
- What do you need/want to know?
- Review the questions. Do you need to add, delete, edit?
- Who needs to be on the team/task force?
- What is your timeframe?





# Program Evaluation Table

	What Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do?	Did It Matter
Metric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Impact</li> </ul>
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff</li> <li>● Funders</li> <li>● Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff</li> <li>● Funders</li> <li>● Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff</li> <li>● Funders</li> <li>● Network</li> <li>● Social Investors</li> </ul>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure services are transparently delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure services are delivered consistently &amp; completely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure services are creating social change</li> </ul>
Strategic Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are services meeting contracted requirements?</li> <li>● Are services distributed equitably relative to the highest needs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can our services be improved?</li> <li>● Do our services benchmark to best practices?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do our services actually address the compelling needs?</li> <li>● How can we increase the impact of our services?</li> <li>● Are we using our data to solicit investments in our success?</li> </ul>

# Where to start?

## Sustainability Model

---



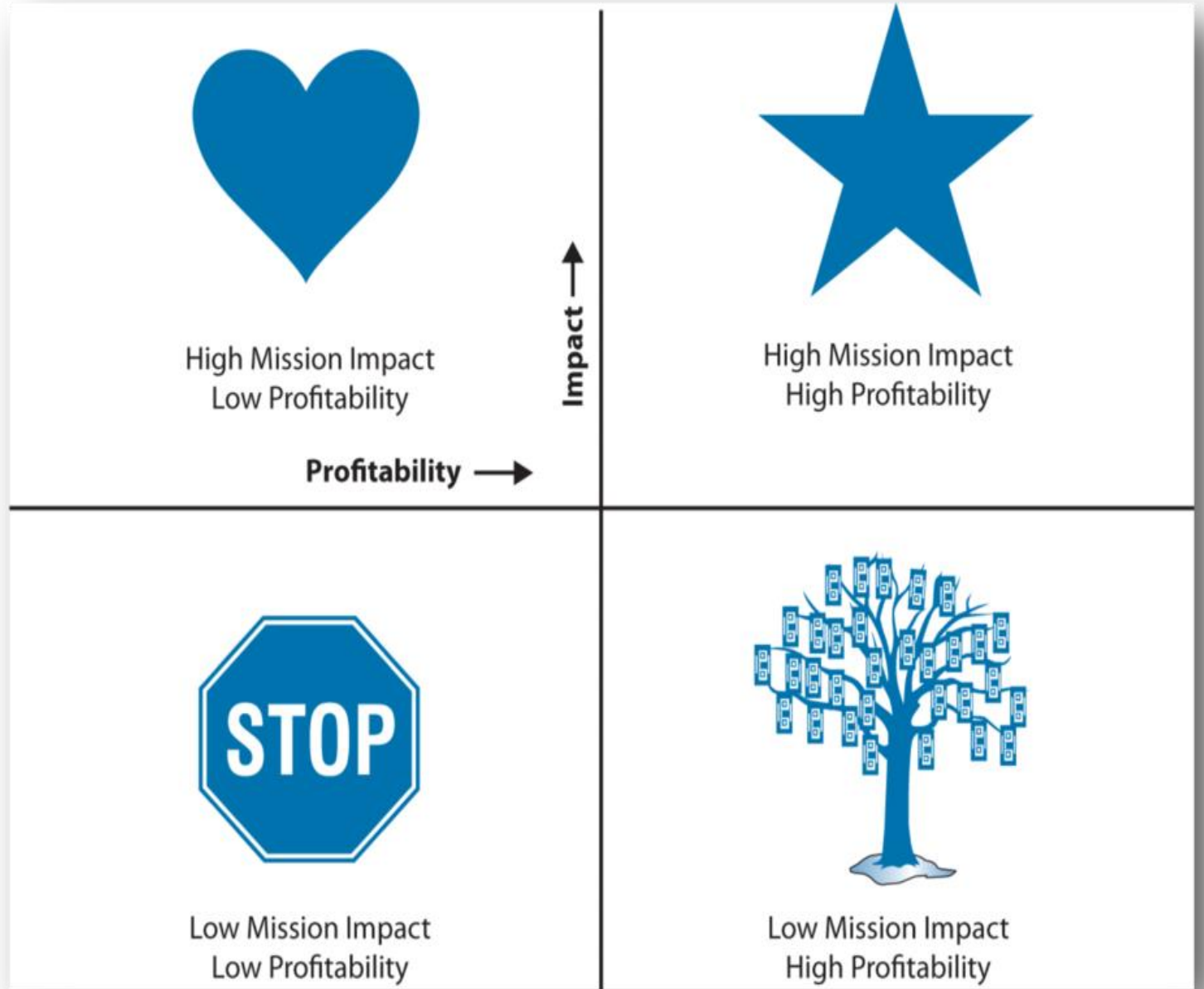
- How will you use the data? What is the goal?
- What do you need/want to know?
- Review the questions. Do you need to add, delete, edit?
- Who needs to be on the team/task force?
- What is your timeframe?

Nisenson Consulting

*Nonprofit Sustainability: Making Strategic Decisions for Financial Viability* by Jan Masaoka, Jeanne Bell, Steve Zimmerman



# Sustainability Model



# Where to start?

## Theory of Change

---

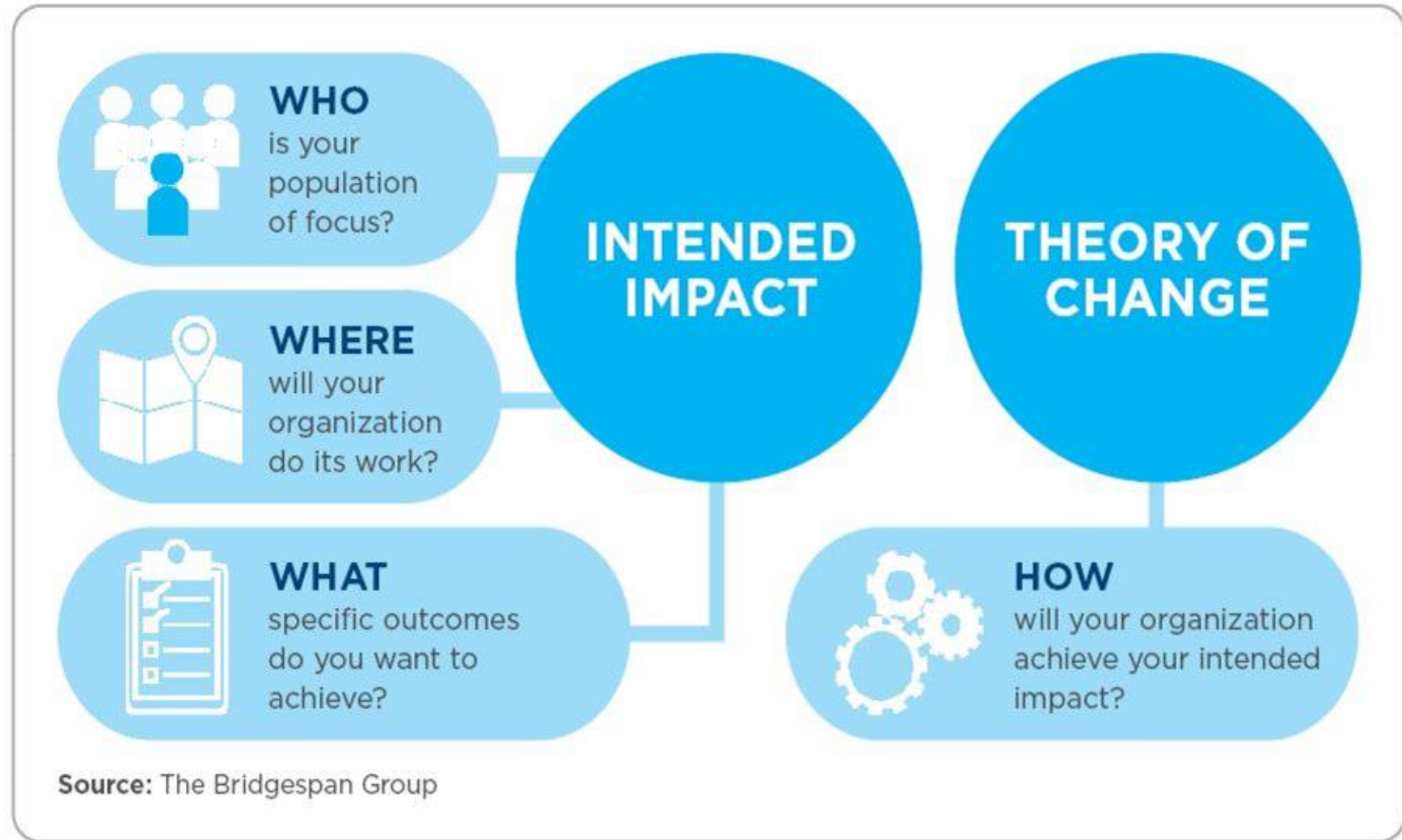
- Determine the intended impact/change.

*If we provide housing for 10 more families this should **lead to** more stability which will **contribute to** better education outcomes for the children, increased access to services and employment, and decreased domestic violence.*

- Who needs to be on the team/task force?
- What is your timeframe for the work?
- What do you want to reported?



# Theory of Change



**PROBLEM**

*I'm always late to work*

**CAUSES**

*Doing unexpected chores*

*Going to a late morning workout class*

*Reading for too long in the morning*

**ROOT CAUSES**

*I like relaxing in the morning*

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

Get to work on time



Do chores after work  
-----  
Exercise after work  
-----  
Stop reading by a certain time



Wake up earlier

CAUSAL PATHWAY

**PROBLEM**

*I'm always late to work*

**CAUSES**

*Traffic!!*

*Leaving the house late*

*Waking up late*

*Can't decide what to wear in the morning*

**ROOT CAUSES**

*Going to bed late*

*Staying up late watching Netflix*

*Can't fall asleep because I've been drinking coffee all day*

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

Get to work on time



Take a different route to work



Leave the house earlier



Wake up earlier | Prepare outfit the night before



Go to bed earlier



Set a bedtime, stop watching Netflix | Reduce daily coffee intake

CAUSAL PATHWAY

What would you do?



# Scenario 1

Mission: To provide quality tutoring that supports student learning and empowers students to achieve success.

The RVA Reading and Tutoring Program (not a real program) wants to expand from Richmond City into Henrico and Chesterfield counties. They have received requests from parents and teachers for services to provide trained tutors for K-5 students after school in these localities.

The board thinks this is a great idea, but staff is concerned about the additional work, time, and money needed for the expansion. They also know there is another organization, Kids Literacy, working in Henrico. They do not want to duplicate efforts.

- What is the goal(s)?
- What other information would you need?
- What evaluation format would you choose?  
(Program Evaluation Table, Sustainability Grid, Theory of Change)



## Scenario 2

Mission is to respectfully and compassionately empower persons who are homeless with hope by providing emergency and transitional shelter, care and guidance together with the community.

The Shelter on 5<sup>th</sup> has been providing literacy services for the past 10+ years. The program is small and is staffed by dedicated volunteers that started it however, paid staff deal with the program logistics (scheduling rooms, volunteers) and the Shelter provides literacy resources.

The volunteers who started this program, including significant supporters of the Shelter, believe it is important to addressing homelessness. The Shelter is getting a new space, and the volunteers are pushing for dedicated classroom. Staff believes the space should go to housing more people and are concerned about the quality of the literacy program.

- What is the goal(s)?
- What other information would you need?
- What evaluation format would you choose?  
(Program Evaluation Table, Sustainability Grid, Theory of Change)

# Scenario 3

Mission: To create homes and communities that are healthy, sustainable, and affordable.  
Vision. **Healthy, sustainable communities for everyone.**

The VA Housing Corporation provides low-income housing. They would like to increase their housing investment to provide housing for 100 more families over the next 3-5 years.

The staff would like to purchase buildings/homes and rehab them to meet the goal and improve housing values in the communities they serve. The board wants to initiate new builds on land that was donated in an area just outside of their primary service area.

- What is the goal?
- What other information would you need?
- What evaluation format would you choose?  
(Program Evaluation Table, Sustainability Grid, Theory of Change)

# What is your scenario? Programs, Staff, Board, Growth.....



# Summary

---

- Program Evaluations should be done every 3 years
- Choose the method(s) that works best for your organization
- Opportunity for improvement and growth
- It's worth the investment of time and energy to build more impactful programs
- There are free resources and templates, but sometimes you need help.



**NISENSEN**  
*Consulting*

*Contact us:*

**Amy Nisenson**

[amy.nisenson@gmail.com](mailto:amy.nisenson@gmail.com) 804-307-4653

**Karen La Forge**

[karenlaforge@outlook.com](mailto:karenlaforge@outlook.com) 804-241-4226

**Website: [www.amynisenson.com](http://www.amynisenson.com)**

Nonprofit Governance/Board Development

Strategic Planning

Program Evaluation

Succession Planning

Executive and Management Search

Community Engagement

Resource Development and Fundraising

Foundation Management

Training and Education