

# Reinvigorate Your Evaluation

15+ Free or  
Low-Cost Tools



Wilder Research.

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# How do you feel about evaluation?



# Roadmap for session

- Grounding – where do these tools fit into the evaluation cycle?
- Cover 15+ evaluation tools (free or low-cost)
- Share *your* favorite evaluation tool
- Questions (if time)

# Evaluation cycle



# How we organized these tools

Beef up your general knowledge of evaluation



Evaluation background

Learn about the community you serve or engage



Assessment

Learn about your program's impact and needed tweaks



Collect data

Make sense out of your data



Data analysis

Communicate evaluation findings



Dissemination

Stay up to date with the evaluation field



Thought leadership

**Let's jump in!**

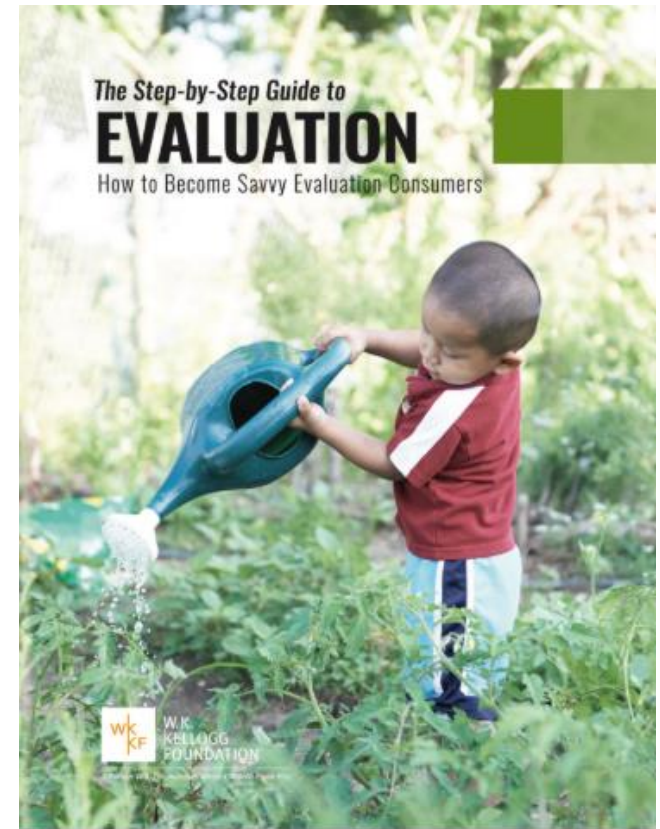


Tool #1:

# The Step-by-Step Guide to Evaluation

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access:

<https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2017/11/wk-kellogg-foundation-step-by-step-guide-to-evaluation>



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #1:

# The Step-by-Step Guide to Evaluation

**Why we like it:** Provides an overview of the entire evaluation process

Includes tips for preparing for evaluation and engaging your community throughout

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**This tool is useful when:** You're interested in a practical reference with exercises, checklists, examples, and additional resources at every stage

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**Cons:** ?



Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership



## Tool #2:

# Community Toolbox

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en>

Section 5. Developing an Evaluation Plan

ation:

ation: Main Section Checklist Examples Tools PowerPoint

Learn the four main steps to developing an evaluation plan, from clarifying objectives and goals to setting up a timeline for evaluation activities.

t Are

- WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE AN EVALUATION PLAN?
- WHEN SHOULD YOU DEVELOP AN EVALUATION PLAN?
- WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF STAKEHOLDERS AND WHAT ARE THEIR INTERESTS IN YOUR EVALUATION?
- HOW DO YOU DEVELOP AN EVALUATION PLAN?

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #2:

# Community Toolbox

- Why we like it:** 46(!) chapters of clear explanations, with examples, checklists, and tools
- Community Assessment (Chapters 3-5)
  - Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives (Chapters 36-39)

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**This tool is useful when:** You need some grounding in the why and how of evaluation

You want context, examples, and tools that support your learning

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**Cons:** Beware the rabbit hole! Lots of information.



Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

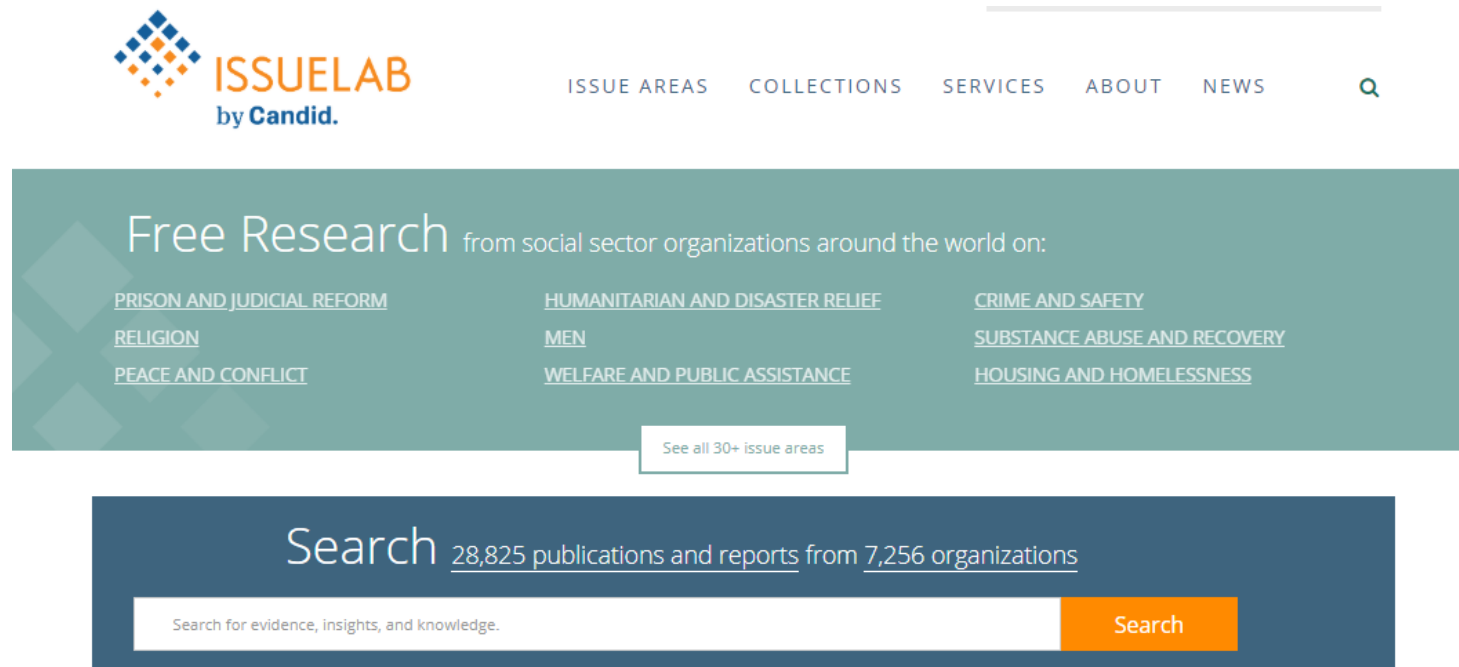
Dissemination

Thought leadership

# Tool #3:

## Issue Lab

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <http://www.issuelab.org>



The screenshot shows the Issue Lab website homepage. At the top left is the logo for "ISSUELAB by Candid.", which consists of a diamond-shaped grid of colored squares (blue, orange, and white) followed by the text "ISSUELAB" in orange and "by Candid." in blue. To the right of the logo is a navigation menu with links for "ISSUE AREAS", "COLLECTIONS", "SERVICES", "ABOUT", and "NEWS", along with a search icon. Below the navigation is a teal banner with the text "Free Research from social sector organizations around the world on:". Underneath this banner are three columns of issue areas, each with a link: "PRISON AND JUDICIAL REFORM", "RELIGION", "PEACE AND CONFLICT" on the left; "HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF", "MEN", "WELFARE AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE" in the middle; and "CRIME AND SAFETY", "SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND RECOVERY", "HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS" on the right. A button labeled "See all 30+ issue areas" is centered below these links. Below the teal banner is a dark blue search bar with the text "Search 28,825 publications and reports from 7,256 organizations". The search bar contains a white input field with the placeholder text "Search for evidence, insights, and knowledge." and an orange "Search" button.

Evaluation  
background

**Assessment**

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

# Tool #3:

## Issue Lab

**Why we like it:** Includes nearly 30,000 publications from >7,000 publishers

Searchable by issue area, date, document type, geography, language

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**This tool is useful when:** You want recent research from others in the social sector on issues important to your organization

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**Cons:** Depth of information by topic varies widely

Evaluation background

**Assessment**

Collect data

Data analysis

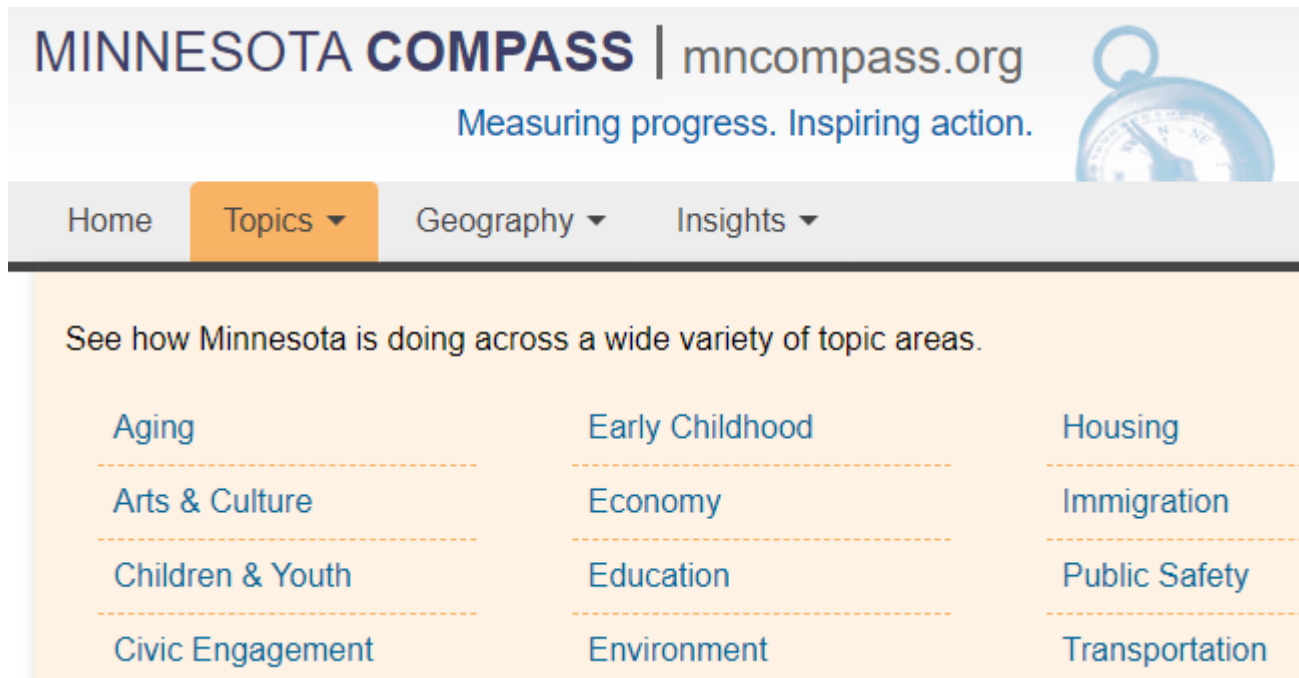
Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #4

# Minnesota Compass

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <https://www.mncompass.org/>



The screenshot shows the top portion of the Minnesota Compass website. At the top left, the text reads "MINNESOTA COMPASS | mncompass.org" in a dark blue font, with the tagline "Measuring progress. Inspiring action." below it. To the right is a blue compass icon. Below this is a navigation bar with "Home", "Topics" (highlighted in orange), "Geography", and "Insights". The main content area has a light orange background and contains the text "See how Minnesota is doing across a wide variety of topic areas." followed by a grid of topic links: Aging, Early Childhood, Housing, Arts & Culture, Economy, Immigration, Children & Youth, Education, Public Safety, Civic Engagement, Environment, and Transportation.

Evaluation  
background

**Assessment**

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #4

# Minnesota Compass

**Why we like it:** User-friendly data and trends on 15+ topics, available by multiple Minnesota geographies

Build-your-own tool lets you create a custom data profile

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**This tool is useful when:** You need current data for a proposal or report

“Insights” articles offer info on how changing trends affect our communities

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**Cons:** Limited to key data measures for Minnesota

Evaluation  
background

**Assessment**

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

# VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers are important community assets, helping to enrich the lives of those they serve and often providing care and services that neither government nor the private sector can afford to provide on their own. High rates of volunteerism also signal a healthy willingness of individuals to pitch in and make the community a better place.

REGION: Statewide ▾

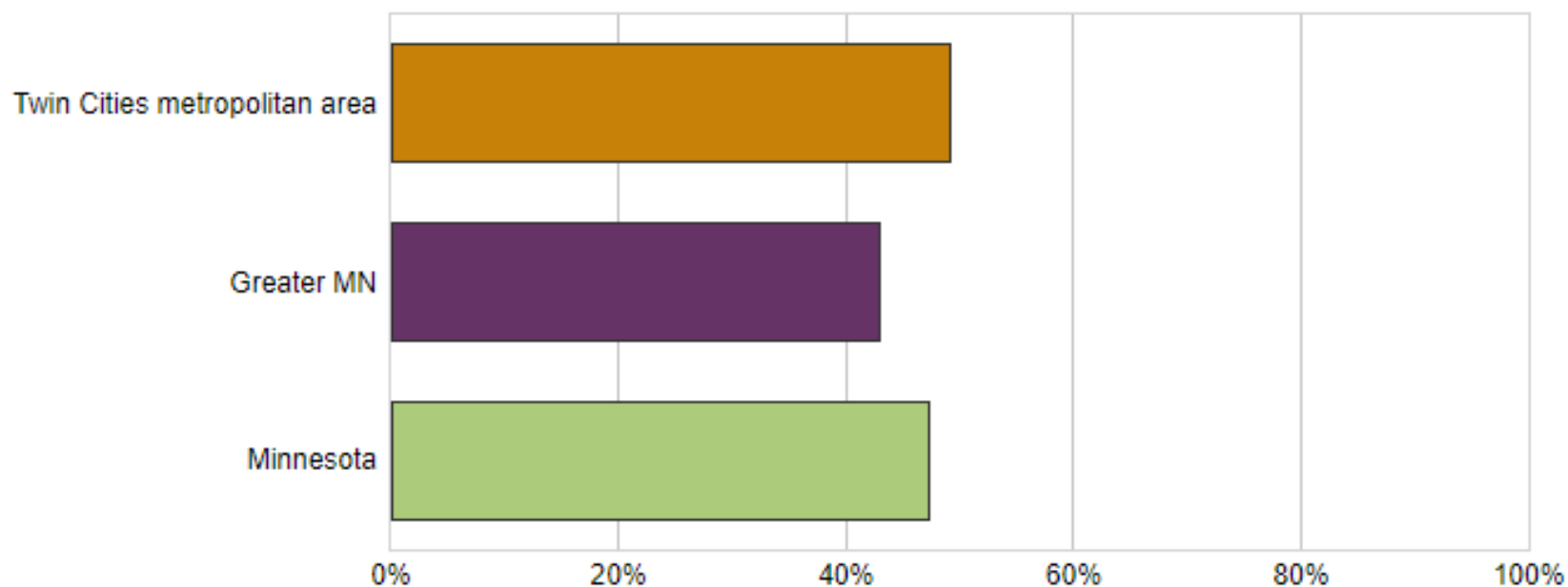
BREAKDOWN: Twin Cities, Greater MN, and MN ▾

VIEW: Graph ▾

## Residents (16+) who volunteered in the past year



Twin Cities metropolitan area, Greater MN, and Minnesota, 2017



Compiled by  
Compass

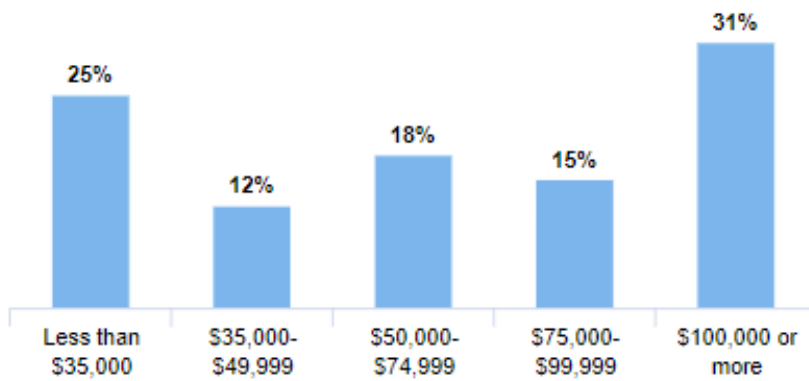
# CITY OF ROCHESTER



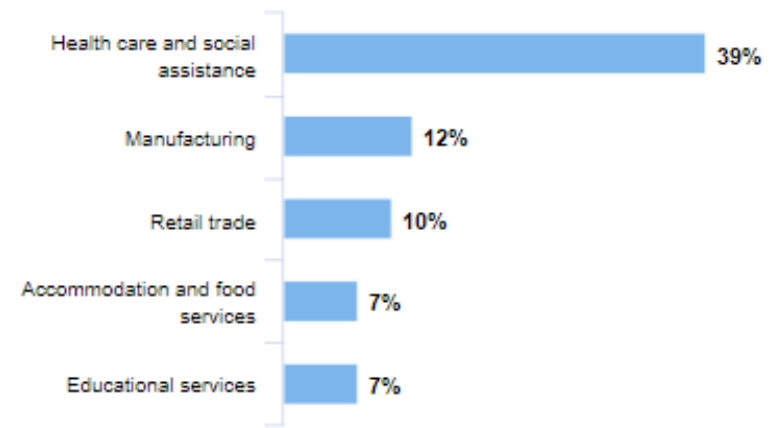
Located in: Olmsted County, Southern Region, Minnesota

At-a-glance facts about residents, households, and workforce. Data are largely derived from the U.S. Census Bureau. When a data point is missing or considered unreliable, it will not display or be labeled suppressed. [See information about geographic profile sources.](#)

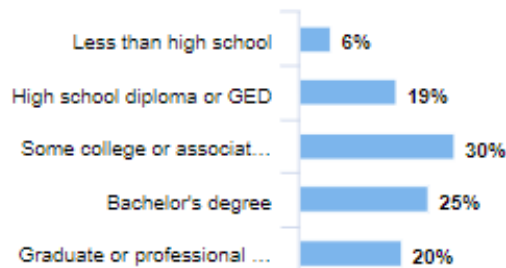
## Households by income (2017 dollars)



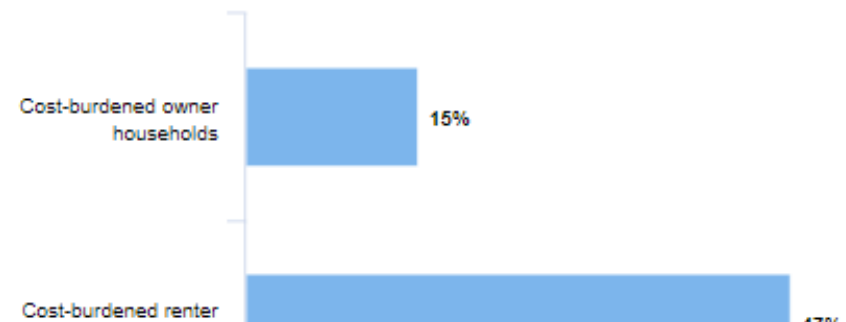
## Workers by industry of employment, 2015



## Educational attainment among adults 25 and older, 2013-2017



## Cost-burdened households by type, 2013-2017





## Tool #5:

# Metrics for Healthy Communities

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <http://metricsforhealthycommunities.org/>

metrics  
for healthy communities



Building a culture of health  
through better measurement

Evaluation  
background

**Assessment**

**Collect data**

Data analysis

Dissemination

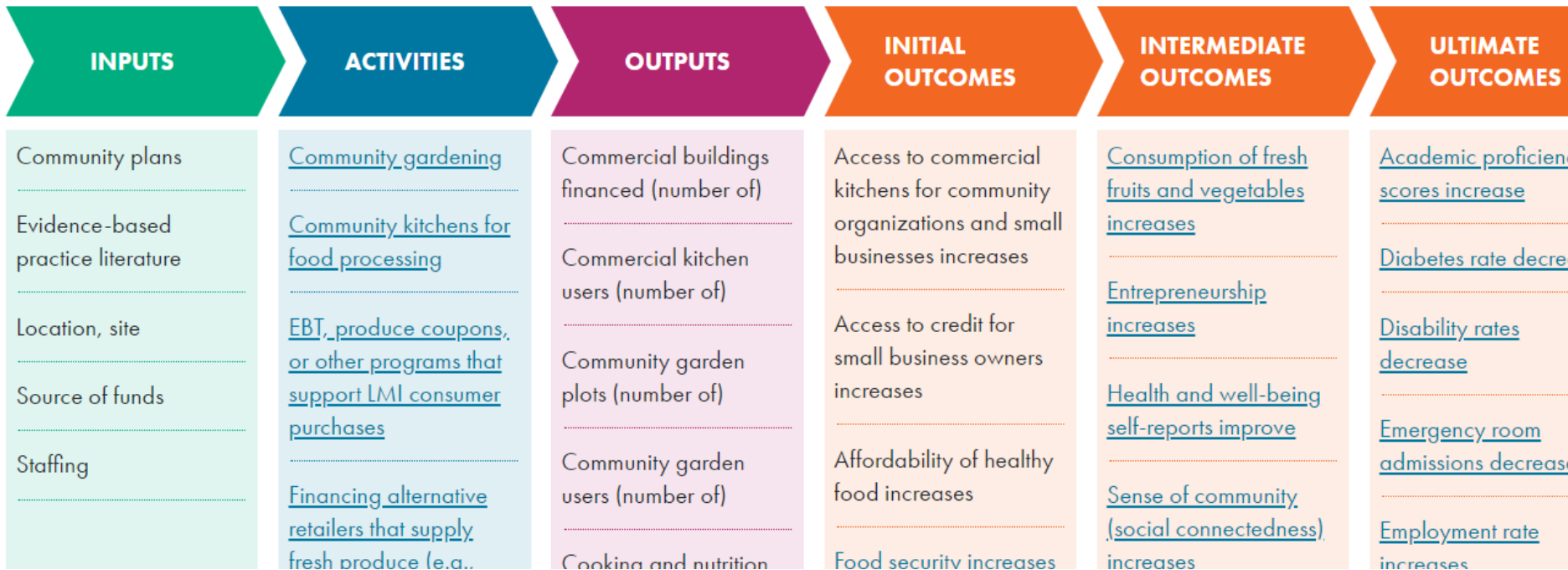
**Thought leadership**

## Tool #5:

# Metrics for Healthy Communities

## Healthy Food Access logic model

Click on any linked activities to view samples of related research evidence. Click on linked outcomes to view sources of data for measuring outcomes and question wording examples to collect your own outcome data. If you're using a mouse, hover over linked items to highlight any evidence related items. Use the entire model as a map for understanding how the work of community development and health organizations collaboratively leads to improved community health.



## Tool #5:

# Metrics for Healthy Communities

SAMPLES OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE THAT LINK THIS ACTIVITY TO OUTCOMES:

## Community gardening

### RESEARCH CITATION

### EVIDENCE STRENGTH

#### **Related outcome: Affordability of healthy food increases**

Hagan, E., and V. Rubin. Economic and Community Development Outcomes of Healthy Food Retail. PolicyLink, 2013, <http://www.policylink.org/find-resources/library/economic-and-community-development-outcomes-of-healthy-food-retail>. [View](#) >



#### **Related outcome: Consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables increases**

Draper, Carrie, and Darcy Freedman. "Review and Analysis of the Benefits, Purposes, and Motivations Associated with Community Gardening in the United States." *Journal of Community Practice*, vol. 18, no. 4, Dec. 2010, pp. 458–92. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/10705422.2010.519682. [View](#) >



## Tool #5:

# Metrics for Healthy Communities

### Why we like it:

Removes firewall to quality data and research around healthy communities/social determinants of health

Gold mine of ideas for how to measure your work

### This tool is useful when:

You work in community development or health and want to:

- Get ideas for indicators/measures for tracking your program impact
- Learn about evidenced-based programs in your area of work (What are other programs in my field doing?)

### Cons:

A LOT of information – watch the demo (<https://youtu.be/m6rl0EwlpxE>)

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

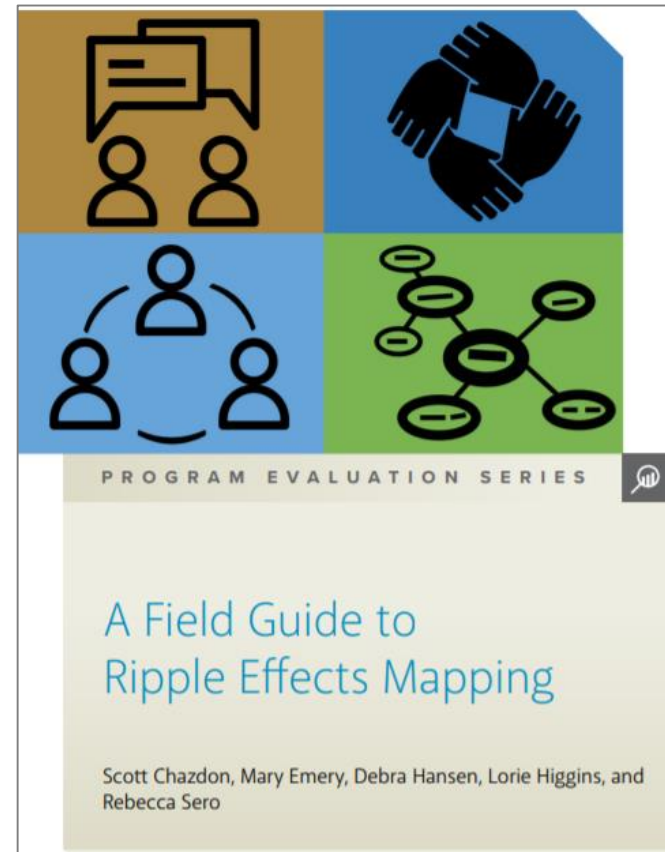
Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #6:

# A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access:  
<https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/190639>



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

**Collect data**

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #6:

# A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping

**Why we like it:** It has it all—description of the method, sample scripts, analysis tips, suggestions for free software to use, reporting examples, and more!

**This tool is useful when:** You want to learn untold stories of program impact and visually represent the ripples of your work, AND you already have expertise conducting qualitative research

- Cons:**
- Additional expertise needed—guide alone is not enough to conduct REM
  - Not a useful method if you need hard numbers
  - Very thorough—TLDR. Cliffs Notes available here: <https://extension.umn.edu/community-development/ripple-effect-mapping>



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

**Collect data**

Data analysis

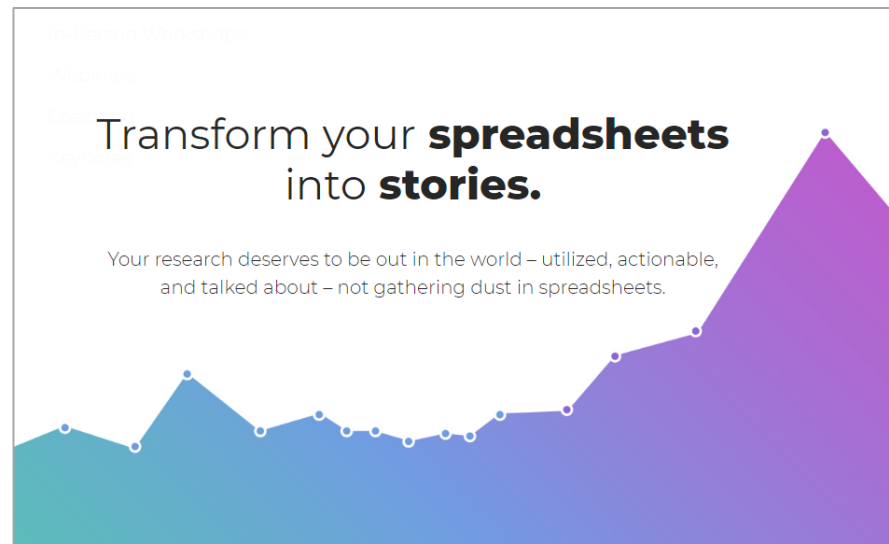
Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #7:

# Depict Data Studio (or anything by Ann Emery)

- Free or low-cost: **FREE & Low-cost**
- How to access: <https://depictdatastudio.com/> or Ann's YouTube channel



Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #7:

# Depict Data Studio (or anything by Ann Emery)

**Why we like it:** CHART CHOOSER: Walks through different ways to display data, pros/cons, and other chart options

Shows TONS of examples of each

Links to related resources and how-to videos

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**This tool is useful when:** You have a bunch of data and are trying to figure out how to interpret and display it

You have at least a basic understanding of Excel

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**Cons:** Some of the hyperlinks don't work

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership



# BRAIN BREAK!

## Excited

I felt new energy for...

## Question

I found myself wondering about...



## Tool #8:

# ProQOL (Professional Quality of Life Measure)

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <https://www.proqol.org/>



Professional Quality of Life:  
Elements, Theory, and Measurement

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #8:

# ProQOL (Professional Quality of Life Measure)

**Why we like it:** Short, straight-forward survey measuring how staff are doing in terms of burnout, secondary traumatic stress, or compassion fatigue

VALIDATED tool with instructions on analyzing results

**This tool is useful when:** Your organization regularly interacts with others who experience suffering and trauma

To assess your employees' well-being (baseline) or measure progress in making your organization a more trauma-informed place to work (follow-up)

**Cons:** Change takes time – might not see changes

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #9:

# Collaboration Factors Inventory

- Free or low-cost: **FREE & low-cost (book companion)**
- How to access:
  - Online collaboration assessment tool for personal or group use: <https://wilderresearch.org/tools/cfi-2018/start>
  - PDF version of the 44-item assessment: <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/collaboration-factors-inventory-3rd-edition>

Welcome to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory, a free online collaboration assessment.

This is an updated version of the tool with two new factors introduced in the recently published *Collaboration: What Makes It Work, 3rd Edition*. You can find [more information and resources](#) at [wilder.org](http://wilder.org).

### Groups

When you register a group, this tool will help you assess how your collaboration is doing on 22 research-tested success factors. You will be able to log-in to view factor scores as well as item averages and open ended responses for your group's completed inventories. Please note, forms are entered into this tool anonymously, so you will not be able to track or identify respondents, view individual responses, or view summaries by respondent organization.

[Register a group »](#)



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

**Collect data**

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #9:

# Collaboration Factors Inventory

**Why we like it:** Research-tested factors, quick to complete, and flexible (online or paper tool for individuals or groups)

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**This tool is useful when:** You want to measure the effectiveness of a collaboration or partnership

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**Cons:** Online assessment results may require analysis on your own.



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

**Collect data**

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

Tool #10:

# Conscious Style Guide

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <http://consciousstyleguide.com/>



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #10:

# Conscious Style Guide

**Why we like it:** Useful and growing resource to help you think critically about the words you choose. News, opinions, and guides.

– BONUS: Useful newsletter

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**This tool is useful when:** You want a language resource that aims for inclusion and acknowledges context

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**Cons:** Let me know if you find one 😊

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #11:

# AEA365

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access: <https://aea365.org/blog/>



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership



## Tool #11:

# AEA365

**Why we like it:** Short daily posts on a wide range of evaluation topics. Posts include Hot Tips, Cool Tricks, Rad Resources, or Lessons Learned.

**This tool is useful when:** You want to learn more about evaluation in bite-sized pieces. Posts are searchable and categorized, so you can explore past posts on specific topics, populations, or methods.

**Cons:** Written by evaluators for evaluators, so may not be accessible to beginners.

More about approach than concrete tools.

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #12:

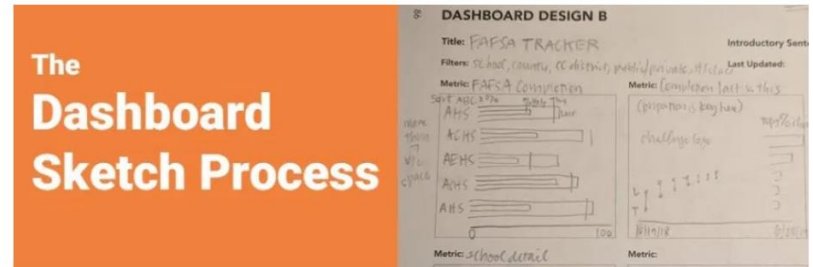
# Evergreen Data (Stephanie Evergreen's blog)

- Free or low-cost:  
**FREE (blog) + Low-cost (book) + \$\$\$ (workshops or events)**
- How to access:  
<https://stephanieevergreen.com/blog/>



Home About Workshops Upcoming Events Design Blog Books Data Academy ▾ Contact

### The Dashboard Sketch Process



"I vote no." This short answer speeds up the dashboard development process significantly. And I developed the question my client voted on in roughly 3 minutes, by showing her a quick sketch of some possible graph options.

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #12:

# Evergreen Data (Stephanie Evergreen)

**Why we like it:** Fresh perspective on evaluation and sharing findings

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**This tool is useful when:** You want to revamp your annual reports, internal board of directors reports, and other dissemination pieces that show data

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**Cons:** Stephanie's work/perspective is valuable; much of her tools/resources are monetized (but not the blog!)

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #13:

# FreshSpectrum (Chris Lysy)

- Free or low-cost:  
**FREE (plus some free webinars)**
- How to access:  
<https://freshspectrum.com/blog/>



You Sir,  
get me  
some  
data.

freshspectrum

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

I've been sort of overwhelmed lately. I only read reports if they're full of cartoons or cat videos.



freshspectrum

Why is the speedometer stuck on 35?

The car only collects speed data once a year.



[freshspectrum.com](http://freshspectrum.com)

## Tool #13:

# FreshSpectrum (Chris Lysy)

**Why we like it:** Underscores the importance of visuals/art in talking about evaluation (results & getting buy-in)

Great insight into organizational struggles with evaluation and data

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**This tool is useful when:** You need some good visuals/cartoons for an evaluation presentation

You need a good laugh or to commiserate on challenges of evaluation

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**Cons:** ?

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #14:

# A Short Primer on Innovative Evaluation Reporting

- Free or low-cost: **Low cost (book)**
- How to access:

<https://communitysolutions.ca/web/evaluation-reporting-guide/>



Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership



## Tool #14:

# A Short Primer on Innovative Evaluation Reporting

**Why we like it:** Practical tips to rescue you from lengthy reports that don't meet your audience's needs

Dip in and out – no need to read start to finish

**This tool is useful when:** You want your board/constituents/staff to read and act on your evaluation results

You're searching for different ways to present results

## Cons:

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #15:

# Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN)

- Free or low-cost: **FREE**
- How to access:  [plainlanguage.gov](https://plainlanguage.gov)

### IN THIS SECTION

Before and after

Award winners

Reports and brochures

Handbooks and manuals

Letters and notices

Regulations

EXAMPLES > BEFORE AND AFTER

## Use Less Water

*This example was created for training and is not official agency text.*

### ✘ Before

This program promotes efficient water use in homes and businesses throughout the country by offering a simple way to make purchasing decisions that conserve water without sacrificing quality or product performance.

### ✔ After

This program helps homeowners and businesses buy products that use less water without sacrificing quality or performance.

Evaluation  
background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

## Tool #15:

# Plain Language Action and Information Network

## (PLAIN)

**Why we like it:** Your audiences benefit when they find what they need, understand what they find, and use what they find

Examples include language from reports, brochures, handbooks, letters, etc.

**This tool is useful when:** You need a refresher on the basics of clear communications

You want to build a case for plain language with your colleagues

**Cons:** Not extensive. Place to get grounded on plain language.

Evaluation background

Assessment

Collect data

Data analysis

Dissemination

Thought leadership

Your turn!



# Thank you!

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**Wilder Research.**