Evaluation Plan Terminology

**Audience**
The audience for a program includes everyone who has the identified need and who might benefit from the identified solution. It is sometimes called the “target” audience, but is usually different from the program “participants.” Participants may be a small sub-set of the audience.

**Inputs**
Inputs refer to the resources that will be used to produce a program. Time and money are the most fundamental resources, and are usually used to acquire the needed physical and personnel inputs: rented or donated space, staff time, the work of volunteers, contractors or consultants; books, equipment and materials of various kinds.

**Measurable terms**
Clear and concrete language which specifies what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. You can help to make program elements measurable by describing inputs, stating time periods for activities and the number of participants (outputs) to whom services are provided. To make your terms measurable, remember to use verbs that describe observable outer action (such as “demonstrate,” “choose,” and “express”) rather than those that describe inner action (such as “think,” “believe” and “feel”).

**Need**
Need is a general term that includes wants, deficits, and conditions to be remedied or changed: your program aims to address the needs of your audience. Knowledge of audience needs can come from formal research, from your own professional judgment and experience, and from information gathered by partners.

**Outcome**
Outcome is a specific benefit that occurs to participants of a program. It is generally phrased in terms of the changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, condition or status that are expected to occur in the participants as a result of implementing the program. To keep your program focused on these changes, be sure to write objectives starting with a word describing the target audience followed by a verb highlighting the expected change. For example, students develop the habit of library usage. Outcomes may be short-term, medium-term, or long-term.

**Output**
A measure of the volume of a program’s actions such as products created or delivered, number of people served, activities and services carried out. Outputs are generally measured quantitatively.

**Participant**
An individual receiving or participating in services provided by a program. Participants are usually members of identified audiences, and may also be termed a “target” audience. That is, the audience targeted to be helped by the services of a program may be “all 4th graders,” but the program cannot reach all fourth graders, so the program is tried on a smaller group of available participants. If the program is successful, your work may be replicated (repeated in other locations) to reach more of the target audience.