Using Data to Inform and Improve Program Processes

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Welcome!
Session Overview

- Introductions

- Factors that Contribute to Effective Use of Data

- Effective Methods for Data Use

- Team Session - Strategies

- Action Planning

- Q & A

Who We Are
CoBro Consulting

✓ CoBro Consulting is a research and consulting firm providing data management and evaluation services for college access programs nationwide.

- Data management via Compass and CompassMatch
- Program evaluation
- Statistical data analysis
- Survey design, analysis, & reporting
- Comprehensive annual and biennial evaluation reports

Who We Are
CoBro Consulting

Data Management Tools Created by CoBro Consulting:

- ✓ **Compass** is a secure student tracking system and database management tool that expedites data entry, runs reports and analyses, and generates APR data tables at the click of a button.
- ✓ **CompassMatch** is an in-kind contribution management system that allows you to easily record, calculate, and run reports of matching funds.

CoBro Consulting currently serves 27 GEAR UP state and partnership programs, nation-wide.

Who We Are
Utah GEAR UP State Grant

✓ Grant period: 2011-2018

✓ Total award: $26 million

✓ Average annual budget: $ 3.7 million

✓ Implementation Model: Priority

✓ Number of Students Served: 4117

✓ Number of Schools: 51

✓ Number of Districts: 14

✓ Primary partners: 3 Higher Ed, 1 Community-Based

✓ 11 statewide service regions

Who We Are
Utah GEAR UP State Grant

Individualized Services
- ✓ Tutoring and mentoring
- ✓ Academic counseling
- ✓ College-readiness preparation
- ✓ Parent and family support
- ✓ Financial-aid assistance
- ✓ First-year college services
- ✓ Financial literacy education
- ✓ Program evaluation and data gathering

Who are You?
(GEAR UP Session Participants)

- ✓ Are you new to GEAR UP?
- ✓ What year was your grant awarded?
- ✓ Have you been with GEAR UP for more than a year?
- ✓ …more than five?

A lot of collective knowledge in the room!

Session Outcomes

- ✓ Understand factors that contribute to effective data use.

- ✓ Identify effective methods in using data beyond required ED reporting.

- ✓ Participate in active discussion regarding optimal strategies for implementing data-driven recommendations and create an action plan.

Why is this important?

Federal programs have embraced a common theme of data-driven decision making and the creation of a culture of evidence to promote formative program improvement.

Contributing Factors

✓ Factors that Contribute to Effective Use of Data:

- Relevant & measurable objectives (identified in your grant application)
- Accurate & timely student-level academic data
- A systematic approach to collecting service data
- Accurate & timely reporting via clear, concise outcome reports
- Wide & frequent dissemination of findings
- Methods to modify program based on findings

Data Management

✓ To address two of the main factors in effective data use, your program needs a way to accurately manage data, record services provided to students, and generate reports or export data that can be used for evaluation of the program.

✓ The most efficient way to do this is through a data management system designed to manage GEAR UP student demographic, academic and services data.
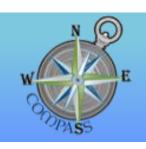
Compass System
Data Management Tool

✓ CoBro Consulting's Compass System expedites data entry, organizes program data and generates real time reports. In addition, the system conducts statistical analysis to evaluate program success.

✓ Benefits of the Compass System for your Program:

- Assists in entering and maintain student academic data. Data can be electronically transferred into the system.
- Provides services and activity data entry screens designed for speed and accuracy that eliminate time-consuming hand entry.
- Collects, organizes and automatically computes data for required ED reports and beyond.

Compass System

✓ Benefits of the Compass System Beyond Required Reporting

- Compass is customized to fit the needs of each unique GEAR UP program.

- Provides multiple pre-formatted reports with user defined options, many requested by your GEAR UP colleagues to assist in continuous program improvement.

- Conducts statistical analysis that shows program impact and displays results in easy to read graphs and tables.

Effective Methods
Utah GEAR UP State Grant

✓Gathering Data

- Collect accurate, timely data

- Train all staff to be responsible for data collection

- Dedicate specific staff to coordinating data efforts

- Provide adequate administrative staff

- Have responsive, experienced external evaluators

- Standardize data practices and forms across program

- Keep multiple sites consistent through internal audits

- Provide calendar of when specific data is due

Effective Methods
Utah GEAR UP State Grant

✓Using Data to Improve Practice

- Engage in data-driven decision making

  - Review data regularly

  - Analyze frequency and effectiveness of services

  - Modify and evolve services were needed

  - Gauge progress on APR data collection

  - Provide feedback to staff

Effective Methods
Utah GEAR UP State Grant

✓ Using Data to Improve Practice

- Disseminate findings back to staff, schools, and public
  - Describe successes and issues
  - Share service hours and investment

- Participate in state college access network
  - Share data and data gathering practices
  - Work with state data alliance

- Build on best practices

Other Uses of Data

✓ Additional methods of using data and evaluation findings beyond the APR

- Service coverage: Review service participation rates, by school, and by student characteristics.

- Gap analysis: Compare findings from paired survey items.

- Dosage effects: Examine correlations of service hours and achievement tests.

Benefits

- ✓ Benefits of utilizing data and evaluation findings beyond the APR
  - ✓ Program strengths and opportunities for improvement are identified.
  - ✓ Program stakeholders see that programmatic decisions are data-driven.
  - ✓ Objective evidence of program impact useful for GEAR UP advocacy.

Discussion

How have you used data and evaluation findings for continuous program improvement?

What are your optimal strategies?

Action Planning

How can you apply information gathered from this session to maximize data utility and strengthen program evaluation capacity when you return?

Action Planning

An action plan provides a description of an organization's approach to change.

✓ Each action step or change to be sought should include the following information:

- *What* actions or changes will occur?
- *Who* will carry out these changes?
- *By when* they will take place, and for how long?
- *What resources* (i.e., money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes?
- *Communication* (who should know what?)

Collective Knowledge

Tap into the collective knowledge of the GEAR UP community.

What is your plan?

Questions? Thoughts?

THANK YOU!

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