Annual Evaluation Report (AER)
TEMPLATE

for NYS 21CCLC Local Evaluators

PROJECT INFORMATION

Program	The Business Training Institute Inc. (BTI) 21st CCLC Program at Utica City School District (UCSD)
Project #	0187-23- 8115 ☞ *Insert last four digits*
Lead Agency	The Business Training Institute Inc.
Program Director	**Dr. Patricia Laino**, Executive Director

#	Name of Participating Site(s) @ Locality (town or city name)	Grade level(s) served at each site
1	Donovan Middle School / Utica	Grades 7–8
2	Kennedy Middle School / Utica	Grades 7–8
3	Proctor High School / Utica	Grades 9–12

Program-wide **Target** Student Enrollment	475	**Actual** Enrollment at/above **15 hours**	686
Evaluator	**Tracy Herman**, Lead Evaluator **Cynthia O'Connor**, Principal	Apter & O'Connor Associates, Inc.	
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Section II

Site Visit Findings

1a. First Site Visit | Procedure

Date(s)	Site# (use p.3 list)	Program activities observed	Methods Used across all sites	
11/15/2022	1	After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 1b).	☒	Observation using protocol*
11/15/2022	3	After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 1b).	☒	Interview(s) using protocol*
			☒	Document review using protocol*
			☐	Insert description of Other Method
			☐	Insert description of Other Method

Please submit a blank copy of each data collection instrument (see Required Supporting Documents, p.10)

1b. First Site Visit | Summary of Findings

Two members of the A&O evaluation team observed a variety of after-school classes spanning multiple grade levels. The evaluation team documented nine classes across the two buildings using a modified out-of-school time (OST) observation instrument developed by Policy Studies Associates, Inc.[1]

Table 1. BTI at UCSD Fall 2022 Observations

Building	Activity	Grade Level	Type of Class
Donovan Middle	Youth Leadership (Scrabble game with integration of math and ELA)	7–8	Enrichment
Donovan Middle	Health, Wellness, and Fitness	7–8	Enrichment
Donovan Middle	Theater & Performing Arts	7–8	Enrichment
Donovan Middle	Photography Club	7–8	Enrichment
Proctor High	Tutoring – French (painting, adding French words – tutoring not observed)	9–12	Academic
Proctor High	Tutoring – Spanish	9–12	Academic
Proctor High	Audio/Visual Program	9–12	Enrichment
Proctor High	Restorative Justice / Weight Training	9–12	Enrichment
Proctor High	Job Skills (Special Education population)	11–12	Enrichment

Implementation Fidelity / Successes

The evaluators noted elements of grant implementation with fidelity to the original, NYSED-approved plan. Strengths observed included:

- A vast array of program offerings was available. Additionally, several classes involved a creative approach in which learning was combined with a fun activity (e.g., a restorative justice lesson was followed by use of fitness equipment in the weight room; foreign language practice was tied with an artistic activity; ELA and math were integrated into a Scrabble game). Additionally, a site coordinator reported the staff are attentive to modifying lessons to hold student interest during the year as well over the years for students who attend the same after-school activity for several years.

- Many of the grant program administrators at BTI and the participating UCSD buildings have extensive experience with and knowledge of the 21st CCLC grant. This experience puts them at an advantage upon entering their first grant year of the 21st CCLC Round 8 funding cycle.

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[1] Pechman, E.M., Mielke, M.B., Russell, C.A., White, R.N., & Cooc, N. (2008, February). Out-of-school time (OST) observation instrument: Report of the validation study. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

- The 21st CCLC program appeared to be well organized at the administrative and classroom levels in these two buildings.

- All program staff are certified school-day teachers. This facilitates a connection between the school day and the after-school program and supports a high-quality program (academic reinforcement was integrated into enrichment classes).

- The grant coordinator and some instructors provided sample daily lesson plans. One principal shared the organized binders of lesson plans. Observations implied further evidence of lesson planning.

- The programs at each building already have strong student enrollment and attendance (e.g. theater, restorative justice / weight room), an accomplishment for secondary grades, in which other after-school commitments can be a barrier for program attendance.

- Interactions were positive (e.g., relaxed, friendly, respectful, collaborative) among students and between students and staff.

- The staff were very involved in the students' activities and attentive to the students.

- Students were engaged, attentive, on-task, and well-behaved.

- Overall, evaluators provided strong scores on the observation tool. Lesson execution was high quality.

- Given the age of the students, the high school program allows them flexibility in dismissal. There are four late bus times for which students may leave the program, depending on their other commitments after school.

- For each observation, there was an appropriate level of adult supervision, the space was conducive to the activity, and there were sufficient materials and supplies needed for the class.

Challenges / Recommendations

The classroom observations as designed are brief and are understood to be just a snapshot. The following might be considered areas for improvement, with the caveat that longer observations of classroom time might reveal that these methods are already in practice:

- The majority of observations were youth-development, skills-based enrichment activities. At the high school, the program calendar lists tutoring for foreign language only. This does not align with the proposal indicating a need to improve students' proficiency in math and ELA. While some academic reinforcement was observed in the enrichment classes, clear evidence of an academic focus in core subjects was missing from the observations and limited in the program schedules.

    Recommendation: Distinguish intentional academic programming and youth enrichment courses in the program schedules at each building. Further emphasize academic support in 21st CCLC program implementation to support performance indicators of success related to math and ELA proficiency and high school graduation.

- The program schedule is not consistent with the program plan. The BTI grant proposal indicates, "*There are before-school programs from 7 to 7:40 a.m. for students who arrive an hour early in the morning and want additional learning time. The weekly schedule is five nights a week from 2:50 to 5:50 p.m. in all schools.*"

  - The high school schedule indicates one before-school program (audio/visual) for twenty minutes, and the after-school high school classes begin at 3:00 and end anywhere between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m., depending on instructor availability—none are three hours in duration.

  - The current program schedule at Donovan Middle School includes before-school classes for thirty or forty minutes each day and an after-school program for forty minutes (2:50–3:30 p.m.). If stretched to ninety minutes/day, this equates to seven and a half hours/week, half of the proposed fifteen hours.

    Recommendation: Adjust the program start and end times to increase the hours of programming available per week. It could be beneficial to indicate the after-school program start time begins exactly at school dismissal. If it is not possible or realistic to add program hours, submission of a program modification to NYSED is recommended.

1c. First Site Visit | Delivery & Receipt of Report

Delivery:

- The evaluator, program coordinator (BTI), and the site coordinator (principal and/or clerical staff) debriefed at the conclusion of the site visit. The evaluator presented an informal summary of strengths and potential areas for improvement.

- The evaluator prepared and delivered a written presentation of site visit findings (a Word document via email) to the program director and program coordinator, inviting feedback and seeking approval, prior to completing the evaluability checklist. Findings were included in the evaluation mid-year report as well.

- The evaluator provided a presentation of the site visit findings at a subsequent advisory board meeting.

Receipt:

- The program director and program coordinator reviewed and approved the written site visit findings.

- The advisory board committee celebrated the program strengths and considered recommendations for improvement. In May 2023, NYSED approved BTI's program modification request to reduce the school-year program hours for the two middle schools.

2a. Second Site Visit | Procedure

Date(s)	Site# (use p.3 list)	Program activities observed	Methods Used across all sites
3/22/2023	2	After-school academics and enrichment (detailed list provided in 2b.)	☒ Observation using protocol*
			☒ Interview(s) using protocol*
			☒ Document review using protocol*
			☐ Insert description of Other Method
			☐ Insert description of Other Method

Please submit a blank copy of each data collection instrument (see Required Supporting Documents, p.10)

2b. Second Site Visit | Summary of Findings

A member of the A&O evaluation team observed four after-school enrichment classes for students in grades 7– 8 at Kennedy Middle School. The evaluator documented the observations using a modified out-of-school time (OST) observation instrument developed by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. The BTI program coordinator was unable to schedule second observations at Donovan Middle School and Proctor High School given the shortened program calendar.

Table 2. BTI at UCSD Spring 2023 Observations

Building	Activity	Grade Level	Type of Class
Kennedy Middle	3D Design (room 143)	7–8	Enrichment
Kennedy Middle	3D Design (room 141)	7–8	Enrichment
Kennedy Middle	3D Design (room 145)	7–8	Enrichment
Kennedy Middle	Character Education / Crochet Club	7–8	Enrichment

Implementation Fidelity / Successes

- The evaluator rated the four classrooms with high scores on the observation tool (a 5 or greater on the 7-point OST scale).[2] Several program strengths were observed, many of which were also documented during the fall observations. Each class was well organized, with evidence of or an implied lesson plan. Students were engaged, attentive, and on task. For each observation, there was an appropriate level of adult supervision, the space was conducive to the activity, and there were sufficient materials and supplies needed for the class.

  - Staff were attentive to the students (working independently or in pairs) and provided one-to-one instruction as needed.

  - Interactions between students and between students and staff were positive. Each class had a relaxing and positive environment.

  - While classified as "enrichment," the three 3D Design instructors (i.e., 3D design / printing, vCarve, and technology) included several elements of STEM in their activities and followed one technology-based lesson plan designed to cover the three related classes.[3] The after-school instructors teach related subject matter during the school day, demonstrating a linkage to the school-day curriculum, an expectation of the grant. Given most technology instruction occurs during the school day, the after-school program provides increased time for hands-on project work in a smaller class.

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[2] In the OST rating scale, 1 represents *not evident*, 5 represents *evident*, and 7 represents *highly evident and consistent*.
[3] https://www.vectric.com/products/vcarve-desktop

- The 3D Design class instructors reported their students appreciate the increased flexibility and creativity in project choices during the after-school program. Students in all four observed classes (including crochet) had the option to make gifts for family members, friends, other after-school clubs, and the community (e.g., 3D tags related to St. Patrick's Day, wood engravings, bracelets, blankets, hats).

- The site coordinator (principal) and assistant principal were visible after school monitoring the hallways, classrooms, and dismissal.

Challenges / Recommendations

The classroom observations as designed are brief and are understood to be just a snapshot. The following might be considered areas for improvement, with the caveat that longer observations of classroom time might reveal that these methods are already in practice:

- The early closure of the 21st CCLC programs at Donovan Middle School and Proctor High School during the 2022–2023 school year were significant challenges. The program calendar developed in the fall indicated the last day of the 21st CCLC program was scheduled for June 17, 2023. Instead, the program at each of these buildings ended on May 12 due to having expended the budgets prior to the end of the program year.

  Recommendations: Closely monitor and limit grant program expenditures, particularly for staffing, to allow the program to run as scheduled and avoid teacher and student frustration with the reduced program calendar. Determine a minimum class size, and if not met by a designated cut-off date, cancel the class or combine it with another class to reduce staff expenses. Consider utilization of teaching assistants who could be compensated at a lower hourly rate than teachers, if deemed qualified to provide a high-interest and high-quality class.

- As with the fall observations, the program at Kennedy Middle School heavily focuses on youth development with skills-based enrichment activities. There were no academic support classes in session to observe on the day of the site visit. The academic component should be viewed as equally important to the enrichment component, as defined by the grant's goals and objectives.

  Recommendations: Add intentional academic programming in the program schedules at each building. Further emphasize academic support in 21st CCLC program implementation. Consider allowing 21st CCLC participants to transition from the academic class to the enrichment class after their homework and tutoring is complete to entice students to stay after school for both program components on a given day.

- Observed programming at Kennedy Middle School did not align with the provided schedule or the grant proposal indicating three hours of programming per day.

o None of the scheduled Wednesday classes were offered on the day of the observation (in two cases the staff were absent; in another case the staff member was busy coaching an after-school sports team). After-school classes that are traditionally offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays were held in order for the evaluator to have classes to observe during the site visit.

o Each of the after-school classes ended sooner than indicated on the program schedule. The classes that are offered on Wednesdays begin at 2:30 p.m. and are scheduled to end at 4:00 or 4:30 p.m.; however, students exited the building at 3:30 p.m., upon bus arrival. Students attended the after-school program for one hour on the observed day, as opposed to three hours as described in the grant proposal. A staff member reported program hours are unpredictable due to bus arrival times.

Recommendations:

- Update program schedules on a regular basis to reflect the actual program times.

- Identify and utilize substitute teachers to prevent class cancellations.

- Collaborate with the transportation department to reinforce the expected arrival times for after-school buses.

- If it is not possible or realistic to add program hours, submission of a program modification to NYSED is recommended.

2c. Second Site Visit | Delivery & Receipt of Report

Delivery:

- The evaluator, program coordinator, and site coordinator (principal) debriefed at the conclusion of the site visit. The evaluator presented an informal summary of strengths and potential areas for improvement.

- The evaluator prepared and delivered a written presentation of site visit findings (in a Word document via email) to the program director and program coordinator, inviting feedback.

- The evaluator presented a summary of site visit findings during the June 2023 advisory board meeting. The grant coordinator also presented a synopsis of accomplishments and areas for improvement, reinforcing the evaluator's findings.

Receipt:

- The program director and program coordinator reviewed and approved the written site visit findings.

- The advisory board members celebrated the program strengths and reflected on the recommendations for program planning and improvement in the next grant year.

- In response to the continued observation of abbreviated program time, BTI consulted with evaluator and the Rest of State Technical Assistance Resource Center, then submitted the NYSED modification form to indicate Kennedy Middle School will provide eight hours of programming per week (four days per week) and Donovan Middle School will provide ten hours per week (five days per week) during the school year, starting in Year 2. NYSED approved the request on May 9, 2023.

Section III

Conclusions & Recommendations

Based on an analysis and synthesis of all data sources (i.e., site visits, surveys, interviews, focus groups, document review, advisory board meetings, and program attendance and outcome data), we offer the following conclusions and recommendations.

SUCCESSES:

High-Quality Program Offerings

- High-quality enrichment program options were consistent with the grant proposal. In some of the classes, students discovered new hobbies, skills, and interests (e.g., photography, service learning, robotics, theater and performing arts, fashion illustration, chess). In other cases, the after-school program served as an extension of the school day, providing students with the flexibility to create additional projects aside from those completed during the school day (e.g., technology, sculpture).

- The availability of academic-specific programming was limited during evaluator site visits to assess program quality; however, a Spanish tutoring class was highly-rated, with two staff actively instructing and observing students practicing their Spanish vocabulary. The STEM, financial management, entrepreneur training, cybersecurity, and audio/visual classes incorporated academic skill reinforcement.[4]

- The evaluator rated the majority of the classes observed with 5 or greater on each of the four key elements of the OST (student relationship-building, student participation, staff relationship-building, and instructional strategies).

- The utilization of UCSD teachers for all 21st CCLC programming was beneficial, as district employees receive ongoing PD for lesson planning, classroom management, and social-emotional learning (SEL). School-day teachers are likely to be more familiar with the students' personalities and academic needs than outside consultants. They can also utilize the same expectations and policies after school that apply during the school day, and may have better access to and understanding of the school-day curriculum to support and expand upon lessons after school.

- Survey findings were positive from the student, parent, and staff perspectives. The majority of student survey respondents (92%) rated the program as *excellent* or *good*. Similarly, 90% of the student survey respondents rated their after-school teachers as *excellent* or *good*. Most parents who completed a survey rated the program as *very effective* or *somewhat effective* (97%) and felt the program met their child's needs (96%). Most staff who completed the survey felt the program's academic (84%) and enrichment (100%) components were high quality.

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[4] Program listings with an academic focus included tutoring in foreign language (Proctor High School), IREAD/IWRITE (Proctor High School), math (Donovan Middle School), ELA (Donovan Middle School), and science (Kennedy Middle School); general tutoring (Kennedy Middle School); and ENL student tutoring (Donovan Middle School).

Strong Engagement and Relationship-Building by Staff and Students

- There was strong student engagement and interest in the program (noted in observations and in the staff focus group).

- A number of data sources indicated the program settings had a positive, respectful, and safe environment.

- Most students reported on the annual student survey that the program helped them make new friends (74%).

- Nearly all staff who completed the survey indicated the program supported growth and development in students' SEL (98%). Staff-identified program strengths included high student engagement, socialization, and collaboration related to smaller group sizes after school compared to the school day.

Positive Results for Performance Indicators

- The 21st CCLC program at UCSD far surpassed their target of 475 participants, with 686 students attending fifteen or more program hours. Additionally, 477 participants attended the program thirty or more hours (continuing to exceed the 475 target).

- A majority of implementation performance indicators were met. Examples include the availability of STEM classes, the summer program duration, utilization of community partners, and family liaison outreach to parents.

- Staff described several program strengths, including student and teacher enjoyment during program time, the small group sizes, the variety and quality of program options, the positive enrichment, and program impacts on academic performance and SEL (including confidence-building).

- Students who completed a survey (n = 272) indicated the program was most impactful in the following ways:

  - *I made new friends*: 74%

  - *I get to try new things:* 73%

  - *My ELA grades are improving*: 64%

  - *I feel more confident:* 60%

- Most students (91%) who completed a survey would recommend the program to their friends. Similarly, 98% of parents who completed the survey would recommend the program to other parents. The majority of parents (89%) agreed their child is happy to have participated in the program.

STRUGGLES / LESSONS LEARNED:

- **Fiscal grant management.** The school-year programming concluded before the anticipated June 16, 2023, end date at each building due to the depletion of grant funds. The grant coordinator acknowledged this as a *lesson learned* in the May staff focus group and June advisory board meeting. BTI staff will increase grant expenditure monitoring moving forward, particularly in light of increased teacher wages taking effect in Year 2.

- **Refinement of performance measures.** At startup, the evaluator worked with the BTI program director and program coordinator to develop a program logic model and revise the performance indicators as stated in the grant narrative to align with the program design requirements. The evaluator and BTI team collaboratively created SMART indicators to clarify performance targets and data needs for the evaluation reports early in the grant year. The BTI grant program leaders expressed appreciation for the participatory evaluation approach and improved program measures.

- The sites **did not offer family literacy sessions**, the focus of Sub-Objective 1.4 (services to parents and other adult community members). While parent liaisons communicated with parents individually and directed them to community resources, the grant requires offering families of participants "opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development."[5] The grant coordinator will work with the site coordinators to plan for whole-family literacy opportunities moving forward. These could include activities such as educational field trips, family cooking, meet-the-author night, family painting, multicultural night, and class demonstrations with the opportunity for parents to gain knowledge and skills (e.g., robotics, technology, science enrichment, audio/visual).

- The sites **did not offer school-year programming for fifteen hours** a week as proposed. As a result, BTI submitted a program modification request to NYSED to modify the target hours for the middle schools beginning in Year 2, and this was approved. The high school will need to increase their program time to achieve fifteen hours per week, or another program modification request may be needed.

- **Mid-year administrative staff changes**.

  - The site coordinator / principal at Proctor High School unexpectedly left the district in December 2022. While the program continued, this caused an interruption for the oversight of program. The vice principal moved into the role of interim principal and program site coordinator, with the support a highly involved clerical person (who has since left the district as well).

  - The district also underwent superintendent changes during the year, which can interfere with district-level support for after-school transportation coordination and data-sharing, which were both challenging areas for the grant overall.

- **Low parent, student, and community member attendance at advisory board meetings.** While one parent, two students, and one community member were included in the advisory board meeting roster and invitations, attendance and meaningful involvement was low. (One parent and two community members attended the first meeting, and another parent attended the third meeting; one student attended the third meeting.)

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[5] https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/NYSED21CCLC-RFP-gc-22-001_Round8.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Monitor grant expenditures regularly to avoid concluding the program sooner than the planned end date.** Reduce staffing and program options as needed to stay within budget limitations. Monitor small class sizes and combine or eliminate classes if financially necessary.

- **Increase the availability of academic-specific support classes** to facilitate the intended academic outcomes, including a focus on state academic standards, as described in the grant RFP.

- **Increase consistency and accuracy in the program calendar and schedules maintained by BTI (master/program-wide calendar) and each participating building.** Update the program calendar and schedules to reflect actual program times and ensure the parents have accurate program information (e.g., parent handbook, student application, program times on the BTI website). Consider storing the schools' program calendar and schedules on a shared drive with BTI staff to allow access to updated schedules and class listings in real time and to monitor the number of weekly program hours.

- **Consider holding parent- and student-specific advisory board meetings** to increase the number of parents and students who attend the meetings

  - The meeting agendas could be customized for the parent and student audience in order to increase their meaningful participation, excluding "specialized topics that involve a subgroup of stakeholders."[6]

  - Consider whether to include a 21st CCLC parent advisory board meeting in conjunction with a PTSA meeting or other event in which parents come to the building (e.g., performances, open houses).

  - Determine which meeting format(s) (e.g., in-person, online, hybrid) and times best align with parent availability.

  - For community-level stakeholder meetings, include the parent and student perspective in the meeting agenda to increase their presence and contributions to the meetings.

- Identify a new **community member representative for the advisory board meetings** (the selected community member resigned after the first meeting). **Update the advisory board roster throughout the year** to reflect changes in members.

- Consider follow-up on **staff-provided recommendations**, including:

  - Improve bussing consistency.

  - Encourage increased communication between school / program team leaders and program staff regarding the students enrolled in their after-school classes (e.g., school-day schedule, school-day attendance, contact information, the child's unique needs) to enable better planning and individualized instruction as needed.

  - Ensure program staff understand the availability and process for requesting materials and supplies to avoid seeking donations or using personal money for program activities.

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[6] https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/NYSED21CCLC-AdvisoryBoardMemo-7.22.pdf

- Explore **student recommendations**, including providing more sports / fitness classes, providing food after-school, and creating opportunities to bring a friend to a class.

- Consider **parent recommendations or discuss them at a parent advisory board meeting**, including increased program-wide emphasis on pro-social behaviors (in addition to classes specifically designed to promote behavioral and SEL development), maintaining the college and career class option, incorporating guest speakers from different professions, and providing parents with literacy and parenting skills training.

- **Attend to performance indicators that were not met**:
  - Emphasize appropriate student behaviors at school to further demonstrate program impacts on the rate of disciplinary action reports (which was greater for regularly attending participants than for non-participants in Year 1).
  - Provide program-sponsored family literacy events at each building, utilizing parent feedback from the needs assessment and focus group.

Required Supporting Documents (please attach)

▶ Data Collection Instruments. **Please see the attachments.**

Collaboration & Utilization

The evaluator and grantee worked together to maintain a positive and collaborative working relationship with clear communication throughout the grant year. This was the first year for A&O to provide contracted services to BTI; both parties have expressed appreciation for the new and positive working relationship. Specific examples include:

- A&O scheduled a "kickoff" call early in the grant year to collaboratively establish communication and data-sharing protocols; review the grant goals, objectives, and performance indicators as proposed; and establish a timeline for data collection activities. Both A&O and the BTI program administrators offered flexibility in scheduling site visit observations and the staff focus group, as well as internal due dates for QSA administration and program and student data.

- A&O utilized a participatory approach for the development and discussion of the evaluation plan and logic model. Both parties saw this as particularly helpful for Year 1 of the five-year grant period.

- In the fall, A&O and the program staff engaged in a collaborative approach to reviewing each item of the evaluability checklist and establishing action items as needed prior to the due date.

- BTI program leaders reviewed and approved each evaluation instrument and deliverable (e.g., site visit summaries, focus group summary, mid-year and annual evaluation reports, data collection instruments).

- The evaluator prepared a written evaluation update to present at each scheduled advisory board meeting and promoted utilization of evaluation findings.

- A&O provided regular reminders for upcoming evaluation activities and needed documentation, and also facilitated the program's required data collection with templates to complete. A&O facilitated a year-end call with the BTI grant coordinator to review the data availability for every performance indicator. For the few areas in which the performance indicator was not met, the coordinator acknowledged opportunities for program improvement.

Possibilities for improvement in utilization of findings would be to:

- Further incorporate parent and student representatives in stakeholder meetings to increase their meaningful involvement in program planning efforts.

- Formally track instances of dissemination of evaluation findings (e.g., when, to whom, what format) and instances of evaluation recommendations being implemented.

Section V

Logic Model (LM) *and/or* Theory of Change Model (ToC)

INSERT HERE or ATTACH SEPARATELY

Please see the attachment.