

SUSTAINING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING YOUR PROJECT

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Adapted for use by the faculty and staff of College of DuPage.

Agencies often request information on how you will sustain and institutionalize your projects after grant funding. Sustainability and institutionalization are often difficult to describe in narrative format and require thoughtful planning and discussions with internal decision-makers. Nevertheless, there are several ways for you to document that the activities and work products of your project continue after project funding ends.

Sustainability vs. Institutionalization

Sustainability is the process of keeping something in existence by providing it with the resources necessary to survive. In the context of a grant, this means the major activities will continue after grant expiration. On the other hand, institutionalization involves the College incorporating the major activities within ongoing operations and processes; the project becomes part of the structure of the College and is continued.

Ways to Document Sustainability

- The work products (documents, services, etc.) are commercially published or distributed through an external group, such as a publisher, or internally through print, Web or other means of dissemination.
- The generated income from the sale of products and services is invested in continuing the project.
- The project becomes an entity generating income that supports the work products and the required personnel.
- The project team seeks additional external grants to support the project.
- The work products are disseminated to other institutions through conference presentations. There is no continuation funding, however the best practices are disseminated to benefit others.
- The project team seeks funding through a membership program providing work products to member organizations.
- The project team seeks local industry sponsorship for the project.
- The project charges for workshops and work products that had been provided free of charge.
- Partners and volunteers assume responsibilities to continue the project activities.

Ways to Document Institutionalization

- The work products are used within existing College programs and courses.
- The services are provided by existing College departments.
- The College provides the project operating funds.
- The College operates differently as a result of the project.

Planning for Sustainability and Institutionalization

It is essential to plan for sustainability and institutionalization from the initial concept. Consider the methods listed above throughout project planning and follow these steps:

1. Determine the vision of a sustained and institutionalized project.
2. Identify specifically the products and services that will be offered.
3. Estimate the required operating budget for the year after the project funding is spent.
4. List the three to five ways to sustain and institutionalized the project.

Planning for sustainability and institutionalization often requires lengthy discussions with your dean, director, and vice president to obtain agreement. There are projects that have been institutionalized because they have proven to be vital to the operation of the College. This requires diligent discussion and positioning of your project with College decision-makers.