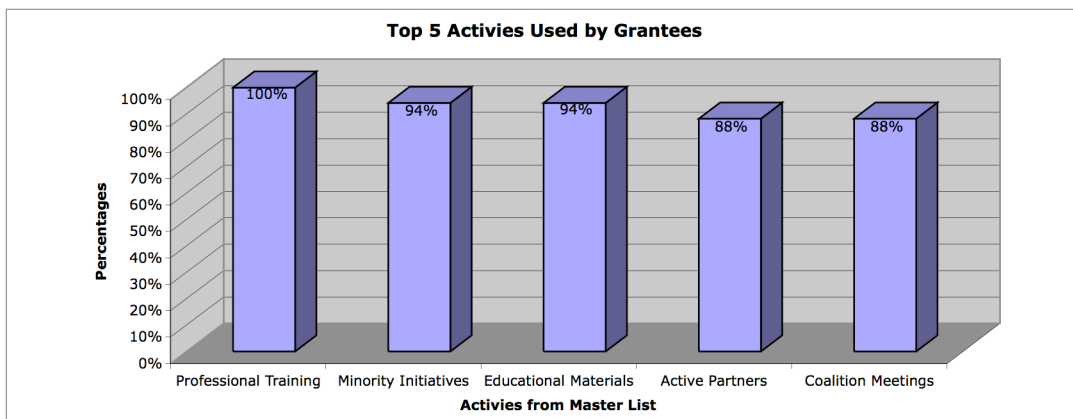
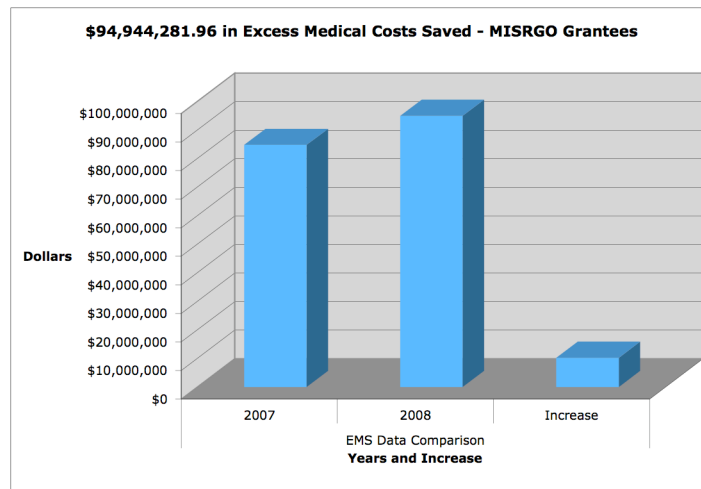


# MISRGO EVALUATION ANNUAL REPORT 2008



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## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes a few of the most significant activities and accomplishments associated with the MISRGO evaluation during 2008. The report also highlights our plans for the future and makes specific recommendations.

## SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Fetterman has provided leadership for the MISRGO evaluation. He has set the agenda, implemented it, and monitored it. However, the evaluation could not have been conducted without the efforts of each of the local evaluators working with each grantee. Ms. Linda Delaney, in particular, has made a number of contributions ranging from reviewing draft documents to helping to implement the overall evaluation plan. The most significant contributions of the MISRGO Evaluation this year include:

1. Building on the Evaluation Monitoring System to document increases in dollars saved the State
2. Introducing the Visual Alert System
3. Providing evaluation training
4. Launching the Arkansas Evaluation Center
5. Developing and launching the Arkansas Evaluation Group (a local affiliate of the American Evaluation Association)
6. Preparing to conduct the first Summer Evaluation Workshop
7. Maintaining the web pages/blogs
  - a. Tobacco Prevention Evaluation: <http://tobaccoprevention.blogspot.com/>
  - b. Arkansas Evaluation Center: <http://arkansasevaluationcenter.blogspot.com>

These accomplishments are discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

## Evaluation Monitoring System

The Evaluation Monitoring System was created to track approximately how much money MISRGO is saving the State in excess medical costs. This tool enables us to view and document the contributions of all grantees, (rather than only focusing on the accomplishments of individual grantee efforts). Last year the total dollars saved was \$84,756,168 (see Figure 1).

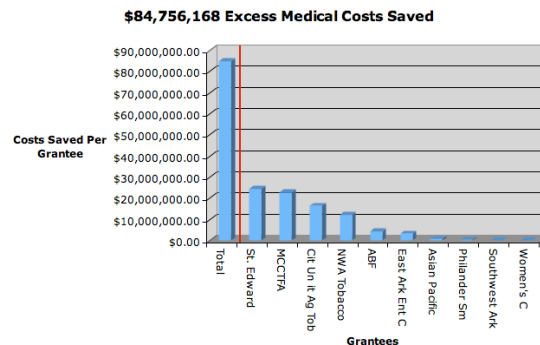


FIGURE 1. 2007 EMS DATA - \$84,756,168 SAVED IN EXCESS MEDICAL COSTS

The Evaluation Monitoring System documented a significant increase in dollars saved the State this year. The cumulative total is currently \$94,944,281 (see Figure 2):

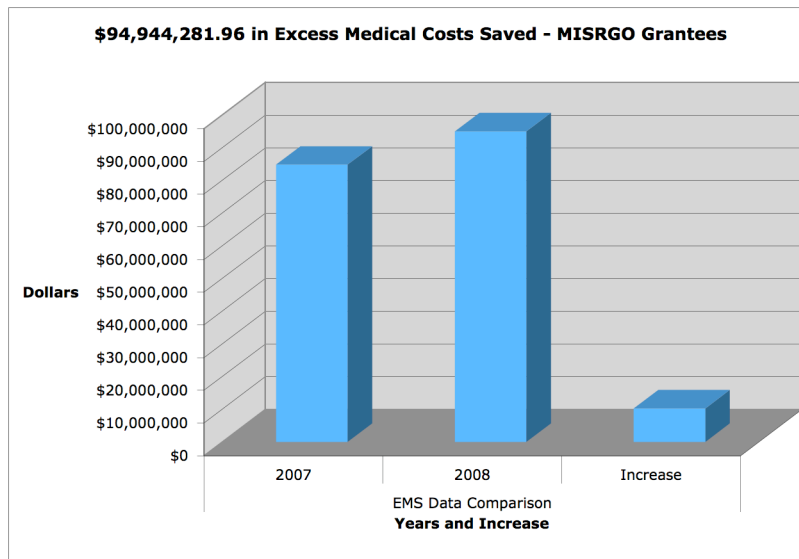


FIGURE 2. 2008 EMS DATA - \$94,944,281 SAVED IN EXCESS MEDICAL COSTS

This is an increase of \$10,188,113 in excess medical costs saved by the State. This is a significant accomplishment and a user-friendly tool to record and monitor progress in this area.

### Visual Alert System

The MISRGO mid-year evaluation reports were reviewed this year with the aim of streamlining them and making them more meaningful. The reporting system was considered difficult and cumbersome. The long descriptive monographs reported were rarely read in any detail and certainly hard to summarize across grantees, (to measure change over time). Consequently a simple, visually appealing tool was developed, called the Visual Alert System.

Similar to the EMS tool, the Visual Alert System enables us to determine and document the activities grantees have in common. This enables anyone monitoring or evaluating grantees to rapidly determine where they are headed, if they are making progress, and in essence where they are putting their efforts or resources. It has the added benefit of being easy to consolidate and paint a portrait of the group as a whole.

For example, concerning individual grantees this tool can be used to describe the frequency or number of activities they are engaged in using simple bar graphs. That enables a reviewer to quickly determine where the grantee is – in terms of progress toward desired goals. It also provides the grantee with a quick reference concerning the status of their efforts and a point of comparison with increases or decreases in the future.

An example was shared with grantees and evaluators during a recent training session to help them prepare to draft their final reports (see Figure 3).

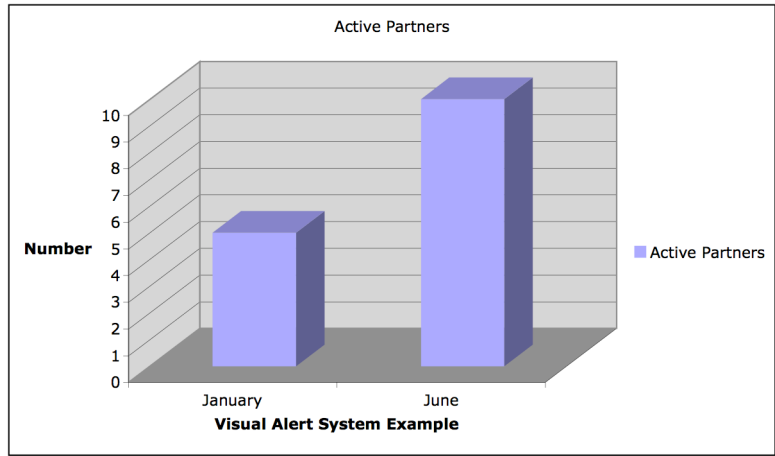


FIGURE 3. EXAMPLE OF HOW TO APPLY VISUAL ALERT SYSTEM TO INDIVIDUAL GRANTEES

This example highlights how a grantee might have 5 active partners in January and 10 in June, documenting significant improvement in this area. A training document was also sent to grantees and evaluators to reinforce the workshop training. The aim is for grantees and evaluators to use this approach to report findings in the future.

Once data is submitted in this fashion it will greatly facilitate a consolidation of the data to inform decision makers about what the group as a whole is doing and in which areas.

For example, concerning the use of newspaper articles to raise awareness about the problems associated with tobacco consumption, it is now possible to document that 82% of the grantees use newspaper articles to communicate about the problems associated with tobacco consumption (and 12% do not) (see Figure 4). This is a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended tobacco prevention activity. This not only confirms that the majority of grantees are implementing appropriate practices, it also enlightens grantees who are not using this practice that they are in the minority and might consider modifying their practices accordingly.

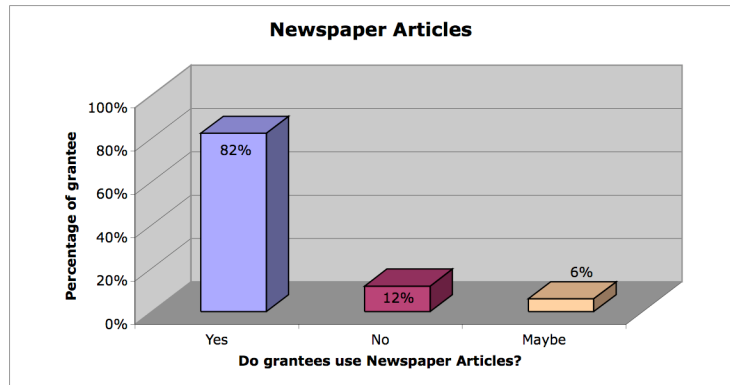


FIGURE 4. VISUAL ALERT SYSTEM EXAMPLE: NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

The Visual Alert System enables a reviewer to see the grantees’ spectrum of tobacco prevention activities at a glance (see Figure 5).

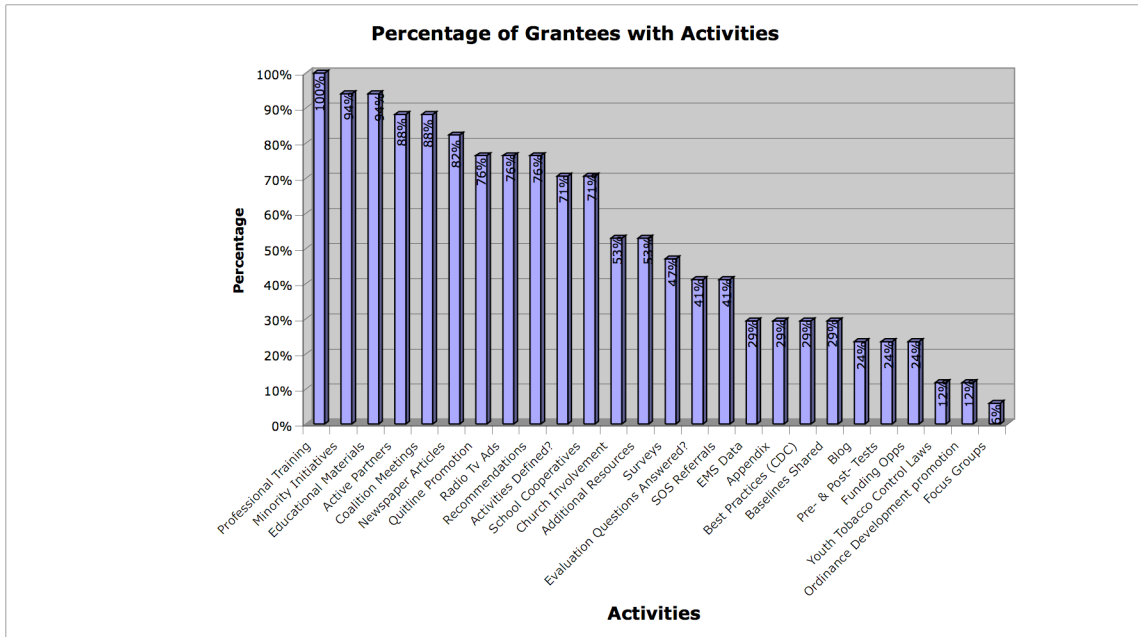


FIGURE 5. VISUAL ALERT SYSTEM: QUICK SCAN OF GRANTEE ACTIVITIES

In addition, the tool enables reviewers to see the top activities that most grantees are engaged in at a given time (Figure 5 and 6), as well as the least frequently implemented activities (see Figure 7). This enables the group to reflect on their practice as a group and reassess their overall strategy.

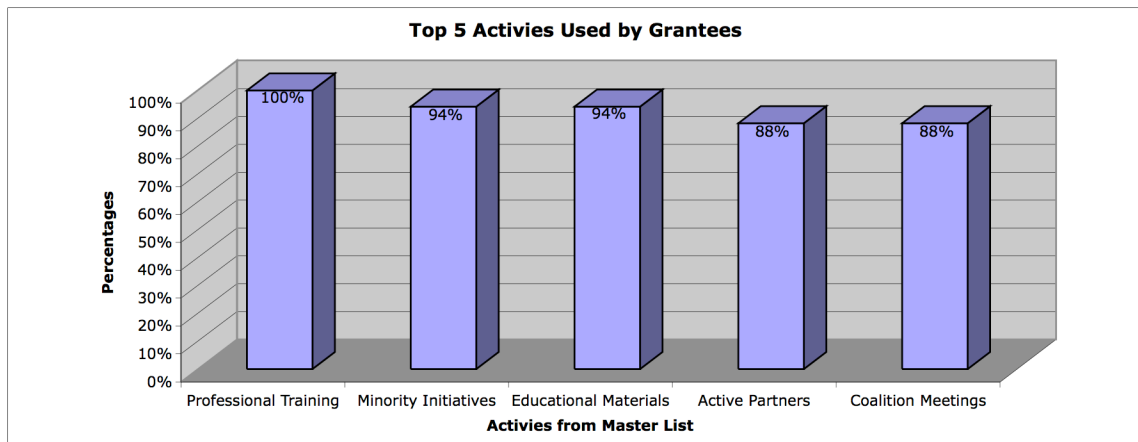


FIGURE 6. VISUAL ALERT SYSTEM: TOP ACTIVITIES USED BY GRANTEEES

The group currently uses these charts to determine if they are going in the “right” direction, what the “norm” of behavior is within the group, and whether they need to alter their course. They also use this data to deliberate about increasing activities in such areas as youth tobacco controls laws and ordinance development promotion.

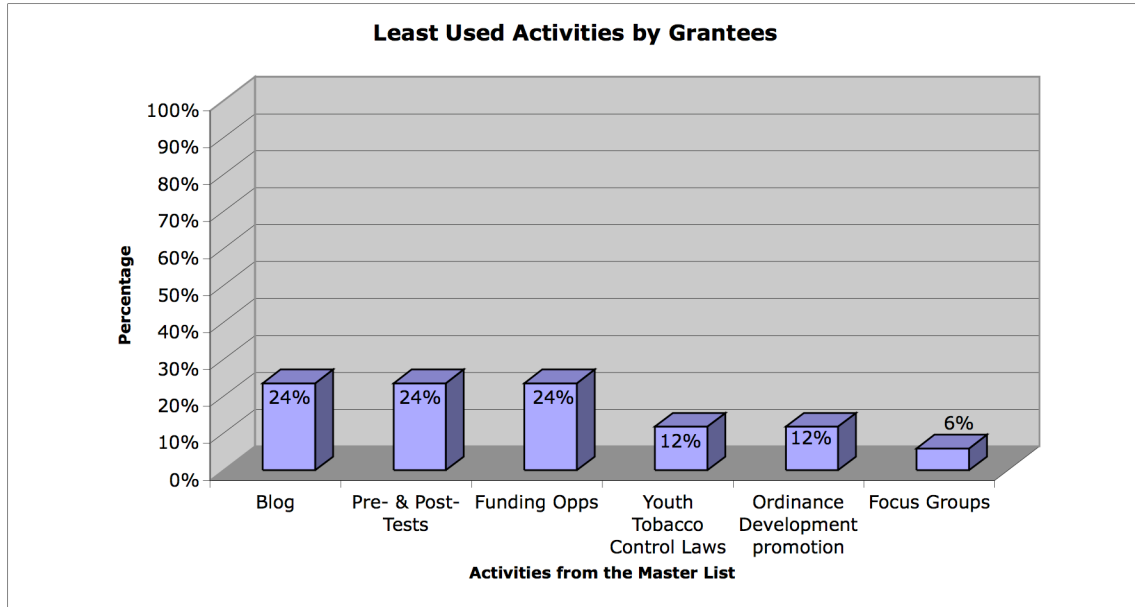


FIGURE 7. VISUAL ALERT SYSTEM: ACTIVITIES LEAST USED BY GRANTEES

## Training

The entire evaluation effort rests on continual training. Grantees and evaluators vary in their evaluation capacity. Some turn over and new grantees and evaluators are replaced. Training, in this context, must be ongoing to ensure quality data collection, analysis, and reporting.

The MISRGO evaluation is implementing multi-level training to enhance evaluation capacity building. The first level is one-on-one counseling and technical assistance. The second level is periodic training sessions. The third is a formal workshop or conference. The fourth approach involves formal education. They are described briefly below:

### Individual

The MISRGO evaluation team provides individual consultations concerning evaluation design and implementation. Examples range from creating online surveys to conducting focus groups. In addition, assistance is provided in the creation of web pages and blogs to highlight grantee activities. Specific assistance is also provide in the use of the Evaluation Monitoring System and the Evaluation Alert System.

### Training Sessions

The MISRGO evaluation team provides periodic training sessions to introduce new evaluation tools, to ensure that all grantees and evaluators have access to the same information, and to enhance an existing skill set.

A recent evaluation session was held on April 24, 2008. In addition to introducing the Visual Alert System, the session focused on Center for Disease Control **Best Practices**

guide to ensure that grantees are implementing programs and activities in alignment with CDC recommended activities.

On September 27, 2007, another evaluation training session was conducted. It focused on the use of technology in evaluation. Grantees and evaluators received training in the use of: online surveys, blogs, digital photography, picture file sharing, internet telephony (Skype), online documents and spreadsheets, and videoconferencing on the net. These tools are being used to enhance the effectiveness of grantee activities. For example, grantees are highlighting their activities on blogs (free of charge). This makes their efforts transparent to the community members and disseminates exemplary practices nationally and internationally. (MISGRO grantee efforts are being recognized throughout the United States in Mexico and Japan. An NIH Health Disparities Scholar at the University of California, San Francisco recently noted the work of a MISRGO grantee in part because of his dissemination strategies.)

### **Workshops**

The MISRGO Evaluation Team is preparing to conduct a large-scale international evaluation training workshop. The purpose is to provide high caliber evaluation training with evaluation peers outside of MISRGO. The secondary aim is to build stronger networks for collaboration, consultation, and communication about evaluation. Prominent evaluators will be providing technical evaluation training including:

- Dr. Stewart Donaldson, Professor and Chair of Psychology, Director of the Institute of Organizational and Program Evaluation Research, and Dean of the School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences, Claremont Graduate University
- Dr. Tarek Azzam, Senior Research Associate, School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences, Claremont Graduate University
- Dr. Rosalie Torres, Torres Consulting Group
- Dr. David Fetterman, School of Medicine, Stanford University, and Co-Director, Arkansas Evaluation Center, School of Education, UAPB

Topics will include: practical program evaluation, use of GIS and web-technology for evaluation, interviewing skills, and empowerment evaluation. Luncheon speakers will include: Senator Tracy Steele, Mr. Kevin Collins (CDC), Dr. Nacaman Williams (Walton Foundation), and Mr. Charles Gasper (Missouri Foundation for Health). Participants include grantees and their evaluators. However, they will also include individuals seeking evaluation training from throughout Arkansas, the mid-west, and parts of the United States. Participants from as far away as Liberia and Ethiopia have registered to attend the evaluation training workshop.

## **Formal Evaluation Education Training**

UAPB is currently creating a certificate program and a masters' program in evaluation. This will include a quarter of online self-paced evaluation training, a quarter of professional association training workshops, and a quarter of face-to-face workshop training at UAPB (with an apprenticeship or practicum for masters' students).

These programs are housed within the Arkansas Evaluation Center and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's School of Education.

## **Informal Education**

Evaluation capacity building may also be facilitated through informal educational modalities. The MISRGO evaluation team was instrumental in creating the Arkansas Group of Evaluators (AGES). It is a group of evaluators throughout the State that meet to build skills, share new tools, and collaborate on various projects. The MISRGO evaluation team applied and received formal local affiliate status with the American Evaluation Association. This enhances the quality of services provided and credibility of the new group's efforts and activities. It also provides the local group with email lists of local evaluators to facilitate communication within the State.

This group will also serve as mentor for certificate and masters' students, creating a seamless relationship (and transition for students) between formal education and daily evaluation practice.

## **Dissemination and Blogs**

The MISRGO evaluation team also created and maintains the primary MISRGO related blogs including:

- Tobacco Prevention Evaluation: <http://tobaccoprevention.blogspot.com/>
- Arkansas Evaluation Center: <http://arkansasevaluationcenter.blogspot.com>
- Arkansas Group of Evaluators: <http://arevaluators.blogspot.com/>

The Tobacco Prevention Evaluation blog records all of the training sessions provided since the inception of the project. It also is a repository for all of the critical documents used to guide the effort (see Figure 8).

The Arkansas Evaluation Center blog maintains the history of the Center, including passing the House, Senate, and a signature from the Governor. It also outlines the plans for the Center to enhance evaluation capacity, focusing on tobacco prevention activities.

The Arkansas Group of Evaluators announces upcoming evaluation capacity building and networking events. It also will be a repository for useful evaluation skill building guides and manuals.

## TOBACCO PREVENTION EVALUATION (MISRGO)

THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2008

Spring Evaluation Training Workshop - April 24,  
2008

Spring Evaluation Training Workshop



Grantees and evaluators came together on April 24, 2008 to participate in evaluation training. Bringing both of them together ensures that they are on the same wave-length about data needs, roles, and relationships. (A copy of the slides used to guide the training day are available on this blog.)

FETTERMAN & ASSOCIATES



DR. DAVID FETTERMAN  
MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA,  
UNITED STATES

Empowerment Evaluator

[VIEW MY COMPLETE](#)

[PROFILE](#)

[Arkansas Evaluation Center](#)

[Arkansas Evaluation Center Progress  
Report 2007](#)

[Arkansas Group of Evaluators](#)

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar \(online\)](#)

[CDC Best Practices for Comprehensive  
Tobacco Control Programs](#)

[CDC Best Practices Summary  
\(Abbreviated\)](#)

[Dr. Fetterman's Web Page](#)

[Dr. Fetterman's Web Tools](#)

[Evaluation Monitoring System -  
Training Manual](#)

**FIGURE 8. MISRGO TOBACCO PREVENTION EVALUATION BLOG**

These blogs maintain a record of key activities, reports, and links to useful information (including CDC best practices and recommended tobacco prevention activities). Blogs ensure open communication between grantees, grantees and their communities, and grantees and the MISRGO office. They also highlight accomplishments throughout the world. MISRGO grantees including FYEN, MCCTFA, and EBCTAP launched their own blogs after receiving MISRGO evaluation technology training. These early adopters understood the power and value of this dissemination tool immediately.

Additional dissemination efforts include presenting evaluation findings at the MISRGO Clearing the Air Conference and the American Evaluation Association. In addition, findings are presented in published journal articles, e.g. *American Journal of Evaluation*.

### Conclusion

This year has been fruitful for evaluation. The Evaluation Monitoring System and the Visual Alert System appear to be successful efforts, providing grantees and evaluators with useful monitoring and reporting tools. In addition, the Arkansas Evaluation Center was formally launched. This has facilitated the creation of a certificate and master's program. It has also helped to initiate the first world-class evaluation workshop at UAPB. The MISRGO evaluation team plans on building on these successes this year.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consider making longer grant agreements with grantees and evaluators (to minimize turnover, institute greater organizational stability, reduce repetitive training needs, and provide grantees with more time to build on their past efforts)
2. Continue to provide ongoing evaluation training (introductory, intermediate, and advanced)
3. Create a MISRGO evaluation protocol, ensuring that all communications related to evaluation are reviewed by Professor Fetterman before they are disseminated, e.g. guidelines, requirements, timelines, and recommendations for conducting and reporting evaluation findings
4. Continue to require the use of the Evaluation Monitoring System, linked to continued funding (to ensure that all grantees are collecting and reporting the same kind of data)
5. Continue to require that all grantees adopt the Visual Alert System linked to continued funding to ensure reporting practices are similar (facilitating cross-grantee data sorts, analysis, and reporting)
6. Continue to adopt CDC Best Practices (programmatic and evaluation practices)
7. Continue to build the Arkansas Evaluation Center, including the certificate and masters programs.
8. Build a strong relationship between the Arkansas Evaluation Center (certificate and masters program) and the Arkansas Group of Evaluators (to create a seamless relationship between students and possible mentors and employment)
9. Seek additional funding for Arkansas Evaluation Center activities, e.g. foundations