



# Cultivate:

## Arts & Culture Co-op

### Evaluation Plan

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## Cultivate: Arts & Culture Co-op

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### **Program Introduction**

Cultivate works within the rural community of Denton, Montana to coordinate the development of a series of three creative projects in the community each summer. The Arts & Culture Co-op will build on the culture of the place through diverse art and culture projects, physically revitalize parts of the downtown area, provide opportunities for community members to take part in a creative process, and begin to provide cultural markers and a sense of rejuvenation for a place that is often considered to be a “drive-through” town. The projects will incorporate the personality of the community and identity of the place. The end goal is to encourage an environment of dialogue and growth, stimulated from the ground up, and enabling community members to identify and solve problems in creative ways while also nurturing greater sense of community within such an isolated area.

### **Mission**

The mission of the arts and culture co-op is to encourage dialogue and collaboration, find creative solutions to local problems, and help rejuvenate community culture through the development of specialized arts and culture projects resourced from the ground up.

### **Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation**

Cultivate is a newly established program (created for the Cultural Programming course) that has not yet been implemented. It is important for evaluation to be implemented as part of the initial planning process to ensure that learning happens throughout the entire process. It is likely that many changes will have to be made, especially during the early stages of development and implementation of the program, and the evaluation plan will setup methods for determining what can be improved upon and what parts of the program are successful and can continue to be strengthened. The evaluation will ensure that steps are taken along the way to critically analyze progress and make continual adjustments for greater effectiveness. It will also help the program remain true to its mission and to stay on

track towards its goals. Because the plan so far has not yet been implemented, it is only theoretical. Therefore, it is likely that adjustments will have to be made based on evaluative feedback. Evaluation will also ensure that actual outcomes correlate to projected outcomes. It will serve to critically analyze the entire project development process once completed and identify areas for improvement. Because the program is new, evaluation will help determine whether to sustain the program, and if so, what changes to make to ensure continued success or to help the program grow.

Evaluation findings will be cataloged in a digital report available online, presented at a community meeting, and physically distributed to key stakeholders. It will be used to continually improve program operations throughout the entire process, to justify changes, to demonstrate effectiveness, successes and accountability to the community and stakeholders, to demonstrate growth and professionalism, to further the program's outreach, and to help secure outside funding and resources.

The greatest challenge in evaluation within this program is both financial and human resources. The program is very young, and even with a well thought out evaluation plan, it will be difficult to ensure that evaluation is actually happening throughout the entire process. This requires time spent on constant critical analysis, documenting findings, performing interviews, talking with participants and stakeholders about their experiences, distributing and collecting surveys, and implementing other evaluation tools. There is no budget for evaluation consultation or contracting or survey mailing costs. Because the program is starting out with little to no financial support and few human resources, it is unlikely that the evaluation will be as robust as it could be. Fortunately, because of the small size of the community (pop. 250), a thorough evaluation can likely be conducted without having to mail surveys or contract an outside evaluator. Local businesses and organizations would likely be happy to assist in distributing evaluation tools. Because of the limited program involvement opportunities in the community, individuals likely have not had much experience at all with evaluations. Therefore, it will be important for them to know why the evaluation is important and how it will be used. Everything must be written clearly with careful use of language that is easily understood.

## Stakeholders

Stakeholders in the evaluation include all individuals contributing to the development and operations of Cultivate. This would be the Program Director and Leadership Committee, Advisory Council (made up of key program stakeholders in the community), everyone who has been a part of the three Project Teams, students in the public school and their parents, and all project participants and volunteers.

Pre-surveys should be given to the Leadership Committee at the beginning of their involvement to gauge their expectations, understanding of the program and their background. They should also be administered to all project team members and participants before getting involved in project work. This will provide information on skill levels, expectations and arts understanding before being influenced by the program. A separate survey should be sent to students in the public school informing them of the program, asking their experience and understanding of art and finding out if and how they might see themselves involved in the program. Interviews should be conducted with participants during and after project implementation to capture the actual experience of those involved. Attendance to all meetings, forums and work days should be diligently tracked. Feedback will be solicited on social media throughout the entire project development and implementation processes to gauge community response. Debriefs will be held within the Leadership Team monthly to discuss opportunities for improvement, keeping record of what changes are implemented and why. Finally, all participants, members of the Leadership Team and Advisory Council will complete a post-survey to gauge their response and demonstrate any change in attitudes, experience, knowledge and expectations

## Logic Model

Resources or Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Knowledgeable leadership team with great passion for the community; many potential project spaces; tight-knit, supportive community; many inexpensive or free avenues for marketing; access to local experts and artists; motivated and creative people	Organize community forums to gain feedback and project ideas; marketing materials; organize working groups to implement projects; facilitate conversations about space; gather resources and supplies; write for press	Community forums and avenues to provide feedback; creation of projects and project teams; collaborative creative arts/culture projects; press about process; collaboration	Increased support for the arts; greater interest in the arts; enhanced creativity; vitality in downtown spaces; more interesting things to see and do; stronger relationships	Increased support and appreciation for the arts in the community; more engaged citizens; revitalized town; lifelong arts interest and pursuit; more active individuals and independent projects springing up; more presence of arts in the school; more families living in Denton; higher quality of life; stronger sense of community

## Evaluation Design

Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods	Indicators	Schedule	Analysis
Who participated (demographics, profession, location, experience) and why?	Participants, Attendance records, Leadership Team	Attendance tracking, interviews, pre-surveys, social media, observation	Individuals attend meetings, forums and project work days	Phase 1 Phase 2	Data will inform the effectiveness of program outreach, allowing Cultivate to decide whether it needs to market differently or not, and will provide valuable insight into why people are participating, providing a better idea of audience expectations. Can use this to adjust communications.
Did involvement increase participant interest, skills, and knowledge in the arts?	Participants, Leadership Team	Pre and post surveys, interviews, social media, observation	Observed increase in skill or interest; continued involvement; teaching others	Phase 2 Phase 3	This evaluation will require direct response from the participant or noted observation from another. It requires self-analysis so it may be difficult to attain, but it will provide perspective on whether the program is increasing support for the arts and influencing the community.
Is the participant more likely to engage in other arts related activities?	Participants	Post surveys, interviews, social media	Continued involvement/ attendance; mention of or interest in other activities	Phase 3	This will help to demonstrate sustainability in the program as well as community support, and provides evidence of individuals who have been effected by the arts in a positive way
Has the program had a positively influenced the larger community?	Participants, Leadership Team, Advisory Council, Community members	Post surveys, Word of mouth, social media, web feedback, interviews, observation	Positive remarks from community members; observed interaction with the projects; continued interest in participation; increase participation	Phase 2 Phase 3	This may be a difficult question to answer because it is so general but because the program is new, its “positive effect” could come out in a variety of ways. It will be important to be attuned to the influence of the program within the community. This will help determine whether changes need to be made.
Were individuals on the Leadership Team satisfied with their experience?	Leadership team	Debriefs; team meetings; surveys; individual meetings	Individuals continue to be involved; demonstrated enthusiasm for the work	Phase 1 Phase 2 Phase 3	This will be important to ensure that operations on the inside are healthy as well as the outside. It will demonstrate that the program is being managed and operated professionally and allow for changes to be made within operations.

\*Phase 1 – Community assessment, feedback, project conception and initial development

\*Phase 2 – Project implementation

\*Phase 3 – Project completion, debrief and follow-up