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A Metaevaluation of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International Accreditation Process

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A META-EVALUATION OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE ACCREDITATION
INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

by

Stacy A. French

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation
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A META-EVALUATION OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE ACCREDITATION INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Stacy A. French, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2016

Fire and emergency services throughout the country are being required by local governmental authorities to provide efficient and effective services. In 1996, the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) and the International Association of Fire Chief (IAFC) executed a master trust agreement that established the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) to award accreditation to those fire and emergency services that demonstrated efficiency and effectiveness in the services provided. As of this study, no documented research had been published that challenged the current CFAI Accreditation process to ensure the highest level of accountability and usefulness for both the public and fire service organizations.

Metaevaluations, the evaluation of an evaluation, has proven to be a valuable tool to validate findings and determine the soundness of an evaluation. The Program Evaluation Standards, developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) have become widely accepted and applied to evaluations across a diverse field of disciplines due to the systematic and comprehensive nature this method provides for quality evaluations. The purpose of this dissertation is to assess the CFAI Agency Accreditation process against the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards in order to determine whether the process meets professional evaluation standards and how the process can be improved.

A case study of a recent CFAI Agency Accreditation process is assessed utilizing the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards. To validate the findings, a sounding board was established to provide feedback on the evaluation findings. The results showed an overall strong compliance to the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards; however, it was found to be weak in the area of reliability. This study suggests further research should be done to improve the reliability as a whole with this accreditation process.

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*I dedicate this dissertation to my family,
my daughters Skyler and Alexis French,
and my wife Shawn French.*

Stacy A. French

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
Introduction	1
Background	1
Commission on Fire Accreditation International	6
Metaevaluation	13
Need for the Study	13
Purpose of the Research	13
The Study's Investigatory Framework	14
Research Questions	15
Study's Intended Users	15
Qualifications of the Evaluator	16
Contributions to Evaluation	17
Overview of Remaining Chapter	18
Review of Literature	18
Program Evaluation Theory	20
Evaluative Approach	24
Need for Evaluation Standards	26
Program Evaluation Standards	27
Metaevaluation	34
Metaevaluation Checklist	37

Evaluator Responsibilities.....	38
Evaluation Use	39
Accreditation in the Fire Services	40
Methods.....	47
Overview of the CFAI Agency Accreditation Process	47
Case for Metaevaluation.....	48
Design.....	49
Instrumentation.....	50
Procedures	52
Limitations	54
Administering the Metaevaluation	55
Summary	55
Results.....	55
Checklist Findings.....	56
Checklist Findings on the Evaluation's Soundness.....	59
Sounding Board.....	92
Discussion	93
Summary of Findings and Conclusions	93
Limitations	97
Contribution to Evaluation Practice	98
Future Research.....	100
Appendices.....	101
A. Performance Indicators.....	101
B. Metaevaluation Checklist (2011).....	115

C. Sounding Board Feedback For Judgments Against Each Standard	141
D. HSIRB Approval	143
References	145

LIST OF TABLES

1. The Program Mevaluation Standards Checkpoints.....	51
2. The Program Evaluation Standards Evaluation Strength.....	53
3. CFAI Scores for Each Metaevaluation Standard	57
4. Metaevaluation Domains Descriptive Statistics	58
5. Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Domain Strength and Quality.....	59
6. Judgments Against Each Standards	86
7. Summary of Pluses, Minuses, and Question Marks Assigned to All 30 Standards	90

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Bottom Line Results.....	84
2. Metaevaluation Summary Table	85

Introduction

This dissertation investigates whether, and to what degree, the Agency Accreditation process developed by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. [CPSE], 2009) meets the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation's *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011). That is, *The Program Evaluation Standards* will be applied in order to metaevaluate the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) Agency Accreditation process using the City of Portage Fire Department's initial CFAI accreditation process as a case analysis. This chapter provides background information on the development of metaevaluation, acceptance and use of the Joint Committee Standards for Educational Evaluation's (JCSEE) Program Evaluation Standards (2011), and the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. The chapter also describes the study's need and purpose, intended framework, including specific research questions, and defined scope, including the significance of this type of research to evaluation practice and intended users and uses.

Background

Evaluation

The operational definition of evaluation, as referred to throughout this paper, is defined as, "the process of determination of merit, worth, or significance" (Scriven, 2007, p. 1). "The overall aim of evaluation is to assist people and organizations to improve their plans, policies and practices on behalf of citizens" (Weiss, 1999, p. 469). "Evaluation serves society by providing affirmations of worth, value, progress, accreditation, and

accountability – and, when necessary, a credible defensible, nonarbitrary basis for terminating bad programs or, conversely, expanding good programs” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 3). In general, the term evaluand refers to objects of evaluations such as programs, organizations and others (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

The term ‘metaevaluation’ was first introduced in 1969, in Scriven’s paper titled “An introduction to Meta-Evaluation,” where metaevaluation was defined as an evaluation of an evaluation. Stufflebeam (1974; 2001) further defined metaevaluation as a valuable tool to assist evaluators in identifying possible problems related to a primary evaluation. Metaevaluation is a tool that can help the general public in their ability to assess the strength and weakness of an evaluation. “Metaevaluation - the evaluation of evaluation - is a professional obligation of evaluators” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 183). Subjects of evaluations have a right to expect that the systems used to evaluate their competence and performance have measured up to appropriate standards (Stufflebeam, 2001).

Evaluations can be seen as good, bad, or somewhere in between. “Evaluations might be flawed by inadequate focus, inappropriate criteria, technical errors, excessive costs, abuse of authority, shoddy implementation, tardy reports, biased findings, ambiguous findings, unjustified conclusions, inadequate or wrong interpretation to users, unwarranted recommendations, and counterproductive interference in the programs being evaluated” (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 184). Evaluations that lack clarity through the use and implementation of something other than recognized standards, subject or promote unworthy products, programs, services and is a disservice to those evaluations that implement and utilize professional standards (Stufflebeam, 2001). Scriven (2009) states

that the use of a professional evaluation tool such as the Program Evaluation Standards for evaluation purposes provides a systematic and comprehensive method to promote quality evaluations.

The development of measurement and assessment tools as it relates to societal improvement, along with the demands for accountability regarding public expenditures, provided the foundation for the program evaluation standards that are in use in today's evaluation society. In the second half of the 20th century, federal, state and local agencies became very interested in the funding of educational and social programs (Yarbrough, Shula, & Caruthers, 2004). It was the value component found within these evaluations that forced the expanded need for program evaluation in the public sector.

“Any area of professional service that potentially could put the public at risk – if services and products are not delivered by highly trained specialists in accordance with standards of good practice and safety – should consider subjecting its programs to accreditation reviews and its personnel to certification processes” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 185). Many organizations including those of the fire service are in some fashion obligated to the realm of accountability-oriented evaluations, to validate the services provided to their communities. In essence, accreditation or certification answers whether institutions or programs are meeting minimum standards, and how they can be improved. It is along this same rationale as to why an accreditation process was developed for the fire service.

“The cornerstone of the development of the National Fire Service accreditation project lies in the fact that self-assessment and performance evaluation play a vital role in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of local fire service agencies, provided that the

findings from performing self-evaluation are applied to the planning and implementation activities which are done locally” (Coleman, 1995, p. 2). There are four major reasons that an organization should subject itself to an evaluation: address change taking place, periodic assessment of organization effectiveness, change in leadership within organization or key manager of the local government, or to raise the level of professionalism within the organization. The process should answer: is the organization effective, is the mission of the organization being achieved, and what is the reason for success within the organization. These general principles provided the foundation of the CFAI Agency Accredited process.

Acceptance and Use of the Program Evaluation Standards

Prior to 1970, American researchers and educators were creating and practicing in the program evaluation profession on the basis of existing social science research methodologies. In contrast to program evaluation as a practice field, theories and methodology of psychometrics and the technology associated with testing had already been widely accepted in American academia (Yarbrough et al., 2004). In the early 1970’s, representatives from the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) met to update standards for testing. It was at this meeting the committee decided to create a subcommittee for recommendations on program evaluation and personnel evaluation.

It was in 1975, under the direction and leadership of Daniel Stufflebeam, that the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) was developed. “The goal was to develop standards to help ensure useful, feasible, ethical, and sound

evaluations of educational programs, projects, and materials” (Sanders, 1994, p. xiv). By the time the JCSEE completed and published the Standards for Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials, the committee contained members from twelve North American national professional organizations, primarily focused on education (JCSEE, 1981). In what became known as the first edition of *The Program Evaluation Standards*, the text incorporated the practice and theoretical knowledge about program evaluation as was known at that time and became a widely recognized set of standards for evaluating educational programs (Stufflebeam, 2003). In 1989, the JCSEE revisited the *Standards* to reflect on the new developments in evaluation, and address the continued outcry by evaluators in fields beyond the educational setting whereby the standards could be utilized for program evaluations in their own field. It was in 1994 when the JCSEE’s *The Program Evaluation Standards*, 2nd Edition was released to address those specific needs. Once again in 2011, the JCSEE released *The Program Evaluation Standards*, 3rd Edition to address the most significant change regarding an increased emphasis on the need to improve and hold evaluations accountable through systematic metaevaluation. The JCSEE is currently supported by 17 international sponsoring organizations serving both educational and social improvements (Yarbrough et al., 2011).

The JCSEE’s Program Evaluation Standards have been adopted by many organizations not only in the U.S. but internationally as well such as Germany and Switzerland (Widmer, 2004). Since 1989, the JCSEE has been a member organization of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and follows ANSI procedures in developing, revising, and approving standards. The original standards for program

evaluation were organized into four major areas: utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy and by the third edition contained a fifth major category labeled evaluation accountability which was added to address ‘evaluation documentation,’ ‘internal metaevaluation,’ and ‘external metaevaluation,’ respectively. Ultimately, these standards provide a set of principles that can be used to guide evaluation practice, improve an ongoing evaluation or evaluation system, and assess evaluation quality (i.e., metaevaluation) for any program evaluation. In terms of metaevaluation, Stufflebeam (2001) wrote, “Attaining and sustaining the status of professionalism requires one to subject her or his work to evaluation and use the findings to strengthen services” (p. 183).

Commission on Fire Accreditation International

Expectations of fire and emergency services have expanded rapidly over the past 50 years from primarily performing fire suppression to a point of providing services in Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT), technical rescue, fire code enforcement and public fire/life safety education. This expectation is not limited to the fact that service can be provided, but more importantly that it can be done efficiently and effectively. At the same time, public policy environments have evolved and typically are characterized by complex interactions of politics, economics, demographics, geography and sociology.

Beginning in the 1980’s, local elected and appointed officials recognized the need for more community involvement and initiated measures to implement community-based, local governance systems. In essence, these types of systems were designed to provide greater transparency as to how government was run, to include but not limited to goals,

realistic outcomes, measurable benchmarks, and an evaluation tool to determine the effect services have on the community.

In 1986, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) met to develop the concepts and design that would address the continuous improvement of the fire service industry as was being required of these and other community-based governments. It was in December of 1996 that the IAFC and ICMA executed the Master Trust Agreement that established the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) to award accreditation to fire and emergency service agencies and to pursue scientific research and education in the public interest. To reflect its larger focus and its importance to all-hazard response, the corporation's name was changed to the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). CFAI then became an entity under CPSE, continuing to assist organizations in making the transition from tactical deployment to strategic response, and responsible for the credentialing of an agency.

CPSE promotes the continuous quality improvement of fire and emergency service agencies that serve communities worldwide by providing training and career resource information. As a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation, CPSE supports and encourages agencies and personnel to meet international performance standards through various programs and the work of two commissions: CFAI and the Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC) providing personal credentialing of various professional designation programs ranging from Fire Officer (FO) to Chief Fire Officer (CFO). In addition, CPSE provides a Technical Advisor Program (TAP) to provide coaching, guidance and facilitation for organizational improvement.

CPSE serves as the governing body for the organizations that offer accreditation, education, and credentialing services to first responder and fire service industry professionals and agencies. Agencies such as CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) and CAAS (Commission on Accreditation for Ambulance Services) are two other accrediting agencies, specific to that particular public safety discipline. Accreditation is the end result for an agency that successfully completes the Agency Accreditation process, the evaluation ‘tool’ that was specifically designed for the fire service. As of June 13, 2015 there were a total of 207 accredited agencies, 124 were classified as career, 33 classified as combination, 48 as Department of Defense, and 2 as volunteer. CPSE is currently recognized by the Department of Defense (DoD) as the accreditation agency for all of its military fire personnel and installations.

The CFAI Agency Accreditation Process

The CFAI Agency Accreditation process provides the only international set of performance criteria by which a fire agency and their community can evaluate the levels of service and quality of fire, EMS, and other services it provides its constituents (CPSE, 2009). Another model utilized to determine agency capabilities is that of ISO (Insurance Service Office) which measures a departments ability to respond to a given fire emergency only, looking at only one service provided by a given agency. CFAI, instead of only measuring a department’s ability to respond to fire emergencies, looks at all services the department provides and evaluates the department based on the services it provides in totality. The CFAI Agency Accreditation process is a comprehensive evaluation model that enables fire and emergency service organizations to perform a self-examination, examining past, current, and future service levels and performance. These

are then compare them to industry's best practices, followed by an on-site external review by peer reviewers, used as a means to validate the reliability of organizational information and performance (Assessor Handbook, 2007). This process leads to improved service delivery by helping fire departments:

- Determine community risk and safety needs.
- Evaluate the performance of the department.
- Establish a method for achieving continuous organizational improvement.

Every fire organization whether volunteer, combination, career, federal, or private can use the accreditation model in setting goals and crafting strategic action plans, while continuously evaluating and improving services provided to the public. This process requires many hours, not uncommon to reach over 1,500 hours of research and analysis to complete this process. This in itself may be the reason why most departments that complete this process are primarily career agencies and why there are only 2 volunteer agencies that are currently accredited.

The intent of the CFAI is to develop, validate and maintain an accreditation system that is credible, realistic, usable and achievable (CPSE, 2009). The basis of evaluation for a modern fire service agency is to determine how well it identifies risks and hazards, how efficiently and effectively its services address those risks and hazards, and how well it complies with both legislative and regulated mandates.

The accreditation process is primarily composed of two parts; an independent self-assessment of the organization coupled with an independent analysis by a third-party external peer review team made up of personnel who have been trained in providing peer assessment from like size and type agencies. As for the accreditation model there are 10

broad categories (Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. [CPSE], 2009):

1. Governance and Administration
2. Assessment and Planning
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Financial Resources
5. Programs
6. Physical Resources
7. Human Resources
8. Training and Competency
9. Essential Resources
10. External Systems Relationships

Within each of these categories, there are a total of 44 criteria that are further broken down into 253 detailed performance indicators (Appendix A). These performance indicators define the desired level of achievement or performance for each specific behavior or task. During the self-assessment, departments are required to address each of these performance indicators and provide proof of their abilities to achieve the desired level of performance. The accreditation process is verified by the third-party peer assessment team that provides recommendations to the commission at one of two events throughout the year. The two events, the CPSE Excellence Conference, which is held in the early spring, and the Fire Rescue International (FRI) conference held in late summer, are the only two occasions in which the commission acts on the peer assessor agency recommendations. Agencies are recommended to the commission in one of the three conditions: approved as noted, approved with the following conditions or not approved. It

is up to the commission as to what level of approval they may or may not provide to a department.

The organizational steps towards achieving accreditation status are:

- Registered Agency Status
 - Considered an exploratory status
 - Good for up to 5 years
 - Receive the Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual (FESSAM)
- Applicant Agency Status
 - Application cost is based on population of community
 - 18-month process for primarily career based agencies and up to 24-months for those agencies that are primarily volunteer based.
 - Self-Assessment is completed by the agency which provides documents demonstrating compliance, commonly referred to as proof's
- Candidate Agency Status
 - Documents completed during the self-assessment process are reviewed
 - On-site visit by a CFAI Peer Team is conducted
 - CFAI Peer Team recommendations are considered by the commission and upon approval agencies are afforded the accredited status
- Accredited Status
 - Upon accreditation, annual compliance reports are provided by the organization then reviewed and considered by the commission
 - Re-accreditation takes place every three years

- Documents are provided by the agency demonstrating compliance
- On-site visit by a CFAI Peer Team is conducted

As of this report, although revisions are made to the accreditation program based on some type of schedule and system, it does not appear there are any means for a systematic metaevaluation of the Agency Accreditation program and/or process. It is the desire of this author to promote the value of such a system to those members of CPSE and CFAI through the findings of this report ultimately resulting in a new module pertaining to evaluation in both the program and process for all aspects of accreditation whether agency or individuals. Secondly, the author hopes to promote the need for an evaluation of this metaevaluation to validate its findings as it relates to utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability.

Previous Research on CFAI Evaluation Standards

The problem to be addressed by this dissertation is the lack of a systematic metaevaluation of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. In order to ensure a high quality accreditation process, the process must be challenged by currently accepted practices, while ensuring project outcomes are being met. Up to this point, research on the CFAI accreditation system has been very limited, focusing on various departments attempting to determine if the CFAI accreditation process would appear to be of value for the time and effort that would be anticipated in order to complete the accreditation process. This research was typically completed as an Applied Research Project (ARP) through the National Fire Academy (NFA) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP). At no time has any documented research been published that challenges the current CFAI Agency Accreditation process to ensure the highest level of accountability and usefulness

for both the public and fire service organization.

Metaevaluation

Metaevaluation is defined as the evaluation of an evaluation, evaluation system, or evaluation device (Scriven, 1969). Operationally for this paper, metaevaluation is defined as, “the process of delineating, obtaining, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about an evaluation’s utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability for the purposes of guiding the evaluation and reporting its strengths and weaknesses” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 635). The main elements of a metaevaluation are (a) group processes in which the evaluators interact with the client and other stakeholders and (b) discrete technical tasks, involving the collection, analysis and synthesis of information to make a judgment regarding the target evaluation.

Need for the Study

All government agencies that serve public safety should perform to the highest relevant standards, be monitored to assure their soundness in both quality and service, and be regularly updated and improved based on a systematic evaluative feedback through evaluation, such as that of an accreditation system. Should such a systematic evaluative feedback not take place, agencies within the fire service industry will be unable to satisfactorily address the needs of their community, and ultimately will lead to increased risk to both the public and personnel providing service during such an emergency.

Purpose of the Research

Public safety agencies need to develop and implement an assessment tool to

address the ever-changing community needs and financial constraints in order to maintain or improve the strength of the organization. The application of a tool such as the CFAI Agency Accreditation process can be fiscally responsible by providing the necessary feedback for potential growth of the organization in terms of efficiencies and effectiveness and identify whether the department's deliverables are in line with the public expectation. Ensuring such tools are valid is imperative in any organization desiring such outcomes. The purpose of this dissertation is to assess the CFAI Agency Accreditation process against the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards in order to determine whether the process meets professional evaluation standards and how the process can be improved.

The Study's Investigatory Framework

This dissertation will address the need for a systematic metaevaluation and strengthening of the current CFAI Agency Accreditation process by adapting a nationally-recognized set of program evaluation standards, adapting a metaevaluation checklist keyed to these standards, obtaining evidence including stakeholder inputs needed to apply the checklist, completing the checklist to identify strengths and weaknesses of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process, reporting the metaevaluation findings to CFAI's key stakeholder groups, assisting key members of the audiences for this dissertation to apply the metaevaluation findings, and working with the leadership of the CFAI to outline a plan for future periodic metaevaluations of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process.

Research Questions

Five focal questions are investigated in this dissertation:

1. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the utility standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
2. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the feasibility standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
3. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the propriety standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
4. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the accuracy standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
5. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the evaluation accountability standards as developed by the JCSEE?*

These questions will be addressed by utilizing metaevaluation to evaluate how the CFAI Agency Accreditation process performs against the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards. This will be accomplished through the use of Stufflebeam's (2011) *Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist*, which is keyed to the 30 standards in the JCSEE (2011) *Program Evaluation Standards* to determine the CFAI Agency Accreditation process strengths and weakness, in providing sound, fair, efficient, useful, and accountable assessments of the assessed fire services' ability, and to assist in policy decision-making.

Study's Intended Users

This study provides information that could be relevant to various agencies and

organizations. The primary intended users of this study will be fire departments preparing or participating in fire department accreditation processes, citizens and other governing bodies those agencies are affiliated, and members of CPSE. Feedback to members of CPSE as to the soundness of the Agency Accreditation process will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the process to those persons in positions of authority and management. Providing a sound Agency Accreditation process will ultimately assist the end user, who in this case is the agencies which are looking to be accredited. Secondary users of this study could include but not limited to other public safety accreditation organizations such as the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) or governmental bodies who provide oversight and/or direction over such accreditation processes. Effective and efficient operations are pinnacle of any public safety agency and must be continually evaluated for best practices in providing services. Ultimately, this dissertation will provide practical, professionally sound information that could be used for strengthening the CFAI Agency Accreditation process and for instituting ongoing systematic metaevaluation services in order to continuously improve the accreditation process.

Qualifications of the Evaluator

The author/evaluator for this dissertation paper is qualified to undertake this metaevaluation due to his years of experience in the fire service and his educational background in both evaluation and public safety. Moreover, the author has extensively studied, *The Program Evaluation Standards* developed by the JCSEE and the American Evaluation Association's (American Evaluation Association [AEA], 2004) *Guiding*

Principles for Evaluators. With over 16 years of career experience and over 7 years of experience as an on-call (part-paid firefighter), the author/evaluator has over 23 years of experience in the fire service.

The author/evaluator is a graduate of the National Fire Academy (NFA) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP), credentialed as a Chief Fire Officer (CFO) by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), certified in the State of Michigan as: a Professional Emergency Manager (PEM), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Certified Fire and EMS Instructor, Fire Inspector and Plan Reviewer, Hazardous Materials Technician, and Rope/Confined Space Technician. During the course of his career, 10 years was served as a Training/Safety Officer and the last four as an Assistant Fire Chief.

In addition to the years of diverse service and the numerous credentials and the various functions and positions within the fire service, the author has completed his doctoral studies, and upon successful completion of this dissertation will be provided with his Ph.D. Formal education included numerous classes related but not limited to: organizational leadership, human resources, strategic management, financial management, data analysis, evaluation, metaevaluation, and psychometrics.

Contributions to Evaluation

To the best of my knowledge, this metaevaluation represents the first of its kind used to investigate the CFAI Agency Accreditation process using the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards as the basis for inquiry. It is my hope the results will stimulate discussion and action in terms of professional evaluation within the field of public safety. One of those specific desires is to promote the need for evaluating new and

existing programs, not only to confirm the credibility of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process, but also to promote critical analysis of other current accreditation and credentialed programs utilized within public safety agencies.

Overview of Remaining Chapter

In Chapter 2, the author presents a review on the development of evaluation, metaevaluation, the JCSEE Program Evaluation Standards, the metaevaluation checklist, and the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. In Chapter 3, there is a detailed description of the study's research design, associated limitations, the development and use of a sounding board of personnel from CFAI for questions related to the Agency Accreditation process, and to whom the results will be distributed. In Chapter 4, the author will discuss the findings of the study and in Chapter 5, a summary is provided, discussing the conclusions, and providing recommendations for additional research will be provided.

Review of Literature

The success of any social program hinges on an effective and appropriately applied evaluation system. Social programs have and continue to be developed to satisfy current needs within an organizational culture. Weiss (1999) stated that evaluations are utilized within social programs to assist people and organizations in terms of providing the best service to the citizens. Cronbach (1980) takes this a step further stating that any good society will evaluate its social condition to improve life and make its evaluation process better. In its most general sense, "social programs, and the policies that spawn and justify them, aim to improve the welfare of individuals, organizations, and society"

(Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991, p. 19). Each of these social programs is assigned a particular value by the stakeholders. In many cases, social programs measure their value in terms the efficiencies and effectiveness associated with a particular set of criteria or standards. Elements within these types of programs are always in flux due to the nature of social dynamics. To properly assess the efficiencies and effectiveness of any given evaluand, evaluations must be performed utilizing recognized standards and procedures providing the necessary feedback stakeholders require for determining the aforementioned value of a particular evaluand.

Evaluation is not static and must continue to evolve in terms of theory and practice to respond to the challenges associated with the fluid dynamics of social science. According to Stufflebeam, Madaus, & Kellaghan (2000),

any attempts to formally evaluate something involves coming to grips with a wide range of concepts such as value, merit, worth, growth, criteria, standards, objectives, needs, norms, client, audience, validity, reliability, objectivity, practical significance, accountability, improvement, inputs, process, product, formative, summative, cost, impact, information, credibility, and, of course, the term evaluation itself (p. vii).

In order to address these challenges, program evaluators must ensure they adequately “identify and define audiences and information requirements; the object to be evaluated; the purposes of the evaluation; inquiry procedures; concerns and issues to be examined; variables to be assessed; bases for interpreting findings; and the standards to be invoked in assessing the quality of work” (Stufflebeam et al., 2000, p. vii).

Program evaluation, both in the general industry and the fire community, is not new but instead has evolved over the past 150 years to produce such standards as the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards, as well as those in the fire industry with CPSE and CFAI Standards. Although the development of these standards were generated less than 40 years ago, it was the previous 100 plus years of history that provided the guidance needed to develop such standards. To better understand how and why these standards evolved to where they are today, it is important to highlight some of the major contributors over the past 150 years (Stufflebeam et al., 2000). In order to do so, the developmental history of the JCSEE Program Evaluation Standards will be described in seven periods, while the development of the CFAI standards will be described since its inception in the mid 1980's.

Program Evaluation Theory

Program evaluation has become a widely accepted field of research and investigation since the 1960's. Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991) identified five fundamental aspects of theory that provide the framework for program evaluation approaches:

1. Social programming: the ways that social programs and policies develop, improve, and change, especially in regard to social problems.
2. Knowledge construction: the way researchers learn about social action.
3. Valuing: the ways value can be attached to program descriptions.
4. Knowledge use: the ways social science information is used to modify programs and policies.
5. Evaluation practice: the tactics and strategies evaluators follow in their professional work, especially given the constraints they face. (p. 32)

Program evaluation relies on social programming to provide the steps necessary to solve social problems through the incremental improvements of existing program

implementing a better design for new or existing programs and terminating those programs that lack progress. In order to provide for those effective changes, Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991) stated social programming must look at the three elements of any program:

1. Internal program structure: employees, clients, available resources, outcomes, budget, social norms, facilities, and organizational structure. Specifically looking at how these components are structured, what functions they fulfill, how they operate along with strengths and weaknesses of those structures.
2. External constraints: external funding, constraints from external stakeholders, availability of external resources and political and economic values of society.
3. How program changes contribute to social change: focuses on how change should be implemented as allowed by society. All programs are contextually dependent in that the acceptance of change is only what the social structure will allow.

Scriven (1991) defined evaluation as, “the process of determining the merit, worth and value of things, and evaluations are the products of that process” (p. 1). Scriven (2004) defines the “thing” being evaluated as the “evaluand” (p. 186). For the purpose of this paper the operational definition for evaluand will refer to any object including but not limited to: a person, program, policy, product, etc. Scriven more recently expounded on the definition of evaluation by adding the context of significance to his definition stating that, “one of the most important questions professional evaluators should regularly consider is the extent to which evaluation has made a contribution to the welfare of humankind and, more generally, to the welfare of the planet we inhabit” (Scriven, 2004, p. 183). According to Scriven (1991), evaluation,

is said to be one of the most powerful and versatile of the 'transdisciplines'-tool disciplines such as logic, design, and statistics-that apply across broad ranges of the human investigative and creative effort while maintaining the autonomy of a discipline in their own right (p. 1).

Scriven (1991) also stated,

While program evaluation is an area that uses many investigative techniques from the social sciences, it also uses – or should use – many from other disciplines (such as law, logic, and ethics), from other areas of applied evaluation (such as personnel and product evaluation), and from the developments in the foundations of evaluation – loosely speaking, evaluation theory (p. 2).

The process of evaluation is not simple, “in the usual taxonomy of cognitive processes it is listed as the most sophisticated of all” (Scriven, 1991, p. 2). Evaluation is not just the accumulation and summarizing of data, but also requires a, “conclusion about merit or net benefits, and it consists of evaluative premises or standards” (Scriven, 1991, p. 4). Evaluation is listed as the highest of six levels in the Bloom Taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom et al., 1956).

There are four main uses of evaluation: improvement, accountability, dissemination and enlightenment (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The first use, typically referred to as formative evaluation (Scriven, 1967), is where information is provided for developing, ensuring the quality, or improvement of the service. The second use, typically referred to as summative evaluation (Scriven, 1967), is a retrospective assessment of an evaluand following development of a product, completion of a program or at the end of a cycle (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The third use refers to the dissemination of proven practices or products to help consumers make informed decisions in the purchase of a product or service. The fourth use is to promote enlightenment, or new understanding as a result of the evaluation. Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) reflect on the possible purposes of evaluation,

With some forethought, careful planning, and appropriate budgeting, evaluations may serve not only to guide operating programs, sum up and assess their contributions, and lead to the dissemination of effective products and services but also to address particular research, theory, or policy questions (p. 25).

Value is of primary importance for stakeholders in terms of any evaluation and is typically associated with summative and/or formative evaluation findings. The type of evaluation that would be provided is identified by the expected outcome of the evaluation itself. Those evaluations requiring assistance through the use of feedback to improve the evaluand during the development or delivery of the program will value from the formative evaluation process; where as, those looking to make a decision on the effectiveness of the program as a whole will appreciate the summative approach. In both cases, the ends are meant to be a correlation to their means. That being said, specific standards must be identified as a desired end for measurement purposes. There are times however, in which an evaluation can provide significant value to an evaluand without previous knowledge of the expected outcomes.

Biases can be detrimental to any evaluation. To minimize these effects, Scriven (1975) describes the use of goal-based evaluations. In these evaluations, the evaluator is not provided with the expected outcomes or goals of the evaluation. This typically forces the evaluator to work harder at finding any effects reducing the likelihood of missing a side effect. This has the potential of bringing out attributes of a program not previously known, allowing change of expected outcomes to match those of the existing contributions.

Evaluative Approach

Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) have classified program evaluation into twenty-six evaluation approaches. Of these approaches, five are classified as pseudoevaluations, fourteen as questions and methods-oriented, three as improvement/accountability-oriented, three as social agenda/advocacy, and one as eclectic. The approach used to fully assess a program's value is that of the improvement/accountability-oriented approach consisting of: (a) decision/accountability-oriented studies, (b) consumer-oriented studies, and (c) the accreditation/certification approach (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The improvement/accountability-oriented approach is comprehensive as it considers the full range of questions and criteria needed to assess a program based on such criteria as merit, worth, probity, importance, feasibility, safety, or equity and often employs the assessed needs of the program's stakeholder as the foundational criteria for assessing the program's worth. The core outcomes of this approach are to foster improvement and accountability, assist consumers in making decisions and assist in the accrediting of institutions and programs (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

“The decision- and accountability-oriented approach emphasizes that program evaluation should be used proactively to help improve a program as well as retroactively to judge its value” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 198). Philosophically, the objectivist orientation is used to identify the best answers to context-limited questions while subscribing to those principles found in a well-functioning democratic society. In practicality, the approach encourages stakeholders to address important questions, while providing timely and relevant feedback. The basis of this approach is to provide a

knowledge and value base for making decisions while being accountable as it relates to the use of services that are morally sound and cost effective.

In the consumer-oriented studies, the evaluator must draw direct evaluative conclusions about the program being evaluated. Grounded in a deeply reasoned view of ethics and the common good, together with skills in obtaining and synthesizing pertinent, valid and reliable information, the evaluator should help developers produce and deliver products and services that are of excellent quality and of great use to consumers. More importantly, the evaluator should help the consumer identify and assess the merit and worth of competing programs, services and products (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The philosophical objectivist approach looks at a program comprehensively in terms of quality and costs, functionality as it relates to the needs of the intended beneficiaries, while comparatively considering alternative programs.

In the accreditation/certification approach, institutions, programs and personnel are studied to determine whether they are fit to serve designated functions in society, on the basis of meeting minimum standards while in addition, identifying areas for improvement. Typical methods used in the accreditation/certification approach are self-study and self-reporting by the individual or institution, with some type of follow up by a panel of experts to confirm the findings. Any area of professional service that could put the public at risk if not delivered in accordance with good practice and safety should consider subjecting its programs and personnel to accreditation reviews. The major advantage of such a program is that it aids a layperson in making informed judgments about the quality of an organization, a program and/or qualifications of an individual. Some of the difficulties associated with accreditation lie with the guidelines of

accrediting and certifying bodies that tend to over emphasize inputs and processes and not outcomes. Furthermore difficulties are found in the self-study and visitation process, which offer many opportunities for corruption and acceptance of inadequate performance. Giving reason why it is essential to subject accreditation and certification processes themselves to independent metaevaluations (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

Need for Evaluation Standards

Evaluation is an emerging profession; following other professional fields, evaluators have established standards and principles for their work. “Standards help ensure that evaluators and their clients communicate effectively and reach a clear, mutual understanding concerning the criteria to be met by an evaluation” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 81). During the past three decades, evaluation has strengthened as a practice through the development and use of evaluation standards. During this time, these professional standards have become an integral part of wider community acceptance and expectance that such criteria and measures will be used for the quality and accountability of evaluations.

Many professions have developed and periodically update standards, principles and codes of performance in the interest of their personnel to provide competent, ethical and safe delivery of services. Often these standards, principles and codes are part of an accrediting, licensing or certification system intended to provide high quality service and to protect the public. Such standards, principles and codes are typically developed by a standing committee of distinguished members of a particular profession or government organization, typically referred to as experts in their field of work. According to

Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007), standards for program evaluations have several specific functions:

- Provide general principles for addressing a variety of practical issues in evaluation work
- Help ensure that evaluators will employ the evaluation field's best available practices
- Provide direction to make evaluation planning efficient and inclusive of pertinent evaluation questions
- Provide core content for training and educating evaluators and other participants in the evaluation process
- Present evaluators and their constituents with a common language to facilitate communications and collaboration
- Help evaluators achieve and maintain credibility with public oversight bodies and clients
- Earn and maintain the public's confidence in the evaluation field
- Protect consumers and society from harmful or corrupt practices
- Provide objective criteria for assessing and strengthening evaluation services
- Provide a basis for accountability by evaluators
- Provide a basis for adjudicating claims of malpractice and other disputes
- Provide a conceptual framework and working definitions to help guide research and development in evaluation. (p. 84)

There must be a shared understanding and agreement about what constitutes a good evaluation, and the Program Evaluation Standards are considered one of the most important sources of criteria to achieve this shared understanding and agreement (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Adherence to these and other professional standards provides the foundation to deliver sound and useful evaluation services.

Program Evaluation Standards

With the evolution of evaluation as a profession during the last quarter of the twentieth century, there was a growing desire amongst practitioners for acceptable codes, practice in evaluation. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) was established in 1975. Since that time, the standing committee is now sponsored by over seventeen professional societies with a combined membership of over

3 million. As with other professional standard organizations, the JCSEE is charged with performing ongoing development, reviews and revisions of the evaluation standards. In 1981, the JCSEE developed the first edition related to program evaluation called, *Standards for Evaluation of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials*. It was 1994 when the second edition, *The Program Evaluation Standards*, was released changing its focus to account for all program evaluations. It was not until 2011 before the third edition was released in which the fifth standard, evaluation accountability, was added.

The seventeen members of the original JCSEE were appointed by twelve professional organizations to capture the diverse perspectives and contributions of program evaluation stakeholders across the United States. The organizations and appointed members were representatives from, “school accreditation, counseling and guidance, curriculum, educational administration, higher education, educational measurement, educational research, educational governance, program evaluation, psychology, statistics and teaching” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p.87). One of the fundamental requirements of the original panel was to include an equal number of members representing evaluation client and practitioner perspectives.

Each of the thirty program evaluation standards contains a statement of the standard, an explanation of its requirements, a rationale, guidelines for carrying it out, common errors to be anticipated and avoided, and an illustrative case (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The JCSEE (1981) *The Standards For Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects, and Materials* incorporated the practice and theoretical knowledge about program evaluation at that time. Standards were organized into four major areas of concern experienced by the first generations of program evaluators: utility, feasibility,

propriety, accuracy, and in 2011 with the release of the 3rd Edition, evaluation accountability. The standards made clear that not all standards were equally applicable in all situations and that professional judgment would be needed on all aspects of program evaluations (Yarbrough, Shula, & Caruthers, 2004).

Utility

In its simplest terms, utility is based on the extent to which the program stakeholder finds the evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs (Yarbrough et al., 2011). The question has to be asked, if the evaluation is not useful for the stakeholder than what value did the evaluation provide? Value is the core component of every decision and judgment throughout an evaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2011) and in many educational and social programs, is found to be context dependent.

In order for an evaluation to be useful, the evaluator must understand the needs of the stakeholder and provide clear, concise and on time feedback (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The feedback should not only address the stakeholder's most important questions, strength and weaknesses but should obtain a full range of information to properly assess the merit, worth and significance of the program. The evaluator should then assist the stakeholder in studying and applying the findings. For any evaluation to be successful, "those persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that their findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance" (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation [JCSEE], 1981, p. 19). A systematic evaluation has the ability to validate programs, initiate beneficial changes to a programs contexts, policies, and

practices and are most beneficial when they contribute to the social betterment of the individual and organization (Yarbrough et al., 2011).

Five types of use are commonly found in the literature and field of evaluation. The first three are primarily related to the use of findings: instrumental, when decision makers use the evaluation findings to modify the evaluand; conceptual, when the evaluation findings help program staff understand the program in a new way; and enlightenment, when the evaluation findings add knowledge to the field and thus may be used by anyone, not just those involved with the program or evaluation of the program (Fleischer & Christie, 2009). A fourth use, process use, as defined by Patton (2008) is defined as “cognitive, behavioral, program and organizational changes resulting, either directly or indirectly, from engagement in the evaluation process and learning to thing evaluatively” (Patton, 2008, p. 108). The fifth type of use is persuasive or symbolic use where it is used politically to persuade others or to legitimize ones position in a political debate (Fleischer & Christie, 2009; Patton, 2008).

There are several challenges associated with implementing utility. According to *The Program Evaluation Standards 3rd Edition* (2011) evaluators must consider three challenges: the hidden needs of the stakeholders, how stakeholders will use the information, and changes that are likely to occur within and around the program as the evaluation is being performed. In addition to these challenges, the profession of evaluation recognizes that some evaluators fail to adhere to standards and/or principles (referred to as misevaluation) and that some evaluators are involved in misuse, where they manipulate the evaluation to distort the findings or corrupt the inquiry (Patton, 2008).

Over the past couple decades, process use has gained popularity in many evaluations. Process use refers to changes in cognitive, behavioral, program, and organizational changes resulting directly or indirectly from the evaluator engaging stakeholders during the evaluation process. Process use occurs when involved stakeholders learn or make changes resulting from the evaluation process (Patton, 2008).

The JCSEE defines the utility standard as, “the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs” (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2010, p. 4). This definition is similar to that put forth by Michael Quinn Patton. In his textbook *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 4th Edition, Patton (2008) defines program evaluation as, “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding” (Patton, 2008, p. 39). Through both definitions, useful evaluations lead to descriptions, insights, judgments, decisions, recommendations, and other processes that meet the needs of those requesting the evaluation. In terms of making effective change in social programs, utility is significantly important.

Feasibility

Feasibility relates to the degree of efficiency and effectiveness of an evaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2011). Evaluators should select procedures that minimize disruptions and that are feasible and realistic given the availability of time, budget, staff, and participants. There are four guidelines used to assist with the feasibility of an evaluation: ensure availability of qualified personnel to complete evaluation, choose procedures that

will be completed with reasonable effort at a compatible skill level of participating personnel, select procedures based on availability of participants and known time constraints, and whenever possible make evaluation activities part of routine events (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation [JCSEE], 1994).

Working to increase feasibility adds value to evaluation in three ways: good evaluation project management tends to (a) lead to successful evaluations, (b) bring the world of possible evaluation procedures to the world of practical procedures for a specific evaluation, and (c) serve as a precondition for other attributes of quality. “Overall, the feasibility standards require evaluations to be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, politically viable, frugal, and cost-effective” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 88).

To develop feasible evaluations, evaluators and stakeholders need to develop a shared understanding of the four key concepts: evaluability, context, values and accountability. Evaluability is the degree for which it is possible to evaluate a specific program at a specific time. Context is the cultural, political, economical, and geographical environments in which programs occur. Values refer to the system of concepts and qualities that stakeholders use to make judgment. Accountability refers to the related use in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Feasibility of an evaluation provides a sound practice that should ultimately facilitate the use of an evaluation.

Propriety

Propriety is intended to ensure evaluations will be conducted legally, ethically and with due regard for the welfare of those involved through the proper, fair, legal, right, acceptable, and just means within an evaluations (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation [JCSEE], 1994; Yarbrough et al., 2011). Ethics encompasses

concerns about the rights, responsibilities and behaviors of evaluators and the evaluation stakeholders that are to be addressed at all levels of the evaluation process. All applicable laws and rules should be followed with due regard for the people and organization involved with the evaluation. Professionalism requires knowledge of appropriate standards and principles combined with the dynamic understanding of contextual elements of the environment.

Accuracy

Accuracy is intended to ensure the evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information in order to determine the merit, worth and significance of an evaluand. *The Program Evaluation Standards* (2011) state, “Evaluations should strive for as much accuracy as is feasible, proper, and useful to support sound conclusions and decisions in specific situations” (Yarbrough et al., 2011, p. 158). Inconsistencies, distortions and misconceptions are three of the limiting factors that can occur within an evaluation. The accuracy standards are designed to minimize these effects and to promote truthfulness of evaluation findings and conclusion.

Evaluation Accountability Standards

The newest of the *Program Evaluation Standards* is that of Evaluation Accountability. The working definition of accountability as used by the *Program Evaluation Standards* (2011), “refers to the responsible use of resources to produce value” (Yarbrough et al., 2011, p. 226). Program evaluation supports the notion of evaluation accountability by investigating how programs are implemented, how programs could be improved, and the merit, worth and significance of the program to the stakeholders. Improving evaluation accountability requires similar efforts as those

described for program accountability. In essence it requires a systematic evaluation of an evaluation, commonly referred to as a metaevaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2011). This in turn provides a meaningful learning set for evaluators and evaluation users leading to better evaluations and uses of evaluations in the future.

Metaevaluation

Evaluations are vital instruments utilized by all industries and social groups to make judgment of an evaluand. The term metaevaluation is a systematic evaluation of an evaluation and its subcomponents. “Anyone who applies the utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and evaluation accountability standards to judge the quality of evaluations and their components is engaging in metaevaluation” (Yarbrough et al., 2011, p. 227). As referred to in the JCSEE *The Program Evaluation Standards* 2nd edition (1994) in terms of metaevaluation, “the evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards, so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses” (JCSEE, 1994, p. 185). Many times, evaluations can bring about the end of products, services or processes, ultimately leading to an enormous loss in the amount of time, energy and money from whom those were produced. Due to the tremendous power that can be associated with an evaluation, it is imperative that a metaevaluation is performed to either reinforce sound evaluations or dispute erroneous findings from the original evaluation. Although formative and summative metaevaluations may be performed internally, external metaevaluators generally provide an unbiased opinion that are more widely accepted as valid. This is especially true when the external evaluator selected is either not affiliated with the primary evaluation or encompasses such methods

and instrumentations such as the metaevaluation checklist in order to minimize any potential biases.

Metaevaluations, as a result of their relativity to compliance of a particular standard are sometimes referred to as a desk audit, which rely on existing documentation that is highly dependent on the quality of available evidence for decision making. Like other approaches associated with evaluations or audits, the metaevaluation should be meticulously catalogued and documented for transparency and replicability.

Metaevaluations are the backbone to defending or disproving evaluation practices. “Metaevaluations are in public, professional, and institutional interests to ensure that evaluations provide sound findings and conclusions, that evaluation practices continue to improve, and that institutions administer efficient, effective, ethical evaluation systems” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 649). Apart from ensuring the quality of an evaluation, metaevaluations should be used to provide direction for improvement and to earn and maintain credibility associated with the particular evaluand. For the purpose of this paper, the operational definition of metaevaluation is, “the process of delineating, obtaining, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about an evaluation’s utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability for the purposes of guiding the evaluation and reporting its strengths and weaknesses” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 635).

There are two key elements associated with this operational definition of metaevaluation: group process and discrete technical tasks. Group process refers to metaevaluators’ interaction with the client and other stakeholders. More specifically, the evaluator’s ability to acquire the necessary information, reach mutual understanding on

definitions and communicate. In presenting the findings to the client and stakeholders, the evaluator should assist the client in drawing justified conclusions and assist them in applying these findings. The discrete technical tasks refer to collecting, analyzing and synthesizing the information needed to judge the evaluation (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). These two elements provide the basis for judging of an evaluation.

The JCSEE Program Evaluation Standards 3rd edition created a new group of standards labeled evaluation accountability, in which it addressed the three evaluation accountability standards associated with a metaevaluation. The first new standard is (E1) Evaluation Documentation which states that evaluators should fully document their evaluations, (E2) Internal Metaevaluation which states evaluators should use these and other applicable standards to examine the components of an evaluation, and (E3) External Metaevaluation which encourages those involved with the evaluation to conduct an external metaevaluation using these and other applicable standards.

The operational definition of Accountability for this paper is the same as that used by the JCSEE Program Evaluation Standards 3rd edition; “the responsible use of resources, to produce value” (Yarbrough et al., 2011, p. 226). Program accountability is utilized in program evaluations to address how programs are implemented, could be improved, and the merit, worth and significance to the stakeholders (Yarbrough et al., 2011). Attending to the evaluation accountability standards is important for it guides improvements during all phases of evaluation design and implementation; leads to improved decision making; and allows for practitioners and other stakeholders to become more skillful in future practice (Yarbrough et al., 2011).

Metaevaluation Checklist

The need for a checklist, "is very useful, not just for evaluators and meta-evaluators, but for their clients and critics" (Scriven, 2012, p. 1). In the article *The Metaevaluation Imperative* (2001), Stufflebeam describes an instrument that could be used involving comparative assessments for a number of evaluations, which later became known as the Metaevaluation Checklist. Although this checklist reflects the JCSEE's Program Evaluation Standards (2011), the Committee was not asked to assess or endorse the checklist. With that said, the author developed this checklist based on his 35 years of experience, his involvement as the original Chairman in developing the Joint Committee's standards for evaluations of programs and his extensive work in researching and applying the standards and his numerous publications on their use.

The checklist is designed to assess completed program evaluations against professionally defined requirements for sound evaluations put forth by the JCSEE's Program Evaluation Standards (Yarbrough, et al., 2011). Its 30 standards are divided into five attributes that utilize six checkpoints to assess the evaluations adherence to each criterion. The checklist (Stufflebeam, 2011) is broken into five parts:

1. Start-up activities: includes gathering and studying information pertaining to the subject's evaluation and review relevant information and documentation.
2. Description of the subject evaluation: succinct factual description of the subject evaluation.
3. Ratings of the subject evaluation: assess the subject evaluation against each of the five categories.

4. Analysis of metaevaluation ratings: analyze, summarize and display the results of the metaevaluation.
5. Reporting metaevaluation findings: summarize the findings, including and deficiencies or inadequacies noted during the metaevaluation.

Evaluator Responsibilities

In his paper *Evaluating Evaluations: A Meta-Evaluation Checklist*, Scriven (2012) states that any professional evaluator including that of a meta-evaluator, has a basket of skill sets that may be implicit in terms of addressing the criteria of merit for an evaluation, however, he continues to state that by making those criteria explicit facilitates the evaluation and there by improving the meta-evaluation. Professional evaluators are guided by several documents including the *American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (2004) and the *Generally Accepted Government Accountability Office Government Auditing Standards* (GAGAS) of 2011, commonly referred to as the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Yellow Book. In terms of responsibility, as knowledgeable professionals, primary program evaluators have five basic principles they should follow for any evaluation: systematic inquiry, competence, integrity/honesty, respect for people, and responsibility for general public welfare (American Evaluation Association [AEA], 2004). In terms of the GAO, the GAGAS highlights the importance of proper accountability in their foundation and ethical principles stating, "management and officials entrusted with public resources are responsible for carrying out public functions and providing service to the public effectively, efficiently, economically, ethically, and equitably within the context of the statutory boundaries of the specific government program" (United States Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2011, p.

4). The GAGAS's framework for conducting high quality evaluations and audits uses competence, integrity, objectivity and independence as standards that must be followed by any evaluation performed for or in regards to any program that receive government awards. As a means of compliance with these guidelines for providing evaluations, evaluators should be driven to require metaevaluations of their work, communicating this need to their clients, sponsors and or other party that may also be responsible for obtaining and maintaining evaluation accountability.

Evaluation Use

Of the recognized leaders in political evaluations, Carol Weiss is probably one of the most widely acknowledged experts in the field. Her work as a political scientist has provided evaluators with an understanding of the politics associated with the use of evaluation findings within an organization. Politics are part of every decision including evaluation outcomes based on the context and field of power at that time. This occurs as contending parties seek to gain advantage, advance their political ideologies or push their particular interest (Weiss, 1999). Even with the acknowledged importance of information in decision-making, evaluation is only one component in the political process.

It is important to consider institutional context in the decision making processes as the organization's history, traditions, culture, standard operating practices, rules, budgets that may prove themselves to be powerful constraints on what can and cannot be considered. Weiss (1999) indicated that decision-making typically does not take place at one time but generally takes shape gradually, commonly referred to as decision accretion, in which many large and small political choices and policy judgments are made over several years, gradually narrowing the available alternatives. In many cases an individual

grows within an organization working in several different offices, making decisions in reflection of their position of power at that time. This continuity of slow change growth provides for stability; however, with the wrong direction and leadership it can set the organization adrift with no true direction or a purpose that does not align with public expectations.

Organizations sometimes are unwilling to utilize the evaluation findings, as there are no means for linking results to the organization's policy making. Typically this occurs when there are no feedback mechanisms established within the organization to the overseers and stakeholders. There is little to no accountability within the organization to ensure such feedback can occur. This relates directly back to the implementation of the evaluation findings and recommended changes as a result of evaluations that are poorly conducted, inadequately interpreted and afflicted with research biases (Weiss, 1999).

Accreditation in the Fire Services

Today more than ever, the fire service is faced with doing more with less, and struggling with government officials for any funding increases unless able to demonstrate improvement in service delivery to the community in a quantifiable way (Bruegman, 1995). With the total number of fire calls down since 1970 (Lawton, 1995), fire departments are struggling with defending their purpose and changing their focus.

The constant demand from local citizens to do more with less, requires local governmental agencies to reflect on those services and programs required of their citizens to ensure they are being maintained in the most efficient and effective manner for those resources provided within a particular agency or department. For governmental agencies, balancing what is provided to the public and what is not is consistently being debated in

the public setting. Citizens feel compelled to increase the transparency of its local governments, particularly in how they provide services and the cost for which those services are derived. More specifically, citizens feel they need to be more aware of how governmental agencies can provide fiscal responsibility, safety and stability within their respective communities (Piotrowski & Van Ryzin, 2007). Many governmental agencies look towards a sound recognized accreditation process to measure their capabilities in order to demonstrate their efficiencies and effectiveness.

Accrediting agencies periodically assess the performance of organizations against established standards using clear accreditation criteria and guidelines for self-assessments. The same is true in the fire services. “Accreditation is a way to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of a fire department by determining community risks and fire safety needs, accurately evaluating the organization’s performance and providing a method for continuous improvement” (Wolf, 2012, p. 1). Most accreditation programs begin with the organization performing a self-assessment typically taking a year to complete. Upon completion of the self-assessment, a team of external evaluators, appointed by the accrediting agency, reviews the self-assessment, conducts a site visit and writes an independent evaluation report to determine to what extent the subject organization or program is to be accredited.

To address concerns of their citizens, local governmental agencies are turning their focus towards proven methods of evaluation and assessment to determine funding priorities and to validate efficiencies and effectiveness of a given program. There are four main reasons fire departments tend to conduct an in-depth evaluation of ones department: (a) to cope with change, (b) to improve efficiencies and effectiveness, (c) to conform with

a change of leadership within the local government structure, and (d) to raise the level of performance and professionalism within the organization (Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. [CPSE], 2009). The agency is looking to answer three main questions when they perform these evaluations: is the organization effective, is the mission of the department being met in terms of its goals and objectives, and what are the reasons for the success or failure of department activities.

CFAI Standards

Mr. Robert Beckmann presented at the 81st Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) on May 16, 1977. His speech focused on the need for an accreditation process within the fire service. The self-evaluation is designed as a systematic assessment to determine how the department is functioning as compared to recognized standards. Mr. Beckmann said it best in his speech, “there is only one valid necessity for the accreditation function and process; namely, in the public interest and the welfare of society” (Beckmann, 1977, p. 4). Although there may be fringe benefits and auxiliary uses of the accreditation process, however, “if you can’t show a direct relationship to public interest and societal welfare, you don’t need accreditation” (Beckmann, 1977, p. 5). It was this speech that sparked the interest of the fire service and city governments across the country, to develop an accreditation program for the fire service.

The cornerstone in the development of the fire accreditation project relies on the self-assessment and performance evaluation, which plays a vital role in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire service agencies (Bruegman, 1995). The purpose of the accreditation process is to, “develop a comprehensive system of fire service

evaluation that could assist local government in determining their risks and fire safety needs, evaluate the performance of the organizations involved, and provide a method for continuous improvement” (Bruegman, 1995, p. 1).

The meetings between the International City Management Association (ICMA) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) in the later part of 1996 resulted in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two parties committing both organizations to the joint development of a voluntary national fire service accreditation system. This MOU was as a direct result of work completed by various personnel which ultimately began with the speech by Mr. Beckmann at the NFPA conference in 1977, stressing the need for an accreditation process within the fire service.

The original discussion regarding an accreditation process for the fire service came from a conversation between Warren Isman, the Fire Chief of Arlington, Virginia and the Chairman of ICMA in the early 1980’s (R. J. Coleman, personal communication, January 29, 2014). The Chairman argued law enforcement had an accreditation model, however, the fire service had none. Chief Ronny Coleman served as the Chairman of the Fire Accreditation Committee from that point until the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) came into existence. Reflecting on the importance to all-hazard response, the corporation’s name was changed to the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and CFAI became an entity under CPSE to assist organizations in transition from tactical deployment to strategic response.

CPSE administers the accreditation process for fire and EMS departments through the CFAI. Referred to as the most critical component of the accreditation process, departments must perform an internal risk assessment to identify overall service level

objectives, critical tasks, and staffing or other resource needs (Thiel & Jennings, 2012).

Materials acquired by departments in this process describe physical, economical and demographic factors to address the overall level of risk to the community. Utilization of historical data helps to illustrate not only the frequency of calls for service, but assists in determining probability and adequacy in terms of response.

Regardless of size, fire departments desiring to become accredited must complete a detailed self-assessment that examines more than 200 separate performance indicators, of which 100 are considered core or required competencies. The performance indicators then fall into 10 categories (Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. [CPSE], 2009):

- Assessment and planning
- Essential resources
- External systems relations
- Fiscal resources
- Goals and objectives
- Governance and administration
- Human resources
- Physical resources
- Programs
- Training and competency

Upon completion of the self-assessment by the organization, a team of peer site evaluators visits the department to verify and clarify information provided in the self-assessment. These peer evaluators are selected from departments with similar characteristics as those of the agency being evaluated. Based on the information compiled

by the team, they recommend either final accreditation or identify additional work that is needed.

The following are several significant benefits found in completing the CFAI accreditation process. The CFAI accreditation process:

- Promotes excellence with fire and emergency service organizations,
- Encourages quality improvement,
- Reassure peers and public organization has defined mission and objectives appropriate for jurisdiction it serves,
- Encourages a detailed evaluation of organization,
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses of organizations,
- Provides methodology for building on strengths and addressing weaknesses,
- Assures peers and public of departments efficiency and effectiveness,
- Provides communicating management and leadership philosophies and facilitating input from all internal/external stakeholders,
- Provides international recognition,
- Develops methods of documents, strategic and operational plans, and
- Fosters pride within the organization and community,

The CFAI agency accreditation process provides a systematic procedure to assist and assess agency capabilities against a set of recognized standards of acceptable practices. This process is different than most, in that accreditation is not measured on whether an agency is able to achieve those recognized standards, but instead measured against its own benchmarks, based on accepted levels of risk by local governmental officials. As the process stresses the importance of agencies to reach a recognized

standard level of acceptable practice, agencies will have to show what is being done to achieve those standard performance levels on their annual report and verified at the agency five-year re-accreditation on-site visit.

It is generally accepted amongst the evaluation community that not one decision making evaluative approach works best for every situation. With that said, most evaluators would deem it important for the model to provide an effective outcome for those stakeholders it serves. Scriven (1972) stated evaluators should not only examine the stated goals of a project but instead to look broader into the program both in terms of the intended and unintended outcomes. Suchman (1967) goes one step further and suggests that evaluators understand the intervening process that led to the outcomes. Stufflebeam (1974) states evaluation is a process of providing meaningful and useful information for decisions. Cronbach (1980) took this information one step further by stating that seldom does one individual make a decision about a program, but instead it is rather made in a policy-shaping community. (Cronbach, 1980)

As important as that of an evaluation itself, it is a metaevaluation practice that could be used in measuring the soundness of the overall evaluation. Noting how important the findings of an evaluation can be in an organization, care should be taken to ensure the method used to evaluate is a sound process. One such metaevaluation tool that has been vetted and proven to be successful in its findings is that of the metaevaluation checklist, developed by Stufflebeam (2011), that provides a systematic method in performing a metaevaluation utilizing the JCSEE's Program Evaluation Standards (2011) as a common set of criteria against which to measure the quality of a program evaluation.

Methods

Overview of the CFAI Agency Accreditation Process

The CFAI Agency Accreditation process has been described as a continuous self-assessment improvement model incorporating a Standard of Cover (SOC) to describe how the department meets or exceeds the CFAI Accreditation Standards followed by an on-site assessment performed by peer evaluators, as a validation tool. According to CFAI (CPSE, 2009), the cornerstone to their accreditation process is the voluntary self-assessment. Both the self-assessment and SOC are then judged by a group of peer assessors that perform an on-site assessment and provide a recommendation as to a department's accreditation status to the commission (CPSE, 2009). Due to the significant subjectivity of the process, CFAI has identified that peer reviewers from like organizations (e.g., community demographics, department size and type, etc.) provide the most effective form of assessment and means to validate the reliability of organizational information and performance.

The primary objective of the assessors' on-site visit is to determine the validity and reliability of an agency's self-assessment document. To do so, the on-site team of assessors, utilizes the Categories and Criteria section of the Fire and Emergency Service Self Assessment Manual (FESSAM) as their assessment tool (see Appendix A). Each assessment is broken into 10 categories encompassing 45 criteria that are further broken down into 244 performance indicators, 77 of which are classified as core competencies.

Agency responses to some of these categories and criteria are expected to vary significantly, resulting in peer assessors making subjective decisions on what constitutes an adequate response. The Assessors Handbook (2007) admits, "the professional

judgment of the assessor is the key for this subjective decision” (p. 104). To assist peer evaluators with these assessments and the subjective decisions that must be made, CFAI asks the assessor to consider the type of proof or response that was indicated, the ability and level of significance in relation to the agency’s mission statement, and the amount of conflicting information during interviews and review of the required documentation (Peer Assessors Handbook, 2007). In addition, CFAI has developed On-site Assessment Worksheets as a method of tracking an agency’s documentation to assist the peer assessor team during their on-site visit.

CFAI has developed a training program to ensure peer assessors have sufficient general education and special training and are recognized as practitioners or educators within the field of fire service leadership, management, training, education certifications, etc. (Assessor Handbook, 2007). Peer Assessment Team members are selected by the CFAI Program Manager and only considered after they themselves have completed the CFAI sponsored self-assessment, standards of cover, and peer assessor training programs. Peer Assessors are classified based on their experience with the teams and their ability to perform a site assessment as a means to promote quality and consistency amongst site assessments (Assessor Handbook, 2007).

Case for Metaevaluation

Without mechanisms such as metaevaluation to detect problems within a program, evaluations may produce erroneous results where the delivery of services is inefficient, ineffective and/or unfair. As Stufflebeam (2001) points out, “metaevaluations are in public, professional, and institutional interests to assure that evaluations provide sound findings and conclusions; that evaluation practices continue to improve; and that

institutions administer efficient, effective evaluation systems” (p. 183). As professional evaluators or those that oversee evaluation systems, it is imperative for the credibility of the program, to validate processes against one or more recognized standards through a metaevaluation to assure the services are defensible.

Design

This research will utilize a metaevaluation process to (a) assess the CFAI assessment plan for its utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and evaluator accountability as compared to that of the JCSEE’s (Yarbrough, et al., 2011) Program Evaluation Standards and (b) identify strengths and potential weaknesses associated with the CFAI assessment plan. This will be performed through the use of the City of Portage Fire Department’s initial accreditation process by CFAI, as a case study to provide the assessment. The following research questions will be utilized to address these questions:

6. To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the utility standard as developed by the JCSEE?
7. To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the feasibility standard as developed by the JCSEE?
8. To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the propriety standard as developed by the JCSEE?
9. To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the accuracy standard as developed by the JCSEE?
10. To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the evaluation standard as developed by the JCSEE?

Instrumentation

The metaevaluation will utilize the Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist (see Appendix B) developed by Stufflebeam (2011) as the measurement tool for this evaluation. Stufflebeam's (2011) metaevaluation checklist is intended, "for assessing program evaluations against professionally defined requirements for sound evaluations" (p. 3). The professionally defined requirements are in reference to the JCSEE's (Yarbrough, et al., 2011) Program Evaluation Standards. The checklist is broken into five parts with Part 4 where the 30 metaevaluation standards are identified and divided into the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards sections according to the five attributes: (1) utility, (2) feasibility, (3) propriety, (4) accuracy and (5) evaluator accountability. The checklist utilizes six checkpoints to assess the evaluations adherence to each criterion. Shown in Table 1 are the aforementioned attributes and their associated standards.

Table 1

The Program Evaluation Standards Checkpoints

Attributes	Standards	Checkpoints
Utility: Evaluation is aligned with stakeholders' needs.	U1: Evaluator Credibility	6
	U2: Attention to Stakeholders	6
	U3: Negotiated Purposes	6
	U4: Explicit Values	6
	U5: Relevant Information	6
	U6: Meaningful Process and Products	6
	U7: Timeliness and Appropriate Communication and Reporting	6
	U8: Concern for Consequences and Influence	6
Feasibility: Evaluation is viable and cost effective	F1: Project Management	6
	F2: Practical Procedures	6
	F3: Context Viability	6
	F4: Resource Use	6
Propriety: Evaluation is ethical, relevant and professional	P1: Responsive and Inclusive Orientation	6
	P2: Formal Agreements	6
	P3: Human Rights and Respect	6
	P4: Clarity and Fairness	6
	P5: Transparency and Disclosure	6
	P6: Conflicts of Interests	6
	P7: Fiscal Responsibility	6
Accuracy: Merit in theory, design, methods and reasoning	A1: Justified Conclusions and Decisions	6
	A2: Valid Information	6
	A3: Reliable Information	6
	A4: Explicit Program and Content Descriptions	6
	A5: Information Management	6
	A6: Sound Designs and Analyses	6
	A7: Explicit Evaluation Reasoning	6
	A8: Communicating and Reporting	6
Evaluation Accountability: Evaluation is systematic, transparent and valid	E1: Evaluation Documentation	6
	E2: Internal Metaevaluation	6
	E3: External Metaevaluation	6

The Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2011) was explicitly designed around the JCSEE's (Yarbrough, et al., 2011) Program Evaluation Standards. The checklist is used to assess all 30 standards within the 5 attributes, utilizing

a scale of 0-6 to measure an evaluations level of compliance with these standards.

Although endorsement for the checklist was never sought or acquired by the JCSEE, it is important to note that Daniel Stufflebeam, the author of this checklist, was the original chair of the JCSEE and served as principle author for the original *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981).

Procedures

In accordance with the instructions for applying the checklist (Stufflebeam, 2011), there are five stages in applying the checklist.

1. *Part 1 – Start-up Activities:* The meta-evaluator must have reviewed the JCSEE's (Yarbrough, et al., 2010) Program Evaluation Standards and then gather and study information pertaining to the subject evaluation purpose, audience, procedures, execution, reports, uses, etc. Review existing documents and interview evaluation clients, evaluators, program personnel and program recipients as needed.
2. *Part 2 – Description of the Subject Evaluation:* A succinct, factual description of the subject evaluation must be completed. For this research, the CFAI Agency Accreditation process will be the basis for this study (Attachment D).
3. *Part 3 – Ratings of the Subject Evaluation:* Each checkpoint is used to judge an evaluation against each standard. Each checkpoint is to be marked with a plus (+) if met, a minus (-) if not met, a question mark (?) if insufficient information is available to render a judgment, and a star (*) or circle around a mark allows for commentary on a particular checkpoint. Based on the number of +s, rate each standard as follows: 0-1 Poor, 2-3 Fair, 4 Good, 5 Very Good, and 6 Excellent. Score the evaluation on each of the categories and convert each category's score

to a percentage that is used to determine the strength of the evaluation as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

The Program Evaluation Standards Evaluation Strength

Attributes	Standards	Strength of Evaluation	
Utility:	8	Excellent	29.4to 32 (92-100%)
		Very Good	21.44 to 29.43 (67-91.99%)
		Good	13.44 to 21.43 (42-66.99%)
		Fair	5.44 to 13.43 (17-41.99%)
		Poor	0 to 5.43 (0-16.99%)
Feasibility:	4	Excellent	14.72 to 16 (92-100%)
		Very Good	10.72 to 14.71 (67-91.99%)
		Good	6.72 to 10.71 (42-66.99%)
		Fair	2.72 to 6.71 (17-41.99%)
		Poor	0 to 2.71 (0-16.99%)
Propriety:	7	Excellent	26.76 to 28 (92-100%)
		Very Good	18.76 to 26.75 (67-91.99%)
		Good	11.76 to 18.75 (42-66.99%)
		Fair	4.76 to 11.75 (17-41.99%)
		Poor	0 to 4.75 (0-16.99%)
Accuracy:	8	Excellent	29.44 to 32 (92-100%)
		Very Good	21.44 to 29.43 (67-91.99%)
		Good	13.44 to 21.43 (42-66.99%)
		Fair	5.44 to 13.43 (17-41.99%)
		Poor	0 to 5.43 (0-16.99%)
Evaluation Accountability:	3	Excellent	11.04 to 12 (92-100%)
		Very Good	8.04 to 11.03 (67-91.99%)
		Good	5.04 to 8.03 (42-66.99%)
		Fair	2.04 to 5.03 (17-41.99%)
		Poor	0 to 2.03 (0-16.99%)

4. *Part 4 – Analysis of Metaevaluation Ratings:* The meta-evaluator analyzes, summarizes and displays the weighted results of the subject metaevaluation. The default rating is set to show equal weight distribution amongst all five attributes assuming each is equally important. Results are displayed as an illustrative chart summarizing judgment for each criteria, category and overall merit across all

standards. Each of which is accompanied by a summary of judgments. Weight distribution may be modified, as identified by the client and evaluator, to reflect the importance of one or more attributes over others. Narratives should be provided as needed to highlight information associated with specific standards as identified in Part 3.

5. *Part 5 – Reporting Metaevaluation Findings:* The meta-evaluator provides a final report on the metaevaluation. The report will expand on any deficiencies noted in the metaevaluation due to any deficient performance by the meta-evaluator, inadequate documentation by the evaluator, or other significant factors to note from the findings.

Limitations

In terms of limitations, of primary concern with this study was the question as to how a single case study can effectively allow for judgment on a particular evaluation model. To address these concerns, and assist in the ability to generalize the findings, I utilized a sounding board consisting of three senior peer assessors, deemed as experts in the application of the accreditation process from CFAI, along with the assistance of the current CFAI Program Director Karl Ristow, to provide feedback as to accuracy of the findings.

Second was the limited experience of this evaluator in applying the use of the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011). I utilized two members of my committee: Dr. Daniel Stufflebeam, author of the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011), and Dr. Chris Coryn due to their vast experience and application of the metaevaluation process to metaevaluate my findings and applicable use of the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011). The third committee

member, Dr. William Fales, was utilized for his vast experience with case studies in the medical community.

Administering the Metaevaluation

A sounding board was developed to assist the evaluator with the evaluation process. The sounding board was assembled from members associated with CFAI, knowledgeable of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process, and selected by CFAI senior staff. The evaluator utilized this board to ensure the evaluation is clear, factual and true. The board provided access to all relevant documents and data, interviews as requested by the meta-evaluator, and answer questions related to the evaluation being performed. Findings and final report will be provided to the Director of CPSE and/or designee as agreed upon as stated in the formal signed agreement.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process, a case for metaevaluation, the evaluation design, and a description of the Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist as developed by Stufflebeam (2011) that will be used as the instrument for measuring the CFAI Accreditation System. Secondly, it described the use of the sounding board for assistance during the evaluation and addressed to who/whom the outcome report and findings will be provided.

Results

This chapter reports the scoring results from the Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Checklist (2011), as described in Chapter 3, utilized for assessing the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. The CFAI process was evaluated against

professionally defined requirements of the JCSEE's Program Evaluation Standards (Yarbrough, et al., 2011) through a case study of the Portage Fire Department's 2015 initial accreditation process by CFAI. This chapter on results is centered on these five focal questions:

1. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the utility standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
2. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the feasibility standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
3. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the propriety standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
4. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the accuracy standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
5. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the evaluation accountability standards as developed by the JCSEE?*

Checklist Findings

The 30 metaevaluation standards are identified and divided into the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards' sections on utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and evaluation accountability as shown in Table 3. For each standard, six checkpoints are listed from the JCSEE's explanation of the standard are listed, plus commentary for further explanation of the rating. For scoring purposes, each checkpoint was marked with a plus (+) if met, and a minus (-) if not met. The checkpoints were then translated to a score of one (1) for each plus (+) with values ranging from 0-6 with six (6) then categorically classified as excellent; five (5) classified as very good; four (4) classified as

good; two to three (2-3) classified as fair; and zero to one (0-1) classified as poor. The scores for each standard were then summarized and converted to a percentage to assess judgment of the domain.

Table 3

CFAI Scores for Each Metaevaluation Standard

Utility		
	Standard	Score
U1	Evaluator Credibility	6
U2	Attention to Stakeholders	6
U3	Negotiated Purposes	6
U4	Explicit Values	6
U5	Relevant Information	6
U6	Meaningful Processes and Products	5
U7	Timely and Appropriate Communicating and Reporting	4
U8	Concern for Consequences and Influences	6
Feasibility		
	Standard	Score
F1	Project Management	6
F2	Practical Procedures	6
F3	Contextual Viability	6
F4	Resource Use	5
Propriety		
	Standard	Score
P1	Responsive and Inclusive Orientation	6
P2	Formal Agreements	5
P3	Human Rights and Respect	6
P4	Clarity and Fairness	6
P5	Transparency and Disclosure	6
P6	Conflicts of Interests	6
P7	Fiscal Responsibility	6
Accuracy		
	Standard	Score
A1	Justified Conclusions and Decisions	6
A2	Valid Information	6
A3	Reliable Information	1
A4	Explicit Program and Context Descriptions	5
A5	Information Management	6
A6	Sound Designs and Analysis	5
A7	Explicit Evaluation Reasoning	5
A8	Communication and Reporting	6

Table 3 – Continued

Evaluation Accountability		
	Standard	Score
EA1	Evaluation Documentation	6
EA2	Internal Metaevaluation	6
EA3	External Metaevaluation	5

Table 4 provides the domain's descriptive statistical information related to the number of plus's (+) achieved by each standard. Utility is composed of eight standards, the range of which was 4-6, with a mean of 5.63 and a standard deviation of 0.74. Feasibility is composed of four standards, the range of which was 5-6, with a mean of 5.75 and a standard deviation of 0.50. Propriety is composed of seven standards, the range of which was 5-6, with a mean of 5.86 and a standard deviation of 0.38. Accuracy is composed of eight standards, the range of which was 1-6, with a mean of 5.0 and a standard deviation of 1.69. Lastly, Evaluation Accountability is composed of three standards, the range of which was 5-6, with a mean of 5.33 and a standard deviation of 0.58.

Table 4

Metaevaluation Domains Descriptive Statistics

Domain	N	Total (+)'s	Min/Max	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Utility	8	45	4/6	5.63	0.74	6
Feasibility	4	23	5/6	5.75	0.50	6
Propriety	7	41	5/6	5.86	0.38	6
Accuracy	8	40	1/6	5.0	1.69	5.5
Evaluation Accountability	3	16	5/6	5.33	0.58	5

Table 5 provides the total score and strength of the five domains. To address strength, each domain noted the number of excellent ratings that had a multiplier of four

(4), very good ratings with a multiplier of three (3), good ratings with a multiplier of two (2), and fair ratings with a multiplier of one (1). A sum of these scores were then divided by the total number of possible points and multiplied by 100. The eight standards of utility were summed for a total score of 29 out of a potential 32 points resulting in a strength of 90.6 percent, indicating a quality of *Very Good*. The four standards of feasibility were summed for a total score of 15 out of a potential 16 points resulting in a strength of 93.8 percent, indicating a quality of *Excellent*. The seven standards of propriety were summed for a total score of 27 out of a potential 28 points resulting in a strength of 96.4 percent, also indicating a quality of *Excellent*. The eight standards of accuracy were summed for a total score of 25 out of a potential 32 points resulting in a strength of 78.1 percent, indicating a quality of *Very Good*. The three standards of evaluation accountability were summed for a total score of 10 out of a potential 12 points resulting in a strength of 83.3 percent, indicating a quality of *Very Good*. These are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Program Evaluations Metaevaluation Domain Strength and Quality

Domain	Total Score	Strength	Quality
Utility	29	90.6%	Very Good
Feasibility	15	93.8%	Excellent
Propriety	27	96.4%	Excellent
Accuracy	25	78.1%	Very Good
Evaluation Accountability	10	83.3%	Very Good

Checklist Findings on the Evaluation's Soundness

The following is a checkpoint-by-checkpoint assessment of the CFAI Program Accreditation process utilizing six criterion for each of the 30 standards that are divided

into five major categories of utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and evaluation accountability. Attempts were made by the evaluator to consider all aspects of a sound evaluation plan, including but not limited to the framework, products, and follow-up methods used within the process. For each of the 180 checkpoints, items were scored as either a plus (+) if the information was present or minus (-) if it was not present.

<p>The 30 Metaevaluation Standards (Grouped into UTILITY, FEASIBILITY, PROPRIETY, ACCURACY, & EVALUATION ACCOUNTABILITY)</p>				
<p><i>THE UTILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS ALIGNED WITH STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS SUCH THAT PROCESS USES, FINDINGS USES, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE INFLUENCES ARE POSSIBLE.</i></p>				
<p>U1 Evaluator Credibility. [Evaluations should be conducted by qualified people who establish and maintain credibility in the evaluation context.]</p>				
<p>[+] Engage evaluators who possess the needed knowledge, skills, experience, and professional credentials [+] Engage evaluators whose evaluation qualifications, communication skills, and methodological approach are a good fit to the stakeholders' situation and needs [+] Engage evaluators who are appropriately sensitive and responsive to issues of gender, socioeconomic status, race, language, and culture [+] Engage evaluators who build good working relationships, and listen, observe, clarify, and attend appropriately to stakeholders' criticisms and suggestions [+] Engage evaluators who have a record of keeping evaluations moving forward while effectively addressing evaluation users' information needs [+] Give stakeholders information on the evaluation plan's technical quality and practicality, e.g., as assessed by an independent evaluation expert</p>				
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>				
<p>Comment re. U1, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 6 of the CFAI Policy and Procedures manual Amended March 3, 2011; Part XIII: Peer Assessment Team Criteria provides requirements for Peer Assessor Level 1 and 2, and Peer Assessment Team Leader. • Agencies participating in the accreditation process are required to provide at least one qualified person to participate as a peer assessor to evaluate other agencies. These individuals are required to complete the Self Assessment, Standard of Cover, and on-line Peer Assessor module within one-year of their first team assignment. • The initial stage in applying as a peer assessor, personnel are required to complete a Personal Resource Inventory (PRI) that is submitted to the CFAI Program Manager. The Program Manager reviews the information, interviews the candidate and makes final recommendation as to whether the individual will be allowed to participate as a peer assessor. Although subjective in nature, strength of the PRI, along with Program Manager's competence and dedication to continuous overview of the Assessment Team members will strengthen these criteria. • The CFAI Program Manager attempts to place peer assessors with agencies seeking accreditation in terms of similar organizations, demographics, size, etc. • Peer assessors are required to complete a minimum of 2 hours of continuing education each year to maintain their status as a peer assessor. • CFAI is beginning the process of requiring peer assessors to be personally 				

<p>credentialed at their designated level of Fire Officer (FO), Chief Training Officer (CTO), Fire Marshal (FM), or Chief Fire Officer (CFO).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Assessment Team Leaders are selected only after demonstrating their ability to properly manage on-site visits and adequately produce final documentation representative of a quality assessment of an agency • Final evaluation plan is reviewed and approved by the Commission of Fire Accreditation International.
<p>U2 Attention to Stakeholders. <i>[Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program or affected by the evaluation.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Clearly identify and arrange for ongoing interaction with the evaluation client</p> <p>[+] Identify and arrange for appropriate exchange with the other right-to-know audiences, including, among others, the program's authority figures, implementers, beneficiaries, and funders</p> <p>[+] Search out & invite input from groups or communities whose perspectives are typically excluded, especially stakeholders who might be hindered by the evaluation</p> <p>[+] Help stakeholders understand the evaluation's boundaries and purposes and engage them to uncover assumptions, interests, values, behaviors, and concerns regarding the program</p> <p>[+] Determine how stakeholders intend to use the evaluation's findings</p> <p>[+] Involve and inform stakeholders about the evaluation's progress and findings throughout the process, as appropriate</p>
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>
<p>Comment re. U2, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once obtaining Applicant Agency status the mentor was in constant contact with the department program manager (Firefighter Moore). Once all required documents were provided to CFAI for review the agency moved into the Accreditation Candidate Status where the Team Leader of the assessment team began constant communication with the department program manager. • The process required the department to seek out input from all identified stakeholders. In this case, the stakeholders as identified in the strategic plan, were all personnel within the department, city management, city council and the general public. Numerous meetings with fire personnel took place over the course of 18 months during the accreditation phase to solicit input on direction and needs. The department promoted an open house to solicit input from the general public in the fall of 2015, however only fire department personnel showed. As a result, a presentation on the findings was provided to council at a Council of the Whole (COW) meeting. This allowed an opportunity for council to provide feedback and ask questions. • 44 criteria broken down into 253 detailed performance indicators were used to describe performance of agency. This tool proved to be valuable to the organization through answering of specific questions related to the agency. • This process required the agency to describe goals and objectives within Standard of Cover as to use of the findings • There was no requirement to inform stakeholders on findings throughout

process.
U3 Negotiated Purposes. <i>[Evaluation purposes should be identified and revisited based on the needs of stakeholders.]</i>
<p>[+] Identify the client's stated purposes for the evaluation</p> <p>[+] Engage the client and stakeholders to weigh stated evaluation purposes—e.g., against their perceptions of dilemmas, quandaries, and desired evaluation outcomes—and to embrace evaluation's bottom line goal of assessing value, e.g., a program's worth, merit, or significance</p> <p>[+] Help the client group consider possible alternative evaluation purposes, e.g., program planning, development, management, and improvement; program documentation and accountability; and judging the program's quality, impacts, and worth</p> <p>[+] Engage the client to clarify and prioritize the evaluation's purposes using appropriate tools such as needs assessments and logic models</p> <p>[+] Provide for engaging the client group periodically to revisit and, as appropriate, update the evaluation's purposes</p> <p>[+] Assure that initial and updated evaluation purposes are communicated to the full range of stakeholders</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
<p>Comment re. U3, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self assessment workshop, required for at least one member of each agency, helps agencies with their stated purpose of an evaluation and possible alternatives of the purpose as identified during an agencies self assessment process. • The peer assessment team provided a four-day on site visit to verify program's worth, merit, or significance as described in the Standard of Cover (SOC) and Strategic Plan. • The process only provides feedback on deficient items and as to why they are deficient. There are no mechanisms in process that allows for recommendations to be given in order to provide for improvement based on organization dynamics. • A needs assessment is required for all SOC's with goals and objectives as outcomes of the assessment. • The process requires annual compliance reports in order to provide updates on progress towards department goals and needs of organization. • The process requires the Strategic Plan to be adopted or signed off as reviewed and approved by senior city management or council.
U4 Explicit Values. <i>[Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning the evaluation purposes, processes, and judgments.]</i>

<p>[+] Make clear the evaluator's commitment to certain, relevant values, e.g., an evaluation's utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability and a program's equity, fairness, excellence, effectiveness, safety, efficiency, fiscal accountability, legality, and freedom from fraud, waste, and abuse</p> <p>[+] Engage the client and program stakeholders in an effective process of values clarification, which may include examining the needs of targeted program beneficiaries, the basis for program goals, and the rationale for defined evaluation purposes</p> <p>[+] Assist the client group to air and discuss their common and discrepant views of what values and purposes should guide the program evaluation</p> <p>[+] Acknowledge and show respect for stakeholders' possibly diverse perspectives on value matters, e.g., by assisting them to seek consensus or at least reach an accommodation regarding possible alternative interpretations of findings against different values</p> <p>[+] clarify the values that will undergird the evaluation, taking account of client, stakeholder, and evaluator positions on this matter</p> <p>[+] Act to ensure that the client and full range of stakeholders understand and respect the values that will guide the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the evaluation's information</p>
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>
<p>Comment re. U4, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The self-assessment workshop assisted agency members in value clarification and stakeholder involvement in the process. • Assessment Team members are selected for specific program evaluation, based on "like" organization from which they had or currently preside. • The mentor assigned to the organization seeking accreditation, provided clear commitment through careful examination and recommendations with examples related to values associated with utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and accountability.
<p>U5 Relevant Information. <i>[Evaluation information should serve the identified and emergent needs of intended users.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Interview stakeholders to determine their different perspectives, information needs, and views of what constitutes credible, acceptable information</p> <p>[+] Plan to obtain sufficient information to address the client group's most important information needs</p> <p>[+] Assess and adapt the information collection plan to assure adequate scope for assessing the program's value, e.g., its worth, merit, or significance</p> <p>[+] Assure that the obtained information will address and keep within the boundaries of the evaluation's stated purposes and key questions</p> <p>[+] Allocate time and resources to collecting different parts of the needed information in consideration of their differential importance</p> <p>[+] Allow flexibility during the evaluation process for revising the information collection plan pursuant to emergence of new, legitimate information needs</p>
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>

Comment re. U5, as appropriate:

- The process requires stakeholders' input.
- The primary task, as identified in the Peer Assessor/Team Leader Handbook, is for Assessors to determine whether or not an agency has satisfactorily documented activities consistent with each of the program performance indicators.
- On-site practice of the team is to interview key organizational personnel.
- Review of the department's self-assessment information and on-site interviews provides the opportunity to determine the group's most important information.
- FESSAM and SOC documents, completed by the agency, are used as a foundation to assess the agency by the designated peer review group prior to and during the site assessment.
- The Peer Assessment Team, according to the Peer Assessor/Team Leader Handbook, will have to be flexible during the verification process and to utilize the CFAI On-Site Assessment Worksheets for guidance and documentation.

U6 Meaningful Processes and Products. *[Evaluation activities, descriptions, findings, and judgments should encourage use.]*

[-] Budget evaluation time and resources to allow for meaningful exchange with stakeholders throughout the evaluation process

[+] Engage the full range of stakeholders to assess the original evaluation plan's meaningfulness for their intended uses

[+] During the evaluation process, regularly visit with stakeholders' to assess their evaluation needs and expectations, also, as appropriate, to obtain their assistance in executing the evaluation plan

[+] Regularly obtain stakeholders' reactions to the meaningfulness of evaluation procedures and processes

[+] Invite stakeholders to react to and discuss the accuracy, clarity, and meaningfulness of evaluation reports

[+] As appropriate, adapt evaluation procedures, processes, and reports to assure that they meaningfully address stakeholder needs

☐ 6 Excellent ☒ 5 Very Good ☐ 4 Good ☐ 2-3 Fair ☐ 0-1 Poor

Comment re. U6, as appropriate:

- The process lacked the mechanism to gauge estimated hours, manpower, etc.
- After reviewing the SOC, Self-Assessment and Strategic Plan submitted by the requesting agency, Team Leader and agency manager coordinated a time frame (typically 3-7 days) for which to verify items listed in documentation.
- The Peer Assessment Team would interview key organizational personnel, members of the governing board, advisory committee, and other persons associated with the fire service delivery system.
- During the on-site assessment, the Peer Assessment Team is required to have constant communication with the agency throughout the process on items such as schedules, reports, and additional information.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assessment Team is required to review findings with the agency prior to leaving the on-site assessment. • There is an assumption the Assessment Team is obtaining the stakeholders' reactions as to the meaningfulness of the evaluation procedures and processes. • There does not appear to be any guidance on modifications that can be made by the Team in regards to the evaluation procedures, processes or reports. • There is an expectation of the process that the Fire Chief of the agency seeking accreditation will have the necessary insight and is competent in providing information and reports to stakeholders that will meet or exceed their expectations.
<p>U7 Timeliness and Appropriate Communication and Reporting. <i>[Evaluations should attend in a timely and ongoing way to the reporting and dissemination needs of stakeholders.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Plan to deliver evaluation feedback pursuant to the client group's projection of when they will need reports, but allow flexibility for responding to changes in the program's timeline and needs</p> <p>[+] Plan, as appropriate, to give stakeholders access to important information as it emerges</p> <p>[+] Employ reporting formats and media that accommodate the characteristics and serve the needs of the different audiences</p> <p>[-] Determine how much technical detail to report by identifying and taking account of the audience's technical background and expectations</p> <p>[-] Plan and budget evaluation follow-up activities so that the evaluator can assist the client group to interpret and make effective use of the final evaluation report</p> <p>[+] Pursuant to the above checkpoints, formalize expectations for communicating and reporting to the sponsor and stakeholders in the evaluation contract</p>
<p>[] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [X] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>
<p>Comment re. U7, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFAI has identified clear timelines on when reports were to be submitted by the agency seeking accreditation. Feedback is provided by the agencies CFAI mentor in a timely fashion as to not hold up the ability of the agency to submit final reports. • Feedback is provided to stakeholders in all phases of the process, with the final feedback provided at the accreditation hearing. • Agencies are required to submit all documents electronically. There does not appear to be a method of submitting reports in any other fashion. • Technical details required for accreditation does not differ for different agencies. There is nothing specifically noted that requires reports be written in a manner to match the organizations technical background and expectations. • There are no mechanisms where the evaluator can interpret and assist in the use of final report. More specifically, there is no follow-up method to provide assistance in achieving desired results. This practice may prove more fruitful for the accreditation program should experts in areas of deficiencies be available to provide the desired guidance for compliance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are clear directions for providing formal feedback during the various stages of the process. 	
U8 Concern for Consequences and Influence. <i>[Evaluations should promote responsible and adaptive use while guarding against unintended negative consequences and misuse.]</i>	
<p>[+] Identify the stakeholders' formal and informal communication mechanisms that connect stakeholders and, as appropriate, channel evaluation findings through these mechanisms</p> <p>[+] Be vigilant and proactive in identifying and appropriately communicating with stakeholders who appear to be sabotaging the evaluation and, as necessary, counteract the sabotage</p> <p>[+] Plan to meet, as appropriate, with stakeholders to help them apply findings in ways that are logical, meaningful, ethical, effective, and transparent</p> <p>[+] In discussing evaluation findings with the client group stress the importance of applying the findings in accordance with the evaluation's negotiated purposes</p> <p>[+] Be vigilant to identify, prevent, or appropriately address any misuses of evaluation findings</p> <p>[+] Follow up evaluation reports to determine if and how stakeholders applied the findings</p>	
[+] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor	
Comment re. U8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self-assessment workshop provides information on formal and informal communication methods to best reach and connect stakeholders. It is the expectation that the Fire Chief and staff are competent in detecting potential sabotage and will instill counter mechanisms to prevent such actions from occurring. The system relies on the agency to address the findings in a way that is logical, meaningful, ethical effective, and transparent for each stakeholder. There are no negotiated purposes identified before beginning the accreditation process. It is the expectation of the Fire Chief to provide guidelines and formats for agencies to assist stakeholders in applying, but not misusing findings. Accredited agencies are required to provide annual reports to describe changes that have been made to reach desired outcomes. 	
Scoring the Evaluation for UTILITY Add the following: Number of Excellent ratings (0-8) <u>6</u> x 4 = <u>24</u> Number of Very Good (0-8) <u>1</u> x 3 = <u>3</u> Number of Good (0-8)	Strength of the evaluation's provisions for UTILITY: [] 29.44 (92%) to 32: Excellent [X] 21.44 (67%) to 29.43: Very Good [] 13.44 (42%) to 21.43: Good [] 5.44 (17%) to 13.43: Fair [] 0 (0%) to 5.43: Poor

$\frac{1}{2} \times 2 = 2$ Number of Fair (0-8) _____ $\times 1 =$ _____ Total score: $= 29$	$\frac{29 \text{ (Total score)}}{32} = .906 \times 100 = 90.6\%$
THE FEASIBILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS VIABLE, REALISTIC, CONTEXTUALLY SENSITIVE, RESPONSIVE, PRUDENT, DIPLOMATIC, POLITICALLY VIABLE, EFFICIENT, AND COST EFFECTIVE.	
F1 Project Management. <i>[Evaluations should use effective project management strategies.]</i>	
[+] Ground management of the evaluation in knowledge of the stakeholders' environment and needs and the evaluation's purposes [+] Prepare a formal management plan including, e.g., the evaluation's goals, procedures, assignments, communication, reporting, schedule, budget, monitoring arrangements, risk management arrangements, and accounting procedures [+] Recruit evaluation staff members who collectively have knowledge, skills, and experience required to execute, explain, monitor, and maintain rigor, viability, and credibility in the evaluation process [+] Involve and regularly inform an appropriate range of stakeholders [+] Systematically oversee and document the evaluation's activities and expenditures [+] Periodically review the evaluation's progress and, as appropriate, update the evaluation plan and procedures	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor	
Comment re. F1, as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solid self-assessment instrument directs information needed to properly assess operations. • Project management tools are made available but lack use. • It is expected the Fire Chief will employ staff with the knowledge, skills, and experience for the accreditation process. • The process requires stakeholders to be identified and informed. • One of the greatest strengths is the required interaction with the agency mentor for oversight on progress and provides formative feedback throughout development of documents. 	
F2 Practical Procedures. <i>[The procedures should be practical and responsive to the way the program operates.]</i>	
[+] Assess and confirm the program's evaluability before deciding to proceed with the evaluation [+] Employ procedures that fit well within the program and its environment [+] Assure that the selected procedures take account of and equitably accommodate the characteristics and needs of diverse stakeholders	

[+] Obtain relevant insider knowledge and incorporate it into the data collection process														
[+] Make efficient use of existing information and avoid needless duplication in collecting data														
[+] Conduct the evaluation so as to minimize disruption to the program														
[X]	6	Excellent	[]	5	Very Good	[]	4	Good	[]	2-3	Fair	[]	0-1	Poor
Comment re. F2, as appropriate:														
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is an expectation that information obtained by those personnel who attend the self-assessment workshop, with the assistance of the Fire Chief and administration, will determine the agencies evaluability before deciding to proceed with the evaluation.• It is applicable across multitude of agencies on premise of the self-assessment model.• The self-assessment measurement allows for diversity.• On-site interviews with various stakeholders validate information contained in SOC.• Although participants could consider some information required for self-assessment redundant, the questions associated with the self-assessment are modified in such a way to seek additional information closely related but not duplicated.• The Assessment Team on-site assessment is at the direction of the program manager to prevent any disruption to operations.														
F3 Contextual Viability. <i>[Evaluations should recognize, monitor, and balance the cultural and political interests and needs of individuals and groups.]</i>														
[+] Investigate the program's cultural, political, and economic contexts by reviewing such items as the program's funding proposal, budget documents, organizational charts, reports, and news media accounts and by interviewing such stakeholders as the program's funder, policy board members, director, staff, recipients, and area residents														
[+] Take into account the interests and needs of stakeholders in the process of designing, contracting for, and staffing the evaluation														
[+] Enlist stakeholder and interest group support through such means as regular exchange with a review panel composed of a representative group of stakeholders														
[+] Practice even-handedness and responsiveness in relating to all stakeholders, e.g., in the composition of focus groups														
[+] Avert or identify and counteract attempts to bias or misapply the findings														
[+] Provide appropriate mechanisms for stakeholders to remain informed about the evaluation's progress and findings, such as an evaluation project website, an evaluation newsletter, targeted reports, and a telephone response line														
[X]	6	Excellent	[]	5	Very Good	[]	4	Good	[]	2-3	Fair	[]	0-1	Poor

Comment re. F3, as appropriate:

- Items are all documented in self-assessment and verified with on-site interviews.
- It is the expectation that the Fire Chief understands the interest and needs of the stakeholders in such a way to most adequately staff the accreditation process.
- Stakeholders are interviewed with on-site assessment team.
- Interview procedures are described in Team Assessment manual to avoid biasing.
- The team is required to provide an oversight on findings before departure from on-site visit.

F4 Resource Use. *[Evaluations should use resources effectively and efficiently.]*

[+] Negotiate a budget--ensuring that the contracted evaluation work can be completed efficiently and effectively—to include the needed funds and the necessary in-kind support and cooperation of program personnel

[+] Balance effectiveness and efficiency in resource use to help ensure that the evaluation will be worth its costs and that sponsors will get their money's worth

[+] Use resources carefully with as little waste as possible

[+] Utilize existing data, systems, and services when they are well aligned with the evaluation's purposes

[-] Document the evaluation's costs, including time, human resources, expenditures, infrastructure support, and foregone opportunities

[+] Document the evaluation's benefits, including contributions to program improvement, future funding, better informed stakeholders, and dissemination of effective services

☐ 6 Excellent ☒ 5 Very Good ☐ 4 Good ☐ 2-3 Fair ☐ 0-1 Poor

Comment re. F3, as appropriate:

- The cost associated with all levels of the process is clearly defined.
- It is expected the Fire Chief and/or designee will be competent managers to promote the most efficient and effective accreditation process.
- To minimize the cost to the agency, the Team reviews all written information prior to the on-site assessment.
- The Assessment Team utilizes only that information for which is provided by the agency seeking accreditation.
- There is no requirement for the agency to document costs associated with this process. This information could be utilized to provide guidance to future organizations seeking to acquire accreditation.
- Agency is required to show benefits of the program in the strategic plan.

Scoring the Evaluation for FEASIBILITY

Add the following:

Number of Excellent ratings (0-4)

Strength of the evaluation's provisions for FEASIBILITY:

☒ 14.72 (92%) to 16: **Excellent**

☐ 10.72 (67%) to 14.71: **Very**

<u>3</u> x 4 = <u>12</u> Number of Very Good (0-4) <u>1</u> x 3 = <u>3</u> Number of Good (0-4) — x 2 = — Number of Fair (0-4) — x 1 = — <p style="text-align: right;">Total score:</p> <u>15</u>	Good [] 6.72 (42%) to 10.71: Good [] 2.72 (17%) to 6.71: Fair [] 0 (0%) to 2.71: Poor <u>15</u> (Total score) ÷ 16 = <u>.938</u> x 100 = <u>93.8</u> %
<p>THE PROPRIETY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION WILL BE CONDUCTED PROPERLY, FAIRLY, LEGALLY, ETHICALLY, AND JUSTLY WITH RESPECT TO (1) EVALUATORS' AND STAKEHOLDERS' ETHICAL RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND DUTIES; (2) SYSTEMS OF RELEVANT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND RULES; AND (3) ROLES AND DUTIES OF PROFESSIONAL EVALUATORS.</p>	
<p>P1 Responsive and Inclusive Orientation. <i>[Evaluations should be responsive to stakeholders and their communities.]</i></p>	
<p>[+] Acquire and take account of knowledge of the program environment's history, significant events, culture, and other factors affecting the program and its evaluation</p> <p>[+] Identify stakeholders broadly, gather useful information from them, and include them, as appropriate, in decisions about the evaluation's purposes, questions, and design</p> <p>[+] Engage and serve the full range of stakeholders in an even-handed manner, regardless of their politics, personal characteristics, status, or power</p> <p>[+] Design and schedule the evaluation to provide multiple opportunities for stakeholders to be involved, contribute, and be heard throughout the evaluation process</p> <p>[+] Be open to and thoughtfully consider stakeholders' contradictory views, interests, and beliefs regarding the program's prior history, goals, status, achievements, and significance</p> <p>[+] Avert or counteract moves by powerful stakeholders to dominate in determining evaluation purposes, questions, and procedures and interpreting outcomes</p>	
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>	
<p>Comment re. P1, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The self-assessment provided by the agency seeking accreditation provides the program history, significant events, etc. • The stakeholders are identified in SOC and verified during the on-site assessment by the Assessment Team. • The process requires the involvement of all stakeholders associated in the process. • Although the accreditation process requires involvement of the stakeholders it does not dictate the number of sessions that must be made available to solicit feedback or provide information. • The Peer Assessors provide interviews with multiple stakeholders during their 	

<p>on-site assessment to gain overall agency perspective minimizing any dominant group or persons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an expectation that the Fire Chief and their staff will be thoughtful and considerate to all views brought forth by all stakeholders in the process. In addition, the Fire Chief will provide ample opportunities for stakeholders to be involved and contribute in this process. 	
<p>P2 Formal Agreements. <i>[Evaluation agreements should be negotiated to make obligations explicit and take into account the needs, expectations, and cultural contexts of clients and other stakeholders.]</i></p>	
<p>[+] Negotiate evaluation-related obligations, with the client, including what is to be done, how, by whom, when, and at what cost</p> <p>[+] Make ethical, legal, and professional stipulations and obligations explicit and binding regarding such evaluation matters as evaluation purposes and questions, confidentiality/anonymity of data, editorial authority, release of reports, evaluation follow-up activities, cooperation of program staff, funds and in-kind resources, and provision for a metaevaluation</p> <p>[+] Employ the contract negotiation process to strengthen trust in communications through stakeholder consultation and, unless restricted by laws or regulations, allowing stakeholders to review the printed agreement</p> <p>[-] Ensure that formal evaluation agreements conform to federal, tribal, state, or local requirements, statutes, and regulations</p> <p>[+] Employ negotiated agreements to monitor, track, and assure effective implementation of specific duties and responsibilities</p> <p>[+] Revisit evaluation agreements over time and negotiate revisions as appropriate</p>	
<p>[] 6 Excellent [X] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>	
<p>Comment re. P2, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an agency applies for accreditation, they must sign a formal agreement when entering the accreditation process that outlines all obligations and costs associated with the process. • A mentor is assigned to each registered agency to provide oversight and formative feedback through the development of required documents. • The accreditation process requires an on-site visit every five-years with a yearly written update as to any changes associated with the organizations and the progress towards goals identified by the organization with the last written strategic plan submitted for their initial or re-accreditation process. • It is unknown as to whether the formal agreements have been vetted in a way to address the conformity to all state, federal, local, etc. regulations. 	
<p>P3 Human Rights and Respect. <i>[Evaluations should be designed and conducted to protect human and legal rights and maintain the dignity of participants and other stakeholders.]</i></p>	

- The process is clearly identified to the agency.
- The responsibility of communication with stakeholders lies with the agency.
- Any valuing from stakeholders is the responsibility of the agency program manager and administration. Some of this will be confirmed or denied with the peer assessor on-site interviews.
- The evaluation process is clearly delineated but is again left with the agency program manager and administrator to disseminate to other right-to-know audiences.
- It is the assumed responsibility of the Fire Chief to ensure proper communication to all stakeholders throughout process.

P5 Transparency and Disclosure. *[Evaluations should provide complete descriptions of findings, limitations, and conclusions to all stakeholders unless doing so would violate legal or propriety obligations.]*

- [+] Identify and disclose to all stakeholders the legal and contractual constraints under which the evaluation's information can be released and disseminated
- [+] Maintain open lines of communication with and be accessible to, at least representatives of, the full range of stakeholders throughout the evaluation, so they can obtain the information which they are authorized to review
- [+] Before releasing the evaluation's findings, inform each intended recipient of the evaluation's policies—regarding such matters as right-to-know audiences, human rights, confidentiality, and privacy—and, as appropriate, acquire her or his written agreement to comply with these policies
- [+] Provide all stakeholders access to a full description and assessment of the program, e.g., its targeted and actual beneficiaries; its aims, structure, staff, process, and costs; and its strengths, weaknesses, and side effects
- [+] Provide all stakeholders with information on the evaluation's conclusions and limitations
- [+] Provide all right-to-know audiences with access to information on the evaluation's sources of monetary and in-kind support

☒ 6 Excellent ☐ 5 Very Good ☐ 4 Good ☐ 2-3 Fair ☐ 0-1 Poor

Comment re. P5, as appropriate:

- The Fire Chief must identify the acceptable practices for dissemination of information to all stakeholders.
- The agency must make all stakeholders available within reason.
- The decision as to which stakeholders receive information is left with the agency.
- Conclusions and limitations are clearly identified as a requirement of the on-site team prior to departure and commission on actions taken in regards to the level of accreditation.
- The self-assessment requires stakeholders to be identified. Involvement of stakeholders must be identified in the strategic plan and stakeholder interviews by on-site personnel are required.

- Peer assessors and mentors are not paid for their assistance. Only cost is on-site expenditures and certification cost to CFAI.
- Although not required within the process it is expected that the Fire Chief will maintain and provide records as required of the agency and make any necessary budget modifications.

<p>Scoring the Evaluation for PROPRIETY</p> <p>Add the following:</p> <p>Number of Excellent ratings (0-7) <u>6</u> x 4 = <u>24</u></p> <p>Number of Very Good (0-7) <u>1</u> x 3 = <u>3</u></p> <p>Number of Good (0-7) _____ x 2 = _____</p> <p>Number of Fair (0-7) _____ x 1 = _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total score: <u>=27</u></p>	<p>Strength of the evaluation's provisions for PROPRIETY:</p> <p>[X] 26.76 (92%) to 28: Excellent</p> <p>[] 18.76 (67%) to 26.75: Very Good</p> <p>[] 11.76 (42%) to 18.75: Good</p> <p>[] 4.76 (17%) to 11.75: Fair</p> <p>[] 0 (0%) to 4.75: Poor</p> <p><u>27</u> (Total score) ÷ 28 = <u>.964</u> x 100 = <u>96.4</u> %</p>
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*THE **ACCURACY STANDARDS** ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION EMPLOYS SOUND THEORY, DESIGNS, METHODS, AND REASONING IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE INCONSISTENCIES, DISTORTIONS, AND MISCONCEPTIONS AND PRODUCE AND REPORT TRUTHFUL EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.*

A1 Justified Conclusions and Decisions. *[Evaluation conclusions and decisions should be explicitly justified in the cultures and contexts where they have consequences.]*

- [+] Address each contracted evaluation question based on information that is sufficiently broad, deep, reliable, contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and valid
- [+] Derive defensible conclusions that respond to the evaluation's stated purposes, e.g., to identify and assess the program's strengths and weaknesses, main effects and side effects, and worth and merit
- [+] Limit conclusions to the applicable time periods, contexts, purposes, and activities
- [+] Identify the persons who determined the evaluation's conclusions, e.g., the evaluator using the obtained information plus inputs from a broad range of stakeholders
- [+] Identify and report all important assumptions, the interpretive frameworks and values employed to derive the conclusions, and any appropriate caveats
- [+] Report plausible alternative explanations of the findings and explain why rival explanations were rejected

[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair
[] 0-1 Poor

<p>Comment re. A1, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer assessors are able to confirm or deny validity of information provided by agency through interviews and review of self-assessment, SOC and strategic plan documents.
<p>A2 Valid Information. <i>[Evaluation information should serve the intended purposes and support valid interpretations.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Through communication with the full range of stakeholders develop a coherent, widely understood set of concepts and terms needed to assess and judge the program within its cultural context</p> <p>[+] Assure—through such means as systematic protocols, training, and calibration--that data collectors competently obtain the needed data</p> <p>[+] Document the methodological steps taken to protect validity during data selection, collection, storage, and analysis</p> <p>[+] Involve clients, sponsors, and other stakeholders sufficiently to ensure that the scope and depth of interpretations are aligned with their needs and widely understood</p> <p>[+] Investigate and report threats to validity, e.g., by examining and reporting on the merits of alternative explanations</p> <p>[+] Assess and report the comprehensiveness, quality, and clarity of the information provided by the procedures as a set in relation to the information needed to address the evaluation's purposes and questions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>
<p>Comment re. A2, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information obtained by peer assessors is not shared with anyone outside of CFAI Interviews with various stakeholders during the on-site assessment provides opportunity for team to understand dynamics of organization.
<p>A3 Reliable Information. <i>[Evaluation procedures should yield sufficiently dependable and consistent information for the intended uses.]</i></p>
<p>[-] Determine, justify, and report the needed types of reliability—e/g., test-retest, findings from parallel groups, or ratings by multiple observers—and the acceptable levels of reliability</p> <p>[-] In the process of examining, strengthening, and reporting reliability, account for situations where assessments are or may be differentially reliable due to varying characteristics of persons and groups in the evaluation's context</p> <p>[+] Assure that the evaluation team includes or has access to expertise needed to investigate the applicable types of reliability</p> <p>[-] Describe the procedures used to achieve consistency</p> <p>[-] Provide appropriate reliability estimates for key information summaries, including descriptions of programs, program components, contexts, and outcomes</p> <p>[-] Examine and discuss the consistency of scoring, categorization, and coding and between different sets of information, e.g., assessments by different observers</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>

<p>Comment re. A3, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment team members are selected from like agencies, must have experience in the fire service and approved by the CFAI Program Manager. • There are no inter-rater reliability assessments performed on Assessment Team members. • Although CEU's are required of all Assessment Team members, no measurement tools are utilized to address reliability of organizational assessments.
<p>A4 Explicit Program and Context Descriptions. <i>[Evaluations should document programs and their contexts with appropriate detail and scope for the evaluation purposes.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Describe all important aspects of the program—e.g., goals, design, intended and actual recipients, components and subcomponents, staff and resources, procedures, and activities—and how these evolved over time</p> <p>[+] Describe how people in the program's general area experienced and perceived the program's existence, importance, and quality</p> <p>[-] Identify any model or theory that program staff invoked to structure and carry out the program</p> <p>[+] Define, analyze, and characterize contextual influences that appeared to significantly influence the program and that might be of interest to potential adopters, including the context's technical, social, political, organizational, and economic features</p> <p>[+] Identify any other programs, projects, or factors in the context that may affect the evaluated program's operations and accomplishments</p> <p>[+] As appropriate, report how the program's context is similar to or different from contexts where the program is expected to or reasonably might be adopted</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>
<p>Comment re. A4, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Team members performed interviews based on size of organization, position of authority within the organization or the involvement a person may have been involved in the organizations accreditation process. • The process/model for performing the self-assessment is provided to all personnel who complete the required self-assessment class provided by CFAI for all agencies seeking accreditation through their process. • The program requires description of contextual factors that effect outcomes.
<p>A5 Information Management. <i>[Evaluations should employ systematic information collection, review, verification, and storage methods.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Select information sources and procedures that are most likely to meet the evaluation's needs for accuracy and be respected by the evaluation's client group</p> <p>[+] Ensure that the collection of information is systematic, replicable, adequately free of mistakes, and well documented</p> <p>[+] Establish and implement protocols for quality control of the collection, validation,</p>

<p>storage, and retrieval of evaluation information</p> <p>[+] Document and maintain both the original and processed versions of obtained information</p> <p>[+] Retain the original and analyzed forms of information as long as authorized users need it</p> <p>[+] Store the evaluative information in ways that prevent direct and indirect alterations, distortions, destruction, or decay</p>
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair</p> <p>[] 0-1 Poor</p>
<p>Comment re. A5, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is required to be well documented and is verified by the on-site Assessment Team. • Quality control utilized by the agency seeking accreditation must be addressed in the process. • Data is assessed and compared based on both current and previous agency documentation and quality control.
<p>A6 Sound Designs and Analyses. <i>[Evaluations should employ technically adequate designs and analyses that are appropriate for the evaluation purposes.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Create or select a logical framework that provides a sound basis for studying the subject program, answering the evaluation's questions, and judging the program and its components</p> <p>[+] Plan to access pertinent information sources and to collect a sufficient breadth and depth of relevant, high quality quantitative and qualitative information in order to answer the evaluation's questions and judge the program's value</p> <p>[+] Delineate the many specific details required to collect, analyze, and report the needed information</p> <p>[+] Develop specific plans for analyzing obtained information, including clarifying needed assumptions, checking and correcting data and information, aggregating data, and checking for statistical significance of observed changes or differences in program recipients' performance</p> <p>[+] Buttress the conceptual framework and technical evaluation design with concrete plans for staffing, funding, scheduling, documenting, and metaevaluating the evaluation work</p> <p>[+] Plan specific procedures to avert and check for threats to reaching defensible conclusions, including analysis of factors of contextual complexity, examination of the sufficiency and validity of obtained information, checking on the plausibility of assumptions underlying the evaluation design, and assessment of the plausibility of alternative interpretations and conclusions</p>
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair</p> <p>[] 0-1 Poor</p>
<p>Comment re. A6, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there are no ANSI, ISO or Professional Evaluation Criteria used for assessing or verifying the CFAI accreditation process and/or procedures. • The current model utilized by CFAI for accrediting organizations focuses

<p>around the agency self-assessment process to address specific organizational values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site peer assessment will validate information obtained and verify conclusions obtained by agency as outline in the Standard of Cover and Strategic Plan as submitted by agency for accreditation. • There is no requirement for agencies to utilize a specific method or framework for acquiring data. • The Assessment Team's on-site timeframe provided reasonable time for proper assessment, interviews and data analysis to judge program. • There is no requirement for how to collect data, just how to present the information in the report.
<p>A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning. <i>[Evaluation reasoning leading from information and analyses to findings, interpretations, conclusions, and judgments should be clearly and completely documented.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Clearly describe all the assumptions, criteria, and evidence that provided the basis for judgments and conclusions</p> <p>[+] In making reasoning explicit, begin with the most important questions, then, as feasible, address all other key questions, e.g., those related to description, improvement, causal attributions, accountability, and costs related to effectiveness or benefits</p> <p>[+] Document the evaluation's chain of reasoning, including the values invoked so that stakeholders who might embrace different values can assess the evaluation's judgments and conclusions</p> <p>[-] Examine and report how the evaluation's judgments and conclusions are or are not consistent with the possibly varying value orientations and positions of different stakeholders</p> <p>[+] Identify, evaluate, and report the relative defensibility of alternative conclusions that might have been reached based on the obtained evidence</p> <p>[+] Assess and acknowledge limitations of the reasoning that led to the evaluation's judgments and conclusions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">[] 6 Excellent [X] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>
<p>Comment re. A7, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standard of Cover and Strategic Plan submitted by the agency for the accreditation process describes the evaluation reasoning used for agency conclusions. • The final report submitted to the CFAI Commission and organization seeking accreditation, does not provide varying values between those of the Assessment Team and that of the organization.
<p>A8 Communicating and Reporting. <i>[Evaluation communications should have adequate scope and guard against misconceptions, biases, distortions, and errors.]</i></p>
<p>[+] Reach a formal agreement that the evaluator will retain editorial authority over reports</p> <p>[+] Reach a formal agreement defining right-to-know audiences and guaranteeing</p>

<p>appropriate levels of openness and transparency in releasing and disseminating evaluation findings</p> <p>[+] Schedule formal and informal reporting in consideration of user needs, including follow-up assistance for applying findings</p> <p>[+] Employ multiple reporting mechanisms, e.g., slides, dramatizations, photographs, powerpoint®, focus groups, printed reports, oral presentations, telephone conversations, and memos</p> <p>[+] Provide safeguards, such as stakeholder reviews of draft reports and translations into language of users, to assure that formal evaluation reports are correct, relevant, and understood by representatives of all segments of the evaluation's audience</p> <p>[+] Consistently check and correct draft reports to assure they are impartial, objective, free from bias, responsive to contracted evaluation questions, accurate, free of ambiguity, understood by key stakeholders, and edited for clarity</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>	
<p>Comment re. A8, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The accreditation process requires all items associated with this criterion. 	
<p>Scoring the Evaluation for ACCURACY</p> <p>Add the following:</p> <p>Number of Excellent ratings (0-8) <u> 5 </u> x 4 = <u> 20 </u></p> <p>Number of Very Good (0-8) <u> 2 </u> x 3 = <u> 6 </u></p> <p>Number of Good (0-8) <u> 0 </u> x 2 = <u> 0 </u></p> <p>Number of Fair (0-8) <u> 0 </u> x 1 = <u> 0 </u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total score:</p> <p><u> 26 </u></p>	<p>Strength of the evaluation's provisions for ACCURACY:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 29 (92%) to 32: Excellent</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21 (67%) to 28: Very Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13 (42%) to 20: Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 (17%) to 12: Fair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0 (0%) to 4: Poor</p> <p><u> 26 </u> (Total score) ÷ 32 = <u>.813</u> x 100 = <u>81.3</u> %</p>
<p><i>THE EVALUATION ACCOUNTABILITY CRITERIA ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS SYSTEMATICALLY, THOROUGHLY, AND TRANSPARENTLY DOCUMENTED AND THEN ASSESSED, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY FOR ITS UTILITY, FEASIBILITY, PROPRIETY, AND ACCURACY.</i></p>	
<p>EA1 Evaluation Documentation. <i>[Evaluations should fully document their negotiated purposes and implemented designs, procedures, data, and outcomes.]</i></p>	
<p>Document and preserve for inspection the following:</p> <p>[+] Contract or memorandum of agreement that governed the evaluation</p> <p>[+] Evaluation plan, including evaluation tools and resumes of key evaluation staff</p> <p>[+] Evaluation budget and cost records</p> <p>[+] Reports, including interim and final reports, the evaluation's internal metaevaluation report, and, if obtained, a copy of the external metaevaluation report</p>	

<p>[+] Other information determined to be needed by reviewers, such as technical data on the employed evaluation tools, a glossary of pertinent theoretical and operational definitions involved in the evaluation, a description of the subject program, a record of stakeholder involvement, and news accounts related to the evaluation</p> <p>[+] Evidence of the evaluation's consequences, including stakeholders' uses of findings</p>				
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair</p> <p>[] 0-1 Poor</p>				
<p>Comment re. EA1, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process clearly delineates what is expected of an agency for credentialing, including but not limited to all parts that must be addressed in the Standard of Cover, the Strategic Plan and the Self-Assessment produced by department. 				
<p>EA2 Internal Metaevaluation. <i>[Evaluations should use these and other applicable standards to examine the accountability of the evaluation design, procedures employed, information collected, and outcomes.]</i></p>				
<p>[+] At the evaluation's beginning, determine the metaevaluation's intended users and uses (e.g., formative and summative)</p> <p>[+] Develop a plan for obtaining, processing, and reporting a sufficient scope and depth of information to assess the evaluation's utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy and address the intended users' needs for timely metaevaluation feedback and reports</p> <p>[+] Assign responsibility for documenting and assessing the evaluation's plans, process, findings, and impacts and budget sufficient resources to carry out the internal metaevaluation</p> <p>[+] Maintain and make available for inspection a record of all internal metaevaluation steps, information, analyses, costs, and observed uses of the metaevaluation findings</p> <p>[+] Reach, justify, and report Judgments of the evaluation's adherence to all of the metaevaluation standards</p> <p>[+] Make the internal metaevaluation findings available to all authorized users</p>				
<p>[X] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [X] 2-3 Fair</p> <p>[] 0-1 Poor</p>				
<p>Comment re. EA2, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The formal contract that is signed by each agency when entering this process requires the Fire Chief or their designee to be responsible for providing the necessary information requested of the accreditation process. It also requires all information being provided to be accurate and true to the best of their ability with conformance measures that are used to validate the information being provided. 				
<p>EA3 External Metaevaluation. <i>[Program evaluation sponsors, clients, evaluators, and other stakeholders should encourage the conduct of external metaevaluations using these and other applicable standards.]</i></p>				
<p>[+] Confirm through exchange with key stakeholders the need for an external assessment of the evaluation and the purposes it should serve (e.g., formative or</p>				

summative) [+] Stipulate that these and possibly additional standards will be used to assess and judge the evaluation [+] Select, recruit, and reach a formal agreement with an external metaevaluator who possesses an independent perspective, appropriate expertise, and freedom from possibly compromising connections or interests [+] Assure that the external metaevaluation is adequately planned, staffed, and funded [+] Provide the external metaevaluator with access to information and personnel required to conduct a thorough, defensible metaevaluation that serves the intended purposes [-] Assure that the metaevaluation will be subjected to appropriate quality control and that the metaevaluator will deliver as part of the metaevaluation report an attestation of its adherence to the metaevaluation standards	
<div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </div>	
Comment re. EA3, as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All roles and responsibilities for the external metaevaluation by peer assessors for the on-site review are identified in the CFAI Policy and Procedures manual. 	
Scoring the Evaluation for EVALUATOR ACCOUNTABILITY Add the following: Number of Excellent ratings (0-3) <u> 2 </u> x 4 = <u> 8 </u> Number of Very Good (0-3) <u> 1 </u> x 3 = <u> 3 </u> Number of Good (0-3) _____ x 2 = _____ Number of Fair (0-3) _____ x 1 = _____ <div style="text-align: right;">Total score:</div> <u> 11 </u>	Strength of the evaluation's provisions for EVALUATOR ACCOUNTABILITY: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 (92%) to 12: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 8 (67%) to 10: Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5 (42%) to 7: Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 (17%) to 4: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0 (0%) to 1: Poor <u> 11 </u> (Total score) ÷ 12 = <u> .917 </u> x 100 = <u> 91.7 </u> %

The following figures and tables are summative reports of the detailed findings reported above. Figure 1 confirms that the evaluation plan addressed a significant portion of the requirements set forth in the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards. The general findings are: very good attention was paid to providing policy makers and other stakeholders with useful information in terms of process and findings; excellent provisions for making the evaluation practical, politically viable, and cost-effective;

excellent attention to provide a fair, legal and ethical process; very good attention to assuring that the evaluation will produce accurate information, and, in general, very good attention to matters of evaluator accountability.

The general findings seen in Figure 1 are found to be fairly consistent on how well the evaluation plan meets all of the requirements of the JCSEE's Standards (2011) with the areas of feasibility and propriety excelling above the other three categories.

Graph of Merit: Bottom Line Results of a Summative Metaevaluation

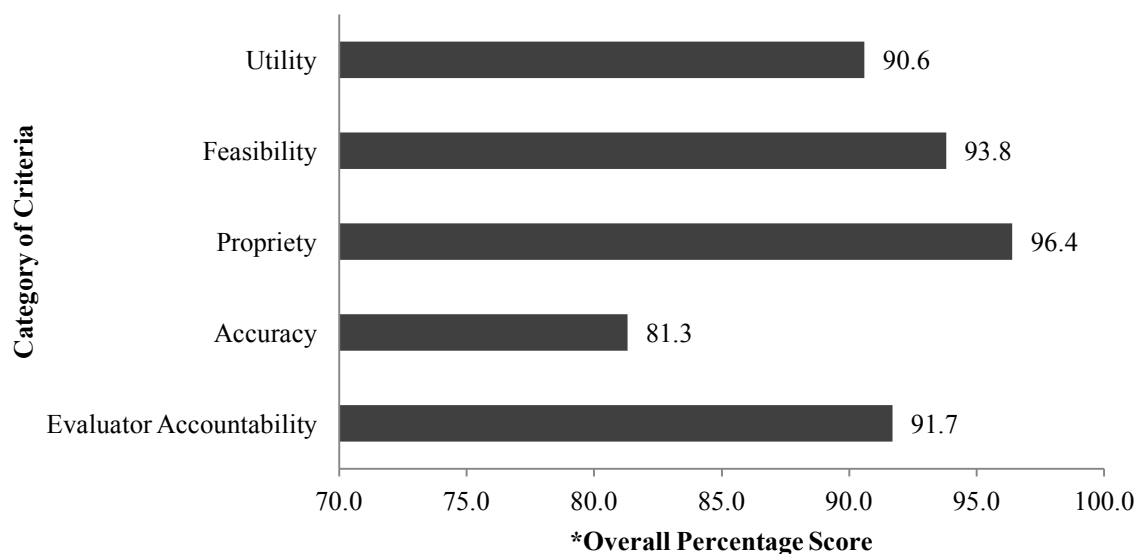


Figure 1. Bottom Line Results

*0-16 (Poor), 17-41 (Fair), 42-66 (Good), 67-91 (Very Good), 92-100 (Excellent)

Figure 2 provides a listing of the scores and ratings of the evaluation plan and graphically illustrates against all of the 30-metaevaluation criteria. This demonstrates the significant number of very good and excellent ratings amongst the criteria.

Results of Summative Metaevaluation for Each Metaevaluation Standard

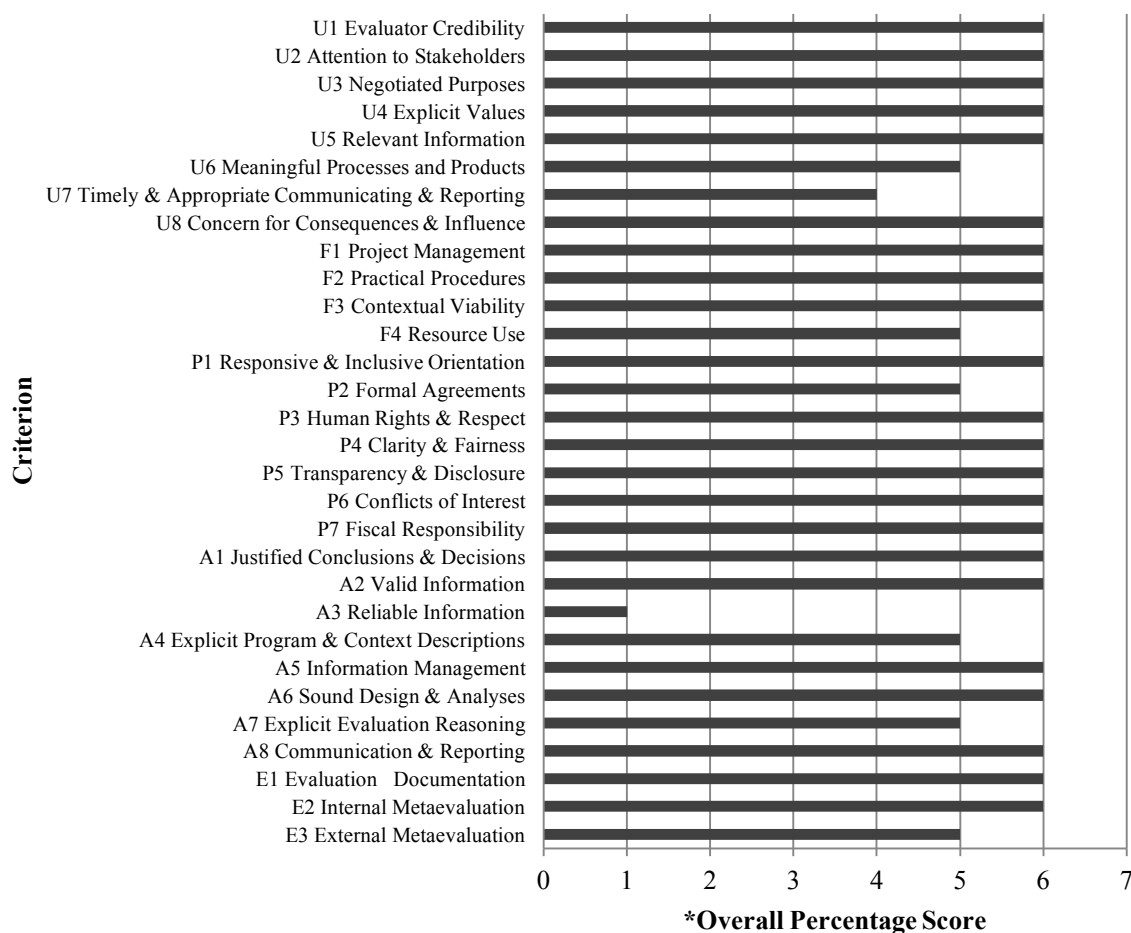


Figure 2. Metaevaluation Summary Table

*0-1 (Poor), 2-3 (Fair), 4 (Good), 5 (Very Good), 6 (Excellent)

Table 6 summarizes the scores and ratings of the evaluation plan against all of the 30 metaevaluation criteria with summary judgment comments to assist the reader identify areas of the evaluation plan's strength, as well as weaknesses that may need to be addressed. Noteworthy areas of strength are in CFAI's extensive self-assessment tool, clarifying the measured objectives focused into 10 categories encompassing 45 criteria

that are further broken down into 244 performance indicators, 77 of which are deemed core competencies.

Table 6

Judgments Against Each Standards

Criterion	Score & Rating	Summary Judgments
U1 Evaluator Credibility	6 (E)	<i>The CFAI Policy and Procedures manual clearly identifies peer assessor requirements. There are no criteria identified to address soft skills on sensitivity of gender, race, etc. CFAI is currently working on requiring all peer assessors to be credentialed at their designated level to validate competencies of personnel.</i>
U2 Attention to Stakeholders	6 (E)	<i>The criteria and performance indicators of the Standard of Cover ensure areas of the agency are assessed and the improvement process is explained for each area.</i>
U3 Negotiated Purposes	6 (E)	<i>Although the process provides criteria and performance indicators, it relies on the management skills of the Fire Chief and their respective administration to engage the group and consider alternative evaluation purposes.</i>
U4 Explicit Values	6 (E)	<i>The self-assessment workshop provided guidance on value clarification and stakeholder involvement in the process.</i>
U5 Relevant Information	6 (E)	<i>The on-site assessment team's validated input was considered through random interviews of personnel within the agency striving for accreditation.</i>
U6 Meaningful Processes & Products	5 (VG)	<i>There is an expectation of the process that the Fire Chief of the agency seeking accreditation will have the necessary insight and is a competent manager in communicating information and providing adequate reports that will meet or exceed stakeholder expectations.</i>
U7 Timely & Appropriate Communicating & Reporting	4 (G)	<i>On-site peer assessors are there for a summative evaluation and are not able to provide formative feedback during the visit. The CFAI Commission provides any clarification on noted deficiencies or how the assessment pertains to the organization during bi-annual agency reviews.</i>
U8 Concern for Consequences & Influence	6 (E)	<i>It is the expectation of the Fire Chief to find the best method to interpret and apply findings for improvement in efficiencies and effectiveness.</i>

Table 6 – Continued

Criterion	Score & Rating	Summary Judgments
F1 Project Management	6 (E)	<i>One of the greatest strengths of the process is the required interaction with the agency mentor for oversight on progress; at which time, they also provide some formative feedback through the Standard of Cover document.</i>
F2 Practical Procedures	6 (E)	<i>Training and guidelines adequately integrate to provide a quality process in reviewing an agency for accreditation. Determining agencies' evaluability before beginning the process relies on the knowledge of the agency Fire Chief.</i>
F3 Contextual Viability	6 (E)	<i>Required documentation to be completed by an agency (i.e., Standard of Cover, Self-Assessment and Strategic Plan) provides the necessary documents that are reviewed by a peer assessment team to verify agency meets minimum criteria as expected by CFAI Commission.</i>
F4 Resource Use	5 (VG)	<i>Costs for accreditation and training are clearly identified. The Fire Chief is expected to be fiscally responsible and provide adequate resources for the completion of this process.</i>
P1 Responsive & Inclusive Orientation	6 (E)	<i>Accreditation process requires involvement of both internal and external stakeholders. Verification of this process takes place with the on-site assessment by the peer evaluation team.</i>
P2 Formal Agreements	5 (VG)	<i>There are several formal agreements that must be signed when applying for accreditation at the various levels of the process.</i>
P3 Human Rights & Respect	6 (E)	<i>CFAI policy and procedures manual clearly addresses ethics and integrity in respect to the agency and CFAI procedures as a whole.</i>
P4 Clarity & Fairness	6 (E)	<i>The process is clearly defined to promote clarity and fairness but is left with the Fire Chief and agency program manager to disseminate requirements and findings to other right-to-know audiences.</i>
P5 Transparency & Disclosure	6 (E)	<i>The process leaves this responsibility to the agency representatives.</i>
P6 Conflicts of Interest	6 (E)	<i>The process requires any and all potential conflicts of interest either by agency or peer assessors, to be immediately and openly identified and addressed to protect the integrity of the accreditation process.</i>

Table 6 – Continued

Criterion	Score & Rating	Summary Judgments
P7 Fiscal Responsibility	6 (E)	<i>All associated costs for the program, including travel for peer assessment team, are clearly presented up front. It is the expectation that the Fire Chief and/or designee will provide necessary oversight and documentation as required of agency policy and procedures.</i>
A1 Justified Conclusions & Decisions	6 (E)	<i>Peer assessors are able to confirm or deny validity of information provided by the agency through interviews and review of self-assessment, SOC, and strategic plan document.</i>
A2 Valid Information	6 (E)	<i>The process requires that peer assessors be forbidden from discussing any part of the agency assessment to anyone outside the organization. Interviews during on-site assessment provide opportunity for team to understand agency dynamics.</i>
A3 Reliable Information	1 (P)	<i>Peer assessors are selected for assignment based on their relatively similar organizations (i.e., demographics, population, etc.) for which they are to provide an assessment. Process relies on CFAI Program Manager and Team Leaders to ensure consistency amongst various peer assessors. There are no inner rater reliability assessments to validate reliability amongst peer assessors as of this evaluation.</i>
A4 Explicit Program & Context Description	5 (VG)	<i>Self-assessment provides a mechanism for an agency to explore and expound on cultures and social factors that have contributed to where the organization is today.</i>
A5 Information Management	6 (E)	<i>The process does require quality control on data utilized for agency accreditation.</i>
A6 Sound Design & Analysis	5 (VG)	<i>Although the process is grounded in sound assessment design, currently there are no ANSI, ISO, or professional evaluation criteria used as a foundation in the design or delivery of the accreditation process.</i>
A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning	5 (VG)	<i>The Standard of Cover and Strategic Plan describes the evaluation reasoning used by the agency to describe its findings.</i>

A8 Communicating & Reporting	6 (E)	<i>The process clearly defines criteria of reports and who retains the rights of those documents.</i>
E1 Evaluation Documentation	6 (E)	<i>The process clearly delineates what is expected of an agency for credentialing.</i>

Table 6 – Continued

Criterion	Score & Rating	Summary Judgments
E2 Internal Metaevaluation	6 (E)	<i>The process requires the Fire Chief or designee to perform several functions of an internal meta-evaluator.</i>
E3 External Metaevaluation	5 (VG)	<i>All roles and responsibilities for an external metaevaluation by peer assessors are identified in the CFAI policy and procedures manual.</i>

Table 7 confirms that overall the evaluation plan is very good in relation to the JCSEE (2011) Program Evaluation Standards. As noted in Table 7, the evaluation plan received positive ratings on 92 percent of the checkpoints associated with the 30 applied metaevaluation criteria, while only eight percent of the checkmarks received negative ratings.

Table 7

Summary of Pluses, Minuses, and Question Marks Assigned to All 30 Standards

Criterion	Score & Rating	Number of Pluses (+s)	Number of Minuses (-s)
U1 Evaluator Credibility	6 (E)	6	0
U2 Attention to Stakeholders	6 (E)	6	0
U3 Negotiated Purposes	6 (E)	6	0
U4 Explicit Values	6 (E)	6	0
U5 Relevant Information	6 (E)	6	0
U6 Meaningful Processes & Products	5 (VG)	5	1
U7 Timely & Appropriate Communicating & Reporting	4 (G)	4	2
U8 Concern for Consequences & Reporting	6 (E)	6	0
F1 Project Management	6 (E)	6	0
F2 Practical Procedures	6 (E)	6	0
F3 Contextual Viability	6 (E)	6	0
F4 Resource Use	5 (VG)	5	1
P1 Responsive & Inclusive Orientation	6 (E)	6	0
P2 Formal Agreements	5 (VG)	5	1
P3 Human Rights & Respect	6 (E)	6	0
P4 Clarity & Fairness	6 (E)	6	0
P5 Transparency & Disclosure	6 (E)	6	0
P6 Conflicts of Interest	6 (E)	6	0

Table 7 – Continued

Criterion	Score & Rating	Number of Pluses (+s)	Number of Minuses (-s)
P7 Fiscal Responsibility	6 (E)	6	0
A1 Justified Conclusions & Decisions	6 (E)	6	0
A2 Valid Information	6 (E)	6	0
A3 Reliable Information	1 (P)	1	5
A4 Explicit Program & Context Descriptions	5 (VG)	5	1
A5 Information Management	6 (E)	6	0
A6 Sound Design & Analyses	5 (VG)	5	1
A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning	5 (VG)	5	1
A8 Communication & Reporting	6 (E)	6	0
E1 Evaluation Documentation	6 (E)	6	0
E2 Internal Metaevaluation	5 (VG)	6	0
E3 External Metaevaluation	5 (VG)	5	1
Totals		165	15
Percent of 180 Possible Checkpoints		91.7	8.3

Comments, as appropriate:

The overall evaluation plan received positive ratings on approximately 92 percent of the rated checkpoints with only approximately 8 percent receiving negative ratings. Utilizing the checklist rating and scoring scale, the strength of the overall evaluation is rated as Very Good.

Sounding Board

At the request of the author, the CFAI Program Director, Karl Ristow, selected members to serve as a sounding board to provide a vetting of the findings of this study. On two separate occasions, the Director attempted to convene a group of three personnel to serve as a sounding board for this project. On both occasions, only one member from each group volunteered and provided feedback on the findings of this study. Although the lack of response for assistance was found to be disappointing, the CFAI Program Director describes the two members who volunteered as very instrumental in the CFAI Agency Accreditation Process, both as agency peer assessors and their assistance in the recent re-imaging project. In addition to those two members, the Director himself and Preet Bassi, Director of CPSE, provided feedback of the results as well, encompassing the users and management team of the accreditation process.

The author of this study provided a summative assessment form (Attachment B) for the sounding board members to utilize when providing critical feedback to the findings. Although only one member utilized the form provided, all members provided critical feedback on the findings. In general all members concluded the study was found to, “show an objective approach to the evaluation” (B. Dean, personal communication, December 22, 2015) while supporting the “dynamic and versatility” that was envisioned at the inception of the CFAI Agency Accreditation Process. In addition, the group found the results to, “support many areas that were found during the re-imaging of the model and process” (B. Dean, personal communication, December 22, 2015).

Discussion

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This chapter provides a brief summary of its findings, limitations associated with this study, implications and contributions as a result of this study along with some recommendations for future research. Findings of this metaevaluation revealed the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards in use of the Metaevaluation Checklist (Stufflebeam, 2011) provided a sound method for evaluating the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. Findings highlighted the applicability and usefulness of the metaevaluation methodology.

The purpose of this dissertation was to assess the CFAI Agency Accreditation process against the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards in order to determine whether the process meets professional evaluation standards and how the process can be improved. The study investigated five focal questions in this dissertation:

1. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the utility standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
2. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the feasibility standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
3. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the propriety standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
4. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the accuracy standards as developed by the JCSEE?*
5. *To what degree does the CFAI Agency Accreditation process meet the evaluation accountability standards as developed by the JCSEE?*

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) has developed a set of 30 standards in *The Program Evaluation Standards* (2011) for the evaluation of educational programs, and of which, have been adapted to numerous other program evaluation applications around the world. Stufflebeam (2011) has developed a checklist containing 180 checkpoints used to evaluate programs on the basis of the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards. The checklist was applied in its entirety to evaluate the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. Once completed, the checklist findings were validated by a sounding board, assembled by CFAI administration.

As for question one, the CFAI Agency Accreditation process utilized the JCSEE's (Yarbrough, et al., 2011) Program Evaluation Standards and found the utility standards, as identified through the use of the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011), to acquire a rating of very good. Six of the eight standards were assigned a rating of excellent. As for deficiencies noted, the process does not provide follow-up activities allowing the evaluation team to assist the client group on making effective use of the final report. This was a main concern of Patton (2008) where he stated decision makers often ignore evaluation findings for two primary reasons: the evaluator did not clearly know their stakeholders and often did not actively work with the decision makers.

As for question two, the feasibility standards had an overall rating of excellent. The only item noted as deficient in accordance with the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011) was in the area of documenting costs associated with the accreditation process. Though in itself, may not prove to have any bearing on whether an agency acquires their accreditation, it does lend itself the value of the accreditation process to agencies.

As for question three, the propriety standards had an overall rating of excellent. Only item noted as deficient within this set of standards related to the evaluation agreement conforming to federal, state, local, etc. requirements. There was no indication in any of the literature or contract that was signed by agency participating in the accreditation process that provided this information.

As for question four, the accuracy standards had an overall rating of very good. The standard A3 Reliable Information was rated the lowest of all standards in this evaluation. The process itself was deemed to be strong in terms of providing a systematic process to ensure reliable information was made available by the agency seeking accreditation. However, the reliability of the peer assessors comes into question, as there appears to be some potential for differences in scoring of agencies. As previously stated, Wingate (2009) reported that, “metaevaluative judgments are largely idiosyncratic” (p. 107). This is no different for an evaluator that is part of a peer assessment team, as their reference of measurement is obtained by their experiences. Although the entire peer assessment team that is performing the on-site assessment typically obtains consensus, there is currently no mechanisms in place to verify inter-rater reliability of the team performing on-site assessment, or between agencies being assessed. CFAI has attempted to address this issue implementing a process to evaluate new peer assessors. The process for new peer assessors are as follows:

- Complete a Personal Resource Inventory
- Gain approval by the CFAI Program Manager to begin Peer Assessor process
- Complete CFAI Workshop series
- Participate on at least three on-site peer assessment teams

- Be recommended by at least two team leaders from the three on-site teams
- Participate in annual continuing education provided by CFAI

As for question five, the evaluator accountability standard had an overall rating of excellent. The only item in question is the lack of an external metaevaluation on the process. As of this study, there was no documented formal metaevaluation that had occurred on this process. In 2015, CFAI established a committee to review current processes and practices and provide recommended changes to the CFAI Commission on the Agency Accreditation process. The project is referred to as the Re-Imaging Project. The results of this project are expected to be presented to the CFAI Commission at the 2016 CPSE Excellence Conference in March 2016, at which time it is expected the changes will be approved and allow for the implementation of those changes to begin.

The objective of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process was to, “describe and define a model accreditation system that was credible, realistic, usable and achievable” (FEESM 2009, p. 15). Based on the findings utilizing the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011), the use of the JCSEE’s (Yarbrough, et al., 2011) Program Evaluation Standards was found to be a viable tool for evaluating the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. The study found the CFAI’s unique four-step Agency Accreditation process ([1] becoming a registered agency, [2] becoming an applicant agency, [3] becoming a candidate for accreditation, and [4] achieving accreditation) to be a systematically sound tool that allow agencies to be successful in accomplishing the accreditation process. The cornerstone of this process, as described by CFAI, was the self-assessment performed by the agency seeking accreditation. Using Stufflebeam’s (2011) checklist as a summative evaluation tool, the meta-evaluator gave the evaluation of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process

an overall rating of 88.5%, or very good as referred by the checklist scoring scale. This rating represents the goal of the CFAI Agency Accreditation, to improve the ability for communities to recognize and reduce risk while improving the quality of life for citizens within the community; this goal is primarily being met with the current process.

Limitations

As a primary concern in terms of limitations with this study was the question as to how a single case study can effectively allow for judgment on a particular evaluation model. To properly address these concerns, a sounding board consisting of two senior peer assessors, deemed as experts in the application of the accreditation process from CFAI, along with the assistance of the current CFAI Program Director Karl Ristow, provides feedback as to accuracy of the findings. This method of assessing the findings provided a mechanism to validate the findings and measure how generalizable the findings of one case study would relate to the process as a whole.

Credibility can also be considered a limitation in any evaluation. This evaluation provided detailed information not only on the evaluator's credentials, but also in the transparency of the findings for this evaluation. Independence is often correlated with credibility (Stufflebeam, 1974). As for this evaluation, the evaluator had no direct ties to CFAI nor subsidized in any fashion for the results of this evaluation to reduce biasing.

Reliability amongst different users of this information could provide mixed results dependent upon the evaluator's experiences, perceptions and biases (Stufflebeam, 1974). One area of concern associated with metaevaluations as described by Wingate (2009) revolves around the area of reliability, more specifically in the areas of interrater reliability, test-retest reliability and internal consistency. Of these three areas of concerns,

utilizing the methods as provided in this study with future studies, should adequately address the internal consistency of metaevaluations.

Although the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011) was found to be a fundamentally sound tool to evaluate the CFAI Agency Accreditation process in comparison to the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards, it did not come without its own limitations. Although the original checklist allows for a question mark (?) to be used when insufficient information is available to make a judgment, the author of this evaluation found enough information to address each of the checkpoints, however, he also found in answering such checkpoints there was a range of relative agreement for each item. For the dichotomy associated with each criterion in which information is available, one must decide if there is enough information to satisfy the item and if so to provide the criterion with a plus (+). This was evident in the results that were produced (see Figure 2, Metaevaluation Summary Table), showing a high level of compliance in the area of validity, however, associated with a low score for reliability. This in itself is fundamentally unsound in that no item can be found to be valid if it is not reliable.

The focus of this evaluation was on the accreditation process as a whole, not on the specific categories and criteria that are to be addressed by the agencies performing the accreditation process. As a result the author cannot speak to the adherence of those specific items as it relates to the accreditation process, but instead only as to whether the accreditation process meets the stated goals and objectives of the program.

Contribution to Evaluation Practice

To the best of my knowledge, this metaevaluation represents the first of its kind used to investigate the CFAI Agency Accreditation process using the JCSEE's (2011)

Program Evaluation Standards as the basis for inquiry. This lends itself to addressing the concerns addressed by Henry and Mark (2003) in which there is a shortage of rigorous, systematic evidence to promote improving evaluations. This study specifically provides the basis for improving empirical knowledge associated with the practice and understanding for these types of evaluations, ultimately moving towards social betterment.

Although the study was performed through the perspective of one individual, and focused only on one case study, the feedback received from the sounding board on the findings of this study indicate that the use of the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards and that of the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011), proved to be a useful approach for assessing the CFAI Agency Accreditation process. This in fact demonstrated the importance metaevaluation can have in strengthening any evaluation. It is believed these results will promote change and be used to strengthen the existing program.

The results of this study may force agencies of other disciplines or governmental officials to require the same rigorous metaevaluation practice as the one performed for this study, to ensure sound practices are being followed and to enhance the value of such accreditation processes. It is my hope the results will stimulate discussion and action in terms of professional evaluation within the field of public safety. One of those specific desires is to promote the need for evaluating new and existing programs not only to confirm the credibility of the CFAI Agency Accreditation process, but also to promote critical analysis of other current accreditation and credentialed programs utilized within public safety agencies.

Future Research

As noted by Christie (2003) as to the idiosyncrasies of individual evaluators and deficiencies noted in reliability (Wingate, 2009) amongst peer assessors, it is believed further research on reliability associated with agency evaluations should be looked at closer. In addition, further research should be performed to identify the appropriate training for peer assessors to adequately address interrater reliability expectations of agency evaluations. In addition, the area of test-retest reliability should be assessed on future metaevaluations utilizing the methods described in this report while incorporating the training tool for peer assessors as previously described. The use of these two items should prove to be a reliable instrument that can be utilized for future metaevaluations.

Based on the findings of this study, it would only seem prudent that other public safety accreditation models such as CALEA for the police communities and CAAS for the ambulance services should undergo the same metaevaluation process to evaluate the soundness of those programs as it compares to the JCSEE's (2011) Program Evaluation Standards and that of the Metaevaluation Checklist (2011).

Appendix A
Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators

CC 1A.1 The agency is legally established.

1A.2 The governing authority having jurisdiction over the fire service organization or agency periodically reviews and approves programs and ensures compliance with basic governmental as well as agency policies.

1A.3 The method used to select the agency's chief fire officer/chief executive officer includes evaluation of candidate qualifications and credentials.

1A.4 The governing body approves the administrative structure that carries out the agency's mission.

1A.5 The governing body has policies to preclude individual participation of governing board members and staff in actions involving possible conflict of interest.

1A.6 A communication process is in place between the governing body and the administrative structure of the agency.

1A.7 The role and composition of various policy making, planning and special purpose bodies are defined in a governing body organization chart for the authority having jurisdiction.

1A.8 The governing body publishes a mission statement for the agency.

1B.1 The administrative structure reflects the agency's mission, goals, objectives, size, and complexity.

1B.2 Resource allocation reflects the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.

CC 1B.3 The agency administration demonstrates compliance with legal requirements of local, state/provincial, and federal governments.

1B.4 Personnel functions, roles, and responsibilities are defined in writing, and a current organization chart exists that includes the agency's relationship to the governing body.

1B.5 The agency's title is consistent with its mission.

2A.1 Geographical boundaries for the authority having jurisdiction are identified (e.g., street and local highway network, jurisdictional boundaries, mutual and automatic aid zones, contract service areas, etc.)

2A.2 The agency organizes the community into geographic planning zone(s) for purposes of analyzing service provision.

CC 2A.3 The agency analyzes the community by service area/population density for the purpose of developing total response time standards.

2A.4 Data including fire loss, injury and life loss, property loss, and other associated losses, are recorded for a minimum of three immediately previous years.

2A.5 Demographics such as population, land use, topography, climate and occupancy groups are identified and documented.

2A.6 Significant economic indicators used in the planning effort are identified (e.g., revenue sources, local economic factors, insurance evaluations, and assessed valuation of various components).

2A.7 The water supply system that provides available fire flow for the planning zones, major risks, key risks, and special hazard areas should be documented and included in the planning effort.

CC 2B.1 Each planning zone and population area is analyzed and risk factors are evaluated in order to establish a standards of response coverage.

2B.2 The frequency and probability of occurrence of fire suppression service demands are identified in each planning zone.

2B.3 The maximum or worst fire risk(s) in each planning zone is/are identified and located, i.e., hazards that require the maximum amount of fire protection resources or that would result in the greatest loss of life or property; the key or special hazard risk in each planning zone is identified and located, i.e., hazards, which if destroyed would be a critical or essential economic loss to the community (this also could include cultural, environmental, or historical loss); the typical or routine risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most common to the planning zone; the remote or isolated risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most distant from other risks as to be almost unique to the planning zone; and/or other locally adopted equivalencies are utilized to identify fire risk.

2B.4 A critical task analysis of each risk category and/or fire incident is conducted to determine the effective response force (ERF).

CC 2B.5 Agency baseline and benchmark travel time objectives for fire response conform to industry best practices as prescribed on page 71 for first due and effective response force (ERF).

CC 2B.6 Given the fire risk(s), area of responsibility, demographics, economic indicators, fire loss data, water supply and automatic fire protection system information, an effective standards of response coverage strategy is established.

2B.7 Fire protection suppression and detection systems are identified and being considered in the planning process.

CC 2B.8 The agency utilizes a formal process periodically to assess the balance between fire suppression capabilities and fire risks in the service area. Identified imbalances are addressed through the planning process.

CC 2C.1 Each planning zone and population area is analyzed and non-fire risk factors evaluated in order to establish a standards of response coverage.

2C.2 The frequency and probability of occurrence of service demands other than fire are identified in each planning zone.

2C.3 The maximum or worst non-fire risk(s) in each planning zone is/are identified and located; the key or special hazard risk in each planning zone is identified and located, i.e., hazards, which if destroyed would be a critical or essential economic loss to the community (this could also include cultural, environmental, or historical loss); the typical or routine non-fire risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most common to the planning zone; the remote or isolated non-fire risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most distant from other risks as to be almost unique to the planning zone; and/or other locally adopted equivalencies are utilized to identify non-fire risks.

2C.4 A critical task analysis of each risk category and/or non-fire incident is conducted to determine the effective response force (ERF).

CC 2C.5 Agency baseline and benchmark travel time objectives for non-fire incident response conform to industry best practices as prescribed on page XX for first due and effective response force (ERF).

CC 2C.6 Given the importance and magnitude of service demands, a standards of response coverage strategy is established for each type of non-fire risk(s) and service demand.

CC 2D.1 The fire service agency has a published strategic plan.

2D.2 The strategic plan is approved within the agency and submitted to the governing body or administrative officer with responsibility over the fire agency and to whom the chief fire officer/chief executive officer reports.

CC 3A.1 The agency publishes general organizational goals directed toward achieving the agency's long-range plans. Corresponding specific objectives are published to implement these goals and incorporate the measurable elements of time, quantity, and quality.

3A.2 The agency establishes goals for each operational program with corresponding specific objectives that incorporate the measurable elements of time, quantity and quality.

3A.3 Published materials accurately portray the agency's goals and objectives as well as mission, vision and values in context.

3A.4 Agency goals and objectives are submitted to and reviewed by the governing authority responsible for establishing policy.

CC 3B.1 Some form of organizational management process is identified and used to implement and track the agency's goals and objectives.

3B.2 The agency's goals and objectives are disseminated to all members of the organization.

CC 3C.1 The agency's goals and objectives are examined and modified at least annually for quality and to ensure they remain current and consistent with the agency's mission, vision, and long range plan(s).

3C.2 The agency establishes performance measures to evaluate achievement of general organizational and operational program goals and objectives.

4A.1 The governing body and regulatory agencies give the agency appropriate direction in budget and planning matters within their scope of services.

CC 4A.2 Policies, guidelines and processes for developing the annual budget are defined and followed.

4A.3 The budget process involves input from appropriate persons or groups, including staff officers and other members of the agency.

4A.4 The annual budget, short and long-range financial planning, and capital expenditures are consistent with agency priorities and support achievement of the agency's strategic plan and goals and objectives.

4A.5 Budgeted expenditures are consistent with projected financial resources.

4B.1 Financial resources management adheres to generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) for budgeting and accounting. Appropriate safeguards are in place for expenditures, fiscal reports are provided for administrative decision making, and sufficient flexibility exists to meet contingencies.

4B.2 Financial administration responsibilities are organized into specific assignments, which are supported by specific clearly-defined policies.

4B.3 Any projected operating deficit (expenditures exceeding revenues in a budget year) is explained, and a plan developed to rectify the deficit.

4B.4 Periodic financial reports are reviewed by the agency.

CC 4B.5 Independent financial audits are conducted annually for the prior fiscal year. Deficiencies are noted and plans made to resolve audit exceptions.

4B.6 The agency and any subsidiary entities or auxiliaries have financial risk management policies and programs that protect the agency and its assets.

4B.7 Programs designed to develop financial support from outside sources are planned and coordinated to reflect the objectives of the agency. All fund-raising activities are governed by agency policy, comply with GAAP and/or other recognized financial principles, and are subject to public disclosure and periodic independent financial audits.

4B.8 Any revenue producing organizations permitted to use the agency's name and/or reputation conform to agency principles of financial operation.

CC 4C.1 Programs and activities based on current and anticipated revenues are adequate to maintain adopted levels of service.

4C.2 Plans exist for the payment of long-term liabilities and debts.

4C.3 Future asset maintenance costs are projected with related funding plans.

4C.4 Financial plans avoid the use of one-time funding sources to cover ongoing costs unless plans are provided to ensure a means of continuity for personnel resources and capital assets.

4C.5 Contingency funds are maintained in accordance with GAAP recommendations and anticipate budgetary restrictions and/or shortfalls.

CC 5A.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, pumping capacity, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of fire suppression emergency incidents .

5A.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for fire suppression and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

5A.3 Supplies and materials allocation (e.g., foam, gasoline, fuel, batteries, etc.) is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet fire suppression operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5A.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct fire suppression activities.

CC 5A.5 The agency uses a standardized incident command/management system.

5A.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of its fire suppression response program and incident reporting capability.

CC 5A.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the fire suppression program.

CC 5B.1 The authority having jurisdiction has an adopted fire prevention code.

CC 5B.2 The code enforcement program is designed to ensure compliance with applicable fire protection law and agency objectives.

CC 5B.3 The program has adequate staff with specific expertise to meet the fire prevention/life safety program goals and objectives.

5B.4 A plan review process is in place to ensure that buildings and infrastructure (e.g., hydrants, access, street width, etc.) are constructed in accordance with adopted codes and ordinances.

5B.5 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment, supplies and materials to meet the fire prevention/life safety program needs.

5B.6 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the fire prevention/life safety program.

5B.7 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the fire prevention program.

CC 5B.8 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the fire prevention program and its efforts in risk reduction.

5C.1 The diversity and delivery of the public education program includes individual, business, and community audiences.

5C.2 The program has staffing with specific expertise to accomplish the program goals and objectives.

5C.3 The agency defines and provides appropriate adequate equipment, supplies and materials to meet the public education program needs.

CC 5C.4 The public education program targets specific risks and risk audiences as identified through incident, demographic, and program data analysis.

CC 5C.5 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the public education program.

5C.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of its public education program.

CC 5C.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the public education program and its effect on reducing identified risks.

5C.8 There are programs in place that enable improved fire protection and injury prevention for low income families (e.g. as free smoke alarm installation, free bicycle helmet program, etc.)

CC 5D.1 The agency's fire investigation program is authorized by adopted statute, code, or ordinance.

CC 5D.2 The scientific method (or an equivalent) is utilized to investigate and determine the origin and cause of all significant fires and explosions.

CC 5D.3 The program has adequate staff with specific expertise, training, and credentials to accomplish the program goals and objectives.

5D.4 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment, supplies and materials to meet the fire investigation program needs.

5D.5 The agency establishes agreements for support from other agencies to aid in accomplishing the program goals and objectives.

CC 5D.6 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the fire cause and investigation program.

5D.7 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the fire investigation program.

CC 5D.8 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the fire investigation program.

CC 5E.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of technical rescue emergency incidents.

5E.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for technical rescue and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

5E.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet technical rescue operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5E.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to accomplish the stated level of response for technical rescue incidents.

5E.5 Minimum training and operational standards are established and met for all personnel who function in the technical rescue program.

5E.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the technical rescue program.

CC 5E.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the technical rescue program.

CC 5F.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of hazardous materials emergency incidents.

5F.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for hazardous materials response and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

5F.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet hazardous materials response operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5F.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the hazardous materials response program.

5F.5 Minimum training and operational standards are established and met for all personnel who function in the hazardous materials response program, including for incidents involving weapons of mass destruction.

5F.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the hazardous materials program.

CC 5F.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the hazardous materials program.

CC 5G.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of emergency medical incidents.

5G.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for EMS incidents and to be compliant with applicable local, state/provincial and national standards and mandates.

5G.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet EMS operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5G.4 Standard operating procedures or general guidelines, and standing orders/protocols, are in place to direct EMS response activities and to meet the stated level of EMS response.

5G.5 Online and offline medical control is available to the agency.

CC 5G.6 A patient care record is created and maintained for each patient encountered by the EMS system. This report contains patient history, incident history, data regarding treatment rendered, and the patient disposition recorded. The agency must make reasonable efforts to protect reports from public access and maintain them as per local and state/provincial records retention requirements.

CC 5G.7 The agency has a HIPAA compliance program in place for the EMS program that meets with federal guidelines and all personnel have been properly trained in HIPAA regulations and procedures.

5G.8 Patient care records receive an independent review and the agency has a quality assurance program in place.

5G.9 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the EMS program.

CC 5G.10 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the EMS program.

CC 5H.1 The agency publishes an all-hazards plan that defines roles and responsibilities of all participating departments and/or external agencies. An appropriate multi-agency organizational structure is identified and authorized to carry out the all-hazards plan predetermined functions and duties.

5H.2 The agency is compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and its operational methods are compatible with all external response agencies.

5H.3 The necessary outside agency support is identified and documented.

CC 5H.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct domestic preparedness planning and response activities.

CC 5H.5 Processes are in place to provide for interoperability with other public safety agencies in the field including portable, mobile, and fixed communications systems, tools, and equipment.

5H.6 A process is in place to record information and provide data on needed resources, scope, nature of the event, and field resources deployment.

5H.7 The agency periodically conducts operational tests of and evaluates the all-hazards plan and the domestic preparedness program.

5H.8 The agency conducts and documents a vulnerability assessment and has operational plans to protect and secure the agency's specific critical infrastructure, including but not limited to materials and supplies, apparatus and facilities security, fuel, and information systems.

CC 5I.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of aviation emergencies.

5I.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of aviation rescue and fire fighting response and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

5I.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet aviation rescue and fire fighting operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5I.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct aviation rescue and fire fighting activities.

5I.5 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the aviation rescue and fire fighting services program.

CC 5I.6 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the aviation fire fighting and rescue program.

CC 5J.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of marine and shipboard emergency incidents.

5J.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for marine and shipboard incidents and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

5J.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet marine and shipboard fire fighting and rescue operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5K.4 Current standard operating procedure or general guidelines are in place to direct Insert other program title fire fighting and rescue activities.

5K.5 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the Insert other program title rescue and fire fighting services program.

CC 5K.6 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the Insert other program title fire fighting and rescue program.

CC 5K.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of Insert other program title emergency incidents.

5K.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for Insert other program title incidents and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

5K.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet Insert other program title fire fighting and rescue operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

CC 5K.4 Current standard operating procedure or general guidelines are in place to direct Insert other program title fire fighting and rescue activities.

5K.5 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the Insert other program title rescue and fire fighting services program.

CC 5K.6 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the Insert other program title fire fighting and rescue program.

6A.1 The development, construction, or purchase of physical resources is consistent with the agency's goals and the strategic plan.

CC 6A.2 The governing body, administration and staff are involved in the planning for physical facilities.

6B.1 Each facility has adequate space for agency functions (e.g., operations, fire prevention, training, support services, administration, etc.)

6B.2 Buildings and outbuildings are clean and in good repair and the surrounding grounds are well kept. Maintenance is conducted in a systematic and planned manner.

CC 6B.3 Physical facilities are adequate and properly distributed in accordance with stated service level objectives and standards of response coverage.

CC 6B.4 Facilities comply with federal, state/provincial and local codes and regulations.

CC 6C.1 Apparatus are located strategically to accomplish the stated standards of response coverage and service level objectives.

6C.2 Apparatus types are appropriate for the functions served, e.g., operations, staff support services, specialized services, and administration.

6C.3 A current replacement schedule exists for all apparatus

6C.4 A process is in place for writing apparatus replacement specifications that allows for employee input.

CC 6D.1 An apparatus maintenance program is established. Apparatus maintenance is conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and federal and/or state/provincial regulations. Attention is given to the safety, health, and security aspects of equipment operation and maintenance.

6D.2 The maintenance and repair facility is provided with sufficient space and equipped with appropriate tools.

6D.3 A system is in place to ensure the regular inspection, testing, fueling, preventive maintenance, and emergency repair for all fire apparatus and equipment.

6D.4 An adequate number of trained and certified maintenance personnel are available to meet the program needs.

CC 6D.5 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the apparatus maintenance program.

6D.6 The level of supervision is adequate to manage the program.

6D.7 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the apparatus maintenance program.

6D.8 The reserve vehicle fleet is adequate or a documented contingency plan with another agency is in place for the event that apparatus must be taken out of service.

6E.1 Tools and equipment are distributed appropriately in sufficient quantities.

6E.2 Tools and equipment replacement is scheduled, budgeted, and implemented, and is adequate to meet the agency's needs.

CC 6E.3 Equipment maintenance, testing, and inspections are conducted by qualified personnel and appropriate records are kept.

6E.4 An inventory control and maintenance tracking system is in place and is current.

CC 6F.1 Safety equipment is identified and distributed to appropriate personnel.

6F.2 Distributed safety equipment is sufficient for the functions performed.

6F.3 Safety equipment replacement is scheduled, budgeted and implemented, and is adequate to meet the agency's needs.

6F.4 Safety equipment maintenance, testing, and inspections are conducted by trained qualified personnel and appropriate records are kept.

6F.5 A safety equipment inventory control and maintenance tracking system is in place and current.

CC 7A.1 A human resources manager is designated.

7A.2 The human resources program has adequate staffing to accomplish the human resources administrative functions.

7A.3 Policies are established to direct the human resources administrative practices in accordance with local, state/provincial, and federal requirements.

7B.1 A mechanism is in place to identify and announce potential entry level, lateral, and promotional positions.

7B.2 The agency and its members are part of the recruiting process.

CC 7B.3 Processes and screening/qualifying devices used for recruitment and selection of initial, lateral, and promotional candidates are job related and comply with all local, state/provincial, and federal requirements including equal opportunity and discriminations statutes.

7B.4 The agency's workforce composition is reflective of the service area demographics or the agency has a recruitment plan to achieve the desired workforce composition.

7B.5 A new member orientation program is in place.

CC 7B.6 A supervised probationary process is used to evaluate new and promoted members based on the candidates' demonstrated knowledge, skills and abilities.

7B.7 An employee/member recognition program is in place.

7B.8 The working conditions and environment are such that the agency attracts diverse and qualified applicants and retains a tenured workforce.

7B.9 Exit interviews or periodic employee surveys, or other mechanisms are used to acquire feedback and improve agency policies and procedures.

7B.10 The agency conducts workforce assessments and has a plan to address projected personnel resource needs including retention and attrition of tenured and experienced employees/members.

CC 7C.1 Personnel policies, procedures and rules are current, written, and communicated to all personnel.

CC 7C.2 A specific policy defines and prohibits sexual, racial, disability or other forms of harassment, bias, and unlawful discrimination of employees/members and describes the related reporting procedures. The policy and organizational expectations specific to employee behavior are communicated formally to all members/employees and are enforced.

7C.3 A disciplinary system is in place and enforced.

7C.4 An internal ethics and conflict of interest policy is published and communicated to employees/members.

7C.5 A grievance/complaint procedure is published and communicated to employees/members.

CC 7D.1 A position classification system and a process by which jobs are audited and modified are in place.

7D.2 Current written job descriptions exist for all positions and incumbent personnel have input into revisions.

7D.3 A personnel appraisal system is in place.

7D.4 The agency maintains a current list of the special knowledge, skills, and abilities of each employee/member.

7D.5 Methods for employee/member input or a suggestion program are in place.

7D.6 Career development programs are made available to all employees/members.

CC 7E.1 Rates of pay and compensation are published and available to all employees/members.

7E.2 Member benefits are defined, published and communicated to all employees/members.

7F.1 A specific person or persons are assigned responsibility for implementing the occupational health and safety and risk management programs.

7F.2 Procedures are established for reporting, evaluating, addressing, and communicating workplace hazards as well as unsafe/unhealthy conditions and work practices.

7F.3 The agency documents steps taken to implement risk reduction and address identified workplace hazards.

7F.4 Procedures are established and communicated specific to minimizing occupational exposure to communicable diseases or chemicals.

CC 7F.5 An occupational health and safety training program is established and designed to instruct the workforce in general safe work practices, from point of initial employment through each job assignment and/or whenever new substances, new processes, procedures, or equipment are introduced. It provides specific instructions on operations and hazards specific to the agency.

7F.7 A process is in place to investigate and document accidents, injuries, legal actions, etc., which is supported by the agency's information management system.

7G.2 The agency provides personnel with access to fitness facilities and equipment as well as exercise instruction .

7G.4 The agency provides an employee/member assistance program with timely access to critical incident stress debriefing and behavioral counseling resources.

7G.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the wellness/fitness programs .

CC 8A.1 The organization has a process in place to identify training needs, which identifies the tasks, activities, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to deal with anticipated emergency conditions.

8A.2 The training program is consistent with the agency's mission statement and published goals and objectives, and meets the agency's needs.

8A.4 The agency has identified minimum levels of training required for all positions in the organization.

8A.5 A command and staff development program is in place.

8B.1 A process is in place to ensure that personnel are appropriately trained.

8B.2 The agency provides both short and long-range training schedules.

8B.3 The agency has a process for developing performance-based measurements.

CC 8B.4 The agency provides for evaluation of individual, company, or crew, and multi-company or crew performance through performance-based measurements.

8B.5 The agency maintains individual/member training records.

CC 8C.1 Available training facilities and apparatus are provided to support the training needs of the agency.

8C.2 Instructional personnel are available to meet the needs of the agency.

8C.3 Instructional materials are current, support the training program, and are easily accessible.

8C.4 Apparatus and equipment utilized for training are properly maintained in accordance with the agency's operational procedures, and are readily accessible to trainers and employees.

8C.5 The agency maintains a current inventory of all training equipment and resources.

8C.6 A selection process is in place for training and educational resource materials.

CC 8C.7 Training materials are evaluated on a continuing basis, and reflect current practices.

CC 9A.1 The agency establishes minimum fire flow requirements and total water supply needed for existing representative structures and other potential fire locations. This information should also be included in the fire risk evaluation and pre-fire planning process.

CC 9A.2 An adequate and reliable fixed or portable water supply is available for fire fighting purposes. The identified water supply sources are sufficient in volume and pressure to control and extinguish fires.

9A.3 The fire agency evaluates fire suppression water flow requirements for proposed projects involving structures or complexes of structures within their jurisdiction. Significant reductions in required fire flow granted by the installation of an approved sprinkler system in buildings are documented.

9A.4 The agency maintains regular contact with the managers of public and private water systems to stay informed about all sources of water available for fighting fires.

9A.5 The agency maintains copies of current water supply and hydrant maps for its service area.

9A.6 Hydrant adequacy and placement reflects the locality's known hazards and the agency's needs for dealing with those hazards.

9A.7 Fire hydrants are located so that each is visible and accessible at all times. Hydrant locations are documented.

9A.8 Fire hydrants are inspected, tested and maintained and the agency's related processes are evaluated periodically to ensure adequate and readily available public or private water for fire protection.

9A.9 The agency identifies and plans for alternate sources of water supply for those areas without hydrants, where hydrant flows are insufficient, or in the event of a major disruption in public water supply capabilities.

9A.10 The agency has operational procedures in place outlining available water supply.

CC 9B.1 A system is in place to ensure communications with portable, mobile, and fixed communications systems in the field.

9B.2 The emergency communications system is capable of receiving automatic and manual early warning and other emergency reporting signals.

9B.3 The agency's communications center(s) is/are adequately equipped and designed, e.g., telephones, radios, equipment status, alarm devices, computers, address files, dispatching circuits, playback devices, recording systems, printers, consoles, desks, chairs, lighting and map displays, etc.

9B.4 The uninterrupted electrical power supply for the communications center is reliable and has automatic backup capability.

CC 9B.5 Standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct all types of dispatching services provided to the agency by the communications center(s).

9B.6 Adequate numbers of fire or emergency dispatchers are on duty to handle the anticipated call volume.

9B.7 An adequate maintenance program is in place with regularly scheduled system tests.

9B.8 The communications center(s) has/have adequate supervision and management.

9B.9 A communications training program for emergency dispatchers is in place that ensures adequate, timely, and reliable fire agency emergency response.

9B.10 The interoperability of the communications system is evaluated and documented. Appropriate procedures are implemented to provide for communications between the agency and other emergency responders.

CC 9C.1 The administrative support services are appropriate for the agency's size, function, complexity, and mission, and are adequately staffed and managed.

9C.2 Sufficient general office equipment, supplies and resources are in place to support departmental needs.

9C.3 Technological resources (e.g., telecommunications equipment, computer systems, general business software, etc.) and the information management system are appropriate to support the needs of the agency. Access is available to technical support personnel with expertise in the systems deployed by the agency.

9C.4 Public reception and public information components support the customer service needs of the agency.

9C.5 Organizational documents, forms, and manuals are maintained and current.

CC 10A.1 The agency develops and maintains outside relationships that support its mission, operations, or cost effectiveness.

10A.2 The agency's strategic plan identifies relationships with external agencies/systems and their anticipated impact or benefit to the mission or cost effectiveness of the agency.

10A.3 A process is in place for developing, implementing, and revising interagency policies and agreements.

10A.4 A conflict resolution process exists between the organization and external agencies with whom it has a defined relationship.

CC 10B.1 External agency agreements are current and support organizational objectives.

10B.2 The agency researches, analyzes and gives consideration to all types of functional agreements that may aid in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the agency.

10B.3 The agency has a process by which their agreements are managed, reviewed, and revised.

CC - Core Competency

Appendix B

Metaevaluation Checklist (2011)

<p style="text-align: center;">The 30 Metaevaluation Standards (Grouped into UTILITY, FEASIBILITY, PROPRIETY, ACCURACY, & EVALUATION ACCOUNTABILITY)</p>				
<p><i>THE UTILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS ALIGNED WITH STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS SUCH THAT PROCESS USES, FINDINGS USES, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE INFLUENCES ARE POSSIBLE.</i></p>				
<p>U1 Evaluator Credibility. [Evaluations should be conducted by qualified people who establish and maintain credibility in the evaluation context.]</p>				
<p>[] Engage evaluators who possess the needed knowledge, skills, experience, and professional credentials [] Engage evaluators whose evaluation qualifications, communication skills, and methodological approach are a good fit to the stakeholders' situation and needs [] Engage evaluators who are appropriately sensitive and responsive to issues of gender, socioeconomic status, race, language, and culture [] Engage evaluators who build good working relationships, and listen, observe, clarify, and attend appropriately to stakeholders' criticisms and suggestions [] Engage evaluators who have a record of keeping evaluations moving forward while effectively addressing evaluation users' information needs [] Give stakeholders information on the evaluation plan's technical quality and practicality, e.g., as assessed by an independent evaluation expert</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">[] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>				
<p>Comment re. U1, as appropriate:</p>				
<p>U2 Attention to Stakeholders. [Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program or affected by the evaluation.]</p>				
<p>[] Clearly identify and arrange for ongoing interaction with the evaluation client [] Identify and arrange for appropriate exchange with the other right-to-know audiences, including, among others, the program's authority figures, implementers, beneficiaries, and funders [] Search out & invite input from groups or communities whose perspectives are typically excluded, especially stakeholders who might be hindered by the evaluation [] Help stakeholders understand the evaluation's boundaries and purposes and engage them to uncover assumptions, interests, values, behaviors, and concerns regarding the</p>				

<p>program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Determine how stakeholders intend to use the evaluation's findings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Involve and inform stakeholders about the evaluation's progress and findings throughout the process, as appropriate</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>
<p>Comment re. U2, as appropriate:</p>
<p>U3 Negotiated Purposes. <i>[Evaluation purposes should be identified and revisited based on the needs of stakeholders.]</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Identify the client's stated purposes for the evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Engage the client and stakeholders to weigh stated evaluation purposes—e.g., against their perceptions of dilemmas, quandaries, and desired evaluation outcomes—and to embrace evaluation's bottom line goal of assessing value, e.g., a program's worth, merit, or significance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Help the client group consider possible alternative evaluation purposes, e.g., program planning, development, management, and improvement; program documentation and accountability; and judging the program's quality, impacts, and worth</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Engage the client to clarify and prioritize the evaluation's purposes using appropriate tools such as needs assessments and logic models</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Provide for engaging the client group periodically to revisit and, as appropriate, update the evaluation's purposes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assure that initial and updated evaluation purposes are communicated to the full range of stakeholders</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>
<p>Comment re. U3, as appropriate:</p>

U4 Explicit Values. <i>[Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning the evaluation purposes, processes, and judgments.]</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Make clear the evaluator's commitment to certain, relevant values, e.g., an evaluation's utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability and a program's equity, fairness, excellence, effectiveness, safety, efficiency, fiscal accountability, legality, and freedom from fraud, waste, and abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Engage the client and program stakeholders in an effective process of values clarification, which may include examining the needs of targeted program beneficiaries, the basis for program goals, and the rationale for defined evaluation purposes <input type="checkbox"/> Assist the client group to air and discuss their common and discrepant views of what values and purposes should guide the program evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge and show respect for stakeholders' possibly diverse perspectives on value matters, e.g., by assisting them to seek consensus or at least reach an accommodation regarding possible alternative interpretations of findings against different values <input type="checkbox"/> clarify the values that will undergird the evaluation, taking account of client, stakeholder, and evaluator positions on this matter <input type="checkbox"/> Act to ensure that the client and full range of stakeholders understand and respect the values that will guide the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the evaluation's information				
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Comment re. U4, as appropriate:				
U5 Relevant Information. <i>[Evaluation information should serve the identified and emergent needs of intended users.]</i>				

<input type="checkbox"/> Interview stakeholders to determine their different perspectives, information needs, and views of what constitutes credible, acceptable information <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to obtain sufficient information to address the client group's most important information needs <input type="checkbox"/> Assess and adapt the information collection plan to assure adequate scope for assessing the program's value, e.g., its worth, merit, or significance <input type="checkbox"/> Assure that the obtained information will address and keep within the boundaries of the evaluation's stated purposes and key questions <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate time and resources to collecting different parts of the needed information in consideration of their differential importance <input type="checkbox"/> Allow flexibility during the evaluation process for revising the information collection plan pursuant to emergence of new, legitimate information needs
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
<p>Comment re. U5, as appropriate:</p>

U6 Meaningful Processes and Products. <i>[Evaluation activities, descriptions, findings, and judgments should encourage use.]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget evaluation time and resources to allow for meaningful exchange with stakeholders throughout the evaluation process <input type="checkbox"/> Engage the full range of stakeholders to assess the original evaluation plan's meaningfulness for their intended uses <input type="checkbox"/> During the evaluation process, regularly visit with stakeholders' to assess their evaluation needs and expectations, also, as appropriate, to obtain their assistance in executing the evaluation plan <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly obtain stakeholders' reactions to the meaningfulness of evaluation procedures and processes <input type="checkbox"/> Invite stakeholders to react to and discuss the accuracy, clarity, and meaningfulness of evaluation reports <input type="checkbox"/> As appropriate, adapt evaluation procedures, processes, and reports to assure that they meaningfully address stakeholder needs

<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. U6, as appropriate:
U7 Timeliness and Appropriate Communication and Reporting. <i>[Evaluations should attend in a timely and ongoing way to the reporting and dissemination needs of stakeholders.]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan to deliver evaluation feedback pursuant to the client group's projection of when they will need reports, but allow flexibility for responding to changes in the program's timeline and needs <input type="checkbox"/> Plan, as appropriate, to give stakeholders access to important information as it emerges <input type="checkbox"/> Employ reporting formats and media that accommodate the characteristics and serve the needs of the different audiences <input type="checkbox"/> Determine how much technical detail to report by identifying and taking account of the audience's technical background and expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and budget evaluation follow-up activities so that the evaluator can assist the client group to interpret and make effective use of the final evaluation report <input type="checkbox"/> Pursuant to the above checkpoints, formalize expectations for communicating and reporting to the sponsor and stakeholders in the evaluation contract
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. U7, as appropriate:

U8 Concern for Consequences and Influence. <i>[Evaluations should promote responsible and adaptive use while guarding against unintended negative consequences and misuse.]</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify the stakeholders' formal and informal communication mechanisms that connect stakeholders and, as appropriate, channel evaluation findings through these mechanisms <input type="checkbox"/> Be vigilant and proactive in identifying and appropriately communicating with stakeholders who appear to be sabotaging the evaluation and, as necessary, counteract the sabotage <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to meet, as appropriate, with stakeholders to help them apply findings in ways that are logical, meaningful, ethical, effective, and transparent <input type="checkbox"/> In discussing evaluation findings with the client group stress the importance of applying the findings in accordance with the evaluation's negotiated purposes <input type="checkbox"/> Be vigilant to identify, prevent, or appropriately address any misuses of evaluation findings <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up evaluation reports to determine if and how stakeholders applied the findings				
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor				
Comment re. U8:				

<p>Scoring the Evaluation for UTILITY Add the following:</p> <p>Number of Excellent ratings (0-8) _____ x 4 = _____</p> <p>Number of Very Good (0-8) _____ x 3 = _____</p> <p>Number of Good (0-8) _____ x 2 = _____</p> <p>Number of Fair (0-8) _____ x 1 = _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total score: = _____</p>	<p>Strength of the evaluation's provisions for UTILITY:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 29.44 (92%) to 32: Excellent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 21.44 (67%) to 29.43: Very Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13.44 (42%) to 21.43: Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.44 (17%) to 13.43: Fair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0 (0%) to 5.43: Poor</p> <p>_____ (Total score) ÷ 32 = _____ x 100 = _____ %</p>
<p>THE FEASIBILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS VIABLE, REALISTIC, CONTEXTUALLY SENSITIVE, RESPONSIVE, PRUDENT, DIPLOMATIC, POLITICALLY VIABLE, EFFICIENT, AND COST EFFECTIVE.</p>	
<p>F1 Project Management. <i>[Evaluations should use effective project management strategies.]</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Ground management of the evaluation in knowledge of the stakeholders' environment and needs and the evaluation's purposes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a formal management plan including, e.g., the evaluation's goals, procedures, assignments, communication, reporting, schedule, budget, monitoring arrangements, risk management arrangements, and accounting procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recruit evaluation staff members who collectively have knowledge, skills, and experience required to execute, explain, monitor, and maintain rigor, viability, and credibility in the evaluation process</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Involve and regularly inform an appropriate range of stakeholders</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Systematically oversee and document the evaluation's activities and expenditures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Periodically review the evaluation's progress and, as appropriate, update the evaluation plan and procedures</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </p>	
<p>Comment re. F1, as appropriate:</p>	
<p>F2 Practical Procedures. <i>[The procedures should be practical and responsive to the way the program operates.]</i></p>	

<input type="checkbox"/> Assess and confirm the program's evaluability before deciding to proceed with the evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Employ procedures that fit well within the program and its environment <input type="checkbox"/> Assure that the selected procedures take account of and equitably accommodate the characteristics and needs of diverse stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain relevant insider knowledge and incorporate it into the data collection process <input type="checkbox"/> Make efficient use of existing information and avoid needless duplication in collecting data <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct the evaluation so as to minimize disruption to the program				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </div>				
Comment re. F2, as appropriate:				
F3 Contextual Viability. <i>[Evaluations should recognize, monitor, and balance the cultural and political interests and needs of individuals and groups.]</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate the program's cultural, political, and economic contexts by reviewing such items as the program's funding proposal, budget documents, organizational charts, reports, and news media accounts and by interviewing such stakeholders as the program's funder, policy board members, director, staff, recipients, and area residents <input type="checkbox"/> Take into account the interests and needs of stakeholders in the process of designing, contracting for, and staffing the evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Enlist stakeholder and interest group support through such means as regular exchange with a review panel composed of a representative group of stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Practice even-handedness and responsiveness in relating to all stakeholders, e.g., in the composition of focus groups <input type="checkbox"/> Avert or identify and counteract attempts to bias or misapply the findings <input type="checkbox"/> Provide appropriate mechanisms for stakeholders to remain informed about the evaluation's progress and findings, such as an evaluation project website, an evaluation newsletter, targeted reports, and a telephone response line				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 0;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor </div>				

Comment re. F3, as appropriate:

F4 Resource Use. *[Evaluations should use resources effectively and efficiently.]*

☐ Negotiate a budget--ensuring that the contracted evaluation work can be completed efficiently and effectively—to include the needed funds and the necessary in-kind support and cooperation of program personnel

☐ Balance effectiveness and efficiency in resource use to help ensure that the evaluation will be worth its costs and that sponsors will get their money's worth

☐ Use resources carefully with as little waste as possible

☐ Utilize existing data, systems, and services when they are well aligned with the evaluation's purposes

☐ Document the evaluation's costs, including time, human resources, expenditures, infrastructure support, and foregone opportunities

☐ Document the evaluation's benefits, including contributions to program improvement, future funding, better informed stakeholders, and dissemination of effective services

☐ 6 Excellent ☐ 5 Very Good ☐ 4 Good ☐ 2-3 Fair ☐ 0-1 Poor

Comment re. F3, as appropriate:

<p>Scoring the Evaluation for FEASIBILITY</p> <p>Add the following:</p> <p>Number of Excellent ratings (0-4) _____ x 4 = _____</p> <p>Number of Very Good (0-4) _____ x 3 = _____</p> <p>Number of Good (0-4) _____ x 2 = _____</p> <p>Number of Fair (0-4) _____ x 1 = _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total score:</p> <p>= _____</p>	<p>Strength of the evaluation's provisions for FEASIBILITY:</p> <p>[] 14.72 (92%) to 16: Excellent</p> <p>[] 10.72 (67%) to 14.71: Very Good</p> <p>[] 6.72 (42%) to 10.71: Good</p> <p>[] 2.72 (17%) to 6.71: Fair</p> <p>[] 0 (0%) to 2.71: Poor</p> <p>_____ (Total score) ÷ 16 = _____ x 100 = _____ %</p>
<p>THE PROPRIETY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION WILL BE CONDUCTED PROPERLY, FAIRLY, LEGALLY, ETHICALLY, AND JUSTLY WITH RESPECT TO (1) EVALUATORS' AND STAKEHOLDERS' ETHICAL RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND DUTIES; (2) SYSTEMS OF RELEVANT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND RULES; AND (3) ROLES AND DUTIES OF PROFESSIONAL EVALUATORS.</p>	
<p>P1 Responsive and Inclusive Orientation. <i>[Evaluations should be responsive to stakeholders and their communities.]</i></p>	
<p>[] Acquire and take account of knowledge of the program environment's history, significant events, culture, and other factors affecting the program and its evaluation</p> <p>[] Identify stakeholders broadly, gather useful information from them, and include them, as appropriate, in decisions about the evaluation's purposes, questions, and design</p> <p>[] Engage and serve the full range of stakeholders in an even-handed manner, regardless of their politics, personal characteristics, status, or power</p> <p>[] Design and schedule the evaluation to provide multiple opportunities for stakeholders to be involved, contribute, and be heard throughout the evaluation process</p> <p>[] Be open to and thoughtfully consider stakeholders' contradictory views, interests, and beliefs regarding the program's prior history, goals, status, achievements, and significance</p> <p>[] Avert or counteract moves by powerful stakeholders to dominate in determining evaluation purposes, questions, and procedures and interpreting outcomes</p>	
<p>[] 6 Excellent [] 5 Very Good [] 4 Good [] 2-3 Fair [] 0-1 Poor</p>	
<p>Comment re. P1, as appropriate:</p>	

P2 Formal Agreements. <i>[Evaluation agreements should be negotiated to make obligations explicit and take into account the needs, expectations, and cultural contexts of clients and other stakeholders.]</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate evaluation-related obligations, with the client, including what is to be done, how, by whom, when, and at what cost <input type="checkbox"/> Make ethical, legal, and professional stipulations and obligations explicit and binding regarding such evaluation matters as evaluation purposes and questions, confidentiality/anonymity of data, editorial authority, release of reports, evaluation follow-up activities, cooperation of program staff, funds and in-kind resources, and provision for a metaevaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Employ the contract negotiation process to strengthen trust in communications through stakeholder consultation and, unless restricted by laws or regulations, allowing stakeholders to review the printed agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that formal evaluation agreements conform to federal, tribal, state, or local requirements, statutes, and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Employ negotiated agreements to monitor, track, and assure effective implementation of specific duties and responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Revisit evaluation agreements over time and negotiate revisions as appropriate			
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor			
Comment re. P2, as appropriate:			
P3 Human Rights and Respect. <i>[Evaluations should be designed and conducted to protect human and legal rights and maintain the dignity of participants and other stakeholders.]</i>			

P5 Transparency and Disclosure. <i>[Evaluations should provide complete descriptions of findings, limitations, and conclusions to all stakeholders unless doing so would violate legal or propriety obligations.]</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and disclose to all stakeholders the legal and contractual constraints under which the evaluation's information can be released and disseminated <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain open lines of communication with and be accessible to, at least representatives of, the full range of stakeholders throughout the evaluation, so they can obtain the information which they are authorized to review <input type="checkbox"/> Before releasing the evaluation's findings, inform each intended recipient of the evaluation's policies—regarding such matters as right-to-know audiences, human rights, confidentiality, and privacy—and, as appropriate, acquire her or his written agreement to comply with these policies <input type="checkbox"/> Provide all stakeholders access to a full description and assessment of the program, e.g., its targeted and actual beneficiaries; its aims, structure, staff, process, and costs; and its strengths, weaknesses, and side effects <input type="checkbox"/> Provide all stakeholders with information on the evaluation's conclusions and limitations <input type="checkbox"/> Provide all right-to-know audiences with access to information on the evaluation's sources of monetary and in-kind support				
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. P5, as appropriate:				

P6 Conflicts of Interests. <i>[Evaluators should openly and honestly identify and address real or perceived conflicts of interests that may compromise the evaluation.]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Throughout the evaluation process search for potential, suspected, or actual conflicts of interest <input type="checkbox"/> Search for conflicts involving a wide range of persons and groups, e.g., those associated with the client, the program's financial sponsor, program recipients, area residents, the evaluator, and other stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Search for various kinds of conflicting interests, including prospects for financial gains or losses, competing program goals, alternative program procedures, alternative evaluation approaches, and alternative bases for interpreting findings

<p>Scoring the Evaluation for PROPRIETY</p> <p>Add the following:</p> <p>Number of Excellent ratings (0-7) _____ x 4 = _____</p> <p>Number of Very Good (0-7) _____ x 3 = _____</p> <p>Number of Good (0-7) _____ x 2 = _____</p> <p>Number of Fair (0-7) _____ x 1 = _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total score: = _____</p>	<p>Strength of the evaluation's provisions for PROPRIETY:</p> <p>[] 26.76 (92%) to 28: Excellent</p> <p>[] 18.76 (67%) to 26.75: Very Good</p> <p>[] 11.76 (42%) to 18.75: Good</p> <p>[] 4.76 (17%) to 11.75: Fair</p> <p>[] 0 (0%) to 4.75: Poor</p> <p>_____ (Total score) ÷ 28 = _____ x 100 = _____ %</p>

*THE **ACCURACY STANDARDS** ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION EMPLOYS SOUND THEORY, DESIGNS, METHODS, AND REASONING IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE INCONSISTENCIES, DISTORTIONS, AND MISCONCEPTIONS AND PRODUCE AND REPORT TRUTHFUL EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.*

A1 Justified Conclusions and Decisions. *[Evaluation conclusions and decisions should be explicitly justified in the cultures and contexts where they have consequences.]*

- [] Address each contracted evaluation question based on information that is sufficiently broad, deep, reliable, contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and valid
- [] Derive defensible conclusions that respond to the evaluation's stated purposes, e.g., to identify and assess the program's strengths and weaknesses, main effects and side effects, and worth and merit
- [] Limit conclusions to the applicable time periods, contexts, purposes, and activities

<input type="checkbox"/> Identify the persons who determined the evaluation's conclusions, e.g., the evaluator using the obtained information plus inputs from a broad range of stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and report all important assumptions, the interpretive frameworks and values employed to derive the conclusions, and any appropriate caveats <input type="checkbox"/> Report plausible alternative explanations of the findings and explain why rival explanations were rejected
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. A1, as appropriate:
A2 Valid Information. <i>[Evaluation information should serve the intended purposes and support valid interpretations.]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Through communication with the full range of stakeholders develop a coherent, widely understood set of concepts and terms needed to assess and judge the program within its cultural context <input type="checkbox"/> Assure—through such means as systematic protocols, training, and calibration--that data collectors competently obtain the needed data <input type="checkbox"/> Document the methodological steps taken to protect validity during data selection, collection, storage, and analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Involve clients, sponsors, and other stakeholders sufficiently to ensure that the scope and depth of interpretations are aligned with their needs and widely understood <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate and report threats to validity, e.g., by examining and reporting on the merits of alternative explanations <input type="checkbox"/> Assess and report the comprehensiveness, quality, and clarity of the information provided by the procedures as a set in relation to the information needed to address the evaluation's purposes and questions
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. A2, as appropriate:

A3 Reliable Information. <i>[Evaluation procedures should yield sufficiently dependable and consistent information for the intended uses.]</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine, justify, and report the needed types of reliability—e/g., test-retest, findings from parallel groups, or ratings by multiple observers—and the acceptable levels of reliability <input type="checkbox"/> In the process of examining, strengthening, and reporting reliability, account for situations where assessments are or may be differentially reliable due to varying characteristics of persons and groups in the evaluation's context <input type="checkbox"/> Assure that the evaluation team includes or has access to expertise needed to investigate the applicable types of reliability <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the procedures used to achieve consistency <input type="checkbox"/> Provide appropriate reliability estimates for key information summaries, including descriptions of programs, program components, contexts, and outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Examine and discuss the consistency of scoring, categorization, and coding and between different sets of information, e.g., assessments by different observers			
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor			
Comment re. A3, as appropriate:			
A4 Explicit Program and Context Descriptions. <i>[Evaluations should document programs and their contexts with appropriate detail and scope for the evaluation purposes.]</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Describe all important aspects of the program—e.g., goals, design, intended and			

<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. A5, as appropriate:
A6 Sound Designs and Analyses. <i>[Evaluations should employ technically adequate designs and analyses that are appropriate for the evaluation purposes.]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Create or select a logical framework that provides a sound basis for studying the subject program, answering the evaluation's questions, and judging the program and its components <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to access pertinent information sources and to collect a sufficient breadth and depth of relevant, high quality quantitative and qualitative information in order to answer the evaluation's questions and judge the program's value <input type="checkbox"/> Delineate the many specific details required to collect, analyze, and report the needed information <input type="checkbox"/> Develop specific plans for analyzing obtained information, including clarifying needed assumptions, checking and correcting data and information, aggregating data, and checking for statistical significance of observed changes or differences in program recipients' performance <input type="checkbox"/> Buttress the conceptual framework and technical evaluation design with concrete plans for staffing, funding, scheduling, documenting, and metaevaluating the evaluation work <input type="checkbox"/> Plan specific procedures to avert and check for threats to reaching defensible conclusions, including analysis of factors of contextual complexity, examination of the sufficiency and validity of obtained information, checking on the plausibility of assumptions underlying the evaluation design, and assessment of the plausibility of alternative interpretations and conclusions
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor
Comment re. A6, as appropriate:

A7 Explicit Evaluation Reasoning. <i>[Evaluation reasoning leading from information and analyses to findings, interpretations, conclusions, and judgments should be clearly and completely documented.]</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Clearly describe all the assumptions, criteria, and evidence that provided the basis for judgments and conclusions <input type="checkbox"/> In making reasoning explicit, begin with the most important questions, then, as feasible, address all other key questions, e.g., those related to description, improvement, causal attributions, accountability, and costs related to effectiveness or benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Document the evaluation's chain of reasoning, including the values invoked so that stakeholders who might embrace different values can assess the evaluation's judgments and conclusions <input type="checkbox"/> Examine and report how the evaluation's judgments and conclusions are or are not consistent with the possibly varying value orientations and positions of different stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Identify, evaluate, and report the relative defensibility of alternative conclusions that might have been reached based on the obtained evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Assess and acknowledge limitations of the reasoning that led to the evaluation's judgments and conclusions			
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor			
Comment re. A7, as appropriate:			
A8 Communicating and Reporting. <i>[Evaluation communications should have adequate scope and guard against misconceptions, biases, distortions, and errors.]</i>			

<input type="checkbox"/> Reach a formal agreement that the evaluator will retain editorial authority over reports <input type="checkbox"/> Reach a formal agreement defining right-to-know audiences and guaranteeing appropriate levels of openness and transparency in releasing and disseminating evaluation findings <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule formal and informal reporting in consideration of user needs, including follow-up assistance for applying findings <input type="checkbox"/> Employ multiple reporting mechanisms, e.g., slides, dramatizations, photographs, powerpoint®, focus groups, printed reports, oral presentations, telephone conversations, and memos <input type="checkbox"/> Provide safeguards, such as stakeholder reviews of draft reports and translations into language of users, to assure that formal evaluation reports are correct, relevant, and understood by representatives of all segments of the evaluation's audience <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently check and correct draft reports to assure they are impartial, objective, free from bias, responsive to contracted evaluation questions, accurate, free of ambiguity, understood by key stakeholders, and edited for clarity	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor	
Comment re. A8, as appropriate:	
Scoring the Evaluation for ACCURACY Add the following: Number of Excellent ratings (0-8) _____ x 4 = _____ Number of Very Good (0-8) _____ x 3 = _____ Number of Good (0-8) _____ x 2 = _____ Number of Fair (0-8) _____ x 1 = _____ <p style="text-align: right;">Total score:</p>	Strength of the evaluation's provisions for ACCURACY: <input type="checkbox"/> 29.44 (92%) to 32: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 21.44 (67%) to 29.43: Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 13.44 (42%) to 21.43: Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.44 (17%) to 13.43: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0 (0%) to 5.43: Poor _____ (Total score) ÷ 32 = _____ x 100 = _____ %

its adherence to the metaevaluation standards	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Poor	
Comment re. E3, as appropriate:	
<p>Scoring the Evaluation for EVALUATOR ACCOUNTABILITY Add the following: Number of Excellent ratings (0-3) _____ x 4 = _____ Number of Very Good (0-3) _____ x 3 = _____ Number of Good (0-3) _____ x 2 = _____ Number of Fair (0-3) _____ x 1 = _____ <div style="text-align: right;">Total score:</div> = _____ </p>	<p>Strength of the evaluation's provisions for EVALUATOR ACCOUNTABILITY: <input type="checkbox"/> 11.04 (92%) to 12: Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 8.04 (67%) to 11.03: Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.04 (42%) to 8.03: Good <input type="checkbox"/> 2.04 (17%) to 5.03: Fair <input type="checkbox"/> 0 (0%) to 2.03: Poor <div style="text-align: right;"> _____ (Total score) ÷ 12 = _____ x 100 = _____ % </div> </p>

Appendix C

Sounding Board Feedback for Judgments Against Each Standard

Appendix D
HSIRB Approval

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: November 10, 2015

To: Chris Coryn, Principal Investigator
Stacy French, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: Approval not needed for HSIRB Project Number 15-11-14

This letter will serve as confirmation that your project titled "Metaevaluation of the CFAI Accreditation Process" has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB). Based on that review, the HSIRB has determined that approval is not required for you to conduct this project because you are not collecting personal identifiable (private) information about individual and your scope of work does not meet the Federal definition of human subject.

45 CFR 46.102 (f) Human Subject

(f) *Human subject* means a living individual **about whom** an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains

- (1) Data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or
- (2) Identifiable private information.

Intervention includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (for example, venipuncture) and manipulations of the subject or the subject's environment that are performed for research purposes. *Interaction* includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. *Private information* includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects.

Thank you for your concerns about protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects.

A copy of your protocol and a copy of this letter will be maintained in the HSIRB files.

1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5456

PHONE: (269) 387-8293 FAX: (269) 387-8276

CAMPUS SITE: 251 W. Walwood Hall

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