

PRACTICAL TOOL

Funder-Ready Reporting Checklist

A practical reporting guide that connects activities, outcomes, evidence, risks, and management decisions.

THIS RESOURCE HELPS YOU

- Build reporting before the end of a grant period.
- Improve evidence quality and ownership of data collection.
- Connect reporting to decisions, not just compliance.

The reporting architecture

Outcome and performance definitions

State what success means and which measures will show meaningful progress toward it.

Data ownership and frequency

Name who collects or validates each measure, where it comes from, and how often it should be updated.

Evidence quality and documentation

Keep the source, method, and supporting evidence clear enough that reported results can be trusted and explained.

Risk, variance, and learning

Report material differences from plan, what is driving them, and what the organization is learning.

Connection to decisions

Show how findings affect priorities, resource choices, corrective action, or changes in implementation.

A decision-ready reporting chain

1. Activity

What the organization did or delivered.

2. Output

What was produced directly by the activity.

3. Outcome

What changed for the organization, participant, system, or portfolio.

4. Evidence

The data or documentation supporting the claimed result.

5. Interpretation and decision

What the evidence means, what risk or variance exists, and what management action follows.

What weak reporting usually looks like

Last-minute data chasing

Ownership and collection routines were never established, so reporting becomes a scramble.

Activity without meaning

Reports list events, outputs, or tasks but do not connect them to outcomes or performance.

Unexplained variance

Numbers are shown without explaining why performance changed or whether leaders need to act.

Evidence without context

Data is technically present but does not explain significance, limitations, or operational implications.

No management link

The report is delivered, but the findings do not change priorities, decisions, risk response, or implementation.