

# IOCE survey of Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs)

## I. Basic profile information

Please type your responses in the right column. Save Word document with name of your VOPE in title. Send completed document to [IOCE@earthlink.net](mailto:IOCE@earthlink.net)

<b>1. Name and acronym of organization (VOPE)</b>	Atlanta-area Evaluation Association
<b>2. Geographic scope of organization</b> (See typology in right column; highlight appropriate level, delete others)	1.1. Sub-national (e.g. local affiliate)
<b>3. Contact Details</b>	Names and e-addresses of up to three contact persons: 1: Tom Chapel, AEA liaison, TChapel@cdc.gov 2: Sarah Gill, president elect, <a href="mailto:sarahgill97@msn.com">sarahgill97@msn.com</a> 3: Linda Vo-Green wuw9@cdc.gov Postal address of VOPE: PO Box 98206, Atlanta, 30359. Telephone: n/a VOPE website URL: www. http://atl-eval.org/
<b>4. a. Current formal/registered membership</b> – numbers of individuals, by their affiliation (if known; please at least give total) <b>4. b. Informal membership</b> (persons on your mailing list)	Government: NGOs/CSOs: Academics: Private sector (consultants): Other:  <b>a. Total official membership:</b> 80 <b>b. Total informal membership:</b> 200
<b>5. Year VOPE was founded</b>	2000, incorporated 2002
<b>6. Current status</b> (identify which)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legally recognized by government</li> </ul>
<b>7. Information about growth:</b> evolution of the number of members or financial resources in the last 5 years.	Since 2009, we have grown substantially. We had perhaps 15 informal members, a smaller number paying dues, and no ongoing activities. This was a nadir of our organization. We currently have an active organization with monthly activities for our membership.
<b>8. Purpose and mission of VOPE</b>	Our mission is to:  Promote the science and practice of evaluation in both the public and private sectors.  Improve the quality of evaluation by promoting professional evaluation practices and stimulating new evaluation ideas and opportunities.  Enhance the professional life of evaluators by providing networking opportunities among evaluators and providing a forum for cross-fertilization of evaluation ideas among various professions, settings, and content areas.  Add credibility and visibility to the evaluation field by bringing students into the evaluation field and mentoring their professional development
<b>9. Current strategy and emphasis</b>	Routinizing our core activities
<b>10. Organizational capacity:</b> Please describe your governance structure, leadership, services provided, finances, human resources, linkages with other organizations, etc.	We are an affiliate of the AEA, but governed separately. We are a voluntary group, driven by member interest. We have 5 official officers: president, past-president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer. We have 4 standing committees (Program, Finance, Membership, Communications) each with two co-chairs, who also serve on the "council". We have an official liaison with the AEA as well. Members pay \$40 dues/year, \$25 for students. We have no standing contracts for services, although we have hired web services recently. We have no formal agreements with any

	other organizations, although we informally work with CDC and other voluntary groups, depending on member interest.
<b>11.Means of communication with members</b> , e.g. newsletter, listserv, publication, website	Newsletter (e-mail) website, Facebook page
<b>12.Past events</b> (e.g. during past year)	August (2014): Targeting synergism and transformation as evaluation strategies, AEA Conference Program Review September: Socializing Standards: AaEA Fall Social November: Disappointing Evaluation Results, Large Scale Outcome Evaluation December: AaEA Holiday Social and Elections February (2015): Data Dashboard Development: A Practical Guide to Navigating the Dashboard Landscape, United Nations Year of Evaluation Talk, March: Cutting-Edge Approaches for the Evaluator’s Toolbox Lunch with Huey Chen April: Social Determinants of Health (a walk the talk event followed) May: Success Case Method (a walk the talk event followed) June: An Evening with Stewart Donaldson (The Independent Evaluators subgroup also held several events)
<b>13.Forthcoming key events/conferences</b> – dates, location	July social September: Guest Speaker (TBD) October: AaEA at AEA
<b>14.Name and e-address of person submitting this information</b>	Maureen Wilce, <a href="mailto:mwilce@cdc.gov">mwilce@cdc.gov</a> or <a href="mailto:mwilce@earthlink.net">mwilce@earthlink.net</a>
<b>15.Date of this update</b>	June 10, 2015

## II. Experience with Evaluation Capacity Building

<p><b>1. Background:</b> Please provide a brief history of the formation of this organization (VOPE).</p> <p>1.1 Who were/are the key players?</p> <p>1.2 How many members do you have on your governing board/committee?</p> <p>1.3 What are the main existing strengths that your VOPE is trying to capitalize on?</p> <p>1.4 What are the main challenges that your VOPE is trying to address?</p>	<p>1.1 we were founded in 2000, by Judith Ottoson, Tom Chapel, David Cotton, and others. We developed by-laws and in 2002 incorporated with the state and applied for Federal recognition as a non-profit organization.</p> <p>1.2 We have 5 official officers: President, Past-president, President-elect, secretary, treasurer. We have 4 standing committees (Program, Finance, Membership, Communications) each with two co-chairs, who also serve on the “council”.</p> <p>1.3 Our strengths are the interests and energy of our members, and the evaluation resources in Atlanta</p> <p>1.4 Maintaining momentum. Our ambitions and ability to invest volunteer resources do not always match. We often have a great deal of interest in small limited projects, but few members with time to coordinate the big picture or serve as mentors to newer evaluators. Communications is also a challenge, as things fall through the cracks as they pass between volunteers.</p>
<p><b>2. Organizational motivation:</b> What were/are the driving forces of the VOPE and its historical development?</p>	<p>The desire to build evaluation capacity within the community and to provide support and networking opportunities for evaluators.</p>
<p><b>3. Evaluation Capacity Building<sup>1</sup>:</b> What has your VOPE done to promote evaluation (M&amp;E) capacity?</p>	<p>We regularly offer programs/events such as those described above. Our on-going activities include offering a “new evaluators” course most years, and offering pro-bono opportunities to allow evaluators to increase their experience through helping local non-profits. Recently we have begun using webinar technology to allow participation for evaluators unable to attend in-person meetings.</p>

<sup>1</sup> By evaluation capacity we refer to the capacity of individuals to produce credible and useful evaluations (supply side), but also to institutional capacities to call for and utilize evaluations (demand side).

<p><b>4. Context / target entities:</b> More specifically, who are the persons or institutions your organization seeks to influence (to strengthen evaluation capacity)? For example:</p> <p>4.1 Technical capacities to <i>supply</i> quality evaluations, partnering with experts, local universities or others to provide training for members, etc.;</p> <p>4.2 Strengthening VOPE organizational capacity itself;</p> <p>4.3 Enhancing the enabling environment for evaluation, including strengthening the <i>demand</i> for and use of evaluations by policy makers;</p> <p>4.4 Influencing governmental policies related to evaluation, evaluation designs and implementation of M&amp;E systems, etc.</p>	<p>4.1 we have a wealth of capacity: CDC, Universities: (Georgia State, Emory, Morehouse), Evaluation consultants and consulting firms; and we have national evaluators “visiting” via the CDC, AEA’s Summer Evaluation Institute, and The Evaluators Institute, which has recently added Atlanta to their schedule.</p> <p>4.2 Our past president has taken on the task of facilitating the sustainability of our processes</p> <p>4.2 Our activities for building demand have been limited, to date. We held a non-profit summit once which brought together leaders from the non-profit sector and evaluators, but we do not currently do outreach.</p> <p>4.4 Our logic model posits that by increasing the skills and awareness through our membership and activities, we will create quality evaluations that have value to organizations. This will build demand ultimately. We also feel that to build demand without a high quality supply (organizational capacity to meet the demand) would be irresponsible.</p>
<p><b>5. Public accountability:</b> Is your VOPE helping to strengthen oversight and transparency of government programs? If so, in what ways? Can you share any success stories of evaluators or others promoting public accountability?</p>	<p>Only indirectly by efforts of our members. For example, one example we can cite is that our new evaluator series has been turned into a web-based training that is available through CDC. Member presentations have been added to curriculums at organizations like CDC and consulting firms.</p>
<p><b>6. More specifically, what are some of the key themes for which you advocate?</b> For example, are you promoting issues related to cultural sensitivity, equity, social justice, empowerment, transformation, gender, environment, poverty? If so, please describe or attach relevant documents.</p>	<p>Officially, we promote themes directly related to evaluation. Within that context, many of our workshops have emphasized making evaluation more accessible across cultural and economic barriers in terms of data collection methods, evaluation design, and disseminating results.</p>
<p><b>7. Methods:</b> Experiences in strengthening skills of individual members, by (for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organizing workshops led by local experts;</li> <li>• organizing webinars with international speakers;</li> <li>• designing and delivering e-learning programmes;</li> <li>• administering mentoring programmes; etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Over the years we have led number of these, especially the workshops and learning programs, and have offered many webinars, though generally for the convenience of our members rather than to take advantage of international speakers. Please see our History Project at our website for a listing.</p>
<p><b>8. Standards:</b> Has your VOPE developed professional standards/ ethical codes/ competencies (or adheres to those developed by others)? If so, please provide documentation.</p>	<p>We follow those set by our parent organization (AEA).</p>
<p><b>9. Job opportunities:</b> Do you share employment/ consultancy</p>	<p>Yes – well, we share opportunities on our website and in our newsletters</p>

opportunities with evaluators on your database?	
<b>10. Progress and results:</b> What progress has been achieved so far in any of the above or other domains? What are expected and unexpected results achieved?	We still exist, and we have great participation. We've had lots of small successes: persons who got jobs because of our activities; networks and connections that have been made.
<b>11. Lessons learned:</b> Recommendations/ tips to others for good practices on how to organize and sustain VOPEs like yours.	Don't rely on technology too much. Twice, we have had to pretty much start over as an organization because we relied on technology that changed and what we had was lost. Always have a back up plan, and then one more check-in for the most important items. Work on systems early in the organization's activities and document them. This provides consistency and enable new folks to continue as others leave.
<b>12. Next steps:</b> What does your organization plan to do next?	We plan to continue to offer programs and tap member interests. We also hope to create systems that will make operations easier (i.e., how to track both dues and member's applications across systems, how to coordinate events (including the new evaluators class), how to transition between yearly changes in offices/chairs, how to better document our activities over time)
<b>13. Willing to share with other VOPEs?</b> For example, would you be interested in forming peer-to-peer partnerships with one or more other VOPEs to share lessons learned, advise each other? If so, describe what you would be willing to share / advice you would seek.	We would be happy to share what we have with others.
<b>14. Suggestions:</b> What ideas do you have for what should be included in activities of IOCE and the EvalPartners Initiative?	Communications and dialog at first, and providing a space to share ideas
<b>15. Want to be actively involved?</b> Does your VOPE want to be actively involved in IOCE and EvalPartners? If so, in what ways?	We would like to learn more about IOCE and opportunities they may have for us to collaborate.
16. Would you be willing to write up a case study providing more detailed analysis of your VOPE's experiences?	We'd be happy to share our materials and ideas as needed.

*Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to this survey. As stated in the instructions, it will be added to the [www.IOCE.net](http://www.IOCE.net) website so persons interested in finding evaluators in your country (or state or province) will have this basic information about your VOPE.*

*Please save this entire Word document with the name of your VOPE in the title, then send as an attachment to [IOCE@earthlink.net](mailto:IOCE@earthlink.net).*

*For any questions or further information you may contact Jim Rugh, EvalPartners Coordinator, at [JimRugh@mindspring.com](mailto:JimRugh@mindspring.com).*