IOCE survey of Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs)

I.   Basic profile information

1. **Name and acronym of organization (VOPE)**	Washington Evaluators (WE)
2. **Geographic scope of organization**	Sub-national (local affiliate of the American Evaluation Association based in the District of Columbia)
3. **Contact Details**	Names and e-addresses of up to three contact persons: 1: Brian Yoder, brainlyoder@gmail.com 2: David Bernstein, DavidBernstein@westat.com 3: Valerie Caracelli, caracelliv@gao.gov Postal address of VOPE: email: washeval@gmail.com Telephone: VOPE website URL: www.washingtonevaluators.org
4. **a. Current formal/ registered membership –** numbers of individuals, by their affiliation *(if known; please at least give total)* **4. b. Informal membership** (persons on your mailing list)	Government: NGOs/CSOs: Academics: Private sector (consultants): Other: **a. Total official membership**: __235_ **b. Total informal membership**: __319_
5. **Year VOPE was founded**	1984
6. **Current status** (identify which)	• Bylaws adopted • Legally recognized by government Non profit 501 (c)(3)
7. Information about **growth**: evolution of the number of members or financial resources in the last 5 years.	Our membership has fluctuated over the years. However, to your question, we had 75 members in 2004 and we have had an increase in membership as reflected above. We also have other informal members so that via email we reach over 500 persons. Our current treasury has approximately $3,000 dollars. Our practice is to continue to recycle money collected so that our members receive benefits in the forms of brown bag lunch colloquia, networking events, as well as, the AEA Paul Johnson Memorial Scholarship.
8. **Purpose and mission of VOPE**	WE is a professional society devoted to fostering state-of-the-art knowledge and information sharing about evaluation.
9. **Current strategy and emphasis**	In January 2014 we focused on developing our organizational capacity by forming three committees focusing on membership, communications, and programming.
10. **Organizational capacity**: Please describe your governance structure, leadership, services provided, finances, human resources, linkages with other organizations, etc.	We are a local affiliate of the American Evaluation Association. Our by-laws are attached and are also located on our website.
11. **Means of communication with members,** e.g. newsletter, listserv, publication, website	Communications with members are maintained via our listserv, LinkedIn, twitter, website, and 365 AEA blog.
12. **Past events** (e.g. during past year)	Website has information on past events which include: • Johanna Morariu, Kat Athanasiades, and Ann Emery of Innovation Network: State of Evaluation 2012: Evaluation Practice and Capacity in the Nonprofit Sector, 25 February 2013, George Washington University (GWU). • Dr. Krishna Kumar, State Dept: Evaluating Democracy Assistance, 5 March 2013, GWU.

	• Brian Yoder and Clare Strawn: How to Evaluate Communities of Practice. Happy Hour at Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. 15 March 2013, Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. • Dr. Kathy Newcomer, George Washington University: A Holistic and Systemic Approach to Performance Measurement and Evaluation, 9 May 2013, GWU. • Dr. Andrew Blum (U.S. Institute of Peace): Change for Evaluation's Sake: Lessons in Organizational Development from the United States Institute of Peace, 29 May 2013, GWU. • Multiple Speakers: Speed Networking and Happy Hour: Bringing together performance measurement and evaluation to inform decision-making, 11 June 2013, Newseum Residences. • Dr. Tom Cook: Random Assignment: Yet another, but this time more empirically based, assessment of how superior it is for describing causal connections, 14 June 2013, GWU. • Dr. Doug Marlowe, Pretrial Services Agency: Enhancing Performance Measurement and Evaluation in Treatment and Criminal Justice, 9 July 2013, GWU. • George Wilson, USAID: Monitoring Progress, Evaluating Programs, and Using Information in Complex, High-Threat Environments: USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, 9 July 2013, GWU • Dr. Stephanie Shipman and Dr. Valerie Caracelli (GAO) and Dr. Richard Lucas (USDA): Facilitating Agencies' Use of Evaluations, 28 August 2013, GWU • Dr. Melanie Hwalek: Evaluation Live! Engaging the Evaluation Experience, 12 September 2013, GWU • GAO Strategic Issues panel: B. Licht, M. Bulman, L. Craig, J. Latimer, A. Miles, D. Ramsey, and D. Webb.: 20 Years of GPRA: Can the 2010 Modernization Act Further Instill a Performance Culture in the Federal Government? 18 September 2013, GWU • Dr. Michael Bamberger. Evaluating Complex Development Programs: Challenges and Promising Approaches, 21 Oct. 2013, GWU • Holiday Party, Bistro Bistro Restaurant. December 2013. • Heather Britt and Melissa Patsalides, USAID. Complexity-Aware Monitoring: Briefing on USAID's New Discussion Note. 25 Feb. 2014, GWU. • Dr. Bruce Hemmer, State Dept. Evaluation of Conflict Interventions: Challenges and Solutions. 8 May 2014. GWU.
13. Forthcoming key events/ conferences – dates, location	Matt Von Hendy will present "10 High Quality, Open Access/Low Cost Research Resources for Evaluators," George Washington University, Marvin Center, room 310, May 29th
14. Name and e-address of person submitting this information	Valerie J. Caracelli 2727 29th St. N.W. Apt. 512 Washington, D.C. 20008
15. Date of this update	May 28, 2014

II.   Experience with Evaluation Capacity Building

1. Background: Please provide a brief history of the formation of this organization (VOPE). 1.1 Who were/are the key players? 1.2 How many members do you have on your governing board/ committee?	1.1 Mike Hendricks founded the organization 30 years ago. 1.2 President, Vice President, Past President, Treasurer, Membership Chair, Communications Chair, Program Chair. 1.3 Washington Evaluators hosts monthly brown bag lunch sessions at George Washington University. Sessions are usually attended a cross-section of our membership. WE's membership draws from the large, ubiquitous presence of the U.S. Federal government in the DC area, but

1.3 What are the main existing strengths that your VOPE is trying to capitalize on? 1.4 What are the main challenges that your VOPE is trying to address?	also from state and local governments, nonprofits, academia, consulting firms and independent consultants, and the private sector. 1.4 Washington Evaluators (WE) is currently trying to expand programming in ways that provide added value to WE members and promotes evaluation in the D.C. metro area, for example, providing skills training and supporting additional social activities.
2. Organizational motivation: What were/are the driving forces of the VOPE and its historical development?	Washington Evaluators was originally created as an organization that gave persons working in and/or interested in evaluation in the Washington, D.C. area an opportunity to get together to network and learn from each other. This original motivation drives the organization today.
3. Evaluation Capacity Building[1]**:** What has your VOPE done to promote evaluation (M&E) capacity?	Last fall (October 2013), WE collaborated with AEA's Evaluation Policy Task Force (EPTF) in an initiative called Evaluators Visit Capitol Hill. WE organized AEA members from across the country to visit the office of their congressperson when in D.C. for the AEA conference and EPTF provided materials to AEA members to drop off at their congressperson's office. The goals of the initiative were to 1) make staffers in congressional offices more aware of program evaluation and AEA, 2) give AEA members the opportunity to meet with and speak about evaluation with a staffer in their congressperson's office.
4. Context / target entities: More specifically, who are the persons or institutions your organization seeks to influence (to strengthen evaluation capacity)? For example: 4.1 Technical capacities to *supply* quality evaluations, partnering with experts, local universities or others to provide training for members, etc.; 4.2 Strengthening VOPE organizational capacity itself; 4.3 Enhancing the enabling environment for evaluation, including strengthening the *demand* for and use of evaluations by policy makers; 4.4 Influencing governmental policies related to evaluation, evaluation designs and implementation of M&E systems, etc.	4.1 Washington Evaluators primarily addresses quality of evaluations through brown bag lunch colloquia given by those with expertise in the topic addressed. WE has not engaged in training to develop technical capacities but it is a topic the Board is exploring, e.g., developing webinars and other types of training. 4.2 WE recently restructured the board to include three committees that do much of the work – committees include: 1) membership committee, 2) program committee, and 3) communications committee. The board focuses on strategic direction of the organization and the committees report monthly to the board on their activities. 4.3 The monthly brownbag sessions are open not only to members but also to others, we advertise sessions through the Federal Evaluators' listserv and other communities of practice. 4.4 WE's Evaluators Visit Capitol Hill initiative constitutes a direct outreach to congressional staff to inform them about evaluation and to avail them of information about the American Evaluation Association and its Evaluation Policy Task Force.
5. Public accountability: 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?	WE traditionally has not taken on public accountability efforts. WE has many members who work for the federal government and overtly advocating for oversight and transparency of government programs could create a potential conflict of interest. But, WE's programming does promote evaluation and therefore public accountability through educational awareness raising (i.e. through brownbag sessions on government evaluations).
6. More specifically, what are some of the key themes for which you advocate? For example, are you promoting	WE raises awareness of evaluation issues, methods, and best practices through monthly brown bag sessions.

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[1] 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).

issues related to cultural sensitivity, equity, social justice, empowerment, transformation, gender, environment, poverty? If so, please describe or attach relevant documents.	
7. Methods: Experiences in strengthening skills of individual members, by (for example): • organizing workshops led by local experts; • organizing webinars with international speakers; • designing and delivering e-learning programmes; • administering mentoring programmes; etc.	WE organizes monthly brownbag sessions on a variety of topics, which include skills, international evaluations and speakers as noted in Part I.
8. Standards: Has your VOPE developed professional standards/ ethical codes/ competencies (or adheres to those developed by others)? If so, please provide documentation.	WE adheres to the same ethical principles as the American Evaluation Association and follows the Program Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on standards for educational evaluation.
9. Job opportunities: Do you share employment/ consultancy opportunities with evaluators on your database?	As appropriate, job postings are sent to WE, WE forwards the postings to its membership. WE does not keep a database of job postings.
10. Progress and results: What progress has been achieved so far in any of the above or other domains? What are expected and unexpected results achieved?	WE should be considered a mature VOPE. WE has been in existence for 30 years. The activities it engages in are largely due to demand by members. It's hard to track WE's progress; however, a survey of membership done two years ago shows that WE maintains what it does best and what its members want (job postings, communications, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, AEA 365, brown bags, and happy hour networking events). WE, as a volunteer organization, has recently expanded opportunities for member participation by setting up three committees--program, membership, and communications. These committees focus activities under the committee rubric and report to the WE Board. WE members have opportunities to work on committees on a variety of activities. Our goals are to expand volunteer opportunities for WE members, increase WE's programming, increase membership, and to better serve members' needs.
11. Lessons learned: Recommendations/ tips to others for good practices on how to organize and sustain VOPEs like yours.	As a VOPE or Community of Practice we try to address member needs. These needs vary over time but need to be taken into account. Also, the context continually changes and so we are engaged in an ongoing and continual learning process. The Washington Evaluators is just one of several evaluation communities in the area. Each organization, Washington Evaluators, the Baltimore Evaluators, and the Eastern Evaluation Research Society (EERS) has its own niche and fills its niche well. WE is known for monthly brownbag sessions, Baltimore Evaluators is known for periodic professional networking Happy Hours, and (EERS) is known for its annual conference. Each organization has very different activities that they are best known for; they do their activities well, and the activities are member-driven. The VOPEs are unique to their circumstances rather than looking exactly alike.
12. Next steps: What does your organization plan to do next?	Increase volunteer opportunities for members, increase programming provided, and increase membership.
13. Willing to share with other VOPEs? For example, would you be interested in forming peer-to-peer partnerships with one or more other VOPEs to	We are willing to undertake efforts to share experiences with VOPEs in other countries, guided by selected WE members and subject to WE Board approval.

share lessons learned, advise each other? If so, describe what you would be willing to share / advice you would seek.	
14. Suggestions: What ideas do you have for what should be included in activities of IOCE and the EvalPartners Initiative?	This has not yet been discussed by the Board.
15. Want to be actively involved? 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 EvalPartners before deciding how Washington Evaluators would like to be involved.
16. Would you be willing to write up a case study providing more detailed analysis of your VOPE's experiences?	If WE can find a member who is interested and has the time to provide a case study, WE would be willing to provide a case study. WE has not identified an interested member to date.