

Evaluating Programs Amid Economic Shifts

This toolkit helps organizations evaluate their current programming in the context of economic changes. Use it to assess, align, rebalance, and adapt with purpose.

E – Economic Sensitivity Assessment

Ask: How does this economic climate affect our target population?

- Are service users experiencing more barriers (e.g., job loss, housing insecurity)?
- Are funders shifting priorities or tightening budgets?
- Are program costs increasing (supplies, staffing, facilities)?

A – Alignment with Current Needs

Ask: Is our programming still addressing today's most urgent needs?

- Community needs surveys or listening sessions
- Data from partners, government, or research organizations

Trim or pause programs that no longer hit the mark; double down on those that do.

R – Resource Rebalancing

Ask: Are we using our money, staff, and time in ways that reflect economic reality?

- Which programs are most cost-effective right now?
- Where can we streamline or partner to share resources?
- Can we shift funding to where it's most needed?





S – Strategic Agility

Ask: Are we nimble enough to pivot if the economy changes again?

- Build a 'rapid response' program fund or team
- Test small-scale pilots before scaling up
- Keep an eye on future trends, not just the present moment

Bonus Tool: Program Impact vs. Effort Matrix

Use this matrix to categorize your programs:

-  High impact / low effort → Protect and prioritize
-  Low impact / high effort → Rethink or sunset
-  High impact / high effort → Invest strategically
-  Low impact / low effort → Repurpose or evaluate