

Priority Setting Methods

Relative Worth

Each participant is granted a fixed amount of “points” – say 100 points. Those points can be awarded to the items to be prioritized in whatever quantity the participants desires.

- All 100 points to just one item if it is that important to the participant.
- Distribute the points evenly to all items, if none is more important than another.
- Distribute some points to some items, and none to others.

In the tabulation, the item that receives the highest total points is the highest priority; next highest points, second priority; etc.

Forced Ranking

If there are 10 items to be prioritized, for example, each participant is to go through each item and rank it in order of importance to the participant.

Give a “1” to the item that is the most important.

Give a “2” to the next most important item.

And so on, until the least important item receives the “10.”

In the tabulation, the item that receives the lowest score or points is the highest priority; the next lowest score is the second priority; etc.

Relative Weighting

This method can be the most difficult to use because it requires careful preparation. In much of the priority setting we do, there are some criteria that are important to consider. For example:

- Cost – How much will it cost to carry out the strategy/action?
- Time – How long will it take to carry it out?
- Relevancy to mission – How important is this action to our mission or purpose?
- Number – How many people will be served/helped?
- Target population – Is the population served the one we are trying to reach?

Determine the criteria that participants are to consider. Determine whether each criteria is of equal importance to others. You may want to construct a scale, say from 1-5, with “5” being the most important. The participant then studies each item for each criterion and grades it on the basis of each of the criteria.

Total the score for each item. The item that receives the highest score is the highest priority; next highest score is the second priority; etc.