

Program Evaluation for Veteran/Military Family Organizations



GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE



About My Work

As an Evaluation Associate, I conduct program evaluations for organizations who serve our service members, veterans, and their families.

Evaluation: Program evaluation follows much the same shape as academic research.

- Literature reviews to develop an evidence base and identify valid/reliable metrics.
- Data collection on program outcomes using surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.
- Analysis & write up of the results and our recommendations.

Capacity Building: One of my goals with any client is to make it so they can collect and manage their own data without the aid of an external evaluator, if they so choose.

- Teach clients the foundations of data collection, management, and analysis.
- Education around the ethics of research & evaluation.

Service Development: Most of our client contracts are for engagements lasting 12 months or more and start at around \$80,000.

- Funders expect to see program evaluations before they provide funding but often will not fund evaluations.
- Development of less expensive, short-term contracts to make evaluation more accessible.

My Anthropological Journey

Undergraduate:

Utah State University

Opportunities:

- Methods Training - Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews, Pile Sorts, Cultural Consensus/Consonance, Social Network Analysis
- RA - Religious Tolerance Research
- LDS Gender Roles Research
- Thesis - Sense of Community in HS Extracurriculars

Post-Bac Internship:

Bureau for Applied Research in Anthropology

Opportunities:

- Client Work
- Community Farm Research
- Food Banking Research
- Deliverable Writing

Masters:

University of North Texas

Opportunities:

- GIS Certificate
- RA - LDS Sacred Spaces
- Thesis - Program Evaluation for United Through Reading
- Part Time Work - Medical Device Design, Aperio Insights
- Co-Chair - NAPA 2019 Master's Career Survey

First Job:

Research Associate, Aperio Insights

Opportunities:

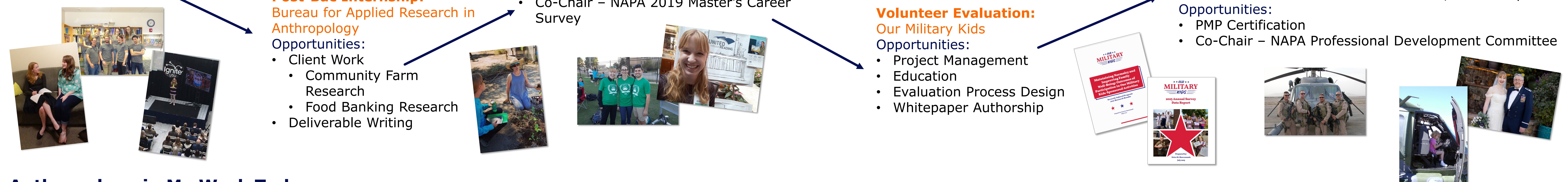
- Corporate Client Work
- Project & Proposal Development
- Time for Pro Bono Work

Second Job:

Evaluation Associate, D'Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families

Clients & Topics:

- The Mission Continues - Sense of Community, Service
 - Elks - Homelessness Prevention
 - United Through Reading - Connection, Literacy
 - G.W. Bush Institute - Social Networks, Leadership
- Opportunities:
- PMP Certification
 - Co-Chair - NAPA Professional Development Committee



Anthropology in My Work Today

Deep Cultural Understanding

- Military culture is UNIQUE, yet nearly all cultural descriptive work has been done by psychologists, sociologists, and social workers.
- Halfie Anthropology (or even quarter anthropology) allows for better navigation between emic (insider) and etic (outsider) reflections on data.
- Informs both program delivery and program evaluation - how to word questions, what is appropriate to ask, etc.

Education

- Capacity building with clients to empower them to measure and communicate their program outcomes.
- Most clients are not social scientists. A primary job is educating them on relevant standards, ethics, etc.
 - > Gender identity and race/ethnicity questions
 - > How to store data and who should have access to it

Methods-Driven Evaluation

- The anthropological toolkit translates directly to evaluation work:
 - > Participant observation through site visits with clients allows observation of programs and services
 - > Surveys, interviews, and focus groups
 - > Social network analysis and pile sorts add depth

Storytelling

- The best deliverables are those where the quantitative findings can be reinforced by quotes from program participants or volunteers.
 - > Letting the voices of participants create a compelling, emotionally driven story.

"I am extremely grateful that things like these [care packages] exist. Not everyone has family or friends that will send them stuff in difficult places. Being deployed and receiving a care package greatly improved my morale and helped me get past depression."