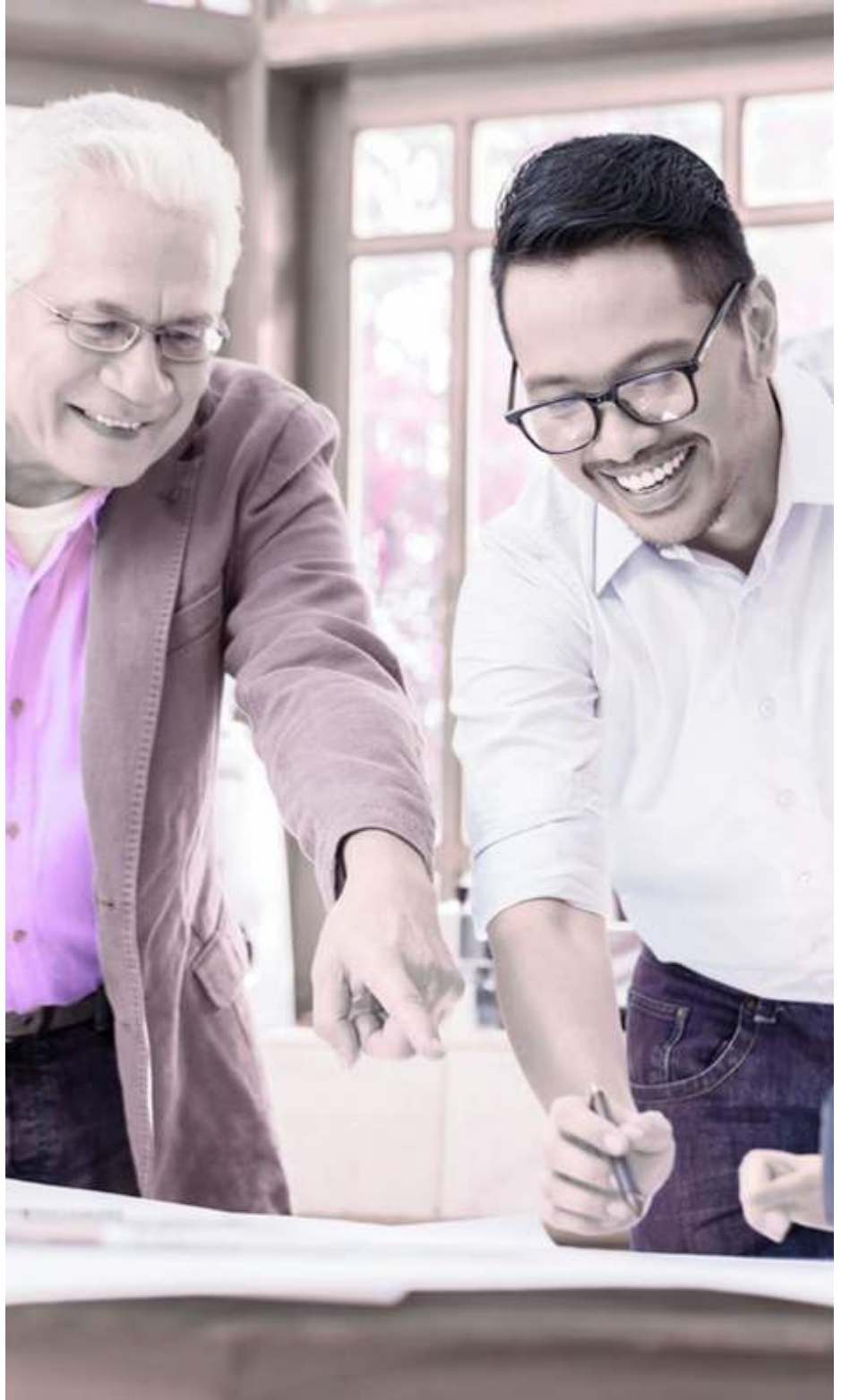


# FEASIBILITY

# TOOLKIT



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# FEASIBILITY TOOLKIT

## Simple Feasibility Study Toolkit for Nonprofits

A practical guide to testing program ideas before launching them

### Introduction

Before launching a new program, responsible nonprofits pause to ask a few important questions:

- Is the need real?
- Does the program fill a gap in the community?
- Can our organization realistically deliver it?

A feasibility study helps answer these questions.

Many nonprofits assume feasibility studies must be expensive or complex. In reality, a small study can be conducted in just a few weeks using simple tools such as focus groups, surveys, and partner conversations.

A thoughtful feasibility process strengthens programs before they launch and demonstrates responsible planning to donors and funders.

This toolkit provides practical tools to help you test a program idea before committing significant resources.

## What is a Feasibility Study?

A feasibility study is a structured way to evaluate whether a proposed program or initiative is practical and likely to succeed.

At its core, the process explores three questions:

### **1. Community Need**

Is there a real gap or problem that needs to be addressed?

### **2. Program Fit**

Is the proposed program the right solution for this community?

### **3. Organizational Capacity**

Does the organization have the resources and partnerships needed to deliver the program effectively?

Feasibility studies do not eliminate uncertainty, but they significantly improve the quality of decisions.

## **Why Feasibility Studies Matter**

Even a small feasibility study can help organizations:

### **Avoid duplication of services**

Communities often already have programs addressing similar needs.

### **Strengthen program design**

Input from participants helps shape programs people will actually use.

### **Build credibility with funders**

Grantmakers want to see that organizations evaluate ideas carefully.

### **Improve long-term impact**

Programs designed with community insight are far more likely to succeed.

## **Step 1: Define the Decision**

Every feasibility study should begin with a clear question.

Examples include:

- Should we launch this program?
- Should we redesign the program before launching it?
- Does this program duplicate existing services?

## **Example Decision Statement**

The purpose of this feasibility study is to determine whether to launch an after-school workforce readiness program in Fall 2026.

A clear purpose helps keep the study focused and ensures that the results guide real decisions.

## **Step 2: Identify Who Should Be Consulted**

Strong feasibility studies include input from people closest to the issue.

Potential participants include:

- Youth or program participants
- Parents or caregivers
- Schools and educators
- Community organizations
- Employers or workforce partners
- Local government or service agencies

Even a small study can be powerful when it includes multiple perspectives.

Aim for diversity of viewpoints rather than large numbers of participants.

### **Step 3: Invite Participation**

Community input can be gathered through:

- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Partner interviews
- Informal conversations

### **Sample Invitation**

Subject: Community Input Requested

Hello,

Our organization is exploring the possibility of launching a new youth program in our community. Before moving forward, we want to hear from people who understand local needs.

We are conducting a short feasibility study and would appreciate your participation in a brief discussion or survey.

Your insights will help ensure that any future program reflects real community needs.

Thank you for helping guide this process.

Warm regards,

Angie Thompson Consulting

## **Step 4: Conduct Focus Groups**

Focus groups allow participants to share experiences and ideas in a structured conversation.

### **Ideal Setup**

- 6–10 participants
- 45–60 minutes
- Quiet meeting space
- Light refreshments
- Name tags

### **Facilitator Role**

The facilitator should:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Keep discussion respectful and balanced
- Capture themes rather than exact quotes

Focus groups work best when participants feel comfortable sharing honest perspectives.

## **Example Discussion Questions**

### **Youth**

- What do you usually do after school?
- What activities would you be excited to attend?
- What would make you want to come every week?
- What would make you stop coming?

### **Parents**

- What challenges do families face after school?
- Are current programs meeting those needs?
- What might prevent your child from participating?
- What outcomes would make a program worthwhile?

### **Community Partners**

- What youth programs already exist in the community?
- Where do you see service gaps?
- What skills do young people need most?
- Would your organization be interested in collaborating?

## Step 5: Evaluate Feasibility

After gathering information, organizations should evaluate what they learned.

A simple scoring approach can help guide decisions. Below is a reference guide:

### Scoring Guide (What 1 - 3 Mean)

Factor	1 (Low)	2 (Moderate)	3 (Strong)
Community Need	Limited evidence	Some evidence	Clear gap
Participant Interest	Low	Moderate	High
Existing Programs	Many similar programs	Some overlap	Clear gap
Organizational Capacity	Limited	Adequate	Strong
Partner Support	None	Some	Strong

## Feasibility Scoring Worksheet

Factor	Score (1-3)	Confidence Level	Evidence Source	Notes
Community Need		High/ Medium/ Low	Focus groups, survey, data	
Participant Interest		High/ Medium/ Low	Survey responses	
Existing Programs		High/ Medium/ Low	Program landscape review	
Organizational Capacity		High/ Medium/ Low	Staff and budget review	
Partner Support		High/ Medium/ Low	Partner interview	

### Total Score

After assigning scores, add them together.

Total Score	Notes
12-15	Green – Program appears feasible
8-11	Yellow – Feasible with adjustments
5-7	Red – Significant challenges identified

## Example

Factor	Score (1-3)	Confidence Level	Evidence Source
Community Need	3	High	Survey + partner interviews
Participant Interest	3	Medium	Youth survey
Existing Programs	2	Medium	Program landscape review
Organizational Capacity	2	Medium	Staff capacity review
Partner Support	3	High	Partner interviews

**Total Score: 13 → Green (Proceed with adjustments)**

*Additional scoring information: “How to Use the Feasibility Scoring Matrix” (P 13)*

### Score Interpretation

#### **12–15 points**

Program appears feasible

#### **8–11 points**

Feasible with adjustments

#### **5–7 points**

Significant concerns identified

## **Summarizing Results**

A feasibility study summary should include:

- Program concept
- Who was consulted
- Key findings
- Feasibility rating
- Recommended next steps

## **Example Recommendation**

Launch a 10-week pilot program focused on workforce readiness skills with transportation support and employer mentorship opportunities.

## **Why This Matters to Funders**

Funders look for more than good intentions. They want to see evidence that a program has been thoughtfully considered before resources are committed.

A small-scale feasibility study demonstrates several qualities that grantmakers value:

### **Responsible planning**

It shows the organization took time to evaluate whether a program is truly needed.

### **Community engagement**

Input from participants, families, and partners signals that the program reflects real community insight rather than assumptions.

### **Reduced risk**

Feasibility work helps identify barriers such as transportation, scheduling, or duplication of services before a program launches.

## **Clearer program design**

When organizations test ideas first, the final program is often stronger and more focused.

Many funders specifically evaluate proposals based on community need, collaboration, and readiness to implement. A simple feasibility study helps provide evidence in each of these areas.

Even a modest study signals that an organization is committed to thoughtful stewardship of the resources entrusted to it.

## **Final Thought**

Thoughtful programs begin with thoughtful questions.

A feasibility study helps organizations listen before launching, strengthen ideas before seeking funding, and build trust with the communities they serve.

Just as importantly, it gives funders confidence that a program has been carefully considered and responsibly designed.

Strong programs begin with listening.

And listening often begins with a simple feasibility study.

**LISTENING → PROGRAM DESIGN →  
FEASIBILITY EVIDENCE → CLEAR MESSAGING  
→ FUNDING CONFIDENCE**

# SCORING MATRIX

## How to Use the Feasibility Scoring Matrix

The scoring matrix helps organizations move from discussion to decision by evaluating the strength of the evidence gathered during the feasibility study.

**Each category is scored on a scale of 1 to 3.**

### Score Meaning

#### **1 = Weak evidence**

There is little support or significant concern in this area.

#### **2 = Moderate evidence**

Some positive indicators exist, but challenges remain.

#### **3 = Strong evidence**

Clear support or readiness exists in this area.

The scores are based on the feedback gathered from focus groups, surveys, and partner interviews.

## Scoring Guide by Category

### COMMUNITY NEED

#### **Score 1 – Limited Evidence**

- Participants indicate that similar programs already exist.
- Few participants describe a clear unmet need.
- Existing data does not show a strong service gap.

### **Score 2 – Moderate Evidence**

- Some participants describe unmet needs.
- Existing programs partially address the issue.
- Data suggests a need but not an urgent gap.

### **Score 3 – Strong Evidence**

- Participants consistently identify the same unmet need.
- Few existing programs address the issue.
- Community partners confirm the service gap.

## **PARTICIPANT INTEREST**

### **Score 1 – Low Interest**

- Few participants express interest in the program.
- Survey responses show limited enthusiasm.
- Participation appears uncertain.

### **Score 2 – Moderate Interest**

- Some participants express interest.
- Participation may depend on scheduling or design changes.

### **Score 3 – High Interest**

- Participants show strong enthusiasm.
- Many respondents indicate they would attend regularly.

## **EXISTING PROGRAMS**

### **Score 1 – Significant Duplication**

- Multiple similar programs already operate in the community.

### **Score 2 – Partial Overlap**

- Some similar programs exist but gaps remain.

### **Score 3 – Clear Service Gap**

- Few or no programs currently address this need.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

### **Score 1 – Limited Capacity**

- Staff, funding, or facilities are insufficient.
- Significant preparation would be required before launch.

### **Score 2 – Adequate Capacity**

- Some resources are available but adjustments are needed.

### **Score 3 – Strong Capacity**

- Staff, partners, and resources are ready for implementation.

## **PARTNER SUPPORT**

### **Score 1 – Limited Support**

- Few partners express interest in collaborating.

### **Score 2 – Moderate Support**

- Some partners show interest but commitments are informal.

### **Score 3 – Strong Support**

- Multiple partners express willingness to refer participants or collaborate.

## TOTAL SCORE INTERPRETATION

After assigning scores for each category, add the values together.

### **12–15 points**

Green: Program appears feasible

Strong evidence supports moving forward.

### **8–11 points**

Yellow: Feasible with adjustments

The program may succeed, but changes should be made before launch.

### **5–7 points**

Red: Significant challenges

The program should be reconsidered or redesigned before moving forward.

## **A helpful note for nonprofits**

The scoring matrix is not meant to force a program forward.

Its purpose is to encourage thoughtful decision-making.

Sometimes the most valuable outcome of a feasibility study is discovering how to refine an idea before investing significant time and resources.

That insight often leads to stronger programs and greater confidence from funders.

### **About Angie Thompson**

Angie Thompson is an independent nonprofit consultant and strategist specializing in donor engagement, fundraising communications, and creative program design.

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