

Sussex County Child Health Promotion Collaborative

Program Evaluation Planning Guide

This Program Evaluation Planning Guide is in two parts. Part I provides a generic set of evaluation questions for Context Evaluation, Design Evaluation, Implementation Evaluation, and Outcome Evaluation. The purpose of this section is to help you articulate your own evaluation questions for your particular program. Part II provides a set of planning worksheets to help you identify which outcomes to measure, as well as your sources of data, data collection strategies, and analytical strategies.

Part I. Evaluation Questions

Program Context Evaluation

In Program Context Evaluation we evaluate the internal and external factors that may affect the future viability of the program. In the process we assess the readiness or fit between the project and the community.

Evaluation Questions	Answers for your specific program
Who is the target population or community for the program?	
What services will the program provide to the target population?	
What evidence is there that the target population/community needs these services?	
What evidence is there that the target population/community wants these services?	
Does your organization have the capacity to deliver the program effectively?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposed program fit the mission of your organization? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization have commitment from top leadership and staff to deliver this type of program? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization have any experience delivering this type of program? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization have adequate staffing to deliver this type of program? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization have sufficient funding to deliver this type of program? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization have a commitment from top leadership and staff to evaluate the outcomes of this program? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization have adequate capacity (staff and technical) to measure outcomes of this program? 	
Does the proposed program duplicate, overlap with, or supplant programs offered by other community organizations?	
Does the proposed program unnecessarily duplicate or conflict with a public program or policy?	
Does the proposed program fit the mission and goals of the funding organization(s)?	

2. Program Design Evaluation

The purpose of Program Design Evaluation is to determine whether the program is theoretically sound and logically designed. The primary sources of information are the program logic model and any accompanying program description. In some cases, funders or program planners might want to consult with experts to ensure that the program is theoretically and logically sound.

Evaluation Questions	Answers for your specific program
Who is the target population for the program?	
What needs will the program address?	
What services will the program provide to the target population?	
What evidence is there that the target population needs these services?	
What are the theoretical assumptions (program theory) linking the program services with the program outcomes? In other words, what evidence is there that these services might produce the desired outcomes?	
Is this program based on proven practices, or is it more experimental in nature?	
What are the target individual outcomes of the program in terms of knowledge, attitudes & beliefs, skills, behaviors, health status, or other relevant factors?	
What are the target organizational outcomes of the program in terms of staffing, structure, financing, capacity, culture, partnerships, other?	
What are the target system and policy outcomes of the program in terms of availability of services, access to services, organization of services, financing of services, etc.?	
What do we know about baseline outcomes? In other words, what are the existing (pre-implementation) levels of knowledge, attitudes & beliefs, skills, health status, or other relevant factors?	
How long will it take to achieve target outcomes? Is this a reasonable timeframe given what we know about the theory behind the program?	
Does the logic model leave out any relevant outcomes?	
Is there a logical relationship between the level of resources, activity, outputs, and outcomes of the program?	
Does the logic model leave out any major outputs?	
Does the logic model leave out any major activities?	
Does the logic model leave out any major resources?	
Does the logic model or narrative identify individual persons with major responsibility for program implementation?	

3. Program Implementation Evaluation

The purpose of Program Implementation Evaluation is to determine whether the program is being implemented fully and as planned. Implementation evaluation is focused on program resources, activities, and outputs. The primary sources of information are the program logic model and any accompanying program description, plus program activity data to be collected during the course of implementation. The questions below are asked in the past tense, but they should be considered during program planning so that data collection procedures can be put into place at the beginning of the program.

Questions to be asked when the program is implemented...	
For each Input or Resource identified in the program logic model:	<i>Identify up to 5 key Resources to be monitored during implementation</i>
When did the resource become available? Was this according to schedule?	
What was the planned vs. actual amount of the resource?	
Was the resource sufficient to support planned activities?	
Was the resource sufficient to achieve planned levels of outputs?	
What were the reasons for any differences between planned and actual levels of resource utilization?	
For each major Activity identified in the program logic model:	<i>Identify up to 5 key Activities to be monitored during implementation</i>
Was the activity completed on time?	
What was the level of quality and satisfaction of the activity?	
Who had lead responsibility for the activity?	
Were there any significant differences in the activity as planned compared to the activity as implemented?	
For each major Output identified in the program logic model:	<i>Identify up to 5 key Outputs to be monitored during implementation</i>
Was the output completed on time?	
Was the output of sufficient quantity or magnitude (number, size) compared to the program design?	
Was the output of sufficient quality compared to the program design?	

4. Program Outcome Evaluation

The purpose of Program Outcome Evaluation is to determine whether the program has affected the desired changes in individuals, organizations, or systems.

Evaluation Questions	Briefly stated the expected outcomes for your specific program....
What individual outcomes (knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, health status, other) do we hope to achieve as a result of the program?	
What organizational outcomes (availability of services, accessibility of services, scope of services, quality of services, cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, staffing level, staff capability, organizational structure) do we hope to achieve as a result of the program?	
What system outcomes (system capacity, system coordination, system integration, collaboration for service delivery, coalition building, system resources, public policy) do we hope to achieve as a result of the program?	

Part II. Focus on Outcomes

1. Choosing which Outcomes to Measure

Outcome evaluation can be complex and expensive. Not every outcome can or should be measured. When planning an outcome evaluation it is important to focus on three to five key outcomes that are important to key audiences and also feasible to measure. To narrow the list of outcomes to measure, it is helpful to ask the following four questions about each potential outcome:

- *Is this outcome important to our audience(s)?* Different outcomes may be of different levels of interest to different audiences. For example, funders and board members may be most interested in higher-level outcomes such as changes in health status. Program managers and service providers may be more interested in micro- and mid-level outcomes such as changes in knowledge, attitudes & beliefs, skills, and behaviors.
- *Is this outcome within our sphere of influence?* In many instances a program will address only part of the health puzzle. For example, in a program to improve diabetes outcomes, a home nursing organization might be responsible for client education, while a local community health center might be responsible for providing prescription drugs and other clinical services. The community health center would not want to assume responsibility for patient education outcomes pursued by the home nursing organization, and the home nursing organization would not want to be responsible for certain clinical outcomes pursued by the community health center.
- *Will our program be at the right stage of implementation to produce this outcome?* In many programs – especially prevention programs – there are both short-term outcomes (within one year) and long-term outcomes (within two or more years). Most funding organizations have one year funding cycles. Both funders and program managers should try to avoid the common problem of promising long-term outcomes in a short-term timeframe.
- *Will we be able to measure this outcome?* This is a common question which is difficult to answer in generalities. The good news is that there is almost always a way to reasonably measure the outcomes of health and human service programs. However, technical expertise may be required to determine the most cost-efficient methods of measurement using sampling and other efficient research tools. It is important for both funders and program managers to ask this question. If the answer appears to be “No” or “Maybe”, it might be worthwhile to obtain a technical consult from an experienced researcher before crossing the outcome in question off the list for evaluation.

Outcome Selection Chart. Complete the chart below. Then, pick three to five outcomes that are important to your audiences, within your sphere of influence, achievable at your stage of implementation, and measurable. These outcomes will be the focus of your outcome evaluation. The Collaborative faculty will provide technical advice to help you answer these questions.

Outcomes	Important to our audiences?	Within our sphere of influence?	Will we be at the right stage of implementation?	Feasible to measure?
	<i>Yes, No, Partly</i>	<i>Yes, No, Partly</i>	<i>Yes, No, Partly</i>	<i>Yes, No, Partly</i>
List Long-term Outcomes (2 years +)				
List Intermediate Outcomes (1 year +)				
List Short-term Outcomes <1 year)				

2. Measurement Plan

Complete this chart for each outcome, output, and activity you plan to measure. Use extra sheets as necessary. Collaborative faculty will provide technical support to help you complete this chart.

Outcome, Output, or Activity	Indicator	Data Source(s)	Data Collection Method(s)	Data Collection Responsibility	Data Collection Deadline(s)	Data Analysis Methods	Data Analysis Responsibility	Data Analysis Deadline

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fill in program name at top of chart 2. List each indicator in first column 3. For each indicator, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the data available from existing sources? ▪ Can we collect the data from primary sources? ▪ Is the data reliable and valid for our purposes? ▪ Can we get the data within our time frames? ▪ Should we collect the data from all participants or a sample? ▪ Do we have a baseline for the indicator? ▪ Do we have the resource capacity to collect and manage the data? ▪ What are the implications for rights of human subjects? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. For each indicator, list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data source(s) Data collection method(s) Responsible person(s) Collection deadline(s) Analysis methods Responsible person(s) Analysis deadline(s)
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3. **Setting Outcome Targets**

We want to achieve certain outcome targets related to exercise, eating, BMI, or other indicators. How do we go about setting targets? Here are five possible approaches.

- **Better than baseline.** Whatever we do, we want to achieve outcomes that are measurably better than baseline. For example, if our baseline is 30 percent, we could seek an outcome of at least 31 percent. As a general guideline, you might want to start with a target five to ten percent better than baseline. Better than baseline is a fallback option. It is best to use one of the following if you can.
- **Better than regional or population group norm.** In this method of targeting, if our baseline is below the regional or population group median or average, we could seek to achieve outcomes better than the group norm. For example, we could seek to beat the state average (regional norm) or the average for people within income below \$15,000 (population norm).
- **Better than best.** If our baseline is better than the regional or population group norm, we could seek outcomes better than the best of our comparison group. For example, if our baseline is above the state average, we could seek outcomes better than the state with the best outcome of all fifty states.
- **Equal to disparate population.** If we are seeking to close racial, ethnic, or economic disparity gaps, we could set our outcomes to close the gap with the next highest population. For example, if our group is African American, and this group is disparate with the White population, we could set our outcome target to equal the White population norm.
- **Healthy People 2010.** Healthy People 2010 has set targets for eating, exercise, and BMI for various populations. If our baseline is below the 2010 target, we could use the Healthy People 2010 target as our outcome target.

4. Data Collection Workplan

Complete this chart for each data collection initiative you will be undertaking as part of your evaluation. Collaborative faculty will help you decide the number and types of instruments you will need, sampling strategies, etc...

	Task	Responsibility	Deadline
1	Specify data collection objectives (target population and content)		
2	Specify overall approach (sampling and data collection)		
3	Develop the data collection instrument		
3.1	Initial draft		
3.2	Expert review of content		
3.3	Translate if necessary		
3.4	Expert review of translation if necessary		
3.5	Pilot test with 10 to 30 prospective respondents		
3.6	Revise as necessary		
4	Select the sample		
4.1	Decide sample size		
4.2	Decide sampling method		
4.3	Select sample		
5	Train the data collectors		
5.1	Review purpose of data collection		
5.2	Train in administration		
5.3	Observe five to ten mock administrations		
6	Develop the analysis plan		
6.1	Create table shells		
6.2	Prepare analysis with pilot survey response		
7	Field the data collection instrument		
7.1	Administer instrument for sample		
7.2	Test early responses for completeness		
7.3	Monitor response rates		
8	Enter the data		
8.1	Acquire hardware		
8.2	Acquire software		
8.3	Keypunch responses		
9	Analyze the data		
9.1	Test for internal consistency		
9.2	Populate table shells		
9.3	Produce statistical analysis		
10	Write the report		

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