ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation

Second Edition

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Preface to the Second Edition

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), a unit within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), is responsible for advising the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of programs to improve the economic and social well-being of children and families.

In collaboration with ACF program offices and others, OPRE is responsible for performance management for ACF, conducts research and policy analyses, and develops and oversees research and evaluation projects to assess program performance and inform policy and practice. The Office provides guidance, analysis, technical assistance, and oversight to ACF programs on: strategic planning; performance measurement; research and evaluation methods; statistical, policy, and program analysis; and synthesis and dissemination of research and demonstration findings.

Toward these ends, OPRE is happy to present an updated edition of *The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation*. The original guide has consistently been the most frequently accessed of OPRE's resources. The new edition has been updated, under the guidance of Kathleen Dwyer, to reflect currently accepted practices, up-to-date terminology, and issues to consider at this time. Tips, samples, and worksheets that were missing from the online version have been inserted back into the guide, as has a thoroughly updated appendix containing a comprehensive list of evaluation resources. Based on feedback within ACF, we have chosen to focus on a single guide that includes examples that would be relevant to all ACF program areas, rather than create separate handbooks for each program.

As with the original edition of *The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation*, this updated edition explains what program evaluation is, why evaluation is important, how to conduct an evaluation and understand the results, how to report evaluation findings, and how to use evaluation results to improve programs that benefit children and families.

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Why Evaluate Your Program?

Y ou should evaluate your program because an evaluation helps you accomplish the following:

- Find out what is and is not working in your program

- Show your funders and the community what your program does and how it benefits your participants

- Raise additional money for your program by providing evidence of its effectiveness

- Improve your staff's work with participants by identifying weaknesses as well as strengths

- Add to the existing knowledge in the human services field about what does and does not work in your type of program with your kinds of participants

Despite these important benefits, program managers often are reluctant to evaluate their programs. Usually this reluctance is due to concerns stemming from a lack of understanding about the evaluation process.

COMMON CONCERNS ABOUT EVALUATION

Concern #1: Evaluation diverts resources away from the program and therefore harms participants. This is a common concern in most programs. However, because evaluation helps to determine what does and does not work in a program, it is actually beneficial to program participants. Without an evaluation, you are providing services with little or no evidence that they actually work!

Concern #2: Evaluation increases the burden for program staff. Often program staff are responsible for collecting evaluation information because they are most familiar with, and have the most contact with program participants. Despite this potential for increased burden, staff can benefit greatly from evaluation because it provides information that can help them improve their work with participants, learn more about program and participant needs, and validate their successes. Also, the burden can be decreased somewhat by incorporating evaluation activities into ongoing program activities.

Concern #3: Evaluation is too complicated. Program managers often reject the idea of conducting an evaluation because they don't know how to do it or whom to ask for help. Although the technical aspects of evaluation can be complex, the evaluation process itself simply systematizes what most program managers already do on an informal basis - figure out whether the program's objectives are being met, which aspects of the program work, and which ones are not effective. Understanding this general process will help you to be a full partner in the evaluation, even if you seek outside help with the technical aspects. If you need outside help, Chapter 4 provides some ideas about how and where to get it.

Concern #4: Evaluation may produce negative results and lead to information that will make the program look bad or lose funding. An evaluation may reveal problems in accomplishing the work of the program as well as successes. It is important to understand that both types of information are significant. The discovery of problems should not be viewed as evidence of program failure, but rather as an opportunity to learn and improve the program. Information about both problems and successes not only helps your program, but also helps other programs learn and improve. When evaluation results are used for accountability purposes, it is all the important that the evaluation be carefully planned and executed.

Concern #5: Evaluation is just another form of monitoring. Program managers and staff often view program evaluation as a way for funders to monitor programs to find out whether staff are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Program evaluation, however, is not the same as monitoring. Sometimes the information collected to monitor a program overlaps with information needed for an evaluation, but the two processes ask very different questions.

MONITORING asks whether a program meets the operating standards set by the funder, State, or licensing agency.

EVALUATION asks whether the program has been successful in achieving its objectives for program implementation and participant outcomes.

Concern #6: Evaluation requires setting performance standards, and this is too difficult. Many program managers believe that an evaluation requires setting performance standards, such as specifying the percentage of participants who will demonstrate changes or exhibit particular behaviors. Program staff worry that if these performance standards are not met, their project will be judged a failure.

This concern is somewhat justified because often funders will require setting such standards. However, performance standards can only be set if there is extensive evaluation information on a particular program in a variety of settings. Without this information, performance standards are completely arbitrary and meaningless. The type of evaluation discussed in this manual is not designed to assess whether particular performance standards are attained because most programs do not have sufficient information to establish these standards in any meaningful way. Instead, it will assess whether there has been significant change in the knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors of a program's participant population in general and whether particular characteristics of the program or the participants are more or less likely to promote change.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION

You can maximize the benefits that evaluation offers by following a few basic guidelines in preparing for and conducting your evaluation.

Invest heavily in planning. Invest both time and effort in deciding what you want to learn from your evaluation. This is the single most important step you will take in this process. Consider what you would like to discover about your program and its impact on participants, and use this information to guide your evaluation planning.

Integrate the evaluation into ongoing activities of the program. Program managers often view evaluation as something that an outsider "does to" a program after it is over, or as an activity "tacked on" merely to please funders. Unfortunately, many programs are evaluated in this way. This approach greatly limits the benefits that program managers and staff can gain from an evaluation. Planning the evaluation should begin at the same time as planning the program so that you can use evaluation feedback to inform program operations.

Participate in the evaluation and show program staff that you think it is important. An evaluation needs the participation of the program manager to succeed. Even if an outside evaluator is hired to conduct the evaluation, program managers must be full partners in the evaluation process. An outside evaluator cannot do it alone. You must teach the evaluator about your program, your participants, and your objectives. Also, staff will value the evaluation if you, the program manager, value it yourself. Talk about it with staff individually and in meetings. If you hire an outside evaluator to conduct the evaluation, be sure that this individual attends staff meetings and gives presentations on the status of the evaluation. Your involvement will encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility for the evaluation among all program staff.

Involve as many of the program staff as much as possible and as early as possible. Project staff have a considerable stake in the success of the evaluation, and involving them early on in the process will enhance the evaluation's effectiveness. Staff will have questions and issues that the evaluation can address, and are usually pleased when the evaluation validates their own hunches about what does and does not work in the program. Because of their experiences and expertise, program staff can ensure that the evaluation questions, design, and methodology are appropriate for the program's participants. Furthermore, early involvement of staff will promote their willingness to participate in data collection and other evaluation-related tasks.

Be realistic about the burden on you and your staff. Evaluations are work. Even if your evaluation calls for an outside evaluator to do most of the data collection, it still takes time to arrange for the evaluator to have access to records, administer questionnaires, or conduct interviews. It is common for both agencies and evaluators to underestimate how much additional effort this involves. When program managers and staff brainstorm about all of the questions they want answered, they often produce a very long list. This process can result in an evaluation that is too complicated. Focus on the key questions that assess your program's general effectiveness.

Be aware of the ethical and cultural issues in an evaluation. This guideline is very important. When you are evaluating a program that provides services or training, you must always consider your responsibilities to the participants and the community. You must ensure that the evaluation is relevant to and

respectful of the cultural backgrounds and individuality of participants. Evaluation instruments and methods of data collection must be culturally sensitive and appropriate for your participants. Participants must be informed that they are taking part in an evaluation and that they have the right to refuse to participate in this activity without jeopardizing their participation in the program. Finally, you must ensure that confidentiality of participant information will be maintained.

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual is designed to help you follow these guidelines while planning and implementing a program evaluation. Each of the chapters addresses specific steps in the evaluation process and provides guidance on how to tailor an evaluation to your program's needs.

The manual is not intended to turn you into a professional evaluator or to suggest that evaluation is a simple process that anyone can perform. Rather, it is meant to provide information to help you understand each step of the evaluation process so that you can participate fully in the evaluation- whether you hire an outside evaluator or decide to do one with assistance from in-house agency staff and resources.

What Is Program Evaluation?

P rogram managers and staff frequently informally assess their program's effectiveness: Are participants benefiting from the program? Are there sufficient numbers of participants? Are the strategies for recruiting participants working? Are participants satisfied with the services or training? Do staff have the necessary skills to provide the services or training? These are all questions that program managers and staff ask and answer on a routine basis.

Evaluation addresses these same questions, but uses a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about a program - and to ensure that those answers are supported by evidence. This does not mean that conducting an evaluation requires no technical knowledge or experience - but it also does not mean that evaluation is beyond the understanding of program managers and staff.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC QUESTIONS AN EVALUATION CAN ANSWER?

There are many different types of program evaluations, many different terms to describe them, and many questions that they can answer. You may have heard the terms formative evaluation, summative evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, cost-effectiveness evaluation, and cost-benefit evaluation. Definitions of these terms and others and selected resources for more information on various types of program evaluations are provided in the appendix.

You may have also heard the terms "qualitative" and "quantitative" used to describe an evaluation. However, these terms, which are

defined in the glossary, refer to the types of information or data that are collected during the evaluation and not to the type of evaluation itself. For example, an outcome evaluation may involve collecting both quantitative and qualitative information about participant outcomes.

This manual is designed to avoid the confusion that often results from the use of so many terms to describe an evaluation. Instead, all of the terms used here are directly related to answering evaluation questions derived from a **program's objectives**.

There are two types of program objectives - **program implementation objectives and participant outcome objectives.** Program implementation objectives refer to what you plan to do in your program, how you plan to do it, and who you want to reach. They include the services or training you plan to implement, the characteristics of the participant population, the number of people you plan to reach, the staffing arrangements and staff training, and the strategies for recruiting participants. Evaluating program implementation objectives is often referred to as a process evaluation. However, because there are many types of process evaluations, this manual will use the term **implementation evaluation**.

Participant outcome objectives describe what you expect to happen to your participants as a result of your program, with the term "participants" referring to agencies, communities, and organizations as well as individuals. Your expectations about how your program will change participants' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or awareness are your participant outcome objectives. Evaluating a program's success in attaining its expectations for participants is often called an **outcome evaluation**.

An evaluation can be used to determine whether you have been successful in attaining both types of objectives, by answering the following questions:

✓ ***Has the program been successful in attaining the anticipated implementation objectives?*** (Are you implementing the services or training that you initially planned to implement? Are you reaching the intended target population? Are you reaching the intended number of participants? Are you developing the planned collaborative relationships?)

DEFINITION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION: Program evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about a program.

✓ ***Has the program been successful in attaining the anticipated participant outcome objectives?*** (Are participants exhibiting the expected changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or awareness? Can these changes be attributed to the program?)

A comprehensive evaluation must answer both key questions. You may be successful in attaining your implementation objectives, but if you do not have information about participant outcomes, you will not know whether your program is worthwhile. Similarly, you may be successful in changing participants' knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors; but if you do not have information about your program's implementation, you will be unable to identify the parts of your program that are associated with these changes.

MAXIMIZING EVALUATION BENEFITS: Evaluations that are incorporated as an integral part of ongoing program operations provide optimum benefits to managers, staff, and participants.

These evaluation questions should be answered while a program is in operation, not after the program is over. This approach will allow you and your staff to identify problems and make necessary changes while the program is still operational. It will also ensure that program participants are available to provide information for the evaluation.

Although not discussed in depth in this manual, two other categories of questions may be of interest: questions regarding the need for services (needs assessment) and questions regarding the program's efficiency (efficiency assessment). A needs assessment is a study of the problem that a program is intended to address and the need for the program. An efficiency assessment is a study that measures program costs and compares them to either a monetary value of the program's benefit (cost-benefit analysis) or a measure of the program's effectiveness in achieving its outcome objectives (cost-effectiveness analysis).

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION?

The term "systematic" in the definition of evaluation indicates that it requires a structured and consistent method of collecting and analyzing information about your program. You can ensure that your evaluation is conducted in a systematic manner by following a few basic steps.

Step 1: Assemble an evaluation team. Planning and executing an evaluation should be a team effort. Even if you hire an outside evaluator or consultant to help, you and members of your staff

must be full partners in the evaluation effort. Chapter 3 discusses various evaluation team options. If you plan to hire an outside evaluator or an evaluation consultant, Chapter 4 provides information on hiring procedures and managing an evaluation that involves an outside professional.

Step 2: Prepare for the evaluation. Before you begin, you will need to build a strong foundation. This planning phase includes deciding what to evaluate, building a program model, stating your objectives in measurable terms, and identifying the context for the evaluation. The more attention you give to planning the evaluation, the more effective it will be. Chapter 5 will help you prepare for your evaluation.

Step 3: Develop an evaluation plan. An evaluation plan is a blueprint or a map for an evaluation. It details the design and the methods that will be used to conduct the evaluation and analyze the findings. You should not implement an evaluation until you have completed an evaluation plan. Information on what to include in a plan is provided in Chapter 6.

BASIC EVALUATION STEPS

Step 1: Assemble an evaluation team

Step 2: Prepare for the evaluation

Step 3: Develop an evaluation plan.

Step 4: Collect evaluation information.

Step 5: Analyze your evaluation information.

Step 6: Prepare the evaluation report.

Step 4: Collect evaluation information. Once you complete an evaluation plan, you are ready to begin collecting information. This task will require selecting or developing information collection procedures and instruments. This process is discussed in Chapter 7.

Step 5: Analyze your evaluation information. After evaluation information is collected, it must be organized in a way that allows you to analyze it. Information analysis should be conducted at various times during the course of the evaluation to allow you and your staff to obtain ongoing feedback about the program. This feedback will either validate what you are doing or identify areas where changes may be needed. Chapter 8 discusses the analysis process.

Step 6: Prepare the evaluation report. The evaluation report should be a comprehensive document that describes the program and provides the results of the information analysis. The report should also include an interpretation of the results for understanding program effectiveness. Chapter 9 is designed to assist you in preparing an evaluation report.

WHAT WILL AN EVALUATION COST?

A useful rule of thumb is to estimate that your evaluation will cost approximately 15 to 20 percent of your total program budget.

Program managers are often concerned about the cost of an evaluation. This is a valid concern. Evaluations do require money. Many program managers and staff believe that it is unethical to use program or agency financial resources for an evaluation, because available funds should be spent on serving participants. However, it is more accurate to view money spent on evaluation as an investment in your program and in your participants, rather than as a diversion of funds available for participants. Evaluation is essential if you want to know whether your program is benefiting participants.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to specify in this manual exactly how much money you will need to conduct your evaluation. The amount of money needed depends on a variety of factors, including what aspects of your program you decide to evaluate, the size of the program (that is, the number of staff members, participants, components, and services), the number of outcomes that you want to assess, who conducts the evaluation, and your agency's available evaluation-related resources. Costs also vary in accord with economic differences in communities and geographic locations.

Sometimes funders will establish a specific amount of grant money to be set aside for an evaluation. The amount usually ranges from 15 to 20 percent of the total funds allocated for the program. If the amount of money to be set aside for an evaluation is not specified by a funding agency, you may want to talk to other program managers in your community who have conducted evaluations. They may be able to tell you how much their evaluations cost and whether they were satisfied with what they got for their money.

Although a dollar amount cannot be specified, it is possible to describe the kinds of information you can obtain from evaluations at different cost levels. Think of the process of building a house. If you spend a small amount of money, you can build the foundation for the house. Additional money will be required to frame the house and still more money will be needed to put on the roof. To finish the inside of the house so that it is inhabitable will require even more money.

Evaluation is similar. Some general guidelines follow on what you may be able to get at different evaluation cost levels.

Lowest cost evaluations. If you spend only a minimal amount of money, you will be able to obtain numerical counts of participants, services, or products and information about the characteristics of participants. You also may be able to find out how satisfied participants were with the services or the training. But this is only the foundation for an evaluation. This information will not tell you whether you have been successful in attaining your participant outcome objectives. Also, at this cost level you will not have in-depth information about program implementation and operations to understand whether your program was implemented as intended and, if not, what changes were made and why they were made.

Low-moderate cost evaluations. If you increase your evaluation budget slightly, you will be able to assess whether there has been a change in your participants' knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors, and also collect in-depth information about your program's implementation. However, this is only the framework of an evaluation. At this cost level, you may not be able to attribute participant changes specifically to your program because you will not have similar information on a comparison or control group.

Moderate-high cost evaluations. Adding more money to your evaluation budget will allow you to use a comparison or control group, and therefore be able to attribute any changes in participants to the program itself. At this cost level, however, your information on participant outcomes may be limited to short-term changes-those that occurred during or immediately after participation in the program.

Highest cost evaluations. At the highest cost level, you will be able to obtain all of the information available from the other cost options as well as longer term outcome information on program participants. The high cost of this type of evaluation is due to the necessity of tracking or contacting program participants after they have left the program. Although follow up activities often are expensive, longer term outcome information is important because it assesses whether the changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors that your participants experienced initially are maintained over time.

Basically, as you increase your budget for an evaluation, you gain a corresponding increase in knowledge about your success in attaining your program objectives. In many situations, the lowest cost evaluations may not be worth the expense, and, to be realistic, the highest cost evaluations may be beyond the scope of most

agencies' financial resources. As a general rule, the more money you are willing to invest in an evaluation, the more useful the information that you will obtain about your program's effectiveness will be, and the more useful these results will be in helping you advocate for your program.

Who Should Conduct Your Evaluation?

One decision that must be made before you begin your evaluation is who will conduct it. Evaluation is best thought of as a team effort. Although one individual heads the team and has primary responsibility for the project, this person will need assistance and cooperation from others. Again, think of building a house. You may hire a contractor to build your house, but you would not expect this professional to do the job alone. You know that to build your house the contractor will need guidance from you and assistance from a variety of technical experts including an architect, electrician, plumber, carpenter, roofer, and mechanical engineer.

Similarly, in conducting an evaluation, the team leader will need assistance from a variety of individuals in determining the focus and design of the evaluation, developing the evaluation plan and sampling plan (if necessary), constructing data collection instruments, collecting the evaluation data, analyzing and interpreting the data, and preparing the final report.

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE TYPES OF EVALUATION TEAMS?

There are many types of evaluation teams that you could assemble. Three possible options for evaluation teams follow:

- An outside evaluator (which may be an individual, research institute, or consulting firm) who serves as the team leader and is supported by in-house staff (Team 1).

- An in-house evaluator who serves as the team leader and is supported by program staff and an outside consultant (Team 2).

- An in-house evaluator who serves as the team leader and is supported by program staff (Team 3).

Whatever team option you select, you must make sure that you, the program manager, are part of the team. Even if your role is limited to one of overall evaluation management, you must participate in all phases of the evaluation effort.

Team 1 option: An outside evaluator with support from program staff

Possible advantages:

- Because outside evaluators do not have a stake in the evaluation's findings, the results may be perceived by current or potential funders as more objective.

- Outside evaluators may have greater expertise and knowledge than agency staff about the technical aspects involved in conducting an evaluation.

- Outside evaluators may offer a new perspective to program operations

- The evaluation may be conducted more efficiently if the evaluator is experienced.

Possible disadvantages:

- Hiring an outside evaluator can be expensive.

- Outside evaluators may not have an adequate understanding of the issues relevant to your program or target population.

Selecting this team does not mean that you or your staff need not be involved in the evaluation. You and other staff members must educate the evaluator about the program, participants, and community. Other staff or advisory board members must also be involved in planning the evaluation to ensure that it addresses your program's objectives and is appropriate for your program's participants.

When deciding on your option, keep in mind that although hiring an outside evaluator to conduct an evaluation may appear to be expensive, ultimately it may be less expensive than channeling staff

EVALUATION TEAM OPTIONS

Team 1: Outside evaluator supported by program staff.

Team 2: In-house evaluation team supported by consultant and program staff.

Team 3: In-house evaluation team supported by program staff.

resources into an evaluation that is not correctly designed or implemented.

Team 2 option: In-house evaluation team leader with support from program staff and an outside consultant
Possible advantages:
- An evaluation team headed by an in-house staff member may be less expensive than hiring an outside evaluator (this is not always true).

- The use of an agency staff member as a team leader may increase the likelihood that the evaluation will be consistent with program objectives.

Possible disadvantages:
- The greater time commitment required of staff may outweigh the cost reduction of using the outside professional as a consultant instead of a team leader.

- A professional evaluator used only for consulting purposes may not give as much attention to the evaluation tasks as may be needed. Like the Team 3 option, Team 2 may be perceived as less objective than using an outside evaluator.

This second option is a good choice if you feel that you have sufficient staff resources to implement the evaluation, but need assistance with the technical aspects. An evaluation consultant, for example, may help with developing the evaluation design, conducting the data analyses, or selecting or constructing appropriate data collection tools. You will also want the consultant to help you develop the evaluation plan to ensure that it is technically correct and that what you plan to do in the evaluation will allow you to answer your evaluation questions.

Team 3 option: In-house evaluation team leader with support from program and other agency staff
Possible advantages:
An in-house evaluation team may be the least expensive option, but this is not always true. An in-house staff evaluation team promotes maximum involvement and participation of program staff and can contribute to building staff expertise for future evaluation efforts.

If you choose to use Team 3, an in-house evaluation team, it is important for you to define specific roles and responsibilities for the evaluation team and your staff to strengthen the objectivity of your evaluation.

Possible disadvantages:

- An in-house team may not be sufficiently knowledgeable or experienced to design and implement the evaluation.

- Potential funders may not perceive evaluation results as objective.

This option presumably avoids the expense of hiring an outside professional, so it is generally thought to be less costly than other evaluation teams. However, because it requires a greater commitment of staff time, you may discover that it is just as costly as using an outside evaluator either as a team leader or as a consultant. You may want to conduct a careful analysis of staff time costs compared to outside consultant costs before you decide on this team option.

HOW CAN YOU DECIDE WHAT TEAM IS BEST FOR YOU?

Before you decide on the best team to assemble, you will need to consider two important issues.

Your program's funding requirements. Often a funding agency requires that you hire an outside evaluator to conduct your evaluation. This type of evaluator is often referred to as a third-party evaluator and is someone who is not affiliated with your agency in any way - someone with evaluation experience who will be objective when evaluating your program.

Your program's resources and capabilities. You can assemble different types of teams depending on your agency's resources and how you will use the findings. To determine what internal resources are available, examine your staff's skills and experience in planning an evaluation, designing data collection procedures and instruments, and collecting and analyzing data and information.

REMINDER: Selecting the best evaluation team depends on your program's funding requirements and your agency's resources and capabilities.

Also, examine the information you already have available through program activities. If, for example, you collect and review information from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System or the Head Start Program Information Report (or any other organized participant database or information system), you may be able to use this information as evaluation data.

If you conduct entrance and exit interviews of participants or complete paperwork or logs on participants' progress in the

program, this information may also be used as part of an evaluation.

The checklist below can help you decide what type of team you may need. Answer the questions based on what you know about your resources.

Resources for Appropriate Team Selection (check one)	Yes	No
1. Does your agency or program have funds designated for evaluation purposes?		
2. Have you successfully conducted previous evaluations of similar programs, components, or services?		
3. Are existing program practices and information collection forms useful for evaluation purposes?		
4. Can you collect evaluation information as part of your regular program operations (at intake, termination)?		
5. Are there agency staff who have training and experience in evaluation-related tasks?		
6. Are there advisory board members who have training and experience in evaluation-related tasks?		

Whatever team you select, remember that you and your staff need to work with the evaluation team and be involved in all evaluation planning and activities. Your knowledge and experience working with program participants and the community are essential for an evaluation that will benefit the program, program participants, community, and funders.

The checklist above can help you select your evaluation team in the following ways:

✓ If your answer to all the resource questions is "no," you may want to consider postponing your evaluation until you can obtain funds to hire an outside evaluator, at least on a consultancy basis. You may also want to consider budgeting

funds for evaluation purposes in your future program planning efforts.

✓ If your answer to question 1 is "yes," but you answer "no" to all other questions, you will need maximum assistance in conducting your evaluation and Team 1 (an outside evaluator with in-house support) is probably your best choice.

✓ If you answer "no" to question 1, but "yes" to most of the other resource questions, then Team 3 (in-house staff only) may be an appropriate choice for you. Keep in mind, however, that if you plan to use evaluation findings to seek program funding, you may want to consider using the Team 2 option (in-house evaluation team with outside consultant) instead and trying to obtain evaluation funds from other areas of your agency's budget.

✓ If your answer to question 1 is "yes" and the remainder of your answers are mixed (some "yes" and some "no") then either the Team 1 or Team 2 option should be effective.

The next chapter provides advice on how to locate, select, hire, and manage an outside evaluator or consultant. This information will be particularly helpful in assembling Teams 1 or 2. If you plan to conduct the evaluation using the Team 3 option, Chapter 4 may still be useful, because it provides suggestions on locating resources that may assist you in your evaluation efforts.

How Do You Hire and Manage an Outside Evaluator?

C areful selection of an outside evaluator can mean the difference between a positive and a negative experience. You will experience the maximum benefits from an evaluation if you hire an evaluator who is willing to work with you and your staff to help you better understand your program, learn what works, and discover what program components may need refining. If you build a good relationship with your evaluator you can work together to ensure that the evaluation remains on track and provides the information you and your funding agency want.

FINDING AN OUTSIDE EVALUATOR

There are four basic steps for finding an evaluator. These steps are similar to any you would use to recruit and hire new program staff. Public agencies may need to use a somewhat different process and involve other divisions of the agency. If you are managing a program in a public agency, check with your procurement department for information on regulations for hiring outside evaluators or consultants.

Step 1: Develop a job description. The first step in the hiring process is to develop a job description that lists the materials, services, and products to be provided by the evaluator. In developing your job description, you will need to know the types of evaluation activities you want this person to perform and the time lines involved. Evaluator responsibilities can involve

developing an evaluation plan, providing progress reports, developing data collection instruments and forms, collecting and analyzing data, and writing reports. If you think you need assistance in developing a job description, ask another agency that has experience in hiring outside evaluators for help. Advisory board members may also be able to assist with this task.

Step 2: Locate sources for evaluators. Potential sources useful for finding an evaluator include the following:

Other agencies that have used outside evaluators. Agencies in your community that are like yours are a good source of information about potential outside evaluators. These agencies may be able to recommend a good evaluator, suggest methods of advertising, and provide other useful information. This is one of the best ways to find an evaluator who understands your program and is sensitive to the community you serve.

Evaluation divisions of State or local agencies. Most State or local government agencies have planning and evaluation departments. You may be able to use individuals from these agencies to work with you on your evaluation. Some evaluation divisions are able to offer their services at no cost as an "in-kind" service. If they are unable to respond to a request for proposal or provide you with in-kind services, staff members from these divisions may be able to direct you toward other organizations that are interested in conducting outside evaluations.

Local colleges and universities. Departments of sociology, psychology, social work/social welfare, education, public health, and public administration, and university-based research centers are possible sources within colleges and universities. Well-known researchers affiliated with these institutions may be readily identifiable. If they cannot personally assist you, they may be able to refer you to other individuals interested in performing local program evaluations.

Technical assistance providers. Some Federal grant programs include a national or local technical assistance provider. If your agency is participating in this kind of grant program, assistance in identifying and selecting an evaluator is an appropriate technical assistance request.

The public library. Reference librarians may be able to direct you to new sources. They can help identify local research firms and

BASIC STEPS FOR FINDING AND HIRING AND EVALUATOR

Develop a job description

Locate sources for evaluators

Advertise

Interview candidates

Write a contract

may be able to provide you with conference proceedings that list program evaluators who were presenters.

Research institutes and consulting firms. Many experienced evaluators are part of research institutes and consulting firms. They are sometimes listed in the yellow pages under "Research" or "Marketing Research." They also can be located by contacting your State human services departments to get a listing of the firms that have bid on recent contracts for evaluations of State programs.

National advocacy groups and local foundations, such as The United Way, American Public Welfare Association, Child Welfare League of America, and the Urban League. The staff and board members of these organizations may be able to provide you with names of local evaluators. They may also be able to offer insight on evaluations that were done well or evaluators especially suited to your needs.

Professional associations, such as the American Evaluation Association, American Sociological Association, and the Society for Research on Child Development. Many evaluators belong to the American Evaluation Association. These organizations can provide you with a list of members in your area for a fee and may have tips on how you should advertise to attract an evaluator that best meets your needs. Additional information on these organizations is provided in the appendix.

Step 3: Advertise and solicit applications. After you have developed a job description, identified possible sources for evaluators, and found ways to advertise the position, you are ready to post an advertisement to get applications. Advertising in the local paper, posting the position at a local college or university, or working with your local government's human resource department (if you are a public agency) are possible ways of soliciting applications. Agency newsletters, local and national meetings, and professional journals are additional sources where you can post your advertisement.

It is wise to advertise as widely as possible, particularly if you are in a small community or are undertaking an evaluation for the first time. Several advertising sources will ensure that you receive multiple responses. You should build in as much time as possible between when you post the position and when you plan to review applications.

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE ADVERTISEMENT

✓ Your agency's name, address, and telephone number, and a contact person (optional, but if you include one, this person should be ready to handle inquiries).

✓ Brief description of program, including objectives, types of evaluation anticipated, available budget, and period of performance (for both program and evaluation).

✓ Principal tasks of the evaluator.

✓ Required evidence of expertise (such as letters of introduction, a resume, a list of references, or a description of a recent evaluation).

✓ Whether an interview is required (strongly re-commended for candidates under consideration).

✓ Other requirements (such as whether you will accept a faxed or e-mailed application) and the deadline for a response to the advertisement.

[Note that if you are a public agency, you may have other restrictions related to procurement.]

PROXIMITY OF
EVALUATORS

When considering an evaluator who is not local, you need to balance the issues of cost, availability, familiarity with your program (or other similar programs) and commitment. Although distance from the program is sometimes a barrier, many programs have successfully worked with out-of-town evaluators.

If you have sufficient time, you may want to consider a two-step process for applications. The position would still be advertised, but you would send evaluators who respond to your advertisement more detailed information about your evaluation requirements and request a description of their approach. For example, you could send potential evaluators a brief description of the program and the evaluation questions you want to answer, along with a description of the community you serve. This would give them an opportunity to propose a plan that more closely corresponds to your program needs.

Step 4: Review applications and interview potential candidates. In reviewing applications, consider the candidate's writing style, type of evaluation plan proposed, language (jargon free), experience working with your type of program and staff, familiarity with the subject area of your program, experience conducting similar evaluations, and proposed costs.

After you have narrowed your selection to two or three candidates, you are ready to schedule an in-person interview. This interview will give you the opportunity to determine whether you and the evaluator are compatible. As you do for other job applicants, you will need to check references from other programs that worked with your candidate.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE TROUBLE HIRING AN EVALUATOR

Despite your best efforts, you may encounter difficulties in hiring an outside evaluator, including the following:

Few or no responses to your advertisement. Many programs, particularly ones in isolated areas, have struggled to obtain even a few responses to their advertisements. Check with your Federal Project Officer to find out whether he or she can offer you suggestions, consult with other programs in your community, and check with your local State or county social service agency to obtain advice. Your advisory board may also be useful in identifying potential evaluators. Another source may be an organization that offers technical assistance to programs similar to yours.

None of the applicants is compatible with program philosophy and staff. If applicants do not match program needs, you may find it helpful to network with other programs and agencies in your State to learn about evaluators that agencies like

yours have used. A compatible philosophy and approach is most important — tradeoffs with proximity to the evaluator may need to be made to find the right evaluator.

The outside evaluator's proposed costs are higher than your budgeted amount. In this instance, you will need to generate additional funds for the evaluation or negotiate with your evaluator to donate some of their services (in-kind services).

Another option is to negotiate with a university professor to supervise advanced degree students to conduct some of the evaluation activities. Information about participants and programs is a valuable resource, providing confidentiality is respected. For example, you can allow a university professor to have access to program information and possibly to other evaluation records in exchange for evaluation services such as instrument development or data analysis.

MANAGING AN EVALUATION HEADED BY AN OUTSIDE EVALUATOR

Often, when the decision is made to hire an outside evaluator, program managers and staff believe that the evaluation is "out of their hands." **This is not true.** An outside evaluator cannot do the job effectively without the cooperation and assistance of program managers and staff.

An evaluation is like any activity taking place within your agency — it needs to be managed. Program managers must manage the evaluation just as program operations are managed. What would happen if your staff stopped interviewing new participants? How long would it be before you knew this had happened? How long would it be before you took action? How involved would you be in finding a solution? An evaluation needs to be treated with the same level of priority.

CREATING A CONTRACT

A major step in managing an evaluation is the development of a contract with your outside evaluator. It is important that your contract include the following:

Who "owns" the evaluation information. It is important to specify who has ownership and to whom the information can be given. Release of information to outside parties should always be cleared with appropriate agency staff.

A GOOD EVALUATOR...

... is willing to work collaboratively to develop an evaluation plan that meets your needs.

... is able to communicate in simple, practical terms.

... has experience evaluating similar human service delivery pro-grams and working with similar resource levels.

... has experience with statistical methods.

... has the time available to do the evaluation.

... has experience developing data collection forms or using standardized instruments.

... will work with a national evaluation team (if one exists).

... will treat data confidentially.

... can come from outside the participant community because the evaluator will be able to learn about, respect, and work with your participants and their multiple cultures.

... is located near your program's operations or is willing to travel frequently to maintain contact with the pro-gram (although travel expenses will increase the cost of your evaluation).

Any plans for publishing the evaluation results should be discussed and cleared before articles are written and submitted for publication. It is important to review publication restrictions from the funding agency. In some instances, the funding agency may have requirements about the use of data and the release of reports.

ELEMENTS OF A BASIC CONTRACT

- Agency name and address
- Evaluator name, address, affiliation (if any), and social security number
- Person from agency responsible for monitoring the contract and work
- Key reports, products, and due dates
- Duties and responsibilities
- Required meetings, including attendance at grantee conferences
- Payment amount, payment schedule, and requirements for payment (fees and expenses)
- Liability release
- Materials provided to the evaluator by the agency
- Any special terms or conditions, including those for terminating the contract
- Data ownership and publication rights
- Confidentiality of data
- Any restrictions on publishing evaluation results
- Signature and date for both agency representative and evaluator

Who will perform evaluation tasks. The contract should clarify who is to perform the evaluation tasks and the level of contact between the evaluator and the program. Some program managers have found that outside evaluators, after they are hired, delegate many of their responsibilities to less experienced staff and have little contact with the program managers or staff. To some extent, a contract can protect your program from this type of situation.

If this problem occurs even after specification of tasks, you may want to talk with the senior evaluator you originally hired to offer the option of renegotiating his or her role. The resolution should be mutually agreeable to program staff and the evaluator and not compromise the integrity of the evaluation or program. The contract should specify the responsibilities of program staff as well as the evaluator. These responsibilities may vary depending on the structure of your evaluation and the amount of money you have available. The exhibits at the end of this chapter provide some guidelines on roles and responsibilities.

Your expectations about the contact between the evaluator and program staff. It is very important for an outside evaluator to keep program staff informed about the status of the evaluation and to integrate the evaluation into ongoing program operations. Failure to do this shortchanges program staff and denies the program an opportunity to make important changes on an ongoing basis. The contract could specify attendance at staff meetings and ongoing reporting requirements. Setting up regular meetings, inviting evaluators to program events and staff meetings, and requiring periodic reports may help solidify the relationship between the program and the evaluation. Other approaches that may help include asking a more senior agency staff member to become involved with the evaluation process or withholding payment if the evaluator fails to perform assigned tasks.

DO YOU NEED OUTSIDE APPROVAL TO HIRE AN EVALUATOR?

In most agencies, executive director, advisory board, or agency board approval is needed before you can extend a contract to your selected evaluator. In Native-American communities, the tribal council may need to approve selection of the evaluator. Check your grant requirements or with your funding agency to determine whether you need Federal approval of your evaluator.

WHAT TO DO IF PROBLEMS ARISE

Even with the best contract, problems can arise during the course of the evaluation process. These problems include the following:

Evaluation approaches differ (the program and evaluator do not see eye-to-eye). Try to reach a common ground where both programmatic and evaluation constraints and needs are met. If many reasonable attempts to resolve differences have been tried and severe conflicts still remain that could jeopardize the program or the evaluation, program staff should consider terminating the evaluation contract. This decision should be weighed carefully and discussed with your funder, as a new evaluator will need to be recruited and brought up to speed midstream. In some situations, finding a new evaluator may be the best option. Before making this decision, however, you will need to discuss this with your program funders, particularly if they are providing financial support for the evaluation.

Evaluation of the program requires analysis skills outside your original plan. You may find that your evaluator is in agreement with your assessment and is willing to add another person to the evaluation team who has expertise and skills needed to undertake additional or different analyses. Many times additional expertise can be added to the evaluation team by using a few hours of a consultant's time. Programmers, statisticians, and the like can augment the evaluation team without fundamentally changing the evaluation team's structure.

The evaluator leaves, terminates the contract, or does not meet contractual requirements. If the evaluator leaves the area or terminates the contract, you will most likely be faced with recruiting a new one. In some instances, programs have successfully maintained their ties to evaluators who have left the area, but this is often difficult. When your evaluator does not meet contractual requirements and efforts to resolve the dispute have failed, public agencies should turn the case over to their procurement office and private agencies should seek legal counsel.

The evaluator is not culturally competent or does not have any experience working with your community and the participants. It is not always possible to locate an evaluator with both experience in the type of evaluation that you need and experience working with specific groups and subgroups in the community. If your evaluator does not have experience working

with the particular group reached by the program, you must educate this person about the culture (or cultures) of the participants' community and how it might affect the evaluation design, instruments, and procedures. The evaluator may need to conduct focus groups or interviews with community members to make sure that evaluation questions and activities are both understood by and respectful of community members.

You are not happy with the evaluator's findings. Sometimes program managers and staff discover that the evaluator's findings are not consistent with their impressions of the program's effectiveness with participants. Program staff believes that participants are demonstrating the expected changes in behavior, knowledge, or attitudes, but the evaluation results do not indicate this. In this situation, you may want to work with your evaluator to make sure the instruments being used are measuring the changes you have been observing in the program participants. Also, remember that your evaluator will continue to need input from program staff in interpreting evaluation findings.

You may also want your evaluator to assess whether some of your participants are changing and whether there are any common characteristics shared by participants that are or are not demonstrating changes. However, be prepared to accept findings that may not support your perceptions. Not every program will work the way it was intended to, and you may need to make some program changes based on your findings.

> The most important message in this manual is that the effectiveness of an evaluation depends on having program managers and staff participate as full partners in the evaluation, whether it is being conducted by an outside evaluator or by in-house staff.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EVALUATOR

- Develop an evaluation plan, in conjunction with program staff.

- Provide monthly or quarterly progress reports to staff (written or in person).

- Train project staff. Training topics could include:

  Using evaluation instruments, information collection activities, participant/case selection for sampling purposes, and other activities.

  Designing information collection instruments or selecting standardized instruments or inventories.

- Implement information collection procedures such as:

  Interview project staff.

  Interview coordinating/collaborating agency staff.

  Interview program participants.

  Conduct focus groups.

  Observe service delivery activities.

  Review participant case records

  Develop database.

  Code, enter, and clean data.

  Analyze data.

- Establish and oversee procedures ensuring confidentiality during all phases of the evaluation.

- Write interim (quarterly, biannual, yearly) evaluation reports and the final evaluation report.

- Attend project staff meetings, advisory board or interagency coordinating committee meetings, and grantee meetings sponsored by funding agency.

- Present findings at local and national meetings and conferences.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM MANAGER

- Educate the outside evaluator about the program's operations and objectives, characteristics of the participant population, and the benefits that program staff expects from the evaluation. This may involve alerting evaluators to sensitive situations (for example, the need to report suspected child abuse) they may encounter during the course of their evaluation activities.

- Provide feedback to the evaluator on whether instruments are appropriate for the target population and provide input during the evaluation plan phase.

- Keep the outside evaluator informed about changes in the program's operations.

- Specify information the evaluator should include in the report.

- Assist in interpreting evaluation findings.

- Provide information to all staff about the evaluation process.

- Monitor the evaluation contract and completion of work products (such as reports).

- Ensure that program staff is fulfilling their responsibilities (such as data collection).

- Supervise in-house evaluation activities, such as completion of data collection instruments, and data entry.

- Serve as a troubleshooter for the evaluation process, resolving problems or locating a higher level person in the agency who can help.

- Request a debriefing from the evaluator at various times during the evaluation and at its conclusion.

How Do You Prepare for an Evaluation?

W hen you build a house, you start by laying the foundation. If your foundation is not well constructed, your house will eventually develop cracks and you will be constantly patching them up. Preparing for an evaluation is like laying a foundation for a house. The effectiveness of an evaluation ultimately depends on how well you have planned it.

Begin preparing for the evaluation when you are planning the program, component, or service that you want to evaluate. This approach will ensure that the evaluation reflects the program's goals and objectives. The process of preparing for an evaluation should involve the outside evaluator or consultant (if you decide to hire one), all program staff who are to be part of the evaluation team, and anyone else in the agency who will be involved. The following steps are designed to help you build a strong foundation for your evaluation.

IN THIS CHAPTER...

Preparing for an evaluation

Program models

Working with assumptions about your program

Providing a context for your evaluation

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT TO EVALUATE

Programs vary in size and scope. Some programs have multiple components, whereas others have only one or two. You can evaluate your entire program, one or two program components, or even one or two services or activities within a component. To a large extent, your decision about what to evaluate will depend on your available financial and staff resources. If your resources are limited, you may want to narrow the scope of your evaluation. It is

better to conduct an effective evaluation of a single program component than to attempt an evaluation of several components or an entire program without sufficient resources.

Sometimes the decision about what to evaluate is made for you. This often occurs when funders require evaluation as a condition of a grant award. Funders may require evaluations of different types of programs including, but not limited to, demonstration projects. Evaluation of demonstration projects is particularly important to funders because the purpose of these projects is to develop and test effective program approaches and models.

At other times, you or your agency administrators will make the decision about what to evaluate. As a general rule, if you are planning to implement new programs, components, or services, you should also plan to evaluate them. This step will help you determine at the outset whether your new efforts are implemented successfully, and are effective in attaining expected participant outcomes. It will also help identify areas for improvement.

If your program is already operational, you may decide you want to evaluate a particular service or component because you are unsure about its effectiveness with some of your participants. Or, you may want to evaluate your program because you believe it is effective and you want to obtain additional funding to continue or expand it.

STEP 2: BUILD A LOGIC MODEL OF YOUR PROGRAM

Whether you decide to evaluate an entire program, a single component, or a single service, you will need to build a logic model that clearly describes what you plan to do. A logic model will provide a structural framework for your evaluation. You will need to develop a clear picture of the particular program, component, or service to be evaluated so that everyone involved has a shared understanding of what they are evaluating. Building a logic model will help you with this task.

There are a variety of types of logic models. There are also a number of different terms for logic models, including program model, program theory, and theory of change. In general, the logic model represents a series of logically related assumptions about the program's participant population and the changes you hope to bring about in that population as a result of your program. It should reflect both how the program will work and how it will

have its effect on the target population. Many examples can be found in the resources listed in the appendix.

The model discussed in this chapter focuses on the program's implementation and participant outcome objectives. A sample completed program model and a worksheet that can be used to develop a model for your program appear at the end of this chapter. The program model includes the following features.

Assumptions about your target population. Your assumptions about your target population are the reasons why you decided to develop a program, program component, or service. These assumptions may be based on theory, your own experiences in working with the target population, or your review of existing research or program literature.

ASSUMPTIONS are the underlying principles that explain why the program's component or service was developed.

Using the worksheet, you would write your assumptions in column 1. Some examples of assumptions about a participant population that could underlie development of a program and potential responses to these assumptions include the following:

Assumption: Children of parents who abuse alcohol or other drugs are at high risk for parental abuse or neglect.

»Response: Develop a program to work with families to address substance abuse and child abuse problems simultaneously.

Assumption: Runaways and homeless youth are at high risk for abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

»Response. Develop a program that provides drug abuse intervention or prevention services to runaway and homeless youth.

Assumption: Families with multiple interpersonal, social, and economic problems need early intervention to prevent the development of child maltreatment, family violence, alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems, or all three.

»Response: Develop an early intervention program that provides comprehensive support services to at-risk families.

Assumption. Children from low-income families are at high risk for developmental, educational, and social problems.

»Response: Develop a program that enhances the developmental, educational, and social adjustment opportunities for children.

Assumption: Child protective services (CPS) workers do not have sufficient skills for working with families in which substance abuse and child maltreatment coexist.

»Response: Develop a training program that will expand the knowledge and skill base of CPS workers.

Program interventions (implementation objectives). The program's interventions or implementation objectives represent what you plan to do to respond to the problems identified in your assumptions. They include the specific services, activities, or products you plan to develop or implement. Using the worksheet, you can fill in your program implementation objectives in column 2. Some examples of implementation objectives that correspond to the above assumptions include the following:

- *Provide intensive in-home services to parents and children.*

- *Provide drug abuse education services to runaway and homeless youth.*

- *Provide in-home counseling and case management services to low-income mothers with infants.*

- *Provide comprehensive child development services to children and families.*

- *Provide multidisciplinary training to CPS workers.*

Implementation objectives are also sometimes known as "outputs," which should be distinguished from "outcomes."

Immediate outcomes (immediate participant outcome objectives). Immediate participant outcome objectives can be entered in column 3. These are your expectations about the changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that you expect to result from your intervention by the time participants complete the program. Examples of immediate outcomes linked to the above interventions include the following:

- *Parents will acknowledge their substance abuse problems.*

- *Youth will demonstrate changes in their attitudes toward use of alcohol and other drugs.*

- *Mothers will increase their knowledge of infant development and of effective and appropriate parenting practices.*

- *Children will demonstrate improvements in their cognitive and interpersonal functioning.*

- *CPS workers will increase their knowledge about the relationship between substance abuse and child maltreatment and about the appropriate service approach for substance-abusing parents.*

Whereas "outputs" refer to the program services or activities, "outcomes" refer to participant knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors.

Intermediate outcomes. Intermediate outcomes, entered in column 4, represent the changes in participants that you think will follow after immediate outcomes are achieved. Examples of intermediate outcomes include the following:

- *After parents acknowledge their AOD abuse problems,* **they will seek treatment to address this problem***.*

- *After parents receive treatment for AOD abuse,* **there will be a reduction in the incidence of child maltreatment***.*

- *After runaway and homeless youth change their attitudes toward AOD use,* **they will reduce this use***.*

- *After mothers have a greater understanding of child development and appropriate parenting practices,* **they will improve their parenting practices with their infants***.*

- *After children demonstrate improvements in their cognitive and interpersonal functioning,* **they will increase their ability to function at an age-appropriate level in a particular setting***.*

- *After CPS workers increase their knowledge about working with families in which AOD abuse and child maltreatment coexist,* **they will improve their skills for working with these families.**

Long-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes, specified in the last column of the model, represent your expectations about the long-term effects of your program on participants or the community. They are derived logically from your immediate and intermediate outcomes. Some people call these distal outcomes, since they may refer to outcomes that are less closely related to the program activities or to outcomes that are more distant in the future. In

contrast, immediate and intermediate outcomes can be referred to as proximal outcomes. Examples of long-term outcomes include the following:

- *After runaway and homeless youth reduce their AOD abuse,* **they will seek services designed to help them resolve other problems they may have**.

- *After mothers of infants become more effective parents,* **the need for out-of-home placements for their children will be reduced**.

- *After CPS workers improve their skills for working with families in which AOD abuse and child maltreatment coexist,* **collaboration and integration of services between the child welfare and the substance abuse treatment systems will increase**.

Logic models are not difficult to construct, and they lay the foundation for your evaluation by clearly identifying your program implementation and participant outcome objectives. These models can then be stated in measurable terms for evaluation purposes.

STEP 3: STATE YOUR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTICIPANT OUTCOME OBJECTIVES IN MEASURABLE TERMS

The logic model serves as a basis for identifying your program's implementation and participant outcome objectives. Initially, you should focus your evaluation on assessing whether implementation objectives and immediate participant outcome objectives were attained. This task will allow you to assess whether it is worthwhile to commit additional resources to evaluating attainment of intermediate and final or long-term outcome objectives.

Remember, every program, component, or service can be characterized by two types of objectives — implementation objectives and outcome objectives. Both types of objectives will need to be stated in measurable terms.

Often program managers believe that stating objectives in measurable terms means that they have to establish performance standards or some kind of arbitrary "measure" that the program must attain. **This is not correct.** Stating objectives in measurable terms simply means that you describe what you plan to do in your program and how you expect the participants to change in a way will allow you to measure these objectives. From this perspective,

measurement can involve anything from counting the number of services (or determining the duration of services) to using a standardized test that will result in a quantifiable score. Some examples of stating objectives in measurable terms are provided below.

Stating implementation objectives in measurable terms. Examples of implementation objectives include the following:

What you plan to do — The services/activities you plan to provide or the products you plan to develop, and the duration and intensity of the services or activities.

Who will do it — What the staffing arrangements will be; the characteristics and qualifications of the program staff who will deliver the services, conduct the training, or develop the products; and how these individuals will be recruited and hired.

MEASURABLE means that you define "how many, when, for how long, what type, and how much" in your implementation objectives.

Who you plan to reach and how many — A description of the participant population for the program; the number of participants to be reached during a specific time frame; and how you plan to recruit or reach the participants.

These objectives are not difficult to state in measurable terms. You simply need to be specific about your program's operations. The following example demonstrates how general implementation objectives can be transformed into measurable objectives.

General objective: Provide substance abuse prevention and intervention services to runaway youth.

» Measurable objectives:

What you plan to do — Provide eight drug abuse education class sessions per year with each session lasting for 2 weeks and involving 2-hour classes convened for 5 days of each week.

Develop a curriculum that will include at least two self-esteem building activities, four presentations by youth who are in recovery, two field trips to recreational facilities, four role playing activities involving parent-child interactions, and one educational lecture on drugs and their effects.

Who will do it — Classes will be conducted by two counselors. One will be a certified addictions counselor, and the other will have at

least 2 years of experience working with runaway and homeless youth.

The curriculum for the classes will be developed by the 2 counselors in conjunction with the clinical director and an outside consultant who is an expert in the area of AOD abuse prevention and intervention.

Counselors will be recruited from current agency staff and will be supervised by the agency clinical director who will provide 3 hours of supervision each week.

Who you plan to reach and how many — Classes will be provided to all youth residing in the shelter during the time of the classes (from 8 to 14 youth for any given session) and to youth who are seeking crisis intervention services from the youth services agency (approximately 6 youth for each session). All youth will be between 13 and 17 years old. Youth seeking crisis intervention services will be recruited to the classes by the intake counselors and the clinical director.

A blank worksheet that can be used to state your implementation objectives in measurable terms is provided at the end of this chapter. From your description of the specific characteristics for each objective, the evaluation will be able to assess, on an ongoing basis whether the objectives were attained, the types of problems encountered during program implementation, and the areas where changes may need to be made. For example, using the example provided above, you may discover that the first class session included only two youth from the crisis intervention services. You will then need to assess your recruitment process, asking the following questions:

How many youth sought crisis intervention services during that timeframe?

How many youth agreed to participate?

What barriers were encountered to participation in the classes (such as youth or parent reluctance to give permission, lack of transportation, or lack of interest among youth)?

Based on your answers to these questions, you may decide to revise your recruitment strategies, train crisis intervention counselors to be more effective in recruiting youth, visit the family to encourage the youth's participation, or offer transportation to youth to make it easier for them to attend the classes.

Stating participant outcome objectives in measurable terms. This process requires you to be specific about the changes in knowledge, attitudes, awareness, or behavior that you expect to occur as a result of participation in your program. One way to be specific about these changes is to ask yourself the following question:

How will we know that the expected changes occurred?

To answer this question, you will have to identify the evidence needed to demonstrate that your participants have changed. The following examples demonstrate how participant outcome objectives may be stated in measurable terms. A worksheet for defining measurable participant outcome objectives appears at the end of this chapter.

General objective: We expect to improve the parenting skills of program participants.

»Measurable objective: Parents participating in the program will demonstrate significant increases in their scores on an instrument that measures parenting skills from intake to completion of the parenting education classes.

General objective: We expect to reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs by youth participating in the substance abuse intervention program.

»Measurable objective: Youth will indicate significant decreases in their scores on an instrument that measures use of alcohol and other drugs from intake to after program participation.

General objective: We expect to improve CPS workers' ability to work effectively with families in which child maltreatment and parental substance abuse problems coexist.

»Measurable objective: CPS workers will demonstrate significant increases in their scores on instruments that measure knowledge of substance abuse and child maltreatment issues and skills for working with these families from before to after training.

General objective: We expect to reduce the risk of child maltreatment for children in the families served.

»**Measurable objective:** Families served by the program will be significantly less likely than a similar group of families to be

reported for child maltreatment for 6 months after they complete the program.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY THE CONTEXT FOR YOUR EVALUATION

Part of planning for an evaluation requires understanding the context in which the evaluation will take place. Think again about building a house. Before you can design your house, you need to know something about your lot. If your lot is on a hill, you must consider the slope of the hill when you design your house. If there are numerous trees on the lot, you must design your house to accommodate the trees.

Similarly, program evaluations do not take place in a vacuum, and the context of an evaluation must be considered before the evaluation can be planned and designed. Although many contextual factors can affect your evaluation, the most common factors pertain to your agency, your staff, and your participant population.

The agency context. The characteristics of an agency implementing a program affects both the program and the evaluation. The aspects of your agency that need to be considered in preparing for your evaluation include the following:

The agency's evaluation-related resources. Does the agency have a management information system in place that can be used to collect data on participants and services? Does the agency have an advisory board that includes members who have experience evaluating programs? Does the agency have discretionary funds in the budget that can be used for an evaluation?

The agency's history of conducting program evaluations. Has the agency evaluated its programs before? If yes, was the experience a negative or positive one? If it was negative, what were the problems encountered and how can they be avoided in the current evaluation? Are the designs of previous agency evaluations appropriate for the evaluation you are currently planning?

If the agency has a history of program evaluation, you may be able to use the previous evaluation designs and methodology for your current evaluation. Review these with your outside evaluator or consultant to determine whether they are applicable to your current needs. If they are applicable, this will save you a great deal of time and money.

The program's relationship to other agency activities. Is the program you want to evaluate integrated into other agency activities, or does it function as a separate entity? What are the relationships between the program and other agency activities? If it is integrated, how will you evaluate it apart from other agency activities? This can be a complicated process. If your evaluation team does not include someone who is an experienced evaluator, you may need assistance from an outside consultant to help you with this task.

The staff context. The support and full participation of program staff in an evaluation is critical to its success. Sometimes evaluations are not successfully implemented because program staff who are responsible for data collection do not consistently administer or complete evaluation forms, follow the directions of the evaluation team, or make concerted efforts to track participants after they left the program. The usual reason for staff-related evaluation problems is that staff were not adequately prepared for the evaluation or given the opportunity to participate in its planning and development. Contextual issues relevant to program staff include the following:

The staff's experiences in participating in program evaluations. Have your staff participated in evaluations prior to this one? If yes, was the experience a positive or negative one? If no, how much do they know about the evaluation process and how much training will they need to participate as full partners in the evaluation?

If staff have had negative experiences with evaluation, you will need to work with them to emphasize the positive aspects of evaluation and to demonstrate how this evaluation will be different from prior ones. All staff will need careful training if they are to be involved in any evaluation activities, and this training should be reinforced throughout the duration of the evaluation.

The staff's attitudes toward evaluation. Do your staff have positive or negative attitudes toward evaluation? If negative, what can be done to make them more positive? How can they be encouraged to support and participate fully in the evaluation?

Negative attitudes sometimes can be counteracted when program managers demonstrate enthusiasm for the evaluation and when evaluation activities are integrated with program activities. It may be helpful to demonstrate to staff how evaluation instruments also can be used as assessment tools for participants and therefore help

CULTURE refers to the shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, institutions and experiences of a group of people. The group may be identified by race, age, ethnicity, language, national origin, religion, or other social category or grouping.

staff develop treatment plans or needs assessments for individual participants.

The staff's knowledge about evaluation. Are your staff knowledgeable about the practices and procedures required for a program evaluation? Do any staff members have a background in conducting evaluations that could help you with the process?

Staff who are knowledgeable about evaluation practices and procedures can be a significant asset to an evaluation. They can assume some of the evaluation tasks and help train and supervise other staff on evaluation activities.

The participant population context. Before designing an evaluation, it is very important to understand the characteristics of your participant population. The primary issue relevant to the participant population context concerns the *potential diversity of your program population.* For example, is the program population similar or diverse with respect to age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and literacy levels? If the population is diverse, how can the evaluation address this diversity?

Participant diversity can present a significant challenge to an evaluation effort. Instruments and methods that may be appropriate for some participants may not be for others. For example, written questionnaires may be easily completed by some participants, but others may not have adequate literacy levels. Similarly, face-to-face interviews may be appropriate for some of the cultural groups the program serves, but not to others.

If you serve a diverse population of participants, you may need to be flexible in your data collection methods. You may design an instrument, for example, that can be administered either as a written instrument or as an interview instrument. You also may need to have your instruments translated into different languages. However, it is important to remember that just translating an instrument does not necessarily mean that it will be culturally appropriate.

If you serve a particular cultural group, you may need to select the individuals who are to collect the evaluation information from the same cultural or ethnic group as your participants. If you are concerned about the literacy levels of your population, you will need to pilot test your instruments to make sure that participants understand what is being asked of them. More information related to pilot tests appears in Chapter 7.

GETTING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED. You may find it useful to discuss the evaluation with program participants, if it seems reasonable to you. You could describe what you plan to do and something about how you plan to do it, and obtain feedback from participants concerning their attitudes and opinions about the evaluation.

Identifying contextual issues is essential to building a solid foundation for your evaluation. During this process, you will want to involve as many members of your expected evaluation team as possible. The decisions you make about how to address these contextual issues in your evaluation will be fundamental to ensuring that the evaluation operates successfully and that its design and methodology are appropriate for your participant population.

After you have completed these initial steps, it is time to "frame" your house. To frame a house, you need blueprints that detail the plans for the house. The blueprint for an evaluation is the evaluation plan. Chapter 6 discusses the elements that go into building this plan.

SAMPLE LOGIC MODEL
Child Abuse Prevention Program

Assumptions about Target Population	Interventions (Implementation Objectives)	Immediate Outcomes (Participant Outcome Objectives)	Intermediate Outcomes (Participant Outcome Objectives)	Long-Term Outcomes
General: Children of parents who abuse alcohol and other drugs (AOD) are at high risk for parental maltreatment.	**General:** Develop a program that addresses AOD abuse and child maltreatment simultaneously.	**General**: Improve overall quality of family functioning	**General**: Reduce AOD abuse and child maltreatment in families.	Eliminate AOD abuse and child maltreatment among participating families parental maltreatment.
Specific: The risk for child abuse will decrease if parents stop using alcohol and other drugs	Substance abuse treatment services Home visiting services	Parents acknowledge AOD abuse and seek help Parents reduce AOD use	Parents complete AOD treatment and continue with support groups or other aftercare services	Eliminate AOD abuse among participating parents
Specific: The risk for child abuse will decrease if parents develop effective parenting skills.	Parent effectiveness education Parent support groups Child development education	Parents increase knowledge of parenting skills Parents increase knowledge of child development Parents acknowledge impact of their AOD abuse on children	Parents demonstrate changes in their parenting practices with children	Eliminate child maltreatment among participating parents
Specific: Children of AOD abusing parents are at high risk for AOD abuse.	Skill building classes Recreational activities Drug abuse education services	Children increase skills in dealing with AOD abusing parents Children increase knowledge of AOD	Children increase self-esteem	Prevent AOD abuse among children in participating families

LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET

Assumptions about Target Population	Interventions (Implementation Objectives)	Immediate Outcomes (Participant Outcome Objectives)	Intermediate Outcomes (Participant Outcome Objectives)	Long Term Outcomes

SAMPLE WORKSHEET: IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES STATED IN MEASURABLE TERMS FOR A DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

Component	What you will do	Who will do it	Who you will reach and how many	How long
Shelter-based services	Implement 8 drug education class each year Implement 8 ROPES programs each year Take 8 field trips each year Provide transportation for youth not residing in the shelter	2 shelter counselors, 1 counselor trained in the ROPES program	Approximately. 5 youth residing in the shelter for a period of two weeks for each activity Approximately 10 youth seeking crisis intervention services from the shelter for each activity	Drug abuse education class will meet daily for one week ROPES course will meet daily for one week Field trip will occur once for each class
Street outreach	Implement a drop-in center for street youth in an area where runaway youth congregate Send out a street van to provide food, clothes, and drug-related information	2 counselors (1 man and 1 woman) who are trained in hug prevention counseling will staff the drop-in center 2 street outreach workers - one man and one woman	Approx. 50 runaway youth who are on the streets will be served each year	The drop-in center will be open from 2:00 - 10:OO pm every day. The street van will go out two times per week from 10:OO pm to 2:00 am.
Home-based services	Provide informal family and couples counseling in the home 2 times per week Provide on-call 24 -hour per day case management for crisis resolution and accessing needed services	2 family therapists and 2 aides	Approximately 50 families each year of youth who have run away or are at risk for running away	Each family will receive services for a 3-month period Follow-up services will be provided for 4 weeks

WORKSHEET FOR DESCRIBING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES IN MEASURABLE TERMS

Component	What you will do	Who will do it	Who you will reach and how many	How long

**SAMPLE PARTICIPANT OUTCOME OBJECTIVES STATED IN MEASURABLE TERMS
FOR A COMPREHENSIVE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Components	Target Population	General Expected Outcomes	Measurable Expected Outcomes
Home-based services	Family	Improve family's access to services Improve family functioning	After receiving services in comparison to before receiving services, families will demonstrate: • Increases in their knowledge about available services in the community • Increases in the number of services they are linked to • Decreases in scores on an inventory measuring family stress • Increases in scores on an inventory measuring life skills
Child development	Children	Improve child development	After receiving services in comparison to before receiving services, children will demonstrate increases in scores on a child development inventory Children receiving component services will show greater increases in scores than a matched group of children who did not receive component services
Mental health services	Families	Improve family functioning	After receiving services, in comparison to before receiving services, parents will show: • Improvements in their ability to cope with stress • Improvements in self-esteem
Parent education	Parents	Improve parenting practices Improve children's health	After receiving services, in comparison to before receiving services, parents will demonstrate: • Increases in their knowledge about appropriate parenting practices • Increases in their knowledge about nutrition • Increases in the number of the nutritious foods they buy and nutritious meals they prepare • Increases in the number of well-child doctor's visits they take their children to
Interagency partnerships	Community agencies and organizations	Improve families' access to services	After participating in this component in comparison to before participating in this component, interagency collaboration members will demonstrate: • Increases in the number of referrals they make to the program • Increases in the number of referrals they take from the program • Increases in their willingness to change procedures to make access to services easier

WORKSHEET: PARTICIPANT OUTCOME OBJECTIVES STATED IN MEASURABLE TERMS

Components	Target Population	General Expected Outcomes	Measurable Expected Outcomes

What Should You Include in an Evaluation Plan?

I f you decided to build a house, you probably would hire an architect to design the house and draw up the plans. Although it is possible to build a house without hiring an architect, this professional knows what is and is not structurally possible and understands the complex issues relevant to setting the foundation and placing the pipes, ducts, and electrical wires. An architect also knows what materials to use in various parts of the house and the types of materials that are best. However, an architect cannot design the house for you unless you tell him or her what you want.

An evaluation plan is a lot like an architect's plans for a house. It is a written document that specifies the evaluation design and details the practices and procedures to use to conduct the evaluation. Just as you would have an architect develop the plans for your house, it is a good idea to have an experienced evaluator develop the plans for your evaluation. Similarly, just as an architect cannot design your house without input from you, an experienced evaluator cannot develop an effective evaluation plan without assistance from you and your staff. The evaluator has the technical expertise, but you and your staff have the program expertise. Both are necessary for a useful evaluation plan.

If you plan to hire an outside evaluator to head your evaluation team, you may want to specify developing the evaluation plan as one of the evaluator's responsibilities, with assistance from you and program staff. If you plan to conduct an in-house evaluation and do not have someone on your evaluation team who is an experienced evaluator, this is a critical point at which to seek assistance from an evaluation consultant. The consultant can help

you prepare the evaluation plan to ensure that your design and methodology are technically correct and appropriate for answering the evaluation questions.

This chapter provides information about the necessary ingredients to include in an evaluation plan. This information will help you:

- Work with an experienced evaluator (either an outside evaluator or someone within your agency) to develop the plan.

- Review the plan that an outside evaluator has developed to make sure all the ingredients are included.

- Understand the kinds of things that are required in an evaluation and why your outside evaluator or evaluation consultant has chosen a specific design or methodology.

An evaluation plan should be developed at least 2 to 3 months before the time you expect to begin the evaluation so that you have ample time to have the plan reviewed, make any necessary changes, and test out information collection procedures and instruments before collecting data.

Do not begin collecting evaluation information until the plan is completed and the instruments have been pilot-tested. A sample evaluation plan outline that may be used as a guide appears at the end of this chapter. The major sections of the outline are discussed below.

> You need to prepare an evaluation plan well in advance of beginning your evaluation, especially if a human subjects review or Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is required by your agency when conducting research and evaluation activities.

SECTION I. THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This section can be used to present the program model (discussed in Chapter 5), program objectives, evaluation questions, and the timeframe for the evaluation (when collection of evaluation information will begin and end). It also should include a discussion of the context for the evaluation, particularly the aspects of the agency, program staff, and participants that may affect the evaluation (also discussed in Chapter 5). If an outside evaluator is preparing the plan, the evaluator will need your help to prepare this section.

SECTION II. EVALUATING IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES - PROCEDURES AND METHODS

This section should provide detailed descriptions of the practices and procedures that will be used to answer evaluation questions

pertaining to your program's implementation objectives. (Are implementation objectives being attained and, if not, why not? What barriers were encountered? What has facilitated attainment of objectives?)

Types of information needed. In an evaluation, information is often referred to as data. Many people think that the term "data" refers to numerical information. In fact, data can be facts, statistics, or any other items of information. Therefore, any information that is collected about your program or participants can be considered evaluation data.

The types of information needed will be guided by the objective you assess. For example, when the objective refers to what you plan to do, you must collect information on the types of services, activities, or educational/training products that are developed and implemented; who received them; and their duration and intensity.

When the objective pertains to who will do it, you must collect information on the characteristics of program staff (including their background and experience), how they were recruited and hired, their job descriptions, the training they received to perform their jobs, and the general staffing and supervisory arrangements for the program.

When the objective concerns who will participate, you must collect information about the characteristics of the participants, the numbers of participants, how they were recruited, barriers encountered in the recruitment process, and factors that facilitated recruitment.

Sources of necessary information. This refers to where, or from whom, you will obtain evaluation information. Again, the selection of sources will be guided by the objective you are assessing. For example:

- Information on services can come from program records or from interviews with program staff.

- Information on staff can come from program records, interviews with agency administrators, staff themselves, and program managers.

- Information on participants and recruitment strategies can come from program records and interviews with program staff and administrators.

NOTE: Data do not have to be numerical. Evaluation data can be any information collected about your program or participants.

WHEN YOU MAY NEED ASSISTANCE FROM AN EXPERIENCED EVALUATOR

During the process of developing an evaluation plan, you will want the assistance from an experienced evaluator when you are:

- Deciding on an evaluation design
- Selecting or developing data collection instruments
- Developing the analysis plan
- Determining the sampling plan (if relevant)

▪ Information about barriers and facilitators to implementing the program can come from interviews with relevant program personnel.

This section of the plan also should include a discussion of how confidentiality of information will be maintained. You will need to develop participant consent forms that include a description of the evaluation objectives and how the information will be used. A sample participant consent form is provided at the end of this chapter.

How sources of information will be selected. If your program has a large number of staff members or participants, the time and cost of the evaluation can be reduced by including only a sample of these staff or participants as sources for evaluation information. If you decide to sample, you will need the assistance of an experienced evaluator to ensure that the sampling procedures result in a group of participants or staff that are appropriate for your evaluation objectives. Sampling is a complicated process, and if you do not sample correctly you run the risk of not being able to generalize your evaluation results to your participant population as a whole.

SAMPLING is the process when only certain participants, staff, or records are used for your evaluation.

There are a variety of methods for sampling your sources.

▪ You can sample by identifying a specific timeframe for collecting evaluation-related information and including only those participants who were served during that timeframe.

▪ You can sample by randomly selecting the participants (or staff) to be used in the evaluation. For example, you might assign case numbers to participants and include only the even-numbered cases in your evaluation.

▪ You can sample based on specific criteria, such as length of time with the program (for staff) or characteristics of participants.

Methods for collecting information. For each implementation objective you are assessing, the evaluation plan must specify how information will be collected (the instruments and procedures) and who will collect it. To the extent possible, collection of evaluation information should be integrated into program operations. For example, in direct services programs, the program's intake,

assessment, and termination forms could be designed so that they are useful for evaluation purposes as well as for program purposes.

In training programs, the registration forms for participants can be used to collect evaluation-related information as well as provide information relevant to conducting the training. If your program uses a management information system (MIS) to track services and participants, it is possible that it will incorporate much of the information that you need for your evaluation.

There are a number of methods for collecting information including structured and open-ended interviews, paper and pencil inventories or questionnaires, observations, and systematic reviews of program or agency records or documents. The methods you select will depend upon the following:

- The evidence you need to establish that your objectives were attained

- Your sources

- Your available resources

Chapter 7 provides more information on these methods. The instruments or forms that you will use to collect evaluation information should be developed or selected as part of the evaluation plan. Do not begin an evaluation until all of the data collection instruments are selected or developed. Again, instrument development or selection can be a complex process and your evaluation team may need assistance from an experienced evaluator for this task.

Confidentiality. An important part of implementing an evaluation is ensuring that your participants are aware of what you are doing and that they are cooperating with the evaluation voluntarily. People should be allowed their privacy, and this means they have the right to refuse to give any personal or family information, the right to refuse to answer any questions, and even the right to refuse to be a part of the evaluation at all.

For each of your program's objectives, the evaluation plan must describe:

✓ Types of information needed

✓ Sources of information

✓ How sources will be selected

✓ Methods for collecting information (instruments and procedures)

✓ Time-frame for collecting information

✓ Methods for analyzing information

WHY INFORMED CONSENT IS SO IMPORTANT. People should be allowed their privacy, and this means that they have the right to refuse to give any personal or family information, the right to refuse to answer any questions in the evaluation, and even the right to refuse to be a part of the evaluation at all. For participant consent to be informed, you must clearly explain these rights, as well as any risks associated with the evaluation.

NOTE: To determine whether your participants changed, you need to collect information about them before they begin (and before they receive services or training) and after they complete your program.

Explain the evaluation activities and what will be required of them as part of the evaluation effort. Tell them that their name will not be used and that the information they provide will not be linked to them. Then, have them sign an informed consent form that documents that they understand the scope of the evaluation, know what is expected of them, agree (or disagree) to participate, and understand they have the right to refuse to give any information. They should also understand that they may drop out of the evaluation at any time without losing any program services. If children are involved, you must get the permission of their parents or guardians concerning their participation in the evaluation.

A sample informed consent form appears at the end of this chapter. Sometimes programs will have participants complete this form at the same time that they complete forms agreeing to participate in the program, or agreeing to let their children participate. This reduces the time needed for the evaluator to secure informed consent.

Timeframe for collecting information. Although you will have already specified a general timeframe for the evaluation, you will need to specify a time frame for collecting data relevant to each implementation objective. Times for data collection will again be guided by the objective under assessment. You should be sure to consider collecting evaluation at the same time for all participants; for example, after they have been in the program for 6 months.

Methods for analyzing information. This section of an evaluation plan describes the practices and procedures for use in analyzing the evaluation information. For assessing program implementation, the analyses will be primarily descriptive and may involve tabulating frequencies (of services and participant characteristics) and classifying narrative information into meaningful categories, such as types of barriers encountered, strategies for overcoming barriers, and types of facilitating factors. An experienced evaluator can help your evaluation team design an analysis plan that will maximize the benefits of the evaluation for the program and for program staff. More information on analyzing program implementation information is provided in Chapter 8.

SECTION III. EVALUATING PARTICIPANT OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

The practices and procedures for evaluating attainment of participant outcome objectives are similar to those for evaluating

implementation objectives. However, this part of your evaluation plan will need to address a few additional issues.

Selecting your evaluation design. A plan for evaluating participant outcome objectives must include a description of the evaluation design. Again, the assistance of an experienced evaluator (either an outside evaluator, consultant, or someone within your agency) is critical at this juncture.

The evaluation design must allow you to answer these basic questions about your participants:

▪ *Did program participants demonstrate changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or awareness?*

▪ *Were the changes the result of the program's interventions?*

Answering the first question concerns assessment of participant outcomes; answering the second concerns assessment of the impact of the program on the participants.

Two commonly used evaluation designs are:

▪ *Pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments*

▪ *Pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments using a comparison or control group*

> **Using a control or comparison group** is the best way to determine the impact of your program on participants.
>
> A **control group** is formed by randomly assigning participants to either a treatment group (which receives services) or a control group (which receives no services).
>
> A **comparison group** is used when you cannot randomly assign participants; instead you identify a group of people similar to your participants but who do not receive your program's services.

A pre- and post-intervention design involves collecting information only on program participants. This information is collected at least twice: once before participants begin the program and again either immediately or some time after they complete or leave the program. You can collect outcome information as often as you like after participants enter the program, but you must collect information on participants before they enter the program. This is called *baseline information* and is essential for demonstrating that a change occurred.

If you are implementing an education or training program, this type of design can be effective for evaluating immediate changes in participants' knowledge and attitudes. In these types of programs, you can assess participants' knowledge and attitudes prior to the training and immediately after training with some degree of certainty that any observed changes resulted from your interventions.

However, if you want to assess longer-term outcomes of training and education programs or any outcomes of service delivery programs, the pre-intervention and post-intervention design by itself is not recommended. Collecting information only on program participants does not allow you to answer the question: Were participant changes the result of program interventions? The changes may have occurred as a result of other interventions, or are changes that might have occurred without any intervention at all.

To be able to attribute participant changes to your program's intervention, you need to use a pre- and post-intervention design that incorporates a comparison or control group. In this design, two groups of individuals are included in your evaluation.

- The treatment group (individuals who participate in your program).

- The non treatment group (individuals who are similar to those in the treatment group, but who do not receive the same services as the treatment group).

The non treatment group is called a *control group* if all eligible program participants are randomly assigned to the treatment and non treatment groups. Random assignment means that members of both groups can be assumed to be similar with respect to all key characteristics except program participation. Thus, potential sources of biases are "controlled." A *comparison group* is a non treatment group where you do not randomly assign people. A comparison group could be families from another program, children from another school, or former program participants.

Evaluation designs that include a control group are the most rigorous. Because the key feature of these designs is random assignment, they are also known as randomized experiments or randomized controlled trials. They provide the strongest evidence that changes in participant outcomes are due to a program intervention.

Although using a control group greatly strengthens your evaluation, there are barriers to implementing this design option. Program staff may view random assignment as unethical because it deprives eligible participants of needed services. As a result, staff sometimes will prioritize eligible participants rather than use random assignment, or staff may simply refuse to assign

NOTE: Random assignment does not mean that control group members cannot receive any services or training. They may remain on a waiting list and participate in your program after the evaluation information has been collected.

individuals to the control group. Staff from other agencies may also feel random assignment is unethical and may refuse to refer individuals to your program.

To avoid these potential barriers, educate staff from your program and from other agencies in your community about the benefits of the random assignment process. No one would argue with the belief that it is important to provide services to individuals who need them. However, it is also important to find out if those services actually work. The random assignment process helps you determine whether or not your program's services are having the anticipated effect on participants. Staff from your program and from other agencies also must be informed that random assignment does not mean that control group members cannot receive any services or training. They may participate in the program after the evaluation data have been collected, or they may receive other types of services or training.

Another potential barrier to using a control group is the number of program participant that are recruited. If you find that you are recruiting fewer participants than you originally anticipated, you may not want to randomly assign participants to a control group because it would reduce the size of your service population.

A final barrier is the difficulty of enlisting control group members in the evaluation process. Because control group members have not participated in the program, they are unlikely to have an interest in the evaluation and may refuse to be interviewed or complete a questionnaire. Some evaluation efforts set aside funds to provide money or other incentives to encourage both control group and treatment group members to participate in the evaluation. Although there is some potential for bias in this situation, it is usually outweighed by the need to collect information from control group members.

If you are implementing a program in which random assignment of participants to treatment and control groups is not possible, you will need to identify a group of individuals or families who are similar to those participating in your program whom you can assess as part of your evaluation. This group is called a *comparison group,* and these designs are called quasi-experiments. Similar to a control group, members of a comparison group may receive other types of services or no services at all. Although using comparison groups means that programs do not have to deny services to eligible participants, you cannot be sure that the two groups are

completely similar, which is why it is more difficult to attribute changes in participant outcomes to a program intervention. You should consult with your outside evaluator or evaluation consultant regarding the statistical techniques and design variations that can strengthen quasi-experimental designs. For example, you may have to collect enough information at baseline to try and statistically control for potential differences as part of your analyses.

REMEMBER: You should notify your funder whenever you are planning major changes to your project or evaluation.

Comparison group members may be participants in other programs provided by your agency or in programs offered by other agencies. If you plan to use a comparison group, you must make sure that this group will be available for assessments during the time frame of your evaluation. Also, be aware that comparison group members, like control group members, are difficult to enlist in an evaluation. The evaluation plan will need to specify strategies for encouraging non treatment group members to take part in the evaluation.

Pilot-testing information collection instruments. Your plans for evaluating participant outcome objectives will need to include a discussion of plans for pilot-testing and revising information collection instruments. Chapter 7 provides information on pilot-testing instruments.

Analyzing participant outcome information. The plan for evaluating participant outcomes must include a comprehensive data analysis plan. The analyses must be structured to answer the questions about whether change occurred and whether these changes can be attributed to the program. A more detailed discussion on analyzing information on participant outcomes is provided in Chapter 8.

SECTION IV. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING THE EVALUATION

This section of the evaluation plan can be used to describe the practices and procedures you expect to use to manage the evaluation. If staff are to be responsible for data collection, you will need to describe how they will be trained and monitored. You may want to develop a data collection manual that staff can use. This will ensure consistency in information collection and will be useful for staff who are hired after the evaluation begins. Chapter 7 discusses various types of evaluation monitoring activities.

This final section of the evaluation plan also should include a discussion of how changes in program operations will be handled

in the evaluation. For example, if a particular service or program component is discontinued or added to the program, you will need to have procedures for documenting the time that this change occurred, the reasons for the change, and whether particular participants were involved in the program prior to or after the change. This will help determine whether the change had any impact on attainment of expected outcomes.

Once you and your experienced evaluator have completed the evaluation plan, it is a good idea to have it reviewed by selected individuals for their comments and suggestions. Potential reviewers include the following:

- Agency administrators who can determine whether the evaluation plan is consistent with the agency's resources and evaluation objectives.

- Program staff who can provide feedback on whether the evaluation will involve an excessive burden for them and whether it is appropriate for program participants.

- Advisory board members who can assess whether the evaluation will provide the type of information most important to know.

- Participants and community members who can determine if the evaluation instruments and procedures are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

After the evaluation plan is complete and the instruments pilot tested, you are ready to begin collecting evaluation information. Because this process is so critical to the success of an evaluation, the major issues pertaining to information collection discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR EVALUATION PLAN

I.   Evaluation framework

    A.   What you are going to evaluate

        1.   Program model (assumptions about target population, interventions, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and final outcomes)

        2.   Program implementation objectives (stated in general and then measurable terms)

            a.   What you plan to do and how

            b.   Who will do it

            c.   Participant population and recruitment strategies

        3.   Participant outcome objectives (stated in general and then measurable terms)

        4.   Context for the evaluation

    B.   Questions to be addressed in the evaluation

        1.   Are implementation objectives being attained? If not, why (that is, what barriers or problems have been encountered)? What kinds of things facilitated implementation?

        2.   Are participant outcome objectives being attained? If not, why (that is, what barriers or problems have been encountered)? What kinds of things facilitated attainment of participant outcomes?

            a.   Do participant outcomes vary as a function of program features? (That is, which aspects of the program are most predictive of expected outcomes?)

            b.   Do participant outcomes vary as a function of characteristics of the participants or staff?

    C.   Timeframe for the evaluation

        1.   When data collection will begin and end

        2.   How and why timeframe was selected

II.   Evaluating implementation objectives - procedures and methods

   (question 1: Are implementation objectives being attained, and if not, why not?)

   A.   Objective 1 (state objective in measurable terms)

       1.   Type of information needed to determine if objective 1 is being attained and to assess barriers and facilitators

       2.   Sources of information (that is, where you plan to get the information including staff, participants, program documents). Be sure to include your plans for maintaining confidentiality of the information obtained during the evaluation

       3.   How sources of information were selected

       4.   Time frame for collecting information

       5.   Methods for collecting the information (such as interviews, paper and pencil instruments, observations, records reviews)

       6.   Methods for analyzing the information to determine whether the objective was attained (that is, tabulation of frequencies, assessment of relationships between or among variables)

   B.   Repeat this information for each implementation objective being assessed in the evaluation

III.   Evaluating participant outcome objectives-procedures and methods
        (question 2: Are participant outcome objectives being attained and if not, why not?)

   A.   Evaluation design

   B.   Objective 1 (state outcome objective in measurable terms)

       1.   Types of information needed to determine if objective 1 is being attained (that is, what evidence will you use to demonstrate the change?)

       2.   Methods of collecting that information (for example, questionnaires, observations, surveys, interviews) and plans for pilot-testing information collection methods

       3.   Sources of information (such as program staff, participants, agency staff, program managers, etc.) and sampling plan, if relevant

       4.   Timeframe for collecting information

       5.   Methods for analyzing the information to determine whether the objective was attained (i.e., tabulation of frequencies, assessment of relationships between or among variables using statistical tests)

   C.   Repeat this information for each participant outcome objective being assessed in the evaluation

IV.   Procedures for managing and monitoring the evaluation

      A.   Procedures for training staff to collect evaluation-related information

      B.   Procedures for conducting quality control checks of the information collection process

      C.   Timelines for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information, including procedures for providing evaluation-related feedback to program managers and staff

SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

We would like you to participate in the Evaluation of *[program name].* Your participation is important to us and will help us assess the effectiveness of the program. As a participant in [program name] we will ask you to *[complete a questionnaire, answer questions in an interview, or other task].*

We will keep all of your answers confidential. Your name will never be included in any reports and none of your answers will be linked to you in any way. The information that you provide will be combined with information from everyone else participating in the study.

[If information/data collection includes questions relevant to behaviors such as child abuse, drug abuse, or suicidal behaviors, the program should make clear its potential legal obligation to report this information - and that confidentiality may be broken in these cases. Make sure that you know what your legal reporting requirements are before you begin your evaluation.]

You do not have to participate in the evaluation. Even if you agree to participate now, you may stop participating at any time or refuse to answer any question. Refusing to be part of the evaluation will not affect your participation or the services you receive in *[program name].*

If you have any questions about the study you may call *[name and telephone number of evaluator, program manager or community advocate].*

By signing below, you confirm that this form has been explained to you and that you understand it.

Please Check One:

❑   AGREE TO PARTICIPATE

❑   DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE

Signed: _____
            Participant or Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

How Do You Get the Information You Need for Your Evaluation?

As Chapter 6 noted, a major section of your evaluation plan concerns evaluation information - what kinds of information you need, what the sources for this information will be, and what procedures you use to collect it. Because these issues are so critical to the success of your evaluation effort, they are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

In a program evaluation, the information you collect is similar to the materials you use when you build a house. If you were to build a house, you would be very concerned about the quality of the materials used. High-quality materials ensure a strong and durable house. In an evaluation, the quality of the information you collect also affects its strength and durability. The higher the quality of the information collected, the better the evaluation.

At the end of the chapter, there are two worksheets to help you plan out the data collection process. One is a sample worksheet completed for a drug abuse prevention program for runaway and homeless youth, and the other is a blank worksheet that you and your evaluation team can complete together. The following sections cover each column of the worksheet.

WHAT SPECIFIC INFORMATION DO YOU NEED TO ADDRESS OBJECTIVES?

Using the worksheet, fill in your program implementation (or participant outcome objectives) in column 1. Make sure that these

objectives are stated in measurable terms. Your statement of objectives in measurable terms will determine the kinds of information you need and will avoid the problem of collecting more information than is actually necessary.

Next, complete column 2 by specifying the information that addresses each objective. This information is sometimes referred to as the data elements. For example, if two of your measurable participant outcome objectives are to improve youth's grades and scores on academic tests and reduce their incidence of behavioral problems as reported by teachers and student self-reports, you will need to collect the following information:

- Student grades

- Academic test scores

- Number of behavior or discipline reports

- Teacher assessments of classroom behaviors

- Student self-assessments of classroom behaviors

These items are the data elements.

WHAT ARE THE BEST SOURCES?

Column 3 can be used to identify appropriate sources for specific evaluation data. For every data element, there may be a range of potential sources, including:

- Program records (case records, registration records, academic records, and other information)

- Program management information systems

- Program reports and documents

- Program staff

- Program participants

- Family members of participants

- Members of a control or comparison group

When making decisions about your information needs, you and other members of your evaluation team may decide that certain types of information would be interesting to collect. However, if the information does not related directly to your implementation or outcome objectives, you should resist this urge. By staying focused on your specific information needs, you will be able to keep the time and costs of the evaluation to a minimum.

- Staff of collaborating agencies

- Records from other agencies (such as health agencies, schools, criminal justice agencies, mental health agencies, child welfare agencies, or direct service agencies)

- Community leaders

- Outside experts

- The general public

- National databases

In deciding the best sources for information, your evaluation team will need to answer three questions:

✓ *What source is likely to provide the most accurate information?*

✓ *What source is the least costly or time consuming?*

✓ *Will collecting information from a particular source pose an excessive burden on that person?*

The judgment regarding accuracy is the most important decision. For example, it may be less costly or time consuming to obtain information about services from interviews with program staff, but staff may not provide as accurate information about services as may be obtained from case records or program logs.

When you interview staff, you are relying on their memories of what happened, but when you review case records or logs, you should be able to get information about what actually did happen. If you choose to use case records or program logs to obtain evaluation-relevant data, you will need to make sure that staff are consistent in recording evaluation information in the records. Sometimes case record reviews can be difficult to use for evaluation purposes because they are incomplete or do not report information in a consistent manner.

Another strategy is to identify existing information on your participants. Although your program may not collect certain information, other programs and agencies may. You might want to seek the cooperation of other agencies to obtain their data, or develop a collaboration that supports your evaluation.

OBSERVATION of participant behavior (especially from children) can be a very good way to collect evaluation information. However, careful training of observers is necessary, in addition to well-designed and validated observation checklists.

WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS?

Column 4 identifies the instruments that you will use to collect the data from specified sources. Some options for information collection instruments include the following:

IN DECIDING THE BEST
SOURCES FOR
INFORMATION, CONSIDER:
✓ The most accurate source
✓ The burden on the source
✓ The availability and
   accessibility of the source
✓ Existing sources

- Written surveys or questionnaires

- Oral interviews (either in person or on the telephone) or focus group interviews (either structured or unstructured)

- Extraction forms to be used for written records (such as case records or existing databases)

- Observation forms or checklists to be used to assess participants' or staff members' behaviors

The types of instruments selected should be guided by your data elements. For example, information on barriers or facilitators to program implementation would be best obtained through oral interviews with program administrators and staff. Information on services provided may be more accurate if obtained by using a case record or program log extraction form.

Information on family functioning may be best obtained through observations or questionnaires designed to assess particular aspects of family relationships and behaviors. Focus group interviews are not always useful for collecting information on individual participant outcomes, but may be used effectively to assess participants' perceptions of a program.

Instruments for evaluating program implementation objectives. Your evaluation team will probably need to develop instruments to collect information on program implementation objectives. This is not a complicated process. You must pay attention to your information needs and potential sources and develop instruments designed specifically to obtain that information from that source. For example, if you want to collect information on planned services and activities from program planners, it is possible to construct an interview instrument that includes the following questions:

✓ *Why was the decision made to develop (the particular service or activity)?*

✓ *Who was involved in making this decision?*

✓ *What plans were made to ensure the cultural relevancy of (the particular service or activity)?*

If case records or logs are viewed as appropriate sources for evaluation information, you will need to develop a case record or program log extraction form. For example, if you want to collect information on actual services or activities, you may design a records extraction form that includes the following items:

✓ *How many times was (the particular activity or service) provided to each participant?*

✓ *Who provided or implemented (the particular activity or service)?*

✓ *What was the intensity of (the particular activity or service)? (How long was it provided for each participant at each time)?*

✓ *What was the duration of (the particular activity or service)? (What was the timeframe during which the participant received or participated in the activity or service?)*

OTHER IDEAS. Sometimes programs can use nontraditional and creative methods of documenting program operations and participant successes. These methods generally are used to supplement the evaluation activities already under way. Some methods you can consider to supplement the information collected as part of your evaluation include the following:

▪ Audio and video recordings

▪ Participant journals

▪ Participant plays and skits

▪ Storybooks

Instruments for evaluating participant outcome objectives. Participant outcome objectives can be assessed using a variety of instruments, depending on your information needs. If your evaluation team decides to use interview instruments, observations, or existing records to collect participant outcome information, you will probably need to develop these instruments. In these situations, you would follow the same guidelines as you would use to develop instruments to assess program implementation objectives.

If your evaluation team decides to use questionnaires or assessment inventories to collect information on participant outcomes, you have the option of selecting existing instruments or developing your own. Many existing instruments can be used to assess participant outcomes, particularly with respect to child abuse potential, substance use, family cohesion, family stress, behavioral patterns, and so on. It is not possible to identify specific instruments or inventories in this manual as particularly noteworthy or useful, because the usefulness of an instrument depends to a large extent on the nature of your program and your participant outcome objectives. If you do not have someone on your evaluation team who is knowledgeable regarding existing assessment instruments, this would be a critical time to enlist the assistance of an outside consultant to identify appropriate

instruments. Some resources for existing instruments are provided in the appendix.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using existing instruments. The primary **advantages** of using existing instruments or inventories are noted on the following page:

They often, but not always, are standardized. This means that the instrument has been administered to a very large population and the scores have been "normed" for that population. When an instrument has been "normed," it means that a specified range of scores is considered "normal," whereas scores in another range are considered "non-normal." Non-normal scores on instruments assessing child abuse potential, substance use, family cohesion, and the like may be indicators of potential problem behaviors.

They usually, but not always, have been established as valid and reliable. An instrument is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. It is reliable if individuals' responses to the instrument are consistent over time or within the instrument.

The primary **disadvantages** of using existing instruments are as follows:

They are not always appropriate for all cultural or ethnic populations. Scores that are "normed" on one cultural group may not reflect the norm of members of another cultural group. Translating the instrument into another language is not sufficient to make it culturally appropriate. The items and scoring system must reflect the norms, values, and traditions of the given cultural group.

They may not be useful for your program. Your participant outcome objectives and the interventions you developed to attain those objectives may not match what is being assessed by a standardized instrument. For example, if you want to evaluate the effects that a tutoring program has on runaway and homeless youth, an instrument measuring depression may not be useful.

If an outside consultant selects an instrument for your program evaluation, make sure that you and other members of the evaluation team review each item on the instrument to ensure that the information it asks for is consistent with your expectations about how program participants will change.

NORMED and NORMAL are statistical terms that refer to the distribution of different scores in a group of people. These terms do not imply dysfunction or abnormality among participants.

If your evaluation team is unable to find an appropriate existing instrument to assess participant outcome objectives, they will need to develop one. Again, if there is no one on your team who has expertise in developing assessment instruments, you will need the assistance of an outside consultant for this task.

Whether you decide to use an existing instrument or develop one, the instrument used should meet the following criteria:

✓ **It should measure a domain addressed by your program.** If you are providing parenting training, you would want an instrument to measure changes in parenting knowledge, skills, and behaviors, not an instrument measuring self-esteem, substance use, or personality type.

✓ **It should be appropriate for your participants in terms of age or developmental level, language, and ease of use.** These characteristics can be checked by conducting focus groups of participants or pilot testing the instruments.

✓ **It should respect and reflect the participants' cultural backgrounds.** The definitions, concepts, and items in the instrument should be relevant to the participants' community and experience.

✓ **The respondent should be able to complete the instrument in a reasonable timeframe.** Again, careful pilot testing can uncover any difficulties.

WHAT PROCEDURES SHOULD YOU USE TO COLLECT DATA?

It is critical that the evaluation team establish a set of procedures to ensure that the information will be collected in a consistent and systematic manner. Information collection procedures should include:

When the information will be collected. This will depend on the schedule the evaluation team has established for the specific time intervals that information must be collected.

Where the information will be collected. This is particularly relevant when information is to be collected from program participants. The evaluation team must decide whether the information will be collected in the program facility, in the participants' homes, or in some other location. It is a good idea to

CULTURAL RELEVANCE. Your instruments should be sensitive to issues and concerns of your participant group. You will want to know:

➢ Do participants understand the terms the instruments use? Is the language at a level everyone can understand?

➢ Are concepts dealt with in the instruments familiar to participants?

➢ Do the instruments deal with concepts in a thoughtful and nonintrusive manner?

➢ Do the questions support the values of the participant group?

be consistent about where you collect information. For example, participants may provide different responses in their own home environments than they would in an agency office setting.

Who will collect the information. In some situations, you will need to be sure that information collectors meet certain criteria. For example, they may need to be familiar with the culture or the language of the individuals they are interviewing or observing. Administering some instruments also may require that the information collector has experience with the instruments or has clinical experience or training.

How the information will be collected. This refers to procedures for administering the instruments. Will they be administered as a group or individually? If you are collecting information from children, will other family members be present? If you are collecting information from individuals with a low level of literacy, will the data collectors read the items to them? The methods you use will depend in large part on the type of program and the characteristics of the participants. Training and education programs, for example, may have participants complete instruments in a group setting. Service delivery programs may find it more appropriate to individually administer instruments.

PILOT TESTING of data collection instruments and procedures allows you to identify and correct problem questions and procedures before you begin your evaluation.

Everyone involved in collecting evaluation information must be trained in data collection procedures. Training should include:

✓ *An item-by-item review of each of the instruments to be used in data collection, including a discussion of the meaning of each item, why it was included in the instrument, and how it is to be completed*

✓ *A review of all instructions on administering or using the instruments, including instructions to the respondents*

✓ *A discussion of potential problems that may arise in administering the instrument, including procedures for resolving the problems*

✓ *A practice session during which data collection staff administer the instrument to one another, use it to extract information from existing case records or program logs, or complete it themselves, if it is a written questionnaire*

✓ *A discussion of respondent confidentiality, including administering an informed consent form, answering respondents' questions about confidentiality, keeping completed instruments in a safe place, and procedures for submitting instruments to the appropriate person*

✓ *A discussion of the need for frequent reviews and checks of the data and for meetings of data collectors to ensure data collection continues to be consistent.*

It is useful to develop a manual that describes precisely what is expected in the information collection process. This will be a handy reference for data collection staff and will be useful for new staff who were hired after the initial evaluation training occurred.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES?

Even after you have selected or constructed the instruments and trained the data-collection staff, you are not yet ready to begin collecting data. Before you can actually begin collecting evaluation information, you must "pilot test" your instruments and procedures. The pilot test will determine whether the instruments and procedures are effective - that they obtain the information needed for the evaluation, without being excessively burdensome to the respondents, and that they are appropriate for the program participant population.

You may pilot test your instruments on a small sample of program records or individuals who are similar to your program participants. You can use a sample of your own program's participants who will not participate in the actual evaluation or a group of participants in another similar program offered by your agency or by another agency in your community.

The kinds of information that can be obtained from a pilot test include:

How long it takes to complete interviews, extract information from records, or fill out questionnaires

Whether self-administered questionnaires can be completed by participants without assistance from staff

Whether the necessary records are readily available, complete, and consistently maintained

Whether the necessary information can be collected in the established time frame

Whether instruments and procedures are culturally appropriate

Whether the notification procedures (letters, informed consent, and the like) are easily implemented and executed

To the extent possible, pilot testing should be done by data collection staff. Ask them to take notes and make comments on the process of administering or using each instrument. Then review these notes and comments to determine whether changes are needed in the instruments or procedures. As part of pilot testing, instruments should be reviewed to assess the number of incomplete answers, unlikely answers, comments on items that may be included in the margins, or other indicators that revisions are necessary.

In addition, you can ask questions of participants after the pilot test to obtain their comments on the instruments and procedures. Frequently, after pilot testing the evaluation team will need to improve the wording of some questions or instructions to the respondent and delete or add items.

HOW CAN YOU MONITOR DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES?

Once data collection begins, this task will require careful monitoring to ensure consistency in the process. Nothing is more damaging to an evaluation effort than information collection instruments that have been incorrectly or inconsistently administered, or that are incomplete.

There are various activities that can be undertaken as part of the monitoring process.

Establish a routine and timeframe for submitting completed instruments. This may be included in your data collection manual. It is a good idea to have instruments submitted to the appropriate member of the evaluation team immediately after completion. That person can then review the instruments and make sure that they are being completed correctly. This will allow problems to be identified and resolved immediately. You may need to retrain some members of the staff responsible for data collection or have a group meeting to re-emphasize a particular procedure or activity.

Conduct random observations of the data collection process. A member of the evaluation team may be assigned the responsibility of observing the data collection process at various times during the evaluation. This person, for example, may sit in

on an interview session to make sure that all of the procedures are being correctly conducted.

Conduct random checks of respondents. As an additional quality control measure, someone on the evaluation team may be assigned the responsibility of checking with a sample of respondents on a routine basis to determine whether the instruments were administered in the expected manner. This individual may ask respondents if they were given the informed consent form to sign and if it was explained to them, where they were interviewed, whether their questions about the interview were answered, and whether they felt the attitude or demeanor of the interviewer was appropriate.

Keep completed interview forms in a secure place. This will ensure that instruments are not lost and that confidentiality is maintained. Completed data collection instruments should not be left lying around, and access to this information should be limited. You may want to consider number-coding the forms rather than using names, though keeping a secured data base that connects the names to numbers.

Encourage staff to view the evaluation as an important part of the program. If program staff are given the responsibility for data collection, they will need support from you for this activity. Their first priority usually is providing services or training to participants and collecting evaluation information may not be valued. You will need to emphasize to your staff that the evaluation is part of the program and that evaluation information can help them improve their services or training to participants.

Once evaluation information is collected, you can begin to analyze it. To maximize the benefits of the evaluation to you, program staff, and program participants, this process should take place on an ongoing basis or at specified intervals during the evaluation. Information on the procedures for analyzing and interpreting evaluation information are discussed in the following chapter.

It is helpful to all staff, especially those who join your program after an evaluation begins, to have a procedures manual that describes all the data collection instruments and procedures.

SAMPLE DATA COLLECTION PLAN FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES FOR A DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

Implementation Objectives	Data Elements	Data Sources	Data Collection Instruments	When Collected
Implement 8 drug education classes, ROPES programs, and field trips each year. Provide transportation for youth not residing in the shelter	Planned services and activities	Program planners	Interview forms	Once at program onset
	Actual services and activities	Program managers Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months
	Differences between planned and actual services	Program manager	Interview forms	Every 3 months
	Barriers and facilitators	Program manager Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months
Staff program with 2 drug education counselors, 1 ROPES Program facilitator, and 1 driver. Use 2 volunteers for each field trip	Planned staffing	Program manager	Interview forms	Once at program onset
	Actual staffing	Program manager Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months
	Differences between planned and actual staffing	Program manager Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months
	Barriers and facilitators	Program manager Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months

Target 5 youth residing in shelter and 10 youth receiving crisis intervention services for each service. Target 10 non-shelter youth for transportation for each session.	Planned target population and numbers served	Program planners	Interview forms	Once at program onset
	Actual target population	Program records	Records extraction form	Every 3 months
	Differences between planned and actual target population	Program managers Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months
	Barriers and facilitators	Program managers Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months
Each session of the drug education classes and ROPES programs will be provided for 7 consecutive days. Drug education classes will be provided for 2 hours in the a.m., and the ROPES course for 4 hours in the p.m.	Planned duration of services	Program planners	Interview forms	Once at program onset
	Actual duration of services	Program manager Program records	Interview forms Record extraction forms	Every 3 months
	Differences between actual and planned duration of services	Program manager Program records	Interview forms Record extraction forms	Every 3 months
	Barriers and facilitators	Program manager Program staff	Interview forms	Every 3 months

WORKSHEET: DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Implementation and Outcome Objectives	Data Elements	Data Sources	Data Collection Instruments	When Collected

How Do You Make Sense of Evaluation Information?

F or evaluation information to be useful, it must be analyzed and interpreted. Many program managers and staff are intimidated by this activity, believing that it is best left to an expert. This is only partially true. If your evaluation team does not include someone who is experienced in analyzing qualitative and quantitative evaluation data, you will need to seek the assistance of an outside consultant for this task. However, it is important for you and all other members of the evaluation team to participate in the analysis activities. This is the only way to ensure that the analyses will answer your evaluation questions, not ones that an outside consultant may want to answer.

Think again about building a house. You may look at a set of blueprints and see only a lot of lines, numbers, and arrows. But when a builder looks at the blueprints, this person sees exactly what needs to be done to build the house and understands all of the technical requirements. This is why most people hire an expert to build one. However, hiring an expert builder does not mean that you do not need to participate in the building process. You need to make sure that the house the builder is working on is the house you want, not one that the builder wants.

This chapter will not tell you how to analyze evaluation data. Instead, it provides some basic information about different procedures for analyzing evaluation data to help you understand and participate more fully in this process. There are many ways to

analyze and interpret evaluation information. The methods discussed in this chapter are not the only methods one can use. Whatever methods the evaluation team decides to use, it is important to realize that analysis procedures must be guided by the evaluation questions. The following evaluation questions are discussed throughout this manual:

Are program implementation objectives being attained? If not, why not? What types of things were barriers to or facilitated attaining program implementation objectives?

Are participant outcome objectives being attained? If not, why not? What types of things were barriers to or facilitated attaining participant outcome objectives?

The following sections discuss procedures for analyzing evaluation information to answer both of these questions.

ANALYZING INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

In this manual, the basic program implementation objectives have been described as follows:

What you plan to do

Who will do it

Whom you plan to reach (your expected participant population) and with what intensity and duration

How many you expect to reach

You can analyze information about attainment of program implementation using a descriptive process. You **describe** what you did (or are doing), who did it, and the characteristics and number of participants. You then **compare** this information to your initial objectives and determine whether there is a difference between objectives and actual implementation. This process will answer the question: *Were program implementation objectives attained?*

If there are differences between your objectives and your actual implementation, you can analyze your evaluation information to identify the **reasons for the differences.** This step answers the question: *If not, why not?*

You also can use your evaluation information to identify **barriers encountered** to implementation and **factors that facilitated implementation.** This information can be used to "tell the story" of your program's implementation. An example of how this information might be organized for a drug abuse prevention program for runaway and homeless youth is provided in a table at the end of this chapter. The table represents an analysis of the program's measurable implementation objective concerning **what the program plans to do.**

You may remember that the measurable objectives introduced as examples in this manual for **what you plan to do** for the drug abuse prevention program were the following:

The program will provide eight drug abuse education class sessions per year.

Each session will last for 2 weeks.

Each 2-week session will involve 2 hours of classes per day.

Classes will be held for 5 days of each week of the session.

In the table, these measurable objectives appear in the first column. The actual program implementation information is provided in the second column. For this program, there were differences between objectives and actual implementation for three of the four measurable objectives. Column 3 notes the presence or absence of differences, and column 4 provides the reasons for those changes.

Columns 5 and 6 in the table identify the barriers encountered and the facilitating factors. These are important to identify whether or not implementation objectives were attained. They provide the context for understanding the program and will help you interpret the results of your analyses.

By reviewing the information in this table, you would be able to say the following things about your program:

The program implemented only six drug abuse prevention sessions instead of the intended eight sessions.

» The fewer than expected sessions were caused by a delay in startup time.

» The delay was caused by the difficulty of recruiting and hiring qualified staff, which took longer than expected.

» With staff now on board, we expect to be able to implement the full eight sessions in the second year.

» Once staff were hired, the sessions were implemented smoothly because there were a number of volunteers who provided assistance in organizing special events and transporting participants to the events.

Although the first two sessions were conducted for 2 weeks each, as intended, the remaining sessions were conducted for only 1 week.

» The decreased duration of the sessions was caused by the difficulty of maintaining the youth's interest during the 2-week period.

» Attendance dropped considerably during the second week, usually because of lack of interest, but sometimes because youth were moved to other placements or returned home.

» Attendance during the first week was maintained because of the availability of youth residing in the shelter.

For the first two sessions the class time was 2 hours per day, as originally intended. After the number of sessions was decreased, the class time was increased to 3 hours per day.

NOTE: It is important to understand that problems in attaining a particular program implementation objective are not a sign of program failure. Often, initial program implementation objectives are changed during the course of implementation in order to improve the program. The evaluation's focus on attaining implementation objectives is only a framework for understanding the events that occurred during implementation of your program.

» The increase was caused by the need to cover the curriculum material during the session.

» The extensive experience of the staff, and the assistance of volunteers, facilitated covering the material during the 1-week period.

» The youth's interest was high during the 1-week period.

The classes were provided for 5 days during the 1-week period, as intended.

» This schedule was facilitated by staff availability and the access to youth residing in the shelter.

» It was more difficult to get youth from crisis intervention services to attend for all 5 days.

Information on this implementation objective will be expanded as you conduct a similar analysis of information relevant to the other implementation objectives of staffing (who will do it) and the population (number and characteristics of participants).

As you can see, if this information is provided on an on-going basis, it will provide opportunities for the program to improve its implementation and better meet the needs of program participants.

ANALYZING INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANT OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

The analysis of participant outcome information must be designed to answer two questions:

Did the expected changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, behavior, or awareness occur?

If changes occurred, were they the result of your program's interventions?

Another question that can be included in your analysis of participant outcome information is:

Did some participants change more than others and, if so, what explains this difference? (For example, characteristics of the participants, types of interventions, duration of interventions, intensity of interventions, or characteristics of staff.)

Your evaluation plan must include a detailed description of how you will analyze information to answer these questions. It is very important to know exactly what you want to do before you begin collecting data, particularly the types of **statistical procedures** that you will use to analyze participant outcome information.

Understanding statistical procedures. Statistical procedures are used to understand changes occurring among participants as a group. In many instances, your program participants may vary considerably with respect to change. Some participants may change a great deal, others may change only slightly, and still others may not change or may change in an unexpected direction. Statistical procedures will help you assess the overall effectiveness of your program and its effectiveness with various types of participants.

Statistical procedures also are important tools for an evaluation because they can determine whether the changes demonstrated by your participants are the result of a chance occurrence or are caused by the variables (program or procedure) being assessed. This is called *statistical significance.* Usually, a change may be considered statistically significant (not just a chance occurrence) if the probability of its happening by chance is less than 5 in 100 cases. However, in some situations, evaluators may set other standards for establishing significance, depending on the nature of the program, what is being measured, and the number of participants. Statistical significance is influenced by both the size of the effect and the size of the sample (number of participants).

Another use for statistical procedures is determining the similarity between your treatment and nontreatment group members. This is particularly important if you are using a comparison group rather than a control group as your nontreatment group. If a comparison group is to be used to establish that participant changes were the result of your program's interventions and not some other factors, you must demonstrate that the members of the comparison group are similar to your participants in every key way except for program participation.

Statistical procedures can be used to determine the extent of similarity of group members with respect to age, gender, socioeconomic status, marital status, race or ethnicity, or other factors.

Statistical tests are a type of statistical procedure that examine the relationships among variables in an analysis. Some statistical tests include a *dependent variable,* one or more independent variables, and potential *moderating or conditioning variables.*

Dependent variables are your measures of the knowledge, attitude, or behavior that you expect will change as a result of your program. For example, if you expect parents to increase their scores on an instrument measuring understanding of child development or effective parenting, the scores on that instrument are the dependent variable for the statistical analyses.

Independent variables refer to your program interventions or elements. For example, the time of data collection (before and after program participation), the level of services or training, or the duration of services may be your independent variables.

Moderating or conditioning variables are those that may affect the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. These are factors such as the participant's gender, socioeconomic status, age, race, or ethnicity.

Most statistical tests assess the relationships among independent variables, dependent variables, and moderating variables. The specific question answered by most statistical tests is: Does the dependent variable vary as a function of levels of the independent variable? For example, do scores on an instrument measuring understanding of child development vary as a function of when the instrument was administered (before and after the program)? In other words, did attendance at your program's child development class increase parents' knowledge?

Most statistical tests can also answer whether any other factors affected the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. For example, was the variation in scores from before to after the program affected by the ages of the persons taking the test, their socioeconomic status, their ethnicity, or other factors? The more independent and moderating variables you include in your statistical analyses, the more you will understand about your program's effectiveness.

As an example, you could assess whether parents' scores on an instrument measuring understanding of child development differed as a result of the time of instrument administration (at intake and at program exit), the age of the parent, and whether or not they completed the full program.

Suppose your statistical test indicates that, for your population as a whole, understanding of child development did not change significantly as a result of the time of instrument administration. That is, "program exit" scores were not significantly higher than "program intake" scores. This finding would presumably indicate that you were not successful in attaining this expected participant outcome.

However, *lack of a significant change among your participants as a group does not necessarily rule out program effectiveness.* If you include the potential moderating variable of age in your analysis, you may find that older mothers (ages 25 to 35) did demonstrate significant differences in before-and-after program scores but younger mothers (ages 17 to 24 years) did not. This would indicate that your program's interventions *are*

NOTE: The types of statistical analyses that can be used for evaluation purposes are extensive and each test requires that the data being analyzed meet specific criteria. Also, there are different tests for different types of data. Unless you have an experienced evaluator as a member of your evaluation team, you will need assistance from an outside consultant in deciding the appropriate statistical analyses, setting up the data base, and conducting the statistical tests.

effective for the older mothers in your target population, but not for the younger ones. You may then want to implement different types of interventions for the younger mothers, or you may want to limit your program recruitment to older mothers, who seem to benefit from what you are doing. *And you would not have known this without the evaluation!*

If you added the variable of whether or not participants completed the full program, you may find that those who completed the program were more likely to demonstrate increases in scores than mothers who did not complete the program and, further, that older mothers were more likely to complete the program than younger mothers. Based on this finding, you may want to find out why the younger mothers were not completing the program so that you can develop strategies for keeping younger mothers in the program.

Just as it is important to analyze the progress of participants who completed your program, it is also important to analyze the progress made by those who dropped out or did not complete the program entirely. This is significant information for your evaluation report.

USING THE RESULTS OF YOUR ANALYSES

The results of your analyses can answer your initial evaluation questions.

Are participant outcome objectives being attained?

If not, why not?

What factors contributed to attainment of objectives?

What factors were barriers to attainment of objectives?

These questions can be answered by interpreting the results of the statistical procedures performed on the participant outcome information. However, to fully address these questions, you will also need to look to the results of the analysis of program implementation information. This will provide a context for interpreting statistical results.

For example, if you find that one or more of your participant outcome objectives is not being attained, you may want to explain this finding. Sometimes you can look to your analysis of program implementation information to understand why this may have happened. You may find, for example, that your program was successful in attaining the outcome of an increase in parents' knowledge about child development, but was not successful in attaining the behavioral outcome of improved parenting skills.

In reviewing your program implementation information, you may find that some components of your program were successfully implemented as intended, but that the home-based counseling component of the program was not fully implemented as intended - and that the problems encountered in implementing the home-based counseling component included difficulty in recruiting qualified staff, extensive staff turnover in the counselor positions, and insufficient supervision for staff. Because the participant outcome most closely associated with this component was improving parenting skills, the absence of changes in this behavior may be attributable to the problems encountered in implementing this objective.

The results of integrating information from your participant outcome and program implementation analyses are the content for your evaluation report. Ideally, evaluation reports should be prepared on an ongoing basis so that you can receive feedback on the progress of your evaluation and your program. The specified times for each report would depend on your need for evaluation information, the time frame for the evaluation, and the duration of the program. Chapter 9 provides more information on preparing an evaluation report.

SAMPLE TABLE FOR ANALYZING INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

Implementation Objective	Actual Implementation	Differences? (Yes/No)	If Yes, Reasons for Change	Barriers Encountered	Facilitating Factors
8 drug abuse education class sessions per year	6 drug abuse education class sessions the first	Yes	Delay in start up time during the first year	Difficulty finding qualified staff Delay in curriculum development	Agency experience in implementing similar types of programs Assistance of volunteers with the sessions
Each session will last for 2 weeks	First 2 sessions lasted for 2 weeks, last 4 sessions for 1 week	Yes	Participants could not consistently attend for 2 weeks	Youth lost interest during the second week	Available participants in the shelter
Each class will be for 2 hours	First 2 sessions, classes were for 2 hours each day; last 4 sessions were for 3 hours each day	Yes	Since the time was shortened, had to extend the intensity of classes to cover the curriculum material	None	Experienced staff able to cover the curriculum during the shortened time span
Classes will be given for 5 days of each week	5 days a week	No		Problems with crisis intervention youth attending for all 5 days	Staff availability

How Can You Report What You Have Learned?

A n evaluation report is an important document. It integrates what you have learned about your program from the evaluation. However, it is vital to understand that there are different ways of reporting evaluation information, depending on how you want to use the report and who your audience will be. In this chapter, we suggest preparing evaluation reports that are appropriate for a range of uses. A program evaluation report can do the following:

- Guide management decisions by identifying areas in which changes may be needed for future implementation Tell the "story" of program implementation and demonstrate the impact of the program on participants

- Advocate for your program with potential funders or with other community agencies to encourage referrals

- Help advance the field of human services

These uses suggest that various audiences for an evaluation report might include program staff and agency directors, program funders, potential funders, agency boards, other community agencies, and local and national organizations that advocate for individuals like your program participants or for programs such as yours.

Whatever type of report you plan to develop, remember that it is critical to report negative results, as well as significant ones. There is as much to learn from program approaches or models that do

not work as there is from those that work. Negative results should not be thought of as shameful. Efforts to change knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through programmatic interventions are not always going to work. It is also important to present results that may not be conclusive, but show promise and warrant additional study. For example, if mothers over the age of 25 seemed to improve their parenting skills after receiving home-based support services, this is worth presenting so future evaluation can explore this further. Currently, so little is known about what does and does not work that any information on these issues greatly increases knowledge in the field.

PREPARING AN EVALUATION REPORT FOR PROGRAM FUNDERS

The report to program funders will probably be the most comprehensive report you prepare. Often program funders will use your report to demonstrate the effectiveness of their grant initiatives and to support allocation of additional moneys for similar programs. A report that is useful for this purpose will need to include detailed information about the program, the evaluation design and methods, and the types of data analyses conducted.

A sample outline for an evaluation report for program funders is provided in this chapter. The outline is developed for a "final report" and assumes all the information collected on your program has been analyzed. However, this outline may also be used for interim reports, with different sections completed at various times during the evaluation and feedback provided to program personnel on the ongoing status of the evaluation.

PREPARING AN EVALUATION REPORT FOR PROGRAM STAFF AND AGENCY PERSONNEL

An evaluation report for program staff and agency personnel may be used to support management decisions about ongoing or future program efforts. This type of report may not need to include as much detail on the evaluation methodology but might focus instead on findings. The report could include the information noted in outline Sections II E (description of results of analysis of implementation information), III D (discussion of issues that affected the outcome evaluation and how they were addressed), III F (results of data analysis on participant outcome information), III G (discussion of results), and IV C (discussion of potential relationships between implementation and outcome evaluation results).

You may also want to publish the results of your evaluation in a professional journal. However, this chapter will not address this type of evaluation report. The member of your evaluation team who is an experienced evaluator should be able to help you prepare a report for publication.

PREPARING AN EVALUATION REPORT FOR POTENTIAL FUNDERS AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. Your report should be accompanied by an executive summary that summarizes the key evaluation methods and results, so that readers will not have to review all of the details of the report if they do not have the time.

It is unlikely that potential funders (including State legislatures and national and local foundations) or advocacy organizations will want to read a lengthy report. In a report for this audience, you may want to focus on the information provided in Section IV of the outline. This report would consist of only a summary of both program implementation and participant outcome objectives and a discussion of the relationships between implementation policies, practices, procedures, and participant outcomes.

DISSEMINATING THE RESULTS OF YOUR EVALUATION

In addition to producing formal evaluation reports, you may want to take advantage of other opportunities to share what you have learned with others in your community or with the field in general. You might want to consider drafting letters to community health and social services agencies or other organizations that may be interested in the activities and results of your work. Other ways to let people know what you have done include the following:

- Producing press releases and articles for local professional publications, such as newsletters and journals

- Making presentations at meetings on the results of your program at the local health department, university or public library, or other setting

- Listing your evaluation report or other evaluation-related publications in relevant databases, on electronic bulletin boards, and with clearinghouses

- Making telephone calls and scheduling meetings with similar programs to share your experience and results

Many of the resource materials listed in the appendix of this manual contain ideas and guidelines for producing different types of informational materials related to evaluations.

Sample Outline
Final Evaluation Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction: General Description of the Project (1 page)

   A. Description of program components, including services or training delivered and target population for each service

   B. Description of collaborative efforts (if relevant), including the agencies participating in the collaboration and their various roles and responsibilities in the project

   C. Description of strategies for recruiting program participants (if relevant)

   D. Description of special issues relevant to serving the project's target population (or providing education and training to participants) and plans to address them

      1. Agency and staffing issues

      2. Participants' cultural background, socioeconomic status, literacy levels, and other characteristics

II. Evaluation of Program Implementation Objectives

   A. Description of the project's implementation objectives(measurable objectives)>

      1. What you planned to do (planned services/interventions/training/education; duration and intensity of each service/intervention/training period)

      2. Whom you planned to have do it (planned staffing arrangements and qualifications/characteristics of staff)

      3. Target population (intended characteristics and number of members of the target population to be reached by each service/intervention/training/ education effort and how you planned to recruit participants)

      4. Description of the project's objectives for collaborating with community agencies

         a. Planned collaborative arrangements

         b. Services/interventions/training provided by collaborating agencies

   B. Statement of evaluation questions (Were program implementation objectives attained? If not, why not? What were the barriers to and facilitators of attaining implementation objectives?)

C.

Examples:

How successful was the project in implementing a parenting education class for mothers with substance abuse problems? What were the policies, practices, and procedures used to attain this objective? What were the barriers to, and facilitators of attaining this objective?

How successful was the project in recruiting the intended target population and serving the expected number of participants? What were the policies, practices, and procedures used to recruit and maintain participants in the project? What were the barriers to, and facilitators of attaining this objective?

How successful was the project in developing and implementing a multidisciplinary training curriculum? What were the practices and procedures used to develop and implement the curriculum? What were the barriers to, and facilitators of attaining this objective?

How successful was the project in establishing collaborative relationships with other agencies in the community? What were the policies, practices, and procedures used to attain this objective? What were the barriers to, and facilitators of attaining this objective?

D. Description of data collection methods and data collected for each evaluation question

1. Description of data collected

2. Description of methodology of data collection

3. Description of data sources (such as project documents, project staff, project participants, and collaborating agency staff)

4. Description of sampling procedures

E. Description of data analysis procedures

F. Description of results of analysis

1. Statement of findings with respect to each evaluation question

Examples:

The project's success in attaining the objective

The effectiveness of particular policies, practices, and procedures in attaining the objective

The barriers to and facilitators of attainment of the objective

2. Statement of issues that may have affected the evaluation's findings

    Examples:

    The need to make changes in the evaluation because of changes in program implementation or characteristics of the population served

    Staff turnover in the project resulting in inconsistent data collection procedures

    Changes in evaluation staff

III. Evaluation of Participant Outcome Objectives

    A. Description of participant outcome objectives (in measurable terms)

        1. What changes were participants expected to exhibit as a result of their participation in each service/intervention/training module provided by the project?

        2. What changes were participants expected to exhibit as a result of participation in the project in general?

        3. What changes were expected to occur in the community's service delivery system as a result of the project?

    B. Statement of evaluation questions, evaluation design, and method for assessing change for each question

        Examples:

        How effective was the project in attaining its expected outcome of decreasing parental substance abuse? How was this measured? What design was used to establish that a change occurred and to relate the change to the project's interventions (such as pre intervention and post intervention, control groups, comparison groups, etc.)? Why was this design selected?

        How effective was the project in attaining its expected outcome of increasing children's self-esteem? How was this measured? What design was used to establish that a change occurred and to relate the change to the project's interventions? Why was this design selected?

        How effective was the project in increasing the knowledge and skills of training participants? How was this measured? What design was used to establish that a change occurred and to relate the change to the project's interventions? Why was this design selected?

    C. Discussion of data collection methods (for each evaluation question)

        1. Data collected

2. Method of data collection

   Examples:

   Case record reviews

   Interviews

   Self-report questionnaires or inventories (if you developed an instrument for this evaluation, attach a copy to the final report)

   Observations

3. Data sources (for each evaluation question) and sampling plans, when relevant

D. Discussion of issues that affected the outcome evaluation and how they were addressed

   1. Program-related issues

      a. Staff turnover

      b. Changes in target population characteristics

      c. Changes in services/interventions during the course of the project

      d. Changes in staffing plans

      e. Changes in collaborative arrangements

      f. Characteristics of participants

   2. Evaluation-related issues

      a. Problems encountered in obtaining participant consent

      b. Change in numbers of participants served requiring change in analysis plans

      c. Questionable cultural relevance of evaluation data collection instruments and/or procedures

      d. Problems encountered due to participant attrition

E. Procedures for data analyses

F. Results of data analyses

   1. Significant and negative analyses results (including statement of established level of significance) for each outcome evaluation question

   2. Promising, but inconclusive analyses results

      3.   Issues/problems relevant to the analyses

         Examples:

         Issues relevant to data collection procedures, particularly consistency in methods and consistency across data collectors

         Issues relevant to the number of participants served by the project and those included in the analysis

         Missing data or differences in size of sample for various analyses

G.   Discussion of results

      1.   Interpretation of results for each evaluation question, including any explanatory information from the process evaluation

         a.   The effectiveness of the project in attaining a specific outcome objective

         b.   Variables associated with attainment of specific outcomes, such as characteristics of the population, characteristics of the service provider or trainer, duration, or intensity of services or training, and characteristics of the service or training

      2.   Issues relevant to interpretation of results

IV.   Integration of Process and Outcome Evaluation Information

A.   Summary of process evaluation results

B.   Summary of outcome evaluation results

C.   Discussion of potential relationships between program implementation and participant outcome evaluation results

    Examples:

    Did particular policies, practices, or procedures used to attain program implementation objectives have different effects on participant outcomes?

    How did practices and procedures used to recruit and maintain participants in services affect participant outcomes?

    What collaboration practices and procedures were found to be related to attainment of expected community outcomes?

    Were particular training modules more effective than others in attaining expected outcomes for participants? If so, what were the features of these modules that may have contributed to their effectiveness (such as characteristics of the trainers, characteristics of the curriculum, the duration and intensity of the services)?

V.   Recommendations to Program Administrators or Funders for Future Program and Evaluation Efforts

> *Examples:*
>
> *Based on the evaluation findings, it is recommended that the particular service approach developed for this program be used to target mothers who are 25 years of age or older. Younger mothers do not appear to benefit from this type of approach.*
>
> *The evaluation findings suggest that traditional educational services are not as effective as self-esteem building services in promoting attitude changes among adolescents regarding substance abuse. We recommend that future program development focus on providing these types of services to youth at risk for substance abuse.*
>
> *Based on the evaluation findings, it is recommended that funders provide sufficient funding for evaluation that will permit a long-term follow-up assessment of participants. The kinds of participant changes that the program may bring about may not be observable until 3 or 6 months after they leave the program.*

Glossary

baseline data - Initial information on program participants or other program aspects collected prior to receipt of services or program intervention. Baseline data are often gathered through intake interviews and observations and are used later for comparing measures that determine changes in your participants, program, or environment.

bias - (refers to statistical bias). Inaccurate representation that produces systematic error in a research finding. Bias may result in overestimating or underestimating certain characteristics of the population. It may result from incomplete information or invalid collection methods and may be intentional or unintentional.

comparison group - Individuals whose characteristics (such as race/ethnicity, gender, and age) are similar to those of your program participants. These individuals may not receive any services, or they may receive a different set of services, activities, or products. In no instance do they receive the same service(s) as those you are evaluating. As part of the evaluation process, the experimental (or treatment) group and the comparison group are assessed to determine which type of services, activities, or products provided by your program produced the expected changes.

confidentiality - Since an evaluation may entail exchanging or gathering privileged or sensitive information about individuals, a written form that assures evaluation participants that information provided will not be openly disclosed nor associated with them by name is important. Such a form ensures that their privacy will be maintained.

consultant - An individual who provides expert or professional advice or services, often in a paid capacity.

control group - A group of individuals whose characteristics (such as race/ethnicity, gender, and age) are similar to those of your program participants, but do not receive the program (services, products, or activities) you are evaluating. Participants are randomly assigned to either the treatment (or program) group and the control group. A control group is used to assess the effect of your program on participants as compared to similar individuals not receiving the services, products, or activities you are evaluating. The same information is collected for people in the control group as in the experimental group.

cost-benefit analysis - A type of analysis that involves comparing the relative costs of operating a program (program expenses, staff salaries, etc.) to the benefits (gains to individuals or society) it generates. For example, a program to reduce cigarette smoking would focus on the difference between the dollars expended for converting smokers into nonsmokers with the dollar savings from reduced medical care for smoking related disease, days lost from work, and the like.

cost effectiveness analysis - A type of analysis that involves comparing the relative costs of operating a program with the extent to which the program met it goals and objectives. For example, a program

to reduce cigarette smoking would estimate the dollars that had to be expended in order to convert each smoker into a nonsmoker.

cultural relevance - Demonstration that evaluation methods, procedures, and or instruments are appropriate for the culture(s) to which they are applied. (Other terms include cultural competency, cultural sensitivity).

culture - The shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, institutions, and experience of a group of people. The group may be identified by race, age, ethnicity, language, national origin, religion, or other social category or grouping.

data - Specific information or facts that are collected. A data item is usually a discrete or single measure. Examples of data items might include age, date of entry into program, or reading level. Sources of data may include case records, attendance records, referrals, assessments, interviews, and the like.

data analysis - The process of systematically applying statistical and logical techniques to describe, summarize, and compare data collected.

data collection instruments - Forms used to collect information for your evaluation. Forms may include interview instruments, intake forms, case logs, and attendance records. They may be developed specifically for your evaluation or modified from existing instruments. A professional evaluator can help select those that are most appropriate for your program.

data collection plan - A written document describing the specific procedures to be used to gather the evaluation information or data. The plan describes who collects the information, when and where it is collected, and how it is to be obtained.

database - An accumulation of information that has been systematically organized for easy access and analysis. Databases typically are computerized.

design - The overall plan and specification of the approach expected in a particular evaluation. The design describes how you plan to measure program components and how you plan to use the resulting measurements. A pre- and post-intervention design with or without a comparison or control group is the design needed to evaluate participant outcome objectives.

evaluation - A systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about your program. It helps to identify effective and ineffective services, practices, and approaches.

evaluator - An individual trained and experienced in designing and conducting an evaluation that uses tested and accepted research methodologies.

evaluation plan - A written document describing the overall approach or design you anticipate using to guide your evaluation. It includes what you plan to do, how you plan to do it, who will do it, when it will be done, and why the evaluation is being conducted. The evaluation plan serves as a guide for the evaluation.

evaluation team - The individuals, such as the outside evaluator, evaluation consultant, program manager, and program staff who participate in planning and conducting the evaluation. Team members assist in developing the evaluation design, developing data collection instruments, collecting data, analyzing data, and writing the report.

exit data - Information gathered after an individual leaves your program. Exit data are often compared to baseline data. For example, a Head Start program may complete a developmental assessment of children at the end of the program year to measure a child's developmental progress by comparing developmental status at the beginning and end of the program year.

experimental group - A group of individuals receiving the treatment or intervention being evaluated or studied. Experimental groups (also known as treatment groups) are usually compared to a control or comparison group.

focus group - A group of 7-10 people convened for the purpose of obtaining perceptions or opinions, suggesting ideas, or recommending actions. A focus group is a method of collecting data for evaluation purposes.

formative evaluation - A type of process evaluation of new programs or services that focuses on collecting data on program operations so that needed changes or modifications can be made to the program in its early stages. Formative evaluations are used to provide feedback to staff about the program components that are working and those that need to be changed.

immediate outcomes - The changes in program participants, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that occur early in the course of the program. They may occur at certain program points, or at program completion. For example, acknowledging substance abuse problems is an immediate outcome.

impact evaluation - A type of outcome evaluation that focuses on the broad, longer-term impacts or results of a program. For example, an impact evaluation could show that a decrease in a community's overall infant mortality rate was the direct result of a program designed to provide early prenatal care.

in-kind service - Time or services donated to your program.

informed consent - A written agreement by program participants to voluntarily participate in an evaluation or study after having been advised of the purpose of the study, the type of information being collected, and how the information will be used.

instrument - A tool used to collect and organize information. Includes written instruments or measures, such as questionnaires, scales, and tests.

intermediate outcomes - Results or outcomes of a program or treatment that may require some time before they are realized. For example, part-time employment would be an intermediate outcome of a program designed to assist at-risk youth in becoming self-sufficient.

internal resources - An agency's or organization's resources including staff skills and experiences and any information you already have available through current program activities.

intervention - The specific services, activities, or products developed and implemented to change or improve program participants' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or awareness.

logic model - A diagram showing the logic or rationale underlying your particular program. In other words, it is a picture of a program that shows what it is supposed to accomplish. A logic model describes the links between program objectives, program activities, and expected program outcomes.

management information system (MIS) - An information collection and analysis system, usually computerized, that facilitates access to program and participant information. It is usually designed and used for administrative purposes. The types of information typically included in an MIS are service delivery measures, such as session, contacts, or referrals; staff caseloads; client sociodemographic information; client status; and treatment outcomes. Many MIS can be adapted to meet evaluation requirements.

measurable terms - Specifying, through clear language, what it is you plan to do and how you plan to do it. Stating time periods for activities, "dosage" or frequency information (such as three 1-hour training sessions), and number of participants helps to make project activities measurable.

methodology - The way in which you find out information; a methodology describes how something will be (or was) done. The methodology includes the methods, procedures, and techniques used to collect and analyze information.

monitoring - The process of reviewing a program or activity to determine whether set standards or requirements are being met. Unlike evaluation, monitoring compares a program to an ideal or exact state.

objective - A specific statement that explains how a program goal will be accomplished. For example, an objective of the goal to improve adult literacy could be to provide tutoring to participants on a weekly basis for 6 months. An objective is stated so that changes, in this case, an increase in a specific type of knowledge, can be measured and analyzed. Objectives are written using measurable terms and are time-limited.

outcome - Outcomes are a result of the program, services, or products you provide and refer to changes in knowledge, attitude, or behavior in participants. They are referred to as participant outcomes in this manual.

outcome evaluation - Evaluation designed to assess the extent to which a program or intervention affects participants according to specific variables or data elements. These results are expected to be caused by program activities and tested by comparison of results across sample groups in the target population. Also known as impact and summative evaluation.

outcome objectives - The changes in knowledge, attitudes, awareness, or behavior that you expect to occur as a result of implementing your program component, service, or activity. Also known as participant outcome objectives.

outside evaluator - An evaluator not affiliated with your agency prior to the program evaluation. Also known as a third-party evaluator.

participant - An individual, family, agency, neighborhood, community, or State, receiving or participating in services provided by your program. Also known as a client or target population group.

pilot test - Preliminary test or study of your program or evaluation activities to try out procedures and make any needed changes or adjustments. For example, an agency may pilot test new data collection instruments that were developed for the evaluation.

posttest - A test or measurement taken after a service or intervention takes place. It is compared with the results of a pretest to show evidence of the effects or changes as a result of the service or intervention being evaluated.

pretest - A test or measurement taken before a service or intervention begins. It is compared with the results of a posttest to show evidence of the effects of the service or intervention being evaluated. A pretest can be used to obtain baseline data.

process evaluation - An evaluation that examines the extent to which a program is operating as intended by assessing ongoing program operations and whether the targeted population is being served. A process evaluation involves collecting data that describes program operations in detail, including the types and levels of services provided, the location of service delivery, staffing; sociodemographic characteristics of participants; the community in which services are provided, and the linkages with collaborating agencies. A process evaluation helps program staff identify needed interventions and/or change program components to improve service delivery. It is also called formative or implementation evaluation.

program implementation objectives - What you plan to do in your program, component, or service. For example, providing therapeutic child care for 15 children, giving them 2 hot meals per day, are referred to as program implementation objectives.

qualitative data - Information that is difficult to measure, count, or express in numerical terms. For example, a participant's impression about the fairness of a program rule/requirement is qualitative data.

quantitative data - Information that can be expressed in numerical terms, counted or compared on a scale. For example, improvement in a child's reading level as measured by a reading test.

random assignment - The assignment of individuals in the pool of all potential participants to either the experimental (treatment) or control group in such a manner that their assignment to a group is determined entirely by chance.

reliability - Extent to which a measurement (such as an instrument or a data collection procedure) produces consistent results over repeated observations or administrations of the instrument under the same conditions each time. It is also important that reliability be maintained across data collectors; this is call interrater reliability.

sample - A subset of participants selected from the total study population. Samples can be random (selected by chance, such as every 6th individual on a waiting list) or nonrandom (selected purposefully, such as all 2-year olds in a Head Start program).

standardized instruments - Assessments, inventories, questionnaires, or interviews, that have been tested with a large number of individuals and are designed to be administered to program participants in consistent manner. Results of tests with program participants can be compared to reported results of the tests used with other populations.

statistical procedures - The set of standards and rules based in statistical theory, by which one can describe and evaluate what has occurred.

statistical test - Type of statistical procedure, such as a t-test or Z-score, that is applied to data to determine whether your results are statistically significant (i.e., the outcome is not likely to have resulted by chance alone).

summative evaluation - A type of outcome evaluation that assesses the results or outcomes of a program. This type of evaluation is concerned with a program's overall effectiveness.

treatment group - Also called an experimental group, a treatment group is composed of a group of individuals receiving the services, products, or activities (interventions) that you are evaluating.

validity - The extent to which a measurement instrument or test accurately measures what it is supposed to measure. For example, a reading test is a valid measure of reading skills, but is not a valid measure of total language competency.

variables - Specific characteristics or attributes, such as behaviors, age, or test scores, that are expected to change or vary. For example, the level of adolescent drug use after being exposed to a drug prevention program is one variable that may be examined in an evaluation.

Appendix: Evaluation Resources

EVALUATION MANUALS AND GUIDES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999). Framework for program evaluation in public health. *MMWR, 48(RR11)*, 1-40. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr4811a1.htm

Thompson, N. J. & McClintock, H. O. (2000). *Demonstrating Your Program's Worth: A Primer on Evaluation for Programs to Prevent Unintentional Injury*. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/dypw/index.htm

United Way Outcome Measurement Resource Network (1996). *Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach*. Alexandria, VA: United Way of America. Retrieved from http://www.liveunited.org/Outcomes/Resources/MPO/index.cfm

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Office of the Director, Office of Strategy and Innovation (2005). *Introduction to program evaluation for public health programs: A self-study guide*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/eval/evalguide.pdf

W. K. Kellogg Foundation (1998). *Evaluation handbook*. Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=101&CID=281&CatID=281&ItemID=2810770&NID=20&LanguageID=0

W. K. Kellogg Foundation (2004). *Logic model development guide*. Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=101&CID=281&CatID=281&ItemID=2813669&NID=20&LanguageID=0

ONLINE EVALUATION TOOLKITS

Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

> *Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement*
> http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/

Center for Research and Evaluation on Abstinence Education/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

> *Center for Research and Evaluation on Abstinence Education*
> http://abstinenceevaluation.hhs.gov/tiki-index.php

Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

> *Evaluation Toolkit and Logic Model Builder*
> http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/developing/toolkit/

> *Steps in Evaluating Prevention Programs*
> http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/evaluating/steps.cfm

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), a service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

> *Evaluation Toolkit*
> http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/toolkit/index.htm

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

American Evaluation Association

- Online Resources
  http://www.eval.org/resources.asp

  Has listings of and links to:
    - Professional groups of interest to evaluators;
    - Sites containing compilations of tools and instruments of use to evaluators;
    - Evaluation consultants;
    - Email-based discussion lists (listservs) focusing on evaluation and/or evaluation-related methodologies;
    - Foundations funding applied research;
    - Evaluation divisions/units of government entities as well as evaluation units of non-government organizations (NGOs);
    - Online handbooks and texts;

- Products for developing and administering surveys as well as scanning survey/form results;
- Products for analyzing qualitative data;
- University/academic departments and centers that focus a significant portion of their work in the area of evaluation; and
- University and college programs that offer graduate-level programs and/or certificates in evaluation.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Evaluation Working Group

- Resources
  http://www.cdc.gov/eval/resources.htm

  Has links to resources related to:
  - Evaluation ethics, principles, and standards;
  - Organizations, societies, foundations, and associations;
  - Journals and on-line publications;
  - Step-by-step manuals;
  - Logic model resources;
  - Planning and performance improvement tools; and
  - Reports and publications.

National Network of Libraries of Medicine

- Outreach Evaluation Resource Center
  http://nnlm.gov/evaluation/

  Resources include the guide *Measuring the Difference: Guide to Planning and Evaluating Health Information Outreach,* as well as supplemental booklets in the series *Planning and Evaluating Health Information Outreach Projects.* Also includes links to other tools and resources for evaluation and data collection.

SRI International

- Online Evaluation Resource Library
  http://oerl.sri.com/

  Resources include collections of evaluation plans, instruments, and reports, which are organized into project categories, such as curriculum development and teacher education. Also includes professional development modules that can be used to better understand and utilize the materials made available.

CLEARINGHOUSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Healthfinder.gov
http://www.healthfinder.gov/

For healthfinder.gov's list of **Federal clearinghouses**, click on "Find Services and Information," then under "Find a Health Organization: Browse by Type of Organization," click on "Federal Clearinghouses."

Within the "Find Services and Information" section of healthfinder.gov, you will also find lists of **other types of organizations**, including Federal agencies, health and human services clearinghouses, nonprofit organizations, professional organizations, and state health and human services. The organizations cover a broad range of health topics, including abstinence, adoption, child abuse and neglect, child care, child protection, child safety, child support, child welfare, early childhood education, family services, parenting, teenage pregnancy, and youth-at-risk, among many others.

Selected Federal Clearinghouses

Child Welfare Information Gateway
Children's Bureau/ACYF
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20024
Toll free: (800) 394-3366
Phone: (703) 385-7565
Fax: (703) 385.3206
Email: info@childwelfare.gov
http://www.childwelfare.gov/

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Head Start (OHS)
8th Floor Portal Building
Washington, DC 20024
Toll free: (866) 763-6481
Email: askus@headstartinfo.org
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc

Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
ERIC Project
c/o Computer Sciences Corporation
655 15th St. NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (800) 538-3742
http://www.eric.ed.gov/

Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) Information Center
P.O. Box 2910
Merrifield, VA 22118
Toll free: (888) 275-4772
TTY/TTD: (877) 489-4772
Fax: (703) 821-2098
http://www.ask.hrsa.gov/MCH.cfm
Email: ask@hrsa.gov

Maternal and Child Health Information Resource Center (MCHIRC)
1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 842-2000
Fax: (202) 728-9469
Email: mchirc@altarum.org
http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/mchirc/

National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC)
10530 Rosehaven St., Suite 400
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: (800) 616-2242
Fax: (800) 716-2242
TTY: (800) 516-2242
Email: info@nccic.org
http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth (NCFY)
P.O. Box 13505
Silver Spring, Maryland 20911-3505
Phone: (301) 608-8098
Fax: (301) 608-8721
http://www.ncfy.com/

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20847-2345
Phone: 1-877-SAMHSA-7
Hablamos español: 1-877-767-8432
TDD: 1-800-487-4889
Fax: (240) 221-4292
http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/about/aboutncadi.aspx

LOCATING INFORMATION COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS/MEASURES

▪ *Tests in Print (TIP) Series*

Publisher: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements

TIP is a comprehensive bibliography of all known commercially available tests that are currently in print in the English language. Each TIP entry includes the test title, test purpose, test publisher, in-print status, price, test acronym, intended test population, administration times, publication date(s), and test author(s). Detailed information regarding the individual tests, such as psychometric information and reviews of the tests, are not included in the *TIP* entries.

▪ *Tests: A Comprehensive Reference for Assessments in Psychology, Education, and Business*

Publisher: PRO-ED, Inc.

Tests is a comprehensive bibliography of all tests available in the English language covering psychology, education, and business. Each entry includes: test title, authors' names, copyright date, primary publisher, population for which the test is intended, a purpose statement, a brief description highlighting the test's major features, format information, scoring method, and relevant cost and availability information. Detailed information regarding the individual tests, such as psychometric information and reviews of the tests, are not included in the entries.

▪ *Mental Measurements Yearbook (MMY) Series*

Publisher: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements

Each *MMY* test entry includes descriptive information (such as the test name, intended population, publication dates, forms and prices, test author, and publisher); additional information on the extent to which reliability, validity, norming data, scoring and reporting services, and foreign language versions are available; and one or two reviews of the test and testing materials. To be reviewed in the MMY a test must be commercially available, be published in the English language, and be new, revised, or widely used since it last appeared in the *MMY* series. Tests also must provide sufficient documentation supporting their technical quality to meet criteria for review.

▪ *Test Critiques*

Publisher: PRO-ED, Inc.

Test Critiques contains supplemental information regarding the tests that are cataloged in *Tests*, which is also published by PRO-ED. This information includes psychometric information such as reliability, validity, and norm development, as well as reviews from experts regarding the technical adequacy of the test.

- *Test Reviews Online*
  http://buros.unl.edu/buros/jsp/search.jsp

  Test Reviews Online provides test reviews exactly as they appear in the *MMY* series. In addition, monthly updates are provided from the latest test review database. For a small fee, users may download reviews for over 2,500 tests that include specifics on test purpose, population, publication date, administration time, and descriptive test critiques.

- *TestLink, the Test Collection at Educational Testing Service (ETS)*
  http://204.50.92.130/ETS_Test_Collection/Portal.aspx

  The Test Collection at ETS is a database of more than 25,000 tests and other measurement devices most of which were created by authors outside ETS.

- *Ericae.net Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation*
  http://ericae.net/freetests.htm

  This database contains tests and instruments that have been appended to or contained in reports in the ERIC database or to journal articles. These tests can be readily used for research and for non-commercial purposes.

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EVALUATION CONSULTANTS

American Evaluation Association
http://www.eval.org/
Has a listing of association members who are available for evaluation consulting.

American Sociological Association
http://www.asanet.org/

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
http://www.appam.org/

Child Welfare League of America
http://www.cwla.org/

National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES)
http://www.ncsl.org/nlpes/

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