

Monitoring and Evaluation

Every good plan needs an evaluation component. The evaluation process can help you have a clear understanding of what progress is being made toward your goals, what is effective, and what is not working. Realizing what is not working is critical, so you can make mid-course corrections rather than continuing to do things that are not producing results.

Other benefits of evaluation:

- ◆ Evaluation results are important to funders. A robust evaluation process makes your organization appealing for continued funding.
- ◆ Evaluation enables you to measure and celebrate successes.
- ◆ Evaluation builds trust within your coalition.

Just as people participate in project activities, people must participate in project evaluation. The best evaluations value multiple perspectives and involve a representation of people who care about the project.

– *W.H. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook*



Consider these questions as you discuss evaluation:

1. Who will use the evaluation information?
2. What is being evaluated?
3. What methods will be used to conduct the evaluation?
4. How will information be gathered and analyzed?
5. How can we be assured that what we learn will be used?

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation suggests that evaluation be ongoing and occur at every phase of a project's development: preplanning, start-up, implementation, and expansion or replication phases. The relevant questions to ask and the evaluation activities may differ for each phase. What remains the same is that evaluation assists project staff and community partners make effective decisions to continuously strengthen and improve the initiative.

Evaluation tools and resources:

An Evaluation Framework for Community Health Programs

(<http://www.cdc.gov/eval/evalcbph.pdf>). From the Center for the Advancement of Public Health, this document presents a framework that emphasizes program evaluation as a practical and ongoing process that involves program staff, community members, as well as evaluation experts. The document promotes a common understanding of program evaluation. It provides a conceptual roadmap that can be adapted to a variety of settings and within many different groups and communities.

An Evaluation Primer on Health Risk Communication Programs and Outcomes

(<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HEC/evalprmr.html>). This U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Environmental Health Policy Committee document focuses on planning and executing evaluations of health risk communication programs and materials.

Basic Guide to Program Evaluation

(http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm). Written by Carter McNamara, this document provides guidance on planning and implementing an evaluation process for profit and nonprofit programs. It is available from the Free Management Library™.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Working Group

(<http://www.cdc.gov/eval/>). This website highlights of a framework, steps, and standards for program evaluation. Links to additional resources are provided.

RE-AIM

(www.RE-AIM.org). RE-AIM (reach, efficacy/effectiveness, adoption, implementation, maintenance) is a way for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to evaluate health behavior interventions. The website offers tools including calculations, checklists, and measures.

United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extensive System Offices

(<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>). Each U.S. state and territory has a state office at its land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices. These offices provide useful, practical, and research-based information on a variety of topics. Many state extension offices provide information, training, and tools related to evaluation.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook

(<http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf>). This document provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a relevant and useful program tool. It is written primarily for project directors who have direct responsibility for the ongoing evaluation of W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded projects. However, it is a useful resource for others who have evaluation responsibilities.