

What is program evaluation?

A beginners guide

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Free Resources for Program Evaluation
<http://gsociology.icaap.org/methods>

What is evaluation

This is the first in a set of handouts on the key questions about program evaluation.

This handout starts with the first question: What is program evaluation?

People often think of program evaluation as looking to answer this question:

- Does the program work? And how can it be improved?

However, there are many equally important questions

- Is the program worthwhile?
- Are there alternatives that would be better?
- Are there unintended consequences?
- Are the program goals appropriate and useful?

That is, an evaluation can help a program improve their services, but can also help ensure that the program is delivering the **right** services.

See this resource for additional information:

Evaluation 101, Juliana M. Blome
NIH <http://publications.nigms.nih.gov/more/ppts/blome/>
Slides 3 and 4

What is evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic assessment. Evaluations should follow a systematic and mutually agreed on plan. Plans will typically include the following:

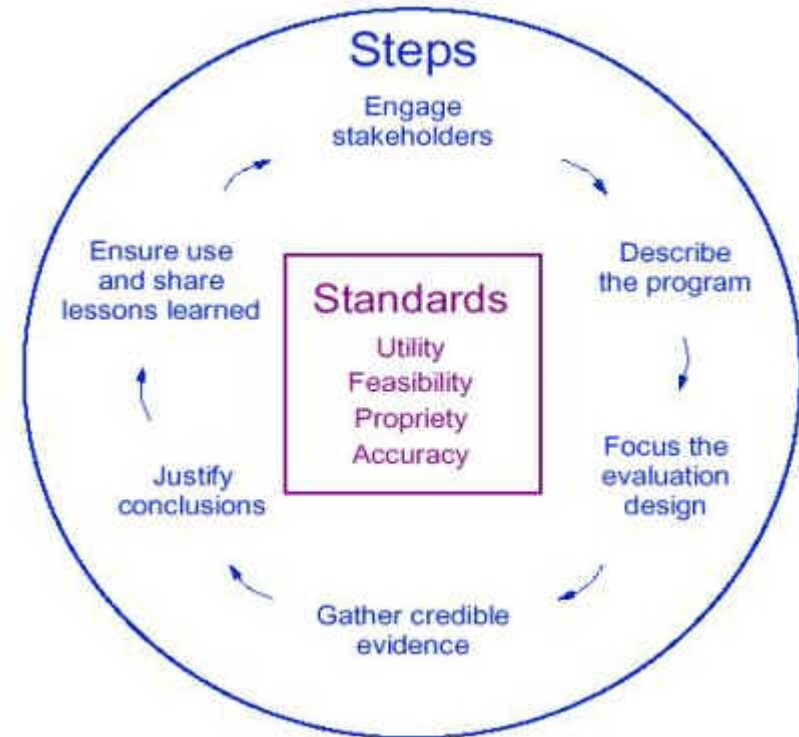
- Determining the goal of the evaluation: What is the evaluation question, what is the evaluation to find out.
- How will the evaluation answer the question: What methods will be used.
- Making the results useful, how will the results be reported so that they can be used by the organization to make improvements.

Additional resources about evaluation:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health. MMWR 1999;48(No. RR-11). <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm>

What is evaluation

Evaluation is a process



The process is a continuous feedback loop. Each step provides information useful in the following steps.

What is evaluation

The process involves:

- Getting stakeholders (people involved in the program) actively involved in the evaluation
- Developing a complete understanding of the program
- Using the knowledge to determine what information is needed and how to gather it.
- Gathering the evidence
- Interpreting the evidence, making sure it makes sense.
- Using the results, making sure they are useful, getting stakeholders to use them, which depends on stakeholder involvement throughout the evaluation process.
- Following up, continuing communication among all involved, about the evaluation, implementing any recommendations, sharing feedback about the evaluation.

Diagram and information from:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health. MMWR 1999;48(No. RR-11). <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm>

What is evaluation

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I also benefited greatly from feedback from folks on various email lists, and I thank them all!

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