

### Program Evaluation Matrix

Approach	Type	Description	Purpose	Strength	Limitation	Sample Question
Adversary Oriented Evaluation	Process Outcome	Balances bias through a planned effort to generate opposing points of view within an evaluation	To assure fairness and illuminate program strengths and weaknesses by incorporating both positive and negative views into the evaluation design	Diverts a great deal of subsequent criticism by addressing anticipated	Time consuming and expensive requiring extensive preparation and investment of human and financial resources	How effective is the Healthy Start program in reducing child abuse rates?
Black Box Evaluation	Outcome	Examines program output without consideration of program input	To determine program effects	Determines whether or not program is achieving its goals	Fails to consider why something is effective or ineffective	Do standardized test scores of high school students improve from the beginning of the term to the end?
Cluster Evaluation	Process	Engages a group of projects with common funders, topics, or themes in common evaluation efforts to provide a composite overview of the success or failure of the cluster	To improve programs by identifying patterns of and lessons from the cluster	Allows multiple evaluation models, each designed for individual sites and programs based on local needs, to address collective themes or topics	Lack of standardization makes it difficult to describe how approach should be conducted	In what ways do prenatal programs for parents improve outcomes for infants?
Context Evaluation	Need	Describes discrepancies between what is and what is desired	To develop a program rationale through the analysis of unrealized needs and unused opportunities	Potential for program effectiveness is enhanced when conceptual basis for program is perceived needs	Target audience may fail to recognize or articulate needs	What are the needs of low income women in terms of prenatal health care?
Cost Effectiveness Evaluation	Efficiency	Describes the relationship between program costs and outcomes for participants in substantive terms	To judge the efficiency of a program	Allows comparison and rank ordering of alternative interventions in addressing similar goals	Requires extensive technical and analytical procedures	How many dollars were expended to increase reading test scores of students?

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Cost-Benefit Evaluation	Efficiency	Compares program costs and program outcomes in terms of dollars	To describe the economic efficiency of a program regarding actual or anticipated costs and known or expected benefits	Useful in convincing policy makers, funders, and decision makers that dollar benefits justify the program	Difficult to quantify many outcomes in monetary terms and to express costs and benefits in terms of a common denominator	What was the total estimated savings to society as a result of decreases in teen pregnancy rates?
Evaluation Research	Outcome	Generates knowledge of program effectiveness in general rather than to judge the merit of individual programs	To generate knowledge for conceptual use	Introduces objectivity and scientific rigor	Nonsignificant statistical findings do not necessarily mean that group means are equal nor that program is ineffective	Do employers who offer on site child care have higher staff morale than those employers who do not offer on site child care?
Goal Free Evaluation	Outcome	Gathers data directly on program effect and effectiveness without knowledge of program goals	To evaluate the actual effects free from constraints of goals and their outcome expectations	Attention to actual effects rather than alleged effects reduces tendency toward tunnel vision and increases likelihood that unanticipated side effects will be noted	Not goal-free at all but rather focuses on wider context goals instead of program specific objectives	What are the actual effects of the mentoring program?
Goals Based Evaluation	Outcome	Emphasizes the clarification of goals and the program ' s effectiveness in achieving goals	To measure the degree to which goals are achieved	Evaluation is sensitive to a particular program and its circumscribed goals and objectives	Fails to consider additional effects of program and neglects why it succeeds or fails	Does parent's knowledge of child development change as a result of the program?
Impact Evaluation	Outcome	Addresses impact of program on program recipient	To describe direct and indirect program effects	Tests the usefulness of a program in ameliorating a particular problem	Difficult to establish causality in social sciences	Are participants able to secure meaningful employment as a result of the job training program?
Implementation Evaluation	Process	Examines if the program is functional and operating as it is supposed to be	To determine extent to which program is properly implemented (To seek out discrepancies between program plan and reality)	Examines program operations in context since implementation strategies are neither automatic or certain	Provides no information regarding program efficiency or effectiveness	Is the program reaching the target population?

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Input Evaluation	Process	Describes strong and weak points of strategies toward achieving objectives	To identify and assess program capabilities	Provides useful information to guide program strategy and design	Approach can be complex and overwhelming if priorities are not set and followed	Are home visits or group sessions more appropriate for the target population?
Outcomes Evaluation	Outcome	Comparison of actual program outcomes to desired program outcomes	To determine whether or not program objectives have been attained	Generally is easy to understand, develop and implement	Lacks information regarding the actual nature of the program and the what is producing observed outcomes	Do patients lose weight?
Performance Evaluation	Outcome	Assesses program results in terms of established performance indicators	To describe behavior changes as a result of the program	Establishes performance criteria for program recipients	Uncertainty regarding the extent to which program activities caused observed results	What study skills do youth display after participating in a tutoring program?
Process Evaluation	Process	Focuses on internal dynamics and actual operations to understand strengths and weaknesses	To look at how an outcome is produced rather than the outcome itself	Provides feedback in developmental phase to improve program	Does not indicate if a program is successful or effective	How many hours of direct contact do program recipients receive?
Responsive Evaluation	Process Outcome Need Efficiency	Responds to program activities and audience needs by allowing evaluation questions and methods to emerge from observation	To address the concerns and issues of the stakeholder audience	Directs the attention of the evaluator to the needs of those for whom the evaluation is being done	Reliance on individual stakeholder perspectives may lead to subjective designs and findings	What major questions would you like the evaluation to answer?
Theory Based Evaluation	Process Outcome	Evaluation based on a model, theory or philosophy about how a program works	To identify the causal relationships which affect, operate, and influence the program	Presents rationale for choice of variables and results can contribute to growing body of scientific knowledge	Conclusions are based on whether theory is correct or accepted	Is there a fit between the outcomes predicted by the ecological theory and the observed outcomes for families?

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Utilization Focused Evaluation	Process Outcome Efficiency Need	Yields immediate, concrete, observable, and useful information on program decisions and activities as a result of evaluation findings	To increase the use of evaluation	Provides meaningful, relevant, and substantial information to empower users	Demands high expenditures of time, energy, and staff resources	What information is needed by stakeholders to improve future youth development programs?

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