

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Florida Department of Transportation Safety Office



GRANTS

What type of evaluation is right for my program?

This report, intended for program planners, identifies steps for evaluation and provides strategies for addressing challenges in program assessment.

Evaluation, the process of determining a program's utility or direction, is critical to program planning, budgeting, and management. Through evaluation, program planners can ascertain *how well* components of their program are functioning. Evaluation also provides clues as to *why* components may or may not work. Evaluation aids program accountability. Managers often need to determine whether their programs are having the intended effect on participants and the community. Documenting a program's impact provides valuable information to decision and policy-makers, such as program funders. Finally, evaluation can aid long-term strategic planning for program managers, community leaders, and policy-makers. Carefully documented results from an evaluation provide guidance to those planning similar programs and allow programs to serve as models for other communities.

Program managers can use a variety of methods for evaluating programs, which yield different results and have different uses and purposes. Evaluation design and scope dictate the required resources. Several common types of evaluation are:

Formative



Formative evaluations, which normally precedes program implementation, but can occur during the program as well, such as when revisions are being considered. Every step of the way, you will examine your plans, develop strategies and procedures, and create and utilize materials to promote your program and derive expected outcomes. As things are learned and observed, you will make necessary adjustments to better meet the objectives or even alter objectives if they were found to be unreasonable.

Process



Process evaluations, which assesses the performance or completion of steps taken to achieve desired program outcomes. Process evaluation can occur throughout the project cycle and can guide managers to make changes to maximize effectiveness. It addresses questions like: How many saturation patrols have been conducted and how many citations have been issued? Examples of process measures are the number of ads shown in a media campaign or the number of community partners.

Impact



Impact evaluations, which seek to isolate a program's impact on participants and communities, while filtering out effects from other potential sources (e.g. weather, other programs). It refers to measuring changes in intermediate variables, such as knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. It addresses questions like: What knowledge have you gained from historical data versus data collected during the program and what answers are still yet to be learned?

Outcome



Outcome evaluations, which consider program goals to determine if desired changes to attitudes, behavior, or knowledge have been attained as a result of the intervention. This type of evaluation refers to the bottom line. It addresses questions like: Have the number crashes, injuries and fatalities decreased as a result of the program. Often, programs are not sufficiently large enough to claim an outcome effect. For example, a small school-based education program in a medium sized city, would have little "significant" impact on overall fatalities. Most evaluations you will be involved in will likely measure behavioral changes. Examples of outcomes include a quantifiable decrease in the number of traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities involving impaired drivers following a DUI program in the county or city.

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