Support and Training for the Evaluation of Programs (STEPs)
Products and Procedures
July 2023

Throughout the evaluation process, your STEPs program evaluator and graduate research assistant will stay in close contact to coordinate any necessary data collection, update you on the progress, and make sure your needs are being met. After completing the evaluation plan, STEPs will ask for your assessment of the evaluation, and whether you would like to continue with another evaluation project.

PRODUCTS

Logic Models

Logic models allow organizations to visualize a linear pathway between program resources, activities, outputs, and short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. Logic models are useful for clarifying program components and helping organizations identify the most important evaluation questions. Unique features of STEPs' logic models are the inclusion of contextual factors like the social problem being addressed, collaborating partners, and external factors.

National Trends Reviews

STEPs will conduct a review of professional and grey literature on programs and organizations like yours and will package it in an engaging and accessible way to help inform program and evaluation best practices.

Needs Assessments

STEPs will conduct a needs assessment to better understand the unique social problem your program or organization is seeking to address. We utilize a variety of data sources including secondary data, key informants, public hearings or community forums, focus groups, and surveys to determine the needs of your target population. Needs assessments are useful for identifying the specific contexts and scope of your population's needs and laying the foundation for program priorities and growth.

Process Evaluation

STEPs will look at how your program operates and how those operations are related to program goals. We also assess client satisfaction and the availability of needed resources. A process evaluation can also assess whether a program is reaching its intended population. Data sources for process evaluation may include client and participant service pathways, staff morale, client and participant demographics, and program fidelity. Process evaluations are useful for assuring efficiency of service delivery and maximizing program outcomes.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation is useful for showing the impact of your work. STEPs will conduct an outcome evaluation to better understand program results. We may use valid and reliable measurement tools that are carefully selected to match your participants and the outcomes stated on your logic model. We may also conduct focus groups or interviews to more fully explain the experiences and outcomes of your participants.

Capacity Building

STEPs offers many forms of evaluation capacity building for programs and organizations. We offer professional development workshops for anyone in the community or tailored trainings for organizations. We also provide one-on-one

consulting and technical assistance when organizations do not have the time or ability to contract with us on a long-term basis. Evaluation capacity-building is useful when organizations want to grow their internal capacity for evaluation.

<div align="center">PROCEDURES</div>

Throughout the evaluation process, the STEPs evaluation team will:
- Demonstrate a collaborative approach.
- Promote evidence-informed decision making through a utilization-focused approach.
- Demonstrate appropriate and effective oral communication during face-to-face, phone, and Zoom conversations.
- Demonstrate timely, appropriate, and effective written communication via email.
- Listen to understand and engage different perspectives.
- Effectively work with an organization in designing, implementing, interpreting, and reporting evaluation results as appropriate.
- Foster positive relationships with your organization throughout the evaluation process.
- Build trust throughout the evaluation.
- Provide a written report(s) communicating the evaluation process and results accurately, and in sufficient detail, to allow the community partner to understand, interpret, and use the work.

Throughout the evaluation process, the community partner should:
- Express their thoughts on what they want to learn through the evaluation.
- Fully participate in the collaborative evaluation process through frequent in-person, phone, and/or Zoom meetings, and respond to STEPs' emails.
- Possibly partner with STEPs in administering tools and surveys, and arranging focus groups and interviews.
- Communicate any questions or concerns to STEPs in a timely manner.
- Provide feedback to STEPs throughout the creation and presentation of deliverables.
- Reflect on the evaluation process and results, and let STEPs know how you plan to use the work.

How to prepare for the evaluation:
- Be ready for STEPs to ask: "What do you want to know? Why do you want to know it? And what will you do when you find out?"
- Locate past evaluation reports and consider sharing them so STEPs can better understand your context.
- Access current data and consider sharing so STEPs can maximize the data you've already collected.
- Identify personnel who can answer STEPs questions and provide needed information.
- Look forward to thoughtful conversations about what is going well with your program, and what you might do differently.

Assessment Process:
1. Reach out to STEPs with an interest in evaluation. This can be done by phone or email or in person.
2. Meet with STEPs to discuss your program and determine your need, timeline, approximate budget, and source of funding.
3. STEPs will draft an evaluation menu including potential evaluation activities and estimated budget.
4. STEPs will answer your questions to help you make informed decisions regarding the evaluation menu and budget.

5. STEPs will work with UNO's Office of Research and Creative Activity, which is responsible for preparing the official agreement and budget, and obtaining signatures from all parties.
6. STEPs will schedule a meeting with your key staff and the STEPs evaluation team to establish the groundwork for a successful evaluation.
7. Meet with STEPs to review the finalized report and findings.