Using evaluation for program improvement

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Let’s check in…

When you hear the word “evaluation”, what comes to your mind?

Draw a picture!
Let’s hear from everyone!
Evaluation is...

• “determining the **merit, worth, value** of something.”

  - Michael Scriven (1991)

• “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs **to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding.”

  - Michael Quinn Patton (2008)
Current ways you assess “performance”...

Performance measurement focuses on measuring program “outputs”.

Program Exit, Training Completion, and Credential Attainment

Select Program
(All Programs)

Select Characteristic
(All Participants)

Select Year of Program Participation
(All Years)

Program Exit Status
(All Programs)

Training Completion at Program Exit
(All Programs)

Credential Attainment at Program Exit
(All Programs)

Not Exited

Did not complete training

Completed training

No credential

Post sec credential

Source: MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
Evaluation answers more critical questions such as ‘how well was the program implemented?’, ‘how substantial and valuable were the outcomes?’ or ‘did the program make a real difference in people’s lives?’
Both evaluation and performance measurement are needed to drive organizational/program performance.

If you don’t evaluate, you are left without the tools to explain challenged performance.
Performance measurement - evaluation continuum...

Source: Child Trends, Research-to-Results Brief (January 2011)
Process Evaluation

- To WHOM did you direct program efforts?
- WHAT has your program done? What are the barriers/facilitators to program implementation?
- WHEN did program activities take place?
- WHERE did program activities take place?

Process evaluations are commonly used to confirm that the program was indeed implemented as intended before using resources to assess its effectiveness.
Developmental Evaluation

Visual depicting rapid-cycle feedback in developmental evaluation

Why developmental evaluation exists...

Our program just started
we have no idea where to go
or how to evaluate

We'll start by predetermining
the program’s outcomes
using very little evidence
then over the years we’ll
judge you according to that
Gage East Supportive Housing Project
Outcome and Impact Evaluation

- Did the program succeed in helping people secure jobs?
- Was the program more successful with certain groups of people than with others?
- What aspects of the program did participants find gave the greatest benefit?
Cost Evaluation

- Cost effectiveness
- Cost utility
- Cost benefit
What does it take to plan and conduct evaluations?

- Organizations usually allocate 5% of the program budget to evaluation
- Staff time and skills
- Technological resources
Focusing the evaluation
Selecting the evaluation design and data collection methods
Collecting and analyzing data
Reporting findings

Evaluation Planning
A starting point could be...
THEORY OF CHANGE

INPUTS

1. Resources
   - Data on Disparities
   - Promising Practices
   - Equity Frameworks
   - Content Experts

2. Stakeholders
   - Participants
   - Direct Service Providers
   - State Agencies
   - Employers
   - Funders

ACTIVITIES

3. Workforce Engagement
   - PRIMARY
     - Equity Workforce Network
     - Equity Works Leadership Institute
     - Employer Engagement
   - SECONDARY
     - Peer Learning • Application Exercises • Data Driven Program Improvement • Individual Leadership Development • Technical Assistance

4. Workforce Systems Change
   - SHORT-TERM
     - Relationships
     - Peer to peer, intra- & inter-organizational Insights
     - Programmatic & employer equity practices
     - Introspection
     - Around organization’s equity practices & programming
     - Innovation
     - Leverage relationships, insights & learning to improve programming
   - MID-TERM
     - Policy Alignment & Reform
     - Flexible Funding Streams
     - Shared Advocacy
     - Appropriate Shared Measures
   - LONG-TERM
     - A Minnesota workforce system that implements effective programming towards closing the racial disparities gap for low skilled workers of color through:
       - A USER CENTERED DESIGN APPROACH
       - Gender, age, & culturally appropriate program design
       - LABOR MARKET FOCUSED STRATEGY
       - Leveraging data to meet market demand for skills and sectoral expertise

EXTERNAL EFFORTS
- Good Job Pathways
- DEED Equity Grants
- Governors Workforce Development Board Equity Committee

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Resource intensive...

Technically demanding...

Vulnerability involved...

...but adds value!
Identify a program in your organization (could be your own program) and the type of evaluation you think the program would benefit from.

- Process Evaluation
- Developmental Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation
- Impact Evaluation
- Cost Evaluation
“Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.”

-Margaret Wheatley