

### 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?                              |
| <b>Black Box Evaluation</b>          | 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?                               |
| <b>Cost Effectiveness Evaluation</b> | 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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| <b>Cost-Benefit Evaluation</b>   | 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?  |
| <b>Impact Evaluation</b>         | 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?                               |
| <b>Implementation Evaluation</b> | 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?                                  |
| <b>Outcomes Evaluation</b> | 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?                                  |
| <b>Process Evaluation</b>  | 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<br>Outcome<br>Need<br>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<br>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<br>Focused<br>Evaluation | Process<br>Outcome<br>Efficiency<br>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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