

An Evaluability Assessment (EA) is a pre-evaluation tool that is used to determine whether it is appropriate and worthwhile for a program to be subject to an outcome evaluation. EA can save evaluation dollars by preventing a premature outcome evaluation that can result in negative, null, or inconclusive program findings. Several elements (e.g., adequacy of the program’s design or organizational culture and climate) need to be considered when deciding if a program is ready for evaluation. This EA checklist is designed to assist professionals as they determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program and the organization that implements the program before entering the evaluation process. The checklist is intended to be utilized as a guide rather than the determinant to move forward with an evaluation.

For each question below, check either Yes or No. Use the comments column to take notes as you complete the checklist. Focus on the questions marked as No and discuss strategies to address them with your evaluation team.

| Program Goals and Objectives | Yes | No | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Does the program have a clear theory of change (i.e., explanation for the underlying ideas about why the program should work)? | | | |
| Does the program have a logic model (i.e., visual map that shows the relationships among the program resources/inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact)? | | | |
| Does the program clearly define the outcome(s) it aims to address? | | | |
| Does the program have formal goals and objectives? If you answer no, skip to the Program Design and Implementation Section. | | | |
| Are the program goals and objectives attainable and realistic? | | | |
| Are the goals and objectives specific? Do they offer details about who, what, where, and when they will be completed? | | | |

| Program Design and Implementation | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Are staff trained to deliver the program? | | | |
| Is there an implementation plan (i.e., a process for how the program should be delivered and supported)? | | | |
| Are implementation materials (e.g., workbooks, manuals, handouts, procedures) available to guide how the program is delivered? | | | |
| Are there any factors outside of the program design and the implementation setting that could affect the program from reaching its intended outcomes, such as potential changes in funding or policy? | | | |
| Does the program serve the population for whom it was designed? | | | |
| Does the program fit with the mission of the organization? | | | |

| Outcomes | Yes | No | Comments |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Have you discussed and decided on the intended short-term and long-term outcomes for the program (i.e., the intended benefits participants receive during and after the program's delivery)? | | | |
| Can the intended outcomes be measured? | | | |
| Has an evaluation ever been conducted on the program? | | | |
| If there has been an evaluation, do you have access to the data that were collected? | | | |
| Does the data you have demonstrate changes in the participants' behavior as a result of the program? | | | |



| Organizational Readiness | Yes | No | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Is there support for the evaluation from your leadership (e.g., Board of Directors, Director)? | | | |
| Has your leadership expressed an interest in or demonstrated use of evidence and data in decision-making processes in the past? | | | |
| Does the culture in your organization support information sharing, discussion and learning, and an openness to new ideas in decision-making? | | | |
| Is your leadership willing to allocate the necessary resources to the evaluation process (e.g., time, staff, funding)? | | | |
| Are there any systems or processes currently in place within your organization for data collection, storage, processing, analysis, and/or reporting? | | | |

The questions provided in the checklist are designed to help you think through what considerations and resources may be necessary for a program evaluation. Several guides are available to help you conduct an EA:

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention Introduction to Program Evaluation for Public Health: A Self Study Guide
www.cdc.gov/eval/guide/cdcevalmanual.pdf
- Evaluability for Impact Evaluation: Guidance, Checklists, and Decision Support
www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9802.pdf
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Evaluability Assessment: Examining the Readiness of a Program for Evaluation
www.jrsa.org/pubs/juv-justice/evaluability-assessment.pdf
- Planning Evaluability Assessments: A Synthesis of the Literature with Recommendations from the Department of International Development
www.gsdrc.org/document-library/planning-evaluability-assessments-a-synthesis-of-the-literature-with-recommendations/



Once you have conducted an EA and determined that the program you are delivering or intend to deliver is ready to be evaluated, the next step is to start the planning process for conducting an evaluation. The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State has developed an Evaluation Planning Worksheet that can assist professionals in preparing for an evaluation and generating dialogue among members of an evaluation team.

Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists are available at the Clearinghouse who can offer support and guidance through the program evaluation process and provide possible strategies to help you conduct a program evaluation. Our TA Specialists are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT Monday through Friday. Use the information below to contact us!

Please Note: *This tool was developed based on a review of literature and tools related to evaluation planning. Please see our Program Evaluation: Resources and Tools list.*

This material is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with Penn State University.

