Planning Tool 10:

**Planning an Evaluation**

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|  | PurposeYou may use this guide to plan an evaluation that assesses whether the project goals you identified earlier were achieved and help you adjust your project design. After completing this tool, you will have evaluation questions and a plan for acquiring the data needed to answer those questions. This tool will be most helpful if used early in project planning to help you determine what information you will need to collect, from where and whom, and at which points in time. Answering these questions early on will prevent you from missing key data sources needed to evaluate or communicate the impact of your project. This information will also help you to clarify the key outcomes the project is designed to achieve and to generate an evaluation that can inform future decisions and funding requests. |

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|  | Whom Should You Consult?In order to make the most of this tool, you should set aside a few undisturbed blocks of time to bring together the team members who will manage the evaluation as well as those who understand project goals and implementation. Ideally this group will include a staff member who is well versed in research and evaluation. Depending on the types of questions you want to answer and the complexity of the analysis that is needed, your team may be able to handle the entire evaluation using a spreadsheet to analyze program data. |

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|  | Key Considerations* **Intervention and control groups:** Randomly assigning adjunctively eligible families to an intervention group (who will receive targeted outreach) and a control group (who will not) allows you to compare results across the two groups and understand the impact of your project.

*BDT and CBPP’s past WIC data matching and targeted text outreach pilots used a “randomized waitlist control trial” study design, where the control group received text outreach* ***after*** *the evaluation was completed. This means that an intervention group received a series of texts about WIC enrollment over a period of several weeks, while a control group did not, which allows for a comparison between the two groups. Once outreach was completed for the intervention group and data was collected, then the control group received the same outreach as the intervention group so they would have an opportunity to enroll in WIC.* *This design enabled us to study the impact of the interventions compared to a baseline but also ensure that all eligible families eventually received direct text outreach. During the pilots, both groups were treated comparably in all other outreach initiatives carried out by their state or local WIC agencies, so families in the control group received any other kind of outreach being conducted by WIC at the time.** **Quantitative vs. qualitative methods:** Quantitative methods use numbers to describe a phenomenon, helping people understand *what* is happening, while qualitative methods analyze non-numerical data that can provide a deeper understanding of the factors that describe the why or how. For example, quantitative methods might include comparing the number of people who were certified for WIC in the intervention and control groups to understand the impact of the intervention on certifications. Qualitative methods might include interviewing people who did not certify for WIC to better understand the barriers they faced when trying to enroll. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be useful for evaluating project implementation and outcomes. It is common to use a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data to answer key questions.
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 ***Examples:***

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| **Quantitative data** | **Qualitative data** |
| * Process measures that quantify the things that have been done during delivery of your outreach (e.g., number of text messages sent; number of certification appointments scheduled)
* Outcome measures that capture what has occurred as a result of your outreach (e.g., percentage of text recipients who responded to text messages; number of complete certifications; percentage of individuals in outreach and comparison groups that enrolled in WIC)
* Closed-ended survey responses such as yes/no questions, multiple choice, Likert scales
 | * Interview data (e.g., key themes or questions that emerged)
* Focus group data
* Open-ended survey responses
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**1. Evaluation Goals**

Use the space below to document the overarching reason(s) why you are doing the evaluation. To help guide the discussion, you may want to ask your team what they hope to learn from the evaluation.

It may also be helpful to review the project goals you identified in Planning Tool 2. If your team needs help getting started, read through the example goals below and then try using one of the sentence starters to help you write your own. Recording these statements will help you as you write your evaluation questions later.

**Sentence starters:**

Measure the extent to which       .

Learn how       .

Understand the impact of       .

Identify the differences between       .

Document the total number of

| **Goal Number** | **Evaluation Goals** |
| --- | --- |
| *Examples* | 1. *Measure the extent to which WIC-eligible families who are enrolled in Medicaid or SNAP are not enrolled in WIC.*
2. *Learn whether targeted outreach increases enrollment of adjunctively eligible families.*
3. *Understand the impact of text-based outreach on enrollment of families in WIC in the five largest counties.*
4. *Evaluate whether targeted outreach to pregnant individuals newly enrolled in Medicaid results in earlier WIC enrollment.*
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| **Goal 1** |  |
| **Goal 2** |  |
| **Goal 3** |  |
| *Add more rows as needed…* |  |

**2. Intended Use of Information/Dissemination**

It is helpful to identify what your organization will do with the information that you gather through this process. Knowing the intended audience can influence what information you collect and how you analyze and report it. Check off the appropriate choice(s) below or add more of your own.

**We will use findings to:**

[ ]  Inform project decisions or drive project improvement processes

[ ]  Understand project impacts

[ ]  Report to funders

[ ]  Share publicly through blog posts, papers, or presentations

[ ]  Other       .

**3. Evaluation Questions**

Next, your team can use the information you have compiled during the activity thus far to identify the **specific questions** you will attempt to answer for each evaluation goal. This doesn’t need to be complicated; you can break down what you hope to learn into pieces. These questions can be phrased in a variety of ways, but each question needs a clearly defined metric, or directly measurable outcome(s). The examples and question starters below might help you write one or a few of your own.

**Question Starters**

To what extent does       ?

What is the effect of       ?

What are the differences between      ?

How do program participants respond to       ?

Are there any differences between groups in terms of      ?

| **Question Number** | **Evaluation Questions** | **Related Goal #** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Example*  | * *How many WIC-eligible individuals are enrolled in Medicaid or SNAP but not WIC and what are their key characteristics?*
* *What share of outreach recipients responded to the outreach?*
* *What share of outreach recipients scheduled a certification appointment?*
* *What share of outreach recipients attended a certification appointment?*
* *What share of outreach recipients were certified?*
* *Were there differences in any of the measures above across racial or ethnic groups?*
* *Were families that completed an online appointment request form more or less likely to ultimately enroll in WIC than families that requested a call to schedule an appointment?*
 | *1,2,3* |
| **Question 1** |  |  |
| **Question 2** |  |  |
| **Question 3** |  |  |
| *Add more rows as needed…* |  |  |

**4. Data Sources and Use**

Next you will need to identify what data sources you might use to answer the evaluation questions you listed above. Copy those questions into the first column and, in the second column, list any likely sources to answer each question. Data sources could include programmatic data, survey data, information from focus groups, publicly available data, or any other source you have access to. You may also want to list names or roles of individuals who would manage this process in the last column. This chart will help you to clarify what information you need and from whom and identify if you are missing anything that is needed. The first row is completed for you as an example.

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| **Question** | **Possible data source** | **Intended use** | **Person or entity managing this information** |
| ***Example:*** *How do people with different demographic characteristics respond to the intervention?*  | ***Example:*** *Enrollment and demographic data collected by state agency and compiled on a weekly basis.* | ***Example:*** *Focusing on outreach that is effective with underserved demographic groups.* | ***Example:*** *WIC epidemiologist.*  |
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**Additional notes on data sources:**

Use the space below to note any of the above entries that require additional attention. You may want to revisit your data sharing agreement to review what data will be available and in what format.

***Example:*** *Enrollment data would need to be pulled from the state system at the end of the project. We would like this to be at the individual level, so that we can not only examine how the control and treatment groups behaved, but also look at factors like race, spoken language, and location. The WIC epidemiologist has access to this and can help us identify what we need and in what format.*

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