

SECTION 6. EVALUATE

DETERMINING HOW WELL YOUR PLAN IS WORKING

Once goals and a strategy for moving forward in strategic planning have been established, you should plan to measure progress. Tracking your plan can reveal start-up problems, serve to verify pre-project assumptions, allow for mid-course corrections, and ultimately indicate whether or not the project succeeded in achieving its goals. Since there is little that is a 100% success or failure, an assessment can indicate what aspects of the project succeeded and to what degree. It is also likely that conditions have changed, or new, unanticipated factors have arisen. An assessment can indicate what those factors are, as well display any positive or negative unintentional consequences of the project. Feedback can contribute to refinement and a continual cycle of improvement.

It is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change.

—Charles Darwin

In **Section 4, Implement**, we talked about the importance of obtaining funding for your plan. Funding sources are always eager for evidence that a program is effective. Evaluation data can help a great deal in making sure that a good program continues.

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section outlines the steps you need to track the results of your strategic plan. We discuss:

STEP 1. DECIDING WHY YOU ARE CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION

STEP 2. IDENTIFYING WHO WILL HELP WITH THE EVALUATION

STEP 3. CHOOSING YOUR EVALUATION STRATEGY

STEP 4. WRITING YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

STEP 5. COLLECTING DATA

STEP 6. REPORTING RESULTS

USING A
MODEL TO
EVALUATE
YOUR STRATE-
GIC PLAN

Fundamentally, program evaluation research seeks to answer the basic question of whether or not the program is achieving its stated goals as they were set forth in the strategic plan.

There are many types of program evaluation or evaluation research methods. This section contains a basic model that can help you get started on your evaluation.

STEP 1. DECIDING WHY YOU ARE CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION

Evaluating your strategic plan will take time and resources. Therefore, it is important to take time upfront to identify why you are conducting the evaluation and what you hope to achieve. Once you have outlined the primary goals for your evaluation, you will better be able to structure it to meet those goals. You will also be able to get buy-in from members of your organization.

Evaluations can benefit your organization¹. They can:

- **Enhance the quality of services.** Well-crafted evaluations can tell you about clients' needs and satisfaction levels. They can also help you cite areas for improvement and take appropriate actions.
- **Improve management practices.** Evaluations can provide an objective way to gauge performance. By identifying the performance that you want in place, managers can operate their programs to achieve the specific results. This builds employee morale and confidence and, at the same time, holds everyone accountable.
- **Support continuous improvement.** Evaluations can point to problems with plans, programs, or processes. You can then use this information to develop targeted and continuous solutions.
- **Aid in the budget development process.** Evaluations provide a way to assess the level of resources needed to support activities. They can also identify the level of products or services that are possible at varying funding levels. This information can bring greater clarity to the budget development process.
- **Make programs more understandable.** Evaluations can help others see how well your organization is working. This serves two purposes: policy makers can see the quality of service you are providing, and the public can see what is being done with their tax dollars or charitable contributions.
- **Assess policies, plans, and programs.** Evaluations can help decide what is next for your organization. They help decision makers decide whether to continue, modify, or eliminate a particular policy, plan or program.²

As you decide why your organization is conducting an evaluation, you should also think about the parameters of the evaluation. Because evaluations can be costly—in terms of time and resources—it is vitally important to ensure that you are structuring your evaluation to be practical and effective. Some of the considerations in developing an evaluation plan are:

- **Utility.** Ensure that an evaluation will serve the practical information needs of intended users.
- **Feasibility.** Ensure that the evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.
- **Propriety.** Ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.
- **Accuracy.** Ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

STEP 2. IDENTIFYING WHO CAN HELP WITH THE EVALUATION

Before developing an evaluation plan you should decide who will be a part of the evaluation. One of the first decisions you will need to make is whether you want to conduct the evaluation with your own staff or whether you would like to work with an outside evaluator or consultant who specializes in this area. Both alternatives have advantages and disadvantages:

Questions to Consider	Using Your Own Staff to do the Evaluation		Using an Outside Consultant to Do the Evaluation	
	Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Who could provide the best information about our organization?	Staff members know the organization and how it works.	They may be less objective.	The consultant may see things that staff within the organization cannot see.	The consultant does not know the organization and may misinterpret information.
2. Do we have the expertise to do the evaluation?	Staff may have experience in evaluation or can learn about it.	Mistakes could be made that threaten the validity of the evaluation.	The consultant has more experience and expertise in the area of evaluation.	Consultants can vary in terms of their expertise and work quality.
3. What are the monetary costs?	Staff may not need to be paid additional money to work on the evaluation.	Staff may not have the time to devote to the evaluation due to other duties.	The consultant would be under contract to perform certain work.	Outside consultants may charge a lot for their services.

Evaluations conducted by your staff can be as useful and informative as those conducted by an outside consultant. However, you should choose the option that best matches the time, resources, and expectations that you have for the evaluation.

If you have already hired a consultant to assist with the strategic planning, that person should also be prepared to monitor results and evaluate. If you choose to use the consultant in this way, you should remember that the consultant will now become a part of the process and may be less objective about the results.

Even if you decide to hire someone, the following steps in this section are worth reviewing to help you better understand the consultant's work.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 6, STEP 2 includes a questionnaire to help you decide whether you should conduct an evaluation using your own staff or whether you would be better off hiring a consultant. There are several elements you need to consider while filling out this questionnaire: keep your evaluation goals in mind, remember the resources dedicated to evaluation, and know the strengths of your staff.

STEP 3. CHOOSING YOUR EVALUATION STRATEGY

Assessing strategic plan progress can be done on many levels. At a minimum you will want to monitor your strategic plan as it is implemented. An evaluation goes beyond this monitoring, to also encompass whether the new plan is working or not. There are several different types of evaluation that are appropriate at different times and for different purposes. You may only want to attempt one type of evaluation or you may combine several types to get a more complete picture. The common evaluation strategies discussed here are:

- Monitoring,
- Process evaluation,
- Outcome evaluation,
- Impact evaluation, and
- Empowerment evaluation.

Monitoring

Monitoring activities are focused on whether the plan is being implemented as it was designed. For example, your strategic plan may focus on increasing the security of victims that testify in court. To do this there may be a new police assignment policy in your jurisdiction. To monitor the success of this effort you would see whether the police are actually being assigned as planned. In contrast, whether the new assignment policy actually results in more security for the victims is an evaluation question.

Two important questions to consider when monitoring your plan are³:

- **Are you reaching your target audience?** Victim services agencies are usually trying to deliver services to a particular target audience. For example, a rape crisis center is trying to deliver services to victims of sexual assault. When monitoring a new initiative you should measure the extent to which you are reaching them. Some of the data that you would want to track are the number of participants in your program and their characteristics. In the example of a rape crisis center, the center might want to see how many participants are in their program compared with crime rates or victimization rates for the area they serve.

Another issue is whether the program is reaching everyone it is intending to reach. Some groups may be overrepresented and others may be underrepresented. In the case of the rape crisis center, there may be a particular group, such as college students, that never call the center. You

can keep track of participation through existing records or you may want to conduct a survey of a sample of the participants in your program to learn their characteristics

- **Is your strategic plan being implemented the way it was designed?** It is easy to blame the strategic plan, and label it faulty when goals are not met, but organizations need to implement their plans as designed in order to fully meet stated goals. To monitor how the plan is being applied, you should assess the following features of your program as they were actually delivered:
- **In what context did you deliver your program? Did this match the planned context?**
 - Where did the program take place? What facilities were used?
 - What staff participated in services delivery?
 - What resources were used?
- **What procedures and activities took place?**
 - Did staff deliver the services as planned? Did they follow the planned procedures?
 - What activities did the participants engage in? Were these the planned activities?

Process evaluation

A process evaluation investigates the way in which the organization conducts its business, looking at items such as:

- How are services provided?
- Who receives your services?
- Who provides your services?
- What resources are available to the program?
- How are these resources used?
- What resources seem lacking in the program?
- How is the organization structured?
- What is the impact of this structure on services?
- How are staff members recruited, screened, selected, trained and supervised?
- How are decisions made in the organization?

- For collaborative efforts, what are the nature and operations of these relationships?
- If the agency does not collaborate with others, should it?

Process evaluation is very useful and is suggested not only in its own right, but in conjunction with outcome evaluations and impact evaluations, discussed next. The reason this is helpful is because if program outcomes and impacts can be improved, then the process evaluation may help lead the program to an understanding of any operations shortcomings. If mended, these shortcomings could improve outcome results and impact results.

Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluation looks more specifically at whether or not the program achieved its goals and had its intended effect on the target population. An outcome evaluation will focus on questions such as: Has the program actually aided or assisted victims, and how?

The outcome of a program is always a change in a measurable indicator. In the earlier example of a program that wants to increase the security of victims that testify in court, a possible outcome is that more victims participated in the program. Another possible outcome is that they are more likely to testify. A good strategic plan will have goals and objectives that should lead to measurable outcomes. Measuring those outcomes becomes the key to an outcome evaluation.

Impact evaluation

This type of evaluation asks the question, “What was the impact of this outcome on the various systems involved?” An impact evaluation goes one step beyond the outcomes to see what effects the outcomes have on the ultimate goals of the program. Returning again to the example of the program that wants to increase the security of victims that testify in court, an impact evaluation could look beyond the outcomes of the victims’ increased participation and their willingness to testify, to whether they actually report feeling more secure. This security would be a measurable impact of the program

The basic focus of an impact evaluation is, “What actual results did the program produce?” In addressing this question, negative results may appear which would not have been evident before.

For example, perhaps you conducted a process evaluation on a victim program that measured things like the number of client contacts, numbers of referrals, and fulfillment of information requests. These measures could

report impressive process numbers. However, if you look at some victim impacts, such as client satisfaction or improved emotional or mental health status, the program may not indicate good results. In general, impact evaluations are more difficult to elicit a positive result. If you can show positive impact results, your overall program has been very successful.

Empowerment evaluation⁴

Empowerment evaluation is appropriate for the strategic planning setting in that it includes not only evaluation for the program, but also *capacity building* within the program to produce better program monitoring and evaluation.

In empowerment evaluation, the role of the evaluator evolves into one of collaborator, and not merely one of an outside expert. Evaluation of this type begins with your organization holding an open forum for the community to participate in a review of the newly implemented program and any problems. The empowerment evaluator is not an individual, but a group member. This evaluative system causes an on-going process of improvement, instead of a one-time assessment of the program's value or success. Since strategic planning needs constant review and revision, this evaluative measure complements it well.

Suggested resources

For more information on program monitoring and evaluation, please review:

- Tomz and McGillis'⁵ *Serving Crime Victims & Witnesses*.
- OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy⁶.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 6, STEP 3 includes a questionnaire to help you choose the best evaluation strategy for your organization's needs. This questionnaire helps you identify the most important issues for your evaluation, and guides you to the most appropriate strategy.

STEP 4. WRITING YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

Once you have decided upon your evaluation strategy, you will need to develop a structured plan for your evaluation that will guide the collection of data. Your evaluation plan should be a written document that all parties involved in the evaluation can use as data is collected. It should contain the following sections:

- Background,
- Evaluation purpose and goals,
- Method,
- Data Analysis,
- Time Schedule, and
- Assumptions and Limitations.

Background

Describe the context for the evaluation in terms of the strategic plan. Specify the scope of the plan, how many years will be covered by the evaluation, and the key personnel involved in the evaluation.

Evaluation purpose and goals

Describe the purpose of the evaluation and the goals that the evaluation is trying to achieve. Specify the type of evaluation you have chosen to use.

Method

Describe how you will evaluate, including information about:

- **Subjects.** Describe who will be included in the evaluation.
- **Performance measures.** Describe the performance measures that you will collect.
- **Assessment Instruments.** Describe any instruments, such as surveys or focus group protocols, that you will use in the evaluation.
- **Sampling Plan.** If you are going to create a sample to collect the data, describe how you will choose participants for the study.
- **Design.** Describe when you will collect data.
- **Procedures.** Describe the procedures you will use for collecting data for the evaluation.

Data analysis

Discuss how the data will be analyzed after collection is completed. For example, you may plan to compare the percentage of victims who are willing to participate in your program before you instituted the new plan to those willing to participate after you instituted the new plan.

Time schedule

List the tasks you will complete for the evaluation and when you will complete each one.

Assumptions and limitations

Describe any assumptions that you are making in the design. For example, you may be assuming that participants selected for the evaluation study will be available and willing to participate. Also, describe any limitations to the evaluation plan. For example, your study may rely only on subjective data (opinions) of participants, rather than other more objective data (numbers). Another limitations possibility is that you may not have any baseline data that can measure performance “before” the strategic plan to use to compare against “after” performance.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 6, STEP 4 includes an evaluation plan outlining tool to help you write your own evaluation plan. The outlining tool contains all of the sections above, including background, evaluation purpose and goals, method, data analysis, time schedule, and assumptions and limitations. It also provides questions for you to answer for each section in order to help you develop your evaluation plan.

STEP 5. COLLECTING DATA

No matter what type of evaluation strategy you have chosen, you will need to collect data. The purpose of collecting this data varies by the type of evaluation you have chosen. Regardless of the type of evaluation, however, you will be collecting data about performance. To collect data about performance, you will need to establish and track clear performance measures.

5.1 ESTABLISH PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures provide detailed information that can be used by strategic planners to assess whether or not desired results are actually accomplished.

Performance measures can be quantitative (expressed as a number or degree of change) or qualitative (non-numeric measures such as perceptions and observations).

Examples of quantitative data include:

- Reported crimes.
- Arrests.
- System resources (e.g. manpower, facilities, equipment, budgets).
- Demographics:
 - Total population.
 - Offender population.

Examples of qualitative data include:

- Perceptions (e.g. opinions, observations).
- Psychological factors (e.g. fear of crime).
- Policies and procedures (e.g. agency structure).

When developing performance measures you should evaluate them according to the following scheme. Appropriate performance measures should address “the five Cs”:

- **Client-focused.** Obtain and include the perspectives of key clients and stakeholders.
- **Culturally competent.** Reflect the diversity of the range of culture, ethnicity, gender, and geography represented in both clientele, as well as the strategic planning team.

- **Credible.** Based on reliable and thorough data collection and analysis.
- **Comparable.** To initial benchmarks established by the strategic planners, as well as to other data over the period of the strategic plan.
- **Comprehensive.** All areas of the strategic plan's programs can be measured.

The Arizona Governor's Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting uses an excellent model that incorporates five common performance measures: input, output, outcome, efficiency and quality.⁷

- **Inputs.** Inputs measure the amount of resources needed to provide services. They include labor, materials, equipment and supplies, and can also represent demand factors, such as target populations. Input measures are useful to show the total cost of providing services; the mix of resources used to provide the service; the demand for services; and the amount of resources used for one service in relation to other services.
- **Outputs.** Outputs measure the amount of services provided. Outputs focus on the level of activity in a particular program. Workload measures, which are designed to show how staff time will be allocated to respond to service demand, are most commonly reported. Outputs are useful in defining what a program produces. However, they are limited because they do not indicate whether the program goals have been accomplished, and they do not reveal anything about the quality or efficiency of the service provided.
- **Outcomes.** Outcomes measure whether services are meeting proposed targets. Outcomes reflect the actual results achieved, as well as the impact or benefit of programs. Both intermediate and long-term outcomes can be evaluated. Policy makers are generally most interested in outcome measures.
- **Efficiency.** Efficiency measures are also known as productivity measures. Efficiency can be measured in terms of the cost per unit of output, the ratio of outputs per unit of input, and the ratio of outputs per unit of time. Ratios help express the relationships between different performance measures to convey more information about the productivity and cost effectiveness of a program.
- **Quality.** Quality measures reflect the effectiveness in meeting the expectations of clients or stakeholders. Measures of quality include reliability, accuracy, courtesy, competence, responsiveness, and completeness associated with the service provided. Lack of quality can also be measured: the resources devoted to performing work over again, correcting errors, or

resolving client complaints. Both the positive and negative sides of measuring quality can be important to track.

5.2 TRACK PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Data should be collected for each performance measure and reported at a regular interval. Progress reports on performance measures could be in the form of data tables or presented in charts or graphs.

A comparison of actual performance, as reported in the monitoring document, to the “planned” performance (e.g. target) provides the basis for periodic evaluation of the strategic plan and the planning process. The leader(s) of the strategic planning process should use the results of the quarterly or monthly reports to identify reasons for not meeting expected results, and use this information to review and revise policies, procedures, goals, and objectives, as necessary.

Tracking performance and reporting results is an important way to measure progress toward meeting the goals in the strategic plan.

Establish boundaries for all your tracking activities

- Set specific cut-off times for reporting all activities.
- Pay special attention to continuity of data collection and calculation during personnel changes. You must train new staff about how to calculate the measures in accordance with previous methods you have established.
- Construct effective internal controls to ensure that information is properly collected and accurately reported. It is difficult and embarrassing to take back information once it is disseminated.

Compare actual performance you have measured to your proposed performance level

You should address the following questions:

- How does the reported performance compare to previous periods?
- Is the comparison result because of the successful achievement of the goal?
- Do external factors affect performance to the extent that targets may not be met?
- Is the comparison result due to a faulty project of performance?
- Are there unanticipated effects resulting from the comparison?

Prepare data for the tracking document

You should address the following questions:

- How frequently and in what form will you prepare performance information?
- What kind of exploratory data are needed to explain trends and results?
- How will the data/information be verified and checked for accuracy?
- What kinds of controls, tests, and/or audits are appropriate?
- What kinds of unintended results can be expected from implementing the strategies?
- How can you avoid these results?
- How will the data be used to evaluate, improve, and change the programs?
- How will someone know if a program is inefficient or ineffective?
- What can be done to fix it?

Report from your tracking document

You will want to choose information to report based on the particular program you are tracking. However, you should always report certain basic information:

- **Progress and non-progress on all steps.** You should report progress-to-date on steps in the action plan that are completed or ahead of schedule, and that are on schedule.
- **Reasons for non-progress or changes to plans.** If things are not progressing according to plan, you should explain the reasons why.
- **Steps you are taking to rectify any non-progress, or scheduled slowdowns.**
- **The status of each step of your action plan.** For example, is each step on schedule, delayed, canceled, ahead of schedule, or in the planning stages? Enough information should be provided to offer an honest, accurate assessment of the status of the overall strategic planning process.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 6, STEP 5 contains a short checklist to help you ensure that you have included the most important issues in your tracking document. It also contains a sample Tracking Document for you to customize to your own needs. This document includes all of the necessary information listed above.

STEP 6. REPORTING RESULTS

The final step in evaluating your strategic plan is to analyze the results and then present this information in a way that others can use and understand. You will probably want to develop internal as well as external reports.

Internal reporting

Internal reports can take various forms. Chief among these are program performance evaluations, planning and budgeting activities, and implementation of improvement activities. These reports can be more detailed, and are usually more frequent than those for policy makers. They may also include process information. Sometimes, the data may be separated in order to clearly convey patterns. For example, results may be more meaningful if reported by geographic area, or type of victimization.

Each state or agency will establish its own guidelines concerning how often performance information is to be collected and reported. At a minimum, data for each measure will have to be collected annually, but some measures may be calculated more frequently. For example, a decision might be made to have internal management reports about key volume/caseload indicators every month, with reports to the administration or leadership on a quarterly or semiannual basis.

External reporting

External stakeholders, public policy makers, providers, and clients want to know how well the organization and its programs are performing. If performance measurements show a continual improvement process with a positive impact on results, stakeholders' concerns may be allayed.

Reports for policy makers should be clear and concise. Reports are often easier to read if the data are presented graphically. Performance measures can also be incorporated in annual reports.

Make sure you fully explain your evaluation results in reports. Rarely can all the variables be measured, nor the true "cause and effect" relationships identified, but be sure to include all of the relevant information necessary for understanding.

Include the following to help communicate results:

- Include targets as well as actual results. For example, knowing that your target was to increase the number of police trained in rape victim sensitivity by 20 percent, puts an increase of 25 percent in context.

- Include explanations where performance varies significantly from previous levels or targets. If your new training system of working with consultants has enabled you to reach twice the number of potential trainees, you should mention that in your report and explain what led to the change.
- Develop reports that are user friendly and that victims, service providers, and other stakeholders will be able to understand. Use words and vocabulary that fit your target audience. Even if your evaluation used sophisticated statistical methods to analyze your progress, present the results in terms that the common person can understand.
- Decide whether you want to report results for many separate groups or only for the organization as a whole. Whatever level you decide, try to be consistent throughout the report.
- Do not include more information that an external audience would need. Other information can be included in internal reports to maintain a record of what you did.
- Give the report to some members of your target audience to review before you finalize it.

Addressing poor performance

Evaluative measures will sometimes show poor performance. Organizations do not always have control over ultimate results; the economy or events in people's lives can influence a program's outcome. When poor performance evaluations occur, use these as a springboard to improvement. Strategic planning leaders must determine what needs to be-or can be-done differently to produce better evaluations.



TOOLS FOR SECTION 6, STEP 6 contains a sample Monitoring Report to help you collect and compile evaluation data. You can customize this report to your own data.

ENDNOTES

1. One of the most comprehensive handbooks on program monitoring and evaluation is the *Managing for Results Guidebook: A Logical Approach for Program Design, Outcome Measurement and Process Evaluation for Sub-recipients of STOP, VOCA, and Family Violence Grants*. Written specifically for community- and system-based victim service programs, it was developed by the Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Planning with assistance from Performance Vistas, Inc. The Guidebook can be accessed at: www.state.tn.us/finance/rds/victimshomepage.htm
2. Ibid.
3. This is discussed in Chapter 4 in P.H Rossi, H.E. Freeman, & M.W. Lipsey, 1999, *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach (6th Ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
4. D.M. Fetterman, S.J. Kaftarian, and A. Wandersman, (eds.), *Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self Assessment and Accountability*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 5.
5. J.E. Tomz and D. McGillis, 1997, *Serving Crime Victims & Witnesses*, Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice (NCJ# 163174). Available at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/163174.pdf.
6. M.T. Gaboury, D. Petersen, and D. G. Kilpatrick, 2000, "Research and Evaluation" in Seymour, A., M. Murray, J. Sigmon, C. Edmunds, M.T. Gaboury, and G. Coleman (eds.), *National Victim Assistance Academy Text*, McLean, VA: Victims' Assistance Legal Organization. Available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/assist/nvaa2000/academy/Q-17-RES.htm
7. Arizona Governor's Office, 1998, *1998 Strategic Planning and Performance Handbook*, Phoenix, AZ: Office of the Governor, Strategic Planning and Budgeting, available at www.state.az.us/ospb/managing_for_results_june19-02.cfm



TOOLS FOR SECTION 6: EVALUATE

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section contains tools you could use when you are developing an evaluation for your strategic plan. These tools apply to:

STEP 2. IDENTIFYING WHO CAN HELP WITH THE EVALUATION

- Self-Evaluation Versus Outside Evaluation Assessment Questionnaire
- Client Analysis Checklist

STEP 3. CHOOSING YOUR EVALUATION STRATEGY

- Most Important Issues For Your Evaluation Questionnaire

STEP 4. WRITING YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

- Evaluation Plan Outlining Tool

STEP 5. COLLECTING DATA

- Tracking Document Checklist
- Sample Tracking Document

STEP 6. REPORTING RESULTS

- Sample Monitoring Report

STEP 2. IDENTIFYING WHO CAN HELP WITH THE EVALUATION

In the following questionnaire, you will need to seriously consider your goals in performing this evaluation. For each question, you should pick one option, and put a check next to the option that you choose in the last column.

Self-Evaluation Versus Outside Evaluation Assessment Questionnaire

Questions	Your need/Your ability	Type of evaluation	(check one box per answer)
1. Do you want a deep understanding of your organization or a broad overview?	Deep insight	→	Self-evaluation
	Broad understanding	→	Outside evaluation
2. Do you need absolutely unbiased information regarding your organization, for political or other reasons?	Information cannot be biased	→	Outside evaluation
	Information may be biased	→	Self-evaluation
3. Does your staff have experience in evaluation? Could you train them?	Staff has experience or could be trained	→	Self-evaluation
	Staff does not have experience and could not be trained	→	Outside evaluation
4. Do you have the money to conduct a thorough evaluation?	Money is available for evaluation	→	Outside evaluation
	Money is not available for evaluation	→	Self-evaluation
5. Do you have staff time to dedicate to a thorough evaluation?	Staff can be made available for evaluation	→	Self-evaluation
	Staff can not be made available for evaluation	→	Outside evaluation
Number of checks for Self-evaluation			
Number of checks for Outside evaluation			

After honestly assessing your answers to each of these questions, add up the checks to see whether your answers point more often to a self-evaluation or to an outside evaluation.

After you have added up the number of checks for either a self-evaluation or an outside evaluation, be sure you weight your answers honestly. Depending on your organization, some of your needs will be more important than others. Sometimes, if your checks are evenly balanced, you will want to make your decision on the importance of each factor in the assessment.

STEP 3. CHOOSING YOUR EVALUATION STRATEGY

To help you understand what evaluation is best for you, ask yourself which of the following questions you most need answered by your evaluation. Read through the list, and then check the ones that you feel are the most important for your evaluation to answer. You may check more than one question in each box. Some boxes might have no checks.

Most Important Issues For Your Evaluation Questionnaire

1. _____

- Are you reaching your target audience?
- Where did the program take place?
- What facilities were used?
- What staff participated in the delivery of services?
- What resources were used?
- What procedures and activities took place?
- Did staff deliver the services as planned?
- Did they follow the planned procedures?
- What activities did the participants engage in?
- Were these the planned activities?

2. _____

- How were program services provided?
- Who provided the services?
- What resources are available to your program and how are these used?
- What resources seem lacking in your program?
- How is your organization structured?
- What is the impact of your structure on services?
- How are your staff members recruited, screened, selected, trained and supervised?
- How do you make decisions?
- How do any collaborative relationships function?
- If your program does not collaborate with others, should you?

3. _____
- Has your program actually assisted victims?
 - What are your program's actual results?
 - Are your program's results positive or negative for victims?
 - Are your program's results positive or negative for your organization?
 - What were your program's goals?
 - Have you reached your goals?
 - Are your goals being measured accurately?
 - Are your goals written to measure your program's success?
4. _____
- How have your outcomes impacted your the various systems involved in your program?
 - How do participants feel after being involved in your program?
 - Should you reevaluate your program's goals?
 - Are the outcomes affecting victims' lives positively or negatively?
 - How have your outcomes affected perceptions about your program and your organization?
 - How have your goals affected perceptions about your programs and your organization?
 - Has your program had unexpected consequences? For victims? For your organization? For an outside agency?
5. _____
- How can they way you deliver services be improved?
 - How can evaluators build on their assessment of your program?
 - How can your program become more collaborative?
 - How can you use this evaluation to identify areas to build your organization's capacity to evaluate itself?
 - How can you increase participation in the evaluation process?
 - How can you involve more outside participants in your evaluation process?

Do a majority of the questions you think are most important for your evaluation to answer fall in one area of the table? (Keep in mind that it is accepted, and even encouraged to adopt more than one evaluation method, or design a combination of several methods.)

In the following table:

- Questions in the first block are those that **program monitoring** could answer.
- Questions in the second block represent information a **process evaluation** could answer.
- Questions in the third block represent information an **outcomes evaluation** could answer.
- Questions in the fourth block are those that an **impact evaluation** could answer.
- Questions in the fifth block are those that an **empowerment evaluation** could answer.

STEP 4. WRITING YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

Once you have the information you need, writing your evaluation plan becomes a process of logically ordering the information that evaluators will need to do their jobs. The following tool can help you ensure that all of the pieces of your evaluation plan are in place.

Evaluation Plan Outlining Tool

Section	Section contents
Background	What is the context for your evaluation? - What is the scope of your evaluation plan? - What are the years your evaluation will cover? - Who are the key personnel involved?
Evaluation purpose and goals	What is the purpose of your evaluation? - Why are you evaluating? - What do you hope to find out? - What are your goals for your evaluation?
Method	How will you conduct your evaluation? - Who will be included in the evaluation? (Subjects) - What performance measures will you collect? (Performance measures) - What instruments, such as surveys or focus group protocols, will you use in the evaluation? (Assessment instruments) - If you are going to sample to collect the data, how will you choose participants for the study? (Sampling plan) - When will you collect data? (Design) - What procedures will you use for collecting data for the evaluation? (Procedures)
Data analysis	How will you analyze your data to find results? For example: - Will you compare the percentage of victims who are willing to participate before you instituted the new plan to those willing to participate after you instituted the new plan? - Will you assess qualitative data for themes and big ideas? - Will you compare before and after statistics? - How else will you transform your raw data from the initial data collected to statistics and comparisons?

Time schedule

- How long will you take to complete your evaluation?
- What tasks are involved in your evaluation?
 - What is the deadline for completing each task?
 - What is your overall deadline?

Assumptions and limitations

- What assumptions is your evaluation based on? How is your evaluation limited? For example:
- Are you assuming you will find willing participants for surveys or other data collection tools?
 - Are you limited by collecting only subjective data (such as opinions or feelings) rather than objective data?
 - Are you limited by a lack of baseline data to make comparisons with?

STEP 5. COLLECTING DATA

Tracking documents will have to be tailored to the programs they track. However, you will always need to include certain elements for a workable tracking document. The following checklist will help you ensure that you have included all the basic elements a tracking document needs.

Tracking Document Checklist

Does your tracking document include:

- Goals?
- Objectives?
- Performance measures?
- Action plans?
- An explanation of the actions taken to date?
- Information about the current status?
- Room for comments?

Remember that by adding space for comments and the current status of each action step, the action plan you created in **Section 4, Implement**, may work as the tracking document.

Sample Tracking Document

Tracking report for: (Program name or task name) _____

Dates covered: _____

1. What are the program's overall goals? 1a. Are these goals being met?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. What are the program's goals for these dates/tasks? 2a. Are these goals being met?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. What are the program's overall objectives?

3a. Are these objects being met?

4. What are the program's objectives for these dates/tasks?

4a. Are these objectives being met?

5. What performance measures were used to track this task?

5a. Why were these performance measures used?

6. For any goals above, how are they not being met? Why are they not being met?

7. What action plans have been developed to address unmet goals?
Individual, team, agency, section(s), or division(s) responsible for implementing:

Actions taken to date:

8. For any objectives above, how are they not being met? Why are they not being met?

9. What action plans have been created to address unmet objectives?
Individual, team, agency, section(s), or division(s) responsible for implementing:

Actions taken to date:

10. What is the current status of the program?
Is the program on schedule? Why or why not?

Additional comments:

STEP 6. REPORTING RESULTS

Sample Monitoring Report

Date of Report: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>			
Implementation Objectives	Date		
Performance Objectives	To date	Projected	Goal
Objectives	Accomplished	Not accomplished	

Findings

Positive finding(s) (list)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Negative finding(s) & general problems with this grant (list) (assume the need for a corrective action)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Corrective Action(s): Who? Will do what? By when? Consequences of non-compliance?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____