



Allyson Kelley and Associates PLLC

Evaluation Tips in Times of COVID-19

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic is a defining period. Organizations need to capture and evaluate the shifts in approaches due to COVID-19. This document summarizes unique impacts, organizational responses, actions, data collection, and reporting. It was developed for individuals, organizations, and communities navigating a different evaluation reality.

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EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS DURING COVID-19

The COVID 19 pandemic is a defining period. Organizations need to capture and evaluate the shifts in approaches that came about because of COVID 19. This document summarizes unique impacts, organizational responses, actions, data collection, and reporting. It was developed for individuals, organizations, and communities as they navigate a different evaluation reality.

UNDERSTANDING COVID 19 UNIQUE IMPACTS

- Strive to understand how extended social distancing has impacted the people the organization/program serves.
- What types of strategies have the organization/program taken to lessen the impact of the effects of social distancing among the people they serve?
- Create opportunities to re-engage stakeholders specifically around the issue of COVID 19.

QUESTIONS THAT GUIDE ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE

- How “nimble” and “flexible” is the organization during a time of crisis?
- How has organizational capacity been impacted because of COVID 19?
- How is the organization staying connected to partners and the community?
- How are decisions made and how has this changed as the result of COVID-19?
- What are the costs, different costs, and costs savings that should be considered?
- Do evaluation contracts need to be revised? Have evaluation roles changed? Have resources changed? What skills are required and what skills are available?
- What kinds of methods is the organization using to maintain and strengthen relationships virtually?

ACTIONS

- Provide flexibility in expectations and timelines, be supportive to the teams you are working with.
- Be aware of the stress that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing. Team members are now working under different conditions, at home, limited internet, flex office spaces, and multiple distractions.
- Be ethical and respectful in evaluation approaches. When basic needs are not met, people may not see the value in completing an evaluation.
- Provide incentives for completing evaluations, like gift cards or gas cards that compensate people for their time.
- Maintain anonymity and confidentiality of data collected using online and virtual platforms.

TACKLING DATA COLLECTION DIFFICULTIES

- What kinds of data were planned to be collected? What activities are happening now? Can any data be collected using virtual methods?
- Consider online surveys to reach participants, use Facebook Groups or email listservs to engage people in evaluation and program activities. Use telephone surveys and other surveys to reach hard to reach populations if appropriate.
- Consider bias of respondents if they are completing evaluations during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, are the only people who have access to technology, working for an institution organization, or those with transportation to and from location where activities and evaluations are taking place.

DON'T FORGET THE RAINBOW FRAMEWORK

- Manage, define, frame, describe, understand causes, synthesize, report, and support use (www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow_framework).

REPORTING

- Once you collect data, use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and email get information back to constituents. Programs like InDesign, Piktochart, Lucid Press, Infogram, and other software programs go a long way in communicating the right message at the right time to the right person.
- Incorporate positive messages, themes, social norms, encouraging information resulting from evaluation findings. Focus on strengths rather than deficits when possible.
- Limit the length of evaluation reports to less than five pages if posting electronically. Consider the audience, what they know, what they need to know, and how the report addresses these questions.
- Discuss reporting timeline changes from funding agencies. Most agencies are allowing report submissions later than initially planned due to interruptions related to COVID-19.



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