Basic Evaluation Questions for Organizations and Partnerships

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Evaluation is often considered with some trepidation. Will it uncover problems that some people want to hide? Will those funding organizations or partnerships learn things that will result in their funding being withdrawn? Will the evaluation be user-friendly and practical given the time and effort involved in conducing it? The following basic evaluation questions are offered to reduce such concerns and provide a guide for how an evaluation can helpful for: (1) assisting those responsible for implementing organizational/partnership action plans and activities determine what is important to learn to improve their work; (2) clarifying and utilizing measures that best document their learning; and (3) deciding how to strategically share what is learned with key stakeholders in order to financially sustain the most valuable outcomes of organizational/partnership efforts.

(1) What goals and objectives are you working on?

(2) What are the most important things that you want to learn from your work on these goals and objectives?

(3) Why is it important to learn these kinds of things about your work?

(4) What kinds of evidence will represent valid documentation of what you have learned?

(5) What specific kinds of decisions would you like to make based on what you can learn from evaluating your work on these goals and objectives?

(6) With which stakeholders, in addition to those most directly affected by it, do you want to share what you learn?

(7) What do these stakeholders want to learn (describe as specifically as possible) from your work?

(8) What evidence will they accept as valid documentation of what they want to learn from your work?

(9) What specific kinds of decisions, including future funding, are these stakeholders willing to make based on what they learn from your work?

(10) How can evaluation findings for your organization/partnership best be directly linked to financially sustaining the most important outcomes of your work by current and/or new stakeholders?