



# A Guide to Evaluation Primers

# A GUIDE TO EVALUATION PRIMERS

This document was produced by the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Kien Lee and David Chavis at ASDC contributed to this document. We would like to thank Laura Leviton at the Foundation for her support and guidance, John Stevenson at the University of Rhode Island for his help as an independent rater, and Lynne Berry for her editorial assistance.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

This report is an orientation guide to some handbooks and basic primers (introductory pieces) on program evaluation. These are not the academic texts; several of those are recommended at the end of this paper. Instead, these primers are directed toward the non-expert, explaining some of the central issues in evaluation and why they are important.

The primers also outline what the Foundation expects from evaluation. This is helpful both for those conducting evaluation and for the grantees whose efforts might undergo evaluation. Grant recipients of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) often request guidance about when, why and how to conduct program evaluation in the following situations:

- **In-house evaluation:** Some grantees will conduct evaluation themselves, depending on project scope and purpose.
- **Independent evaluation:** Grants awarded under an RWJF national program initiative often require the recipient organizations to participate in evaluation conducted by an independent group (click here to see descriptions of such national programs elsewhere on the RWJF Web site).
- **Collaborative evaluation:** In certain cases, grantees may collaborate with independent evaluators on collection of data to serve both their own purposes and those of the overall evaluation.
- **Choosing not to evaluate:** In still other cases, evaluation is just not necessary and grant resources are better used for other purposes.

Some grant recipients know a great deal about evaluation, while others have little experience in this area. However, all grant recipients are entitled to know what RWJF views as a reasonable standard of evidence, and all may benefit from knowing what to expect from evaluation. For further information the reader may want to read the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* in Appendix A of this guide.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Available Primers

All the evaluation primers reviewed in this guide have strengths and weaknesses. For example, the National Science Foundation's *2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* is straightforward and good, potentially appropriate even for those who may not have National Science Foundation grants. Anyone interested in evaluating a program would do well to consider several options for evaluation, because an evaluation can be conducted for many reasons. It can provide information:

- About program performance, or program effects (summative evaluation),
- About how a program might be improved (formative evaluation),
- To ensure accountability,
- To build the program's capacity to manage operations,
- To develop strategies, and

- To deepen knowledge.

However, a single evaluation practice cannot achieve all these aims. Grantees should select evaluation practices that are appropriate and good, given their unique evaluation needs. They will want to consult primers that are strong in the area of their needs.

## Creation of This Report

At the request of RWJF, professional evaluators at the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) undertook the task to review and critique 11 evaluation primers frequently referenced by organizations and agencies with which they work. ASDC reviewed and rated the primers using criteria and a protocol requested by RWJF's Research and Evaluation Unit.<sup>1</sup> The primers were reviewed and judged according to the extent to which they answered the following questions, all of which are important when you are considering an evaluation of your program:

- Who should use the primer?
- What is evaluation?
- Who should perform evaluations?
- Who are the stakeholders in a program and how might they be engaged?
- Which approach to evaluation and which evaluation method should be used?
- What are indicators and which ones should be used?
- How feasible is evaluation?
- Does evaluation promote social equity and cultural sensitivity?
- What are the benefits and uses of evaluation?
- How can evaluation build capacity?

Primers also were rated based on ease of use and types of programs discussed. The ratings ranged from a low of 1 (weak) to a high of 5 (clear and comprehensive) on many features (user friendly format, attention to issues of feasibility, etc). In the Figures throughout this guide, a check (✓) in the relevant column indicates that the primer received a rating of 4 or 5 on that feature.

Since this guide is for the non-expert primarily, we don't present much detail on criteria for selection. Requests for details should be directed to ASDC at [asdc@capablecommunity.com](mailto:asdc@capablecommunity.com).

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<sup>1</sup> An independent evaluator reviewed and rated ASDC's *Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives* primer.

## 2. SELECTED PRIMERS

RWJF and ASDC selected 11 primers for review. These primers were chosen because they focus on health and they are commonly used by nonprofits and other organizations. The 11 primers are:

1. Association for the Study and Development of Community (June 2001). *Principles for evaluating comprehensive community initiatives*. Washington, D.C.: National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention.  
[Available from the National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention, 1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005-2201; (202) 393-7731; [www.peacebeyondviolence.org](http://www.peacebeyondviolence.org).]  
This document was not intended as a cookbook for evaluation. A general guide to values, issues, and approaches in a particular evaluation context, it was developed for advanced evaluators who already have in-depth knowledge of the challenges of evaluating comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs). Funders and practitioners involved with CCIs also might find it useful.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999). *Framework for program evaluation in public health*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, vol. 48, no. RR-11.  
[Available for download at [www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm#cbph](http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm#cbph).]  
The framework was produced to guide public health professionals in their use of evaluation within their program context. It promotes the integration of evaluation into routine program activities. It summarizes the essential elements of program evaluation, steps in program evaluation, and standards for effective program evaluation.
3. Community Toolbox (online). *Evaluating community programs and initiatives*.  
[Available at [http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools/EN/part\\_1010.htm](http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools/EN/part_1010.htm).]  
A Web-based resource created and maintained by the University of Kansas Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development in Lawrence, Kan., and AHEC/Community Partners in Amherst, Mass., the Community Toolbox contains simple and friendly instructions for planning, implementing, and evaluating community health and development initiatives. *Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives*, a section within the Toolbox, includes task descriptions, step-by-step guidelines, examples, checklists of major points, and training materials for evaluating community health and development efforts. As a Web-based resource, this document is subject to expansions and improvements, including changes in hyperlinks.
4. Innovative Network (online). *Helping agencies succeed*.  
[Available at [www.innonet.org](http://www.innonet.org).]  
This Web-based resource was developed to make evaluation tools and resources available to nonprofits and funders across program type, organization size, and geographic boundaries. Innovation Network (“InnoNet”) views evaluation as an opportunity for nonprofits to identify ways to meet their missions more effectively. A

“workstation” leads the user through a series of interactive steps to define program goals, determine activities needed to achieve those goals, design steps for evaluating the activities and outcomes, and budget the expenses needed for the conducting the program and the evaluation. The workstation allows the user to submit the plans for comments by InnoNet staff.

5. National Science Foundation (2002). *The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation*. Arlington, Va.  
[Available for download at [www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm).]  
This handbook was developed for managers of National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded education programs who have little knowledge of evaluation. It is intended to increase these program managers’ understanding of the evaluation process and NSF’s requirements for evaluation, as well as to build their capacity to communicate with evaluators and manage the actual evaluation.
6. Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (1991). *Prevention Plus III: Assessing alcohol and other drug prevention programs at the school and community level*. Rockville, Md.: Office for Substance Abuse Prevention.  
[Available from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 11426 Rockville Pike, Suite 200, Rockville, Md. 20852; 1-800-729-6686; [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov).]  
This office within the federal government has since been renamed the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, or CSAP. School and community leaders involved in community partnerships and coalitions to prevent alcohol and drug use can use this resource to help them assess the effectiveness of their prevention efforts. This primer, using simple and nontechnical language, guides them through a series of steps to assess and document their individual activities. It is not intended to be a manual to use for complex evaluations of model research and demonstration programs that test theories and hypotheses.
7. Moberg, D.P. (1984). *Evaluation of prevention programs: A basic guide for practitioners*. Madison, Wis.: University Of Wisconsin System for the Wisconsin Clearinghouse.  
[Available for loan at the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources, 1552 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726-4085; (608) 262-9157 or (800) 248-9244; [www.uhs.wisc.edu/wch](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/wch).]  
This guide was intended for professionals and lay persons involved in local prevention services. Funders who support prevention programs also might find it useful. It defines the meaning of prevention and contains concise explanations of approaches and techniques for prevention evaluation.
8. Sierra Health Foundation (2000). *We did it ourselves: An evaluation guide book*. Sacramento, Calif.  
[Available from the Sierra Health Foundation, 1321 Garden Highway, Sacramento, Calif. 95833; (916) 922-4755; [www.sierrahealth.org](http://www.sierrahealth.org).]  
This primer, used during evaluation training workshops for members of the Sierra Health Foundation’s Community Partnerships for Healthy Children (CPHC), serves as a

reference guide after workshop participants return to their own communities to design and conduct an evaluation of their individual collaboratives. It contains step-by-step instructions, worksheets, and exercises for individuals who have never done an evaluation before. It also could be useful to community organizations not funded by the Sierra Health Foundation that are undertaking a collaborative process to improve children's well-being.

9. United Way of America (1996). *Measuring program outcomes*. Arlington, Va.  
[Available from the United Way of America, Effective Practices and Measuring Impact, 701 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Va. 22314; (703) 836-7100.]  
This primer is a step-by-step guide to help executive directors and program managers in a broad range of human services measure their program outcomes. These include not only direct-services, but also advocacy, public education, capacity building, and other related efforts. This primer leads the user through a series of steps for measuring program outcomes, from getting ready to do it to actually using the findings.
10. University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension (1998). *Evaluating collaboratives*. Madison, Wis.  
[Available from the Cooperative Extension Publications, Room 170, 630 W. Mifflin Street, Madison, Wis. 53703; (608) 262-3346.]  
Individuals interested in evaluating the work of coalitions and collaborations will find this primer useful. This primer recognizes that evaluating collaborative work requires new and innovative evaluation methods. Based on the belief that learning is critical to improving understanding and performance, this primer provides a compendium of ideas and research for users to consider and choose from to increase their collaboratives' effectiveness.
11. W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998). *Evaluation handbook*. Battle Creek, MI.  
[Available for download at [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).]  
Based on the belief that evaluation should be supportive and responsive to projects, this primer was developed primarily for project directors who are responsible for evaluating W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF)-funded projects. It provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a useful tool for program improvement. This primer contains enough information for program staff to plan and conduct an evaluation with or without the assistance of an external evaluator.

Each primer was written with a unique philosophical orientation toward both evaluation and intended audience. Each primer also displayed unique strengths in providing certain information related to evaluation. Users of these primers would benefit from having an overall understanding of evaluation; most of the primers provide very general information about evaluation, leaving it to the user to customize this general information to his or her specific needs, capacities, and context.

The primers did not include adequate information and discussion about the following:

- Selection of evaluators, both internal and external, and qualities of a responsive and competent evaluation;

- Assessment of the “evaluability” of a program or initiative, determination of the best evaluation design given the developmental stage of a program, and the capacities (knowledge, resources, skills) required for that method of evaluation;
- Evaluation of systems and community change, including the kinds of measures and methods most appropriate for determining such change; (although Community Toolbox links its discussion of how to achieve such change to potential measures)
- Informed consent and confidentiality;
- Consideration of specific issues related to vulnerable and disadvantaged populations in the evaluation design and process, with such issues ranging from the transient nature of some communities (homeless, recent immigrants), which makes it difficult to track participants over a long period of time, to the way evaluation findings may portray a community and the consequences of that portrayal;
- Information about race, ethnicity, and culture and how these factors affect evaluations (for example, certain terms have different values and meaning among different cultures; “family” in some cultures includes both the nuclear family and extended kin);
- Understanding of power issues in evaluation and how evaluation can be a tool for fostering social equity; and
- Methods for facilitating group dynamics among stakeholders, especially approaches toward handling disagreements and power differences among participants (for instance, a funder might have very different expectations of a program than would a community leader; the funder has more power).

Figures 1 to 12 show the strengths of the primers within the specific criteria by which they were judged and rated. Figure 13 summarizes the strengths across all the criteria.

### 3. WHO SHOULD USE EACH PRIMER?

ASDC reviewed the intended users of each primer (see Figure 1). Intended users included:

Individuals with no evaluation knowledge;  
 Beginner and advanced evaluators;  
 Foundations;  
 Nonprofits and community-based organizations;  
 Public agencies; and  
 Other specific users (e.g., grantees of a foundation or funding institutions and community partnerships).

**Figure 1: Who should use each primer?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	No evaluation knowledge	Beginner evaluator	Advanced evaluator	Foundation	Nonprofit/ community-based org.	Public agency	Other specific audience
<b><i>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</i></b> Community Tool Box	√	√	√		√		
<b><i>Evaluating Collaboratives</i></b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√	√		√		Collaboratives
<b><i>Evaluation Handbook</i></b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF)	√	√		√	√		WKKF grantees
<b><i>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</i></b> D. Paul Moberg		√	√	√	√	√	Professionals with social science research knowledge
<b><i>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</i></b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention		√	√		√	√	CDC grantees
<b><i>Helping Agencies Succeed</i></b> InnoNet	√	√			√		

<b>PRIMER</b>	No evaluation knowledge	Beginner evaluator	Advanced evaluator	Foundation	Nonprofit/ community-based org.	Public agency	Other specific audience
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America	√	√	√		√		
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√	√	√		√		Substance-abuse prevention partnerships
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community			√	√	√	√	
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation		√	√		√		NSF grantees
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	√			√		Foundation grantees and health partnerships in general

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 4. HOW EASY IS EACH PRIMER TO USE?

ASDC rated the primers on ease of use, reviewing each primer for inclusion of the following elements:

- Examples to clarify points;
- Questions to stimulate user thinking;
- Worksheets, checklists, and summary tables;
- Illustrations and other visual cues to convey ideas;
- Samples of data collection instruments and/or templates for forms and instruments, including informed consent forms;
- Step-by-step instructions on how to conduct an evaluation; and
- A list of evaluation and other relevant sources.

Figure 2 shows the specific strengths of each primer in terms of ease of use. In summary:

- Primers by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, United Way, and Sierra Health Foundation are easiest to use. These primers provide examples, illustrations, sample instruments, checklists, etc. Their instructions are simple and easy to follow. The Sierra Health Foundation primer provides an annotated bibliography.
- Primers by the Community Tool Box and InnoNet, both online tools, provide direct links to sample instruments, templates, and additional resources. InnoNet's primer also enables users to work through their program, evaluation, and budget plans (all linked together) in real time, then submit their plans and questions to an InnoNet staff person for review and feedback. The Community Tool Box's primer, however, can be cumbersome, in that it requires the user to hyperlink from one chapter and section to another in order to retrieve more in-depth information. This process makes it possible for the user to get "lost."

**Figure 2: How easy is each primer to use?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Uses appropriate examples	Poses guiding questions	Includes exercises/ worksheets/ checklists	Uses illustrations and other visual cues	Provides data collection	Provides templates	Provides step-by-step instructions	Lists evaluation and other relevant resources
<b><i>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</i></b> Community Tool Box		√			√	√		√
<b><i>Evaluating Collaboratives</i></b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b><i>Evaluation Handbook</i></b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	√					√	√
<b><i>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</i></b> D. Paul Moberg								
<b><i>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</i></b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention				√				
<b><i>Helping Agencies Succeed</i></b> InnoNet			√		√	√	√	√
<b><i>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</i></b> United Way of America	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b><i>Prevention Plus III</i></b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
<b><i>Principles for Evaluating CCIs</i></b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community		√						√
<b><i>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</i></b> National Science Foundation		√						
<b><i>We Did It Ourselves</i></b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 5. DOES THE PRIMER PROVIDE A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION?

The primers were reviewed for the degree to which they provide thorough and clear information about evaluation in general (see Figure 3). In summary:

- The primers developed by W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), D. Paul Moberg, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, National Science Foundation, and the Sierra Health Foundation contain the most clear and thorough explanations, including brief descriptions of common misperceptions regarding evaluation.
- The WKKF primer includes a brief historical overview of evaluation not included in any of the other primers.
- The Community Tool Box and InnoNet primers exclude or provide very limited information about evaluation in general. Most of the information provided in Community Tool Box's introduction to evaluation is taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention evaluation primer for public health programs.

**Figure 3: Does the primer provide a descriptive overview of evaluation?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Overall philosophy of evaluation	Overview of evaluation (e.g., history, values)	Best use and application of primer
<b><i>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</i></b> Community Tool Box			
<b><i>Evaluating Collaboratives</i></b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√		√
<b><i>Evaluation Handbook</i></b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	√	√
<b><i>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</i></b> D. Paul Moberg	√	√	√
<b><i>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</i></b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	√		√

<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet			√
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America	√		√
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√	√	√
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community			√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation	√	√	√
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	√	√

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 6. WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS AND EVALUATIONS ARE DISCUSSED IN EACH PRIMER?

ASDC reviewed the types of programs and evaluations discussed in each primer (see Figure 4). In summary:

- Primers by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKK), Sierra Health Foundation and the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) cover the widest range of programs. The first two primers are directly applicable to community-based health programs for vulnerable populations in culturally diverse settings. ASDC's primer covers community-based programs and collaboratives working on general issues concerning vulnerable populations in diverse settings.
- All primers, except the ASDC and National Science Foundation (NSF) primers, are directly applicable to health programs.
- *Evaluating Collaboratives* by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and *Principles for Evaluating CCIs* by ASDC contain the most explicit advice and information on working with collaboratives (e.g., examples of outcomes and indicators related to collaboratives, ways to ensure buy-in from partners). The *Prevention Plus III* primer contains less information about working in collaborative settings, even though it is intended for substance abuse prevention partnerships and coalitions.
- All but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ASDC, and NSF primers are directly applicable to small-scale and low-budget evaluations. The CDC and NSF primers discuss the value and use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs, and the use of experts to assist in these types of evaluation design; experimental designs tend to be costly. ASDC's primer is concerned with comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), which require more complex evaluations. The other primers are intended to guide staff through internal evaluations of program performance; evaluations more amenable to small-scale, low-budget design.
- All except the NSF primer are directly applicable to formative evaluations or programs in early development, including information (to varying degrees) about ways to use evaluation to inform program development and improvement.
- A majority of the primers are directly applicable to evaluation of outcomes and individual change. ASDC's primer is the only one containing principles for evaluation of systems and community change.
- Only the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, WKKF, and Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) primers are directly applicable to process evaluations, including strategies and methods for evaluating how well a program or initiative is being implemented.

**Figure 4: What types of programs and evaluations are discussed in each primer?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Health	Community-based	Vulnerable populations	Culturally diverse settings	Collaboratives	Small-scale, low-budget	Formative or programs in early development	Process evaluation	Outcome evaluation	Systems or community change	Individual change
<b><i>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</i></b> Community Tool Box	√	√				√	√				√
<b><i>Evaluating Collaboratives</i></b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√			√	√	√	√	√		√
<b><i>Evaluation Handbook</i></b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√
<b><i>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</i></b> D. Paul Moberg	√	√				√	√				√
<b><i>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</i></b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	√	√					√		√		
<b><i>Helping Agencies Succeed</i></b> InnoNet	√	√				√	√		√		√
<b><i>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</i></b> United Way of America	√	√	√			√	√		√		√
<b><i>Prevention Plus III</i></b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√	√				√	√	√	√		√
<b><i>Principles for Evaluating CCIs</i></b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community		√	√	√	√		√		√	√	
<b><i>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</i></b> National Science Foundation				√					√		√
<b><i>We Did It Ourselves</i></b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	√	√	√		√	√		√		√

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 7. WHO SHOULD PERFORM EVALUATIONS AND WHAT IS A GOOD EVALUATION?

Knowledge about how to select the best evaluator for an evaluation and the qualities of a good evaluation are as important as knowledge about the program to be evaluated. Figure 5 shows the primers that best describe what the user should expect from the evaluator, and what to look for in a good evaluation. In summary:

- The W.F. Kellogg Foundation's *Evaluation Handbook* contains the most thorough instructions on how to select an evaluator and the qualities to look for in a responsive evaluation. It discusses internal and external evaluators and their roles, specific evaluation skills required for certain situations and challenges, contractual arrangements, and the use of a team approach to ensure a responsive and high quality evaluation. The primer also includes a checklist for selecting an evaluator.
- The Community Tool Box summarizes the factors to be considered when choosing between professional and volunteer evaluators, including resources available, complexity of evaluation, type of information and analysis required, and mission of evaluation.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention primer links the steps in an evaluation (e.g., engaging stakeholders) to the evaluation standards developed by the Joint Committee on Educational Evaluation (utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy) to demonstrate the qualities of a competent evaluation. It includes a matrix that cross-walks each step to the appropriate standard.
- Most of the primers were written to guide staff in assessing or evaluating their own programs. This may be why these primers do not provide instructions on how to select an evaluation consultant. They mention that external consultants may need to be engaged if the evaluation requires extensive statistical analysis or complex designs, but they do not provide advice on how to select such consultants.

**Figure 5: Who should perform evaluations and what is a good evaluation?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Expectations for evaluator and evaluation	Competencies and qualities of a good evaluation
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box	√	√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension		
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	√
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg		
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention		√
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet		
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP		
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community	√	
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation		
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation		

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 8. WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS AND HOW MIGHT THEY BE ENGAGED?

Stakeholders are individuals who have an interest in the program or project being evaluated; for example, program or project participants, staff, community leaders, collaborating agencies, technical-assistance providers, funders, and even evaluators. Involving many stakeholders ensures unique and multiple perspectives on an issue, more buy-in and willingness to help gather the necessary information, better interpretation of the findings, and broader acceptance of the recommendations resulting from the evaluation. Primers were rated according to their depth of information about engaging stakeholders and including them in the reflection of findings (see Figure 6). In summary:

- The Community Tool Box, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC), and W.K. Kellogg Foundation primers provide the most extensive information about engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process. The first three primers also include detailed instructions on how to encourage stakeholders to reflect on the evaluation findings to maximize their use.
- The ASDC and University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension primers contain the most information on resolving conflicts among stakeholders, and the most extensive discussion of power dynamics likely to arise among community stakeholders, funders, evaluators, and technical-assistance providers. Even in these two primers, however, the discussion of conflict resolution and power dynamics is not as extensive as it might be, given that evaluation can be a political process, and conflicts are inherent in any group process.
- The Community Tool Box hyperlinks its evaluation primer to a section of the site that deals with transforming conflict. However, the latter section is not explicit about dealing with disagreements within an evaluation context. Such guidance is an obvious gap among the primers.

**Figure 6: Who are the stakeholders and how might they be engaged?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Ways to engage stakeholders in the evaluation	Reflections on findings by stakeholders
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box	√	√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg		
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention		
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet		
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP		
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community	√	√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation	√	
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation		

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 9. WHICH EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD SHOULD BE USED?

The primers were reviewed for their clarity and comprehensiveness on evaluation design and data-collection methods. The extent to which they explain the strengths and limitations of certain designs (e.g., experimental and observational designs, focus groups, and mail surveys) also was examined and rated (see Figure 7). In summary:

- In general, the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, D. Paul Moberg, National Science Foundation (NSF), and Sierra Health Foundation primers include the most thorough information about evaluation design and data collection methods.
- The Sierra Health Foundation primer contains an easy-to-understand matrix that identifies most appropriate method by topic area, from process to outcome information.
- In the NSF handbook, text boxes clearly list, in a format easy to read and understand, the advantages and disadvantages of different data collection methods.
- *Helping Agencies Succeed* by InnoNet does not include any information about evaluation design or approach, but it includes hyperlinks to several excellent resources that explain when to use certain data collection methods, and the strengths and limitations of each method.
- The United Way primer has a summary table that compares the cost, amount of training required, completion time, and response rate associated with specific data collection methods.
- Primers by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the United Way contain a section on informed consent and confidentiality.

**Figure 7: Which evaluation approach and method should be used?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Quantitative and qualitative methods	Strengths and limitations of evaluation designs and approaches	Strengths and limitations of data collection methods
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box			√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension		√	√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	√	√
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg	√	√	√
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention			
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet			√
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		√	
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP			
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community		√	
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation	√	√	√
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	√	√

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 10. WHAT ARE INDICATORS AND WHICH ONES SHOULD BE USED?

Indicators are visible signs of whether or not a program is achieving the expected outcomes or progressing in the intended direction. They are usually something (e.g., a number, a percentage) that can be tracked to see if there was a decrease or an increase. The Association for the Study of Development of Community (ASDC) examined the extent to which each primer provides information about the kinds of indicators to include in an evaluation. Figure 8 shows the ratings across primers as well as the types of indicators described in each primer. In summary:

- Primers by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, InnoNet, United Way, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and Sierra Health Foundation provide the most thorough information about indicators, including examples of indicators for certain types of programs.
- The Sierra Health Foundation primer includes an appendix with a comprehensive list of indicators for child and family health outcomes.
- The InnoNet *Helping Agencies Succeed* primer includes hyperlinks to indicators organized according to the following topics: shelter and homelessness, housing, children/youth and families, maternal and child health, domestic violence.
- The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension *Evaluating Collaboratives* primer contains indicators specific to the performance of collaboratives.

**Figure 8: Indicators**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Explanation and examples of indicators	Types of indicators
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box		
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	Collaborative and community outcomes
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation		
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg		Prevention outcomes
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention		
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet	√	Shelter and homelessness, housing, children/youth and families, maternal and child health, domestic violence
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America	√	Health and community outcomes
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√	Substance abuse prevention and partnership outcomes
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community		Community outcomes
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation		
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	Child and family health outcomes

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 11. HOW FEASIBLE IS EVALUATION?

The Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) reviewed the extent to which the primers provide explanations of assessing the “evaluability” of a program or initiative (i.e., can it be done, is it worth doing at this time), availability and accessibility of data sources, and ways to build on existing information systems to reduce the burden of data collection and reporting (see Figure 9). In summary:

- “Evaluability” is one of the least discussed topics in all the primers (aside from expectations of evaluators and cultural appropriateness). All the primers assume a prior decision that the program is worth evaluating.
- The Wisconsin University Cooperative Extension’s *Evaluating Collaboratives* primer provides a good discussion on the use of existing materials (e.g., meeting minutes, telephone logs, registration forms) as part of the process of evaluating collaboratives.
- The W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s *Evaluation Handbook* contains an itemized list of expenses associated with evaluation, to help the user determine how much the evaluation will cost before embarking on it.
- The ASDC primer on evaluating comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) mentions the combining of reporting requirements for administrative and evaluative purposes into one process to minimize the reporting burden on program grantees.

**Figure 9: How feasible is evaluation?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Cost-benefit of an evaluation	Assurance of adequate resources for design	Availability and accessibility of data sources	Use of existing information systems to reduce reporting burden
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box				
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension			√	√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√	√		
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg				
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention				
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet				
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America				
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP				
<b>Principles for Evaluating CCIs</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community				
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation				
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation				

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 12. DOES EVALUATION PROMOTE SOCIAL EQUITY AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY?

The Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) reviewed the primers for inclusion of topics related to culture and cultural sensitivity in evaluation, and the potential use of evaluation to promote social equity, justice and fairness. We realize that such topics stimulate lively debate in a field that at first glance, appears to be highly technical. However, raising these issues is important in evaluation, for the following reasons:

- Growing diversity in American communities makes culture and cultural sensitivity important considerations for evaluation;
- Ways in which people view and interpret an issue and share information are affected by their culture and life experiences; and
- Evaluation generates information and knowledge; because information and knowledge give power, evaluators have the responsibility of promoting social equity by ensuring that information is accessible and available to everyone, especially those who are typically marginalized.

ASDC looked for information ranging from calls for caution regarding hidden assumptions about people from different racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to ways to handle language differences (see Figure 10). In summary:

- The ASDC *Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives* primer contains the most extensive discussion of ways in which issues of power could emerge and be addressed in evaluations, specifically evaluation of CCIs.
- The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension primer includes a short section on issues of power inherent in collaboratives (issues impacting evaluation), but less information on ensuring cultural diversity and sensitivity in evaluation.
- The National Science Foundation primer contains a section on strategies for addressing culturally responsive evaluations.
- The above three primers contain the most extensive information about power and culture. However, they lack both specific examples of how culture affects evaluations and instructions or strategies for ensuring cultural sensitivity.
- Most of the other primers do not specify anything beyond mentioning the importance of cultural sensitivity.

**Figure 10: Does evaluation promote social equity and cultural sensitivity?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Political nature of evaluation and use of findings to promote social equity	Identification and inclusion of cultural values and assumptions
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box		
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation		
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg		
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention		
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet		
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP		
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community	√	√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation		√
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation		

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

### 13. WHAT ARE THE USES AND BENEFITS OF EVALUATION?

The Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) rated the primers according to the advice and opinions they offered regarding different purposes and uses of evaluation, ways in which evaluation findings may be communicated, and tradeoffs and risks of evaluation. Trade-offs occur with evaluation because staff may be required to spend time tracking and documenting activities and accomplishments in addition to meeting their typical program responsibilities. However, this time will be well spent if they learn what is working well and what needs improvement in their program. Evaluation also exposes program weaknesses, which may lead to a variety of consequences, such as discontinued funding or staff changes. In this respect, evaluation can be risky.

Figure 11 shows the primers that provide information about the uses, benefits, and risks of evaluation. In summary:

- The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and ASDC primers include the most thorough explanations of the purposes and uses of evaluation and evaluation findings, how evaluation findings may be communicated, and the tradeoffs and risks of evaluation.
- Only the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) primer mentions the importance of aligning evaluation with program stage of development; however, no specific instructions are provided on how to do this.
- Community Tool Box includes an entire section on the reasons and avenues for providing information and how to handle difficult audiences and share information with the press.
- The Sierra Health Foundation primer provides a method for making findings useful (Findings, Meaning, and Action, or FMA) and includes examples of how a finding can be interpreted and what actions it can generate.
- The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and United Way primers describe how to communicate with internal and external constituencies; the former provides advice on formal and informal forms of communication and a checklist of practical ways to promote evaluation results.
- Primers by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the National Science Foundation, CDC, Sierra Health Foundation, and Community Tool Box contain a checklist of sections and information to include in evaluation reports.

**Figure 11: What are the uses and benefits of evaluation?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Different purposes and uses of evaluation and evaluation findings	Trade-offs and risks of evaluation	Ways in which evaluation findings may be communicated
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box	√		√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√	√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√		√
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg	√	√	
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	√		
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet			
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America	√		
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√		
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community	√	√	√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation			√
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√		

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 14. HOW CAN EVALUATION BUILD CAPACITY?

As part of its review, ASDC examined the primers for information about the use of evaluation to build capacity, such as ways to use evaluation information in program planning and strategy development (see Figure 12). In summary:

- Primers by the Community Tool Box, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, and the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) provide the most information about the use of evaluation for capacity building. Although the participatory theme and emphasis on capacity building are pervasive in the ASDC primer, however, exact instructions on how to build capacity through evaluation are limited.
- The Community Tool Box includes a section on monitoring systems to ensure frequent data collection and feedback for program improvement.
- The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension *Evaluating Collaboratives* primer provides specific guidance on how to use evaluation as a learning tool for improving the performance of collaboratives.
- Primers by InnoNet, Sierra Health Foundation, and United Way do not include explicit explanations of how to use information for capacity building. By helping the user create an evaluation plan that links program goals and activities to specific outcomes, however, they ensure the use of evaluation for program improvement.

**Figure 12: How can evaluation build capacity?**

<b>PRIMER</b>	Suggestions for frequent check-in and monitoring	Use of information for planning and strategy development
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box	√	√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation		√
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg		
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention		
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet		√
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		√
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP		
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community	√	√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation		
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation		√

A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 15. OVERALL STRENGTHS OF EACH PRIMER

Figure 13 shows the overall strengths of each primer across all the criteria by which they were judged and rated. In summary, *Evaluating Collaboratives* by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and *Evaluation Handbook* by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation cover the widest range of information and provide the most thorough information about evaluation, followed by *Prevention Plus III* by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, *Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives* by the Association for the Study and Development of Community, and *We Did It Ourselves* by the Sierra Health Foundation.

However, it is important to repeat our earlier caution: Grantees should select evaluation practices that are appropriate and good, given their unique evaluation needs. They will want to consult primers that are strong in the area of their needs.

Figure 13a: Overall strengths of each primer across all criteria

<b>PRIMER</b>	Widest range of users	Ease of use	Descriptive overview of evaluation	Widest range of programs discussed	Widest range of evaluations discussed	Qualities of evaluator and good evaluation	Engaging stakeholders
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box						√	√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension	√	√			√		√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√		√	√	√	√	
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg	√		√				
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	√						
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet							
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		√					
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP	√	√	√		√		
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community				√			√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation			√				
<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation		√	√	√			

Figure 13b: Overall strengths of each primer across all criteria (continued)

<b>PRIMER</b>	Evaluation approach and	Indicators	Feasibility of evaluation	Promotion of social equity and cultural sensitivity	Uses and benefits of evaluation	Use of evaluation to build capacity
<b>Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives</b> Community Tool Box						√
<b>Evaluating Collaboratives</b> Univ. of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension		√	√		√	√
<b>Evaluation Handbook</b> W.K. Kellogg Foundation	√		√			
<b>Evaluation of Prevention Programs</b> D. Paul Moberg	√					
<b>Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention						
<b>Helping Agencies Succeed</b> InnoNet		√				
<b>Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach</b> United Way of America		√				
<b>Prevention Plus III</b> Office for Substance Abuse Prevention / CSAP		√				
<b>Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives</b> Assoc. for the Study & Dev. Of Community				√	√	√
<b>The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation</b> National Science Foundation	√					

<b>We Did It Ourselves</b> Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative Sierra Health Foundation	√	√				
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A √ implies a strength of the primer. No check may indicate a relative weakness, no discussion of this feature, or not applicable.

## 16. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are many, many resources available on evaluation, but time and space do not permit a critique of all of them. Here we present some useful Web sites and documents. In part B are listed the best academic treatments of evaluation available in 2003.

Also, the treatment of human subjects is best addressed by visiting a Web site with a good tutorial. An up-to-date, straightforward tutorial can be found at [www.virginia.edu/researchandpublicservice/irbsbs/index.html](http://www.virginia.edu/researchandpublicservice/irbsbs/index.html) for the social sciences, and [www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/hic/](http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/hic/) for health-care oriented research and evaluation.

### A. EVALUATION PRIMERS AND WEB SITES

- American Evaluation Association  
[www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org)
- *An Evaluation Framework for Community Health Programs*, June 2000  
The Center for the Advancement of Community-Based Public Health  
5102 Chapel Hill Blvd.  
Durham, NC 27707
- *Assessing Development Effectiveness*, 1994  
The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433
- *Evaluating Child Abuse Prevention Programs: A Resource Guidebook for Service Providers*  
University of Texas at Austin  
Center for Social Work Research  
School of Social Work  
1 University Station D3500  
Austin, TX 78712  
(512) 471-9832
- *Outcome Mapping*, 2001  
International Development Research Centre  
PO Box 8500  
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9  
[www.idrc.ca](http://www.idrc.ca)
- *Participatory Evaluation*  
Community-Based Public Health Policy and Practice, Issue 5, April 2002  
Partnership for the Public's Health  
Public Health Institute

- *Program Evaluation Project Annotated Bibliography*, 1997  
The Center for Nonprofit Management  
2900 Live Oak Street  
Dallas, TX 75204  
(214) 826-3470
  
- *Taking Stock: A Practical Guide to Evaluating Your Own Programs*, 1997  
Horizon Research, Inc.  
111 Cloister Court – Suite 220  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-2296
  
- *The Handbook for Evaluating HIV Education*  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dahs/publications/hiv\\_handbook/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dahs/publications/hiv_handbook/index.htm)
  
- *Understanding Evaluation: The Way to Better Prevention Programs*, 1993  
Westat, Inc.  
1650 Research Blvd  
Rockville, MD 20850
  
- *What, Me Evaluate?*, 1986  
National Crime Prevention Council  
1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
13th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

## B. RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC TEXTBOOKS

- Cronbach, L.J. and associates (1980). *Toward reform of program evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Patton, M.Q. (1997). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (3rd edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rossi, P.H., Freeman, H. L., & Lipsey, M.W. (1999). *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scriven, M. (1991) *Evaluation thesaurus* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Shadish, W.R., Cook, T.D., and Leviton, L.C. *Foundations of program evaluation: Theorists and their theories*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991.
- Weiss, C.H. (1997). *Evaluation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: Prentice-Hall.
- J.S. Wholey, H.P. Hatry, and K.E. Newcomer, (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.
- Worthen, B.R. & Sanders, J.R., & Fitzpatrick, J. L. (1996) *Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines* (2nd Edition). New York: Addison-Wesley.

# Appendix A

## Guiding Principles for Evaluators

A Report from the American Evaluation Association Task Force on  
Guiding Principles for Evaluators

### Members of the Task Force

Dianna Newman, University of Albany/SUNY  
Mary Ann Scheirer, Private Practice  
William Shadish, Memphis State University (Chair), [w.shadish@mail.psyc.memphis.edu](mailto:w.shadish@mail.psyc.memphis.edu)  
Chris Wye, National Academy of Public Administration

### The Principles

**A. Systematic Inquiry:** Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated.

1. Evaluators should adhere to the highest appropriate technical standards in conducting their work, whether that work is quantitative or qualitative in nature, so as to increase the accuracy and credibility of the evaluative information they produce.
2. Evaluators should explore with the client the shortcomings and strengths both of the various evaluation questions it might be productive to ask, and the various approaches that might be used for answering those questions.
3. When presenting their work, evaluators should communicate their methods and approaches accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret and critique their work. They should make clear the limitations of an evaluation and its results. Evaluators should discuss in a contextually appropriate way those values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses that significantly affect the interpretation of the evaluative findings. These statements apply to all aspects of the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.

**B. Competence:** Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.

1. Evaluators should possess (or, here and elsewhere as appropriate, ensure that the evaluation team possesses) the education, abilities, skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed in the evaluation.
2. Evaluators should practice within the limits of their professional training and competence, and should decline to conduct evaluations that fall substantially outside those limits. When declining the commission or request is not feasible or appropriate,

evaluators should make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result. Evaluators should make every effort to gain the competence directly or through the assistance of others who possess the required expertise.

3. Evaluators should continually seek to maintain and improve their competencies, in order to provide the highest level of performance in their evaluations. This continuing professional development might include formal coursework and workshops, self-study, evaluations of one's own practice, and working with other evaluators to learn from their skills and expertise.

**C. Integrity/Honesty:** Evaluators ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.

1. Evaluators should negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the costs, tasks to be undertaken, limitations of methodology, scope of results likely to be obtained, and uses of data resulting from a specific evaluation. It is primarily the evaluator's responsibility to initiate discussion and clarification of these matters, not the client's.
2. Evaluators should record all changes made in the originally negotiated project plans, and the reasons why the changes were made. If those changes would significantly affect the scope and likely results of the evaluation, the evaluator should inform the client and other important stakeholders in a timely fashion (barring good reason to the contrary, before proceeding with further work) of the changes and their likely impact.
3. Evaluators should seek to determine, and where appropriate be explicit about, their own, their clients', and other stakeholders' interests concerning the conduct and outcomes of an evaluation (including financial, political and career interests).
4. Evaluators should disclose any roles or relationships they have concerning whatever is being evaluated that might pose a significant conflict of interest with their role as an evaluator. Any such conflict should be mentioned in reports of the evaluation results.
5. Evaluators should not misrepresent their procedures, data or findings. Within reasonable limits, they should attempt to prevent or correct any substantial misuses of their work by others.
6. If evaluators determine that certain procedures or activities seem likely to produce misleading evaluative information or conclusions, they have the responsibility to communicate their concerns, and the reasons for them, to the client (the one who funds or requests the evaluation). If discussions with the client do not resolve these concerns, so that a misleading evaluation is then implemented, the evaluator may legitimately decline to conduct the evaluation if that is feasible and appropriate. If not, the evaluator should consult colleagues or relevant stakeholders about other proper ways to proceed (options might include, but are not limited to, discussions at a higher level, a dissenting cover letter or appendix, or refusal to sign the final document).

7. Barring compelling reason to the contrary, evaluators should disclose all sources of financial support for an evaluation, and the source of the request for the evaluation.

**D. Respect for People:** Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.

1. Where applicable, evaluators must abide by current professional ethics and standards regarding risks, harms, and burdens that might be engendered to those participating in the evaluation; regarding informed consent for participation in evaluation; and regarding informing participants about the scope and limits of confidentiality. Examples of such standards include federal regulations about protection of human subjects, or the ethical principles of such associations as the American Anthropological Association, the American Educational Research Association, or the American Psychological Association. Although this principle is not intended to extend the applicability of such ethics and standards beyond their current scope, evaluators should abide by them where it is feasible and desirable to do so.
2. Because justified negative or critical conclusions from an evaluation must be explicitly stated, evaluations sometimes produce results that harm client or stakeholder interests. Under this circumstance, evaluators should seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur, provided this will not compromise the integrity of the evaluation findings. Evaluators should carefully judge when the benefits from doing the evaluation or in performing certain evaluation procedures should be foregone because of the risks or harms. Where possible, these issues should be anticipated during the negotiation of the evaluation.
3. Knowing that evaluations often will negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
4. Where feasible, evaluators should attempt to foster the social equity of the evaluation, so that those who give to the evaluation can receive some benefits in return. For example, evaluators should seek to ensure that those who bear the burdens of contributing data and incurring any risks are doing so willingly, and that they have full knowledge of, and maximum feasible opportunity to obtain any benefits that may be produced from the evaluation. When it would not endanger the integrity of the evaluation, respondents or program participants should be informed if and how they can receive services to which they are otherwise entitled without participating in the evaluation.
5. Evaluators have the responsibility to identify and respect differences among participants, such as differences in their culture, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity, and to be mindful of potential implications of these differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting their evaluations.

**E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:** Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

1. When planning and reporting evaluations, evaluators should consider including important perspectives and interests of the full range of stakeholders in the object being evaluated. Evaluators should carefully consider the justification when omitting important value perspectives or the views of important groups.
2. Evaluators should consider not only the immediate operations and outcomes of whatever is being evaluated, but also the broad assumptions, implications and potential side effects of it.
3. Freedom of information is essential in a democracy. Hence, barring compelling reason to the contrary, evaluators should allow all relevant stakeholders to have access to evaluative information, and should actively disseminate that information to stakeholders if resources allow. If different evaluation results are communicated in forms that are tailored to the interests of different stakeholders, those communications should ensure that each stakeholder group is aware of the existence of the other communications. Communications that are tailored to a given stakeholder should always include all important results that may bear on interests of that stakeholder. In all cases, evaluators should strive to present results as clearly and simply as accuracy allows so that clients and other stakeholders can easily understand the evaluation process and results.
4. Evaluators should maintain a balance between client needs and other needs. Evaluators necessarily have a special relationship with the client who funds or requests the evaluation. By virtue of that relationship, evaluators must strive to meet legitimate client needs whenever it is feasible and appropriate to do so. However, that relationship can also place evaluators in difficult dilemmas when client interests conflict with other interests, or when client interests conflict with the obligation of evaluators for systematic inquiry, competence, integrity, and respect for people. In these cases, evaluators should explicitly identify and discuss the conflicts with the client and relevant stakeholders, resolve them when possible, determine whether continued work on the evaluation is advisable if the conflicts cannot be resolved, and make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result if the conflict is not resolved.
5. Evaluators have obligations that encompass the public interest and good. These obligations are especially important when evaluators are supported by publicly-generated funds; but clear threats to the public good should never be ignored in any evaluation. Because the public interest and good are rarely the same as the interests of any particular group (including those of the client or funding agency), evaluators will usually have to go beyond an analysis of particular stakeholder interests when considering the welfare of society as a whole.