Making the Most of your Evaluator

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Expectation for Evaluation in Government*

- Accomplishing Goals
- Assessing Program & Results
- Setting Ambitious Targets & Evaluating Outcomes
- Conducting Rigorous Evaluation: Effectiveness/ Impact Evaluations
- Informing Program Improvement & Future Design
- Building the Knowledge Base

Evaluation for Learning & Accountability

*Shared with permission from RDE NSF Program Officer Dr. Linda Thurston
Expectations for Evaluation:

- Independent, qualified evaluator
- Evaluation based on scope of project
- Well-articulated Evaluation Plan
  - Based on a logic model / program theory
  - Utilizes a robust, appropriate evaluation design
  - Includes formative and summative evaluations
  - Identifies measures that are tied to expected outcomes
- Demonstrates impact of program
Effective Evaluation Plans

- Develop at the beginning of the project with the project team
- Involve stakeholders in the identification of relevant questions and indicators
- Need to determine how you are going to use the data to be collected
- Focus on outcomes of critical interest
Guiding Questions

- What is the purpose of your evaluation?
- What do you need to know to make program decisions?
- What skills does your evaluator need?
Finding an Evaluator

- Word of Mouth
- American Evaluation Association (AEA) Database
- Universities
- Grantee Networks
- Put out an RFP
Hiring an Evaluator

- Approaches and Experience
- Subject Matter Expertise
- Work Style
- Start Times
- Fees and Costs
Key Components

- Good Fit
- Scope of Work
- Appropriate Skills
Questions

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