

Guidance for Conducting an Evaluation

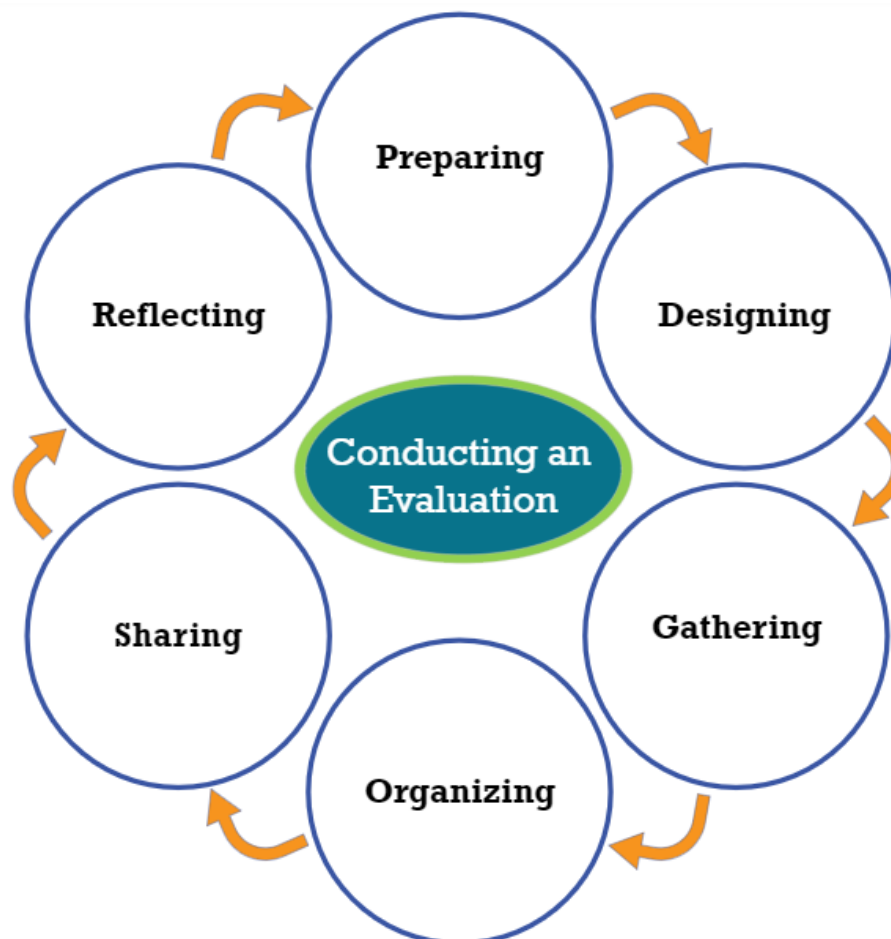
Introduction

“Evaluations should tell stories that teach lessons. Evaluation, like storytelling, is about learning.”

- Tribal Evaluation Workgroup (2013)

The best solutions *for* tribal communities come from *within* tribal communities. Conducting evaluation within tribal communities requires the active centering of tribal sovereignty, community values, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Depending on the goal, an evaluation may be completed once or it may exist as a continuous process. The six basic steps in the evaluation process are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Overview of the Six Steps in the Evaluation Cycle.



The readiness assessment along with the following tables are meant to help your tribal child welfare program (TCWP) think through each of these six steps and will help identify actionable next steps toward conducting your own evaluation. These tables will help your TCWP begin planning evaluation, but the overall scope of the evaluation is up to you. Citations and optional resources for more detailed guidance are provided at the end.

Readiness Assessment

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
Who will be the primary person responsible for conducting this evaluation?		
How soon do you need to complete the evaluation work your TCWP is interested in?		
What resources or knowledge does your TCWP need to get started on evaluation work?		

Preparing for Evaluation

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
What does your organization want to know through evaluation?		
What are your evaluation objectives? Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting continuous quality improvement (CQI) of a program, project, training, etc. • Collecting data for decision-making or replicating a service (Implementation) • Monitoring return on investment of a training, initiative, or effort (Outcome) 		

<p>Does your organization have a current program/service logic model?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, what are your program’s stated inputs, activities, strategies, outputs, and outcomes? This will serve as a baseline for how your TCWP defines “success.” 		
<p>Does your organization currently have any evaluation/CQI processes in place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, what do those look like? • How is data gathered and kept in your organization? • How is data monitored and reported? • How do you use data to inform decisions and make improvements? 		
<p>What existing information can answer your evaluation questions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data do you have access to? (e.g., case documentation, existing protocols, statistics, etc.) 		
<p>What is your staff’s availability to conduct evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any staff at your organization with previous evaluation experience? • How much time can staff allocate to evaluation activities? 		
<p>What access does your organization have to organizational resources? Consider:</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from key leaders • Communication/reporting procedures 		
<p>What access does your organization have to technical and material resources? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videoconferencing software • Data management systems 		
<p>What is your budget for evaluation?</p>		
<p>What approvals may be required before conducting an evaluation/CQI? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal council • Tribal Institutional Review Board 		

Designing an Evaluation

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
<p>What evaluation approaches are most appropriate for your community? Some options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups/listening sessions • Surveys • Document or data scans 		
<p>What do other key community members, clients, partners, funders, and interested groups need from the evaluation?</p>		

Gathering Information/Data

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
Who will gather the information/data?		
When will the information/data be gathered?		

Organizing the Information/Data

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
Who will review the information/data?		
How should the information/data be organized so that the findings are clear and accessible?		

Sharing Findings

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
Based on your organization's needs and capacity, when does it make sense to begin reviewing the findings?		
What findings will you share? Consider what information should be kept private/confidential, and what new knowledge would benefit others to know.		
Who will you share your evaluation findings with? Consider your audience.		
How will you share your findings? Options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written reports • Presentations • Graphs and charts • Creative depictions (art, story-telling, music, etc.) 		

When will you share your findings?		
Who will be responsible for sharing the findings?		

Reflecting on Next Steps After Evaluation

Considerations	Response	Plan for Next Steps
What was your overall experience conducting an evaluation?		
In what ways did this evaluation support cultural responsiveness and Indigenous ways of knowing?		
How can next steps continue to support tribal sovereignty?		
What challenges did you encounter in conducting the evaluation?		
What accomplishments were achieved?		
What next steps do you need to consider to keep moving forward?		

Citations and Further Reading

- Bowman-Farrell, N. R. (2019). Nation-to-Nation evaluation: Governance, tribal sovereignty, and systems thinking through culturally responsive indigenous evaluations. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 34(2).
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