Legal Assistance Program

EVALUATION PLAN TEMPLATE

This template lists questions to inform an evaluation of a program. The questions on this page capture the specifics of the program to be evaluated and the purpose of the evaluation. On the next page are questions to inform the design of the evaluation.

Section	Description of information that could be included
PROGRAM AND PURPOSE	
Background / context	Contextual statement, describing where the program under evaluation fits structurally and strategically within the organisation
Program aims (outcomes)	What is the program intended to achieve? What would success look like?
	A program can have multiple aims, for multiple parties (e.g. clients, staff, organisation)
	Which outcomes are measurable?
	If the program will be compared to an alternative method of achieving the outcomes, how will this comparison be made?
	What is the counterfactual for participants, that is what will participants do in the absence of the program?
	Are there confounding factors? That is, might clients experience other interventions that could have an impact on outcomes? Can these be controlled for in the methodology?
Program description (inputs and outputs)	A Program Logic is recommended (see separate Foundation Resource)
	What does the program look like: who is delivering it, what activities are being undertaken, at what locations?
	Who are the target clients and how will they be identified?
	How does this program differ from other programs with similar aims?
Purpose of evaluation and decisions that will be affected.	How will the findings of the evaluation be used?
	What types of decisions will be made: continuation of program, reduced/additional resources, or operational improvements?
	This will determine the rigour and type of research that is appropriate. For instance, a more rigorous design is likely to be required to measure outcomes to compare the cost-effectiveness of alternative programs, while a less rigorous design is required to identify how a program is being delivered and experienced for the purpose of program delivery improvement.
Stakeholders	Main client/decision maker
	Parties whose cooperation/input is required
	Other parties with an interest in the findings
Dissemination plan	How are the findings best shared with main client and, meet the needs of this audience and have the intended impact? Does this influence how the project is conducted and/or its timing, such as the including an interim report?
	How best to reach other parties with an interest in the findings?
	Describe the format for the output(s), which could include short or long reports, presentations with discussions, new training materials, webinars, social media campaign etc.

JUSTICE RESOURCES

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METHODOLOGY	
Research question(s)	Specify the question that needs to be answered to determine whether the program has the aims outlined above. Differentiate between:
	· Measures of outcomes/impacts: these will require an experimental design and quantitative data and should make clear what the outcome is being compared to (see methodology hierarchy). Can be supplemented by qualitative data to understand the mechanisms operating to achieve the outcomes.
	· Review of operations and practice: these will draw on both quantitative (administrative data and representative surveys) and qualitative (document review, interviews, focus groups and non-representative surveys)
Methodology	Describe the broad type of methodology that will be used and why it is appropriate to answer the research question(s)
	See the Foundation's Effectiveness paper for an explanation of the alternative evaluation methodologies
	For evaluations of outcomes/impacts, specify the counterfactual and potential confounding factors, and how these will be identified and/or controlled for in the research design
Roles	Lead investigator
	Team members
	Parties with an expertise that can assist the project
Project plan	Depending on the project complexity, this may require a separate document. At a minimum, summarise the stages of the research and identify any contingencies.
Tasks and responsiblities	These should align with the project plan, who will do what at each stage?
Timetable	Specify the timeline of the project referencing the stages in the project plan.
How will project outputs assist with the decision to be made?	Articulate the relationship between the findings of the research and any decisions about the program that these may influence.
Risks and contingencies	Identify the key problems that may arise during the project and what procedures have been or could be put in place to mitigate these. For instance, low participation rates could require the introduction of incentive payments.
Ethics, privacy, confidentiality	Identify whether there is a requirement to submit the proposal to an ethics committee. This is likely if the topics covered are sensitive or the participants are juveniles or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
	Identify potential risks for those participating and how these will be mitigated, including arrangements for protecting participant privacy (e.g. secure and temporary storage of contact details) and confidentiality (e.g. aggregating data and not including any identifying characteristics in reports)
Additional resources	For example:
	· Travel costs
	· Survey tools / software
	· Transcription costs
	· Phone calls
	· Incentive payments
	· Peer review costs
	· Printing