**State Program Evaluation Guides: Developing an Evaluation Plan**

* [Download the Guide  [PDF–176K]](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdSP/programs/nhdsp_program/evaluation_guides/docs/evaluation_plan.pdf)

The evaluation guide *Developing an Evaluation Plan* will help states and their partners think through the process of planning evaluation activity. The guide describes components of a plan, details to consider in plan development, provides sample templates, and provides a step-by-step process. This guide uses one example, providing training, and carries it through all the steps. This format is meant as a template and resource in helping you think through and write your evaluation plan. A feedback page is provided at the end of this guide. Your comments will be appreciated, especially after you have used the information to develop an evaluation plan.

An evaluation plan is part of your application for funding or plan of work. This plan should be based on the program objectives stated in the work plan and provide an approach to assess the extent to which those objectives have been achieved. A state’s evaluation plan should also include a method to document progress toward achieving the 5- and 10-year performance measures described in the program announcement.

The evaluation plan will also help states develop an overall picture of evaluation activities so that required staff time and resources can be identified. Just as the program work plan is a roadmap for implementing a program, the evaluation plan provides a roadmap for evaluation activities. Your plan is a fluid document that will change, based on budget, resources, work plan objectives, accomplishments, and expectations. A plan can, and eventually should, be developed to include the following two levels:

1. Process evaluation: focuses on the quality and implementation of capacity building activities and interventions.
2. Outcome evaluation: concentrates on assessing the achievement of expected outcomes of selected capacity building activities and interventions. Outcome evaluation should build on process evaluation.

States are not expected to engage in all levels of evaluation in the beginning but to grow into them as capacity is increased and programs develop.

When should you develop an evaluation plan? Ideally, you should draft the evaluation plan while you develop your program work plan. As you develop objectives, activities, and timelines, documenting their progress is a natural next step. Developing your evaluation plan as you develop your work plan helps you think realistically about the process of evaluation. It also encourages you to monitor and assess, from the beginning, your program’s implementation so that program improvements can be made. And, as the program or intervention budget is planned, evaluation costs can be estimated and included.

You can develop your evaluation plan—either as one document that consolidates all your state’s HDSP evaluation activities (Appendix 1) or alternatively, integrated into your work plan as a component of each objective (Appendix 2). If you choose the latter, you will eventually want to look at the evaluation activities of your program or intervention as a whole to get a broad picture of the job ahead.