

PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLANNING KIT EVALUATION for school health programs

STEP 6: EVALUATE

In the Evaluate step, you collect and analyze data about the progress your program has made in implementing the strategies in your strategic plan, and the extent to which you achieved the SMART objectives in annual workplans. Your program uses this evaluation data to improve program implementation and activities in current and future workplans. Evaluation occurs throughout the five years of the cooperative agreement. As a result of completing the Evaluate step, you will have evaluation findings on how the strategic plan is progressing each year and descriptions of planned program improvements based on evaluation findings. At the end of your cooperative agreement, you should have a summary of overall progress in implementing the five-year strategic plan based on the annual evaluation data you collected.

DASH expects that funded partners will describe their programs (through a strategic plan and annual workplans), document what happened in their programs, and use evaluation findings to improve their programs. Programs that have met these three expectations can consider conducting more in-depth evaluations, such as examining the quality of the activities in which the program is engaged or assessing what happened as a result of program activities.



For more information on DASH's evaluation expectations, consult the DASH Program Evaluation website (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/index.htm>).

At the end of the EVALUATE step, you should have:

- ✓ A summary of overall progress in implementing the five-year strategic plan based on the annual evaluation data you collected.

Review the evaluation process you developed for your strategic plan. This process identified the data that you will collect, the timeline for collecting evaluation data, and how the program will use evaluation data for program improvement.



You can use the **Data Collection Framework** each year to help you review the information your program needs, and the measures, sources, and methods for collecting this information. At a minimum, your program will need to collect data on how well the program (and the strategic plan) has been implemented, including who, what, when, where, and how program activities were accomplished. This type of data collection is called process evaluation.

Plan for data collection well in advance of when data collection begins.

- Develop procedures for collecting the information you need. DASH expects funded partners to designate a person responsible for ensuring that process evaluation data are recorded in a

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systematic and planned fashion. Process evaluation data, such as the *Indicators for School Health Programs*, include data on the distribution of materials, and the provision of professional development and individualized technical assistance on policy, curricula, student assessment, and environmental initiatives..

- Identify or develop instruments to collect the data you need (e.g., technical assistance logs, questionnaires). Develop standardized forms to record process evaluation data for different program activities (e.g., professional development events).

Determine how your program will organize and store evaluation data. A database can provide a centralized location for data storage, including the *Indicators for School Health Programs*. A database will enable your program to analyze and use data for program improvement throughout program implementation. A database need not be complex; a simple spreadsheet can serve the purpose of data storage.

Review the evaluation data you have collected by asking questions such as the following:

- Were the data collected systematically and according to the data collection plan? If not, why not?
- Did the program follow the strategic plan, including the implementation, communication and evaluation of the plan? If not, why not? What actions do you need to take to get the program back on track?

- Did the program achieve the SMART objectives in the workplan? For example:
 - To what degree did the program reach target audiences?
 - Were the program activities implemented as planned? If not, why not?
 - What fiscal, logistical, staffing, or political issues impeded or facilitated workplan implementation?
- What do the data indicate about the program and ways to improve it?
- Does the strategic plan need to be changed to reflect changes in your program or your program's environment?

Keep in mind that you should only answer questions for which you have collected data, so it is important to identify in advance the information you need and the data you will collect.

Share evaluation data with your Project Officer, program staff, and other stakeholders to provide a picture of what the program has accomplished in the past year.



Consult the **DASH evaluation website** for evaluation resources, including handbooks, briefs, guides, tutorials, tools, and information on how to obtain evaluation technical assistance (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>).