



Evaluation Technical Assistance

# EVALUATION Compass

www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation

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## Evaluating Your Strategic Plan

A strategic plan can move your school health program forward to new accomplishments, and evaluating your strategic plan will increase your chances for program success.



### Strategic Plans for School Health Programs

DASH requires programs funded under cooperative agreement 08-801 to develop a strategic plan document that describes a program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and outlines strategies and directions for the five years of the cooperative agreement. Strategic plans that are both implemented and evaluated can help school health programs achieve their goals. This newsletter reviews guidance for evaluating a strategic plan as well as the annual workplans that the strategic plan informs.

are important for monitoring how your five-year strategic plan is progressing. Evaluation findings can inform changes in your strategic plan and annual workplans and can lead to program improvements.

When you review the evaluation process in your strategic plan, verify that it aligns with your program's specific goals, strategies, implementation timeline, and staff resources. It is important that your evaluation questions relate directly to your program work, and that your program has the capacity to collect data to answer the questions, along with the resources to interpret and use the data for program improvement.

### Compass Point #1: Reviewing Your Evaluation Process

Your strategic plan narrative describes the process your program will use to evaluate your strategic plan and your program activities. This process should identify the data that you will collect, the timeline for collecting evaluation data, and how the program will use evaluation data for program improvement. Evaluation data

### Compass Point #2: Evaluating Strategy Implementation and Workplan Objectives

In your strategic plan, program strategies describe the means or broad approach by which your program will achieve its goals over the five years of the cooperative agreement. Strategies inform the content of your annual workplans, including objectives and activities necessary to accomplish program goal(s) for a particular

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year. Evaluating a strategic plan requires evaluating the annual implementation of program strategies and the extent to which the work associated with those strategies has been achieved. The table on the right illustrates evaluation of an example strategy that has one objective associated with it. (Most annual workplans will address more than one strategy, and some may include more than one objective for each strategy.)

One useful data source for evaluation is the *Indicators for School Health Programs*, which DASH requires school health programs funded under Cooperative Agreement 08-801 to submit annually. The *Indicators* summarize process evaluation data that describe basic program activities. Wherever possible, programs should use the *Indicators* as one of the data sources for evaluating the achievement of workplan objectives.

It is important to plan for collecting your evaluation data in advance by doing the following:

- Develop procedures for collecting the information you need.
- Designate a person responsible for ensuring that data are recorded in a systematic and planned fashion.
- Identify or develop instruments and standardized forms to collect the data you need (e.g., technical assistance logs, questionnaires).
- Determine how your program will organize and store evaluation data.

<b>Program Strategy</b>	Disseminate model Coordinated School Health (CSH) Physical Activity, Nutrition, Tobacco (PANT) policies to schools and school districts.
<b>SMART Workplan Objective*</b>	By the end of the fiscal year, two model CSH and PANT policies will be distributed to 20% of the school districts in the state.
<b>Evaluation Question</b>	How many schools and school districts did we distribute our model CSH and PANT policies?
<b>Data Sources</b>	Distribution lists, hits on policy webpage, <i>Indicators for School Health Programs</i> (CSHP Q17b)

\*SMART objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-phased.

### Compass Point #3: Reviewing Your Evaluation Data

Each year your program should have a summary of overall progress in implementing your five-year strategic plan based on the annual evaluation data you collected. Review the evaluation data you have collected by asking questions such as the following:

- Did the program follow the strategic plan, including the implementation, communication and evaluation of the plan? What actions do you need to take to get the program back on track?
- Did the program achieve the SMART objectives in the workplan? If not, why not?
- What changes occurred in the School Level Impact Measures (SLIMs) that the program chose to target? (Profiles, the data source for SLIMs is available every other year).
- 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?

### Webinars a Success!

In August and September 2008, the DASH Evaluation Research Team (ERT) developed two webinars to provide technical assistance related to strategic planning. Each webinar was conducted twice. Across the four events, 81 DASH funded sites and 125 individuals participated.

On a follow-up questionnaire, the percentage of respondents who reported they were "mostly" or "completely" confident in the webinar topic was 48% before the webinar and 89% after the webinar.

Due to positive participant response, the ERT is conducting more webinars on evaluation topics. We held a webinar on collecting data for *Indicators* at the end of February and early March.

Look for email announcements about another webinar on the *Indicators* this Spring.



### New Briefs on Data Collection

Five new DASH evaluation briefs address data collection methods, including focus groups, questionnaires, observations, interviews, and document review. Check them out at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>

## Resource Zone

- **Data Collection Framework**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/sp\\_toolkit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/sp_toolkit.htm)
- **Developing Process Evaluation Questions**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>