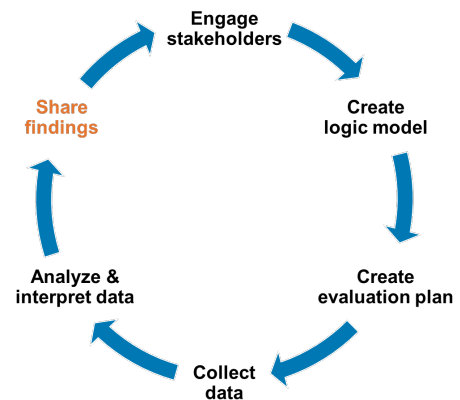


# Using and sharing evaluation results

This tool is part of an evaluation toolkit called Measuring What Matters. It includes information about how to complete this essential step of evaluation, including templates and a case study example of how a typical community organization – *HealthConnect* - might complete this step for their community health worker program.



## What does it take to use and share your evaluation findings?

This last step in conducting an evaluation involves developing recommendations and thinking creatively about how best to share your findings and recommendations. In this step, you'll think through questions like:

- What recommendations do we want to make?
- What actions should be taken based on what we learned?
- With whom should we share our evaluation findings?
- What findings will interest different stakeholder groups? How will we reach them?
- When should we share recommendations so they are timely and have maximum effect?

## Why share and use your findings?

By providing a deeper and richer understanding of your program, you can build on what's working and develop new strategies for what's not. The many reasons to communicate your findings include:

- **Learning:** Program improvement, strategic planning, sharing lessons / promising practices
- **Reporting:** Meet funding requirements, accountability to the board, sharing findings with evaluation participants
- **Outreach:** Engaging stakeholders, marketing, fundraising

## How do you share and use your evaluation results?

This step starts with developing your recommendations and identifying the list of stakeholders you want to share your results with. Then you can keep each of those stakeholders in mind and think through the “what,” “how,” and “when” of sharing your findings. Then you'll be ready to put this information together into a communications plan.

At the end of year one, the *Health Connect* program team found that the program was making a difference, but it wasn't reaching enough people. Based on their findings they recommended making changes for program year 2: adding evening hours and having a food bank representative come to give weekly demonstrations of cooking on a budget. It was time to use and share these initial findings and recommendations at a meeting with funders and stakeholders.

## Using and sharing your results Checklist

Sharing the right information with the right people in the right way is the best way to make sure your findings are useful! As you create your communication plan, use the items in this checklist to ensure that you've followed these key steps and included the quality checks.

### ☐ Did you develop recommendations?

Recommendations describe the actions you think should be taken based on what you learned. They should align with the reasons you did the evaluation in the first place. For example:

If your goal is to improve the program's ability to reach its outcomes



Recommendations may include different approaches to make the program more successful or highlight areas where training is needed.

If your goal is to determine the future of the program



Recommendations may suggest expanding a successful program by adding services or locations.

✓ **Useful & Feasible.** Did you review your list of stakeholders and figure out WHOM you should share results with?

Share the results with stakeholders both inside and outside of the program—people who have an interest and people who can take action on your findings. Look back at your list of stakeholders and use that as a starting point. Consider expanding it to include those who you would like to know more about your program and those who might be interested in your findings or lessons learned.

### ☐ Did you decide WHAT information you want to share back to each audience?

What you communicate will probably be different for each audience, because not everyone will be interested in the same thing. Tailor the information to each set of stakeholders and interested parties in terms of detail, technical complexity, and area of focus. Ask yourself:

- What general issues does this stakeholder care about?
- What specific information will this group want to know?
- What, if any, other information will resonate with them?

✓ **Accurate.** Don't bias your reporting by eliminating negative results—report both negative and positive findings. And be sure to include a discussion of the limitations of your evaluation so that audiences can decide for themselves how to interpret the findings.

### ☐ Did you decide HOW you will share the information? What is the right format?

Just as different audiences will be interested in different information, the same format might not be best for every stakeholder on your list. For example:

- A comprehensive written report might be the best way to meet funder requirements.
- Program participants might prefer a personal conversation or meeting where findings are presented in a simple manner and the goal is to talk about the results.
- You might best reach the broader community with a news release or through social media.

In general, people are moving away from lengthy evaluation reports to presenting findings and recommendations in a way that emphasizes what matters most. Your stakeholders can help you decide on format and how much detail is suitable for the people they represent.

✓ **Useful.** It is also important to think about the language you will use. Complex analysis and technical terms may be appropriate for some audiences, but not for others. For maximum impact, people need to understand what you're saying!

#### □ Did you decide WHEN the right time to share information with your stakeholders was?

The last thing in developing your communication plan is deciding when to share results with your stakeholders. Consider the following as you make your decision:

- **Focus on timeliness and relevance** by sharing findings while the data still matter and those who participated will see the results of their participation.
- **Maximize impact** by knowing when the information will be of use. Can you coordinate the release of your results with other upcoming events in the community?
- **Sequence how you share** findings and take care to inform your stakeholders of the results before sharing with the general public.
- **Frequency is key** Typically, if you want your evaluation findings to be useful, one written report is not enough. Plan to get the message out several times in a variety of ways.

#### □ Did you follow-up to ensure that your evaluation findings are used for decisions and actions?

The final step in the evaluation process is to follow up with stakeholders to make sure that 1) they have had an opportunity to review the information you provided, 2) they received the information they needed, and 3) there is a plan for next steps, if appropriate. The timing of follow-up may be related to funding cycles or other factors, but it is better to do so sooner rather than later, while the information is fresh and on stakeholders' minds.

#### □ Did you use the Communication Plan Template?

Once you have thought through the “who”, “what”, “how” and “when” of using and sharing your findings, you are ready to put it together into the communication plan template! [Take a look at the Case Study to see the communication plan that the \*Health Connect\* program team created.](#)

The Center for Community Health and Evaluation designs and evaluates health-related programs and initiatives throughout the United States.



CCHE's *Measuring What Matters* curriculum is informed by the following resources:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: A Framework for Program Evaluation](#)
- [University of Wisconsin–Extension: Program Development and Evaluation](#)
- [Northwest Center for Public Health Practice: Data Collection for Program Evaluation \[online course\]](#)

## Sharing your evaluation results template

Use this template to develop a plan for communicating the results of your evaluation.

Who? (List your stakeholders)	What information do you need to share with them?	Why? (What is your purpose for communicating with them?)	How will you share the information? (e.g., report, presentation, personal discussion, media release)	When should the information be shared?
<i>Example: Board members</i>	<i>Progress toward goals</i>	<i>To inform strategic planning</i>	<i>Written and oral report at board meeting</i>	<i>Before/during strategic planning meeting</i>

Adapted from University of Wisconsin–Extension: Program Development and Evaluation. <http://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/>

## Case Study: *HealthConnect* completes the sharing evaluation results template

Who is your audience? (List your stakeholders)	What information do you need to share with them?	Why? (What is your purpose for communicating with them?)	How will you share the information? (e.g., report, presentation, personal discussion, media release)	When should the information be shared?
<b>Program team:</b> Champions/ staff at partner agencies and Community Health Workers	Ongoing information about the program is working  Impact on health behaviors and outcomes; improvement ideas	To strengthen engagement; to close the loop and show how info they provided is being used; to inform improvement & planning	Written and oral reports at regular meetings  Discuss evaluation results and work together to develop recommendations	As it is available and during quarterly quality improvement meetings
<b>Participants</b> served by the Community Health Worker (CHW) program	Impact on health behaviors and outcomes; improvements being made	To strengthen engagement; to close the loop and show how info they provided is being used	Brief written summary of results  Verbally at individual or group visits as needed	Before any significant changes are made to the program
<b>Board &amp; leadership</b> at CHW partner agencies  Other social service organization partners	Referral information; impact on health behaviors and outcomes; improvement ideas	To ensure buy-in and inform resource allocation, to strengthen partnerships, to improve referrals	Top level findings and recommendations presented at meetings  Personal conversations with key partners	Board: Upcoming board meetings  Partners: Annually (after briefing internal stakeholders)
<b>External funders</b>	Progress toward outcomes; overview of findings and lessons learned	Grant accountability; to increase the likelihood of future funding	In grant progress report; personal discussion with external funders	Upcoming progress report
<b>Community residents</b> (broadly)	Success of program at improving health behaviors & outcomes	To recruit potential clients in order to better serve the community	Media release and use in community promotion (e.g. public transit or social media)	At least annually, after internal stakeholders have been briefed