

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) Rural Northern Border Region Outreach Program




Building a Strong Assessment Plan: *Key Components, Strategies, & Tips*

January 16, 2025

3:00 – 4:00 PM ET



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Today's Objectives

- Understand the importance of an assessment plan
 - Learn about the components of the plan and expectations for each section
 - Explore best practices and tips for assessment planning
 - Learn about support available to you
- 

A Quick Poll





Overview of the Assessment Plan

- **What:**
 - Provides guidance for monitoring and assessing project activities
- **Why:**
 - Monitor and improve
 - Accountability to funder & other stakeholders
 - Gain new knowledge about project strategies
 - Build evidence-base
 - Demonstrate impact

Assessment Plan Sections

I. Introduction

- Project description, EB model, stakeholder engagement

II. Assessment Questions

- Process and outcome

III. Data Collection

IV. Data Analysis

V. Communications/Utilization Plan

VI. Attachments

- Data Collection Plan (see III above)
- Other relevant content as applicable

Stakeholder Engagement in Planning

- Enhanced buy-in & support
- Improved quality and relevance
- Increase transparency and trust
- Capacity building
- Better utilization of findings
- Fosters collaboration



Assessment Questions



Assessment Questions

- What are they?
 - Overarching questions used to gain understanding of project implementation and effect or outcomes
- Tips for good questions
 - Be clear and specify what is being assessed
 - Be derived from the program's goals, objectives, theory of change
 - Satisfy an important information need
 - Incorporate the needs and expectations of stakeholders

Prioritizing Assessment Questions

Feasibility

	High	Low
Usefulness	Best Choice	Good Choice
	Okay Choice	Poor Choice

Process Assessment

- Focus on inputs, activities, or outputs
- Identify essential program elements
- Describe program
- Provide timely data for program improvement
- Understand how program works (or doesn't work)

Typical Process Assessment Questions

- Who participated in the program?
- How many were reached by program services?
- To what extent was the program implemented as intended?
- How many consortium/network members participated?
- How satisfied were consortium members with the program?

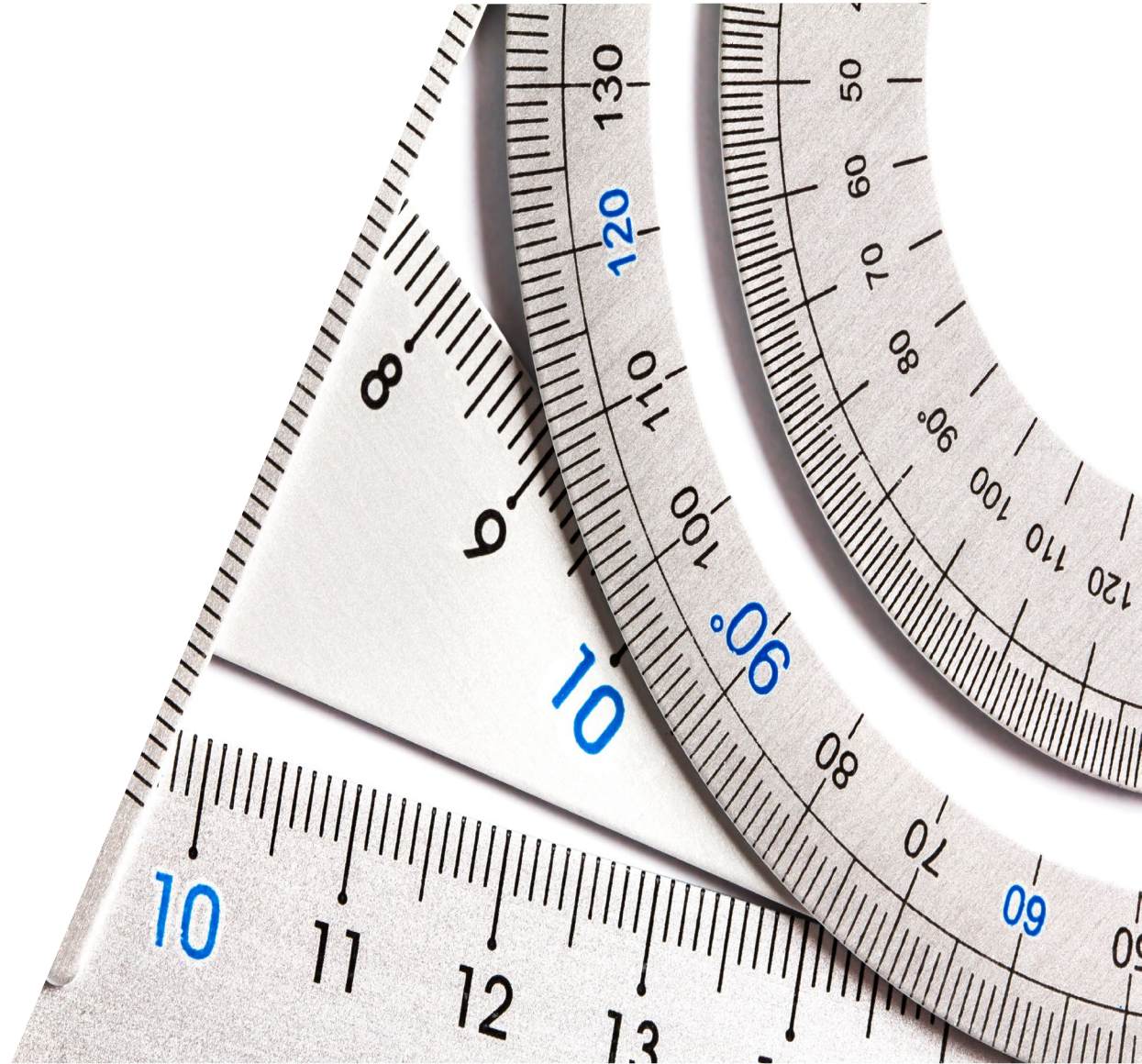
Outcome Assessment

- Focuses on short-term, intermediate, or long-term outcomes
 - What changes or impacts occurred (eg, patients, providers, organizations, etc.) as a result of program?
- Determine whether or not program goals/objectives were met
- To justify the need for further funding
- To ensure that only effective programs are continued

Typical Outcome Assessment Questions

- To what extent, did program activities lead to the desired change?
- What changes occurred as a result of the program?
- How much did the program increase positive behaviors?
- Was the consortium/network sustained over time?
- Did the program lead to policy/environmental changes?

Indicators/ Measures



Assumptions

- Assessment purpose is clearly articulated and defined
- Theory of change → you have an understanding of how and why you expect a program to produce results
- Ideally, there are well formulated evaluation questions
 - Both process and outcome

Program Assessment needs both:

- **Process Measures**

- Focused on implementation
- Progress milestones
- Monitored more frequently
- Real-time evaluation
- Direct association between activities and measures

- **Outcome Measures**

- Focused on impact
- Final results
- Monitored less frequently
- Lagging evaluation
- Likely impacted by many contributing factors

Example Process Measures

- **Evaluation Question:** *Did the implemented program reach the intended target population?*
 - **Example measures:**
 - Number of individuals from the target population who were contacted via email
 - Number of individuals from the target population who enrolled in the program
 - Number of enrolled individuals who completed the lifestyle change program

Example Outcome Measures

- **Evaluation Question:** *To what extent did participation in the smoking cessation program reduce smoking behaviors?*
 - **Example measures:**
 - Number/% of program participants who quit smoking
 - Number/% of program participants who reported smoking less
- **Evaluation Question:** *What percentage of graduates secured full-time employment within six months of completing the training?*
 - **Example measure:** Employment rate of program graduates after leaving program

Considerations and Tips

- For process measures, there is a tremendous amount of information that can be gathered about implementation.
- Target goals for measures may change over time.
- Process measures are likely to be easier to achieve than outcome measures.
- Give consideration to the data source(s) for your measures.
 - How can you gather the information needed to measure the target outcomes?
 - Will some additional data analysis be needed?
- When writing your measures, make sure they aren't double or triple barreled.

Data Collection Plan



Data Collection Plan

Assessment Questions <i>What do we want to know about the program?</i> Question Type <i>Process or Outcome?</i>	Indicator(s) <i>How will we measure it?</i>	Data Source/ Instrument <i>From what data source or tool will you obtain the data</i>	Methods <i>How will you collect/pull the data?</i>	Timeline <i>When will we collect the data?</i>	Individual(s) Responsible <i>Who will collect and report on the data?</i>	Desired status/goal for this measure <i>What does success look like?</i>
Intervention/Strategy	<i>Train and build capacity of pediatric workforce to enhance social-emotional screening and assessment of children</i>					
Question: <i>How many pediatricians and primary care providers were trained?</i> Type: <i>Process</i>	<i># of pediatricians and primary care providers trained on standardized S/E screening tools</i>	<i>registration sign-in sheets</i>	<i>Record numbers from online registration systems and/or sign-in sheets at training locations</i>	<i>Every other month after each of the 6 annual trainings</i>	<i>Trainer, Project Coordinator</i>	<i>30 providers trained each year (5 per training, annually) – goal of 90 trained by end of project</i>
Question: <i>To what extent do providers have a greater understanding of screening and assessment tools as a result of the training?</i> Type: <i>Outcome</i>	<i><u>Self reported</u> increased knowledge of screening/assessment tools</i>	<i>Pre-post training survey</i>	<i>Trainers administer surveys before and after each training; data recorded in Excel</i>	<i>Every other month before and after each of the 6 annual trainings</i>	<i>Trainer, Project Coordinator</i>	<i>85% of all trainees report increased knowledge after completion of training</i>

Design a workplan that you can complete and will use! *Keep in mind...*

- Simple is better than complex
- Being able to implement the plan is key
- Choose questions that map to your goals and are important
- Ensure obtaining data that are needed is not too time-consuming
- Use results to celebrate successes and address areas of concern

Data Collection Plan Considerations

Assessment Question

- Does your question map to a project goal/objective that is achievable?

Measures/Indicators

- Do you have access to the indicator (data) you will use to answer your question?

Data Source/Instrument

- Is data source accessible within your organization or does it require access to other partners/sites?
- Is your data source "up-to-date" and not a year or more behind?
- Do you have the necessary data collection instruments or need to develop or utilize an existing tool (eg, survey)?

Data Collection Plan Considerations

Methods

- Conduct interviews, focus groups, or surveys?
- Do staff require additional training to support data collection?

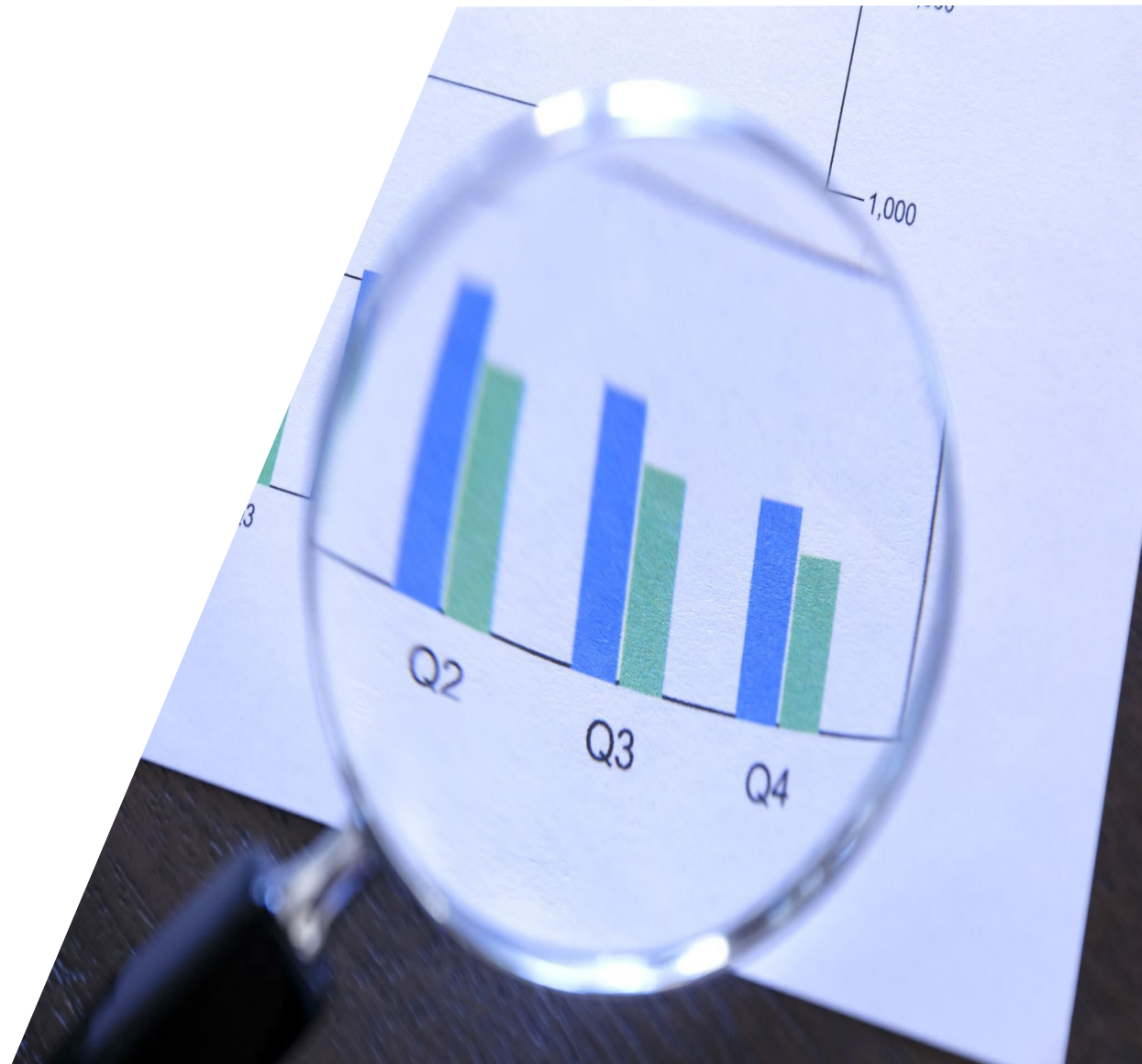
Timeline

- When do you need to collect the data?
- Have you given yourself enough time to be able to analyze and report?

Individual(s) Responsible

- Who oversees this process?
- Who collects and analyzes the data?
- Who works with network staff so they understand and can retrieve their data?

Analysis



A few things about data...

- **Data – must be both valid and reliable**
- **Quantitative data**
 - Numbers expressed in measurable units
 - Can use statistical methods to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between variables
 - Examples:
 - Percentages of patients that receive an appropriate health screening
 - Average of a specific laboratory value
 - Frequencies of timely access to care
- **Qualitative data**
 - Non-numeric information that describes concepts and characteristics, rather than numbers and statistics
 - Observable but not measurable (like quantitative)
 - Examples:
 - Patient descriptions of pain experience during an interview
 - Feedback from focus groups about a new treatment plan
 - Written patient diaries about their chronic disease experience/journey

Data Analysis – Tips & Considerations

- Key approaches for analyzing data:
 - Quantitative - Statistical tools (e.g., Excel, SPSS, SAS, Stata).
 - Qualitative - Thematic analysis/coding
 - May use tools like NVivo, ATLAS.ti, etc.
- Engaging stakeholders in data interpretation:
 - Joint workshops to discuss findings
 - Visual tools like dashboards or graphs
 - Be responsive to feedback from stakeholders
- Recognize any potential limitations to data
 - Sample size limitations
 - Data quality
 - Contextual factors

Communications/ Utilization



Communicating/Using your Program Data

- **Why?**
 - Transparency and accountability
 - Improved decision-making
 - Building buy-in and support for efforts
 - Enhanced public trust
 - Program and process improvement
 - Contribute to evidence-base
- **How?**
 - Reports and publications
 - Infographics and other visualizations
 - Factsheets
 - Social media
 - Newsletters and email campaigns
 - Presentations and conferences



Audiences Types

External Audiences

Those you want to engage to educate/raise awareness about your issues and work; influence behaviors; or garner support for your programs, services, resources, systems change, or other plans.

THINK: end-users of programs, community stakeholders, funders, legislators

Internal Audiences

Those who already understand what you want to accomplish but need and deserve regular communication about progress to maintain buy-in and support.

THINK: partners, staff, board members (if applicable)

Using Data to Tell Your Story

Datasets contain stories, your task is to find them

Focus on messaging that will connect with your audience

- What are their values, beliefs, priorities?
- What are sources of information they trust?

BLUF

- **Bottom Line Up Front:** Don't overburden the audience with too much information

When a Single Number is Important

Approximately
1 in 8 Georgians



Are Uninsured



Tips for Successful Planning

- Dedicate staff
- Form a workgroup – include key stakeholder representation
- Engage and involve stakeholders in plan development
- This is not a “one and done” process → Be prepared to adjust the plan as needed

Use your TA Provider

➤ **Monthly TA Calls**

- Strategize an approach to developing your plan and engaging partners
- Review data collection strategies and measures
- Convene team for data conversations
- Strategize data utilization and communication

➤ **Review & provide feedback**

➤ **Site visits**

- Customized, collaborative design
- Short and focused
- Action oriented
- Facilitated conversations - strategy development, refine plans, and/or address implementation issues
- Training/capacity building components

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Strategy

We select the most appropriate and effective approach given the unique, local context, while cultivating a strategic mindset



Thank you!

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Questions?

