

PRIORITIZATION - TRACKING FOR SUCCESS

For activities aimed to engage and include Latino youth, programmatic and organizational evaluations would benefit existing and future undertakings. The intent of the evaluation is to measure program and organizational development, effectiveness, success, policies, and services; and identify areas of potential improvement. Two general categories of program evaluation should be conducted: formative and summative.



In formative evaluation, programs /projects are assessed during their development or early implementation to provide information about how best to revise and modify for improvement. This type of evaluation is often used for pilot projects, new programs, or monitoring ongoing programs. In summative evaluation, programs/projects are assessed at the end of implementation, and findings are used to help decide whether a program should be adopted, continued, or modified for improvement.

Both evaluation methods are recommended for use, when possible, to provide staff with feedback for program modifications (formative) as well as review of progress on program goals and objectives (summative). To ensure a thorough program evaluation and depending on the scope and focus of the study several methods could be used and may include literature reviews, case studies, site visits, focus groups, personal interviews, economic analyses, and quantitative surveys.

Questions an evaluation can answer may include:

- What factors (historical, environmental, organizational, political, financial, etc.) are associated with the success or failure of the program, service, or organization to date?
- How can implementation be improved?

- What are the positive and negative outcomes of the program, service, or organization?
- To what extent were the needs of all members of the stakeholder community effectively served?
- How, if at all, should the goals and objectives of the program, service, or organization be revised?
- Relative to its cost, how valuable are the results of the program?
- Do alternatives or modifications exist that better meet the goals and objectives?
- Will the contributions of the program be sustained?

For organizational evaluations, an internal and external component is recommended. The internal evaluation assesses the organization's goals, objectives and vision as well as the internal staff attitudes and values. Methodologies may include focus groups and/or surveys to capture internal staff perceptions and attitudes that identify areas of effectiveness and areas of needed growth and improvement. An external evaluation assesses the opinions and attitudes toward the organization from external constituents and the general public. Methodologies may include focus groups and/or surveys of stakeholders and/or the general population as well as case studies and economic analyses.

The knowledge gained from a thorough evaluation provides the organization with an understanding to improve programs and build strong partnerships.