# Evaluation Planning Handout

## Step 1: What do you need to know?

The first step in any evaluation process is to identify what you want to know. Frame it as a question. Use the examples below to help you write your own situation and evaluation question.

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| **Situation** | **Evaluation Question** |
| *Ex. You led a presentation for a community group* | *Did the audience learn what we tried to teach?* |
| *Ex. You have completed your food pantry project* | *Have we been successful in achieving our goals?* |
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## Step 2: Choose the Best Evaluation Method

In order to answer the question from Step 1 effectively and efficiently, choose the most appropriate evaluation method. Consider how much time or resources are available, the strengths and weaknesses of various methods, who you are gathering information from, and what type of data you need to answer the question. Examples are provided to help you.

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| **Audience** | **Data Needed to Answer the Question** | **Evaluation Method** |
| *Ex. Presentation audience members* | *What they learned and how they want to help* | *1-page survey to be completed by each audience member before leaving* |
| *Ex. Food pantry clientele* | *The number of participants and their satisfaction with the pantry* | *Tracking participation by collecting a 3-question postcard from each participant* |
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## Step 3: Developing and Conducting the Evaluation for Your Project

Now that you have decided what you need to know and how you want to gather the data, it’s time to develop the evaluation tool you will use. What kinds of questions might you ask to help you get the data you need? Use the examples below to help you.

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| **Data Needed** *(from Step 2)* | **Questions for More Detail** |
| *Ex. What the audience members learned and how they want to help* | * Did you understand the information we presented? Y or N
* What is the most important thing you learned from the presentation?
* What was missing from the presentation?
* Are you willing to help with our project? Y or N
* If yes, how can we contact you?
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| *Ex. The number of participants and their satisfaction with the pantry* | * Date (so you can count how many participants attended each day)
* How satisfied are you with the food at the pantry? (scale)
* How satisfied are you with the hours the pantry is open? (scale)
* How satisfied are you with volunteer support at the pantry? (scale)
* What suggestions do you have to improve the pantry? (open-ended)
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**Respect for those Who Took Part in the Evaluation**

The most important thing to remember when gathering data is to respect the people you are collecting it from. What does this kind of respect look like?

* Only ask for information you need in the simplest way possible
* Always give them the choice to not take part in your evaluation
* Thank them when they do take time to participate

How you ask questions and organize your evaluation tool can make a big difference in how many people participate in it. Many resources for evaluation development are available free on the Internet. For more help in developing your evaluation, please refer to the [YACH Guidebook’s supplemental web page](https://blogs.extension.wisc.edu/yach/evaluate-your-plan/).

When you have an evaluation tool developed, implement it as you planned and as was recommended by the support resources you used.

## Step 4: Analyze the Data

It is not enough to collect and compile the data. It’s important to analyze the data to find out what it can tell you. Analysis helps draw out important pieces of data that show if a project has been successful. Resources to help you think through how to look at the data you have collected are available at the [YACH Guidebook’s supplemental web page](https://blogs.extension.wisc.edu/yach/evaluate-your-plan/).

**Here are a few questions for you to consider in analyzing the data:**

* In what ways has your project been successful so far?
* In what areas of the project is more work needed?
* What does the data suggest about next steps or changes that are needed? This could be for the youth or for another group
* What other questions does the data raise? What might you want to know more about?
* What unintended outcomes came up, if any?

## Step 5: Use/Share the Data

We gather data for one or more specific purposes. We gather it to help us know if we have been successful. We use it, and when appropriate we share it with others who may benefit.

**Respect for those Who Took Part in the Evaluation**

* Keep their responses anonymous—never share individual data
* Only use the data they share in positive ways (consider your intentions as well as potential impacts on various groups of people of how you share data)

**A few questions you might consider as you think about how to use or share the data include:**

* Based on what you learned as you analyzed the data, what changes might you make to your project?
* Who else might need or want the data? (Consider groups you identified as allies or partners earlier in the project. Look back at your first ripple map if it helps.)
* How will you share your data with the group(s) you identified? (Consider strategies such as writing a brief report, creating an infographic, developing a web page or social media posts, doing a presentation, or a variety of other means to share the data.)

