

Evaluability Assessment

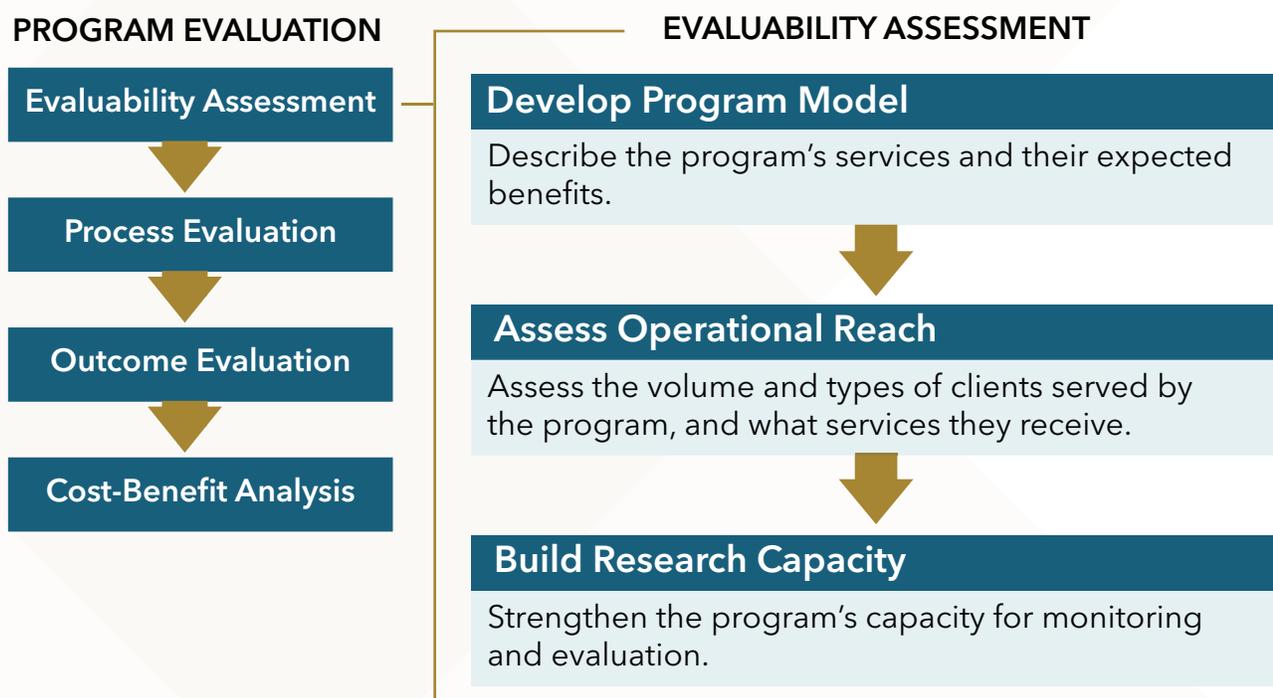
What is an evaluability assessment?

An evaluability assessment can help newer programs prepare for evaluation and determine the extent to which evaluation will be useful and feasible.¹ The goals of an evaluability assessment are to clarify a program's objectives, resources, activities; determine whom the program reaches and how; assess or build its research capacity; and pinpoint areas for improvement before an evaluation takes place.

Evaluability assessments provide essential information about a program or service's functioning to stakeholders at the earliest stages of a program's implementation. By gathering information at this formative stage, leadership is better equipped to ensure a program is on the right track and set up for success. Completing an evaluability assessment builds a strong foundation for a subsequent [Process Evaluation](#) or [Outcome Evaluation](#).

What steps are involved in an evaluability assessment?

An evaluability assessment's components vary depending on the program and context, but typically include the following (see figure and next page).



¹Evaluability assessments are sometimes called formative evaluations.

1. **Develop program model**—outline the program model, including the *resources* available (e.g. staff, physical space, funding), the *services* that will be offered and to whom (e.g. safety planning for domestic violence survivors), and the expected *benefits* of the program to clients (e.g. access to shelters). This outline can serve as the program’s logic model, or conceptual framework, which can be further developed at a later stage if needed.
2. **Assess operational reach**—describe the volume and types of clients whom the program is designed to serve, whom the program actually serves, and how services are delivered. Assessing the program’s capacity, operational strategy, and reach will help determine when the program may be ready for an evaluation.
3. **Build research capacity**—take stock of the program’s data sources and their quality to help build capacity for research and program monitoring. This could include identifying how client records are tracked (e.g. case managers update files daily), how quality is assured (e.g. supervisors conduct weekly file reviews), and the extent to which data are available for analyses. Use the information collected to outline objectives for improving the quality and availability of data moving forward.

How do I conduct an evaluability assessment?

The following activities commonly support an evaluability assessment:

- **Review program materials** including items such as mission statements, program policies, staff management and training plans, and client service information. Use these materials to develop a program logic model, or conceptual framework.
- **Talk with key stakeholders** such as program staff, clients, and community members, to understand the program’s vision and objectives, and evaluation potential. If applicable, respect procedures to [protect victims](#) during research.
- **Examine program/service data** on the number and types of clients who have been served, to determine whether the program is reaching its target population and to understand the services that are actually being provided.
- **Inventory data sources and their quality** by working with program staff to review record keeping practices and any data management systems. Work with program staff to determine what new data collection activities could be added, without compromising the quality of services.
- **Develop a quality assurance plan** for providers to implement as they deliver services, including helpful tools like service checklists and guidelines for reviewing client records.
- **Summarize information collected** to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the program model and data management system. Meet with key stakeholders, and use findings to refine program practices, guide strategic planning, and determine when and how to engage in an evaluation.

Additional Resources

For more on [program evaluation](#) and a [library](#) of research materials, visit CVR online.

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