



# SHEEO

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

## Components of Program Evaluation

---

David Tandberg – Principal Policy Analyst

Christina Whitfield – Associate Vice President

## Session Goal

Discussion of the issues we should currently be considering in order to design and implement a quality evaluation of our adult promise programs.

## Importance of Program Evaluation

“We cannot make our programs better unless we know where they are weak and strong . . . We cannot plan effectively if we are unaware of options and their relative merits; and we cannot convince our constituents that we have done good work and deserved continued support unless we can show them evidence that we have done what we promised and produced beneficial results. For these and other reasons, public servants must subject their work to competent evaluation.” (Stufflebeam, 1983,p. 140)

## Planning for Evaluation

Planning for the evaluation should begin while you are designing the policy.

- Evaluation should be baked into the policy design and implementation processes
- Up-front conversations will help ensure proper design, that the required data are collected, and that the necessary commitment is obtained to conduct a quality evaluation and to positively respond to the evaluation results

## Planning for Evaluation

Early internal conversations should involve policy, research, and data staff

- Each bring critical perspectives, knowledge, and resources

## Engage Stakeholders

It is vital to engage stakeholders during the planning phase for the evaluation. These stakeholders might include:

- Governor/governor's office
- Legislature
- Adult students
- College and university staff
- State financial aid administrators
- Business and industry

## Applying Lessons Learned from the Evaluation

- Consider early who should see what, when, and how
- Ensure an early commitment to the evaluation and to using the results to improve the program
- After receiving the results engage in internal and external conversations about program revision

## Early Considerations

- What are our policy goals?
- Who are the intended audiences for, and what are the goals of, the evaluation?
- What are our research questions?
- Given our research questions, what type of evaluation/research design(s) will we need to implement?



## Early Considerations

- What types of data do we need to collect?
- How will we define our cohorts and comparison/baseline groups?
- How are we going to track implementation?
- Which data do we have on hand? Are new data collections required?
- Will we need to engage in any data sharing agreements?

## Quantitative Research Questions

- Are students in the program progressing at higher rates than students in the baseline group?
- Are program participants completing credentials with value?
- Is the Promise program benefitting under-served students?
- Are specific program design elements or interventions particularly effective?
- What is the return on investment for the program?

## Qualitative Research Questions

- What are adult students' specific support needs?
- How do participants describe their experience as adult students and with the program?
- How did different institutions, organizations, or departments approach the implementation of the program?
- What is their perception of the implementation process?

## State-Specific Research Questions

- What are the research questions/evaluation design considerations specific to your project?
- What might we consider regarding cross-state comparability?