

BOX 3. Engaging stakeholders

Definition	Fostering input, participation, and power-sharing among those persons who have an investment in the conduct of the evaluation and the findings; it is especially important to engage primary users of the evaluation.
Role	Helps increase chances that the evaluation will be useful; can improve the evaluation's credibility, clarify roles and responsibilities, enhance cultural competence, help protect human subjects, and avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.
Activities	• Consulting insiders (e.g., leaders, staff, clients, and program funding sources) and outsiders (e.g., skeptics); • Taking special effort to promote the inclusion of less powerful groups or individuals; • Coordinating stakeholder input throughout the process of evaluation design, operation, and use; and • Avoiding excessive stakeholder identification, which might prevent progress of the evaluation.

BOX 4. Describing the program

Definition	Scrutinizing the features of the program being evaluated, including its purpose and place in a larger public health context. Description includes information regarding the way the program was intended to function and the way that it actually was implemented. Also includes features of the program's context that are likely to influence conclusions regarding the program.
Role	Improves evaluation's fairness and accuracy; permits a balanced assessment of strengths and weaknesses and helps stakeholders understand how program features fit together and relate to a larger context.
Activities	• Characterizing the need (or set of needs) addressed by the program; • Listing specific expectations as goals, objectives, and criteria for success; • Clarifying why program activities are believed to lead to expected changes; • Drawing an explicit logic model to illustrate relationships between program elements and expected changes; • Assessing the program's maturity or stage of development; • Analyzing the context within which the program operates; • Considering how the program is linked to other ongoing efforts; and • Avoiding creation of an overly precise description for a program that is under development.

BOX 5. Focusing the evaluation design

Definition	Planning in advance where the evaluation is headed and what steps will be taken; process is iterative (i.e., it continues until a focused approach is found to answer evaluation questions with methods that stakeholders agree will be useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate); evaluation questions and methods might be adjusted to achieve an optimal match that facilitates use by primary users.
Role	Provides investment in quality; increases the chances that the evaluation will succeed by identifying procedures that are practical, politically viable, and cost-effective; failure to plan thoroughly can be self-defeating, leading to an evaluation that might become impractical or useless; when stakeholders agree on a design focus, it is used throughout the evaluation process to keep the project on track.
Activities	• Meeting with stakeholders to clarify the real intent or purpose of the evaluation; • Learning which persons are in a position to actually use the findings, then orienting the plan to meet their needs; • Understanding how the evaluation results are to be used; • Writing explicit evaluation questions to be answered; • Describing practical methods for sampling, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and judgment; • Preparing a written protocol or agreement that summarizes the evaluation procedures, with clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders; and • Revising parts or all of the evaluation plan when critical circumstances change.