

Conducting a Stakeholder Site Visit

Background: Stakeholders are people or organizations invested in a program, interested in the results of the evaluation, and/or with a stake in what will be done with the results of the evaluation. Stakeholders contribute ideas for success, offer a different perspective, or provide resources and engaging stakeholders can build confidence and strengthen relationships. Prioritizing stakeholder engagement can facilitate project progress and investment in successful collaboration. Site visits provide an opportunity to get to know stakeholders, discuss project activities, and identify shared values and priorities.

Purpose: In public health we collaborate with laboratories, clinicians and first responders, among others. Based on your workflows it may be helpful to learn about another area related to your work. Consider how your data is collected and who may be involved, how the analyzed data is used for program improvement or community engagement, or the experience of the end user of your data. Examples of meaningful site visits include visiting a public health laboratory for vaccine related projects, police departments for opioid related projects, noninfectious disease staff can discuss similarities and differences with infectious disease colleagues on outbreak investigation processes or surveillance related projects, and hospitals for syndromic surveillance related projects.

Objectives: 1) Meet with stakeholders to build and/or establish a relationship of trust and understanding. 2) Increase understanding and awareness of other public health ecosystem components.

Consider the following in your planning and discussion for the site visit.

1. Describe your current relationship with your stakeholder. Consider your interests, communication preferences and shared goals.
2. Identify strengths and areas of improvement.
3. Identify priorities, project goals and challenges.
4. Discuss possible solutions and necessary resources to support change.
5. Actively listen to and engage your stakeholder during the site visit.
6. Consider opportunities for alignment and mutual support.
7. Decide how you may engage or communicate in the future. Are regular updates needed?
8. Reflect on the importance of cross-discipline collaboration and shared learning.