


*Providing Context*




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### Key Questions

- Why assess/evaluate the program?
- What counts as evidence of success?
- Who will use the information?
- How will it be used?
- What decisions is it designed to support?
- What's reasonable to assess?




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### Original Program Legislation

"The conferees continue to be concerned about the health care needs of those in the Mississippi River Delta region. The conferees ...will provide \$6.8 million to continue HRSA's ongoing initiative which is providing funding and technical assistance to help underserved rural communities identify and better address their health care needs and to help small rural hospitals improve their financial and operational performance."

- 2002 Conference Report




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## Purpose of the DSRDN Program

To improve the health of people living in rural Delta areas by:

- » Improving systems of health care in rural areas in the Delta
- » Strengthening rural Delta State community organizations' ability to develop and implement projects to address local health care needs



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## Assessment or Evaluation?

- Health Program Evaluation = the systematic application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, or outcomes of a program.
- Assessing the Impact of a Program = identifying and compiling evidence that the program is having its intended impact.



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## Why Evaluate?

- How do you know if you're accomplishing program goals?
- Even if you ARE accomplishing those goals, could you be doing it better?
- How do you communicate your accomplishments to funders, partners, communities, and intended recipients of program services?



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## Evaluation Can...

- Improve the implementation and effectiveness of programs
- Help document program accomplishments
- Help better manage resources
- Satisfy ethical responsibility to clients to demonstrate positive and negative effects of program participation



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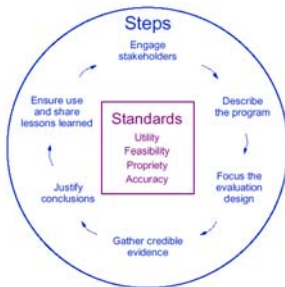
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## Recommended Framework for Evaluation



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## Program Assessment

- Less "rigorous"
- Driven by original intent of program
- Used specifically by Federal Programs to demonstrate why they should continue to be funded



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## State Approach: Evaluation or Impact Assessment?



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## Federal Approach: Assess Program Impact

- Emphasis on demonstrating impact of the DSRDN program
- Addresses realities of "performance-based budgeting"
- Need "evidence" to support program impact
- We (ORHP and you) can define what we believe constitutes "evidence"



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## Question

As a program, what information can all (or most) DSRDN grantees provide that will demonstrate that the Program is achieving its intended effect?



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