

## Checklist for Maximizing Your Internal Evaluator

The following items will help ensure that your organization receives the maximum benefit from an internal evaluator or evaluation team.

- There is a sufficient budget to support evaluation activities.
- Evaluation staff have sufficient facilities, equipment, technology, and technical support.
- Adequate information systems are in place to collect and analyze evaluation data.
- There are sufficient evaluation staff to meet the demand for evaluation.
- External evaluation consultants are used when needed.
- Evaluation staff have access to on-going professional development.
- Other program staff have access to basic training and/or coaching in evaluation.
- Program staff, managers, clients, and other collaborators have the opportunity to participate in planning, conducting, analyzing evaluation data.
- Evaluation staff are able to respond to urgent needs for information from management.
- There is an organization-wide evaluation policy or guiding principles in place.
- There is an evaluation champion(s) at the senior level.

- The evaluator has a direct reporting relationship to a senior leader.

## Additional Tips

- Review the literature first for relevant studies before asking for a duplicate evaluation.
- Approach your evaluator(s) with a clear idea of what you need:
  - Is it an evaluation, research, performance monitoring, quality improvement, business support and analysis, or internal audit?
  - Do you need them to lead an evaluation, educate staff to do one their own, or provide simple advice?
- Come with initial evaluation questions and be prepared to have a discussion about the possibilities. Then allow them to guide you through the best possible process.
- Contact your evaluator early, not when a project is coming to an end.
- Allow your evaluator to use their full skill set, they can do much more than just surveys.
- Recognize that good evaluation requires a team of people, not a single person.
- Recognize that attributing outcomes to a particular program is often limited by program context and the resources available.
- Ask for tips on how to increase use of the findings within the organization.
- Situate the evaluator(s) in a department where they are not marginalized next to clinical research nor limited in the scope of programs they can evaluate.