

How to Create an Evaluation Plan

There is considerable literature that suggest that the time to start the development of an evaluation plan is at the beginning. In the case of a volunteer driver program, the plan could be developed so it is ready at the beginning of the program and can be implemented when the program is ready to undertake an evaluation. Below are two important steps in the planning process.

IDENTIFY THE ELEMENTS

The following program elements: inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes are important in planning the evaluation.

Inputs: financial resources, equipment, facilities, staff, etc.

Activities: organization of the program, plans, and goals or accomplishment related to recruitment, training, and fundraising activities

Outputs: target numbers of passengers, drivers, and staff involved in the program and rides planned or provided

Outcomes: volunteer transportation services planned or provided including passengers served, the volunteers, staff, community members, and the funding needed and secured

Once these elements have been identified, it will be important to identify the activities necessary in creating the evaluation plan: 1) goal and purpose, 2) evaluation questions, 3) types of information to be collected, 4) participants involved, and 5) time frame for the evaluation.

Plan the Activities

Below are the five activities that will be helpful in creating a volunteer driver program evaluation plan.

1. Identify the Goal and Purpose of the Evaluation

Evaluation goals and purposes might emphasize the delivery of at least 500 rides to older adults by involving volunteers as drivers within the first two years of operation.

2. Develop the Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions might include: Who might be recruited as passengers, how they will be recruited, and how many will be recruited? How and how many volunteers will be recruited, and how will they be recruited? What is the satisfaction of both riders and drivers regarding the volunteer transportation service?

3. Decide on the Information to Be Gathered

Information related to usage would be developed from the program's software about the number of rides, the types and numbers of passengers, and the numbers of volunteer drivers. Information related to satisfaction would be gathered from surveys and focus groups.

4. Determine the Program Participants to Be Involved

All program staff and board members could be involved in the evaluation. A sample of volunteer drivers and passengers also could be asked to participate in the evaluation.

5. Set the Time Frame for the Evaluation

Although many programs undertake an evaluation on an annual basis, a new volunteer driver program may decide to complete its planning activities and initial implementation activities before initiating an evaluation process. It would appear that in the event it undertakes a one-year planning process and a one-year implementation process, the evaluation could be undertaken in year three.