

The ultimate purpose of sharing evaluation results is to demonstrate program effectiveness and identify program improvements.

There are some additional uses of evaluation and they include the following:

- To demonstrate to legislators or other stakeholders that resources are being well spent.
- To aid in forming budgets and justify the allocation of resources.
- To compare outcomes with those of previous years.
- To compare actual outcomes with intended outcomes.
- To suggest realistic intended outcomes.
- To support annual and long-range planning.
- To focus attention on issues important to the program.
- To promote the program.
- To identify partners for collaborations.
- To enhance the program's image.
- To retain or increase funding.
- To provide direction for program staff.
- To identify training and technical assistance needs.

### What's involved in ensuring use and sharing lessons learned?

Five elements are important in making sure that the findings from an evaluation are used:

- Making recommendations
- Preparation
- Feedback
- Follow-up
- Dissemination

### Making Recommendations

Recommendations are actions to consider as a result of an evaluation. They can strengthen an evaluation when they anticipate and react to what users want to know. Recommendations may also undermine an evaluation's credibility if they aren't supported by enough evidence or aren't in keeping with stakeholders' values.

Keeping this in mind, what's recommended will depend on the intended audience and the purpose of the evaluation. Identifying and engaging key stakeholders during the evaluation process maximizes the chances that the recommendations will be relevant and useful to them. Getting feedback early on in the evaluation makes our stakeholders' eventual support of the report recommendations more likely.

### Preparation

Preparation refers to the steps taken to get ready to eventually use the evaluation findings. Through preparation, stakeholders can:

- Strengthen their ability to translate new knowledge into appropriate action.
- Discuss how potential findings might affect decision-making.
- Explore positive and negative implications of potential results and identify different options for program improvement.

### Feedback

Feedback is the communication that occurs among everyone involved in the evaluation. Feedback, necessary at all stages of the evaluation process, creates an atmosphere of trust among stakeholders. Early in an evaluation, the process of giving and receiving feedback keeps an evaluation on track by keeping everyone informed about how the program is being implemented and how the evaluation is proceeding.

As the evaluation progresses and preliminary results become available, feedback helps ensure that primary intended users and other stakeholders have opportunities to comment on evaluation decisions. Valuable feedback can be obtained by holding discussions and routinely sharing interim findings, provisional interpretations, and draft reports.

### Follow-up

Although follow-up refers to the support that many users need throughout the evaluation process, here it refers to the support that's needed after users receive evaluation results and begin to reach and justify their conclusions.

Active follow-up can achieve the following:

- Remind users of the intended uses of what has been learned.
- Help to prevent misuse of results by ensuring that evidence is applied to the questions that were the evaluation's central focus.
- Prevent lessons learned from becoming lost or ignored in the process of making complex or political decisions.

Use the checklist that follows to plan for using and sharing evaluation results.

Using and Sharing Evaluation Results Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify strategies to increase the likelihood that evaluation findings will be used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify strategies to reduce the likelihood that information will be misinterpreted.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide continuous feedback to the program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare stakeholders for the eventual use of evaluation findings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify training and technical assistance needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use evaluation findings to support annual and long-range planning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use evaluation findings to promote your program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use evaluation findings to enhance the public image of your program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule follow-up meetings to facilitate the transfer of evaluation conclusions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate procedures used and lessons learned to stakeholders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider interim reports to key audiences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tailor evaluation reports to audience(s.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revisit the purpose(s) of the evaluation when preparing recommendations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present clear and succinct findings in a timely manner.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid jargon when preparing or presenting information to stakeholders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate evaluation findings in several ways.

*Adapted from:* <https://www.cdc.gov/eval/guide/step6/index.htm>