



Evaluations fall into one of two broad categories: formative and summative. Formative evaluations are conducted during program development and implementation. They're useful when we want direction on how to best achieve program goals or improve a program. Summative evaluations should be completed once programs are well-established. They will show if the program is achieving its goals.

Within the categories of formative and summative evaluation, there are different types of evaluation. Choosing which one is appropriate depends on the stage of the program.

Type of Evaluation	Purpose
Formative	
Needs Assessment	Helps to determine who needs the program, how great the need is, and what can be done to best meet the need.
Process or implementation evaluation	Examines the process of implementing the program and determines whether the program is operating as planned. It can be done continuously or as a one-time assessment. Results are used to improve the program.
Summative	
Outcome evaluation	Investigates to what extent the program is achieving its outcomes. These outcomes are the short-term and medium-term changes in program participants that result directly from the program.
Impact evaluation	Determines any broader, longer-term changes that have occurred as a result of the program. These impacts are the net effects, typically on the community, organization or society.

Source: <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/evaluation-what-it-and-why-do-it>

