

Understanding Program Effectiveness: NIWL's Research & Evaluation Services

OVERVIEW

NIWL's Research Team meets clients wherever they are in the evaluation journey—from design to data collection to dissemination. We gain a true understanding of our partners' goals and then tailor our process to best fit their needs. Our continuum of support covers various planning and evaluation stages and is anchored in collaboration and communication.

As program evaluation experts, NIWL's Research Team clarifies for clients how their projects are progressing toward intended outcomes. We apply rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods, helping clients build evidence for their work. Through data collection, analysis, and feedback, we identify what is working and what could be improved. We customize our research designs and instruments to answer the right questions and present the results in the most effective manner. We support our partners in building strong evaluation practices and enabling informed, data-driven decisions.

WHY EVALUATION?

- Understand the effectiveness of a program
- Understand areas for improvement
- Document effective practices to replicate in other settings
- Communicate effectiveness to partners, community members, and funders



Pam Carter talks with a Promising Justice Practices attendee. Photo Credit Hawk Hartico

CORE STRENGTHS

- ❖ **Content Expertise:** Our key focus areas include college and career readiness, career and technical education, postsecondary education, juvenile justice prevention/reentry and working with Tribal and rural communities. We help organizations assess needs, strengthen capacity, and focus on continuous improvement in both education and employment.
- ❖ **Collaborative and Participatory Approach:** Community members are the experts in their own strengths, challenges, and opportunities. We prioritize our partners' involvement in evaluation activities from start to finish.
- ❖ **Partnership:** We aim to understand our clients' needs and goals through listening and relationship-building. Our commitment, responsiveness, and consistent delivery of high-quality products has led to numerous repeat clients. Along the way, we strengthen our partners' capacity to use data to drive decision making.
- ❖ **Storytelling:** Our strong partnerships allow us to best listen, record, and tell partners' and their participants' powerful stories. This leads to youth voices in program design, evidence-based results for securing funding, and a rigorous determination of a project's strengths accomplishments.

In our **summative evaluation** of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tiwahe Pilot Initiative—which integrated social service delivery in Tribal nations—qualitative researchers collaborated with Tribal leaders and administrators to tailor the study protocol. Leaders, social service providers, and Native Nations' citizens reviewed draft findings for accuracy and appropriateness, providing commentary that shaped the final evaluation report to Congress.

EVALUATION ROADMAP



Engagement and Understanding.

- Engaging with partners and communities
- Develop shared understanding of evaluation audience, purpose, and benefit to community



Conceptualization/Planning.

- Co-constructing a *Theory of Change* (ToC) to serve as project roadmap
- Align project activities, strategies and intended outcomes and their causal pathways to ToC



Design.

- Selection of evaluation method based on client needs and current literature
- Creation of custom questionnaires, surveys, and interview protocols
- Use of expert, mixed-method researchers to highlight program impact and improvement areas



Implementation.

- Securing Human Subject Research Approval
- Collection of primary data (virtually/through site visits)
- Collection of secondary data (databases/environmental scans)
- Routine communication of findings



Analysis.

- Use of statistical or qualitative analysis of data, as appropriate
- Confirming ideas with program participants prior to report writing
- Developing recommendations based on findings
- Development of dynamic, iterative, and user-centered data dashboards, providing ease of access for partners in making data-driven solutions



Reporting and Use.

- Compiling findings into multiple presentations and reports - each crafted for a particular audience
- Creation of graphics such as charts, tables, and photos for easily understandable communication of results



Finalization.

- Prioritize client review, discussion, and feedback
- Building client capacity for data-driven decision making

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

- **Landscape analysis** to inform the development of AmeriCorps' alumni program
- **Environmental scan** to assist site selection for GE Aerospace's Next Engineers
- **Case study** of rural reentry in southeast Arkansas
- **Oral history** to celebrate 30th anniversary of Johnson & Johnson's Bridge to Employment (BTE) program
- **Summative evaluation** of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's GEAR UP
- **Data dashboards** co-designed with J&J for WiSTEM²D and BTE

Through our collaboration with Junior Achievement WorldWide (supported by HSBC), we collectively designed a **mixed-methods study** to examine the relationship of a financial program, *Building a Financially Capable Generation*, and student knowledge, attitude, behavioral intent, and self-efficacy as it related to financial capability.

Want to learn more? Check out our resources by scanning the QR code!



About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so people everywhere have access to the opportunities they need to lead full and healthy lives. With collaborations in over 60 countries, we work directly with local leaders to improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

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