



**2018-2019 UNM EVALUATION LAB  
Organization Debriefings – May and June 2019**

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The Evaluation Lab Team Leads and I conducted a debriefing at the conclusion of the 2018-2019 Lab with the leadership of each organization. The purpose of the debriefing is to assess the extent to which the Lab is meeting organization needs and realizing the Lab's goal of supporting organizations in enhancing their evaluation capacity.

We debriefed all seven 2018-2019 partner organizations in May and June of 2019. Organizations were very responsive to requests for the debriefing interviews and generous with their time; the meetings lasted between 30 minutes and an hour.

This report summarizes the content of the interviews.

## I. VALUE TO ORGANIZATIONS

### **Learning, engagement and big-picture thinking**

Organizations reported that staff members gained *new skills in qualitative data collection and analysis, and in going through the process of developing and implementing a survey*. Three organizations reported that staff learned how to conduct an interactive focus group and two reported that staff learned how to code. The coding process helped one organization appreciate the value of qualitative data as a legitimate—and rich—source of information.

Another benefit was staff *engagement*. At NMPCA, the focus group process really engaged clinic staff, people wanted to be heard. Organization leadership learned that evaluation can energize an organization.

Other benefits were bringing new staff into the process and promoting *big-picture thinking*.

### **Products**

Organizations valued the evaluation products created with the Lab, which they used in grant proposals and grant reports. The products included:

- Useful feedback
- A multi-year evaluation plan
- Logical models and rubrics
- Community data compilations
- Literature reviews
- Identifying a promising data platform
- Client survey data

### ***In their own words:***

*Every time I work with the Lab, I learn something different.*

*We got a lot as always.*

## II. CAPACITY BUILDING

**Training**, especially for organizations that had teams working on project. Staff member teams in two organizations were involved in collecting and coding focus group data.

**Organization initiatives.** One organization planned own focus group (although challenging to recruit clients) and developed a successful feedback survey last year with 400 respondents (although challenging to keep momentum; this year only 60). Las Cumbres now has a part time Evaluation Coordinator; Centro Sávila is hiring a part time evaluation coordinator and program developer.

**Organization climate.** Organizations reported more staff buy-in for evaluation.

**Work in progress.** Two organizations see capacity building as a **work in progress**. One is looking to send more staff members to the Summer Institute. The other is interested in joining the ECHO learning community.

### ***In their own words:***

*We learned enough to do focus group on our own.*

*The UNM team really gained people's confidence. Over years [of working with the Lab], staff see evaluation as shining light for good, and not as a hammer.*

## III. STUDENTS

Organizations reported **good communication and responsiveness** on the part of the UNM team. One organization said that the students kept the project on track with lots of reminders, which they appreciated.

**Students also brought value to projects.** One organization found that, "Students brought with them a lot of things we are looking for in who we want to hire: experience with invisible barriers for population, appreciation for challenges. Students asked good questions."

Another organization appreciated that the project was conducted as a **partnership**.

The Director of Embudo Valley Library was also a student. The **dual role** was sometimes difficult to navigate, especially with regard to the other student on the team.

### ***In their own words:***

*We had a great connection.*

## IV. CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

One organization said that, in retrospect, the original plan was too ambitious.

Another suggested that we consider an expanded model that includes periodic training throughout state, similar to what the state library provides.

Another organization was involved in a major leadership transition this year and had inherited the previous director's project.

In one project the team lead was also a staff member. Next time we should assign a different team lead.

One of the northern New Mexico organizations noted that the distance is challenging, and made it hard to coordinate meetings. This organization is stretched for resources, which made it hard to involve other staff members.

## V. LIFE AFTER THE EVALUATION LAB

The ECHO Learning Community is probably a good solution for the Embudo Valley Library.

One concern is how organizations can build infrastructure to continue evaluation.

Staff members who had attended the Summer Institute reported that the training helped with capacity building. One said, "It gave us a map." This foundation helped them to partner more effectively with the UNM team, because they understood what they were doing and why.

One organization said that it would be hard to do the following on their own: Literature review, report, external eye on data.

Several organizations expressed support for a coaching model, where senior fellows would continue evaluation support, backed up by supervision provided on campus.

### **Quote:**

*It's not that we can't do it. We don't have the time and ability to follow through and to keep it [evaluation] prioritized.*

## APPENDIX: Interview Questions

- 1-What did you and your organization get out of working with the Evaluation Lab if anything?
- 2-How were logistics? How was communication and professionalism of students?
- 3-What would you change?
- 4-Was there capacity building? Ideas for how we can help build evaluation capacity.