Internal and External Evaluation
When and how each works best

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Summer 2018
Externally and Internally driven evaluation

• Who wants the evaluation?
• What is the purpose of the evaluation?
• Who performs the evaluation?
Why evaluate?

• External reasons

• Internal reasons
Deciding who performs the evaluation

• Some funders require external evaluator
• Some funders want numbers
• Some funders want stories
• Other funders want evaluation of the programs they fund but don’t provide guidelines or money
Advantages and disadvantages of having an external evaluator
Hiring an external evaluator

• Evaluators have different approaches and cost varies widely
• Interview several to see what they can do with your budget, how they approach evaluation, and whether your communication styles are compatible
  • Ask for references
  • See published plans and reports in the Learning Center on the Evaluation Lab website
  • You will get a better evaluation from an evaluator who takes the time to really makes an effort to and understands your organization
• Hire early in the grant cycle
Cost of evaluation

Typical to write in 10%-20% of program costs for evaluation (higher end for more rigorous evaluation designs with credible comparison groups)

You will have no trouble finding an evaluator if you have $10k, which buys about 80 hours of an evaluator’s time

• Our evaluator: 5 interviews, focus group, skills survey, summary (but not a synthesizing report), 6 or so meetings, presentation before advisory council
• If you are generating your own data, cost could be less
• Unlikely this will support a rigorous design
Advantages and disadvantages of internal evaluations
Evaluation should feel satisfying and validating

Evaluation provides supporting documentation for what you know you are doing right . . .

. . . and illuminates the way forward
Satisfying and validating evaluations

• Internal evaluation activities lead to program adjustments

• External evaluator learns your organization, by really listening and observing, and by being (or becoming) familiar with the evidence base related to your work
  - Evaluation accurately reflects your organization and recommendations are helpful
Questions?

• THANK YOU!!