

## New York State Evaluation Tip Sheet for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Programs

**Important to remember: Evaluation is not punitive. Evaluation is not something that is done to you. Evaluation is considered part of management and is paid for out of the management budget, it is not an expense to program delivery. Good evaluations will collect data in order to provide you with high quality information for you to use to help you make decisions to continuously improve your program.**

### What to expect from your evaluator:

#### Support regarding the Annual Performance Report (APR) Requirements -

- ▶ **Evaluators should help coordinate and have some involvement in the collection of data for the APR, particularly the teacher surveys, report card grades and student test scores.** Some evaluators do the actual collection, particularly in smaller programs involving a small number of schools, for instance. In larger programs, with multiple feeder schools, a program person may be given the task of actually collecting the data. **In New York City, evaluators should be familiar with Youthservices.net software and provide assistance with data collection using this system.**
- ▶ **Evaluators should provide technical assistance in the entering of the data for the APR and/or enter outcome data for the APR.** That includes the student achievement data, teacher survey data and indicating whether or not objectives have been met.

#### Support beyond the APR -

- ▶ **Evaluators should provide program administrators with a clear evaluation plan that makes clear what evaluation services will be provided within the designated budget.** Evaluators should explain to key stakeholders, especially program directors and program staff, what data will be collected as part of the evaluation beyond the data required for the APR, when it will be collected, and the reasons for collecting it (What the data will tell program management and how that information will help them improve or maintain the quality of their program). The evaluator must provide a timeline regarding the data collection schedule in order to ensure that the information will be provided to program management in time for it to be useful in decision-making. Possible data sources include: student surveys, student focus groups, parent surveys, parent focus groups, program staff surveys, school administrator surveys/interviews, community based organization (CBO) partner surveys/interviews, site visit observations, etc. What data sources are used should be driven by what a program wants to learn, together with, how much an evaluator can do within the evaluation budget.
- ▶ **It is recommended that local evaluators include site visits as part of their program evaluation.** A typical number of site visits to a program is about 4 times per year, at a minimum, 2 per year, to determine such things as fidelity of implementation with the original proposal, whether the program is reaching its target population and target numbers, whether program is of high quality, if students are engaged, and any other indicators that would inform whether objectives stated in the individual grant proposal are being met. These are things that cannot be measured over a distance.
- ▶ **It is recommended that one site visit should include an observation of the parent/family component** with the above mentioned questions again considered.
- ▶ **Evaluators should provide ongoing feedback to program administrators, which should include suggestions for mid-course corrections.** This should be formal, such as monthly or

quarterly reports, meetings, conversations and/or memos. In addition to ongoing, formal reporting, the evaluator should also provide an annual summary report including the analysis and interpretation of all data (including that reported in the interim reports), and conclusions and recommendations (including those previously made and reported). Nothing in this final report should be a surprise to program personnel if there has been ongoing **communication throughout the year. As communication is a two way street, programs have to keep their evaluator informed of all program plans, whether programmatic or administrative in nature, that might impact program implementation. This program responsibility should be included in any evaluation contract.**

- ▶ **Cooperation with the Statewide Evaluation is required of evaluators by responding to all surveys and/or correspondence initiated as part of the Statewide Evaluation.** An Annual Evaluation Report will be required to be submitted to The New York State Education Department for all Round 4 and the soon to be Round 5 programs beginning next program year, to be submitted in 2010. These are the first cohorts to be mandated to have an external evaluator.

**Other recommended evaluation activities that program staff and evaluators have found to be especially helpful include the following:**

- ▶ **Creation of a logic model with program staff is a strategy used by many evaluators to obviate to program personnel what was originally promised in the grant proposal, the purpose of the promised activities and the expected results of providing the activities. When the evaluator gets together with key stakeholders, at the beginning of a program, to collaboratively create a logic model of its program, it has been proven to be an extremely worthwhile exercise.** Many site coordinators and other program staff are often not familiar with the grant proposal for their programs. The process of collaboratively creating the logic model is equally as useful as the actual product. The logic model itself can be revisited periodically and provides a nice frame of reference for ongoing productive discussions between the evaluator and key stakeholders.
- ▶ **The NYSAN Quality Self Assessment (QSA) instrument is a very useful checklist that offers programs a way to assess themselves in several areas that help them to pinpoint their compliance with mandatory pre-conditions and capacities for a quality program. The logic model, mentioned in the previous bullet, applies these pre-conditions and capacities as resources to the effective delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center program. The NYSAN QSA helps you to assess your material, organizational and personnel resources without which a high quality program is not possible. By facilitating the use of these two instruments, evaluators can provide essential guidance to program personnel on how to interpret the information provided by them.** NYSED mandates the use of the QSA twice each year for programs to reflect on their programs' preconditions and capacities. While most elements should be in place before the start of your program, it is good to periodically reflect to make sure they are still in place. Evaluators, as facilitators of the tool, can be effective in offsetting the tendencies of some to score themselves too generously and not honestly reflect.
- ▶ **While not currently mandated, it is highly recommended that evaluators attend the bi-annual TASE conference Evaluator Track sessions, of which there are typically two at each conference, and which are normally held in the fall and spring of each year.** These sessions help to increase the sharing of 'Best Practices' in evaluation and provide the opportunity to share and network. Attendance at the TASE Conference also benefits evaluators and the programs they serve in the receipt of updates and information from The Technical Assistance Center (TAC) program manager, State Evaluator and State Coordinator. The cost of this attendance should be included in any evaluation contract, including program commitment to pay evaluator travel to the conferences.