

Evaluation Plan Development Checklist for MIECHV Awardees

A DOHVE TA Resource

October 2018

About this checklist

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) awardees proposing to conduct a state-led evaluation with MIECHV funds are required to submit an evaluation plan. All evaluation plans must be approved by HRSA with concurrence from the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (ACF OPRE). The below checklist contains the basic components of an approvable evaluation plan. Before submitting your evaluation plan to your HRSA Project Officer (PO), we recommend you use this checklist to ensure you have included all the outlined components in your evaluation plan.

Timeline for submitting evaluation plans

Awardees must submit a full evaluation plan to their PO within 120 days after the FY 2018 Notice of Award (NOA). Your PO and DOHVE TA liaison will review the evaluation plan and provide initial feedback within 40 calendar days of receipt. After this, a representative from HRSA's Policy, Data, Technical Assistance and Communications (PDTAC) Branch and ACF's OPRE will review and provide feedback within 30 days of receipt of the revised plan. Awardees must wait until the evaluation plan is approved by HRSA before beginning their evaluation. Awardees are encouraged to submit plans before the 120-day deadline to expedite reviews and turnarounds. DOHVE Liaisons are available to assist with developing and submitting the plan between NOA release date and evaluation plan deadline (e.g., 120 days after the NOA).

*Timeline for Review Process for Evaluation Plans with Moderate Revisions**

Review Timeframe	Activity
1/21 - 3/15	1st round of reviews (DOHVE & PO) DOHVE liaison & PO revisions sent to awardee.
3/18 - 4/5	2nd round of reviews (DOHVE, PO, OPRE & HRSA) Awardees have 5-10 calendar days to address revisions. During this timeframe, the plan goes to OPRE and HRSA review. OPRE and HRSA reviewers provide the 2nd round of feedback.
4/5 - 4/30	Awardees send revised evaluation plan addressing all remaining feedback. Once HRSA approves evaluation plan, awardee can start FY18 evaluation activities.

**If evaluation plans have no revisions or minor revisions, plans may have a shorter review period. But, if evaluation plans need major revisions or do not properly address DOHVE, OPRE, or HRSA feedback, plans may have a longer review process.*

Suggestions for organizing and formatting evaluation plans

To assure clear communication of the components of the evaluation plan, please consider the following outline:

- 1) Evaluation Design
- 2) Data Analysis and Interim Reporting
- 3) Budget
- 4) Dissemination of Evaluation Findings

Additionally, keep the following considerations in mind when formatting evaluation plans:

- Include page numbers
- Include a table of contents
- Number the evaluation questions
- Spell out acronyms when used for the first time
- Provide summary tables aligning research questions with data collection methods, data collection tools, frequency of data collection, respondents, and proposed analyses
- Restate research questions before describing data collection methods and analyses to address research questions

EVALUATION PLAN COMPONENTS	YES	NO
1. Evaluation Design		
1a. Include a list of key evaluation staff and their relevant experience, skills, and knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specify entities/organizations responsible for collection and reporting evaluation data. ▪ Explain staff roles and responsibilities for all major evaluation activities. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1b. Provide rationale for the evaluation. Describe how evaluation questions are tied to program priorities, learning agenda, or long-term evaluation strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How and why were the evaluation topics, evaluation aims, and evaluation questions identified? How and why was the evaluation design selected? ▪ Include relevant literature if applicable. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1c. Describe adaptation, enhancement, or promising approach (if applicable). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the theoretical or empirical linkages between adaptation/model enhancement/promising approach and expected outcomes. Describe how evaluation will inform these links. ▪ Specify program theory of change for adaptation/model enhancement/promising approach. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1d. For promising approaches, an appropriate evaluation design is proposed to draw causal inferences about impact.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>1e. For continuing evaluations, summarize past evaluation findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the connection between the past and the new evaluation. Characterize the differences/updates between the prior and proposed evaluation. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1f. For continuing evaluations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The study must include one or more new questions of interest appropriate to the evaluation design and analysis plan; and/or ▪ An innovation that will increase study rigor and the generalizability of evaluation findings, such as a proposed increase to the study sample size. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1g. Specify evaluation framework and program theory of change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the program’s theory of change, including a visual or written description mapping program outcomes to intervention activities. ▪ Describe the evaluation framework that was used (e.g., participatory, utilization focused, developmental, etc). ▪ Explain how the proposed evaluation framework aligns with the program theory of change. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1h. Specify program outcomes measured in evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the expected immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of the evaluation. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1i. Specify population(s) targeted in the evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the characteristics of the target population? For example, will the study target first-time mothers or families with particular demographic or risk factors? ▪ Why will this population be targeted in the evaluation? For example, was a needs assessment conducted to identify the target population? ▪ How will the target population be identified for participating in the evaluation? For example, will a screening tool be used to identify evaluation participants? ▪ Provide any contextual background about the target population served. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1j. Specify evaluation research questions, and hypotheses as applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the primary aims of the evaluation? ▪ What are the primary research questions the evaluation will address? ▪ Are the questions specific and measurable? ▪ What hypotheses or outcomes are expected for each of the evaluation aims or research questions? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>1k. Specify evaluation design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What study design will be utilized to address the evaluation questions? If different designs or approaches will be used for individual questions, be sure to describe all designs and/or approaches. For example, a systems evaluation and quantitative approach may be used for select evaluation questions whereas an implementation evaluation and qualitative approach may be used to address other evaluation questions. ▪ Consider appropriate evaluation designs and data sources that can answer evaluation questions within an 18-19 month time frame. The evaluation plan review process can take up to 5 months or more. ▪ Proposed evaluation design meets expectations for rigor outlined in Appendix A of the award application and in the DOHVE TA resource, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: Ensuring Quality Evaluations ▪ Evaluation design is appropriate for and able to fully address proposed evaluation questions/hypotheses. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1l. Provide rationale for design selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a rationale for the selected evaluation design(s). For example, how is the selected evaluation design(s) particularly well suited for answering the evaluation questions? Were other evaluation designs considered and ultimately not selected due to contextual considerations or limitations? For example, program hesitation to conduct randomized studies, interest in reducing data collection burden, etc. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1m. Provide a description of timeline for evaluation activities. The timeline should be feasible for all major evaluation activities provided. (Note: All evaluation activities should be concluded by the end of the grant cycle). Timeline should allow extra time for evaluation plan revisions, DOHVE and OPRE review, and HRSA approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a timeline for all major evaluation phases and activities. For example, describe timeline for evaluation planning, Tribal oversight, IRB approval, instrument development, staff recruitment and training, administration of instruments, data collection, analysis, reporting. Timeline should be broken down by evaluation component when applicable. ▪ Ensure that the timeline includes development of a final evaluation summary document, which is a required component of the grant's final report. If applicable, consider timing to assure that the contracted evaluator is available to assist with this evaluation summary and any needed revisions. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1n. Provide a description of assessment tools and instruments used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a list of assessment tools and instruments used to assess each outcome and rationale for selecting those tools and instruments. For qualitative components, include a description of the protocol or discussion guides. ▪ Report the reliability coefficients for the instruments that will be used. Did you choose existing instruments or will you create your own instruments? If a tool will be developed, indicate steps you will take to validate it. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>1o. Provide a description of data collection methods and schedule (e.g., survey, interviews, etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe each data collection method and explain why the method was selected. Include the target population (or sub-population) for each data collection method. ▪ For each data collection activity, note when data will be collected and the frequency. For example, in a pre-post study, describe the schedule for when data will be assessed at baseline and follow-up. Will data be collected just once for follow-up or multiple times? If you are proposing a control or comparison group, will you use the same data collection methods for all groups? <p>Exhibit 1: Example Summary of Data Collection Methods and Schedule</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Data Collection Activity</th> <th>Data Collection Instrument(s)</th> <th>Target Respondents</th> <th>Frequency of Data Collection</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Home visitor surveys</td> <td>Working Alliance Inventory (WAI)</td> <td>10 home visitors</td> <td>Annual collection of WAI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supervisor interviews</td> <td>Semi-structured interview protocol</td> <td>5 supervisors</td> <td>Quarterly telephone interviews</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Data Collection Activity	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Target Respondents	Frequency of Data Collection	Home visitor surveys	Working Alliance Inventory (WAI)	10 home visitors	Annual collection of WAI	Supervisor interviews	Semi-structured interview protocol	5 supervisors	Quarterly telephone interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>1p. Provide sample size(s) and sampling plan if applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Define the type of sampling you plan will use. For example, random, stratified, or composite. ▪ Describe the sampling recruitment strategy and inclusion/exclusion criteria for determining your sample. ▪ How will you account for sampling and measurement error? Describe any potential sampling bias and how you plan to address it. ▪ Describe your expected level of attrition from the sample and plans to reduce it. ▪ If you plan to assess multiple groups, include a description of how baseline equivalence will be established for key characteristics prior to the intervention (e.g., demographics, key outcomes) or, if inequivalence, what matching techniques will be used to control for demographics and outcomes at baseline (e.g., propensity score matching, difference-in difference, case matching, kernel matching). ▪ If applicable, describe how the control or comparison group will be selected, recruited, and retained. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
<p>1q. Provide estimated power to detect impacts if applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a justification that your sample size is adequate and include results from power analysis if applicable. ▪ Does your estimated sample size provide your study with enough power to detect effects? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
<p>1r. Acknowledge potential limitations or biases to study design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there any study limitations expected? For example, limitations due to sample size, reliability of data, language fluency, etc.? Explain how anticipated limitations can be addressed in advance and/or minimized. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												

<p>1s. For continuing evaluations, describe strategies to improve aspects of the evaluation design (e.g., no comparison group, using one data source, etc) and/or past challenges with the implementation of evaluation design (e.g., small sample size, poor data quality, etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will the proposed evaluation address past challenges to result in a higher-quality study? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1t. Description for ensuring data ownership, privacy, and confidentiality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include a description of data management protocols planned to ensure data ownership, participant privacy, and confidentiality throughout the evaluation. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Data Analysis and Interim Reporting</p>		
<p>2a. Analytic methods and analysis plans are clearly articulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe planned analytic approach for addressing missing data (such as regression imputation, maximum likelihood, non-response weights). ▪ Include plans for ensuring that results are presented in a balanced and objective manner (i.e. include significant and non-significant findings; include negative, positive, and inconclusive results.). Indicate how results will be triangulated using multiple sources when possible (e.g., administrative, participant outcome data). <p>Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will you establish the validity and reliability of your methods/results? (For example, use of standardized instruments, description of statistical methods used). ▪ Describe the analyses planned to provide statistical significance and/or effect sizes for each expected outcome. ▪ Note potential confounding factors and efforts to control for them. <p>Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What strategies will you use to establish the trustworthiness/credibility of the findings and minimize bias? For example, establishing inter-rater reliability, including rich and detailed verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts, accounting for personal biases, using data triangulation, employing member checks (e.g., inviting participants' feedback on coding themes and analysis), using audio/visual recordings and field notes, transcription records reviewed for accuracy, anonymization. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2b. Describe a plan for using interim data and findings to inform program improvements and activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe how data will be shared throughout the evaluation to inform practice, including to whom and how frequently. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Budget																
<p>3a. Outline monetary costs related the evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monetary costs included should be just those related to the evaluation. Also, these costs should include salary and benefits for staff working on the evaluation, funds for external evaluators, cost of relevant data collection, travel, communication tools, printing, supplies, equipment, etc. The exhibit below provides an example of how to summarize monetary costs of the evaluation. <p>Exhibit 2: Example Summary of Allocation of Evaluation Funds</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Evaluation Activity and Brief Description</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Total Cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Staff: One 50% Research Coordinator; One Full Time Research Assistant</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel: Hotel and car rental for 10 site visits</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Materials: 30 tablets for data collection; WAI surveys</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Allowable Incentives or Participant Reimbursements: ie. books for children</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other: Office space rental; stipend for research assistant tuition</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Evaluation Budget</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Evaluation Activity and Brief Description	Total Cost	Staff: One 50% Research Coordinator; One Full Time Research Assistant		Travel: Hotel and car rental for 10 site visits		Materials: 30 tablets for data collection; WAI surveys		Allowable Incentives or Participant Reimbursements: ie. books for children		Other: Office space rental; stipend for research assistant tuition		Total Evaluation Budget		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>3b. Budget for evaluation activities is: (a) appropriate for the evaluation design and question(s), (b) adequate to ensure quality and rigor, and (c) in line with available program and organizational resources.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>														
4. Dissemination of Evaluation Findings																
<p>4a. Describe plans for disseminating lessons learned to MIECHV awardees and the home visiting field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include a list of plans for distributing evaluation findings, such as specific conference presentations, journal article submissions, presentations to peers (such as Community of Practice meetings), or other mechanisms. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>														
<p>4b. Describe how and when findings will be shared within the organization and with local implementing agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How and when will findings be shared within the organization and with local implementing agencies? ▪ How and when will findings be shared with external stakeholders including community and state partners, state legislatures, other grantees, etc? ▪ Include a list of plans for distributing evaluation findings within your state, across your MIECHV team, partnering organizations, and local implementing agencies. This may include regular team meetings, state conferences, newsletters, or other mechanisms. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>														

For more information

For more information on the evaluation plan expectations, please refer to the following documents:

- **FY18 NOFO**

Appendix A in the FY 18 NOFO document describes the expectations regarding research and evaluation activities that will be conducted.

- **Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: Ensuring Quality Evaluations: A DOHVE Technical Assistance Brief**

This handout summarizes the federal expectations for evaluations and includes a summary of key elements that should be included in a quality evaluation.

- **Working with an External Evaluator: The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: A DOHVE Tip Sheet**

This handout provides tips on what to consider before working with an external evaluator to plan, carry out, and report on an evaluation.