New Byrne JAG Strategic Planning Opportunity!

Research & Evaluation Support TTA Menu

Do you work for a state administering agency looking to better understand your office's own unique programmatic and funding landscape? Do you want to build capacity for subawardees to evaluate their own programs? Check out this new pilot project!

The NCJA Center for Justice Planning, in collaboration with the NCJA Data Center and the Center for Justice Innovation (CJI), have developed a menu of research and evaluation support options for State Administering Agencies (SAAs) to select from in order to develop subawardees' capacity to evaluate their own programs. The NCJA Data Center and CJI will work in conjunction with your agency to develop and execute a workplan specific to individualized needs and priorities. The following menu options aim to highlight potential areas of technical assistance that you can pursue to achieve your broader strategic planning goals.

What Can We Help With?

1. Providing an overview of current funding streams and planned funding allocations
2. Providing an overview of any prior, current or planned subawardee program evaluation practices to inform future evaluation planning
3. Producing a literature review and/or conducting a nationwide scan of resources and interventions associated with SAAs' funding allocations
4. Developing materials for SAAs that translate specific research concepts into practitioner-friendly deliverables that provide a grounding in the basics of programmatic evaluations
5. Developing materials that SAAs can use to gauge a program's readiness for evaluation
6. Developing materials SAAs can use to systematically incorporate evaluation principles
7. For specific pilot programs poised to begin or in the early stages of development, NCJA and CJI can assist with evaluation planning, needs assessments and data assessments

Select from the TTA Menu Today!

Email
datacenter@ncja.org

Research & Evaluation Support: Expanded TTA Menu

1. Providing an overview of current funding streams and planned funding allocations

Purpose

Reviewing materials (such as strategic planning documents, performance measurement guidelines and requirements, and requests for proposals) and facilitated activities (such as logic modeling and interviews and focus groups with State Administering Agency (SAA) staff or select subawardees) can help identify how subawardees' practices align with the strategic goals of the SAA.

Example

This review and analysis process can involve visually mapping out all the projects supported by the SAA across different funding categories. The end product can facilitate discussions within the SAA's office about which areas of funding are in alignment with the goals of their strategic plan(s).

2. Providing an overview of any prior, current or planned subawardee program evaluation practices to inform future evaluation planning

Purpose

Reviewing findings from prior evaluations in conjunction with current materials and activities the SAA and subawardees use to evaluate programs can help to identify gaps and pinpoint areas where evaluation practices can be strengthened.

Examples

» If the SAA allocates a sizable portion of funding to multijurisdictional task forces, it can be helpful to assess what each subaward is reporting and other components that could be useful to understand the efficacy of the programs.

» Reviewing how subawardees are currently using or plan to use electronic case management systems is key to building capacity for evaluation and research. For example, helping SAAs encourage the uptake of case management systems by dedicating funding for this purpose or by establishing key performance measures that certain types of programs should consistently collect can allow SAAs to build capacity to help subawardees navigate conversations with research partners.

» Some types of programs may hope to have an impact on outcomes that are not easily measured (e.g., experience with preventive services) or require accessing external data sources (e.g., court records). Facilitated discussions around these kinds of topics and delineating how performance measures vary by program type can be another way for SAAs to support their subawardees.

3. Producing a literature review and/or conducting a nationwide scan of resources and interventions associated with SAAs' funding decisions

Purpose

A literature review can help identify innovative interventions, new advantages/disadvantages for consideration and ways to evaluate programs. Having a broader understanding of the existing literature and of the types of evaluation tools pertinent to each program type is crucial to assessing the readiness and capacity of subawardees and in evaluating the efficacy of their programs. A thorough review of existing literature, programs, practices and resources can allow SAAs to learn effective strategies for implementing change and communicate that to subawardees.

Examples

» Some subject matters are difficult to study due to the lack of administrative or detailed data. Reviewing how studies address these challenges can help the SAA advise subawardees. SAA staff can also help subawardees identify key outcomes of interest and provide guidance on how to record the necessary data.

» Literature reviews can also highlight the challenges associated with conducting cost-effectiveness studies in a criminal legal system context and highlight promising practices SAAs could consider in working with sites.

4. Developing materials for SAAs that translate specific research concepts into practitioner-friendly deliverables that provide a grounding in the basics of programmatic evaluations

Purpose

SAAs can provide resources to subawardees that make it more manageable to self-evaluate their practices. These materials can be tailored to match the SAAs' priorities or future goals.

Example

If the SAA wants to shift more funding into reentry interventions, these resources could list common research designs and methods for assessing reentry services, their strengths, their weaknesses and elements that make reentry program evaluations more feasible.

5. Developing materials that SAAs can use to gauge a program's readiness for evaluation

Purpose

SAAs can use readiness materials to guide subawardees toward the appropriate evaluation design or advise them on how to build capacity for evaluations. Materials can include logic modeling, system maps, data inventories and observation forms.

Example

If the SAA aims to coach subawardees on evaluation processes, CJI can advise SAA staff on how to guide subawardees and provide direction on next steps based on where programs are in terms of evaluation readiness. The overarching goal is to meet subawardees where they are and provide them with constructive guidance.

6. Developing materials SAAs can use to systematically incorporate evaluation principles

Purpose

NCJA and CJI can help identify stages where SAAs can encourage better evaluation practices by subawardees.

Example

For example, CJI and the SAA have identified the application stage of the grant cycle as needing assistance in terms of encouraging and communicating best practices for evaluation.

CJI can work with SAAs to add/modify the language in existing funding solicitations and require subawardees to consider how they can evaluate future programs. This language might focus on providing practitioner-friendly content and examples related to process, outcome and impact evaluation to provide greater flexibility and understanding of evaluation processes for subawardees and their staff.

7. For specific pilot programs poised to begin or in the early stages of development, NCJA and CJI can assist with evaluation planning, needs assessments and data assessments.

Purpose

In addition to supporting subawardees in their evaluation planning, these pilot programs can serve as case studies that guide how programs can prepare and implement evaluations.

Example

If SAAs are allocating funds to a new area, CJI can provide guidance on collecting pertinent performance measures to prepare for future evaluation. CJI can also use the readiness tools described in option five to work directly with SAAs to support them in evaluation planning.

Select from the TTA Menu Today!

Email
datacenter@ncja.org