EVAL2 - Launching Rigorous Evaluations

Certification Guide

What is this document for? To help your city achieve EVAL2, we have compiled a guiding list of goals, considerations, and resources. It is a starting point and reference guide for identifying ways to satisfy EVAL2 within your government's structures and priorities. This document is NOT what is submitted for certification.

What does it mean to meet EVAL2? Your local government has a regular, sustained process for identifying, launching, and resourcing rigorous evaluations (process, experimental, or quasi-experimental). Specifically, your local government **must meet the following every year**:

- EVAL2.1: **In the past year**, your local government **has launched at least three or more rigorous evaluations** (process, experimental, or quasi-experimental) that used evaluation protocols.

Rigorous evaluations are systematic assessments, using standard research methods to help gain insight into the design, implementation, or effects of a policy, program, or practice.

Some indications of rigor may be:
- There was an evaluation plan or protocol developed in advance
- There are clear research questions, with an appropriate approach to answering them
- There are explanations around how participants did or did not receive the program
- It can rule out alternative explanations for the outcomes or patterns we observe
- There are enough participants or observations to make credible conclusions and describe a full range of experiences
- It credibly explains how things were measured and the data that was used

Why should my city meet EVAL2? Regularly running rigorous evaluations provide local governments with important data & evidence about their practices and programs.

Not sure how to launch a rigorous evaluation? Check out the "City Evaluation Examples" and the "Run Evaluations" pages on BIT's Evaluation Resource Hub!

Want to stay in the know of WWC events and resources and connect with other evaluation-minded cities? Once you submit the WWC Certification Assessment, join the WWC Community Forum for new resources and future opportunities!

What needs to be submitted to meet EVAL2? For each of the 3 evaluations:

☐ An **evaluation protocol** describing the plan for evaluations that have been launched
- Use the EvalPlan Online Workbook to build a protocol!
- See the Evaluation Replication Worksheets for examples of protocols

OR

☐ An **evaluation report** that includes the evaluation protocol and the evaluation results
- Simple process evaluation report template
- Simple RCT report template
- See the Economic Mobility Evaluation Project Summaries for examples of reports

☐ **If conducted with an external organization**, make sure the evaluation's alignment with your government's goals is documented in the protocol or report.

How can my city meet EVAL2? We suggest you reflect on the goals and considerations below to identify what evaluation should look like in your city. Please note that a city need not develop or provide this full set of documentation to satisfy EVAL2; it is a "menu" of approaches and documentation options.

Goal	Considerations	Resources & Examples to Meet Goal
Create an accessible location for evaluation resources, methods, and tools	❏ Is there a central, digital location where materials/tools can be stored and made accessible for city staff? ❏ Does this location include materials and resources related to evaluation? If not, can they be added?	Add documents from these guides and the BIT Evaluation Resource Hub link to your City intranet or shared drive. Look for existing resources on the internet, and create an overview outlining good training, websites, videos, etc. ➔ J-PAL evaluation resources ➔ Unicef Overview of Impact Evaluation ➔ CDC Types of Evaluation ➔ Innovations for Poverty Action Toolkit ➔ Free courses from Coursera or Edx

		➔ WWC GoxEx Academy
Ensure that resources are used	❏ Can these materials be integrated into an existing onboarding process for staff to learn how to use them? ❏ Can these materials be used as part of a new or existing training course? ❏ Is there a way to ensure that city staff understand the purpose of rigorous evaluation? ❏ Can evaluation materials be integrated as part of an evaluation request process?	Create / modify onboarding processes so staff directly involved in conducting evaluations are aware of evaluation resources and how they should be used. Integrate evaluation resources into a new or existing training course and/or have key members from different teams participate in a GovEx Academy course. Create a culture that emphasizes the purpose of rigorous evaluation (e.g., establishing an evaluation policy, including evaluation success stories in newsletters, Lunch and Learns about ongoing / completed evaluations). Integrate evaluation materials into the evaluation request process.
Build or resource evaluation capacity	❏ Is there someone within departments with the skills and support required to conduct evaluations? If yes, are the responsibilities listed in their job descriptions? ❏ If departments lack internal evaluation capacity, is there a team in the city government that they can request support from / a process by which to request that support OR is there a process by which they can receive external support (e.g., from an academic institution)? ❏ Is there someone who can assist with or review the analysis portions of a trial if needed? If yes, are these responsibilities listed in their job descriptions? ❏ Are there training opportunities available to build evaluation capacity within your city's government?	Create / modify staff roles and responsibilities to build evaluation capacity within your city. ➔ Intro to Evaluation Function ➔ Evaluation Function Charter Template Define processes for requesting additional evaluation support and policies that increase access to evaluation expertise. ➔ Formalize research partnership and establish roles and expectations (JPAL) Promote staff training opportunities that build evaluation capacity (e.g., create training courses, create evaluation mentorship programs, compile a list of external courses, make funds available for evaluation training opportunities). ➔ Knowing What Works: Adding Evaluation to Your City's Toolkit (GovEx Course)
Identify evaluation opportunities	❏ Is there an individual or team responsible for scoping evaluation opportunities? ❏ Is there a process for identifying meaningful, novel, and actionable	Formally or informally designate individuals to lead the identification of evaluation opportunities. Use the following resources to lead

	evaluation opportunities that are feasible? ❏ Are there any practices or policies to evaluate new programs or large investments automatically, to confirm they are achieving their goals? ❏ Are there opportunities to use existing grant or funding reporting requirements to encourage an evaluation? ❏ When scoping evaluation opportunities, are the ethical implications considered thoughtfully? ❏ When evaluation opportunities are identified, how are they reported and approved to move forward?	evaluation scoping discussions and document the rationale for conducting these evaluations: ➔ Eval Project Scoping Facilitation Guide ➔ Eval Scoping Worksheet ➔ Scoping a Low Cost Process Evaluation ➔ Identifying Departments Require staff involved in evaluation to participate in a training on research ethics. Include ethics checks into scoping processes and requests for evaluations. ➔ Ethical & Quality Evaluation Standards ➔ The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research Create a review process through which evaluation teams submit their proposals and receive feedback / approval.
Specify a research question & approach	❏ Does the evaluation team understand the context and the underlying barriers sufficiently? ❏ Does the evaluation team know how to design a research question that provides an actionable and high-value answer to inform a decision? ❏ Does the evaluation team know how to select a research approach that best answers the priority research question, within given constraints? ❏ Can you reach a sample size large and representative enough to feel confident in the interpretation of the results of your evaluation?	Consider conducting exploratory research to arrive at a more relevant and targeted research question. Develop a logic model of how a program, policy, or practice is supposed to work. This can help you identify questions like *Is X component leading to Y outcome?* ➔ Logic Model Development Guide Use the following resources to help you design your research question: ➔ EvalPlan Online Workbook ➔ The Experimenter's Inventory Use the BIT Statistical Power Calculator to estimate the necessary sample size you'll need if carrying out a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT). Consider whether this sample size is attainable.
Make an evaluation plan	❏ Does your city have an evaluation protocol template with guidance on how to plan and conduct different types of evaluations? ❏ Do evaluation teams have the technical capacity for statistical	Use the EvalPlan Online Workbook to produce your city's evaluation protocols or adapt it to create your own. Build requirements for statistical

	analysis (e.g., power calculations, sample size estimations) and random assignment of treatments? ❏ Is there a defined process for conducting quality assurance of evaluation plans? Is there someone or a team that has the formal responsibility for conducting quality assurance of evaluation plans?	analysis proficiency into relevant staff roles. Use the following resources for support with randomization: ➔ Excel Randomization Guide
Launch your evaluation and gather data	❏ Do the data information systems collect the type of data needed for the evaluation? ❏ If not, has the team planned for how to gather this data? Is this plan feasible? Has the team coordinated with relevant stakeholders (e.g., IT department)? ❏ Is the evaluation team following data protection laws by securing informed consent from research participants when required or requesting a waiver? ❏ Is data being stored and handled in a way that protects research participants' privacy? ❏ If the evaluation team is responsible for data collection (e.g., conducting interviews or focus groups), are they appropriately trained on research best practices?	Carefully consider the type of data needed for the evaluation and how that data will be collected. Ensure that all stakeholders involved are aware of the data requirements and implementation plans. ➔ Data Collection Primer: Interviews, Focus Groups & Observations Ensure that evaluation teams are aware of relevant data protection laws (e.g., your city's, your state's, federal) by including easy to comprehend documents like an FAQ in evaluation protocols, creating a training, and/or designating a liaison to review data handling of evaluations. If any partners are involved, be sure to align on their data protection policies as well. ➔ Informed Consent FAQs (HHS) Create a policy and socialize practices that ensure secure data storage and handling (e.g., not storing evaluation data onto personal devices). Compile resources and ensure experience in relevant research skills. ➔ The Code for America Spring 2020 Qualitative Research Practice Guide Make sure your evaluation is ready then launch it. ➔ Go for Launch Checklist
Analyze & interpret the results of your data	❏ Does the evaluation team know how to clean and analyze data? ❏ Are there processes / guidance for how to conduct and document the cleaning and analysis of evaluation data? ❏ Is there a process / individuals	Train teams / create or compile resources that support the cleaning and analysis of evaluation data. ➔ Excel Guide: Data Cleaning & Analysis ➔ *For Stata:* Data Cleaning & Management (IPA)

responsible for conducting quality assurance of the data analysis?

❏ Does the evaluation team know how to interpret the data and translate it into actionable insights?

If conducting a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT), use the following resources to calculate and graph the results:

➔ BIT Results Calculator
➔ Excel Guide: RCT Graphing Template

Create processes for documenting the cleaning and analysis of data that allow individuals external to the eval team to provide quality assurance reviews of the analysis.

Engage the evaluation team and relevant stakeholders in a discussion of the results.

➔ Interpretation Discussion Guide