Program Evaluation
The Five-Tiered Approach

Level/Title	Purposes of Evaluation	Audiences	Tasks	Kinds of Data to Collect/Analyze
Tier One – Needs Assessment	1. To determine the size and nature of a public problem 2. To determine unmet need for services in a community 3. To propose program and policy options to meet needs 4. To set a data baseline from which later progress can be measured 5. To broaden the base of support for a proposed program	1. Policymakers 2. Funders 3. Community stakeholders	1. Review existing community, county, and state data 2. Determine additional data needed to describe problem and potential service users 3. Conduct "environmental scan" of available resources 4. Identify resource gaps and unmet needs 5. Set goals and objectives for intervention 6. Recommend one program model for range of options	1. Extant data on target population; services currently available 2. Interviews with community leaders 3. Interviews or survey data from prospective participants 4. Information about similar programs in other locations
Tier Two – Monitoring and Accountability	1. To monitor program performance 2. To meet demands for accountability 3. To build a constituency 4. To aid in program planning and decision-making 5. To provide a groundwork for later evaluation activities	1. Program staff and administrators 2. Policymakers 3. Funders 4. Community stakeholders 5. Media	1. Determine needs and capacities for data collection and management 2. Develop clear and consistent procedures for collecting essential data elements 3. Gather and analyze data to describe program along dimensions of clients, services, staff, and costs	1. MIS (management information system) data; collected at program, county, and/or state level 2. Case material; obtained through record reviews, program contact forms, etc.
Tier Three – Quality Review and Program Clarification	1. To develop a more detailed picture of the program as it is being implemented 2. To assess the quality and consistency of the intervention 3. To provide information to staff for program improvement	1. Program staff and administrators 2. Policymakers 3. Community stakeholders	1. Review monitoring data 2. Expand on program description using information about participants' views 3. Compare program with standards and expectations 4. Examine participants' perceptions about effects of program 5. Clarify program goals and	1. MIS monitoring data 2. Case material 3. Other qualitative and quantitative data on program operations, customer satisfaction, and perceived effects; obtained using questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus groups

			design	
Tier Four – Achieving Outcomes	1. To determine changes, if any, have occurred among beneficiaries 2. To attribute changes to the program 3. To provide information to staff for program improvement	1. Program staff and administrators 2. Policymakers 3. Community stakeholders 4. Funders 5. Other programs	1. Choose short-term objectives to be examined 2. Choose appropriate research design, given constraints and capacities 3. Determine measurable indicators of success for outcome objectives 4. Collect and analyze information about effects on beneficiaries	1. Client-specific data; obtained using questionnaires, interviews, goal attainment scaling, observations, and functional indicators 2. Client and community social indicators 3. MIS data
Tier Five – Establishing Impact	1. To contribute to knowledge development in the field 2. To produce evidence of differential effectiveness of treatments 3. To identify models worthy of replication	1. Academic and research communities 2. Policymakers 3. Funders 4. General public	1. Decide on impact objectives based on results of Tier Four evaluation efforts 2. Choose appropriately rigorous research design and comparison group 3. Identify techniques and tools to measure effects in treatment and comparison groups 4. Analyze information to identify program impacts	1. Client-specific data; obtained using questionnaires, interviews, goal attainment scaling, observations, and functional indicators 2. Client and community social indicators 3. MIS data 4. Comparable data for control group

Source: Jacobs, F., Kapuscik, J., Kates, E., & Williams, P. (2001). *Making it count: Evaluating family preservation services.* Medford, MA: Tufts University, Family Preservation Evaluation Project.