Why Evaluation

Evaluation is a powerful tool for systematically collecting and analyzing data about the characteristics, strategies, outcomes, and effectiveness of initiatives, programs, and policies for the purpose of making decisions and recommendations for improvements.

Depending on your needs, evaluation can:

- Inform program planning and decision-making by identifying operational strengths and weaknesses
- Assess program or policy success by determining outcomes, impacts, and effectiveness
- Test program theories and strategies
- Identify initiatives, programs, policies, and strategies ready for replication or scale-up
- Provide accountability information to funders

We provide rigorous program evaluation, applied research, and evaluation technical assistance and training that address the needs and challenges of families and communities and the organizations that serve them.

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The Carsey Institute Evaluation Program

serves state, regional, and national foundations, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and international funders with research-based and client-driven evaluations. We have conducted evaluations and research on programs in the areas of education, environment, health, social services, community economic development, and foundation grantmaking. Funders have included the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, U.S. Treasury Department, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund at the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Endowment for Health, Foundation for Seacoast Health, National Science Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, nonprofit organizations, and private firms.

The Carsey Institute Evaluation Program:

- Develops project and program logic models
- Identifies and develops appropriate evaluation questions, indicators, and measures
- Designs and conducts formative and summative program evaluations
- Conducts evaluations and assessments focused on process and implemenation, program theory and contexts, decisions, costs, outcomes, impacts, and effectiveness
- Monitors program performance and policy implementation
- Carries out applied quantitative and qualitative research on issues relevant to programs and policies
- Provides technical assistance and training to build internal evaluation capacity

Examples of our work

- A three-year, quasi-experimental impact assessment and process evaluation of a nonprofit program providing car loans and financial counseling to credit-poor clients
- A five-year evaluation of a regional initiative to support economic business development and early childhood development that includes building evaluation capacity of initiative staff and grantees, and evaluating implementation and outcomes
- A mixed methods assessment of the contribution of a public-private model of health insurance for low- to moderate-income children to a state’s low rate of uninsured children
- Social network analysis of a grantee learning community
- Evaluation of the collaboration between nonprofit agencies in a human services initiative
- Evaluation of an international microfinance and enterprise development training program
- A qualitative study for an impact assessment of a national government’s conditional cash transfer program on human development outcomes
- Evaluation research for a nonprofit organization on the perceptions of users and businesses along a regional recreational waterway
- Evaluation of the dissemination and use of research produced by a federal grants program

Why Choose Carsey

The Carsey Institute Evaluation Program assists public agencies and private for-profit and nonprofit organizations in learning more about their programs and policies. Our experienced staff works closely with clients to identify the right questions and choose the most appropriate methods for accurate and credible results. In planning technical assistance and training, we clarify client needs and then develop relevant and effective strategies for the organization. As a university-based organization, we also collaborate with our colleagues in the development of grant proposals and in the evaluation of their projects.

We are social scientists concerned with conducting evaluations and research of the highest quality, utility, and cost-effectiveness. We bring expertise to the planning and design of evaluations and to the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of findings. When needed, we tap additional methodological or content expertise from the larger university community, giving us the capacity to respond to a diverse array of evaluation needs.

The team at the Carsey Institute worked with us to ground-truth our place-based funding strategy, providing critical quantitative and qualitative data that enabled us and our community partners to assess progress and adjust course real time.”

—Racheal Stuart, Racheal Stuart Consulting

For more information, please contact:
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