

# VR Program Evaluation Coach

## What You'll Need to Get Started

This document outlines some basic requirements for conducting your own program evaluation and the steps you will take with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program Evaluation Coach. Along the way, you might have to bring in other members of your team (such as a data analyst) to help.

Before you can begin crafting a program evaluation with the VR Program Evaluation Coach, you need the following:

- A service to test (may or may not already be in use)
- A population receiving or willing to receive the service
  - Within the population of recipients or potential recipients, you will have to create two similar groups, one receiving the service and one not receiving the service. The VR Program Evaluation Coach will help you create the two groups.
- A program for collecting and organizing data, such as Microsoft Excel

## REQUIRED INFORMATION

Exhibit 1 summarizes the information you will need to complete various steps for the program evaluation. The earlier you begin collecting and thinking about the information, the easier it will be to complete your program evaluation.

### Exhibit 1. Information needed for the program evaluation

Step	Information needed
The basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who the service recipients are (or will be)</li><li>• What outcomes you're interested in</li></ul>
Determine your program evaluation approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whether the service has been implemented</li><li>• How you will sort potential recipients into similar groups</li></ul>
Craft your program evaluation question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What outcome you are targeting</li><li>• Whom you are trying to affect</li></ul>
Making sense of your results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost of the service</li><li>• Idea of what success looks like</li></ul>
Summarize context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic information about the service and its implementation</li><li>• Details about the VR environment</li></ul>

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## REQUIRED DATA

The earlier you begin collecting and cleaning your data, the better. A review of our data guides, “[Prepare Your Data for Analysis: Matched Comparison Design](#)” and “[Prepare Your Data for Analysis: Randomized Pilot](#),” will help acquaint you with the format required for the data you will upload to the VR Program Evaluation Coach and how to ensure that you enter data in that format. Depending on the type of program evaluation you are conducting, you will have to use data at different points. It is likely that you won’t be able to gather all of your information at once, but the earlier you complete your data set, the easier your analysis will be. Note that it is important for you to record all of your data using individual identifiers. These are unique codes for each participant. The identifiers—individual, staff, or office identifiers—are what will enable you to combine (merge) data sets without using any personally identifiable information (PII). The VR Program Evaluation Coach does not require personally identifiable information for use of the tool, and it does not create evaluation reports or briefs that contain PII. Below is a list of the data you will need (for more details, refer to the data guide linked above).

- Outcome data (required)
- Outcome or outcome-related data from before use of the service (optional)
- List of who is and is not receiving the service (required)
- Background characteristics (important for establishing a comparison group)
- Service delivery data (required for certain program evaluation questions)

If you are not directly managing the data for the program evaluation, the planning stage is an important time to communicate with the person responsible for data management. You should discuss the data required for your specific program evaluation and determine how and when those data will be collected.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Throughout the course of your program evaluation, you and/or someone on your team will have to possess the following skills and competencies:

- Ability to answer questions about the service being evaluated and the desired outcomes
- Understand how to collect or extract data from different sources
- Proficiency with a data management system

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## ICON DIRECTORY



**Guide:** These documents are meant to assist you in completing your program evaluation by providing you with educational material about the program evaluation process.



**Interactive tools:** These tools require you to input information relevant to your program evaluation.



**Statistical tools:** These tools analyze the data you input to determine who is in your treatment and comparison groups and whether your service is achieving the desired outcome.

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