



Research & Evaluation Service Menu



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This menu reflects our commitment to providing high-quality, tailored research and evaluation services that leverage our extensive expertise in improving the health and wellness of children through school, district, and community interventions. Each service is designed to meet the unique needs of our clients, ensuring impactful and actionable results. All service offerings include additional administrative work to account for project management and coordination. Examples of the services are included to provide a snapshot picture of what clients can expect when engaging with *Action for Healthy Kids* for research and evaluation services.

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Evaluation Plan Development

Evaluation plan development involves crafting a comprehensive blueprint that outlines the evaluation strategy for a program or project. This service is designed to ensure that the evaluation process is methodically planned to meet specific goals, answer pertinent questions, and achieve insightful outcomes. It includes stakeholder engagement, setting evaluation objectives, defining key performance indicators, and determining methodologies for data collection and analysis.

Service Components

Collaborative Stakeholder Meetings	Conduct meetings with all relevant stakeholders to understand their needs, expectations, and insights, which inform the evaluation design.
Logic Model Development	Create visual representations outlining the need for the program and what outcomes are expected to come from the program or intervention.
Theory of Change Development	Articulate the sequence of events from program inputs to outputs and outcomes, clarifying the underlying assumptions and identifying why the program or intervention will yield outlined outcomes.
Evaluation Plan Creation	Develop a written evaluation plan that details the evaluation goal(s), methods, timing, and tools for data collection and analysis. Define key evaluation questions that align with the program objectives.
Implementation Planning	Plan and document the logistical aspects of implementing the evaluation, including timelines, roles, and responsibilities.
Training and Capacity Building	Provide training sessions for program staff and stakeholders on the evaluation process, tools, and their roles in the implementation.



Example

Developing an evaluation plan for a new after-school program aimed at increasing physical activity among secondary school students. The plan would demonstrate the need for the program, define the metrics for success, outline data collection methods for assessing student physical activity levels before and after the program, and set a timeline for interim reviews and final assessment.

Evaluation Plan Implementation

Evaluation plan implementation involves executing the strategic blueprint of an evaluation plan for a specific program or project. This service ensures that the evaluation is not only well-planned but also executed to meet the defined objectives, respond to key questions, and yield insightful outcomes. It includes continuous stakeholder engagement, the application of developed models and frameworks, and the comprehensive management of data collection and analysis processes.

Service Components

Stakeholder Engagement	Continuously engage with stakeholders to ensure the evaluation remains aligned with their expectations and adapts to any emerging insights or changes.
Evaluation Tool Design and Development	Develop and validate assessment instruments tailored to measure specific program outcomes.
Formative Assessment	Conduct ongoing assessments to provide continuous feedback to program staff and stakeholders, allowing for immediate adjustments. Develop and suggest modifications to the program based on data-informed insights to enhance program effectiveness.
Summative Assessment	Provide a final, comprehensive evaluation to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the program against the established goals.
Data Collection and Analysis	Oversee the data collection according to the planned methodologies and perform data analysis to derive meaningful insights.
Reporting and Recommendations	Prepare detailed reports summarizing the findings and their implications for stakeholders. Provide actionable recommendations based on evaluation results to guide future program directions.
Stakeholder Briefings	Conduct briefings for program partners and stakeholders to review findings and discuss implications.



Example

Implementing an evaluation plan for a mentorship program designed to improve social connectedness among youth. Implementation would begin with formative assessments to monitor early indicators of success and areas for improvement, followed by summative assessment to evaluate overall program effectiveness and its alignment with long-term goals.

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment services evaluate and identify the specific needs of a particular population or community. This service can serve as a critical foundation for strategic planning and targeted program development, supporting clients in identifying what works, what doesn't, where improvements can be made, and the most pressing issues facing their stakeholders.

Service Components	
Identify Purpose and Scope	Collaborate with clients to clearly define goals for the needs assessment, setting the stage for a focused inquiry.
Review Existing Data and Research	Investigate what is already known about the target population's needs using existing data to inform assessment development.
Select Assessment Methods	Identify the best methods—qualitative, quantitative, or a mix to match assessment goals.
Develop Assessment Tools	Craft tailored tools, such as surveys or interview guides, that are designed to gather the most relevant and actionable data from the target population.
Participant Recruitment	Coordinate and manage recruitment of participants aligned with the goals of the needs assessment. This includes coordinating recruitment logistics, securing informed consent, and participant compensation.
Data Collection	Coordinate and manage the collection of data necessary to collect meaningful insights from the target population, using quantitative and qualitative methods as appropriate.
Data Analysis	Analyze collected data using various techniques to highlight key themes and patterns that will inform strategic decision-making.
Reporting and Recommendations	Prepare detailed reports summarizing the findings and their implications for stakeholders. Provide actionable recommendations based on assessment results to guide future program directions.
Stakeholder Briefings	Conduct briefings for program partners and stakeholders to review findings and discuss implications.



Example

Performing a needs assessment for a school district looking to enhance its health education programs. This would involve gathering input from educators, parents, and students and developing a final report with actionable recommendations for updating the health education curriculum, ensuring it meets the needs of the community.

Evaluation Training and Capacity Building

Evaluation training and capacity building services provide comprehensive, customized training sessions designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of clients in various aspects of program evaluation. Training topics pertain to improving internal capabilities to conduct effective evaluations, developing and improving surveys, and utilizing interviewing techniques and specific evaluation tools.

Training Topics	
Using Data to Select Program Priorities	Training on leveraging data to strategically identify and prioritize program needs and opportunities.
Analyzing District and School Level Data	Training on techniques for performing descriptive analysis on district and/or school data to inform decision-making and sustainability planning.
Survey Development and Implementation Training	Training on skill development in designing, administering, and interpreting surveys to gather impactful data.
Interviewing Techniques Workshop	Training on effective interviewing strategies to enhance qualitative data collection.
How to Use Evaluation Tools	Training on the practical use of specific tools such as technical assistance logs, School Health Index, and the Family-School Partnership Assessment.
Understanding Evaluation Frameworks	Instruction on the development and application of logic models, Theories of Change, and needs assessments.



Example

Training district staff on how to use and interpret student wellness surveys, including sessions focused on survey design, data collection, and analysis techniques. The training would include practical exercises in descriptive statistics to help staff understand health trends within student data, enabling informed decisions to enhance student wellness programs effectively.

Survey Design

Survey design involves the development of customized survey instruments tailored to the specific needs of a program or research project. This service ensures that surveys effectively capture the data necessary to answer critical questions and assess outcomes. It includes the development of survey instrumentation, pilot testing of survey tools, programming, and implementation support. The process is collaborative, involving close consultation with clients to align the survey with program goals and stakeholder needs.

Service Components	
Initial Consultation	Engage with clients to understand the specific data needs, target audience, and objectives of the survey.
Survey Instrument Development	Develop a customized survey including drafting questions, selecting response formats, and ensuring that all items align with the intended measurements. Adapt existing validated measures, when applicable.
Pilot Testing	Pilot test the survey with a small segment of the target population to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity of the questions. Analyze pilot data and refine the survey based on feedback and test results.
Survey Finalization and Implementation Planning	Finalize the survey design, incorporating feedback and adjustments from pilot testing phase. Plan the deployment of the survey, including creation of participant recruitment materials, and assent forms.
Survey Programming	Convert finalized survey into a digital format using a web platform (i.e. SurveyMonkey). Program all question types, logic, branching, and other functionalities required for the survey. Test survey functionality with a sample of the target population to ensure the survey is functioning correctly and is user-friendly.
Training and Support	Provide training for clients or staff on how to administer the survey and manage data collection.



Example

Designing a survey for a school district to evaluate the effectiveness of a new digital learning tool. The survey would measure students' engagement, educators' ease of use, and perceived improvements in learning outcomes.

Cross-Sectional Study

Cross-sectional study design and implementation services involve the planning, execution, and analysis of data collected at one timepoint. This type of study is used to capture a snapshot description of the association between variables without inferring causality. This service is valuable for assessing the prevalence of outcomes in a population at a fixed point, making it ideal for hypothesis generation and baseline assessments for program interventions.

Service Components	
Study Design	Design the cross-sectional study, including defining the research question, selecting the population, determining the sample size, and choosing the appropriate data collection methods.
Instrument Development	Develop or select appropriate data collection instruments, such as surveys, questionnaires, or existing data sources.
Participant Recruitment	Implement strategies for recruiting participants that represent the target population, managing consents, and ensuring ethical compliance.
Data Collection	Coordinate and supervise the collection of data. This may involve online surveys or the use of secondary data sources.
Data Processing and Analysis	Process the collected data to prepare it for analysis. Perform statistical analysis to describe the data and examine relationships between variables.
Report Writing and Presentation	Write comprehensive reports that summarize the methodology, findings, implications, and limitations of the study. Develop presentations to disseminate study results to stakeholders via various channels (e.g., academic conferences).



Example

Designing and implementing a cross-sectional study to assess the association between physical activity and academic achievement among students in rural schools at a single timepoint. The study involves survey design, parent recruitment, data collection via digital surveys, statistical analysis, and report generation.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus group and interview services involve the coordinated design, execution, and analysis of group and individual conversations to gather qualitative data from specific target populations. This service is crucial for obtaining in-depth insights into participants' perceptions, opinions, and experiences, allowing for a richer understanding of their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in regard to a program or topic. Focus groups and interviews are particularly useful for exploring new concepts, gathering feedback on existing services, and identifying areas for improvement.

Service Components	
Methodology Design	Develop a comprehensive design for qualitative data collection, deciding on focus groups and/or individual interviews based on the research objectives. In collaboration with the client, define participant selection criteria and the number of sessions or interviews required.
Protocol Development	Develop a detailed moderator guide that outlines the discussion topics, questions, and probes to ensure all relevant topics are covered comprehensively.
Participant Recruitment	Identify and recruit appropriate participants, ensuring diversity and adherence to the study's demographic requirements. Manage logistical arrangements including scheduling, consent forms, and compensation.
Session Moderation and Interview Conduct	Facilitate focus group sessions by guiding the discussion effectively and managing group dynamics and/or conduct one-on-one interviews, allowing for a deeper dive into individual experiences and perspectives.
Data Transcription	Transcribe all discussions and/or interviews.
Data Analysis	Develop a coding scheme which may include both pre-determined and emergent codes and systematically apply the coding scheme to the transcripts. Analyze qualitative data using appropriate methods such as thematic analysis to extract key themes and insights.
Reporting and Recommendations	Compile findings into comprehensive reports that include detailed analysis, actionable insights, and strategic recommendations. Present results to stakeholders in a format that facilitates understanding and decision-making.
Stakeholder Briefings	Organize debriefing sessions and share outs with stakeholders to discuss findings, implications, and next steps based on the focus group and/or interview results.



Example

Designing and conducting focus groups and interviews to assess school meal perceptions among school staff and parents. The initiative involves developing discussion protocols, recruiting diverse participants, and executing sessions, followed by transcription and thematic analysis of the data. The results are synthesized into a comprehensive report with actionable insights for tailoring school meal programs.

General Reporting

General reporting services involve the creation of comprehensive and detailed reports and presentations tailored to meet the specific needs of various stakeholders, including boards, funding agencies, program staff, and the general public. This service is essential for communicating the outcomes and insights derived from research and evaluation activities, ensuring that the findings are accessible, understandable, and actionable for all intended audiences.

Service Components

Report Planning and Design	Collaborate with clients to identify the report goals, audience needs, and preferred formats for reporting. Design the structure and layout of reports and presentations to ensure clarity and engagement.
Data Synthesis and Analysis Presentation	Synthesize data and analysis into key findings that are relevant to stakeholder interests and needs. Create visual elements such as charts, graphs, and infographics to enhance the presentation of data.
Report Writing	Draft comprehensive reports that detail methodologies, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Ensure the language and style are appropriate for the target audience, whether for technical experts, decision-makers, or the general public.
Review and Revision Process	Conduct iterative reviews with clients to refine the report content and presentation based on feedback. Make necessary revisions to ensure the final report meets all stakeholder requirements and expectations.
Presentation Development	Develop presentations tailored to specific audiences, such as board meetings, conferences, or community gatherings. Prepare speaking notes and rehearse presentations to ensure clear and effective delivery.
Dissemination Strategy	Plan and implement a dissemination strategy to ensure the report reaches all relevant audiences through the appropriate channels. Include digital publication, physical distribution, and live presentations as needed.



Example

Creating a detailed annual evaluation report for a multi-year nutrition education initiative funded by a major foundation. The report would include an executive summary for quick insights, detailed analysis sections for technical stakeholders, and a visually engaging presentation for the foundation's board of directors.

Data Dissemination

Data dissemination services involve the strategic distribution of research findings and insights through various materials tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse audiences. This service ensures that key information reaches the relevant stakeholders, policymakers, practitioners, and the public. It includes the creation of policy briefs, op-eds, conference presentations, and peer-reviewed journal articles, all customized to effectively communicate the project's impacts and recommendations.

Service Components

Material Development and Content Creation	Develop a range of dissemination materials based on the research findings and the intended audience. This may include policy briefs for policymakers, op-eds for the general public, detailed presentations for academic conferences, and articles for submission to peer-reviewed journals. Create content that is engaging, informative, and persuasive. Ensure that it is accessible and comprehensive to non-specialists when necessary, while maintaining the depth and rigor required for expert audiences.
Review and Iteration	Collaborate with clients and stakeholders to review content drafts and incorporate feedback. Iterate on the content to refine the messages, clarity, and effectiveness of the dissemination materials.
Presentation and Engagement	Prepare and deliver presentations at conferences, workshops, or webinars. Engage with the audience through Q&A sessions and follow-up discussions to further disseminate the research findings.
Impact Monitoring	Monitor the reach and impact of dissemination efforts through feedback collection, media mentions, citation analysis and other metrics.



Example

Disseminating the results of a public health study on the impact of school gardens on student health outcomes. The dissemination plan includes a policy brief aimed at local government officials, an op-ed in a major city newspaper to engage the general public, and a detailed presentation for a national public health conference.

RFP Support

RFP support services involve comprehensive assistance to clients, including school districts, non-profit organizations, and state departments of education, in developing robust, compelling, and competitive grant applications. This service focuses specifically on enhancing the research and/or evaluation sections of grant proposals, ensuring they align with funder guidelines and effectively showcase the potential for impact. It includes guidance on crafting detailed evaluation plans that demonstrate thoughtful design, feasible implementation, and the ability to deliver measurable results.

Service Components

Initial Consultation	Discuss the specific needs, goals, and requirements of the client's proposal. Review previous applications (if available) to understand areas of strength and improvement.
Evaluation Plan Development	Assist in developing a detailed evaluation plan that could include objectives, methods, expected outcomes, logic model, theory of change and data analysis strategies. Ensure the plan aligns with both the program's goals and the funder's evaluation criteria.
Writing and Editing Support	Provide writing assistance to articulate the evaluation methodology clearly and persuasively in the proposal. Edit and refine the evaluation sections to enhance clarity, coherence, and impact.
Compliance and Best Practices	Ensure that the evaluation plan complies with all specified RFP guidelines and best practices in program evaluation. Provide recommendations on ethical considerations and data management plans.
Feedback Integration	Incorporate feedback from the client and revise the proposal accordingly. Prepare the final draft of the research and/or evaluation section for submission.



Example

Assisting a state department of education in preparing a grant proposal to secure funding for an innovative district wellness program. Our team collaborates with the client to develop a comprehensive evaluation plan that details the assessment of program effectiveness in increasing student physical activity and improving nutrition habits. The plan includes predefined metrics for success, data collection methods, and a detailed analysis strategy, ensuring the proposal meets the standards of the funding agency.

Literature Review

Literature review services involve comprehensive analysis of existing research relevant to specific health and/or educational initiatives. This service provides support to organizations, school districts, and policy-makers aiming to ground their programs and policies in evidence-based practices. By systematically reviewing and synthesizing existing research, our team helps clients understand the current knowledge landscape, identify best practices, and recognize gaps in the literature that need addressing.

Service Components

Scope and Objective Definition	Collaborate with clients to clearly define the scope and objectives of the literature review, ensuring alignment with their strategic goals. Determine the key questions and topics that the literature review will address.
Systematic Search Strategy	Develop and implement a systematic search strategy using relevant databases to gather literature that meets predefined criteria, including comprehensive coverage of both academic and grey literature.
Data Extraction and Organization	Extract key data and findings from selected articles and reports, organizing it into a structured format that facilitates analysis and synthesis. Summarize important findings and methodologies used in the literature.
Critical Analysis and Synthesis	Critically analyze the collected literature to assess the quality and relevance of the research. Synthesize findings to draw conclusions, highlight trends, and identify research gaps or inconsistencies.
Reporting and Recommendations	Draft a comprehensive report that includes a synthesis of the literature, critical insights, and evidence-based recommendations for future actions. Format the report to align with different stakeholder needs, ensuring it is accessible and informative.



Example

Conducting a literature review to gather and synthesize existing research on effective physical education practices and their impact on student health. The insights gained from this review are used by a state department of education to inform the development of new guidelines for physical education programs aimed at improving student well-being.



Contact Us

Ready to review a formal proposal from Action for Healthy Kids for our research and evaluation services? Contact a member of our team today to request a formal proposal. We look forward to working with your team to support schools, districts, and communities in improving the health and wellness of children.



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