



# WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR EVALUATOR

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## EXPERTISE

Your evaluator should have specific expertise and experience in working with community coalitions. Experience evaluating other types of organizations or evaluating specific programs can be helpful but usually are inadequate preparation for the challenge of evaluating coalitions. A background in research can also be helpful but your evaluator should understand the difference between research and evaluation (they are not the same at all). Your evaluator must have direct, practical, and real community experience with evaluating coalitions.

## COLLABORATION

Your evaluator should know how to design a process that puts your coalition and community in control. Your evaluator should be seen as (and see themselves as) a “co-expert.” Your team knows your community and coalition best. An evaluator simply brings specific skills and tools that can help your team work better and achieve the results your team desires. The terms “participatory evaluation” or “participatory research” are popular phrases that describe this important idea. The bottom line is that your evaluator should work hand-in-hand with coalition leadership and staff at each step of the evaluation process.

## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Your coalition should know more about evaluation as a result of working with your evaluator. The systems set up in cooperation with your evaluator should take minimal time to maintain, provide concrete information your team regularly uses during meetings and for presentations, and they must be affordable. After working with a skilled evaluator your coalition should find that evaluation has simply become a part of “how you do business.” Further, your coalition members and staff should be able to point to specific examples of how you have improved, how you now work better together, how you can tell your story more completely, how you have gained credibility and support in the community, and how you have exceeded your funders’ evaluation requirements.

## QUALITY AND ETHICS

Your evaluator should understand the ethics that guide the practice of community evaluation and should be able to discuss these principles easily and in everyday language with coalition members. When creating tools to collect information, your evaluator should also create quality control procedures that the coalition team can easily understand, implement and adhere to so everyone can have a high degree of confidence in the data and the evaluation results.