

# Evaluate Your Program in 10 Steps

## **STEP 1: DECIDE**

Take a hard look at your volunteer driver program, its purposes, activities, and accomplishments. Ask yourself if sufficient planning and implementation of policies and program actions have been undertaken for embarking on an evaluation. Examples could include policies and program activities related to volunteer driver recruitment and training, risk and risk management, funding and fundraising, and rider/passenger transportation service delivery.

## **STEP 2: INVOLVE**

Identify and list the program participants or stakeholders who have supported the volunteer driver program in the past plus have interests and expectations for its future. They could include board members, staff, volunteers, passengers, community members, and funders.

## **STEP 3: ASSESS**

Review the prospective evaluation activities and resources that are available for the evaluation. In addition to time, money, people, resources, and review and approval processes, it will be important to decide if the volunteer driver program has adequate resources to undertake and complete an evaluation process, and if its outcome will be useful.

## **STEP 4: DEVELOP**

Identify the questions and people relevant to your evaluation. It will be important to involve the people who are or should be participants and stakeholders (mentioned above). Determine what questions should be asked. Questions might address outcomes with respect to the extent to which the volunteer driver program has implemented its agenda and activities. Additionally, how it meeting its goals and objectives in the previous year.

## **STEP 5: DETERMINE**

It will be important to review the purpose of evaluation, the questions to be asked, the availability and reliability of needed data, and to plan the data gathering activities. A volunteer driver program might plan to use software reports and qualitative surveys as data sources. This data will emphasize indicators such as the number of passengers and drivers; feedback from passengers and drivers; and the number of rides provided in the previous and current year. It will be important to ensure anonymity in all participant information collected.

### **STEP 6: PLAN**

Devise the method for evaluating the program, its policies, and how the results will be used and communicated. A volunteer driver program may want to create a matrix of information gathered from previous evaluation questions and activities. It may also wish to identify the data sources, timelines, roles, responsibilities, and methods that will be used in analyzing the new data.

### **STEP 7: COLLECT**

Identify the methods for data collection (program data, surveys, interviews) and any necessary methods for informing the evaluation participants. A volunteer driver program may be able to generate much of its data from reports from the previous year; from its software; and from its drivers, riders, and community surveys. The program will need to ensure that reports from previous years and software reports are accurate.

### **STEP 8: ANALYZE**

Once the data has been collected, accurate data entry will be critical. A volunteer driver program that has collected both qualitative and quantitative data will need to consider staffing for quantitative and qualitative data entry and separate staffing for checking the accuracy of data entry and data results. Statistical analysis and interpretation can be conducted on quantitative data. Themes can be developed from qualitative data. Recommendations can be developed from interpretation of the results.

### **STEP 9: DISSEMINATE**

The evaluation results may include a list of recommended actions based on the outcomes of the process. A volunteer driver program may decide to distribute the findings via a written report or slide presentation to its board, staff, and funders. It also may convey these to volunteers, riders, and the community or prepare a news release with links to the full report and slide show.

### **STEP: 10 APPLY**

Ensure that the results of the evaluation can lead to success. For example, a volunteer driver program may decide to organize a meeting of the Board of Directors to discuss the results and decide on appropriate action steps (perhaps in the form of an action plan) that can be undertaken by the program and its participants. Alternately, it may decide to organize a meeting of its primary funding partners to review the results and explore action steps that can lead to continued or additional funding.

*Note: These 10 steps were inspired by a public health capacity-building initiative of Ontario in Canada. This initiative works with Ontario's public health system, health care intermediaries, and partner initiatives and is supported by the Ontario Government.*