



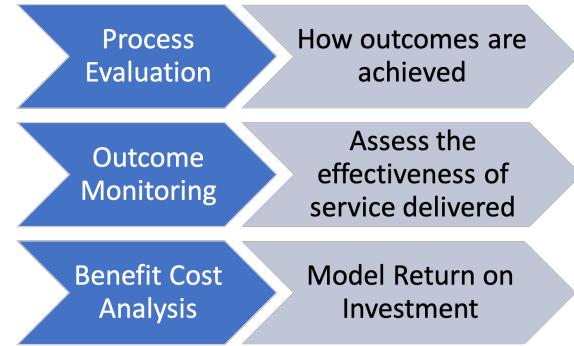
Alabama Support Team for Evidence-Based Practices

THE RIGHT SERVICES, TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE, IN THE RIGHT WAY, AT THE RIGHT TIME

Strategic Evaluation is a systemic approach to looking at programs and services from multiple perspectives. The importance of strategic evaluation rests in the ability to identify the efficiencies and effectiveness of achieving a desired outcome. This type of evaluation allows for performance benchmarking, measuring performance across time and jurisdiction, analyzing results, and taking corrective action. Strategic evaluation requires a longer engagement timeframe than developing a service inventory and should be focused on similarly situated services and populations.

A Focused Evaluation

Policymakers should determine the focus. Through its Catalog of Services, ASTEP has begun to categorize services by policy area, outcome, and target population. Currently, analysis is limited to agencies that have completed a baseline service inventory. Using Strategic Evaluation, policymakers can focus evaluation by policy area, outcome, or target population regardless of whether an agency has created of an inventory.



Policy Areas	Outcomes of Interest	Target Populations
Child Welfare	Child Abuse & Neglect	birth - 5 years of age
Children's Mental Health	Depression, ADHD	Adolescent
Health Care	Obesity (Child & Adult)	Youth, College Age
Substance Use Disorder	Opioid Use	Pregnant women, Seniors
Adult Mental Health	PTSD	Low Income Individuals
Health & Prevention	Infant Mortality, Falls Prevention	
Workforce Development	Public Assistance, Food Assistance	



*Services designed to treat
Pregnant Women with
Substance Use Disorder*

Process Evaluation

By focusing on how a service works through process evaluation, ASTEP will be able to inform policymakers and public managers about the outcomes the service is designed to achieve and whether it is implemented in a way that will impact those outcomes. In order to assess whether a service is effective, ASTEP must first determine its intended purpose. Process evaluation provides service information related to Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions. The results of a process evaluation will allow better reporting on the service, comparing the service to similarly situated services, and provide information that can be used to improve future activities and inform further evaluations through outcome monitoring and benefit-cost analysis.

Who, What, When, Where, Why

- Who is the target population of the service efforts?
- What has your program done?
- What are the barriers/facilitators to implementation of program activities?
- When did your program activities take place?
- Where did your program activities take place?
- Why is this service needed?

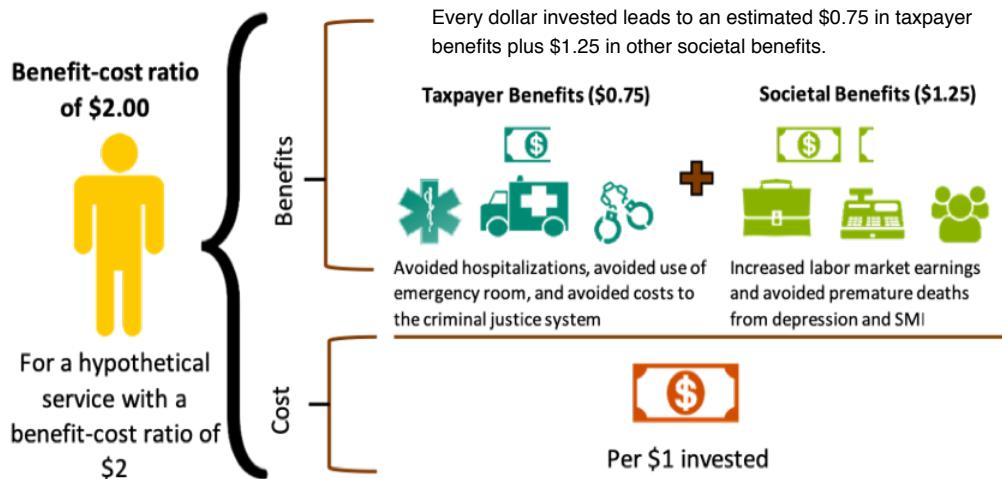


Outcome Monitoring and Oversight

Outcome monitoring and oversight helps determine the effect a service has on its target population's behaviors and the service's effectiveness at meeting its objectives. Once a service's intended purpose is defined, there is a need to measure a service's performance against the established quality standards and outcome benchmarks. This includes comparing results across time and jurisdiction, analyzing efficiencies and effectiveness, and performing periodic reviews of similarly situated services. Outcome monitoring and oversight helps ensure that services are efficiently meeting their purpose.

Benefit Cost Analysis and the RFI Model

Economic evaluation provides policymakers and program managers a way to assess a service's cost relative to its effectiveness at impacting specific outcomes. The Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative (RFI) and Model provides ASTEP with a resource to help determine the economic benefits of a service versus its cost to implement. By leveraging high quality research studies, the tool also helps to estimate the impact of various programs using Alabama specific economic attributes.



Policymakers and program managers can consult this tool before implementing a service to determine the break-even cost of delivering a service. Benefit Cost analysis is especially useful in identifying impacts from multiple perspectives. It also provides the capability to evaluate the risk or likelihood of a return on investment of a service with proven impacts on outcomes.

Outcomes

Strategic Evaluation is a cost-effective approach to ensuring services delivered impact the desired outcome policymakers and public managers intended. Narrowing the focus of evaluation to specific areas of interest allows for deeper evaluation and analysis. By having a concentrated and strategic plan for evaluation, ASTEP can continue to develop and enhance the existing catalog of services, capture the true costs associated with achieving an outcome, and identify potential gaps in service.

What you get from Strategic Evaluations

Improved understanding of why public managers do what they do

Promote continuous improvement and provide another level of accountability for taxpayer dollars and the clients being serviced

Ability to compare current services to alternatives or highlight services that might be in competition with one another

Help expose or debunk assumptions

"If you don't know where you are going, you are certain to end up somewhere else."

- Yogi Berra



Strategic Evaluation

SERVICE ASSESSMENT

- Build a detailed, service level inventory
- Engage providers ensuring an accurate inventory of services
- Collect specific service level data attributed to the targeted outcomes
- Match services to evidence

OUTCOME MONITORING

- Measure performance against benchmarks
- Evaluate performance
- Compare results across time jurisdiction
- Analyze cost effectiveness and efficiency

BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS

- Determine impact on outcomes
- Calculate the return on investment



Right Services: Services that have been proven to positively affect the desired outcome.

Right People: Services are delivered to the people they are targeted to impact.

Right Way: Services are implemented and delivered with efficacy and fidelity to their design.

Right Time: Services are delivered at the appropriate time to impact the desired outcome.



POSSIBILITIES OF STRATEGIC EVALUATION

Continuous development of specific elements found in Strategic Evaluation could result in expanding the concept of data-driven policymaking through evidence, enabling Alabama to not only use evidence, but become creators of evidence. ASTEP's Strategic Evaluation model incorporates the RFI approach and model to assess program effectiveness and estimated benefits achieved through evidence-based practices. States with a longer history using similar evaluation methods have proven just that. Some examples follow:

Extends RFI reach to local and county governments through EBP Collaborative

Evaluation Unit receives direction from the Legislative Finance Committee

Multi-State Agency Collaborative focused on shared outcomes

Pioneers in creating a cost-benefit model and path for what can be accomplished through creative and collaborative environments

Colorado's work with the RFI started in 2014 and has evolved from the traditional RFI approach through the creation of the Colorado Evidence-Based Policy Collaborative (EBP Collaborative). Like Alabama, Colorado's Research and Evidence-Based Policy (REP) Team focused on a more data-driven approach using research, evidence, implementation science, and cost-benefit analysis to inform the states decision-making process. Colorado strategically evaluates services offered throughout the state with a focus on policy areas. By systematically identifying the success of state programs, analyzing evidence-based programs based on their projected benefits, cost and investment risks, the REP team is able to advise policymakers on program effectiveness. With the forming of the EBP Collaborative in 2017, Colorado extended the original reach of their RFI approach to county and local governments with the intent of broadening the impact of data-driven decision making.

New Mexico's Program Evaluation Unit incorporated the RFI approach into its existing program evaluations to improve outcomes, redirect funding to programs that are proven to work, and project long-term benefits. New Mexico's Legislative Finance Committee directs the focus of the Program Evaluation Unit with the aim at providing oversight to state agencies and improving and ensuring accountability through the effective allocation of resources for the benefits of its citizens.

Criminal justice leaders in **New York** use the RFI approach to inform program and budget decisions; as well as, to enhance the state's evidence-based alternatives to incarceration. Behind the successful application of the RFI approach was the need for a strategic focus, careful timing, and continued commitment. By implementing performance monitoring and regular fidelity reviews, New York is ensuring that programs have the best chance to meet targeted outcomes.

Since the 1990s, **Washington State Institute for Public Policy** (WSIPP) has been engaging policymakers and public managers to ensure their work answers relevant policy questions. WSIPP's three-step process; (1) systematically assessing studies that have been tested and proven to achieve improvements in outcomes, (2) comparing the benefits and costs of each policy option, and (3) assessing the risk in the estimates that a particular option will at least break-even, has been recognized both nationally and internationally.

Alabama has the potential and capacity to improve outcomes. Strategic Evaluation is the ground work from where each of these states started. Through a focused process of service assessment and process evaluation, outcome monitoring and oversight, and benefit cost analysis; Alabama will be listed among the states that strategically impact outcomes; delivering the right services, to the right people, in the right way, at the right time.