

Tying it Together

Developing a web-based data collection system for a multi-site tobacco initiative

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Presentation Overview



- Background
- Planning & System Development
- TIES System
- System Implementation
- Lessons Learned



Background

MFH Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Initiative



- 9-year commitment initiated in 2004, \$40M
- Several strategies, including:
 - Implement smoke-free workplace programs
 - Promote school-based prevention programs
- Regional and community-based structure
- Internal and external evaluation

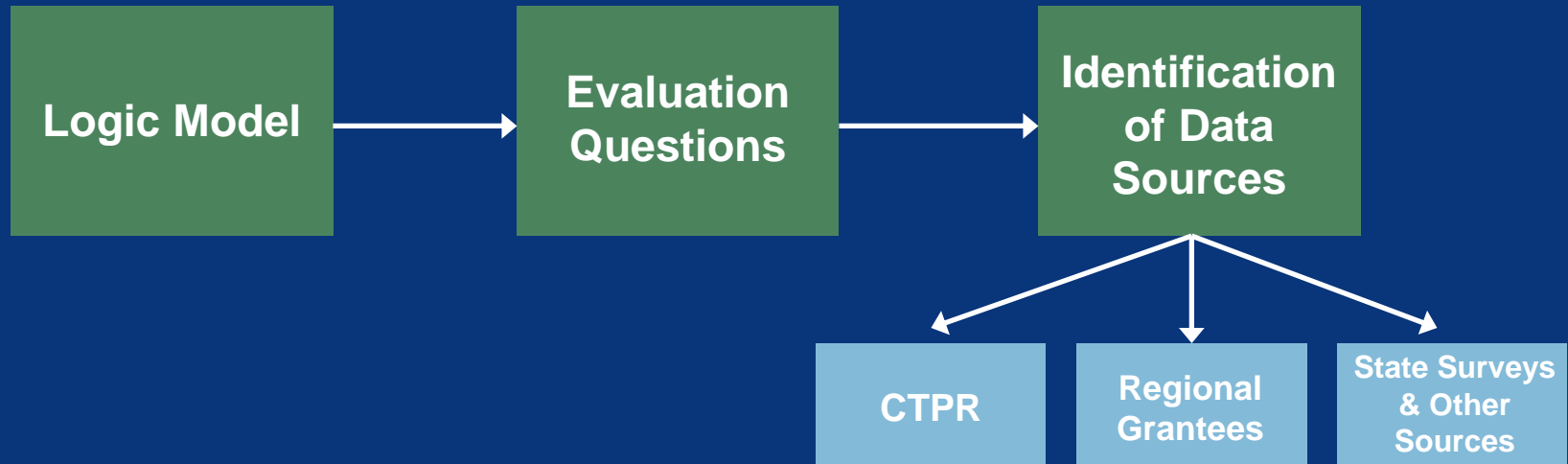
For more information- <http://www.mffh.org>

Initiative Evaluation - Aims



- Conduct a rigorous evaluation of the Initiative to produce and disseminate useful, quality findings
- Increase the evaluation capacity of the MFH regional and community grantees using a systematic evidence-based approach

Initiative Evaluation - Process



Initiative Evaluation - Challenge



- 9-year initiative
- 5 regional grantees
 - 27 community grantees
- Variety of interventions
- Solution

Tobacco Initiative Evaluation System (TIES)

A centralized location for regional grantees
to submit and access data via the web



Planning & System Development

Existing Web-based Systems



- Review manuals and content of systems from similar programs
- Interview system developers/users
- Review reports and presentations

Purpose of System



- Identify the primary purpose of your system
- Our purpose
 - To provide a centralized system to submit and access data over the life of the Initiative.
 - To enhance the timeliness, accuracy, and efficiency of data collection.
 - To provide utility beyond data collection.

Identification of Data Set



- Evaluation questions drive content
- Identify common characteristics across grantee programs
- Make sure stakeholders review data set
- Require grantees to incorporate data set prior to launch of system

Internal vs. External Developer



	External Contractor	Internal Staff
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saves staff time• Existing expertise and software	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete control• Utilize and enhance staff skills
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up and maintenance• Minor edits• Longer turnaround time• Access to data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training• Software• Increased staff hours• Working with IT Dept

Selection of Developer



- *Criteria for bid invitation:*
 - Recommendations from colleagues
 - Applicable experience
 - Capacity to do work
 - Location of office
 - Initial interaction
- *Compare bids based on:*
 - Experience and qualifications
 - Work plan
 - Timeline
 - Deliverables
 - Budget
 - References
 - Examples
 - Interaction with team

Working with Contractor



- Communication
 - Identify primary contact for both sides
 - Set up regular communication
 - At least weekly during initial development
 - Document all changes and feedback and send to contractor
 - Use multiple methods (*i.e.*, phone, email, fax)

Working with Contractor (cont)



- Information you are responsible for
 - Content (*i.e.*, instructions, fields, labels, response options, etc.)
 - Design requirements (*e.g.*, logos, color scheme)
 - Layout specifications for data entry screens and reports
 - Calculations for reports
 - Decision on host for site

Budget



- Be clear about budget up front
- Identify “must have” features
- If possible, get bids before determining overall evaluation budget
- Our budget
 - Started with \$10,000, spent \$12,279
 - Final budget included additional changes and hosting
 - Included money for upgrades in future budgets

Timeline



- Make sure timeline is realistic
 - Allow plenty of time for planning
- Identify short-term deadlines for yourself and your contractor
- Our Timeline- 1 year
 - Included: content development, contractor selection, system development, and testing
 - Original estimate for system development- 8 weeks



Tobacco Initiative Evaluation System (TIES)



System Implementation

Training



- Initial training is important
- Conducting training in-person is preferred
- Develop a detailed manual
 - Receive feedback from users on manual prior to finalizing
- Be prepared for additional training due to staff turnover

Technical Assistance



- Be prepared to provide ongoing technical assistance
- Identify primary contact person from your staff
- Track all assistance requests

Quality Control



- Conduct regular checks on the data
- Develop a protocol that identifies potential problems/quality issues
- Keep track of issues and solutions
- Contact grantee immediately when problem is identified

Backup



- Conduct regular backups of the system and copies of data
- If using external host, confirm the level and regularity of their backups
 - Do not rely solely on the host, back up the data yourself
- Before you restore your system, test it out on a system copy



Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned



1. Allow more time for planning than actual system development
2. Think about how grantees and funder will use system
3. Determine most of the content prior to beginning work with contractor
4. Allow for unanticipated delays in timeline

Lessons Learned (cont)



5. Be very specific regarding content, layout, functions, etc.
6. Document all decisions
7. Incorporate editing features into system in case of data entry errors
8. Test, test, and test again
 - Incorporate grantees and other users in testing

Lessons Learned (cont)



9. Be flexible
 - There is no guarantee system will work flawlessly
10. Include money in future budgets for upgrades and maintenance
11. Include at least 1 FTE from your staff dedicated to working on system & with grantees
12. Be aware of your grantees' level of evaluation expertise

For More Information

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