SIX STEPS OF EVALUATION

Core Qualities of Evaluation
• Decide evaluation is important, identify why it’s important, and commit to it.
• Implement with rigor and consistency.
• Be realistic about what you can achieve and what you can measure.
• Include it early in your planning and do it often
• Use what you learn.
• Adopt evaluation as part of your working culture.

1. Purpose/Background (start with the end in mind)
• Decide what you want to know and why you want to know it. (To make change? To assess impact?)
• Make sure your evaluation goals are in line with your program goals.
• Find out if data already exists that may inform your question.
• Identify the human and financial resources available to you for this process. (It is scalable — large & small organizations can do this)
• Establish a team who will work with you to answer this question.
• Have a plan for what you will do with the information you learn and with whom you will want to share it.

2. Outcome design (what does success look like?)
• Determine the desired outcomes for a given project, program or initiative.
• Identify the indicators of success. (How do you know you are achieving those desired outcomes?)
• Identify what method will work best for you and your organization. (ie Logic Model, Theory of Change.)
• Involve key program staff, artists, and/or stakeholders in this step of the planning

3. Data collection
• Collect a balance of both quantitative data (numbers and statistics) and qualitative data (stories and anecdotes).
• Determine your data collection method, which will be unique to what it is you’re evaluating.
• Examples of how to collect data include:
  • Talking to people (ie, interviews, focus groups)
  • Getting written Responses (surveys)
  • Recording observations using a protocol
  • Reviewing existing research and data
• Assign roles/responsibilities for your team members to carry out the collection process

4. Data analysis
• Be systematic and objective. Don’t be afraid to involve people who were not part of the process to help.
• Organize the information you gathered and draw conclusions
• Draw conclusions and identify lessons learned.

5. Share the findings
• Sharing results out more broadly has the potential to connect you to all the communities with whom you’re invested in building relationships.
• Decide who can benefit from what you learned. (Internal staff, key stakeholders, funders, artists, your community, and/or others in the field)
• A written report summarizing your findings remains with your organization as a testament to your hard work and the program’s value

6. Implementation – Taking Action
• The process comes full circle: Remember step 1 — Know why you’re gathering the information and have a plan for what you will do with the information.
• The results of evaluation are only valuable if you/stakeholders act on your findings.
• Take the opportunity to discuss (and debate) how to act and identify next steps.