Involving Community Members in Evaluation
A Planning Framework

When community members are involved in evaluation, all aspects of the project, from identification of the question to dissemination of results, are more likely to reflect the priorities, values, and experiences of the community. In any evaluation or research project, community involvement can be considered along a continuum, where community members have increasing levels of influence and responsibility. This planning framework, which can be used by organizations responsible for conducting or funding evaluation projects, can increase transparency, establish shared expectations, serve as a starting point to further clarify roles, and increase accountability.

Community role in each project phase	Community informed **Advisors**	Community involved **Community as collaborator**	Community directed **Community as leader**
Project planning/ decision-making	Community members advise on project (one-time input, limited decision-making control)	Community members (e.g., community advisory committee) give input throughout project and are involved in decision-making	Community members drive project, set timelines, define research question
Data collection	Community members review and give input to data collection strategies, tools; facilitate connections	Community members conduct data collection (subcontractors); determine most appropriate methods and co-create tools	Community members develop questions, determine approaches and make staffing decisions; gather information
Data analysis	Community members identify questions that need to be answered using additional analyses	Community members participate in data analysis (e.g., coding), ask for additional analyses/raise new questions, interpret meaning	Community members lead analysis, ask for additional analyses/raise new questions, interpret meaning
Reporting/ sharing results	Community members review and provide feedback to drafts of reporting materials (of all types)	Community members help identify key findings and develop recommendations, determine best modes for reporting	Community members write reports or develop other materials or approaches for reporting
Dissemination	Community members advise on dissemination strategies and key audiences	Community members co-present findings, help determine key audiences; share information in their networks	Community members determine audience(s); present findings

Just as the community member role varies across the continuum, the role of evaluation partners, funders, and program managers will also shift. In addition, the role of community members can vary within each phase of an evaluation project.