

Potential Sources for Finding an External Evaluator

The table below outlines the pros and cons of three potential sources for a hired external evaluator.

Source	Pros	Cons
College or university	Educational institutions offer the expertise of faculty members or graduate students at low to moderate overhead costs. Many small, not-for-profit organizations have found low-cost data collection assistance through colleges or universities. With proper training, graduate students (the more inexpensive option) can create instruments and collect and analyze data. Contact college or university behavioral and social science departments (e.g., criminal justice, social work, public health, psychology) to learn if they have faculty or graduate students to assist you.	May be challenged to meet the variety of expertise and time commitments to complete an evaluation within a grant cycle.
Independent researcher	Researchers who work alone or with minimal staff can provide high-level expertise at low overhead costs. They commonly have the flexibility to be located on site, enabling frequent interaction with program participants.	May be focused on social service or other professional activities and not have sufficient time available to conduct a meaningful evaluation.
Research and evaluation organization	Organizations with research and evaluation departments offer a range of expertise. They are able to meet the multiple needs of an initiative by offering experts across disciplines and having state-of-the-art technology in house.	May be comparatively expensive because of the higher overhead costs associated with larger organizations.