

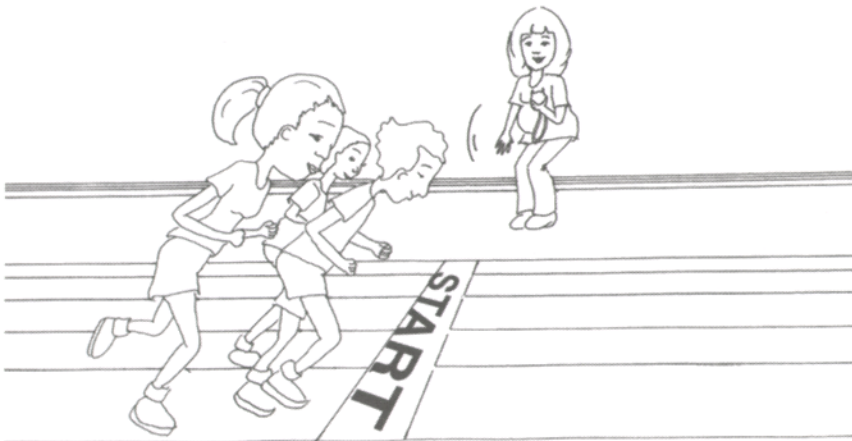
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## Step 4: Deliver, Track, and Evaluate Your Program

Step 4 will help you to:

- Kick off your program with grace.
- Keep track of events and new participants.
- Prepare to make necessary changes in the program.
- Evaluate your program's success.

### 4.1 Kick Off Your Program



By this time, your program staff and committee should be ready. You have all the resources you need and a timetable to put everything together. Although you may be tempted to “just do it” once you have reached this stage, your campaign will run more smoothly if tasks are specifically outlined. As campaigns proceed, unanticipated opportunities for message dissemination are often generated. The Puerto Rico campaign, for example, prompted two health insurance companies to provide training on folic acid for their primary care physicians after the campaign was under way. The following ideas will help you to keep organized and adapt to additional demands.

#### **4. 1-1 Make Checklist for Activities**

Checklists are excellent tools with which to make sure you are ready to implement an activity. The program planning charts provided in Appendix E can be used to track your accomplishments. In writing checklists, you should consider the details of each activity. Your checklist will help you determine if your program is ready to be launched. A sample checklist follows. Questions for the checklist will vary from program to program, depending on the activities you choose. Another sample checklist for a program’s partner can be found in Appendix F.



## Checklist

*Have you reminded all of your partners that you are counting on them to carry out their assignments?*

*Do they know when, where, and how to do their activities?*

*Do you have a list of media, businesses, and organizations to contact?*

*Are the materials ready in sufficient quantities?*

*Have those involved in your program been trained properly?*

*Are physicians and other health care professionals ready to answer questions and to provide materials about folic acid to their patients?*

*Are PSAs, press kits, inserts, brochures and other materials ready to be distributed and received by the media?*

*Are the materials ready for volunteers and their organizations to begin their activities?*

*Have you called the media to remind them of important dates?*

*Have you followed up with each volunteer and volunteer organization to remind them of important dates and commitments and to check on materials and problems?*

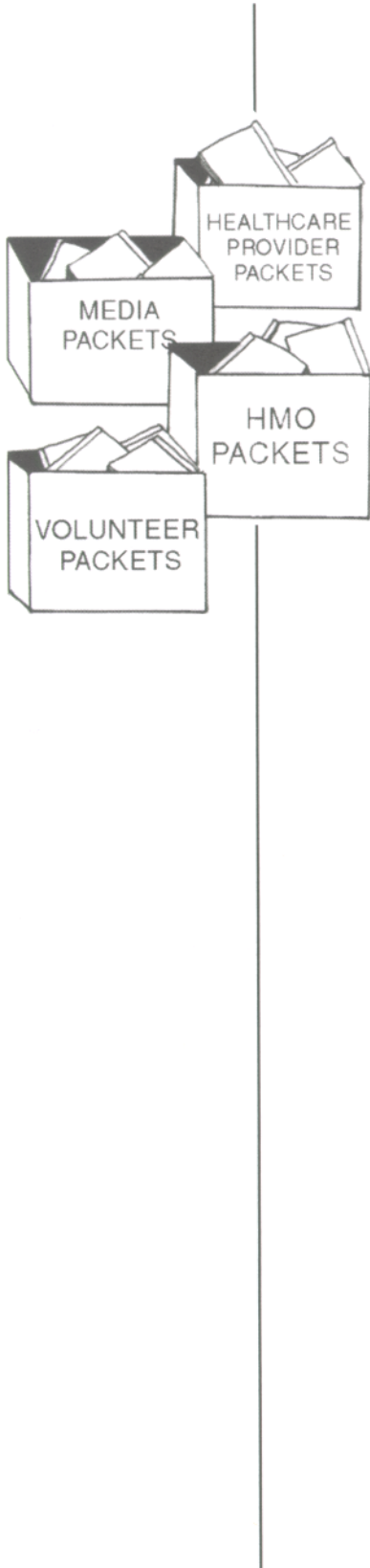
*Are you prepared to work with intermediaries who volunteer after the program has been implemented?*

*Are you prepared to ensure that each activity is happening as you planned?*

*Do you have follow-up response cards and thank you letters ready?*

*Do you have plans for a newsletter, meetings, or other methods to keep partners updated and involved?*

*Do you have a celebration for your accomplishments planned and ready?*



## 4. 1-2 Prepare Packets

Activity packets can be prepared in advance to respond to new requests by the media, potential funders, or new partners. These packets would be designed to orient your new partners to the campaign. A cover letter, a program activity list, and a brochure are essential in each packet. The other activity packet items will depend on the type of partner who offers their support. For instance, an NTD prevention slide presentation or informational speech could be included for health care providers or teachers. PSAs and photos could be included for media partners. Having these packets prepared *before* they are needed will free up your time to respond and to incorporate new community contributions, deal with unexpected opportunities, and impress your community partners with your commitment to the campaign. To prepare the packets, you could even have a “packing party” with some of your partners or volunteers.

### Partnering Tip

- *Provide partners with a series of small, short-term tasks and frequent “thank you’s” or small rewards like certificates of appreciation. Do not give partners too much to do at once.*
- *Use communication channels such as newsletters, e-mails, meetings, or milestone parties to update and inform partners about the program’s progress, achievements, changes, and important decisions.*



### Real World Examples



In 1994-95, the Spina Bifida Association of Kentucky (SBAK) undertook the “Project Healthy Babies” campaign. As part of its preparation for the various activities in the campaign, SBAK created different activity packets for each of its partners—grocers, media stations, health care providers, schools, and others. Following is an example of SBAK’s packet contents and “tips” for their partners. SBAK “Project Healthy Babies” packet examples prepared for other potential partners can be found in Appendix F.

## Media Campaign

### Tips:

- Kick off your campaign during a proclaimed month or date such as Spina Bifida Awareness Month. A nationally recognized event adds to your message promoting folic acid. A list of other timely opportunities to promote the use of folic acid is in Step 2.
- Contact your local Spina Bifida Association for spokespersons. With prior approval, a local family affected by spina bifida may be included on a list given to the media of people who would be available to give interviews.
- Include folic acid supplements. This gift will make your press kit unique and memorable, thus adding to your response. You may be able to have these donated by a local store or pharmacy company.
- Provide informative articles that can be inserted into a newspaper and 30-second and 10-second public service announcements for radio stations.
- Make sure your information is correct and up-to-date. Have a knowledgeable editor for your material.
- Be brief, and know who the contact person is at each newspaper and radio station.
- Follow up with a letter or phone call.
- Keep the message simple so that the newspapers and radio stations will feel confident displaying the information to the public.

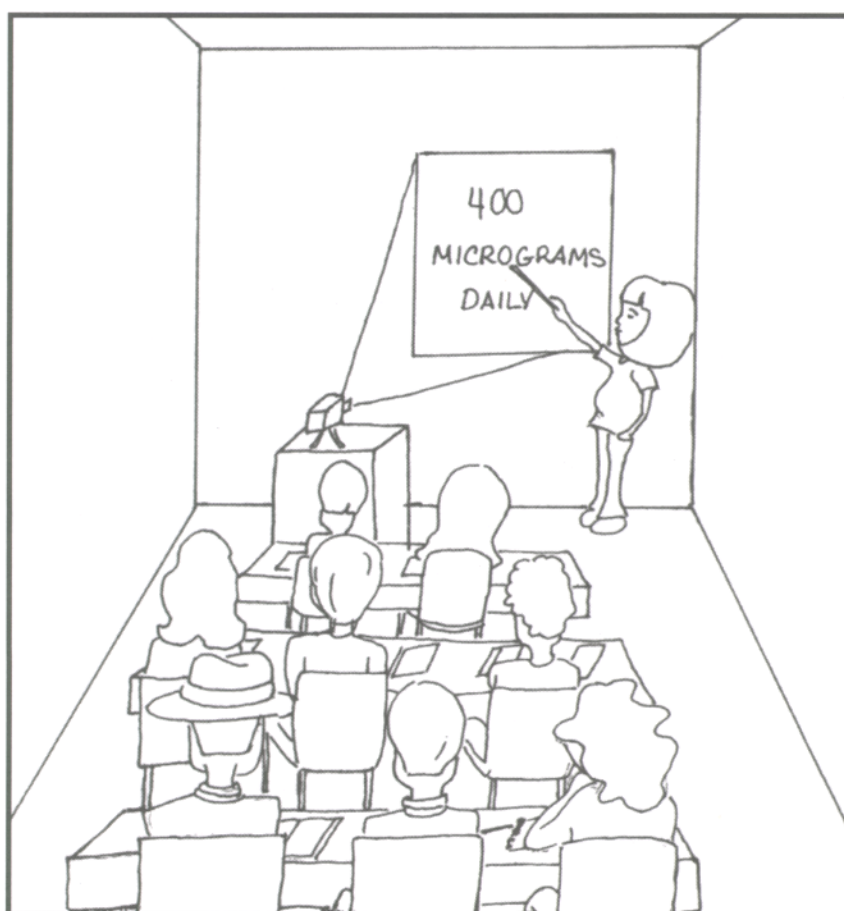
Press Kit Includes:

- Cover letter
- Press release
- Folic acid information
- Information on partners and their services
- Short article prepared for print
- Public service announcements for radio
- Follow-up letter to radio stations
- Response cards for newspapers and radio stations to mail back
- Samples of newspaper articles

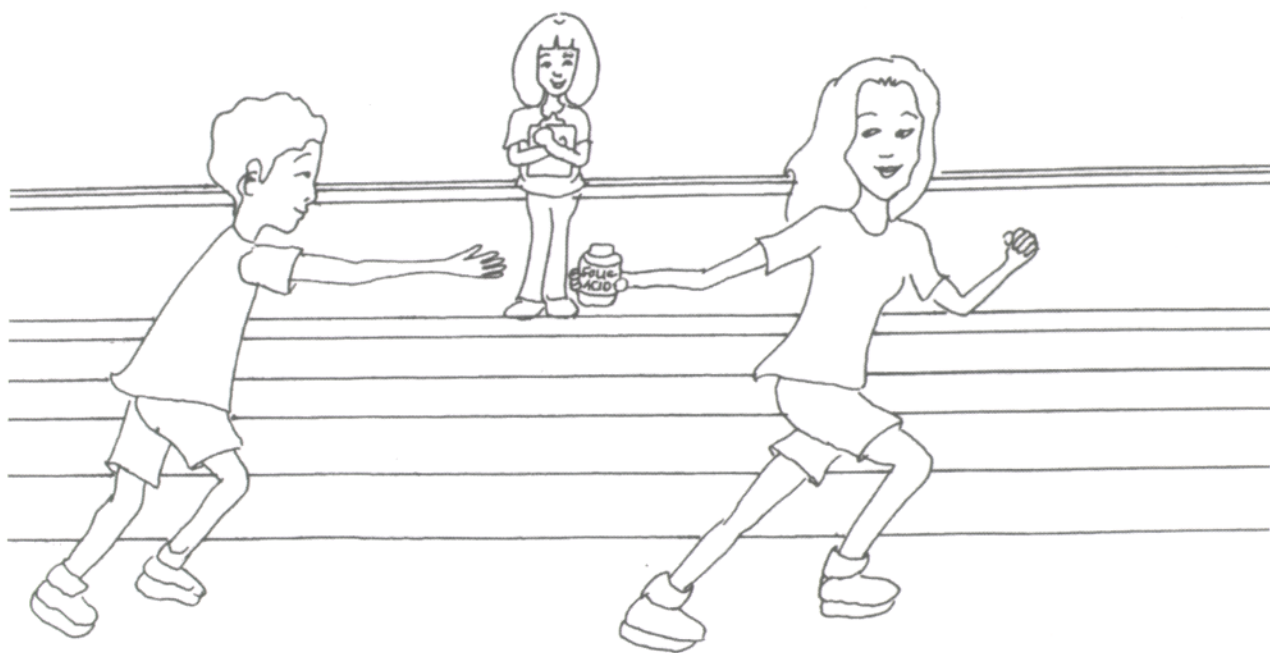
**Appendix H can help you to develop your own press kit for the media.**

## 4. 1-3 Train Partners and Volunteers

To ensure that everyone involved is providing the same message, you need to spend time educating your partners and volunteers about the importance of women of childbearing age consuming 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. Health care providers need reviews and updates too. Everyone should feel comfortable before beginning the tasks for which they volunteered. In Appendix I, you will find a cover letter for health care professionals, a training kit/slide show presentation, and how to contact other programs that have prepared training kits.



## 4.2 Keep Track of Your Program



Every plan needs a mechanism for checking on the progress of activities. This mechanism, called *process evaluation*, allows you to detect small problems before they become big ones, provides a realistic basis for mid-course decisions, and can give participants some preliminary encouragement if it reveals evidence of success. Process evaluation may also lead you to replace procedures that are not working well with more effective ones. You should establish some specific time intervals for reviewing the progress of your program. At these intervals, measure activities and outcomes that relate to the goals and objectives of your program. Some questions to answer include the following:



### How well did you plan?

- Are activities on track?
- Are time schedules being met?
- Are resource expenditures acceptable?
- Is staffing sufficient to meet program needs?

### How are individual activities progressing?

- What activity has been done?
- How many times has it been done?
- Who did the activity?
- Who was the intended audience?
- How big was the intended audience?
- How long did the activity last?
- Was the timing of the activity appropriate?
- Was the location a good one for reaching your audience?

### Is the intended audience being reached?

- How many people in the target audience were reached by electronic media?
- How many were reached by print media?
- How many sets of educational materials were distributed?

- How many presentations were given and what percentage of your target audience was reached through these presentations?

### **Are people responding?**

- How many inquiries were made by mail, by telephone, or in person in response to your campaign?
- How many intermediaries volunteered after the campaign began?

### **Are there any problems or issues that need to be worked out?**

- Do some aspects of the program need more attention? Do some need to be changed or eliminated?
- Can you improve the delivery of services for the remainder of the program?

## Partnering Tip

*Remember that all participants in your campaign need to know that what they are doing is important and appreciated. Take time to celebrate your accomplishments and acknowledge the contributions of everyone. Be sure to think about how you want to share information about accomplishments and about how you want to celebrate those accomplishments.*



*Thank-you letters, certificates of appreciation, a celebration luncheon or party, or acknowledgments of a job well done will motivate people to keep working on the plan. Even bringing cookies, fruit, or drinks to a long meeting can help provide a positive atmosphere. Celebrating your short-term successes and showing appreciation for your partners will help your efforts for the long term.*

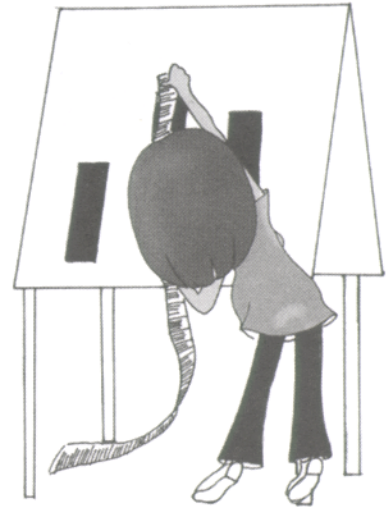


The Georgia Folic Acid Task Force carried out a number of activities around Mother's Day as part of an ongoing five year folic acid education campaign. They used the following process evaluation measures to track their progress and learn what activities worked, needed to be changed, or were not useful.

- Teleflora, a flower wire delivery service, included cards with a folic acid message in all floral deliveries for Mother's Day and Secretary's Week. The Teleflora florists returned stamped, self-addressed post cards that reported the number of folic acid cards they gave away, as well as their interest in participating in future folic acid activities.
- Nutritionists, family and consumer science teachers, and women's health clinic employees staffed folic acid display tables in their communities. They returned forms that recorded such information as the number of brochures they gave out, the number of visitors to their tables, the location of their tables, and the type of publicity received about the display.
- In order to gauge whether the Mother's Day flurry of activities increased media attention to folic acid issues, the Task Force did media hit searches. They tracked the appearance of folic acid issues (using specific search words—folic acid, folic, folate, homocysteine, and Georgia Folic Acid Task Force) in 14 Georgia daily and weekly newspapers one month before the activities, during the two week blitz, and one month following their completion.
- During a focus group with Georgia pediatricians, conducted as part of a separate research project, one of the Task Force partners heard anecdotal information that pediatricians who had received a mailing with folic acid information and materials were confused about the purpose of the mailing. As a result, they either threw out the materials or passed them on to OB/GYN colleagues. The cover letters were revised for future mailings.

## 4.3 Evaluate Your Program Effects

In measuring the success of your folic acid program, you will want to know if you are making a difference. Activities that help you measure the effects of your prevention efforts are called *outcome evaluation*. In the previous section, you read about the benefits of monitoring your program's activities. That type of evaluation, process evaluation, answers the question, "Is the program working as expected?" If not, "What can we do about it?" By measuring the end results of a project, you can answer the question, "How well did the program work or achieve its objectives and goals?"



### Why should you do outcome evaluation?

- It demonstrates the results of your project's efforts to partners, advisors, staff, or populations that you tried to reach.
- These results can provide evidence of a need for additional funding, resources, or activities.
- The results can be used to improve and revise an ongoing program.
- The results may encourage others to initiate and maintain public health prevention efforts.

## **4. 3-1 Review Your Program's Goals, Objectives, and Resources**

This section will help you to assess what kind of evaluation would be most beneficial to your program.

### **4. 3-1-a Evaluate your program's objectives**

If you wrote measurable objectives, this task will be very straightforward. If you did not, evaluation may be difficult. Measurable objectives can include changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. For instance:

- Compare the percentage of women who knew about the importance of folic acid before and after the program.
- Compare the percentage of women who used vitamins containing folic acid before and after the program.
- Determine the percentage of women who increased their consumption of foods fortified with folic acid and rich in folate since the beginning of your program.

### **4. 3-1-b Think about your resources**

Measuring the effects of your program takes time and money. In designing your evaluation, think about the personnel, time, computer facilities, and funds available to you as well as your agency's policies and any previous, well-designed evaluation activities that you know of to use as a model. The resources available to you will determine the type and extent of evaluation that can be done.

### 4.3-1-c Identify an appropriate evaluator

You have two basic choices—in-house staff or outside consultants (experts from research organizations). If you are new at measuring effects, consider getting some outside help, either training or technical assistance. In measuring effects, there are many complicated issues to grapple with such as bias, cost, skills, politics, resources, and time.

PROS	CONS
<p><b>In-House Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Less Costly</li> <li>•Familiar with product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Difficult to be objective</li> <li>•Usually less evaluation expertise</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outside Consultants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Evaluation expertise</li> <li>•Fresh outlook</li> <li>•Increased credibility</li> <li>•More objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More costly</li> <li>•Have to inform about project specifics</li> <li>•Effort to find competent evaluator</li> </ul>

#### **Partnering Tip**

*You may be able to use local university faculty or graduate students to advise your staff or carry out some evaluation tasks.*



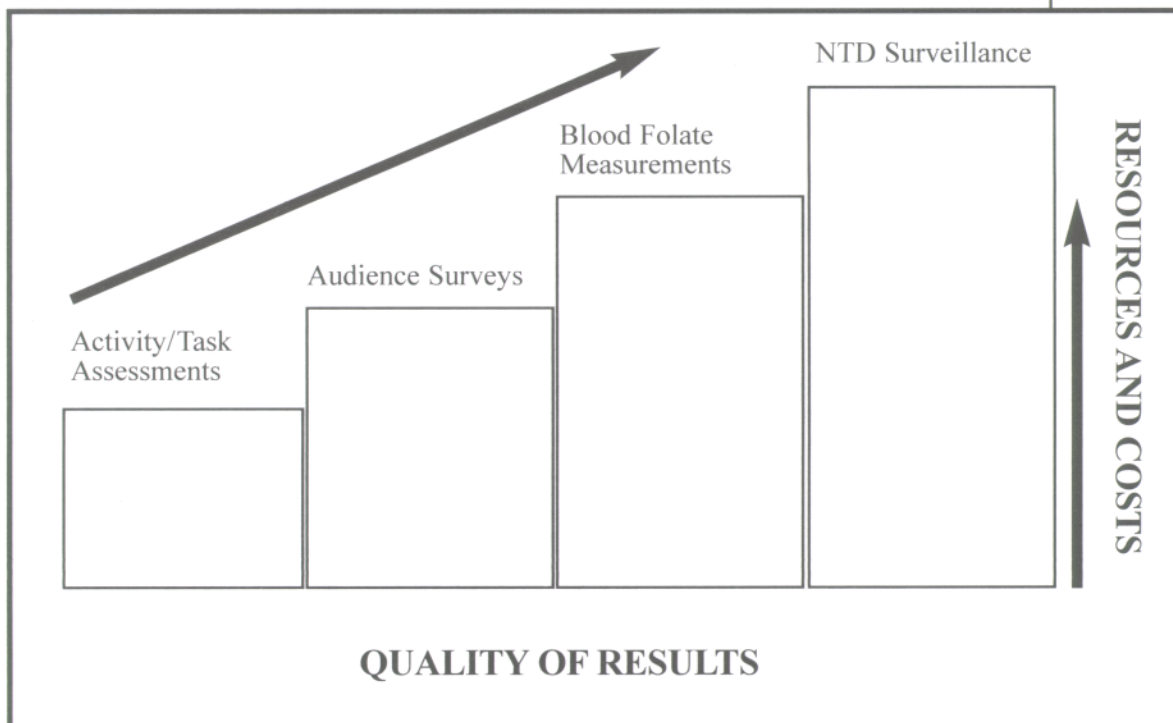
#### **4. 3-1-d Define the purpose of the evaluation**

Think about what the evaluation results might accomplish and who needs to be aware of the results.

- What changes do you want to measure?
- What do funders want to know?
- What does the staff or program director in your program want to know?
- Should you continue or discontinue the program?
- How can you improve the program's practices and procedures?
- Should you add or drop specific program activities?
- Can or should similar programs be instituted elsewhere?
- Are your results useful to people in other geographic locations, to other groups of women, or to other programs?



### 4.3-2 Decide How to Measure Your Results



The following are examples of ways to measure your program's accomplishments. These accomplishments can be activities, as well as results of those activities. Measurements range from simple ones that require few resources to complex ones that require more.

## 4. 3-2-a Activity/Task Assessments

These types of measurements do not inform you about your target audience's changes in knowledge, attitudes or behavior. Instead, they are used to measure how effective you have been in getting your message to your target audience. For example, you might count:

- The number of houses visited on a door-to-door folic acid awareness campaign.
- The number of people attending educational events.
- The number of folic acid brochures distributed in a clinic.
- The number of articles on folic acid published in newspapers and employee newsletters.
- The number of supplements distributed to, or purchased by employees at a workplace.
- The number of responses to your activities. (For example, responses to a PSA or press release, or requests for information to a toll-free number).

### **Activity/Task Assessment Tip**

One way to enhance your activity/task assessment would be to find out more about the women who respond to specific messages. Counts or estimates of the number of women that you reached in specific geographic, ethnic, and age categories would be helpful for further measuring the results of your program.

Real World Examples



**A** New Mexico program sent out a comprehensive press kit to television and radio stations and newspapers that included a press release with a toll-free telephone number. The staff counted telephone calls to this telephone line as a way to track the responses to its public awareness campaign. They also counted calls to the program's telephone line and requests for materials.

Create a Folic Acid Telephone Information Line!



**Activity/ Task Assessment**

**Benefits**

- \* At a minimum, provides a quantifiable measure of activities or a community's "exposure" to a message.
- \* Less costly and less resource intensive than other evaluation activities.
- \* Results are easily understandable.

**Drawbacks**

- \* Measures the activities, not the ultimate behavior change or outcomes. For example, the fact that 300 brochures were distributed at a clinic does not mean that they were read. Similarly, the fact that 500 bottles of folic acid supplements were distributed at a workplace does not necessarily mean that the women took them.
- \* Could require cooperation of partners like pharmacies and grocery stores to track measures like sales.



#### **4. 3-2-b Measure changes in women's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior**

An evaluation taken before and after a program can be very useful in demonstrating the effectiveness of your program. A survey is one method many folic acid programs have used in the past. However, designing a reliable survey is not easy. Without experienced and careful survey design and sample selection, results from surveys can be misleading and inaccurate. Appendix G contains survey questions that have been used by CDC and others. We encourage you to use these questions. If you use the same questions as those asked by other programs or in other areas, your results can be compared with theirs. Please note that these questions may not address a community's specific cultural, racial or ethnic, linguistic, economic, or other characteristics. Contact a university statistician or social science researcher for help in tailoring these questions to your community's needs.

To measure changes in women's behavior, folic acid promotion programs could also track the sales of folic acid-containing vitamins, foods fortified with folic acid, or foods rich in folate. Examples are:

- A managed care organization could track multivitamin and folic acid supplement sales in their in-house or contracted pharmacies before and after a folic acid educational campaign.
- A program could ask a pharmacy chain that serves its target population to track multivitamin and folic acid sales before and after a folic acid educational campaign.
- A program could ask a grocery store chain to monitor the sales performance of orange juice and fortified breakfast cereals like *Product 19*<sup>®</sup>, *Total*<sup>®</sup>, *Multigrain Cheerios Plus*<sup>®</sup>, or *Smart Start*<sup>®</sup> before and after a folic acid educational campaign.



**U**tah Department of Health conducted a before and after program evaluation survey of women's knowledge and behavior. This survey:

- **Saved on resources by adding questions to existing surveys.**
- **Was designed so that its results could be compared with results from other surveys.**
- **Showed the importance of how questions are worded and of which populations are chosen.**

Utah conducted a pre-campaign telephone survey two months before the campaign began, and a post-campaign survey was done a year later. Health Department personnel surveyed women ages 15 to 45 through two existing programs in the Utah Department of Health: Baby Your Baby (BYB), a prenatal program, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS is an on-going, state-based, random-digit-dialed telephone survey of non-institutionalized persons 18 years of age or more that tracks key health-related behaviors. They developed two survey questions to "piggyback" onto these already existing surveys, thereby minimizing the financial and personnel resources used to conduct the evaluation. The questions served to assess the Health Department's goal of increasing knowledge about and use of folic acid.

The survey results were compared with those from a national survey used by the March of Dimes. A much higher proportion of reproductive-age women in Utah reported using a multivitamin or supplement. These results led them to re-evaluate the wording of the question, "Do you currently take any vitamin pills or supplements?" They realized that the wording of their question might have been too vague. First, "supplements" may have been interpreted to mean herbal preparations, which are used commonly in Utah. Second, the question did not specify whether vitamin supplements were taken *daily* as did the national survey used by the March of Dimes. Because the term "daily" was omitted, many more women in Utah could have reported taking vitamin pills or supplements. Another possible explanation for Utah's results is that vitamin usage among women questioned in the BYB prenatal program may not be typical of that for all reproductive-age women in Utah. Although using pre-existing surveys is convenient and saves on resources, there are also limitations to be considered.

## Real World Examples



The following is an example of how one organization dealt with a problematic issue: how to survey a sample of women that accurately represents the larger group of women targeted in its prevention efforts. To learn more about barriers preventing women from receiving prenatal care, a managed care organization surveyed women in its Medicaid managed care program in Memphis, Tennessee. The survey took about one hour and included questions about the use of the medical care system and community resources, reproductive health, mental health, social support, life events, general health behaviors, multivitamin use, and attitudes about prenatal care.

A limitation of telephone and mail surveys is that people without phones or permanent addresses are under-represented. Since a large proportion of this particular population had frequent address changes and were without phones, the study recruited and trained women from the community to be interviewers and conduct a door-to-door survey. This enabled the survey to reach women who would not have been reached through a telephone or mail survey, thereby minimizing a potential bias. This is not to say that telephone or mail surveys are inappropriate. However, it is important to clearly define the population of interest and to ensure that the survey method chosen results in a sample that is representative of your population of interest. Discussion of the complex issues surrounding the design of a survey is beyond the scope of this resource guide but can be found in survey design texts referred to in Appendix B.

Real World Examples



**O**ndaga County Health Department (OCHD) in Syracuse, NY, conducted a survey of women's knowledge and behavior that:

- **Made creative use of existing resources.**
- **Showed how survey findings can provide direction for future efforts.**

OCHD saved on resources by using the local university's nutrition students and health department personnel as volunteers to make the telephone survey calls. A notable finding from OCHD's survey was that many women reported they were unaware that most multivitamins contained the recommended amount of folic acid (400 micrograms). In addition to evaluating their program, these survey results were helpful in identifying future program objectives and changes in program messages.



### Key Rules in Conducting Surveys

1. When conducting surveys before and after a program, select your sample and solicit answers in the same way.
2. Try to ensure that the sample of women to be surveyed is representative of the group of women you want to reach in your prevention efforts.
3. Survey enough women in order to produce reliable results. A statistician at a local college, an epidemiologist, or a survey expert can help with the "power calculations" to determine the number of women you need to survey.
4. Depending upon your survey and your agency, your survey may require approval by a *human subjects review committee* or *institutional review board (IRB)*, a mechanism used to protect the rights and welfare of humans involved in research.
5. Try to eliminate any potential biases and threats to your survey's validity. References for this subject can be found in Appendix B.
6. Train the people conducting your survey to ask questions and record answers in a standardized and consistent manner. Look to your local university research departments for help.
7. Consider asking your survey questions in the same way as other published surveys, such as the BRFSS which can be found in Appendix G. This allows for the comparison of your results with results from other populations.

#### 4. 3-2-c Measure blood folate

Surveys of blood folate levels in reproductive-age women can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a folic acid promotion program by measuring folate levels in a target population before and after the program. Projects such as these generally require *institutional review board (IRB)* approval and a special consideration of the *informed consent* process and procedures for handling and storing private information.

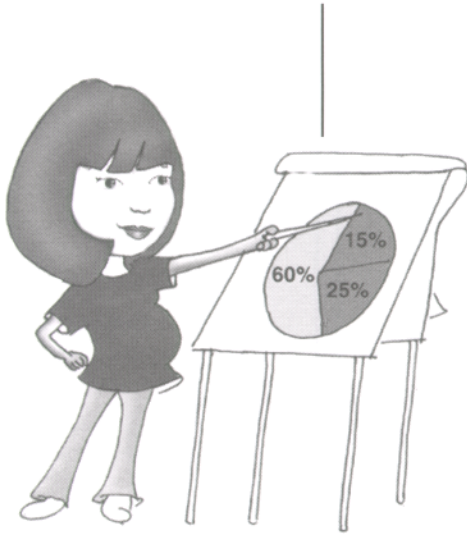
On a national level, the Third and Fourth National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES III and IV) will be used to evaluate changes in folic acid consumption. In addition, blood folate surveys of specific populations in other settings are being planned. For example, one state's family planning clinics will measure folate levels in blood obtained during routine client visits in order to assess the effectiveness of distributing free folic acid supplements. In another example from a managed care setting, blood folate levels will be measured in samples routinely drawn from women during their first prenatal visit to evaluate interventions to increase folic acid use. When more is learned about blood folate values, CDC will share information about this evaluation measurement.

### **4.3-2-d The pros and cons of counting NTDs for an outcome evaluation**

One way to evaluate any NTD prevention program is to count the number of neural tube defects before and after the program's intervention. However, there are several reasons why counting NTDs is not a practical evaluation method for many community programs.

- In states or communities that do not have large numbers of births, the relatively small number of NTDs makes it difficult to see the impact of interventions on NTD rates.
- The increasing use of prenatal diagnosis of birth defects and subsequent selective terminations of pregnancies has caused the number of babies born with NTDs to decrease. To estimate accurately the number of pregnancies affected by an NTD, one must include prenatally diagnosed cases. However, identifying prenatally diagnosed cases is often difficult and resource-intensive.

Despite these drawbacks, changes in NTDs rates are being used to evaluate NTD prevention programs in several areas of the country. Birth defect surveillance programs or registries in your state can be a valuable resource or partner and should be made aware of your folic acid interventions and evaluations. You may be able to use data from these surveillance registries. See Appendix C for a list of state surveillance contacts.



## 4. 3-3 Analyze the Data

- **Reassess your program's goals and objectives.** How do changes in your community or agency relate to your original set of goals, objectives, or activities? Should you revise any of them now?
- **Identify activities where additional efforts are needed.** How do the resulting changes in your community or agency relate to a service or activity in the program? Were your objectives and activities completed? Were they successful? If not, why? (Lack of resources?)
- **Think about objectives met as a result of successful activities.** Should these activities be continued and strengthened because they appear to work well? Or should they be considered successful and completed? Do they need to be reassessed? Can they be expanded to apply to other audiences or situations?
- **Compare the costs and results of different activities.** How do the relative costs (including staff time) and results of different aspects of your program compare? Did some activities work well, but cost less than others?
- **Seek expert help to analyze data,** such as university statisticians or market researchers.

Additional information on analyzing data is provided in Appendix B.

### Avoid These Common Errors

- *Concluding that a program works when it does not.* This error is usually a result of a poor evaluation design or data collection. Failure to account for the impact of other activities in the community that could have influenced the changes in knowledge about or use of folic acid is an example of a poor evaluation design. Choosing a sample of a population that does not represent the population your program tried to reach can also bias your results.
- *Concluding that the program did not produce any change because the results of your evaluation did not show any change.* This error can occur when the sample assessed in your evaluation is not large enough.
- *Concluding that a program was or was not effective, without information about the process.* This error commonly occurs when a program has not been monitored— **process evaluation** was not carried out (See section 4.2).
- *Concluding that a program has made an important impact when it has not.* Specify the amount of change that would have meaningful implications for your program. A statistical difference may not represent a meaningful difference.

## 4.3-4 Garner Support for the Program

Letting others know about your program and its activities is a great way to make new contacts and learn about similar experiences, lessons learned, new ideas, or other potential resources in your community. It can also:

- Exhibit your program's effectiveness and demonstrate a need to continue your program in your county, community, or elsewhere.
- Interest other organizations in continuing or helping with some activities.

## 4.3-5 Communicate Your Findings

- **Write an evaluation report.** An evaluation report is a formal record of your success. Written evidence can serve as a foundation for future NTD prevention efforts and help others to design their own programs. Some items to include in an evaluation report are:
  - A statement of the goal of the evaluation.
  - A discussion of the evaluation method and design.
  - A copy or explanation of your evaluation activity and/or questionnaire.
  - A summary of changes made in the program during and after your evaluation.
  - An estimate of the program's overall effectiveness. Share the results of your activity with the leadership of your agency or community.

- **Write a letter** about your findings to medical, public health, or health educational journals or to local professional newsletters.
- **Make a poster presentation** for a relevant professional or community meeting.
- **Send letters or brief reports to, telephone, or plan meetings** with peers in similar organizations.
- **Use the press** (print, television, and radio).
- **Write up a program description and gather sample materials to send to the CDC Folic Acid Promotion/NTD Prevention Clearinghouse.**

### Partnering Tip

*Meet to discuss follow-up activities and ideas to sustain your efforts. Talk about resources developed in your program that might be useful for other projects. Make sure that all partners feel they continue to be part of the program's success.*



### Lessons Learned in Evaluation

- Plan your evaluation **before** the project begins.
- Base evaluation activities on program goals and objectives.
- Find an experienced evaluator to help evaluate your program.
- Establish relationships with local college or university departments of health education, psychology, statistics, etc.