4 STEPS

TO AGGREGATE DATA FROM MULTIPLE PROGRAM SITES

Public health and education initiatives often need to combine data from multiple program sites to demonstrate overall impact. ICF has distilled lessons and recommendations from decades of evaluation experience to maximize your ability to aggregate data from multi-site initiatives.

1 Identify your targets.

- Before the program begins, engage stakeholders to conceptualize success of the initiative.
- Define the outcomes you will report to your stakeholders at the end of the program.
- Aim towards clearly defined targets as you work through the remaining steps.

2 Define what will be measured.

- Require grantees to measure a core set of common indicators using standard definitions and units of measurement.
- Articulate measurement requirements explicitly in the funding announcement and cooperative agreements so grantees know what they are committing to in advance.
- When applicable, consider existing and available data sources when selecting indicators.
- Do a final gut check to make sure your required indicators are squarely aligned with the aims and targets of the initiative.

3 Promote standard data collection methods.

- Include a pre-implementation phase within the period of performance so that grantees can establish baseline before the interventions begin.
- Require grantees to use uniform data collection methods and valid instruments.
- Define standard protocols and time points for data collection and provide training and technical assistance to data collectors.
- Consider using a single entity to collect community-level outcomes across all participating locations.

4 Establish a standard reporting system.

- Select a single, interactive, web-based data system for the initiative with standardized fields and definitions.
- Require grantees to submit data at specific time intervals with automated data validation mechanisms.
- Provide ongoing training and technical assistance to grantees to support valid and reliable data entry.
- Perform regular data quality checks, summarize data entry errors, and provide feedback to improve data quality.
- Provide a web-based platform (e.g., dashboard) for grantees to view their performance in relation to group means and medians.