

Why Choose Via Evaluation for 21st CCLC



BRIEF ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

Via Evaluation is a consulting firm that provides evaluation services for organizations serving high-risk populations. Our core purpose is to help organizations improve, develop, and sustain their services for maximum community impact.

We believe that developing and improving programs requires both dedication to learning and understanding the needs of our clients. To this end, we provide a wide range of services, including conducting needs assessments, collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, helping clients incorporate research evidence into programs, monitoring the implementation of programs, providing process feedback for continuous program improvement, and demonstrating program results with outcome evaluation, reports, and presentations.

On July 1st, 2017, two current long-term executive staff will become majority owners of Via Evaluation. These two women are committed to continuing the high-quality work of Via Evaluation, and will be applying soon after purchase for MWBE certification. This certification may be helpful to clients with grants from New York State that require grants funds to be spent on MWBE enterprises.

Our company adheres to the professional guidelines of the American Evaluation Association (AEA), the primary professional association for evaluators in the United States, and its Guiding Principles for Evaluators. All evaluation staff are members. The company presents at the AEA conferences and other venues annually. We emphasize professional development, and our staff regularly attend The Evaluators' Institute courses, AEA trainings, and relevant national conferences and trainings as they pertain to specific projects. In addition, all evaluation staff have completed training in human subjects research ethics, data security, and HIPAA regulations.

Via Evaluation takes a Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) approach to evaluation (Patton, 2008). This approach emphasizes the involvement of stakeholders in the project development and evaluation process to enhance the usefulness of evaluation. The key to this process is our collaborative, team-based evaluation approach, which aims to create a cohesive working relationship between the evaluator, the project team, and stakeholders. To this end, Via Evaluation works with our clients to develop evaluation plans, quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches, and reports that are usable and inform action.

WHY CHOOSE VIA EVALUATION FOR 21ST CCLC EVALUATION?

Since 1998, Via Evaluation (formerly Ciurczak & Company, Inc.) has evaluated a wide variety of projects, many of which focus on working with districts, community

based organizations, and others to improve student success. Via Evaluation has completed over 200 unique project evaluations, and hundreds of evaluation reports, for state, federal, foundation, and other funders. We focus on creating user-friendly, accurate reports that help clients achieve their goals. We are passionate about working with clients to achieve positive outcomes for students, families, and communities.

We have evaluated over 50 unique 21st CCLC grants, likely more than any other evaluation firm outside New York City, and are working with many Round 7 grantees. We have evaluated grants funded by each round of 21st CCLC in New York State. Via Evaluation is very familiar with the required evaluation manual. In fact, we provided input to the state evaluators as the manual was formulated, and presented about the development of the manual at the annual American Evaluation Association conference.

Via Evaluation is involved with several after-school networks in New York State, regularly attends 21st CCLC trainings for grantees around the state, and has presented at the Network for Youth Success of New York State and the National Afterschool Association conferences. We have provided extensive training on logic models, and have collaboratively created logic models for dozens of clients.

The specific tasks that we would complete as your evaluator, per the current evaluation manual include:

- create or revisit the Program Logic Model annually;
- provide a detailed, clear evaluation plan annually;
- create or revisit project objectives;
- create tools to measure progress toward program objectives;
- create forms/templates to facilitate data collection (e.g., attendance templates);
- complete Stage 1 of the Evaluation Process (requiring a site visit for each site);
- complete Stage 2 of the Evaluation Process (requiring a site visit for each site);
- submit results of stages 1 & 2 to NYSED, as required (Stage 3);
- participate in required Quarterly Advisory Meetings;
- create and analyze appropriate surveys; and
- complete the required Evaluator's Report.

We also provide clients with mid-year and end-of-year "Quick Facts" reports that summarize program outputs and outcomes in a format that is easy for stakeholders to understand. The purpose of these reports is to help clients make timely decisions for program improvement, aligned to program objectives.

The evaluation of 21st CCLC does not require the evaluator to complete the Annual Performance Report (APR). However, we recognize that many clients want

assistance completing the required APR. If you contract with us to provide APR services, we will:

- review and analyze attendance data, by grade level band, as required for APR reporting;
- obtain academic and demographic information for APR completion from relevant district(s);
- provide results of analyses for the client to easily enter attendance and outcome data into the federal reporting system.

VALUE OF WORKING WITH VIA EVALUATION

Key benefits of working with Via Evaluation on any project include access to:

- the expertise of multiple highly-qualified and experienced evaluators,
- over 55 years combined evaluation experience completing a wide variety of projects,
- staff who are certified to conduct research with human subjects and trained in research and evaluation ethics,
- staff who have received the What Works Clearinghouse Group Design Standards Certificate,
- HIPAA-compliant data systems,
- a high-quality data entry and data management system,
- extensive experience working with school district and other large data sources,
- Spanish, Burmese, Mandarin Chinese, and Arakanese-speaking staff, and
- Online survey capabilities.

When you work with us, you will have a team of evaluation staff dedicated to the needs of your project. A lead evaluator with a Masters level degree and years of real-world evaluation experience will be your key contact, and ensure our team is meeting the needs of your project. We do not sub-contract our work. We understand the value of as-needed, as well as regularly-scheduled, meetings between project staff and experienced evaluators. Evaluation is our full-time focus, not a side job.

Currently, the Via Evaluation team includes 11 staff members. The evaluation team consists of a Director of Evaluation, 3 Evaluators, and 4 Research Associates. Most evaluation staff have Masters degrees; three are former teachers.

The evaluation department benefits from the experience and support of a Director of Operations, an Administrative Assistant, and the President of the company. We have strong hiring, onboarding, and employee development procedures to hire and develop new high-quality staff as needed.

We will apply this experience to your program, providing you with information to foster continuous program improvement and positive participant outcomes.

Our clients express very high levels of satisfaction with our work. The overwhelming majority return again and again as new opportunities arise, looking to us to play the data-focused “critical friend” role they need for continuous quality improvement. They repeatedly praise our responsiveness, expertise, and timeliness in reporting as valuable. References are available upon request.

The following client comments illustrate the value of working with Via Evaluation:

[Via Evaluation] is not just an "evaluator" - they are a true partner, taking interest in the well-being of the programs and how to make them better. I cannot imagine working with any other evaluator.

Working with Via Evaluation has provided our team with an increased awareness of the importance of using data to make programming decisions. In addition, the team members doing direct work have a better understanding of their role and the impact they are having on students.

The team at Via go above and beyond in their work. They listen, provide honest feedback and are patient when you are learning. I trust the team and that is important!