



»»»»» Reflecting and Closing the Research Program



Reflecting and Closing the Research Program

KEY POINTS: LAUNCHING THE PROGRAM

- Thank partners for their contributions.
- Review metrics to assess the program.
- Identify successes and challenges.
- Share program outcomes widely.
- Implement a community-specific exit strategy to ensure ongoing collaboration and sustained impact.
- Help partners understand next steps.

TOOLS, TEMPLATES, AND RESOURCES

- [Program Reflection and Debrief Worksheet](#)

Thanking Partners

Partners are essential to the success of a public health research program. Recognizing their contributions shows appreciation for their efforts and builds goodwill for future work. It helps to ask partners how they would like to be thanked. Many teams have held celebration events with food to help mark the close of a research program.

Some other ideas include:

- Creating a thank you video featuring photos from local events that highlighted partners' efforts
- Inviting political leaders to celebrations to give further attention to the importance of partner contributions
- Sharing testimonials about the positive impact of the program
- Providing certificates, gifts, and stipends to recognize partners for their time and dedication
- Allowing partners to keep leftover materials and supplies
- Providing a final report or guide recognizing partner contributions to the program



Reflecting

Assessing Metrics

Once the research program is over, evaluate its success by reviewing the metrics established in the planning phase. Questions to consider include:

- Was the program accessible to community members?
- Who did the program reach?
- Did it reach the intended populations, including underserved communities and those disproportionately affected by the public health challenge?
- How did the program impact the community overall?
- What strategies were most effective in engaging the communities served?

Documenting Lessons Learned

Reflecting on the program's successes and challenges is crucial for improving future public health research programs. Budget time for evaluation and reflection between the end of one program and the start of another. With every new program, ask: How can this process be improved?

To collect lessons learned:

- Document successes and challenges throughout research program delivery
- Hold debrief sessions with partners
- Conduct post-program surveys with partners



Refer to the [Program Reflection and Debrief Worksheet](#) for capturing key insights.

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

The YMTT program used post-program assessments to gather program partner feedback. These evaluations helped refine operations and improve processes for future programs. This Roadmap was developed from partner feedback and was shared widely at a [summit](#) where partners discussed lessons learned, knowledge gaps, and next steps for ongoing public health collaborations.

Sharing Findings and Results

Choose effective methods to share program outcomes, such as:

- Posting on the research program's website
- Sharing results with local media
- Creating summaries of results in plain language
- Presenting at scientific conferences
- Providing results at the last research program meeting or event
- Publishing the research program's work in academic journals
- Highlighting stories of how the research program positively impacted lives

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

The YES study created a final summary that provided a snapshot of participation and outcomes. It includes the total number of participants, locations, demographics, and lessons learned. The study summary was posted on the program [website](#) and shared through newsletters.

Maintaining Relationships

Ending a program without follow-up can appear disrespectful and may mean passing up on future collaborations. Develop a thoughtful exit strategy in partnership with community leaders. This plan should outline steps to maintain connections and communication with partners.

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

The SYCT and YMCF test distribution programs' exit strategies included:

- Encouraging organizations to collaborate on other community issues
- Sharing information about future funding opportunities
- Conducting follow-ups in the weeks and months after the program ended to monitor progress
- Scheduling annual meetings to reconnect with partners, provide updates, and assess ongoing community needs

We extend our sincere appreciation to our community partners in Merced County, CA and Pitt County, NC for their valuable insights, collaboration, and continued commitment. Their contributions were instrumental in shaping the Roadmap.

We also acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions and insight in shaping this tool:

Nathan McKeel

Emily Granados

Cody Neshteruk

Mark Henry II

Norma Cardona

Gabriella Roude

In addition, we would like to thank the participants of the Community Engagement East to West Meeting in 2025

Pitt County Health Department