



## HOW TO FIND AND CHOOSE AN EVALUATOR

1. A good evaluator has experience with your type of program and your type of population. Ask them if they have ever evaluated criminal justice and treatment programs? (This experience can be crucial. You can pay a small amount for an evaluator with no experience with your type of program, but then the product you receive may be of no use to you at all.)
2. Ask them - what types of program evaluation have they completed before i.e. have they completed a process evaluation, outcome evaluation, impact evaluation or cost evaluation? Do they know the difference?
3. Are they willing to be part of a team approach and help with developing the programs goals and objectives? Will they work with you to develop the evaluation design and determine what questions you need the answer to? (Think about: Who is the audience for your evaluation? What do they want to know?)
4. The evaluator should have experience with collecting and analyzing data and defining variables. Ask to review copies of previous evaluations. Ask if they have been published in any journals.
5. Be cautious about the temptation to hire an evaluator/graduate student who is willing to work for very little money. They may be interested in performing research on your program to answer a question of academic interest but they may not be willing to engage you in the process and their research may be of no interest or help to your program. Be sure to follow the suggestions and ask the questions in the guidelines above to help you determine if this potential evaluator is right for you.
6. Talk to your state office, particularly if they have supported drug courts, to find out if the state has evaluators available to do your drug court evaluation. You can check with the county or city to see if they have evaluators identified. You can also find an evaluator by looking online for evaluation reports. If you find one you like, find out who did it and contact them. Finally, you can find someone by contacting local universities-departments of psychology, education, public health, criminal justice, political science, etc.