

# Dual Status Youth Program Evaluation Design

*In support of effective evaluation of the procedural fidelity and impact on youth outcomes for state and/or local dual status youth initiatives.*

## INTRODUCTION

RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice (RFK NRC) has been active for more than twenty years providing expert interactive consultation and technical assistance to state and local jurisdictions in the tailored development and implementation of Dual Status Youth (DSY) projects. A group of **core practices and markers of positive achievement form the foundation for success.**

In an ongoing effort to support assessment and evaluation of the DSY practices, procedures, protocols, and impact on youth and families uniquely developed in jurisdictions, RFK NRC has developed a methodology to conduct an **evaluability assessment** for individually tailored DSY programs. The primary purpose of an evaluability assessment is to systematically assess the manner by which a DSY program can be reliably and credibly measured that will ultimately support consistent and ongoing evaluation. It emphasizes methods to permit localized evaluation as to whether their DSY program has been effective and is sustainable. Key focus areas permit:

- determination if the established methods and practices have been implemented as intended, using a **program fidelity checklist**, in view of the locally established
  - target population
  - policies, procedures, and protocols
  - goals, objectives, activities, and desired youth outcomes
- establishment as to whether initial and subsequent program evaluations will provide useful and accurate information to assess multi-system performance and impact on DSY youth, and
- identification of capacity to inform trends and potential ongoing adjustments to policy and practice of DSY programs

Simply put, an evaluability assessment helps generate local and tailored considerations on how best to **evaluate a DSY program specific to your jurisdiction during its early or formative stages as well as long-term program considerations.**

The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, a program of RFK Community Alliance, provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to serve local, state, and national leaders, practitioners, and youth-serving agencies to enhance system performance and improve outcomes for children involved with the youth justice system.

Learn more at: [www.rfknrcjj.org](http://www.rfknrcjj.org)



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# DSY Program Evaluation Steps

The straightforward steps presented below provide a blueprint for jurisdictions to create the necessary infrastructure of local leaders and practitioners to carry out an evaluability assessment. This ultimately provides sustainable capacity to evaluate policies, procedures, protocols, and impact on youth and families resulting from their uniquely developed DSY program.

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY



### Identifying the Infrastructure for the DSY Evaluation

- Incorporate DSY Executive Committee for oversight and representation
- Include representation from agencies involved in the project
- Develop a multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing commitment to ongoing assessment and evaluation of the DSY program
- Establish Subcommittees/Ad Hoc Working Groups as necessary to guide and expertly inform policy and practice elements of the DSY program
  - Law and policy
  - Resources and practices
  - Data (collection, management, and performance)

## STEP 2: PREPARE



### Preparing and Informing the Evaluability Assessment

- Construct a Logic Model
- Gather and review of qualitative and quantitative documents and forms that currently comprise the DSY program operations and sought goals/outcomes
- Construct a localized **Data Action Plan** reflecting the current DSY operational activities and identifying the desired multi-system performance and youth outcome measures
- Conduct affinity group and individual meetings to collect qualitative information attesting to current implementation of practice from impacted stakeholders
- Identify the applied screening and assessment processes that affect DSY eligibility, case tracking, and case recommendations
- Explore current continuous quality improvement (CQI) and quality assurance (QA) sources, methods, and capacity

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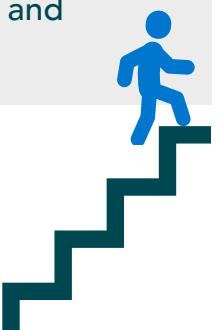


## STEP 3: IMPLEMENT

### Implementing the Evaluability Assessment Process

- Clarify and establish final definition for the DSY target population
- Finalize the Logic Model and Data Action Plan (includes all sought youth/family outcomes and associated measures)
- Examine practical operation of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) construct (including professional and youth/family participation, timing, and case plan emerging from the MDT)
- Conduct an analysis of cross-agency collaboration in implementation of policy and protocol

## STEP 4: FINALIZE



### Putting it all Together

- Finalize approval of all relevant policies, operating procedures, protocols, documentation forms, key performance indicators, and desired youth and family outcomes
- Execute the finalized DSY MOU reflecting adoption of all elements of the DSY collaboration, operations, policies and procedures, youth/family outcomes, reporting timing and format to DSY Executive Committee and participating staff
- Secure endorsement from the Executive Committee for the plan of action elements in the evaluation design and associated timelines and tasks for DSY program personnel
- Establish deadline for initiating the finalized Evaluation Design and the routine timing for use of prioritized data and information that will inform the ongoing and future evaluation of the DSY program

Please visit our website ([www.rfknrcjj.org](http://www.rfknrcjj.org)) for additional resources, including:

- Core Principles of Practice
- Program Fidelity Checklist
- Logic Model
- Data Action Plan
- Outcomes and Measures
- Markers of Achievements



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