

**Law Enforcement-Based
Victim Services:
*Template Package VI –
Program Evaluation***

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Introduction

Victim-centered responses and services are vital to the safety, stability, and healing of crime victims, as their use can ultimately reduce and prevent future victimization.¹ In 2018, to support the development of law enforcement-based victim services in the United States, to strengthen their capacity, and to support partnerships with community-based programs, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) launched the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services & Technical Assistance Program (LEV Program). Providing training and technical assistance for the LEV Program, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) aims to enhance the capacity of law enforcement-based victim services by providing guidance on promising practices, protocols, and policies to support victims' access to their legal rights and the services and responses they need.

Explanation of Templates

Whether establishing or enhancing a law enforcement-based victim services program, engaging in program evaluation promotes informed service delivery. This publication discusses the basic components of program evaluation. Templates and resources are provided to help agencies get started. Materials have been adapted from existing law enforcement-based victim services programs and other organizations. While all material has been vetted by subject matter experts, agencies should carefully review all material and update to fit their own needs.

Definitions

Throughout this document series, the following definitions will apply. They were selected through a review of documents in the field, including those from existing law enforcement-based victim services programs:

- **Advocacy** – actions to support a cause, idea, policy, or position.
 - Individual advocacy – actions aimed at direct services for victims.
 - Systemic advocacy – actions to improve overall system responses and outcomes for all victims.
 - Community-based advocacy – actions by those who work for private, autonomous, often nonprofit organizations within the community.
 - System-based advocacy – actions by those employed by public agencies such as law enforcement, prosecutor's office, or some other entity within the city, county, state, tribal, or federal government.

¹ Brian A. Reaves, [Police Response to Domestic Violence, 2006–2015](#) (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017).
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- **Agency** – refers to the police department, sheriff’s office, tribal police or public safety department, campus police department, district attorney’s office, state attorney’s office, or other governmental criminal justice entity that is employing victim services personnel.
- **Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB)** – a group of at least five members who review human subjects research within their jurisdiction to make sure research participants, especially vulnerable participants (e.g., minors, older adults, victims of crime, people who are incarcerated), are being treated respectfully and ethically. IRBs have the power to approve, deny, monitor, and request modifications of research activities.²
- **Internal Customers** – staff (e.g., employees, volunteers, student interns) of the agency or organization in reference.
- **Likert Scale** – a common survey response format that often includes four, five, or seven options such as “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.”
- **Logic Model** – a road map that documents the elements needed for desired results (inputs), including the program components (activities), any products created (outputs), and the changes expected after implementation (outcomes and impact).³
- **Objectives** – action-oriented descriptions of how goals are achieved.
- **Outcomes** – the expected knowledge, skills, or behavior changes.
- **Outputs** – products created (e.g., marketing materials, training presentations) or services delivered (e.g., victims’ rights notification).
- **Procedural Justice** – an approach to resolving disputes and allocating resources that involves fair and consistent application of rules, inclusion of those impacted by decisions, and transparency of processes by which impartial and unbiased decisions are made.⁴
- **Program Evaluation** – a process that systematically collects, analyzes, and uses data to answer questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of projects, programs, and policies.⁵
- **Qualitative Data** – information that cannot be quantified but can be described. Some examples include personal opinions, motivations, or experiences. Typically, this data is collected through observation, interviews, or focus groups.⁶
- **Quantitative Data** – information that can be measured or recorded using numbers. Some examples include age, height, or period of time.⁷

² Center for Victim Research, Glossary, s.v. “[Institutional Review Board](#).”

³ Center for Victim Research, Glossary, s.v. “[Logic Model](#).”

⁴ Laura Kunard and Charlene Moe, [Procedural Justice for Law Enforcement: An Overview](#) (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).

⁵ Center for Victim Research, Glossary, s.v. “[Program Evaluation](#)”; For additional information on program evaluations, see Center for Victim Research’s [Program Evaluation Quick Reference](#).

⁶ Center for Victim Research, Glossary, s.v. “[Qualitative Data](#).”

⁷ Center for Victim Research, Glossary, s.v. “[Quantitative Data](#).”

- **Research** – the process of discovery. Collecting and analyzing data to learn something new or confirm other results. Research can be qualitative, quantitative, or a mixture of both.
- **Sample** – a subset of a population of interest. For example, a researcher may be interested in the impact that a particular project, program, or policy has on victims, but it is highly unlikely they will be able to identify and survey all victims. In this case, the researcher may select a sample of victims to participate in their study.⁸
- **Trauma-Informed** – approaches delivered with an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma in staff, victims, and others and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings. Trauma-informed approaches place priority on restoring the survivor’s feelings of safety, choice, and control. Programs, services, agencies, and communities can be trauma informed.⁹
- **Victim-Centered** – placing the crime victim’s priorities, needs, and interests at the center of the work with the victim; providing nonjudgmental assistance, with an emphasis on victim self-determination, where appropriate, and assisting victims in making informed choices; ensuring that restoring victims’ feelings of safety and security are a priority and safeguarding against policies and practices that may inadvertently retraumatize victims; ensuring that victims’ rights, voices, and perspectives are incorporated when developing and implementing system- and community-based efforts that impact crime victims.¹⁰
- **Victim Services Personnel** – personnel (paid or unpaid) designated to provide law enforcement-based victim services program oversight, crisis intervention, criminal justice support, community referrals, and advocacy on behalf of crime victims, witnesses, survivors, and co-victims.
- **Victim Services Unit (VSU)** – the unit within the law enforcement agency that houses the victim services personnel.
- **Victim, Witness, Survivor, Co-Victim** – any person (minor or adult) who directly experiences or is impacted by a crime or criminal activity.
 - Victim is an individual who is an independent participant in the criminal case under federal or state victims’ rights laws, denotes a person’s legal status (unavailable to the general public), and defines the level and extent of participation that the individual is entitled to in the criminal matter.
 - Witness is an individual who has personal knowledge of information or actions that are relative to the incident being investigated.

⁸ [Glossary - Center for Victim Research](#)

⁹ OVC, “[Glossary](#)” in *Achieving Excellence: Model Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime (Model Standards)*.

¹⁰ OVC, “[Glossary](#)” in *Achieving Excellence: Model Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime (Model Standards)*.

- Survivor is often used interchangeably with “victim” when conveying context related to resilience and healing.
- Co-Victim is an individual who has lost a loved one to homicide, including family members, other relatives, and friends of the decedent.

Why Evaluate Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services?

Establishing a law enforcement-based victim services program requires extensive work, including securing funding; recruiting, hiring, and training new personnel; developing service parameters; writing policies and procedures; and solidifying internal and external partnerships. This process requires support and commitment from agency leaders and usually takes a few years to build a solid foundation. When agencies initiate victim services programs, they do so to improve agency response to victims of crime. Evaluation is a commonly overlooked, but essential aspect of law enforcement-based victim services improvement and sustainability.

Agencies engaging in victim services program evaluation ask, “Is this working?” Agencies must evaluate current practices to strengthen quality work, identify gaps, and ensure intended goals are met. If agencies do not gather data and related program information, it is impossible to know what is working and what is not. Integrating evaluation as a standard component of the program also acknowledges that change is a constant: agencies change (e.g., leadership transition, victim services staffing levels), communities change (e.g., population or demographic trends), and victims’ needs change (e.g., new forms of technology or communication). Additionally, engaging in evaluation and incorporating learned information promotes agency transparency and, ultimately, procedural justice.¹¹

While “is this working?” is a way to frame evaluation, there are other questions to consider, such as:

- Are there areas for improvement?
- Are there gaps in services?
- Is the workload appropriate for current staffing levels?
- Are victim services policies and practices effectively meeting crime victims’ needs?
- Are crime victims’ legal rights¹² being upheld?

As a program standard or a funding requirement, most law enforcement-based victim services programs collect baseline statistical information about service provision (e.g., number of victims served, victim demographic information, crime types served, types of services provided). This data is crucial in supporting existing efforts and can be used to justify continued or additional funding, but it may tell only one part of the story. For example, this data may provide the number of victims served, but does not show the quality or consistency of the services provided.

¹¹ For additional information on procedural justice, see [Procedural Justice for Law Enforcement: An Overview](#).

¹² For additional information on victims’ rights, see state-specific [Victims’ Rights Jurisdiction Profiles](#) developed by the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI).

Data-driven decision-making is not a new concept in criminal justice, and the same philosophy applies to victim services. Victims are better served when evaluation is applied to victim services programs, and gaps or shortcomings are identified and improved. Demonstrating to funders and other stakeholders that routine evaluation is being conducted demonstrates an agency's commitment to law enforcement-based victim services and the community it serves.

Common Misconceptions of Evaluation

Victim services personnel and their supervisors may be apprehensive to engage in program evaluation. Many myths exist about evaluation, which can make the task feel overwhelming.

Myth 1: Evaluation is too hard.

Evaluation may feel out of reach or like something done only at a college or university. Victim services personnel do not need to be professional researchers to integrate evaluation into practice. There are options that require differing levels of time and expertise (see the [Develop the Tool](#) section below for more information). Evaluating a victim services program is an attainable goal, especially when reasonable strategies are employed.

Myth 2: Evaluation is too expensive.

Evaluation does not always require a significant financial commitment. Agencies do not need to hire a full-time researcher nor do staff necessarily need to receive specialized training. Free online resources can assist in developing evaluation plans. When partnering with a researcher, consider working with a graduate student, which may reduce costs. Alternatively, seeking grant funding to support this work is a great way to facilitate a formal partnership. Agencies are encouraged to identify what may already be accessible, including tools (e.g., web-based survey software) or personnel specialties (e.g., analyst).

Myth 3: Asking victims about their experience is retraumatizing.

There is a valid ethical concern that surveying victims about their victimization experiences can be retraumatizing. However, research shows this may not typically be the case. It can be validating for victims to speak to someone or complete a survey about their experiences because it enables them to further process their feelings and feel heard. *

If agencies decide to collect feedback from victims through focus groups or individual interviews, it is highly recommended they work with a researcher. In these instances, agencies should provide a safe atmosphere and offer support during and following the interview or focus group.

*Rebecca Campbell, Adrienne Adams, and Debra Patterson, "Methodological Challenges of Collecting Evaluation Data from Traumatized Clients/Consumers: A Comparison of Three Methods," *American Journal of Evaluation* 29, no. 3 (September 2008): 369-381.

Myth 4: No one will respond to a survey.

Low response rates can be a concern when using surveys. However, considering the survey length, the types of questions asked, accessibility (e.g., mobile device, different languages), and the number of reminders sent can all contribute to increased survey response rates. Incentives (e.g., gift cards or other prizes) can also encourage survey completion.

Develop a Logic Model

Prior to engaging in evaluation, it is imperative to have a strong understanding of the victim services program components. Developing a visual map can help to identify the program’s main aspects and demonstrate how they connect. This is an important practice for program development and strategic planning. A visual map can also serve as a useful tool when training staff or working with stakeholders.

There are multiple ways to visually conceptualize a program, but a logic model is one such tool that is straightforward and widely used. Logic models ask, “if this, then what?” and help break down the program components. While there are different versions of logic models, they generally include these components:

- **Inputs**—What fundamental elements are needed for the program or project to function? *Examples: staffing, funding, leadership support, office space, equipment*
- **Activities**—What are the components of the program or project itself? *Examples: 24/7 on-call rotation, follow-up phone contact with victims within 48 hours of receiving case information*
- **Outputs**—What products or services does the program or project produce (including target numbers)? *Examples: victim services brochures, law enforcement officer training*
- **Outcomes**—What are the expected knowledge, skills, and behavior changes if the program or project runs as intended? *Example: victim served by the victim services unit will report feeling an increased level of support in the investigative process*
- **Impact**—What are the larger agency, community, societal, or cultural impacts of the program or project in the long term? *Example: victims are supported throughout the reporting process.*

See the [logic model template](#) included in this publication and the Center for Victims Research’s [Quick Reference: Logic Models](#) to get started.

Getting Started

Prior to an evaluation, a few decision points must be determined. This includes *what* the evaluation will focus on and *who* will be involved.

Identify the Focus Area

There are many aspects of a victim services program that are worthwhile to evaluate. The focus of an evaluation may be determined by many factors, including funding (e.g., grant that requires victim satisfaction surveys), an identified area of concern (e.g., victim services referrals are only coming from one district), or an area of curiosity (e.g., are victims more likely to stay engaged if they receive victim services within 24 hours of initial report?). Identifying the evaluation focus helps to determine the type of evaluation that should be used.¹³

While not an exhaustive list, agencies can consider the following evaluation focus areas:

- Identify patterns and trends in victim services usage and victimization in jurisdiction over time;
- Use data to identify service delivery gaps (e.g., underserved victims) and develop a plan to address them;
- Look at data currently available (e.g., crime statistics, agency calls for services, number of victims seeking services through victim services program), and explore ways to use this data and what other data could be collected to improve services to victims (e.g., victimization patterns, trends);
- Identify languages spoken in the community to inform a robust language access plan;
- Identify gaps in data collection and learn ways to use current and new data;
- Collect and analyze data related to the integration of victim services within the agency (e.g., interviewing agency personnel to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities);
- Conduct interviews with personnel to understand the agency’s culture and perception of their role in victim response; use this information to identify gaps in training; and
- Develop a process for regularly obtaining feedback from victims, community members, partners, and internal agency personnel (e.g., victim satisfaction surveys, training evaluation surveys) and learn ways to use this information.

Determine Key Players

Identifying key players that should be involved in an evaluation is a significant and strategic step. Each key player may have a different role and purpose. Some may be involved in the early planning phases, while others may receive only periodic updates or help share findings. Consider each key player’s role and how to maximize their time, expertise, and authority. For example, engaging command staff at early planning stages can help support evaluation activities throughout the process (e.g., encourage staff survey completion, approve the release of a final report, authorize programmatic changes based on findings). Similarly, agency analysts might assist with identifying currently accessible data. It is important to consider key players from internal partnerships (e.g., partnerships between victim services and other agency personnel) and external partnerships (e.g., partnerships between victim services and community-based organizations or public entities).¹⁴

¹³ For additional information on types of program evaluation, see Center for Victim Research’s [Program Evaluation webpage](#).

¹⁴ For more information on developing internal and external partnerships, see [Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Effective Partnerships](#).

Key players should be made aware of the intention and benefit of evaluation. Engaging in evaluation can feel vulnerable for many agencies as there is a potential to receive feedback that does not appear favorable. Engaging key players in leadership positions from the beginning can generate support and prevent barriers.

Key Partners to Consider	
Internal Partners	External Partners
Agency Command Staff Victim Services’ Chain of Command Patrol Leadership Investigations Leadership Records Leadership PIO/Communications Personnel Analysts	Community-Based Victim Services Organizations Local Governmental Body Forensic Nurse Examiners Prosecutors Researchers
Potential Roles for Partners	
Help define focus area Identify gaps in services Facilitate support or buy-in Review evaluation components (e.g., question, data, survey) Assist with recruiting sample group participants Identify and obtain current data sets	

Partner with a Researcher

Agencies should strongly consider partnering with a researcher. A researcher might be employed by a college or university, a government agency, or a private organization. Benefits to partnering with a researcher include expertise, credibility, and neutrality. While some evaluation methods can be conducted without advanced training, certain methods should be conducted only by a researcher. A researcher’s education, training, and experience allow for a well-designed and thorough evaluation. They are skilled in framing concepts of study, identifying pertinent literature, conducting data collection, analyzing results, and identifying recommendations. As such, the final products – whether published in an academic journal or presented to command staff – are more credible. Additionally, a researcher offers neutrality to the work. The sample group may feel more comfortable with a third-party researcher, which allows them to provide more honest feedback. Neutrality is also beneficial during data analysis. A researcher can analyze and interpret data with less bias, leading to more accurate results.

While the benefits of partnering with a researcher are notable, there can be challenges to these partnerships. The main barrier for agencies interested in partnering with a researcher may be identifying one. An agency without an existing relationship with a researcher can start by conducting an internet search. Two places to begin are the Center for Victim Research’s (CVR) [Directory of Victim Researchers](#) and local college and university websites for faculty researchers in the fields of social work, sociology, and

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criminal justice. Also consider identifying the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) in your state, as these entities have been tasked to focus on criminal justice.¹⁵ Begin reaching out to researchers who might have an interest in victim populations or law enforcement. Developing a relationship with a researcher takes time, so agencies are encouraged to initiate outreach well before the desired time to start research or evaluation.¹⁶

Another challenge for agencies might be securing funding to partner with a researcher. Agencies should not allow a lack of funding to discourage initial outreach. Developing a relationship with a researcher first—even without identified funding for a project—is recommended. If both parties are interested in collaborating, then both can look for potential funding opportunities. While local, state, and federal grants could be a useful option to fund a research project, agencies should also consider the use of the agency budget to contract with a researcher. For less extensive research and evaluation, consider partnering with a graduate student. This may allow for a partnership with no or lower cost.

Managing access to information and official records for the purpose of research may also be a barrier for some agencies. Many agencies have policies that require personnel and contracted vendors with access to records to receive a background check and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) clearance. Agencies should not let this deter them from partnering with a researcher. Instead, become familiar with agency policies and processes that would affect the use of a researcher. When processes are known, an appropriate timeline can be developed to make sure all clearances are secured.

Data Collection Planning and Implementation

When the focus area, partners, and sample have been identified, the next step is to determine how data will be collected and develop a plan for the evaluation.

“We utilized a research partner from the inception of the Victim Services Unit in 2016 to collect baseline perceptions of law enforcement and community relations. This collaboration and the collected data was used to develop a plan moving forward.

Six years later, the department continues to utilize a research partner and evaluate data to continuously enhance victim services programming. It is important not to become stagnant. It is crucial to listen to those being served and to use that information to strive for more. Research and constant evaluation are the best way to do that. Expansion and successful grant applications would have been limited without the data collected.”

Brittany Jeffers
Victim Services Coordinator &
Grant Administrator
Victim Services Division
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Saginaw, Michigan

¹⁵ For additional information on Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs), see JIRN’s [Statistical Analysis Centers \(SACs\)](#).

¹⁶ For additional information about researcher-practitioner partnerships, see Center for Victim Research’s [Finding a Research Partner for Victim Researcher-Practitioner Collaborations](#) and [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) for Victim Researcher-Practitioner Collaborations](#).

Identify the Method of Data Collection

The goal of the evaluation directly informs what data is collected. For example, if an agency is trying to determine whether patrol officers call victim services personnel out more often after they have received training, then call-out data should be collected, and interviews should be conducted with officers about why they are or are not requesting victim services.

Types of data collection methods include—

- **Surveys** – web-based (e.g., sent by email or text, accessible through QR code) or paper (e.g., completed in person, sent by mail).
- **Interviews**¹⁷ – individual conversations conducted either in-person or virtually.
- **Focus groups**¹⁸ – small group conversations (usually 3 – 7 participants from the identified sample) conducted in-person or virtually.
- **Field observation** – time spent observing how a new policy or practice is integrated into an agency and documentation of observations.
- **Policy review** – tracking how well a policy is implemented or understood over time through observation, surveys, or interviews.
- **Case review** – review of investigators’ and victim services personnel’s documentation after a case has been concluded to identify what went well and what could be improved.

The method of data collection may also indicate what partners are needed. For example, if a decision is made to interview patrol officers, then it may be a good idea to partner with a researcher since they will be seen as a more neutral party when collecting information. Additionally, partnering with agency leadership of patrol will be essential in gaining early buy-in and support.

Identify the Sample

The group that is being evaluated is known as the sample. Identifying the sample is determined by what the agency hopes to learn from the evaluation. Samples usually refer to a subset of the population (e.g., 25 co-victims of homicide out of the 50 total co-victims of homicide that were working with investigations from the last two years, 50 patrol officers out of the 350 total patrol officers in the agency). Ideally, samples should be representative of the demographic makeup of the larger group.

While the sample could include any number of people, some possible groups to consider include—

- Victims, witnesses, co-victims, or survivors of crime
- Law enforcement personnel, or a narrower focus—
 - Victim services personnel

¹⁷ Interviews with victims should be completed by trained researchers due to the sensitive nature of working with victims and the potential for additional case-related information to be disclosed.

¹⁸ Focus groups with victims should be completed by trained researchers because of the sensitive nature of working with victims in a group setting.

- Patrol officers
- Investigators
- Front-line leadership
- Leadership/command staff
- Professional staff
- Community partners, this may include—
 - Community-based organizations (e.g., rape crisis center, domestic violence agency)
 - Prosecutors' offices
 - Hospitals
 - Mental or physical healthcare clinics

Develop a Timeline

Consider the various layers of approval that will be required. Think through each step in the process that may be a timeline factor and the associated administrative and programmatic tasks. Examples may include leadership approval to send a survey to all patrol officers, approval of the language for use in the survey, executing a contract with a researcher, or collecting survey data from community partners for a specified period of time. Plan for steps to take longer than anticipated, such as data analysis, and include ample buffer time to account for delays and setbacks.

Develop the Tool

For most agencies, surveys will be the preferred method for data collection. They are low-cost and can be used for a variety of sample populations and purposes. For practical recommendations, see the resource below on [Tips for Survey Development](#).¹⁹

For some agencies, interviews will be the selected method for data collection and will likely be completed in partnership with a researcher. Interviews differ from surveys by offering an opportunity to explore ideas and concepts. Preparation for interviews is critical. Questions will need to be written ahead of time and reviewed by a third-party to make sure they are framed appropriately (e.g., use of open-ended questions), interpreted as intended, and meet the goals for the data collection. Additionally, details such as location and timing of the interview are important to consider.

Agencies are encouraged to consult with partners from culturally specific organizations to discuss language and accessibility during the process of tool development. This will help ensure inclusivity and effective participant engagement and feedback.

Determine Storage and Accessibility of Data

Prior to collecting data, agencies should consider where the data will be stored and who will have access.²⁰ Engaging in evaluation often produces sizeable electronic and physical documents, including survey

¹⁹ There are existing tools uniquely developed for victim services programs that can be used or adapted to fit agency needs. In addition to the sample surveys included in this publication, the [iMPROVE Platform](#) is a free and customizable outcome measurement platform for victim services providers.

²⁰ For additional information related to data access, see Center for Victim Research's [Data-Sharing Agreements](#).

responses, interview recordings and transcripts, participant consent forms, and contact lists. When agencies partner with a researcher, these items will likely be stored securely with the researcher's institution, but this will be important to discuss and understand prior to collecting the data. Agencies and partnering researchers should also determine who will have access to these documents. For agencies not partnering with a researcher, a secure storage location should be identified. While all data should be handled with care, data collected from victims is particularly sensitive. Legal intersections for data collected from victims, such as new case information or grievances should be considered.²¹

Collect Data

It is important to have all major and minor details determined before data collection begins. For example, will a new email address be used to release the survey? Who will be responsible for releasing the survey? How long will surveys be open? How long will focus groups last?

Consider the culture of the sample group and the timing of the data collection. For example, major holidays are not an optimal time to release a survey or schedule interviews as people may be taking time away from work or especially busy in their personal lives. When considering holidays, consider federally recognized holidays and other religious and cultural holidays. Similarly, consider local school breaks in planning. It may not be possible to avoid these events altogether, but consideration should be made for the length of time a survey is open, volume or frequency of reminders, and interview scheduling.

Events that might be specific to the participant sample should also be considered. For example, if a community is hosting a large-scale event such as a political convention, festival, or sporting event, plan accordingly—if patrol officers are the sample group, they may be working additional jobs or overtime. If the sample group includes leaders at community-based organizations, be mindful of major fundraising or grant timelines as there could be additional scheduling difficulties. While there is never a perfect time to release a survey or conduct interviews, agencies are encouraged to consider potential conflicts.

Send Reminders

When conducting a survey or interviews, reminders should be sent to encourage participation. If web-based surveys are used, plan on sending email reminders to survey participants. The frequency may differ depending on the intended sample size. For example, for large sample sizes, consider sending two or three survey completion reminders a week apart. To avoid confusion and frustration, reminders should be sent only to participants who have not completed the survey. The reminder emails should be brief and include the importance of the survey, privacy information, and the deadline to complete. If paper surveys are used, determine the best strategy for reminders. For example, if the participant sample is sworn investigators, consider asking investigation leadership to send a reminder email.

If interviews are conducted, set up and send calendar invitations and reminders to participants to increase engagement and avoid no-shows. Reminders should be tailored to the participant group. For example, if interviews are conducted with command staff, sending an electronic calendar invitation for the interview

²¹ For additional information related to legal intersections, see [Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Documentation Standards](#).
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and an email reminder the day before may be the best strategy. Alternatively, if victims are participating in interviews, it might be better to send a reminder by email or text.

Response Rates

Regardless of the strategies used to increase engagement, it is unlikely that 100 percent of a sample group will complete a survey. While it is not necessary for every individual to complete the survey before analysis can take place, good judgment should be used to determine if *enough* of the sample group has completed the survey. For example, if only six victims respond to a survey that was sent to 600 victims, then this represents 1 percent of the sample group. It is therefore unlikely that responses are appropriately representative, and it would be difficult to interpret the data effectively. In this example, a more appropriate goal is to achieve responses from 15 to 20 percent of the sample groups, which would allow for themes and patterns to be identified.

Data Analysis

An evaluation is not complete once data is collected. Raw data must be analyzed to help answer questions about the program. While analysis can be complex and often requires advanced knowledge and skills, there is a lot that can be distilled from relatively simple analyses. However, partnering with a trained researcher can increase an agency's capacity to analyze data and help expand the scope of the analysis.

Analyze the Data

Some basic data analysis principles include—

- 1 Keep the purpose and focus of the study in mind during analysis. Analysis is directly linked with data collection and other aspects of the evaluation approach. Ensure research questions, data collection, and data analysis plans are developed during early planning stages.
- 2 Check the data for errors before starting the analysis (e.g., when a number is provided for a yes or no question). This is often referred to as “cleaning” the data and it is essential to do before analyzing begins.
- 3 Document every step of the analysis so the methods can easily be followed and understood by others. This will enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.
- 4 Move from the simple to the more complex. While analysis is often repetitive and may lead to new questions, it is best to begin with analyses that focus on one variable at a time.

5

Don't overstate or understate findings or draw unsupported conclusions. Be transparent about the limitations of the findings.

6

Maintain the security of the data and protect personally identifiable information throughout the process, including when presenting findings.

Preparing Data for Analysis

Preparing data for analysis is an essential step in the process. Depending on how data was collected, it may need to be transferred from the data collection instrument to an analytical software program or another format to make analysis easier. For example, victim demographic information may need to be transferred to an Excel document so the data can be filtered or reorganized.

Once the data has been transferred, it needs to be “cleaned” and organized for the analysis. *Cleaning* your data primarily involves a diligent review of all data to identify incomplete or erroneous responses.²² Documenting the nature of missing data is important to properly interpret the findings. Sometimes an entire data field, such as all responses to a particular survey question, will need to be removed from the analysis due to the extent of missing or erroneous data.

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods and Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative are umbrella terms that can apply to the type of data collection method used and based on this method, the type of information received, and analysis conducted.

Quantitative refers to methods, data, and analyses that are based on numerical measurement and statistical analysis. Common data collection methods include surveys, questionnaires, tests, and accessing official statistics and program records. Quantitative data typically takes the form of numbers or statistics. Basic analyses tend to focus on describing the data collected (descriptive statistics) and examining simple relationships between variables to identify patterns and trends over time.

Qualitative refers to methods, data, and analyses that are primarily descriptive. Common data collection methods include interviewing, direct observation, and review of victim services documents. Data produced typically take the form of narrative (e.g., descriptions of the program obtained from documents or through interviews). Analysis of qualitative data tends to be highly interpretive and focused on the discovery of new information. It often looks for themes or patterns with the purpose of gaining insights.

Analyzing Quantitative Data

Since quantitative data is numeric, basic analyses typically focus on developing summary statistics. Common summary statistics include simple counts of the ways survey questions are answered, or the

²² Jan Van den Broeck et al., “[Data Cleaning: Detecting, Diagnosing, and Editing Data Abnormalities](#),” *PLoS Medicine* 2, no. 10 (2005), e267.
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ways demographic categories of survey respondents are reflected in the data collected. For example, if a survey asks whether a person who received services was satisfied with those services, data analysis involves tabulating how many responses were “yes” and how many were “no.” Similarly, tabulating counts within each relevant demographic category of respondents would also be needed, such as the number of male and female respondents.

Analyzing quantitative data may also involve measures of central tendency that reflect the way data values in survey responses cluster. Common measures of central tendency are the mean, median, and mode. The mean is simply the average value. The median is the middle value in the entire range of values for that response, and the mode is the most frequent response in the range.

While many analytical software programs are readily available today, tools such as Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets, or a similar spreadsheet program are likely the easiest and most affordable tools for simple analysis of quantitative data. If partnering with a researcher, advanced analysis skill sets and the capacity to use a more sophisticated analytical software program such as STATA, SPSS, R, Tableau, or Microsoft Power BI are likely available.

Analyzing Qualitative Data

Since qualitative data typically involves narrative or text rather than numbers, it tends to be less structured than quantitative data. Information can often be captured through a transcription service that is built into many virtual meeting platforms and can record and transcribe interviews. A computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo, Thematic, or a similar program can facilitate the organizing and coding of the data. It is easier and more efficient to read, code, structure, and analyze qualitative data using a software program specifically designed for use with qualitative data.

Common methods of qualitative data analysis involve identifying common patterns such as how often a certain word or concept is referenced in interviews, differences and other connections in narrative, text, communications, sorting responses into categories, or documentation of observations.

Report Writing and Sharing Results

Report Writing

At the conclusion of an evaluation, key findings should be memorialized in an accessible way. A comprehensive final report including the description of the issue, individuals and stakeholders involved, data collection methods, data analysis methods, data analysis results, and recommendations should be developed. This report is an important component of any evaluation, however, it is important to consider the function and usability for the intended audience. For example, in addition to a final report, agencies should consider developing various products geared toward different stakeholders. This might include a presentation to agency command staff or a one-page summary to share with community stakeholders. These products are useful to inform stakeholders on research and evaluation findings. They can also be used to support requests for agency, local, state, or federal funding to sustain or grow the program.

Quotes from surveys or interviews should be used with caution if they are incorporated into final reports or presentations. Quote attribution—or identifying who the quote came from—should be handled with care to ensure anonymity. While demographics are frequently used instead of names to de-identify participants (e.g., 40-year-old African American woman), this can inadvertently reveal someone’s identity if they are part of an underrepresented group within the sample population. For example, if the sample contains less than 1 percent of people who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community and a quote is used from an individual in this population, it could be easy to identify them. Additionally, if the quote comes from a victim, there are additional factors that must be considered. Factors may include—Did the victim consent to have their words used in final reports? Has the victim’s case been resolved? What information was provided to the victim about how this information could be used? Care should be taken to maintain the highest level of privacy possible.

Sharing Results

Sharing evaluation results is a critical step. Regardless of outcomes, this can demonstrate the agency’s transparency, strengthen partnerships, and show commitment to improving services.²³ Agencies should consider the following:

- Who should receive the information and why?
- What is the goal of sharing the information?
- Can the information be tailored for different audiences to ensure relevance?
- Should the agency partner with community or other organizations to share the findings?
- How can the data be used to advocate for additional resources or program changes?
- What programmatic changes are suggested by the findings?

Sharing the findings of the program evaluation provides stakeholders an opportunity to review the results and recommendations and actively partner in next steps and solutions to identified gaps or challenges. When this information is shared responsibly and coupled with the agency’s action steps toward improvement, it can build trust with the receiving audience (e.g., victims, community members, agency personnel, community partners).

Responding to the Results

An evaluation is unfinished if a final report is generated and filed away. Agencies have an ethical responsibility to use the information gathered to improve services.²⁴ Developing an action plan will support implementing and integrating what has been learned through the evaluation to support enhanced program outcomes.²⁵ Some factors to consider—

²³ International Association of Chiefs of Police and Office for Victims of Crime (IACP), [Performance Monitoring](#), Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims (ELERV) Strategy, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: IACP, 2020).

²⁴ IACP, [Performance Monitoring](#).

²⁵ For a sample action plan worksheet, see [Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Template Package I: Getting Started](#).

- What are the short-term goals and action steps? What are the long-term goals and action steps?
- Who should be involved in implementing recommendations?
- What resources (e.g., time, equipment, training) are needed?

When determining an action plan and gaining support from stakeholders, rely on the data. Clearly presenting research and evaluation results and recommendations will maximize this support.

Accompanying Publications & Webinars

The LEV Program aims to guide agencies to provide high-quality services (coordinated, collaborative, culturally responsive, multidisciplinary, and trauma-informed) that address the broader needs and rights of all crime victims. The following publications can assist in these efforts.

- [Key Considerations](#) and the accompanying checklist provide guidance to agencies establishing or enhancing services to victims. These publications include an overview of foundational topics for law enforcement-based victim services.
- [Victims' Rights Jurisdiction Profiles](#) provide state-specific information on the intersections of victims' rights and communication with victim services personnel.
- [Advocacy Parameters](#) discusses the structure of law enforcement-based victim services, personnel supervision, and service delivery.
- [Documentation Standards](#) discusses victim services documentation location, content, access, and legal intersections.
- [Effective Partnerships](#) discusses the benefits of partnerships and encourages agencies to consider both internal and external partners to strengthen community response to victims.
- [Using Technology to Communicate with Victims](#) discusses considerations when using virtual technology to communicate with victims.
- [Agency Incorporation](#) discusses integrating victim services within the agency including models of services provision, strategic planning, budget considerations, crisis response, and workplace culture change.

This is the sixth and final publication of the Template Package series. Additional template packages previously published include—

- [Template Package I - Getting Started](#) provides victim services personnel job descriptions, interview questions, a code of ethics, and personnel standards and responsibilities.
- [Template Package II - Next Steps](#) provides case response protocol templates, scenarios, and documentation samples.

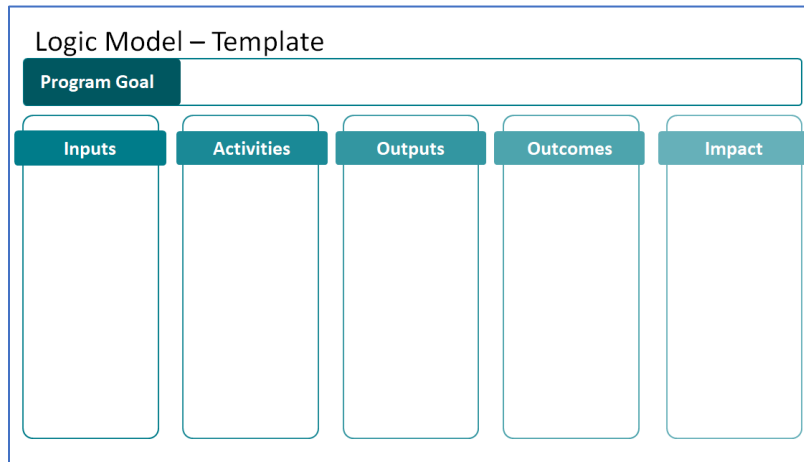
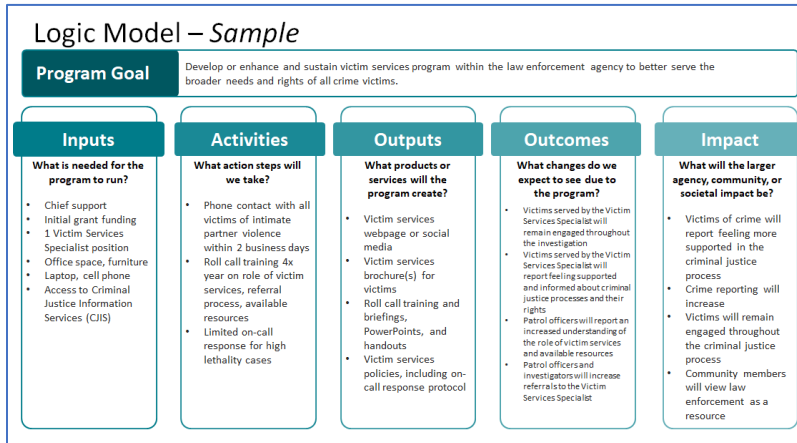
- [*Template Package III – Student Interns & Volunteers*](#) provides templates for recruiting, screening and selection, training, supervision, and other agency considerations for student interns and volunteers.
- [*Template Package IV – Pamphlets*](#) includes sample crime-specific and topic-specific informational pamphlets for agencies to customize and disseminate to victims of crime.
- [*Template Package V – Training*](#) includes customizable presentations and activity workbooks agencies can use for victim services personnel training.

To supplement the publications, IACP developed a virtual training series, which is accessible through the [LEV webpage](#). Each topic covered has content intended for sworn personnel and content intended for program personnel. This model promotes a thorough understanding of the intricacies of victim services at all levels of a law enforcement agency.

Templates and Resources

TEMPLATE – Logic Model

Templates in this series provide sample language and content to help assess, develop, and refine professional victim service standards. The Logic Model template should be customized to fit your agency in format, language, and intent. Agency personnel, including legal counsel and human resources staff, should review this template to ensure the information is consistent with local jurisdiction requirements.



Agencies can use this link ([Logic Model](#)) to download this document.

RESOURCE – Tips for Survey Development

Tips for Surveys

Developing a survey is rarely a simple, straightforward process. Many factors will directly affect the usability of a survey for participants. There may be existing surveys that can be used or adapted for agency needs. For example, the [IMProVE tool](#) is a free outcome measurement platform for victim services provision. Considering these factors during development will ensure the survey is user friendly and promote a higher rate of completion.

General Considerations

Survey Delivery Method

The most typical methods for delivering surveys are electronic, such as a QR code, email, or text and paper through the mail or in person. There are advantages and disadvantages to each method. These factors should be weighed to determine the best option for a particular survey. The sample group, that is the people taking the survey, should be the primary factor in determining the delivery method. For example, if the sample group does not have consistent access to the internet or a computer or smartphone, then an electronic survey will probably not be the best option.

If paper surveys are used, determine how the surveys will be disseminated and collected. If electronic or web-based, identify a survey tool and the process for survey dissemination. Some law enforcement agencies may already have licenses for survey tools for platforms, which may include SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, SPIDRTech, PowerEgag, Alchemer, Sogolytics, TypeForm, or others. Many electronic survey tools provide a free version with basic functionality and a more sophisticated option for a cost. Consider any associated costs with the chosen method while planning to include the printing of paper surveys, self-addressed envelopes, or a paid license for an electronic survey tool.

Survey Length

Surveys should take no longer than 7 to 12 minutes to complete. Ideally, a survey should include two or three open-ended questions to enhance participation. The flow of questions can help participants complete the survey quickly and efficiently. Start with easy questions, move to hard questions, and end with moderate questions. This ensures the survey does not end with hard questions when participants are more likely to drop off. If it is an option, consider randomizing the order of questions on electronic surveys, so they do not appear in the same order for every person who responds. This way, the same question will not be unanswered by multiple people because it appears at the end of the survey. When surveys are too long, participants may simply stop and fail to complete the survey.

Survey Format

Review the format or layout of a survey prior to dissemination. If using a paper survey, print the survey to see how it appears on the page. Ensure the spacing is consistent and that page breaks do not separate questions and answers. If using a web-based survey, review how the survey will appear on a computer (e.g., laptop, PC), a tablet, and a cell phone. Consider a survey's compatibility with a screen reader. Some programs (including Microsoft Word and Excel) have an accessibility check function that can identify possible screen reader issues and make recommended edits. Avoid using long matrix questions (example

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Agencies can use this link ([Tips for Survey Development](#)) to download this resource.

TEMPLATE – Victim Satisfaction Survey

Templates in this series provide sample language and content to help assess, develop, and refine professional victim service standards. You should customize this Victim Satisfaction Survey template to fit your agency in terms of format, language, and intent. Agency personnel, including legal counsel and human resources staff, should review this template to ensure the information is consistent with local jurisdiction requirements.

[Agency Name/Logo]
[Victim Services Unit Logo]
Victim Satisfaction Survey

The [Agency Name]'s Victim Services Unit is requesting feedback from victims of crime who have worked with a Victim Services Specialist. We review all survey feedback to improve our response and services to victims. Your name and information will not be associated with your answers. Only a summary of responses will be shared with agency leaders.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You can decide to stop responding to this survey at any time. Completing or not completing this survey will not impact your investigation or ability to work with [Agency's Name] or Victim Services or exercise victims' rights.

I agree to take this survey and understand that I can stop taking this survey at any time.

1. A Victim Services Specialist contacted me in a timely manner.
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
2. How did you speak with the Victim Services Specialist the first time?
 - A. In person at the police department
 - B. In person at the scene of the crime
 - C. In person at the hospital
 - D. By phone
 - E. Other (please specify) _____
3. Were you able to speak to the Victim Services Specialist when you needed to?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
4. Did the Victim Services Specialist provide you with resources/referrals to other organizations or services?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
5. Were the resources/referrals the Victim Services Specialist provided to you helpful?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
6. When you spoke with the Victim Services Specialist, were you treated with respect and dignity?
 - A. Always
 - B. Very Often
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Rarely
 - E. Never

Agencies can use this link ([Victim Satisfaction Survey](#)) to download this document.

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TEMPLATE – Survey of Victim Services

Templates in this series provide sample language and content to help assess, develop, and refine professional victim service standards. You should customize this Survey of Victim Services template to fit your agency in terms of format, language, and intent. Agency personnel, including legal counsel and human resources staff, should review this template to ensure the information is consistent with local jurisdiction requirements.

[Agency Name/Logo]
[Victim Services Unit Logo]
[Agency] Survey of Victim Services

The [Agency Name]'s Victim Services Unit is requesting feedback from all [Agency Name] employees to assess the general understanding of Victim Services and identify gaps. Aggregate data (without identifying information) will be used to inform victim services updates and be shared with agency leadership.

Your participation in this survey is valued and voluntary. You can decide to stop responding to this survey at any time.

I agree to take this survey and understand that I can stop taking this survey at any time.

Demographics

1. What role do you serve in the department:
 - A. Sworn staff (go to question 2)
 - B. Professional staff (go to question 3)
2. As a sworn member of the agency, what is your position:
 - A. Front-line officer (e.g., officer, investigator)
 - B. First-line supervisor (e.g., sergeant)
 - C. Mid-level supervisor (e.g., lieutenant, commander)
 - D. Executive leadership (e.g., chief, deputy chief)
3. How many years have you worked with [Agency Name]?
 - A. Less than 1 year
 - B. 1 – 5 years
 - C. 6 – 10 years
 - D. 11 – 15 years
 - E. 16 – 20 years
 - F. More than 20 years

Victim Services Understanding

4. You are familiar with the Victim Services Unit and the services they provide.
 - A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree

Agencies can use this link ([Survey of Victim Services](#)) to download this document.

TEMPLATE – Victim Services Community Partner Survey

Templates in this series provide sample language and content to help assess, develop, and refine professional victim service standards. You should customize this Victim Services Community Partner Survey template to fit your agency in terms of format, language, and intent. Agency personnel, including legal counsel and human resources staff, should review this template to ensure the information is consistent with local jurisdiction requirements.

[Agency Name/Logo]
[Victim Services Unit Logo]
Community Partner Survey

The [Agency Name]'s Victim Services Unit is requesting feedback about its services from community partners to identify what is working well and areas for improvement. Aggregate data (without identifying information) will be used to inform programmatic updates and be shared with agency leadership.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You can decide to stop responding to this survey at any time.

1. What is your professional role?
 - A. Community-Based Victim Advocacy (e.g., advocate employed by a domestic violence agency or rape crisis center)
 - B. System-Based Victim Advocacy (e.g., advocate employed by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office)
 - C. Attorney (e.g., prosecutor, victims' rights attorney)
 - D. Forensic Interviewer
 - E. Adult or Child Protection/Welfare
 - F. Sworn Law Enforcement
 - G. Medical Professional (e.g., SANE nurse)
 - H. Mental Health Professional (e.g., counselor, social worker)
 - I. Other: _____
2. Victims can easily access [Agency Name]'s Victim Services Unit.
 - A. Always
 - B. Very Often
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Rarely
 - E. Never
3. As a professional, you can easily access [Agency Name]'s Victim Services Unit.
 - A. Always
 - B. Very Often
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Rarely
 - E. Never
4. Describe your perception of the current [Agency Name]'s Victim Services Unit.

Agencies can use this link ([Victim Services Community Partner Survey](#)) to download this document.

Revised March 2024

RESOURCE – Tips for Data Analysis

Tips for Data Analysis

Data analysis can be time-consuming and may feel overwhelming. Below are a few tips to help enhance the process and support usable outputs.

Develop a Plan	Before beginning any data analysis project, develop a plan and timeline for the process. If partnering with another reviewer, ensure the timeline is achievable for both reviewers.
Do Not Rush the Process	Build in enough time for data cleaning, review, comparison, and a second round of review. Qualitative data can take a long time to review and understand. Reviewers will likely need to read interview transcripts or open-ended survey responses multiple times.
Clean Your Data	Survey results can sometimes be messy. For example, not every person answers every question. Decide how to “clean” the data before analysis. This could mean removing incomplete responses or including responses over 75 percent complete. For qualitative data, if the transcription is automated (i.e., through artificial intelligence programs), it should be read while listening to the recording to edit any incorrectly transcribed words. While automated transcription programs (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) have improved, they are not 100 percent accurate.
Use Color	When reviewing qualitative data for themes and similarities, use different colors to highlight different themes. This will make it much easier to locate quotes for the report later.
Convert Words to Numbers	On a five-point scale, you can convert the words to a numerical scale of one to five. This will allow you to provide an average answer “score” for the question.
Cross-Reference Open-Ended Questions with Demographics	Review open-ended responses in relation to demographics. If the responses are from only women, or only people from one racial or ethnic background, it is important to acknowledge this and think about how this might affect the results.

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Agencies can use this link ([Tips for Data Analysis](#)) to download this document.

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RESOURCE – Final Report Guide

Final Report Guide

This template is intended to be a guide for creating an accessible and usable report for sharing a program evaluation.

Title Page

This can be a simple text page with the title, report author(s), and date the report is released. It can be made more visually appealing with logos and graphics.

Acknowledgements

The report author(s) can acknowledge and thank those who contributed to the evaluation. This section should be one or two paragraphs and can list author names¹ and agencies, partners, or researchers who took part in the evaluation.

Executive Summary

An executive summary can offer a brief, succinct, and digestible overview of the program being evaluated, the method of evaluation, key results, and recommendations. This may include graphs and images. Executive summaries are typically brief (less than two pages).

Introduction

An introduction provides a summary of the program being evaluated and the goals of the research and evaluation in approximately one page or less.

History of Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services

Depending on the program's longevity and the amount of information shared in the introduction, it may be useful to provide a more detailed history of law enforcement-based victim services and the associated achievements. This section should be no more than two pages.

Method

Describe the method used. This can be separated by subheadings if, for example, the evaluation included several elements: interviews, survey, and case review data. The goal of this section is to educate the reader on how the agency conducted the evaluation to provide context for the results. This section should be about one page.

Results

The results section is central to an evaluation report. It can include tables, graphs, and charts to help illustrate the results of the evaluation. A combination of graphics and narrative is ideal. Ensure any graphics included are explained in detail and interpretation is not left up to the reader.

If the evaluation project had a hypothesis or sought answers to identified research questions, the results section will highlight what was found. If the results are inconclusive, this will also be

¹ Survey and interview participant names should not be listed. When appropriate, acknowledge the participant sample in the aggregate (e.g., thank you to the victims who participated in the survey, thank you to the officers who were interviewed for this evaluation).

Agencies can use this link ([Final Report Guide](#)) to download this document.
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