

### Evaluator

This questionnaire can help you assess if you are prepared to participate in a Pay for Success (PFS) project as an evaluator.

PFS's evidence-based policy approach addresses critical issues by interrupting cycles of negative social and economic outcomes to measurably improve communities and the effectiveness of public policy. Some PFS projects focus on scaling or replicating proven interventions, while others seek to introduce or adapt services to new settings. Issue areas that might be a fit for PFS include:

- criminal justice
- early childhood education
- homelessness
- prevention or treatment of problems associated with chronic disease
- substance abuse
- behavioral health
- workforce development
- and many more.

Pay for Success projects are sponsored by local, state, or federal governments that want to achieve better social outcomes by working with providers through service contracts that tie funding to outcomes. Investors provide the upfront money service providers need to deliver programs and achieve results. Independent evaluators determine whether the target outcomes have been met at pre-determined intervals during the project. If the objectives have been met, the government repays the investors, sometimes with a return.

Independent, unbiased evaluation of PFS projects is crucial to improving social outcomes, as it builds the evidence base for social service interventions. The questions below can help you determine if you can effectively serve as a PFS evaluator.

#### Content Knowledge

Evaluators must understand the range of social impact assessment design options and have experience evaluating social programs through their entire development cycle. Cultural competence is crucial, as evaluators design and implement assessments for diverse populations and issue areas.

- Has the organization demonstrated in-depth and current knowledge and experience with multiple assessment methods, particularly in the project's program area?
- How many years of experience does the organization have with the target community?

#### Capacity and Capabilities

Evaluating PFS projects requires substantial staff and organizational resources and may frequently span 3 to 5 years or more, with an evaluation of the results and corresponding payout sometimes only at the end of the project. To be effective, the evaluator must have adequate staff and organizational resources that include plans for succession and liability, stable financial health, and it must be secure in the knowledge that it will be able to fulfill its role for the full length of the partnership.

- Does the organization have a record of delivering high-quality evaluations for multi-year projects in multiple settings, and have those findings been shared in publicly available research reports?
- Does it have experience with random assignment evaluation of large-scale interventions (e.g., studies with a sample size of 500 or more) in multiple locations?
- Has the organization demonstrated it has adequate stability, in its staff, organizational resources, financial health, and long-term succession planning to undertake a PFS evaluation?

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#### **Capacity and Capabilities, cont.**

- Does the organization have established policies and a track record of good knowledge management and dissemination?
- Does the organization have an established Institutional Review Board for the review of research ethics and protection of human subjects?
- Has the organization demonstrated its ability to translate data into actionable insights?

#### **Credibility**

Program evaluation, whether interim or final, triggers repayment of the initial PFS investment, and any additional payments tied to higher levels of impact or success. Evaluations can be paid for either by funds raised through the PFS financing process, or separately by philanthropy or government. In either scenario, payment for the evaluation must not be tied in any way to the achievement of the outcomes, nor can the evaluator have a financial interest or stake in the project.

- Is the organization a neutral party, free from conflicts of interest with the project and its partners?
- Does the organization have strong credibility with:
  - o Service providers?
  - o Investors?
  - o Government?
  - o Transaction coordinators and/or other intermediaries?
- Is the organization comfortable with the scrutiny that comes with involvement in high-profile public-private partnerships?

#### **Partnership Skills**

PFS projects require the close coordination of multiple stakeholders over multiple years in a dynamic setting. For projects to work well, evaluators must be skilled at navigating long-term partnerships.

- Does the organization have experience participating in or evaluating public-private partnerships?
- Does the organization have high-quality, long-term relationships with partners, and experience managing associated challenges?
- Does the organization have experience evaluating performance-based government contracts?
- Is the organization willing to engage in a close collaboration (e.g., for progress reviews, results analyses, and course corrections)?
- Does the organization have a demonstrated track record in assisting partner organizations in program design to facilitate outcomes measurement?