

A guiding principle of AEA is to promote the common good and advance equity. Effective stakeholder engagement is crucial. By effectively engaging stakeholders, evaluators can:

- Improve stakeholder ownership of the evaluation process, results and use, &
- Improve how stakeholders use evaluation results to inform continuous quality improvement

HOW might internal evaluators implement these principles in Nonprofit Settings?

### Step 1: Consider your stakeholder(s):



For internal evaluators, there are often many different stakeholders involved in the evaluation process:

- Community Member
- Program Participant
- Program Manager/Director
- Organizational Leader
- Executive Leader

The first step is to meet your stakeholders where they are at in order to develop meaningful ways to promote engagement. Stakeholder should be key partners throughout the entire evaluation process.

### Step 2: Consider your approach:

We've found that using the following approaches promote high engagement in an internal evaluation setting:

#### • Collaborative Evaluation Approaches:

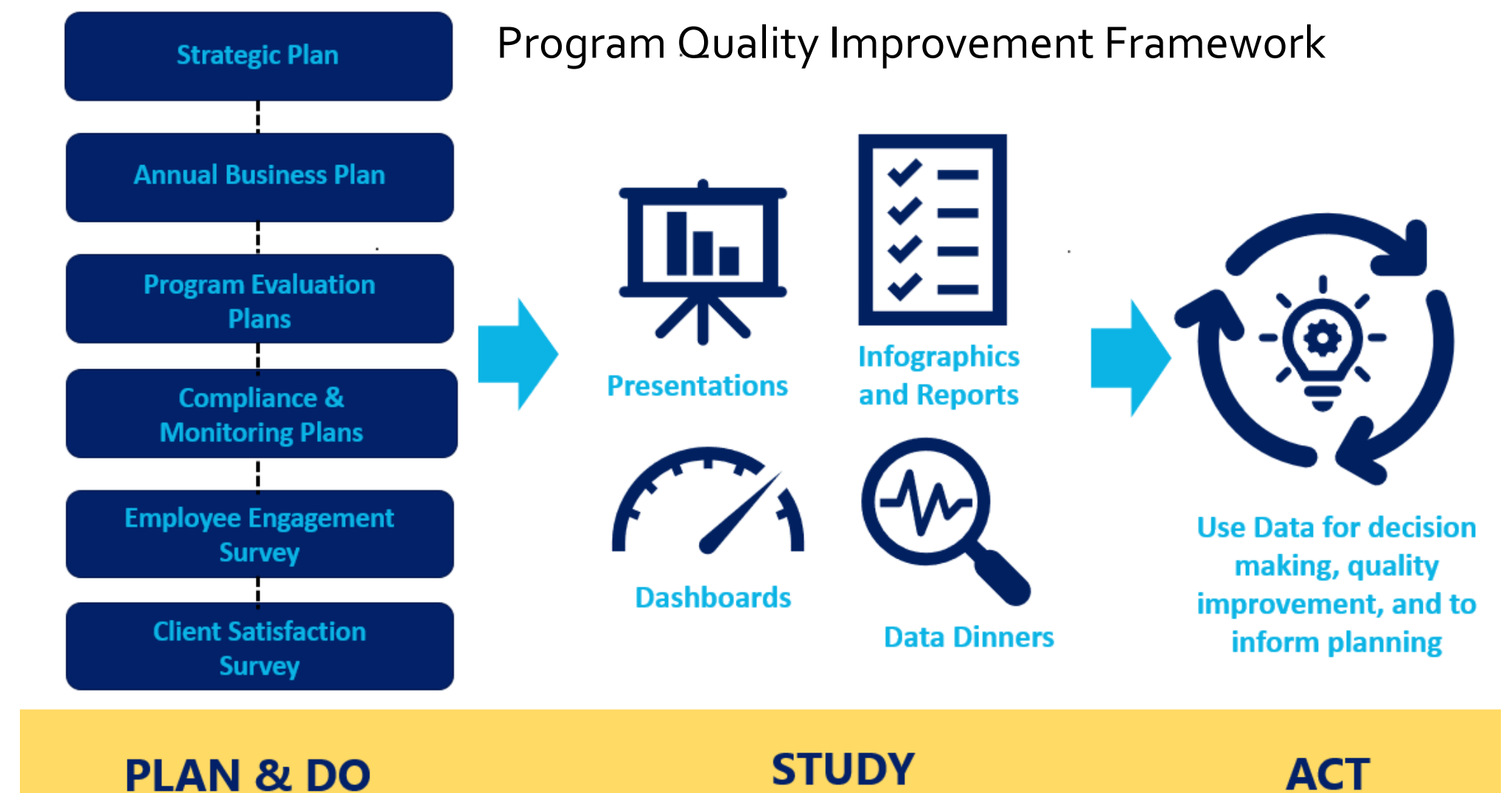
- Collaborative evaluation approaches have significantly shifted our approaches to the work, shining a brighter light on our stakeholders to advance equity. These approaches ensure that evaluation questions and methodology are grounded in the lived experiences of those in which we are serving (O'Sullivan, 2012).

#### • Developmental Evaluation Approaches:

- This approach is ideal for internal evaluators as it is responsive to the context of changing environments and it naturally promotes ongoing collaboration and participation among key stakeholders. Nonprofit environments are constantly changing, so using evaluation approaches that are responsive to those changes can improve the ultimate usefulness of the process and end result (Patton, 2006).

### Step 3: Promote engagement at each step of the evaluation process

Part of our evaluation planning process always involves developing a plan that identifies a process and timeline of WHO (directors, teachers, program participants etc.) the key stakeholders are and HOW (report, data dinner, in-person presentation, webinar, etc.) we disseminate the information at each step of the evaluation process, following the Plan, Do, Study, Act framework.



#### References

- O'Sullivan, R.G. (2012). Collaborative evaluation within a framework of stakeholder-oriented evaluation approaches. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 35(4), 518-522.
- Patton, M.Q. (2006) Evaluation for the way we work. *The Nonprofit Quarterly*. Vol. 13 (1): 28-33.

#### How we carry out our Mission: Blueprint for Brighter Futures

The Starfish Blueprint for Brighter Futures is a comprehensive strategy for how we deliver services. As a roadmap, it steers our course so that we are aligned as One Starfish around three primary areas of well-being:

**Healthy Families**  
**Successful Students**  
**Empowered Families**

Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a nonprofit human service agency, recognized as a champion for children and families across metro Detroit who have limited access to essential resources such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Serving over 4,000 children and their families annually, we provide high-quality programs and support services that focus on early childhood education and development, behavioral health wellness, and empowered parents. Through our holistic approach, Starfish partners with families so they have access to the right resources at the right time.

