

CONSIDERATIONS IN CONSENT

Evaluation should always be optional. It is understandable that we want as much information as we can get about how well we are doing. People are willing to answer our questions. However, not everyone is and sometimes our evaluation design just is not for some. In our work, we need to respect that boundary. Building solid relationship and being open, honest and transparent consistently in our work will go a long way in fostering participation in evaluation. That said, we can never assume that participation—even if it has been given in the past.

As a standard practice, all evaluation should have voluntary consent. Consent can be given orally or in writing and should be in the language of the person giving consent and at a level they can understand.

It is always good practice on a written evaluation tool to have a statement of voluntary participation or consent that states the following:

- A choice about whether to participate or not
- The purpose of the evaluation and what is being asked of them and why
- Any risks or benefits to them for providing the information
- How the information gathered will be used and by who
- Who they can contact if they have questions or concerns

Consent statements do not need to be long. As an example, a consent statement can look like the following:

Thank you for taking the time to help us improve the way in which we respond coalitions through TA. This survey will take about 5 minutes of your time. It asks questions about your experience with your TA provider. We plan to use this information to better match TA providers with coalition needs. You may choose to answer all or none of the questions. If you would like to provide feedback, or have any questions or concerns before, during or after the survey, please contact Lora Jones at (555) 555-5555 or ljones@gmail.com.