



Differential Monitoring: Stakeholder Facilitation Policy for NARA Consultants

Purpose

This document is intended to assist consultants in the facilitation of a variety of meeting types including, but not limited to stakeholder meetings, town hall meetings, focus groups, etc. It is designed to outline the practices, steps and strategies that will best gather information critical to inform and assist the client as they develop a differential monitoring system for the licensing agency. For the purpose of this policy, client may refer to an individual, an organization, or a state, province, territory or tribal agency.

Introduction

Historically, licensing has had a “one size fits all” approach in that all facilities were monitored using the same monitoring tool without regard to the facility’s compliance history. This approach has not been overly efficient nor effective, particularly in light of governments desire to reduce budgets and “do more with less”. A new approach, using targeted monitoring allows licensing staff to spend less time in facilities with a history of high compliance and more time in facilities with low levels of compliance. This approach improves efficiency and allows licensing staff the necessary time to support struggling facilities achieve compliance.

NARA assists the client in the development of a differential monitoring system, which includes facilitated meetings. These meetings help gather and disseminate information with overarching goals of obtaining stakeholder input and gaining support for the necessary and anticipated changes.

Meeting Objectives

Facilitated meetings help the client gain a broader understanding of the project’s impact and potential challenges in the following ways:

- Encourage open communication, especially between individuals/groups who may not interact regularly.
- Convey the client’s goals and provide background.
- Break down silos, address concerns and manage expectations.
- Identify and reduce risks and prevent conflicts.
- Foster a sense of shared ownership and collaboration.
- Ensure that everyone is working toward a shared vision and common goal.
- Gather valuable input/feedback to inform steps and decisions.

Definitions

Differential Monitoring (DM) – a method used to determine the frequency of inspections needed and the scope that will be required based on the setting’s licensing history. This method generally uses weighted risk

assessments, licensing indicators, and quality indicators to determine the number and extent of inspections for a licensed setting.

Facilitated meeting – a meeting in which the meeting leader, or facilitator, guides the participants through a series of predefined steps to arrive at a result that is created, understood and accepted by all participants.

Focus Group – a group of people assembled to participate in a discussion about the client’s plan to implement a differential monitoring system and provide feedback on specific aspects of the project. A focus group consists of a limited number of participants that represent perspectives of both the providers and the licensing staff and covers a targeted topic. Focus groups can help inform the need for targeted measurement tools, help co-create the new inspection process, provide meaningful ways to keep stakeholders informed throughout the project and create buy in for the project.

Key Indicators (KI) – a subset of licensing regulations from an existing set of regulations that statistically predict regulatory compliance with the entire set of regulations. The subset is identified through analysis of compliance data. If a licensee is in compliance with these rules, the licensee is probably compliant with all the rules. If the license is not in compliance with these rules, they are probably breaking other rules as well.

Key Indicator System (KIS) – a licensing measurement system utilizing a shortened version of a comprehensive checklist measuring compliance with rules through a statistical methodology. Only key predictor rules are included on an indicator checklist. It is a form of inferential inspections where only a portion of the full set of rules is measured.

Quality Indicators (QI) – a subset of licensing regulations and other nonregulatory practices that have a strong, statistically-significant relationship to healthy growth and development in children, usually based on state-specific versions of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). Quality indicators can be used to supplement differential monitoring (e.g., conducting fewer inspections in high-quality programs) or as part of a quality ranking system for public use.

Quality Indicator System (QIS) – identify non-regulatory factors that predict the overall quality of care provided in a licensed setting, usually based on state-specific versions of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).

Stakeholder Meeting – a meeting in which those who have an interest (or stake) in the outcome of a project are gathered to obtain information, provide strategic feedback and ensure that all perspectives are considered and everyone is aligned toward a common goal.

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) – identifying themes and patterns in noncompliance descriptions to determine how rules are broken; also used to evaluate inter-rater reliability, adherence to policy, and the need for interpretive guidance.

Weighed Risk Assessment (WRA) – an assessment that assigns a numerical score to each rule in a set of licensing regulations based on the level of risk to people in care if the rule is not in compliance. The higher the score, the greater the potential risk to persons receiving services. Generally, a score of 1 equals “no risk” and 10 equals “certain risk.”

Weighted Risk System (WRS) – a Likert type of measurement tool that utilizes a modified Delphi technique to determine the relative risk to individuals if there are violations with specific rules. Weighting systems are developed by sending a survey to a selected sample of persons in order for them to rank the relative risk of violation with specific rules.

Steps and Tasks

General Knowledge and Responsibilities for Facilitation

Understand NARA's history, mission, vision, and values. Be able to provide background information on the association. Include an explanation of the “why” and “how” behind Differential Monitoring to foster trust, credibility, and buy-in from those involved in the Differential Monitoring project. Additional information related to this topic can be found on the NARA website under About NARA

Be familiar with the components and purpose of NARA's differential monitoring system. Be a subject matter expert on Differential Monitoring, or partner with someone with additional DM knowledge so that the team can successfully share DM knowledge and adequately facilitate meetings to achieve the client's objectives. Information on differential monitoring can be found on the NARA website under Key Indicators.

Understand consultant responsibilities. Be aware of and understand the scope of work and contract deliverables to ensure the client receives the services for which they are paying. Ensure the facilitation discussions are aligned with the relevant components of the project to adequately gather the required input or outcomes for the facilitated meeting. The consultant is also expected to attend and actively participate in all client and NARA/Team meetings during the development of these systems to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the system and client's objectives.

Use a common language. Every client uses a different language to describe their staff, work tools and products. Research, learn and use their language to avoid confusion and demonstrate competency necessary to provide appropriate services.

Document meetings, communication, decisions. Document all communication with the date, time and who was involved, particularly if the communication was verbal. It is always good to follow-up with an email confirming what was said and or agreed to so there is no misunderstanding down the road.

Planning

Develop meeting objectives. Effective facilitated meetings require careful planning and preparation. Identify the intended outcome for these facilitated sessions with the client. Determine the specific goals and objectives of the meeting and the information to be shared as well as the questions designed to meet the goals and objectives. Based on objectives, facilitated meetings may occur before, during or after the DM data collection and analysis phase.

Understand the client's system, organization, and rules. To effectively engage with the project, it is essential that the consultant becomes familiar with the client including their licensing system, inspections, and both statutory and agency-specific requirements. Familiarity with the relevant rules ensure alignment with regulatory requirements and project objectives. Finally, the consultant must be knowledgeable of the client's organizational structure, limitations and the overall impact on providers and the public.

Determine the type and number of facilitated meetings required. The consultant's contract and scope of work typically outlines the number and type of facilitated meetings required. However, if not specified, the consultant and the client must collaborate to make these decisions based on the goals and objectives identified by the client, and in concert with NARA, to ensure activities remain within scope.

Identify the participants. Clearly define the groups and specific individuals to be invited to the meeting based on their role and expertise in the project. Generally, open invitations to a wide variety of groups and individuals are given for stakeholder meetings, town hall meetings, and similar gatherings. Individuals invited to focus group meetings are generally identified and selected based on their anticipated overall contribution to the topic or meeting objectives. The client goals and objectives should inform the roles of participants required for each meeting.

Determine roles and responsibilities. Determining who is responsible for each aspect of the facilitated meeting is essential to ensure its effectiveness. It is important to determine how much the client will be involved and their role. In some cases, the client may prefer less or no involvement so participants may more freely express their opinions regarding plans and actions.

Involvement of the client, however, is significant and indicates that they “own” the project and decisions regarding any changes to be made. At a minimum, the client may serve in a consultative role in most cases. Additionally, participants may have questions about the client's operations, which may require input and clarification from a client's representative. Establishing clear roles ensures a more effective and efficient meeting. The following roles should be considered:

- Client Representative – Welcomes participants and outlines the meeting agenda, outlines next steps in the project.
- NARA Consultant – Provides information regarding differential monitoring including benefits to providers, the client and the public.
- Client Representative – Provides information related to the client's systems and answers operational questions.
- Support Staff, if applicable. – Provides logistical/technical support, note taking, documents discussion.

Develop a clear agenda. Determine the information to be provided to the participants. Set agenda items that outline relevant discussion topics, questions to be presented and decisions to be made, to elicit the information required from the participants. The predefined meeting goals and objectives can drive the agenda. This step may include developing discussion prompts, thought provoking questions, FAQ factsheet, guided discussion points, and the like.

Determine the venue and support required. The client has the responsibility to determine the meeting venue based on available resources and objectives. Facilitated meetings may be in-person or virtual. Both have pros and cons, which will need to be evaluated to make an informed decision that will meet both the client's objectives and the contractual requirements. Examples of support include staff to provide technology support, which should be available prior to and during the meeting, a virtual meeting platform, if applicable, interpreter services, if applicable, and a note taking/recording person or system.

Required Materials

Materials required for facilitated meetings include the following, as applicable:

- Virtual meeting platform.
- Differential monitoring information to include Key Indicator Systems, Weighted Risk Systems, Quality Indicators in handouts or PowerPoint presentations based on information from the completed data collection and analysis phase.
- Note taking/recording method.

Presentation of Materials

The consultant develops a PowerPoint presentation and any necessary handouts to facilitate the meeting effectively. These materials should be tailored to the specific type of meeting and participants. The meeting should be structured to provide the required information and solicit feedback to meet the client's objectives. All materials developed should be reviewed and approved in collaboration with the client to ensure their accuracy and meet their expectations. The following content can be used as a guide:

- Welcome and Introductions.
- Meeting Objectives and Ground Rules.
- NARA Overview.
 - What NARA is?
 - Why use NARA?
- Overview of the Differential Monitoring project.
- Brief explanation of Differential Monitoring.
 - KIS
 - WRS
 - QIS
 - TCA
- Benefits of Differential Monitoring.
- Description of current state of licensing.
- Benefits of new process.
- Questions/prompts requiring discussion/feedback.
- Timelines and next steps.

Other Deliverables

Facilitated Meeting Report. The consultant contract will identify any post-meeting deliverables. Generally, a facilitated meeting requires a report summarizing the content of the meeting and providing an analysis of the participant comments to determine trends and themes. The report should be in a form and format easily used by

the client and include the meeting dates, type of meeting, findings and methodology documented. The analysis should be as detailed as possible including trends and themes by participant role, i.e. parents, providers, advocates, licensing staff, etc. Thematic Content Analysis may be used to analyze the meeting data. Both a quantitative and qualitative approach to analyze and interpret the data is needed. Quantitative analysis calculates the frequency of each theme's occurrence to determine its prevalence. Qualitative insights delve into the thematic content to identify issues or concerns or uncover gaps in information provided to stakeholders or the need for additional steps. The report can offer recommendations for next steps and illustrative examples to highlight frequent comments. Where possible, patterns and themes identified may be displayed as a graph or table to give a visual representation of the content and frequency of ideas expressed. A narrative is less useful but may be necessary given the variables and variety of discussions.

The following sections will serve as a guide for development of the report:

- Purpose of the Report.
- Background.
- Summary of Meetings.
- Follow Up.
- Conclusion.
- Contacts.

PowerPoint Presentation and Handouts. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts used to facilitate the meeting should be provided to the client. Generally, these materials are attached as Appendices to the report.

Tips for Communicating with the Client

- Ensure all venues are appropriate for the type of meeting to include size, ventilation, tables and or chairs, technology, as appropriate. This is the responsibility of the client so ensure they understand your venue needs and expectations.
- Review roles and responsibilities with the client so that the meetings will be professional and meet the client's requirement.
- Set expectations for timelines. Communicate when the deliverables will be completed and what will be delivered. Be specific about dates, and if there are multiple stages or milestones, include those details.
- Be open and transparent with communication and work products. Share training agendas/plans/materials with the client and seek content understanding and agreement before proceeding to the next phase of the process. Consult with the NARA regarding any concerns and seek clarification, as needed gaps.
- Listen to the client's feedback and be adaptable to adjustments/changes in work product or deliverables. Any changes must be within scope of work. Any significant deviations must be discussed with NARA prior to any agreement with the client.
- Where appropriate, NARA may use AI software to enhance the experience, accuracy and timely submission adhering to the NARA policy. Any utilization of AI will be discussed with the client prior to use. The full AI policy is located on the consultant page of the NARA website.

Resources/Citations

www.naralicensing.org - About NARA; Key Indicators; AI Policy and other NARA resources

[NARA Facilitated Meeting Final Report Template](#)

[State of Minnesota Report of Stakeholder Sessions](#)