Tip Sheet for Thinking through Data Collection Options

Step 1: Examples of questions providers may have
- Are participants using homework help time to complete homework?
- Do participants feel safe and supported by program staff?
- Do field trips/sports/ increase participant attendance and engagement?
- Do staff feel prepared and capable to deliver our reading program?
- Would adult community members use a computer space, and for what purposes?
- Are participants interested in mentoring, both as a mentee or a mentor?
- What outreach strategies will help recruit K-3 students struggling to read into the program?

Step 2: Examples of respondents that may help answer your overarching question
- Program participants
- Non-participants who could participate
- Community members
- Youth Council members
- Parents/Caregivers
- Program staff
- School staff
- Partner staff
- *Note: Be specific about respondent groups, clarifying sub-groups that are targets*

Step 3: Examples of low-burden data collection methods:
- Short questionnaires (e.g., note card, QR-code survey, Mentimeter)
- Hands-on voting (e.g., stickers, beads)
- Response poster/Word wall
- Brief "standing" interviews (e.g., at events, during pick-up, on the street)
- Focus groups and listening sessions
- Discussions during meetings (e.g., meetings for tenants/community, school faculty, Advisory Board, program staff, partners)
- Prompt-driven suggestion box
- Youth-driven peer interviews
- Existing participation and satisfaction data sources

Step 3 (cont): Examples of who could help collect data
- Program staff
- Youth Council/Leadership program participants/Older participants
- Advisory Board members
- Community volunteers
- Program partners (e.g., service providers, community institutions, coaches, vendors)
- NYCHA Resident Association partners
- Security staff

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Step 4: Examples of strategies to capture and manage data
- Interview protocol forms to take notes, one copy for each respondent
- Photos of visual data (e.g., sticker vote, poster responses,
- Use of free software like Google Docs and Sheets to enter data
- Automated reports from survey and polling software (e.g., Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, Mentimeter, Alchemer)
- AI transcripts of virtual sessions
- Clear yet simple instructions and tools for data collectors to support consistent data collection

Step 4 (cont): Examples of strategies to make sense of data
- Identify a lead person to gather data from collectors and assemble it, such as totaling countable responses for items, organizing individual text responses by question or theme, creating lists of short answers or suggestion box ideas, and so on.
- Find patterns that show high frequency responses, as well as variation and outliers.
- Develop a document that pulls the "aggregated" data together so others can discuss it collaboratively.
- Have a Data Discussion Meeting with key stakeholders, such as other staff, Advisory Board, Youth Council, partners, and focus on identifying the big takeaways.
- Document the takeaways with the supportive data to inform planning, refer to later, and communicate with transparency.
- Keep sight of the original question and problem, but also consider unexpected insights and opportunities for further clarification/collection.

Step 5: Examples of processes to turn data into action
- Clarify the big picture purpose for taking action on the data, and determine what data and takeaways will help that purpose.
- Gather key people who will likely carry out actions, approve them, and inform planning, along with individuals who collected the data.
- Develop an action plan document that identifies key actions, the people responsible for carrying it out, timeline, and anything else that will help to clarify what will happen.
- When planning actions, consider the organization's priorities, program requirements, level of burden, and feasibility, making sure it is aligned, doable, and worth the effort.
- Communicate the data and action plan transparently, particularly in situations where a feedback loop to stakeholder groups will help them see how the program has responded to input.
- Identify a lead person to monitor the action plan document and progress, ensuring actions get carried out and assessing if the changes have worked.

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