# The Evaluative Inquiry Cycle Guide*

## PHASE 1: FRAMING

### CONTEXT

What is the purpose of this work? Why does this work matter?

What challenges are we addressing? What opportunities are we creating? How does this work connect to other things happening in this context?

Who are the key stakeholders? What do they need or want out of this work? How do we know that?

To what else do we need to pay attention in order to be successful?

### IMPACT

What is the intended impact of this effort?

How is that intended impact connected with the larger impact of the organization?

What is our unique contribution to making that impact?

What do we need to know to do our best work?

### ASSUMPTIONS

What assumptions do we have about this work? What is the source of those assumptions?

What assumptions can and should be explored more?

What assumptions are we comfortable making?

### VALUES

What values do we want to show up in this work?

In what ways will those values show up?

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*This handout provides sample questions to ask at each stage of the Evaluative Inquiry Cycle. These questions are intended as thought starters. Depending on your situation you may want to ask different questions.*
PHASE 2: FOCUSING

Of all the questions we surfaced during framing—which are the most important for us to pursue? What information would most enable us to make better decisions and take more effective action?

Who (or what) is most likely to have the information we need? What are the best ways of getting that information? What information do we want to know about who is providing the information and how it is being provided to help us make sense of the information?

Are there processes already in place for gathering information that we could leverage? How can we weave gathering information into the work?

Who will make sense of and use the information?

How will the information be used? What do we need to know and to do to support that use?

PHASE 3: CONDUCTING

How will we collect the information?

Who will collect the information?

When will we collect the information?

Who will make sense of and use the information?

How and where will we keep track of it?

Who will compile and analyze the information?

PHASE 4: APPLYING

What does the information we have tell us? What connections and opportunities do we see?

What is surprising? What is confusing?

Who else should be part of the sense-making process? Who might help us turn the information into insights?

What should we do differently based on this information?

What else do we need to know? About what do we need more clarity?

How can we support each other in taking our next steps?