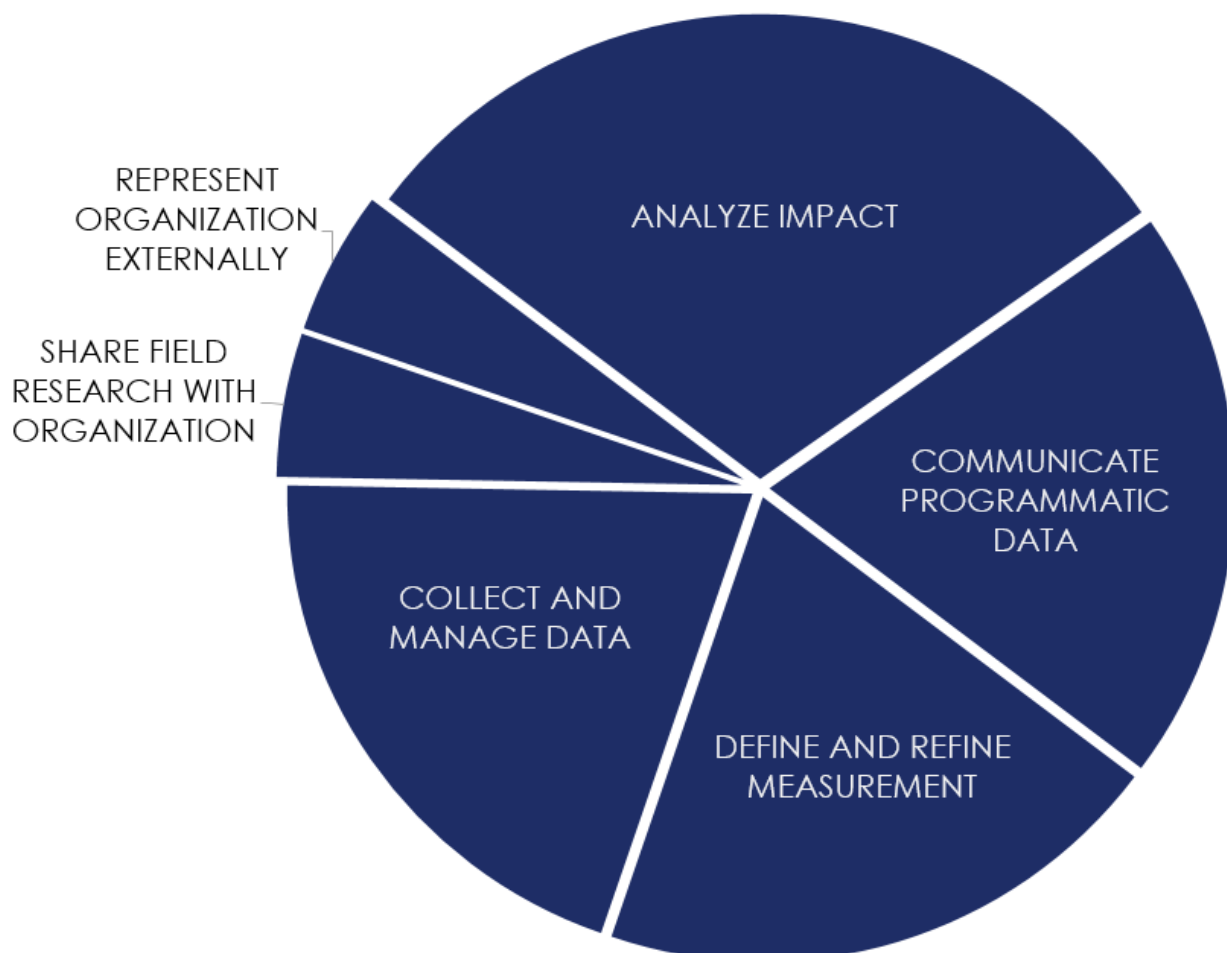


Orientation to the Research and Evaluation Team's Work

The Research and Evaluation (RE) team evaluates programmatic efforts to achieve targeted outcomes for youth and shares this information with internal and external stakeholders. RE empowers consumers of information to better understand and contribute to improving the work done by the organization. RE is powered by a team of five that operates in support of all iMentor cities as well as Partner Program affiliates.

What Research and Evaluation Does

The RE team's work is split into five categories, each of which is briefly explored in this article. The graphic below is intended to aid in the process of ensuring that the basic team functions are addressed and accounted for, while also allowing for prioritization of annual project-based work to dig deeper into programmatic data.



Analyze Impact

The RE team's primary function is to study the impact of programming on participants. This process involves refining and testing research questions the organization is interested in. This

involves establishing, executing, and refining ways to :

- Best analyze inputs (i.e., how do we quantify engagement in the program?)
- Analyze outcomes (i.e., how do we determine whether mentees are "college ready?")
- Learn about the relationship between inputs and outcomes (how are engagement in the program and mentee college readiness related?)

In order to ensure that the team is positioned to successfully execute these tasks and answer these questions, RE works with programmatic stakeholders to support them in high quality implementation of all evaluation tasks (i.e., administration of surveys, completion of mentor quality assessments, etc.).

Communicate Programmatic Data (and Impact)

The result of work executed in service of analyzing programmatic impact is meant to be shared broadly across the organization, as well as with external stakeholders such as funders, current/prospective mentors and school partners. Examples of reports generated in an effort to communicate impact include:

- End of Year Report – Comprehensive analysis of programmatic data collected throughout each school year
- College Outcomes Report – Deep dive into the college enrollment, persistence and graduation for mentees that participated or continue to participate in programming
- Funder Specific Reports – Follow up regarding the progress toward goals set forth as a result of a financial award

The RE team also seeks to engage the entire organization in-person, either to discuss results presented in reports, leverage real-time data for programmatic improvement, or support deeper exploration. In addition to formal presentations to the organization, RE holds weekly office hours where questions, thoughts and ideas both large and small are welcome! Click [here](http://partners.imentor.org/help/leveraging-the-research-and-evaluation-team) (<http://partners.imentor.org/help/leveraging-the-research-and-evaluation-team>) to learn how you can leverage and collaborate with the RE team.

Define and Refine Measurement

The RE team works diligently to revisit the way in which everything the organization does is measured in an effort to stay up to date with industry standards. As the mentees we work with and technology changes, so should the way things are measured.

This includes, but is certainly not limited to:

- Revision of survey questions and scales used to measure the strength of mentee-mentor relationships, college aspiration and non-cognitive skill development
- Exploration of enhanced ways to measure engagement with programmatic curriculum
- Empowering staff with the tools necessary to track, interpret, and act on programmatic information – whenever possible collaborating with the Platform team to build these tools

- Innovation around measurement and analysis of key areas of inquiry to the organization

Collect and Manage Data

Over the course of a single mentee's engagement with iMentor, they will generate more than 5,000 individual points of data. As mentees are tracked through their college experience, this figure increases. Collecting and managing this data for all iMentor cities and Partner Program affiliates is no small task and represents a large portion of RE's work. This ongoing task involves collaboration with programmatic stakeholders to ensure that data is collected consistently, appropriately maintained and that it is as comprehensive as possible.

Share Field Research with the Organization

As the organization strives to be truly data driven, it is not enough to simply consider the results of internally conducted analyses. There is a lot of great research being conducted in both the mentoring and college access community. The RE team seeks to ensure that pertinent publications are shared in service of delivering the best possible program to mentees and mentors.

Represent iMentor Externally

While representatives from all departments of the organization engage with external stakeholders, the RE team takes responsibility for doing so in matters directly related to research. This includes collaboration with the National College Access Network, MENTOR and other organizations as well as hosting presentations at conferences.
