



Girls' Leadership Guide: *Why Employee Evaluation Matters for Small Nonprofits*

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You've built something meaningful. Your organization shows up every day for girls who need mentorship, safe spaces, resources, and someone in their corner. But here's a question worth asking yourself: Are the people doing that work being supported, challenged, and developed with the same intentionality you bring to your mission?

For small nonprofits serving girls, staff evaluation isn't a bureaucratic checkbox. It's a core equity practice. If you believe in the potential of every girl you serve, that belief has to extend to your team as well.

Why Small Organizations Often Skip It

It's understandable. When your staff is small, budgets are tight, and the work feels urgent, a formal evaluation process can feel like a luxury. Leaders often think, "We talk all the time, so I know how everyone is doing." However informal communication and structured feedback are not the same thing. Without a consistent evaluation process, high performers go unrecognized, growth areas go unaddressed, and team members don't get the professional development they've earned.

The Power of 360-Degree Evaluation

One of the most valuable tools for small nonprofits is the 360-degree evaluation, a process where feedback is gathered from multiple directions: supervisors, peers, direct reports, and sometimes even program participants or board members. Rather than relying on a single manager's perspective, 360s give a fuller, more honest picture of how someone is actually showing up.

For organizations focused on girls, this model has added resonance. Many of your programs likely emphasize voice, self-advocacy, and being seen and heard. A 360-degree process reflects those same values inside your organization. It tells every team member that their perspective matters here too.

For a small team, a 360 doesn't need to be elaborate. A set of thoughtful, consistent questions around communication, collaboration, mission alignment, and professional growth, administered annually or biannually, can be genuinely transformative.

Evaluating Up: Staff Feedback for the Executive Director

One of the most powerful and most overlooked practices in small nonprofits is creating a formal channel for staff to provide feedback to the executive director. Leadership accountability is not a threat to authority. It's a sign of organizational maturity.

When staff can offer structured, anonymous feedback to the ED, trust deepens, blind spots shrink, and the whole organization becomes more adaptive. It also models for your team, and indirectly for the girls you serve, that healthy leadership welcomes honest feedback and doesn't require perfection to earn respect.

Turning Evaluation into Growth

The goal of any evaluation process is not judgment. It's development. Pair evaluations with individual growth plans, skill-building opportunities, and honest conversations about where each person wants to go professionally.

When your team thrives, your mission thrives. And the girls counting on you deserve nothing less than an organization where everyone, from program staff to the executive director, is always growing.