



2012 AmeriCorps Performance Measure Training Meeting Minutes

- 1) Welcome, introductions, etc.
- 2) Attendants:
 - Samantha - HELP
 - Holly - Energy Corps
 - Jake – YASC
 - Eric – Campus Compact
 - Nancy– Commissioner
 - Heather – St. Vincent
 - Katie – Montana State Parks AmeriCorps
 - Katie – Campus Corps
 - Jono – MCC
 - Alison – Montana Legal Services
 - Al – Energy Corps
 - Danielle – Montana Youth Homes
 - April – St. Vincent
 - Krista - HELP
 - Tony – OCS
 - Cecily – Food Corps
- 3) Learning objectives for today's call.

Note this repeats much of what was presented at the grantee meeting.
- 4) A theory of change uses cause and effect logic to specify the change that will occur as a result of a particular intervention.

In the case of AmeriCorps,

 - if members service activity (X) is delivered,
 - then the change (Y) will happen
 - directly improving the community need defined by the program.
- 5) A theory of change has three components: the problem, the intervention and the outcome. Remember a theory of change uses evidence to articulate a set of assumptions about the cause and effect relationship. Specifically, evidence is used to articulate why the intervention is likely to cause the outcome.

Note: the intervention describes what members will be doing and applicants should provide detail in the narrative including duration and frequency...

Question: Does the intervention need to be explained in both the performance measure and the narrative?

Answer: Yes, the performance measure should be fully explained in both the narrative and within the 'Strategy to Achieve Results' Section of the performance measure. This includes explaining the intervention in detail, again in both places. It is key to use both areas as the external reviews will not receive a copy of the performance measures.
- 6) Applicants are asked to outline their theory of change in the application.

Specifically... the problem(s) identified; the solution that will be carried out by AmeriCorps members and community volunteers; the ways in which AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to deliver the solution; and the anticipated outcomes.

Note: the Theory of Change should be developed prior to creating Performance Measures

- 7) So, now that we've reviewed the concept of a theory of change let's move to performance measurement. There are three key components in this definition: Regular measurement (Performance measurement provides a snapshot of where you are at a given moment in time); Amount of service (frequency and duration); and Outcomes (change) that results from this service
- 8) CNCS measures the impact of a program in two ways, first through performance measurement and second through evaluation.
- 9) So the main difference between performance measurement and evaluation is that evaluation seeks to "prove" a theory of change, and performance measurement does not.
- 10) Another way to look at this, performance measurement can show impact—specifically, it can show whether a change occurred. But it can't show causality, meaning that it can't show that the change occurred because of the intervention. So why are we talking about this during a PM call? Because PM's don't prove a theory of change, applicants must provide data that will prove there is a connection between the PM and the community need.

Question: MCC has spent a good deal of money on evaluations for metrics such as member development which the Corporation has asked applicants to leave out of their performance measures. Member development is still valuable and it is a different kind of evaluation. How do we include this information?

Answer: The Corporation is developing measures for member development and until they are published CNCS has asked applicants to include member development within the narrative.

- 11) If the program has a solid theory of change, there is an expectation certain outcomes will result from the intervention.
Performance measurement gives the program an opportunity to see whether the expected change is happening. If it isn't, that may signal there is a problem with the delivery of the intervention. Maybe the intervention is being delivered at a lower "dosage" (frequency, intensity, duration) than necessary. Maybe the actual delivery of the intervention is not taking place the way the intervention was planned.
If delivery is not the problem it may be evidence that the theory of change on which performance measures are based is wrong.
Even if the evidence for the intervention is not well-defined, performance measurement still plays a role in demonstrating impact. PM's can provide evidence a change occurred; therefore, they provide evidence to support your theory of change going forward.
Note: existing programs should use their performance measures as a piece of evidence for their theory of change. New programs should site research to support their theory of change.

- 12) Lets look a little more closely at why performance measurement is important.
- 13) Some of the many ways that performance measurement can help programs. Make changes to the intervention based on what you learn about how you're doing. If you're not achieving the results you planed for, look at modifying the program design.
Show impact: Performance measurement can help you improve the quality of the services you provide but it can also help you set targets for future performance by establishing a baseline.
- 14) Definition: Outputs are counts of the amount of service that members or volunteers have completed. They do not provide information on benefits to, or other changes in, the lives of members and/or beneficiaries. In other words, outputs tend to be the things that are easy to count. They tell you how much you did, but they don't tell you whether a change occurred. It is important to note, that outputs can be very useful in measuring efficiency as well as retention. For instance, a program might look at its average cost per beneficiary.

- 15) What do these outputs have in common? Answer: They don't tell us whether the service completed resulted in a change for the beneficiaries of that service.
- 16) Outcomes specify changes that have occurred in the lives of members and/or beneficiaries. CNCS requires that outcomes be measurable during the grant period. Outcomes are reported on an annual basis with applicants setting annual targets. Outcomes should be a measure of the change outlined in your theory of change.
- 17) Outcomes measure changes in attitude, behavior, or condition. The Corporation wants programs to capture significant changes in the lives of beneficiaries. The closer a program can come to measuring long term change, the stronger it will be. Most programs should aim to measure a quantifiable change in behavior or condition. Outcomes that measure attitude and knowledge are less compelling than those that measure changes in behavior.

Question: Measuring change in children's behavior can be a challenge to track due to getting permission. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer: When writing your performance measures look at what data is available and what you can measure. Build a relationship with the school and agency to gain access to the information you want.

- 18) So we have looked at the big picture of performance measurement and now we're going to shift gears and get into the nuts and bolts. Read Corporation requirement for performance measurement.

Question: If our primary focus is not covered in the Priority Measures can we create additional measures?

Answer: Yes, applicants can write their own measures, they will fall into the tier 5 category so long as they are aligned with a national focus area.

Question: Are performance measures now just outputs and outcomes?

Answer: Yes. An aligned performance measure connects the applicants mission, theory of change, output, and outcome, with the outcome relating back to the mission and all information supported with relevant data.

- 19) Outputs = counts

Outcomes = change in attitude, behavior or condition resulting from the number counted in the Output
The result of outcome affects the community need being addressed in the theory of change

Question: Can there be multiple outcomes for one output?

Answer: Yes, an output can have more than one outcome.

- 20) Here is an output and two outcomes that could align with the output. What do you think of these outcomes? Why might we choose one rather than the other?

Are there other possible outcomes that would be better?

Outcome A measures an increase in knowledge, which is less desirable than a change in behavior.

Outcome B measures a change in behavior, but the way the outcome is written, it appears that this will be self-reported.

Question: Is it ok to have both B and C (attitude and behavior change) with the same output?

Answer: Yes, we strongly encourage applicants to focus on behavior and conditional changes; if you want to include a change in attitude as extra information you are welcome to.

- 21) CNCS has developed priority measures to aggregate the outcomes of national service programs across the agency, including AmeriCorps State and National, NCCC, VISTA and Senior Corps.

AmeriCorps State and National has developed additional national performance measures for its programs. The 2012 NOFO and Performance Measures Instructions (for each focus area and capacity building) explain how to select and align national measures.

Note: Capacity Building must increase non-profit's ability to serve after the member has gone (sustainability)

You are strongly encouraged to utilize the national performance measures when they fit your program model.

In some cases, you may be required to select priority measures. Consult the NOFO and Performance Measures Instructions for more details.

22) Is the performance measures aligned with the theory of change described in the narrative? Are the outputs and outcomes are correctly aligned?

output – students tutored in reading

outcome – percent of students who scored higher in reading

Are the performance measures of a high quality and does the program use rigorous data collection methods and instruments to measure their outcomes?

In addition, the outcome(s) identified should be a change that is worth measuring.

Question: How do you align performance measures around volunteer generation?

Answer: To align volunteer measures, the volunteers must have a defined role and the outcome needs to be attached to their position description. If general volunteer recruitment is your primary focus and the volunteers are not focused on one project your performance measure may just consist of an output and in that case you would need a second aligned measure.

23) Now we'll look at each of the criteria in a bit more detail. Alignment with Theory of Change:

Once you find an intervention and outcome that strongly tie together consider the frequency, intensity, and duration of the intervention necessary to result in the outcome

24) Give me an example of a poorly aligned output and outcome?

Give me a good example?

25) Capturing Change, The so what...

Are the measures you select appropriate for the change you want to show?

Is the change worth measuring?

Are you measuring a change that will directly impact the community need you addressed and will the member activity create that change?

26) Assessment checklist is used by CNCS

External reviews do not receive a copy of the applicants performance measures or budget.

Remember: Don't assume the grant review knows your program.

Best Practice: have someone not familiar with your program to review the application for clarity based solely on the narrative

Would anyone like to see a copy of the assessment checklist?

27) Once you have identified your outputs and outcomes, it's time to start thinking about data collection and reporting.

28) Thank you

29) Questions

Question: When entering the performance measure value can you enter a percentage?

Answer: Yes, percentages can be entered but the percentage sign will not be included. The percentage will be explained within the performance measure itself.

Question: Have the Governor's Office of Community Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service been in contact regarding the Capacity Building measures and their need for indirect service?

Answer: Yes

Question: What is the definition of youth in regards to mentoring in the priority measures?

Answer: Waiting on a response from CNCS

Question: EN1 measures energy efficiency after weatherization and looks for energy use to be significantly improved. The definition of significantly improved is very high when looking at a 40 year old trailer compared to new energy star homes. Can the target for significantly improved be modified?

Answer: Waiting on a response from CNCS

**AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

Complete one checklist for each Performance Measure and save as directed in the PO Guide. One checklist will address all outputs and outcomes in a Performance Measure.

APPLICANT ID: ██████████	PROGRAM OFFICER:
LEGAL APPLICANT:	

Performance Measure Title:	
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- This is the aligned measure for the primary service activity.
- This is not the aligned measure for the primary service activity, but another measure that meets this requirement is present in the application.
- National Performance Measure

All items with a "no" response require an explanation.

ALIGNMENT AND QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES

#	Review Item	Yes	No	Comment
1	The strategy (intervention) aligns with the need identified in the narrative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	The strategy (intervention) is likely to lead to the outputs and outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	The output results and indicators are aligned and clearly identify what is being counted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	The outputs results and indicators are likely to result from the proposed activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	The indicators for each output count only one output.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	The targets are logical and the target values appear reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Instruments are sufficiently rigorous.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Data collection methodologies are appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	The outcome results and indicators clearly identify who or what will change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	The outcome results align with the outputs and with other outcomes in the measure (<i>focused on the same beneficiaries, outcomes will logically occur as result of the outputs, end outcome will occur as the result of the intermediate outcome.</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	The intermediate outcome results can be measured during the grant period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	Each outcome counts only one indicator.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13	The outcome targets are logical and the target values appear reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14	The outcome targets clearly identify how many/how much change will occur.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15	Instruments are sufficiently rigorous.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16	Data collection methodologies are appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

#	Review Item	Yes	No	Comment
17	If in the National Performance Measures Pilot : The applicant has selected all required measures and aligned all measures correctly. (Applicants will either select aligned outcomes or include an applicant determined outcome as outlined in the NOFO.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18	The performance measure outputs and outcomes align with the problem, solution, and anticipated outcomes described in the program narrative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19	The performance measure represents a significant program activity and impact . (Program Officers should require removal of extraneous measures during clarification.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

For multiple outputs or outcomes in the same measure, you can respond in the rows provided or copy/paste 3-8 for outputs and 9-16 for outcomes. (To copy/paste any rows you must "unprotect" the document, make the format changes, and then "protect" the document.)

Clarification Items - Based on the comments above
Paste clarification text into the Clarification section of the Review Worksheet.

Action Steps (Optional)

- Measure is acceptable.
- Measure is of high quality and should be noted for sharing.
- Measure requires amendment during Clarification:
- Measure requires TA to be provided by:

- This applicant has not opted into the National Performance Measures Pilot but has the potential to do that. This should be clarified.