ASN Planning Grantee Training: Best Practices for Performance Measures

July 2023

AmeriCorps

Session Outline

Performance measurement definition and purpose

ASN performance measure requirements

ASN Performance Measure Instructions

Breakout Room

Best practices

Designing a Performance Measure

Questions

Resources

How did we get here?

Develop your intervention

Create Theory of Change and expand it into a Logic Model

Logic Model includes Outputs and (short-, medium-, and long-term) Outcomes

Measure what you value and value what you measure

What is Performance Measurement?

Performance Measurement Regulations: [45 CFR 2522.550-2522.650](#)

Performance measures – measurable indicators of a program's performance as it relates to member service activities

Performance measurement – the process of regularly measuring the services provided by your program and the effect your program has in communities or in the lives of community beneficiaries

All grantees must establish, track, and assess performance measures for their programs

- Performance measure targets are entered in the application

- Performance measure actuals are reported in the End-of-Year Project Progress Report

Performance Measurement

Ongoing, systematic process of tracking your project outputs and outcomes

Outputs: Amount of service provided

- Number of individuals, organizations, other entities served

Outcomes: Changes or benefits that occur

- Can be changes in individuals, organizations, communities, or the environment
- Typically include changes in **knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition**

Outcomes have a logical connection to the service activities and be aligned with outputs

Purpose of Performance Measurement

Recognition of progress

- Collect reliable information about the intervention's implementation and progress toward outcomes

Accountability to funders and stakeholders

- Communicate achievements in a meaningful and objective way

Program improvement

- Spot and correct problems
- Strengthen the intervention
- Determine where to allocate limited resources

How AmeriCorps Uses Performance Measures

Tell the story of the collective accomplishments of national service programs

National Performance Measures

- Provide shared language for outputs and outcomes that multiple programs have in common
- Cover all AmeriCorps focus areas

Applicant-Determined Measures

- Intended for programs whose interventions, outputs, or outcomes do not fit under existing National Performance Measures

AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Requirements

At least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) connected to primary intervention

- Must focus on community impact

- May be National Performance Measure or applicant-determined measure

- Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, are permitted but not required

Performance measures reflect significant activities in applicant's Theory of Change

- No need to capture all program activity in performance measures

Use National Performance Measures and system-defined interventions if applicable

- Do not create applicant determined outputs or outcomes that duplicate existing NPMs

- Do not create user-defined intervention labels that duplicate existing interventions

AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions

Funding Announcement, Mandatory Supplemental Information, and Application Instructions

2023 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity (PDF)

2023 AmeriCorps State and National Mandatory Supplemental Information (PDF)

2023 AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions (PDF)

Performance Measure Instructions

2023 AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions (PDF)

PM Instructions - Requirements

AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Requirements

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure depending on the program's theory of change. Applications may also include National Performance Measure outputs without associated outcome(s) provided that the output measures a significant program activity. These output-only measures do not fulfill the requirement for an aligned performance measure but may be selected in addition to the aligned measure(s).

All performance measures must reflect significant program activities whose outputs and outcomes are consistent with the applicant's core theory of change. Applicants are not expected to have performance measures for every program activity. AmeriCorps does not require applicants to use National Performance Measures but expects them to do so if National Performance Measures reflect key outputs and/or outcomes of the theory of change. Applicants may not create applicant determined outputs or outcomes that duplicate existing National Performance Measures.

All performance measures, including output-only measures, must be associated with one or more interventions (service activities). Applicants are expected to use the system-defined intervention categories if they appropriately represent the applicant's program activities. Applicants may not create user-defined intervention labels that duplicate existing intervention categories.

PM Instructions – Selection Rules

AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measures Selection Rules

These selection rules specify allowable output/outcome pairings for National Performance Measures. Applicants must follow these selection rules when using National Performance Measures. Applicants may not select any National Performance Measures that may appear in eGrants if they are not present on this list. Please see the NOFO for additional information about application requirements.

PM Instructions – Selection Rules

Economic Opportunity

Strategic Plan Objective	Selection Rules		Interventions
	Outputs	**Outcomes (if applicable)***	
Financial Literacy	O1A: Number of individuals served	O9: Number of individuals with improved financial knowledge	Financial Literacy Education
Housing	O1A: Number of individuals served	O11: Number of individuals transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing	Housing Unit Development Housing Unit Repair Housing Placement/Assistance
	O4: Number of housing units developed or repaired	O20: Number of safe, healthy, affordable housing units made available	Housing Unit Development Housing Unit Repair
Employment	O1A: Number of individuals served	O10: Number of individuals who secure employment O21: Number of individuals with improved job readiness	Job Training Job Placement GED Education Other Adult Education
Find Opportunity	N/A (outputs may be reported as Performance Data Elements on annual Progress Reports)	N/A (outcomes may be reported as Performance Data Elements on annual Progress Reports)	N/A
Other Economic Opportunity	O1A: Number of individuals served	Applicant-determined	Applicant-determined

*All National Performance Measure outputs may also be paired with an applicant-determined outcome instead or may be used without an associated outcome.

There are selection rules for each Focus Area and Capacity Building

PM Instructions – Definitions and Data Collection

O1A (output)	Number of individuals served
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** recipients of AmeriCorps-supported services related to increasing economic opportunity **Served:** substantive engagement of individuals with a specific goal in mind related to economic opportunity. Cannot consist solely of mass dissemination of information such as email blasts, social media posts, or distributing pamphlets.
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

Remember the Focus Area Notes, too!

O21 (outcome)	Number of individuals with improved job readiness
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** those reported in measure O1A, V1, V7A, or V8 **Improved job readiness:** increased knowledge or skills related to seeking, obtaining, or successfully retaining a job.
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Survey, interview, observation, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in job readiness at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

PM Instructions – Appendix A

Member Service Year (MSY) and Member Allocation

Entering information into the application's Performance Measure Module that shows the program's best estimate about how member time will be allocated

Allocate MSY and Members
- At the Objective level
  - All MSY must be allocated to one or more Objectives and cannot be counted more than once
  - Members must be allocated to one or more Objectives and may be counted more than once
- At the Performance Measure level
  - Since not all program activities need to be captured in Performance Measures, not all MSY and Members must be allocated to a Performance Measure

Total MSYs in the Budget must match MSYs allocated to the Objectives

PM Instructions – Appendix B

Checklist Item		Primary Aligned Measure (required)	Additional Measure (optional)	Additional Measure (optional)
Resource Allocation				
1	MSY and member allocations to focus areas and objectives are consistent with the application narrative/logic model.			
2	MSY and member allocations to performance measures are consistent with the application narrative/logic model.			
Performance Measure Requirements				
3	The application includes least 1 aligned performance measure (output + outcome) corresponding to the primary intervention.			
4	All performance measures reflect significant program activities whose outputs and outcomes are consistent with the applicant's core theory of change.			
5	Any output-only measures included in the application consist solely of National Performance Measure outputs.			
6	The application does not include applicant-determined measures that duplicate existing National Performance Measures. *(Note: Applicant-determined measures are recognizable by the labels OUTPT or OUTCM, followed by numbers. Any applications containing these labels are NOT National Performance Measures, even if the applicant has labeled them like a national measure.)*			

PM Instructions – Appendix C

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What should a continuation applicant do if one or more of their National Performance Measures is no longer present in the Performance Measure Instructions?**

All applicants, including continuation applicants, must follow the National Performance Measure selection rules specified in the current Performance Measure Instructions. Applicants must revise their performance measures as needed to conform to the updated instructions.

2. **What should a continuation grantee who is measuring a National Performance Measure output or outcome that has a changed definition do in the continuation application?**

If the grantee is unable to measure the output or outcome as defined in the current Performance Measure Instructions, the grantee should choose a different performance measure.

3. **What are National Performance Measures?**

AmeriCorps has established six Focus Areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families based on the priorities included in the Serve America Act. Within these Focus Areas, as well as for Capacity Building, AmeriCorps has created National Performance Measures in order to aggregate the results of similar programs and demonstrate the impact across our agency programs and initiatives.

Breakout!

Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Select performance measures that fit your program design and theory of change, not vice versa

- Read the instructions

- Less = more: limit performance measures to significant program activities

- Select measures that complement existing Performance Data Elements

- Use National Performance Measures when they fit the program design

- Use system-defined intervention categories when possible (but other interventions are allowable)

Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Clearly define terms and ensure they are meaningful
- Clearly distinguish outcomes from outputs while maintaining logical alignment
- Choose outcome measures that are ambitious but realistic
- For outcomes that require participant follow-up, set targets that take into account response rate attrition
- Use pre-post assessments when possible
- Use numerical targets, not percentages

Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Select data collection instruments that are valid (measure what they are supposed to measure) and yield consistent and accurate results

- Choose data collection instruments that are accessible and yield timely data

- Allocate sufficient resources toward data collection efforts: money, time, personnel, training, storage

Designing a Measure

The HealthyCorps Program is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead small-group health education programs for elementary students at area community centers. The primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, with the longer-term goal of improved health during their teen years.

Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different groups of 5-8 children after school each day for about 30 minutes each over a period of 8 months, using a nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies. Members will also recruit volunteers to help community centers expand health-focused physical activities in their afterschool programs.

Step 1: Identify Service Activity/ies

The HealthyCorps Program is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead small-group health education programs for elementary students at area community centers. The primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, with the longer-term goal of improved health during their teen years.

Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different 5-8 children after school each day for about 30 minutes each over a period of 8 months, using a nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies. Members will also recruit volunteers to help community centers expand health-focused physical activities in their afterschool programs.

Primary

Secondary

Step 2: Choose the Right Measure(s) and Intervention(s)

Primary service activity: nutrition education

Healthy Futures

Strategic Plan Objective	Outputs	Outcomes (if applicable)*	Interventions
		Selection Rules	**Interventions**
Aging in Place	H4A: Number of individuals served	H9A: Number of individuals who report improved capacity for independent living H19: Number of individuals with improved health	Companionship Nutrition/Food Support Legal Services Transportation Medical Services Opioid/Drug Intervention
Obesity & Food	H4A: Number of individuals served	H12: Number of individuals who report increased food security H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge H18: Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health H19: Number of individuals with improved health	Outreach Education/Training Referrals Medical Services Nutrition/Food Support Physical Activities Counseling/Coaching Opioid/Drug Intervention
	H10A: Number of pounds of food provided	Applicant-determined	Nutrition/Food Support
Access to Care	H4A: Number of individuals served	H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge H18: Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health H19: Number of individuals with improved health H20: Number of individuals with improved access to medical care	Outreach Education/Training Referrals Medical Services Counseling/Coaching Opioid/Drug Intervention
Other Healthy Futures	H4A: Number of individuals served	Applicant-determined	Applicant-determined

*All National Performance Measure outputs may also be paired with an applicant-determined outcome instead or may be used without an associated outcome.

Secondary service activity: volunteer recruitment to expand health-focused afterschool programming

Strategic Plan Objective	Selection Rules		Interventions
	Outputs	Outcomes (if applicable)*	
Capacity Building & Leverage	G3-3.4: Number of organizations that received capacity building services	G3-3.10A: Number of organizations that increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach	Volunteer management Training Resource development Systems development

*All National Performance Measure outputs may also be paired with an applicant-determined outcome instead or may be used without an associated outcome.

Step 2: Choose the Right Measure(s) and Intervention(s) (continued)

Strategic Plan Objective	Selection Rules		Interventions
	Outputs	Outcomes (if applicable)*	
Access to Care	H4A: Number of individuals served	H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge H18: Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health H19: Number of individuals with improved health H20: Number of individuals with improved access to medical care	Outreach Education/Training Referrals Medical Services Counseling/Coaching Opioid/Drug Intervention

Step 3: Study the Instructions for Each Measure

Read the Performance Measure Instructions for each measure to make sure the program can meet the requirements

H4A (output)	Number of individuals served
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** recipients of AmeriCorps-supported services related to improving health-related outcomes **Served:** substantive engagement of individuals with a specific health-related goal in mind. Cannot consist solely of mass dissemination of information such as email blasts, social media posts, or distributing pamphlets.
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

Step 3: Study the Instructions for Each Measure (continued)

H17 (outcome)	Number of individuals with increased health knowledge
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** those reported in H4A, V1, V7A, or V8
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Survey, test, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

Applicants that cannot meet the requirements for a measure should not use it

Step 4: Define All Terms Clearly

H4A (output)	Number of individuals served
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** recipients of AmeriCorps-supported services related to improving health-related outcomes **Served:** substantive engagement of individuals with a specific health-related goal in mind. Cannot consist solely of mass dissemination of information such as email blasts, social media posts, or distributing pamphlets.
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

HealthyCorps definition of "substantive engagement": attending at least 4 health education sessions (equivalent to 1 month of participation)

Step 4: Define All Terms Clearly (continued)

H17 (outcome)	Number of individuals with increased health knowledge
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** those reported in H4A, V1, V7A, or V8
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Survey, test, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

HealthyCorps definition of "increased health knowledge": At 10% or greater increase in a child's ability to identify healthy food choices.

Step 5: Calculate MSY and Member Allocations

Determine how many members, and what portion of members' time (MSYs), will be devoted to:

A) Each focus area and objective

B) The specific activities captured by the performance measure*

Members can be counted toward more than one focus area/objective/activity; MSYs cannot

*Not all member activities need to be captured under performance measures

Step 5: Calculate MSY and Member Allocations (continued)

HealthyCorps MSY and member allocations: 6 half-time members, 3.0 MSYs

A) Each focus area and objective

	Members	MSYs
Healthy Futures focus area, Access to Care objective (nutrition education)	6	2
Capacity Building focus area, Capacity Building and Leverage objective (volunteer recruitment)	6	1

B) The specific activities captured by the performance measure

	Members	MSYs
Nutrition Education	6	2

Step 6: Set Output and Outcome Targets

Ambitious but realistic estimate of what can be accomplished in 1 program year

Outcome targets should relate logically to output targets

HealthyCorps targets:

- *Output H4A: 150 students*

- *Outcome H17: 90 students*

Step 7: Select Appropriate Instruments

Must meet criteria specified in the Performance Measure Instructions

- Output

How to Measure/ Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

- Outcome

How to Measure/ Collect Data	Survey, test, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

Must meet fundamental data quality standards
- Valid
- Accurate
- Consistent
- Complete
- Verifiable

Step 7: Select Appropriate Instruments (continued)

HealthyCorps output instrument:

- *Sign-in sheets for each nutrition education session that capture each participant's first and last name. Data from sign-in sheets will be transferred to Excel spreadsheets to track each individual child and the number of times they attended sessions.*

HealthyCorps outcome instrument:

- *Pre-post test with 20 multiple-choice questions asking children to select the healthiest food choices. This assessment was developed by the public health agency consortium to align with their nutrition education curriculum, and has been previously tested in five states. Children will take the pre-test during the first session, and the post-test will be given after 8 months or when the child leaves the program, whichever is sooner.*

Questions?

Step 8: Put it All Together

- Use eGrants Performance Measure Module

- Application Instructions explain how to enter information

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Click the "Begin" button to add a new performance measure

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Locate the focus area and objective connected to your primary service activity

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Check the box next to the intervention that matches your primary service activity

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Locate and select any secondary intervention(s)

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Screen Instructions

On this screen you will select all objectives for your project.

You must choose a primary focus area.

* **Focus Areas** ❓

▸ **Disaster Services**

▸ **Economic Opportunity**

▸ **Education**

▸ **Environmental Stewardship**

▸ **Healthy Futures**

▸ **Veterans and Military Families**

▸ **Capacity Building**

▸ **Other Community Priorities**

* **Select Primary Focus Area**   [Healthy Futures ▾]   * **Select Primary Intervention**   [Access to Care: Education/Training ▾]

Select Secondary Focus Area   [Capacity Building ▾]   **Select Secondary Intervention**   [Capacity Building & Leverage: Volunteer M ▾]

[Save]   [Back]   [Next]

Assign your primary and secondary focus areas and interventions, then click "Next"

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Enter the total MSYs for the project, then the number of MSYs and members connected to each focus area and objective

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Select the objective connected to your primary service activity

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Performance Measures

* Objective	?	Access to Care ▾
* Title		Nutrition Education
* Problem Statement		

* Selected Interventions ?

▾ **Access to Care**

☐ Education/Training

* Outputs ?

▾ **Access to Care**

○ H4A: Number of individuals served

○ [ ]

Enter a logical title for the performance measure

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Summarize the community problem/ need connected to the performance measure

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Select the primary intervention and any other intervention(s) connected to the performance measure, then select the relevant National Performance Measure output

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Select the relevant National Performance Measure outcome(s)

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Enter the number of MSYs and members connected to the performance measure

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Summarize the service activity/ies connected to this performance measure

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Enter the Method, Instrument Description, and Target Number for the output

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Describe the design and dosage (frequency, intensity, duration) of the interventions you have selected.

* Description of Interventions

Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different groups of 5-8 children after school each day for about 30 minutes each over a period of 8 months, using a nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies.

Expand each output and outcome and enter data collection information.

▸ **Output: H4A: Number of individuals served**

▾ **Outcome: H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge**

* Select Method

Test

Add New Method

Describe the specific instrument(s) you will use to measure the output or outcome. Include the title of the instrument(s), a brief description of what it measures and how it will be administered, and details about its reliability and validity if applicable.

* Enter Instrument Description

Pre-post test with 20 multiple-choice questions asking children to select the healthiest food choices. This assessment was developed by the public health agency consortium to align with their nutrition education curriculum, and has been previously tested in other states. Children will take the pre-test during the first session, and the post-test will be given after 8 months or when the child leaves the program, whichever is sooner.

* Enter Target   90   *** Unit of Measure**   Individuals

Enter the Method, Instrument Description, and Target Number for the outcome

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Mark the performance measure as Complete

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Check for your completed performance measure, then click Next

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Validate your performance measures

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Return to your grant application

Resources

FY 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Grants

- ASN PM Instructions
- PHA PM Instructions
- ASN Native Nations PM Instructions

National Performance Measurement Core Curriculum

Evaluation Resources Core Curriculum