SUMIKA: Hello. Welcome to the 2019 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition Webinar Series: Best Practices in Developing Performance Measures. All mikes are on mute at this time and we'll leave them on mute throughout the duration of this webinar. This webinar is being recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, you can disconnect at any time. This recording and slides will be available on the FY19 NOFo page on Nationalservice.gov in approximately 10 business days. You may use the chat box to ask questions at any time. We may wait for an opportune time to answer them, so please be patient if your question is not answered right away. If you have any technical difficulties via the chat box as well. If you do that, our webinar facilitator will be able to assist you via a private chat. Now I'd like to turn it over to Jay as presenter, Sarah Yue from AmeriCorps State National

SARAH: Thanks, SUMIKA, and hi everyone. Happy Post Thanksgiving. Thank you for joining us on the Monday after Thanksgiving for a discussion of performance measures, specifically Best Practices in Developing

Performance Measures for your AmeriCorps State and National application. We are also, for those of you who've been around with AmeriCorps for a while, going to be touching on the changes that have been made to the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions.

So, as SUMIKA mentioned, we're happy to answer questions at any time during the webinar. So, please go ahead and type them into the chat field as you think of them. If you do think of questions later after the webinar that you weren't able to ask during this hour, you can also send them to the email address AmeriCorpsgrants, that's all one word, @cns.gov. You will see that email address again at the end of the presentation. So, you'll be able to see it in writing then. If you send a question to that email address, it will be answered by someone on the outreach team. Oh, and thank you so much to CNCS for putting it right there in the chat box.

So, without further ado, let's go ahead and get started and talk about Performance Measurements. Quick overview just to make sure that we're all speaking the same language. So, Performance Measurements is the ongoing and systematic processes of tracking outputs and outcomes for your program. And by outputs, we mean the amount of service provided. Now what specifically that means will depend on your program design. For many of our programs, the outputs are people, the number of people served by the program. However, for some programs, it could be other types of counts like the number of acres of land treated by AmeriCorps members or the number of organizations served.

Outcomes in contrast are the changes or the benefits that occur in your program as a logical consequence to the interventions, which is a fancy word for activities, that are taking place. And, again, for many of our programs, these are changes related to people, but they could also be changes in organizations, in the broader community, or in the natural environment.

Outcomes are generally classified as changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. You can remember that with the acronym KABC, knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. As I mentioned, they should be logically connected to your program’s interventions or service activities. They should also be aligned with your output. So, if your output counts the number of people served by the program, then your outcome should reflect a change in those same people’s knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition in life.

So, what’s the point of performance measurements? Well, there are three main purposes. The first is to be able to recognize whether or not progress is being made. You know what it is that you ultimately want your program to accomplish. Performance measurement can tell you whether you are reaching your goals, and, if so, at what pace you’re reaching them. And it can also tell you whether you’re implementing your program in the way that you plan to.

The second purpose is to provide accountability. Obviously, we here at CNCS require AmeriCorps programs to report on their progress to us via performance measures. But you may also have other funders, other stakeholders that would also request this same type of information. So, performance measurement gives you an objective and meaningful strategy for communicating achievements to those stakeholders or funders in a way that will make sense to them.

And then the third purpose and really one of the most important purposes of performance measurement is program improvement. The performance measurement gives you benchmarks that tell you whether or not you're meeting your goals. And if you're not meeting your goals, they might give you some insights to help you figure out where you could strengthen those interventions to reach your goals more effectively. And it can also help you figure out how to allocate personnel and funds in the most optimal way, especially in an environment where resources are limited.

From CNCS's perspective, performance measure data helps us to tell the story of collective impact of

AmeriCorps members and other national service programs across the country. And we do that primarily through our set of National Performance Measurements. These give us the ability to speak the same language, as it were, about outputs and outcomes that many programs have in common. CNCS has a set of National Performance Measures for all six of our focus areas. Those are: education, healthy futures, economic opportunity, veterans and military families, disaster services, and environmental stewardship. And we also have a set of National Performance Measures for capacity building activities.

CNCS does expect programs to select National Performance Measures if their program design is consistent with those measures. However, we do recognize that there may be some programs and program models where National Performance Measures don't quite fit. And so, as a result, programs also have the option to create what we call applicant determined measures either as an output-outcome pair or applicant created outcomes for existing national outputs.

On this slide you can see the baseline performance measure requirements for AmeriCorps state and national applicants. And those of you who have applied for AmeriCorps state and national grants in the past should notice that these requirements are the same as last year and they have been largely consistent for a number of years. AmeriCorps applications are required to have at least one aligned performance measure, by which we mean output paired with outcome, connected to the primary intervention.

Now it’s up to you as the applicant to define what primary intervention means in your context. There’s no set number of member service years or members that have to be associated with that particular intervention. Instead, you should make that decision about what is primary for you based on your theory of change as is described in your application narrative and your logic model. However, your primary intervention does need to be a community-focused or beneficiary-focused intervention, rather than a member-focused intervention. Member-focused performance measures are not permitted in 2019. And I'll say more about that in a moment. If you have member-focused interventions, if you are hoping to achieve member-specific outcomes, those could be listed as secondary interventions.

Now you’re required aligned performance measure could be either a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined performance measure. You’re not required to use National Performance Measures and applicants don’t get extra credit for using national measures. But, again, as I said on the previous slide, we do expect applicants to use National Performance Measures if they are a good fit for the program’s theory of change. And, by the way, theory of change for those of you who are newer to this means the chain of logic between the community need, the program activities, and the expected outputs and outcomes of the program. One thing that we do not allow is creating applicant-determined measures that duplicate National Performance Measures.

So, you're required to have one aligned performance measure. Applicants are welcome to have more than just the single required measure. But, as you can see on this slide in the second bullet, we only want applicants to propose outputs and outcomes that capture significant program activities. Now, again, there's no set definition of significant. So, applicants can use their own judgment about what counts as significant in their particular context. But, generally speaking, the quality of performance measures is more important than the quantity. Just like there's no extra credit for using National Performance Measures, there's also no extra credit for having lots and lots of measures. AmeriCorps applicants are not required to capture all of their program activity in performance measures.

The National Performance Measure Instructions, which are posted on our Notice of Funding Opportunity page, are a fundamental guidance document, just like the Notice of Funding Opportunity itself and just like the application instructions and the mandatory supplemental guides. You should refer to the National

Performance Measure Instructions whenever you are creating or editing performance measures for your application. Those instructions show the selection rules for National Performance Measures, in other words, which outputs can be paired with which outcomes. And which objectives and service activities or interventions are connected to each measure. And the document also provides specific instructions for each individual output and outcome.

In addition, there are three appendices in the National Performance Measure Instructions that you can use as resources when developing performance measures. And that includes both the National Performance Measures and also applicant-determined performance measures. We have Appendix A, which is a tutorial about how to assign member service years or MSY’s and member positions to objectives and performance measures within the application.

Appendix B has a checklist that you can use to self-assess your performance measures and fix any problems that you might encounter before you submit your application to CNCS. This lists a disclaimer, not intended to be completely comprehensive or catch every potential issue, but it will help you be responsive to the AmeriCorps state and National Performance Measure requirements.

And then Appendix C has a set of frequently asked questions and answers about performance measures. And there is an FAQ in Appendix C that summarizes the changes that were made to the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions. I will say more about that on the next slide. And, again, you can find the National Performance Measure Instructions by going to the main NOFO or Notices Funding Opportunity page and clicking on Performance Measures Instructions. Also, at the end of this presentation, you'll see a direct link to that document.

Okay, so, again, for those of you who've been around for more than a year or two, here's a summary of the major changes to the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions. If you've already looked at them, you may have noticed that they are significantly different as compared to last year. So, let me say a little bit about the goals of those changes. One goal was to simplify the National Performance Measure Matrix by reducing the number and complexity of the measures included there. So, we have gone from over 110 distinct measures in 2018 to approximately 40 measures in 2019.

Another goal was to make the measures more inclusive and reduce barriers to use. And that means that we are being less prescriptive about definitions and required instruments for each measure. Instead, we're giving more flexibility to applicants and grantees to decide what is the best fit for you for your theory of change?

But I do want to note that programs are still required to meet fundamental data quality standards. And, in fact, page 22 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity lists what those fundamental standards are. So, please keep those in mind. Make sure that the data collection methods you choose will produce valid, reliable, consistent, complete, and verifiable data.

Back to the goals of the changes. Another goal was to enhance impact reporting by making sure that all focus areas have National Performance Measure outcomes available, not required, but available to capture achievable but meaningful change. And then finally, a goal was to focus performance measures exclusively on community impact. In 2019, we’re going to ask programs to use demographic indicators rather than performance measures to capture key member-focused outputs and outcomes.

So, as you can hear, that is a lot of changes. So, because of the scale of these changes, all existing grantees, including continuation grantees, need to revise their measures in 2019 to follow the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions. Let me say that again. All existing grantees, including continuation grantees, need to revise their measures this year to match the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions. Please, please, please take care of this up front before applications are submitted to avoid having to do it later during the clarification or resolution process.

Transitioning a little bit to some best practices. Here are some best practices from CNCS's perspective for performance measure design. First of all, select performance measures that fit your program design and your theory of change. Start with your own vision for what your program will do and what you hope to accomplish. And don't create your performance measures until after you've fully developed your theory of change and your logic model. Please don't try to artificially fit your program model into a particular performance measure just because you want to use that measure. A performance measure I not going to be helpful either to CNCS or to you if it doesn't effectively capture what you actually intend to do in your program.

Read the instructions. As I said before, the National Performance Measure Instructions are a fundamental guidance document for preparing an application. So, before you choose a National Performance Measure, it's really important that you read the instructions for that measure very closely. And you will also be required to check a box in your application saying that you will comply with the requirements in the National Performance Measure Instructions.

Less equals more. I said this before but it's worth repeating. You are only required to select one performance measure connected to your primary intervention. You're welcome to select additional measures if you choose, including output only measures if they make sense for your program design. But if an activity will not be a significant one in terms of time or effort on the part of your AmeriCorps members, we encourage you not to create a performance measure for it. You can and you should plan to collect and monitor data on those activities for your own programmatic purposes. But you do not need to report that data to CNCS as a performance measure.

Clearly define terms and ensure that they are meaningful. It's really helpful to specify what you mean by key words and phrases that you use in your performance measures. A common word is “improvement.” If you use that word and don’t tell us what you mean by improvement, we don’t know if that means a tiny change or a large one. “Increased knowledge” is another example. Does that mean a large increase of knowledge or a small one? It’s really helpful to spell that out. And it’s also really helpful to explain why that level of change that you will be counting is meaningful to your program beneficiaries because that helps you use performance measures to tell your story and to tell your story effectively.

As I mentioned earlier, you should use National Performance Measures in any case where your program design and your measurement strategy sets those measures. We do not want you to create applicant-determined measures that duplicate or are very similar to existing national measures. And we also don’t want you to type national measure codes and definitions into an applicant-determined measure field in the performance measure module. Those of you who have done this for a couple of years may know what I mean by that. Sometimes it can be hard to find particular National Performance Measures unless you've selected the right objectives first. So, if you can't find the measure you want, it probably means you have to go back and select the right objective in the performance measure module. Don't create it because you can't find it somewhere else

Something a little bit new in 2019 is that we really want you to use system-defined intervention categories when you can. The 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions list particular interventions or service activities for each performance measure. And if one of those interventions matches the activities that you will be doing, please select that system-defined intervention. Please only create your own intervention if none of the existing ones are a good fit for your service activities.

Oh, I think we have a question that's come in. Yeah, go ahead.

SUMIKA: Sarah, we have a question from Katie. For continuation applications, will programs have to update their logic model? Will programs have to include information about changes to data collection tools?

SARAH: Okay, good question. So, in a continuation application, please look at the application instructions for a description of continuation applications. It only asks you to list the changes that you've made in the continuation changes section of the application. So, if you are changing your performance measures, which most or all continuation applications will have to do, please mention in the continuation changes narrative that you have done that but you don't need to update the logic model. That's not part of the instructions for continuation applicants. Just describe the changes you've made in the continuation changes narrative and then go into the performance measures themselves and make those changes. Good question.

SUMIKA: We have a secondary question from Christine. "Hello, I have a question about the streamlined measures. Where there was previously a standalone literacy performance measure and a standalone social emotional measure, there is now one school readiness measure ED23, which has multiple indicators. Our program has a literacy component and a social emotional component and we'd like to be able to set and report on targets for both. Can we propose two ED23A's, one for language and literacy gains and one for social emotional gains?

SARAH: All right. Hi, Christine, good question. I can't answer specific questions about your program design. But what I can tell you is that the Appendix C of the National Performance Measure Instructions has some FAQ's about when you should have a separate measure and when you shouldn't. So, you can take a look at those. Generally speaking, if you have distinct interventions, so distinct service activities, it's appropriate to have two separate measures. If you have one intervention, one service activity that can have more than one outcome, it can

be appropriate to have more than one outcome connected to the same output.
So, again, I know that's a very general answer to your specific question. But, again, I can't comment on particular program designs, just more on conceptually when it's appropriate to have separate measures and when it's not.

I'm going to move on for the moment. I know there's another question or two that has come in. That's wonderful. Please keep them coming. We're going to have someone who's looking through those and we'll bring those questions into the mix when we have another pause.

Meanwhile, let's look at the next slide. All right, clearly distinguish outcomes from outputs. This is a mistake that's most commonly made with applicant-determined outcomes. You need to make sure that your outcome doesn't just count participation in program or restate an output, but actually reflects that KABC that I mentioned, the knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. So, for example, if the output is the number of individuals participating in a program, the outcome can't be the number of individuals who completed the program because that's not a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. Instead, the program might choose an outcome such as the number of individuals who show improved knowledge of program content or the number of individuals taking specific actions as a result of participating in the program.

Choose outcome measures that are ambitious but realistic. We want you to reach for the moon when you set your long-term goals for your program. And we would like to see those goals in your logic model, but you don't need to measure your long-term goals in performance measures. They're really not suited for that. Instead you can measure short or medium-term goals that are attainable in a single grant year, but reflect important steps toward your ultimate goals. For example, if your ultimate goal is for children to grow up to be healthy adults, that's a great goal, but you don't need to and can't measure that in a single year. Instead as a performance measure, you could measure the number of children that have increased their level of physical activity as a result of participating in a member-led program. This is a meaningful change in behavior that's appropriately ambitious and it's a logical step toward developing healthier adults, but it's also immeasurable in a single year.

For outcomes that require participant follow-up, please consider that when you're setting your targets. Many outcomes will require post-surveys, post-tests, or some other type of participant follow-up to determine changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. Unfortunately, it's rarely possible, although it would be lovely, to get 100% of program participants to respond to surveys or follow-up requests. And we don't want you to do any fancy math where you extrapolate your results, unless you have an improved sampling plant. So, if you get a 50% response rate, you can't just double that and call that 100% response. That's not the way that it works. Again, unless you have an improved sampling plan that would do that in a way that was more statistically valid.

So, it’s wise to set your outcome targets somewhat lower than your output targets to account for the less than 100% response rates. That being said, it’s definitely a goal to achieve the highest response rates possible, so when you’re planning your data collection strategy, keep that in mind, trying to maximize your response rate from participants.

For longer-term outcomes, we want you to set targets that are achievable in a single grant year. Some performance measure outcomes involve changes in condition like high school graduation or obtaining a job that may not be achieved by all beneficiaries within a single program year. For those types of performance measures, it’s important to set targets that reflect what can be accomplished in a single grant year. For example, if your program is designed to help students graduate successfully from high school, but your program serves students in all grades of high school, grades nine through 12, then your target should only reflect the students who would be eligible to graduate from high school within the current grant year. And that's likely to be only the 12th grade students. So, that doesn't mean you shouldn't serve the younger students if that's part of your theory of change. You absolutely should and can. It just means you need to set your outcome target as a smaller subset and explain your rationale for that.

Speaking of targets, please use numbers, not percentages. That allows us to do our collective impacts and add up numbers across all of our programs. As you know, you can't add percentages.

When possible, we'd like you to use pre/post-assessments. Objective measures generally yield better data than subjective measures. So, if I were to ask you at the end of this webinar if you feel like you know more about performance measurement than you did at the beginning, chances are you would say yes, even if it's just to make me feel better. But if I gave you a pre- and post-assessment that actually measured your knowledge about performance measurement before and after the webinar, it may or not show the increase of knowledge that you believed took place. In other words, people's perceptions of change can be different than the actual change itself. So, we do encourage the use of pre/post when that's practical.

Select data collection instruments that are valid and reliable. Performance measure actuals are not meaningful unless you can say with confidence that they mean what they're supposed to mean and that that meaning does not fluctuate across different sites or across different time periods. To be able to use performance measures to make good decisions, you need to have good data and good data is going to come from high quality instruments. So, for example, consider selecting an instrument that has been tested by an independent third party and has been proven to measure the particular type of change you are interested in measuring.

Choose data collection instruments that are accessible and yield timely data. If you rely on an instrument like in education programs, maybe a state standardized test where there can be several months of delay in receiving the results or where there's a lot of restrictions or hurdles in accessing the data, you may have difficulty getting performance measure data or using it to make informed decisions about your program in a timely way. So, you might consider looking for alternative instruments where the data are more accessible and there's a quicker turnaround time in receiving those results.

And, finally, before we transition to a slightly different topic here, make sure that you're allocating sufficient resources toward data collection efforts. Data collection is a significant investment, certainly in terms of dollars, but also in terms of staff time and member time. So, you want to build those dollar investments and time investments up front into your budget, your staffing, and your program design. Performance measurement will not be done effectively if it becomes an unexpected add-on to somebody's already full schedule.

So, let's pause for a moment. I know there's been several more questions. Please keep them coming. SUMIKA, what else have we got for questions here?

SUMIKA: Yes. We've got a few questions in. Our next question comes from Stephanie. Can National Direct grantees utilize multiple measurement tools? Example: pre- and post-survey data, and pre/post-standardized assessment score data across sub-grantee programs to report on ED5? Or can only one measurement type be used for all sub-grantee programs?

SARAH: So, we are giving grantees a lot of flexibility this year to tell us what instrument makes sense for you, for your theory of change. So, if you have an instrument that accomplishes what you need to accomplish and it collects high-quality data on a performance measure that is defined in the way that the National Performance Measure Instructions allow, then you can use the instrument that makes sense for you and that includes if you have different instruments in different sub-grantees or sites, different part of the country. You can use those different instruments, again, if they are a good fit for your measure and a good fit for your program design.

SUMIKA: Thank you. Our next question comes from Laura. What if a pre-defined intervention does match but does not capture all interventions? Should we add our own? Example: in improving acres of land, some of the predetermined interventions match our intervention but leaves out some important interventions out for acres improved that we would like to count.

SARAH: Okay. So, for particular performance measures you can have more than one intervention associated with the performance measure. So, if it's an "and," so you select one or more interventions and there's others as well, if they are significant interventions, then you're welcome to go ahead and define your own interventions. If they are minimal aspects of the service activities that you're doing, you don't need to have those if the predefined interventions capture the significant gist of what your members are doing, then there's no need to create additional interventions. But if there's something that's missing that's really significant for your program design, then, yes, you can go ahead and do that in supplement to the predefined interventions.

SUMIKA: Our next question comes from Katie. If a program's previous performance measure has been eliminated and the program cannot find another performance measure that fits, can the programs create an applicant-determined performance measure that may resemble an unlimited -- an eliminated performance measure?

SARAH: So, if you truly cannot find a performance measure in the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions that is a fit for your theory of change, then you have really unlimited leeway to create the applicant-determined measure that is the right fit for your theory of change with a couple of caveats. One is the 2019 performance measures are pretty -- I don't want to say broad, but they do leave a lot of space for folks with different kinds of interventions to find themselves there. So, I take a really close look at them and see if perhaps there is a way that your intervention does fit under one of those measures. And if it doesn't and you are creating your own measure, take a look at Appendix B at the performance measure checklist that's there and make sure that the measure that you're creating meets the suggestions that are provided in that checklist. But as long as you're doing that, it's your theory of change and your program, so you should have the performance measure that is the right fit for you.

SUMIKA: Our next question comes from Jeannette. Are retrospective measures possible?

SARAH: Again, really depends on your theory of change. You can make the case to us about what instrument you want to use and why this is going to capture meaningful change. If you can make that case that this is going to give high-quality data that is meaningful, then you can propose the measure that works for you. I'm sorry, the instrument that works for you.

SUMIKA: Our next question comes from Amy. Is there a place on the NOFO website where questions that are asked during the webinars and through email are addressed and posted?

SARAH: That’s a little bit outside of this topic. So, I’m going to defer that to AmeriCorps Grants, that email address that you saw up above. Send that question to AmeriCorps Grants and they’ll respond to it.

SUMIKA: Excellent. Our next question comes from Laura. What role in data collection assessment and report drafting are members allowed to play for the service they are delivering versus staff?

SARAH: Members can be involved in data collection. Really it depends on your program design. So much of this is very dependent on the particular situation. But generally speaking, members are permitted to engage in data collection and in many program designs members do engage in that.

SUMIKA: And we have one final question left in the queue at this time from Stephanie. If proposing a sampling plan is convenient sampling permitted, for example, can a grantee report on ED5 for the full population of AmeriCorps students served by the extra plating and data sub-grantee programs who are only able to collect from the 20% of AmeriCorps students served?

SARAH: Stephanie, I'm going to refer you to Appendix C of the National Performance Member instructions. There are several questions, several FAQ's in there about sampling and that will answer your question in more detail than I can right now. But thank you for your question. Thank you all for your questions. These are great. Please, please keep them coming. I'm going to move on a little bit, but as questions accumulate, we'll do another break in a few minutes and answer some more.

We are going to transition into an example of how a hypothetical AmeriCorps applicant would go about selecting and designing a performance measure. What you see on this slide is a brief summary of a pretend -- this is not a real program, I made it up -- this is a pretend program called EduCorps. EduCorps is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead one-on-one and small group tutoring programs for middle school students at a high poverty school. The primary goal of the program is to improve students' achievement levels in mathematics and to help students stay on track for high school graduation. Members will meet with groups of one to three students after school each day for about an hour each, using mathematics enrichment materials that complement the normal classroom curriculum. Members will also lead daily large group activities focused on physical activity and healthy eating.

So, that's our program. Let's take it step by step here of how this pretend program would select and design a performance measure. We're going to start as all applicants should start with the fundamental performance measure requirement, an aligned measure -

- that means output plus outcome -- connected to the primary service activity.

As I mentioned earlier, CNCS expects applicants to choose National Performance Measures if they are consistent with the program design. In the case of EduCorps, their primary service activity as described in that summary I showed you is academic tutoring. And this fits under CNCS's K through 12 success strategic plan objective. There are several possible performance measure pairs related to this objective. You can see them on this slide here. This is a screenshot from the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions.

But given that the main goal of this program is improving students' achievement in math, reading the titles of these measures suggests that Outcome Measure ED5A, the number of students with improved academic performance, could be a good fit for this program design.

Per the chart shown on the slide, the required output measure for outcome ED5A is ED1A, the number of individuals served. Thus, the aligned performance measure of the applicant should create will consist of outcome ED1A plus outcome ED5A. As I also mentioned earlier, applicants should select from the system-defined list of interventions when possible. Since tutoring is included in the predefined list, the program should select this intervention as the primary service activity that is connected to the aligned performance measure.

The applicant is only required to have this one aligned performance measure. But the description of the program indicated that members are also engaged in activities other than tutoring, including physical fitness and nutrition programs. The applicant has the option of selecting additional performance measures for these activities, either aligned measures or output-only measures. That means outputs with no outcomes connected to them. However, this is not necessary and per those best practices we talked about a minute ago, applicants should not add other measures unless the activities that those measures would capture are considered to be significant. In other words, they are a substantial part of the applicant's theory of change and proposed member service activities. So, in this case, our hypothetical applicant is going to choose not to add any additional measures because those activities are not significant in this context.

It's also important that any performance measure the applicant selects is measurable during the grant year. So, for example, while the EduCorps program description mentioned staying on track for high school graduation as one of their long-term goals, very meaningful long-term goal, it serves middle school students. So, a program like this that serves middle school would not be able to measure high school graduation outcomes within the grant period. They will probably appear as long-term goals in the logic model and that's appropriate, but those outcomes would be better assessed through evaluation rather than performance measurement.

Once the applicant has tentatively selected outputs and outcomes, it's important to read the National Performance Measurement instructions carefully for each output and outcome. The applicant needs to make sure that the measures really are the right fit and that their program design will allow them to meet the requirements for each measure in terms of eligibility. In other words, who or what can be counted under that measure, as well as data collection appropriate instruments to collect data. Again, one of the significant changes in the 2019 National Performance Measures is that the categories of who or what can be counted under particular measures have been broadened. So, folks who were around last year may know that we had a previous measure ED1 that required that individuals counted under the measure meet a specific definition of economically disadvantaged. I think that Hope just asked the question related to this exact thing. Measure ED1A does not include a requirement that the individuals meet a specific definition of economically disadvantages. Programs are free to include under this measure any recipients of CNCS support services related to education. Keeping in mind that the value of your theory of change is important. What is the compelling community need that you are meeting? How is the intervention going to help you meet that need and achieve meaningful outcomes? So, there should be a good reason why you are serving the people you are serving, but they do not have to meet a specific definition as defined in the National Performance Measure Instructions. Also keep in mind the program should only count the individuals who specifically receive the intervention or interventions associated with the performance measure. So, in the case of EduCorps, the individuals that would be counted under ED1A would be the middle school students receiving the tutoring intervention.

For ED5A, the National Performance Measure Instructions state that only students counted under the output measure, ED1A, can be counted under this outcome. So, this means the applicant can’t report more students under the outcome than they do under the output. The instructions also provide guidance about appropriate instruments for collecting data under this measure. We'll talk more about instruments on a later slide, so stay tuned for that.

Really, the important thing to keep in mind is that if an applicant's program design will not allow them to meet the requirements for a particular measure, they should not use that measure. They can either select a different National Performance Measure or create an applicant-determined measure that is a better fit.

Let's pause for a moment. Any questions, I can answer?

SUMIKA: Yes. We have a question from Christine. For ED1A, can you share more guidance on what is meant by an engagement, which is listed as the definition of served in the performance measurement instructions?

SARAH: So, the definitions that are there are the definitions. Generally -- so, what you need to do is make the case. Tell us -- and "us" I mean CNCS, not me particularly -- tell CNCS why the individuals you are serving are the ones that you need to serve? Why the engagement that you have with them is meaningful and will result in meaningful results? Make the case to us. We're not restricting you with predefined definitions as much. We're asking you to tell your story in a compelling way using performance measures.

SUMIKA: And I believe you addressed the question from Hope. Hope's question: Should Education NPM focus on disadvantaged students?

SARAH: Yeah, I think we got that one. Hope, if that doesn't answer your question, feel free to type in again and let us know. All right, super, moving along to Step 3: Define Terms Clearly.

So, while the instruction -- this kind of relates actually to Christine's question. So, while the instructions for measure ED5A provide a definition of improved academic performance, you can see that here on the slide. This is text from the National Performance Measure Instructions. It's up to the applicant to decide what this should look like in the context of their own program. And improved demonstration of skill or knowledge, which is what you see in the definition here, will look very different for a kindergartener versus a middle school student or for a literacy-focused intervention versus a math-focused intervention.

Performance measures are about telling your story effectively. And because of that, it’s to your advantage as an applicant to spell out the details of what improvement will mean for you? What will it mean for your program and why will this level of change be meaningful for your beneficiaries? If it’s not clear that what you will be measuring in a performance measure is significant, CNCS may ask you to revise the measure or to delete it. So, keep that in mind.

For EduCorps, for our example here, here’s a sample definition provided above. At least 1.1 years of academic growth from the beginning to the end of the school year. Obviously, based on the numbers here, this level both exceeds the expected student growth rate for an academic year. So, it’s clear that this level of change is meaningful. And so, by defining this, I am helping CNCS, the reviewers understand why what you're measuring matters and why CNCS should care about it.

Step 4 is to figure out the member resources that the applicant will allocate to the performance measure. By member resources, I mean the number of members and also the amount of each member's time that is devoted to the intervention that is captured in the performance measure. The portion of member time we express in MSY's, Member Service Years.

So, individual members, individual people can participate in more than one type of service activity. Some members do more than one activity over the course of their service. So, you can count members under more than one performance measure. But the time that members spend can't be double counted. They can't be spending time simultaneously on two different things at once. So, MSY's represent the amount of member time devoted to particular activities and thus, cannot be double counted across different measures.

It’s also important to remember that not all members and not all MSY’s have to be captured under performance measures. They do all have to be assigned to objectives and that happens at an earlier stage of the performance measure creation process. But they do not all have to be assigned to performance measures. And in fact, there's no required minimum percentage for the amount of MSY’s or members that need to be allocated to the performance measures. You’ll hear me say this a lot. I'll say it again. It depends on the program. It depends on the program design, the program’s theory of change, and how the applicant defines their primary service activity.

In the case of our pretend program EduCorps, it’s clear from the program description that all members are participating in the tutoring intervention. As a result, all six members are contributing to the performance measure related to tutoring. However, the description indicates that in addition to tutoring, members are also leading activities related to fitness and nutrition. These interventions are in a completely different focus area, that would be healthy futures rather than education. And they don't connect to this particular performance measure. So, only a portion of members' time -- the program will estimate in this case two-thirds of their time -- is spent on tutoring. So, only two-thirds of the program's total MSY's should be allocated to this performance measure. Per the description, the program has six half-time member sets, three MSY's, so, two-thirds of that is two. So, two MSY's devoted to this measure.

Still have questions about this? I understand. Doing math over a webinar can be challenging. So, if this is not quite clear and you feel like you need more assistance on how to calculate MSY's, how to calculate members, we have help for you -- Appendix A of the National Performance Measure Instructions can help walk you through this in greater detail.

The next step in performance measure development is to set output and outcome targets. These should reflect a realistic but ambitious estimate of what the members who are contributing to this performance measure can accomplish in a single program year. And the targets should also be logically related to each other. For example, in most cases, the target for the outcome should not exceed the output target and that's certainly the case for these education performance measures.

In the case of EduCorps, the applicant estimates that six half-time members devoting two-thirds of their time to tutoring can collectively tutor about 90 students per year. So, that's the target that the program sets for ED1A. Of those 90 students who participate in the program, the applicant estimates that about 60 of those students will be able to meet the definition of improved academic performance. This is 67% if you're doing math of the students who participate, but we are not doing percentages as targets. The targets should be stated as a number, not a percentage. So, the targets are 60 students for the outcome and 90 students for the output.

Now let’s talk about instruments. The next step in a performance measure design is to choose the right instruments to measure the output and the outcome. This comes back to the significant changes in 2019. The National Performance Measures Instructions in 2019 are less prescriptive about the types of instruments that can be used for particular measures. Those of you who have been around will remember that previous measure ED5 -- some of you have referenced that in your questions, in fact -- specifically required programs to use a standardized pre/post-test. The new measure ED5A does not have that specific requirement. ED5A allows programs to choose the instrument that makes the most sense for their program design and for their target population. However -- this is the same however I mentioned earlier -- the selected instrument needs to meet certain requirements. It needs to meet the requirements outlined in the National Performance Measure Instructions. It needs to be able to measure changes in academic performance at the individual beneficiary level that’s specified here in the instructions that you see on the screen. And it needs to be able to collect high-quality data. Programs are responsible to collect data collection instruments that are high-quality and produce valid, reliable, consistent, complete and verifiable data. Which is why in service to this goal, CNCS is still encouraging programs to use pre/post assessments whenever possible. Because we believe that that’s going to help you collect that high-quality, valid, reliable, consistent data.

CNCS is also going to continue to monitor grantees data collection practices to make sure that the required data quality standards are being met. And when I say required standards, I’m talking about the ones that are in the Notice of Funding Opportunity on page 22. So, please make sure to take a look at that.

Let’s pause before we put it altogether for a couple more questions. We’re approaching endpoint here. What else have we got, Samica?4

SUMIKA: Excellent. We have another question from Hope. We have four aligned measures. Is there a benefit to changing three of them to output-only measures?

SARAH: So, again, I can’t comment on particular program designs. What I will say, and this may be me being a broken record again, so forgive me. Propose the measures that make the most sense for you, that make the most sense for your program, for your theory of change, that tell your story the most effectively. You still need to meet the fundamental requirements of at least one aligned measure connected to your primary service activity. That means output and outcome connected to the primary service activity. Beyond that, you tell us what tells your story the most effectively.

SUMIKA: Excellent. We have another question from Patricia. If you only have two-thirds of MSY’s allocated to a performance measure like in the example, do you need another performance measure to account for the remaining MSY’s?

SARAH: You do not. You are not required to have all of your MSY's allocated to performance measures. You are required to allocate all of your MSY's to objectives, but you're not required to put them into performance measures. So, you do not need to put that other one-third of the MSY's into a performance measure unless that program activity, that other one-third of the MSY's, represents a significant program activity where a performance measure would be effective in telling your story and would demonstrate something meaningful to CNCS.

SUMIKA: Those are all the questions for this time.

SARAH: Great. Let's put it altogether in Step 7. The final step is for the applicant to use the e-grants performance measure module to put together the outputs and outcomes they've chosen, the interventions they've selected, the MSY's and members they have allocated, and the instruments they have selected to create an aligned National Performance Measure. And here you see what it might look like in PDF form if you in fact used the e-grants performance measures module to create a performance measure. This would be a sample printout of the completed performance measure. Obviously, it did truncate because the slide is small, but the rest of the outcome measure would be below what you can see here. If you've never used the performance measures module, there is a link on the next slide to a tutorial about how to use the performance measure module.

Which brings us to some additional resources that you have available You see here the link to the 2019 National Performance Measures Instructions. This is a direct link. Obviously, it's very long. You can also find the instructions by going to the main 2019 Notice of Funding Opportunity page and you can link directly from there.

There is also a performance measurement core curriculum, which I can refer you to, that has some elements that are specifically related to performance measurement. You can see performance measurement basics, quality performance measures, and data collection and instruments. Those are all available to you in the link you see is here. It’s on what is called the Knowledge Network. There’s also some webinars related to -- some presentations rather related to theory of change and evidence. If those terms are new to you and you need some help on that, you can find that as well.

And a shameless plug -- there is a webinar on Thursday this week on demonstrating evidence. So, if the word “evidence” strikes fear into your heart, come to the webinar on Thursday and you can learn more about that.

Other resources: as I just mentioned, there is a webinar on -- sorry, a module on how to navigate e-grants performance measures module. That link is listed here as well. And finally on this slide, if you still have questions, I'll answer a few more before our webinar concludes. But if you still have questions that don’t get answered today or if you come up with other questions after you disconnect from the webinar today, you can email them to AmeriCorpsgrants@cns.gov.

So, let's see what other questions we have as we're wrapping up here.

SUMIKA: Currently, we do not have any questions in the queue. But at this time if you want to ask any questions for Sarah, you may type them into the chat box.

SARAH: Okay, super. And I do see that Laura you asked about something I just talked about, which is perfect. That there are in the performance measurement core curriculum, there is a training on theory of change on the Knowledge Network that you are welcome to access. Oh, and Sarah, thank you. Sarah Sadowski, thank you for putting a link up there. That is very helpful.

Well, we've got just a couple of minutes left. So, I will just pause for a moment to see if any other questions are coming in in the queue. I really do encourage you to use that AmeriCorps grants email box for any other questions. And, again, I want to say one more time, just remember that this impacts continuation applicants as well. So, if we have any State Commission representatives on the line here, which I think that we do, please make sure that you are working with your continuation sub-grantees to make these changes in their performance measures, to make sure that the performance measures align with the 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions.

Let’s see, I see a couple of people typing. Let’s see if any other questions come in. I am not seeing any more, so why don’t we go ahead and wrap up and if any other questions come in during the couple of seconds we spend on wrap-up, I'll answer them. But, otherwise, SUMIKA, I’m handing this back to you.

SUMIKA: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Sarah. As we mentioned at the beginning, this webinar is recorded and the slides and the recording will be posted on the 2019 NOFO page within about 10 days. So, also a plug that we have a few more webinars this week. We have one on Creating an Effective Budget, which is on Wednesday at 1 pm and then, as Sarah mentioned, we have one on Evidence-Based Models on Thursday also at 1 pm. So, those links to information on all those webinars can be found on our NOFO page where you can register and, hopefully, you will join us. And one last plug for AmeriCorps Grants to send any questions there regarding performance measures.

SARAH: Okay. Well, thank you all so much for joining. Have a wonderful week and best of luck with the application process. Thank you.

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