

Commission Performance Measures Checklist Tool with Sample Standard Clarification Items

This commission-focused tool is based on the Performance Measures Checklist in the Performance Measures Instructions, Appendix B. Items on the checklist are common problems that require clarification. The tool pairs the checklist with standard clarification language. This tool can be used by commissions to assess performance measures during the review process and to draft clarification/corrective directions for subgrantees.

The checklist is not a comprehensive list of all performance measure items that may require clarification. Refer to the Performance Measure Instructions and NOFO FAQs for full requirements. All standard clarification language is a starting point only; the clarification language will need to be adapted to provide clear direction for a subgrantee’s particular performance measure.

Please note: checklist items in red are not included in the 2017 Performance Measure Instructions Appendix B version of the checklist. These are included as a bonus item for commissions from the 2016 CNCS reviewer tool.

Section 1: Checklist

| Grant Application Review Performance Measure Worksheet | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------|
| | Application ID | | | | | | |
| | Legal Applicant | | | | | | |
| | Program | | | | | | |
| | New or Recompete | | | | | | |
| <i>Complete this worksheet for all performance measures in the application except those you are instructing the applicant to remove during clarification.</i> | | | | | | | |
| | | PM1 | PM2 | PM3 | PM4 | PM5 | Standard Clarification Item # |
| | Alignment with Narrative/TOC | | | | | | |
| 1 | Focus areas, objectives, interventions, outputs and outcomes are consistent with the application narrative, logic model and theory of change. | | | | | | 3, 15 |
| | Interventions | | | | | | |
| 2 | The interventions selected contribute directly to the outputs and outcomes. | | | | | | 16 |
| 3 | Interventions are not repeated in multiple aligned performance measures. | | | | | | 16 |
| | Dosage | | | | | | |

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| 4 | The dosage (frequency, intensity, duration of intervention) is described and is sufficient to achieve outcomes. | | | | | | | 8, 17 |
| Resource Allocation | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | MSY and member allocation charts are consistent with the member activities/time spent on member activities described in the application narrative. | | | | | | | 18 |
| 6 | MSY allocations for performance measures are reasonable. (If it is clear that not all interventions are being measured, then 100% of MSYs should not be allocated to performance measures. CNCS expects an accurate estimate of MSYs that will lead to performance measure outcomes and does not require applicants to measure 100% of program activity or to allocate a certain percentage of activity to National Performance Measures.) | | | | | | | 18 |
| 7 | MSYs are zero for Teacher Corps (ED12, ED13, ED14, ED17, ED18, ED19) and Member Development (O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17) performance measures and any other performance measures that measure member outcomes rather than beneficiary outcomes (EN2, EN2.1, V2, V10). | | | | | | | 2 |
| Selection Rules/Performance Measure Instructions | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Unless the applicant is a continuation, no retired measures (e.g., measures marked deleted or not appearing in the 2015 Performance Measures Instructions) have been selected. | | | | | | | 19 |
| 9 | The applicant has at least 1 aligned performance measure for the primary intervention. | | | | | | | 20 |
| 10 | National Performance Measures conform to selection rules, definitions and data collection requirements specified in the Performance Measure Instructions. (Compliance with definitions and data collection requirements must be clearly explained in the performance measure text boxes or must be clarified.) | | | | | | | Clarification items will be specific to rules/requirements in the measure |
| 11 | Individuals counted in National Performance Measures meet definition of "economically disadvantaged" in the Performance Measure Instructions. (Note: Definitions are different for different performance measures.) | | | | | | | 1 |
| 12 | It is clear that beneficiaries are not double-counted in an aligned performance measure. | | | | | | | 21 |
| 13 | National Performance Measures count beneficiaries, not AmeriCorps members, unless the measure specifies that national service participants are to be counted. | | | | | | | 22 |

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| 14 | The population counted in each National Performance Measure is the population specified in the Performance Measure Instructions. | | | | | | Clarification items will be specific to rules/requirements in the measure |
| 15 | Capacity Building interventions meet the CNCS definition of capacity-building in the Performance Measure Instructions. | | | | | | 3 |
| 16 | Member development measures (O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17) have a 30-day timeline, not the previously acceptable 90-day timeline. | | | | | | 5 |
| 17 | Applicant is not using applicant-determined member development or volunteer generation measures that are the same or similar to National Performance Measures or Grantee Progress Report demographic indicators (e.g., number of volunteers.) | | | | | | 3, 23 |
| 18 | Member development measures (O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17) or volunteer generation measures (G3-3.1, G3-3.2, G3-3.3) are only present if these activities are the primary focus of the program or a significant component of the program's theory of change. | | | | | | 3 |
| Education Selection Rules/Performance Measure Instructions | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Completion is defined for education outputs measuring completion. (ED2, ED4A, ED21, ED32). Note: Dosage and completion are not necessarily the same. The applicant must specify the minimum dosage necessary to be counted as having completed the program, which may or may not be the same dosage specified in the intervention description. | | | | | | 8 |
| 20 | ED1/ED2 and ED3A/ED4A are not used in the same aligned PM. | | | | | | 6 |
| 21 | The mentoring intervention is selected for ED3A/ED4A, and no other interventions are selected for ED3A/ED4A. Mentoring is not selected as an intervention in any education measures other than ED3A/ED4A. | | | | | | 7, 10 |
| 22 | The mentoring dosage meets the dosage requirements described in the Performance Measure Instructions for ED3A/ED4A. | | | | | | 9 |
| 23 | It is clear that the proposed standardized test for ED5 and/or ED30 meets the definition in the Performance Measure Instructions. | | | | | | 11 |
| 24 | If the state standardized test is proposed to measure ED5 and/or ED30, a justification is provided as directed in the Performance Measure Instructions. (Note: Request must be approved by CNCS.) | | | | | | 12 |

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| 25 | If the applicant is measuring multiple subjects under ED5 and/or ED30, it is clear whether/how much students must improve in reading, math or both subjects in order to be counted. | | | | | | 13 |
| 26 | For ED27A or ED27B, the applicant specifies which dimension(s) of academic engagement described in the Performance Measure Instructions will be measured. | | | | | | 14 |
| Alignment & Quality | | | | | | | |
| 27 | Applicant-determined outputs and outcomes are aligned correctly. | | | | | | 24 |
| 28 | Outputs and outcomes clearly identify what is counted. | | | | | | 24 |
| 29 | Each output or outcome counts only one thing (except certain National Performance Measures). | | | | | | 24 |
| 30 | Outcomes clearly identify a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition. (Counts that do not measure a change are outputs and must be labeled as such.) | | | | | | 24 |
| 31 | Outcomes clearly specify the level of improvement necessary to be counted as "improved" and it is clear why this level of improvement is significant for the beneficiary population served. | | | | | | 13 |
| 32 | Outcomes count individual level gains, not average gains for the population served. | | | | | | 24 |
| 33 | Outcomes measure meaningful/significant changes and are aligned with the applicant's theory of change. (Note: Outcomes that do not measure significant changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition should be revised. If the applicant is not able to propose a meaningful outcome, the aligned performance measure should be removed. CNCS prefers that applicants measure a small number of meaningful outcomes rather than a large number of outputs paired with insignificant outcomes.) | | | | | | 24 |
| 34 | Outcomes can be measured during a single grant year. | | | | | | 24 |
| Data Collection/Instruments | | | | | | | |
| 35 | Data collection methods are appropriate. | | | | | | 25, 26 |
| 36 | Instruments are likely to yield high quality data. | | | | | | 26 |
| 37 | The instrument, and what it measures, is clearly described. | | | | | | 26 |
| 38 | If the Performance Measure Instructions specify the instrument to be used, the applicant is using that instrument (e.g., pre/post test). | | | | | | 25 |

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| 39 | The instrument measures the change specified in the outcome. (For example, if the outcome is a change in knowledge, the proposed instrument measures a change in knowledge, not a change in attitude.) | | | | | | 26 |
| 40 | Output instruments are sufficient to count all beneficiaries served and to ensure that individuals are not double-counted. | | | | | | 26 |
| 41 | Outcome instruments will be administered to all beneficiaries receiving the intervention or completing the program. (Note, competitive grantees may propose a sampling plan for CNCS approval if this is not the case. Formula grantees are not permitted to sample.) | | | | | | 27 |
| Pre/Post Test | | | | | | | |
| 42 | If using a pre/post test to measure knowledge gains from training activities, it is clear how the pre/post test is connected to the learning objectives of the training. | | | | | | 26 |
| 43 | The timeline for administering the pre/post test is clear. | | | | | | 28 |
| 44 | If a pre/post test is required by the Performance Measure Instructions, the instrument described is a pre/post test. | | | | | | 25 |
| 45 | The applicant can successfully match pre-test data with post-test data at the individual level. The same instrument must be used for the pre-test and the post-test. | | | | | | 28 |
| Targets | | | | | | | |
| 46 | Target values appear ambitious but realistic/It is clear how targets were set. | | | | | | 29 |
| 47 | Outcome targets are smaller than output targets, with some exceptions (i.e., capacity-building National Performance Measures). Note: In some cases it may be appropriate for the outcome target to be equal to the output target. | | | | | | 30 |
| 48 | The output and outcome targets are reasonably proportional. Note: What constitutes reasonably proportional may depend on what is being counted, how and when. | | | | | | 29 |
| Unit of Measure | | | | | | | |
| 49 | The unit of measure is not AmeriCorps members except in National Performance Measures that count national service participants. | | | | | | 22 |
| 50 | The unit of measure is consistent for all outputs or outcomes in the PM unless otherwise specified in the Performance Measure Instructions. | | | | | | 31 |
| 51 | The unit of measure is not hours. | | | | | | 31 |
| 52 | The unit of measure is a number, not a percent. | | | | | | 31 |
| Sampling (If applicant does not propose sampling, skip this section) | | | | | | | |

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| 53 | If sampling is proposed, the targets represent the total for the population being served, not just the sample. (Note: Formula grantees are not permitted to sample.) | | | | | | 27 |
| 54 | If sampling is proposed, the sampling plan is forwarded to CNCS for consideration. (Note: Formula grantees are not permitted to sample.) | | | | | | 27 |
| Misc. | | | | | | | |
| 55 | The applicant has not opted into National Performance Measures but has the potential to do so. (In this case, clarify why the applicant has not opted into National Performance Measures and, if applicable, direct them to select appropriate National Performance Measures.) | | | | | | 23 |
| 56 | The applicant has not created applicant-determined measures that are identical to National Performance Measures. (Note: This is a common problem that occurs when applicants have not selected the correct objective. Applicants must review the selection rules and choose the correct objectives or the corresponding performance measures will not be available for selection. 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 with the number of a national measure.) | | | | | | 23 |

Section 2: Standard Performance Measure Clarification Items

Each numbered clarification item (below) is connected to specific section(s) of the PM Checklist (above). Commissions may use a tool like this to draft clarification/corrective directions for subgrantee performance measures.

Please note: The checklist is not a comprehensive list of all performance measure items that may require clarification. Refer to the Performance Measure Instructions and NOFO FAQs for full requirements. All standard clarification language is a starting point only; the clarification language will need to be adapted to provide clear direction for a subgrantee's particular performance measure.

1. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please describe how the individuals counted under this measure meet the definition of "economically disadvantaged" as specified in the National Performance Measure Instructions for this particular measure.
2. Please zero out the MSYs and members associated with this performance measure and, if appropriate, re-allocate them to performance measure(s) focused on community impact. Please also ensure that there are zero MSYs and members associated with the Find Opportunity and Teacher Corps objectives (if one or more of those objectives is present) on the MSYs/Members tab of the Performance Measure Module; all MSYs and members must be allocated to community impact objectives.
3. Please remove this measure from the application.
4. Please add one or more aligned performance measures to the application that reflect the community impact of the program.
5. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please confirm that the span of time for which a member will be counted under this measure includes enrollment to 30 days after a member leaves service.
6. Outputs ED1/ED2 and ED3A/ED4A may not be used in the same aligned performance measure. Please remove either ED1/ED2 or ED3A/ED4A from this measure.
7. Mentoring may not be selected as an intervention in any education measures other than ED3A/ED4A. Please remove mentoring from the list of intervention(s) associated with this measure.
8. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please specify the minimum number of days, hours, or other units of participation that will be required in order for an individual to be counted under this measure.
9. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please describe how the individuals counted under this measure will meet the minimum dosage requirements as specified in the National Performance Measure Instructions.
10. The only intervention that may be selected for measures ED3A/ED4A is mentoring. Please ensure that mentoring is selected and remove any other interventions associated with this measure.
11. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please describe how the proposed instrument(s) meet the definition and criteria for a standardized test as specified in the National Performance Measure Instructions: (1) measures the types of student skills/knowledge

- the program is trying to improve through its efforts, (2) is appropriate for the grade level, (3) has demonstrated validity or reliability for the population they are serving, and (4) is compatible with, and acceptable to, the school where the program is providing services.
12. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please provide a justification for the use of the state standardized test to measure this outcome, including how the test is sufficiently tailored to the material taught, how the timeline for obtaining test data will meet national service reporting requirements, and why gains in the test are likely to be attributable, in part or in whole, to the efforts of national service participants.
 13. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please specify the level of gain/amount of improvement that will be required in order for an individual to be counted under this measure. Please also provide a justification for why this level of gain/improvement is significant.
 14. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please specify which dimension(s) of academic engagement described in the Performance Measure Instructions will be measured.
 15. Please remove objective [X] from the Objectives tab of the Performance Measure Module and re-allocate any MSYs and members currently associated with this objective to other objective(s). Please also remove any performance measure(s) associated with this objective.
 16. Please remove intervention [X] from this performance measure.
 17. In the Describe Interventions section of the measure, please provide a justification for how the dosage (frequency, intensity, and duration) of the intervention will be sufficient to achieve the proposed outcome(s).
 18. Please adjust the MSY and member allocations for the objectives and/or performance measures to more accurately reflect the member activities/time spent on member activities as described in the application narrative.
 19. National Performance Measure [X] has been retired and is not listed in the 2016 Performance Measure Instructions. Please remove this measure from the application.
 20. Please add one or more aligned performance measures to the application that are associated with the primary service intervention.
 21. In the Described Instruments section of the measure, please describe how the program will ensure that individuals are not double-counted under this measure.
 22. The individuals counted under this measure must be community beneficiaries, not AmeriCorps members. Please revise the measure accordingly.
 23. This measure duplicates one or more National Performance Measures. Please remove this measure from the application and replace it with National Performance Measure(s) [X].
 24. Please remove the current outcome measure and replace it with an outcome that [select the relevant missing characteristic(s)]: is aligned with the output; clearly identifies what is counted and counts only one thing; reflects a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior,

- or condition; has the same unit of measure as the output; counts individual level gains, not average gains for the population served; measures meaningful/significant changes that are aligned with the Theory of Change; can be measured during a single grant year.
25. Per the National Performance Measure Instructions, this measure requires the use of [specify the required instrument]. Please revise the "Measured By" field to reflect the required instrument, and provide details about the specific instrument the program will use in the Described Instrument section.
 26. Please remove the current instrument and replace it with an instrument that [select the relevant missing characteristic(s)]: is likely to yield high quality data; clearly indicates what will be measured; measures the change specified in the outcome; is sufficient to count all beneficiaries served; ensures that individuals are not double-counted. Provide a detailed description of the instrument in the Described Instrument section of the measure.
 27. It appears that the program is proposing to use sampling to measure this output/outcome. In the Clarification narrative, please provide a detailed sampling plan that describes how the program will ensure that the sample is representative of the full population being served. Please also ensure that the targets set for the measure in the application reflect the full population of beneficiaries that the program intends to serve, not just the sample.
 28. In the Described Instrument section of the measure, please describe the timing of the pre- and post-assessments and ensure that the timeline meets any applicable requirements specified in the National Performance Measure Instructions. Please also ensure that the same instrument is used for both the pre- and post-assessments, and that the pre-assessment data can be matched with the post-assessment data for each individual assessed.
 29. Please provide a justification for the size of the target set for this output/outcome, explaining clearly how the target is ambitious but realistic for the proposed intervention and appropriately reflects the amount of MSY dedicated to the intervention.
 30. Please revise your outcome target so that it is equal to or less than the output target.
 31. Please revise the unit of measure for the output/outcome to ensure that it is [select the relevant missing characteristic(s)]: consistent for all outputs and outcomes in the performance measure; expressed as a whole number, not a percentage; not hours.