

AmeriCorps National Measures Pilot Year 2: 2011-2012 Outcome Instrument Packet

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, ACQUIRING A GED AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Programs that choose to measure outputs Education ED1-ED2 or Education ED3A-ED4A must choose and measure at least one of eight national outcome performance measures. Below are three of the national outcome performance measures programs can choose; or they can choose one or more of five other education national outcome performance measures. See other education outcome instrument packets for information on the other five measures.

Education Focus Area

National Performance Measures: <i>You can choose one or more of these outcomes for your national education outcome performance measures.</i>
Outcome: Number of unduplicated students graduating from high school on time with a diploma (ED9).
Outcome: Number of unduplicated students acquiring a GED (ED26)
Outcome: Number of unduplicated students entering post-secondary institutions (ED10).

Definition of Key Terms¹

- **Students and Youth:** those unduplicated students and youth that were reported in ED2 and/or ED4A: students enrolled in grades K-12 that completed participation in an AmeriCorps education program (ED2); and youth that were mentored through the AmeriCorps program for at least the required time period (ED4A).
- **Graduating on time** is to graduate within four years
- **Post-secondary institutions** may include two-year and four-year colleges.
- **Entering post secondary-institutions** means matriculating as a full-time or part-time student.
- **GED** is referred to as the General Educational Development (also General Education Diploma, General Equivalency Diploma, or Graduate Equivalency Degree) and consists of a group of five subject tests which, when passed, certify that the taker has high school-level academic skills. For additional information from the GED Testing Service <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/index.htm>
- **GED Participants**, as defined for this national measure (ED26), are youth, 18 and under who are out of school, do not have a high school diploma, and are participating in a GED program.

¹ 2011 National Performance Measures: Background Information References and Authorities, Definitions, Suggestions Regarding Data Collection, and Additional Notes, CNCS:

http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/11_1018_ameri_corps_nofa_background_document.pdf

Considerations for these National Performance Measures²

- Will you be measuring one or more of these outcomes for students who were counted as completing your education program (ED2) and/or completing your mentoring program (ED4A)?

ED9: Graduating High School

- This measure is best suited for AmeriCorps programs that primarily serve 11th and 12th graders and whose objective is to promote timely high school graduation. Is this a primary objective of your education or mentoring program? Are most of your participants in this grade range?
- Can you establish a reasonable baseline or identify an appropriate “comparison” group consisting of the same population you plan to serve? For example, what is the typical high school graduation rate of the population you intend to serve? The youth served in your program should have a higher rate of on-time high school graduation than this group.
- Will you be able to set a “reach” target, the minimum anticipated percent of students participating in your education or mentoring program who you hope will graduate from high school on time? Will the target percentage you set represent an ambitious but realistic challenge for your program?

ED26: Acquiring a GED

- This measure is best suited for AmeriCorps programs that primarily serve youth who qualify to take the GED test, that is, those who are not enrolled in school (check age qualifications and parent permission in your state) and whose objective is to promote the acquisition of the GED certificate. Are the primary beneficiaries of your education or mentoring program 16-18 year old youth?
- Does your services focus on helping the beneficiaries successfully prepare for the GED tests and/or acquire their GED?
- Can you establish a reasonable baseline or identify an appropriate “comparison” group that is similar to the participants in your program? For example, what is the typical GED completion rate for the population you intend to serve? Those served in your program should have a higher rate of GED completion than this group.
- Will you be able to set a “reach” target, the minimum anticipated percent of students participating in your education or mentoring program who you hope will obtain a GED? Will the target percentage you set represent an ambitious but realistic challenge for your program?

ED10: Entering Post-Secondary Institutions

- This measure is best suited for AmeriCorps programs that focus on preparing high school students for college. Is this a primary objective of your education or mentoring program? Are most of your participants in high school?
- Can you establish a reasonable baseline or identify an appropriate “comparison” group consisting of the population you plan to serve and who enter post-secondary institutions?

² For more on alignment of performance measures, see the AmeriCorps Toolkit:
<http://nationalserviceresources.org/star/ac-program-toolkit>.

Can you find out what is the typical post-secondary school enrollment rate of the population you intend to serve? The youth served in your program should attain a higher rate of post-secondary school enrollment than this group after participating in your program.

- Will you be able to set a “reach” target, the minimum anticipated percent of students participating in your education or mentoring program who you hope will enter a post-secondary institution? Will the target percentage you set represent an ambitious but realistic challenge for your program?

Data Collection Challenges

- Will you be able to track unduplicated student participants who complete participation in your education program and/or mentoring program in a timely fashion? Can you aggregate and report the graduation data from the high schools (ED9), GED acquisition data (ED26), or enrollment data from post-secondary education institutions (ED10) by your deadline?
- After using the data collection instruments to document outcomes, do you have a safe place to store these documents? These “raw data” will provide evidence that you collected the data in a systematic manner and will verify the results reported.

ED9: Graduating High School

- Will you be able to obtain graduation records on individual students from the high schools or from the students? Have you resolved any confidentiality issues so that you can obtain data on individual students?
- Will you be able to obtain high school records for student participants who complete your education and/or mentoring programs prior to 12th grade,(or those who complete your program and then transfer to another school), to see if they graduated high school on time?

ED26: Acquiring a GED

- Will you be able to confirm that student participants obtained a GED credential or certificate? Have you resolved any confidentiality issues with the student participants in order to be able to request GED certificate data from individual students?
- Will you be able to obtain this information during your program year? For instance, can the student participants complete your GED preparation program and take the GED tests before the program year ends?

ED10: Entering Post-Secondary Institutions

- Will you be able to obtain documentation (official school records) for individual students that have enrolled in a post-secondary institution? Have you resolved any confidentiality issues with the educational institutions so that you can obtain data on individual students? Do you know how many and from which institutions you will need to request data? Can you get enrollment records from the students?
- If you are not able to get documentation, you will need to ask participants about their enrollment. Will you be able to find former education program participants and/or mentoring program participants to ask them about their enrollment?

- How long will you be able to track former participants after they complete the education program or mentoring program to see if they have enrolled in college? For example, if a student graduates from high school but does not enroll in college until the following year, will that student count toward meeting the outcome target? Will you be able to track students over this time period?

Data Collection Strategies

- Consider developing your instrument in an Excel spreadsheet, or at least transferring your data to an Excel spreadsheet. This will allow you to add new students and “sort” your list so that it remains in alphabetical order, and you can easily check to see if a student has already been counted (listed in your spreadsheet). You can also add columns to track other types of data not included in the instrument.
- Determine in advance what data you need from the students, schools or universities, whether you can get the data from the schools or universities, and how much time the schools will need to pull together information you request.
- If your program has not done so, work out a system with the schools and universities to address confidentiality issues around student data. For example, requesting data using student identification numbers rather than names may be acceptable.
- Consider using an Excel spreadsheet which allows easy counts and the ability to sort the names and identify duplicate entries.

ED9: Graduating High School

- Consider how you will get data (i.e., graduates from high school) on students who have transferred to another high school after completing your education or mentoring program but before graduating. If high schools are in the same district, this may not be difficult; however, tracking students that leave the area will be more difficult.

ED26: Acquiring a GED

- Consider how you will get data from students who may retake one or more of the five tests again. Some areas may require the student to wait several months or show proof of attending a preparation course before the student is permitted to re-test.

ED10: Entering Post-Secondary Institutions

- Obtain phone/address/email information from student participants completing your education and/or mentoring program and two other friend or family contacts so you can find them in the future to determine if they enter a post-secondary institution. Keep in mind that they may leave the area after graduation.
- If you need to distribute surveys to former participants, give yourself at least two months to collect this data, including following up with people who do not respond to the first request.

Sample Instruments in this Packet

Participant Follow-up Survey Questions (ED10)

This instrument determines if students enroll in a post-secondary institution after having participated in your education or mentoring program. The survey asks if the student is currently enrolled, full/part time status, and the type of institution. Additional questions will provide information on the name of the institution and date when the student started his/her first semester of school. Participants are also asked how many units they are taking to verify if they are full-time or part-time students. If students are not yet enrolled in a post-secondary institution, the survey asks whether they plan to enroll the next year.

Additional, optional questions programs may want to ask:

- Are you currently a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior?
- When do you expect to graduate?
- What is your major? What type of degree are you working toward?
- How has the AmeriCorps program helped you get into this institution?

Student Summary Tracking Log (ED9, ED26 and/or ED10)

This instrument can be used to track the number of students that graduate from high school (ED9), acquire a GED certificate (ED26) and enter post-secondary institutions (ED10). If you are only using one of these measures, you do not need to add information for the other measure in this “Student Summary Tracking Log”.

- This log collects outcome data on individual students that completed an AmeriCorps education program and/or mentoring program as listed under the national output performance measure ED2 or ED4A. You are encouraged to develop an Excel spreadsheet to combine output and outcome data, and use the spreadsheet to document unduplicated participants.
- “Date student completed education or mentoring program” tells you how long it has been since the student finished the education or mentoring program; you will need to decide how long to track students to find out whether they met the expected outcomes.
- To track whether the student received a high school diploma on time (ED9), the log asks for the date the student completed the program, the grade level at the time of completion, and the expected high school graduation date. “Grade level” and “expected high school graduation date” tell you when the student will be ready to graduate from high school and enroll in a post-secondary institution.
- To track whether the student acquired a GED (ED26), the identify the date the student is expected to take the GED tests and whether the student has met the outcome and acquired a GED. You will need to confirm that the student has passed all five tests and received a GED certificate or credential.
- In addition to tracking whether the student entered a post-secondary institution (ED10), the log asks you for some information verifying enrollment: the first semester of the student’s enrollment, and the type and date of the documentation you collected (self report or records).

**Education Services:
High School Graduation, GED Acquisition and
College Enrollment**

Sample Instruments:

Participant Follow-Up Survey (ED10)

**Student Summary Tracking Log
(ED9, ED26 and ED10)**

Participant Follow-up Survey Questions (ED10)

Instructions

What is the purpose?	To determine how many students participating in your education or mentoring program enter a post-secondary institution (ED10). It is preferable to obtain official school records of institutional enrollment; however, if this is not possible, a follow-up survey is an acceptable method for collecting this information.
Who should complete this instrument?	Participants that have completed the education or mentoring program (counted in ED2 and/or ED4A) and graduated from high school.
When should we complete this instrument?	After students have completed participation in your education or mentor program, graduated from high school, and had enough time to enroll in a post-secondary institution (You can track students to determine enrollment in a post-secondary institution through your three-year AmeriCorps grant cycle.)
What should we do to prepare?	Modify the survey questions as needed (i.e. check for appropriate language and accuracy of terms) and add any other information your program may need to measure impact. Decide how you would like to administer the survey and how you would like the participants to return the survey. You can email the survey, develop an online survey, mail a hard copy with a stamped self-addressed envelope, distribute it to participants in person, or conduct an interview (e.g., phone interview, face-to-face interview). Provide a description and instructions at the beginning of this survey by including an explanation about the purpose of the survey, how the data will be used, if responses are confidential, and who the participant can contact if they have questions. Provide instructions on how and when to return the survey. If you are interviewing participants, you will also need to train interviewers in advance so they are prepared to ask questions correctly, record responses accurately, and answer questions consistently. ³
What should we do afterwards?	You may need to follow-up with some respondents to clarify answers. Keep follow-up surveys in a safe place; these are your data . You will aggregate these data later to determine if you met your outcome target.
Can I use an alternative instrument?	Different forms and methods can be used to survey participants. For example, if you already have a survey you use to collect feedback from participants, consider adding these questions to save time and resources. However, whether the survey is collected in paper format or electronic format, remember to save these “raw” data as proof that a systematic process was used to document the outcome.

³ For more on data collection methods, see Project STAR resources: <http://nationalserviceresources.org/star/ac-steps-collection>.

Participant Follow-up Survey Questions

(ED10)

You should first try and obtain official records to show that the students enrolled in a post-secondary institution (e.g., college acceptance letter). However, if this is not possible, then self-report surveys can be administered.

Questions to ask for a Self-Report Survey

Below are questions to ask participants that have completed the education or mentoring program (participants counted in ED2 and/or ED4A) and graduated from high school.

Note: In question #2, if the respondent answers "other, check the explanation to determine whether the response allows you to count the participant as "entering a post-secondary institution." You may need to follow-up with the respondent to clarify answers.

1. Are you currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution (e.g., college, university)?

a. Yes (continue to 2.)

b. No (answer 1b.)

1b. If no, do you plan to enroll in a post-secondary institution in the next year?

a. Yes. University/college name: _____ (Stop)

b. No (Stop)

2. What type of institution are you currently enrolled in?

a. 2 year Community College

b. 4 year Public College or University

c. 4 year Private College or University

d. Other (explain): _____

3. What is the name and location of the institution where you are enrolled?

Name: _____

Address: _____

4. What is/was your first semester as a student at this institution (e.g. Fall 2012)? _____

5. Are you currently enrolled as a full time or part time student?

a. Full Time (number of units you are taking this semester: ____)

b. Part Time (number of units you are taking this semester: ____)

Student Summary Tracking Log (ED9, ED26 and ED10)

Instructions

What is the purpose?	To determine how many students that completed education services graduated from high school on time (ED9), acquired a GED (ED26) and/or entered a post-secondary institution (ED10).
Who should complete this instrument?	Project Director or designee should complete the instrument.
When should we complete this instrument?	As students graduate from high school on time, acquire their GED certificate and/or are accepted into a post-secondary institution.
What should we do to prepare?	<p>Enter the names of students who completed the education program (ED2) or the mentoring program (ED4A) and expected dates for graduation or GED test, if applicable.</p> <p>You may want to add a column for another student identifier, such as birth date or address, if you are tracking large numbers of students.</p> <p>Depending on which measures you are tracking, you may want to omit the measure columns that are not pertinent to your program outcome.</p> <p>*Recommended: If you are tracking students for both ED2 (students that completed a tutoring/academic support program) and ED4A (students that completed a mentoring program), use separate logs. This will allow you to compare results for each program more easily and make decisions about where improvement could occur.</p>
What should we do afterwards?	Keep a copy of "Student Summary Tracking Logs" in a safe place; these are your data . You will aggregate these data later to determine if you met your outcome targets.
Can I use an alternative instrument?	Different forms can be developed/used to document unduplicated students that graduated high school, acquired a GED and/or were accepted into a post-secondary institution. For example, a spreadsheet format allows you to easily add columns and rows to track additional data (e.g. the type of degree that students are working toward), and track data over time such as student status at college (continuing full time, part time, graduating). However, whether your instrument is in paper format or electronic format, remember to save these "raw" data as proof that a systematic process was used to document the outcomes.

Student Summary Tracking Log

Education Program: _____ **School Year:** _____

Students received this service (check one): Tutoring/Academic Support (ED2) Mentoring Support (ED4A)

Person completing this Log: _____

Instructions: List the students that completed your education or mentoring program (student list in ED2 or ED4A), the date they completed the program, and grade level at the time of completion, if applicable. For ED9: Enter the student’s expected high school graduation date and as students’ graduate from high school on time, enter a “1” in the column after the date of graduation. ED26: In the columns under GED ACQUISITION, as students receive their GED certificate, enter a “1” in the column after the expected date of the GED tests. ED10: As students are accepted into a post-secondary school, enter a “1” in the first column under POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION. Note the date of the first semester they will start. Also note whether the data you collected to determine enrollment is a self-report, “S” (participant survey), or an official document confirming enrollment, “E”, and the date of the self report or document.

STUDENT (1)		HIGH SCHOOL (ED9)				GED ACQUISITION (ED26)		POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION (2) (ED10)			
Last Name	First Name	Date completed education or mentoring program	Grade level at time of program completion	Expected date high school graduation	Enter “1” if received high school diploma	Expected date GED tests	Enter “1” if received GED certificate	Enter “1” if accepted into post-secondary institution	First semester of enrollment date	Data: Self Report (S) or Enrollment Document (E)	Date of self report or enrollment document
Example: Smith	John	5/20/10	12	6/10/10	1			1	Fall 2010	E	7/1/10
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.	<i>add rows</i>										

Notes:

(1) List students that completed an education or mentoring program (students tracked in ED2 and ED4A).

(2) May include 2- or 4-year colleges. Student must be enrolled as a full or part time student.

Totals:

Outcome (ED9): Number of unduplicated students participating in your program that graduated high school on time with a diploma: ____#

Outcome (ED26): Number of unduplicated students participating in your program that acquire a GED certificate: ____#

Outcome (ED10): Number of unduplicated students in your program that entered post-secondary institutions: ____#