

# Orientation II: Selection Criteria and Assessment Process



*2014 justice AmeriCorps Reviewer Training*

# Topics

- ◆ Overview of the Review Process and Selection Criteria
  - Timeline, Reviewer Roles, Individual Review Form, Reviewer Handbook
- ◆ Selection Criteria
  - Rationale and Approach/Program Design
    - Assessing Need, Theory of Change, and Logic Model
    - Program Design, Member Activities, and Evidence Base
    - Member Training and Supervision
  - Organizational Capability
  - CNCS Reviewer-Specific Selection Criteria
- ◆ Reviewer Feedback - Strengths/Weaknesses
- ◆ Summary and Key Considerations

# Timeline & Reviewer Roles

- ◆ **Review Timeline: July 29th to August 7th**
- ◆ **Federal Staff Reviewers:**
  - CNCS Staff Reviewers
  - Department of Justice (DOJ) Staff Reviewers
- ◆ **External Reviewers**
- ◆ **All Reviewers will assess the following sections:**
  - Logic Model Completeness
  - Rationale & Approach/Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Performance Measures and Performance Indicator\*
  - Funding Considerations\*

# Timeline & Reviewer Roles (cont'd)

- ◆ All reviewers draft strength/weakness feedback statements and clarification items
- ◆ IRF is designed to make it clear which reviewer completes which sections
  - ***Make sure to select the proper role on the top of the form***

# For CNCS Staff Reviewers ONLY

- ◆ Review AmeriCorps specific components within Rationale & Approach/Program Design, Organizational Capability, Cost Effectiveness/Budget Adequacy, and Grant and Strategic Characteristics
- ◆ Assess Priority Tier, Performance Measures, and whether the applicant submitted required additional documents
- ◆ Provide AmeriCorps specific context and information during panel discussions
- ◆ Additional logistical responsibilities
  - Submit IRFs for panel into designated CNCS folder
  - Enter required information into eGrants

# Individual Review Form (IRF)

2014 justice AmeriCorps Individual Review Form	
Complete the form according to the Application Review Guide and instructions for each cell. DO NOT copy and paste into the form. Note: All white fields must be completed; shaded fields are not required or not editable.	
APPLICATION OVERVIEW	
A. Reviewer Type	CNCS Reviewer
B. Reviewer Name	
C. Panel Number	
D. 2014 Application ID	
E. Legal Applicant	
F. Program Name	
G. Previous Grantee Status	
H. State	
I. Type of Grant	
LOGIC MODEL COMPLETENESS (Assessed by choosing yes or no for each indicator. Do not assess quality of the information here.)	
a. Logic model depicts number of locations or sites where members are providing services.	
b. Logic model depicts the number of members that will be delivering the intervention (identifying the specific number of lawyers and paralegals the applicant proposes to enroll).	
c. Logic model depicts the core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will be implementing or delivering, such as representation in Immigration Proceedings; screening for abuse, trafficking, and trauma; and referral to appropriate authorities and/or support services to	
d. Logic model depicts duration of the intervention.	
e. Logic model depicts dosage of the intervention.	
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
1. Executive Summary	
2. RATIONALE & APPROACH/PROGRAM DESIGN	
2a. Problem/Need	
2a.i Standard: The applicant indicates the court location(s) they propose to serve and describes the relevant community needs that AmeriCorps members will be addressing.	
2a.ii Standard: The applicant cites specific, relevant data to document the need, such as inadequacy of pro bono or low cost legal services -- as well as additional support services for Unaccompanied children - available in the area.	
2b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems, Evidence and Measurable Community Impact	
Theory of Change & Logic Model	
2b.i Standard: The intervention is an effective way to address the problem/need identified by the applicant.	
2b.ii Standard: The theory of change is described consistently in the logic model and application narrative.	
2b.iii Standard: The inputs, activities and outputs are logically aligned.	
2b.iv Standard: The outcomes identified in the logic model are logically aligned with the problem/need and intervention.	
2b.v Standard: The theory of change and logic model cover comprehensively the applicant's entire program (i.e. no significant aspects of the program design are left out.)	
2b.vi Standard: The performance measures are aligned with the theory of change/logic model.	
2b.vii Standard: The performance measures represent significant program activities. (If not, do not review the PM; instruct the applicant to delete it during clarification.)	
Evidence Quality (Reference External and R&E Assessments) Note: For preliminary, moderate or strong evidence level, if any of the four below quality indicators is rated unsatisfactory, the evidence level (found on Evidence tab) will drop down to the next lowest level. Quality indicators are not applicable to the pre-preliminary and no evidence levels and will not be assessed for those levels; choose "Not Applicable."	

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SUBMIT  
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SUBMITTED  
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# Individual Reviewer Form (cont.)

- ◆ Excel form with cells that either have option for narrative or drop-down selections
- ◆ Use the descriptions of standards and considerations for the Selection Criteria in the Reviewer Handbook to complete the IRF
- ◆ Follow submission instructions in the Handbook
  - Different for CNCS Reviewers, and DOJ and External Reviewers
- ◆ Complete one IRF per application
- ◆ Work from a template saved on your computer (not the one on the Reviewer Resource Webpage)

# Review Rubric

- ◆ Three types of ratings:
  - Five-rating option
  - Three-rating option
  - Two-rating option
    - Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
    - Yes/No
  
- ◆ Descriptions of the Rubric can be found:
  - Within the Reviewer Handbook
  - On the Reviewer Resource Webpage
  - Within the IRF on Tab 3

# Important Considerations Specific to justice AmeriCorps

- ◆ Review the important considerations specific to this competition in the Guide (after the Selection Rubric section) to help with your assessment of program design and member activities
  - Includes definitions of important concepts

# Logic Model Completeness

# What is a Logic Model?

- ◆ A visual summary or snapshot that communicates how a program works, the resources they have to operate their program, the activities they plan, and the outcomes they hope to achieve
- ◆ The purpose of a Logic Model is to describe how a program will create change

# Applicant Logic Models

- ◆ Inputs – Resources, including AmeriCorps members
- ◆ Activities (Interventions)
- ◆ Outputs (Beneficiaries, other products of program services)
- ◆ Outcomes
  - Short Term (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Opinions)
  - Medium Term (Behavior)
  - Long-Term (Condition)

# Key Points

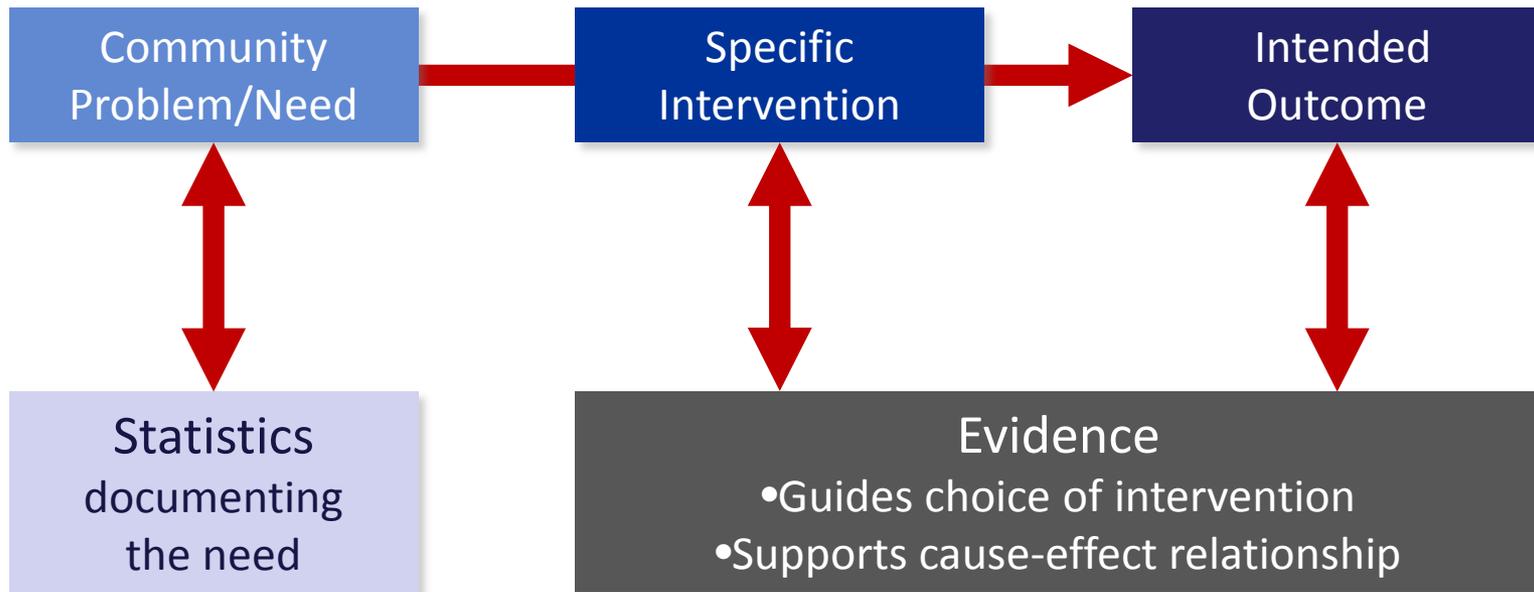
- ◆ The Logic Model and narrative work together to depict the program's Theory of Change
- ◆ All the information in one doesn't have to be in the other, as long as the two are aligned
- ◆ The Logic Model is simply a visual representation of the Theory of Change and program design
- ◆ Applicants do not measure all outcomes in Theory of Change; they continue to measure outcomes that make sense for their program
- ◆ CNCS provided a template for the applicants' Logic Models

# Completeness

- ◆ Number of locations or sites in which members would be providing legal services to Unaccompanied Children
- ◆ Number of AmeriCorps members that will be delivering the intervention
- ◆ Duration of the intervention
- ◆ Dosage of the intervention
- ◆ Core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will be implementing or delivering
- ◆ Available resources to support the intervention

# Rationale & Approach/Program Design

# Theory of Change Elements



# Quality of Theory of Change

## **Problem**

- ◆ The community problem/need is prevalent and severe in the communities where members serve
- ◆ The applicant cites specific, relevant data to document the need

## **Intervention**

- ◆ The intervention is an effective way to address the problem/need identified by the applicant

## **Outcomes**

- ◆ The outcomes identified in the Logic Model are logically aligned with the problem/need and intervention

# Problem/Need

- ◆ *2a.i Standard: The community problem/need is prevalent and severe in the communities where members will serve. The applicant indicates the court location(s) they propose to serve and describes the relevant community needs that AmeriCorps members will be addressing.*
- ◆ *2a.ii Standard: The applicant cites specific, relevant data to document the need, such as inadequacy of pro bono or low cost legal services, as well as additional support services for Unaccompanied children, available in the area.*

# Assessing Theory of Change and Logic Model

- ◆ *2.b.i Standard: The intervention is an effective way to address the problem/need identified by the applicant.*
- ◆ *2.b.ii Standard: The theory of change is described consistently in the logic model and application narrative.*
- ◆ *2.b.iii Standard: The inputs, activities and outcomes are logically aligned (identifying the specific number of lawyers and paralegals the applicant proposes to enroll).*
- ◆ *2.b.iv Standard: The outcomes identified in the logic model are logically aligned with the problem/need and intervention.*

# Assessing Theory of Change and Logic Model (cont.)

- ◆ *2.b.v Standard: The theory of change and logic model cover comprehensively the applicant's entire program (i.e. no significant aspects of the program design are left out.)*
- ◆ *2.b.vi Standard: The performance measures are aligned with the theory of change/logic model.*
- ◆ *2.b.vii Standard: The performance measures represent significant program activities. (If not, do not review the performance measure; instruct the applicant to delete it during clarification.)*

# Evidence

- ◆ The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) identifies levels of evidence
- ◆ Applicants are assigned a level of evidence based on:
  - Number of studies
  - Type of studies
  - Whether evidence is from the applicant's program or a similar program
  - Combinations described in NOFO
  - Additional quality considerations

# Evaluation Study Designs & Causal Impact

<b>Evaluation Study Designs</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Ability to make statements about causal attribution</b>
<b>Experimental Design Studies</b>	<b>Randomly Assigned Groups</b>	
<b>Quasi-Experimental Design Studies</b>	<b>Statistically Matched Groups</b>	
<b>Non-Experimental Design Studies</b>	<b>Not Statistically Matched Groups or Group Compared to Itself</b>	

# Levels of Evidence

- ◆ Pre-Preliminary Evidence
- ◆ Preliminary Evidence
- ◆ Moderate Evidence
- ◆ Strong Evidence

# Pre-Preliminary Evidence

## **Evidence does not support conclusions about contribution to observed outcomes**

- ◆ Applicant presents a description of the evidence from the literature
  - OR quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience regarding the use of culturally competent and trauma-informed interventions with children and youth.
- ◆ An example could be gathering feedback from program participants or beneficiaries following their experience of such interventions.

# Preliminary Evidence

- ◆ Applicant presents a description of the evidence from the literature
  - OR quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience that can support conclusions about the impact of culturally competent and trauma-informed care on a program's observed outcomes.
- ◆ Consists of at least 1 non-experimental study conducted on the culturally competent and trauma-informed care.
  - A study that demonstrates improvement in program participants over time on one or more intended outcomes or an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations would constitute preliminary evidence.
- ◆ Examples of research that meet the standards include:
  - 1) outcome studies that track program participants through a service pipeline and measure participants' responses at the end of the program; and
  - 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether participants have improved on an intended outcome.

# Moderate Evidence

- ◆ Applicant presents a description of the evidence from the literature
  - OR quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience that can support causal conclusions that culturally competent and trauma-informed care improved participant outcomes **with moderate confidence**.
- ◆ Consists of 1 or more quasi-experimental studies of interventions using culturally competent and trauma-informed care with positive findings on one or more intended outcome
  - OR 2 or more non-experimental studies conducted on interventions using culturally competent and trauma-informed care with positive findings on one or more intended outcome
  - OR 1 or more experimental studies of another relevant program using culturally competent and trauma-informed care.

# Moderate Evidence (cont.)

- ◆ Examples of research that meet the standards include:
  - ◆ Well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies that compare outcomes between the group receiving the intervention featuring culturally competent and trauma-informed care and a matched comparison group (i.e. a similar population that does not receive the intervention).

# Strong Evidence

- ◆ Applicant presents a description of the evidence from the literature
  - OR quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience that can support causal conclusions that culturally competent and trauma-informed care improved participant outcomes **with the highest level of confidence.**
- ◆ Consists of 1 or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on an intervention using culturally competent and trauma-informed care with positive findings on one or more intended outcome.

## AND

- ◆ The applicant was rated satisfactory on all four quality of evidence standards

# Assessing Evidence

- ◆ **Step 1:** Make an initial assessment of the level of evidence using the levels described in the NOFO (use Evidence tab in IRF).
- ◆ **Step 2:** Assess quality indicators found on the SRW as 2b.viii – 2b.xi.
- ◆ **Step 3:** Re-assess the level of evidence based on quality indicators. If any quality indicator was rated unsatisfactory, you must drop your initial assessment down one level.
  - Make your final assessment in the IRF-2b.xii.
- ◆ Rely only on what is in the application – Do not look up additional information

# Ratings for Quality Indicators

## **Satisfactory**

Response meets all or most aspects of the standard. Overall quality of the response is at least satisfactory.

## **Unsatisfactory**

Response is low-quality and neglects to satisfactorily address more than one aspect of the standard. Overall quality of the response is lacking with room for assumption in key aspects.

# Alignment of Models

- ◆ The program model(s) studied is the same or nearly the same as the model the applicant will implement, in a similar context with similar target beneficiaries or entities.

# Methodological Quality

- ◆ The study or studies used rigorous and appropriate research methodologies given the design (e.g. non-experimental, quasi-experimental, experimental)
  - using high quality data, sufficient sample size/statistical power, and a representative sample to identify effects
- ◆ The study or studies exhibited internal validity
  - i.e. any effects identified can be reasonably attributed to the program model given the methodological limitations

# Recency

- ◆ Studies conducted within the past six years are considered satisfactory.
  - For studies older than six years, a “satisfactory” Rating may be given if there is reasonable confidence that the relevant conditions in which the program operated when studied are the same or similar as the conditions in which the applicant’s program will be operating.

# Strength of Findings

- ◆ The findings from the study or studies indicate with confidence that the program model under study had at least one positive and significant effect on target beneficiaries or entities. “Significant” means the results were statistically significant, for example at the 95% confidence level (or  $p < .05$ ).

# Member Training

- ◆ *2c.i Standard: Members will be adequately trained to provide legal services focused on immigration law. The applicant describes any additional, supplemental training that will facilitate the successful delivery of legal services to Unaccompanied Children, both before and after the national training.*
- ◆ *2c.ii Standard: Members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules regarding prohibited activities.*

# Member Supervision

- ◆ *2d.i Standard: Members will receive adequate guidance and support from their supervisor/s.*
- ◆ *2d.ii. Standard: Supervision structure will ensure that members are not engaged in prohibited activities.*
- ◆ *2d.iii. Standard: Supervisors will be trained and prepared to adequately manage the program, provide guidance and supervision to AmeriCorps members, and oversee the work of AmeriCorps members as they appear in Immigration Proceedings.*

# For CNCS Staff Reviewers ONLY

## ◆ Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

- Program participants will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- Communities will know that members are serving in AmeriCorps.
- Members will wear the AmeriCorps logo daily.
- Members will be adequately prepared to speak about their experiences to members of the community.

# Organizational Capability

# Organizational Background and Staffing

- ◆ *3a.i Standard: The organization has the experience, staffing and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program. The organization has adequate experience to implement a program providing legal support with Immigration Proceedings to Unaccompanied Children and demonstrates ability to launch and scale new initiatives.*
- ◆ *3a.ii: The organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal funds.*

# Organizational Background and Staffing (cont.)

- ◆ *3a.iii Standard: The organization has the capacity to address a 20% fluctuation in the number of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court locations in which the Grantee proposes to operate during the first year of the Program.*
- ◆ *3a.iv Standard: The organization has the capacity to scale up its operations in the second and third years if needed.*
- ◆ *3a.v Standard: The organizational chart is consistent with the narrative.*

# For CNCS Staff Reviewers ONLY

- ◆ Compliance and Accountability, Past Performance, and Continuous Improvement
  - These aspects are reviewed only by CNCS Reviewers
  - Pertain to AmeriCorps specific regulations and program management requirements

# Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

# Funding Priorities, Performance Measures, and Performance Indicators

- ◆ Priority Tier
- ◆ Performance Measures Assessment
- ◆ Plan to Collect Required Performance Indicators
- ◆ Proof of Malpractice Insurance

# Funding Considerations

- ◆ Significant Opportunity/Risk

# Strengths, Weaknesses, and Clarification Items

## ◆ Strengths and Weaknesses

- Language is evaluative and does not restate information from Application
- Comments are appropriate, aligned with the rating, and address the strengths and weaknesses with the greatest impact
- *Reviewer Tips for Writing Meaningful Comments* provided on the Reviewer Resource Webpage

## ◆ Clarification Items

- Budget Comments
- Performance Measure and Other General Clarification Items
- Special Conditions
- Post-Award Follow-Up
- Use BONUS FIELDS only if instructed during the review

# Summary and Key Considerations

- ◆ Read the Review Handbook and NOFO thoroughly prior to reading the first application and completing IRF
- ◆ Consult with your Panel Coordinator if any questions arise and use the Panel Discussion as an opportunity to clarify Selection Criteria or to share your expertise on a particular issue
- ◆ Provide clear and thoughtful comments relating to strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ Draft clarification items to help get additional information about aspects of the application that may not be clear