High Quality Performance Measures
Carla Ganiel, Senior Program and Project Specialist
Learning Objectives

• Define performance measurement

• Understand how performance measurement and evaluation differ

• Know how CNCS uses performance measures

• Learn characteristics of high quality performance measures
What is Performance Measurement?

- Ongoing, systematic process of tracking your program or project outputs and outcomes

**Outputs**: Amount of service provided (people served, products created, or programs developed)

**Outcomes**: Changes or benefits that occur
- Can reflect changes in individuals, organizations, communities or the environment
- Typically include changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition
- Must have a logical connection to the intervention and be aligned with outputs
Purpose of Performance Measurement

- Recognition of progress
  - Collect reliable information about the intervention’s implementation and progress toward outcomes

- Accountability to funders and stakeholders
  - Communicate achievements in a meaningful and compelling way

- Program Improvement
  - Spot and correct problems
  - Strengthen the intervention
  - Determine where to allocate limited resources
## Performance Measurement and Impact Evaluation

### Differences: Key Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Performance Measurement</th>
<th>Impact Evaluation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments and progress</td>
<td>In-depth research activity that assesses whether the program works as expected</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time Focus</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Conducted periodically or on an ad-hoc basis</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cause and Effect</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates if a change occurred, but not why; Change is not attributable to intervention</td>
<td>Tests cause and effect relationship between intervention and outcomes with a comparison or control group;</td>
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</table>
Building Evidence of Effectiveness

**Evidence Informed**
- Identify a strong program design
- Ensure effective implementation
- Gather evidence
  - Develop logic model

**Performance Measures - Outputs**

**Assess program’s outcomes**

**Obtain evidence of positive program outcomes**

**Evaluation**

**Evidence Based**
- Attain strong evidence of positive program outcomes
Grantees and sponsors contribute to the National Service story by selecting national performance measures:

– Agency-Wide Priority Measures
– Complementary Program Measures
CNCS National Performance Measures

Reflect the CNCS Strategic Plan and its programming priorities:

• Disaster Services
• Economic Opportunity
• Education
• Environmental Stewardship
• Healthy Futures
• Veterans & Military Families
• Capacity Building
• Grantees and sponsors will use common terms, definitions and measurement approaches.

• CNCS Programs will have specific performance measurement requirements.
How CNCS Uses Performance Measures

• Tell the story of the collective impact of national service programs

• National Performance Measures:
  – Reflect CNCS Strategic Plan and programming priorities
  – Allow for consistent terms, definitions, and approaches to measurement ("speaking the same language")
  – Priority Measures: used across multiple CNCS programs
  – Complementary Measures: customized for particular programs (e.g., AmeriCorps)

• Applicant-determined Measures*:
  – Intended for programs whose interventions, outputs, or outcomes do not fit under existing National Performance Measures

*Some National Performance Measures have applicant-determined outcomes
Performance Measure Requirements

• One aligned performance measure (output + outcome) for primary intervention

• Programs may create additional performance measures to measure outcomes of significant program interventions
High Quality Performance Measures

• Alignment with theory of change
• Alignment of outputs and outcomes
• Meaningful change – Worth measuring
Alignment with Theory of Change

- Logical connection between problem, intervention, outcome
- The intervention is likely to lead to the outcome
- The outcome measures what the intervention is trying to accomplish (change in knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition)
Theory of Change: Veterans Example

**Community Problem/Need**
Young veterans have high rates of unemployment

**Specific Intervention**
Job training and placement services.

**Intended Outcome**
Veterans find or are placed in jobs.
What is Measured?

- Will the program intervention change attitude, knowledge, behavior or condition?
- Outcome type should be the same as theory of change
## Types of Outcomes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attitude/Belief</th>
<th>Knowledge/Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought, feeling</td>
<td>Understanding, know-how</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Situation, circumstance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Outcome Examples—Education

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Knowledge/Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Condition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased interest in school</td>
<td>Improved math ability</td>
<td>Increased school attendance</td>
<td>Successful completion of High School</td>
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</table>
### Outcome Examples—Healthy Futures

<table>
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<th>Knowledge/Skill</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Increased desire to adapt good nutrition habits</td>
<td>Improved low-budget cooking skills</td>
<td>Increased healthy food intake</td>
<td>Improved household food security (supply)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Change in Condition

- Afterschool services expanded to two new locations
- Reduced waiting time and cost for clients
Alignment of Outputs and Outcomes

- Intervention produces output
- Output leads to the outcome
- Output and outcome measure the same intervention and beneficiaries
- National Measures aligned as directed in CNCS guidance

<table>
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<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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75
**INTERVENTION:** Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

**OUTPUT:** Individuals with disabilities receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

**OUTCOME:** Construction team members improve construction skills.

- Do the intervention and output align?
- 
- 
- Why or why not?
**INTERVENTION:** Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

**OUTPUT:** *Individuals with disabilities* receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

**OUTCOME:** *Construction team members* improve construction skills.

- Do the output and outcome align?
  - Yes
  - No

- Why or why not?
  - 2 different groups of beneficiaries
## Examples of Aligned Output-Outcome National Performance Measures

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<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Number of children that completed participation in CNCS-supported early childhood education programs. (ED21)</td>
<td>Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development.(ED23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Examples of Aligned Output-Outcome National Performance Measures

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<td>Healthy Futures</td>
<td>Number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger (H11)</td>
<td>Number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services (H12)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Meaningful Outcomes

The Outcome should:

- Reflect a meaningful change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition

- So what?

- Be ambitious yet realistic
Meaningful Outcome

- Is the outcome logically connected to the community problem?
- Is the outcome central or peripheral to the program’s theory of change?
Meaningful Outcome

- Beneficiaries. Is the target audience identified in the outcome?
- Scope of the outcome. How many will benefit?
- Magnitude of the outcome. How much change will occur for beneficiaries?
- Data collection plan. Are proposed methods/instruments appropriate? Is there a clear plan/timeline for developing instruments and collecting data?
Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Select PMs that fit your program design and theory of change, not vice versa
- Less = more: focus on a small number of high-quality measures
- Measure outputs and outcomes for program beneficiaries*
- Clearly define all terms used
- For longer-term outcomes, set targets that are achievable in a single grant year

*Except for member development and teacher corps measures
Best Practices: Performance Measure Design (continued)

- Use numerical targets, not percentages
- For outcomes that require participant follow-up, set targets that take into account response rate attrition
- Clearly distinguish outcomes from outputs while maintaining logical alignment
- Choose outcome measures that are ambitious but realistic; ensure that the program can realistically document or track the required information.
Best Practices: Performance Measure Implementation and Data Collection

- Set up MOUs with service sites that clearly lay out data collection responsibilities/expectations
- Provide up-front training in data collection for members, site supervisors, and other program staff
- Obtain baseline data so that changes can be objectively assessed, rather than assessing perceptions of change retroactively
- Select data collection instruments that are valid (measure what they are supposed to measure) and reliable (yield consistent results)
- Keep data collection procedures consistent over time and across different sites
• Choose data collection instruments that are accessible and yield timely data
• Develop creative ways to improve beneficiary responses to data collection efforts (incentives, etc.)
• Allocate sufficient resources toward data collection efforts: money, time, personnel
• Build in time for data review and verification prior to compiling/submitting reports
• Incorporate data quality review protocols into monitoring visits to sites
• Share best practices between programs/commissions
Questions?
Resources

AmeriCorps Performance Measures Page:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/americorps

CNCS Performance Measurement Core Curriculum:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/training-resources