


Slide 1



Welcome to this webinar on Best Practices in Performance Measure Design for AmeriCorps State and National Grants. I'm Sarah Foster, the Program Impact Specialist for AmeriCorps State and National, also known as ASN, and I'll be leading today's session. I want to thank you all for attending this session and your interest in ASN's funding opportunities.

Session Outline




- Performance measurement definition and purpose
- AmeriCorps State and National performance measure requirements
- AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions
- Best practices
- Designing an example project grant measure
- AmeriCorps State and National Planning Grant Performance Measure Instructions
- Designing an example planning grant measure
- Resources
- Questions

In this presentation I'll start with the definition and purpose of performance measurement, then talk specifically about ASN's performance measure requirements and the set of Performance Measure Instructions that accompany each Notice of Funding Opportunity. We'll talk about best practices in designing performance measures, then walk through an example of how to design a high-quality performance measure for a sample program model and a walk through of the planning grant performance measures. Finally, we'll end with performance measurement resources available to all AmeriCorps State and National applicants.

There's a lot to cover in this hour, and we should have time for questions at the end of the presentation. Please feel free to type questions using the Q&A feature as we go along so we can address them at the end of the session.

Performance Measurement



Ongoing, systematic process of tracking your project outputs and outcomes

Outputs: Amount of service provided
(number of people/organizations/other entities served)

Outcomes: Changes or benefits that occur

- Can be changes in individuals, organizations, communities, or the environment
- Typically include changes in **knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition**
- Must have a logical connection to the service activities and be aligned with outputs

- Let's start with a brief overview of performance measurement just to make sure we're all on the same page
- Performance measurement is the ongoing and systematic process of tracking outputs and outcomes for your program
- Outputs = amount of service provided; what exactly that means depends on your program design. For many ASN grantees, the outputs are likely to be the number of people served by the program; however, for some programs it could be other types of counts, such as the number of acres of land treated by AmeriCorps members, or the number of organizations served.
- Outcomes = changes or benefits that occur in your program as a logical consequence to the intervention, or service activities, taking place. Again, for many ASN grantees, these will be changes that are directly related to people; however, they could also be changes in organizations, in the broader community, or in the environment.
- Outcomes can generally be classified as changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. Outcomes should be logically connected to your program's service activities, and they also should be aligned with your outputs. So if your output counts the number of people served by the program, the outcome should reflect a change in those same people's knowledge, attitudes, behavior, or condition in life.

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 objective way

Program improvement

- Spot and correct problems
- Strengthen the intervention
- Determine where to allocate limited resources

So what's the point of performance measurement? 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 project to accomplish; performance measurement can tell you whether are reaching your goals, and if so, at what pace. It can also tell you whether you are implementing your project in the way that you planned.
- The second purpose is to provide accountability. AmeriCorps requires that you report on your progress to us via performance measures, but you may also have other funders and stakeholders that also request this type of information. Performance measurement is an objective and meaningful strategy for communicating achievements to your stakeholders in a way that makes sense to them.
- The third purpose is program improvement. Performance measurement provides benchmarks that tell you whether or not you are meeting your goals, and if not, may also give you insights to help you figure out where your interventions could be strengthened to reach those goals more effectively. It can also help you figure out how to allocate personnel and funds in the most helpful way, especially in an environment where resources are limited.

How AmeriCorps Uses Performance Measures

Tell the story of the collective accomplishments of national service programs

National Performance Measures

- Provide shared language for outputs and outcomes that multiple programs have in common
- Cover all AmeriCorps focus areas

Applicant-Determined Measures

- Intended for programs whose interventions, outputs, or outcomes do not fit under existing National Performance Measures

From AmeriCorps' perspective, performance measure data helps us to tell the story of the collective accomplishments of AmeriCorps members and other national service programs across the country.

We do that primarily through our set of National Performance Measures, which we call NPMs, which allow us communicate about outputs and outcomes that many programs have in common. There are a set of NPMs for six AmeriCorps focus areas – Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, Veterans and Military Families, Disaster Services, and Environmental Stewardship – and also a set of NPMs for Capacity Building activities.

AmeriCorps State and National expects grantees to select National Performance Measures if their program design is consistent with these measures. However, we recognize that there are some AmeriCorps projects and program models for which National Performance Measures don't quite fit. As a result, AmeriCorps State and National grantees also have the option to create what we call applicant-determined measures, either as output-outcome pairs or as outcomes for existing national outputs.

AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Requirements

At least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) connected to primary intervention

- Must focus on community impact
- May be National Performance Measure or applicant-determined measure
- Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, are permitted but not required

Performance measures reflect significant activities in applicant's Theory of Change

- No need to capture all program activity in performance measures

Here are the baseline performance measure requirements for AmeriCorps State and National applicants. Those of you who have applied for ASN grants in the past will notice that these requirements have been consistent for a number of years.

AmeriCorps applications are required to have at least one aligned performance measure (meaning that there is an output paired with an outcome) connected to the primary intervention

It is up to you as the applicant to define your primary intervention; there is no set number of member service years or members that have to be associated with it. The decision about what is “primary” should be based on your Theory of Change as described in your application narrative and logic model. However, the intervention that you define as primary needs to be a community-focused intervention rather than a member-focused intervention, since member-focused performance measures are not permitted.

Your required aligned performance measure can be either a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined performance measure. Applicants are not required to use National PMs, and they don’t get “extra credit” for doing so. However, we do expect applicants to use NPMs if they are a good fit for the program’s Theory of Change (this means the chain of logic between the community need, program activities, and expected outputs and outcomes). Applicants are not allowed to create applicant-determined measures that duplicate NPMs.

Applicants are welcome to have more than just the single required performance measure. However, we only want applicants to propose outputs and outcomes that capture significant program activities. Again, there is no set definition of “significant,” so applicants can use their own judgment about what counts as significant in their context. However, generally speaking, the quality of performance measures

is more important than the quantity. Just like there is no extra credit for using NPMs, there is also no extra credit for having lots and lots of measures. AmeriCorps State and National applicants are NOT required to capture all of their program activity in performance measures.

AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions

Summarize performance measure requirements for ASN program grants or planning grants, including list of allowable measures

Show selection rules and instructions for each National Performance Measure

Include helpful appendices:

- MSYs and member allocations tutorial (Appendix A)
- Performance Measure Checklist (Appendix B)
- FAQs (Appendix C)

PM Instructions are located on the Notice of Funding Opportunity page

- FY 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Grants: <https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2023-ameri-corps-state-national-grants>
- FY 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Native Nation Grants: <https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2023-ameri-corps-state-national-native-nations-grants>

The Performance Measure Instructions are a fundamental guidance documents, just like the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), Mandatory Supplemental Information, and Application Instructions. You should refer to the Performance Measure Instructions whenever you are creating or editing performance measures for your application.

The PM Instructions provide an overview of the performance measurement requirements for ASN grants – either program grants (which are grants that enroll AmeriCorps members) or planning grants. The PM Instructions also lay out the selection rules – in other words, which NPM outputs can be paired with which outcomes, and which objectives and service activities (or interventions) are connected to each measure. Detailed instructions are also provided for how to use each individual output and outcome measure.

There are three appendices that you can use as resources when developing performance measures:

- Appendix A has a tutorial about how to assign member service years (MSYs) and member positions (called slots) 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 common problems before submitting your application to AmeriCorps. It is not intended to be completely comprehensive or catch every potential issue, but it will help you be responsive to the PM requirements.
- Appendix C has a set of frequently asked questions and answers about performance measures

PM Instructions are located on the Notice of Funding Opportunity page



AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions

Funding Announcement, Mandatory Supplemental Information, and Application Instructions <small>2023 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Mandatory Supplemental Information (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions (PDF)</small>	Funding Announcement, Mandatory Supplemental Information, and Application Instructions <small>2023 Public Health AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps Mandatory Supplemental Information (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions (PDF)</small>
Performance Measure Instructions <small>2023 AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions (PDF)</small>	Performance Measure Instructions <small>2023 Public Health AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions (PDF)</small>
Funding Announcement, Mandatory Supplemental Information, and Application Instructions <small>2023 AmeriCorps State and National Native Nations Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Native Nations Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Native Nations Grants Mandatory Supplemental Information (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions (PDF)</small>	Funding Announcement, Mandatory Supplemental Information, and Application Instructions <small>2023 AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan (ARP) Planning Grants (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan (ARP) Planning Grants Mandatory Supplemental Information (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan (ARP) Planning Grants Application Instructions (PDF)</small>
Performance Measure Instructions <small>2023 AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions (PDF) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measures Instructions for Planning Grant Applicants (PDF)</small>	Performance Measure Instructions <small>2023 AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan (ARP) Planning Grants Performance Measures Instructions for Planning Grant Applicants (PDF)</small>

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Since there may be people from all of our current available funding opportunities on this call, I want to emphasize for you to be sure that you are looking at the Performance Measure Instructions associated with the Funding Opportunity you're applying to. The Public Health AmeriCorps PM Instructions are different than the ASN and Native Nation PM Instructions because PHA applicants may only select PMs in the Healthy Futures and Capacity Building focus areas. Planning Grant PM Instructions are also different from the PM Instructions for grants that have members.

Performance Measure Instructions: Recent Changes

Simplified the National Performance Measure matrix by reducing the number and complexity of measures

Made National Performance Measures more inclusive and reduced barriers to use

Provided National Performance Measure outcome options in all focus areas

Focused performance measures exclusively on community impact

- Key member-focused outputs and outcomes are reported via optional performance data elements

****All applicants must follow the current Performance Measure Instructions****

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If you applied for AmeriCorps funding in 2019, you may remember that the National Performance Measure matrix changed significantly that year. This slide summarizes the primary changes that were first made in 2019 and that continue today. All new, re-competing, and continuation applicants are required to follow these updated Performance Measure instructions.

One important feature in the current PM Instructions is that AmeriCorps State and National performance measures must focus on community impact, not the impact of the program on AmeriCorps members themselves. This is NOT because AmeriCorps doesn't value member outputs and outcomes. In fact, just the opposite! AmeriCorps expects all grantees to create meaningful member experiences and to provide valuable training and support that will lead to positive member outcomes both during and after their service. For that reason, AmeriCorps State and National wants all grantees to be able to report on member outputs and outcomes, not just grantees that opt into particular performance measures. Starting in 2019, a set of optional performance data elements, formerly known as demographic indicators, became available to all grantees to report member-focused outputs and outcomes on their Project Progress Reports. Data on member impacts are also collected across all programs via the Member Exit Survey.

Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Select performance measures that fit your program design and theory of change, not vice versa
- Read the instructions
- Less = more: limit performance measures to significant program activities
- Select measures that complement existing Performance Data Elements
- Use National Performance Measures when they fit the program design
- Use system-defined intervention categories when possible (but other interventions are allowable)

I'd like to run through a few best practices from AmeriCorps' perspective for performance measure design. This list was developed by a team of AmeriCorps program staff and is based on common issues we see in the hundreds of performance measures we review each year.

Select PMs that fit your program design and theory of change, not vice versa

- Start with your own vision for what your program will do and what you hope to accomplish, and don't select your PMs until after you have fully developed your Theory of Change and logic model. 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 is not going to be helpful for your program if it doesn't effectively capture what you actually intend to do.

Read the instructions

- As I mentioned before, the Performance Measure Instructions are a fundamental guidance document for preparing an application. Before you choose a National Performance Measure, it is important that you read the instructions for that measure very closely and that you follow all of the requirements specified in the Performance Measure Instructions.

Less = more; limit performance measures to significant program activities

- Remember that you are only required to have one performance measure connected to your primary intervention. You are welcome to select additional performance measures, including output-only measures, if they make sense for your program design. However, 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 should! - plan to collect and monitor data on those activities for your own programmatic purposes, but you do not need to report the data to AmeriCorps as a performance measure.

Select PMs that complement existing Performance Data Elements

- As I mentioned earlier, all ASN grantees are asked to report on a set of standard Performance Data Elements in their annual progress reports. These data elements are listed in the end-of-year progress report instructions posted on the AmeriCorps website, and grantees are required to report on all of the ones that are relevant to your program model. Because you already have to report on those indicators, it's a good idea to choose performance measures that will complement that reporting and provide an additional value-add. For example, if your program provides job training or placement services, you will already be required to report as a Performance Data Element the number of individuals you serve. So it might make sense to create a performance measure that will use this output and adds a relevant outcome measure: for example, the number of beneficiaries who actually secure employment. Or you could create a performance measure that is completely different from the Performance Data Elements, like the number of organizations that receive capacity-building services and improve their volunteer management capacity. You probably DON'T want to create a performance measure that simply duplicates the available Performance Data Elements and adds nothing extra, like an output-only measure that counts the number of individuals served during disasters.

Use national performance measures when they fit the program design

- As I mentioned earlier, you should use national performance measures in any case where your program design and measurement strategy fits these measures. AmeriCorps does NOT want you to create applicant-determined measures that duplicate or are very similar to existing national measures. We also don't want you to type national measure codes and definitions into an applicant-determined measure field in the Performance Measure Module. If you can't find a particular national performance measure in the PMM screens, it probably means that you need to go back and select a different objective on an earlier tab. The first few pages of the PM Instructions show you which measures are located under each objective.

Use system-defined intervention categories when possible

- The Performance Measure Instructions list particular interventions, or service activities, for each performance measure. If one or more of those interventions match the activities you will be doing, please select these system-defined interventions. You should only type in your own interventions if none of the existing interventions is a good fit for your service activities. If you are currently using an intervention category that is not listed in the PM Instructions, please switch to using a new system-defined intervention if you can.

Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Clearly define terms and ensure they are meaningful
- Clearly distinguish outcomes from outputs while maintaining logical alignment
- Choose outcome measures that are ambitious but realistic
- For outcomes that require participant follow-up, set targets that take into account response rate attrition
- Use pre-post assessments when possible
- Use numerical targets, not percentages

Clearly define terms and ensure they are meaningful

- It's helpful to specify the meaning of important words and phrases you include in your performance measures, such as "improvement". Otherwise, we don't know whether terms like "increased health knowledge" or "improved health" mean a tiny change or a large one. It's also helpful to explain why the level of change that you will be measuring is meaningful to the program beneficiaries; that will help you use performance measures to tell your story effectively.

Clearly distinguish outcomes from outputs while maintaining logical alignment

- This is a mistake that is most commonly made with applicant-determined outcomes. You need to make sure that your outcome doesn't just count participation in a program or re-state the output measure, but reflects an actual change in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. 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; this is not a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition. Instead, the outcome could be the number of individuals who showed 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 in setting your long-term goals for the program, and we want you to include those long-term goals in your logic model. However, you don't need to report on your long-term goals as part of your performance measures; 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, you don't need to (and can't) measure that in a single year; instead, 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 is appropriately ambitious and is a logical step toward developing healthier adults, but is also measurable in a single year.

For outcomes that require participant follow-up, set targets that take into account response rate attrition

- Many outcomes require post-surveys, tests, or some other type of participant follow-up to determine changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition. Unfortunately, it's rarely possible to get 100% of program participants to respond to those surveys or follow-up requests. We also don't want you to extrapolate your results unless you have an approved sampling plan (in other words, if you get a 50% response rate to your post-survey, you can't just double the numbers to simulate a 100% response rate.) As a result, it's wise to set your outcome targets somewhat lower than your output targets to account for less than 100% response rates. However, you should also make it a goal to achieve the highest response rates possible.

Use pre-post assessments when possible

- Objective measures generally yield better data than subjective measures. If we ask you at the end of today's webinar whether you feel like you know more about AmeriCorps performance measurement than you did at the beginning of the webinar, chances are that you will say yes (at least, I hope so!). But if we gave you a pre- and post-assessment that actually measured your knowledge about performance measurement before and after the webinar, it may or may not show the increase in knowledge that you believed took place. People's own perceptions of change are frequently different than the actual change itself.

Use numerical targets, not percentages

- This allows us to add up numbers across all of our programs; percentages are not add-able

Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Select data collection instruments that are valid (measure what they are supposed to measure) and yield consistent and accurate results
- Choose data collection instruments that are accessible and yield timely data
- Allocate sufficient resources toward data collection efforts: money, time, personnel, training, storage

Select data collection instruments that are valid (as in they measure what they are supposed to measure) and yield consistent and accurate results

- Performance measure actuals are not meaningful unless you can say with confidence that they mean what they are supposed to mean, and that the meaning does not fluctuate across different sites or across different time periods. To be able to make good decisions about a program, you need to have good data, and good data comes from high-quality data collection 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. Or pilot-test the instrument yourself and check the quality of the data you receive before you decide to start using that instrument for your whole program.

Choose data collection instruments that are accessible and yield timely data


- If you rely on an instrument – for example, patient health records – where there are privacy laws or other barriers to accessing the data, you may have difficulty getting performance measure results and/or using them to make informed decisions about your program. You might consider looking for alternative instruments where the data are more accessible and there is a quicker turnaround time.

Allocate sufficient resources toward data collection efforts, which include money, time, personnel, training, and storage


- Data collection is a significant investment, certainly in terms of dollars, but also in terms of staff time and member time. You will want to build those dollar and time investments up-front into your budget, staffing, and program design. Performance measurement will not be done effectively if it becomes an unexpected “add-on” to someone’s already full schedule, or if your staff or members don’t receive adequate training on how to do it. You also need to be planning for how you will store

source documentation for your outputs and outcomes (sign-in sheets, completed surveys, etc.) and retain it as grant records.

Designing a Measure



The HealthyCorps Program is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead small-group health education programs for elementary students at area community centers. The primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, with the longer-term goal of improved health during their teen years.



Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different groups of 5-8 children after school each day for about 30 minutes each over a period of 8 months, using a nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies. Members will also recruit volunteers to help community centers expand health-focused physical activities in their afterschool programs.

Let's transition to an example of how an AmeriCorps applicant would go about selecting and designing a performance measure. Here is a brief summary of a hypothetical program called HealthyCorps.

The HealthyCorps Program is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead small-group health education programs for elementary students at area community centers. The primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, with the longer-term goal of improved health during their teen years.

Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different groups of 5-8 children after school each day for about 30 minutes each over a period of 8 months, using a nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies. Members will also recruit volunteers to help community centers expand health-focused physical activities in their afterschool programs.

I'll also drop this program description in the chat so you can refer to it later if you'd like to.

[Text to drop into chat]:


The HealthyCorps Program is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead small-group health education programs for elementary students at area community centers. The primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, with the longer-term goal of improved health during their teen years.

Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different groups of 5-8 children after school each day for about 30 minutes each over a period of 8 months, using a nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies. Members will also recruit volunteers to help community centers expand health-focused physical activities in their afterschool programs.

Step 1: Identify Service Activity/ies

The HealthyCorps Program is requesting six half-time AmeriCorps members to lead small-group health education programs for elementary students at area community centers. The primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, with the longer-term goal of improved health during their teen years.

Each AmeriCorps member will meet with different **Primary** 5-8 children after school each day for ~~30-45 minutes each~~ over a period of 8 months, using a **Primary** nutrition education curriculum developed by a consortium of state and local public health agencies. Members will also **Secondary** recruit volunteers to help community centers expand health-focused physical activities in their afterschool programs.



Before HealthyCorps starts choosing performance measures, their first step is to zero in on what exactly the AmeriCorps members will be doing to help the community – in other words, what specific interventions, or service activities, they will be involved in.

Based on this description, HealthyCorps members will be doing two things:

- Providing nutrition education to children
- Recruiting volunteers to help community centers expand afterschool offerings

It's up to HealthyCorps to define which of these they consider to be their "primary" service activity. However, since the description says that the primary short-term goal of the program is to improve children's understanding of healthy eating habits, it seems logical that they would classify the nutrition education activities as primary. Recruiting volunteers to expand health-focused afterschool offerings would be considered their secondary activity.

Step 2: Choose the Right Measure(s) and Intervention(s)

Primary service activity: nutrition education

Healthy Futures			
Strategic Plan Objective	Selection Rules		Interventions
	Outputs	Outcomes (if applicable)*	
Aging in Place	H4A: Number of individuals served	H9A: Number of individuals who report improved capacity for independent living H19: Number of individuals with improved health	Companionship Nutrition/Food Support Legal Services Transportation Medication Support Opioid/Drug Intervention
Obesity & Food	H4A: Number of individuals served	H12: Number of individuals who report increased food security H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge H18: Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health H19: Number of individuals with improved health	Outreach Education/Training Referrals Medical Services Medication Support Physical Activities Counseling/Coaching Opioid/Drug Intervention
Access to Care	H4A: Number of individuals served	H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge H18: Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health H19: Number of individuals with improved health H20: Number of individuals with improved access to medical care	Nutrition/Food Support Outreach Education/Training Referrals Medical Services Counseling/Coaching Opioid/Drug Intervention
Other Healthy Futures	H4A: Number of individuals served	Applicant-determined	Applicant-determined


*All National Performance Measure outputs may also be paired with an applicant-determined outcome instead or may be used without an associated outcome.

This is an image from the ASN Grant and Native Nation Grant Performance Measure Instructions' selection rules; PHA grantees will see different Healthy Future performance measures in their instructions.

Once HealthyCorps has identified nutrition education as their primary intervention, they will start, as all applicants should start, by meeting their baseline performance measure requirement: one aligned measure (output + outcome) connected to this primary service activity.

Nutrition education fits under AmeriCorps' "Access to Care" and "Obesity & Food" objectives in the Healthy Futures focus area. Since their intervention could apply to either of these objectives, it is up to the grantee to decide which fits best. Since the intervention is not specifically tied to obesity but instead access to nutrition education, HealthyCorps will create its required performance measure under the "Access to Care" objective.

Step 2: Choose the Right Measure(s) and Intervention(s) (Continued)



Secondary service activity: volunteer recruitment to expand health-focused afterschool programming

Strategic Plan Objective	Selection Rules		Interventions
	Outputs	Outcomes (if applicable)*	
Capacity Building & Leverage	G3-3.4: Number of organizations that received capacity building services	G3-3.10A: Number of organizations that increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach	Volunteer management Training Resource development Systems development


* All National Performance Measure outputs may also be paired with an applicant-determined outcome instead or may be used without an associated outcome.

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AmeriCorps applicants can also select additional performance measures for secondary service activities, which for HealthyCorps includes recruiting volunteers to expand health-focused physical activities in afterschool programs. HealthyCorps’ secondary activity falls under the Capacity Building and Leverage objective in the Capacity Building focus area. However, it’s not necessary for HealthyCorps to create a performance measure for this. In fact, HealthyCorps should NOT create additional performance measures unless the activities they capture are a substantial part of the applicant’s Theory of Change and proposed member service.

In our example, HealthyCorps decides to stick with just the single required performance measure connected to their primary service activity, nutrition education.

Step 2: Choose the Right Measure(s) and Intervention(s) (continued)



Strategic Plan Objective	Selection Rules		Interventions
	Outputs	Outcomes (if applicable)*	
Access to Care	H4A: Number of individuals served	H17: Number of individuals with increased health knowledge H18: Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health H19: Number of individuals with improved health H20: Number of individuals with improved access to medical care	Outreach Education/Training Referrals Medical Services Counseling/Coaching Opioid/Drug Intervention

As you can see in the Selection Rules column, there are four possible outcome measures under the Access to Care objective. We need to pick the measure that best fits HealthyCorps’ Theory of Change for their primary service activity.

According to the program description, HealthyCorps’ primary short-term goal is to improve children’s understanding of healthy eating habits. This is the outcome they should try to measure. The program also has the longer-term goal of improving health during the teen years, but because they are serving elementary-age kids, this longer-term outcome wouldn’t be measurable within a single program year. So outcome measure H17, the number of individuals with increased health knowledge, is the most logical outcome measure for this program design.

According to the selection rules, the required output measure for outcome H17 is H4A, the number of individuals served. Thus, the aligned performance measure that HealthyCorps will create should consist of output H4A plus outcome H17.

As I also mentioned earlier, applicants should select from the list of system-defined interventions whenever possible. Since Education and Training is included in the pre-defined list, HealthyCorps should select this intervention as the primary service activity connected to their aligned performance measure.

Step 3: Study the Instructions for Each Measure


Read the Performance Measure Instructions for each measure to make sure the program can meet the requirements

H4A (output)	Number of individuals served
Definition of Key Terms	<p>Individuals: recipients of AmeriCorps-supported services related to improving health-related outcomes</p> <p>Served: substantive engagement of individuals with a specific health-related goal in mind. Cannot consist solely of mass dissemination of information such as email blasts, social media posts, or distributing pamphlets.</p>
How to Measure/Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

Once HealthyCorps has tentatively selected their National Performance Measure outputs and outcomes, it's important for them to read the Performance Measure Instructions carefully for each measure. They need to make sure the measures they've selected truly are the right fit, and that their program design will allow them to meet the requirements for each measure in terms of eligibility (who or what can be counted under the measure) as well as data collection (appropriate instruments to collect data).

For output measure H4A, the instructions are very inclusive: this measure can count any recipients of AmeriCorps-supported services related to improving health-related outcomes. The only caveat is that the services provided to those individuals must be significant – in other words, a substantive engagement with a specific health-related goal in mind. HealthyCorps can't just count the number of people on their email distribution list or the number of kids who pick up an informational leaflet about nutrition. And the output also needs to be an unduplicated count. So if the same child attends five sessions of HealthyCorps' health education program, that child shouldn't be counted five separate times.

Step 3: Study the Instructions for Each Measure (continued)



H17 (outcome)	Number of individuals with increased health knowledge
Definition of Key Terms	Individuals: those reported in H4A, V1, V7A, or V8
How to Measure/Collect Data	Survey, test, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

Applicants that cannot meet the requirements for a measure should not use it

For outcome measure H17, the Performance Measure instructions say that only individuals reported under the output measure H4A can be counted (you can disregard the other measure codes listed here, because they aren't relevant to the Healthy Futures outcome; they're related to Veterans and Military Families outputs). This means HealthyCorps can't report more children under the outcome than they do under the output.

The instructions also provide guidance about appropriate instruments for collecting data under this outcome. We'll talk more about instruments on a later slide. The most important note in this section is that the instrument needs to be able to measure changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. Group-level or generalized assessments won't meet this requirement. Also, pre-post assessments should be used when possible to get the most objective measure of change.

If HealthyCorps' program design won't allow them to meet the requirements for outcome H17, they shouldn't use it. They should select a different option from the list of available AmeriCorps outcome measures.

Step 4: Define All Terms Clearly

H4A (output)	Number of individuals served
Definition of Key Terms	<p>Individuals: recipients of AmeriCorps-supported services related to improving health-related outcomes</p> <p>Served: substantive engagement of individuals with a specific health-related goal in mind. Cannot consist solely of mass dissemination of information such as email blasts, social media posts, or distributing pamphlets.</p>
How to Measure/Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

HealthyCorps definition of "substantive engagement": attending at least 4 health education sessions (equivalent to 1 month of participation)

You'll notice that the instructions for H4A don't fully define "substantive engagement" other than saying what is it not. And the instructions for H17 don't define "increased health knowledge". It is up to HealthyCorps to decide what terms like "substantive engagement" and "increased knowledge" should look like in the context of their own program design. "Substantive engagement" may be different for a child vs. an adult, and increased knowledge will look different depending on whether it is knowledge about nutrition or knowledge about how to prevent the spread of disease.

Because performance measures are about telling a program's story effectively, it is to HealthyCorps' advantage to spell out the details of what these terms mean and why the definitions are meaningful for the children they propose to serve. If it is not clear that what is being counted in a performance measure is significant, AmeriCorps may ask HealthyCorps to revise or delete the measure.

This slide shows HealthyCorps' definition of "substantive engagement" for the output measure. They are defining it as attending at least 4 health education sessions, which is equivalent to 1 month of participation. So if a child shows up for just one 30-minute session and then never comes back, they won't be counted as being served, because it's unlikely that they would have been able to benefit much from that brief level of participation.

Step 4: Define All Terms Clearly (continued)

H17 (outcome)	Number of individuals with increased health knowledge
Definition of Key Terms	Individuals: those reported in H4A, V1, V7A, or V8
How to Measure/Collect Data	Survey, test, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

HealthyCorps definition of “increased health knowledge”: At 10% or greater increase in a child's ability to identify healthy food choices.

This slide shows HealthyCorps’ definition of “increased health knowledge” for the outcome measure. It specifies that they will be measuring knowledge about healthy food choices, and that the increase has to be at least 10%. We’ll get to more details in a later step about exactly how the program proposes to measure this change.

Step 5: Calculate MSY and Member Allocations

Determine how many members, and what portion of members' time (MSYs), will be devoted to:

- A) Each focus area and objective
- B) The specific activities captured by the performance measure*

Members can be counted toward more than one focus area/objective/activity; MSYs cannot


*Not all member activities need to be captured under performance measures

The next step for HealthyCorps is to quantify how they will be allocating their member resources. They need to calculate the number of members and the amount of each member's time that will be devoted to each focus area and objective in their proposed project. From there, they can figure out the sub-set of members and member time that will contribute to the specific activities captured by the performance measure.

Member time is measured in Member Service Years, or MSYs; one MSY is the equivalent of a full-time term of service. Individual members can participate in more than one type of service activity, so members themselves can be counted more than once. However, MSYs, which are a measure of the time they spend on each activity, cannot be double-counted.

It's important to remember that not all AmeriCorps member activities need to be captured under performance measures. There is no required percentage of an applicant's MSYs and members that must be allocated to performance measures; this will depend on the applicant's program design.

Step 5: Calculate MSY and Member Allocations (continued)



HealthyCorps MSY and member allocations: 6 half-time members, 3.0 MSYs

A) Each focus area and objective

	Members	MSYs
Healthy Futures focus area, Access to Care objective (nutrition education)	6	2
Capacity Building focus area, Capacity Building and Leverage objective (volunteer recruitment)	6	1

B) The specific activities captured by the performance measure

	Members	MSYs
Nutrition Education	6	2

HealthyCorps’ program description states that they will be enrolling 6 half-time members. Since each half-time member position equals 0.5 MSYs, the program has 3.0 MSYs total. As we saw on a previous slide, the service activities for HealthyCorps AmeriCorps members fall into two focus areas and objectives. Nutrition Education, the program’s primary service activity, is in the Healthy Futures focus area under the Access to Care objective. Volunteer recruitment, the program’s secondary service activity, is in the Capacity Building focus area under the Capacity Building and Leverage objective.

The program description indicates that all AmeriCorps members are participating in both activities, so all 6 members are counted twice, once for each activity. Calculating MSYs is a bit more complicated. Healthy Corps estimates that about 2/3 of member time is spent on nutrition education while the other 1/3 is spent on capacity building. So 2 out of the 3 total MSYs are allocated to Healthy Futures while the other 1 MSY is allocated to Capacity Building. These values sum up to 3, meaning that no MSYs are double-counted.

Once HealthyCorps has figured this out, they can calculate how many MSYs and members should be allocated to the specific activities captured by the performance measure. Nutrition education is the only activity the AmeriCorps members are doing in the Healthy Futures focus area, so HealthyCorps assigns all of their Healthy Futures MSYs and members to the performance measure. Since they didn’t create a performance measure for their capacity building activity, the remaining 1 MSY won’t be assigned to a performance measure.

You may still have questions about this, and that’s okay! You can learn more about MSY and Member Allocations in Appendix A of the PM Instructions.

Step 6: Set Output and Outcome Targets

Ambitious but realistic estimate of what can be accomplished in 1 program year

Outcome targets should relate logically to output targets

HealthyCorps targets:

- *Output H4A: 150 students*
- *Outcome H17: 90 students*

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 the performance measure can accomplish in a single program year. 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.

In the case of HealthyCorps, the applicant estimates that six half-time members devoting a collective 2 MSYs to small-group health education programs over 8 months can collectively work with a total of 150 children, so this is the target for output measure H4A. Of the 150 children who participate in the program, HealthyCorps projects that 90 of them will meet the definition of increased health knowledge. This represents 60% of the students who participate; however, the outcome target needs to be stated as a number, not a percentage.

Step 7: Select Appropriate Instruments

Must meet criteria specified in the Performance Measure Instructions

- Output

How to Measure/ Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services
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- Outcome

How to Measure/ Collect Data	Survey, test, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.
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Must meet fundamental data quality standards

- Valid
- Accurate
- Consistent
- Complete
- Verifiable

The next step for HealthyCorps is to choose instruments to measure their output and outcome. The performance measure instructions provide quite a bit of flexibility in the types of instruments that can be used. However, as we talked about earlier, the selected instruments have to meet the criteria in the instructions: the output instrument must ensure an unduplicated count of individuals who receive services, and the outcome instrument must be able to measure changes in knowledge at the individual beneficiary level.

Applicants are responsible for selecting high-quality data collection instruments that produce valid, accurate, consistent, complete, and verifiable data. The Notice of Funding Opportunity spells out required data quality standards that programs have to meet. To help with validity, AmeriCorps encourages programs to use pre-post assessments for outcomes whenever possible. Data collection instruments should also be crafted by subject-matter experts and should be field-tested ahead of time to make sure they are effective.

Step 7: Select Appropriate Instruments (continued)



HealthyCorps output instrument:

- *Sign-in sheets for each nutrition education session that capture each participant's first and last name. Data from sign-in sheets will be transferred to Excel spreadsheets to track each individual child and the number of times they attended sessions.*

HealthyCorps outcome instrument:

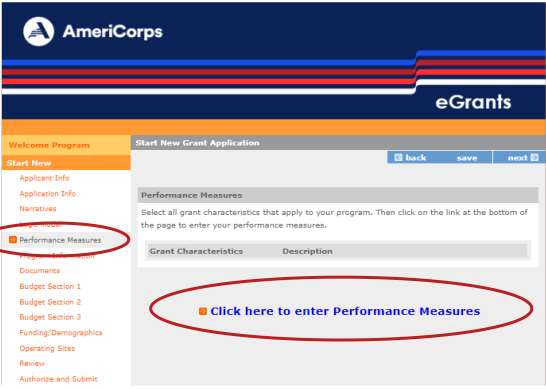
- *Pre-post test with 20 multiple-choice questions asking children to select the healthiest food choices. This assessment was developed by the public health agency consortium to align with their nutrition education curriculum, and has been previously tested in five states. Children will take the pre-test during the first session, and the post-test will be given after 8 months or when the child leaves the program, whichever is sooner.*

Here are the instruments that HealthyCorps intends to use:

The output instrument: Sign-in sheets for each nutrition education session that capture each participant's first and last name. Data from sign-in sheets will be transferred to Excel spreadsheets to track each individual child and the number of times they attended sessions.

And for the outcome instrument: Pre-post test with 20 multiple-choice questions asking children to select the healthiest food choices. This assessment was developed by the public health agency consortium to align with their nutrition education curriculum, and has been previously tested in five states. Children will take the pre-test during the first session, and the post-test will be given after 8 months or when the child leaves the program, whichever is sooner.

Step 8: Put it All Together



The screenshot shows the eGrants application interface. The left-hand menu has several orange links, with "Performance Measures" highlighted by a red circle. The main content area shows the "Performance Measures" section, which includes a table with columns for "Grant Characteristics" and "Description". A red circle highlights a link that says "Click here to enter Performance Measures".

- Use eGrants Performance Measure Module
- Application Instructions explain how to enter information

The final step is for HealthyCorps to use the eGrants Performance Measure Module to put together the outputs and outcomes they have chosen, the interventions they have selected, the MSYs and members they have allocated, and the instruments they have selected to create their performance measure. The AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions walk you through how to enter all of that information in eGrants, but we will walk through it quickly here as well. Let's step into the role of HealthyCorps, and have you pretend that you are a program staff member charged with entering HealthyCorps' performance measure in your grant application.

If you haven't yet begun your grant application in eGrants, this is what the application interface looks like. There are multiple orange links on the left-hand side of the screen that correspond to each section of your application.

Find the section labeled "Performance Measures" on the left hand menu and click on it. Then click on the link that says "Click here to enter Performance Measures."

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

The screenshot shows the 'eGrants Performance Measures' application interface. At the top, it displays 'Type: New Application' and 'Status: Prime Applicant Initial Entry'. Below this, the 'Submitted' status is shown for 'Legal Applicant Name: HealthyCorps'. The navigation menu includes 'Home Page', 'Objective', 'MSY/Members', 'Performance Measure', 'Data Collection', and 'Summary'. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Add New Performance Measures' with a blue 'Begin' button circled in red; 'Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members' with an 'Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members' button; and 'Delete or Edit Performance Measures Created' with a table. The table has columns for Objective, ID, Title, Interventions, Output, Outcome, End Outcome, MSY, and Members. Below the table, it states 'There are currently no performance measure created for this application.' and includes an 'Add New Performance Measures' button. A sidebar on the left contains 'Screen Instructions' with a list of steps: 'Welcome to the Performance Measures Module. Please click on the "Begin" button to start the process of creating performance measures. Applicants will complete the following tasks in the specified order.', 'Selecting objectives and interventions.', 'Selecting primary and secondary focus areas and interventions.', 'Allocating MSYs/Members to each objective.', and 'Creating one or more performance measures.'

Click the "Begin" button to add a new performance measure

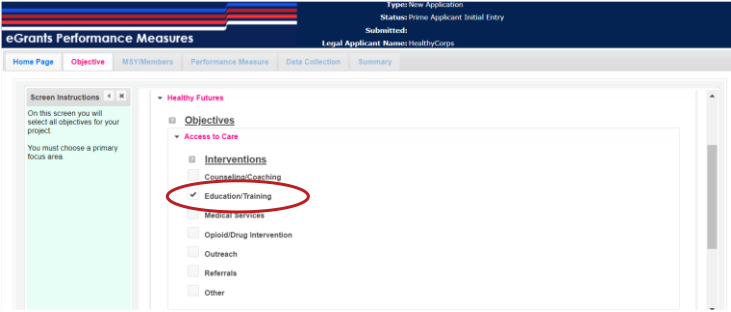
This opens up the Performance Measure Module screen. You will start on the Home page, where you click the blue "Begin" button to add your performance measure.

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

Locate the focus area and objective connected to your primary service activity

The button takes you to the Objective tab, where you will select all of the focus areas and objectives for your program and then select the service activities connected to each one. You'll start with your primary service activity, which fits under the Healthy Futures focus area in the Access to Care objective. Click the arrow next to Healthy Futures to see the list of available objectives.

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)

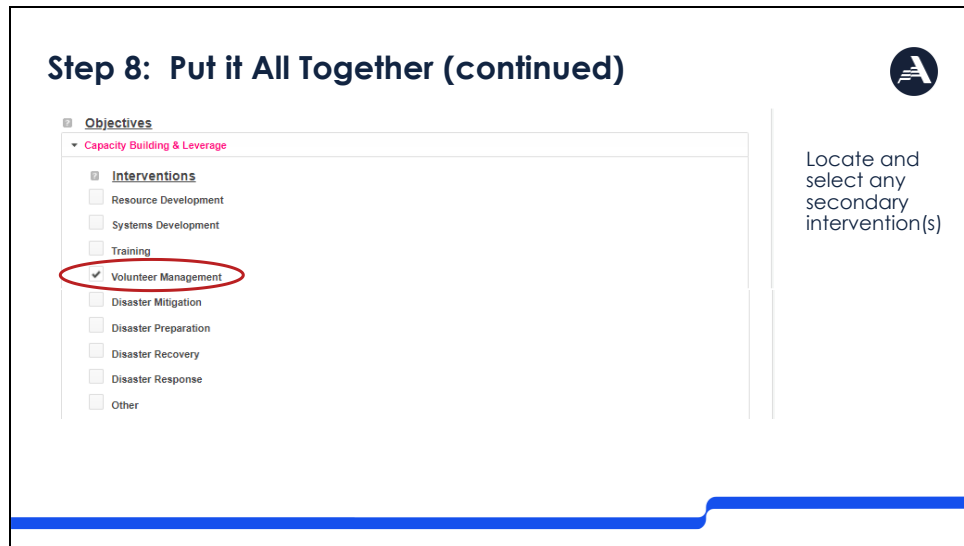


The screenshot shows the 'eGrants Performance Measures' application interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home Page', 'Objective', 'MST/Members', 'Performance Measure', 'Data Collection', and 'Summary'. The main content area is titled 'Healthy Futures' and contains a list of 'Objectives' and 'Interventions'. Under 'Interventions', the following options are listed: 'Access to Care', 'Counseling/Coaching', 'Education/Training', 'Medical Services', 'Opioid/Drug Intervention', 'Outreach', 'Referrals', and 'Other'. The 'Education/Training' option is selected, indicated by a checked checkbox and a red circle around the text. A green box on the left contains instructions: 'On this screen you will select all objectives for your project. You must choose a primary focus area.'

Check the box next to the intervention that matches your primary service activity

Find the system-defined intervention label that matches your primary service activity, and check the box in front of it. If you don't see one that is a good fit, select "Other."

Step 8: Put it All Together (continued)



Locate and select any secondary intervention(s)

- Objectives
 - Capacity Building & Leverage
 - Interventions
 - Resource Development
 - Systems Development
 - Training
 - Volunteer Management**
 - Disaster Mitigation
 - Disaster Preparation
 - Disaster Recovery
 - Disaster Response
 - Other

Then you do the same thing for any secondary service activities. HealthyCorps has an additional intervention in the Capacity Building focus area under the Capacity Building & Leverage objective, focused on recruiting volunteers. The system-defined intervention “Volunteer Management” is the best fit here.



At the bottom of the tab, you need to indicate your primary focus area and your primary service activity. You can also label your secondary focus area and intervention, though this isn't required. Once you have finished these steps, click the "Next" button.

A helpful tip: be sure to save your work frequently! The eGrants application screens sometimes time you out without warning. The "Save" button is located at the bottom left-hand side of the screen.