AMERICORPS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSION

March 5, 2021

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
Center for Research and Evaluation on Education and Human Services

TODAY'S PLAN

- Welcome!
- The Big Picture: What is your program doing? Why?
    - Theory of Change
    - Evidence
    - Logic Model
    - Performance Measures
- Group Activity: Outline a program's theory of change
- Resources: What tools can help?
- Wrap-Up

Category	%
Executive Summary	**0**
Program Design	**50**
Theory of Change and Logic Model	24
Evidence Tier	8
Evidence Quality	8
Notice Priority	0
Member Experience	10
Organizational Capacity	**25**
Organizational Background and Staffing	9
Compliance and Accountability	8
Culture that Values Learning	4
Member Supervision	4
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	**25**

THE BIG PICTURE

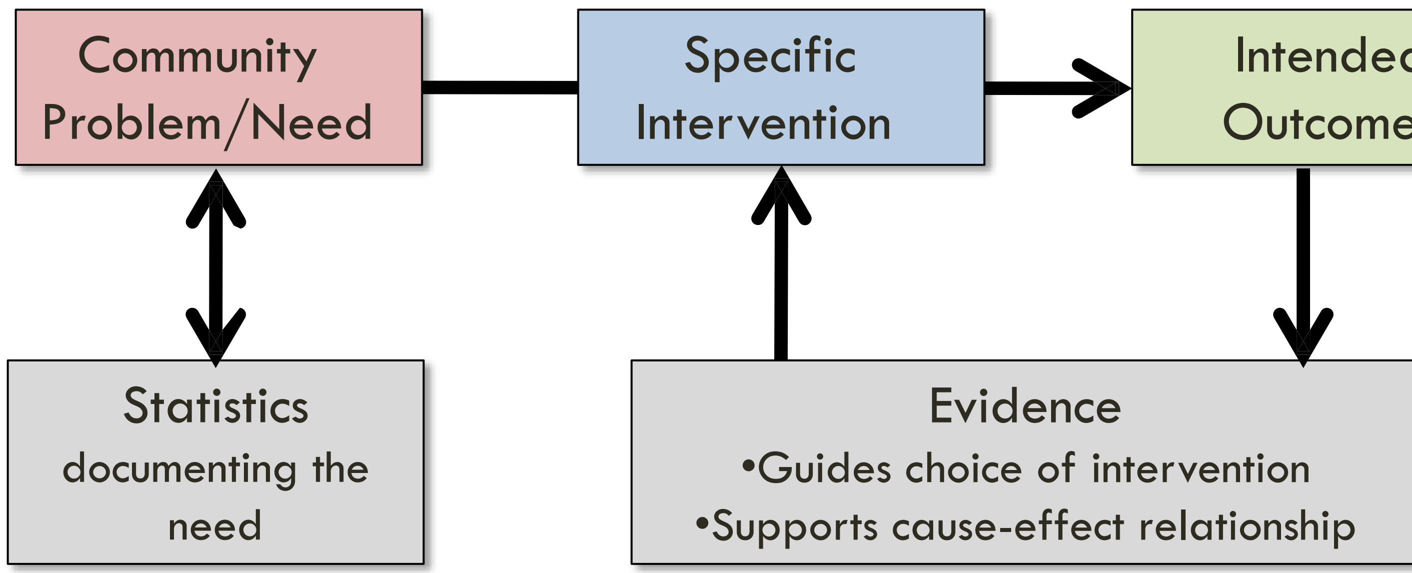
What is your program doing? Why?

THEORY OF CHANGE

- Description of what the program is, what is going to happen, and why you think so
- Narrative description of the what, how and why of a program
  - What you need for your program
  - How you will deliver your program
  - How and why your program will make an impact

Source: Corporation for National & Community Service How to Develop a Program Logic Model (2014)

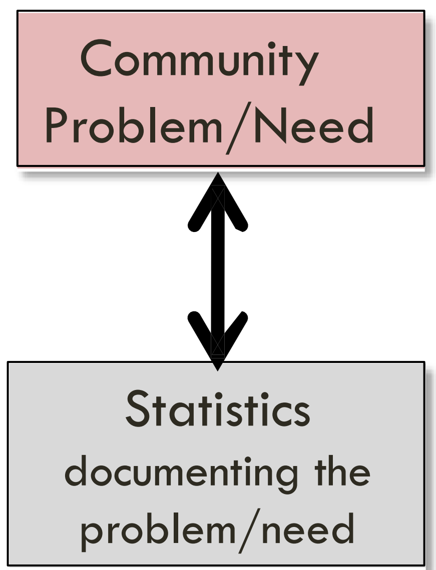
HOW A THEORY OF CHANGE WORKS



Source: Corporation for National & Community Service(2012). Designing Effective Action for Change. JBS International, Inc.

COMMUNITY PROBLEM / NEED

Community issue or concern that you need AmeriCorps members to help address



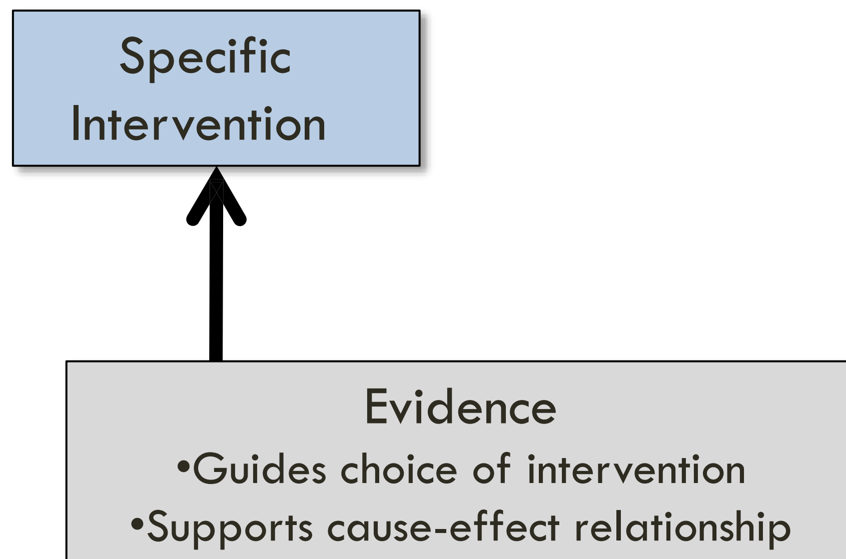
Source: Corporation for National & Community Service(2012). Designing Effective Action for Change. JBS International, Inc.

HOW DO I DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY PROBLEM / NEED?

- What, specifically, is the problem?
- For whom does the problem exist? Where does it exist?
- How pervasive is the problem?
- How serious is the problem?
- Why does this matter?

SPECIFIC INTERVENTION

Most effective **SET** of activities for **YOUR AMERICORPS MEMBERS**



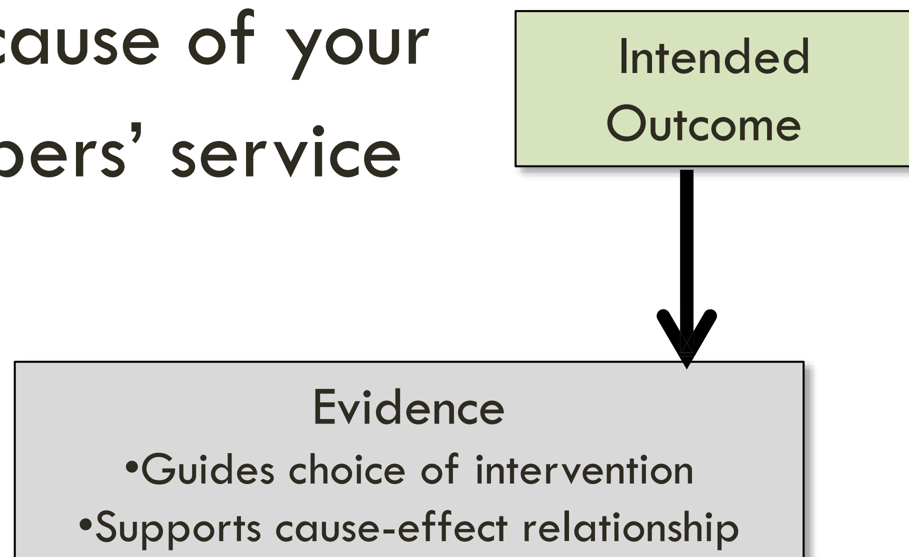
Source: Corporation for National & Community Service(2012). Designing Effective Action for Change. JBS International, Inc.

HOW DO I DESCRIBE MY INTERVENTION?

- What, specifically, will the AmeriCorps members do? With whom?
- How often will the activities occur (e.g., how many sessions a week)?
- How long will each activity/session be?
- How long will the intervention last (e.g., how many total weeks of sessions)?

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Changes you intended to see in the community (or targeted beneficiaries) because of your AmeriCorps members' service



Source: Corporation for National & Community Service(2012). Designing Effective Action for Change. JBS International, Inc.

WHAT OUTCOMES DO I DESCRIBE?

- What changes are supported by the evidence?
- Who will change because of the AmeriCorps members' service?

WHAT OUTCOMES DO I DESCRIBE?

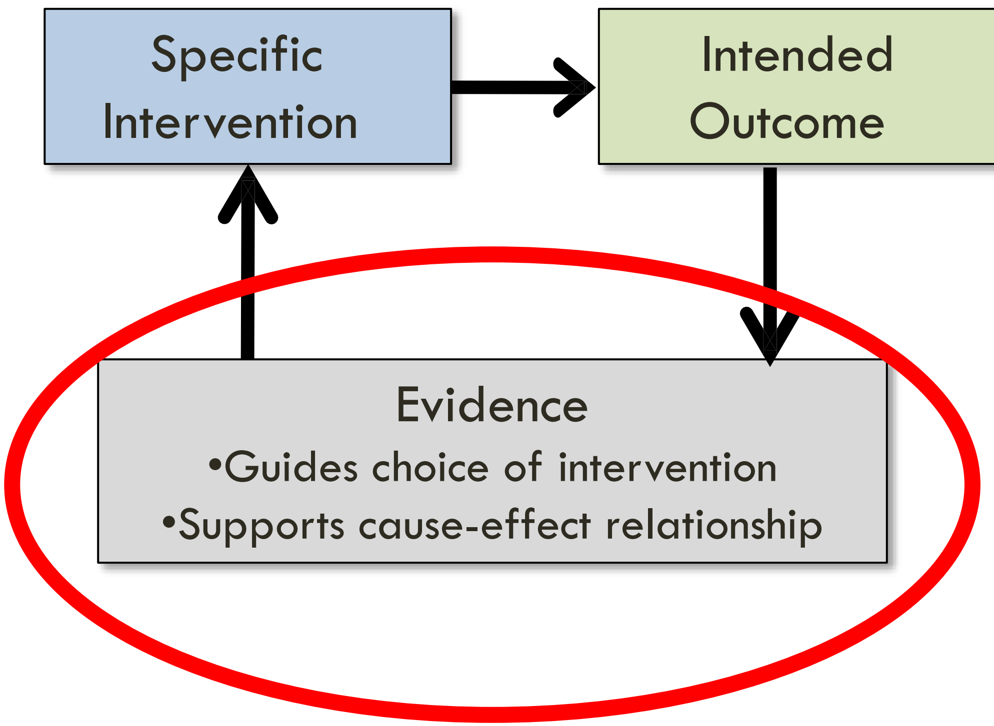
- What knowledge, skills, attitudes or abilities will change because of the AmeriCorps members’ service?
- What behaviors will change because of the AmeriCorps members’ service?
- What conditions, environments or policies will change because of the AmeriCorps members’ service?
- When will something change (short, long-term)?
- Does one change precede the other? Dependencies?

BEST PRACTICES - Theory of Change

- ✓ Clearly state the specific activities of AmeriCorps members (i.e., what an average day might include).
- ✓ Specify how much of the intervention will be provided (i.e., dosage) (e.g., 3, 60-minute sessions per week for 12 weeks).
- ✓ Make sure the activities, outputs, and outcomes match the performance measures and logic model.
- ✓ Describe how the set of activities will lead to the specified outcomes, and how short-term outcomes lead to longer-term outcomes.
- ✓ <u>Focus this section on the specifics of the intervention.</u>

EVIDENCE

Evidence from studies or evaluations of an intervention tell you the extent to which it will lead to your intended outcome(s)



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EVIDENCE TERMS

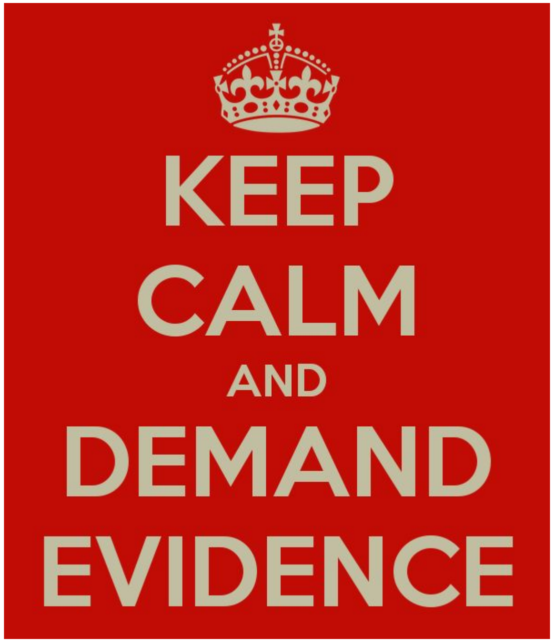
Evidence-Based: Programs that have been rigorously evaluated and have demonstrated positive results for at least one key desired outcome. (See CNCS Evidence Exchange for interventions with Moderate or Strong evidence.)

Evidence-Informed: Programs that use the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but do not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the intervention described in the application.

EVIDENCE BASE

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has <u>two parts</u>:

1. **Evidence tier**
2. **Evidence quality**



(See the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.)

WHAT DO I STATE FOR EVIDENCE TIER?

- What evidence tier do you have evidence to support? (STATE IT)
  - Pre-preliminary
  - Preliminary
  - Moderate
  - Strong
- What evidence do you have to support your proposed intervention?

WHAT DO I STATE FOR EVIDENCE TIER?

If *preliminary*, *moderate*, or *strong* evidence tier:

- To what extent is the intervention described by the evidence the same as your intervention?

Intervention described in evidence (and the population) **MUST BE EXACTLY THE SAME** as the intervention being proposed.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT EVIDENCE TIER?

Evidence Tier	Report submitted	Entity conducting evaluation	Study design of submitted report/evaluation
Pre-preliminary	No	N/A	N/A
Preliminary	Up to 2	Internal or external to applicant	•Pre/Post, single group •Post only, comparison group •Retrospective Pre/Post, single group
Moderate	Up to 2	External to applicant	•Single site, quasi-experimental design with matched comparison and treatment groups •Single site, randomized control trial design
Strong	Up to 2	External to applicant	•Multi-site, quasi-experimental design with matched comparison and treatment groups •Multi-site, randomized control trial design

EVIDENCE TIER: EVIDENCE SOURCES

- Your own data
- Your own evaluations
- Others' evaluations
- Others' research studies

Be able to describe and cite the evidence you have.

EVIDENCE QUALITY - SELF-ASSESSMENT

If *pre-preliminary* tier:

- To what extent do you provide **relevant** evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform your proposed program design?
- Are your studies relatively recent (**within the last 6 years**)?
- To what extent do your cited studies demonstrate a **meaningful positive effect** on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest?
- **Who conducted the study** (i.e., provide the article title, authors, year of the study, and other details)?

EVIDENCE QUALITY - SELF-ASSESSMENT

If *preliminary*, *moderate*, or *strong* evidence tier, consider all *pre-preliminary* criteria <u>PLUS</u>:

- To what extent is the intervention described by the evidence **the same** as your intervention?
- How were the studies you are submitting as evidence **designed** (e.g., non-experimental with pre-test/post-test, quasi-experimental)? Does the design align the grant requirements?
- How were data **collected** (e.g., the who, what, where, when, and how of the data collection)?

BEST PRACTICES - Evidence

- ✓ State your evidence tier.
- ✓ If you select *preliminary*, *moderate*, or *strong* evidence tier, your intervention MUST BE <u>the same</u> as the intervention described in the evidence.
- ✓ Describe and cite the evidence you have.
- ✓ Cite evidence from the last 6 years.

LOGIC MODEL

- A required attachment in your application
- A detailed visual representation of a program and its theory of change
- Communicates how a program works by depicting the intended relationships among program components (i.e., inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes)

HOW A LOGIC MODEL WORKS

Certain resources are needed to operate your program

If you have access to them, **then** you can use them to accomplish your planned activities

If you accomplish your planned activities, **then** you will hopefully deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended

If you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, **then** your participants will benefit in certain ways

If these benefits to participants are achieved, **then** certain changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur

Resources/ Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes/ Impacts → Long-Term Goal

Your Planned Work (Resources/Inputs, Activities)

Your Intended Results (Outputs, Outcomes/Impacts, Long-Term Goal)

EVERYDAY LOGIC MODEL: COOKIES

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
Baker Flour, sugar Butter, eggs Chocolate chips Oven Cooking supplies	Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees Mix together ingredients Drop tablespoons of mixture onto cookie sheet Bake for 8-10 minutes Cool cookies and store	# cookies dropped onto cookie sheets # cookies baked # cookies stored in cookie jar	Increased satisfaction Decreased hunger Decreased crankiness	Improved family relations	Increased weight

COMPLETE THE LOGIC MODEL FROM 1 TO 4

4 INPUTS (What we invest)	2 ACTIVITIES (What we do)	3 OUTPUTS (How we know)	1 OUTCOMES (What changes)		
			SHORT TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
What do you have and what do you need to make the activities and outcomes happen?	*What activities must be undertaken to make the changes happen?*	*What evidence remains to let you know that activities happened?* *What are the footprints left by the activities?*	*What will the people you serve know/ think differently from before the intervention?*	*What will the people you serve do differently from before the intervention?*	*If you really got it right, what will be different in 10 years?*

THEORY OF CHANGE VS. LOGIC MODEL

Feature	Theory of Change	Logic Model
Frame of reference	"What we want to achieve"	"What are we doing"
Questions answered	Why and how	What and when
Core components	Need/Problem Intervention Outcome	Input Activities Outcome
Format	Narrative	Graphic

BEST PRACTICES - Logic Model

- ✓ Use verbs/action-oriented language to describe activities.
- ✓ Include dosage (i.e., how much, how often) of activities.
- ✓ Correctly categorize outputs and outcomes.
- ✓ Match outputs and outcomes to the theory of change description.
- ✓ Match outputs and outcomes to performance measures.
- ✓ Organize rows of the logic model to clearly connect activities to expected outputs and outcomes.

LOGIC MODELS LEAD TO…

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			SHORT TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
Staff Funding AmeriCorps members Existing training Training materials	Recruit participants and collaborators Conduct financial literacy workshops Provide financial counseling	# participants recruited # workshops conducted # workshop participants # of counseling participants	Increased knowledge of personal finance Improved skills to manage finances Increased access to financial assistance information	Increased reported use of financial management skills Increased use of financial assistance resources	Increased financial stability of economically disadvantaged individuals

Potential performance measures

… ALIGNED PERFORMANCE MEASURES.

	Output	Short-Term Outcome	Medium-Term Outcome
Logic Model Component	# workshop participants # counseling participants	Increased knowledge of personal finance	Increased reported use of financial management skills
Performance Measure	# economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services	% participants demonstrating greater understanding of personal finance principles	% participants reporting greater use of financial management skills included in workshop
Data Source	Sign-in sheet for workshops Sign-in sheet for counseling	Pre/post surveys of participants and a matched comparison group of non-participants	Pre/post 4-week and 6-month follow-up surveys of participants and a matched comparison group of non- participants

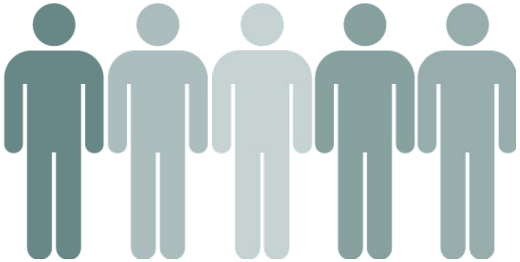
AMERICORPS PERFORMANCE MEASURE RULES

- At least 1 aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) is required
- Allowable output/outcome pairs are specified
- Selectable performance measures are listed in the 2021 CNCS Performance Measures Instructions
- Must be aligned to the program's theory of change and logic model

TYPES OF AMERICORPS PERFORMANCE MEASURES

OUTPUTS

- Amount of service provided (*aligned with your theory of change and logic model*)
- Examples
  - People served
  - Products created
  - Programs developed



TYPES OF AMERICORPS PERFORMANCE MEASURES

OUTCOMES

- Reflect the changes or benefits that occur because of your AmeriCorps members' services (*aligned to your theory of change and logic model*)

Attitude/Belief	Knowledge/ Skill	Behavior	Condition
Thought, feeling	Understanding know-how	Action	Situation, circumstance

WHAT ARE THEY NOT?

Performance measures **do not** measure everything your program does.

- Your selected performance measures should be aligned to one or two **key** outcomes from your logic model and theory of change.

CNCS PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

HEALTHY FUTURES

Focus Area Notes

- Programs should only opt into the Healthy Futures performance measures if the measures reflect significant program activities aligned with the applicant's core theory of change.
- All individuals counted under these measures must be program beneficiaries, not National Service Participants. National Service Participant outputs and outcomes should be reported in the Performance Data Elements in annual Progress Reports.
- Activities associated with these measures must be carried out by National Service Participants or by volunteers directly recruited and/or supported by National Service Participants.

H4A (output)	Number of individuals served
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** recipients of CNCS-supported services related to improving health-related outcomes **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.
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Tracking mechanism that ensures an unduplicated count of individuals who have received services

H9A (outcome)	Number of individuals who report improved capacity for independent living
Definition of Key Terms	**Individuals:** those reported in H4A, V1, V7A, or V8
How to Measure/ Collect Data	Survey, interview, caseworker assessment, or other instrument capable of measuring changes in independent living capacity at the individual beneficiary level. When possible, pre-post assessments should be utilized.

Performance Measure:

Focus Area:	Objective:	No of MSY's:	No of Members:

Problem Statement:

Selected Interventions:

Describe Interventions:

ED1A Output:

ED1A: Number of individuals served

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

ED23A Outcome:

ED23A: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

CNCS PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

ED1A Output:

ED1A: Number of individuals served

Select from drop down

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

ED23A Outcome:

ED23A: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

CNCS PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

ED1A Output:

ED1A: Number of individuals served

Estimate based on rationale in theory of change

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

ED23A Outcome:

ED23A: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

CNCS PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

ED1A Output:

ED1A: Number of individuals served

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

Select your data collection method (how you obtain the data to inform the measure, e.g., student survey)

ED23A Outcome:

ED23A: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

CNCS PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

ED1A Output:

ED1A: Number of individuals served

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

ED23A Outcome:

ED23A: Number of children demonstrating gai

Target:

Measured By:

Described Instrument:

Provide details about your data collection method:

- Name of instrument
- What it will measure
- How it will be administered
- Reliability and validity information
- (For outcome) How much change is considered to be "improvement" or the like
- (For outcome) How the instrument will be used to measure change

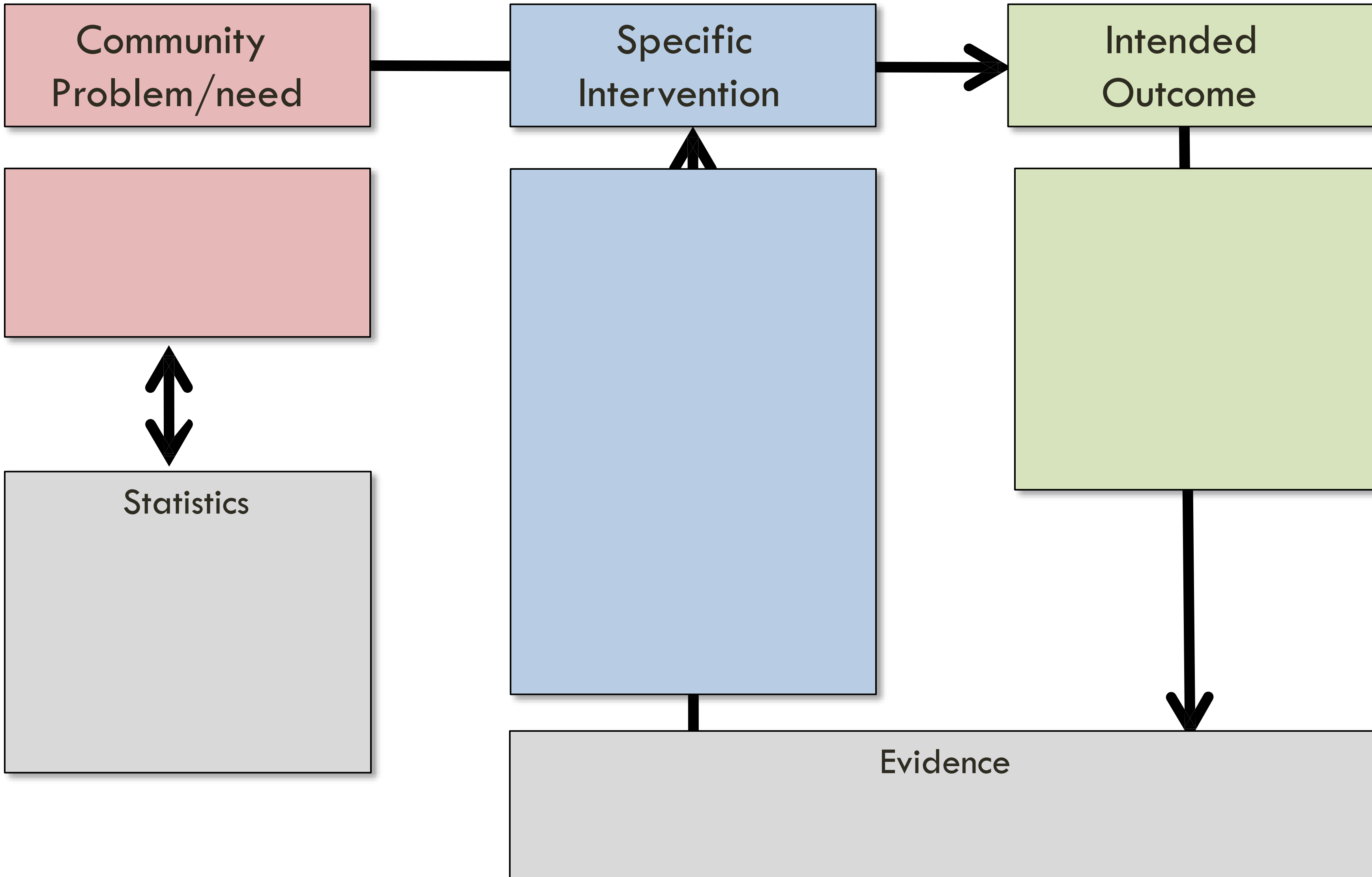
BEST PRACTICES - Measures

- ✓ Select from the 2021 performance measures.
- ✓ Explain the target setting method (specify the target and how it was selected).
- ✓ Define all performance measure key terms (e.g., Improve)
- ✓ Develop clear, specific, and measurable applicant-determined performance measures that are not duplicated in the 2021 performance measures.
- ✓ Explain what instrument will be used and how it will be used to inform the performance measure.
- ✓ Plan how, when, where and who will collect/obtain your performance measure data and articulate it in your narrative
- ✓ Review Appendix B: Performance Measures Checklist

RESOURCES

What tools can help?

THEORY OF CHANGE



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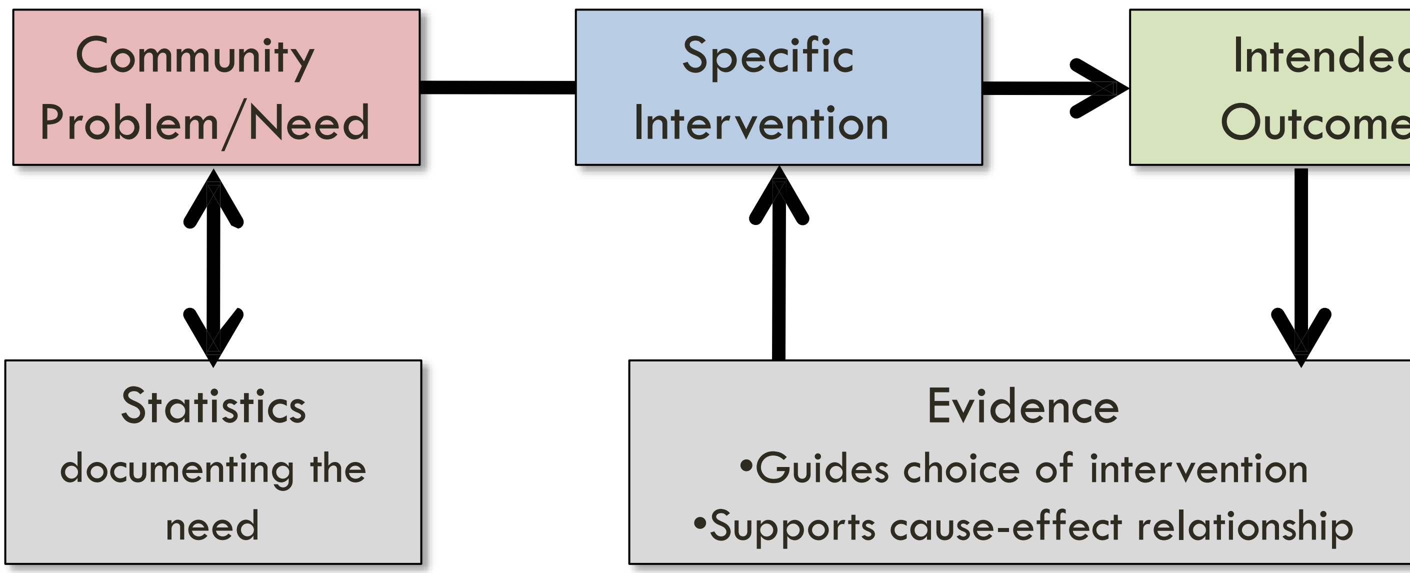

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THEORY OF CHANGE

Community Problem / Need

- What, specifically, is the problem?
- Why does this matter?

Statistics to Support Problem / Need

- What data tell you that this is a problem / need?
- For whom does the problem exist? Where does it exist?
- How pervasive is the problem?
- How serious is the problem?

THEORY OF CHANGE

Specific Intervention

- What is the specific SET of activities your members will do?
- With whom will members work?
- How often will the activities occur (e.g., how many sessions a week)?
- How long will each activity/session be?
- How long will the intervention last (e.g., how many total weeks of sessions)?

Evidence to Support Choice of Intervention

- How do you know this intervention is appropriate for your community problem / need?

THEORY OF CHANGE

Intended Outcomes

Because of the AmeriCorps members' service...

- Who will change?
- What knowledge, skills, attitudes or abilities will change?
- What behaviors will change?
- What conditions, environments, or policies will change?
- When will something change (short, long-term)?
- Does one change precede the other? Dependencies?

Evidence to Support Intended Outcomes

- How do you know the intervention will make things change?
- What changes are supported by the evidence? Under what circumstances?

THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK

Problem	Intervention	Outcome(s)
Specific need in the community we have chosen to address	*If members/ volunteers do this…*	*…then this will happen.*
State Problem **Documentation:** Describe statistics or research documenting the problem.	Succinctly describe intervention **Evidence:** Describe evidence documenting the effect of the intervention.	Describe positive and significant changes resulting from intervention

EXAMPLE LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM

ALIGN LOGIC MODEL AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Source	Output	Short Term Outcome	Medium Term Outcome
Logic Model Component			
Performance Measure			

WRAP-UP

How are you feeling?
What did you take away?

CREEHS CAN HELP!

We are happy to be a thought partner for your projects related to:

Program Design

- developing logic models/program theories
- specifying goals and objectives for projects

Data Collection and Management and Analysis

- collecting and managing data for performance measures
- designing and implementing evaluations for their programs

Performance Measurement

- operationalizing performance measures

Data Analysis and Reporting

- analyzing and interpreting data
- summarizing data and reporting findings

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