

PROJECT STAR TUTORIAL FOR AMERICORPS PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE MEASURES: INDICATORS, INSTRUMENTS, TARGETS TRANSCRIPT

Slide 1: Identifying Indicators, Instruments, and Target for Performance Measures (title slide)

Welcome to this tutorial for AmeriCorps State and National programs on identifying indicators, instruments, and targets for performance measures. In this tutorial, you will learn about the measurement details that must be included with each result statement in the performance measurement section of the AmeriCorps application. These elements, known as indicators, instruments and targets, clarify the type of data you will collect to measure each result and to report progress for performance measures.

If you have questions about the information presented in this tutorial, please contact Project STAR at 1-800-548-3656, or contact your program officer.

This tutorial is self-paced. The controls at the bottom of the window allow you to pause, move backward and forward, turn the audio on and off, and turn closed captioning on and off. Click the forward button when you are ready to advance to the next slide.

Slide 2: Agenda

This tutorial includes:

- A quick review of the basic elements of an AmeriCorps performance measure;
- Definitions for indicator, instrument, and target;
- Examples illustrating these same concepts; and,
- Additional resources

Slide 3: Basic PM Elements—Quick Review

Recall from the tutorial on the *Logic Model and Aligned Measures* that most elements of performance measures come straight out of the logic model.

The planning elements of an AmeriCorps program consist of the community need, inputs, and service activities.

- The community need identifies an unmet need that the AmeriCorps program will address.
- Inputs are the resources that the program will utilize to conduct activities.
- Activities are what AmeriCorps members do to address the community need.

The intended results of an AmeriCorps program are defined in terms of outputs and outcomes.

- Outputs document the delivery of services.
- Intermediate outcomes and end outcomes are positive changes that occur in the lives of beneficiaries, clients or members.

You need to identify measurement details known as indicators, instruments, and targets for outputs and intermediate outcomes. Let's learn more about each of these elements.

Slide 4: Indicators

An indicator is a specific, measurable item of information collected to determine progress toward achieving a desired result.

An indicator provides evidence that something has occurred.

Indicators are concrete and measurable.

Output indicators are usually expressed as the number of clients or beneficiaries served, while outcome indicators are may be phrased in terms of the number or percentage of beneficiaries who experience the desired change.

To see examples of output and outcome indicators for a youth mentoring program, position your mouse pointer over the yellow rectangles near the bottom of this slide.

Slide 5: Instrument

An instrument is a measurement tool that collects data from an identified data source to address specific indicators.

A data source is the person, organization, or place that can provide the information required by an indicator. A data source provides the information in the form of observable evidence needed to measure results.

An instrument is the specific document or form used to collect information from the data source. AmeriCorps programs can adapt existing instruments or develop their own. In some cases, you or another stakeholder may already collect this information.

Since an instrument can collect data for multiple indicators, it is sometimes possible to measure more than one performance measurement result using the same instrument.

To see examples of output and outcome instruments, position your mouse pointer over the yellow rectangles near the bottom of this slide.

Slide 6: Target

A target describes the *amount* of change anticipated in a given year.

The amount of change specified in a target equates to “success” for the performance measure.

The target should be stated in terms of the indicator, and should take into account how the instrument measures results.

For an output target, include the number of beneficiaries served, the minimum “dosage” of service to be provided to each person, and the time frame when the output will be achieved.

For an outcome target, include the number or percentage of beneficiaries who will experience change, specify the amount of change that will occur; and over what time period the change will occur.

To see examples of output and outcome targets, position your mouse pointer over the yellow rectangles near the bottom of this slide.

Slide 7: Tips for Developing Outcome Targets

Developing targets for outcomes can be challenging, especially if you are starting a new AmeriCorps program or undertaking new service activities. Here are some tips for developing outcome targets.

For starters, consider the resources (or inputs) available for your program and what's realistic given these resources.

Also, consider the community context. Working with disadvantaged populations, or addressing complex and longstanding problems may impose limits on the amount of change you can expect to see within a timeframe of one, two, or even three years.

Talk to other service providers and professionals in your community to get a sense of what is achievable.

Base targets on a combination of information from the relevant research literature and real-life program experience.

Remember that targets should strike a balance between being ambitious and striving for what is realistically achievable.

Targets are generally understood to be educated guesses even in the best circumstances, so be prepared to adjust targets based on experience.

Slide 8: Getting Specific: Moving from result to target

The information presented so far strongly suggests a tight relationship between indicators, instruments, and targets. In fact, each of these elements helps you “funnel down” from the abstract and general to the concrete and specific by progressively clarifying the result statement in terms of what will be measured and how it will be measured.

At the broadest level, the result statement answers the question, “What type of change do we expect for beneficiaries?”

The indicator specifies this change in measurable terms by asking the question, “How will we know if the change occurred?”

The instrument clarifies how the indicator will be measured by answering the question, “What method and tool will we use to capture information about the indicator?” Specific questions in the instrument are designed to measure the indicator.

At the most specific level, the target asks the question, “What *level* of success do we expect?” The target is expressed in the same language as the indicator and takes into account how the instrument will measure this indicator.

Slide 9: Additional Resources

You can find additional information, such as about application instructions and guidelines at <http://www.americorps.gov>.

In addition, a wealth of performance measurement resources is available at the National Service Resource Center, including:

- The Performance Measurement Toolkit,
- The Performance Measurement Builder,
- Guidance for developing instruments, and
- Packets of sample instruments

To find these resources, go to <http://nationalservice.gov/resources> and use the search engine to look for “americorps project star”, then click the search result for “Project STAR: AmeriCorps*State/National (Special Collection)”.

Slide 10: Indicators, Instruments, and Targets for National Performance Measures

For additional information on indicators, instruments, and targets for the National Performance Measures, visit the Resource Center, at <http://nationalservice.gov/resources>. Use the search engine feature to look for “national measures”, then click the search result for “AmeriCorps State and National Programs: National Performance Measures Pilot”.

Relevant resources on this web page include:

- Detailed Background Information on National Performance Measures, and
- Downloadable packets of sample instruments for National Measures in each Focus Area.

Targets for National Measures should be set based on program resources, service activities, and community context.

Slide 11: Finale

This concludes the tutorial on indicators, instruments and targets. For more information, contact your program officer or Project STAR. You can reach us by phone at 1-800-548-3656, or by email at star@jbsinternational.com. Project STAR technical assistance is free to Corporation grantees.