

## PROJECT STAR TUTORIAL FOR AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

### **THE LOGIC MODEL AND ALIGNED MEASURES**

#### **TRANSCRIPT**

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JAMES: Welcome to this Project STAR tutorial on The Logic Model and Aligned Measures. This tutorial will be helpful to program directors who would like to learn how to use this simple planning tool to develop aligned performance measures.

We recommend you look over the supplementary materials before viewing this tutorial. These materials can be accessed and downloaded from the web page where you found this tutorial. You can also contact Project STAR at 800-548-3656, or your state commission, with any questions you have.

In this tutorial, we will:

- Introduce the logic model and talk about some of its uses,
- Define components of the logic model, which include some basic performance measurement terms,
- Consider how a logic model can be used to develop aligned performance measures,
- View examples of logic models with aligned results,
- And we'll give you some tips for creating your own logic model, some practice exercises you can do at your leisure, and we'll direct you to some additional resources.

After you've viewed this tutorial, you will have a better understanding of the elements and uses of a logic model, in particular how constructing a logic model can help you think about aligned performance measures.

CLAUDIA: Can we start with an explanation of what a logic model IS, and what its value might be? If it's not a requirement of the Corporation, why do one?

JAMES: Sure. The Kellogg Foundation defines it this way - "A program logic model is a picture of how your program works—the theory and assumptions underlying the program... This model provides a roadmap of your program, highlighting how it is expected to work, what activities need to come before others, and how desired outcomes are achieved." A logic model can also help you explore the full range of outputs and outcomes. Once you've done that, you can decide which outputs and outcomes are appropriate for your performance measures.

A logic model is a simple diagram of how your program works— it's like a visual aid that shows the relationships between the key features of your program. The model can be conceptualized as two sections: program planning and the

intended results. The elements include the community need, inputs, activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes.

CLAUDIA: Okay, I see what it looks like, but I'm not sure how it's used.

JAMES: Well, for starters, going through the process of developing a logic model can help you clarify the results you're trying to achieve and assist in planning. The model can also help you communicate the program's value to stakeholders.

CLAUDIA: That's fine, but right now I'm more concerned with meeting the grant requirement to develop a set of aligned performance measures. How can a logic model help me figure that out?

JAMES: We'll show you how working out a logic model can help you think about performance measurement results in terms of alignment. That is, the results—outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes—that are directly related to your identified service activity.

CLAUDIA: Okay, that sounds like what I need. Let me see the diagram again.

JAMES: Okay, you can see that the logic model lays out how you'll achieve your program goals, which are based on the needs in your community, by combining resources (or inputs) and service activities to produce specific results, or the outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes. As you identify each of these things, all of the components should be in alignment; that is, they are built around the same activity and address your community need.

CLAUDIA: So this diagram can be read from left to right, which shows the relationship between the components. Can it go in another direction: up and down, or around in a spiral, or something else?

JAMES: Yes, this is just one way to diagram a logic model – there are many others, but they all have the same objective – to help show the relationship between what the program will do and what they expect to achieve. As you can see, your community need statement, your inputs, and your activities are all considered “program planning” components of your logic model. They describe why you are doing the project, the resources you have, and the specific activities you will do. Your outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes are your intended results; they are what you expect to have happen as a result of the program planning.

CLAUDIA: Okay. But can we break it down piece by piece? I've heard these terms before, but I want to make sure I understand them in this context.

JAMES: Sure, this will be a bit of a review for you then. Let's start with the first component, the community need your program is addressing. Your community need is the compelling problem or issue in your community that your service activity is designed to address.

Your community need statement is phrased as a problem that exists in your community, like "hiking trails in local parks have seriously deteriorated," or "third graders are reading below grade level."

CLAUDIA: I see– the community need statement sets the stage for your service activity– why members are doing what they're doing.

JAMES: Yes, and not only that, it describes a particular need that your end outcome will address. We'll talk more about that in a minute.

Let's look at the next piece of the logic model, inputs. Inputs are the resources you'll need to address the community need you've identified. Inputs could be human, financial, organizational, and community resources- both those your program will provide and those provided by other organizations or individuals. Some examples of inputs are:

- AmeriCorps members
- Supervision
- Community partners
- Equipment and Supplies
- Facilities
- Training
- Cash and In-kind resources.

CLAUDIA: Okay, that's clear enough. What's the next piece?

JAMES: The next piece of the logic model is the activity, or what the program is going to do with the inputs. Activities specifically describe what the AmeriCorps members will do to address the community need. Strong activity descriptions answer the questions "who, what, where, when, how, how long, and over what period of time."

CLAUDIA: Does the activity description need to be lengthy?

JAMES: It should be detailed enough to give a picture of what members will do, and show us how it will lead to the results.

CLAUDIA: Can you give me an example?

JAMES: Sure. 15 AmeriCorps members will tutor children one-on-one in reading at the ABC after school program, 3 times per week for 20 minutes at a time, from September through May, using teacher-identified curriculum.

CLAUDIA: So, going back to the diagram, where are we? It looks like we've just discussed the three elements on the left, or the planning side, of the diagram.

JAMES: That's right! Now let's move on to the three remaining elements, the intended results of the activity.

The first result is the outputs. Outputs are counts of the amount of service delivered or products created that members or volunteers have completed through the service activity.

CLAUDIA: Yes, this is sounding familiar.

JAMES: Outputs do not answer the question "what changed as a result of our service?" or provide information on benefits or other changes in the lives of beneficiaries. Outputs simply summarize some aspect of what has been produced and/or who has received service.

CLAUDIA: Okay, I see. So for these examples, "neighborhood parks will be cleaned," we would count the number of parks cleaned. For "students tutored in reading," we count the number of students tutored.

JAMES: Yes, very good. Outputs are counts of service or people served through your activity. Outcomes, on the other hand, look at the impact of services on beneficiaries. If you recall, there are two kinds of outcomes, intermediate outcomes and end outcomes. Let's talk first about end outcomes.

End outcomes are the more substantial outcomes in that they tie back to the community need. End outcome results address the community need. When you identify an end outcome, you should have evidence that the end outcome you chose really will address the community need.

End outcomes answer the question "so what?" What difference did we make? They represent the important changes that occur in the lives of the beneficiaries you are serving— the changes you envisioned that would directly address the stated community need.

CLAUDIA: Okay, I think I remember this. What was the one we skipped?

JAMES: Intermediate outcomes. Intermediate outcomes are also changes that have occurred in the lives of beneficiaries but they do not represent the final

result you are hoping to achieve. Instead, they're likely to be preconditions for more significant changes, or the end outcomes.

Intermediate outcomes might include quality indicators such as timeliness and client satisfaction that provide useful information for program management.

CLAUDIA: So, I forget now...are intermediate outcomes measured part way through the year?

JAMES: Not necessarily. "Intermediate" doesn't refer to an outcome measured at mid-year. Think of it as a result that, if achieved, is a probable pre-cursor to a more lasting and substantial result, or the end outcome.

CLAUDIA: Oh, okay. The logic model shows that. Output leads to intermediate outcome, which leads to the end outcome.

JAMES: Yes, good. Now that we've discussed each of the components of a logic model, let's take another quick look at the whole diagram.

Developing a logic model should produce an aligned set of performance measures because each step along the way flows from the previous step and follows an "if-then" logic.

- If the community has this need, then these are the appropriate resources and activities to address it.
- If we have these resources, then we can engage in these activities.
- If we engage in these activities, then we can expect to produce these outputs.
- If we produce these outputs, then we can expect some of the beneficiaries to experience this intermediate outcome.
- If some of the beneficiaries experience this intermediate outcome, then some of these same beneficiaries should also attain the end outcome.

CLAUDIA: Oh, okay! I see how this could be helpful now. Can you show me the whole model with an example?

JAMES: Sure. Here's an example of a very straightforward logic model built around children not paying attention in class because they are hungry. This is not a real program, but let's use it as a simple illustration of a basic logic model.

So, the community need is that because children don't eat breakfast, their hunger prevents them from paying attention in class. Inputs consist of the material and human resources that will be used for an activity that addresses the need.

CLAUDIA: The inputs are a pretty basic list, but the list seems like it includes all the things you would need.

JAMES: Right. So then, using these resources, volunteers perform the activity, which consists of making sandwiches to feed the hungry children. Outputs from this activity include some number of sandwiches being made, and some number of children being fed. Notice how this output is a count of service produced or people served, and it is a direct result of the activity that was performed. The output is aligned with the need, inputs, and activities.

CLAUDIA: Okay.

JAMES: So, what benefits occurred for these kids because they received sandwiches? The intermediate outcome described here is that they experience a decrease in hunger. The intermediate outcome is aligned with the need, inputs, activities, and output.

CLAUDIA: That seems like a substantial enough result that it should be an end outcome.

JAMES: It might serve as an end outcome in another circumstance, but remember that in this case, our community need statement is focused, ultimately, on the children's ability to pay attention in class. That's why the end outcome listed here was chosen— it is directly linked to the crux of this particular need statement. The end outcome is that children are better able to pay attention in class now. All elements of the model are aligned and follow an if-then logic.

CLAUDIA: Okay, that makes sense. Do you have a real program example?

JAMES: Sure, let's look at the park service example. Let's say our need is that our community's urban neighborhoods lack safe, clean open areas for people to unwind, for seniors to meet, for children to play outside. Our inputs are members, volunteers, supervision and clean-up tools, and our service activity is that members and volunteers clean up the neighborhood parks. The output is the number of parks cleaned. The intermediate outcome is that residents perceive parks as cleaner and safer. For example, people see that the playground equipment is in good working order and safe for children; old benches are replaced; dangerous litter such as broken glass and used drug paraphernalia has been cleared. The end outcome is that residents increase their use of neighborhood parks.

This is an aligned set of performance measures because the output, intermediate outcome, and end outcome follow an if-then logic. The end outcome is the big change you hope to achieve—that residents increase their use of neighborhood parks—and it ties directly back to your identified

community need. The intermediate outcome is a change that happens along the way that may be a precondition for the end outcome to occur.

CLAUDIA: It occurs to me that as we develop these models, we can't really just think in terms of left to right then, can we? It seems like you need to look at the need, then think about the end outcome, then decide if you have enough resources, or inputs to complete the work- or the outputs. Jump around a little.

JAMES: Right! Many programs find it useful to start with the end outcome and community need- what is the end result we hope to achieve?

Well, do you feel like a logic model scholar now? Are you ready to try a few exercises on your own anyway?

CLAUDIA: Sure!

JAMES: First, these puzzles that are kind of fun. You can practice constructing logic models in different program areas with these five puzzles. These are all available online in the Project STAR area of the Resource Center.

We also have a worksheet with a partially completed logic model posted on the webpage where you accessed this tutorial. The service activity is that AmeriCorps members will serve as mentors to at-risk students in grades 7 – 9. Take a look at the community need, inputs, and activity statement. Then your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to list what you think might be an appropriate output, intermediate outcome and end outcome.

CLAUDIA: Um...Does the worksheet come with an answer key?

JAMES: Yes, the worksheet includes a completed logic model example with results that align with the community need, inputs, and activity.

CLAUDIA: Okay, that sounds like good practice, but I'd like to take a stab at a logic model for my own activity.

JAMES: Great! Once you do, you'll have a set of aligned performance measures for your program. The worksheet with the logic model exercise includes a blank logic model on the last page. If you like, send your completed logic model to Project STAR and we can give you some feedback.

CLAUDIA: Okay, sounds kind of fun.

JAMES: Good. Now, before we go, let me just remind you that Project STAR has helpful logic model resources available online, including a worksheet, those puzzles we talked about earlier, and samples for environmental programs. Go

Project STAR Tutorial for AmeriCorps Programs, The Logic Model and Aligned Measures, Transcript

to [www.nationalservice.gov/resources](http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources) and search: project star, AmeriCorps, logic model. Click on “AmeriCorps Logic Model Resources.” From this page, you can also access “The AmeriCorps Program Applicant Performance Measurement Toolkit” if you haven’t already.

CLAUDIA: Well, those resources seem helpful, but what if I want to talk to a real person about this?

JAMES: No problem. If you have questions on logic models or anything around performance measurement, you can contact your state commission, or contact Project STAR by phone at 800-548-3656, or email us at [star@jbsinternational.com](mailto:star@jbsinternational.com). Remember: Project STAR’s assistance is free to CNCS grantees.

CLAUDIA: Well, thanks for your help.

JAMES: My pleasure!