

## **PROJECT STAR TUTORIAL FOR AMERICORPS PROGRAMS INTRODUCING NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

### **TRANSCRIPT**

#### **Slide 1: Introducing National Performance Measures (title slide)**

This tutorial provides an overview of the National Performance Measures for AmeriCorps State and National programs.

If you have questions about the information presented, 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 covers:

- National Performance Measurement:
  - Requirements for opting into the National Performance Measures
  - Choosing appropriate National Measures for your program
  - Aligning output with outcome
- National Performance Measurement Instrument Packets, including:
  - Considerations for Measuring National Performance Measures
  - Data Collection Challenges and Strategies
  - Sample instruments
- You will also learn about additional resources to help you implement your National Performance Measurement system.

#### **Slide 3: National Performance Measures**

Inspired by the Serve America Act of 2009, the National Performance Measures address six Focus Areas.

- Education
- Healthy Futures
- Environmental Stewardship
- Opportunity
- Veterans and Military Families, and
- Disaster Services

Within the first five of these Focus Areas, the Corporation has created National Performance Measures in order to aggregate the results of similar programs and demonstrate the impact of AmeriCorps at a national level. The Corporation has not yet created National Measures for the Disaster Services Focus area.

National data aggregation means it is especially important for programs to obtain unduplicated counts of the people they serve.

#### **Slide 4: National Performance Measures: Outputs and Outcomes**

Now that you have opted into the National Measures, the next step is to choose the outputs and outcomes for your anticipated program results.

Most national measures are outputs; however, some outputs are connected to prescribed outcomes.

In some cases, you must measure more than one national output and/or more than one national outcome. Carefully review the resources listed at the end of this tutorial to determine what national outputs and national outcome you will be measuring.

If you choose a National Measure output that does not have a corresponding National Measure outcome, then you will need to identify an applicant-determined outcome.

#### **Slide 5: National Performance Measures and Alignment**

National Performance Measures must be developed as an aligned set that includes an output and an intermediate outcome. Since most National Measures are outputs, you will need to add an intermediate outcome to form an aligned set of measures.

If you select a National Measure that is an output:

- First, check to see if a required National outcome exists for the National output you picked. If so, then you must use it. This is your intermediate outcome.
- Otherwise, if no required National outcome exists for your National output, then you must develop your own intermediate outcome.
- Finally, to round out the set of aligned measures, describe your end outcome in the application narrative.

### **Slide 6: Some National Measures Must Remain Together**

Certain National Measures must be kept together, meaning that if you select a particular National Measure, then you are also obligated to measure certain other performance measures in the same Focus Area.

Consult the application instructions and Project STAR's instrument packets to see if this requirement applies to any National Measures your program has adopted.

Here are a couple of examples to illustrate the situation.

- For the Education Focus Area, if you choose to measure unduplicated students who enroll in an AmeriCorps education program, then you must also measure how many students complete the program. Since these are both outputs, you must also select an outcome measure in the Education Focus Area in order to achieve alignment.
- For the Opportunity Focus Area, if you choose to measure unduplicated individuals receiving job placement services, which is an output, then you must also measure how many individuals are placed in jobs as an outcome.

Look carefully at the Corporation's application instructions and Project STAR's instrument packets for specific information about which National Measures must be kept together.

### **Slide 7: National Performance Measurement Instrument Packets**

Project STAR has developed a series of instrument packets for the National Measures. These packets are designed to jumpstart the process of implementing your performance measurement system using National Measures. A packet is available for all National Measures. Some packets describe two or more National Measures, while other packets describe only one National Measure.

Each packet includes:

- Definitions of Key Terms, which provides clarification of terminology to help you determine how to implement your service activities, who to serve, and how to implement your performance measurement system;
- Considerations for the National Performance Measure, which provides you with suggestions to keep in mind so that you can successfully reach your anticipated outputs and outcomes;
- Discussion of data collection challenges and strategies related to the National Measure;
- Sample instruments with instructions on how to use them; and, if applicable,
- Specific requirements to measure sets of National Performance Measures in combination.

**Slide 8: Considerations for National Measures**

Programs that adopt National Measures must engage in service activities that are consistent with these National Measures.

This means the service activities:

- Focus on achieving the same results addressed by the National Measures
- Conform to key terms defined in the National Performance Measures: Background Information; and,
- Provide clients with a sufficient “dosage” of service delivered by well-trained members so as to produce intended results.

Additional considerations revolving around outcomes include:

- Whether you can identify and measure appropriate intermediate outcomes that align with a National Measure output;
- Whether you can establish benchmarks to determine meaningful change; and,
- The availability of baseline or comparison data to measure change.

Look at instrument packets for the National Measures that interest you to learn more about these and other relevant considerations.

## **Slide 9: Data Collection Challenges & Strategies**

Collecting data for National Performance Measures requires careful planning and tracking. The National Measures packets provide information on specific challenges associated with each measure and recommended strategies for addressing these challenges. Let's briefly consider some of the most common ones.

- To obtain unduplicated counts of beneficiaries, it is recommended you use a unique identifier for each person, such as their name, address, or an ID number. Placing this information in a spreadsheet and sorting alphabetically or numerically will help you spot and remove duplicates.
- For persons who attend multiple class sessions, you should establish minimum attendance criteria and only count participants who meet these criteria as beneficiaries. An attendance sheet or similar device can help you keep track of participants' attendance.
- Following up with beneficiaries after they leave your program can be more successful if you obtain follow-up contact information while beneficiaries are still in the program. Diligent follow-up may require contacting former program participants several times.
- If you plan to rely on partner organizations to provide performance measurement data, determine in advance which organizations have the data, and the circumstances under which they are willing to share this information. Establish agreements in advance to ensure cooperation in getting needed data.
- To ensure the confidentiality and security of performance measurement data, work with partners in advance to develop systems and formal agreements that will protect the privacy of individuals' information.
- To obtain data in time for reporting, work with key stakeholders to agree upon a data collection schedule that is reasonable for them and which fits your reporting needs.

You can learn more about these and other data collection challenges and strategies by reviewing the National Measures instrument packets.

**Slide 10: Resources for National Measures**

Check out Project STAR's page on the National Service Resource Center to learn more about implementing National Measures.

To find this page, go to <http://nationalservice.gov/resources> and enter "national measures" in the search engine. Select the first result that comes up, "AmeriCorps State and National Programs: National Performance Measures Pilot".

The web page contains a wealth of useful material, including:

- Over 30 National Performance Measurement Instrument Packets that cover all of the national measures in five Focus Areas;
- The Corporation's *National Performance Measures: Background Information* for 2010 and 2011;
- The Corporation's *National Performance Measures Frequently Asked Questions* for 2010 and 2011; and,
- Instructions for entering performance measures in eGrants.

**Slide 11: Project STAR**

This concludes the tutorial *Introducing the National Performance Measures*. 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](mailto:star@jbsinternational.com). Project STAR technical assistance is free to Corporation grantees.