# Performance Measure Instructions

Performance measurement is the systematic process of tracking your program or project outputs and outcomes. The purpose of performance measurement is to:

- Recognize progress toward your program goals.
- Support program improvement by spotting and correcting issues.
- Ensure accountability to funders and stakeholders.
- Allow AmeriCorps and the Commission to tell the story of collective impact.

An output is a type of measure that tabulates, calculates, or records the actual products or services delivered by a program, such as students receiving tutoring or houses built. In other words, outputs are the amount of service provided. They measure the completion of activities and document the fact that individuals received services, products were created, or programs were developed.

An outcome is a type of measure that indicates progress toward achieving the intended result of a program, which usually represents a change in the situation of beneficiaries of service, such as educational achievement or housing. In other words, outcomes reflect the changes or benefits that occur.

All AmeriCorps applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure depending on the program's design.

National Performance Measures are AmeriCorps the Agency's predefined performance measures. There are National Performance Measures for each priority area of the Agency, and they include key definitions and guidance on how to measure and collect the necessary data.

Applicant-Determined Performance Measures are performance measures that do not fit into the National Performance Measures and thus are defined by the applicant.

## Performance Measurement Tips

All performance measures must reflect significant program activities whose outputs and outcomes are consistent with the applicant's program design. Applicants are not expected to have performance measures for every program activity. Outputs and outcome targets should be realistic and achievable. Do not overestimate or overstate what the program is able to accomplish.

When setting targets:

- where there are pre- and post-tests and/or where the individuals must respond to written or electronic prompts, be sure to account for response rate attrition
- set numerical targets, NOT percentages
- include a brief explanation of your minimum dosage required for a recipient to be included in your target.

The National Performance Measures all include definitions and guidance on how to measure/collect data. Do not select a performance measure if you cannot meet the requirements for it.

Define how you know when a change has occurred. For example:

- if you are measuring a change in academic performance, what threshold for an improvement in academic performance will count as a change? An improvement of how many points on an academic achievement test? An improvement of how many grade levels in literacy and/or numeracy? An improvement of how many percentage points in an overall subject grade?
- if you are measuring engagement in school via pre- and post-test, what difference must occur between the two tests to show an improvement?

## Example – Performance Measure Worksheet

| **Problem Statement** (brief 1-2 sentence statement) |
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| Despite the proven benefits, quality arts education yields on school engagement, personal development, and civic minded behaviors for vulnerable student populations (economically disadvantaged students, students of color and ELLs), access to quality arts education in the identified areas of need (Title I Schools) is not present or is very limited. |
| **Described Intervention** (small paragraph describing type of intervention, design, and dosage of intervention – intensity, frequency, and duration) |
| 25 Members serve full-time in 13 Title I schools to deliver issue-based "Citizenship and Art" curriculum to economically disadvantaged students, students of color and ELLS in Head Start-12 grade. Each member serves approximately 50 unduplicated students each week, with each student receiving an average of three arts education hours per week for the entire year. |
| **Output:**<br>**National Performance Measure Number/Title** OR **Applicant-Determined Performance Measure Title** |
| ED1A: Number of individuals served |

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| Output Target (enter number of beneficiaries – do not use percentages) |
| 1,250 |
| Output Measured By (unit of measure or population, i.e., children, miles, etc.) |
| Students receiving the "Citizenship and Art" curriculum |
| Output Instrument (enter data collection tool and method, define the minimum dosage necessary to be counted as successful) |
| Daily attendance sheets. Must participate in at least 10 sessions during the school year to be counted. |
| Outcome:<br>National Performance Measure Number/Title OR Applicant-Determined Performance Measure Title |
| ED27C: Number of students with improved academic engagement or social-emotional skills |
| Outcome Target (enter number of beneficiaries – do not use percentages) |
| 437 |
| Outcome Measured By (unit of measure or population, i.e., children, miles, etc.) |
| Students counted in ED1A that demonstrate at least one of the following: Improved attendance to school; Decreased youth disciplinary actions; or Increased youth participation in school or community events. |
| Outcome Instrument (enter data collection tool and method, define the minimum dosage necessary to be counted as successful) |
| Pre and post comparison of school attendance and disciplinary records; and beneficiary survey on school and community event participation. Must participate in at least 10 sessions during the school year to be counted. |