Understanding the Important Program Design Elements that are a part of the AmeriCorps Application

Amy Salinas and Jennifer Cowart

Tips for Participating

- Phones are muted;
- To ask questions, use the Questions panel OR
- Click on the hand icon to let us know you have a question; and
- Links and recording will be available after the session – www.nevadavolunteers.org

Guest Speakers

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Webinars

ALL webinars are from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- February 15 – Understanding the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity and Determining Organization Fit
- February 22 – Understanding the Important Program Design Elements that are a Part of the AmeriCorps Application
- March 8 – Understanding the Full Narrative and Performance Measurement Elements and Requirements
- March 29 – Understanding and Creating Your AmeriCorps Budget

Our Purpose

Understand the key areas of the application that speak specifically to your AmeriCorps program design:

- ❑ Narrative – theory of change; logic model; evidence; and member experience; and
- ❑ Logic Model Document

Session Topics

- What Makes AmeriCorps Unique
- Program Design Elements
  - Narrative
    - Theory of Change
    - Logic Model
    - Evidence
    - Member Experience
  - Logic Model

Guiding Principles

- Theory of Change
- Evidence Informed or Evidence Based
- Impact Focused

Get Things Done

Strengthen Communities

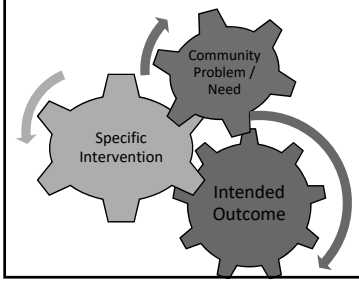
Develop Participants and Ensure a Strong Member Experience

Encourage Responsibility

Expand Opportunity

Focus on Brand Identification

Theory of Change

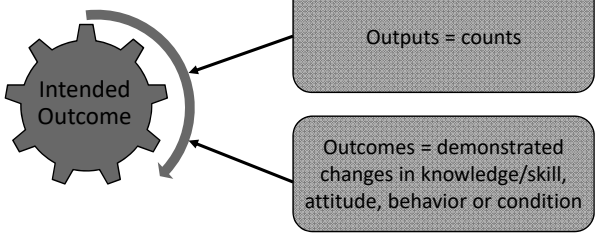


What is required to make your change initiative happen? And why do you think your set of interventions will move the needle along the problem?

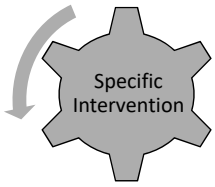
Theory of Change

? What is showing up in your community or communities that makes you think something needs to be done? What is the problem?
? What factors are causing this issue/problem to happen?
? How do you know? What evidence do you have? Is this evidence current?

Theory of Change



Theory of Change

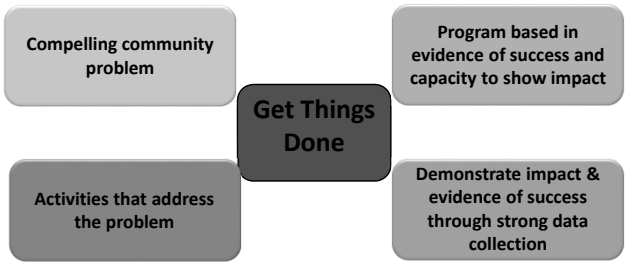


Specific set of activities in which your members will be engaged that will bring about the change for those who will benefit from the services.

Theory of Change

1. Plausible – Does the logic of your model seem correct: "if we do these things, will we get the results we expect?"
2. Feasible – Do you have enough resources to implement the intervention you have chosen? Does the time and money needed for the change correlate to the amount of change?
3. Meaningful – Are your intended outcomes important? Is the magnitude of change you expect worth the effort?

Guiding Principles



Guiding Principles

Compelling Community Problem

- Demonstrate there is a need in your community or communities.
  - Do you have data you can share to show the readers of your grant that there is a problem? Is it compelling?

Guiding Principles

Activities that address the problem and are based in evidence of success

- Well thought out plan on how you are going to use AmeriCorps members.
  - AmeriCorps members - individuals who you recruit and select who will serve for a period of time, typically 10-12 months, for a specific amount of time per year.
- Well thought out position descriptions
- Members are not given to you…you have to do outreach and recruit them yourself.
- Activities you propose for members to do have some likelihood of working.

Guiding Principles

Demonstrate impact & evidence of success through strong data collection

- Be able to report on and document key indicators of success - Outputs and Outcomes
  - How many people served will be a success?
  - How will you know when members are doing something that will help to eventually move the needle on the issue or issues your community faces?
- And anything you state that you will report on, you must be able to demonstrate you have strong systems in place to collect that information and can verify anything you report on with back up documentation

Guiding Principles

AmeriCorps Application

1. Narrative
   A. Executive Summary – 0 Points
   B. Program Design – 50 Points
   C. Organizational Capability – 25 Points
   D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy** - 25 Points

**See Budget

Application Narrative

A. Program Design (50%)

1. **Theory of Change and Logic Model (28 points)**
2. Evidence Base (16 points)
3. Notice Priority (0 points)
4. Member Experience (6 points)

Application Narrative

Theory of Change

- Intervention is responsive to the identified community problem
- Intervention is clearly articulated including: design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers
- Intervention is likely to lead to outcomes identified in theory of change
- Proposed outcomes in the narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community need
- Rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver intervention(s) is reasonable
- AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the problem

Application Narrative

Logic Model

Elements are logically aligned and depict:

- Summary of the community problem
- Inputs or resources necessary to deliver the intervention including:
  - Locations/sites members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver intervention
- Core activities that define the intervention/program model that members will implement/deliver including:
  - Duration – how long is the intervention
  - Dosage and frequency – how often and for how long the intervention happens
  - Target population – who specifically are the beneficiaries

Application Narrative

Logic Model

Elements are logically aligned and depict:

- Outputs that result from the intervention
  - Number of beneficiaries served
  - Types and number of activities conducted
- Outcomes (changes) that result from the intervention
  - Knowledge/skill
  - Attitude
  - Behavior
- Your performance measurements are clearly listed in the appropriate output and outcome columns

In the application narrative, applicants should outline your chosen measurements and discuss your rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Logic Models

What **specifically** needs to happen within your program that will help to move the needle on the larger change effort?

Logic Model

Application Narrative
Section called Program Design includes:

- Theory of change and logic model

Logic Model

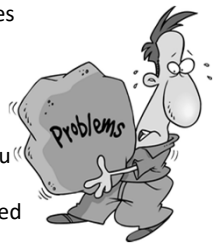
Logic Model Document

- Required part of your application
- Limited to 3 pages long

Problem	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	Outcomes		
				Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Community problem that the program activities are designed to address	What we invest	What we do	Direct products from program activities	Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions	Changes in behavior or action that result from participants' new knowledge	Meaningful changes, often in their condition or status in life

Logic Model

- ? What is showing up as an issue that makes you think something needs to be done?
- ? What is happening in your community/communities that merits attention?
- ? How do you know? What evidence do you have? Data? Assessment? Community Dialogue? Is all of this current and localized to the proposed service area?



Logic Model

Activities

- ? What specifically will members do to address the problem? As you think about their day and week, what are they doing?
- ? Who is the target population for their activities?
- ? How long and how often will the members do these activities?
- ? What will the duration, dosage, and frequency of the activities be for the beneficiaries?

Logic Model

Primary or Significant Activity:

- Where members put most of their effort and time
- All or most of the members participate
- Important to the program mission

Logic Model

Secondary Activities:

- Also important to program design;
- Do NOT serve as the primary thing that will move the needle along the change, but help with your outcomes or other areas on which you are trying to affect change

Logic Model

Impact

Outputs

- Counts
- Number of people served
- Services delivered
- Projects completed

Logic Model

IMPACT

- Short-Term Outcomes → Changes in knowledge, skills and/or attitudes
- Medium-Term Outcomes → Changes in behavior or actions
- Long-Term Outcomes → Changes in condition or status in life

Logic Model

- AmeriCorps Members
- Program Staff
- Funding
- Training and Curriculum

INPUTS

RESOURCES

- Sites
- Supervision
- Volunteers
- Research

Problem	Inputs	Activities/ Interventions	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Mid Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
SAFETY 7 target areas have a poverty rate between 27.7% and 47.45%. These areas experience high crime, and are concern areas for LRPD. Following are total number of burglary related reports in the last year by atom: 88060 (175); 89101 (99), 95060 (21), 89088 (303), 103096 (196), 117067 (167), and 123071 (341). The percentage of homes who experienced a burglary related crime in the last year are: 88060 (51%); 89101 (38%), 95060 (5%), 89088 (52%), 103096 (72%), 117067 (35%), and 123071 (34%).	SAFETY - 5 teams of 2 FT and 4 PT members each - 7 targeted atoms/neighborhood areas: 88060; 89101, 95060, 89088, 103096, 117067, and 123071 - Home Security Assessment Tool -LRPD provided training and crime stat support -2 Week Member Orientation from LRPD on assessments, community policing, neighborhood information, and more -Ongoing supervision from LRPD while members are on site in neighborhoods -Training throughout the year on public safety, neighborhood revitalization, etc.	SAFETY PRIMARY ACTIVITY: -Conduct security assessments on homes; Perform safety improvements i.e. deadbolt lock installation, painting house numbers on curbs, trimming shrubs/ bushes, etc. (intervention occurs daily until safety improvements are complete/duration will depend on # of improvements/ hazards) ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: -Public Training and information distribution; Monthly community meetings with LRPD and community leaders; Presentations on theft prevention and neighborhood safety; Create personalized	SAFETY APPLICANT DEVELOPED OUTPUT: 100 homes where security assessments were completed OTHER OUTPUTS -Number of handouts, brochures created and distributed; Number of public safety classes taught; Number of participants at public safety classes; Number of monthly community meetings conducted; Number of participants at monthly community meetings; Number of deadbolt locks installed; 100 personalized safety plans created; Conduct 100 pre/post surveys to test knowledge of public safety	SAFETY APPLICANT DEVELOPED OUTCOME: 95 homes where security was improved OTHER OUTCOMES: -Increase knowledge of public safety -Knowledge of 5 ways to prevent theft	SAFETY -Increased trust between and among LRPD and residents -Increased involvement with LRPD and safety programs -Increase feelings of safety in own home and neighborhood	SAFETY -Decrease in residential burglary

Logic Model

- Appropriate amount of detail and includes all key program components
- Depicts plausible relationships between program components
- Realistic
- Achieves consensus among your program's stakeholders that the model accurately depicts the program and its intended results

Logic Model

What is the desired long-term outcome?
Increase # of healthy families. ***But how?***
What is the desired intermediate outcome?
Increase # of families using healthy food practices. ***But how?***
What is the desired short-term outcome?
Individuals gain knowledge of healthy food choices. ***But how?***
What outputs are needed to achieve the outcomes?
200 families complete an educational workshop. ***But how?***
What activities are needed to achieve the outcomes?
Conduct four educational workshops per month. ***But how?***
What inputs are needed to achieve the outcomes?
Funding, program staff, AmeriCorps members, volunteers, research.

Logic Model

- Explains the intervention activities instead of presenting data demonstrating the specific problem/issue in the community the intervention will address
- Uses state or national data instead of local data
- Does not cite data for every specific community in which members will be placed
- Turns into a "data dump" with too many indirect or unrelated statistics
- Community need, interventions, and intended outcomes are not closely related and performance measure elements are not clearly defined
- Details are not consistent with the application narrative and performance measurements.

Application Narrative

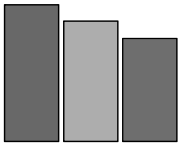
A. Program Design (50%)

1. Theory of Change and Logic Model (28 points)
2. **Evidence Base (16 points)**
3. Notice Priority (0 points)
4. Member Experience (6 points)

Evidence

Evidence Base (16 points)

Evidence Tier & **Evidence Quality**



Evidence

Evidence-Informed → Evidence-Based

1. Practitioner/organization knowledge and research
2. Qualitative studies
3. Findings from performance measures, basic research, strong logic model and history of demonstrating positive results

Rigorously evaluated by utilizing a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental evaluation with demonstrated positive results.

Evidence Narrative

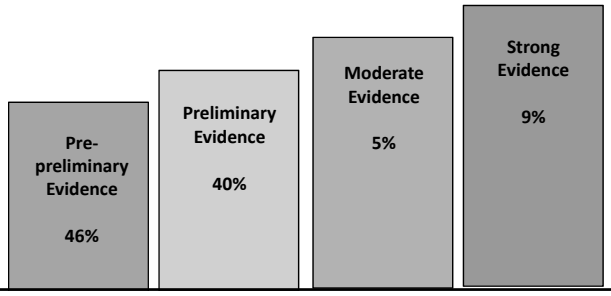
- State the evidence tier in which they think they qualify.
- Clearly indicate and describe the evidence that supports the highest evidence tier for which the program is eligible.
- Describe the complete body of evidence that supports the program intervention including evidence from lower tiers.

NOFO – Pages 16-17

and

Mandatory Supplemental Guidance – Pages 4-6

Evidence



Evidence

Pre-Preliminary

No Outcome or Impact evaluation of the intervention proposed in the application

Must show how evidence informed:

- Collected data along same performance measurements,
- using best available knowledge and research to guide the design

Evidence

Preliminary Evidence

Has up to 2 outcome evaluation reports that evaluated the same intervention.

Outcome evaluations have to either:

- Be conducted internally; or
- By an entity external to the application

The study design also must include:

- Pre and post-assessments without a comparison group; or
- Post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups

Evidence

Moderate

Submits up to 2 well-designed and well-implemented studies of their own program that evaluated the same intervention described in this application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes of interest.

Must use experimental design evaluations (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or Quasi-Experimental Design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups.

Evidence

Strong Evidence

Demonstrates that the intervention described in the application has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state level using a well-designed and well-implemented QED (quasi-experimental design) or RCT (random control trial) of their own program. The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization.

Evidence Narrative

In the Evidence Tier section, applicants must:

1. summarize the study design and key findings of any evaluation report(s) submitted; and
2. describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies.

Must also include:

- Date the research or evaluation was completed and the time period for which the intervention was examined
- Study's relevance to the proposed intervention
- Target population studied (e.g. the demographics)
- Methodology utilized in the study
- Description of the data, data source and data collection methods
- Outcomes or impacts examined and the study findings
- Strength of the findings

Application Narrative

A. Program Design (50%)

1. Theory of Change and Logic Model (28 points)
2. Evidence Base (16 points)
3. **Notice Priority (0 points)**
4. Member Experience (6 points)

Application Narrative

NOTICE

NOFO – Page 5

Notice Priority (0 points)

- Program is within one or more of the 2019 AmeriCorps funding priorities
- Program meets all of the requirements detailed in the NOFO and in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance

Application Narrative

A. Program Design (50%)

1. Theory of Change and Logic Model (28 points)
2. Evidence Base (16 points)
3. Notice Priority (0 points)
4. **Member Experience (6 points)**

Application Narrative

Member Experience (6 points)

AmeriCorps members will gain skills & experience as a result of training and service which will be valued by future employers.	Recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.	Foster an inclusive service culture, where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and service

Resources

- Webinar Power Point
- CNCS Self-paced tutorials:
  - Theory of Change
    - http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/designing-effective-action-change
  - Evidence
    - http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/americorps/building-evidence-effectiveness

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