

AmeriCorps Grant Writing Workshop

Theory of Change & Logic Models

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Session Outline



1. Theory of Change: Terms, Examples, Resources
2. Logic Models: Terms, Examples, Resources
3. General Tips and Resources



Session Goals

- Solid understanding of CNCS expectations for **Theory of Change** and **Logic Models**
- Awareness of the **alignment** between your *Theory of Action, Logic Model* and *Program Design Narrative*
- **Equipped with CNCS resources** to help you in the future (after this presentation!)

Situating ourselves, our projects, and contexts ...

Culture and context are “dynamic systems of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others” (Gay, 2010, p. 8).

Alignment and evidence informs everything...

Program Design Alignment

Theory of Change ~ Logic Models ~ Application Narrative

Evidence

Performance Measures ~ Quality Data Systems ~ Evaluation



Theory of Change

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Terms



- **“Theory of change”**: Underlying idea of how you believe your program will create change
- **“Logic model”**: Communicates how a program works by showing relationships between program components
- **“Program design”**: Where your goals, activities, objectives and outcomes come together

Theory of change and logic models are:

- 38% of your points for program design in peer review
- 19% of your points at the CNCS competitive level

Alignment and evidence informs everything...

Program Design Alignment

Theory of Change ~ Logic Models ~ Application Narrative

Evidence

Performance Measures ~ Quality Data Systems ~ Evaluation



Straight from the RFP: Theory of Change (page 18)

- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

What is a program's Theory of Change?

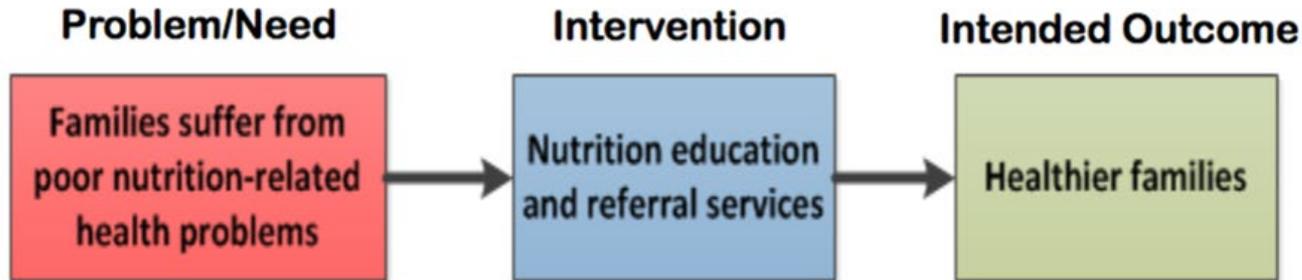
- The general underlying idea of how you believe your intervention will create change.
- There are three main elements:



For an overview of theory of change and evidence, refer to the modules, “Designing Effective Action for Change” and “Evidence: What It Is and Where to Find It”, respectively, located on the Knowledge Network.

Example of a program's Theory of Change

Theory of change for a nutrition assistance program:



Visit: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/npm/toc-powerpoint.pdf>

or

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/OpAC%20Logic%20Model%20draft%20in%20progress.pdf>

Assessing your Theory of Change

	<i>Indicate to what extent each statement is true.</i>			
	Not at all true	Somewh at true	True	Not applicabl e
Theory of Change				
There is a coherent, logical program theory. Strategies and activities are designed to address a clearly identified and defined problem or need. There is a logical connection between the program strategies and activities and the intended outcomes or desired changes. Goals and objectives are articulated and attainable with the available resources. (The program has a logic model.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program participation is clearly defined and distinguishable from nonparticipation. There is no ambiguity about who is in the program and who is not.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a shared understanding among program leadership and staff about the core elements of the program and the context in which the program operates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is agreement across the program leadership and staff as to what the expected program outcomes are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear Time Frame for the Program				
The intervention has a clearly defined timeframe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a reasonable and shared expectation around the timeframe for when observable/measurable outcomes in the short, intermediate or long term will occur.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CNCS Theory of Change E-Course

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/planning-evaluation>



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Member & Volunteer Development

Online Courses

Planning an Evaluation

Investing time in planning an evaluation helps to ensure that your evaluation will produce useful information for program improvement.

- ⊕ Laying the Groundwork Before Your First Evaluation
- ⊕ Logic Models
- ⊕ Developing Research Questions
- ⊕ Designing an Evaluation
- ⊕ Writing an Evaluation Plan
- ⊕ Budgeting for an Evaluation
- ⊕ Recruiting and Managing an Evaluator
- ⊕ Conducting a Needs or Readiness Assessment



Planning an Evaluation

Investing time in planning an evaluation helps to ensure that your evaluation will produce useful information for program improvement.

⊕ Laying the Groundwork Before Your First Evaluation

⊖ Logic Models

AmeriCorps State & National

Logic Models: This course introduces the key components of a logic model and discusses how logic models can be used to support daily program operations and evaluation planning.

- Logic Model Slides ([PDF](#)) ([PPT](#))
- Access the recording of the Logic Model presentation held on October 23, 2014 [here](#). ([Description of audio](#).)

Social Innovation Fund (SIF)

- College Preparation example ([PDF](#))

⊕ Developing Research Questions

⊕ Designing an Evaluation

Logic Models

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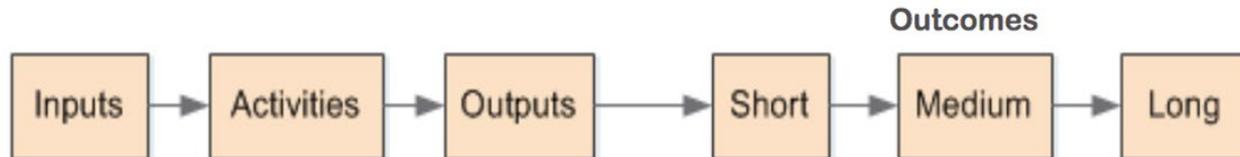


Straight from the RFP: Logic Model (page 18)

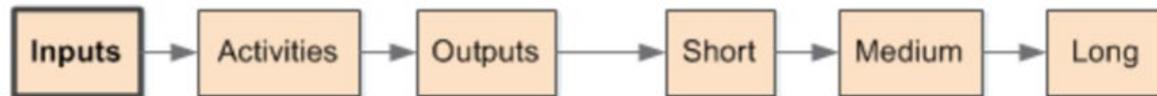
- A summary of the community problem/need outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including, but not limited to:
 - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
 - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
 - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (e.g., number of beneficiaries served). If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

What is a Logic Model?

- A detailed visual representation of a program and its theory of change.
- Communicates how a program works by depicting the intended relationships among program components:
 - Inputs or resources
 - Activities
 - Outputs
 - Outcomes

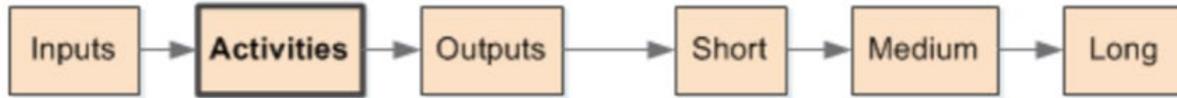


Key components of a Logic Model



- **Inputs or resources** include the human, financial, organizational, and community resources available for carrying out a program's activities.
- Examples:
 - Funding
 - Program staff
 - AmeriCorps members
 - Volunteers
 - Training
 - Research

Key components of a Logic Model



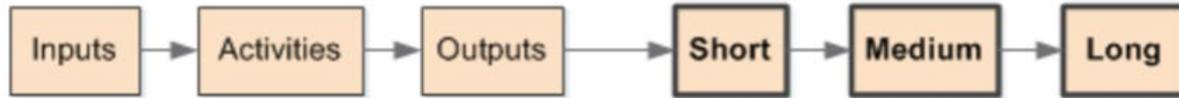
- **Activities** are the processes, tools, events, and actions that are used to bring about a program's intended changes or results.
- Examples:
 - Workshops on healthy food options
 - Food preparation counseling
 - Referrals to food programs and resources

Key components of a Logic Model



- **Outputs** are the direct products of a program's activities and may include types, levels and targets of services to be delivered by the program.
- Examples:
 - # individuals attending workshops
 - # individuals receiving services
 - # individuals receiving referrals

Key components of a Logic Model



- **Outcomes** are the expected changes in the population served that result from a program's activities and fall along a continuum, ranging from short to long term results:
 - Short-term: changes in knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes (e.g., ↑ knowledge healthy choices)
 - Medium-term: changes in behavior or action (e.g., ↑ adoption of healthy food practices)
 - Long-term: changes in condition or status in life (e.g., ↑ food security)

Difference between outputs and outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct products of a program's activities/services• Often expressed numerically or quantified in some way• Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none"># attending workshops# receiving services# receiving referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes resulting from a program's activities/services• Quantify changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition• Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none">↑ knowledge healthy choices↑ adoption healthy practices↑ food security

CNCS Logic Model Template

Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	Outcomes		
			Short-Term	Medium -Term	Long-Term
What we invest (# and type of AmeriCorps members)	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

Example AmeriCorps “Food for All” Program

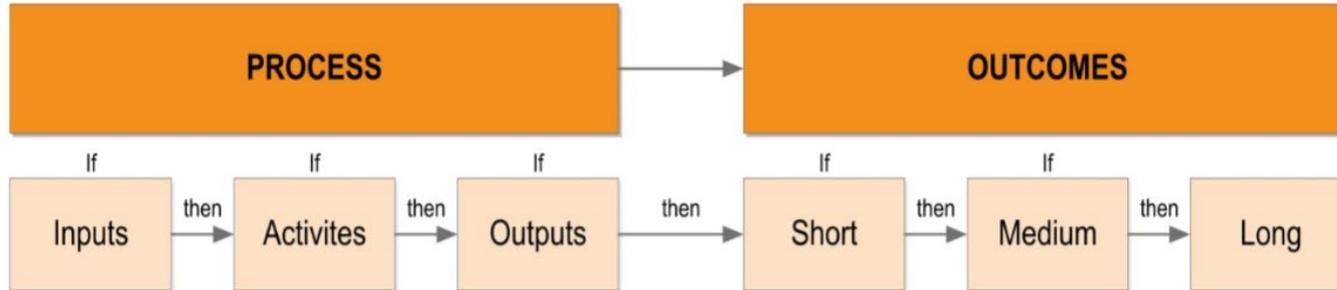
Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<i>What we invest</i>	<i>What we do</i>	<i>Direct products from program activities</i>	<i>Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions</i>	<i>Changes in behavior or action that result from participants' new knowledge</i>	<i>Meaningful changes, often in their condition or status in life</i>
Food for All Local Partners Professional Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chefs • Nutritionists • Financial Professionals AmeriCorps Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Local • Host sites Culinary and Nutrition Education Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Local 	Volunteer Management Curricula and material development Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Volunteer Course Coordination Other Food for All-related educational events Program promotion Partnership development and maintenance	# volunteers # courses held # of Food for All-related educational events held # of thriving programs operating through local partners # beneficiaries	Participants <u>increase knowledge of</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food resource management practices • Food safety practices • Healthy nutrition practices • Cooking techniques Participants <u>increase skills in</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking • Food resource management Participants <u>increase self-efficacy for</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At-home meal prep • Ability to manage food resources • Making healthy family food decisions Participants <u>improve attitudes towards</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy foods • Trying new foods 	Participants increase food resource management practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meal planning • Price comparison • Making grocery lists Participants increase food safety practices Participants improve nutrition practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F/V consumption • LF dairy consumption • Whole grain consumption • Low-sodium • Low-fat • Healthy choices when eating out • Healthy beverages Participants increase at-home meal preparation	Improve food security for families Increase number of families eating healthy foods Improve healthy food environment for children

Example AmeriCorps Wildlife Program

Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
What we invest (# and type of AmeriCorps members)	What we do	Direct products from program activities	Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions	Changes in behavior or actions that result from new knowledge	Meaningful changes, often in condition or status in life
<p>Cash and in-kind project support</p> <p>1 Program Director</p> <p>10 AmeriCorps S/N Members</p> <p>2 VISTA members</p> <p>1 NCCC team (10 members)</p>	<p>Provide individual case management to high school seniors to include: tutoring sessions, organizing and chaperoning college campus visits, training in financial aid, researching scholarship opportunities, developing college and career plans with students, mock interviews and resume writing assistance</p> <p>VISTA members develop a system for data collection and analysis, for resource development, student engagement, and curriculum design. The VISTAs also develop and strengthen volunteer and mentoring program opportunities.</p> <p>NCCC carry out the logistics for a newly developed annual "Life After High School" Fair.</p>	<p># of high school seniors tutored</p> <p># of campus visits completed</p> <p># of high school seniors completing at least one campus visit</p> <p># of mock interviews completed</p> <p># of resumes reviewed</p> <p># of dollars raised</p> <p># of mentors trained in student engagement curriculum</p> <p># of individuals trained to use data collection system</p> <p># of Volunteers engaged</p> <p># of partnerships established (with business, military branches, colleges and local AmeriCorps programs)</p> <p># of individuals engaged as presenters at Fair.</p>	<p>Seniors report feeling more knowledgeable about their post-secondary opportunities</p> <p>Seniors report feeling more confident in their ability to compete for college admission or career opportunities</p>	<p>Seniors submit applications for one or more of the following: job, internship, college, financial aid, scholarships, military service</p> <p>Seniors interview for college, a job or internship, or military or national service opportunities</p> <p>Trained volunteers augment AmeriCorps member activities and assist NCCC teams with logistics for the Life After Fair.</p>	<p>All graduating seniors know their immediate next step in life as they either have a job opportunity or internship or are enrolled in the military, AmeriCorps or a post-secondary institution.</p> <p>Volunteers take over implementing major components of the student engagement curriculum, mentor training, and Life After High School Fair.</p>

Develop your own Logic Model

- Two main approaches are used to create a logic model:
 - Reverse logic (right to left) – asks “but how” questions
 - Forward logic (left to right) – uses “if...then” statements



See the following for detailed guidance on logic model development:

https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Logic%20Model%20Slides%20_05.28.14st10.17_0.pdf

Assess your own Logic Model

- Consider asking the following questions:
 - **Level of detail:** Does your model contain an appropriate amount of detail for its intended use? Does it include all key program components?
 - **Plausible:** Does the logic of the model seem correct? Are there any gaps in the logic of the program?
 - **Realistic:** Is it reasonable to assume that the program can achieve the expected outcomes?
 - **Consensus:** Do program staff and external stakeholders agree that the model accurately depicts the program and its intended results?

CNCS Logic Model & Evaluation Resources

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation>



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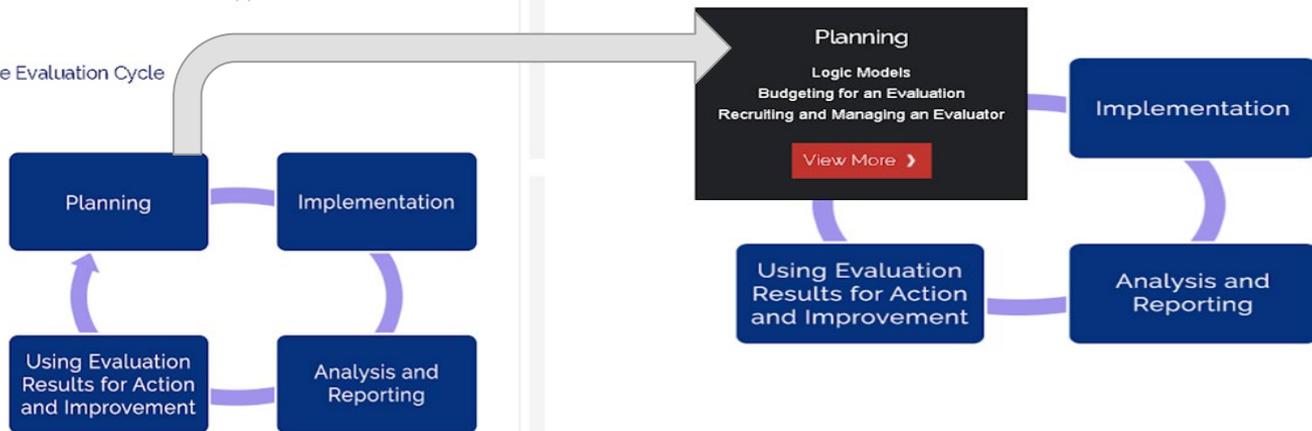
Recruitment

Senior Corps

Evaluation Resources & Training

Evaluation is a powerful tool for improving a program and increasing its ability to serve people more efficiently and effectively. It gives programs an opportunity to test their interventions, adjust services to best meet community needs, and collect data to support their work.

The Evaluation Cycle



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The Evaluation Cycle

Program Design Narrative

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Alignment and evidence informs everything...

Program Design Alignment

Theory of Change ~ Logic Models ~ Application Narrative

Evidence

Performance Measures ~ Quality Data Systems ~ Evaluation



Tips from Program Officers and Evaluators

- Give yourself enough time!
- Numbers should align between Theory of Change, Logic Model, and Program Design narrative
- Use detail on dosage, duration, and frequency of intervention
- Ensure alignment between program design and your members' activities
- Balance a coherent and specific program design with the inherent variability of the work we do

Tips from Program Officers and Evaluators

- Use the CNCS rubrics to draft and rate your narrative
- Logic model
 - Keep to 3 pages maximum (strict limit)
 - Include PMs and include a direct reference to national PMs
 - Not everything in this section needs to be measured
 - Get information in the right box (outputs do not equal outcomes, etc.)

AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Resources

- AmeriCorps State and National sets aside 1% of total grant funds to award grants to eligible federally recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations.
- The FY2016 AmeriCorps Indian Tribes portfolio includes 18 program grants and 3 planning grants, a total of 21 grants for \$3.7 Million and 208 AmeriCorps members serving in Native communities around the country.

AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Resources

AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grants Website:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2017/fy2017-ameri-corps-indian-tribes-grants>

Marshfield Clinic Tribal AmeriCorps Resources:

<https://cco.marshfieldclinic.org/tribalameri-corpsprogram/>

Tribal AmeriCorps Website:

<https://tribalameri-corps.org/>

Tribal AmeriCorps Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TribalAmeriCorps/>



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