Theory of Change & Evidence

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Theory of Change

- Demonstrates a well-specified framework
- Identifies key components of the proposed project
- Logic Model = visual representation of the theory of change
Main Elements

1. Community Problem/Need
2. Specific Intervention
3. Intended Outcome
Community Problem/Need

Data describing the community problem/need should address:

› **Scope**: what is the severity of the need for those affected? (number of those affected)

› **Significance**: if your application was not funded, what would be the impact to the community?

› **Causes**: why does the need exist? (historical data)
Specific Intervention

- Specific set of activities in which Members/volunteers will engage
- Most effective strategy to bring about change
- Supported by evidence
  - What have others tried?
  - Were previous interventions by others successful?
  - Are you duplicating an intervention that is currently being carried out by another organization? What will you do differently?
Specific Intervention - Elements

- **Design:** who does what?

- **Dosage:**
  - *frequency*- how often?
  - *intensity*- how much?
  - *duration*- how long?
Intended Outcome

- What is the change or changes your program wants to make?
- What results do you desire from implementing your proposed AmeriCorps program? Focus on the beneficiaries and the community problem/need; not the program process.
- What are your Outputs and Outcomes?

  - **Outcome**: 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. For example, increased reading level by 2 grades.

  - **Output**: A type of measure that tabulates, calculates, or records the actual products or services delivered by a program, such as students receiving tutoring services.

  - **Performance Measure**: A value or characteristic that measures progress toward goals, and also used to improve progress, reduce risks, or improve cost-effectiveness. For example, student has attended 4 sessions of tutoring.
Evidence

- Includes studies/evaluations conducted that should be specific to your intervention(s)

- Verifies that the proposed intervention(s) will be effective for the proposed community need
What can we learn from evidence?

- **New Programs**
  - Which intervention should we use?
  - What dosage should we implement to achieve the intended outcome?
  - Who does what?

- **Existing Programs**
  - Did a change occur? If so, is it documented?
  - Can you verify that the change occurred as a result of services provided by your AmeriCorps program?
  - Did we achieve the intended outcome?
  - Should we continue using the current intervention, modify it, or select a new one?
Assessing Evidence

Criteria:
1. Is it relevant?
2. Is it compelling?
3. Is it up-to-date?
4. Is it objective?
Q1: Evidence is a body of available facts that allows you to determine whether a proposition is true.

True or False?
TRUE
Q2: If your program is not meeting its performance measures or outcomes, you should not modify its theory of change and logic model.

True or False?
Q3: Negative, positive, and even no findings can help you improve your program.

True or False?
TRUE
Thank you! You can contact MCSC staff for questions and technical assistance at (573) 751-7488 or (877) 210-7611. Or e-mail at mcsc@ded.mo.gov.