AmeriCorps State
Sample Evaluation Plan for an Internal Evaluation

This Sample Evaluation Plan was developed by OVCS. Evaluation plans can be designed in many different ways. Using this sample template is optional; you can modify it, use other models, or design an evaluation plan that meets your program's needs.

I. AmeriCorps Program Information

Date: 6/1/2012

Program Name: AmeriCorps ABC Learning Corps **Program ID:** 07ACHMI0020098

Legal Applicant: MRB School District

Contact Person: Ken Francis, Program Director

Phone/email: 888-888-8888 kfrancis@test.com

II. Program Summary

Program description and primary activities:
AmeriCorps ABC Learning Corps provides reading tutoring to at-risk third graders using AmeriCorps members and community volunteers in ten elementary schools in the MPD School District. The one-on-one reading tutoring occurs both during the school day and as part of the after-school program averaging three contacts per student per week for 20 minutes each session. Students are identified for participation in the program by teachers based on their reading proficiency and their resulting overall risk for academic failure.

III. Evaluation Plan Overview

1. Evaluation classification:
This evaluation will be conducted as an internal evaluation, using an internal evaluator.

2. Role of the evaluator:
The internal evaluator assisted in the development of this Evaluation Plan; she will also take a lead role in the actual evaluation process.

3. Evaluator qualifications:
Robin Smith is a program specialist for the MRB School District. She has five years experience evaluating numerous grant-funded projects, ranging in size from $25,000 - $1,000,000, for such funders as the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of Education, the Library of Congress, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice. Robin Smith was chosen due to her excellent qualifications as an evaluator in the field of education, and prior experience

with all aspects of the AmeriCorps ABC Learning Corps program. She has knowledge of the AmeriCorps ABC Learning Corps Program, but has a strict organizational directive to provide accurate and useful information in this evaluation.

4. Evaluation timeline and completion of evaluation report:
The beginning of Year One of the grant will be primarily dedicated to completing the planning and finalizing the general evaluation approach outlined in this plan, as well as finalizing our data collection tools and systems. Data collection on short-term outputs will be conducted during this first year, as well as data on intermediate outcomes that include instruments that will be completed during the course of the Program Year (i.e., pre- and post-test results on math and literacy). A Year-One evaluation update will be completed to assess these results. The collection portion of the evaluation will continue in the first quarter of Year Two and run through the full program year, with another evaluation update completed at the close of that Program Year. The first quarter of Year Three will be focused on data analysis and the preparation of the findings and recommendations for the final report. The report will be completed by the internal evaluator by November 31, 2014. In December 2014, this evaluation will be debriefed by the evaluator and stakeholder representatives; and then a post-evaluation action plan will be prepared by Ken Francis. This post-evaluation action plan will be implemented in 2015.

5. Participants who developed the Evaluation Plan:
Ken Francis – AmeriCorps ABC Learning Corps, Program Director
Robin Smith – MPD School District Program Specialist, Internal Evaluator

6. This evaluation plan aims to serve the following purposes in addition to meeting AmeriCorps funding requirements:

- To determine whether program targets are realistic
- To assess program output and program outcomes
- To report to other funders
- As a management and decision making tool

7. Projected use of findings:
The process evaluation findings will allow us to make more informed decisions toward continued improvement of ABC's reading tutoring services. We want to train our tutors (both AmeriCorps members and community volunteers) to more effectively provide high quality tutoring to our students. The outcome evaluation findings will enable us to decide whether the increased reading skills of students are in fact, the result of our program services. The evaluation will provide us with information on causality. In addition to the Corporation, we will report our findings to other supporters/stakeholders, including funders and community partners. The evaluation findings will also be applied to improving promotion and outreach activities for recruiting new AmeriCorps members, new community volunteer tutors, nonprofit partners, and strategic business partners.

IV. Audiences

1. Primary stakeholders for this evaluation:

- Corporation/State Commission
- AmeriCorps Program staff and members
- Students tutored and their teachers
- Elementary school managers
- Community Partners

2. Use of evaluation results for these primary stakeholders:

As a formula-funded program, OVCS will require us to submit an evaluation report when we re-apply for continued funds in 2015; therefore OVCS is an important stakeholder for our program evaluation. We also want to show our state partners that we are making a difference in our community because we want their continued support assisting us in reaching out to the community to obtain matching funds. Our program staff members are also important stakeholders, as outside feedback on how our program is really working will help us in future decision-making and validation of our work. Lastly, our community partners are critical to our ability to provide services in the community; our continued collaboration allows us to place AmeriCorps members at their sites. Our partners have asked us for evaluation results of our program so that they can take this information to their institutional decision makers who determine whether or not to continue participation in our program.

V. Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Questions to be answered by this evaluation:

In consultation with our internal evaluator, we identified the following key questions that our evaluation will address. Additional detailed questions will be determined when our evaluation plan is refined.

Process Evaluation Questions:

- Is our tutoring model being implemented with integrity by both AmeriCorps members and community volunteers? If not, why not?
- Do the sites' institutional infrastructure support the services provided by the AmeriCorps ABC Learning Corps? If so, how so; if not, why not?
- Are there any modifications that we need to make in our service delivery based on our outcome findings?

Outcome Evaluation Questions:

- Have students in the ABC Learning Corps Reading Tutoring Program improved in their reading ability as anticipated, after their participation in the program?
- If students improved in their reading ability, how much change occurred, in which areas, and in who have these changes taken place?
- What ABC Learning Corps tutoring practices caused the reading ability changes in students?
- How will the outcomes of students enrolled in the ABC Learning Corps Reading Tutoring Program compare with similar students not served by any tutoring program?
- What other causal factors have an impact (positive or negative) on the desired program

outcomes?

VI. Evaluation Design

Our evaluation approach will employ a variety of research designs, including exploratory, descriptive, and quasi-experimental designs. Based on these designs, appropriate data collection methods and instruments will be used to gather information for evaluating the attainment of the program objectives. These designs were identified in consultation with our internal evaluator.

1. Summary:

Exploratory design – The evaluator will conduct a quick assessment to verify the need for tutoring services in the school district, which students need this service, and if students needing help are participating in the tutoring program. A literature review of program designs and results of similar scientifically-based tutoring programs will be conducted and compared with ABC Learning Corps tutoring services. This review will inform us of the most effective program designs and performance measures to consider.

Descriptive design – The evaluation methods relating to the descriptive design will include service utilization studies, opinion polls, client satisfaction surveys, outcome surveys and best practice surveys. The descriptive design, along with information from the exploratory study, will respond to the process, intermediate outcome, and end outcome related questions.

Quasi-experimental design – The evaluator will select a number of students meeting specified criteria for evaluation. The established criteria will include, but will not be limited to, active participation in the program, ability to establish a stable baseline and to stay with the program, available school data, and willingness to be studied. The reading skills of the selected students will be measured at baseline (pre-tutoring phase), and after the tutoring starts, over several assessment points to monitor the changes. The quasi-experimental design will include case studies of the students to provide a human face highlighting the possible effects of the intervention (tutoring).

The ABC Learning Corps Reading Tutoring Program results will be compared with data gathered from existing records or reports of the general school/district data on students reading and/or with those students who are on the waiting list and have not yet received tutoring.

2. Data Types

We will collect two kinds of data. For the process assessment portion of our evaluation, we will collect data on the integrity of implementing our program model. This data will include the number of hours of reading tutoring provided per student, the number of tutoring sessions per week over what period of time, the tutoring methods used, etc. For the outcome assessment portion, we will utilize the data we currently collect for our annual performance measures, i.e. student outcomes including reading skill improvement and overall increases in reading proficiency.

There are several data sources for this evaluation.

- Information on ABC's program model implementation will be collected from AmeriCorps members and their supervising teachers.
- Data on student outcomes in the tutored group will be collected from school district staff and teachers.
- Data on the comparison group students/classes will also be collected from school district staff and teachers.

3. Ethical considerations for this evaluation:

ABC Learning Corps has established guidelines for protecting the confidentiality of all service recipient records. All ABC staff are required to complete training on participant protection and confidentiality.

Prior to participants' involvement in the program, procedures that safeguard their privacy and confidentiality will be presented both in English, and if necessary in their primary language. The voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw from the program at anytime without prejudice, potential risks, and the use of data collected through this project will also be discussed. Limitations on confidentiality for minors as well as adults will be explained. Risks are not anticipated, but we will inform the participants about the nature of instruments and the approximate length of time for completion.

Participants and their guardians will then be asked to review and sign the proper consent documents, i.e., consent to participate form, parental permission, or assent form. When appropriate, implied consent or verbal consent will also be used. However, no participants will be refused services if they are not willing to take part in the evaluation.

Human Subjects Review approvals will be secured from the ABC Learning Corps and the School District's Institutional Review Boards before the beginning of the evaluation. All safeguard procedures and documents are detailed in the evaluation plan and are on file for review. Memorandums of Understanding between School District and the ABC Learning Corps specify what and how information could be accessed and used.

VII. Data Collection (Methods and Instruments)

1. Proposed data collection methods:

Quasi-experimental methods – for outcome data
Survey Questionnaire - for process/Implementation data
Secondary data analysis – for standard reading tutoring expectations and other program results

2. Instruments be to used:

- Instruments to collect process/implementation data about our program model will be developed by the independent evaluator in conjunction with program staff after we receive funding for the next three year grant cycle.
- Secondary data summary tools will also be developed by our independent evaluator.

- We will use our existing performance measurement data collection tools to collect student outcome data from both the experimental and comparison groups.

3. Person responsible for data collection:
During the evaluation contract negotiations, we will work with our internal evaluator to identify specific roles in data collection for program, our legal applicant, site staff, AmeriCorps members and the evaluator.

4, Data collection timeline:
The following data will be collected during Year One:

- Student outcome data will be collected at the beginning of the school year, mid-term, and end of the school year.
- Process data will be collected monthly.

VIII. Data Management and Analysis

1. Data management:
We plan to use the following data management methods:
- Paper and pencil hardcopy record
- Computer data base (i.e., Excel, SPSS)

2. Data analysis strategies:
The following data analysis strategies are proposed:
- Basic display: frequency, percentage, charts.
- Measurement of central tendency: Mean, Mode, Median.
- Comparisons using descriptive and inferential statistics (e.g., t-test, Chi-Square)

3. Person responsible for data analysis:
The data will be aggregated and analyzed by Robin Smith, our internal evaluator.

IX. Strategies for Using Evaluation Findings

1. Reporting:
The internal evaluator will compile a final report outlining all our process and outcome findings and the resulting recommendations for improvement. The complete report will be made available to OVCS as part of our next grant application. We will compile a one page fact sheet highlighting the results of our evaluation to share with other stakeholders (community partners, members, current and prospective funders, etc.) as well as participating teachers, school administrators and district staff. If our findings are strongly positive, we will also release a press release to our community paper, TV and radio stations to promote our work.

2. Evaluation Debriefing:
ABC will hold an evaluation debriefing meeting after the evaluation report has been prepared to review the evaluation methodology, implementation, findings and recommendations with the evaluator and stakeholder representatives.

3. Post-Evaluation Action Plan:
ABC will prepare a post-evaluation action plan based on recommendations made by the evaluator, participants of the evaluation debriefing meeting, and other stakeholders, such as Board members, staff members, partners, etc.

IX. Budget

Evaluation Staff	$14,000
Travel	$1,000
Communications	$1,050
Printing/Duplication	$1,950
Supplies	$600
Indirect Costs	$6,000
Other: Data Entry	$5,400
Other:	0
TOTAL	**$30,000**

Budget Justification:
Our total evaluation budget, $30,000 is approximately 6% of two year's annual budget for ABC Learning Corps.

Evaluation Staff/Consultant Salary/Benefits or Consultant Fee:
The internal evaluator will be responsible for implementation of the evaluation, including instrument development, monitoring data collection, analyzing the data, and reporting results. The estimated time over two years for this scope of work is 35 days (280 hours) @ $50/hour.

Travel:
Mileage to drive within the district: 520 miles @ $.445/mile = $750
Parking (50 days @ $5.00/day = $250)

Communications:
Cell phone, long distance and fax charges (24 months @ $43.75/month)

Printing/Duplication:
Duplication of data collections tools/report/evaluation materials @ $.10/copy: $1500
Printing and packaging of annual and final reports – 30 reports @ $15/report $ 450

Supplies:
Office supplies and miscellaneous material (24 months @ $25/month)

Indirect Costs:
10% indirect costs (office space, utilities, accounting)

Other:
Data entry: 450 hours @ $12/hour

Glossary of Terms

Data: Information and evidence gathered during the assessment or evaluation process.

Descriptive design: provides an in-depth description of a phenomenon or the relationships between two or more phenomena. A descriptive evaluation may include several methods, such as conducting surveys or interviews, and analyzing existing data and preliminary outcome measures or tests.

Evaluation: Evaluation uses research methods and procedures to determine the merit, worth, or value of something. Program evaluation typically investigates why a program worked, identifies unintended benefits or consequences of a program, and how a program might be improved or changed. Program evaluation is also used to gather evidence of whether a program "caused" outcomes to be achieved.

Evaluation design: the framework for implementing the process of determining the merit, worth, or value of something (evaluation). Three evaluation designs include exploratory, descriptive, and experimental study designs.

Evaluation questions: serve to focus the entire evaluation process and determine the type of information to collect, the strategy for gathering the information, and the appropriate analysis options.

Exploratory design: assists at the beginning of a program or during planning to gain familiarity and increase understanding to help formulate better program services. It may also help determine what outcomes are appropriate to measure. An exploratory evaluation may involve several methods, such as a review of the literature, review of existing data, interviews or surveys with key informants from stakeholder groups.

Frequency: A count of observations, in the form of numbers and percentages, which fit into different categories.

Inferential statistics: statistics that are used to generalize conclusions to the larger population based on a sample from that population.

Integrity: truthfulness, objectivity, consistence, reliability.

Mean: the arithmetic *average* of observations in the form of values (e.g. scores, responses). To determine the mean observation, total the values and divide by the number of observations.

Median: the observation in the form of a value in the middle of all the observations. Half of the observations are below the median, and half are above it. To determine the median, list the observations from lowest to highest, and count to the number exactly in the middle.

Measurement of central tendency: measures or statistics that describe the center, or middle area, of a distribution of observations, such as the mean and median.

Mode: the observation that occurs most often in the set of observations. (e.g., In this set of scores –9, 10, 12, 12, 12, 20, 21, 26, 30— the mode is 12.)

Outcome evaluation: examines whether an intervention (e.g. program service) resulted in verifiable effects on specifically-defined changes (outcomes) to the recipient of the intervention.

Percentage: a portion of a complete set.

Performance Measurement: Performance measurement is "measurement on a regular basis of the results (outcomes) and efficiency of services or programs" (Hatry, p. 3.). Performance measures track both the amount of work done by your program (outputs) and the impact of this work on your program beneficiaries (outcomes). The purpose of performance measurement is to ensure program accountability, and ultimately help improve services.

Process evaluation: investigates program delivery and structure: is it operating as intended? How many people are being served? Is the target population using the services? Does the administrative structure support the program effectively?

Quasi-experimental design: Quasi-experiments compare two or more like groups, a control group and an experimental group (i.e. the group that receives the program service), or one group at several different intervals before and after intervention, to see if desired outcomes are more likely to occur in the group that received the service. A quasi-experiment differs from a true experiment in that random assignment is not required.

Stakeholders: people or groups with an interest in the program's success and evaluation (e.g. funders, staff and volunteers, recipients, community members).

Glossary Sources:
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- Scriven, Michael (1991). Evaluation Thesaurus (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
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