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# Demonstrating Results in National Service Programs: An Introduction to the Government Performance and Results Act

Corporation for National Service

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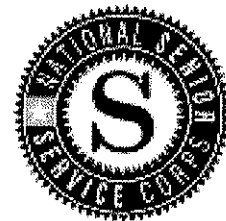
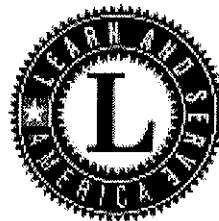
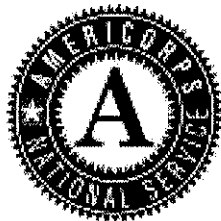
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# Demonstrating Results in National Service Programs

An Introduction to  
the Government Performance and Results Act

CORPORATION  
FOR NATIONAL  
SERVICE



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CWS  
n.d.

NSLC  
c/o ETR Associates  
4 Carbonero Way  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

## **For Further Information**

You can find the Strategic Plan and the Performance Plan for the Corporation for National Service on the World Wide Web at this Internet address:

<http://www.nationalservice.org>

For specific information about how the Government Performance and Results Act might affect your project, contact Dr. David Rymph at (202) 606-5000, ext. 223 or by email at [drymph@cns.gov](mailto:drymph@cns.gov).

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**Mission of the  
Corporation for  
National Service**

To provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in service that addresses the nation's educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results and to encourage all Americans to engage in such service. In doing so, the Corporation will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunity for those who promise to service.

## Introduction

The public's attitude toward government is undergoing significant change. The American public wants a government that is more effective, more efficient, and more accountable to those who support it. This has resulted in a series of reform efforts: the National Performance Review of 1993 (renamed the National Partnership for Reinventing Government), the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, the Government Management Reform Act, the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (known as the Clinger-Cohen Act), and the 1994 Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act, among others. The most extensive, however, is the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (also known as "the Results Act").

The Results Act has the potential to enhance substantially the management and accountability of federal agencies, and to improve the effectiveness of every major program in the federal government. The strength of the Results Act lies in the logic of its requirements. Federal agencies are to establish agency-wide strategic plans, develop performance goals for their programs, link those plans and goals to their budgets, measure program performance against the goals, and report publicly on the results. These requirements are causing federal agencies to transform their management approaches and bring improved public accountability for spending federal dollars. Ultimately, we hope to make federal programs more effective in achieving their legislated purposes.

The Results Act does not directly address individuals and organizations receiving grants from federal agencies. However, the only way the Corporation can conduct effective programs that meet the expectations of Congress is if the Corporation and its grantees work toward the same goals.

We prepared this document to help Corporation grantees in understanding the requirements and implications of the Results Act. We also believe that national service programs will benefit from this exercise in effective planning and performance measurement. Finally, the Results Act supports the many efforts underway to strengthen collaboration between our grantees and the Corporation staff.

## **Requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act**

The Government Performance and Results Act is a straightforward statute that requires all federal agencies to manage their activities with attention to the consequences of those activities. Agencies must state clearly what they intend to accomplish, identify the resources required, and periodically report their progress to the Congress. The expectation is that the Results Act will contribute to increased accountability for the expenditures of public funds. This legislation seeks to improve congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of federal programs. At a minimum, the Results Act is promoting a new governmental focus on results, service delivery and customer satisfaction.

In the past, agencies justified their budgets with descriptions and enumerations of their activities. Programs provided data on the numbers of grant applications received, the training provided, or the number of people expected to enroll in a program. These data are important for the administration of a program, but do not necessarily relate directly to the result of the program. Effort often substituted for results. This is no longer acceptable. Program accountability cannot rest on the number and cost of training classes or the number and timeliness of the grants awarded. It must reflect, for example, whether national service projects result in strengthened communities or whether service-learning grants produce an increase in student academic achievement.

The Results Act requires all federal agencies to send Congress the public sector equivalent of a business plan. Just as corporations submit business plans to banks and other financial interest-holders, agencies must now produce similar documents for review by the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress. Specifically, the Results Act requires each agency to submit three distinct products:

*A strategic plan covering a period of five years.* The Corporation for National Service submitted its first strategic plan to Congress in September 1997. We must update this plan at least every three years.

*An annual performance plan.* We sent our first one to the Office of Management and Budget with the FY 1999 budget request, and then transmitted it to Congress in February 1998. Our plan along with all other agency plans formed the basis for a government-wide performance plan, which the Office of Management and Budget sent to the Congress in February 1998.

*An annual report on program performance.* The first version of this report will cover FY 1999 and is due to the Congress by March 31, 2000.

The Results Act differs from past management reform initiatives in two ways. First, it uses the federal budget as the vehicle to provide visibility and accountability to the process. By requiring strategic and

performance plans to be presented as part of an agency's annual budget submission, performance planning is receiving heightened attention from executives throughout government.

Second, in contrast to previous reform efforts, which were Administration initiatives, *the Results Act is the law*. Among management reform efforts undertaken in the century, only those grounded in a statute remained in force. The Results Act is an amendment to the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, which established the General Accounting Office, the Office of Management and Budget, and most procedures for the financial management of the federal government.

## **STRATEGIC PLANS**

An essential element for a Results Act is the requirement for a strategic plan. The law requires each federal agency to develop a five-year strategic plan and to maintain its relevance by revising it at least every three years. The strategic plan sets the general course and direction for what the Corporation will be doing. It derives from the statutory base of legislation, which states the purpose and intent of Congress and the President for program operation. In developing the plan, agencies assign priorities, make choices, and commit to realistic goals.

The Results Act specifies six distinct elements that each agency's strategic plan must contain:

*A comprehensive mission statement that sets forth the fundamental purpose of the agency.*

*General strategic goals and objectives that focus on results and reflect the tangible accomplishments of the agency's programs.*

*A description of how the agency intends to achieve its goals and objectives, that is, the strategies the agency will follow and the resources needed to attain the goals and objectives.*

*A description of how the annual performance goals relate to the general goals and objectives of the strategic plan.*

*An identification of those significant factors external to the agency and beyond its control that could significantly affect the achievement of the agency's goals and objectives.*

*A description of the program evaluations used in establishing or revising agency goals and objectives with a schedule for future program evaluation.*



Being clear on when the Corporation can take responsibility for outcomes is important. Our programs are only part of the vast network of service activities, sponsored by public and private sources, at work in the country. Many current problems facing our nation, such as poverty and illiteracy, do not have easy answers. The strategic plan specifies what results the Corporation will attempt to achieve and how it will go about it within the broader societal context affecting national service.

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS**

The Results Act requires that the annual performance plan must cover each program activity set forth in the agency budget. The annual performance plan sets specific program goals, identifies resources required to reach the goals, and links the strategic plan to the annual budget by describing the progress that will occur during each fiscal year. It sets out the results that the public can expect to get for its money. While the strategic plan describes the long-term course of the Corporation, the annual performance plan defines what we hope to accomplish in any one year.

Besides performance goals, the annual plan includes performance objectives and performance indicators, which are the means for determining whether the program is meeting its goals and objectives. The plan expresses the objectives and indicators in a quantifiable and measurable form that allow us to measure the accomplishments of a program. A performance goal, for example, might be to increase the percentage from 40 percent to 50 percent of AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps projects that members will complete in low-income communities with significant compelling needs. A related performance objective might be that most community representatives rate the completed projects as highly successful. Each annual performance plan then would project a 5 percent to 10 percent per year increase in projects being completed in low-income communities with significant compelling needs.

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

The Results Act also requires federal agencies to prepare annual performance reports and to submit them to the President and the Congress within six months after the end of the fiscal year. The purpose of the performance report is to compare actual program results with the performance goals identified in the annual performance plan. Agencies will account for their performance during fiscal 1999 by relating what they accomplished to what they planned and approved for that year. When they do not achieve some goals, the annual performance report will provide explanations for the failures. Program performance reports will allow agencies to redirect their efforts considering changing circumstances, thus providing a mechanism to keep the strategic plan current and relevant.

This clear and simple requirement has the potential to change the way many federal agencies conduct their business. The Corporation will become more precise about its objectives. It will have to meet a higher standard in fulfilling these goals. Programs will develop new ways to measure success. The annual performance report provides the accountability that is the centerpiece of the Results Act. The information it provides will allow the Congress and the public to hold the Corporation's staff and, through them, its grantees accountable by expecting specific levels of performance.

## **PERFORMANCE BUDGETING**

By requiring agencies to submit annual performance plans as a part of their budget requests, the Results Act makes the budget an explicit aspect of the "managing for results" idea. The importance of strategic planning and performance measures increases because they relate directly to the agency budget process. This allows Corporation managers and the Congress to compare the expenditure of resources to performance as the means to improve decision-making.

## Performance Measures

The Results Act distinguishes among several categories of measures that relate to programs and projects. Table 1 describes the categories.

Category	Definition	Examples
Impacts	Outcomes for which the program is demonstrably responsible.	Gains in reading ability by children tutored in projects organized by AmeriCorps members.
Outcomes	Event or condition that show progress toward achievement of the program's goals.	Number of community volunteers generated and organized by AmeriCorps members.
Output	Products or services produced by a program. The direct result of program activities.	Members enrolled by AmeriCorps*State and National grantees.
Activities	The work by an organization that directly produces the output, its core products and services.	The AmeriCorps*State and National grants for the 1999-2000 program year using the fiscal 1999 appropriation.
Inputs	Resources used by an organization to support its activities.	The fiscal 1999 federal appropriation for AmeriCorps*State and National.

The various types of measures form a hierarchy built on a paradox. The higher a measure is in the table, the more important the effect in addressing significant national problems. Unfortunately, the higher the measure is in the table, it is also more difficult to collect data that clearly measure program performance.

Under the Results Act, the Corporation must account for both the activities that arise from its programs and the results that come from those activities. For example, with our reading programs, we will report on the number of children tutored and the degree to which

reading scores increased. To assess the results of its programs, the Corporation must develop performance measures that focus on the higher levels of measures, namely, output, outcome, and impact.

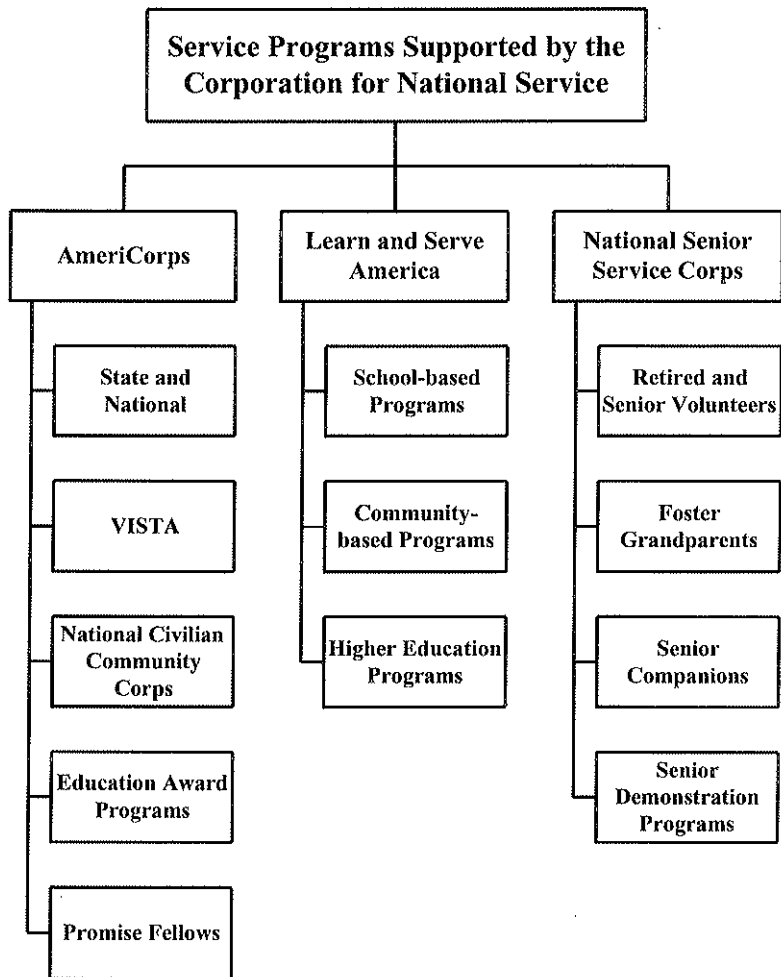
These performance measures must meet three criteria. First, they must show a level of expected results for each program. Second, the measures have to permit the collection of objective information regarding the targets. Third, they must permit the comparison of actual program results with proposed goals.

The Results Act challenges us to find ways to link clearly and logically the activities supported by our programs to the consequences of the service activities. For example, a program offering mentoring to troubled adolescents and young mothers would want to show the extent to which young mothers graduate from high school and then eventually attend college.

Assessing results rather than simply tabulating activities will require fundamental changes in the collection, analysis, and reporting of performance information. If the Corporation is to develop and report on appropriate targets for performance, the data from grantees must be reliable, clear, comprehensible, and comparable on some basis. This will not be easy to obtain, nor fully achieve immediately. Sometimes, no one is collecting the needed data and, in others, the validity and comparability of the data are poor. Each succeeding cycle in this annual process of planning, implementation, and assessment, however, should provide new insights for improving the quality of the data. This should also lead to a better understanding of the outcomes and impacts of the Corporation's programs.

# The Structure of the Corporation for National Service

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 established the Corporation for National Service to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. The Corporation supports a range of national and community service programs, providing opportunities for individuals to serve full or part-time, with or without stipends, as individuals or as part of a team. The following chart is a simplified depiction of the service programs supported by the Corporation.



## AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, engages approximately 40,000 Americans each year in intensive, results-driven service on a full or part-time basis to help communities solve their toughest challenges. For their service, participants become eligible to receive education awards that help pay for college, graduate school, or job training. Within AmeriCorps, five branches or divisions enroll members in service:

*AmeriCorps\*State and National* members participate in local service organizations operated by not-for-profit agencies, local and state government entities, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, local school and police districts, and partnerships among any of the above. Member recruitment, selection, and placement are the responsibility of the grantees. Members serving with these grantees must meet community needs in education, public safety, the environment and other human needs through direct and demonstrable service.

*AmeriCorps\*VISTA* members serve low-income communities across the country. Members of AmeriCorps\*VISTA work and live in the communities in which they serve, creating or expanding projects that can continue after they complete their service. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve with local project sponsors and focus on building community capacity, mobilizing community resources, and increasing self-reliance.

*AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps* is a 10-month, full-time residential program for men and women ages 18 to 24, operated directly by the Corporation. AmeriCorps\*NCCC combines the best practices of civilian service with the best practices of military service, including leadership development and team-building. Members live and train at campuses based in five regions. AmeriCorps\*NCCC service emphasizes disaster relief, large scale capital improvements, and providing leadership to large groups of volunteers.

*AmeriCorps\*Education Award Programs* initiative provides education awards to national, state, and local community service organizations that can support most or all of the costs associated with managing an AmeriCorps grant from sources other than the Corporation. The program began in 1997, in part because of discussions with Congress on methods to lower member costs to the Corporation. Program requirements have changed under this initiative to allow greater management and operational flexibility. This program especially fits organizations that already conduct substantial community service and the availability of education awards will further enhance their capacity to serve. This program does not require grantees to pay living stipends to members.

*AmeriCorps\*Promise Fellows* serve a one-year term with organizations committed to helping meet one or more of the five goals of the 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future. These goals seek to ensure that the nation's children have: (1) caring adults in their lives as parents, mentors, tutors or coaches; (2) safe places with structured activities in which to learn and grow; (3) a healthy start and healthy future; (4) an effective education equipping them with marketable skills; and (5) an opportunity to give back to their communities through their own service.

## **LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA**

Learn and Serve America combines learning and service to enrich the educational development of nearly one million students annually who help meet the needs of their communities. The program supports students in service from kindergarten through college. Service-learning activities give young people opportunities to serve by connecting community service with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility. The program provides funds to state education agencies, State Commissions, schools, colleges and universities, and nonprofit organizations. Grantees create new service-learning activities, replicate existing models, and provide training and development on service-learning to staff, faculty, adult volunteers, and student participants. Learn and Serve America has three aspects:

*School-based Programs.* Learn and Serve America grants funds directly to state education agencies, Indian tribes, U.S. Territories, and grant-making entities. These funds go to strengthen the service-learning infrastructure and build capacity at the state level and at the local level through subgrants. Direct grantees implement, operate, and expand service-learning programs through subgrants to local partnerships.

*Community-based Programs.* Community-based grants develop high-quality service-learning programs in community-based organizations and agencies. Projects promote civic and personal responsibility for youth while they address communities unmet educational, public safety, environmental or other needs.

*Higher Education Programs.* Learn and Serve America: Higher Education grants support efforts to make service an integral component of the pedagogical approach to teaching and learning in the nation's colleges and universities. The Corporation supports a variety of service-learning initiatives including the development of curricula, training for faculty, clinical programs, student-led community projects, and community leadership in partnership with institutions of higher education.

## NATIONAL SENIOR SERVICE CORPS

National Senior Service Corps taps the skills, talents, and experiences of 500,000 older Americans to help solve local problems. Three national programs comprise the Senior Corps:

*The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)* recruits and places older Americans, ages 55 and up, who are willing to help with local problems. RSVP volunteers choose how and where they want to serve, and they decide how many hours a week they can serve. RSVP volunteers do not receive any stipend. RSVP volunteers serve through public agencies and nonprofit organizations. They tutor children and youth, organize neighborhood watch programs, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, program computers, help people recover from natural disasters, and serve as museum docents – whatever their skills and interests lead them to do.

*Foster Grandparents* serve one-on-one with young people with special needs. Foster Grandparents serve 20 hours a week and receive stipends set at \$2.55 an hour to help offset the costs of volunteering. They must be age 60 or above and meet certain income requirements. Foster Grandparents serve in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, correctional institutions, and Head Start and day care centers. Foster Grandparents help abused and neglected children, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers, and care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities.

*Senior Companions* provide assistance to frail, homebound individuals, most of them elderly. These clients have difficulties with daily living tasks and Senior Companions help them retain their dignity and independence. The Senior Companion provides low-income persons, age 60 and over, the opportunity to serve those in need. Senior Companions receive the same stipend and insurance as Foster Grandparents and serve 20 hours a week.

*Senior Demonstration Programs* test new models and incentives for involving older people in volunteer service. The Senior Corps Demonstration offers seniors of all income and educational levels a range of volunteer service opportunities and a range of incentives for participation, including the traditional stipend, service credits, and the like. Core elements of Senior Corps Demonstrations include seniors serving in teams, fostering leadership opportunities for those involved, and intensive service. The demonstration tests the value of a concentration of senior resources focusing on a critical national need and will measure its impact.



## **Performance Measurement in the Corporation**

The performance measures used by the Corporation for National Service fit into two broad categories: annual performance indicators and focused, usually one-time-only, program evaluation studies.

### **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Annual Performance Indicators are measures based on information collected on a regular (usually yearly), basis from grantees and subgrantees of the Corporation and from members. Primarily, these indicators measure aspects of program performance that are in the direct control of the Corporation. These data are useful for oversight and management of the programs. Many of these measures focus on what programs do with federal funds—such as carrying out projects, enrolling members, awarding subgrants, and so on. In addition, annual indicators can include program accomplishments, community impact ratings, and customer satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

*Accomplishment Reporting.* Asking programs to report accomplishments allows them to detail in quantitative form the many significant contributions they are making toward meeting critical community needs. The Corporation has implemented this approach in methods tested on AmeriCorps\*State and National, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and the three Senior Corps programs. Accomplishment reporting is now ready for use by other programs in the Corporation and the results will be included as a major component in the Corporation's Performance Reports for fiscal 1999 and fiscal 2000.

While believing in the value of accomplishment reporting, the Corporation recognizes that the statistics in accomplishment reports represent intermediate outcomes and not end outcomes. These numbers, however, tell a compelling story about the work of national service. These data serve as one source of information among many by which to evaluate the merit of national service programs. Accomplishment reporting does not stand alone, but serves as an informative adjunct to the other performance indicators proposed in this plan.

*Community Impact Ratings.* This method assesses the impact of national service programs on the communities and organizations in which members serve. This assessment, or rating, consists of a survey of important community representatives. These informants should have first-hand knowledge of the quality and impact of the service work performed by members of national service programs. A sample of local programs will nominate a small number of community representatives. These representatives are not employees of the grantee or the local program. They could be professionals working in

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<sup>1</sup> The performance indicators proposed by the Corporation for National Service can be found in the Fiscal 2000 Performance Plan, which is available at our website: [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org).

the same setting as national service participants. The local program will have the option of referring to a list of typical community institutions they should try to include in their roster of nominees. The Corporation would build a roster from the list of nominees.

*Customer Satisfaction Surveys.* The Corporation's programs have many customers: program participants, grantees, community residents receiving services, and local and state governments. Gathering their perspectives on how well the Corporation is meeting their needs is an essential part of its commitment to continuous quality improvement. Targeted customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted annually, emphasizing how well the Corporation goes about its business of serving direct customers: the grantees and program participants.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES**

Program evaluation represents a significant area of investment by the Corporation. Unlike annual performance indicators, many outcome evaluation studies are not likely to occur every year because they are more expensive and time consuming to carry out. Program outcome studies, however less frequent than indicator data, will still provide reliable, valid and useful information on what national service programs achieve for the American people.

One reason the Corporation places so much importance on program evaluation lies in the relationship the Corporation has with its national service programs and their outcomes. The Corporation supports national service almost exclusively by making grants to nonprofit, private, and public institutions. These grantees, in turn, use federal funds and guidance, mixed with other sources of support, to design and operate service programs meeting locally defined needs.

Working through these networks of grantees, subgrantees, community sponsors, and other partners to accomplish the Corporation's mission means that the outcomes of national service programs are often the result of factors outside of Corporation control. These complex systems make it challenging to identify the federal contribution to the end outcomes. To meet this challenge, the Corporation's program evaluation strategy will measure outcomes while allowing for the Corporation's indirect involvement in the results. Individual program evaluations, by using formal, scientific methods, including sampling and control groups, can identify the direct results and impact of national service programs.

In addition, program evaluations, as structured by the Corporation, are important to building trust in the data. Independent, third party researchers usually carry out corporation evaluations. The Corporation contracts with the best research organizations in the country, then gives them the independence and resources to do accurate, reliable, and valid studies of national service programs.

Finally, the Corporation was founded on the principles of the “reinventing government,” including its emphasis on quality improvement in program operations and getting things done for the American people. Although performance indicators can describe what programs do, they cannot explain why certain results happen or of what consequence they are. Sound program evaluations can begin to address these concerns.



## Role of the Grantee

To manage for results, the Corporation needs the assistance of its grantees -- those closest to the delivery of program services -- to provide the objective information and data necessary to show results. This holds the promise of a transformation in the way the Corporation and its grantees do business. The success of both parties will depend on the results they achieve and not on the effort they make.

If the Results Act truly is to be effective in enhancing the performance of government programs, the programs need a candid assessment of how they, and, in turn, the projects they support, are doing. Grantees have the best position to provide this level of information. They have first-hand experience about the performance and results of their service activities. The requirement that performance information come from those closest to the outcomes has the potential to provide relevant insights into education programs, with great benefit for everyone.

The utility of performance measures comes from more than assessing a program's success and then reporting on its results. Performance measurement is also a tool to guide the development and operation of the program. With performance data, Corporation managers and project directors can reassess their approaches and make decisions that are more informed. These data might lead to modifications in program strategies, improvements to the processes, redesigning organizational structures, enhancing customer service delivery, and generally engaging in continuous improvement activities.

Grantees can be of assistance in this process by working with Corporation staff to identify the most important factors that are truly critical to the success of the program. Together we can identify the appropriate level of annual performance for each output and find ways to reformulate the performance indicators when needed. Performance measurement will provide the qualitative and quantitative evidence of their individual project's achievements. We will collect this information on a project basis. Then we will aggregate the data and prepare reports to Congress and the public.

The focus of the discussion between Corporation staff and its grantees must be on how to achieve and demonstrate results. Grantees have the responsibility to decide how to structure their projects and what emphasis to place on various elements of their strategies. Each grantee, however, must also provide evidence that a practical, effective approach is in place and that their project is achieving what it purports to do.

Over the next five years, those programs that can show a continual increase in program performance while maintaining control over resources will clearly increase in value to both the Corporation and congressional decision-makers. If a grantee can develop innovative approaches to improve performance or to control costs, the project is

certain to receive a more favorable evaluation. The Corporation will view with less favor those grantees that continue to allocate dollars at a constant or increasing rate, despite levels of performance that show no improvement. In this environment, increased success will come to those grantees that can maintain control over costs, while continually improving program accomplishments.

The Results Act requires that the Corporation create an annual performance plan for its programs. This plan specifies expected outcomes, indicators of success, and implementation strategies. These requirements create a basis for an exchange between the Corporation and its grantees about performance, accountability and achievements that benefit the communities, families, and individuals their members serve.

## Conclusion

The Government Performance and Results Act has created a "bottom line" for federal programs by requiring an annual performance report. This report should become the basis for an ongoing discussion with Congress concerning the impact of national service programs. Further, the report will reflect the Corporation's perspective on performance -- related matters such as funding, mitigating external factors, and suggested legislative changes.

Performance monitoring and reporting, when fully carried out, will significantly enhance the knowledge of members of Congress on issues pertinent to national service. In such an environment, the debate should shift dramatically from one in which a request for additional funds is based primarily on need. Increasingly, justifications for funding will include clear demonstrations of the effect programs have on targeted populations and on American communities and individuals. This shift in approach will substantially transform the management and impact of Corporation programs.

In bringing the improved new methods of program accountability to the federal government, the Results Act represents the latest in a long series of efforts to manage federal programs to improve their performance and results. Given the dramatic challenges facing public governance as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Results Act offers those committed to the ideal of public accountability for the expenditure of public funds an unprecedented opportunity. Now there will exist the capacity to link high-minded program goals with a clearer idea of the resources needed and a means of assigning responsibility for the delivery of those goals. By any measure, this will be a significant step forward.

The Corporation grantees are essential partners with the program staff in responding to the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. It is only by working in collaboration that we can fully achieve the aims of the Congress and the President in establishing and funding the various national service programs.

This brief document is the basis for a conversation involving the Corporation staff and the grantees of its programs. It is part of an effort to figure out what we will do, how we will do it, and what we will accomplish. As partners, we can improve the quality and extent of national service received by citizens throughout America.





## Glossary

**Activity** - The work by the grantee that directly produces the project's products and services. Example: project hours completed.

**Impact** - The degree to which broad social objectives directly result from program activities. Example: Strengthening and expanding the capacity of local organizations to address the needs of low-income communities.

**Input** - The resources (human, financial, equipment, supplies, and other) that the grantee uses to produce its outputs. Example: Dollars expended.

**Outcome** - The degree to which the accomplishment of program goals is the result of program activities. Outcomes are often the consequence of what a program does, rather than what the program does directly. Example: Number of young mothers receiving support services in high school who enroll in college.

**Output** - The products, services, and other direct results of the project or program activities. Example: Miles of trails cleared of debris.

**Performance Indicator** - A target level of performance expressed in measurable terms, against which to compare actual achievement. Example: Number of AmeriCorps\*VISTA projects will increase from 1,200 to 1,250 for the upcoming program year.

**Performance Measure** - A characteristic or metric that expresses, most often in numerical form, the performance of a program. Examples: Dollars expended, members enrolled, number of children tutored.

**Program Goal** - A broad aim that the program strives to achieve through the expenditure of its appropriated funds. Example: Tutor children and youth, organize neighborhood watch programs, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, program computers, help people recover from natural disasters.

**Program Objective** - A specific aim, the achievement of which contributes to the attainment of the goal of the program. Example: To be more effective *Senior Companions* receive training in topics such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, diabetes, and mental health.

