

ACL/ARCH Data Collection Workgroup
December 5, 2017 Webinar Meeting Minutes

Presenters

Heather Menne, Administration for Community Living (ACL) and
Casandra Firman, ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center

In Attendance

Twenty-nine participants (see full list of participants via this link, as well as Webinar recording): <https://lifespanrespite.wildapricot.org/Data-Work-Group-Calls>

ARCH staff members Jill Kagan, Ray Kirk, and Susan Summers

Meeting Overview

Heather presented the aims, content and process of the Data Workgroup. The key aim of the Data Collection Workgroup is to identify a set of data elements and data collection protocol that will become a future requirement for Lifespan Respite grantees.

The focus of the day's discussion, in alignment with the requirements of the grant, will focus heavily, if not exclusively on systems outcomes. This will not preclude the collection of data on caregiver outcomes in the future.

To achieve this aim, Lifespan Respite grantees, ARCH staff, and ACL staff will help ensure that appropriate data are collected to demonstrate the effectiveness; and that data collection requirements are reasonable and achievable for all grantees.

The Data Collection Workgroup will actively participate with ACL and ARCH staff to achieve this aim. ARCH will draft a data collection tool, which the Workgroup will review. After revision of the data collection tool by ARCH, several states will pilot the data collection tool Spring, 2018.

Review of the systems change and logic model

Casandra called to the Workgroup's attention the ARCH *Measuring Systems Change and Consumer Outcomes* document.

https://archrespite.org/images/docs/2014_Guidebooks/PerformanceMeasurement_Guide_web.pdf

This document represents an earlier step in the process, and one in which it was highly recommended (though not required) that states have in place a logic model that includes their goals and outcomes, and identifies activities by which they could achieve these, as well as corresponding indicators by which states could monitor progress toward, and document achievement of those goals and objectives.

A sample logic model is available in the *Measuring Systems Change* document and through the link above.

Data Collection System

Casandra reiterated that the primary focus of data collection is systems change, and helping caregivers by improving systems, as mandated by legislation.

Past **focus groups with state grantees** identified systems change, and within state systems integration, as key to data collection. Enhancing communication among federal agencies supporting respite was also cited as important, and grantees wished for some uniformity in data reporting across funding sources. Finally, grantees wanted data collection requirements to be reasonable and achievable.

Focus group participants also agreed that, at minimum, grantees should achieve the goals included in their proposals, and semi-annually grantees should track and report progress toward goals.

Casandra shared two samples of data collection forms: one was a binary form indicating, 'yes', the goal was achieved, and 'no', the goal was not achieved. In the second sample form, percentage of goal completion could be indicated resulting in a weighted score that could represent partial goal achievement.

Group Discussion: First Outcome

First Outcome: *Grantees achieve the goals identified in their proposals.*

Casandra asked the group about the pertinence of the first outcome, whether data could reasonably be collected for this outcome, and whether any one had experience collecting data on a similar outcome.

The following comments are summarized and paraphrased, not verbatim. Please use the link to access the actual conversation.

<https://lifespanrespite.wildapricot.org/Data-Work-Group-Calls>

Comments regarding altering data indicators

Comment: This outcome is excellent and should be the foundation with one exception: Frequently we need to make detours because we encounter things we did not anticipate. Therefore, indicators should not be set in concrete, but should be modified when circumstances dictate and according to baseline and/or tracking data.

Comment: I've never participated in a grant that didn't evolve rather significantly. ACL and other partners have been very supportive in revisions. There have always been challenges, but they have not been insurmountable. Grantees and funders should communicate as projects proceed, and objectives revised as appropriate and with mutual agreement, so that projects progress and (revised) goals are met at the end of projects.

Heather posed the following question: Could the tool that Casandra showed with the weighting be expanded to include new or emerging indicator that would account for the lesson learned and revisions made?

Workgroup members agreed that this sounded a feasible approach to document revisions to objectives throughout the course of grants.

Comment: One of the things we might wish to tease out is language relative to systems change for goals that are broad and include a focus on caregivers or other entities. How do we demonstrate that we are moving a system along? How do we reflect change in other areas that contribute to systems change?

Casandra commented that caregiver outcomes can be subsumed within a systems change outcome.

Comment: There should be a defined process for checking in with ACL when grantees believe goals and objectives merit revision.

Comment: Some grantees have made significant changes after having long conversations and providing evidence that goals should be revised, and that local partners are supportive of revisions.

Comment: A section in the semi-annual report is included to allow documentation of grant modifications, including changes in outcomes or indicators.

Comment: There should be a definition of “significant change” so that minor changes do not require renegotiation of grant contracts.

Group Discussion: Data Collection Approaches

Heather asked group their feelings about the yes/no versus weighted data collection approaches. Casandra pointed out samples of these methods included in the ARCH *Measuring Systems Change and Consumer Outcomes* document. Casandra pointed out that these can be improved upon and changed.

Comment: I like the weighted form more because it gives the ability to show progress. Some indicators may cross over several quarters of work. This would allow for better story telling for where things are at. That would be valuable.

Heather: Data from individual grantees would be looked at by ACL in the aggregate.

Comment: Both approaches (yes/no and weighted) should be field tested.

Comment: Data collection seems simple and should be easy to achieve.

Comment: I agree with the breaking down of responses to include “partially achieved” to allow tracking of progress throughout the duration of the grant.

Comment: Especially during beginning years, when grantees are collecting baseline data, it would be nice to be able to indicate grantees are “on target to meet goals”.

Data collection and reporting schedule:

Heather: What period of performance and schedule will people be reporting on? A six month reporting period may be useful. What is most beneficial to grantees?

Comment: A lot of these will tie back to work plan. We have a loose idea of what we hope to achieve within a timeframe that would serve as a guidepost. There could be indicators that could be achieved in a year's time, depending upon how the grant was written. The schedule of data collection would influence how goals and indicators would be constructed by grantees.

Comment: Comparing across states is comparing apples and oranges. By just counting outcomes and assuming they are equal, the content and meaning of outcomes will be lost.

Casandra paraphrasing a quote from David Besst: We assume that if the feds have approved our grants, they approve of the outcomes and what we will measure.

Jill: One of the purposes is to demonstrate to policy makers is that we are achieving our stated goals. If grantees are accomplishing what they intended to accomplish with their approved activities, then we can show that states are not wasting money. Saying "90% of states are achieving outcomes" would be helpful to policy makers.

Heather: Do we wish to identify the type of outcomes we are generating (e.g., public awareness, staff training, etc.)?

Comment: I think it's a great idea to have subcategories because not every outcome is as achievable as others. By doing these, we could see national gaps and what states are having difficulty in achieving certain types of outcomes.

Casandra: The next two outcomes will be more prescriptive, but this outcome allows more diversity and allows us to track the features of their program that are unique.

Wrap-Up

Heather invited Workgroup members to communicate via email with ideas, comments. Next call will focus on a discussion of remaining two outcomes:

1. Grantees develop a sustainable state-wide system that increases involvement of organizations and individuals in promoting community-based respite services.
2. Lifespan Respite activities result in increased access to respite resources across the state.

Next Call: January 11, 2018, Noon EST, 90 minutes