

# Theories of Change in AmeriCorps

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**AmeriCorps**



# Session Goals

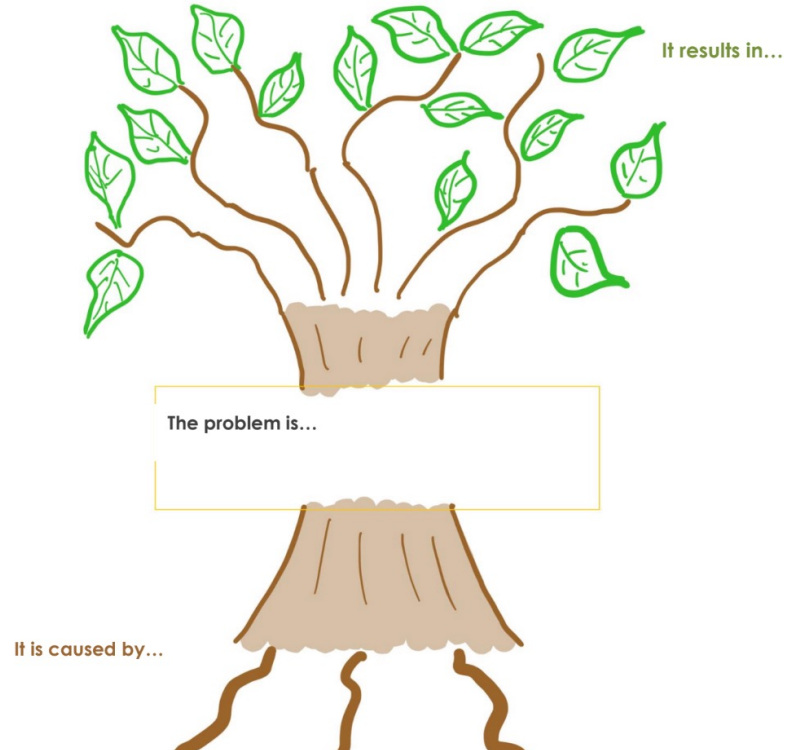


- Solid understanding of AmeriCorps expectations for **Theories of Change**
- Awareness of the **alignment** between your *Theory of Change, Logic Model* and *Program Design*
- **Equipped with AmeriCorps resources** to help you in the future (after this presentation!)

# Why are we Doing This?



**Analysing Problem** *How to clearly define a problem?*  
**Planning Actions** *How to generate ideas?*



- **“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

# Culture and Context in Our Work Together

**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 ~ Program Design

## Evidence

Performance Measures ~ Quality Data Systems ~ Evaluation



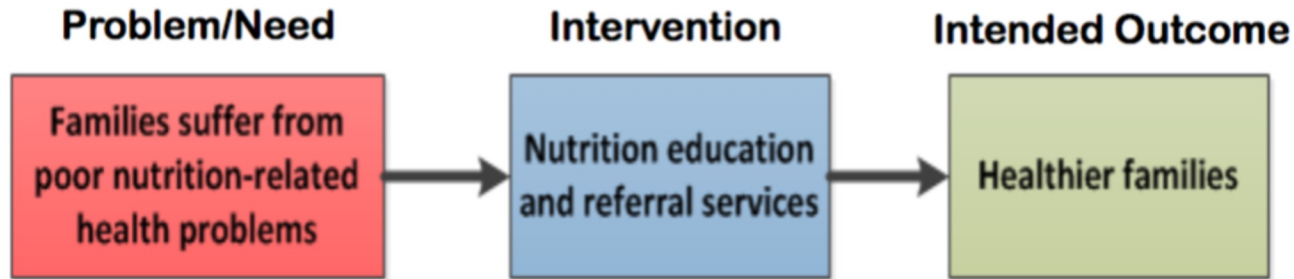
# What is a Program's Theory of Change?

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



# Example of a Program's Theory of Change

Theory of change for a nutrition assistance program:





# Culture and Context in Our Work Together

**How do your own cultural lenses and the cultural contexts in which you work impact how you describe your community problem or need?**

# Assessing your Theory of Change

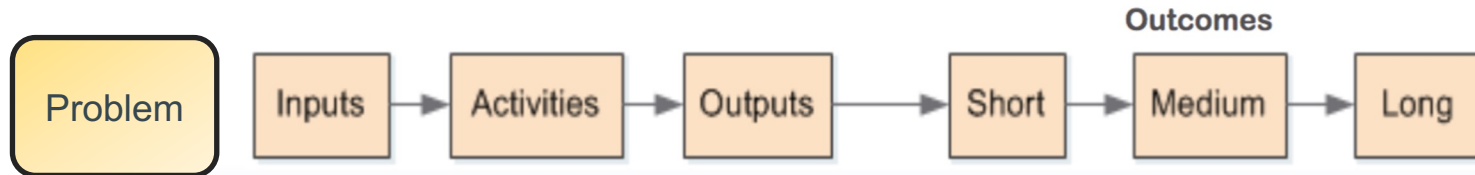
	<i>Indicate to what extent each statement is true.</i>			
	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Somewh at true</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>Not applicabl e</b>
<b>Theory of Change</b>				
There is a coherent, logical program theory. Strategies and activities are designed to address a clearly identified and defined problem 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"/>
<b>Clear Time Frame for the Program</b>				
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"/>

Impact Evaluability Assessment Tool. Source:

[https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2015\\_09\\_03\\_ImpactEvaluabilityAssessmentTool\\_ORE.pdf](https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2015_09_03_ImpactEvaluabilityAssessmentTool_ORE.pdf)

# 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



# AmeriCorps 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

# Learning Courses & Resources

## **AmeriCorps Module on Designing Effective Action**

<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/modules/module-2-designing-effective-action-for-change/story.html>

## **Slides on Logic Model from NORC and AmeriCorps**

[https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Logic%20Model%20Slides\\_final.pdf](https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Logic%20Model%20Slides_final.pdf)



**AmeriCorps**

## **On3Learn Modules on Logic Models**

<https://on3learn.digitalchalk.com/auth/login>

## **Litmos Logic Model Training**

<https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/account/login/>

## **1:1 Technical Assistance from WEC**

[https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3NMIUHTZwhDx2Qd](https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3NMIUHTZwhDx2Qd)

# Worktime!

- Draw it out
  - Overall theory of change
  - Annotate evidence supporting community need + program idea
- Write it out
  - Create an outline with need + program + outcomes
  - Free write descriptions for each section in the outline

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# Straight from the RFP: Theory of Change

- 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.