

Basic Steps in Conducting an Evaluation – Exercises

While unemployment is a challenge facing many Americans, it is particularly significant for veterans. Veterans and their spouses experience disproportionately high rates of unemployment compared to their civilian peers and often face significant challenges in transitioning into civilian work and community life. Barriers include the inability to translate military accomplishments into civilian terms, the lack of knowledge regarding available community supports, and employers’ lack of understanding of the unique strengths of veterans as well as tax credits that are available to employers for their hiring. To address these challenges and combat veteran unemployment, this hypothetical AmeriCorps program supports job readiness and job search skills, transitioning services for families, and education and outreach to potential employers.

Hypothetical AmeriCorps Veterans Program Logic Model

| Project Resources | Core Project Components | Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation | Evidence of Change | | |
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| | | | Outcomes | | |
| INPUTS | ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | 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 |
| Funding Staff 100 AmeriCorps State and National members Volunteers Research | Conduct job readiness workshops (resume preparation, mock interviews, etc.) Provide job search assistance Provide one-on-one peer counseling services Provide referrals for transitioning services to families Identify and educate potential employers | # individuals participating in workshops # individuals receiving job search assistance # individuals receiving counseling services # families receiving transitioning service referrals # employers receiving education | Increased confidence in gaining employment Increase in job readiness skills Increased knowledge of effective job search strategies Increased knowledge of community services Increased employer knowledge of benefits of hiring veterans and military spouses | Increase in job placement Increased capacity of families to manage transition from military to civilian work and family life Increased adoption of military-friendly practices by employers | Individuals maintain stable employment Increased family well-being Employers routinely hire veterans and military spouses |

Example of data collection and analysis for a process evaluation

Research question: Is the job readiness program being implemented as designed?

| Process Evaluation of a Job Readiness Program for Veterans | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Research question | Indicators | What is collected and how? | From whom / data sources? | When collected and by whom? | How will you analyze the data? |
| Is the job readiness program being implemented as designed? | a) Member use of program curriculum during workshops b) Duration of workshops c) Participant workshop rates | a - c) Members report details about workshops in logs with pre-defined categories of reporting a - b) observations of workshops | a - c) Members a - b) Evaluator observes participants in workshops | a - c) External evaluator collects the workshop logs quarterly a) Quarterly observations by the evaluator(s) using structured observation protocols | a - c) Generate frequencies on use of curriculum; average duration of workshops; and average rate of workshop attendance c) Generate frequencies and averages on quantitative data (e.g., ratings scales, frequency scales) and thematically code and analyze open-ended comments/notes |

Example of data collection and analysis for an impact evaluation

Research question: What impact does the job readiness intervention have on veterans’ ability to secure and maintain employment relative to a comparison group?

| Impact Evaluation of a Job Readiness Program for Veterans | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Research question | Outcome of interest | What is collected and how? | From whom / data sources? | When collected and by whom? | How will you analyze the data? |
| What impact does the job readiness intervention have on veterans’ ability to secure and maintain employment relative to a comparison group? | Veterans’ employment status | Veterans’ employment status is measured with a survey. | | | |

| Impact Evaluation of a Job Readiness Program for Veterans | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Research question | Outcome of interest | What is collected and how? | From whom / data sources? | When collected and by whom? | How will you analyze the data? |
| What impact does the job readiness intervention have on veterans' ability to secure and maintain employment relative to a comparison group? | Veterans' employment status | Veterans' employment status is measured with a survey. | <p>Veterans participating in the program serves as the intervention group.</p> <p>Veterans receiving no job assistance services serve as the comparison group.</p> | <p>The evaluator administers the survey at two time points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - before the job readiness program begins - 1 year after the job readiness program is implemented | Calculate the difference in average outcome in the intervention group minus the difference in average outcome in the comparison group before and after treatment (difference in differences method) |

Example of data collection and analysis for an evaluation of your AmeriCorps program

Research Question: ???

| Process or Impact Evaluation of Your AmeriCorps Program | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Research question | Indicators or Outcome of interest | What is collected and how? | From whom / data sources? | When collected and by whom? | How will you analyze the data? |
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