

Fast-Tracking Success:

Accelerating Progress towards Performance Targets

As a federal grant recipient, it is your responsibility to meet your grant performance goals. While this may seem obvious, meeting your performance goals is the minimum objective you should be striving for as you carry out the activities of your grant program. While many benefits can come to your organization and community through new partnerships, innovation, and employer relationships, your success in meeting performance goals serves as the measurable outcome of your program's results and its impact on your community.

When taxpayer dollars are involved, the accountability established through performance goals cannot be overstated. It is the primary yardstick the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) uses to gauge your grant program's effectiveness. Your program decisions should be driven by the important outcomes realized by learners, workers, and employers and how they contribute to achieving your performance goals.

This tool provides a framework for assessing your performance in relation to the target goals for your H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant and planning for performance acceleration strategies and adjustments to meet those goals. Ideally, you and your team will set up a regular time to meet—preferably monthly but at least quarterly—to assess your progress toward these targets. This framework is designed to assist you in identifying areas where you may be falling short in meeting performance and plan for necessary adjustments to help you ultimately achieve those goals.

Step 1: Identify Gaps in Meeting Grant Goals

Begin by using the quarterly scorecard provided to you by the coaching team. Ensure that the numbers on the scorecard match your own tracking numbers and that there are no discrepancies between your “official” performance numbers in the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) and any internal tracking methods you are using.

Once you have verified the numbers are accurate, review the scorecard to identify any gaps in performance. The last two columns of “Percent to Total Goal” and “Percent of Grant Period Elapsed” will give you the clearest picture of where you stand in relation to your goals. The number in your “Percent to Total Goal” column should be nearly equal to or higher than the number in the “Percent of Grant Period Elapsed.” Any target that shows you are behind 10 percentage points or more in the “Percent to Total Goal” column deserves some further attention and planning. Consider these shortcomings your “gap areas.”

Step 2: Create Quarterly Targets

Rather than putting a plan in place and hoping that it will help you achieve your performance goals by the end of the grant performance period, break your goals down further, quarter-by-quarter, to ensure you have short-term targets and can make course corrections along the way to meet those goals. You can do this in its simplest form by determining the actual number of participants left in a given category and dividing that by the number of quarters left in the grant period. For example, if “Participants Completed a

Program and Earned a Credential” is a gap area for you, you would determine how many more participants need to complete in order for you to reach this goal. If it is July of the third year of the grant, and your target is 150 participants, and you have served 50, your analysis will look like this:

<i>Outcome Measures</i>	<i>Actual 6.30.23</i>	<i>Total Target</i>	<i>Number Remaining to Target</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Target Achieved</i>	<i>Percent of Grant Elapsed</i>
Total Participants who complete education/training activities AND receive a degree, or other type of credential	50	150	100	33%	50%

Table 1

Number of participants still needing to complete and receive a credential	Number of quarters left in grant period	Number of participants needing to complete training and receive a credential per quarter
150 <i>(goal)</i> – 50 <i>(completed)</i> = 100 <i>(still to complete)</i>	7	15 <i>(100 ÷ 7, rounded up to ensure goal met)</i>

Table 2

Keeping your quarterly planning this simple may help your team set reasonable quarterly goals. However, it is crucial to remember various elements of timing as you complete this quarterly planning. If one of your gap areas is “Total Participants Served” or “Total Participants Enrolled” but you have other gap areas as well, you should consider decreasing the number of quarters you have to reach your “Total Participants Served” or “Total Participants enrolled” goal.

This adjustment is necessary because other measures that require the completion of training or employment will likely take longer than a month or two to complete. Therefore, you will need to have your participants enrolled with enough time left for them to complete their training and obtain employment. You will need to consider the length of your approved trainings, how long it will take to enroll participants, how long it will take to get them started in training, start dates of your trainings, and how long it will take them to complete their training. You probably cannot get that all done in the last quarter of the grant period! In this case, you may determine that you need to meet your enrollment goal two quarters before the end of the grant period in order to meet your entered and completed training and employment goals.

You should also consider the realities of semester or program completion dates in this planning to reflect any challenges or influxes of program completions when planning for metrics like “Participants that Completed Training,” “Participants that Completed Training and Earned a Credential,” as well as known employer partner hiring needs and cycles with respect to “Participants that Entered Employment” goals.

Step 3: Action Planning to Achieve Results

As a team, use the information you have gathered so far to review your gap areas and your quarterly goals to better understand your specific challenges and opportunities. Refer to the [Participant Support Lifecycle Model](#) to guide this discussion. Identify which stages of the participant lifecycle correspond to your performance gap areas. Consider using the action planning tool provided in the Participant Support Lifecycle Model to make program changes that will impact your performance targets, keeping in mind the quarter-by-quarter goals you have set. The Performance Goals roughly correspond to the Participant Support Lifecycle phases as shown in Table 3.

Performance Goals	Participant Support Lifecycle Phases
Total Participants served	 Outreach & Recruitment  Intake, Onramps, and Enrollment
Total Participants enrolled in education/training activities	 Outreach & Recruitment  Intake, Onramps, and Enrollment
Total Participants who complete education/training activities	 Training/Education Progress  Completion & Certification
Total Participants who complete education/training activities AND receive a degree or other type of credential	 Training/Education Progress  Completion & Certification
Total number of unemployed/underemployed participants who complete education/training activities and obtain employment	 Training/Education Progress  Completion & Certification  Placement
Total number of Incumbent Worker Participants who complete training activities and that advance into a new position	 Training/Education Progress  Completion & Certification  Placement

Table 3

As you consider your performance gap areas and the actions you will take to improve those areas, consider elements of your grant program that are going well. Consider why they are succeeding and how you can replicate those outcomes in other areas of your performance.

Step 4: Grant Modification Requests, as Needed

When you complete the action planning activity, you may identify necessary adjustments that require a Grant Modification Request. Examples of this might include adding a training program to your grant, realigning your budget to better prioritize your goals, or requesting a no-cost program extension. *Changing your performance targets is not an allowable modification.*

To make a modification request, you should contact your FPO to discuss your request and talk through the process. Details on making the request can be found in Section 4 of the [ETA Grantee Handbook](#).

Step 5: Ongoing Continuous Improvement

Setting quarterly goals and creating action plans are important steps in reaching your performance goals; however, it is crucial that you monitor progress on an ongoing basis and instill ownership of meeting these targets in your team and across your partners. If you have subcontractors for your grant or partners that have some responsibility and/or a significant role in meeting your performance targets, it is essential that they are included in ongoing meetings and progress monitoring.

If your grant program is well underway, and you are on track to meet performance with no discernable gap areas, quarterly meetings may be sufficient to keep your grant on track for performance success. However, if you have gap areas that you are working to close, your team should meet at least monthly to monitor your progress, discuss action plan progress, and adjust plans where gap areas continue to persist.

This regular accountability is key to ensuring that you not only have a good plan for success in place, but that everyone is following through on their piece of the plan and that you can make necessary adjustments for success. In addition, capturing lessons learned throughout your grant period can contribute to efficiencies and performance acceleration strategies for future grants, as well as capture learnings to fill in knowledge gaps created as a result of turnover in your organization and grant team.