



# CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS

Office of the Governor



**AmeriCorps**  
California



# Demonstrating Evidence

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BRYNNA ARNESON, GRANTS MANAGER



**AmeriCorps**  
California

# Technical Assistance Webinars

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## AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Overview and Q+A

- Tuesday, September 27, 1pm PST

## AmeriCorps Budget Development

- Tuesday, October 4, 2pm PST

## AmeriCorps State Funding Application Forms and Selection Criteria

- Thursday, October 6, 1pm PST

## Developing Performance Measures

- Tuesday, October 11, 1pm PST

## **Demonstrating Evidence**

- Thursday, October 13, 1pm PST

# Session Objectives

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Understanding of:

- AmeriCorps approach to evidence
- Evidence Base selection criteria
- Tips for demonstrating evidence

# Why is Evidence Important?

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- Achieve a shared goal of offering communities effective solutions that address their needs
- Ensure that federal dollars are invested wisely
- Inform continuous improvement of programs
  - Change what isn't working
  - Do more of what is working



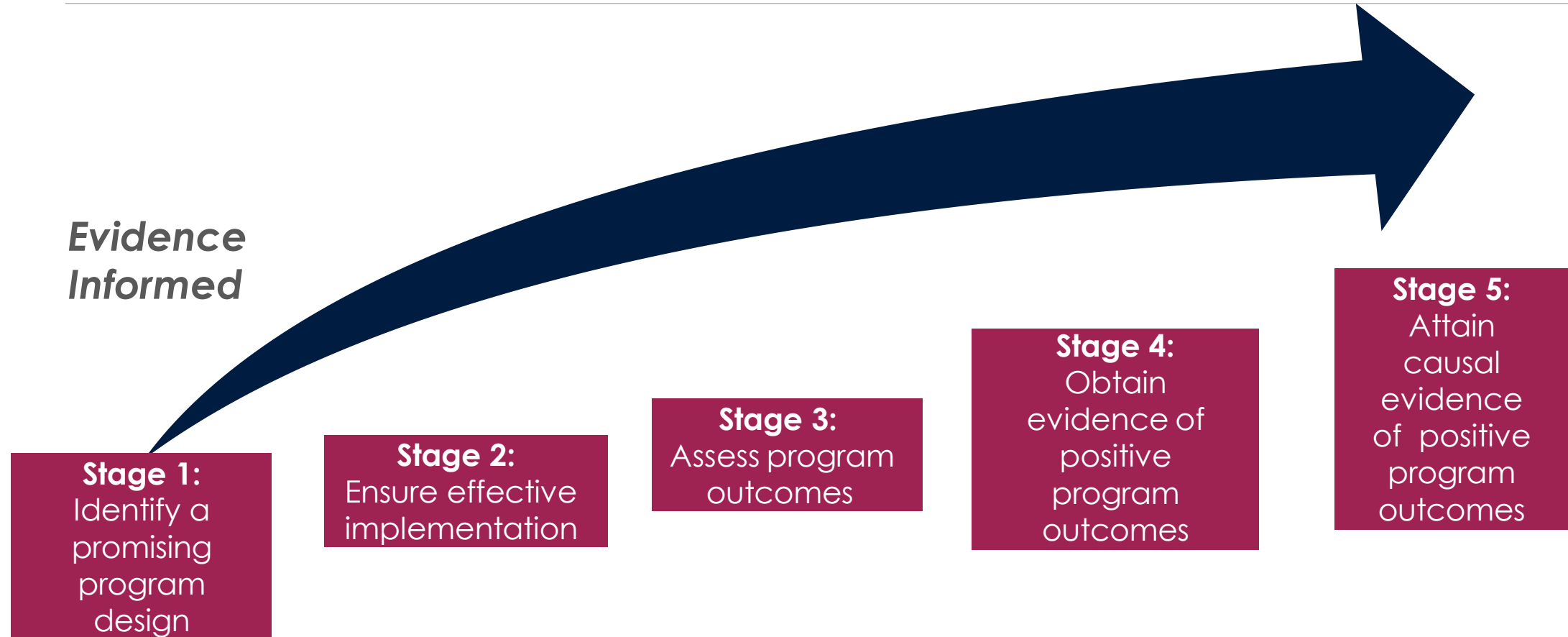
# Evidence in AmeriCorps Grant Applications

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- Proposed service activities (interventions) must be supported by evidence
  - Threshold requirement for funding
- Evidence-informed:
  - Uses available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design/implementation
  - Specific intervention described in application has not been rigorously evaluated
- Evidence-based:
  - Intervention described in application has been rigorously evaluated and demonstrated positive results

# Building Evidence of Effectiveness

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# Same Intervention

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- Evidence-based applicants must provide evidence for the same intervention described in the application
- “Same intervention” means all these criteria match:
  - Characteristics of the beneficiary population
  - Characteristics of population delivering intervention
  - Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components
  - Setting in which intervention is delivered
  - Outcomes of intervention



# Clarifying Program Design

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- To assess the evidence supporting an application, core components of the intervention must be clearly described in both the application and the submitted evaluation report(s):
  - Characteristics of the beneficiary population
  - Characteristics of population delivering intervention
  - Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components
  - Setting in which intervention is delivered
  - Outcomes of intervention

# FY23 Evidence Base Criteria

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- Evidence Tier (6 points)
  - Based on:
    - Relative strength of each applicant's evidence base
    - The likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model
- Evidence Quality (4 points)
  - Based on:
    - Quality of the applicant's evidence
    - Extent to which the evidence supports the proposed program design
  - Exact evidence quality criteria depend on the evidence tier

# Evidence Tiers

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- Pre-Preliminary
  - Preliminary
  - Moderate
  - Strong
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- In 2022, programs were funded at the following tiers:
    - Strong (28%)
    - Moderate (15%)
    - Preliminary (25%)
    - Pre-Preliminary (32%)

# Evidence Tiers: Pre-Preliminary

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- Applicant has not submitted any outcome/impact evaluations of the intervention described in the application
- Applicant must describe in the application narrative how the program design is evidence-informed.
- Applicants may also cite prior performance data.
- **Threshold requirement:** Applicants in this evidence tier must have adequate evidence quality in order to be considered for funding.

# Pre-Preliminary Evidence Tier Example

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Applicant's *Ready to Read* program provides small-group tutoring services to 5th-grade students for 30 minutes, twice a week. The program is adapted from Famous Tutoring Program's successful approach, which used the same curriculum to provide one-on-one tutoring sessions for 30 minutes every day. A 2017 randomized control trial found that students in the Famous Tutoring Program increased their scores on standardized tests by 40% more than the control group.

Additional Documents: None.

# Evidence Tiers: Preliminary

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- Applicant has submitted outcome evaluation report(s) (either internal or independent evaluations)
  - Comparison group may be present, but is not randomly assigned or statistically matched
- Reports evaluated the **same intervention** described in the application
- Reports show **positive results** on one or more key desired outcome in the applicant's logic model.

# Preliminary Evidence Tier Example

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Applicant's Ready to Read program provides small-group tutoring services to 5th-grade students for 30 minutes, twice a week. Based on pre-and post-assessments administered by the Ready to Read program in 2017, 350 students gained at least 1.5 grade levels in reading mastery. The effect sizes were significant and represent a positive result.

Additional Documents: The applicant submitted one internal evaluation report of the Ready to Read program describing the results of the pre-post assessment.



# Evidence Tiers: Moderate

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- Applicant has submitted **impact evaluation** report(s) (must be conducted by an independent evaluator)
  - Experimental (RCT) or quasi-experimental (QED) study designs
  - Ability to generalize the findings beyond the study context may be limited (i.e. single site)
- Reports evaluated the **same intervention** described in the application
- Reports show **positive results** on one or more key desired outcome in the applicant's logic model.

# Moderate Evidence Tier Example

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The applicant's Ready to Read program uses the same curriculum, program design, and dosage as the Famous Tutoring Program and is serving similar students. Based on a 2017 quasi-experimental evaluation conducted by Famous Tutoring Program at one of their program sites, students gained on average 1.3 grade levels on the Famous Standardized Literacy Assessment, compared to just 0.8 grade levels for the comparison group. The study was conducted by an independent (external) evaluator. The results were significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Additional Documents: The applicant submitted one independent evaluation report from the Famous Tutoring Program describing the results of the QED study.

# Evidence Tiers: Strong

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- Applicant has submitted **impact evaluation** report(s) (must be conducted by an independent evaluator)
  - Experimental (RCT) or quasi-experimental (QED) study designs
  - Results are attributable to the intervention and can be generalized beyond the study context (e.g. multi-site evaluations or multiple evaluations from different sites/populations)
- Reports evaluated the **same intervention** described in the application
- Reports show **consistently positive results** on one or more key desired outcome in the applicant's logic model.

# Strong Evidence Tier Example

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- Applicant's Ready to Read program provides tutoring services in 25 states across the country. The program hired an independent evaluator to conduct a randomized controlled trial in 16 states, including both rural and urban sites as well as student populations with different ethnic/racial backgrounds. The evaluation found that students in the Ready to Read program outperformed students in the control group on 3 specific literacy skills addressed by the program. The results were statistically significant with Moderate effect sizes. Subgroup analysis showed positive impacts in both rural and urban settings and across multiple ethnic/racial groups.
- Additional Documents: The applicant submitted one independent evaluation report from the Ready to Read program describing the results of the RCT study.

# Submitting Evaluation Reports/Studies

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- Who should submit reports or studies?
  - To be considered for Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence, submit up to 2 reports/studies (or 3 if evaluation report is required)
  - Any applicant required to submit an evaluation report to meet evaluation requirements should submit an evaluation report
- Required evaluation report can be submitted in addition to the other 2 studies
- Reports or studies submitted for evidence tier **MUST** be of the same intervention proposed in the application

# Evidence Quality Criteria: Pre-Preliminary

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- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies to inform their program design
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last 6 years
- Evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest
- Based on content of the Evidence Base narrative

# Evidence Quality Criteria: Preliminary/Moderate/Strong

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- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g. adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.)
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest
- Based on submitted reports/studies



# Tips for Applicants

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- Read the RFA, Application Instructions, and Mandatory Supplemental Guidance carefully
- In Evidence Base, describe the full body of evidence that exists for your program:
- Summarize the study design and key findings from any submitted reports
- Describe other supporting evidence, for example, past performance measure data or other research
- Describe how the intervention in the submitted report(s) is the same as the intervention proposed in the application
- Do not submit more than the allowable number of studies (either 2 or 3 depending on applicant's evaluation requirements)
- Select high quality evidence: rigorous, relevant, recent, meaningful

# Resources

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- Evaluation Resources on the Knowledge Network
  - <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources>
- AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange
  - <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>

# Questions & Answers

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PLEASE TYPE YOUR QUESTIONS IN THE CHAT OR UNMUTE

# Thank you!

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SEND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO [FUNDING@CV.CA.GOV](mailto:FUNDING@CV.CA.GOV)

