Performance Measures: Tracking Program Progress Transcript

Please stand by for real time captions.

Welcome

Hello everyone and thank you for attending today's webinar, Performance Measures: Tracking Program Progress.

Before we begin we wanted to cover a few housekeeping items. At the bottom of your audience console are multiple application widgets that you can use. You can expand each widget by clicking on the maximize icon on the top right of the widget or by dragging the bottom right corner of the widget panel.

If you have any questions for the presenters during the webcast, you can click on the Q&A widget at the bottom and submit your question there -- tap at the bottom of the screen. We will try to address as many questions as possible during this event, but if a fuller answer is required or we run out of time, your question will be answered via an FAQ document that will be posted on the websites for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood and on the FaMLE Cross-Site website.

A copy of the slide deck and additional materials are available in the resource list widget that looks like a green folder on the bottom of the screen.

If you have any technical difficulty, please click on the Help widget. It has a question mark icon and covers common technical issues.

A recording of the webcast will be available soon after the webcast and can be accessed using the same audience link you used to access this event.

Now I would like to introduce Robin Dion, Senior Fellow at Mathematica Policy Research. Robin, you now have the floor.

Introduction

Great, thanks Kansola.

Welcome everybody to the second in a series of webinars presented by the Fatherhood and Marriage Local Evaluation and Cross-site project, also known as the FaMLE cross-site.

Sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation at the Administration for Children and Families, this webinar, like the others that will follow, is specifically intended to provide assistance to organizations interested in applying for a federal healthy marriage or responsible fatherhood grant. This includes the Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education grants, the New Pathways for Fathers and Families grants, and the Responsible Fatherhood Opportunities for Reentry and Mobility grants.

This webinar will focus exclusively on the Performance Measures that are required to be collected as a condition of all the new grants.

Other upcoming FaMLE cross-site webinars will focus on the nFORM system which is a management information system that will be used to collect the performance measure data; and we will have a further webinar on issues related to Local Program Evaluation.

All of the webinars are being recorded and will be posted on the FaMLE cross-site website.

So we have three objectives for today's webinar. First, we'd like you to come away with a better understanding of the connection between the OFA grants and the FaMLE Cross-Site project. Second, we'd like to explain why the performance data are needed and what they cover. And third, we would like to provide some information about how the new grantees will be collecting the data and creating performance reports.

The webinar will start today with a summary of the FaMLE cross-site project, and then move into a discussion of the requirements in the funding opportunity announcement regarding the performance measures and the purpose of performance measures. My colleagues are then going to present an overview of the performance measures, discuss how the participant and grantee data will be collected; and then cover the quarterly and semi-annual reporting on program performance.

First let me introduce today's speakers. My name is Robin Dion, and I am the Project Director for the FaMLE Cross-Site project. I am joined by Grace Roemer, an Associate Director in our survey division at Mathematica, and Mathew Stange, a Mathematica survey researcher.
At the end of this webinar you will also hear from Seth Chamberlain and Julie Leis. They're the federal project officers at the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation who oversee the FaMLE cross-site project, and they'll be addressing questions that are raised during today's webinar.

So what is the FaMLE Cross-Site Project?

Well this project focuses on providing support for the 2015 cohort of healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grantees sponsored by the Office of Family Assistance. This support will be for collecting the performance measure data and assistance for grantees' local evaluations—before, during, and after grant award. Ultimately, the project will also conduct analyses of data collected by all of the grantees, hence the cross-site part of the project name.

ACF first engaged Mathematica to conduct the project in fall o2013. The first activity that we've been working on was to examine, recommend and develop a set of research-based performance measures that will help grantees to manage their programs and provide high quality data on program operations as well as the outcomes of participants. We also began development of the nFORM system, which will be provided for free to grantees with all of the performance measures and reports already programmed in.

We also developed a website where you can access many resources for developing strong grant proposals, www.famlecross-site.info. Once the grants are awarded, the project will provide training and ongoing support to grantees as they use the web-based system to collect and report on the performance measure data.

In the second major area of activity, the FaMLE cross-site project will also provide evaluation technical assistance and support for grantees as they conduct their own locally-led evaluations. As you know, these evaluations are separate from the effort to collect and report on the performance measures; local evaluations may be descriptive studies or they may be impact evaluations.

And third, to develop the bigger picture of the grants' achievements, the FaMLE cross-site project will aggregate the performance measure data across all the grantees and conduct cross-site analyses in 3 areas: in program design, program implementation, and program outcomes.

To help you get a little better sense of how ACF, OFA, OPRE and the FaMLE cross-site project are all linked, here's a diagram.

The box at the top of the diagram shows how the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) includes two agencies – the Office of Family Assistance, which we also call OFA, in the left-hand box of the second row, and the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, or OPRE, in the right-hand box of the second row.

You can also see on the left that OFA oversees the grant funding for the responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage grantees. And on the right, you can see that OPRE oversees Mathematica's work on the FaMLE Cross-Site project, which as you know will provide support to the grantees in collecting and reporting on the data and conducting their local evaluations.

Notice the double-headed arrow in the center of the diagram between OFA and OPRE. This represents the close collaboration that these two agencies have developed to facilitate high quality data collection and other research activities among grantees. For example, OFA has been highly involved with OPRE and Mathematica over the past 18 months in the development and refinement of performance measures, also developing the data collection modalities, and designing the report formats.

Let's turn now to a discussion of the requirements in the funding opportunity announcements related to the performance measures.

According to the funding opportunity announcements, all new grantees, whether or not they may be also involved in a local or federal evaluation, must agree to collect, store, and report on the set of standardized performance measures that have been developed and that will be programmed into the new data collection system . These include: Program applicant characteristics, program operations, enrollment and participation, and participant outcomes.

In their applicants for funding, organizations must include a description of how they'll be collecting these data, their readiness to collect these performance measures, and how they will maintain participant privacy.

Let's turn now to a quick overview of the basics of collecting performance measures, including what they are and their purpose.

The performance measures are basically indicators of a program's progress and achievements.

In the healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grants, they cover three broad areas: program operations, enrollment and participation of clients, and the outcomes of the clients.

The primary purpose of Performance Measures is to facilitate the government's monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments, particularly progress toward pre-established goals.

Yet the data can also be used in other ways. First, to help programs monitor their own progress and make their own mid-course corrections whenever needed, and second, to supplement data collected for local evaluations. And finally the data will also be used by the FaMLE Cross-Site project to conduct analyses of data aggregated across all the grantees.

It's important to note however that collecting and reporting on performance measure data, or any kind of data for that matter, does not in and of itself constitute an evaluation effort. In other words, the requirement to collect performance measures is separate from the requirement for a Local Evaluation in the funding opportunity announcements. A local evaluation is an effort to address a specific research question that the grantee is interested in. These evaluations would likely include other research measures and may or may not include, for example, assignment to a comparison group. So performance measure data could be used to supplement the efforts of a local evaluation, but it's not the same thing as a local evaluation.

The performance measures to be collected by grantees are very important because they show whether and how well the goals are being met across all the different stages of implementation.

For those of you who attended the webinar on program design, this diagram on program implementation should look a little familiar. Inputs of course refers to the resources you need to carry out the program activities, for example, your staff's education and experience, the strength of your organizational partnerships. You will be collecting data on all of these topics as part of the performance measures.

Activities in the second box refers to the actual services that the program offers as well as strategies that the program implements to engage and retain participants. Again, the performance measures include data on these activities.

Outputs the third box, in turn, are the immediate results of the activities. For example an output of outreach and recruitment activities is the number of individuals who enroll, while the output of strategies to promote retention is participation. Once again there are a number of performance measures that are related to these outputs.

Now outcomes are a little different from outputs: they are the behavioral and attitudinal changes of the participants that we hope will result due to their participation in the program. And there is a full set of both pre- and post- outcome measures in the performance measures which my colleagues will be talking about soon.

Assessing the progress of programs in each of these key areas will allow programs, funders, and researchers alike to understand more about how to design, build, and replicate the highest quality programs.

The overarching goal of performance measurement is to enhance the chances that programs will be successful in achieving their objectives.

By regularly assessing and reporting on a program's progress, meeting accountability requirements, and keeping stakeholders such as the community informed, programs are much more likely to succeed and thrive.

With that, I am going to turn the webinar over to Grace Roemer, who's going to lead us through a discussion of the difference performance measure data collection pieces and the reporting for the next round of grantees. Grace?

Collecting Performance Measure Data

Thank you, Robin. This is Grace. Over the next several slides I'll provide information about the performance measure data that grantees will collect as part of the FaMLE Cross-Site Project. And then Mathew Stange will describe how grantees will report on the performance data.

The performance measures were designed through a collaborative process between OFA, OPRE, and the FaMLE Cross-Site team. The starting point was identifying the important outcomes that the healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs are designed to produce. The team then designed measures that would assess the extent to which these outcomes are achieved. A key principal of the performance measures design is that consistent collection of measures across grantees will help us understand the extent to which client outcomes are achieved nationally. In addition, as Robin mentioned, each grantee will be able to assess its own performance using these measures.

To ensure broad input in the measures development, the public was given an opportunity to review and comment through a 60-day Federal Register notice. This notice was published in November 2014 and nearly 30 current grantees and researchers provided a range of comments.

We also tested the measures for comprehension in English and Spanish, as well as the burden on grantees to collect the measures.

The comments and pilot test results informed a careful revision of the measures.

There are two categories of performance measures surveys and all of the performance measures surveys we are talking about today are posted on the http://www.famlecross-site.info website.
First, in the left column here, grantees will collect measures about the characteristics and outcomes of individual clients in their healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs.

Information about individual clients' demographic characteristics, their financial well-being, family status, health and well-being, and what attracted clients to the specific responsible fatherhood or healthy marriage program are all captured at program intake.

Clients will also complete a "pre-test" when they begin receiving services. The "pre-test" collects baseline information on parenting, economic stability, healthy marriage and relationships, and personal development.

Clients are also going to complete a "post-test" after they receive services. This post-test covers the same topics as the pre-test, and also captures clients' perceptions of the program once they've completed it. The pre- and post- test approach allows us to measure the extent to which individual clients experienced any changes after participating in these programs. In other words, the performance measures will allow us to assess within and across programs the ways in which programs had the intended effect in clients' lives.

On the right-hand column here grantees will also provide narrative and quantitative reports on their program operations, client enrollment, and service delivery. This will help grantees and ACF understand what works well in program design and implementation, and where there are challenges.

Specifically, grantees will provide information on marketing and recruiting clients into their programs, how they monitor quality, staffing, and implementation challenges.

As I mentioned, the client data are collected at intake, and before and after service receipt. The grantee data will be reported on a regular schedule throughout the grant and the schedule for that is based on the grant fiscal year. Mathew will describe this process in more detail later in this presentation. The semi-annual progress report will be submitted in months 6 and 12 of every grant year and will cover the prior six months of activity and plans for the coming six months. The grantee quarterly progress report will be submitted in months 3 and 9 of every grant year and this quarterly progress report or QPR is a snapshot or interim report on program activities.

To help ease the burden on grantees of collecting and reporting on this important performance information, we are developing a data collection and reporting system for grantees which is called “nFORM”. This is a great acronym which stands for “Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management.”

Every responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage grantee will use this secure, web-based, and free information management system.

The nFORM MIS will collect and store all of the required performance data, and will quickly produce reports for both OFA and grantees to support ongoing analysis of program implementation and outcomes.

And as we’ve mentioned before grantees will be able to access their own program data through an nFORM query tool and reports. Grantees will be able to download de-identified data through an export function. They can then organize and sort the data to answer questions they might have as the grant is moving forward. Questions they may have about how their own clients are doing, based on trends they may be seeing during service delivery.

For example, program staff may perceive that clients in different age groups seem more or less successful during the workshops. By using the nFORM query function the grantee can drill down to find out if this is widespread, which will help them determine how to address the issue.

As Robin mentioned, there will be a separate webinar providing more details on nFORM tomorrow, May 27th. We encourage you to participate in that webinar to learn more about how nFORM will simplify the process of collecting and reporting on the performance measures.

Now I’m going to provide some more details on the measures, how they were developed, and how grantees will collect them.

As I mentioned, the performance measures were developed through a collaborative process between OFA, OPRE, and Mathematica, and public input was obtained during measure development.

We selected measures that: are appropriate for the clients typically served by responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs, and also that had ideally been used successfully in prior studies of these populations. We selected measures also that are free and publically available, and do not require interviewer assistance so that they could be self-administered. And further the measures that we selected are statistically reliable and valid.

The performance measures were cognitively tested and pilot-tested with low-income, low-literacy clients currently participating in responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs. We also tested the measures with Hispanic participants in Spanish.

To ensure a comprehensive review of the draft measures, our testing included clients who ranged widely in age, in relationship status, and in the number of children.

We pilot tested the performance measures that appear on the applicant characteristics survey and the pre- and post- surveys for responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage program clients.

The pilot testing led to some revisions including shortening some of the measures. We then timed the surveys for a variety of complicated scenarios and found that the time to complete the surveys ranged from about 9 or 10 to 23 minutes, depending on the survey.

The performance measures were designed to collect the comprehensive data needed to assess client and program performance within and across grantees. But it was also very important to develop a straightforward approach to collecting the data to minimize the burden on grantees and client.

On paper, the surveys may look long, but will not take a long time to complete.

Staff will not need to help clients complete the performance measures surveys. As I mentioned we selected measures that could be self-administered. They will be programmed into nFORM and self-administered on computers, laptops, or tablets. Page 30 of the FOA provides information on the hardware and web browsers that nFORM is designed to work on. Clients will answer questions by pushing a button on the tablet or computer after listening to the questions read aloud.

ACASI, which stands for audio-computer assisted self-interviewing software, will be available for all clients. This means that any clients who may have literacy issues won't have any difficulty completing the surveys. The surveys, including the ACASI versions, will be available in both English and Spanish.

The performance measure surveys include a lot of skip patterns, meaning that clients do not necessarily answer every question. Their responses to some questions determine whether they have to answer other questions. For example, on the pretest survey, if clients don't have any children under the age of 21, they skip at least ten questions. The client may also skip over six questions depending on how they believe they get along with the other parent of their child.

The surveys will be automated so that clients won't have to think about what question to answer next. The computer will automatically advance or skip clients to the correct next question depending on how they've answered previous questions. Staff and clients will not have to think about these skip patterns at all.

We've tailored the performance measures to the specific populations to be served which will help with client response and targeted analyses of the specific experiences and outcomes of these populations.

We've developed pre- and post-program surveys for responsible fatherhood grantees, and more specifically for community-based and incarcerated fathers.

When the responsible fatherhood programs serve couples, both participants will complete these performance measure surveys.

For healthy marriage grantees we have developed specific pre- and post-tests for adults and youth.

I just recently described the different performance measures surveys and when each would be completed by clients.

Applicant characteristics are provided at intake, the pre-tests are completed at the client's first workshop, and the post-tests are completed at the last workshop, or a month after the first workshop if the workshop lasts less than one month.

This table on this slide shows the timing estimates based on our testing. As mentioned earlier, the time required to complete each survey ranges from 9 to 23 minutes.

These timing estimates were done using paper versions of the surveys and we anticipate that completion times may be a bit shorter with ACASI.

Although clients will complete the performance measures surveys themselves using nFORM and ACASI, grantee staff will make sure they are set up to complete the correct survey.

Program staff will schedule clients' completion of the surveys to make sure that they get done, program staff will also track each client's completion in nFORMS.

Once a survey is scheduled, staff will select the correct survey based on the grant type and clients, so that community-based fathers served by responsible fatherhood grants only complete those tailored pre- and post-tests.

Staff will also select the correct survey based on where the client is in the program—at intake, at the first workshop, or at the last workshop, and open that proper survey for the client.

nFORM security features ensure that the client does not have access to any other data in nFORM while completing each survey.

We'll provide extensive training and technical assistance on nFORM and collection of the performance measures data once the grants start.

Programs may need to schedule the post-test surveys at different times based on their program design. The bullets on this slide reflect different grantee scenarios and how to adjust the timing of the post-test accordingly. In cohort based programs and open-entry programs where clients follow a service plan, the post-test should be scheduled for the last workshop that the client is expected to attend.

Once grantees are selected, as mentioned we will provide training and targeted technical assistance on strategies for client engagement during and after their services, and for collecting data from those who have dropped out of programs.

This training and technical assistance will also cover strategies for collecting data from youth and incarcerated fathers, and that data collection may be different from how other clients will complete the performance measure surveys. Many studies successfully collect data from youth and from those in correctional facilities.

For example, many grantees may serve youth in high schools, and collecting performance data from these youth may require school and parental consent. This is a very common process and there are many strategies grantees can use to obtain the necessary consents. It will be very helpful for a grantee staff person who is familiar with the community to establish a strong relationship with a point of contact in each school where they're collecting data. This point of contact may allow grantee staff for example to give a short presentation to students and provide incentives for completing the consent form.

Correctional facilities do not often allow people to bring in materials, so the performance measure data have to be collected differently for incarcerated individuals. For example, grantee staff may need to set up a telephone call to administer the survey over the phone, while they enter respondent's answers directly into nFORM. And again we'll be covering strategies for these types of data collection once the grants begin.

I've just given an overview of the client-level performance measures, so now we'll spend a few minutes on the grantee-level performance measures. I mentioned earlier that grantees will provide narrative and quantitative reports on their program operations, on client enrollment, and service delivery to help grantees and ACF understand what works well in program design and implementation, and where there are challenges.

So to inform these reports which Mathew will talk about, grantees on a quarterly basis grantees will respond to the program operations survey in nFORM. The program operations survey collects information that's again used to develop the performance reports and also for cross-site analyses.

The quarterly program operations survey consists of 21 questions about outreach and recruitment of clients into the program; monitoring quality through staff training, supervision, and observation; staff qualifications; and implementation challenges.

Grantees will also collect and enter data on the program services that they offer, and fathers' and couples' participation in these services. This information will also be used to develop the performance reports and for cross-site analyses.

Grantees will document program attendance in real time, for example from workshop sign-in sheets. Enrollment and participation data should be entered into nFORM at least once a week. Healthy marriage grantees will track participation at both the individual and couple level.

And now Mathew Stange will provide more information about reporting on the performance measures data. Mathew?

Reporting on Performance Measure Data

Thank you, Grace.

We will next look at the performance reporting that grantees will be required to submit semi-annually and quarterly. I will begin with an overview of the reporting, then discuss the sources of data, describe what information is reported, and then end by describing the steps of the reporting process.

First, an overview of the reporting. The Performance Progress Reporting or PPR provides valuable information about program operations, performance, and outcomes. This information helps OFA monitor progress; and grantees will find the information valuable for quality improvement and their local evaluations.

Grantees will provide quarterly and semi-annual reporting. The reports include both quantitative and narrative information. The quantitative data and calculations are automatically generated by nFORM using data from the surveys that Grace just described. Grantees only need to add the narrative—they do not need to aggregate any of the numeric data.

The narrative information comes from questions that each grantee answers about their performance and activities. The narrative provides context and detail about program operations and helps to explain the numeric data in the reports.

Grantees will send their reports to their Federal Program Specialist. Example templates of the PPRs are available on the website.

The data for performance reporting come from 5 sources, entered both clients by and program staff.

Client-entered data are their responses to the applicant characteristics and pre- and post-test surveys. As Grace mentioned, the applicant characteristics information is collected at intake and the pre- and post-test data are collected at the first and last workshops, respectively.

Program staff will enter information about enrollment and participation throughout the project and staff will enter data about program operations in the program operations survey and write narratives about program operations quarterly. To facilitate easy reporting, all of the data are stored within nFORM.

All of this quantitative and narrative information is used in the program progress reports, which provides valuable insights about each program's inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. This information shows how well goals are being met across all stages of implementation.

For inputs, the PPRs provide information about recruitment efforts, enrollment targets, and characteristics of applicants. Information about inputs is both quantitative and written descriptions. For instance, the applicant characteristics data come from surveys of the clients, which is supplemented with narratives about the target population. Information is reported about demographics, such as age and race; economic stability; and family structure.

Recruitment and enrollment target information is both numeric and written description as well. This information comes from the program operations survey and from written responses to questions. The narrative component allows each grantee to explain the quantitative information about their inputs into the program.

The PPRs also provide information about program activities—including about quality assurance and monitoring, implementation challenges, and referrals. The quantitative information comes from the responses to the questions about these aspects in the quarterly program operations survey.

Grantees also report on and describe challenges that they experience, such as with recruitment, keeping clients engaged, maintaining program fidelity, and staff turnover. This allows grantees to provide context about their program activities, such as the recruitment strategies and approaches used during the reporting period.

Output information in the PPRs pertains to enrollment figures, timing of participation in services, program attendance, and retention rates. Simply by entering this small amount of information into nFORM as part of the normal session activities, grantees will easily obtain a lot of valuable information about these outputs at the touch of a button.

Grantees, additionally, are asked to provide narratives about these aspects. For example, grantees can explain the challenges that they are experiencing with meeting enrollment targets and then strategies they have to address the challenges. Or if grantees are exceeding enrollment targets, they can describe what they think is contributing to this success.

This information in the PPRs not only reports on which outputs that programs have but also contributes valuable descriptions and strategies to improve program operations.

Finally, the PPRs provide a wealth of information about the outcomes of programs at just the touch of a button. nFORM automatically averages the post-test survey data so that grantees can observe quantitative information about their clients' parenting behaviors, economic stability, relationship attitudes and behaviors, and personal development at the end of the program. Moreover, this section reports the overall perceptions of the program, such as the percentage of clients who reported that the program helped a lot.

The Quarterly Performance Report or QPR includes a subset of the information that you will submit for the semi-annual PPRs. Again this information reported in the QPRs is both quantitative and narrative.

The QPRs report information about enrollment, timing of first participation, program attendance, retention, quality assurance and monitoring, implementation challenges, and staff turnover.

Information for the QPRs come from the same 5 sources as the PPRs and it is all stored within nFORM to facilitate easy reporting. Again, nFORM automatically aggregates the quantitative data and grantees simply compose their written narrative for the QPRs. Templates of the QPRs are available on the FaMLE website.

Now a little bit more about the narrative component of the performance reporting. As mentioned, grantees will provide a written description of their activities, progress, and plans.

Grantees will answer key questions required by ACF's Office of Grants Management and OFA.

Grantees will also use the typed narratives to provide context about program operations and to explain the numeric information reported in the PPRs. For example, a grantee might explain that winter weather conditions contributed to low enrollment numbers during the reporting period. The questions that grantees will respond to with narratives are available on the templates posted to the website.

Lastly, we will look at the steps for producing the reports. The first step is answering the questions about program operations in nFORM. That is, completing the Program Operations Survey.

This is followed by generating the quantitative data on applicant characteristics and outcomes. This step is as easy as clicking a button in nFORM. nFORM aggregates the survey information for you.

Once you have the quantitative information, you review it for accuracy and to gain information that you will use in the write-up of your narratives. As I mentioned on the previous slide, writing-up the narratives is simply answering the PPR questions in nFORM.

After you have completed your narrative, you save the report and submit it to your Federal Program Specialist.

Grantees must submit these reports 4 times in each grant year as outlined on the slide. These alternate between a QPR at the end of January, a PPR in April, another QPR in July, and a PPR at the end of the grant year in October.

More information about the PPRs and QPRs is provided on the website and in the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Robin will now summarize our talk today.

Robin?

Summary

Great. Thank you, Matthew and Grace. So that was a lot of information. I'm going to just do a really quick summary of what we have heard today. And then we will move to answering some questions.

In the next round of grants, program participants are going to be asked to complete three brief surveys. The applicant characteristics survey, a pre-test survey, and a post-test survey.
Administration of these surveys has been designed to be a simple as possible, allowing participants to simply press a button on a computer screen to respond to a set of questions that have been preselected for them.

Using the system means that program staff will not have to administer surveys or enter responses into a system somewhere. It also means that in the vast majority of situations, neither grant staff or professional interviewers will be needed because the questions will all be pre-recorded. The audio portion also ensures participants' privacy and makes responding easier for people who do not read well.

Grantees themselves will also enter data in three different areas. First, they will enter data on program participants' attendance, on an going basis. Second, once every 3 months they'll respond to a short set of questions about program operations. And third, also once every 3 months they will enter narrative information on their major activities, challenges, and plans.

Reporting will also be simplified compared to previous years, because the system will already be programmed to generate tables of data for your quarterly and semi-annual reports, with just the click of a button.

Although the Quarterly Report is a new addition for the next round of grantees, it generally is just a subset of the items that will be reported on in the semi-annual report. It too, will be generated with the push of a button, and all that is required is for the grantee to add narrative and submit the report, whether it's a QPR or a PPR.

To summarize, the performance measure data will be used in several ways: By the grantees, who will have access to the data themselves and can use it to self-monitor their progress and make any mid-course corrections they feel are needed; By researchers who are involved in local evaluations and cross-site analyses; And to help federal staff oversee administration of the grants.

So before we wrap up, I'd like to highlight just a few resources that grant applicants can access to help them write good proposals. One of the most important resources is the FaMLE Cross-Site website, at www.famlecross-site.info.

This website contains a great deal of useful information that was developed specifically to help you craft solid healthy marriage or responsible fatherhood proposals. Proposals that describe your plans for program design, program implementation, and program evaluation. You'll find sections on the website related to each of these. It also includes questions for you to consider as you develop your plans, it provides targeted tips, and offers links to other resources that you might find useful.

Under the Performance Measures tab, the website also contains links to all of the performance measures that we have been discussing today that grantees will be required to collect. It also includes a link to a prototype of the nFORM system, so you can actually explore it yourself.

So let me quickly highlight the other webinars in this series…

We've already conducted a webinar on program design, which was recorded and if it's not available today it should be there very quickly.

Tomorrow, we will conducting a webinar exclusively on the nFORM system, and will walk you through a live prototype of the system itself.

And finally, on Thursday, we will hold a webinar to discuss the local evaluations that are required by the funding opportunity announcements.

We hope these resources will help you address your questions. In addition, we will be recording and archiving all of the answers to the questions that you raise during today's webinar and during the other webinars and those will be posted on the FaMLE cross-site website. Please understand, however, that we will not be able to answer questions outside of this series of webinars because, as you can appreciate, a fair grant competition means that everybody should have access to the same information.

Thanks so much for your attention today. I'm now going to turn the webinar over to staff from OPRE who will address your questions. Seth, Julie?

Question & Answer

Hello, this is Seth Chamberlain. I thank you very much, Robin and your staff for that great presentation. We have received a lot of questions during the webinar. In fact, we have about over 60 of them at the moment. I'm not sure that I can address them all right now. As Robin mentioned, this webinar will be archived. Additionally, answers to all of the questions that have been submitted will be posted to the FaMLE cross-site website. So thank you for all of your questions. If I cannot answer them during this webinar, the answers will be posted most likely next week.

The first question is: the system of reporting seems to indicate Internet connection is available at all places we teach or hold program activities. However, this is not a given in rural areas. How do grantees handle getting clients in front of a connected computer, tablet, etc.?

So to answer this question, I want to direct folks to a specific place in the -- funding opportunity announcements. In the healthy marriage funding opportunity announcement, this is on page 30 and in the responsible fatherhood funding opportunity announcement, this is on page 33. This is all in section 4 of the funding opportunity announcement 4.2 which talks about applications. So under performance measures, the third paragraph talks about -- says applicants must describe whether and how data will be collected. The last sentence of that paragraph says, in the rare case where applicants and/or partners do not have access to the Internet because of systemic connectivity, the proposal must clearly describe potential avenues for collecting performance measurement data through the Internet as well as indicate a willingness to work with ACS to find ways to implement internet data collection through these avenues. In short, we are asking you to describe potential avenues for collecting performance measure data and to work with us to collect those data.

The next question: for places that do not have Internet connection, can we utilize paper questionnaires for intake, pre-and post-surveys that can be later entered into nFORM?

As I just said, we are asking you to describe potential avenues for collecting performance measurement data through the Internet as well as indicate a willingness to work with us to find ways to implement Internet data collection through these avenues. So I am not going to speak directly about whether paper would or would not be appropriate what we are asking in the funding opportunity announcement is for you to describe potential avenues for collecting performance measurement data through the Internet, as well as indicate a willingness to work with ACF to find ways to implement Internet data collection through these avenues.

The next question: is there a suggested number of participants to be served based on cost-effectiveness, e.g. cost per participant, or sample size for the evaluation?

The answer is: we cannot give specific guidance on a specific application. I am not sure what the research design would be for the local evaluation and there is a lot of research out there related to cost-effectiveness, but whether it is relevant for the programs that are being proposed in specific applications, I am not sure. So for questions like this, I won't be able to answer them because we cannot provide direct assistance to one applicant if we don't provide it to every applicant.

Next question. Do we fill out one QPR for each component, i.e. healthy marriage, fatherhood, economic stability or one QPR that covers all components referring I think specifically to B-03 and B-04?

The answer is: there will be one QPR per grantee expected. There will be one QPR per grantee expected, not one QPR for component. I think the person who asked that question asked about healthy marriage, fatherhood, and economic stability. Those are the three components in the responsible fatherhood funding opportunity announcement. For those of you in healthy marriage, they might not make as much sense, but in short, every grantee, whether they are a healthy marriage or a responsible fatherhood grantee or ReFORM for that matter, they will be asked to submit one QPR.

I'm going to ask the team overseeing the webinar just to give me a thumbs up in the team chat just to make sure that my sound is coming through clear and that you can hear me.

The next question is – okay thank you I got a confirmation that it sounds good.

Next question is: since the PPR states a reporting period beginning October 1, are we correct to assume start dates will be October 1, 2015? Start date -- the grants are expected to be awarded by September 30, 2015. However, the funding opportunity announcements also talk about a planning period. So these specific start dates for services and for collecting performance measure data would be dependent on the particular grantee and activity that that grantee undertakes during the planning period prior to beginning services.

Next question is: are all program applicants required to engage in a local evaluation or federal evaluation or is this optional?

The funding opportunity announcement – actually before I answer the question, let me differentiate a local evaluation from a federal evaluation. There are performance measures that are expected of all programs and there will be a cross-site evaluation of performance data. But we are not calling that a federal evaluation, we are calling that performance measures and a cross-site analysis. Second, there are local evaluations, local evaluations is our way to say these are grantee specific evaluations that are conducted by a specific evaluator for that specific grantee. The grantee organization will determine who that local evaluator is. That is not a federal evaluation. There are federal evaluations. Number one, performance measures and a cross-site analysis. Number two, local evaluations. Number three, are federal evaluations. Those are also discussed in the funding opportunity announcement but those are different from the first two. The federal evaluations are federally – they are contracting organizations that are contracted by the federal government to conduct impact evaluations of activities of a small subset of grantees. There is one federal evaluation called Building Bridges and Bonds which is going to conduct impact evaluations of responsible fatherhood grantees. There's a second called STREAMS which will be conducting impact evaluations of healthy marriage grants. However, both federal evaluations are going to be of a subset, that's a small subset, we are thinking around six healthy marriage grantees and around six responsible fatherhood grantees. Again, those three items are first performance measures and a cross-site analysis of performance data, second are local evaluations, third are federal evaluations. So the question was: are you required to conduct a local evaluation? The answer is: in the funding opportunity announcement, there is language – I'm looking on page 31 of the healthy marriage funding opportunity announcement and I'm looking on page 33 of the responsible fatherhood funding responsibility announcement, there is language that says applicants must propose a descriptive local evaluation plan or an impact local evaluation plan which will enter one or more grantee specific research questions. So everyone is expected to propose an impact – I'm sorry, a descriptive local plan or an impact local evaluation plan. It is possible but some grantees will be selected to participate in one of the federally led evaluations. But that's separate from the local evaluation. I should mention if you have more questions about local evaluations, there is going to be a webinar on local evaluations on Thursday this week at 2 PM Eastern time, 11 AM specific time that specific time. If you go to the FaMLE Cross-Site Project website, you can register for that webinar. I should mention there is a webinar on the federally-led evaluations which will be on Friday of this week at 2 PM Eastern, 11 AM Pacific. You can also register for that webinar by going to the FaMLE cross-site website and of course we will be answering these questions and posting the answers to the questions on the FaMLE cross-site website.

The next question is: are grantees expected to collect performance measures with those people enrolled in a control group with no intervention?

The answer is: it depends. For local evaluations, you are expected to propose a design that will answer your research question. Let me be more specific. In the funding opportunity announcement for healthy marriage on page 31, and in the responsible fatherhood funding opportunity announcement on page 34, under the bullet research design, so this is talking about the local evaluations and under the bullet research design, there's a statement that says applicants must include a justification for why the proposed research design is best suited to answer the research questions. So it is up to the applicants to decide which research design will answer the research questions that you have. It is possible that a – that an evaluation would include a control group and the questions have -- are not related to what is already in nFORM and in the performance measures, but it is possible that those questions would be part of your evaluations. You are -- applicants are expected to include a justification for why the proposed research design is best suited to answer the research questions.

The next question: if a collaborative of 12 faith and community agencies participates in the project, can they limit the research effort to 3-4 organizations that best represent a cross-section of the 12? Or would all 12 have to implement the research? So the question ends with research but I think he means implement the research project.

The answer is: again, applicants must include a justification for why the proposed research design is best suited to answer the research questions. Again if I'm looking in the section of the FOA in either the Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood or for that matter the ReFORM funding opportunity announcement, the funding opportunity announcements say that applicant must propose a descriptive local evaluation plan or an impact local evaluation plan in accordance with the funding level requested which will answer one or more grantee-specific research questions. Let me break that sentence down. Applicants must propose a, not multiple it says *a*, descriptive local evaluation or an impact local evaluation plan which will answer one or more grantee-specific research questions. So that means one, local -- one local evaluation plan which will have one or more grantee-specific questions. From those questions, a design must be proposed in the application that is best suited to answer the research questions. Again, I can't speak to the specific person who submitted the question about whether the design that you outlined in your question is appropriate or not because we cannot provide specific assistance to one applicant. What I will say that you should include a justification for why the proposed research design is best suited to answer the research question.

The next question is: will there be a different pre-post for youth? I think they mean a pretest, protest – for youth.

The answer is: yes. On the FaMLE cross-site website there are the pre and post-test and there are different surveys for youth that are participating in healthy marriage and education programs. We do have different surveys for youth. In the responsible fatherhood context we do not have different surveys for youth. But in the healthy marriage and relationship education context, we do have different surveys for youth.

So the next question is: for informing continuous improvement, can our data plan include non-FaMLE sources, such as career inventories or barriers to employment assessments?
The answer is: yes. There is nothing in the FOA that forbids other data collection, or prohibits, that's a better word, there's nothing in the FOAs that prohibits other data collection. What is required in the FOA is collection of the performance measures but if applicants propose other data collection, there's nothing in the FOA that prohibits that.

The next question: is will all measures be available in Spanish?

The answer is: yes. All answers will be available in English and Spanish.

Next question is: is there any copies of the surveys available for grantees to review? I think you mean are there any copies of service available for applicants to review.

And the answer is: yes. The surveys are all available on the FaMLE cross-site website. If you go to the FaMLE cross site website there is a bar across the top with different pages of the website you can go to. There is one for helping you through program design, helping you think through your local evaluation design, and then the next is on performance measures and nFORM. So all of the performance measure question surveys are on that webpage. I should mention that all of the applicant characteristics questions, the pre-test questions and the post-test questions won't appear as they appear in the paper surveys on the website. They will be in a web-based survey format that will facilitate applicants or participants completing the surveys. And I can say a bit more about that. Those surveys are being created in a form called ACASI which stands for audio computer-assisted self-interview. What that means is that participants or applicants will be able to see the questions on the screen and either press them on a tablet with their finger, press the answer that they select with their finger, or if they are using the laptop, click the mouse or click the letter to select a specific option. They're called audio computer-assisted self-interviews because there will be an audio capability so that if applicants or participants use ear buds, they can hear the question being read to them and select the option that they think is correct for them. We think in this way, populations with low literacy will still be able to complete the surveys because they'll be able to hear the questions and select the options that best -- the option that best fits them.

I'm getting a note that my voice is breaking up and to try to stay close to the microphone. I apologize. I have the phone up to my ear but I may not be speaking loud enough so I'm going to try to speak louder. I am going to ask my folks on the team to continue to chat with me. If I do get too low if my voice gets too low, and I'd also appreciate a thumbs up or down about how I sound now to be sure that folks can hear me.

The question about pre-post surveys, they will be available in audio computer-assisted self-interview format.

The next question is: what is the comprehension literacy level of the pre-and post surveys?

The answer : I'm not exactly sure. I know that we have -- often the answer to that question is about a specific grade level and I can't remember, but I know that we have created them to be accessible to folks with lower literacy levels and for those with very low literacy levels, we have created or we are creating the surveys with an audio computer-assisted self-interview format so that folks can hear the questions being asked.

I'm writing to my team to make sure that I am coming through clearly.

So the next question is: how do we logistically have 10-16 people fill out a computer-based form if we are running the curriculum as an off-site retreat? Can we budget for the appropriate number of laptops?

So to answer this question we're going to flip in the funding opportunity announcements to another page. I'm looking in the healthy marriage funding opportunity announcement on page 35, In the responsible fatherhood funding opportunity announcement on page 38. There are directions here for applicants about budgeting for evaluations. Right under the heading it says budgeting for evaluation, it says the applicant overall line item budget and budget justification must also include detailed allocations for the range of required performance measure and -- I'm sorry performance measure data and evaluation activities -- including the following. The second bullet says, storage of performance data, including desktop/laptop computer or tablet purchase for ACASI, that's that audio computer-assisted self-interview, online applicant characteristics and pre-and post-test including headphones and maintenance. So yes. The applicants should budget for computers or laptops.

The next question is: are there supposed to be two pre-tests? One to be offered during intake and/or one to be offered during first workshop. I have only seen one pre-test tool.

The answer is: there is one applicant characteristics survey that should be given to applicants. And then there is one pre-test that should be given to participants on the -- when they arrive for their first session.

The next question is: would you please clarify what a local evaluation entails?

That's a big question. There is – there are a few sections of the funding opportunity announcements that address what a local evaluation entails. I am going to talk about these very quickly because there is a whole webinar about this on Thursday. To begin, what a local evaluation entails, I am flipping in the healthy marriage funding opportunity announcement to page 10. And I am flipping to the responsible fatherhood funding opportunity announcement to page 11. And that quickly goes on to page 12. So grantees are expected to conduct grantee-specific evaluations called local evaluations to answer one or more grantee-specific research questions. The next paragraphs talk about different funding levels and what type of local evaluation is expected. I should mention that this breakdown of funding level and local evaluation expectation does not exist for ReFORM. ReFORM is different. For Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood, to be clear for the new pathways for fathers and families, funding opportunity announcement, there are three tiers. For those requesting funding from $350,000-$699,999 per year they are expected to conduct a descriptive local evaluation. Grantees funded from $700,000-$999,999 are expected to conduct either a descriptive or impact local evaluation and grantees funded from $1,000,000 to $2,000,000 per year are expected to conduct an impact local evaluation. I'm not sure I said the second bullet correctly. Those funded from $700,000 to $999,999 are expected to conduct <u>either</u> a descriptive or impact local evaluation. And those funded from $1,000,000 to $2,000,000 are expected to conduct impact local evaluations. The funding opportunity announcements go on to describe topics for those local evaluations, including recruitment and program participation, programming, programming supports. The funding opportunity announcements go on to describe and to provide an example of what a descriptive evaluation would entail versus an impact evaluation. They go on to talk about the fact that local evaluations must be designed to help inform future programming and expand the evidence-base and that analyses of data must clearly support the final reported results. They go on to say that local evaluations must be conducted by an independent evaluator, referred to as a local evaluator. They go on to say, the FOAs go on to say, that the first nine months of the grant can be used as a planning period including the refinement of a research plan. And there is more detail about those local evaluations in that section of the FOA. I would also ask webinar participants to look at a separate part of the funding opportunity announcements. This is page 31 in the healthy marriage funding opportunity announcement. And page 33 in the responsible fatherhood funding opportunity announcement. Under the funded activities evaluation plan, there is information about the local evaluations. The second paragraph in each of these talks about that applicants must propose a descriptive local evaluation plan or an impact local evaluation plan. Applicants that propose to conduct descriptive evaluations must use data and analysis to describe and explain the importance and implications of the program's processes, such as the process or program implementation study and or the program's population such as the pre-post study. Applicants that propose to conduct an impact evaluation must have a comparison group who does not receive the services of interest and that is comparable at baseline, i.e. before a program begins, to those who participate in the service program. Applicants – the funding opportunity announcements go on to say applicants must include the following components in their plans. There are three bullets here. Research questions, research design, -- I'm sorry there are four bullets. Research questions, research design, community support, and importance for the field. The funding opportunities lastly state that applicants must identify their local evaluator and the IRB they expect to use. I encourage everyone to attend the webinar on Thursday about local evaluations.

The next question is: if nFORM is in development, when is it expected to be operative for use?

We are expecting to make nFORM available for use when grantees are beginning services. So the funding opportunity announcements mention that there is a planning period of up to nine months for grantees. It is possible that grantees will finish their planning earlier than nine months. If that is the case, nFORM will be ready for those grantees to use when they have been approved that their planning period is done and they begin services.

The next question: will each staff member, such as the case manager, use nFORM as a case record system by entering client contact information daily?

nFORM, the answer is nFORM is intended to be very user-friendly to the grantees. So that it can be used as a daily management information system by staff. There is nothing in the funding opportunity announcements that precludes use of another system, however, data will need to be entered into nFORM such as daily client contacts, and client participation. So there's nothing that precludes use of another management information system, but nFORM is being designed so that it can be used as the management information system for healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood and ReFORM grantees.

The next question is: can we extract our actual data versus aggregates and averages?

The answer is: yes. The data will be exportable from nFORM so that grantees and/or their local evaluators can analyze the data using a separate statistical package such as SPSS or SAS or whatever you have or even Excel. There are going to be a set number of ready reports in nFORM so that staff can easily review a set number of reports. However, the data will also be exportable so that they can be separately analyzed.

The next question is: will the data from the local evaluations also be stored on nFORM?

The answer is: it depends. A local evaluation should be designed to answer the research questions that are proposed. If there are data elements for those research questions that use the performance measures, then there will be data for that local evaluation in nFORM. However, if the local evaluation has questions -- has survey questions or data collection instruments that are completely separate from nFORM because that is what their research questions are and that's what their research design is, there is nothing in the FOA that prohibits that. Separate data can be collected, separate data can be analyzed to evaluate the research question. So will local evaluation data be stored in nFORM? It depends on what the local evaluation design is. And whether it intends to utilize the performance measures in analyzing its questions.

Will we still complete OLDC twice a year? Another question that is similar is -- in other words is nFORM in addition to the OLDC or place of this?

The answer is: nFORM is in place of OLDC. We do not intend grantees to report data in OLDC. Rather, we intend nFORM to house the data for nFORM to pre-populate the quarterly performance report and the semiannual PPRs so that grantees can add a narrative to pre-populated forms, which will make it easier for grantees and then submit those. I would encourage everyone to attend the webinar tomorrow on nFORM. That webinar will occur at 2 PM Eastern time, 11 AM Pacific and to register for the webinar, please go to the FaMLE cross-site website.

Next question is: does the nFORM system eliminate the need to have our own internal database for tracking intakes, attendance, etc?

The answer is: it depends. You may have a system that you need to track intakes, to track attendance, etc. or you may decide that -- so if you do have a system that you depend on and you don't want to stop using, there is nothing in the funding opportunity announcement that precludes you from using that system. However, nFORM is being designed for the specific cohort of responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage grantees. So it can be used to track things like intake and attendance. It will be up to the applicants to decide what they would like to apply to do. And for then for the grantees, the awarded grantees, to implement that.

The next question is: what is the precise difference between the PPR and the QPR? Please clarify, thanks.

The QPR and the PPR are designed so that grantees can report a certain set of data every quarter to OFA. So with the first year, I'm not going to talk about the planning year because when grantees start will depend on when they are done planning. I should not say planning year. The planning period is the first nine months of the grant. I'm sorry, up to the first nine months of the grant. So if we talk about – let's say starting October 1, 2016, grantees will be expected to provide a QPR, a quarterly performance report, after the first quarter. So to cover the period October, November, December. Then grantees will be expected to submit a PPR after the first six months so that would be October, November, December, January, February, March. Then grantees would be expected to submit another QPR after the first nine months. That would be October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June. Finally, grantees would be expected to submit an end of year PPR covering all 12 months. So the intention is that grantees will report quarterly. They will report after the first quarter a QPR and after the first six months a PPR, after the first nine months the QPR, and at the end of the year, a final PPR.

This is the last question: What will happen if a seminar participant does not want to enter a certain question such as exact birthdate, income, educational level, etc.?

We cannot force participants to answer questions and if a participant refuses to answer a question, that is their right. So they do not have to answer that question.

I would like to thank everyone for your engagement, we received a lot of questions. I'm going to be doing a lot of typing tonight to answer the questions. And we are gathering all of the questions from all of the webinars and we hope to post them in an organized fashion next week.

Thank you all so much. Please attend a webinar tomorrow at 2 PM Eastern, 11 AM Pacific on nFORM. And the same time Thursday on local evaluations, and same time Friday on the federally-led evaluations. And again, you can register for those webinars by going to the FaMLE cross-site website to the homepage.

I’m going to hand it back over to Kansola.

This concludes the webcast for today. Thank you.

[Event Concluded]