

**North Carolina LiteracyCorps Engage**  
**Corliss Brown Thompson, Ph.D., External Evaluator**

**Evaluation Plan for 2016-2019**

**Overview of Evaluation Project**

In collaboration with the Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education (SCALE) at University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill, in conjunction with Dr. Corliss Brown Thompson developed an assessment plan for NC LiteracyCorps Engage program. The assessment plan focuses on performance measurement of Volunteers, K-12 Learners, and Adult Learners.

The project will use a collaborative evaluation approach. Collaborative evaluation (O’Sullivan, 2004) begins with all key stakeholders reviewing the evaluation plan to make sure that evaluation questions are relevant and that data collection strategies are realistic. To ensure validity and reliability of data collection, instruments will be reviewed by key stakeholders and data summaries will be sent back to those providing the information for member-checking of contents. Stakeholders will be asked to review draft reports prior to their finalization, which further guarantees fidelity of information. These techniques, along with strict adherence to the American Evaluation Association’s *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*, will be used to promote quality evaluation.

**Theory of Change**

Given the importance of literacy skills and basic education for children and adults along with the needs represented in North Carolina, SCALE intends to support and train NCLC members who can in turn support community organizations focused on this need. Volunteers will be managed and supported by NCLC members to go and provide group and direct instruction for adults and K-12 learners. Direct instruction for K-12 and adult learners will lead to improved performance and skills for adults and youth, allowing them to better contribute as citizens and to the NC workforce. To measure the extent to which NCLC is achieving their vision of change, specific outputs and outcomes will be measured (see Table 1).

Table 1. Performance Measure Outcomes and Outputs

Participant Type	Goal Type	Output/Outcome
Volunteers	Output	Volunteers Recruited or Managed
	Outcome	Sites with Effective Volunteer Management Practices
K-12 Learner	Output 1	K-12 Students Who Start Program
	Output 2	K-12 Students Completed Program
	Outcome	K-12 Students with Improved Performance
Adult Learner	Output	Economically Disadvantaged Students Participating in Program
	Outcome	Economically Disadvantaged Students Reporting Increased Literacy Skills

The following research questions will guide the evaluation:

1. How many volunteers were recruited or managed by NCLC members?
2. How many sites supported by NCLC members have effective volunteer management practices?
3. How many k-12 students start a NCLC member-supported program?
4. How many k-12 students complete a NCLC member-supported program?
5. How many k-12 students in NCLC member supported programs have improved academic performance?
6. How many economically disadvantaged students participate in NCLC member-supported programs?
7. How many economically disadvantaged students in NCLC member supported programs report increased literacy skills?

Each performance measure that is part of NCLC’s theory of change is described next along with the corresponding intervention, measurement plan, outputs and outcomes.

**Performance Measure:** Strengthen the volunteer base for Literacy Programs in NC

**Intervention:**

SCALE will provide Volunteer Management Training once a year with three 2-hour modules for all AmeriCorps members: Volunteer Management, Volunteer Recruitment, and Volunteer Training.

**Output Target:** 1350 volunteers from the community will be managed by the organization or participants.

**Measured by Volunteer Activity Log:** Each site will keep a database of their volunteers. The following information will be tracked for each of the volunteers in the database: Name,

demographics including economic status, contact information, volunteer assignment, date recruited, trainings attended, and hours per quarter. In order to collect this data each site will give volunteers an entry form. Attendance at all training sessions will be recorded, and volunteers will sign in and out at each session in order to track their hours. Each quarter, the site will use attendance and training records information to complete their Volunteer Activity Logs.

**Analysis:** The number of volunteers who served for the minimum requirement will be counted.

**Outcome Target:** Ten organizations will implement effective volunteer management practices

**Measured by Pre/Post Organizational Assessment:** The volunteer database manager from each site will complete the Organizational Retrospective Pre-Assessment. In order to measure the reliability of the assessment, scores will be triangulated with observations from the AmeriCorps Director site visits.

**End Outcome:** Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math.

**Analysis:** A spreadsheet with students who have completed the Bader pre- and post-tests will be created. Each student's growth from pre- to post-test will be determined individually. The number of students who improved from pre- to post-test will be counted.

**Measured by Standardized Pre/Post Test (Bader Test):** The Bader test will be given to all participants at the beginning, September, and the end, April, of the program. The Bader test has been validated by Pearson with a .88 correlation between the Bader test and the Slosson Oral Reading test.

### **Performance Measure: Support literacy success for K-12 Learners**

#### **Intervention:**

Sites will provide one on one tutoring and/or small group tutoring for K-12 students. Each site has developed its own program model based on community and learner needs. However programs must provide a minimum of 60 minutes of tutoring per week. Participants must receive a minimum of 18 contact hours to be considered as completed (equivalent to approximately 18 one hour tutoring sessions).

**Output 1:** Number of students who start in a K-12 program

**Output Target:** 800 students

**Analysis:** Number of students who enroll in a K-12 program will be counted from the Activity Log.

**Output 2:** Number of students who completed K-12 programs

**Output 2 Target:** 650 students

**Analysis:** Number of students who completed a K-12 program will be counted from the Activity Log.

**Measured by Activity Log:** Each site will keep a database of their participants. The following information will be tracked for each of the volunteers in the database: Name, contact information, attendance hours per quarter, and Bader scores. In order to collect this data each site will give each child's parent an entry form. Attendance at all training sessions will be recorded, and volunteers will sign in and out at each training session and tutoring session in order to track their hours. Each quarter, the site will use this information to complete their Activity Log.

**Outcome:** Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and or math.

**Outcome Target:** 450 students

**Analysis:** A spreadsheet with students who have completed the Bader pre- and post-tests will be created. Each student's growth from pre- to post-test will be determined individually. The number of students who improved from pre- to post-test will be counted. The number of students who improved on the Bader test will be reported.

**Measured by Standardized Pre/Post Test (Bader Test):** The Bader test will be given to all participants at the beginning, September, and the end, April, of the program. The Bader test has been validated by Pearson with a .88 correlation between the Bader test and the Slosson Oral Reading test. Volunteers will also complete a Tutor Assessment for each child. The evaluator will triangulate the data through monitoring the amount of time tutored in comparison to Bader results.

**Performance Measure: Support adult learners to obtain the literacy skills needed to obtain a new or better job**

**Intervention:**

Sites will provide Adult ESL Education, GED Education, Job Training, Adult Basic Education, and/or Workplace Behavior/Soft Skills Training. Each site has developed its own program model based on community and learner needs. However, programs must provide a minimum of 60 minutes of tutoring per week. Participants must receive a minimum of 18 contact hours to be considered as completed (equivalent to approximately 18 one hour tutoring sessions) or have completed a tested program milestone (eg. pass the GED or pass a level in ESL).

**Measured by Participant Activity Log:**

Each site will keep a database of their participants. The following information will be tracked for each of the volunteers in the database: name, contact information, demographics including economic disadvantage, attendance and hours per quarter. In order to collect this data each site will give participants an entry form. Attendance at all tutoring sessions will be recorded, and volunteers will sign in and out at each session in order to track their hours. Each quarter, the site will use these sign-in sheets to complete their Participant Activity Log.

**Output:** Number of economically disadvantaged Individuals who participate in program

**Outcome Target:** 650

**Analysis:** Adults who participate in at least 18 hours will be counted as participating.

**Measured by Activity Log:** NCLC members will track adult participation hours in the Activity Log

**Outcome:** Number of Economically Disadvantaged Individuals who report Improved Literacy Skills

**Outcome Target:** 450 economically disadvantaged adults

**Analysis:** Adults participants who demonstrate improvement on at least one literacy skill item on the adult-self assessment will be counted.

**Measured by Adult Evaluation and Tutor Assessment:** Adult Students will complete a survey that allows them to self report their literacy skills. The adult survey has been reviewed by a literacy specialist for content validity.

## **Research Design**

The evaluation of the NCLC program will be conducted using a non-experimental design. There are many reasons for taking a non-experimental approach. First, experimental approaches require a control group. Each organization is interested in ensuring that each participant gets to participate in a curriculum that will help improve their skill set. Therefore, there is no interest in having participants participate in the program for purposes of research-only, without receiving educational benefit. The same logic would apply to random selection of participants. NCLC supports a variety of programs throughout the state. While they use a similar evidence-based approach, each program is different. As such, outcomes across programs should not be compared. Instead, it is helpful to assess each set of participants at each site to determine if they are meeting the intended outcomes of NCLC.

Based on these limitations, the NCLC program evaluation is designed to measure the outputs and outcomes of Volunteers, K-12 Learners, and Adult Learners at each site individually and as a collection of sites. Each individual that participates in an NCLC-member supported program will be counted as part of the population of study. A sample of participants will not be used. This approach is beneficial because NCLC will know if each participant and site benefited from their program. This design is limited, however, because the results are not generalizable to other programs. Also, this design focuses more on performance measurement rather than evaluation of the program. At this stage of program development, NCLC staff has determined that assistance with performance measurement would be first priority for program evaluation. However, part of the evaluation cycle includes a yearly meeting where the evaluation plan is revisited in order to make changes. The program evaluator will work closely with the program to revise the program evaluation plan yearly.

## **Qualifications Needed for the Evaluator**

The evaluator should have experience in the development of evaluation plans including logic models and theories of change. The evaluator should understand all aspects of the program evaluation process including design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. Instrument design, electronic survey development, use of spreadsheets are additional skill sets needed for the evaluator of NCLC. Finally, much of the data collection will be done by the members themselves. Therefore, the NCLC program evaluator needs to be able to teach basic program evaluation methods to NCLC members and be available for troubleshooting and follow up support.

## **Estimated Budget**

The cost of the NCLC program evaluation is \$8000 per year. \$4000 of the evaluation is covered through an in-kind contribution from Dr. Corliss Brown Thompson. The estimated breakdown of costs is as follows:

- \$2000 Yearly Report
- \$1000 Evaluation Design Revision
- \$1000 Quarterly Reports
- \$2000 Instrument Development and Data Collection
- \$2000 Evaluation Training