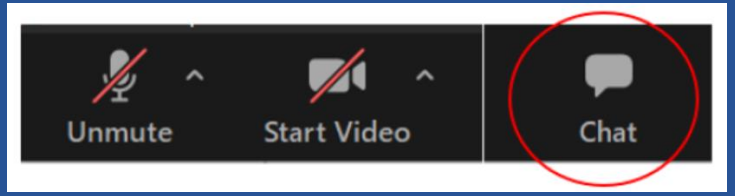
AmeriCorps

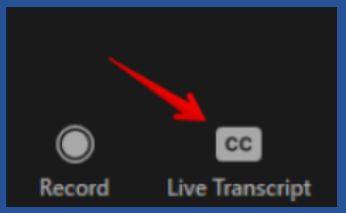
Virtual Meeting Tips & Best Practices

Rules of Engagement

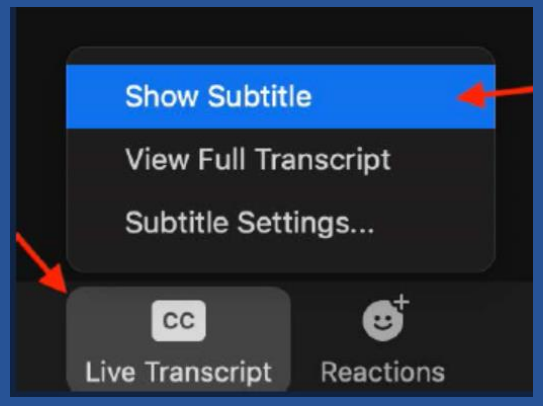


Participant microphones are automatically muted, and cameras disabled upon entry to limit backround noise, unintentional feedback, or interference with the Webinar.

Use the in-app features, including the **Chat** box, to ask a question, share feedback, or request technical assistance from Webinar Support Team.



Use the "**Raise Hand**" feature located under "reactions" to be recognized to come off mute and ask a question during the Q&A portion of the Webinar.



The Webinar Support Team will monitor the chat for the duration of the Webinar.

AmeriCorps Impact Webinar – Bridging the Research to Practice Gap with an Equitable Lens

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ServeMinnesota

Ampact

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AmeriCorps

Mary M. Hyde, PhD Director, Office of Research and Evaluation

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps' Evidence Journey

AmeriCorps
Lily Zandniapour, PhD
Research and Evaluation Manager,
Office of Research and Evaluation

- AmeriCorps' Evidence Journey
- Partnering on a Shared Vision: a common framework

Background

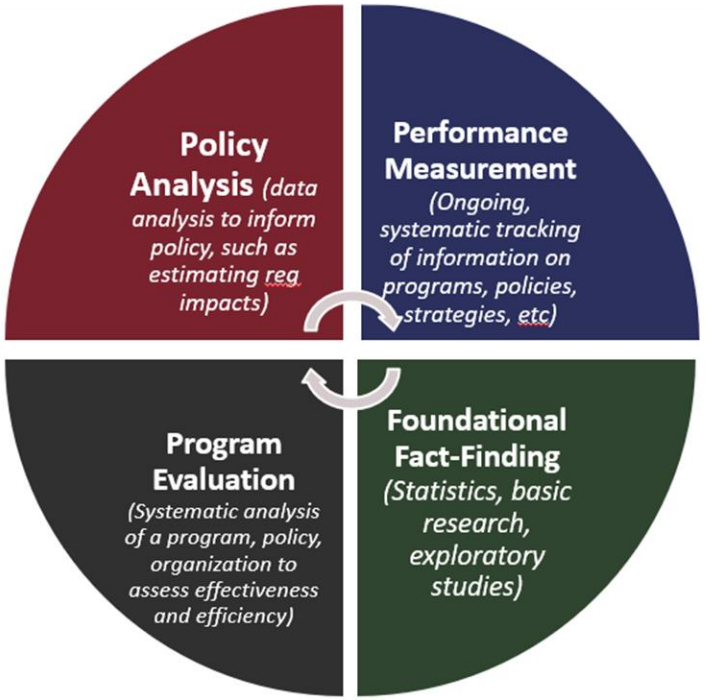
- AmeriCorps programs have used **performance measures** since their inception.
- Following the **passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act** (PUBLIC LAW 111–13—APR. 21, 2009), AmeriCorps/CNCS implemented the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) Program, and more intentionally **began to organize and develop an evidence base for the national service programs**.
- Over successive years (2010 - 2022) AmeriCorps and its partners have made **significant investments in evidence building to develop and strengthen the evidence base of AmeriCorps-supported programs** and the agency funding programs and initiatives.
- **AmeriCorps State and National Guidance** on evaluation timelines, evaluation planning and study types, evidence reviews and evidentiary levels
- Our **partners in Minnesota have been on the frontline of this effort**: Leaders in Our Field (e.g. MRC evaluation; ROI Study).

The Evidence Act and AmeriCorps Learning Agenda

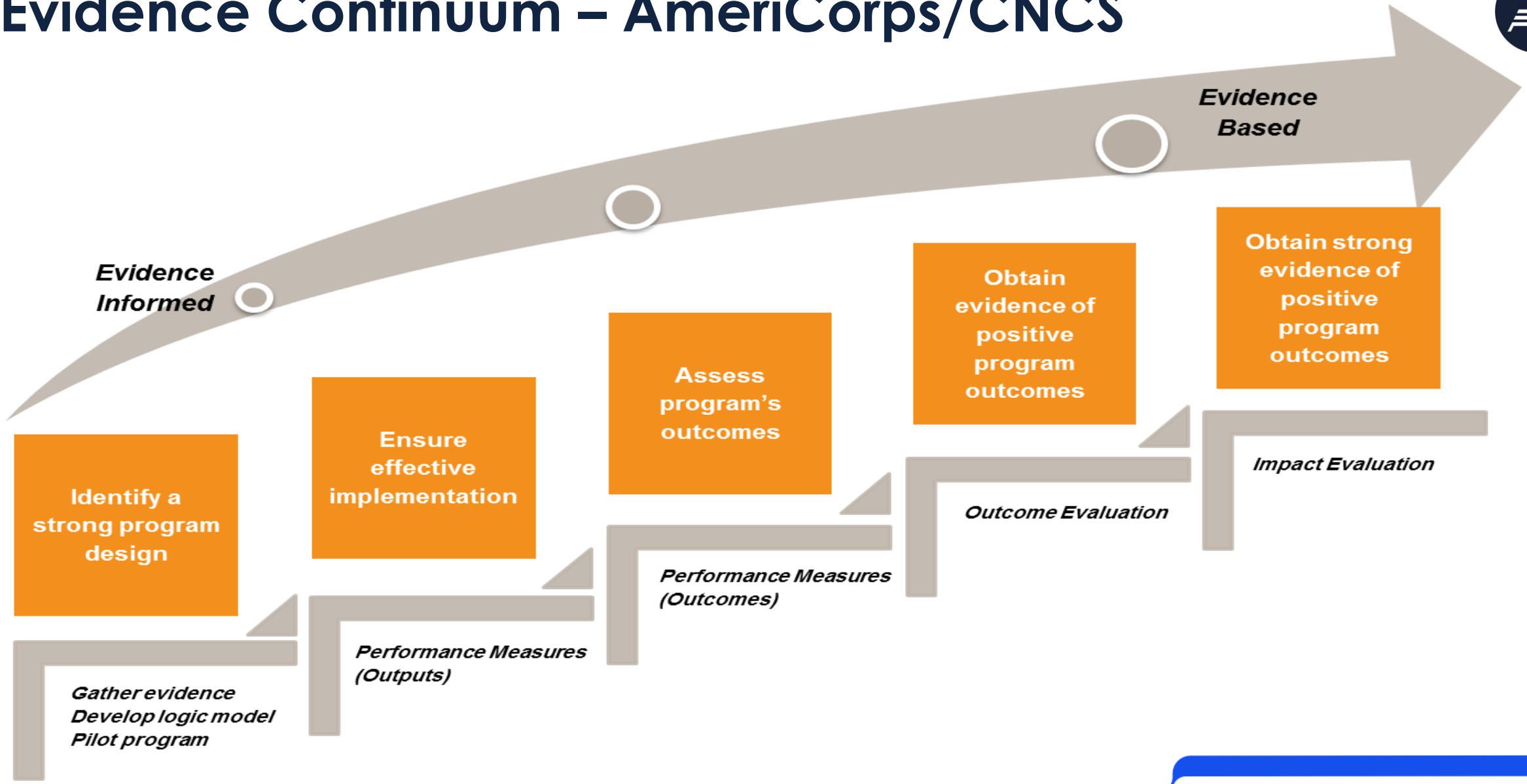
The Statute, the Guidance, the Agency Documents: AmeriCorps' Evidence and Learning Culture

- The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act) ***"Federal agencies are to use evidence whenever possible to further both mission and operations, and to commit to build evidence where it is lacking."***
- OMB M-21-27, The Learning Agenda, Evaluation Capacity Assessment, and the Annual Evaluation Plan ***"…serves to focus agency attention on the evidence needed to solve big problems"***
- *OMB Memorandum, M-19-23 …* ***(Establish agency accountability for use of evidence and the development of a learning agenda)***
- *OMB Memorandum, M-20-12 …* ***(Build and support evidence and evaluation capacity)***
- FY22-26: AmeriCorps Strategic Plan, Draft Learning Agenda, Draft Capacity Assessment and the current Evaluation Plan

Evidence Act definition of an Agency's Evidence Ecosystem



Evidence Continuum – AmeriCorps/CNCS



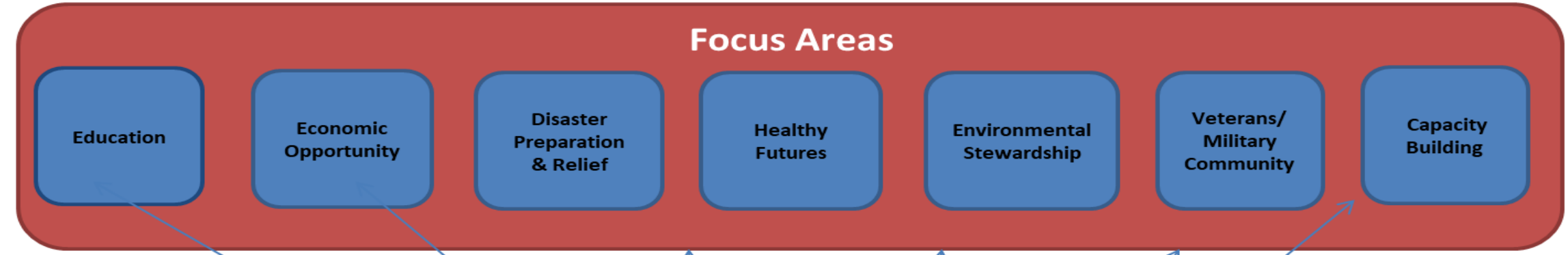
Partnering on a Shared Vision

- Evidence generates credible, relevant, and actionable information about [AmeriCorps'] organizational effectiveness, operational performance, and the outcomes of national service programs
- Building evidence for what works, for whom, and under what circumstances, is a central part of ensuring the public's access to effective solutions.
- Evidence supports innovation, improvement, and learning

--AmeriCorps Strategic Learning and Evidence Building Plan, 2022-2026

Common Framework

Value Proposition: Investing in the provision of human (service members and volunteers) and financial capital in the nation's nonprofit organizations, which deliver evidenced-informed interventions with far-reaching impacts at the member/volunteer, organization, and community levels



Delivering Evidence-Informed Interventions

(e.g., Tutoring, Mentoring, Disaster Assistance, etc.)

Non-Profit Organizations (Grantees, Sponsors, Subgrantees, Service Sites) (social turbines)

Other Funding Sources (e.g. Match)

State Service Commissions

AmeriCorps

National Service

Human Capital, Financial Capital

AmeriCorps (ASN, VISTA, NCCC:); AmeriCorps Seniors (FGP, SCP, RSVP)

Other Programs/Special Initiatives

Human Capital, Financial Capital

(e.g. Social Innovation Fund)

Investment Returns: The returns include: 1) community impact; 2) stimulation of private-sector investment through match; 3) alumni with experience that translates into skills that lead to higher levels of civic engagement and a pathway to employment

Expanding Partnership with Communities At All Levels

- AmeriCorps is focused on expanding our footprint in communities, particularly those that have been underserved and using evidence to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

❖ *"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."* (Maya Angelou)

- ServeMinnesota and Ampact are in full alignment with AmeriCorps in relying on evidence-based practice for advancing their goals and for using an equity lens to ensure diversity, inclusion, and meaningful partnership with communities.
- They are both innovators and early adopters.

Research and Innovation at ServeMinnesota

October, 2022

AmeriCorps | ServeMN

NATIONAL Science & Service COLLABORATIVE

AmeriCorps is uniquely positioned as a lever for advancing research and practice

AmeriCorps | ServeMN

NATIONAL Science & Service COLLABORATIVE

Evidence to Practice <–> Practice to Evidence

The Research Problem

Academic Research

NIH

ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

Inspiration for Solutions

Publications

ServeMN

The Practice Problem

Critical Issue

People Power

Early Learning CORPS

Reading CORPS

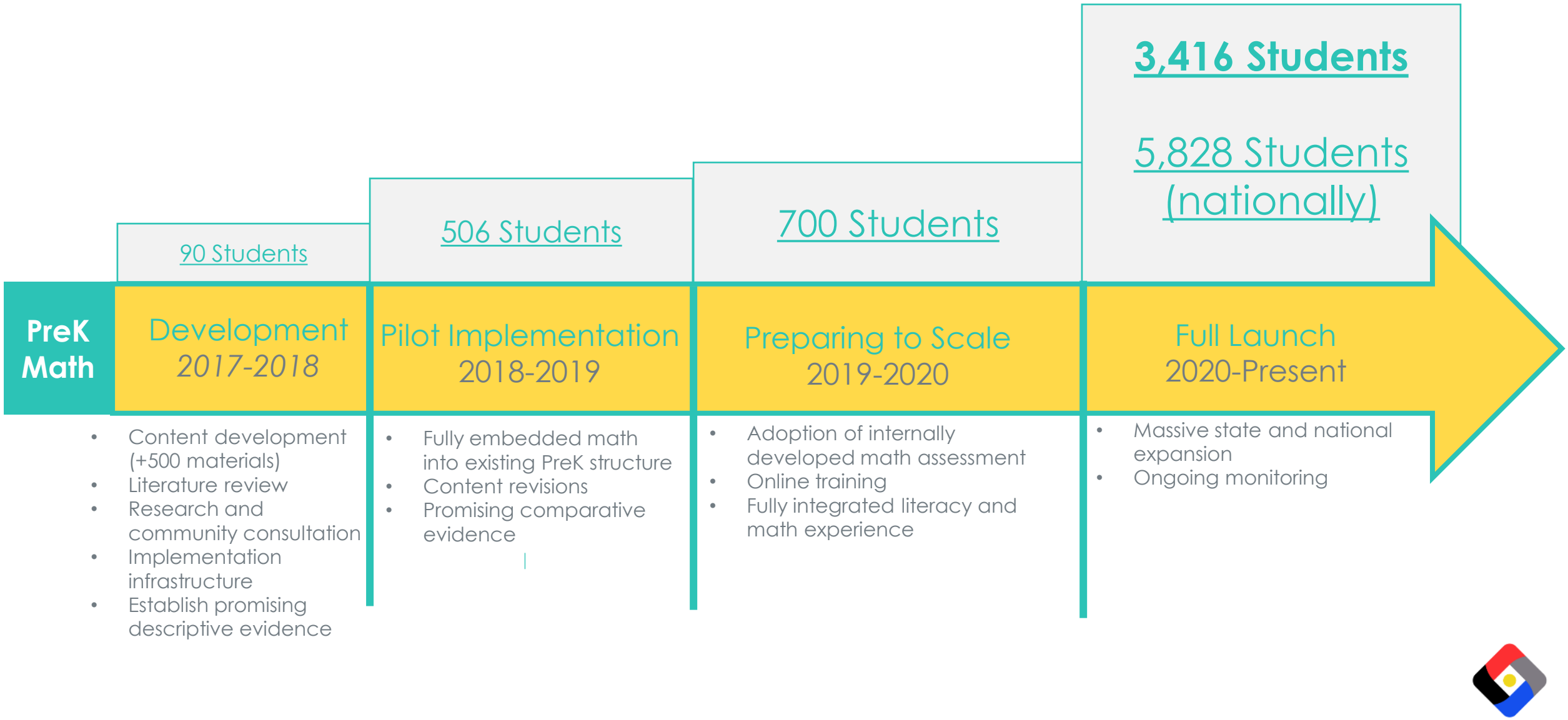
Recovery CORPS

Math CORPS

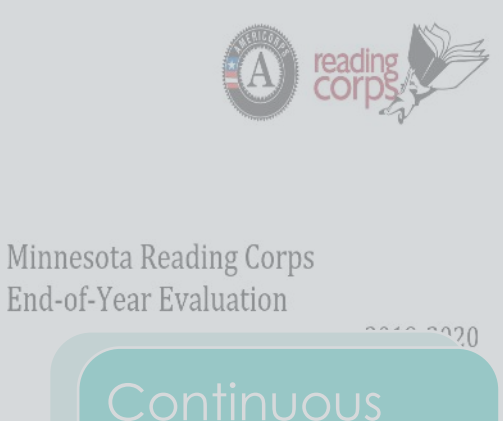
AmeriCorps

Federal, State, & Private Funding

Example: Program development, piloting, and scaling



Example: Original research for continuous improvement and thought leadership

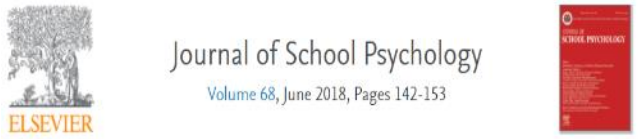


Effective Tutoring

- Causal Impact
- Cost-Effective

Continuous Evaluation

- Students exit but some do not maintain skills.



Research

- Internal Analytics
- Identify causal solutions

Practice

- AmeriCorps infrastructure means almost-immediate implementation.

Implementation, Innovation, and Scaling

Education

- Reading CORPS
- Math CORPS
- Early Learning CORPS

Environmental

- Climate Impact CORPS

Healthy Futures

- Recovery CORPS
- Heading Home CORPS

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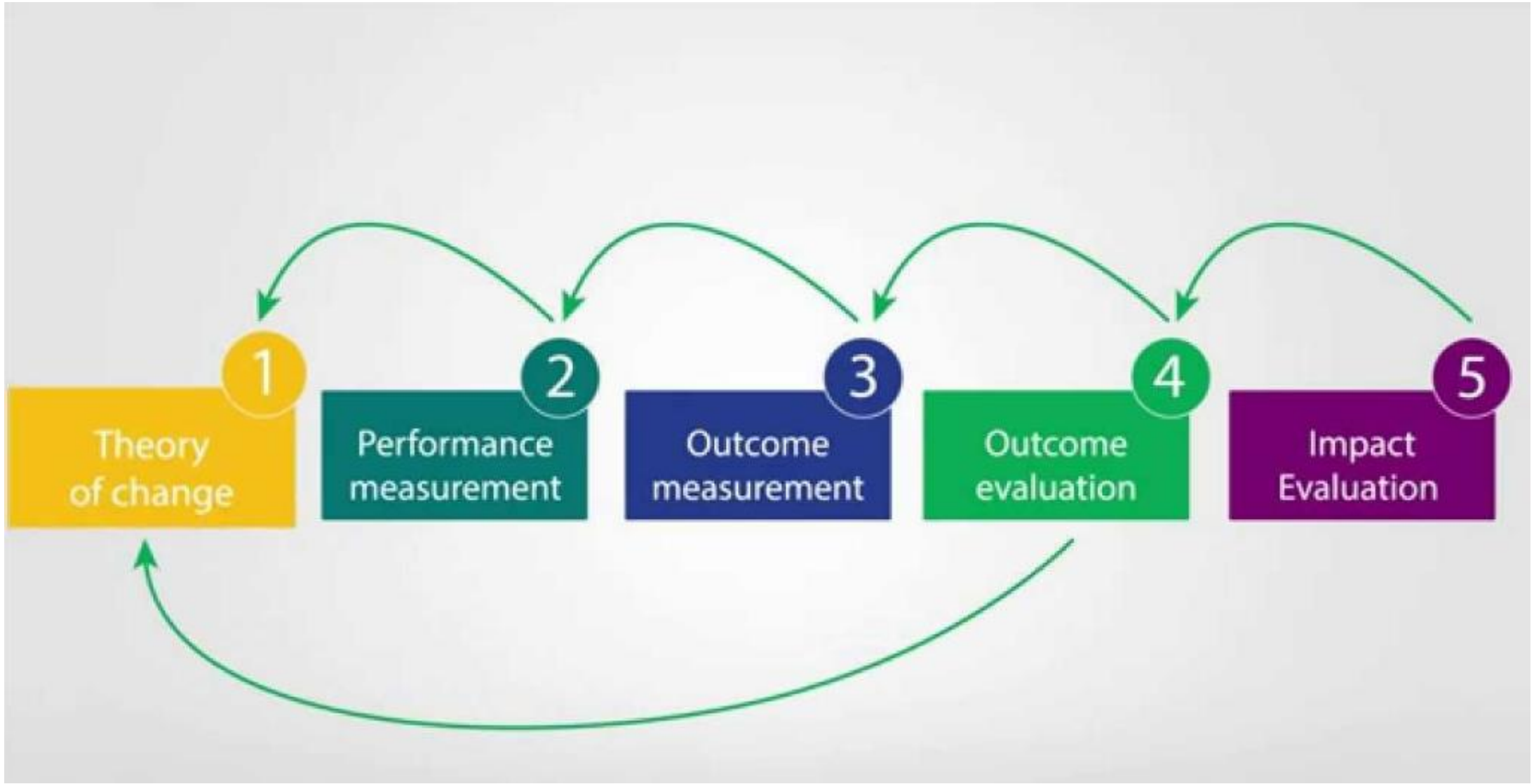

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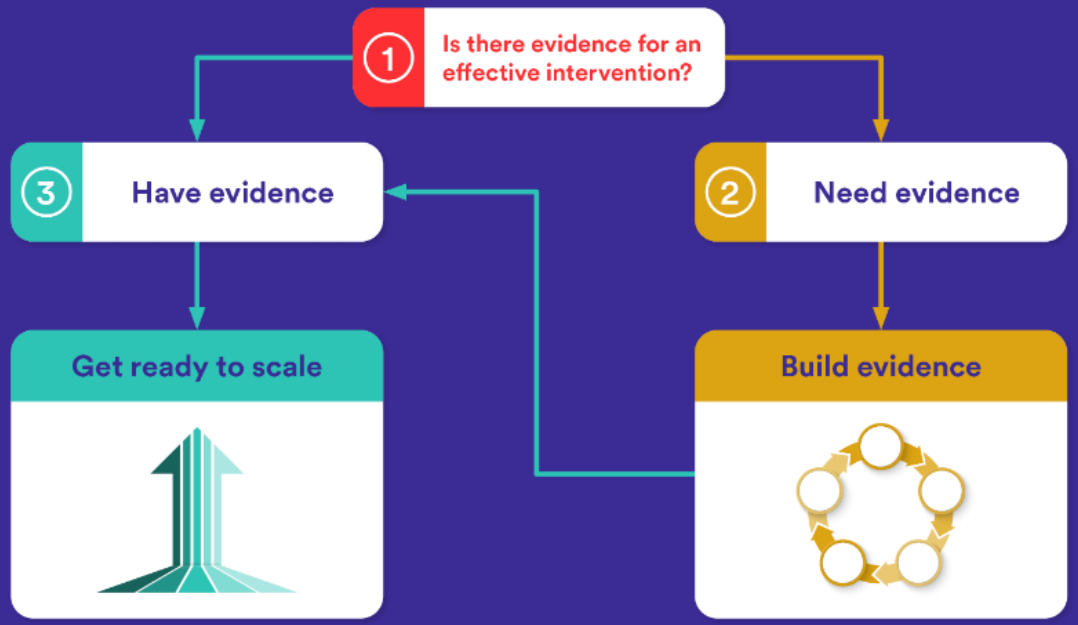
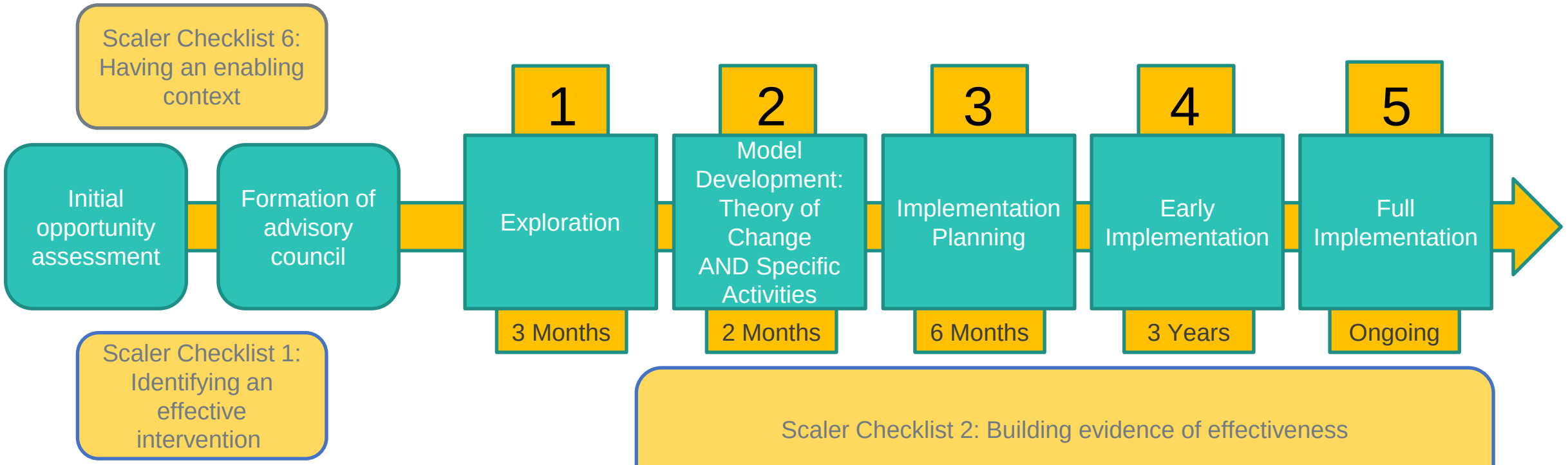
Scaling Checklists: Assessing Your Level of Evidence and Readiness (SCALER)



Pathway: New Program Development



*ServeMinnesota responsible for finding and directing external subject matter expertise, as needed throughout process

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Example: Recovery Corps

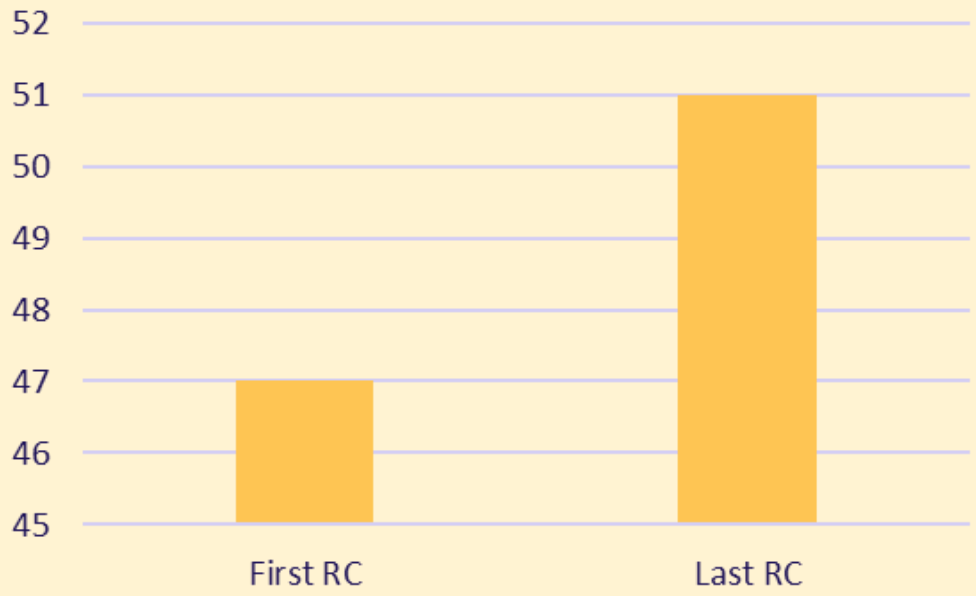
AmeriCorps Members Serve as Recovery Navigators and Project Coordinators

Recovery Navigators are people with **lived experience** in recovery trained to deliver individually tailored **peer support**.

Recovery
CORPS

Program Outcomes - Participants

On average, program participants increased their Recovery Capital score by 4 points after working with a Navigator



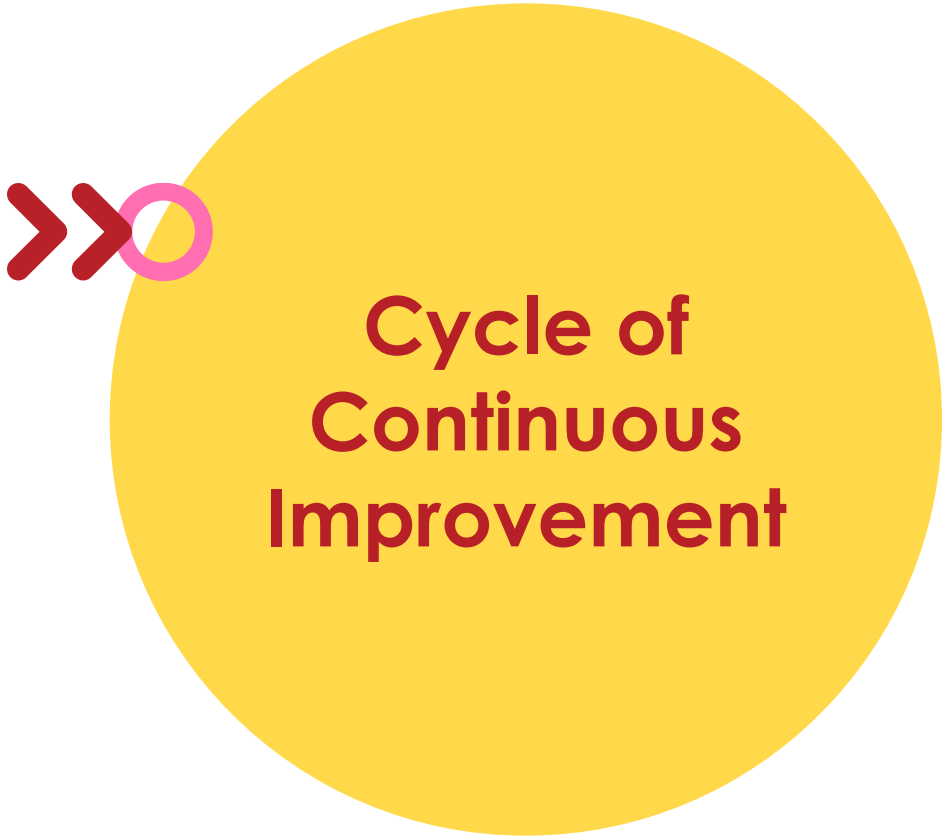
Recovery CORPS

Example:
Reading Corps

Innovations in Reading Corps

Guided by research

- Data-Based Decision Making
  - Uses normative RC data to inform intervention change decisions
- Connected Text Pairs
  - Cluster RCT
  - Impact of serving students in pairs



Reading CORPS

Embedding Equity & Community Engagement in AmeriCorps:

From Design to Implementation

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NATIONAL Science & Service COLLABORATIVE

Definition of Equity

Elimination of barriers to full participation in the process, and access to the full benefits of the outcomes.

Key Pillars

Commission Initiatives
Staff & Board

Recruitment & Retention
Strategies for Members of Color

Career Development
Align with Service Experience

Research & Innovation
Continuous program improvement

Commission Initiatives

Create sustainable and equitable organizational opportunities

- Racial Equity and Inclusion board committee
- Building staff capacity
- Training and support for AmeriCorps programs
- Community engagement

Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Implement specific strategies for recruiting and retaining members of color

- Emergency funds
- Community building with racially diverse organizations
- Increased living allowance
- Feedback sessions with members of color
- Affinity groups
- Alumni networking

Career Development Opportunities

Align current service experiences with future career opportunities

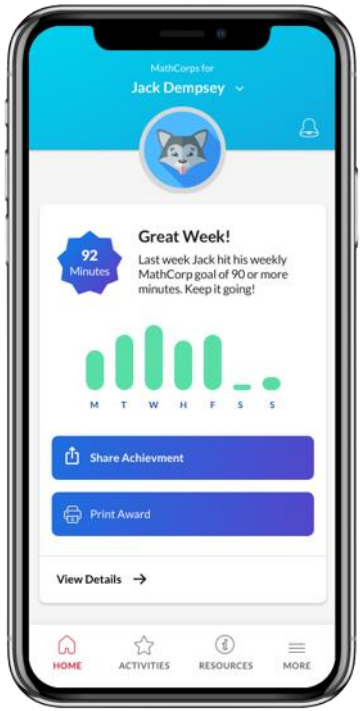
- Track member demographic data and career goals and outcomes
- Align member training to industry skills and standards
- Provide individualized career coaching
- Create intentional skill building opportunities
- Create pathways to certification, credential or degree at little to no cost to members
- Building career placement opportunities post AmeriCorps service

Research & Innovation

- Embed equity and inclusion practices from the design to evaluation of our work
- Engage in community member collaborations
- Co-create research projects *with* community members

Research & Innovation: Community-Based Design

- Increase communication between school and home on AmeriCorps related tutoring activities
- Co-created and facilitated caregiver focus groups to learn ideal communication opportunities
- Developed a prototype completely driven by caregivers
- Funded by the Gates Foundation



Across Communities Impacted by ServeMinnesota

Change the narrative of what national service looks like:

- Creating and **embedding more accessible** opportunities that allow members to thrive during and after their service experience

- Supporting all AmeriCorps programs to **create inclusive spaces that affirm identities** for members

AmeriCorps

Nathaniel Benjamin
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer

AmeriCorps

Q & A Panel Discussion:

- Lily Zandniapour, PhD, AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation
- Peter Nelson, PhD, ServeMinnesota
- Sandra Morán Pulles, PhD, ServeMinnesota
- Anne Sinclair, PhD, Ampact
- Nathaniel Benjamin, AmeriCorps Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer

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Thank you for attending today's webinar.

The recording and support materials will be provided in the next two weeks. Those items will be located on the AmeriCorps Impact Webinar page at:

https://www.americorps.gov/webinar/bridging-research-practice-gap-equitable-lens

To inquire about the work presented in this webinar, please reach out to Evaluation@cns.gov

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