



Key Principles for Achieving OFA Completion Goals

Why is completion so important?

For this grant cohort, OFA set an ambitious performance goal: Grantees must work to ensure a sufficient number of participants receive the intended program.

After all, in order to make a difference, grantees need to retain participants in the intended program.

In the funding opportunity announcements (FOAs), OFA defined “completion”: when a participant receives 90 percent of the primary workshops. While OFA will look at a number of performance milestones across your grant, this is the priority for measuring success.

How will each participant's completion be measured?

Through nFORM, each participant's completion will be measured by how many primary workshop hours (PWHs) the client receives.

Each grantee's PWHs were defined in its grant application and were confirmed during the HMRF Initiative called “Clarifying Program Offerings.” Every participant who receives 90 percent of primary workshop hours will be “complete.”

While some grantees offer case management or supplemental workshops in addition to the primary workshops as part of their project, the completion measure is tied only to the primary workshops.

How will grantees' completion performance targets be measured?

In each approved application, each grantee proposed how many clients would receive 90 percent of primary workshops in each grant year.

Through nFORM, OFA will monitor how many clients reach the milestone of receiving 90 percent of PWHs in each grant year. For example:

If a **Fatherhood FIRE** grantee proposed that 200 fathers would receive 90 percent of primary workshops in grant year 2, OFA will monitor how many fathers reach the milestone of participation in 90 percent of PWHs in grant year 2 (regardless of when the father enrolled).

If a **FRAMEWorks** grantee proposed that 100 couples would receive 90 percent of primary workshops in grant year 3, OFA will monitor how

many couples reach the milestone of participation in 90 percent of PWHs in grant year 3 (regardless of when the couple enrolled).

If a **READY4Life** grantee proposed that 500 youth would receive 90 percent of primary workshops in grant year 4, OFA will monitor how many youth reach the milestone of participation in 90 percent of PWHs in grant year 4 (regardless of when the youth enrolled).

Is completion determined by workshop session or service hours?

A participant's completion is gauged by whether they receive 90 percent of primary workshop hours (PWHs).

Grantees who proposed primary workshop structures with fewer than 10 sessions will need to engage a sufficient number of clients for all sessions, to meet their 90 percent PWHs target. For example, if a FRAMEWorks grantee offers 12 primary workshop hours over six sessions (2 hours each), a participant has to complete all six sessions to achieve a 90 percent rate (10.8 hours). If that participant attended five sessions, they would have completed 10 primary workshop hours, which falls short of the 90 percent standard. OFA may reconsider this standard after grant year 1 or after more data are collected regarding grantees' successes and struggles, based on their workshop structure.

Great! So I just need to be concerned with that one 90 percent completion goal?

It's not quite that simple! To achieve that 90 percent goal, you will want to set and monitor milestones well before that, such as the number of people who enroll, who attend the first primary workshop session, and who attend 50 percent of primary workshop sessions.

After all, almost every program experiences "attrition," that is, losing participants at each stage of the program. OFA has helped you think about this attrition by asking you to set milestone points from the time participants express interest all the way to the time they finish their workshops. You will want to set goals and monitor attrition at each of these Milestones.

Aren't exit surveys a measure of completion?

No. Exit Surveys should be administered with participants who complete *and* who don't complete primary workshops.

Specifically, exit surveys are typically administered at the last primary workshop session, thus with participants who completed primary workshops. But they should also be administered with participants who disengage with workshops without completing them. Exit surveys are required, and OFA will monitor both primary workshop completion (i.e. number of participants who receive 90 percent of PWHs) and exit survey completion.

What are the workshop milestones we should monitor?

OFA has identified seven milestones to help you monitor your progress and to support your commitment to achieving your completion targets.

Many of these milestones are available for tracking through nFORM (highlighted below). The milestones that occur prior to enrollment are not available in nFORM; however, they are also important to meeting the completion milestone. Thus, we encourage you to track and monitor those through an external system (Excel spreadsheet, for example).

- 1 Potential Enrollee:** This describes a person who may be interested, eligible, and/or available for your services. This might be someone who walks through your doors, someone referred by another organization, or even someone in another program within your agency. It could also be someone encountered by one of your recruiters.
- 2 Ready to Enroll:** This describes a person who is interested, eligible, and available. Often eligibility is determined by asking a series of questions like age, marital status, or other demographics. It's important to also assess availability. For example, if an otherwise eligible person is currently balancing work, school, and family demands, this may not be a good time for them to enroll in your program, even if the services you offer could be beneficial. (But keep track of whether multiple potential enrollees have the same conflict, and possibly adjust when you offer programming. At a minimum, keep in touch with that person so they can participate when their schedule changes!) Once you know that a person is interested, eligible, and available, then they are ready to enroll. Only those ready to enroll in your program should be entered into nFORM; in nFORM they will have a status of "applicant pending enrollment" until you complete the enrollment process.
- 3 Enrolled:** This describes an interested, eligible, and available person who completes your structured enrollment process and who also completes the nFORM Applicant Characteristics Survey (ACS) (and has their service assignment saved in nFORM if they are participating in a local evaluation). This process often is referred to as "intake," "enrollment," or "orientation". The process provides participants with the opportunity to learn about the commitment and affirm their intention to participate. In addition, a thorough intake process allows your staff to identify information and barriers that will help you best serve an enrollee. Once you "enroll" a person, you are saying that you intend to serve them. All programs, including school-based programs, should think about what kinds of intake processes and information will best engage participants in the long-run. Once the client is fully enrolled in nFORM, they will have a client status of "active." Grantees can use the client status codes in nFORM to track clients in their program. Table VII.1 of the nFORM 2.0 User Manual lists all of the client status codes grantees can use in nFORM, such as consent revoked, dropped out, and non-responsive.

- 4 Initial attendee:** This is a client who shows up for at least one primary workshop session. In order to complete a workshop, participants must start. This is a critical point for you to employ your identified retention strategies to ensure an engaged client continues to participate.
- 5 Halfway attendee:** This is a client who completes 50 percent of the planned primary workshop hours (PWHs). This means that a person has received half of the planned workshop dose. This is not tied to the number of sessions attended but to the hours of content received. Again, retention and engagement strategies are critical to avoid drop-off.
- 6 Completed:** This describes a client who completes 90 percent of the planned PWHs. While OFA is focusing on this rate, you will not be able to achieve this measure without achieving earlier benchmarks.
- 7 Fully finished:** This describes a client who completes 100 percent of the planned PWHs. This means that the client received everything you had planned and may be eager for more, such as supplemental workshops!

Can someone enroll in the program in one year and receive services in the subsequent year?

Yes, if your budget provides for that, and if that aligns with the expected length of programming and client flow through services.

Can I reengage a person who dropped out of the program in one year to be served in subsequent years?

Absolutely.

While you likely intend for people to begin and complete your service in a designed time-frame, if your service is still applicable in another time-frame, you could resume services to that participant to achieve completion. In this situation, the participant will be counted as completed in the grant year in which they reach that 90 percent milestone. You should focus on reengaging the client as soon as possible to build on the progress you have already made with the participant.

How are school-based workshops affected by completion targets?

Grantees offering services in high school classrooms will have their 90 percent completion targets assessed by scholastic year and not grant year.

This means that a student may be enrolled in one scholastic year and reach 90 percent PWHs in the successive scholastic year.

What if I find that I was too ambitious in setting my completion goals in my grant application?

Your grant application states what you will deliver. Only ACF can amend completion goals or PWHs.

Adjustment requests are not likely in grant year 1, as service delivery will have just commenced. There will not have been enough time for you to demonstrate your ability to meet your proposed goals. After grant year 1, grantees may propose revisions, but will need strong justification; for example, in preparing your annual continuation application you may seek an adjustment. All proposals for revisions in targets must begin with a conversation with your FPS.

Here's to participants getting the greatest benefit possible from your programming!