

### **C.3 MFR Component Guidance**

#### **Performance Discussion (PD)**

The Performance Discussion section is an opportunity for agencies to describe what performance data reveals about agency performance during the past year. Agencies should utilize the “Performance Discussion” column in the “All Data” tab of the Excel template to discuss performance on a per-measure basis. **Agencies are NOT required to complete the performance discussion section for every metric, only metrics with a notable trend to explain.**

If an agency is responsible for reporting data for measures included in the MFR State Comprehensive Plan, the agency must submit performance discussions regarding the goals and objectives that support the State Plan measures.

A typical performance discussion includes:

- 1) A concise statement of overall performance including what reported outcome and efficiency measures and other indicators show about the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency;
- 2) Outcomes attained and explanations for performance that surpasses, meets, or fails to achieve targets within the objectives;
- 3) When applicable, a comparison of program performance to similar programs in other jurisdictions using information from national standards, benchmarking, the experience of other similar states, or published articles, research, audits, or management evaluations.

If you need any assistance or have questions about the format for the performance discussion, please contact Jennifer Spangler at [jennifer.spangler@maryland.gov](mailto:jennifer.spangler@maryland.gov).

#### **Data Certification (C)**

The Data Certification submission should be a letter written on the agency’s letterhead, signed by the agency head or designee, certifying that the entire content of the MFR submission is accurate. For example, the letter can state, “I have fully reviewed the Managing for Results submission for FY 2024 and hereby certify, to the best of my ability, the information to be reliable and accurate.”

#### **Data Definitions and Control Procedures (DC)**

Agencies should use the “Data Definition and Control Procedures” section in the “All Data” tab of the Excel template to provide data definition and control procedures for each MFR metric.

Section 3-1002 (d) of the Maryland State Finance and Procurement Article requires agencies to maintain documentation of internal controls. When establishing performance measurement systems, agencies should ensure that:

- Documentation of data definitions and control procedures is complete, accurate, and consistent;

- Data collection, maintenance, and processing systems are designed to avoid significant error and bias;
- Sufficient information on verification and validation procedures are provided to allow a third party to assess whether those procedures and the reported data are credible; and
- Control procedures include:
  - Periodic review of data collection, maintenance, and processing procedures;
  - Periodic sampling and review of data;
  - Independent audits; or
  - Other established procedures for verifying and validating data.

In addition, agencies that report data for measures included in the State Comprehensive Plan are encouraged to conduct biennial internal audits of the reported data for those measures.

Data from an external source should be indicated and verified where possible. Verification of third party data may include obtaining from each data source the specific procedures used to ensure data integrity. **Agencies should update definitions and control procedures as necessary.**

Data Definitions: A data definition should include both conceptual and operational components that clearly explain the measure with a detailed description of its calculation to allow for replication. Agencies should specify formulas used to calculate measures in the data definitions. Additionally, a complete data definition should fulfill the following criteria:

- Describes the primary source(s) of information, its method of collection and storage;
- Identifies any data limitations, including factors beyond the agency's control; and
- Identifies whether the data is cumulative or non-cumulative.

The reported measure must be consistent with what is being measured in the objective. For example, if the objective measures the percent of Maryland children fully immunized, it would be incorrect to state the measure as the number of children fully immunized.

Control Procedures: Control procedures create a system to ensure that the collection and reporting of performance measures are reliable and accurate. A statement of control procedures should include detailed information regarding data collection and review, and list responsible parties.

There are three types of control procedures: input, process, and review:

**Input controls** are processes developed by an agency to provide reasonable assurance that data collection is accurate. Examples include:

- Data-entry training, including how information will be used and the importance of accuracy;
- Written and established guidelines and procedures for data entry that are used consistently;
- Information received via mail or telephone that is date stamped or logged when received;
- Supervisory review for accuracy of information entered into the computer system;
- Written documentation of the control structure from providers of third-party data; and
- Documentation of the third-party provider's operations to ensure that the information received is accurate.

**Process controls** are mechanisms that provide reasonable assurance that performance measurement systems use the appropriate information and follow procedures established for data gathering and calculation of each measure. Examples include:

- Review of computer programs used to calculate or store performance data to ensure the correct information is being captured and the desired functions are being performed;
- Databases have all of the basic computer controls such as edit checks, logic checks, edit totals, and access controls;
- Personnel understand the origin of the information and stay current with any changes in its form; and
- Written procedures exist for collecting and calculating measures, and personnel are trained in this area.

**Review controls** are procedures to verify that an activity occurred and was correctly calculated to provide reasonable assurance that accurate data is reported. Examples include:

- Communication with executive management to ensure that the desired information is being measured or is capable of being measured;
- Reviewing the calculation of the performance data to ensure that the calculation is consistent with the measure definition and to check for mathematical errors;
- Internal audits of performance measures; and
- Review of MFR submissions for accuracy and typographical errors.

DBM requires agencies to use the Excel template to include Data Definitions and Control Procedures in the corresponding sections on the “All Data” tab. Agencies should review the Excel template to ensure all required information is included in their submission.

If you need any assistance or have questions about the format for the Data Definitions and Control Procedures, please contact Jennifer Spangler at [jennifer.spangler@maryland.gov](mailto:jennifer.spangler@maryland.gov).

Section Title in "All Data" tab	Column Title in "All Data" tab of	Description of Information to Provide in "All Data" tab
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---

IDENTIFIERS	Goal Number	Provide the MFR goal number for this performance measure.
	Objective Number	Provide the objective number for this performance measure.
DATA DEFINITION AND CONTROL PROCEDURES	Type (Input, output, outcome, quality, efficiency)	Indicate the performance measure type as input, output, outcome, quality, or efficiency. Refer to the MFR Guidebook Section A.3 (page 84) for additional guidance.
	Description and Definitions of Terms	Provide complete written description of exactly what is being measured in plain language. Define all terms from written description that need further explanation to ensure consistent interpretation and calculation.
	Data Source/Provider of Data	Provide name of the program/unit if internal source, or the name of the external source/third party provider of data.
	Document or Database Source	Provide the document or database name, file location, and name of organization that collects and maintains data and name of the document. If the document is on a personal computer, specify which drive and file folder(s). Indicate if data comes from a paper record, in house electronic file, or third party database. Provide the Web address if applicable.
	Contact Information	What entity or person owns and maintains the database? Specify whom to contact to learn more about the sources of data.
	Method of data collection	Describe the method of data collection and storage.
	Frequency of data collection	Specify how often the data is collected (monthly, annually, etc.)
	Report Timeframe	Specify whether data represent state fiscal year, federal fiscal year, calendar year or academic year.
	Calculation method(s) or formula(s)	Provide the calculation method or formula used to arrive at this performance measure. The formula will include the specific data elements referenced under "Data Source/Provider of Data" above.
	Data Accuracy and Reliability	How is accuracy and reliability of the data ensured? Describe what steps are taken to ensure data is not duplicated (audits, mgmt review, provider processes, etc.).
	Qualifications, limitations, or areas needing improvement	Describe any qualifications for use of the data. Indicate any outstanding issues or action items that need to be addressed. Identify improvements in terms of data collection, reporting, etc. that are needed to make this performance measure more useful.
	Benchmarks (if applicable)	For comparison purposes, cite performance information for similar internal programs or programs in other jurisdictions or other states, national standards, or other sources such as published articles, research, audits, or management evaluations.