

## CYFAR Common Measures Administration Guide

The CYFAR Common Measures were developed to assess outcomes for CYFAR funded programs. Programs are asked to report annually on standardized evaluation measures. This administration guide was created to help CYFAR grantees better prepare to administer survey measures.

This guide has four sections:

1. Survey Overview
2. Survey Administration
3. Survey Scoring
4. Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

### Section 1: Survey Overview

#### Purpose and Use

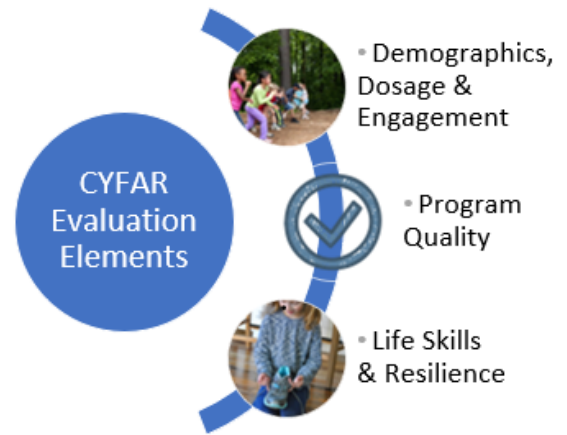
The primary purpose of the Common Measures survey is to provide data to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) on consistent outcomes for CYFAR funded programs. Evaluation allows NIFA to talk about the impact CYFAR programs have on children, youth, and families.

CYFAR requires grantees to conduct cross-site evaluations. The federal government provides money to grants with the understanding that those grants are working towards building strong, sustainable programs. It takes a lot of confidence from lawmakers year after year to allow 5 years of funding at such high levels. This cross-site evaluation provides a way to build that confidence and to show that although there are diverse content areas for CYFAR Programs, there are also a set of core features to those programs—specifically that programs are high quality and are focused on building strong individual capacity among participants.

The results also provide grantees information about process outcomes like engagement and quality of the program. Summative outcomes assess resilience and life skills.

The Common Measures contain three major pieces:

- **The who and how:** Demographics, Dosage, and Engagement
- **The what:** Program Quality
- **The so-what:** Life Skills and Resilience



Some of the measures are given pre- and post-program, and some are only given post-program. For some child and youth measures, staff complete portions of the surveys. See the chart below.

Target Group	Demographics (Pre, Post)	Participation (Pre, Post)	Engagement (Post only)	Life Skills (Pre, Post)	Program Quality (Post only)	Resilience (Pre, Post)
Child	Staff complete	Staff complete	Staff complete	X	X	X
Youth	X	Staff complete	X	X	X	X
Adult	X	X	X	X	X	X

### Description of Measures

Measures were selected following a rigorous review of high-quality surveys that capture the process and outcomes of programs like ours.

#### *Demographics*

These items include participant age, grade, sex, race, and ethnicity.

#### *Participation*

These questions gather information about how often and for how long the participant attended the program and for how long the participant has taken part in similar out-of-school activities.

#### *Engagement*

These questions gather information about how interesting and challenging participants found the programming.

#### *Program Quality*

This survey is aligned with Eccles & Gootman’s (2002) eight essential elements of high-quality programs for youth. The items measure whether or not the program provides

physical and psychological safety; appropriate structure; supportive relationships; opportunities to belong; positive social norms; support for efficacy and mattering; opportunities for skill building; and connections to family, school, and community.

### ***Life Skills***

This survey asks participants to rate their agreement with statements about their decision-making, critical thinking, communication, goal setting, and problem-solving.

### ***Resilience***

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure asks participants about obstacles they may confront (i.e., feeling safe, being treated fairly, and fitting in) and resources they have available (i.e., friends, family, and other caregivers). It is adapted to specific age groups and was designed to be accessible to multiple cultural communities.

## **Section 2: Survey Administration**

### **Preparing the Survey**

The Common Measures Surveys are available in multiple forms. First, create a survey in [Survey Builder](#) on the CYFAR website.

Surveys can be administered in three ways:

- Hard copy/paper survey
- Electronically through Survey Builder
- Electronically through a survey platform (currently integrated with Qualtrics)

It is a good idea to work with your sites to figure out the best approach. Sometimes the best approach is to take multiple approaches. For instance, you might have computers or tablets for electronic surveys in addition to paper options.

### **Administering the Survey**

For all measures, staff can provide accommodations to increase accessibility for all. Strategies that work well include group administration, reading items aloud, and defining words from the surveys.

The Common Measures can also be broken down into pieces and completed over multiple sessions. If youth struggle to complete the whole measure in one sitting, complete 1-2 pages per day. Keep in mind that breaking the survey down into segments requires following up with participants to ensure all surveys get completed.

In addition to administering the survey, participation should also be tracked. Create an attendance tracking log so program participation can easily be assessed at the end of the program.

## Survey Scripts- Introducing the Survey

It is important to give clear instructions to participants as they complete the survey.

Those with reading challenges will benefit from the survey being read aloud to them. Administrators of the survey should be ready to further explain the survey questions. This is not a test.

The following scripts are provided to introduce the survey and make sense of the questions as needed. Please adapt these to your specific group.

*“Today I’m asking you to complete a survey. We want to learn about you and your experiences in this program. We plan to use your feedback to talk about why programs matter and to make the program better.”*

***This survey is optional.** If you do not want to fill out the survey, you do not need to. However, we hope you will take a few minutes to fill it out because your answers are important. Your answers will help make programs better for youth in the future.*

***This survey is private.** No one at your school, home, or CYFAR program will see your answers. Please answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank.*

***This is not a test.** There are no right or wrong answers, and your answers will not affect your participation or place in the program in any way.”*

## Survey Script - Explaining Questions

Younger children might not understand the skills and constructs in the survey. Please explain it to them in easier terms. Below are some examples. The parts in bold are statements taken directly from the instrument. If there are additional statements participants seem to struggle with, you may use more examples from your program.

- **When I have a decision to make:** This is when you have to choose between two (or more) things: for example, whether to play basketball or draw a picture.
- **I think about all the information I have about the different choices:** It's raining outside, so you'll get wet when playing basketball, but you can draw inside.
- **I keep my mind open to different ideas when planning to make a decision:** A friend might suggest playing soccer when you were planning on playing basketball, but soccer sounds fun too, so you think about it.
- **When I communicate with others:** This is when you talk to other people
- **I try to keep eye contact:** You try to look at people when you talk to them or when they talk to you.
- **When setting a goal:** This is when you are trying to do something new
- **I look at the steps needed to achieve the goal:** When you try something new, it doesn't always work the first time you try it. Think about what you could try to make it work.

## Section 3: Survey Scoring

Resilience, life skills, and program quality measures have total and subscale scores which can be computed.

Subscale scores allow us to explore specific elements of a broader experience. For example, a youth may experience their program as being high quality overall but give it a low score in the subscale of Community and Family Integration. Subscales can be useful for exploring participants' experiences and growth in specific areas.

### Resilience

- **Total Score:** The items in the Resilience measure can be directly summed to gain a total score of an individual's resilience. The minimum score is 17, and the maximum score is 85.
- **Subscales:**
  - Items 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 16 make up the **Personal Resilience** subscale by summing the items. The minimum subscale score is 10, and the maximum subscale score is 50.
  - Items 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 15, and 17 make up the **Caregiver** (for children and youth) or **Relational Resilience** (for adults) subscale by summing the items. The minimum subscale score is 7, and the maximum subscale score is 35.

More information on the Resilience measure can be found in the measure's [user manual](#). Scoring information starts on page 13.

### Life Skills

- **Subscales:** The following list includes the items for each subscale, and an average score can be calculated for each. Average scores range from 1 to 5.
  - Decision-making: Items 1-5
  - Critical thinking: Items 6-10
  - Communication: Items 11-16
  - Goal setting: Items 17-20
  - Problem-solving: Items 21-26

### Program Quality

- **Total Score:** The items in the Program Quality measure can be averaged to gain a total program quality score. Two of the items, Program Quality 2 and Program Quality 3, are negatively worded. To recode these items, subtract the score for each participant from 6. Average all the items (Program Quality Items 1, Recoded 2, Recoded 3, and 4-24) to create an average total score ranging from 1 to 5.

- **Subscales:** This instrument is grounded in the National Research Council's elements of program quality (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The elements are grouped into the following subscales. A study validating these subscales and providing their reliability for CYFAR programs is currently in preparation.
  - Supportive Relationships: Items 4, 5, 8
  - Opportunities to Belong: Items 22-24
  - Skill Building and Efficacy: Items 12, 13, 14, 15
  - Community and Family Integration: Items 11, 19-21
  - Positive Norms: Items 6, 9
  - Structure and Safety: Items 1, 7, 18

**A note about missing data.** If a participant is missing some of the items, this can bias results, particularly for the **Resilience** measure that leads to a sum score. Participants with missing items will have artificially lower overall scores than participants who complete the measure. We recommend the following [overview of methods to address missing data](#). A walkthrough of how to address missing data in R is available [here](#).

## Section 4: Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

**Q: What should I do with youth who don't read at grade level?**

**A:** Read the survey aloud. All youth will benefit from hearing the questions in addition to reading them. You can do this in small groups or with the entire group. Youth leaders serve as excellent small group readers for youth who need extra support.

**Q: What should I do when youth do not understand an item or word in one of the measures?**

**A:** You are allowed and encouraged to explain the word or item, and you can give specific examples from your program. You can explain any items participants do not understand. See the script above for some examples.

**Q: The survey is long. How can I keep youth engaged?**

**A:** Break the survey up into smaller pieces. Complete some at the beginning and some at the end of the program day. You can also space measures across multiple sessions, but that might require more follow-up with youth who have inconsistent attendance.

Snacks and stretch breaks help youth to stay focused.

Youth also should hear how important this feedback is and that they are the only ones who can provide it.

**Q: Can I edit or delete questions?**

**A:** Please do not edit or change the Common Measures. They have been tested for reliability and validity in their current form.

**Q: Can I add additional questions?**

**A:** You can add additional questions relevant to your specific program. The CYFAR PDTA team does not need your program specific data.

**Q: Is the survey available in other languages?**

**A:** Yes, all surveys have been translated into Spanish.