

Steps to Developing Expected Measurable Outcomes

The outcome(s) must include a goal, performance measure, baseline, and a target. The outcome(s) must define an event or condition that is external to the project and that is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries and/or the public.

Expected Measurable Outcomes need to be submitted in the following format:

GOAL:

PERFORMANCE

MEASURE:

BASELINE:

TARGET:

The following three steps should provide guidance on how to develop Expected Measureable Outcomes.

1. Determine what the project will accomplish, i.e., the intended results of the project, generally expressed as a GOAL or OBJECTIVE.

a. Goals or objectives should be: a) based on a needs analysis; b) specific; and c) outcome-oriented. Outcome-oriented objectives identify the ultimate result. While the work plan activities identify *how* you intend to achieve the objectives, outcome-oriented objectives should explain *why* are you performing each grant activity and specify not only what will be achieved, but also when those results will be achieved.

2. Figure out how to measure the results and select the PERFORMANCE MEASURE.

a. For each objective identified in step 1, determine the performance measure. Performance measures are measures/indicators used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results. They are usually expressed in quantifiable terms and should be objective and measurable (numeric values, percentages, scores and indices); although in certain circumstances qualitative measures are appropriate.

b. Define who/what your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. Outline how data gathered will be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. This data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget.

3. Determine the BASELINE for each measure and set TARGET goals for future performance.

a. For each performance measure identified in step 2, determine the baseline(s) which you will measure against. Baselines are usually determined by researching past

circumstances in the area you are trying to measure. As an alternative, you may use benchmarks established by third parties accepted as the standard-setters in your industry. If data does not exist, describe the lack of data. It may be appropriate in the first year to set vaguer targets, such as “improvement” where any increase represents outcome achievement, and set more concrete targets in subsequent years when baseline data is available. Use the Baseline Data to set Targets for the quantity of change expected. Targets may be framed in terms of: 1.) Absolute level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people); 2.) Change in level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people, 35 more than last year); or 3.) Change in relation to the scale of the problem (ex: feed 150 homeless people, approximately 10% of the city’s homeless population.)

If you are starting up a new project or trying new approaches remember that little or no measurable progress will be evident in the project start-up phase. This delay in seeing measurable results should be reflected in target-setting. When setting targets, you should take into account external factors that influence your success. You may have a grand ultimate goal, but you should view annual targets as small steps toward that ultimate goal.

You may also want to set stretch goals by using benchmarks as your targets. Benchmarks tell you how the rest of the industry is doing; when you gather data for benchmarks, you look at the results of other organizations serving your type(s) of customers, doing your type of work. In your State plan, you may want to stick to a modest level of planned achievement and reserve your stretch goals for internal use. Another alternative is to include minimum and maximum targets in your application. For example, “We plan, at a minimum, for a 5% increase. However, we will strive for a 10% increase, which our data shows is possible if all external factors work in our favor and our new methodology yields the same results in the demonstration phase.”