

Step 4

Defining Clear Goals and Objectives

Not all proposals get funded. Not all good proposals get funded. Not all good *programs* get funded (that is not redundant—those are three different concepts). Funders weigh priorities against a variety of factors when considering a proposal, including importance, significance, relevance and “so-what.” The last item means, “So what if we fund this project and it succeeds—what will be better as a result?” Too often, grantseekers forget to explain these things simply through solid and well-articulated goals and objectives.

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IN THIS STEP you will learn the concept of writing clear goals and objectives. You will also focus on the important differences between them. Using a worksheet and following the examples, you will construct goals and a set of objectives for your own proposal.

Purpose of the Goals and Objectives Component: The “So What?” Factor

Once you have clearly defined the need your organization is trying to address, the next step is to develop solid goals that clearly define what the organization is trying to accomplish through its program and also to establish measurable objectives that will indicate the organization’s progress toward its goals.

Content of the Goals and Objectives Component

Organization goals, including program and operating goals, are often written as part of a nonprofit’s strategic planning process. Your organization’s goals may already be developed and therefore ready for you to use. A funder

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will want to know the goals that relate directly to the stated need, so those goals should be included in this section of the proposal.

Definition

Goal. "A goal is a focus of accomplishment supported by a series of objectives needed to realize it or a broadly-stated subsidiary result."

For example, one goal of the Senior Latino Community Outreach Pilot Project is "to be the most inclusive, responsive, and culturally competent center for seniors in all of the communities who need our services."

Like goals, objectives are tied to the need statement.

Definition

Objectives. "An objective is a significant step toward a goal; or a precise, measurable, time-phased result." Objectives are much narrower than goals. There are two types of objectives. An outcome objective demonstrates an impact or result. A process objective focuses on a process to achieve the impact. Here are two examples from the Senior Latino Community Outreach Pilot Project:

Outcome objective example. "Ensure that a minimum of 75 Spanish-speaking seniors with Type II diabetes who complete our disease management classes maintain stabilized blood sugar levels for three consecutive months."

Process objective example. "The number of monolingual Spanish-speaking seniors who access the services of our center for the first time within the grant period will increase by 50%."

The exercises in this workbook focus specifically on outcome objectives.

As you prepare the objectives component of the proposal, keep the following in mind:

- Objectives should be stated in quantifiable terms.
- Outcome objectives should be stated in terms of outcomes, not activities or process. (Program activities and process are covered in Step Five, methods.)
- Objectives should specify the result of an activity.
- Objectives should clearly identify the target audience or community being served.
- Objectives should be realistic and capable of being accomplished within the time frame indicated, which is typically the grant period (most often one year in duration).

Do not fret; everyone struggles in the beginning with the differences between goals and objectives. Use this side-by-side comparison as an aid.

Goals Are	Objectives Are
Broad	Narrow
General intentions	Precise intentions
Intangible	Tangible
Abstract	Concrete
Cannot be validated as is	Can be validated

If you look at the writing of outcome objectives from an ends-and-means perspective, these objectives are the ends, whereas the methods (Step Five) are the means of reaching those ends. When developing each objective, answering the following five questions will help you clearly articulate the result your organization expects to accomplish:

1. What is (are) the key area(s) your organization is seeking to change?
2. What segment of the population will be involved in the change?
3. What is the direction of the change (an increase or improvement, or a decrease or reduction) your organization will be looking for?
4. What is the degree or amount of change your organization will be looking for?
5. What is the deadline for reaching that degree of change?

Definition

Methods, also known as strategies. "The methods that the organization will use to deliver services and implement activities in order to achieve its goals."

Remember the logic models briefly introduced back in Step One? Well, this step further illustrates the usefulness of incorporating a logic model in the program design. Applying the logic model in Resource C of this Workbook to the goals and objectives of the Senior Latino Community Outreach Pilot Project:

- The process objectives are in the *outputs* component.
- The outcome objectives are in the *outcomes* component.
- The goals are in the *impact* component.

Helpful Hint

Use the following phrases to assist you in framing your organization's program objectives appropriately:

To reduce To increase To decrease To expand


Tips for Writing Good Goals and Objectives

- *Make sure goals and objectives tie directly to the need statement. This is critical.*
- *Include all relevant parties in the target population.*
- *Allow plenty of time for the objectives to be accomplished. Things always take longer than planned.*
- *Remember that outcome objectives do not describe methods. Collaborating with the community clinics within the service area of the Some City Senior Center is a *method*. Stabilizing the blood sugar levels of a minimum of seventy-five monolingual Spanish-speaking seniors for three consecutive months is an *outcome objective*, as it describes the result of a method.*
- *Determine how your organization is going to measure the change projected in each objective. If you find you have no way to measure change, you probably need to rethink the objectives (more on this in Step Five). Measurement of the objective stated in the previous point might be described this way: "We will measure all participants' blood sugar levels at the beginning of the diabetes management classes and then measure their blood sugar levels weekly for three months following their completion of the classes to determine whether their blood sugar levels are stabilized."*
- *Always try to write at least one outcome objective into your plan, and determine how you will measure it. Remember to budget for evaluation activities if measuring the objective(s) will have costs associated with it.*

Use Worksheet 4.1A to prepare to write your goals and objectives by focusing on outcomes. Start by writing down the goal of the program. Then describe the objectives that tie to that goal. Use the filled-out Worksheet 4.1B as a guide.

If your organization has more than one goal for its program, use a separate copy of Worksheet 4.1A for each goal. Limit the objectives to no more than four per goal.

Then write your proposal's goals and objectives component, following the standard formula supplied at the end of the worksheet, and using the sample goals and objectives on Worksheet 4.1B as a guide. When you are finished, go through the Goals and Objectives Review Questions, in the same way you did with the review questions for your statement of need. Remember, you want to be able to answer yes to each question in the review questions.



WORKSHEET 4.1A:

Goals and Objectives Exercise

Worksheet 4.1B contains sample goals and objectives. Please use it as an example as you complete this questionnaire.

GOAL:

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
Direction of change				
Area of change				
Target population				
Degree of change				
Time frame				
Follow this standard form as you write out your objective statements: To (direction of change) + (area of change) + (target population) + (degree of change) + (time frame).				
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WORKSHEET 4.1B:
Goals and Objectives Exercise Example

GOAL: *Provide comprehensive access to health and social services for the seniors in the Latino communities served by our center.*

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
Direction of change	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase
Area of change	Latino seniors with Type II diabetes	Monolingual Spanish-speaking seniors accessing our center	Latino seniors cooking healthy Mexican food	Referrals from partnering organizations
Target population	Spanish-speaking seniors with Type II diabetes	Monolingual Spanish-speaking seniors accessing our center for the first time	Latino seniors who still prepare their own meals	Our partnering organizations in the community who provide us with referrals
Degree of change	Minimum of 75 individuals	50%	Minimum of 50 individuals	50%
Time frame	6 months (3 months for classes and 3 months for maintenance)	12 months	12 months	12 months

Follow this standard form as you write out your objective statements: To (direction of change) + (area of change) + (target population) + (degree of change) + (time frame).

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Goals and Objectives Review Questions

1. Are your organization's goals stated as results?
2. Are your organization's outcome objectives stated as specific results that relate to a program goal?
3. Can progress in meeting your organization's objectives be quantified and assessed?
4. Do your organization's objectives describe the client population and a specific time frame for change?

Your nonprofit's need statement is in order, and you have the "so what?" factor covered in the program's goals and objectives. Let's move on to the development of your organization's methods, which is Step Five.