
Defining Clear Goals and Objectives

In this section, you will learn how to write clear goals and objectives. A distinction is made between *outcome* and *process* objectives, so that you will understand the important differences between the two. An outcome objective states a quantifiable result of the project. A process objective quantifies your method. Using the worksheets and following the examples, you will write a set of objectives for your own proposal.

■ Writing Goals and Objectives

Once the need to be met has been agreed upon and written into a need statement, it is necessary to develop goals and objectives to give a clear picture of the results of implementing your program. The goals and objectives are the outcomes of the planned program, and they answer the question, How would the situation look if it were changed?

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- **Definition** A *goal* is a broad-based statement of the ultimate result of the change being undertaken (a result that is sometimes unreachable in the short term).

Example: The homebound elderly in ABC County will live with dignity and independence in their own homes.

Program goals are often written for the organization as part of a long-range planning process. They may already be developed for you. A funder will want to know what your program goals are, so they should be included in this section of the proposal.

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- **Definition** An *objective* is a measurable, time-specific result that the organization expects to accomplish as part of the grant. It is much more narrowly defined than a goal. Like the goal, the objective is tied to the need statement.

Example: There will be a 5 percent decrease in the number of frail older adults going into convalescent homes during the first year of the social services referral program.

Preparing the objectives component of the proposal should be done while keeping the following in mind:

- Objectives should be stated in quantifiable terms.
- Objectives should be stated in terms of outcomes, not methods and inputs; that is, they should specify the result of an activity as opposed to just describing program methods.
- Objectives should clearly identify the population group being served.
- Objectives should be realistic and capable of being accomplished within the time frame indicated.

Program objectives should be written as the outcome of your methods, not as the methods themselves. If you look at this from an ends-and-means perspective, the objectives are the ends, and the methods are the means of reaching those ends. The example above is an *outcome objective*—that is, it describes a result. The methods (discussed in Step Four) indicate what will be done to start the new program, increase social services referrals, and lead to the accomplishment of the objective.

When developing each objective, answering the following five questions helps to clearly articulate the result you expect to accomplish:

1. What is/are the key area(s) you are seeking to change?
2. What segment of the population will be involved in the change?
3. What is the direction of change (increase or improvement, or decrease or reduction) you'll be looking for?
4. What is the degree or amount of change you'll be looking for?
5. What is the deadline to reach the degree of change?

HELPFUL HINT

One easy way to ensure you are writing a good objective is to start your objective with wordings, such as the following, that suggest a purpose:

- To reduce ...
- To increase ...
- To decrease ...
- To expand ...

■ Tips for Writing Good Goals and Objectives

- Goals and objectives should tie directly to the need statement.
- Include all relevant parties in the target population.
- Allow plenty of time for the objectives to be accomplished; things always take longer than planned.
- Objectives do not describe methods. Opening a new spay/neuter clinic is a method. Reducing pet overpopulation by 10 percent in 1993 is an objective, because it describes a result.
- Determine how you are going to measure the change you are projecting in your objective. If you find you have no way to measure change, you probably need to rethink the objective (more on this in Step Five).

Develop your objectives using Worksheet 3.1. Then write your goals and objectives component using the Sample Goals and Objectives as a guide. When you are finished,

WORKSHEET 3.1. Goals and Objectives Exercise.

Write your objectives by using the following worksheet to help you focus on outcomes. Start by indicating the goal of the program, and then describe the objectives that tie to the goal. You may have more than one goal (use separate sheets for each goal). You should limit your objectives to one to four per goal.

GOAL: _____

	OBJECTIVE ONE	OBJECTIVE TWO	OBJECTIVE THREE	OBJECTIVE FOUR
Area of change				
Target population				
Direction of change				
Time frame				
Degree of change				

Standard Form for Objective Statements: to (direction of change) + (area of change) + (target population) + (degree of change) + (time frame).

WORKSHEET 3.1. Goals and Objectives Exercise.

Use this filled-out example to help you complete the exercise on the preceding page.

GOAL: Increase the quality of life for the elderly at risk of institutionalization.

	OBJECTIVE ONE	OBJECTIVE TWO	OBJECTIVE THREE	OBJECTIVE FOUR
Area of change	<i>Individuals leaving the Consortium for institutions</i>	<i>Individuals remaining in their homes</i>	<i>Social services referrals and follow-up services</i>	<i>Social services direct care</i>
Target population	<i>Persons served by the Meals Consortium who are at risk of institutionalization</i>	<i>Individuals served by the Meals Consortium</i>	<i>Individuals served by the Meals Consortium</i>	<i>Individuals who are most vulnerable served by the Meals Consortium</i>
Direction of change	<i>Reduce</i>	<i>Expand</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase</i>
Time frame	<i>12 months</i>	<i>12 months</i>	<i>12 months</i>	<i>12 months</i>
Degree of change	<i>5%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>90%</i>

Standard Form for Objective Statements: to (direction of change) + (area of change) + (target population) + (degree of change) + (time frame).

go through the Goals and Objectives Review Questions in the same way you did for your statement of need. Remember, you want to answer yes to each question in the Goals and Objectives Review Questions.

■ Sample Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the Meal Consortium is to enable homebound frail elders to live with independence and dignity in their own homes. Without the daily nutritional meals, the homebound would risk malnourishment and deteriorating health since they are unable to prepare their own meals. The alternative for most of the individuals served is costly institutionalization. A secondary goal of the Meal Consortium is to prevent the cost burden of institutionalization for the homebound and for the community.

The project being proposed will help meet the Consortium's goals. The following objectives are specific to the proposed social services referral program.

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce by 5 percent the number of individuals leaving the Meals Consortium to be institutionalized due to lack of social services.
2. Expand care of the frail elderly to ensure that 80 percent of the population served by the Meals Consortium remain in their homes during 1994-95.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

1. Increase social services referrals and follow-up for 75 percent of the individuals served by the Meals Consortium during 1994-95.
2. Increase social services direct care to 90 percent of the most vulnerable homebound elders served by the Meals Consortium.

■ Goals and Objectives Review Questions

Are your goals stated as results?

Are your objectives stated as specific results that relate to a program goal?

Can progress in meeting your objectives be quantified and assessed?

Do your objectives describe the client population and a specific time frame for change?