

## Sustainability Series Tip Sheet

### The Logic of Program Design, Part 2 – Writing Program Objectives

Outcomes are results or improvements for people and/or communities. Program outcomes refer to specific services that address an issue or problem. These are *short-term* outcomes. Population Outcomes refer to specific changes in the targeted population over time. These are *long-term* outcomes.

**Outcome Objectives** are future-oriented and are related to measurable or observable change. An outcome objective states the results one hopes to attain by carrying out planned intervention activities. In general, most objectives plan to *increase* or *decrease* behavior, knowledge, or attitudes.

Outcomes may be achieved in the short-term, such as increasing the number of people among specific populations who receive hepatitis A and B immunizations and/or hepatitis testing. Long-term changes in the population might be a decrease in the number of people in a specific group who are exposed to hepatitis B and/or C virus.

**Well written *outcome objectives* answer the following questions:**

- **Who or what is expected to change or benefit?**  
Example: *the number of people who are vaccinated against hepatitis A & B*
- **What/how much change or benefit is expected?**  
Example: *a 15% increase in immunizations*
- **Where will the change occur?**  
Example: *At the Joe E Brown Community Clinic*
- **When will the change occur?**  
Example: *By June 30, 2010*
- **How will you know if change occurred and who will measure the change?**  
Example: *The number of patients who complete a series of hepatitis A & B immunizations will increase from 20% to 35%, as measured by immunization logs kept by the project director.*

**Other questions that help the grant writer to evaluate objectives are:**

- **Is the planned change observable or measurable?** Can you see, count, or otherwise observe or measure the change?
- **Is the planned change achievable or reachable?** A baseline measure will assist you in estimating the level of success you might expect to achieve. Be realistic. Don't overestimate the likely change; an outcome of an 80% immunization rate may be unrealistic, if at baseline only 10% of patients have completed their vaccinations. Aim for small and achievable changes over time.
- **Is the change important or meaningful?** Even if achievable, an outcome may not be sufficiently meaningful to be justified. If at the beginning of your intervention 90% of the target group has completed immunizations, it may not be as meaningful to reach the remaining 10%. Weigh the financial and human resource investments required, and the benefits that stakeholders will receive.

**Planning Objectives** may relate to collecting (increasing) data or resources. The emphasis is on obtaining baseline data for planning future interventions.

Example: *By May, 2010, the nursing staff at the Joe E. Brown Clinic will review records of clinic patients to determine barriers that may have prevented the patients from receiving hepatitis A & B vaccination.*

Another part of **Planning** might be to develop **collaboration** with other community programs and resources that relate to the type of work you intend to do. This is a good way to begin exploring ways to integrate how your program delivers its services with other programs in the community.

Example: *By June, 2010, a collaborative of public health nurses, the hospital administrator, and the staff of the clinic will have met three times to develop a community immunization education campaign.*

Another example of a **Planning Objective** is the development of **tools** to help the project meet its goals, such as creating a database for collecting and sharing information with other projects.

Example: *By June, 2010, the Joe E Brown Clinic will create a database that tracks the number of patients receiving hepatitis A and B immunizations and hepatitis B and C testing.*

**There are other types of measurable objectives. The following list describes some of them:**

- **Behavioral objectives** describe behavior or actions, which certain people or a group will take toward achieving an overall outcome. Behavioral objectives must answer the following questions: *Who* are the people that are expected to change their behavior? *What* are the changes in behaviors that you seek? *How much* of the behavior change do you expected to achieve? When is the behavior change expected to occur? How will the change be measured?

Example: *By January 31 2010, the number of patients that reduce their viral hepatitis risk will increase by 65%, as measured by pre and post intervention interviews with patients*

- **Learning objectives** relate to **knowledge** (just as **behavioral objectives** relate to **behavior**).

Example: *By January 2011, at least 65% of patients will increase their knowledge about viral hepatitis risk factors by participating in a patient education class, as measured by pre and post tests.*

- **Environmental objectives** relate to how changes in the environment will help achieve the desired outcomes. People usually do not act a certain way (behave) just because of who they are, but they do so because they exist in a particular environment.

Example: *By June 30, 2012, the Joe E. Brown Clinic will partner with the county health department to add an immunization clinic to the community's existing needle exchange program.*

**Why so many types of objectives?**

- Objectives are related to outcomes. Several objectives may be needed to accomplish one outcome. Many different types of people need to be targeted for change if the change is to be sustained. There may be times when the same objective supports multiple outcomes. For example, implementing a hepatitis A & B immunization or a hepatitis B and C testing program may support outcomes related to healthy families, a healthy community, and improved access to education and care.

*The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable is a coalition of public, private, and voluntary organizations dedicated to reducing the incidence of infection, morbidity, and mortality from viral hepatitis in the U.S.*

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