

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

The differences among goals, objectives, and strategies can be confusing, in large part because different individuals and groups define them differently. In the simplest possible terms:

A goal is a broadly stated, non-measurable change in health status

An objective is a specific, measurable change in health status or behavior

A strategy is the method, approach, or process used to achieve the change ([CT.GOV](#))

Goal Statement:

A program goal is a very **broad statement** of intended accomplishments or a description of a general condition deemed desirable. A well-defined goal statement will establish the “overall direction and focus for the program, define what the program will achieve and serve as the foundation for developing program strategies and objectives” (CDC Evaluation Brief, No. 3a, 2008). Sometimes goals are not always achieved during the duration of the program. Goal statements **do not** state what will be implemented; rather, they are statements that reflect the **results** of what will be implemented. They should be specific to the population, setting, and problem to be addressed. Well-written goals are SMART—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Bound (will describe in objective section)

A strong Goal Statement...

- Focuses on a **Specific** expected program effect in reducing a health problem.
- Identifies a **Priority Population** to be served.
- Is **Jargon-free, Short, Concise, and Easily understood**
- Frames outcomes in **Positive Terms** or in terms of decrease in health risk behavior/outcomes. Avoids use of double negatives.
- Provides a **Framework** for identifying strategies and objectives for achieving the goal(s).
(CDC Evaluation Brief, No. 3a, 2008)

Sample Goals: To(do something) + (among whom) + (where)

- To reduce HIV rates among adolescents in X community.
- To reduce obesity rates in young adolescents in X state.
- To improve cardio-vascular fitness in youth participating in X program.

Resource: [CDC Logic Model Tip](#)

Objectives

Objectives articulate goal-related outcomes in specific and measurable terms. Whereas goals are broad, general, intangible, and abstract, objectives are narrow, precise, tangible, and concrete. One goal may have many objectives. For example, a goal to reduce heart disease deaths might have objectives related to smoking cessation, weight reduction, and physical activity. Objectives add a specificity to goals by stating “who, what, when, and where,” and by stipulating “how many, by how much, or how often.” They typically begin with active verbs such as increase, decrease, reduce, create, and establish. ([CT.GOV](#)) Well-written objectives are also SMART.

SMART objectives are:

- **Specific:** Concrete, detailed, and well defined so that you know where you are going and what to expect when you arrive
- **Measurable:** Numbers and quantities provide means of measurement and comparison
- **Achievable:** feasible and easy to put into action

- **Realistic:** Considers constraints such as resources, personnel, cost, and time frame
- **Time-Bound:** A time frame helps to set boundaries around the objective

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Time-Bound
What exactly are we going to do? What strategies will we use? Is the objective clear? Is the objective described with strong action verbs such as conduct, develop, build, plan, or execute? Who will be involved? Is the outcome specified? Will this objective lead to the desired results?	How will we know that change has occurred? Are we able to gather these measurements?	Can it be done in the proposed timeframe? Are the limitations and constraints understood? Can we do this objective with the resources available?	Do we have the resources available to achieve this objective? Is it possible to achieve this objective?	When will this objective be accomplished? What is the stated deadline?

Resource: [CDC SMART Objective](#)

Sample Process Objectives:

- By year two of the project, staff will have trained 100 health education teachers in the state on the selected scientifically based health education curriculum.
- By December 30, 2012, health educators will have delivered all lessons from X curriculum to 90% of youth participants in the middle school HIV-prevention program.
- Of the 300 high risk youth targeted, 80% (240) will complete all 8 prevention education sessions by the end of the school year, 2012.

Strategies

A strategy describes your approach to getting thing done. It is less specific than action steps but tries broadly to answer the question, “How can we get from where we are now to where we want to be?”

A good strategy will take into account existing barriers and resources (people, finances, time, and materials). It will also be consistent with the overall mission, goals, and objectives of the initiative. Often, an initiative will use many different strategies, such as enhancing support, removing barriers, providing resources, etc., to achieve its objectives.

Objectives articulate the aim of your initiative – what success would look like in achieving your mission. In contrast, strategies suggest paths to take (and how to move along) on the road to success. That is strategies help you to determine how you will achieve your objectives through action.

Characteristics of good strategies

- They point out the overall path and sometimes a specific approach
- They fit resources and opportunities, taking advantage of current assets and public opinion
- They minimize resistance and barriers; creative strategies can help to attract allies and deter opponents

- They reach those who are affected; they must be geared to the abilities and needs of the target population
- They involve as many sectors of the community as possible

Examples of strategies

- Identify populations who underutilize mammography and clinical breast exams.
- Develop a media campaign to educate women about breast cancer risk factors and the benefits of early detection ([CT.GOV](#))

Action Plans:

They lay out sequential steps for carrying out each strategy needed to meet an objective, i.e., they specify activities to be conduct during a designated time frame.

Components of an action plan

At a minimum, the action plan should contain the following information:

- The goal, objective, and strategy to which the activities pertain
- What activities or changes will tank place
- Who will perform each activity
- By when and for how long will the activities take place ([CT.GOV](#))

Strategies & Activities

Strategies are broad concepts or approaches to achieve the project objectives while activities are actions that are undertaken within these strategies.

For example, ‘building the capacity of the community members’ is a strategy your project has adopted. An activity under this strategy can be: ‘organizing training programs for community members.’ **Resource:** [Strategies and Activities](#)

Strategies	Activities
Capacity-building/ awareness raising	Training workshops, street shows, rallies
Organizational development	Staff selection, staff training
Research & Development	Baseline, PRA, FGD
Advocacy	Conferences, meetings, articles, publications
Victim Support Strategy	Establishing shelter homes, counseling, legal support
Micro-finance and CBO development Strategy	Forming SHGs and cooperatives
Participatory Infrastructure Development Strategy	Building irrigation tanks, demo plots etc



Example of simple of goals,
plan activities¹

objectives strategies, and action

Resource: CT.GOV

Goal 1: Reduce deaths and injuries from unintentional falls among older adults			
Objective 1. Reduce by 25% the death rate for unintentional falls among person 65 years of age and older			
strategies	Action Steps	Responsible Entities	Time Frame
1. Develop a public education campaign to increase awareness of the risk factor for falls among older adults	1. create a statewide common message about factors that increase the risk of falls and injuries among older adults 2. Develop a communications plan targeting high-risk populations 3. Develop culturally-sensitive information on ways to reduce fall risks 4. Incorporate common fall and injury messages across stage agencies that provide services for older adults	Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging; State Health Care Cost Containment System; State Department of Economic Services, Division of Adults & Aging; Tribal Councils; Senior centers; Academic institutions	1. By 3/31/2007 2. By 12/31/2007 3. By 3/31/2008 4. By 3/31/2008
2. Promote evidence-based healthy living practices that lower the risk of fall (e.g., physical activity, medication management, annual vision assessment)	1. Identify existing best practice programs 2. Develop guidelines and criteria for best practice programs that promote healthy living and lower fall risk, targeting high-risk populations. Distribute medical forms at pharmacies, senior centers and community health centers throughout the state. 4. Market existing fall prevention programs	Home Safety Council; State Agencies; Local Health Departments; Fall Prevention Coalition; Senior Centers; Community Health Centers; Osteoporosis Prevention Coalition; Pharmacies	1. By 9/30/2009 2. By 2/28/2010 3. By 6/30/2010 4. By 12/31/2010

References

1. Bower, Carol. E.2009. Guide and Template for Comprehensive Health Improvement Planning, Version 2.1. Hartford, CT: Connecticut Department of Public Health, Planning and Workforce Development Section. 119 pp.
http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/state_health_planning/planning_guide_v2-1_2009.pdf
2. Center for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/resourcekit/evaluate/smart_objectives.html
3. FundsforNGOs. <http://www.fundsforngos.org/free-resources-for-ngos/difference-strategies-activities-proposal/>
4. Logic Model Tip Sheet: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/prep-logic-model-ts.pdf>