

SMART Objectives: Creating Your Grant Workplan

This guide is aimed at helping organizations develop realistic and measurable objectives as required by the grant application. This guide describes the components of a SMART objective and provides examples. An exercise at the end offers an opportunity to work through the development of SMART objectives.

As part of the grant application process, organizations propose objectives and develop a work plan. The work plan is based on proposed objectives, so it is important that they are developed using the SMART approach. Writing SMART objectives helps OSDH identify elements of the evaluation plan and measurement, namely indicators and performance measures that will be required throughout the grant period.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and ACTIVITIES

We often think of what we want to accomplish in terms of goals and objectives so that we can easily explain our expectations to others.

A **goal** is a statement that explains what we wish to accomplish. Typically, goals are broad general statements. Example: Improve immunization awareness in Oklahoma

Objectives break the goal down into smaller parts that provide specific, measurable actions by which the goal can be accomplished. Objectives define the results we expect to achieve. For our expectations to be clear, we must write clear, concise objectives.

Objectives are meant to be realistic targets. They are written in the active voice and use action verbs such as plan, write, conduct, and produce (rather than more vague terms like learn, understand, feel). Well-written objectives will always answer the following question: WHO is going to do WHAT, WHEN, TO WHAT EXTENT and how will we MEASURE it?

Activities are the specific tasks or steps that will be conducted to fulfill the objectives. If your objective is "I will clean the kitchen by 1:00pm today," your activities are specific tasks/steps necessary to ensure your kitchen is clean by 1:00pm today.



DEVELOPING SMART OBJECTIVES

One way to develop well-written objectives is to use the SMART approach. Developing specific, measurable objectives requires time, orderly thinking, and a clear picture of the results expected from activities. The more specific your objectives are, the easier it will be to demonstrate success.

SMART: Specific Measurable Attainable/Achievable Relevant Time-bound

Specific—Who is doing what?

The “specific” part of an objective tells us what will change for whom in concrete terms. It identifies the person, population or organization, and specific actions that will result. In some cases, it is appropriate to indicate how the change will be implemented (example: through training). It is important to use verbs that clearly indicate what will be done, such as provide, train, publish, increase, decrease, schedule, or purchase. Verbs like coordinate, partner, support, facilitate, and enhance are not good verbs to use in objectives because they are vague and difficult to measure.

Measurable—Is it quantifiable and can WE measure it?

Measurable implies the ability to count or otherwise quantify an activity or its results. It also means that the source of and mechanism for collecting measurement data are identified, and that collection of these data is feasible for your program or partners.

A baseline measurement is required to document change. The data source you are using and the year the baseline was obtained should always be specified in your objective statement. For example, “By June 2022, the health department will increase the proportion of elderly in McClain County who are 100% compliant with CDC recommended adult immunizations,” specifies not only the performance measure, but the data source as well.

Attainable/Achievable—Can we get it done in the proposed time frame with the resources and support we have available?

The objective must be feasible with the available resources, appropriately limited in scope, and within the program’s control and influence.

It is important to consider the percentage of change as a number of people when discussing impact. Will the effort required to create the amount of change be a good use of your limited resources? For example, our intervention might be intended to increase immunization access among patients in a geographic area. If as a result of our intervention we measure a 5% increase in that geographic area, but 5% of our population is a very small number, we might want to consider the cost of the intervention relative to the number of people affected. We could choose to enhance the intervention for a greater impact or not implement that intervention again.

Relevant—Will this objective influence the desired goal or strategy?

Relevant relates to the relationship between the objective and the overall goals. For immunization programs, the objective should accomplish one of the following:

- Directly lead to achieving or enhancing one of the required objectives.
- Directly lead to a desired change in one of the CDC priority areas (increasing immunization knowledge and awareness, increasing immunization access, increase immunization reporting or eliminating immunization disparity).
- Directly lead to a policy or system level change in a priority setting.

Time bound—When will this objective be accomplished?

A specified and reasonable time frame should be incorporated into the objective statement. This should take into consideration the environment in which the change must be achieved, the scope of the change expected, and how it fits into the overall work plan. It could be indicated as “By December 2010, the program will” or “Within 6 months of receiving the grant, ...”

SMART OBJECTIVES: WORKPLAN EXAMPLE

GOAL: Strengthen Oklahoma’s equitable distribution of vaccines, raise immunizations awareness, and improve immunization access points
Objective 1: Identify your community
Activity 1: The immunization program staff will utilize US Census, state data, and CDC data to identify communities with high concentration of LatinX/Hispanic population in Cleveland County. This activity will be completed by August 31, 2022 Performance Measure: Communities identified, map created and shared with stake holders
Activity 2: The immunization program staff will utilize US Census, state data, and CDC data to identify elderly (ager 65 years old and older) within the identified LatinX/Hispanic population in Cleveland County. This activity will be completed by August 31, 2022. Performance Measure: % of elderly identified in the quarterly report
Objective 2: Engage Partners and Stakeholders
Activity 1: The immunization program leadership and staff will participate in at least 1 meeting each with Oklahoma’s three Immunization Coalitions (Oklahoma County, Tulsa County, and Cleveland County) to inform, remove misinformation, and network. Meet with at least one per quarter. Performance Measure: Meeting attendance sheet, MMWR and other CDC updates shared with the coalitions within 72 hours of release.
Objective 3: Proactive and Compliant Financial Management
Activity 1: Program Staff will meet monthly with Budget & Finance Team to review invoices to avoid any discrepancies. This activity will continue throughout the grant period. Performance Measure: Meeting notes, budget revision requests