



Setting Goals and Developing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound Objectives

Introduction

Goals are the specific result or purpose expected from the project. The project goals specify what will be accomplished over the entire project period and should directly relate to the problem statement and vision. The goal is achieved through the project objectives and activities.

Objectives are the specific steps that lead to the successful completion of the project goals. Completion of objectives result in specific, measurable outcomes that directly contribute to the achievement of the project goals.

Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives is a good way to plan the steps to meet the long-term goals in your grant. It helps you take your grant from ideas to action. Setting SMART objectives keeps the project moving forward, helps with accountability and timing, and lets you know that you are accomplishing what you set out to accomplish.

Definition of SMART Objectives

SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

- **Specific** – Objective clearly states, so anyone reading it can understand, what will be done and who will do it.



- **Measurable** – Objective includes how the action will be measured. Measuring your objectives helps you determine if you are making progress. It keeps you on track and on schedule.
- **Achievable** – Objective is realistic given the realities faced in the community. Setting reasonable objectives helps set the project up for success.
- **Relevant** – A relevant objective makes sense, that is, it fits the purpose of the grant, it fits the culture and structure of the community, and it addresses the vision of the project.
- **Time-bound** – Every objective has a specific timeline for completion.

Tips for writing SMART Objectives

Specific

- Define what you expect
- Determine who will do it
- Detail accountability
- Use action verbs, expressing physical or mental action, as much as possible
- Provide enough detail—this depends on the objective but should be enough to be clear

Measurable

- Identify how you will know the objective was accomplished—usually this means quantity but can also be quality (for instance: “80% of participants agree or strongly agree on the feedback form”)

Attainable

- Make sure you have the time, manpower, resources, and authority to accomplish the objective
- Consider if there may be factors beyond your control



Relevant

- The objective helps you meet the purpose of the grant
- The objective is aligned with the Community Readiness Assessment scores

Time-bound

- Specify when the objective should be completed
- Include time-lined benchmarks for long-range goals and all objectives

Examples of SMART Objectives

Sample objective 1: *Collaborate with 11 Tribal entities.*

The bulleted list below shows how this objective is and is not a SMART objective.

- ***Is it Specific?*** It is clear, but it could be more specific in terms of who will do it and what “collaboration” means.
- ***Is it Measurable?*** Yes, but *how* it will be measured needs to be stated.
- ***Is it Attainable?*** Yes, if you have the time and resources needed.
- ***Is it Relevant?*** Yes, because collaborating with other agencies improves the chance that changes will be made and contributes to sustainability.
- ***Is it Time-bound?*** No – it does not specify a timeframe for completing the objective. Add language to specify completion time.

Sample SMART objective 1: *Project director will obtain Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that spell out the terms of agency collaboration with 11 tribal entities involved with youth by August 31, 2017.*

The objective outlines what will be done and who will do it. It is measurable, it specified some detail about the MOUs, and it is time-lined. Depending on how the Native Connections (NC) team is set up and how you report to the tribal government and/or advisory committee, more specific detail would make this objective even better.



Sample detailed SMART objective 1: *The project director will obtain MOUs that spell out the terms of agency collaboration for 11 tribal entities working with youth. The MOUs will state how many times a year the entities will meet as well as other details how the entities will work together. The advisory committee will review all MOUs before signing; the director will submit all signed MOUs to the advisory committee and Tribal Council by August 31, 2017.*

The list below shows the sections of a SMART objective and provides the detail and rationale that makes it SMART.

Specific

- Who: Project Director
- What: MOUs
- Detail: Terms of collaboration

Measurable

- How many? 11
- Documented by: MOUs
- Accountable to: Board and Tribe

Attainable

- Justification: There are 11 entities that work with youth. We have good relationships with most. We have staff and resources to help them meet the objective.

Relevant

- Rationale: Grant calls for “integrated services.” MOUs help define the terms of working together.

Time-bound



- When: 11 MOUs submitted by August 31, 2017

Sample objective 2: *Continue to educate our community that suicide is a public health problem.*

Sample detailed SMART objective 2: *“The project team will hold two 5K walk/runs with at least four entities by July 1, 2017, and speak once a month at nine community meetings from January–September 2017, to educate our community that suicide is a preventable public health problem.”*

The following shows the SMART details of objective 2.

Specific

- Who: Project Team
- What: Walk/runs & presentations

Measurable

- How many? Two walk/runs and nine presentations
- Documented by: Sign-in sheets and agendas
- Accountable to: Board

Attainable

- Justification: We have time to plan and staff to implement.

Relevant

- Rationale: This type of awareness raising is consistent with our CRA score

Time-bound

- When: Two walk/runs by July 1, 2017, and nine presentations by September 2017



Set up your project for success

1. Get input from your advisory board, your SAMHSA Government Project Officer, and your NC coordinator when writing your goals and objectives.
2. Copy or build on things that have worked before in your community.
3. Have a good idea of the time the designated person has to devote to each objective, so they have the time they need to fulfill the objective. If necessary, figure out how to enlist help from others.
4. Get buy-in from staff and collaborating agencies before you set the goals and objectives.