Smart Objectives

Commission on Aging

September 20, 2023

Goals

- A goal is an aspirational statement about what you want to achieve:

- Broad, future-oriented statement that describes expected effect

- Defines scope

- Provides framework for objectives

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SMART Objectives

- A **SMART** objective is one that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. SMART objectives provide the details for how a group or organization will achieve a goal.

- When we talk about the SHAPE Plan being Affordable, Achievable and Actionable – that is not possible unless we use SMART objectives

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SPECIFIC	Who and what?
MEASURABLE	By how much?
ACHIEVABLE	How?
RELEVANT	Why?
TIME-BOUND	When?

SMART objectives should:

- **Include all components of SMART**
- **Relate to a single result**
- **Be clearly written (use plain language, avoid jargon)**

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Specific Objectives

Precise	Clear to team, partners, and other groups
Use plain language and avoid jargon	Use verbs that document action

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Specific Objectives (cont.)

- Prompts to consider when writing specific objectives include:

- Who: Who will be impacted? Who is your focus population?

- What: What do you intend to impact?

- Example: Reduce the percent of Fairfax County residents over the age of 60 who have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days.

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Measurable Objectives

- How do you show impact over time?

Measure	Target	Data source
- A number, percent, or standard unit used as a reference point from which change can be monitored	- The direction we want to move the measure, or the level we want to reach.	- Be sure to tie your measure and target to a specific data source, like a regular survey or publication, or a state or local agenc

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Measurable Objectives (cont.)

Prompts to consider when writing measurable objectives include:

- How much and in what direction will change occur?

- What data will you use to measure?

- Where will this data come from?

• Is there a stand-in or proxy measure if you cannot directly measure this objective? If not, would another measure be more appropriate instead?

• Example: Decrease by 5 percentage points the percent of Fairfax County residents over the age of 60 who have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days. (baseline: 18%; source: 2022 CASOA)

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Time-bound Objectives

Time-bound objectives attach a reasonable date by which and objective will happen.

Not too soon: Give enough time to demonstrate success and/or the connection between action and outcome

Not too far away: Don't encourage procrastination, or remove the ability to connect the dots between action and outcome

Consider when data will be available: May determine time frame

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Time-bound Objectives (cont.)

Prompts to consider when writing time-bound objectives include:

- Is this time frame realistic?

- Should it be closer? Should it be further away?

- When will the data be available?

Example: By December 31, 2025, decrease by 5 percentage points percent of Fairfax County residents over the age of 60 who have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days. (baseline: 18%; source: 2022 CASOA).

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Relevant Objectives

Relevant objectives align with a corresponding goal and with an organization or group's mission, vision, and values. They're important to partners, community members, and decision-makers, and they help achieve meaningful change for focus populations.

Prompts to consider when writing relevant objectives include:

- Will objective contribute to achieving the overall goal?

- Is it worthwhile and meaningful to measure this objective?

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Achievable Objectives

• Objectives should be within reach for your partners, community, or team, and consider available resources, knowledge, and time. Remember, considering what's achievable for your team or organization often requires thought and discussion.

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Achievable Objectives (cont.)

Prompts to consider when writing achievable objectives include:

- How will the group accomplish this objective?

- Does the current time frame or environment help or hinder this objective? Should we scale the target or time frame up or down?

- What resources will help us achieve this objective? What limitations or constraints stand in our way?

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Achievable Objectives (cont.)

A note of caution about setting objectives for long-term, population-level change:

- Complex, long-term issues require decades of work for change; your organization's actions are one small part

- Who's on the hook if you don't achieve your target?

- Is it more appropriate to measure movement direction without setting a concrete target number? (e.g., increase, decrease, or maintain)

- Consider intermediate objectives when appropriate

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Different ways to write SMART objectives

There are multiple approaches and ways to explain how to write SMART objectives. Here are some other sentence structures for objectives:

- **[Who]** will do **[what]** resulting in **[measure]** by **[when].**

- By **[when], [who]** will do **[what]** resulting in **[measure].**

- By **[when], [measure - includes who and what].**

- **[Measure – includes who and what]** by **[when].**