



Logic Models

Instructor:

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In the highly competitive world of nonprofit survival and grantseeking, there is a constant need to make the best possible case for financial support. Learning to correctly use logic models can help your organization develop a winning strategy to show grantmakers why your organization deserves their support.

There are many versions of logic models – but most *start with the end in mind* (“outcomes”), and include common elements for program design, evaluation, and resources (“inputs”).

Logic models are essentially a program planning and outline tool. They are intended to be used at the program design, evaluation, and improvement stages, and ideally are created by a program team versus one person.

Benefits of using logic models

1. Most grantmakers understand them, and many require them
2. Share expectations within an organization – force the conversation about goals and outcomes so that everyone understands a program’s intent
3. Communicate a program’s intent and design to funders, partners, administrators, boards, etc.
4. Determine if a program’s scale, depth, and reach are realistic, and if your organization has the required capacity and the expertise
5. Encourage outlining of and planning for the “activities” expected to lead to the proposed “outcomes”
6. Promote a proactive plan for tracking, measuring, and evaluating a program
7. The “inputs” are essentially an expense budget – the ingredients required to undertake the “activities” so as to deliver the “outcomes”
8. Determine cost (“inputs”) per outcome figures so as to explain and sell them to funders and the public by way of grant applications, funding appeals, annual reports, marketing materials, etc.
9. The format is easily transferable to grant applications and proposals
10. Facilitate a continuous improvement process

General notes

1. Logic models are typically used at the program/project level, not necessarily at the agency or organizational level, or for capital campaigns.
2. Different logic models use different terms to mean the same thing (e.g. activities vs. methods). Therefore, it's more important to understand the definition of each term than the term itself.
3. Start with the "Purpose" (goal) and "Outcomes" sections. They are the heart of the model.
 - The subject (noun) of these sections should be your population of service or beneficiaries.
 - Avoid assigning numbers and percentages to outcomes. Rather, list them in the "Targets or Objectives" column so that an outcome stands separate from the projected level of success or result you hope to achieve.
 - Try brainstorming "Outcomes" on a separate sheet of paper. Ask, what are the benefits, changes or improvements that will result from our implemented program or project? It helps to think of "before" and "after" scenarios and to think of one unit (e.g. person, house, neighborhood, school) rather than your entire population.
 - A decent relationship exists between "Purpose" and "Outcomes" if it stands to reason that, by accomplishing the "Outcomes" for one unit (e.g. person, house, neighborhood, school), that the "Purpose" will also be accomplished for one unit.
4. Reflect in-kind services in "Activities" and reflect their value as "Inputs." Include their value in both the expense and revenue portions of your actual budget. Often, the provider of the in-kind service is reflected as a collaborator or partner in a grant application.
5. Consider adding a "Revenue" column to the left of "Inputs" so as to plan for and track sources and amounts of support (cash and in-kind).
6. Determine cost per outcome figures by dividing the total value of "Inputs" by "Outcomes."
7. "Indicators" can be thought of as sign posts or mileage markers on a car trip; that is, indications that you're on the right path and can reasonably expect to reach an "Outcome." Conversely, if "Indicators" are not realized, then you may be off the map and not reach your destination.

