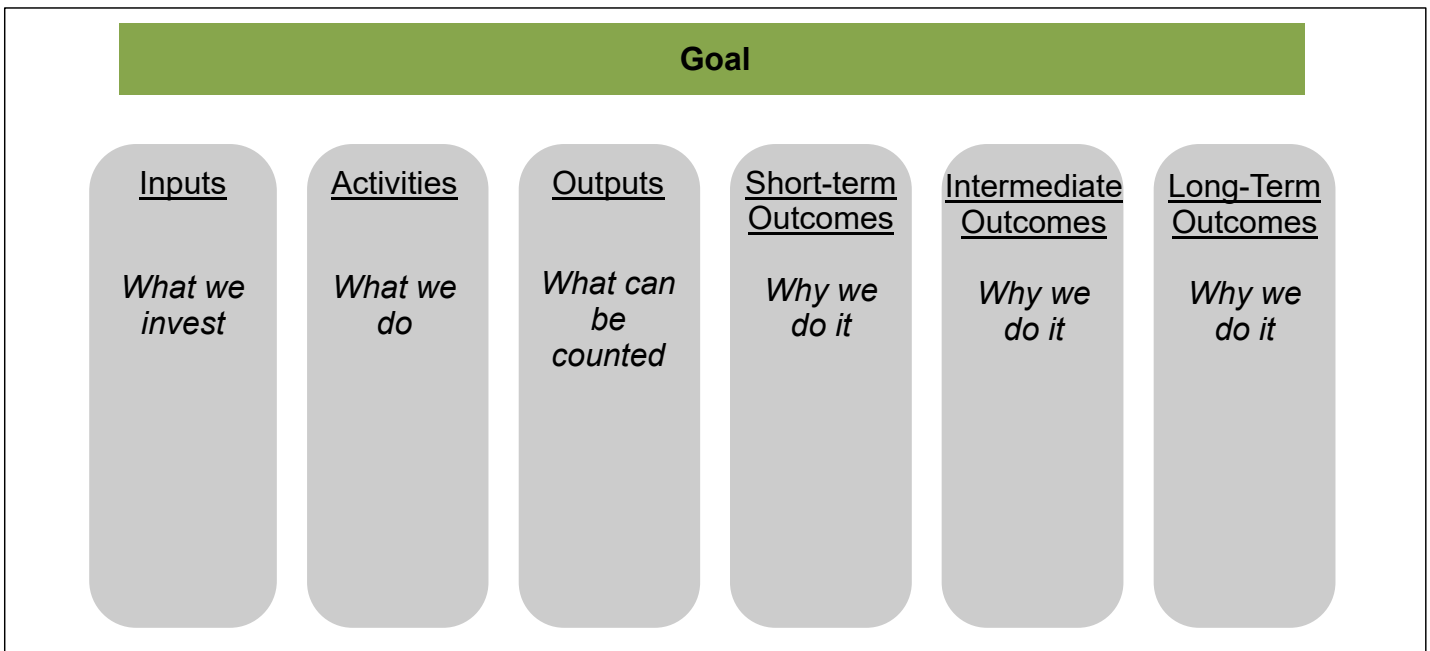


Evaluation Planning Brief: Developing a Logic Model

The logic model is a visual representation of a program that illustrates how planned activities are linked to program results. A well-constructed logic model can make it easier to plan outreach programs by helping you determine the resources and activities you need to achieve desired results. Additionally, logic models assist with structuring evaluations.

Logic Model Template

Logic models come in many different formats, but they all present the shared perspective of an “if...then” statement: “If we obtain the necessary resources and conduct certain activities, we will achieve our desired outcomes.” A basic logic model template is shown here:



Inputs are the resources we need for the outreach project, including people, time, money, materials, equipment, and technology. Activities include what we do—conduct training sessions, provide services and who is reached—participants, agencies, community-based organizations. Outcomes are the results or benefits of your project, including short-term outcomes such as changes in knowledge, intermediate outcomes such as changes in behavior, and long-term outcomes such as changes in individuals' health or medical access, social conditions or population health.

While a logic model is read left to right, “if we do... then... then...” It is beneficial to develop the logic model moving from right to left, starting with the end in mind. Steps for developing a logic model are included on the next page.

Steps to Develop a Logic Model

Step 1: Articulate your intended outcomes

Begin your logic model by listing the intended outcomes (or results) in the last three columns. Outcomes are stated with an emphasis on the project recipients, such as "the participants will increase their ability to find information about health topics they hear about through the media" or "the agency staff will improve their ability to find health information for their clients."

This can be the most challenging part of developing a logic model. It might help to think of short-term and intermediate outcomes as stepping stones to the long-term outcome. First, the short-term outcomes column portrays benefits that individual participants will gain from your program, such as increased knowledge or improved satisfaction. Second, the intermediate outcomes column describes actions that participants are predicted to make as a result of their learning such as changing behavior or making decisions. Finally, the long-term outcomes column is used to describe higher-impact results. These results may be related to an individual, such as improved health outcomes. They often refer to positive changes in the community, organization or system. Since your project may only last 12-18 months, you may not be able to achieve system-level changes before the project ends. However, it is important to articulate long-term outcomes as part of your overall plan so you understand the "big picture" of what you want to achieve.

Step 2: Connect activities to outcomes

Once you have filled in the outcomes columns, it is time to plan the activities that are most likely to lead to your expected results. For each of your outcomes, articulate the activities that will be carried out that will lead to your desired outcomes. It may be important to consider the Diffusion of Innovation approach to describing factors that influence individuals' adoption of innovations. The five-stage process begins when people become aware of a new product or resource (knowledge). They gather more information to form an attitude toward the product (persuasion). If they develop favorable attitudes, they decide whether to use the innovation (decision). They then start applying the product in their daily lives (implementation). Even after they establish a habit of using an innovation, they are constantly comparing it to alternatives to see whether another innovation may meet their needs better (confirmation).

As you can see, they are forming and re-forming their opinion about the product as they move through the five stages. At every stage, they seek information, which ultimately affects whether they adopt the new resource. You should choose the health information outreach strategy that is best suited to the stage of innovation adoption that you want to target. (It is not unusual for health information projects to include several strategies targeting multiple stages.) To choose the activities for your project, consider the stages of the people you plan to work with and plan

Step 3: Identify inputs to accomplish activities

Once you have identified your activities, you are now ready to list the resources you need to conduct them in the inputs column. This step is relatively self-explanatory: you list what you need to implement activities effectively. The main point is to be realistic. It is easy to underestimate the investment needed to do a good outreach project.

Step 4: Put your logic model to work

In reality, developing the first draft of a logic model is complicated and time-consuming, so it often is drafted by a small working team and then revisited later by a more inclusive outreach team or advisory group. This approach is fine, as long as the logic model is viewed as a flexible plan that can be revisited by a larger group at a later time.

In fact, a logic model should be revisited and revised periodically throughout the outreach project. As you conduct your project, you are likely to adapt your strategies as you learn what works well and what doesn't. You should change the logic model to reflect changes in your activities, but keep earlier versions so that you can see what has changed.