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IDENTIFY PROGRAM OUTCOMES IN MINUTES!

Nonprofits work in a very competitive environment when it comes to building a diverse revenue base. Whether you are seeking foundation funding, donor contributions or government grants it is to your advantage to be able to state how your clients' lives have changed due to your program activity or intervention in their lives.

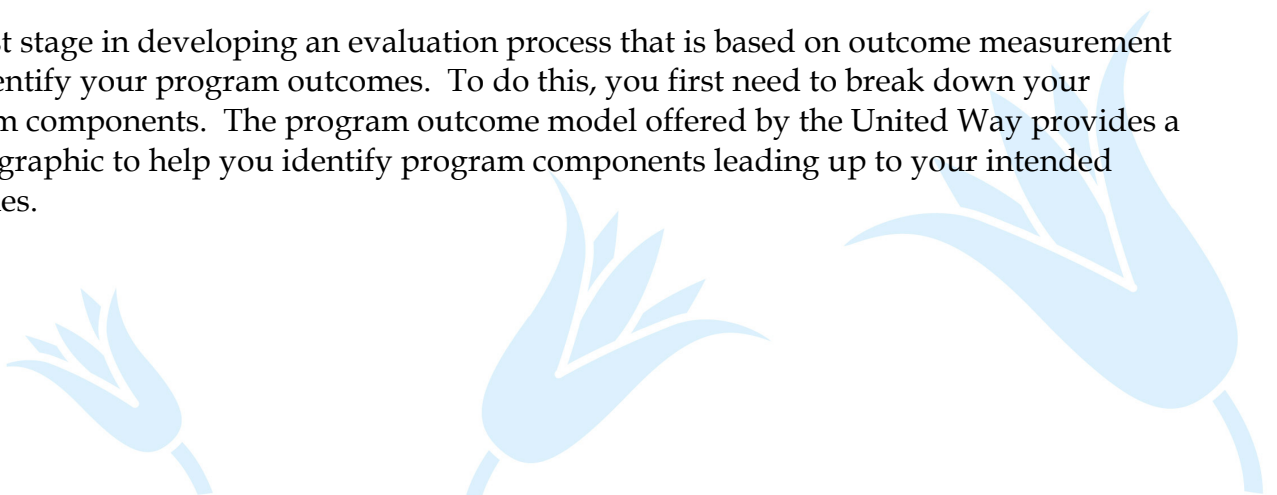
In the grant process, you run across this in most foundation guidelines or grant applications when you are asked to list program outcomes. Today, individual donors want to hear more about how their gift positively changed lives than how many clients attended your workshops.

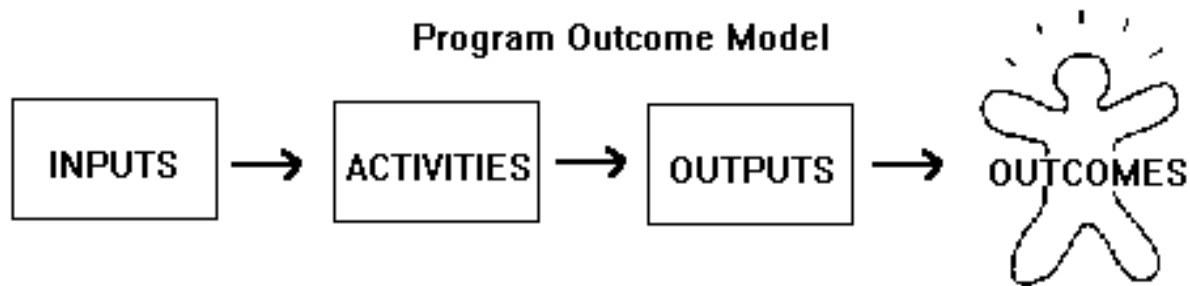
Developing an evaluation process that is based on outcome measurement is one method of gathering and presenting this information.

There are five simple steps in the process:

1. Identify your outcomes
2. Create your logic model
3. Select your outcome indicators
4. Select and create your evaluation tool
5. Analyze and report your results

The first stage in developing an evaluation process that is based on outcome measurement is to identify your program outcomes. To do this, you first need to break down your program components. The program outcome model offered by the United Way provides a simple graphic to help you identify program components leading up to your intended outcomes.





INPUTS are the collection of resources that you bring to the program or activity. They might include funds, personnel, equipment and supplies, volunteers, time, facilities, etc. Without these resources, you would not have a program to offer.

Once you've identified your inputs or resources, and how you might work through any challenges that would keep you from bringing them all together, you can begin to plan program ACTIVITIES. Your program activities should, of course, relate to your organization's mission. An example of an activity might be to educate teenagers about the dangers of binge drinking or provide job training to those seeking work.

The OUTPUTS, then, are the quantifiable results of the activities that were offered. On paper, this would relate to such examples as the number of classes offered or number of clients served.

Now that you have brought your resources together, offered activities and logged in basic program service information, it's time to identify the OUTCOMES expected. Whereas Outputs relay information about service units, Outcomes speak about changed lives. A simple way to remember outcomes is to think of the acronym **NICMIA**, meaning: **N**ew knowledge, **I**ncreased skill, or **C**hanged attitudes or values that lead to **M**odified behavior or an **I**mproved condition or **A**ltered Status.

Let's look at a basic program example. My agency's mission is to assist at-risk youth to succeed in school. **RESOURCES:** We assemble a team of school counselors, college-aged volunteers, and a program coordinator. We collaborate with the local school district to give them after-school classroom space and supplies. We add to that a \$5,000 budget line for incentives, field trips, etc. **ACTIVITIES:** We pair students one-on-one with the college aged mentors and schedule time for them to meet to work on homework or other activities. **OUTPUTS:** We keep a daily record of attendance and time spent mentoring students. **OUTCOMES:** We see improvement in students' attitudes towards school. Report cards show better grades. Students are more likely to stay in school and become engaged in class and extra-curricular activities. The ultimate outcome is that they become better students who graduate high school and go on to attend college and become self-sufficient, contributing

members of society. Notice how several of the NICMIA outcomes are present in the above example.

This fact that your program can offer an at-risk child the assistance needed to become a responsible member of his or her community is a vision that donors and funders can get behind and contribute to. This is why outcome measurement is so important in today's funding environment. As a donor or funder, what more can you ask for than to know that your contribution is making a difference in someone's life and in your community?

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