

DP14-1408 Work Plan Guidance

A *work plan* is a document, often created in chart form, used as a program management tool to provide direction and guidance for the overall program as well as each strategy (partnership building, evaluation, health communication and education, structured support services, and management). Eight recommended components follow each other in the work plan development process and are designed to be used for program planning, implementation, and monitoring progress toward reaching program goals. These components fit into the following categories:

Program Planning

1. Goals (outcomes a program intends to accomplish to fulfill its mission)
Example: Young breast cancer survivors within our service area use structured support services.
2. Objectives (steps a program plans to take to achieve its goals)
Example: Increase the percentage of young breast cancer survivors who are aware of the structured support services offered by Organization X from 50% to 75% by September 29, 2015.
3. Activities (steps taken to accomplish objectives)
Examples:
 - Identify partner organizations who work with young breast cancer survivors.
 - Provide partner organizations with written materials to promote structured support services and instructions for tracking the extent to which young breast cancer survivors are reached.
 - Compile data related to tracking the promotion of structured support services to young breast cancer survivors.
 - Track the number of young breast cancer survivors who use structured support services.
4. Measures of Effectiveness
Example: Percentage of young breast cancer survivors who are aware of available structured support services.
5. Data
Example: Survey data collected by partner organizations.

Implementation

6. Time Frame for Assessing Progress
7. Team Members Responsible

Monitoring Program Progress

8. Progress Report

Program Planning

Goals

Answer the following questions to establish goals:

- What are the strengths of this program?
- What areas need improvement?

To determine the priority problems on which to focus:

- Do data show that this problem has had a negative impact on the success of the program?
- Has this issue been a problem for more than one year?
- Which program components are affected most by this problem?

Goals are general, “big picture” statements of outcomes a program intends to accomplish to fulfill its mission. (Be sure that you know your program’s mission.) They should not contain a measurement. A goal may focus on something new, or concentrate on fixing a problem. Either way, the goal should be written so that the desired outcome is clear. One of the easiest ways to develop an appropriate goal is to focus on priority problems.

To assess whether this goal is appropriate, ask the following questions:

- Is this a general statement of what a program or program component hopes to accomplish during the year?
- Does it describe the desired outcome the program intends to accomplish?
- Is it clearly written? That is, do you understand what the desired outcome is?

Objectives

Objectives state the “big steps” a program will take to attain its goal. They can be used to determine a program’s status at any time, and can be measured during the project period.

Objectives answer the question, “What steps must be completed to accomplish our goal?” They should include only one expectation each.

Objectives should be **S.M.A.R.T.** This is—

- **Specific.** Identifies who, what, where, and how.
- **Measurable.** Identifies how many.
- **Achievable.** Can be attained.
- **Realistic.** Can be attained with the time and resources available.
- **Time framed.** Identifies when.

Activities

Activities are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. They are steps taken to accomplish objectives. When related to objectives, activities have a purpose. Activities are what a program does—its specific tasks to meet its objectives and ultimately fulfill its goal.

Activities answer the question, “What action(s) are needed to meet this objective?”

Measures of Effectiveness

Effectiveness measures are realistic, measurable standards a program sets for itself to gauge progress in achieving its goals. Because goals are broad, several measures of effectiveness may be required to assess progress toward a particular goal. Measures of effectiveness should contain a numeric value or clearly observable behavior.

Measures of effectiveness answer the questions:

- How will we know if our program has achieved this goal?
- What would it take to convince me that our program has achieved this goal?

Data

Data are pieces of information gathered for purposes of evaluation or to determine direction of the program. Data identified at this stage consist of information that can be used to determine success in reaching goals and objectives.

Data collected through some type of assessment, such as management reports, can be used to determine which activities may be most successful. A focused review of the literature, especially review articles or meta-analyses (analysis of many analyses), would be very useful when trying to determine which activities to implement.

When selecting specific activities, ask the following questions:

- Has it worked before?
- Do the data and theory support the idea?
- Does the literature support the idea?
- Did the members of the intended audience tell you they thought it would work?
- Does the program's status warrant such an activity (is the program ready for advanced activities)?

Implementation

There are two parts to implementing a program: a time frame and assignment of team members.

Time Frame

Questions that may help determine a reasonable time frame include:

- How long will it take to assess progress based on data or previous experience?
- Is this appropriate given the other activities you are planning?
- Is this time frame reasonable based on your funding cycle?

Staff Responsible

Determine which staff members are responsible for each task. Questions that should be considered are:

- Who is the appropriate team member to complete this task?
- Given the other activities you are planning, will this person be available to complete this task?

Monitoring Program Progress

Progress Report

The final component of the work-plan is the progress report. The progress report describes:

- Significant accomplishments to date.
- Major problems encountered.
- Strategies for problem solving.
- Work plan revisions needed.

The progress report is required for this funding opportunity announcement and also can be used as a tool for internal communication with staff.

Work Plan Template

Five Year Goal:

Project Period Objective:

Work Plan [insert year]

Objectives	Activities	Measures of Effectiveness	Data	Time Frame for Assessing Progress	Staff Responsible

Progress Report: This section will be used for reporting future progress and will not be used for this application process.