

What is a goal?

A goal is a broad statement that answers the question, "What does your organization or this project hope to accomplish?" Goals are general, conceptual, and abstract. When describing your organizational or program/project goals, it helps to use "visionary" words such as create, develop, expand, increase, offer, promote, provide, serve, and strengthen.

Examples:

- "The goal of our program is to provide students with the skills they need to become tomorrow's leaders."
- "The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive staff development and training program."
- "The shelter's goal is to offer a safety net for women who are homeless and to help mitigate the factors that contribute to homelessness."

What is an objective?

An objective is much narrower in focus and answers the question, "How will your organization accomplish its goals?", or "What steps do you intend to take to accomplish your goal?" It is often stated starting with the word "To". In contrast to your organizational or program/project goals, objectives are tangible, specific, concrete, and - most importantly - measurable. When developing specific objectives for your organization or program/project, it is important to be realistic - make sure that what you are proposing to do is achievable in a specified time period and that you will be able to demonstrate whether or not it was achieved.

Examples:

- "To serve 300 students in Fiscal Year 2010."
- "We will develop an effective training manual, methods, and materials for paid instructors and volunteers."
- "90% of shelter guests will receive one-on-one case management services."

What is a planned outcome?

An outcome is the planned result or consequence that will occur through the achievement of the objectives. It is almost always quantifiable and measurable. Again, it is important to be realistic when anticipating outcomes, but it is also important to plan them high enough that a funder will want to support them.

Examples:

- "60% of participants will be placed in employment"
- "85% of clients will successfully complete their individualized program"
- "at least 20 students will advance one grade level"

Most foundations require a report at the end of the grant period, and they will look for you to provide a comparison of your stated objectives and planned outcomes with what was actually achieved. This speaks to the need for you to have effective data collection and program oversight in place to ensure the ability to accurately monitor and report actual outcomes.