

Designing a Logic Model

Practice Guide



Most community services and programs aim to address or meet a need in the community such as increasing community safety or decreasing disadvantage. Whatever your program's purpose for existence, it is likely that your program or intervention is trying to change something. Explaining what you are doing and why can often be complex and difficult, as there can be multiple activities and interventions that are required to bring about the change and outcomes you are seeking.

Designing a logic model is an excellent way to simplify the complexity of your program and assimilate the causal linkages that are assumed to occur from the start of the program through to the impact it makes. The logic model defines these linkages and assumptions explicitly, making them easily understood. Logic models are also commonly used as a tool to plan and implement an evaluation. They can help you identify indicators that can measure your outcomes and success.

Logic models are an excellent communication tool because they clearly and simply explain your program to people who are not familiar with it.

A logic model is a graphic that often looks like a flow chart. While the model frequently reads from left to right there is no "correct" way of drawing a logic model. You might want a vertical logic model that reads from top to bottom or bottom to top. A circle may express your program or components within a program better than boxes. You can decide on which model you prefer.

A logic model can be developed at any stage of a program's life, but it should be the first thing you do when planning an evaluation.

Step 1:

Decide who is going to be on your team to develop the logic model. You may want key managers, practitioners and those involved in the evaluation process.

Step 2

Your team needs to agree on how the logic model is going to be used and what information is needed to

develop the logic model. Decide if the logic model should focus on a specific component of your program or broadly cover the entire program or organisation. Your decision should be driven by your evaluation or information needs.

Step 3

Consult with stakeholders and gather input from those involved in the program or experts in the field. You may need to refer to program reports, budgets or existing research.

Step 4

Identify your model's components and their relationships. The most commonly used components include:

Inputs

The resources you need to make your program possible.

Activities

The tasks and actions taking place during the implementation of the program.

Outputs

The results of the activities. These can include the amount of services you provide, the products you produce or number of clients you work with. Outputs also include how satisfied clients were with the program.

Outcomes

The changes that occur at an individual, group or community level as a result of the activities and outputs. They are often described in terms of:

- **Short Term:** outcomes achieved in less than 2 years
- **Medium Term:** outcomes achieved within 2-5 years
- **Long Term:** outcomes achieved after 5 years

Outcomes are sometimes referred to as "measures of effect", so they should normally begin with words such as: "increased, improved or enhanced", etc.



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Because outcomes can take years to achieve or evaluate, you need to be very thoughtful about how and why you include them in your model. You should try to make them as measurable and specific as possible, though some will be hard to quantify or measure with accuracy.

You should now have a diagram that depicts clearly and simply what need your program addresses, what activities you undertake, what you expect to achieve and what you hope to achieve. The next step is to collect evidence to verify your model and assumptions. This is the beginning of your evaluation process...

Step 5

Develop the connections between your components by drawing lines or arrows in the diagram. Arrows reveal the direction of influence and signal the changes that are expected to occur as a result of the previous component.

Step 6

Review your logic model and answer these questions before finalising your diagram:

- 1 Is it meaningful and does it make sense?
- 2 Does it make the assumptions explicit?
- 3 Can it be verified?

Designing A Logic Model - Key Principles



- Use a participative process
- Keep it simple
- Do not let perfection be the enemy of progress
- Use the model to tell the story of how your program achieves change
- Use arrows to show how your activities influence the outputs and outcomes
- Ensure your model is a way of thinking – not just a graphic

AIM

The broad need you are addressing and change you expect.

INPUTS

What you invest

ACTIVITIES

What you do

OUTPUTS

Who you reach

The results

OUTCOMES

What changes occur

What impact you make