



Writing Measurable Goals



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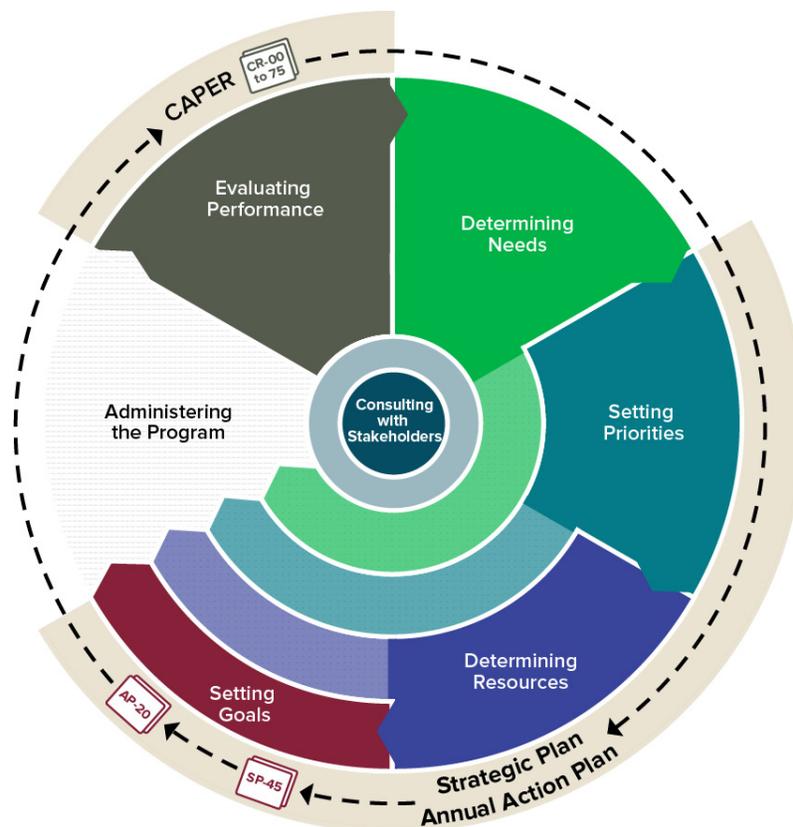
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1. Introduction

In recent years, taxpayers and Congress have begun demanding a clear accounting of the outcomes achieved through the use of federal funds. In response, in 2006 the HUD Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) implemented an Outcome Based Performance Management System for its formula-based programs (CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA). This system identifies intended outcomes and then quantifies and measures the results achieved toward reaching those outcomes. These measures are reported in the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS), which is the reporting system for CPD formula programs.

At the same time, the Consolidated Plan has become the document grantees use to identify their needs, resources, priorities, goals, and strategies for achieving those goals. Both the five-year Strategic Plan and the Annual Action plan require grantees to connect these elements to show how they plan to achieve desired outcomes. The Strategic Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) have all been incorporated recently into IDIS online, integrating all of the key reporting elements of the grants management cycle into one system. This integration is intended to ensure cohesiveness between the goals described in the Strategic Plan and Action Plan and the outcomes tracked in IDIS and reported on in the CAPER. (See Figure 1). With the Strategic Plan, Action Plan, and CAPER all part of IDIS, grantees can easily compare goals described in the Consolidated and Action Plan, the outcomes tracked in IDIS, and the actual progress against those goals as reported in the CAPER.

Figure 1: Setting Goals as Part of Strategic and Annual Planning and for Continuous Performance Assessment



The Consolidated Plan template (“eCon Planning template”) provides a great deal of flexibility in establishing goals, allowing the grantee to determine the number of goals and how the goals are defined. However, the template requires the one-year goals set in each Action Plan to parallel the longer-term goals designated in the five-year Strategic Plan.

To achieve desired outcomes and successful results, grantees must have carefully constructed goals. This learning tool is designed to assist grantees in writing clear and measurable goals in compliance with regulatory requirements and the eCon Planning process now established in IDIS. The eCon Planning process proceeds as follows:

- Goals originate in the Strategic Plan of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan.
- Specific one-year goals with outcome indicators are included in the Annual Action Plan.
- Effectiveness of the actions taken to achieve the goals is measured in the CAPER or Annual Performance Report.

2. Frequently Asked Questions about Measurable Goals and Objectives

Q. What are the characteristics of effective and measurable goals?

Although both the consolidated planning process and the eCon Planning template in IDIS provide considerable flexibility for establishing goals, goals that are effective management tools and measures of progress share several specific characteristics. These characteristics, which form the acronym SMART, are outlined below.

Objectives should be:

- S** **pecific:** Specific goals are more easily measured than vague goals. The grantee should provide enough detail to establish what it wants to accomplish.
- M** **easurable:** Grantees should include a quantifiable measure for each goal, such as number of families to be served or number of units to be produced. The goal outcome indicators (described below) can be helpful for creating quantifiable measures. Each Consolidated Plan goal may include multiple measurable indicators.
- A** **ction-Oriented:** Grantees should explain the specific actions that must be taken to achieve the outcome.
- R** **ealistic:** Grantees should demonstrate that the limitations of the situation are recognized, including available resources, capacity, and political will.
- T** **ime-Bound:** Grantees should include an established deadline. For the Consolidated Plan, each goal includes a start date and an end date.

Example of a SMART Goal: Between 2014 and 2018, the grantee agency will use \$1,500,000 in CDBG funds to preserve and maintain existing affordable housing. The agency will work with Code Enforcement staff to identify appropriate properties, qualify owners, and provide deferred payment loans to rehabilitate 150 housing units.

Q: What process should be followed to develop effective and measurable goals within the HUD framework?

As shown in Figure 1, the process of developing goals should begin with a needs assessment and be informed by the determination of available resources. Thus, in developing goals, both for internal planning use and for the Consolidated Planning process, grantees should critically review the needs assessment and use an inclusive process to set priorities and determine the expected resources. These steps will help grantees develop goals that are both measurable and realistic within their context while addressing priority needs.

Q: How does the process of establishing goals in the Consolidated Plan relate to the CPD Outcome Performance Measurement system in IDIS?

When the grantee sets up an activity in IDIS, the CPD Outcome Performance Measurement System requires the grantee to select from a list of predetermined objectives and outcomes. These are generally broader in scope than the goals needed for the Consolidated Planning process. For each activity set up in IDIS, grantees must choose one of the three objectives that best fits the purpose of the activity, based on the type of activity, funding source, and local program intent. The three objectives are as follows:

- Creating a suitable living environment
- Providing decent housing
- Creating economic opportunities

Once the grantee has chosen the appropriate objective, it must then choose the outcome that best reflects what it is seeking to achieve. The outcomes are also predetermined and the grantee must select only one of the available outcomes for IDIS data entry. The outcomes are as follows:

- Improving availability or accessibility of units or services
- Improving affordability of housing and services
- Improving sustainability by promoting viable communities

This standardized framework for objectives and outcomes allows HUD to generate national outcome statements to describe the aggregate impact of local program activities.

By contrast, the goals established in the Consolidated Plan template in IDIS are specific to each community in the context of its needs and priorities. The goals in the Strategic and Annual Action Plans serve as a management tool for grantees and provide a way for grantees to measure their progress.

Q: What is the best way to get started developing measurable goals for the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan?

Grantees should follow the process outlined in Figure 1 to establish goals for both the Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan. The grantee should identify the priority needs for its community based on the Needs Assessment and the Market Analysis. The goals should be developed to specifically address these priority needs within the context of the available resources and taking into account the influence of market conditions. The eCon Planning template allows grantees to determine the number of goals and how the goals are defined and described.

The goals identified in the five-year Strategic Plan are linked to those identified in the Annual Action Plan. For example, a goal must be listed in the Strategic Plan to be displayed as an option for inclusion in the Action Plan.

For each goal identified in the Strategic Plan, grantees must identify proposed accomplishments and outcomes in quantitative terms. To assist with this, grantees must use one or more of the Goal Outcome Indicators (GOI) (described below) to specify numeric targets the jurisdiction hopes to achieve over the course of the Strategic Plan.

In the example below, a grantee has set a goal related to alleviating chronic homelessness, which has been identified by the grantee as a priority need. The first screenshot shows how the goal is described in the Strategic Plan and the second shows the description of the related goal in the Annual Action Plan. The goal outcome indicators selected are “Tenant-based rental assistance/ Rapid Rehousing” and “Homeless Person Overnight Shelter” with goals of assisting 50 households and 50 persons, respectively, over five years and 10 households and 10 persons, respectively, during the one-year term of the Annual Action Plan. The inclusion of these indicators provides specific, quantitative objectives against which to measure progress and performance.

Strategic Plan

SP-48 Goals Summary

Goal	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding
Chronic Homelessness	Homeless			
	Start Year: 2012	End Year: 2016	Outcome: Availability/accessibility	Objective: Create suitable living environments
	Description: Funds will be used to assist chronically homeless individuals move from living on the street to stabilized, permanent housing situations. Planned activities include street outreach, case management, emergency shelter, rental assistance, and supportive services.			
	Goal Outcome Indicator		Quantity	UoM
Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing		50	Households Assisted	
Homeless Person Overnight Shelter		50	Persons Assisted	

Annual Action Plan

AP-23 Annual Goals Summary

Close

Goal	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding
Chronic Homelessness	Homeless			
	Start Year: 2012	End Year: 2016	Outcome: Availability/accessibility	Objective: Create suitable living environments
	Narrative: Funds will be used to assist chronically homeless individuals move from living on the street to stabilized, permanent housing situations. Planned activities include street outreach, case management, emergency shelter, rental assistance, and supportive services.			
	Goal Outcome Indicator		Quantity	UoM
Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing		10	Households Assisted	
Homeless Person Overnight Shelter		10	Persons Assisted	

Q: How are indicators used to ensure that goals are measurable?

Established and agreed-upon indicators provide a benchmark for determining progress in achieving goals and can be useful for ensuring that goals are measurable and include specific targets. Indicators can help describe, in quantifiable terms, what the jurisdiction plans to achieve. In selecting indicators, grantees should consider the types of activities that must be carried out to address a particular goal.

The eCon Planning template includes 22 goal outcome indicators (GOI) based on the performance measurement indicators already in IDIS online. Grantees should use these indicators to ensure that the goals they develop will be measurable. The goal outcome indicators and associated units of measure included in the eCon Planning template are as follows:

Indicator	Unit of Measure
Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted
Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted
Public Service Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted
Public Service Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted
Facade Treatment/Business Building Rehabilitation	Businesses
Brownfield Acres Remediated	Acres Remediated
Rental Units Constructed	Household / Housing Units
Rental Units Rehabilitated	Household / Housing Units
Homeowner Housing Added	Household / Housing Units
Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household / Housing Units
Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted
Tenant-Based Rental Assistance / Rapid Rehousing	Households Assisted
Homeless Person Overnight Shelter	Persons Assisted
Overnight/Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing Beds added	Beds
Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted
Jobs Created/Retained	Jobs
Businesses Assisted	Businesses Assisted
Housing for Homeless added	Household / Housing Units
Housing for People with HIV/AIDS added	Household / Housing Units
HIV/AIDS Housing Operations	Household / Housing Units
Buildings Demolished	Buildings
Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household / Housing Units
Other	Other



Q. What are some examples of SMART goals for the Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan?

The following chart shows examples of measurable goals, first in the context of the five-year Strategic Plan and then in the one-year Annual Action Plan framework.

Strategic Plan Goals

Strategic Plan Goal	Start Year	End Year	Description	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
Preserve and Maintain Existing Affordable Housing	2014	2018	Grantee agency will work with Code Enforcement staff to identify appropriate properties, complete outreach to homeowners to determine eligibility, assist eligible homeowners with application, and review and provide deferred payment loans for homeowner rehabilitation.	CDBG (amount over 5 years) HOME (amount over 5 years)	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 150 Housing Units
Improve and Expand Neighborhood Economic Opportunities	2014	2018	Grantee will assist businesses in eligible neighborhoods with loans for expansion.	CDBG (amount over five years)	Number of businesses assisted 50 businesses assisted
Expand and Provide Housing Services to Individuals with HIV/AIDS	2014	2018	Grantee will assist existing service organizations to expand current service provision.	HOPWA (amount over five years)	Public service activities other than Low-Moderate-Income Housing 250 persons assisted

Annual Action Plan Goals

Annual Action Plan Goal	Start Year	End Year	Description	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
Preserve and Maintain Existing Affordable Housing	2014	2015	Grantee agency will work with Code Enforcement staff to identify appropriate properties, complete outreach to homeowners to determine eligibility, assist eligible homeowners with application, review and provide deferred payment loans for homeowner rehabilitation.	CDBG (one-year amount) HOME (one-year amount)	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 40 Housing Units
Improve and Expand Neighborhood Economic Opportunities	2014	2015	Grantee will assist businesses in eligible neighborhoods with loans for expansion	CDBG (one-year amount)	Number of businesses assisted 10 businesses assisted
Expand and Provide Housing Services to Individuals with HIV/AIDS	2014	2015	Grantee will assist existing service organizations to expand current service provision	HOPWA (one-year amount)	Public service activities other than Low-Moderate-Income Housing 50 persons assisted

3. Conclusion

Well-conceived and clear goals are a key component of successful program implementation and management. HUD emphasizes this approach because good planning and public involvement can help local jurisdictions demonstrate the effectiveness of their housing and community development efforts through an outcome-based performance measurement system. The groundwork for successful program implementation begins with careful planning, and development of measurable goals, as reflected in the five-year Strategic Plan and each Annual Action Plan. Achievement against those goals is measured in the CAPER. Based on the analysis shown in the CAPER, grantees may determine whether they are effectively using resources to address the identified needs of their communities.

