

How to Write SMART Objectives

Specific

Objectives should be well-defined, and clear to other team members and to partners with the same level of knowledge as you. Using action-oriented verbs, such as "increase" or "decrease," will make your objectives easier to measure in the end.



- Resource: Who is involved with executing this program?
- Target Population: Who is your target population?
- Action: What exactly will you do for them?
- What are the benefits of this objective?
- Where will this program be executed?

Measurable

Objectives should have a benchmark and a target, to help determine whether the objective is achieved, if it has been exceeded (and by how much), or if it hasn't been met (and by how much).



- Change: How much change is expected? In what direction?
- What data will prove this change has occurred? Where will this data come from?
- Is there a proxy measure to use If this objective cannot be directly measured, or is there another measure that would be more appropriate to use instead?

Achievable/Attainable

Objectives should be within reach for your team or program, considering available resources, knowledge, and time.



- How can this objective be accomplished?
- Given the current time frame or socio/political environment, can this objective be achieved? Should we scale it up or down?
- What resources will help us achieve this objective? What limitations or constraints stand in our way? Hint: You can use a SWOT analysis to map out internal and external factors that might positively or negatively impact your objectives.

Relevant

Objectives need to be in line with your program's mission, vision, and goals, as well as agreed-upon by important stakeholders and partners. Objectives related to your organization's mission and guiding principles are more likely to be endorsed by organizational leadership; objectives endorsed by community partners and stakeholders will lead to a greater level of buy-in from community members and other participants.



- Will this objective lead to achieving this organization's goals?
- Does it seem worthwhile to measure this objective? Does it seem reasonable to measure this objective?

Time-Bound

Objectives should be attainable within a specific time frame that isn't so soon as to prevent success, or so far away as to encourage procrastination.



- Time Frame: When will this objective be achieved?
- Is this time frame realistic? Should it be closer, or further in the future?

Fill In the Blanks

Directly inform your SMART objective by using the following template:

[Resource] will [action] to [target population],
resulting in [change] by [time frame].

Examples of SMART Objectives

• Objective	• SMART Objective
• We'll train community members using the curriculum.	• <i>By the third year of the grant period, program staff will have trained 80% of school nurses on the selected train-the-trainer curriculum.</i>
• Improve student learning across courses in the degree	• <i>By Fall 2024, we can improve student learning by hosting drop-in, open lab time for Psychology students.</i>
• Increase Police Academy enrollment	• <i>Increase Police Academy's application to enrollment rate 30% by academic year 2027-2028.</i>

Source: QI Toolbox/MDH