



Objectives, Logic Models, and Performance Measures MDD Grant

Welcome to this pre-application webinar for Charter School Program Model Development and Dissemination or MDD grant applicants. This video will help you prepare objectives, logic models and performance measures for your grant application.

During this presentation, we will share information about logic models and performance measures. These are required elements of CSP grant applications for MDD grants.

We will demonstrate how logic models and performance measures are created for your application and how they will be used throughout the life of your CSP grant.

At the conclusion of this presentation, you will understand how logic models and performance measures can be used as program management tools that support planning, measurement, and evaluation of your grant program.

You will also learn about strategies and best practices for developing CSP grant logic models and performance measures.

Let's begin by ensuring you are familiar with the requirements for logic models and performance measures in your grant application.

Logic models are a planning and project managing tool that support the effective implementation of your grant and help you achieve your grant goals. Per the NIA, your CSP application logic model should be specific to the CSP grant project you intend to implement and should include the objectives you plan to achieve if you are awarded CSP grant funds. Please note that the logic model in your application should be tailored to your CSP program and not a general or overall logic model for the applicant organization.

Your logic model is a key document that will extend through the life of each grant that is awarded. Plan it thoughtfully and ensure it is clear and actionable.

While deciding to apply for a CSP grant, you had goals in mind for what you want to accomplish. These goals will be outlined in your grant application as objectives. They will be aligned to performance measures that serve as a metric or benchmark showing how progress toward grant objectives will be met.

Developing a logic model should help you to clearly define what you plan to achieve with a CSP grant, and drafting aligned performance measures will help you determine how you will measure progress and success.

Let's begin with how your goals translate into measurable objectives. These will anchor your planning and drive your work throughout the life of the grant.

Each CSP applicant has goals they plan to achieve with CSP funds. Goals are high-level statements about what will be accomplished by the end of your grant. They're your big picture, end-game statements.

To evaluate your ability to achieve your goals, the CSP needs to understand how you will measure progress and achievement. Translating your goals into measurable objectives anchors them in action and helps you define the strategies you will use to achieve them. Objectives could be related to topics such as administering subgrants, providing authorizer TA, adding high-quality seats, or other outcomes you plan to accomplish with the grant.

Objectives are a requirement of your CSP grant application, and if funded, you will be held accountable for achieving them. For actionable and effective grant applications and plans, you should draft your objectives using the SMART principles.

The SMART principles help you to create objectives that you and CSP can use to effectively evaluate your grant planning and application.

Your objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound.

Specific objectives are clear and concise.

Measurable objectives use valid and reliable measures and data that can be tracked across the life cycle of the grant.

Achievable objectives are targets you can attain with the resources you have.

Relevant objectives are aligned with the project goals.

Timebound objectives are mapped within the short-, medium-, and long-term sections so the time you plan to achieve them is clearly established.

Once you know your objectives, you can draft a logic model that charts your path to success. Throughout your CSP grant, your logic model will guide your planning and help you evaluate your progress. As a key resource that will shape your grant program, it should be clear, actionable, and aligned to grant requirements.

Your logic model can be created once your objectives are clear. The logic model is a map that depicts how resources and actions lead to intended outcomes. These intended outcomes are the realization of your objectives and should align directly.

To translate your objectives into a logic model, you need to define your intended outcomes, then map toward them with inputs, activities, and outputs you will need to achieve those outcomes. You'll also consider external factors and share assumptions in your logic model to consider the context your plan exists within.

The federal code that defines a logic model can be found in code 34 CFR 77.1, linked at the bottom of this slide. The next few slides will focus on how to create a logic model that clarifies your CSP grant plans.

This is the foundational framework of a logic model. Let's walk through each component at a high level.

Outcomes are what you aim to achieve as the result of your implementation efforts. They are measurable and separated into short-, mid-, and long-term to show how achievements build to your final objectives.

Inputs are the assets, such as people, partnerships, facilities, and materials, that you bring to the grant-funded project. Once you know your intended outcomes, you can determine what inputs are needed to achieve them.

The activities are the actions you will take to achieve your intended outcomes.

The outputs are the products and materials you will develop and create. Their creation supports the intended outcomes.

Underlying all these components are the external factors and assumptions, which are the conditions under which you work and the factors that may positively or negatively affect your project.

Logic models should articulate a logical flow from the inputs to the activities and through the outputs and outcomes. The logic model is a graphic depiction of what you intend your grant implementation to look like. Although this may seem obvious, grantee logic models sometimes lack clear connections and a logical flow across the components. Organize your logic model into sections that clearly progress from your inputs to your outcomes. If Input A is used to implement Activity A, then Output A is produced and Outcome A is achieved.

Let's look at each component of the model in more detail to share best practices for your CSP logic model.

Start your logic model by drafting your outcomes. Outcomes are the realization of your objectives and should align closely. Once you have clear outcomes planned, you can map toward them with the other sections for your logic model. Outcomes should be measurable. Your performance will be evaluated in relation to how well you accomplish them.

Outcomes should be divided into short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes.

Within the context of CSP grants, short-term outcomes represent quick wins typically achieved in the first year of the grant or something that is achieved annually.

Mid-term outcomes take a bit longer to achieve and often will build upon one or more of the short-term outcomes. These may be achieved in years two or three of the grant.

Long-term outcomes represent cumulative results over time, building off the short- and mid-term outcomes to achieve longer-term successes and sustainability.

ALL outcomes should be created using the SMART principles.

Just like your objectives, your outcomes should be SMART. As a reminder, SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound.

Plan your outcomes with the SMART principles in mind and review them to ensure alignment with your objectives.

Inputs are the assets that your organization brings to the program. These can include people, facilities, funding, partnerships, and materials you already have. Consider the staff you have and those you will hire, the buildings and spaces you will use for facilities. Include your CSP funds and other funds available for your program. Partners can include subcontractors, consultants, or community partners who will help with implementation, and materials are assets you have developed or will develop early in the grant to shape how you implement your program.

Thinking about inputs is a good opportunity to take stock of what you have and what you may need to successfully implement your grant funded project. Some examples of questions you may ask as you plan include:

- Do you need to hire someone? Do you have someone experienced with implementing federal grants?
- Do you have the financial systems in place to account for grant funds?
- Do you need more office space?
- How will you pay for expenses not covered by the grant?
- Will you need to print training materials?
- Do you need meeting space to offer technical assistance?

Take some time now, by pausing this training, or in the future, to reflect on the necessary inputs for your grant program and to assess if your organization is ready to take on a federal grant.

Activities are the specific processes or actions that will be performed as part of the grant-funded project. Because activities are actions to be conducted or implemented, they should begin with a verb to indicate the action that will take place. The activities section can serve as a high-level project roadmap. Think about all the things you will be doing over the course of the grant. How will grant funds be spent? Take a moment to list out all the activities you and your team will be engaged in, and group them as needed to facilitate a clear connection to your inputs in the logic model. Once you have listed out all the activities, confirm your inputs have everything you need to implement your activities.

Outputs are products, services, or events produced as a direct result of one or more activities. In contrast to inputs, which are existing assets available to your organization prior to starting the project, outputs are new materials and assets developed as a result of the project activities. You can think of outputs as the deliverables of the project, such as training materials developed, or resources produced.

Some grantees conflate outputs with outcomes, but these are different and distinct components of your logic model. Outputs are what you will produce, while outcomes are what you will achieve.

Creating your logic model generates a useful map of the grant-funded project you are proposing. In addition to the map, it is helpful to consider and include external factors and assumptions.

External factors help define the context in which the project will be implemented, as well as any factors that could positively or negatively affect implementation; this may include the current or changing charter environment in your state and other factors that are out of your organization's control.

Assumptions are informed expectations. Based on your knowledge of conditions in your state, you may assume there is a need and desire for more charter schools and there is a pipeline of eligible applicants.

External factors and assumptions provide a more complete picture of your project and provide context for how and why your project may be successful. Thinking through these factors during the application phase, helps you plan for challenges that could derail or sidetrack project implementation and plan proactively instead of reactively.

Your model will anchor your planning throughout your grant, so it should be thoughtfully developed and clearly outline your path from inputs to outcomes. As a CSP grant applicant, you are committing to performing the activities and achieving the outcomes in your logic model if your application is funded.

Here is an example of a logic model for an MDD project focusing on a career and technical education (CTE) charter school model--applicants should review the NIA as you consider the innovative charter school models to focus your MDD project around. It uses a simple table format to show a path from inputs to outcomes across each row. External factors and assumptions are included below the table.

Another option for building your logic model is to demonstrate relationships with arrows and formatting. While the previous example showed a one-to-one path, you can also build your own model that demonstrates more complex relationships. You may use arrows, charts, and colors to clarify the path from your inputs to your outcomes. The style and format are flexible, but please keep your logic model on one page and ensure it can be easily interpreted by a general audience.

Once you have mapped a path to your intended objectives in your logic model, you will use performance measures to clarify how you will measure success.

Performance measures are the quantitative indicators or metrics that show progress toward your objectives. They are used annually to evaluate your program and report findings to CSP.

During the application process, you will need to identify the metrics you will use to measure grant performance. Choose data readily available to the project. You must be able to report on at least one performance measure under each objective annually to demonstrate substantial progress.

Identify baseline measures you will take to serve as the project's starting point to measure success.

Once you identify baseline measures, identify performance targets for each year of the project to track progress. Targets often increase over time to allow flexibility within the first grant year and to build to the ultimate project objectives by the end of the grant.

Your performance measures should be SMART, just like your objectives and outcomes.

As a reminder SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound.

Plan your performance measures with the SMART principles in mind and review them to ensure alignment with your objectives and outcomes.

For each objective, you should draft roughly 3-5 associated and aligned performance measures. They should clearly measure your progress toward achieving your intended objectives.

In the first year of the grant, you will need to determine which measures you can report on each year, including year 1. The table on this slide shows how some measures within this objective will report annually, and others are specific to grant years and will only be reported when applicable. For each objective, you will need to ensure at least one measure is reported annually.

Let's take a moment for a knowledge check on SMART principles and how they apply to objectives, outcomes, and performance measures.

This is an example of an objective and three performance measures. Are they SMART?

Let's look at the objective. It says increase, but not how much, so it isn't specific, even if it may be easy to measure by proving any increase. Its lack of specificity makes it easily achievable, since an increase of any kind meets the objective, but this minimal goal is not relevant for CSP grants that seek more substantial impact. There is no timeline on this objective either. Edits need to start with specificity and goals that are relevant to CSP grants.

The first performance measure is similarly vague. "Additional" is only relevant with a baseline, and the target should be more specific. What type of meeting, and when? Get specific and include timing.

The second performance measure uses the term "when needed." This is not achievable and an expectation of "great" is hard to measure.

The final measure is measurable but is not specific enough to determine if it is relevant to the objective. What are the conferences about? Who is attending?

These edits to the objective and performance measures focus on adding specificity and timing. They include the grant years in which they will occur and clear actions. They are all relevant and aligned to the objective, and they can be measured to achievable goals with specific details like 15 charter high schools or 5 charter school leaders.

Take a moment to assess if this outcome meets the SMART criteria. Consider each of the SMART criteria in your review.

Is this outcome specific? Not really. We know they are looking to increase students attending CTE programs, but it is not clear how or when this will be done or within which school or network.

Is this outcome measurable? No. A SMART outcome would define the expected increase with a specific target and present baseline data.

Is this outcome achievable? If you think about this in terms of yes or no, it is likely achievable. But without actual numbers or a baseline, it is too simple for the achievement to be impactful.

Is this outcome relevant? Grant funds are intended to disseminate best practices in innovative charter school models. While increasing student participation is related, it would be more reasonable to focus on increasing the network of school leaders and educators engaging with successful models for CTE programs.

Is this outcome timebound? No, it is not clear when the increase is expected to occur.

Take a moment to assess if this objective meets the SMART criteria.

Is this objective specific? No. The subject is “staff.” Which staff does this include? And does host mean present, schedule, or something else?

Is this objective measurable? Sort of. We know the target is all, but since staff is not specific, this is hard to measure. The number of professional development sessions that should be hosted is also unclear.

Is this objective achievable? Yes. If the intended meaning of “staff” and “host” are clarified, this is probably something that could be accomplished annually.

Is this objective relevant? Somewhat. It depends on what the professional development is about. Defining the content more specifically than just “best practices” would help.

Is this objective timebound? Yes. This is defined within a year across all years of the grant.

Take a moment to assess if this performance measure meets the SMART criteria.

Is this measure specific? Yes. We know the focus is on recruiting new school leaders annually.

Is this measure measurable? Yes. We know the target is at least 15 a year.

Is this measure achievable? Yes. It sounds reasonable, to have 15 school leaders added each year.

Is this measure relevant? Yes. Expanding and maintaining the community of practice is essential to the success of partnerships with school leaders.

Is this measure timebound? Yes, we can see this will happen annually.

Your objectives, logic model, and performance measures will be key components of your grant program. They will be used beyond your application to guide and evaluate your grant impact. We encourage you to use them with you teams and stakeholders as an anchor for your program planning, problem solving, and reporting.

Grant program management follows this general cycle: planning, implementation, measuring your efforts, evaluating progress, and adjusting, if needed. Then you move back to planning once again and repeat until your objectives are accomplished.

Your program planning and implementation should be aligned with your logic model. It is a map that depicts how resources and actions lead to intended outcomes. Follow it and build upon it as you plan and implement.

Your performance measures will be used annually to measure and evaluate your performance. You will report these results to CSP, but they should also be a guide for your internal measurement and program evaluation.

Thank you for learning more about CSP grant objectives, logic models and performance measures. For details on application requirements, please review the NIA for the MDD grant competition. Questions can be directed to MDDCompetition@ed.gov.

We appreciate your interest in leveraging a CSP grant to bring more high-quality choice options to students and families in your community.