

United Way of Otter Tail County

Glossary of Selected Outcome Measurement Terms

Inputs are resources a program uses to achieve program objectives. Examples are staff, volunteers, facilities, equipment, curricula, and money. A program uses *inputs* to support *activities*.

Activities are what a program does with its inputs—the services it provides—to fulfill its mission. Examples are sheltering homeless families, educating the public about signs of child abuse, and providing adult mentors for youth. Program *activities* result in *outputs*.

Outputs are products of a program's activities, such as the number of meals provided, classes taught, brochures distributed, or participants served. Another term for "outputs" is "units of service." A program's *outputs* should produce desired *outcomes* for the program's participants.

Outcomes are benefits for participants during or after their involvement with a program. Outcomes may relate to knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, behavior, condition, or status. Examples of outcomes include greater knowledge about HIV/AIDS, improved reading skills, graduation from high school, and more effective responses to conflict, getting a job, and having greater financial stability.

For a particular program, there can be various "levels" of outcomes, with initial outcomes leading to longer-term ones. For example, a youth in a mentoring program who receives one-to-one encouragement to improve academic performance may attend school more regularly, which can lead to getting better grades, which can lead to graduating.

Logic Models put inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes into a logical sequence that could be structured using if then statements (e.g., if there is a place to meet, money, and staff, then kids will come. If they come, then they will be exposed to activities like tutoring. If kids receive tutoring they will get more homework done. If kids get more homework done, their attitudes about school will improve. If their attitudes about school improve, then they will try harder. If they try harder, then their performance will improve.)

Outcome Indicators are the specific items of information that track a program's success on outcomes. They describe observable, measurable characteristics or changes that represent achievement of an outcome. For example, a program whose desired outcome is that participants pursue a healthy lifestyle could define "healthy lifestyle" as not smoking; maintaining a recommended weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol level; getting at least two hours of exercise each week; and wearing seatbelts consistently. The number and percent of program participants who demonstrate these behaviors then is an *indicator* of how well the program is doing with respect to the outcome.

GIVE.

ADVOCATE.

VOLUNTEER

LIVE UNITED™

United Way of Otter Tail County

Summary of Program Outcome Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Resources dedicated to or consumed by the program	What the program does with the inputs to fulfill its mission	The direct products of the program activities	Benefits for participants during and after the program activities
<u>Example:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Money - Staff & Staff Time - volunteers and volunteer time - facilities - Equipment and supplies 	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feed and shelter the homeless - Provide job training - Educate the public about child abuse - Counseling provided to pregnant women - Create mentoring relationships for youth 	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of classes taught - Number of counseling sessions conducted - Number of educational materials distributed - Number of hours of service delivered - Number of participants served 	<u>Example:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New knowledge - Increased skills - Changed attitudes - Modified behavior - Improved conditions - Altered status
Constraints on the program			
<u>Example:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laws - Regulations - Funding Requirements 			