# Logic Model Primer: The What, Why, Who, When and How of Logic Models

## What Is A Logic Model?

"A logic model is a systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve."[1] Simply put, a logic model is a straightforward, yet effective tool to plan, develop and measure the goals, objectives, inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of your program or projects.

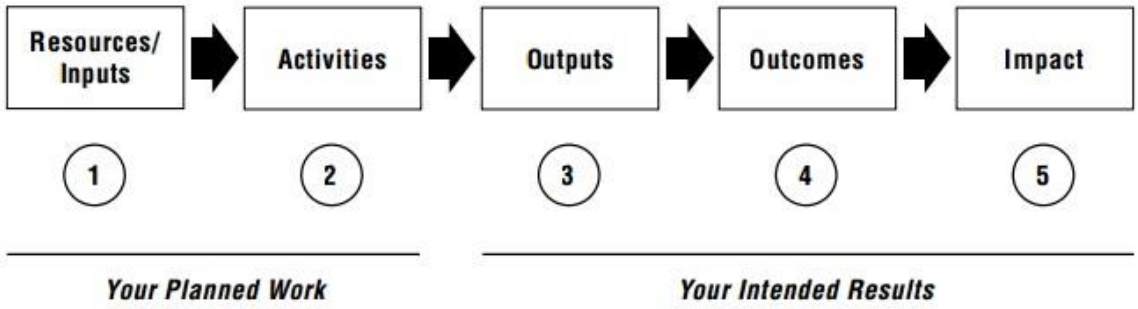


Figure 1. Sample of a Basic Logic Model[2]

Logic models consist of a series of "if…, then…" statements, read left to right, which clearly illustrate the connections between the elements of the program or project, and how they work together to bring about the results sought.

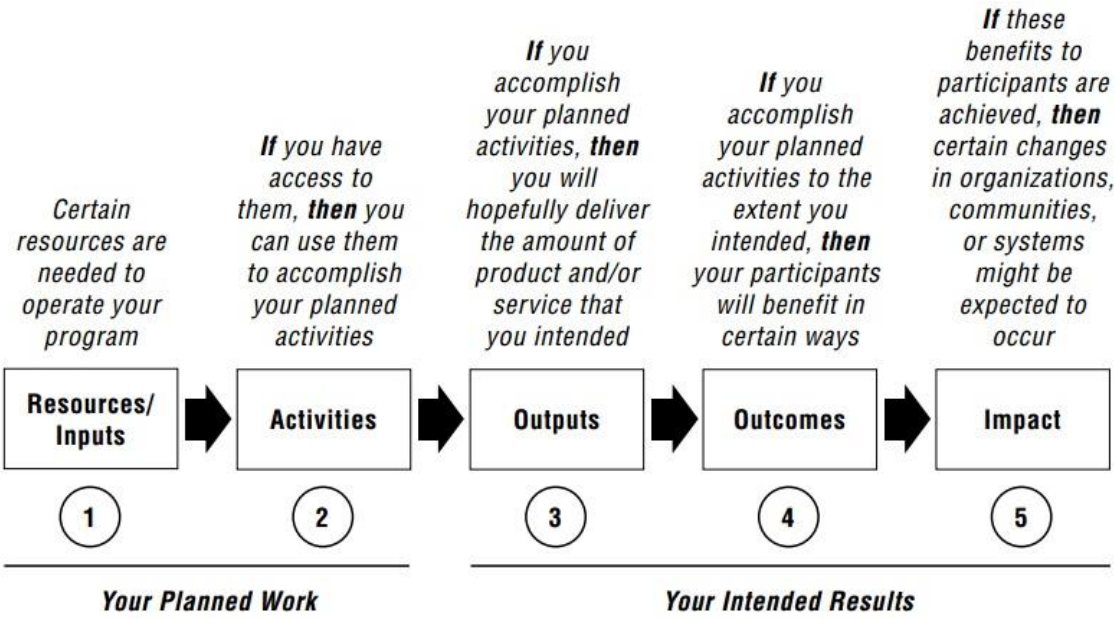


Figure 2. How to Read a Logic Model[3]

## Elements of a Logic Model

Although there are various types of logic models, they usually all have a number of elements, which fall into two components: planned work and intended results. The planned work component includes the inputs and activities needed to achieve the objective. The intended results component includes the program's desired results, namely the outputs and outcomes.

### The Project

- Problems - describe the overarching challenge or issue you would like to address. This includes a description of the problem and the need created by the problem. For example, children and their families are underserved by fragmented systems and ineffective responses.
- Goals - describe what your team would like to accomplish as part of the project. Goals are broad statements encompassing the intended outcomes of the project. For example, to increase the number of children screened and, if applicable, referred to the appropriate assessments and services.
- Objectives - describe how the program goals will be achieved. Objectives should be specific and measureable. For example, by December 2020, all children attending public school in Springfield will be screened utilizing the screening tool and, if needed, will be referred to appropriate assessments and services within thirty days.

## Planned Work

- Inputs *(also known as resources)* - describe the resources the team plans to invest in the project. Examples of inputs include: staff and their time; volunteers and their time; collaborative partners and their time; supplies and materials; equipment; and matching or supplemental funds.
- Activities - describe the type of work that will be accomplished for each objective and how the inputs/resources will be utilized. Examples of activities include: developing protocols and tools; assessing strengths and weaknesses; conducting interviews; and requesting feedback and advice from experts in the field.

## Intended Results

- Outputs - describe the result of the project activities. Outputs often provide information about the process of a project; however, they do not inform the team about the impact of the program.
- Outcomes - describe the measureable achievements of the project. Outcomes should be thought of in relation to time, e.g., short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. Short term outcomes may be demonstrated through a change in awareness and knowledge, while long-term outcomes may be exhibited through systems change, such as policies, practices, and environment.

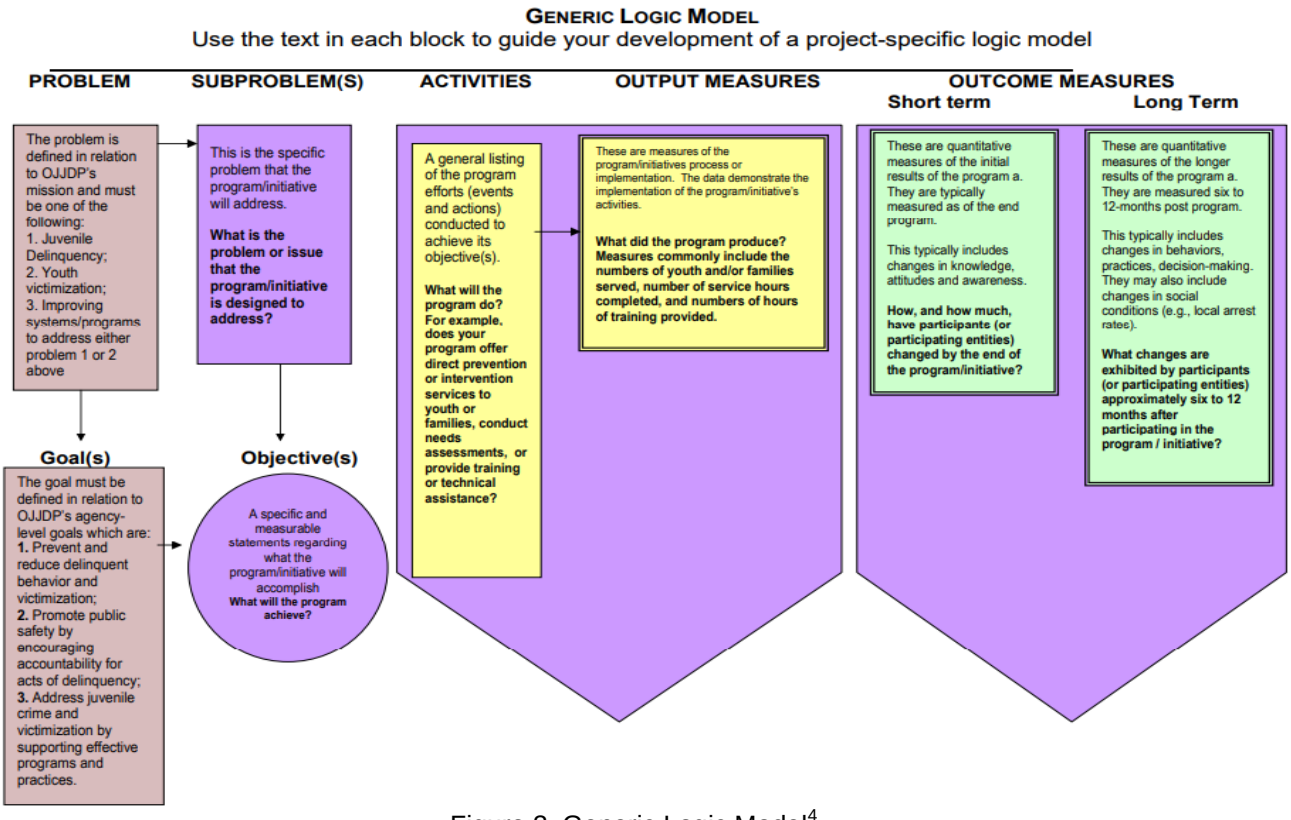


Figure 3. Generic Logic Model[4]

## Why Utilize A Logic Model?

A logic model provides a visual aid of how inputs and activities can be utilized to achieve the outputs and outcomes to accomplish the program goals, objectives, and desired results. Creating a logic model allows your team to visualize the project as a whole, as well as the individual components, in an organized and concrete manner. This activity allows your team to effectively strategize the successful implementation of your program. Additionally, logic models are incredibly helpful for teams to understand their processes and how to use this information to make data-informed decisions. Lastly, regularly reviewing and analyzing the logic models through the use of quarterly report cards, monthly review, and other methods of regular, systematic review is essential to evaluate the progression and success of the project.

## Who Benefits From Utilizing Logic Models?

Logic models are beneficial for any group seeking to implement a new program or project. Logic models assist with strategic planning and simplify the project, which makes it easier to explain and demonstrate to funders, administrators, or other interested parties.

## When Should Logic Models Be Created?

Because logic models can be beneficial throughout the program planning process, it is advantageous to utilize a logic model to strategically outline the program from the beginning. Using logic models will help identify any gaps or issues in the planning phase rather than during the implementation phase when it becomes more difficult to correct deficiencies. However, the value of logic models is not limited to the planning stages, Utilizing logic models throughout the life of the program will help evaluate resources, activities, inputs, and outputs to determine effectiveness. Additionally, logic models are an excellent tool to evaluate a program and its effectiveness before, during, and after implementation. Logic models should be updated and reviewed regularly by the team to ensure the work and efforts further the goals and objectives of the project. This review can be done utilizing quarterly report cards, monthly review, and other methods of regular, systematic review.

## How to Develop A Logic Model?

Key steps for creating an effective logic model include identifying the problem, defining goals, and creating a strategy for achieving the defined goals. Considerations for developing a logic model:

### Step One

Decide on three to five goals you would like to achieve. Essentially, you should ask: What outcomes are we seeking?

When developing goals, it is important to remember the focus of the project. It is also important to consider the assumptions and external factors impacting the project. Assumptions are the beliefs about the project, individuals involved, how people will respond to the project, and how the project will work. External factors involve the environment in which the project exists, such as resources, changing policies and priorities, and climate. This is an excellent opportunity to consider short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals which will help further and achieve the purpose of the project. It is also a great time to consider the program approach. It is also good to consider the side effects or implications of these goals. An additional benefit of utilizing a logic model is that it "builds a shared understanding of what the program is all about and how the parts work together."[5]

**Step Two**

Develop objectives that describe how the goals will be achieved.

Objectives help drive the goals of the project and should be concrete and specific actions, meaning they should be measureable. Utilizing the **SMART**[6] acronym is a helpful tool to set definite and achievable objectives:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime bound

An example of a **SMART** goal could be, "by December 2018, we will host two trainings to at least fifty Department of Human Services workers on the administration of and procedures related to the screening tool."

**Step Three**

Describe the number of inputs the team plans to invest in the project. Inputs are often referred to as resources. Some specific examples of inputs are:

- Staff and their time;
- Volunteers and their time;
- Collaborative partners and their time;
- Supplies/materials;
- Equipment; and
- Matching/supplemental funds, etc.

**Step Four**

List the type of activities or the type of work that will be accomplished for each objective. Words such as establish, provide, train, etc., are often used to describe activities. This can also include:

- Products such as educational or promotional materials;
- Services such as education, training, counseling, or screening; and
- Infrastructure such as relationships and capacity to bring about the desired results.

**Step Five**

Outputs are the result of project activities. Outputs often provide information about the process of the project. Outputs do not inform the team about the impact of the project. Examples of outputs include:

- Materials created such as training manuals, informational materials, promotional materials, and the like;
- Training offered and individuals trained;
- Partner agencies recruited and partnerships formed; and
- Services offered and provided, etc.

**Step Six**

Outcomes are measurable achievements of the project. Outcomes should be thought of based on time, e.g., short-term (0-6 months), intermediate (6-12 months), and long-term (1-3 years). Short-term outcomes may be demonstrated through a change in awareness and knowledge, while long-term outcomes may be exhibited through systems change (e.g., policies, practices, environment, etc.).

**Step Seven**

Regularly review your logic model to evaluate performance and progress of the project. Utilize a standardized form, such as an assessment tool or report card, to determine if activities were executed as planned, if those activities are resulting in the desired outputs, and if the outcomes are aligning with the project goals and objectives. If the project is not progressing as intended, the logic model can help determine where the disconnect has occurred, which then allows you to make adjustments to ensure the continued progress and success of the project.

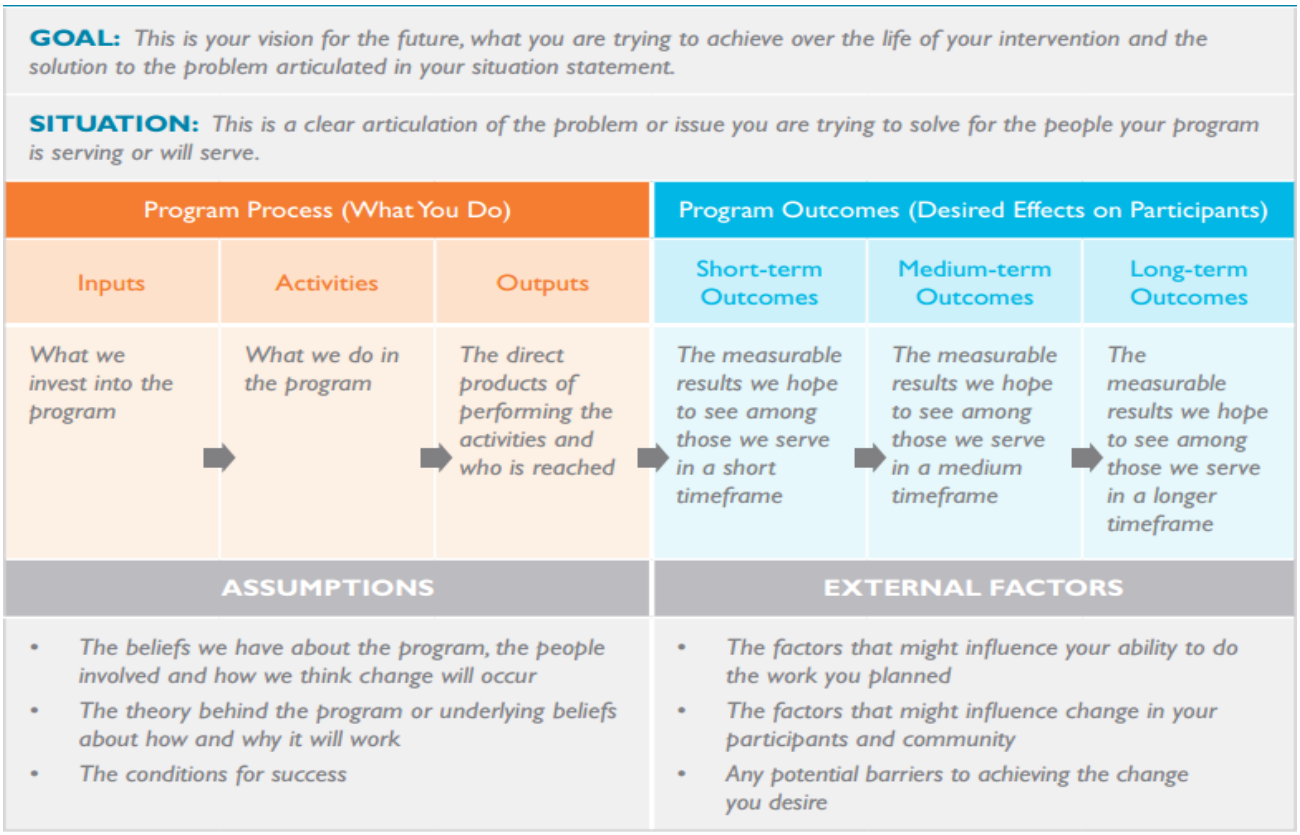


Figure 4. Logic Model Template[7]

## Additional Resources:

Friends National Resource Centers: Logic Model Builder

[1] W.K. Kellogg Foundation, "W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide," (Updated January 2004).
[2] Id.
[3] Id.
[4] Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Performance Measure Logic Models
[5] Id.
[6] Doran, G. T., "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives". Management Review. AMA FORUM. 70 (11): 35–36 (1981).
[7] CFED, Build Your Logic Model

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