AFP Information Exchange

A Step-by-Step Primer on How to Obtain Large Government Grants for Nonprofits (Part 5): Logic Models

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A Step-By-Step Primer on How to Obtain Large Government Grants For Nonprofits (Part 5)

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Obtaining Government Grants: Step 5—Logic Models

There are many steps to applying for large government grants. Each step is equally important to securing the funding your organization needs for growth. Over the next several months, we are planning to outline, step-by-step, the general process inherent in obtaining these grants. Our hope is that other professionals advising or working within the NPO community will comment and offer their own suggestions or opinions. We believe that such productive dialog will be helpful toward bringing more efficiencies (and money!) to nonprofits. This is the fifth part of this series: Logic Models.

This article focuses on the part of the grant application that deals with logic models. In step one, you learned how to prove on paper that your organization had the capacity to partner with the Federal government and become a vendor. In step two, you learned how to research to generate support for your grant application. In step three, we discussed how the case for support should be written to align with the Federal agency's objectives for the community. In step four, we focused on writing the application. Here in step five, we discuss how logic models and program evaluation factor into the application.

STEP 5. Logic Models

Logic models are the primary mechanism by which your program's performance can be measured against the projected goals, objections, and outcomes. They differ from the traditional measurement standards that were focused on budget and are used primarily in part because budget alone is not necessarily the best indicator of success when it comes to fulfilling the organization's mission, especially for health and social services programs.

What is a logic model?

A logic model describes how your program or project is supposed to work. It defines what success will look like at the end of the program. It explains why your strategy is a good solution to the problem. Effective logic models make a specific statement of the activities that will bring about change, and the results you expect to see for the community you are serving. A logic model keeps the participants involved with implementing the program or project moving toward clearly defined goals by providing, dates, times, goals, and specific measurements of anticipated achievements.

There are several terms that you will need to become familiar with as they relate to logic models. They are:

- **Accountability**. Responsibility to provide evidence to stakeholders and funders about the effectiveness and efficiency of programs.
- **Baseline**. Information about the situation or condition prior to a program or intervention.
- **Benchmarks.** Performance data that are used for comparative purposes.
- **Impact**. The social, economic, civic and/or environmental consequences of the program. Impacts tend to be longer-term and so may be equated with goals. Impacts may be positive, negative, and/or neutral: intended or unintended.
- **Impact indicato**r. Expression or indication of impact. Evidence that the impact has/is being achieved.
- **Inputs**. Resources that go into a program including staff time, materials, money, equipment, facilities, volunteer time.
- **Logic model**. Graphic representation of a program showing the intended relationships between investments and results.
- **Measure.** Either quantitative or qualitative information that expresses information about the subject under study.
- **Outcomes.** Results or changes from the program such as changes in knowledge, awareness, skills, attitudes, opinions, aspirations,

motivation, behavior, practice, decision-making, policies, social action, condition, or status. Outcomes may be intended and/or unintended: positive and negative. Outcomes should be measured and recorded as short-term, intermediate, and long-term. The long-term goals should define the impact of the program or project.

- **Outputs**. The activities, products, and participation generated through the investment of resources. Goods and services delivered.

- **Program.** A program is a series of organized activities and resources aimed to help people make improvements in their lives.

- **Program evaluation**. The systematic collection of information about activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs used to make judgments, improve effectiveness, add to knowledge, and/or inform decisions about programs in order to improve programs and be accountable for positive and equitable results and resources invested.

- **Performance measurement**. The ongoing monitoring and reporting of accomplishments, particularly progress towards pre-established goals.

- **Qualitative data.** Data in a narrative or text format.

- **Quantitative data**. Data in numerical format.

What are the components of a logic model? There are several components to a logic model, including:

- **Purpose/Mission/Need/Goal:** What motivates the need for change? This can also be expressed as the problems or opportunities that the program is addressing.

- **Context/External conditions**: What is the climate in which change will take place? How will new policies and programs for your project be aligned with existing ones? What trends compete with your efforts? What is the political and economic climate for investing in your program or project? Will it be supported? What are the obstacles you need to overcome?

- **Inputs/Resources/Infrastructure:** What materials will be used to conduct the program or project? Inputs can also include constraints on

the program, such as regulations, funding gaps, or barriers to achieving your objectives.

- **Activities/Interventions:** How will the program use its resources to implement change? What type of activities will take place? What evidence is there that the activities were performed as planned? (Indicators might include the number of clients, and the frequency, type, duration, of services rendered.)

- **Effects/Results/Consequences/Outcomes/Impacts:** What kinds of changes came about as a direct or indirect effect of the activities? (How many buildings were built, how many services were delivered, what changes were documented in the participants of the program?

What is the purpose of a logic model? A logic model is a story or picture of how an effort or initiative is supposed to work. The process of developing the model brings together stakeholders to articulate the goals of the program and the values that support it, and to identify strategies and desired outcomes.

A logic model is useful for planning, implementing and evaluating a program. It helps stakeholders agree on short and long-term objectives during the planning process, outline activities, assign tasks, and establish clear criteria for evaluation during the effort. When the project ends, it provides a framework for assessing overall effectiveness, as well as the activities, resources, and external factors that played a role in the outcome.

Logic models help planners to set priorities for allocating resources**,** reveal data needs and provide a framework for interpreting results. They enhance program development by integrating research findings and best practices. Logic models help define a pathway and shared vision for community change**.** In a coalition or collaborative partnership, the logic model makes it clear which effects each partner creates and how all those effects lead to a common goal.

On a practical level, logic modeling is time very consuming, and requires a great deal of work initially; and throughout the length of the program or project. Logic models can be very difficult to create, but the process of creating them, as well as the product, will yield many benefits over the course of a program. Logic models can be an invaluable tool in measuring

success as well as program outcomes; and provide benchmarks to measure against similar programs.

How do you create a logic model? First, you need to determine what type of information is required of your logic model. A very basic government logic model is listed below.

Basic Logic Model

Statement of need:

Resources/ Inputs	*Activities*	*Outputs*	*Indicators / Tools*	*Outcomes*	*Impact*
In order to accomplish our set of activities we will need the following:	In order to address our problem or asset we will accomplish the following activities:	We expect that once accomplished these activities will produce the following evidence or service delivery:		We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following changes in 1–3 then 4–6 years:	We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following changes in 7–10 years:

For this model, you are required to list the type of activities your program will be performing, the material needed, the results you hope to accomplish, the indicators that will tell you that you have accomplished those goals, the tools you used to measure them, and the results or outcomes. Finally, what impact or change resulted from your program? You simply fill in the data requested in the categories.

It sounds easy enough, but unfortunately, most government agencies have much more complex logic models required of their potential grantees. The good news is that most agencies will provide a video and/or training session that details the process step by step. It is critical to attend these sessions; and to participate in the training. Some very useful resources to preview before you begin are listed below:

Sample training video for government logic models:

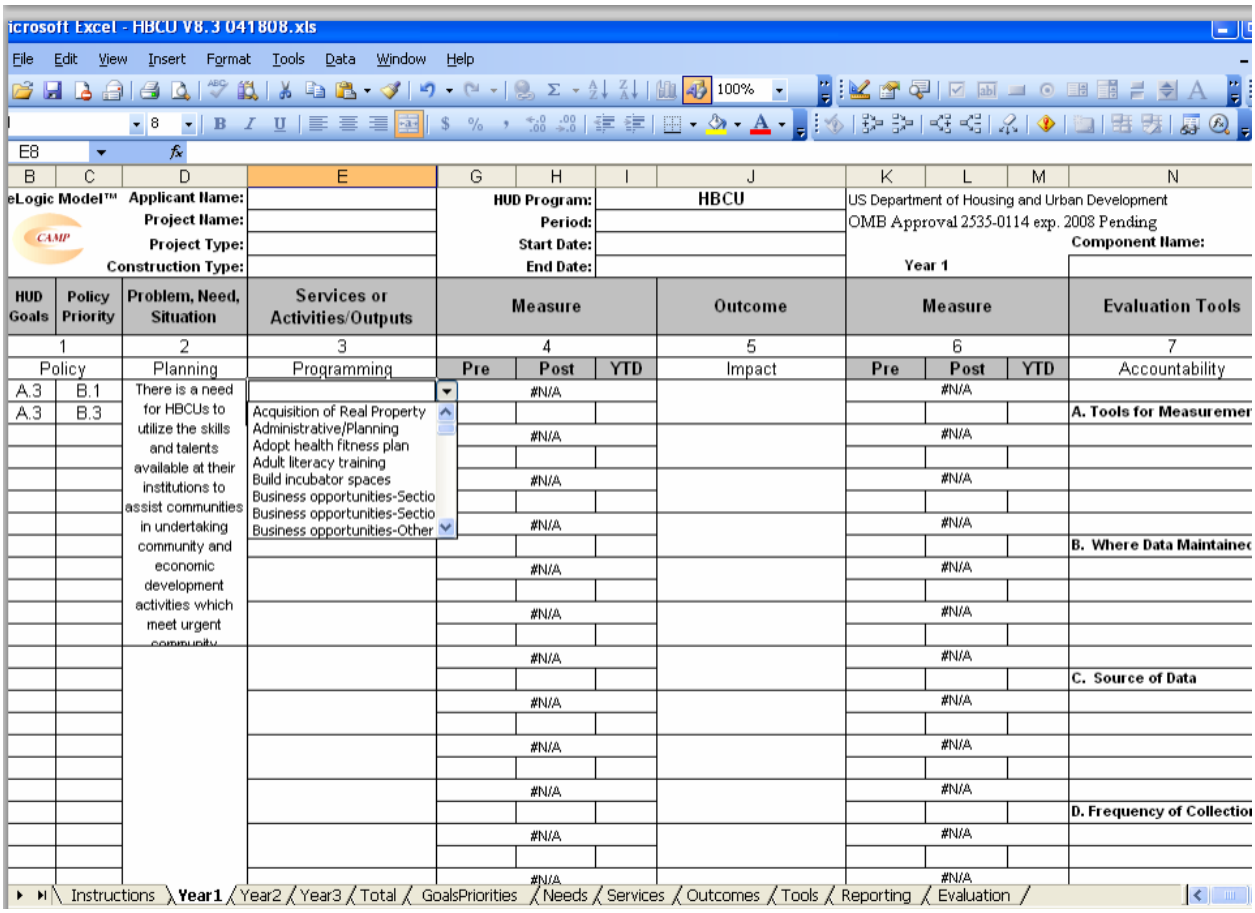
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN3WSWhPUdE&feature=youtube_gdata

Sample completed government logic model:

http://archives.hud.gov/funding/2004/lmexample.doc

Common Errors in completing logic models:
http://archives.hud.gov/funding/2008/elogicmodel.pdf

In some cases, the model will have pre-determined *macros*, (pre-defined shortcuts that will enter pre-programmed data) integrated into the form. As a grant-seeker; this is very helpful in completing the form; and in aligning your project with the agency goals, as demonstrated in the HUD model below.



One recommended approach is to start at the end; and work backwards.

What is your long-term desired outcome? Identify the chain of outcomes that lead to the final, long-term result. What do you have to do to get there? Who must participate? Who is responsible for achieving the outcomes? What activities must be provided, produced or completed so that the desired outcomes are achieved? It might be helpful to separate activities into categories; such as planning, training, workshops, services, products, construction, marketing, etc. What resources are needed to make sure the activities are accomplished?

Another approach is to write down a list of intended activities associated with the program or project.

For each activity, answer;

"We do _____, SO THAT _____ will occur. "

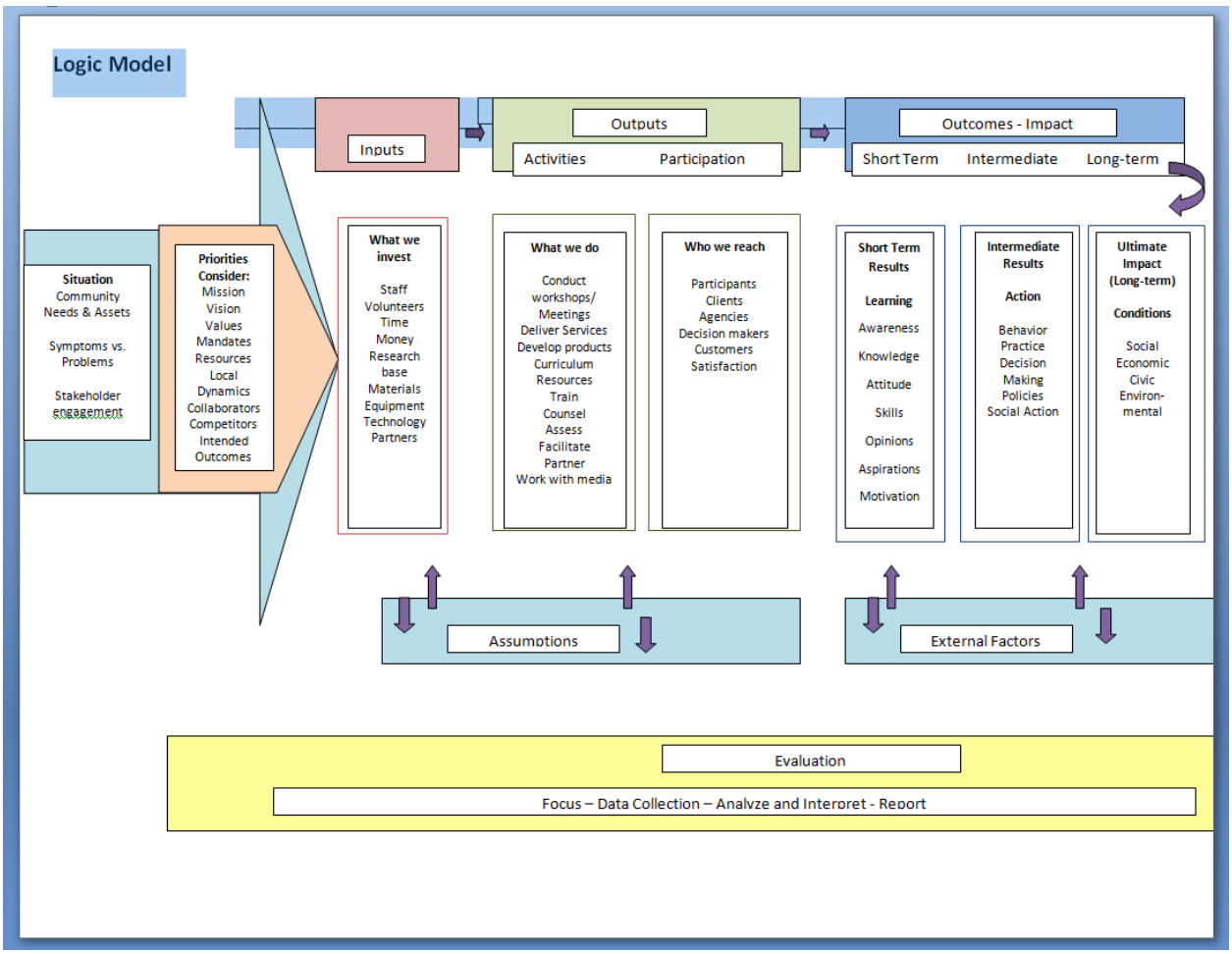
"IF we do_____, THEN_____ will occur. "

You can also use the question, "But why?" For example: But why do I advertise the workshop? Answer: So that people will attend. But why? Answer: So that people will be increase their knowledge about [insert specific response here].

Continue until a chain of connections is created that links program activities to desired end results. Then, list the resources needed to ensure the chain of connections is achieved.

Conclusion.

There are many types of models, including the model provided for you below, which may assist you in creating a logic model that will produce an award winning grant.



Don't miss our next article: Step 6 – The Budget

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About Cathy D. Cessna, RDH, MPA, CFRE: Senior level private and public sector decision maker; fundraiser, marketing lead, advertising sales, medical software sales; affordable housing development. Eleven years of experience - Adjunct Professor; Marketing, Fundraising, Finance, and Non-profit Legal Issues. Non-profit consultant/public sector: Volunteer: Wilmington Montessori School, Junior League of Wilmington, RHD Howell, Delaware Military Academy, Wellness Center Delaware, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Tower Hill School, Delaware Dental Hygiene Assn.

About Charlie Vincent, Esq.: Charlie has almost 15 years of marketing and business experience across different sectors in Delaware and Pennsylvania, including strategic business planning and marketing, event planning, and fundraising for non-profits, small businesses, and entrepreneurs. As an attorney, Charlie developed a unique understanding and perspective of how different clients think in terms of time, budget, and results. These legal experiences, combined with his marketing and business background, enabled him early in his legal career to help two of largest legal non-profits in Delaware with the planning and execution of multiple successful fundraising events. Charlie formed Innovincent LLC in 2014 to help other non-profits, businesses, and individuals with strategic planning, marketing, event planning, and fundraising needs.