



How to Construct Grant Performance Measures (Outputs and Outcomes): A Brief Guide for Environment Grant Applicants

This guide is designed to help program officers and grant applicants as they work together to establish good performance measures. Please be sure to review the following information prior to developing and/or revising performance measures. At the bottom of this guide is a list of sample performance measures, which may provide a helpful starting point. We have also produced a video guide that you may find useful: <http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/about/evaluation-unit>

I. Introduction: Why construct grant performance measures?

Clear statements of the intended results of work to be completed under a grant are essential for shaping the project to be undertaken, for monitoring progress and making any necessary adjustments as the work proceeds, and for assessing the effectiveness and impact of the work as the grant ends. The Walton Family Foundation uses grant performance measures – outputs and outcomes – to express intended results and later to assess success in achieving those results. This document provides guidance for developing grant outputs and outcomes, with examples. If you have any questions, please contact your program officer.

II. Grant Outputs and Outcomes: Definitions and Structure

Outputs: Outputs are the direct results of the activities you undertake under your Foundation grant. They are products, goods, or services that you (or your partners) create or deliver during the course of the grant. Output statements should be formulated to state clearly who is responsible for meeting the output, what the output is, and the date by which it will be met or completed. Ideally, outputs are quantitative, and specify the number, size, area, or other measure by which the results can be assessed. Output statements usually, but not always, include a “who” or “what” that will receive the product, good or service. It is also important to include the basis for judging success or determining how or when an output is met, if this is not obvious.

Example Outputs:

- Organization ABC will develop 500 brochures and distribute them to 300 targeted landowners by March 2013, as documented in program files.
- Organization XYZ will convene a workshop in October 2012 that will be attended by at least 25 policy-makers and fishermen, as documented by the workshop sign-in list.

Outputs may be internal or administrative (e.g., hiring staff, raising funds), but these should ideally be accompanied by external or programmatic outputs (e.g., launching a campaign) so it is clear why the internal outputs are important. Try to avoid detailing all grant activities (e.g., have at least six meetings with partners), and instead focus on the most important results you hope to achieve with your activities (e.g., develop a shared work-plan agreed by all partners).

Outcomes: Outcomes are the impacts or changes in the world that you intend to achieve through your outputs. These may, for example, be changes in administrative policy or regulations, human behavior or activity, or the state of an ecosystem or ecosystem component. Unlike outputs, outcomes are typically beyond your organization’s direct control, and they may depend on many factors. Outcome statements should state clearly who or what will change (if the work is successful), and by when. Like outputs, outcomes should ideally be quantitative, and should state the intended size or scope of the change. With outcomes, it is often particularly important to state how the impact or change will be detected or demonstrated. Outcomes may be short-, medium-, or long-term but should be included only if they are expected to occur within the grant period.

Example Outcomes:

- By January 2014, at least 3,000 acres will be enrolled by landowners in wetland restoration programs, as documented by completed applications submitted to the Department of Resources.
- By March 2015, bycatch of juvenile red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery will be reduced by 30%, as documented through observer programs.

If useful, both short-term and long-term outcomes may be expressed, as follows:

- Output: By April 2014, Organization ABC will have distributed 12 policy briefs with non-partisan analysis to policymakers explaining how bycatch reduction measures are required under current law, as recorded in meeting notes.
- Short-Term Outcome: By May 2014, ten key policymakers will have increased awareness and understanding of the issue, as demonstrated through interviews with select policymakers or their staff.
- Intermediate Outcome: By September 2014, ten key policymakers will have demonstrated commitment to the issue, as documented by comments in public meetings and to media.
- Long-Term Outcome: By December 2014, policymakers will have proposed amendments to the existing regulatory policy.

III. OPTIONAL: Using Goals & Objectives to Organize Grant Outputs and Outcomes

In some cases, particularly with large or complex projects, it may be useful to organize the grant outputs and outcomes under project goals and/or objectives. These are not grant performance measures, but may assist the reader in understanding what a set of outputs and/or outcomes is meant collectively to achieve. Use of goals and/or objectives is **strictly optional**.

These terms are used in many different ways, but the Walton Family Foundation considers a goal to be a large, overarching, usually long-term (often beyond the grant period), desired result. An objective is a specific step or milestone along the way to achieving a goal. Either or both goals and objectives may be used to organize outputs and outcomes, if useful.

Example use of goals and objectives:

- Goal: Ensure sustainability of Gulf of Mexico red snapper populations by 2015.
 - Objective 1: Ensure commercial red snapper fishery meets all legal requirements by 2012.
 - Output: By July 2011, grantee will develop sustainable catch limits for red snapper and submit them to the management agency.
 - Outcome: By July 2012, the management agency will adopt the new catch limits, as documented in published records of the agency's decisions.
 - Objective 2: Reduce red snapper bycatch in the shrimp fishery to sustainable levels.
 - Output: Grantee will work with five to ten selected shrimp fishermen to test new fishing gear that reduces bycatch and, by March 2012, will present results to the Shrimp Fishermen's Cooperative.
 - Short-Term Outcome: By June 2012, 80% of members of the Shrimp Fishermen's Cooperative will have voluntarily adopted new fishing gear, as documented through dockside inspections of fishing vessels.
 - Long-Term Outcome: By June 2013, red snapper bycatch in the shrimp fishery will be reduced by 30%, as documented by on-board observers.

IV. Developing and Using Your Grant Outputs and Outcomes

Your program officer will work with you as you draft and refine your grant outputs and outcomes during the development of your proposal. Assessments of progress in meeting the final, approved outputs and outcomes will be a key element of your interim (if required) and final grant reports. If changes to the outputs or outcomes are needed after the grant is awarded, your program officer will work with you to make any agreed revisions. WFF Evaluation Unit team members are available to provide guidance at all points in the process.

V. Additional Sample Grant Outputs and Outcomes

Following are more sample grant outputs and outcomes. These examples have been developed in the specific context of the Foundation's work to reform K-12 education in America, and are organized under the different strategies of that work. However, the general structure and formulation of the outputs and outcomes are applicable to all aspects of the Foundation's work with its partners, and should help you develop good outputs and outcomes for projects to be funded through the Foundation's environment initiatives.

A. *Creating or Expanding Schools*

Sample Outputs:

- Charter Approval: By June 2013, grantee will receive approval of their charter application, as demonstrated by approval letter from authorizer.
- Secure Facilities: By August 2012, the leadership team will secure a building for the school which requires no more than 50% of expected revenues for rent, as recorded in organization management files.
- Recruit Students: By August 2014, the school principal will hold at least 10 community meetings to recruit students to the new school, as recorded in organization management files.

Sample Outcomes:

- New Schools: Grantee will open 12 new schools by March 2014, as recorded in organization management files.
- Expanded Student Enrollment: Grantee will expand its current enrollment of 250 students by 175 students (to 425 students) by August 2013, as measured by official October enrollment counts for the school.
- Proficiency Rates: Each academic year of the three-year grant (from 2011-12 through 2013-14), the school will have average proficiency rates on state English Language Arts and Mathematics exams which are at least five percentage points higher than its surrounding district. (For an existing school, list the current comparison.)

B. *School Leader Development*

Sample Outputs:

- Conduct Training: By July 2013, staff will train 8 Fellows each year to design, found, and lead high-performing schools, as recorded in program management files.
- Provide Support Services: By July 2014, grantee will provide continuing technical assistance and support services (fundraising, teacher evaluation, data management, etc.) to at least 10 previously trained fellows, as recorded in program management files.

Sample Outcomes:

- Launch Schools: Each newly trained Fellow will open a school within two years of fellowship completion, as recorded in program management files.
- Enroll Students: By August 2014, each new Fellow school will serve between 225 and 550 students when at full capacity, as measured by official October enrollment counts for the school.
- Proficiency Rates: Each academic year, at least 75% of Fellow schools will have average proficiency rates on state English Language Arts and Mathematics exams which are at least five percentage points higher than their surrounding districts, as measured by official state data.

C. *Advocacy*

Sample Outputs:

- Hold Legislative Meetings: Grantee will hold 35 meetings by December 2014 with legislators to provide non-partisan analysis and information on policies related to the state's school voucher program (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal), as recorded in program management files.

- Hold Community Meetings: Grantee will organize and execute at least 10 educational meetings on charter school policy improvements (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal) for community leaders and advocacy allies by June 2012, as recorded in program management files.
- Conduct Rally: Grantee will participate in organizing and hosting (or co-hosting) a rally to support charter schools (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal) at the Statehouse by April 30, 2012. The event will be attended by at least 100 people, as recorded in program management files.
- Recruit New Contacts: By December 2013, the E-advocacy mailing list will be increased from 4,200 to 6,000, as recorded in program management files.
- Reports: By July 2014, grantee will produce a minimum of six reports in the form of non-partisan analysis of the parental choice program, increasing or removing income limits, increasing or removing the cap, and reducing regulation (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal), as recorded in program management files. Reports will be distributed to 100% of legislators and posted online.
- Legal Advocacy: By August 2013, grantee will file an amicus brief in defense of the state's voucher program, as recorded in program management files or court documents.
- Legislative Report: By July 2014, grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the voting records of all legislators that the organization met with during the grant period to provide non-partisan information about the benefits of [insert policy objective].
- Policy Environment: By July 2014, grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the status of all changes related to state charter school policy (including legislation or legislative activity) that occurred during the grant period.

NOTE: The last output, and where applicable the second-last output, should be included in all grant applications involving advocacy work.

Sample Outcomes:

- Increased Awareness: By June 2014, at least 25% of key policymakers and opinion leaders will report being aware of [policy of interest], as measured by a grantee conducted/third-party survey of a select group of key policymakers and opinion leaders. Currently, 10% of key policymakers and opinion leaders are aware of [policy of interest].
- Increased Knowledge: By April 2013, 80% of legislators that grantee has met with will indicate on a survey that they have a better understanding of the policy issue presented.
- Increased Support: By April 2014, a poll conducted by a third party firm will indicate that 65% of citizens in the state support charter schools. Currently, 52% of citizens in the state support charter schools according to a 2012 poll.
- Policymaker Invitation: By October 2014, grantee will receive at least three written invitations on behalf of legislative committees to testify about the results of their non-partisan analysis, as measured by state records.
- Regulatory Policy Change: By January 2014, at least two of the final department regulations regarding the school choice program will reflect grantee written comments, as measured by official state policy records.
- Judicial Ruling: By July 2014, the state supreme court will rule that the voucher program is constitutional, as measured by the court's majority opinion.

D. Organizing

Sample Outputs:

- Expand Staff: By December 2013, six community organizers will be hired to educate and organize parents and community members, as recorded in program management files.
- Hold Education Sessions: At least 10 community engagement meetings/actions will be held, attended by at least 100 community members, by March 2012, as recorded in program management files.

- **Recruit New Members:** By August 2013, staff will distribute information packets to 200 residents, as recorded in organization management files.
- **Conduct Training:** At least 30 members will participate in a three-month training session on charter school policy by January 2013, as recorded in program management files.
- **Legislative Report:** By July 2014, grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the voting records of all legislators that the organization met with during the grant period to provide non-partisan information about the benefits of [insert policy objective].
- **Policy Environment:** By July 2014, grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the status of all changes related to state charter school policy (including legislation or legislative activity) that occurred during the grant period.

NOTE: The last output, and where applicable the second-last output, should be included in all grant applications involving advocacy work (including organizing).

Sample Outcomes:

- **Increased Membership:** Grantee will increase membership by 10% from 200 to 220 parents and local residents, by June 2014, as recorded in program management files.
- **Increased Use of Resources:** Monthly website resource hits by members will increase by 10%, from 2,000 to 2,200 hits, by June 2014, as recorded in program management files.
- **Increased Leadership Capacity:** By May 2013, three newly trained members will take leadership positions in the organization, as recorded in program management files.
- **Increased Advocacy Capacity:** By October 2014, 20 parents trained by grantee will testify at Education Committee hearings as recorded in committee records.
- **Increased Engagement:** By October 2014, 100 parents trained by grantee will be actively engaged in advocating for improved charter school policy (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal), as measured by grantee records. An active parent advocate includes, but is not limited to, parents who are invited to provide testimony, are invited to speak to policymakers and opinion leaders, speak at public events, take a leadership role in the organization, recruit others to the organization, or attend public meetings.

E. Research

Sample Outputs:

- **Conduct Research:** Grantee will conduct key stakeholder interviews with 25 experts in the field by June 2012, as recorded in interview records.
- **Validate Research:** Grantee will review research findings with an advisory panel of 10 research and policy experts in the field by October 2012, as documented by panel review notes.
- **Produce and Distribute/Publicize Report:** Grantee will produce and publicly release an original research report by April 2013, as demonstrated by posting on grantee website. Grantee will distribute and publicize the research through the following activities:
 - **Email Distribution:** Grantee will email a press release announcing the release of the report to a contact list of over 1,000 policymakers, opinion leaders, stakeholders, and others.
 - **Hold Event:** At least 100 people will attend a public event hosted by grantee for the release of the report, as recorded by a sign-in sheet at the event. The event will take place by June 2014.

Sample Outcomes:

- **Published Op-Eds:** At least three articles or op-ed pieces will be published in popular outlets and education publications by summer 2012, as documented by media clippings or citations.
- **Media Hits:** There will be at least five earned media hits mentioning the report by May 2014, as measured by a search of LexisNexis.
- **Report Views:** There will be at least 2,500 unique viewers of the report on grantee's website by December 2014, as recorded in program management files.

- **Report Citations:** There will be at least 10 citations of the report in related policy briefs, research papers, or peer-reviewed journals by May 2015, as measured by grantee tracking.
- **Use of Information:** At least 50% of 10 key stakeholders in the field will provide evidence that they have incorporated the information contained in the research report into their practice by October 2014, as reported by a survey conducted by grantee.

F. Fundraising

Sample Outputs:

- **Conduct Solicitation Campaign:** Program staff will send donation information packets to at least 100 new corporations by June 30, 2014, as measured by a report of outreach methods by Grantee.
- **Solicit New Donors:** The executive director and/or fund development officer will make direct contact with at least 50 new corporations by June 30, 2014 in order to solicit new donors, as measured by a report of outreach methods by grantee.

Sample Outcomes:

- **Increased Fund Generation:** Compared to FY11, grantee will increase total non-WFF donations by 15% in FY12, as recorded in financial management files. Donation total in FY11 was \$315,000.
- **Increased Number of Donors:** Compared to FY11, grantee will increase the total number of donors in FY12 by 10%, as recorded in financial management files. Number of donors in FY11 was 60.
- **Increased Sustainability:** Compared to FY11, grantee will increase total non-WFF multi-year donations by 7% in FY12, as recorded in financial management files. Total multi-year non-WFF donations in FY11 were \$215,000.