



The Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 833-7200



The Center for What Works
3074 West Palmer Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60647
(773) 398-8858

Candidate Outcome Indicators: Business Assistance Program

Implementing an outcome monitoring process enables organizations to track progress in achieving the program's mission. With this information, program managers can better develop budgets, allocate resources and improve their services. This document includes the following suggestions for starting or improving outcome measurement efforts:

1. **Outcome sequence chart** – *Identifies key outcomes presented in the sequence that are normally expected to occur.* The chart illustrates how one outcome leads to the next and identifies specific indicators that might be used to track each outcome. Intermediate outcomes tend to be on the left, and end (or final) outcomes are on the right. The program description at the top of the chart is meant to encompass a range of similar programs.
2. **Candidate outcome indicators** – *Lists outcomes and associated indicators as a starting point for deciding which outcomes to track.* They were chosen based on a review of the program area and consultation with program experts. Only outcome indicators are included (not physical outputs, such as number of classes held; not efficiency, such as cost per counseling session; and not organization issues, such as success in fundraising or staffing). The focus is on program beneficiaries (clients, customers, citizens, participants) and what has been accomplished for them. A data source or collection procedure is suggested for each indicator.

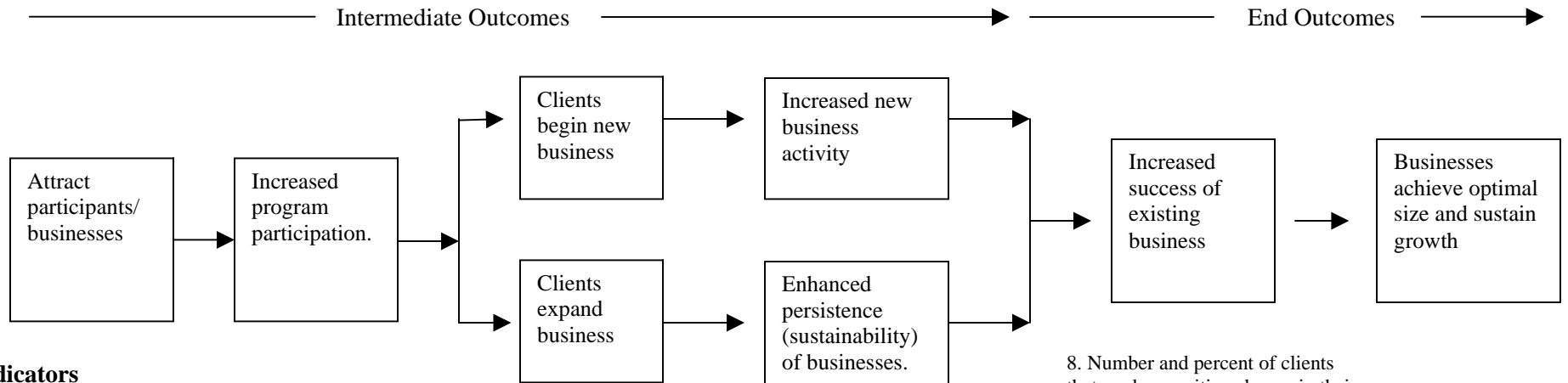
Suggestions and Limitations for Use of the Materials

- Involve others in deciding which outcomes and indicators to track. Obtain input from staff, board members, and clients. As an early step, prepare your own version of an outcome sequence chart—one that you believe fits the needs of your program.
- Review the project report for additional ideas on relevant indicators and additional resources: *Building a Common Framework to Measure Nonprofit Performance.*
- Tabulate the outcome information by various categories of clients to see if outcomes are different for different clients (e.g., gender, age group, income level, handicap level, and race/ethnicity). Use that information to help better target your efforts.
- Start with a small number of the indicators, especially if you have had only very little experience with such data collection and have very limited resources. Add more outcomes and indicators to the performance measurement system later, as you find that information is likely to be useful.
- Outcome information seldom, if ever, tells *why* the outcomes have occurred. Many internal and external factors can contribute to any outcome. Instead, use the outcome data to identify *what* works well and what does not. Use the data to determine for which *categories of clients* your procedures and policies are working well and for which they are not working well. To the extent that the program is not working as well as expected, then attempt to find out the reasons. This investigation process leads to continuous learning and program improvement.

Business Assistance Program Description

To provide programs to assist existing businesses and business entrepreneurs, to help enhance economic development.

Outcomes Sequence Chart



Indicators

1. Number of clients/businesses provided with assistance.

2. Number and percent of clients being assisted with:
a) business planning
b) loan packaging
c) management training
d) certification procedures.

3. Number and percent of clients that began a business within 12 months after the assistance.

4. Number and percent of clients who began a business within 12 months after the assistance and reported that the assistance was a contributing factor.

5. Number and percent of clients that expand existing business within 12 months after the assistance.

6. Number and percent of clients that attributed new business operations or methods to program assistance within 12 months after the

7. Number and percent of program participants still in business, 2 years after start.

8. Number and percent of clients that made a positive change in their business or markets at least in part because of the assistance.

9. Number of additional fulltime employees employed by the client organizations for which the assistance played a significant role in the increase.

10. Number and percent of clients that attributed solving of a significant operational problem to program assistance within 12 months after the assistance.

11. Number and percent of clients that attributed increased sales revenue/profits to program assistance.

12. Number and percent of respondents that strongly agreed that their business functions better as a result of assistance.

Client satisfaction

Satisfaction with program services is an outcome that occurs within almost every program area, yet does not necessarily have a sequential placement. The indicator may be: Number and percent of clients satisfied with business assistance services in courses/organization.

Sources Consulted: Various Community Foundations, 2004, Monitoring the Outcomes of Economic Development Programs: A Manual (Hatry, Harry P, Fall, Mark, Singer, Thomas O, Liner, E. Blaine), 1990, Audit Commission and Improvement and Development Agency's Library of Local Performance Indicators, 2003, Knight Foundation, Listening and Learning: Community Indicator Profiles of Knight Foundation Communities and the Nation, 2004, Women's Business Development Center (www.wbdc.org), Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov), Asian American Alliance (www.asianamericanalliance.com)

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**Program Description:****To provide programs to assist existing businesses and business entrepreneurs, to help enhance economic development.**

	Common Outcomes	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Note	Outcome Stage
1	Increase Participation/ Attendance	Attract participants/ businesses	Number of clients/businesses provided with assistance.	Program records		Intermediate
2	Increase Participation/ Attendance	Increased program participation	Number and percent of clients being assisted with training type X:	Program records/client Survey	See Note # 1	Intermediate
3	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Clients begin new business	Number and percent of clients that began a business within 12 months after the assistance	Client survey after program completion/program records		Intermediate
4	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Clients begin new business	Number and percent of clients who began a business within 12 months after the assistance <u>and</u> reported that the assistance was a contributing factor.	Client survey after program completion/program records		Intermediate
5	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Clients expand business	Number and percent of clients that expand existing business within 12 months after the assistance.	Client survey after program completion/program records		Intermediate
6	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Increased new business activity	Number and percent of clients that attributed new business operations or methods to program assistance within 12 months after the assistance was received.	Client survey after program completion	See Note # 2	Intermediate
7	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Enhanced persistence (sustainability) of existing businesses	Number and percent of program participants still in business, 2 years after start.	Client survey after program completion		End
8	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Increased success of existing businesses	Number and percent of clients that made a positive change in their business or markets at least in part because of the assistance	Client survey after program completion		End
9	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Increased success of existing businesses	Number of additional fulltime employees employed by the client organizations for which the assistance played a significant role in the increase.	Client survey after program completion		End
10	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Increased success of existing businesses	Number and percent of clients that attributed solving of a significant operational problem to program assistance within 12 months after the assistance.	Client survey after program completion	See Note # 2	End
11	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Increased success of existing businesses	Number and percent of clients that attributed increased sales revenue/profits to program assistance.	Client survey after program completion		End

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**Program Description: To provide programs to assist existing businesses and business entrepreneurs, to help enhance economic development.**

	Common Outcomes	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Note	Outcome Stage
12	Increase Incidence of Desirable Activity or Condition	Businesses achieve optimal size and sustain growth	Number and percent of respondents that strongly agreed that their business functions better as a result of assistance.	Client survey after program completion		End
	Client Satisfaction	Client satisfaction	<u>Indicators include:</u> Number and percent of clients satisfied with business assistance services in courses/organization.			

Note #1: Training type may include: Business planning, loan packaging, management training, certification procedures, sales presentation, evaluation, marketing and finance, technical assistance, disaster assistance, vendor alliances, etc.

Note #2: New/Improved business methods and operations include increase in the number of employees and expansion of current operations.

General Notes:

Variations of outcome indicators may be used. For example, many of the indicators can be expressed either positively or negatively.

People may not agree with designations presented here of "intermediate" or "end" outcome stage. While these designations are generally the common order of events for this program area, some organizations may order events differently. The important issue is what should be measured and its relative significance, not how it is labeled.

Sources Consulted: Various Community Foundations, 2004, Monitoring the Outcomes of Economic Development Programs: A Manual (Hatry, Harry P, Fall, Mark, Singer, Thomas O, Liner, E. Blaine), 1990, Audit Commission and Improvement and Development Agency's Library of Local Performance Indicators, 2003, Knight Foundation, Listening and Learning: Community Indicator Profiles of Knight Foundation Communities and the Nation, 2004, Women's Business Development Center (www.wbdc.org), Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov), Asian American Alliance (www.asianamericanalliance.com).