

PROGRAM GATHERING

TOOLKIT



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Program Gathering & SMART Outcomes Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help nonprofit leaders organize essential program information and translate their goals into SMART outcomes. It also connects outcomes to tracking methods, sustainability practices, and reporting strategies funders expect. For educational purposes, we use a fictitious 'ABC,' an organization serving Little County, Oklahoma, through a Summer Arts Enrichment Program.

Prepared by Angie Thompson Consulting, LLC.

1. Program Gathering Template

When a grantor asks for this, they're looking for two pieces that work together: Program Description & SMART Outcomes.

The program description will offer a clear, plain-language summary of your program. It should explain:

1. The need/problem you're addressing
2. Who your target population is
3. What activities/services you'll deliver
4. Where and when it will take place
5. Why your program is the right solution

Think of this as your story + blueprint. Your Program Description tells what you do and why it matters. Your SMART Outcomes prove what success will look like and how you'll measure it.

Use this template to gather your core information funders will request:

Organization Name: _____

Mission: _____

Program Name: _____

Program Description: _____

Target Population: _____

Key Activities: _____

Need Statement: What problem does this program solve? What data supports this need? _____

2. SMART Outcomes Framework

SMART outcomes are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. They provide funders with clear expectations of program success and tie directly back to the organization's mission and Statement of Need.

Example SMART Outcomes for ABC's Summer Arts Program

Specific: By the end of the 4-week program, 80% of enrolled students will complete at least one finished art project (painting, script, music piece, or digital media).

Measurable: Pre- and post-program surveys will measure a 25% increase in participants' confidence in their artistic abilities.

Achievable: At least 60% of students will present their work in a community showcase during the final week.

Relevant: The program will expand access to arts enrichment for children and youth in Little County, aligning with ABC's mission.

Time-bound: Within 3 months after the program, 70% of participants will report continued engagement in artistic activities at school or at home.

2. SMART Outcomes Worksheet

Use this worksheet to create clear, funder-ready outcomes for your program. Each section below guides you through the SMART framework with prompts and space to draft your own outcomes.

S – Specific

What exactly will be accomplished? Who will benefit? Avoid vague words like 'improve' or 'help.'

Prompt: By the end of the program, [X group] will [do/achieve something specific].

Your draft:

M – Measurable

How will success be tracked? Use numbers, percentages, or observable changes.

Prompt: We will know this is working when we can count/see/record [what change or result].

Your draft:

A – Achievable

Is this realistic with the time, staff, and resources we have?

Prompt: Given our resources, it is realistic to reach [X number or percentage] of participants.

Your draft:

R – Relevant

Does this outcome connect directly to our mission and the need we identified?

Prompt: This outcome matters because it supports our mission to [insert mission focus].

Your draft:

T – Time-bound

When will this happen? Funders expect deadlines tied to a timeframe.

Prompt: By [date or program end], [X group] will have achieved [specific outcome].

Your draft:

3. Outcome Tracking Methods

Designing outcomes is only half the work—tracking them is what gives those outcomes credibility. Funders don't just want to hear what you hope to accomplish; they want to see proof of progress. Outcome tracking methods are the tools and processes you use to measure whether your program actually delivered the results you promised. These methods can include surveys, focus groups, attendance records, rubrics, or even community testimonials.

Think of it like this: your SMART outcomes define the target, and your tracking methods demonstrate the arrows hitting the bullseye.

Outcome Tracking Checklist:

- ☐ Pre- and post-program surveys to measure skills and confidence.
- ☐ Instructor rubrics for evaluating student participation and project completion.
- ☐ Attendance logs to track consistency and engagement.
- ☐ Focus groups with parents and youth for qualitative feedback.
- ☐ Community showcase participation rates.
- ☐ Photos/ videos with signed releases (secure permission through photo releases)
- ☐ Data storage & privacy: Ensure survey and participant data is stored securely.

Why Outcome Tracking Matters

- **Builds credibility with funders:** Data shows you keep your promises.
- **Improves your program:** Tracking lets you see what works and what needs adjustment.

- **Supports sustainability:** Demonstrated results make it easier to renew funding or attract new donors.
- **Engages your community:** Sharing impact stories and numbers back to participants, parents, and partners reinforces trust.

How to Use the Data

- **Report Back:** Summarize results in grant reports, board meetings, newsletters, and social media.
- **Tell Stories with Evidence:** Pair quotes or testimonials with measurable outcomes (with signed releases).
- **Refine for Next Year:** Use outcomes to adjust program length, staffing, or curriculum. Funders love to see that you use data for continuous improvement.

Pro Tip: Always connect your tracking methods back to your SMART outcomes. For every outcome written, ask: *“How will we know we achieved this?”* That question points you directly to the best tracking tool.

4. Sustainability & Reporting Notes

Every funder wants to know: What happens after the grant? It's not enough to deliver a great program this year — you need a plan to keep the impact going and to show accountability through clear reporting. Sustainability and reporting notes reassure funders that your program is more than a one-time effort; it's part of a long-term strategy.

Sustainability & Report Checklist:

- ☐ Provide a final report within 60 days of program completion.
- ☐ Share student work and testimonials in community publications.
- ☐ Use results to refine and strengthen the next year's program.
- ☐ Diversify funding sources: grants, donors, corporate partners, earned income.
- ☐ Embed continuous learning: Use reporting as a feedback loop for program improvement.

Why Sustainability & Reporting Matter

- **Builds funder confidence:** Shows you're not dependent on one grant.
- **Demonstrates accountability:** Reporting proves you take stewardship seriously.
- **Strengthens renewal chances:** Funders are more likely to give again when they see results and a plan forward.
- **Guides internal planning:** Reporting and sustainability strategy keeps board and staff aligned.

Think of sustainability and reporting as your promise kept — proof that you'll continue the work beyond the first grant check, and that funders will see the results of their investment.

Worksheet: Program Gathering & SMART Outcomes

1. Program Gathering Template

Use this template to gather core information funders will request:

Organization Name	
Mission	
Program Name	
Program Description	
Target Population	
Key Activities	

Logic Model Template

A Logic Model is a one-page visual that links your resources, activities, and outputs to the outcomes and long-term impact you intend to achieve. It is typically completed for each distinct program you operate. Each row in the model represents a program activity, showing how your inputs lead to outputs, outcomes, and ultimately community impact.

For example, ABC's Summer Arts Enrichment Program in Little County, Oklahoma, would have its own logic model describing staff, activities (painting, theater, music, etc.), student projects and showcases (outputs), the skills and confidence gained by youth (outcomes), and the long-term benefit of increased access to arts and community enrichment (impact).

Inputs (Resources)	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes (Short/Medium)	Impact (Long-Term)
Staff, volunteers, facilities, funding, partnerships	Painting & visual arts workshops	Number of classes held; student art projects completed	Students gain confidence and skills in visual arts	Youth develop lifelong engagement with the arts
Instructors, curriculum, musical instruments	Music and performance classes	Number of performances; student participation rates	Improved collaboration, discipline, and musical skills	Expanded community appreciation for youth arts
(Add your own resources)	(Add your own activities)	(Add measurable outputs)	(Add short/medium- term outcomes)	(Add long-term impact)

About Angie Thompson

Angie Thompson is an independent nonprofit consultant and strategist specializing in donor engagement, fundraising communications, and creative program design. This content is provided for educational purposes and should be tailored to fit your organization's specific needs.

For personalized consulting, visit www.AngieThompsonConsulting.com or email Angie@AngieThompsonConsulting.com

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