The
WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION

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

This guide is designed to help program officers and grantees 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. What are ***performance measures***?

Performance measures are statements that quantitatively describe the direct products and services delivered by a program (**outputs**), as well as the impact of those products and services (**outcomes**). Most importantly, performance measurement is a tool to help understand, manage, and improve what organizations and programs do – and they signify how we know if goals are met.[1]

II. Why are ***performance measures*** useful?

Performance measures can offer a number of benefits for programs. They provide a structured approach to focusing on a program's strategic plan, goals, and accomplishments, and they encourage organizations to concentrate time, resources, and energy on certain specified programmatic aspects. Performance measures can also improve both internal communication at an organization and external communication between organizations and their stakeholders (including funders). The demonstration of good practice and sustainable impacts can help justify continuing or even expanding effective programs.

III. How are ***performance measures*** written?

For WFF grant applicants, performance measures need to have ***five*** elements:

1. **WHO** will achieve the change or accomplish the task?
2. **WHAT** is going to change or be accomplished through the program?
3. **BY WHEN** will the change or accomplishment occur?
4. **HOW MUCH** change will occur? What will the level of accomplishment be?
5. **HOW WE WILL KNOW** the change occurred?

As noted above, there are two types of performance measures: ***output measures*** and ***outcome measures***. Ideally programs should identify and measure both outputs (i.e., those related to program operation and implementation) and outcomes (i.e., those related to the impact of the program).

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[1] Performance-Based Management Special Interest Group. 2001. The Performance-Based management handbook: A six-volume compilation of techniques and tools for implementing the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Volume 2: Establishing an Integrated Performance Measurement System. [http://www.orau.gov/pbm/pbmhandbook/Volume%202.pdf]

- ***Output Measures*** address *what organizations or programs will do* to effect change in targeted constituencies (e.g., teachers, parents, students, schools, policies). Output measures do not include *administrative activities* that are internal to the organization (e.g., hiring an executive director or developing internal procedures and policies), but rather refer to *implementation activities* that connect the program to the targeted external constituencies (e.g., workshops, technical assistance, dissemination grants).

  This distinction is important because output measures that only describe *administrative activities* provide an incomplete picture of a program's potential to effect change. An organization may wish to report that it hired parent trainers (*an administrative activity).* However, that alone is not the aspect of program performance that leads to change. Instead, it is what those new parent trainers do that truly matters (*implementation activities*). The following example illustrates how planned administrative activities can be used as the basis for output measures around *implementation* activities of a program:

  ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY: Hire parent trainers.

  IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY: Parent trainers will conduct outreach sessions in collaboration with community groups.

  OUTPUT MEASURE: Parent trainers (WHO) will conduct at least 15 (HOW MUCH) parent outreach sessions (WHAT) in collaboration with community groups during the second year of the program (BY WHEN), as recorded in program management files (HOW WE WILL KNOW).

  In this example, the *administrative activity* is the precondition for the more important *Output Measure,* which states what will be accomplished. The *Output Measure* is more important because the "WHAT" (parent outreach sessions) defines what needs to be done to reach the program's targeted constituency for change (parents). The "HOW MUCH" (15), defines how many parent outreach sessions are needed to demonstrate successful engagement of this targeted constituency.

- ***Outcome Measures*** always involve some level of change related to *knowledge, attitudes, capacity, opinions, or behavior* that results, at least in part, from the outputs of the program.

For example, outcome measures describe changes in public opinion, student performance, or school quality. Outcomes can be difficult to measure, especially if programs are short-term in nature. Therefore, specification of shorter-term and intermediate outcomes that are related to longer-term impacts can be useful to include as performance measures.

EXAMPLE: "Ninety percent (HOW MUCH) of parents who participate in community outreach sessions (WHO) will report in a survey (HOW WE WILL KNOW) that they will choose a school for their child based on academic performance information (WHAT) immediately following their participation in each outreach session (BY WHEN)."

To reinforce the distinction between output and outcome performance measures, note these two related output and outcome measures:

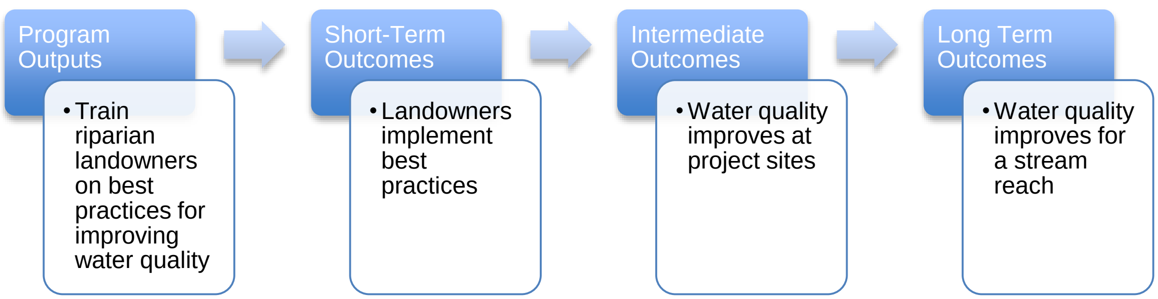
OUTPUT MEASURE: Municipality A (WHO) will construct at least 5 miles (HOW MUCH) of natural surface trail (WHAT) by June 30 (BY WHEN), as recorded in design and construction records (HOW WE WILL KNOW)."

OUTCOME MEASURE: As a result of additional trail connections, an average of 100 (HOW MUCH) trail users (WHO) will use Municipality A trail per day (WHAT), as measured by electronic counters (HOW WE WILL KNOW), between July 1 and December 31 (WHEN)."

IV. Putting it all together – 4 Steps for constructing good ***performance measures***.

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY PROGRAM OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Before writing performance measures, grantees should define their organization's important program outputs and outcomes, paying particular attention to the intended causal linkages between the short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. The following diagram displays program outputs and a series of related outcomes for a program intended to improve water quality. The diagram establishes the series of causes and effects that are expected for a program (i.e. what will happen first, as a result this will happen next, and so forth).



STEP 2 – IDENTIFY MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES

Once the important outputs and outcomes are identified, grantees should identify how each can be measured. In some cases, measurement of outcomes may be difficult (e.g., organization staff may not have access to certain groups targeted for change). Although the outcome may still be relevant, performance measures cannot be easily developed. When this happens, grantees should attempt to find proxy measures or other indicators to confirm that intended outcomes of a program have occurred.

The following list identifies potential measurement strategies for each of the outputs and outcomes included in the diagram above.

OUTPUT:	Train landowners on best practices for improving water quality.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY:	Organization staff record the number of landowners attending training sessions.
SHORT-TERM OUTCOME:	Landowners adopt best practices.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY:	Organization staff monitor and record implementation.
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME:	Water quality is improved at project site.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY:	Water samples taken before and after implementation measuring nutrient loads.
LONG-TERM OUTCOME:	Water quality is improved in the stream reach.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY:	Stream reach's impaired status as determined by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY QUANTITATIVE TARGETS FOR EACH OUTPUT/OUTCOME OF INTEREST

Once the important outputs and outcomes and their measurement strategies are identified, grantees need to determine HOW MUCH of a particular accomplishment (for output measures) or change (for outcome measures) will constitute success. *Targets should be ambitious, but achievable*. The merit of a program is not always judged by the program's ability to meet each and every target, but the extent to which progress is made towards the proposed targets. The following table includes targets for each of the program outputs and outcomes identified above.

Output / Outcome	Target
Train landowners on best practices for improving water quality.	At least **fifteen** property owners will attend training sessions on best practices for riparian areas.
Landowners adopt best practices.	**90%** of training session attendees will implement at least one best practice taught during a session.
Water quality is improved at project site.	Nutrient loads are reduced by at least 75% at each project site.
Water quality is improved in the stream reach.	River A will no longer be listed as an impaired stream by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

STEP 4 – WRITE PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR EACH OUTPUT AND OUTCOME

Using the information developed during the first three steps, grantees are now ready to write performance measures for each output and outcome of interest. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that each performance measure statement includes: WHO, WHAT, HOW MUCH, WHEN, and HOW WE WILL KNOW. Sample performance measures are provided below for the program outputs and outcomes identified earlier.

OUTPUT: Train landowners on best practices for improving water quality.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE: By October 2015, staff will train at least 15 riparian landowners on best practices for improving water quality as measured by attendance records at training sessions.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOME: Landowners adopt best practices.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE: By December 2015, at least 90% of riparian landowner attendees will have implemented at least one best practice taught during a session as measured by program records from site visits.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: Water quality is improved at project site.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE: By December 2016, the nutrient load at each project site will have been reduced by 75% as measured by pre- and post-test water samples taken by an independent lab.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME: Water quality is improved in the stream reach.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE: By January 2017, River A will no longer be listed as an impaired stream by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

V. Additional Considerations

HOW MANY PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE ENOUGH?

The number of performance measures should be commensurate with the level of funding, the length of the grant period, and the type and complexity of work being conducted. Grantees should consider the following guidelines (the figures represent a suggested number of output measures and outcome measures, respectively):

	Time		
Grant Amount Per Year	**1 year**	**2 years**	**3 years**
Less than $100K	3 & 1	4 & 2	5 & 3
Between $100K and $500K	4 & 2	5 & 3	6 & 4
More than $500K	5 & 3	6 & 4	7 & 5

Note: these are guidelines; it is likely that some grants will require more or fewer performance measures, depending on the nature of a particular project.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE CONTENT OF THE ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

Grantees should include performance measures which address: 1) key services or products delivered to constituents (outputs); 2) key impacts of those services that will occur during the timeframe of the grant (programmatic outcomes); and 3) important targets regarding fundraising or financial sustainability (operational outcomes).

Please Note: Program officers may request that a grantee develop additional metrics to track and report on beyond the key performance measures developed for evaluation purposes.

VI. Conclusion

Although the process of developing performance measures has been presented here in a formulaic manner, it is not always as straightforward. Sometimes earlier steps need to be revisited, based on the information generated in subsequent steps. However, it is important to work through each step of the process, beginning by developing statements of expected outputs and outcomes (short, intermediate, and long-term) and then methodically move toward specific performance measures for each of those statements. Some outputs and outcomes are more readily amenable to measurement than others, and a good measure in some contexts could be inappropriate in others. By having a solid understanding of what grantees hope to accomplish and how they hope to accomplish it, performance measures can be designed to best fit the context and goals of each program.

Performance Measure Examples – By Category

These examples are provided to assist grantees and program officers as they work together to establish key output and outcome performance measures. Please review all examples as you may find examples from other categories (e.g. Fundraising) to be useful. Finally, please note that these examples are not the comprehensive list of possible or relevant performance measures for your grant. They should be used as a starting point.

I. *World-class Schools*
II. *Arts and Cultural Programming*
III. *Economic Development*
IV. *Sense of Place*
V. *Public Safety*
VI. *Research*
VII. *Fundraising*

I. World-class Schools

Sample Outputs:

- Charter Approval: By June 2015, Grantee will receive approval of its charter application, as demonstrated by approval letter from authorizer.

- Secure Facilities: By August 2015, 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 2015, 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:

- Expanded Student Enrollment: Grantee will expand its current enrollment of 250 students by 175 students (to 425 students) by August 2016, as measured by official October enrollment counts for the school.

- Expanded Student Enrollment: At full enrollment in August 2017, Grantee school will have 350 students, as measured by official October enrollment counts for the school. Current enrollment is 300 students.

- Proficiency Rates: Each academic year of the three-year grant (from 2015-16 through 2017-18), the school will score in the 80th percentile for math and reading on a nationally norm-referenced test. (For an existing school, list the current national percentile ranking.)

- Academic Value-Added: Each academic year of the three-year grant (from 2015-16 through 2017-18), at least 60% of students will make at least one year's academic progress on a national norm-referenced assessment, separately in both Reading and Math. (For an existing school, list the current percentage).

II. Arts and Cultural Programming

Sample Outputs:

- Hold Performances: By July 2015, Grantee will hold 200 performances as recorded in program management files. 180 performances were held during the 2012-13 season.
- Provide Educational Programming: By July 2016, Grantee will provide 2 week-long professional development workshops for visual and performing arts teachers in grades K-12, with at least 20 teachers attending each workshop as measured by registration records.
- Provide Arts Instruction: By July 2015, Grantee will hold 20 three-month long visual arts classes as measured by program management files.

Sample Outcomes:

- Sell Tickets: Season ticket holders will increase by 75 by July 2015 as measured by ticket purchases. There are currently 650 season ticket holders.
- Attract Audiences Outside of Northwest Arkansas: At least 25% of all ticket sales will be purchased by patrons who live outside of Benton and Washington counties as measured by ticket purchases.
- Increase Donor Base: By July each year, the total number of donors will increase by 10% from the prior year. There were 250 donors as of July 2012.
- Engage Schools in Arts Education: At least five schools will participate in the Grantee's one-week long classroom sessions affecting 150 students in grades K-6 as measured by attendance records.

III. Economic Development

Sample Outputs:

- Contact Prospective Businesses: Grantee will contact at least 250 businesses annually that are considering locating to the region as measured by program management files.
- Build Capacity of Local Startups: By October 2015, Grantee will hold 10 workshops on topics related to developing and marketing a startup, with at least 200 attendees total as measured by attendance records.
- Create a Website: By December 2015, Grantee will develop a website that serves as a marketing and information source for the region for visitors, including information on local attractions, restaurants, and nightlife as measured by the website going live.
- Host Business Competitions: By July 2016, Grantee will host a business pitch competition, with at least 12 potential business participating as measured by registration records.

Sample Outcomes:

- Increase the Number of Jobs: By December 2016, the combined number of jobs in Benton and Washington counties will increase by 100 as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The number of jobs in 2014 was 11,000.
- Increase the Number of People Employed: By December 2015, the number of people employed in Benton and Washington counties will increase by 4,000 as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The number of businesses in 2014 was 188,000.
- Increase Educational Attainment Levels: By December 2015, the number of residents with at least a bachelor's degree will be 28% as measured by American Community Survey data. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree in 2014 was 27%.
- Attract Investment: By October 2015, at least 5 entrepreneurial start-ups will attract at least $5 million in seed funding from investors as measured by program management files.

IV. Sense of Place

Sample Outputs:

- Construct Trails: By December 2015, 5.6 miles of multi-use trail will be constructed between King Street and 12th Avenue according to the standards adopted for the Razorback Greenway as measured by the foundation's independent trails consultant.
- Complete Master Plans: By July 2016, Grantee will complete a downtown master plan that includes a market analysis, an illustrative plan, and action steps as measured by the posting of the final plan on the Grantee's website.
- Provide Education: By August 2015, Grantee will host one transportation planning conference with 50 attendees. At least 10 attendees will be elected or appointed officials as measured by registration records.
- Provide Training: By August 2015, staff will hold two workshops to train at least 50 riparian area landowners on best practices for protecting water quality as measured by attendance records at workshops.

Sample Outcomes:

- Increase Trail Usage: Trail users on River Oak trail will increase by 10% over the prior year during each year of the grant as measured by electronic counters. The baseline for trail usage in 2014 was 100 users per day.
- Implement Master Plans: Zoning policy in Municipality A's downtown will better encourage complete, compact, and connected development by September 2016 as measured by changes to the zoning and development ordinance.

- Preserve Green Space: By May 2015, 260 acres in Municipality A will be deeded to the Grantee and preserved in perpetuity as measured by a copy of the recorded deed and a letter from the mayor.

- Improve Water Quality: By August 2016, the nutrient load at each project site will decrease by 80% as measured by water samples taken by an independent lab before and after streambank restoration.

V. Public Safety

Sample Outputs:

- Expand Youth Programming: By September 2015, enrollment in Grantee afterschool programming for at-risk youth ages 12-18 will expand by 50 participants as measured by enrollment records. Enrollment in 2013 was 200 participants.

- Use New Law Enforcement Tools: By July 2015, Grantee will install new communication software at all dispatch and relevant personnel workstations as measured by program management files.

- Implement Alternative Sentencing Programs: By December 2016, at least 20% of juveniles arrested during 2015 will be placed in the alternative sentencing program as measured by court records. In 2014, 0% were placed in an alternative sentencing program.

Sample Outcomes:

- Reduce Crime Rates: The violent crime rate in Municipality A will decrease by 5% between January 1 and December 31, 2015. The crime rate in 2013 was 7,600 per 100,000 people.

- Reduce Recidivism Rates: The recidivism rate among juveniles arrested in Municipality A will decrease by 10 percentage points during 2017 as compared to 2014 as measured by arrest records. The recidivism rate in 2014 was 40%.

VI. Research

Sample Outputs:

- Conduct Research: Grantee will conduct key stakeholder interviews with 25 experts in the field by June 2015, as recorded in program management files.

- Conduct Research: Grantee will survey 90% of all eligible respondents (on topic of interest) by June 2015, with a completion rate of at least 40%, as recorded in program management files.

- Validate Research: Grantee will review research findings with an advisory panel of 10 research and policy experts in the field by October 2015, as recorded in program management files.

- Produce Report: Grantee will produce and publicly release a non-partisan research report by April 2016, as recorded in program management files.

- Distribute/Publicize Report: Grantee will distribute and publicize the report 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 2015.

Sample Outcomes:

- Published Op-Eds: At least 3 articles or op-ed pieces on funded research topic will be published in popular outlets and education publications by summer 2015, as recorded in program management files.
- Media Hits: There will be at least 5 earned media hits either about the report, or mentioning the report, by May 2016, as measured by a search of LexisNexis.
- Report Views: There will be at least 2,500 unique viewers of the report on the Grantee website by December 2016, 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 2017, as measured by Grantee tracking.
- Use of Information: Grantee will be invited to testify at a public hearing or meeting about the funded research topic by December 2016.

VII. Fundraising

Sample Outputs:

- Conduct Solicitation Campaign: Program staff will send donation information packets to at least 100 new corporations by June 2015, 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 2015 in order to solicit new donors, as measured by a report of outreach methods by Grantee.
- Solicit New Donors: At least 50 potential new donors will attend the annual [event] held on July 2015 to learn more about opportunities for donating and/or partnering, as measured by a report of outreach methods by Grantee.

Sample Outcomes:

- Increased Sustainability: Compared to FY13, Grantee will increase total non-WFF multi-year donations by 7% in FY15, as recorded in financial management files. Total multi-year non-WFF donations in FY13 were $215,000.

- Increased Number of Donors: Compared to FY13, Grantee will increase the total number of donors in FY15 by 10%, as recorded in financial management files. Number of donors in FY13 was 60.

- Increased Fund Generation: Compared to FY13, Grantee will increase total non-WFF donations by 15% in FY15, as recorded in financial management files. Non-WFF donation total in FY13 was $315,000.