What is a Logic Model?

➤ Logic models specify relationships among program goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes.

➤ By specifying these relationships, the logic model makes explicit the “theory” of the program. It shows how you expect what you’re doing to achieve the intended result.

➤ Logic models assist with program data collection by including the measures used to determine program implementation and outcomes.

**Toolkit Contents**

- Introduction to Logic Models
- CHECKLIST: Defining Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Performance Measures
- CHECKLIST: Common Pitfalls
- Logic Model Displays
- Additional Resources
Many grant applications request or recommend the inclusion of a logic model to explain how a current or planned program effort will achieve the desired results. **A logic model is a visual display of program logic and achievement.** Juvenile justice service providers can create and use a logic model to assess and improve program operations, demonstrate program accomplishments to stakeholders, and apply for funding.

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### Why should I use a logic model?

1. To clarify what the program hopes to ultimately achieve.
2. To document what the program intends to do and what it is actually doing.
3. To provide clear definitions for achievement and document measures by which program will be assessed.
4. To highlight areas of weakness in a program.
5. To plan for an evaluation.
6. To help the program stay on track.

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### How do I develop a logic model?

To develop a logic model, think about the linkages between elements of your program: what resources are needed to accomplish activities, how activities contribute to achieving your objectives; and how each objective contributes to the goal. Review program documentation, including the program’s mission statement, website material, the budget, and service or participation/attendance logs.

Consider also the program data you need to collect to demonstrate what your program is accomplishing. There are two types of accomplishments you should be able to demonstrate with program data: successes in implementing the program plan, and successes in achieving the **desired outcome(s).**

Program implementation is a critical but frequently neglected component in logic modeling, program plans, and performance measurement. Program managers and service providers should be included in developing and reviewing the logic model to resolve any discrepancies in what is being done and why. This collaboration will contribute to **fidelity in implementation,** or adherence to the program plan.
What are the key elements of a logic model?

- **Goal(s).** A broad statement about what the program intends to accomplish, which may or may not be achieved completely during the life of the program.
- **Objectives.** Expected achievements that are well-defined, specific, measurable, and derived from the goal.
- **Activities.** Program efforts conducted to achieve the objectives.
- **Outcomes.** Actual changes or lack thereof in the target of the program that are directly related to goal(s) and objectives. May include intended or unintended consequences.
- **Process Measures.** Data used to demonstrate the implementation of activities. Includes products of activities and indicators of services provided.
- **Outcome Measures.** Data used to measure achievement of objectives and goal(s).

What other additional information might I include in a logic model?

- **Problem Statement.** Statement of the problem to be addressed that may include simple baseline data.
- **Resources.** Anything invested in the program to accomplish the work that must be done, such as staff, facilities, materials, or funds. Resources are also called inputs.
- **Initial, Intermediate, and Long-term Outcomes.** You may want to elaborate on the outcomes expected of the program by delineating the results you expect immediately, the results following the initial outcomes, and the ultimate impact of a program. A long-term outcome is the same as a program goal.
- **External Factors.** Factors within a system or local context that may affect program operations or outcomes. Examples include changes in state or federal law, or other programs, practices, and policies operating in the same setting.

What information should not be included in a logic model?

Do not include excessive amounts of detail, as that will defeat the purpose of the logic model: to provide a quick, clear snapshot of program logic. For example, program theory and a summary of relevant research should **not** be included in the logic model.
Activities state what you are currently doing or planning to do.

Objectives explain the purpose of activities: We plan to [ACTIVITY] in order to [OBJECTIVE].

Objectives are measurable so they can show what a program has accomplished. Examples include “to increase” and “to reduce”.

Baseline data have been collected for objectives that require before-and-after comparisons. Examples include number of youth completing high school or number of days absent from school.

Each activity contributes to accomplishing at least one objective. Multiple activities may be required to achieve a single objective.

The logic model includes at least one process measure for each activity.

The logic model includes at least one outcome measure for each objective.

Performance measures are clearly defined and specify a data source (e.g., self-report, official records, counselor assessment, etc.)

Each agency, organization, or program site is aware of what each performance measure means and how it should be collected.

Data collection for each performance measure is as simple as possible, and the measures themselves are practical for program staff to collect/document.
□ **Are links among elements clear?**

It should be obvious which activities are tied to which objective, and which objective is tied to which outcome measure, etc. Avoid confusion or omission of any important elements by clearly specifying which elements are related to one another.

□ **Is there too much (or too little) information provided on the logic model?**

The logic model should include all of the important elements of the program, but should not include specific details about how interventions will occur, a list of staff or involved agencies/organizations, or how performance measures will be collected. This type of additional information belongs in a narrative program statement, manual, or data collection codebook.

□ **Are you making use of the logic model to improve program operations?**

Logic models force program managers and staff to examine both successes and challenges in program implementation, and assess whether activities implemented as intended are producing the desired outcomes. Use the logic model to determine if and how program operations might be improved. Remember that a logic model represents what you are *trying to do*, but program data show what you are *actually doing*.

□ **Does the logic model demonstrate that the scope of the program is reasonable?**

Avoid the tendency to form a broad goal to justify an overly-extensive set of activities. Make realistic assumptions about what can be accomplished with your resources, staff, and timeframe. Ensure that each activity and objective fits within the scope of the program’s purpose or mission.
What’s the best way to display the elements of a logic model?

There are a number of ways to display the elements of a logic model. You might use a schematic to display the program logic, or use a series of if-then statements. However, pay careful attention to grant solicitations/RFAs to see if your funding agency requires the use of a specific template.

Consider the complexity of your program and the audience of interest when making decisions about logic model display. For a simple, linear program model (X leads to Y, Y leads to Z) if-then statements might be most appropriate. If the model is more complex, a schematic logic model might be more appropriate. A more complex model might include multiple component relationships, such as an activity that contributes to both a short-term and intermediate objective; or feedback loops, in which some program outcomes affect activities.

Schematic Logic Model

A schematic logic model is a visual display of the linkages of program elements. Schematic logic models make use of shapes and arrows to provide a “roadmap” of what a program intends to accomplish. This type of logic model is visually appealing, and can provide a quick overview of a program plan for staff as well as outside stakeholders.

Below are links to three logic model templates that can be filled in or modified to meet your program needs.

Basic Template 1    Basic Template 2    Complex Template

If-Then Logic Model

A logic model may also consist of a series of if-then statements that present program assumptions. Remember that if-then statements should only include relationships between program elements. Reserve the research base and program theory for a separate document such as a program narrative.

- If activity 1 is completed as intended, then objective 1 is accomplished.
- If activity 2 is completed as intended, then objective 2 is accomplished.
- If objective 1 and objective 2 are accomplished, then progress towards GOAL is made.


Several resources are from the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, which was developed and maintained by the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA) from 1997-2012. To read more about the center and review available online tools see: www.bja.gov/evaluation/