



# Using Logic Models for Program Planning and Evaluation

## Purpose of the Logic Model Tool:

- Provide an overview of what logic models are and how they can be used.
- Provide an explanation of the components of logic models.
- Provide an example illustrating what a logic model is and how it can be used to evaluate adult education program activities.

## What Are Logic Models?

Logic models provide an approach for program planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation. They present a concise, graphic depiction of what a process, project, program, or system comprises and what it is intended to do. Logic models map the resources and actions needed to reach the target population and how ultimately desired program outcomes will be achieved. While logic models can serve multiple purposes, their primary advantage is their ability to visually capture essential program components and operations and help foster understanding and consensus among staff and other stakeholders.

Varying formats and terms are used when developing logic models, but the same essential components and concepts are found across them all: (a) inputs, such as the resources needed to drive the program; (b) outputs, such as the activities that serve the participants; and (c) outcomes, such as the results and changes that take place during and after program implementation. The logic model framework provides a succinct, “at a glance” picture of the programming and shows the sequential relationships among all program components and the intended results.

## Logic Models in Adult Education

At the state and local program levels, logic models can be useful in planning initiatives, monitoring performance and data management, and evaluating effectiveness. At the state level, for example, a logic model can be used to plan how a new policy will be rolled out or how data from each program will be analyzed. At the local level, programs can chart how they will provide professional development or map the flow of data from collection to management and analysis to state submission.

Regardless of context, the logic model illustrates which resources are needed to provide activities that will produce results that lead, in turn, to desired outcomes. By reviewing these relationships, you can determine if program elements are being implemented as intended and working as designed or if adjustments are needed.

## Steps to Creating and Using a Logic Model

You may discover performance issues in your end-of-year data, hear about trends from local program directors and instructors, or uncover issues during a monitoring visit. Some problems may result from how resources are managed, services are delivered, or data are collected. Once you pinpoint an area for further investigation, it is useful to develop a logic model to map the problem you intend to resolve by specifying the outcomes you want, determining the resources and procedures you need to achieve them, and identifying the external factors and assumptions you make that affect the entire process.

By using a logic model, you can formulate targeted questions that will allow you to uncover what is at the heart of the challenges your program is experiencing. You can complete a logic model using the steps below, although you can vary the order of the steps according to your own development process.

1. **Identify a topic or problem you want to address and the goal you have for solving it.** State your topic or problem related to a process, project, program feature, program, or system and define the goal, which represents the solution to the problem and will dictate the other components of the model.
2. **Determine the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes you want to achieve.** The outcomes are the desired changes you expect to see as a result of the activities you identify in the logic model over time. You should be able to measure whether you have reached those outcomes. When you reach the desired outcomes, you will have solved the problem and met your goal.
3. **Choose the outputs needed to reach the outcomes and the goal.** Activities are actions, services, processes, products, and events that are implemented and created to reach the desired goal. You must have the necessary resources to conduct these activities, and the activities must be geared to the target beneficiaries. Think through the participants: Who is affected and who gains when activities are conducted.
4. **Identify the inputs needed to reach the outcomes and the goal.** Think about all the resources that are needed to implement the activities successfully. These may include people, materials, equipment, space, technology, and funding.
5. **Think through assumptions.** There are certain existing conditions that support the success of the program or system. Factor these assumptions into your model so you do not spend time developing, creating, or fostering something that is already in place. Also, consider who you can capitalize on these conditions.
6. **Think through the external factors.** Circumstances, conditions, or events exist outside the purview of your program. There might be local or state policies or priorities that support or conflict with your goals. There may be events that provide or limit resources. It is important to consider outside forces and the impacts they can have on your implementation efforts.

7. **Review the logic model to evaluate implementation.** Ensure that relationships among the model's components are clear. Determine if the inputs support the outputs and if the outputs will meet the end goal. You may find gaps in resources, or you may identify additional activities that should be conducted. You can continually update the model as you discover what is happening within the program or system and what might be implemented better.

Below is an example of a logic model developed to address a problem or issue identified through National Reporting System data analysis. This logic model depicts existing program components and desired outcomes, and it addresses a single problem, addressed as *Employment outcomes for Integrated Education and Training (IET) participants are below the target*. Also included in the example are blue boxes with the headers and definitions for each section of the model.

**TOPIC OR PROBLEM:**

The Topic or Problem Statement is the issue or situation you are trying to change.

Employment outcomes for IET participants are below the target.

**GOAL:**

The goal is what you see as the solution to the problem you have stated above. It should include the intended results of the program and address the target population.

Increase the number of hours participants attend so they will obtain employment when they leave the program.

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	Activities	Participants	Short-term	Intermediate	Long-term
<i>Inputs are resources used by the program (e.g., human, financial, organizational, communal; technology and equipment).</i>	<i>Activities are what the program does with its inputs to fulfill its mission (e.g., actions, services, products, processes, events).</i>	<i>Participants refers to participants, clients, or customers reached by the program.</i>	<i>Short-term outcomes are changes that are expected to occur immediately or in the near-future (should be measurable).</i>	<i>Intermediate outcomes are changes that you want to occur. These outcomes will link the short- and long-term outcomes (should be measurable).</i>	<i>Long-term outcomes are the ultimate changes you want to occur (should be measurable).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for IET programs</li> <li>• Teachers trained in IET instruction</li> <li>• Curriculum aligned to target industry and occupations</li> <li>• Providers of IET instruction</li> <li>• Employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to students</li> <li>• Classes offered</li> <li>• Contact hours provided</li> <li>• Training services provided</li> <li>• Professional development on IET instruction</li> <li>• Outreach to partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Employers</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher skill gains among students</li> <li>• Higher rate of job placement postexit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More participants advance in jobs</li> <li>• Participants achieve higher wages</li> <li>• Greater employer satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced unemployment</li> <li>• Higher skilled workforce</li> </ul>

ASSUMPTIONS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
<p><i><b>Assumptions</b> are ideas and beliefs you believe to be true that affect the outcomes.</i></p>	<p><i><b>External Factors</b> are events, conditions, activities, or situations beyond your control that may support or impede the outcomes.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructional approach our program uses is effective.</li> <li>• Our instructors are skilled in IET.</li> <li>• Jobs are available in targeted occupations in our region, and employers are willing to hire participants.</li> <li>• Participants have the prerequisite skills necessary to benefit from instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unemployment rate in the community</li> <li>• The availability of employers</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Logic models can help administrators, practitioners, and other stakeholders understand the structure of a program and how its component parts fit together and operate. The framework can be used for planning, organizing, managing, monitoring, and evaluating the program to ensure that it is implemented to achieve the desired results. For additional examples of logic models in the adult education context and blank logic model templates, access the materials from the [2018 Regional Training: Evaluating Program Effectiveness](#).

## References

Innovation Network, Inc. (n.d.). *Logic model workbook*. Retrieved from [http://www.pointk.org/client\\_docs/File/logic\\_model\\_workbook.pdf](http://www.pointk.org/client_docs/File/logic_model_workbook.pdf)

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