

By starting out with SMART objectives, a program or plan can systematically and meaningfully measure progress, show achievements, and identify opportunities for improvement.

In order to understand how the parts of SMART objectives flow together, the order of the SMART components listed below will go out of order—**SMTRA**. This is because the Specific, Measurable and Time-Bound parts are clearly visible in the standard written format for objectives. The Achievable and Relevant pieces are more abstract and require reflection.

## Specific

Objectives should be well-defined, and clear to other team members and to stakeholders who also understand the program or plan.

Consider these prompts:

### What:

- What exactly will you do?
- What is the action?
- What do you intend to impact?

### Who:

- Who is responsible for carrying out the action?
- What are you intending to impact or who is your target population?

Note that not all of these questions will apply to every objective.

Example objective

Original objective	How can we fix this?	SMART-er objective
Staff will be trained in xyz.	We need to clarify the <b>WHO</b> and <b>WHAT</b> to make this objective "smarter."	Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities to staff.

## Measurable

This involves selecting what will be measured to show improvement, impact or success. There may be existing measures and targets that are required for a specific program or grant. Try to pick a measure that is meaningful. The easiest things to measure may not be the most meaningful.

Consider these prompts:

- How much and in what direction will the change occur?
- What data will be used to prove the target is met?
- Where will this data come from?

- Is there a stand-in or proxy measure to use if this objective cannot be directly measured, or is there another measure that would be more appropriate to use instead?

Key terms

**Measure:** Show success or impact over time. It is the number, percent or some standard unit to express how you are doing at achieving the goal or outcome.

**Target:** The desired level of performance you want to see that represents success.

Example objective

Original objective	How can we fix this?	SMART-er objective
Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities to staff.	We need to clarify the <b>MEASURE</b> and <b>TARGET</b> to make this objective "smarter."	Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities <b>resulting in 75% of staff completing Innovation Improvement 101.</b>

### Time-bound

Objectives should be achievable within a specific time frame that isn't so soon as to prevent success, or so far away as to encourage procrastination.

Consider these prompts:

- When will this objective be achieved?
- Is this time-frame realistic?
- Should it be closer or further in the future?

Example objective

Original objective	How can we fix this?	SMART-er objective
Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities resulting in 75% of staff completing Innovation Improvement 101.	We need to clarify the <b>TIME</b> to make this objective "smarter."	Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities resulting in 75% of staff completing Innovation Improvement 101 <b>by December 31, 2022.</b>

### Achievable

Objectives should be within reach for your team or program, considering available resources, knowledge and time.

Consider these prompts:

- How can this objective be accomplished?

- Given the current time frame or environment, can this objective be achieved? Should we scale it up or down?
- What resources will help us achieve this objective? What limitations or constraints stand in our way?

Example objective

SMART-er objective	How can we fix?
Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities resulting in 75% of staff completing Innovation Improvement 101 by December 31, 2022.	To clarify achievability, it may be helpful for the grant project's leadership to explain who is conducting the training, identify any related costs in the budget and consider whether it is possible to complete in the time frame.

### Relevant

Objectives should align with a corresponding goal. Consider if and how successfully completing an objective will be relevant to achieving the goal. Consider if an objective relates to the larger program, plan or organization's mission, vision and goals. It should also be considered whether an objective is relevant or important to the team and other stakeholders. Objectives related to your organization's mission and guiding principles are more likely to be approved by your organizational leadership; objectives supported by other stakeholders will lead to a greater level of buy-in.

Consider these prompts:

- Will this objective lead to achieving this organization's goals?
- Does it seem worthwhile to measure this objective? Does it seem reasonable to measure this objective?

SMART-er objective	How can we fix?
U Build it Better, Inc. will offer xyz training opportunities resulting in 75% of staff completing Innovation Improvement 101 by December 31, 2022.	To clarify relevance, it may be helpful to think about how many staff have already completed the training, if any. If there has already been a high number of staff who have completed this training, maybe they should be offered a higher-level training or re-write the objective to include attending any Innovation Improvement training.

*Note of recognition to MN Dept. of Health and the CDC for the information provided online through their websites.*