



# **Tribal TANF—Child Welfare Coordination: Theory of Change and Logic Models**

OPRE Report 2019-55

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A well-articulated theory of change and logic model are important tools in service delivery. These tools support programs in understanding and improving how programs function. They provide a foundation for meaningful planning and monitoring of activities. Without a clear theory of change, it is difficult for program staff to understand, articulate, and hold themselves accountable to their mission. A theory of change is like a map, helping staff understand the complex network of roads they take to get to their destinations. Without a clearly articulated and actionable logic model, it becomes difficult for program staff to understand the key relationships between the work of a program or activities and the desired outcomes. If a theory of change is a map, a logic model is a set of directions.

A theory of change and logic model rely on and help support the use of data within an organization. As program staff begin to articulate a theory of change, data can help service providers understand the needs of individuals with whom they work, their target populations. Data can also help inform realistic goals for program progress. Once a theory of change and logic model are developed, data can help providers understand if activities are occurring (outputs) and whether the desired change is occurring (outcomes). Ultimately, a theory of change and logic model support “data-driven decision making,” wherein useful, accurate, and relevant information is informing staff and leadership on a daily basis.

This tool provides step-by-step guidance, tailored specifically for *Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)* and *Child Welfare Coordination (TTCW)* grantees, on the development of a theory of change and a logic model that emphasizes measurability of program outputs and outcomes. The goal of this tool is to provide information that will help current and future TTCW grantees to increase their capacity to develop and utilize program theories of change and logic models.

This tool provides an overview of key concepts and strategies for creating a theory of change (section II) as well as a logic model (section III). Following these sections is a discussion of strategies for ensuring that your program’s outputs and outcomes, two key components of your logic model, are measurable (section IV). The tool concludes with a discussion on how and why to revisit a logic model so that it remains a relevant resource throughout the life of a program (section V).

## II. PROGRAM THEORY

Successful programs create change and are built on sound rationale for *how* and *why* the chosen activities/services will be successful. Program managers, staff, community elders, policy makers, and others involved in your program have beliefs and hypotheses about the nature and severity of the problem or the need experienced by your program’s target population; the efficacy of activities/services used to address the problem; and the pathways of change or linkages between services/activities and desired outcomes. These beliefs and hypotheses form the basis for your program’s theory of change.

### **What Is a Theory of Change?**

Theory of change is a theoretical and logical framework that describes how a course of action will achieve its goals (i.e., a map for your program). Engaging in the process of developing a theory of change leads to better program planning, implementation, and monitoring because your program’s activities are linked to a detailed understanding of how change actually happens.

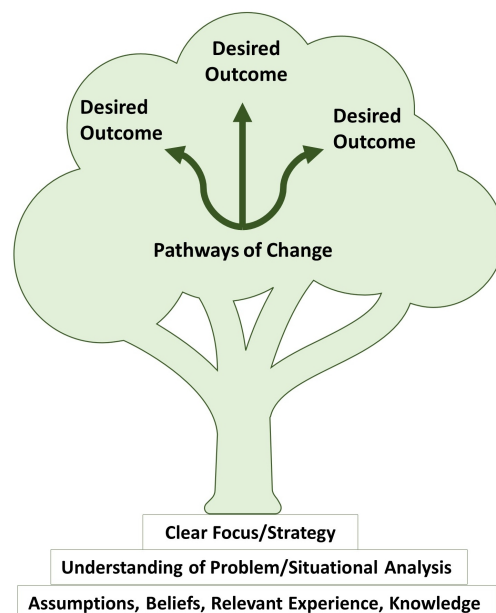
## Components of a Theory of Change

As illustrated in exhibit 1, core components of a theory of change include—


- Problem and assumptions
- Desired outcomes of strategies to address the problem
- Pathways of change between strategies and desired outcomes

Program stakeholders work together to understand the problem, how to address it, and how to measure progress. Developing a theory of change requires a situation analysis, identification of the focus and scope of a program, and an outcomes chain (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). Description and guidance on each of these activities is provided below. Examples of results from an imaginary TTCW program are also provided. Appendix A includes additional worksheets for the below activities.

**Exhibit 1. Key Components of a Theory of Change**




*Situation analysis* addresses and clarifies program staff and stakeholders’ understanding and agreement of the problem. Key questions to guide a situation analysis conversation are presented below. Also provided is an example of results from a situation analysis completed by an imaginary TTCW program.

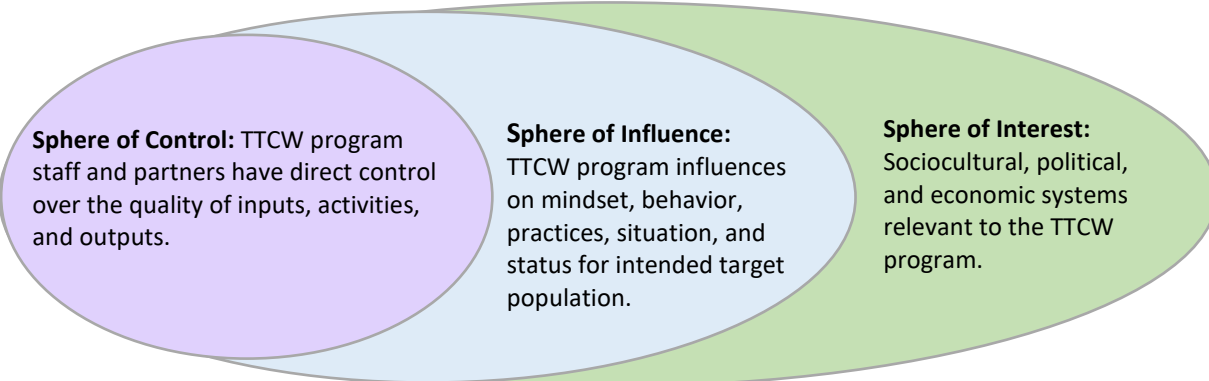
 <b>Activity: Use these questions to guide a situation analysis conversation for your TTCW program.<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Nature of the problem:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the problem or issue?</li> <li>▪ For whom does this problem exist?</li> <li>▪ What is the history of this problem?</li> <li>▪ What are the future projections for this problem?</li> </ul>	<b>Causes and contributing factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why does this problem exist? What are its causes?</li> <li>▪ Are some causes more important or influential than others?</li> <li>▪ What has or has not been effective in addressing the problem?</li> </ul>	<b>Consequences:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why should this be considered a problem?</li> <li>▪ What are the consequences for those who are directly or indirectly affected by this problem?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Imaginary TTCW program situation analysis example:</b> Through a situation analysis conversation, program staff and stakeholders determine and then agree on the nature of the problem the TTCW grant-funded program aims to address. The results of their conversation are as follows—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– External literature/research indicates TANF-eligible families (whether state or Tribal TANF) are generally at higher risk of child maltreatment than other families. Specifically, family conditions associated with poverty (e.g., inadequate housing and homelessness, unmet basic needs, parental stress, inadequate supervision, substance abuse, domestic violence) can pose risks to child safety.</li> <li>– Through examining our own child welfare data and our experiences working with families, we know many of our families are or end up dually involved with TANF and child welfare services. We know many of our families experience risk factors that increase the likelihood of a child’s removal. We have specifically identified intergenerational trauma, substance use, parental stress, and inadequate supervision as the factors most associated with reports of abuse/neglect and removals in our community. We also know that families struggle to meet the competing goals of TANF and child welfare services when navigating “the system.”</li> </ul>		

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Funnell, S. C., & Rogers, P. J. (2011). *Purposeful program theory: Effective use of theories of change and logic models*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



*Focusing and scoping* sets the boundaries of the program by identifying which goals are within the direct realm of program control and influence. Program resources are best used when focused on areas where we have the most control and our influence is highest. The focus of your program should be within your *spheres of control and influence*. These spheres are the control you have over program activities and outputs and direct influence on your target population. There may be issues within the scope of your program that are not directly attributable to your program activities. These issues are structural in nature and lie within your program’s *sphere of interest*. The graphic below can be used to guide a focusing and scoping conversation. Examples of results from an imaginary TTCW program are also provided.

 **Activity: Use this graphic to help facilitate a focusing and scoping conversation for your TTCW program.<sup>2</sup>**



**Sphere of Control:** TTCW program staff and partners have direct control over the quality of inputs, activities, and outputs.

**Sphere of Influence:** TTCW program influences on mindset, behavior, practices, situation, and status for intended target population.

**Sphere of Interest:** Sociocultural, political, and economic systems relevant to the TTCW program.

**Imaginary TTCW program focusing and scoping example:** Staff and stakeholders from our imaginary TTCW program decided to use the TTCW grant to coordinate TANF and child welfare services to remove system-level barriers for families and to address the risk factors of intergenerational trauma, substance use, parental stress, and inadequate supervision among the target population. The team’s discussions of available resources and capacities led to the decision that relevant activities and outputs within the program’s direct “sphere of control” include providing joint case staffings, integrated case plans, and early identification and referral of TANF-eligible families to parenting education classes and related supports. The team expects these activities to increase coordination between TANF and child welfare services, reduce barriers to service, address family needs, and ultimately reduce incidences of abuse/neglect among the target population. These outcomes are the direct influence of the program activities and therefore represent the “sphere of influence.” The team will assess these outcomes during the grant period. The team also hopes its efforts might contribute to reducing disproportionality of native children in foster care. However, since this is a multifaceted issue outside the direct control or influence of the program, the team determines this is within the “sphere of interest” and resources will not be used to assess this during the grant period.

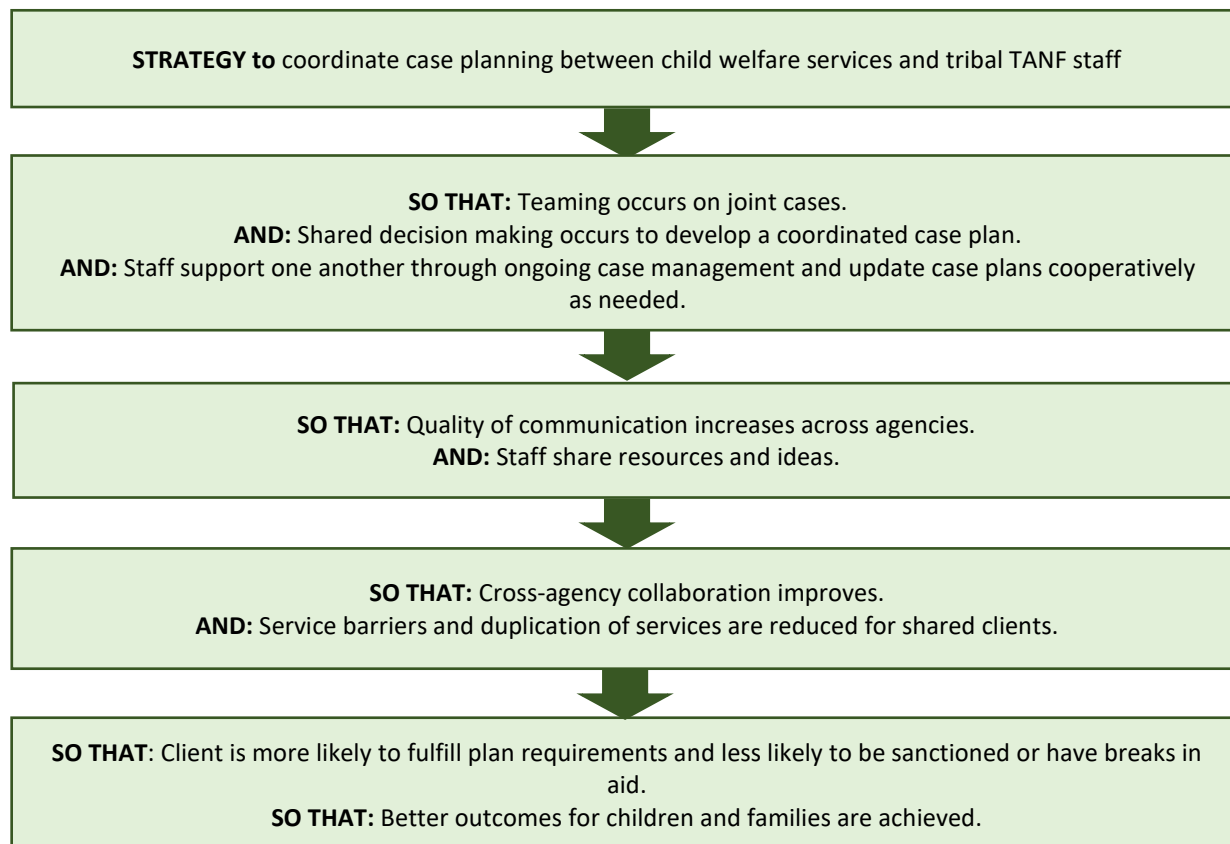
*Outcomes chain* articulates the assumed cause-effect or contingency relationships (i.e., pathways of change) between program activities and desired outcomes. Through the process of developing an outcomes chain, stakeholders confirm assumptions and identify potential gaps in thinking about how and why the program works. The chain lists outcomes using a sequence of “if-then” or “so-that”

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs capstone team (2016). *Designing with People: A participant-centered approach to program development*. Retrieved from [https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/180992/merged\\_document\\_2%20\(1\).pdf?sequence=5](https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/180992/merged_document_2%20(1).pdf?sequence=5)

statements. The activity box below provides guidance on developing an outcomes chain. A sample for an imaginary TTCW program is also provided.

✎	<b>Activity: Use these directions to develop an outcomes chain.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the desired long-term goal, and then by working backwards identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place for the goal to occur.</li> <li>• Identify the first point at which the program has some effect on the target group (i.e., staff, children, families); move down from there to the desired goal.</li> <li>• Arrange the outcomes in a chain of “if-then” or “so that” statements leading to the desired goal.</li> <li>• Eliminate less relevant or significant outcomes; there are typically more than necessary.</li> <li>• Review and validate the outcomes chain.</li> </ul>	

*Imaginary TTCW Program Outcome Chain Example.* Among the goals of our imaginary TTCW program, one goal is to increase coordination and collaboration between child welfare services and Tribal TANF agencies through joint case planning for shared clients. Staff hypothesize this activity would improve communication and sharing of resources across child welfare services and TANF, which would improve cross-agency coordination, reduce system barriers for families, and ultimately lead to better outcomes for children and families. Staff developed the below outcomes chain to map out and test the logic of assumed linkages between activities and desired outcomes. A program might develop multiple outcome chains to depict the presumed causal relationships between program activities and all desired outcomes.



### Using the Theory of Change

The process of developing a theory of change can improve the chances of program success because it requires stakeholders to think through the core ideas and assumptions behind services/activities. A well-developed theory of change—

- Communicates to program stakeholders and policy makers what you are doing and how you anticipate it will work
- Can be used to gain buy-in and support for the program from staff, partners, community members, and other stakeholders
- Should be used to inform the development of your logic model
- Can be used to guide progress monitoring and reporting
- Can and should be revisited and revised as necessary throughout the program

### Theory of Change and the Logic Model

As stated above, a well-developed theory of change provides the foundation for the logic model. The logic model (as will be discussed in section III) translates the theory of change into the “language” of data collection and progress monitoring by—

- Defining the direct outputs of program activities, services, or interventions (e.g., clients participate in services, stakeholders attend meetings)
- Translating desired program goals into measurable outcomes (i.e., specifies measures and indicators that will be used to track progress made on goals)
- Outlining logical linkages between program activities/services, outputs, and expected outcomes
- Testing and refining assumptions about linkages between components of the logic model

## III. DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL LOGIC MODEL

The following describes the key elements of a logic model, provides some relevant examples, and lays out a step-by-step process for developing a logic model for a TTCW program.

### Components of a Logic Model

While there is not a universal set of components for every logic model, many contain the following elements:

- Assumptions
- Inputs
- Activities
- Outputs
- Outcomes

*Assumptions* are the underlying beliefs about how a program will work to bring about change and why it is expected to result in desired outcomes. The assumptions provide an opportunity to briefly describe the key elements of the theory of change within the logic model.



#### *Example assumptions*

- *Many of our families experience risk factors including limited economic self-sufficiency that increase the likelihood of a child's removal.*
- *Families often struggle to meet competing goals of TANF and child welfare services when navigating "the system."*
- *Coordination between TANF and child welfare services can help remove system-level barriers for our families.*

*Inputs* are the resources your program has (or needs) that will allow you to complete necessary activities. Inputs are often found in a program budget and can include the tangible things (office space, technology, vehicles, etc.) and individuals (staff positions, qualifications, etc.) needed for a program. Inputs can sometimes be less tangible (partnerships, cultural knowledge, etc.) but are no less important.

#### *Example inputs*

- *Full-time child protective services (CPS) and TANF staff*
- *Full-time TTCW service coordinator*
- *Data system with access privileges for both CPS and TANF*
- *Shared referral protocol*
- *Policies and procedures for joint staffing*
- *Data sharing agreement between CPS and TANF*

*Activities* are the work of your program. They are the key services provided by the program to achieve the desired change. Activities may be direct services such as case management or planning, but they may also be efforts to support or improve services such as training, hiring, or supervision. An activity should be articulated in a specific enough way that a program staff will know whether or not it has occurred. For example, if "providing training" is a stated program activity, you would not be able to know whether or not the activity occurred. On the other hand, if the stated program activity was "providing one annual training on coordinated case management between TANF and child welfare staff," program staff would be able to note whether or not the activity occurred.

#### *Example activities*

- *Cross-agency training offered to all TANF and CPS staff on joint staffing goals and procedures by September 2019*
- *Cross-agency training offered on data entry protocols for CPS and TANF staff by September 2019 and for new staff as needed*
- *Weekly case intake meetings facilitated by TTCW and attended by staff from CPS and TANF*
- *Jointly staffed case management for all enrolled clients*
- *Case plan reviews for all enrolled clients with input from TANF and CPS staff*

*Outputs* are the direct products or deliverables resulting from program activities. They are immediate and produce concrete results. Outputs are typically stated in terms of quantities such as number of attendees at a training or number of supervision sessions held. Outputs provide the tangible evidence that your activities are being completed, but they do not provide information on the effectiveness of

those activities. Outputs should be articulated specifically and in a way that can be measured. More guidance on creating measurable outputs is found in section IV.

#### *Example outputs*

- Number of cross trainings held on joint staffing and data entry procedures
- Number of staff attendees at each cross-training event
- Percentage of weekly case intake meetings with participation from both CPS and TANF
- Percentage of case plans reviewed and updated with joint input
- Percentage of enrolled clients receiving joint case management services

**Outcomes** are the changes expected as a result of a program's activities. These changes occur at multiple levels such as individual, community, or program. Outcomes can be classified by when the change can be expected (short-, medium-, or long-term). Where outputs are typically articulated as a frequency (a count of an activity). Outcomes are often represented by percentages. Section IV has additional information on measuring outcomes.

#### *Example outcomes*

- Percentage of TANF and CPS staff reporting increased collaboration from year 1 to end of year 3
- Increase in number of ties between CPS and TANF agencies as reported by agency directors (ties include information sharing, cross-training, MOUs, and shared budgets) from year 1 to end of year 3
- Decrease in caregiver report of barriers to accessing services from enrollment to case closure

### **Developing a Logic Model for a TTCW Program**

The following activity is designed to provide a step-by-step process for developing a logic model for a TTCW program.



**Activity: Use this step-by-step process for developing a logic model for a TTCW program.**

**Step 1. Gather your team.**

#### ***TTCW example:***

*Members of the imaginary TTCW program invited the program director, two case managers, an evaluation consultant, and a member of the finance/grant-writing team to participate in the initial planning of the logic model. They wanted to include a community voice in the planning process but decided to get targeted feedback from community members once a draft of the logic model was complete.*

**Step 2. Gather materials.**

#### ***TTCW example:***

*The team gathered the logic model template, the current program budget, the original proposal, a recent needs assessment conducted for another human services grant, and two end of year reports for the TANF and child welfare programs.*

**Step 3. Develop or revisit your theory of change to guide the development of *assumptions* and *outcomes*.**

#### ***TTCW example:***

*The theory of change was completed through a 2-day retreat with both the TANF and child welfare program staff and captured visually with support from the consultant. The team reviewed the visual theory of change to*

<i>ensure that the situation analysis guided the logic model assumptions and the outcomes chain informed the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.</i>	
<b>Step 4.</b>	<b>Examine your program's TTCW proposal and budget and have a guided discussion within your team to articulate relevant <i>inputs</i>.</b>
<b><i>TTCW example:</i></b> <i>The finance/grant-writing lead on the team facilitated a review of the current budget and program proposal to brainstorm an initial list of relevant inputs. The team eliminated items that were redundant and added inputs not captured in the list.</i>	
<b>Step 5.</b>	<b>Examine your TTCW program proposal and discuss with staff to determine a list of current program <i>activities</i>.</b>
<b><i>TTCW example:</i></b> <i>The team revisited the program proposal and the subsequent continuation applications to develop a list of all proposed activities. The case management staff then cross-referenced this list with their daily work to ensure that all activities were included.</i>	
<b>Step 6.</b>	<b>Determine how you will know if your team conducted each of the listed activities by developing an <i>output</i> for each one. Use the S.M.A.R.T. Outputs and Outcomes Worksheet to develop measurable outputs (see Appendix A).</b>
<b><i>TTCW example:</i></b> <i>The evaluation consultant facilitated a process to develop a measurable output that was related to each of the established activities. The program director and case management staff provided information on what data were currently tracked. The team used the S.M.A.R.T. Worksheet to double check if each of the outputs was measurable.</i>	
<b>Step 7.</b>	<b>Ensure each of the elements of the model is logically linked.</b>
<b><i>TTCW example:</i></b> <i>Once each of the elements of the logic model is developed, the team examines the logic model as a whole to ensure the outcomes articulated in the theory of change are measurable and logically linked to the activities. The team revises as needed.</i>	
<b>Step 8.</b>	<b>Review the logic model with key stakeholders and support teams and finalize.</b>
<b><i>TTCW example:</i></b> <i>The team shares its drafted logic model at the next advisory committee meeting and with its technical assistance provider to gather input and feedback. The program director revises the model based on feedback and sends it to the full team for a final review before finalizing the document.</i>	

## IV. MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES OF YOUR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Let's take another look at the hypothetical TTCW program. In this example, the Tribal TANF and the child welfare program aim to work together to better coordinate services to reduce system-level barriers for families and to better address the needs of families by working together on planning and providing services for TANF-eligible families at risk of child maltreatment. The TANF and child welfare programs will use their available resources (inputs) to train staff in joint case planning and management and work collaboratively to support families (activities). The anticipated concrete results (outputs) of the activities would include the number of TANF and child welfare staff participating in the trainings and the number of joint case staffings conducted. One short-term outcome could be staff's gained knowledge about working collaboratively. The staff may then begin to use their newly strengthened skills in day-to-day work (intermediate outcome). Over time, consistent practice of joint case staffings may contribute to improved services for families and thus improved child and family outcomes (long-term outcome). This section focuses on the importance of identifying outputs and outcomes that are measurable and describes approaches used to measure them.

## TTCW Program Activities

First, let's review your program activities, in other words, what will you do with your resources (inputs). In short, program activities are the actions that are needed to implement your program—what your program will do with the resources to achieve program outcomes, and ultimately goals.

Implementing interagency coordination programming can involve countless activities, some more crucial than others to your program's success. However, your logic model should spotlight those activities that are key to producing the desired outcomes. While activities such as recruiting staff, regular staff meetings, and staff trainings are important, they are not considered key activities.

For example, your TTCW program activities might include—

- Providing services and activities to increase self-sufficiency and strengthen the family unit
- Offering support groups, education and training, counseling, intense case management, mentoring, and coaching
- Developing strategies to increase collaboration and coordination between Tribal TANF and child welfare services and other partner agencies (such as new ways for TANF and child welfare services to work with each other, establishing other interagency partnerships, increasing organizational capacity)
- Enhancing coordinated case management
- Improving or enhancing existing practices of service delivery to families
- Developing products (such as materials and educational curricula)

To reiterate, activities or interventions are the services, activities, policies, practices, or procedures that you plan to implement in response to identified problems or needs within your target population. For example, activities and interventions termed direct service activities, that serve program participants directly, could include case management services, parenting workshops, job-skills training, support groups, and perhaps advocacy on behalf of families at risk of child maltreatment.

However, your program activities do not merely include interventions that focus directly on participants. For example, TTCW programs engage in a variety of activities including those aimed to affect systems change and knowledge development. Systems change may refer to efforts made toward improving the services that are available to families and improving the capacity of various systems (legal, social services, welfare, child welfare) to serve families. Examples of systems change efforts include developing new policies and procedures, providing training to child welfare and TANF workers to more effectively engage families, or increasing collaboration between partner agencies.

When describing your program activities, think carefully about which activities are critical to your program's success. Which pieces of your TTCW program do you think (or do theory, research, or practice suggest) will produce change? Which elements must be in place for your program to succeed?

It is important to identify as explicitly as possible specific services, activities, or interventions that constitute your TTCW program. The more precise the definition of each service or activity, the easier it will be to formulate corresponding measures that are discrete and meaningful. Once specific services or activities have been articulated, try to quantify how often you plan on providing your services or activities. Your quantifications of these activities are outputs.

## Measurable Outputs

What are the tangible results of your activities? Outputs are the immediate, concrete result(s) of providing a service or activity (e.g., participants attend parenting skills training or participate in vocational training; MOUs are in place to facilitate interagency communication and coordination). Success in achieving outputs can be measured through process or output measures, which indicate numbers served, types of services provided, frequency of service, duration of service, etc. It is important to identify outputs because they help conceptually link your program activities to the outcomes you expect to achieve. In short, outputs are the measurable, tangible, and direct results of program activities. Outputs are important because they help you to assess how well your program is being implemented and because they are intended to lead to desired outcomes—benefits for participants, families, or communities.

Once outputs have been identified, determine how achievement of these immediate results will be measured. Outputs should be quantified in the most concrete terms possible. Examples of how to measure outputs might include “average number of families served by joint case staffings” or “the number and proportion of case staffings that included staff from both the TANF and the child welfare programs.”

<b>Examples of output statements that are abstract and difficult to measure versus measurable output statements</b>	
<b>Outputs that are difficult to measure:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff conduct home visits</li><li>• Referrals provided to families</li><li>• Staff facilitate parenting classes</li><li>• Staff trainings</li></ul>	<b>Measurable outputs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of home visits</li><li>• Number of referrals for services</li><li>• Number of families completing parenting classes</li><li>• Number of service plans completed</li><li>• Number of child welfare and TANF staff trained</li><li>• Types of staff training provided</li></ul>

**Data sources.** Clear definitions of service outputs will be of little use without knowing where the information that feeds these measures will come from. Identify the initial source of data for each output early to allow time for refining or identifying alternative data sources before your data collection begins. In the case of the output of families served by joint case staffings, a relevant data source might be the case notes. In some instances, it may be necessary to develop customized data collection templates, forms, or logs.

**Measurement intervals.** Process data are generally collected at consistent intervals during the course of the program. Clearly stated measurement intervals (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) help ensure standardization of your data collection across your service population. For example, in the case of the joint staffings, you may want to collect data weekly or monthly on an ongoing basis throughout the TTCW program. In all cases, measurement intervals should be frequent enough to provide regular and useful information but not so frequent as to cause undue burden for your program staff or participants.

**Performance targets.** Depending on the goals of your program, it may be appropriate to articulate performance targets for certain services or activities. A performance target serves as a standard or a “yardstick” against which program progress and success are measured. It is generally expressed in numerical terms (e.g., “75 percent of TANF and child welfare staff will participate in cross training,” or “80 percent of families will be served by joint case staffings”) and is sometimes referenced against a

known historical benchmark or statistic. For example, the attendance rate for other staff trainings that your agency has held may have averaged 65 percent, in which case setting a somewhat higher performance goal (e.g., 70 or 80 percent) may be appropriate. When identifying a performance target, it is important to set a goal that is realistic and attainable. Returning to the example of cross-training of staff, an average attendance target of 95 percent may not be appropriate if historical attendance rates for similar trainings have hovered around 50 percent.

### Measurable Outcomes

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that let you know when you have reached your goals. Outcome statements describe specific changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors you expect to occur as a result of your activities.

Your program's outcomes should reflect the overall focus of the purposes of the TTCW grants and the specific purposes of your individual program. To clarify the outcomes of your program activities, think about what the expected changes would be, the real impact, for the participants. In other words, what do you reasonably expect will happen as the result of your program activities and their outputs? Good outcome statements are specific, measurable, and realistic.

The process of developing appropriate measurable outcomes should be completed for each key activity your program is implementing. Keep in mind that each program activity may have more than one set of associated outcomes. In addition, some of your key activities may lead to similar outcomes. If some of your program activities will likely result in several outcomes, you should determine in which order those changes would occur.

Remember that outcomes may be short-term, such as changes in awareness, knowledge, or skills; intermediate, such as changes in behavior or actions; or long-term changes in status or condition. Short-term outcomes are those that are the most direct result of your activities and outputs. They are generally achievable in 1 year and are typically not ends in themselves but are necessary steps toward desired ends (intermediate or long-term outcomes or goals). Intermediate outcomes are those outcomes that link short-term outcomes to long-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes are those that result from the achievement of your short- and intermediate-term outcomes and take a longer time to achieve. They are also generally outcomes over which your program activities and services have less direct influence. Often long-term outcomes will be outcomes that are achieved beyond the timeframe you identified for your logic model.

**Outcome indicators.** To measure program outcomes, each one needs to be stated in measurable terms (typically numerically or quantitatively). This measure is called an *outcome indicator*. Outcome indicators tell you how your program is progressing. Effective indicators are credible, practical, useful for program improvement, and clear about what they measure. Outcome indicators should be—

- Defined in precise terms
- Measuring real changes
- Directly measuring the corresponding outcome

When selecting outcome indicators for your program, try to answer the following questions:

- What type of progress or change do you expect to be evident in the target population?
- From whom will you collect data for each outcome?



- What types of things would you see, hear, or read about clients or the community that show that progress has been made toward the outcome?
- When will each outcome be attained?

*Measuring outcomes.* In defining outcomes, it is necessary to specify exactly how each outcome will be measured. Outcomes are generally stated in a quantitative format, so as to clearly reflect that a change is being measured and some comparison is being made to determine whether a condition has “increased,” “improved,” or is “greater” after the intervention. Outcomes can also measure whether a condition has “decreased” or is “fewer” (i.e., decreased incidence of child maltreatment, lower unemployment rates).

*Identifying data sources.* Some of the key factors to consider when selecting your data sources include (1) the appropriateness for measuring your program outcomes; (2) suitability for use with your target population; and (3) costs and burden associated with obtaining the data. Your data sources might include some of the following sources of obtaining data to measure your indicators:

- Staff observations
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Current program records (e.g., intake forms)
- Existing databases (e.g., child welfare data, school records)

*Specify measurement intervals.* Measurement interval is the frequency at which data on a given indicator will be collected and is generally expressed using a calendar term (e.g., days, weeks, months, years). A standard and consistent time interval is often preferable for making valid comparisons across clients (e.g., measure change every 6 months for all clients). Sometimes an interval is based on completion of specific service modules or activities (e.g., entry into counseling or substance abuse treatment or completion of parenting class module).

Depending on your outcome indicators, you may want to collect data at several different points in time for some indicators. For others, you may only need to collect data once. It is important to plan measurement intervals early by mapping out the different points in time when the data should be collected for each indicator. For example, you might consider collecting outcome data at program entry, immediately after program completion, and 6-months after the program.

*Identifying performance targets.* Performance targets are the standards of achievement against which program success is measured. Targets are generally expressed in numeric terms (e.g., 80 percent of TANF and child welfare staff who participate in cross training will consistently use joint case planning and case management with participating families within 1 month from the training). Performance targets are often analyzed in comparison to baseline data.

***Well-written and complete outcome statements will usually include five elements.***

1. Who will change - the staff, agency culture, participants?
2. What will change - the knowledge, attitudes, skills?
3. By how much - how much change can realistically be achieved?
4. By when - the timeframe within which you anticipate seeing change?
5. How the change will be measured - the surveys, logs, interviews, or other methods you will use to measure the specific changes?

## V. REVISITING YOUR LOGIC MODEL

While logic models are often developed at the beginning of a program, they should remain an active part of organizational planning throughout the program lifespan. Just as services evolve to meet changing needs and context, so should the logic model.

It can be helpful to revisit a logic at key times—

- When turnover of key staff leadership occurs
- When substantive changes occur to program activities, goals, or funding
- Annually, at a predetermined time

Each program will determine a configuration of staff that will be charged with maintaining the logic model but, in general, the following roles should be included—

- Agency or program director
- Program coordinator or supervisor (if different than director)
- Finance or budget staff
- Data or evaluation staff
- Frontline or direct services staff (at least one)
- Collaborator or program partner (at least one)

A program may also consider including a services recipient or community member to ensure the voices of those served are heard throughout the process. When revisiting the logic model, it is most helpful if some of the individuals involved in the original creation of the model are present to offer any context or historical knowledge needed.

The questions asked when revisiting a logic model will differ depending on the reason for bringing the team together, but some considerations include—

- Does the program have new information or data on community needs or priorities?
- Have community, program, or funder needs changed since the model was developed?
- Have there been changes to staff or planned activities?
- Have some activities already been accomplished and no longer need to be included (staff hiring, training, etc.)?
- Have there been changes to available resources or program scope?
- Is the program able to collect all data relevant to tracking outputs and measuring outcomes?
- Are outcomes being met, and if not, why not? Do they need to be reevaluated or rearticulated?

## VI. CONCLUSION

In closing, after you develop your theory of change, be sure to review and apply it frequently. Revisit your logic model regularly to assess progress and make adjustments where needed. The logic model helps ensure there is a clear understanding of what services are being implemented, what goals program staff hope to achieve, and how program success will be measured. The logic model offers a concise, easy-to-understand visual summary of the program, which can also serve as a handy reference that outlines key features and expected outcomes and can be disseminated to interested third parties to provide a summary of goals and activities.


Using your theory of change and logic model as part of continuous review and improvement helps to assess whether implementation objectives are being attained and whether expected outcomes are being achieved.

## APPENDIX A. Theory of Change and S.M.A.R.T. Outputs and Outcomes Worksheets

## Theory of Change Worksheet

As you begin to develop and/or revise your program's theory of change, consider who should be involved and in what ways. In some cases, it may be possible and desirable to involve a range of people in the whole process; in other cases, it may be better to delegate someone to develop a draft and then engage the wider group in reviewing and revising. For example, you might engage more people in sharing their understanding of what the program is trying to achieve, how it works, and why; but rely primarily on program staff to develop an outcomes chain.

**Component 1. Situation analysis** addresses and clarifies program staff and stakeholders' understanding and agreement of the problem.

 <b>Activity: Use these questions to guide a situation analysis conversation for your TTCW program.<sup>3</sup></b>		
<b>Nature of the problem:</b>	<b>Causes and contributing factors:</b>	<b>Consequences:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the problem or issue?</li> <li>▪ For whom does this problem exist?</li> <li>▪ What is the history of this problem?</li> <li>▪ What are the future projections for this problem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why does this problem exist? What are its causes?</li> <li>▪ Are some causes more important or influential than others?</li> <li>▪ What has or has not been effective in addressing the problem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why should this be considered a problem?</li> <li>▪ What are the consequences for those who are directly or indirectly affected by this problem?</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of stakeholders' understanding and agreement of the problem:</b>		

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Funnell, S. C., & Rogers, P. J. (2011). *Purposeful program theory: Effective use of theories of change and logic models*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

**Component 2. Focusing and scoping** sets the boundaries of the program by identifying which goals are within the programs' direct realm of control and influence.

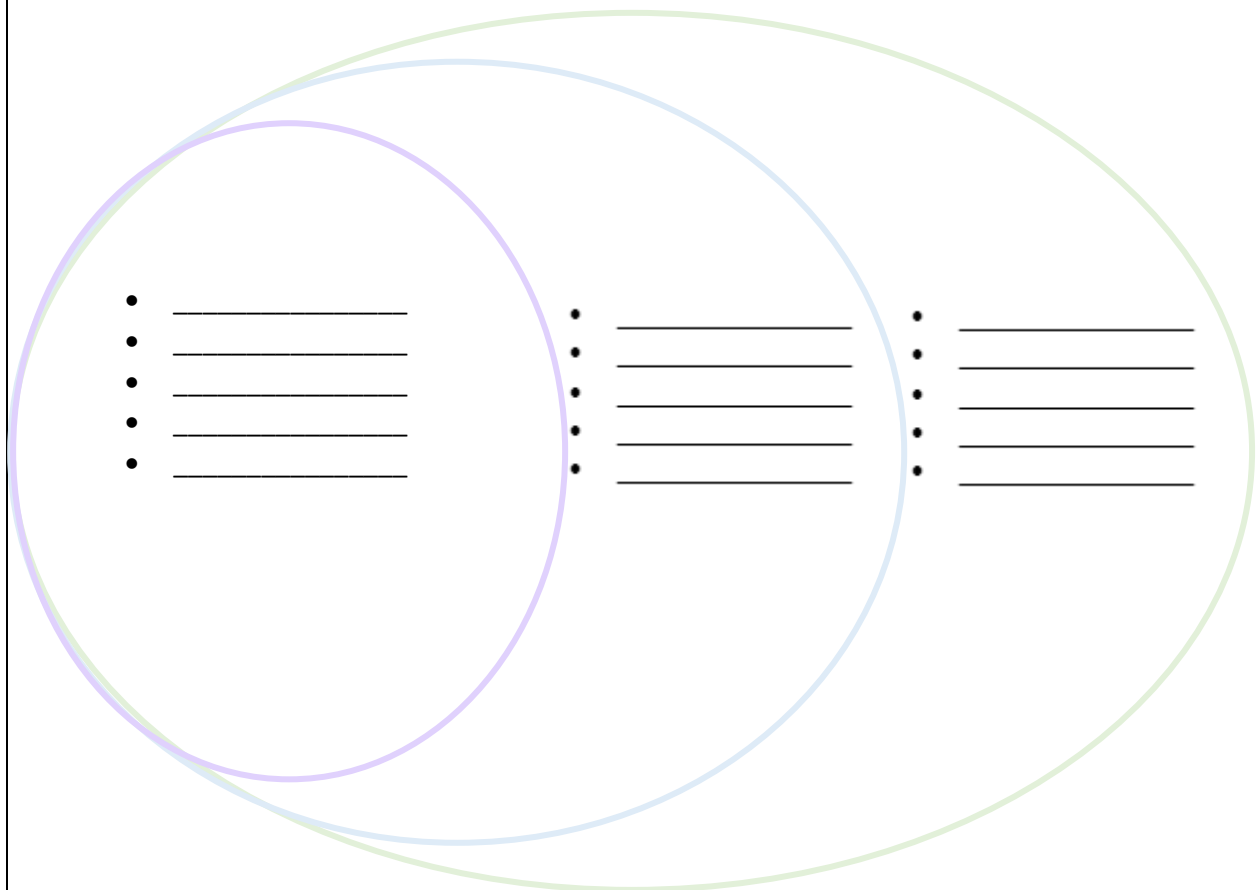


**Activity: Use this graphic to guide a focusing and scoping conversation for your TTCW program.**

**Sphere of Control:** TTCW program staff and partners have direct control over the quality of inputs, activities, and outputs.

**Sphere of Influence:** TTCW program influences on mindset, behavior, practices, situation and status for intended target population.

**Sphere of Interest:** Sociocultural, political, and economic systems relevant to the TTCW program.



**Component 3. Outcomes chain** articulates the assumed cause-effect or contingency relationships (i.e., pathways of change) between program activities and desired outcomes.



**Activity: Use the template below to develop an outcomes chain. Use the statements below as a guide.**

- Identify the desired long-term goal, and then by working backwards identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place for the goal to occur.
- Identify the first point at which the program has some sort of effect on the target group (i.e., staff, children, and families); move down from there to the desired goal.
- Arrange the outcomes in a chain of “if-then” or “so that” statements leading to the desired goal.
- Eliminate less relevant or significant outcomes; there are typically more than necessary.
- Review and validate the outcomes chain.

**Strategy**



**So That**



**So That**



**So That**



**So That**



**Synthesize the results from the activities above into an engaging theory of change statement, describing the *what*, *how*, and *why* your program will achieve its intended goal.**



## S.M.A.R.T. Outputs and Outcomes Worksheet

**Instructions:** Use the definitions below to help you fill out the table for the outputs and outcomes you've identified in your TTCW logic model to determine whether they meet the **S.M.A.R.T** criteria. If one does not meet the criteria, work to revise it until it does.

**Specific (S)** – Outputs and outcomes should be clear and specify what you aim to achieve through your TTCW program.

**Measurable (M)** – Make sure the outputs or outcomes are measurable in a concrete or tangible way.

**Achievable (A)** – You should be able to accomplish your outputs and outcomes in the short or long term of the program period.

**Relevant (R)** – Outputs and outcomes should be relevant to your TTCW program. Choose outputs and outcomes that are directly related to planned program activities.

**Time-Specific (T)** – Outputs and outcomes should be tied to a specific time frame, rather than being left open to encourage staff members and partners to work toward them.

Output or outcome from logic model	Is it <b>Specific?</b> (Y/N)	How will you <b>measure</b> it?	Is it <b>achievable?</b> (Y/N)	Is it <b>relevant?</b> (Y/N)	<b>When</b> will It be achieved?
<i>Example Output:</i> Number of cross-training participants from CPS and TANF.	Yes	Training sign-in sheets and attendance logs capture the number of attendants and attendant's affiliation with either CPS or TANF.	Yes	Yes	Ongoing based on trainings offered but will be compiled and summarized at least semi-annually for the PPR.
<i>Example Outcome:</i> Enrolled fathers will report improved interest in the program via program survey from baseline to end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year.	Yes	Pre- and post-program participant survey.	Yes	Yes	At the end of 2nd year.

## APPENDIX B. Compendium of Resources

This brief compendium includes a sample of resources to assist TTCW grantees in developing, revising, and implementing program theory of change and logic models as well as in setting and tracking measurable performance targets, milestones, benchmarks, and outcomes. A brief description of each resource is included along with a URL link to online access.

<i><b>Program Theory and Logic Models</b></i>		
<b>Resource Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>URL Link/Access</b>
Ahonen, P., and Park, C. (James Bell Associates, 2010). Evaluation Resource Guide for Responsible Fatherhood Programs.	This resource guide was developed to support the planning and evaluation of Responsible Fatherhood projects; however, chapter 3 describes the topic of program theory and chapter 4 discusses logic models and provides tools for developing one.	<a href="https://www.jbassoc.com/resource/evaluation-resource-guide-responsible-fatherhood-programs/">https://www.jbassoc.com/resource/evaluation-resource-guide-responsible-fatherhood-programs/</a>
Aspen Institute and ActKnowledge (2018). The Center for Theory of Change Website.	The Center for Theory of Change's website includes resources on developing a theory of change and free web-based software to design and edit a theory of change.	<a href="https://www.theoryofchange.org/">https://www.theoryofchange.org/</a>
James Bell Associates. (2007). Evaluation Brief: Developing a Logic Model.	Evaluation brief describes key benefits and uses of a logic model.	<a href="https://www.jbassoc.com/resource/developing-logic-model-2/">https://www.jbassoc.com/resource/developing-logic-model-2/</a>
Nesta and the Rockefeller Foundation in partnership with the Open University (2011). DIY Learn Theory of Change Learning Tool.	Free web-based learning module covering the purpose, benefits, and development of a theory of change.	<a href="http://diytoolkit.org/tools/theory-of-change/">http://diytoolkit.org/tools/theory-of-change/</a>
Hernandez, Mario, & Sharon Hodges. (2005). Crafting Logic Models for Systems of Care: Ideas into Action. Making Children's Mental Health Services Successful. Department of Child & Family Studies, University of South Florida.	Monograph highlights purpose and benefits of articulating a theory of change in the context of systems of care approaches. Appendix includes worksheets for developing a theory of change and identifying outcomes and measurement parameters.	<a href="http://cfs.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/news/IdeasInAction.pdf">http://cfs.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/news/IdeasInAction.pdf</a>
Organizational Research Services and Annie E. Casey Foundation (2004). Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results and Learning.	Document includes guidance on developing a theory of change, examples of categories of outcomes that might be mapped, and guidance on developing outcomes chains.	<a href="http://www.mspguide.org/sites/default/files/resource/theory_of_change_a_practical_tool_for_action_results_and_learning_ors_annie_casey_foundation_2004.pdf">http://www.mspguide.org/sites/default/files/resource/theory_of_change_a_practical_tool_for_action_results_and_learning_ors_annie_casey_foundation_2004.pdf</a>

<b><i>Program Theory and Logic Models (continued)</i></b>		
<b>Resource Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>URL Link/Access</b>
W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004). Logic Model Development Guide: Using Logic Models to Bring Together Planning, Evaluation, and Action. Battle Creek, Michigan; Author.	Document provides resources and examples for developing program theory of change and logic models. Also addresses using the logic model throughout the life of your program (i.e., planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation).	<a href="https://www.bttop.org/sites/default/files/public/W.K.%20Kellogg%20LogicModel.pdf">https://www.bttop.org/sites/default/files/public/W.K.%20Kellogg%20LogicModel.pdf</a>
<b><i>Performance Targets, Milestones, and Benchmarks</i></b>		
Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute (2016). <i>Track Performance</i> .	Website provides links to resources for measuring and tracking tribal home visiting programs. Topics include performance measurement, building capacity to track performance, engaging communities in performance measurement, and a summary of performance measures from tribal home visiting grantees.	<a href="http://www.tribaleval.org/track-performance/">http://www.tribaleval.org/track-performance/</a>
<b><i>Defining Measurable Outputs and Outcomes</i></b>		
<b>Resource Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>URL Link/Access</b>
First Nations Development Institute (n.d.). Successful Evaluation: Creating SMART Goals & Objectives What is Evaluation?	Document includes guidance on delineating between goals and objectives, various categories of objectives, and how to develop SMART objectives.	<a href="https://firstnations.org/sites/default/files/GrantseekerResources/EvaluationTips_SMARTGoalsObjectives.pdf">https://firstnations.org/sites/default/files/GrantseekerResources/EvaluationTips_SMARTGoalsObjectives.pdf</a>