ACT

accelerating
community
transformation

A five-year applied research project
conducted by Health Forum
in conjunction with Disney Corporation and Florida Hospital
Funded by AstraZeneca

Module 5

Identifying Outcomes and Indicators

Accelerating Community Transformation

HEALTH FORUM
AHA

Learning Objectives

In this module, your team will be assisted to clarify the nature of the issues or challenges your community has chosen to work on, to begin understanding the issues' contributing factors and identifying what works to address them, and to select outcomes and develop outcome statements and indicators for each issue or initiative.

Specifically, the module is designed to help each ACT community achieve the following learning objectives:

1. Clarify or focus your community's key issues or initiatives.

2. Learn a process for specifying target outcomes and outcome statements for healthier community initiatives.

3. Create outcome statements for each issue or initiative.

4. Learn a process for selecting and defining outcome indicators for each outcome statement.

5. Select indicators for measuring progress toward outcomes.

Overview

Module 5 is made up of three components designed to assist communities in selecting outcomes and indicators for a healthier community:

- A **written module** made up of several brief readings and study questions, presentation materials on key points, examples and exercises, and a glossary of key terms.

- An **on-line computer conference** which will foster a dialogue and address questions and ideas from the Module's readings and exercises.

- A **presentation and working session** which will be held at ACT's Learning Collaborative meeting in San Bernardino to share the results of team exercises, and to identify and work with issues raised in the on-line conference.

The written module is divided into eleven sections:

1. **Learning Objectives, Overview and Time Line**. States the objectives of the module, describes the written module's contents and provides a time line of exercises, readings and other Module activities.

2. **Introduction**. Places Module 5 in the context of ACT's performance-based planning framework and relates it to the work done in Module 4 and to the Outcomes Toolkit.

3. **Outcomes: A New Way of Thinking**. Describes the rationale for developing an outcomes system.

4. **Focusing Your Work: Topics, Issues and Projects**. Describes the distinction between an issue and an initiative, and includes exercises to help you focus your initiatives.

5. **What is the Problem: Understanding its Contributing Factors and Potential Causes**. (Optional) Suggests an optional exercise to deepen your understanding of the problem and its relationship to underlying issues.

6. **What Works: Selecting Promising Interventions**. (Optional) Offers an optional exercise for your team to select promising interventions to address the issues of concern in your community initiatives.

7. **Developing and Evaluating Outcome Statements**. Describes short versus long-term outcomes, includes readings and exercises on developing and testing specific outcome statements and relates outcomes to the Outcomes Toolkit.

8. **Developing Useful, Relevant and Feasible Outcome Indicators**. Offers a reading and an exercise on developing useful outcome indicators, the means by which progress toward outcome targets is assessed.

9. **Summary**. Summarizes the topics covered and suggests a checklist to use before completing the Module.

10. **Print Resources, On-line Resources and Additional Publications on Outcomes and Indicators**. These appendices offer annotated outcomes and indicator sources in a variety of media.

11. **Faculty Biography**. A biography of Lyle Wray, Ph.D., who developed and is facilitating the module.

Timeline

Date	Activity
April 3	Module 5 mailed to ACT teams
April 10	Read through Section 4; complete Exercise 1
April 13	Computer Conference begins
April 20	Read through Section 7; complete Exercises 4 and 5
April 24	Read through Section 9
April 27	Computer Conference ends
April 30	Learning Collaborative in San Bernardino We will ask questions, share experiences, and do group work to complete Exercise 6
month of May	Revisit and complete Outcomes and Indicator selection in community teams based on Module 5 exercises, computer conference and learning collaborative in San Bernardino

Introduction

This module is designed to help each ACT community team develop outcome statements and outcome indicators for each of their major issues and initiatives. Participants will read articles on outcomes measurement, complete several exercises and review resources that provide models for outcome statements and indicators. The steps in Module 5 assume that each ACT team has mission and vision statements and has identified at least two to four active or potential initiatives that respond to issues of community concern.

Module 5 takes a detailed look at one portion of the activities described in Module 4 “Evaluating Healthier Communities Initiatives”. Module 4 covered the overall process of assessing community change initiatives. **Module 5 provides you a set of tools for defining the specific changes you want to make (and measure) in your community.**

Similarly, the concepts in Module 5 represent one part of ACT’s performance-based planning approach to community quality of life improvement. The ACT framework involves several stages focused on achieving and demonstrating results (outcomes) by applying and refining best practices in healthier communities. Module 5 provides a model for carrying out steps 2 and 3 below. The stages are summarized as follows:

1. Identify key community issues for action. At least one of these should be likely to yield quick progress, and another may require a longer time frame.

2. For each issue (or initiative), determine specific, measurable outcomes for which your community will strive.

3. For each outcome, identify one or more outcome indicators that will allow you to measure progress toward the specified outcome. Record baseline data for each indicator.

4. Select or refine key intervention strategies and work plans around "best practices".

5. Track indicator data and intervention activity over time, making refinements based on experience, changes in indicator data and new knowledge of best practices.

OUTCOMES TOOLKIT Connection

Module 5 is aligned with the structure of the Outcomes Toolkit, but is not a “user’s manual” for the Toolkit. As you know, the Outcomes Toolkit will serve as a key mechanism for recording community projects and issues, identifying target outcomes, selecting and defining indicators, documenting interventions, tracking data and programmatic progress, and researching indicator data and best practices.

The Module contains references to the Toolkit’s outcomes and indicator functions that you will be using in a few months, and uses the Outcomes Toolkit to help illustrate the relationship between issues, projects (initiatives), outcomes and indicators. Figure 1 on the next page is a sample screen from the Outcomes Toolkit that depicts this overall structure. To illustrate, “Broward County, Florida” is the project, “Our Health” is an issue area in Broward County, reduction of “Births to Teens" is a target health outcome and “Percentage of all births to teenage girls” is an indicator of that outcome.

Outcomes: A New Way of Thinking

Outcomes-focused community development is not mainly about measures or methods, but rather about a new way of approaching community improvement. It is about participants in a community process working off the same page, having a common focus on results, moving in the same direction and making adjustments to get there. An outcomes focus also requires the courage to recognize and say when something does not work, making the changes needed and moving forward. This Module will provide suggestions on working through a process designed to help you be more successful in making your communities healthier places to live by specifying the outcomes you want to achieve and identifying specific indicators to measure progress.

Outcomes measurement is an important part of the overall process of performance-based planning, also termed performance management. The core idea is to pull together into a coherent package the process of defining a mission and desired outcomes, setting performance standards, linking budget to performance, reporting results, and holding appropriate people and organizations accountable for results.

Selecting and measuring outcomes is deeply connected to a community's or an organization's mission. In a mission statement we answer the question, "what we are trying to get done for whom?" Selecting and measuring outcomes also involves setting outcome targets the level of achievement you are aiming for - and holding ourselves or others accountable for whether the job is accomplished. (A glossary of terms is provided in Appendix D).

A reasonable question might be "why don't we just sit down and pick a few things to work on and get on with it?" Action-oriented people often bristle at the idea of sitting down at more than one meeting to talk about vision, mission, outcomes and indicators before getting things moving. There are a number of reasons that it is worthwhile to go through some of these steps before choosing projects and committing resources.

A Road Map. Having a specific picture of where you want to go helps you to make the many necessary adjustments in approach along the way. What are the values that you use to guide changes? Is there sufficient clarity and reasonable agreement on direction that adjustments can be made to make an initiative work? Carrying the map analogy a little further, the mission and vision provide general direction for an initiative. Outcomes and outcome indicators provide specific milestones on the map, which inform you if you are indeed making progress or need to make corrections.

Choice of Goals to Address. In many cases, performance measurement and outcome measurement are done in the context of business or government programs with externally defined goals. As a community team, you have choices about what you are taking on. You have the responsibility to connect with what your community most believes needs to be done to make it a healthier place to be. Because you may have more choice of which "battle" you pick, the outcomes exercise requires a bit more thought than if you were given the goals at the outset from another source.

Challenges Are Complex. Almost no aspect of complex community obvious solutions just begging for us to pick them up. We need to do some thinking about how we can get where we want to be. Along the way, you usually number of judgments in developing an outcomes system. Some of these judgments include: what are the best strategies for addressing this problem or challenge? What has worked in similar circumstances in similar settings that we can learn from? Which items should we pick as priorities — what are our best bets' for how to spend our resources to meet our mission and outcomes? What should we do first — are there issues of sequencing our efforts? The answers to many of these questions point directly to the outcomes you may choose to measure.

A focus on outcomes carries certain responsibilities, as well. One of these is communicating results to the broader community. Many people tend to think on a large-scale about community outcomes, e.g. reduce crime, poverty, and homelessness. Yet for a collaborative community change effort to address quality of life issues through an outcomes-focused model, we need to develop a more specific and deeper understanding of the issues and to set specific targets for intervention. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind when constructing an outcomes system that eventually you will need to communicate y our work and your findings to the general public in ways that are easily understood. Using outcomes actually makes this easier by providing specific and relevant items to report in the context of the public's more general concerns.

Focusing Your Work: Topics, Issues and Projects

As noted above, people often think in broad terms about the problems and challenges in their communities. Many times people will say that K-12 education, for example, is an issue. This is a broad statement and is more like a topic than an issue. An issue is better thought of as more specific in character, e.g. low graduation rates of low-income students. While it is fine to have a series of topics such as education, economic development, health promotion, quality of life and so on, the work of identifying and clarifying the issues for each is indispensable in building an outcomes measurement system.

As a point of clarification on language, an **issue** is a challenge or problem such as high rates of tobacco use by teens. A **project** or **initiative** is a response to one or more issues. For example, an initiative about teen smoking might include community education on tobacco use and active involvement of teachers, physicians and other community leaders around a "breathe free" campaign. As a practical matter, measuring progress toward addressing an issue or an initiative should be very similar. For example, the indicator "rate of smoking by teenagers" would measure progress with respect to the issue of smoking and a community initiative to reduce teen smoking.

As we begin to work on outcomes, it is essential to start with a clear focus on the problem, challenge or opportunity the issue we have chosen to address. Community projects or initiatives are more likely to be successful when based on a clear and common definition of focused issues. This focus in turn facilitates the development of outcome statements and indicators.

OUTCOMES TOOLKIT Connection

In the Outcomes Toolkit, projects and issues are defined and recorded in the Community Profile Builder, as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 on the following two pages. The Toolkit permits users to define projects and issues narratively, and to indicate each issue's priority level.

ACTION -- complete at Home*

*Note: For each exercise, we will indicate whether we request that you complete it at **Home** (on your own or with your community team), on the **Computer Conference** or at the Learning Collaborative meeting in **San Bernardino**. *Please complete **all the readings** in this module at **Home**.*

Exercise 1: Focusing the Issue

Please use statements of mission, vision, projects and issues you have created elsewhere to answer the questions below for each key community issue you face. (You may wish to photocopy this page.) Some of these questions may appear similar to exercises in Module 4 on evaluation, but it is useful to have a sharp focus on your issues before going further in the development of outcomes. Completing this exercise will help ensure that you have achieved a shared understanding and agreement about your key issues before moving on to outcomes and indicators.

What condition or situation do we seek to change?

___

Who are the major stakeholders (people affected by or who have an interest) in the situation? Who are the likely direct beneficiaries of a corrective intervention? Who else will be impacted?

___

___

Why is this situation important to address? Stated in another way, what may happen if we don't make a change?

___

Where and When does the problem, situation or challenge occur?

___

___

___

How does the situation or problem make itself known? How do we now the problem exists? What evidence of the problem do we see that compels us to seek change?

___

___

___

What is the Problem: Understanding its Contributing Factors and Potential Causes

Once we have selected and defined a set of issues that will form the basis of projects or initiatives, we should assess our level of knowledge about them. It is important that we take the time to carefully define the problems or challenges we face — to understand the issues in detail. Rushing off to solve a problem that is poorly understood can lead us to target outcomes which are not realistic or to choose strategies which are not likely to produce the results we wish to achieve. This is true even if there is agreement on the issue's most salient characteristics, as in Exercise 1.

We need two kinds of knowledge about a problem or challenge. First, we need knowledge of the problem in terms of what causes it or how it came about and those factors that contribute to it. Second, we need knowledge of interventions that are likely to be successful in meeting the challenge or correcting the problem. Following are a reading and two optional exercises to help deepen and organize your team's understanding of key issues.

Reading 1: Misspent youth: Young people and crime. Audit Commission of England and Wales.

In reading through the pamphlet, you may wish to consider the following points:

1. Exhibit 3 on page 5 lists a number of contributing factors to youth getting into trouble with the law and on the outside of the circle suggests seven interventions designed to produce better outcomes for youth.

2. Exhibit 4 describes a strategy for addressing at-risk youth in terms of things to increase or decrease.

3. Note that such a review helps identify outcomes you might wish to measure and indicates some approaches that are likely to be successful in addressing these issues.

Exercises 2 and 3 are labeled "optional" and community teams should feel free to determine whether they would be valuable in light of earlier work that the community may have done. Even if initiatives are already defined or underway to address an issue, these exercises can be useful to generate or refine knowledge about its underlying causes and likely sucessful interventions.

Exercise 2: Understanding Contributing Factors and Potential Causes (Optional)

Exercises 2 and 3 focus on understanding a problem's causal or contributing factors and on selecting promising interventions. More of this content area will be provided in Module 6 on best practices in community interventions. At this point the aim is to stimulate detailed thinking about the problem and its likely successful interventions, to help arrive at a good set of outcomes. Exercises 2 and 3 ideally require one or two meetings each of the community team. If conducting a group process with the community team is not practical, these exercises can be adapted to be compiled by the team coordinator with other appropriate input from community team members.

Exercise 2 will help your team identify, exchange, organize and analyze the knowledge you possess about your key issues. The exercise can be applied to all identified community issues or only to those that require additional detailed examination. Your team brings considerable knowledge and experience to bear on addressing the chosen issues. In addition, you will be using resources suggested in the Appendix to research the problem or challenge area further. At the end of this exercise, your team will have developed a list of the most important factors behind or causes of each issue. These will help inform Exercise 3.

Advance assignment for individual team members:

Each person should be given a blank set of index cards (3" by 5" work fine) and should complete the following assignment using their knowledge or research.

Each team member is responsible for completing as many index cards as needed with the following information for each issue. Your team may choose to assign specific issues or research tasks to its members.

Step 1 -- List a factor that contributes to the problem.

The front of each card should answer the following question:

A factor that contributes to the problem or a potential cause of the problem is:

____

Be sure to write only one main cause or factor idea per card.

Step 2 -- Describe the source of information.

On the back of each card, make a note of the source of the information. It might be obtained from a study or from personal observation, for example.

Your cards should look like this:

Front:	Back:
Cause/factor: Lack of job skills	**Reference/source:** JTPA Study 6/96

Group Process:
Each member should bring his or her set of completed index cards to a meeting. One person should agree in advance to serve as the meeting facilitator. If possible, obtain the help of a person who is not on the team. The facilitator's job is to help the group organize the knowledge it has compiled.

You will need a large, clear surface for completing this task. Some groups like to use a large table. Others prefer to use a wall covered with large sheets of paper that have been sprayed with adhesive spray mount (using masking tape to hold the cards in place is also possible).

Step 1 -- Develop factor or cause clusters.

The facilitator will conduct the meeting like a focus group. A member will be asked to volunteer a cause or factor. The facilitator places the card on the wall or table. Then the facilitator asks if anyone else has a similar or related idea. The related ideas are placed in close proximity to the initial idea. When this factor is complete, the facilitator asks for a different idea. This idea is placed in its own location and related ideas are grouped nearby. This process is followed until all the cards have been placed on the surface.

Step 2 -- Label the factor or cause clusters.

The facilitator will assist the group in developing a label or title for the cause or factor that each cluster represents. Post the cluster label above its group.

Step 3 -- Rank the factor clusters for importance.

Each member should study the factor clusters silently, rank each cluster on a scale of 1 to 5 for its importance as a cause underlying the problem or situation. (A rating of 5 would be the highest or her individual ratings, the group is ready to continue.

The facilitator will start with one cluster and ask for the individual ratings. The facilitator will add the clusters have been rated on importance. Based on this work, the group should be able to order the causal or contributing factors from highest to lowest. The index cards can be used as supporting documentation to explain and provide references for each factor. If there are any concerns about the ranking of the factors, the group should spend time discussing the concerns and arriving at an order that everyone can “live with”. (Remember, you are seeking consensus on the handful (3 to 5) of most important causes as a basis for future work; beyond this, the precision of the ordering is not important.)

What Works:
Selecting Promising Interventions

Now that your team has identified the major factors or causes of the issue, you are ready to identify (through the literature, research findings and programmatic experience) intervention strategies that can successfully impact these causes or factors. As much as possible, you are looking for interventions that have demonstrated they "work". As before, the group may choose to give individual assignments for researching and investigating potential intervention strategies.

While the next module in this series is planned to address best practices interventions in detail, considering promising interventions at this point can be valuable to help identify outcomes to measure.

Exercise 3: Selecting Promising Interventions (Optional)

Like Optional Exercise 2, this exercise requires one or two meetings of the community team. The exercise can be applied to all issues or only to those issues or contributing factors that require the most attention.

Advance assignment for individual team members:
Each person should be given a blank set of index cards (3" by 5" work fine) and should complete the following assignment using their knowledge or research.

Each team member is responsible for completing as many index cards as needed with the following information for each issue. Your team may choose to assign specific issues or research tasks to its members.

Step 1 -- Based on knowledge of contributing factors, list an intervention approach or strategy that may address this issue.

The front of each card should answer the following question:

An approach or strategy that might succeed in addressing the problem is:

Be sure to write only one main intervention approach or strategy idea per card.

Step 2 -- Describe the source of information.

On the back of each card, make a note of the source of the information. It might be obtained from a study or from personal observation, for example as shown below.

Your cards should look like this:

Front:	Back:
Intervention strategy/ approach Incentive grants to provide employer sponsored job training program for targeted groups	**Reference/source:** JTPA Study 6/96

Group Process:
Each member should bring his or her set of completed index cards to a meeting. One person should agree in advance to serve as the meeting facilitator. If possible, obtain the help of a person who is not on the team. The facilitator's job is to help the group process out the knowledge it has compiled.

You will need a large, clear surface for completing this task. Some groups like to use a large table. Others prefer to use a wall covered with large sheets of paper that have been sprayed with adhesive spray mount (using masking tape to hold the cards in place is also possible).

Step 1 -- Develop intervention clusters.

The facilitator will conduct the meeting like a focus group. A member will be asked to volunteer a potential intervention. The facilitator places the card on the wall or table. Then the facilitator asks if anyone else has a similar or related idea. The related ideas are placed in close proximity to the initial idea. When this intervention strategy is complete, the facilitator asks for a different idea. This idea is placed in its own location and related ideas are grouped nearby. This process is followed until all the cards have been placed on the surface.

Step 2 -- Label the intervention clusters.

The facilitator will assist the group in developing a label or title for the type of intervention each cluster represents.

Step 3 --Rank the potential interventions for impact.

Each member should study the intervention clusters silently. For each intervention cluster, each member should rank the cluster on a scale of 1 to 5 for its potential impact in addressing the problem or situation. (A rating of 5 would be the highest or most potentially effective type of intervention and a rating of 1 would be the lowest or least effective type of intervention.) When each individual has completed his or her individual ratings, the group is ready to continue.

The facilitator will start with one intervention cluster and ask for the individual ratings. The facilitator will add the individual ratings to give a total score to the cluster. The group will continue this process until all of the clusters have been rated on impact. Based on this work, the group should be able to order the potential intervention strategies from highest to lowest in terms of potential impact. The product of this exercise will be a list of the potential interventions from highest to lowest. The index cards can be used as supporting documentation to explain and provide references for each intervention type. If there are any concerns about the ranking of the interventions, the group should spend time discussing the concerns and arriving at an order that everyone can "live with". (Remember, you are seeking consensus on the handful (3 to 5) of most fruitful interventions as a basis for future work — beyond this the precision of the ordering is not important.)

Step 4 -- Rank the potential interventions for feasibility.

Now the group has identified a list of the most promising types of interventions. The group should decide how many it would like to analyze further. (Suggest that you select no more than five). Each member should study the selected intervention strategies silently. For each intervention, each member should rank the cluster on a scale of 1 to 5 for its feasibility in your own community or situation. (A rating of 5 would be the highest or most feasible type of intervention and a rating of 1 would be the lowest or least feasible type of intervention.)

To accomplish this, you should consider many factors such as community resources you can leverage, funding resources available, the "tractability of the problem" and "fit" with your community's situation. Candidates for promising interventions also should be examined both in the context of other pre-existing interventions and in terms of the local political process. When each individual has completed his or her individual ratings, the group is ready to continue.

The facilitator will start with the first of the selected intervention strategies and ask for the individual ratings. The facilitator will add the individual ratings to give a total feasibility score to the potential intervention. The group will continue this process until all of the selected interventions have been rated. Based on this work, the group should be able to order the potential intervention strategies from highest to lowest in terms of potential feasibility. After ranking the interventions on feasibility, the group may find it useful to review the interventions and capture any additional notes, special considerations or observations about implementation of this intervention type, using a format similar to the one below.

Intervention Types:	**Feasibility Rating Score:**	**Notes or Special Considerations**:

Developing and Evaluating Outcome Statements

Outcomes state the end result you want to achieve. You can consider outcomes as "the bottom line" for the change initiative. The task of selecting outcomes brings together earlier work on understanding the causes of a problem and what are judged to be likely successful interventions. For this section, three readings are followed by two exercises on outcome selection.

Just as you need to exercise care in framing issues and initiatives for your community, you need to consider a number of criteria for choosing and describing those outcomes you wish to measure. As we will see below, there are many things to consider in selecting outcomes. Is the outcome clear? Is it measurable? Is information available with which to measure it? Is this the best outcome to measure? Do we have too many or too few outcomes? These questions should guide your efforts to determine measurable outcomes for your community's issues and projects. In addition, if you measure the wrong things, you can do harm by focusing attention on unproductive or counter-productive areas and by implying other areas are not important. This is why knowledge of what causes a problem or challenge and what is likely to be effective in addressing it (Exercises 2 and 3) is valuable even when selecting outcomes to measure.

Short and Long-term Outcomes. One of the issues covered in Reading 3 below is that of short-term and long-term outcomes. This was also discussed in Module 4, and deserves reinforcement. While it is tempting to strive for and look at only short-term outcomes, there often are a number of reasons to adopt a longer view. First, important results often take a long time to achieve. Accomplishing major reforms in an inefficient bureaucracy or significant improvements to a distressed community will take a good deal of time, for example. Profound structural and behavioral changes that go to the root of problems are valuable and should not be shortchanged entirely in favor of short-term objectives. A second aspect is that we generally want improvement to be sustained over a long period of time. We therefore need to track improvements to see if there is a significant long-range difference as a result of our interventions.

As was suggested in Module 4, it important to think through intermediate outcomes, as well. For example, in smoking management one may assess the number of people who complete a quit smoking program (short-term), the number of people who have quit smoking over a period of time (intermediate), and changes in overall health status or life span (long-term). Intermediate outcomes occur earlier and generally are more controllable by a program than longer-term outcomes. As such, they serve as a bridge between quick and easily observed gains and those improvements for which evidence accumulates gradually over a period of several years.

As another example, intervening with low-income pregnant teens and producing higher high school graduation rates is rather immediate. Improvement in these young adults' incomes may be an intermediate result. Longer-term outcomes include how well their child develops and whether that child avoids early pregnancy in the next generation. You may wish to pay particular attention to Reading 3 and the comments on shorter and longer-term outcomes and judge how those comments apply to the initiatives of your community team.

Outcome Statements. Outcome statements are specific descriptions of the outcomes you wish to achieve. General outcomes (e.g. the community will reduce smoking among its residents) are not as useful as specific outcome statements that provide measurable parameters and clearly define the intended result. For example:

> "Seventy-five percent of the participants in Community Hospital's 1998 smoking cessation classes will quit smoking by the conclusion of class."

This statement specifies what will change (smoking behavior), the nature of the change (reduction in smoking), the degree of success (75%), how the change will be accomplished (Community Hospital's class), the time frame (duration of the class) and who will benefit (class participants). Outcome statements increase the power of your target outcomes as a guide for future action by offering the ability to assess the degree of success. As such, they offer the ability to share and celebrate goal attainment and the responsibility to be accountable for results.

ACTION -- complete readings at Home; discuss on the Computer Conference

Reading 2: "Outcome monitoring" by D.P. Affholter (1994) in J.S. Wholey, H.P. Hatry, and K.E. Newcomer (editors) <u>Handbook of practical program evaluation</u>.

In reading through the article, please consider the following key points:

1. Examples of outcome measures. (Page 98).

2. Reasons to do outcome monitoring. (Pages 99 -104).

3. The issues in designing an outcome measurement system. These include what to measure, how many measures, how and how often performance should be measured, and how to present the results from outcome monitoring. (Pages 105 -111).

4. The possible pitfalls in outcome monitoring. These include unrealistic expectations, avoiding a clear focus on outcomes, irrelevance, and unwarranted conclusions. (Pages 111-116).

Reading 3: "Outcome measurement: Showing results in the nonprofit sector." M.C. Plantz, M.T. Greenway & M. Hendricks (1997) in New Directions for Evaluation, (75), fall.

In reading through the article, please consider the following key points and questions:

1. There are a variety of purposes to which outcomes measurement has been put. Assessing results and improving performance are two of these. (Page 16).

2. Nonprofit managers report six benefits of an outcomes measurement approach. (Page 17).

3. How does the United Way define outcomes? (Page 17).

4. What is an if-then relationship among desired outcomes as described in the reading? (Page 18).

5. How should an initiative decide how far out in the "outcome chain" to select its longest-term outcome? (As described on page 18 and the chart in page 19).

6. What lessons about the value of outcome measurement have been learned in the nonprofit world? (Pages 23 to 27).

7. What are some challenges for the future of outcome measurement? (Page 27).

Reading 4: Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way of America, (1996). Pages 18-21.

1. Page 18 (exhibit 1-C) describes the Program Outcome Model.

2. Page 19 (exhibit 1-D) provides hints as to what are and are not outcomes.

3. Pages 20-21 (exhibit 1-E) provides examples of diverse programs and possible outcomes.

ACTION -- complete exercises at Home; discuss on the Computer Conference

Exercise 4: Developing Outcome Statements

Step 1 - Answer the following questions with your community team to develop outcome statements for each active initiative. If teen smoking, for example, is your main issue of concern, the initiative might be a comprehensive smoking avoidance effort involving many actors in your community. You also can create outcome statements for key issues.

(As mentioned earlier in the Module, outcomes for issues and those for initiatives are often the same. However, care is warranted when developing outcomes for existing initiatives. If a specific initiative is narrow in focus (e.g. enforcement of a ban on cigarette sales to youth), it is possible to overlook other potentially valuable outcomes (e.g. limiting the demand for cigarettes among young people) that would help address the larger problem.)

Answer these questions for each initiative, writing your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Who will the initiative benefit?
   - This may be stakeholders who are impacted most and/or clients.

2. What are the main benefits or most important results we will achieve?
   - What will be different because of the initiative? Look for verbs that describe the nature of the change(s).

3. What period will we measure?
   - Based on your research or your project plans, when do you expect a notable (observable) change to occur?

4. How much change do we expect over this period?
   - Based on your research, plans and resources, how much of a difference should occur during the selected time frame? Set a target that is realistic but challenging.

Step 2 -- Write outcome statements.

Based on the answers you develop in Step 1, complete the Outcome Statement Templates on page 27 for each initiative. An initiative may have more than one outcome; complete one Outcome Statement Template for each. Your wording may differ from the wording in the template; use it only as a guide. (You may wish to photocopy the template page first.)

Remember that the important thing is for each outcome statement to specify the:

- name of the initiative or issue (e.g. anti-smoking class);
- primary client or stakeholder of the initiative (e.g. people who attend the class);
- what will be changed (e.g. smoking behavior);
- how it will be changed (e.g. reduced);
- amount of change (e.g. 75% percent); and,
- time frame for the change (e.g. by the end of class).

OUTCOMES TOOLKIT Connection

The sample screen from the Outcomes Toolkit on page 26 (Figure 4) illustrates how you will build outcomes statement s using the software. Outcomes are listed in the Community Profile window, and outcomes statements are created in the Outcome Information window. As you can see, the templates on the next page contain many of the specific components included in the Toolkit.

Outcome Statement Template

The ____(title) initiative

will benefit _________________________________(primary client/stakeholder)

by ___________________________________(verb, i.e. reducing, improving)

____ (condition that will change)

by ____________________________(amount) by _________________(date).

Outcome Statement Template

The ____(title) initiative

will benefit _________________________________(primary client/stakeholder)

by ___________________________________(verb, i.e. reducing, improving)

____ (condition that will change)

by ____________________________(amount) by _________________(date).

Outcome Statement Template

The ____(title) initiative

will benefit _________________________________(primary client/stakeholder)

by ___________________________________(verb, i.e. reducing, improving)

____ (condition that will change)

by ____________________________(amount) by _________________(date).

Having completed specific outcome statements for each issue or initiative, you are ready to test them against criteria that will help determine whether they are feasible or appropriate.

ACTION -- complete at Home; discuss on the Computer Conference

Exercise 5: Testing Your Outcome Statements

Step 1 -- Enter your outcome statements from Exercise 4 onto the form on the following page (Figure 5). Use one form per issue or initiative.

Step 2 -- Answer the worksheet's three questions for each outcome statement.

Those outcome statements that meet the tests will reflect stronger, more useful outcomes because they will: be related to the activities of the initiative, provide information (feedback) about successes and areas for improvement, and be supported by key stakeholders participating in or observing the work. Outcome statements for which you cannot answer "yes" to one or more of the tests merit review, revision or (possibly) elimination from your set of target outcomes.

Figure 5

Assessing Possible Outcome Statements			
Initiative/Issue:			
Outcome Statement:	Does it meet test?		
	#1	#2	#3

Test 1: Is it reasonable to believe the proposed or current initiatives can influence the outcome in a non-trivial way, even though it can't control it?

Test 2: Would measurement of the outcome help identify program (initiative) successes and help pinpoint or address problems or shortcomings?

Test 3: Will the initiative's various "publics" accept this as a valid outcome of the initiative?

Adapted from Worksheet 3 in Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way of America, 1996.

Developing Useful, Relevant and Feasible Outcome Indicators

Now that you have selected outcomes, you are ready to move forward with developing **outcome indicators** for each of the outcomes selected. Outcome indicators are the specific items of information that track an initiative's success toward outcomes. They describe observable, measurable characteristics that represent achievement of an outcome.

In fact, you already began identifying indicators in Exercise 4 on outcome statements. In that exercise, you specified "what will be changed" as a result of your initiative(s). The condition or behavior that will be modified to improve quality of life will in some cases be an appropriate indicator. In other cases, it will need refinement or there may be several indicators for a given outcome. For example, the successful reduction of smoking may have indicators for different age groups or for changes in both prevention and quitting.

This section of the module will help you think through several specific issues important to the selection of indicators that both accurately reflect the outcomes you wish to achieve and are feasible to collect and use. Having indicators that are feasible is of prime importance, because your outcomes and indicators are valuable only if you will actually use them in practice.

ACTION -- complete reading at Home; complete exercise in San Bernardino

Reading 5: Chapter 4 (pp. 81-104) of Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way of America, 1996.

Exercise 6: Developing Useful Outcome Indicators

After reading this chapter, complete the worksheet on page 32 (you may wish to photocopy it first) to generate and evaluate potential outcome indicators. You will generate a number of indicators and assess their feasibility based on your ability to obtain reliable, valid, timely, cost effective data for each. Keep generating and evaluating options until you are satisfied that you have one or more indicators for each outcome that will be both useful and feasible to collect.

Please be complete the reading and be prepared to complete the exercise at the Learning Collaborative meeting in San Bernardino.

Step 1 - Begin with your initiatives and their outcomes.

Enter the name of the program or initiative you are considering onto the worksheet on the following page (Figure 6). Enter an outcome statement from Exercise 4 into the form, keeping in mind that each outcome may have several indicators.

Step 2 - What could we measure?

For each outcome, what could we measure that would tell us whether we are achieving the outcome? What indicators are widely available or used? List these as possible outcome indicators in the worksheet. (Please note that the Outcomes Toolkit has an indicators database with 120 pre-defined and widely used indicators.)

Step 3 - Where would we get the data?

Where would we obtain this data (e.g. Government reports, agency records, surveys of general public, participant surveys, etc.)? List the source(s) for each possible indicator.

Step 4 - How would we collect the data?

How would we collect the data? Think about data availability, timing, method, etc. Who will collect it (e.g. staff, volunteers, consultant), how will they obtain it (e.g. library research, conduct a survey, via the Internet), how frequently (e.g. monthly, annually)? Describe the method of data collection below.

Step 5 - How feasible is it to collect the data?

How feasible will it be to collect the data in terms of ease, cost or frequency of collection? Discuss data collection feasibility and then rate it as either high, medium or low.

Figure 6

Assessing Possible Indicators				
Project/Initiative:				
Outcome	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection Method	How feasible? (H, M, L)*
				H, M, L
				H, M, L
				H, M, L
				H, M, L
				H, M, L
				H, M, L
				H, M, L

* Rate the feasibility of each indicator as High, Medium or Low based on reliability, validity, accessibility, timeliness and cost.

Adapted from Worksheet 4 in Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way of America, 1996.

OUTCOMES TOOLKIT Connection

The Outcomes Toolkit allows the user to specify indicators for each outcome in its Indicator Information window. When using the Toolkit, you may choose from among the 120 predefined indicators in the Toolkit's Indicator Database, use an indicator from another source or create entirely new indicators. The sample screen on page 34 (Figure 7) illustrates how the software defines an indicator, including data parameters, rationale for choosing the indicator and notes on data collection experiences and progress.

Summary

Outcome measurement is difficult but valuable work. Collaborative community initiatives address complex issues and will require the combined efforts of many individuals and groups in order to achieve meaningful results. Outcome statements express your guiding vision so that all parties who contribute have a shared, clear and consistent vision of the intended results.

Further, the outcome indicators and outcome statements will provide a structure for monitoring your initiatives' progress in achieving their desired results. Initiatives respond to complex and changing conditions in the community. By defining and measuring outcomes, your team can manage the initiative strategically. The measurement feedback will help you evaluate how well the project is working and explore ways to improve results and achieve the desired impact.

Before completing your work with Module 5, take some time to reflect on your progress. If your team can answer "Yes" to the following questions, you are ready for the next steps in the community improvement process.

YES	NO	
__	__	We have developed at least one outcome statement for each of our initiatives
__	__	Each outcome statement clearly states the expected result and the timeframe for its accomplishment
__	__	The amount of change (target) is realistic but challenging (neither too easy or too difficult)
__	__	The outcome indicators we have selected are relevant measures that would be accepted by stakeholders as being useful and understandable indicators of results
__	__	We have identified the source and a feasible collection method for all indicators (and there is an appropriate balance between the costs of getting the information and the benefits from having the information)
__	__	Together, the set of outcome indicators for every initiative provides a clear definition of success

Congratulations! You are ready to move into Module 6 where you will be looking at best practices for bringing about the results you have articulated in this module.

Resources

Appendix A: Selected Outcomes and Indicator Sources

There are massive data sources available in the outcome area. This list is a partial list of major compilations that ACT teams may wish to access, in addition to the resources included in the Outcomes Toolkit itself.

General Outcomes and Indicator Sources.

Audit Commission of England and Wales. Http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/

Broad Community Quality of Life Outcomes.

The Coordinating Council of Broward (1997). <u>The Broward Benchmarks.</u> Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The first in an annual series, the report covers nine areas: families and communities, safety, learning, health, economy, environment and goverment.

Greater Saint Paul Tomorrow (1997). <u>Entering the 21st century. Social outcomes for our community. Twin Cities East Metropolitan Area</u>. Saint Paul, Minnesota. Wilder Research Center.

This report describes six sets of outcomes for a major portion of a metropolitan area. Notes on the data sources for these outcomes are included in this module as an illustration of types of data sources ACT Team members might find useful.

Jacksonville (Florida) Chamber of Commerce (1994). <u>Executive summary. Life in Jacksonville. Quality indicators for progress.</u> Jacksonville, Florida: Jacksonville Community Council.

This document was based on work in 1985 by 100 volunteers who identified 74 indicators in a Quality of Life Project. The report covers nine separate areas: education, the economy, public safety, natural environment, health, social environment, government/politics, culture/recreation, and mobility. Detailed information is presented in graphic form. Several sample summary pages are included in the module.

Minnesota Planning (1998). Minnesota Milestones 1998. Proposed revisions. Public review draft. Saint Paul, Minnesota. Http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us.

More than half of the states in the United States have developed broad goal setting and outcomes tracking projects which can be fertile ground for a search for ACT Teams for particular outcomes and outcomes indicators. One example is provided. This report outlines outcomes in six main areas for the state: children, families and learning, health, community, economic prosperity, environment and democracy.

Data related to outcomes for children.

Georgia Policy Council. Benchmark database.
Http://murmur.arch.gatech.edu/results/www.html.

This web page contains statistics on the status of families and children in the state of Georgia but also contains information about healthy children, getting children ready for school, having children succeed in school, assisting in creating strong families and self-sufficient families. It has links to several national comparative databases for children. A copy of several pages from the web page is included in this module.

Improved Outcomes for Children Project and the Center for the Study of Social Policy (1995). Finding the data: A start-up list of outcome measures with annotations. A companion document to "The case for shifting to results-based accountability." Washington, D.C. Contact Center for Study of Social Policy, 202-371-1565 or fax 202-371-1472.

This text outlines data sources for sixteen sets of outcomes for children. It uses a format that includes a description of the indicator, definition, significance of the indicator, facts, data sources, comments and related measures.

Kids Count Data Book. A copy of a proposed list of ten measures of progress for families and children is included in this module. Http://www.aecf.org.kc1996.

Search Institute (1997). 40 developmental assets. Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Http://www.search-institute.org.

The Search Institute has a list of 40 assets for youth and suggested strategies for developing these assets as a way of improving life outcomes for youth.

Health and Human Services.

United Way of Northeast Florida (1996). Creating a Community Agenda: Indicators for health and human services. Jacksonville, Florida: Jacksonville Community Council Incorporated.

This publication lists outcome indicators in preparing children to enter school and learn, providing pportunities for positive youth development, assisting youth in crisis, meeting basic needs for food, clothing and shelter, strengthening families and individuals, helping victims of abused and neglect, providing health care, education and support services, help individuals with disabilities and special needs, and care for frail elderly individuals.

Appendix B: On-line Resources for Outcomes and Indicators

Alliance for Redesigning Government. Http://www.clearlake.ibm.com/Alliance.

Center for Accountability and Performance at the American Society for Public Administration. Http://www.aspanet.org/cap/index.htm.

Harvard Family Research Project. Http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp/index.html.

Institute for Educational Leadership. Http://www.iel.org.

National Center for Public Productivity, Rutgers University. Http://newark.rutgers.edu/~ncpp/.

National Performance Review. Http://www.npr.gov/.

Performance Benchmarking Center. Http://www.pbcenter.com.

The Finance Project. Http://www.financeproject.org.

The Rensselaerville Institute. Http://www.crisny.org/not-forprofit/thetute/INDEX.HTM.

United Way of America. Http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes/

Appendix C: Additional Publications on Outcomes and Indicators

A Guide to Developing and Using Performance Measures in Results-Based Budgeting, by Mark Friedman, for The Finance Project, May 1997. Http://www.financeproject.org/measures.html.

A Guide to Selecting Results and Indicators: Implementing Results-Based Budgeting, The Finance Project, May 1997. Http://www.financeproject.org/indicators.html.

Accountability for Performance: Measurement and Monitoring in Local Government, edited by David N. Ammons, International City/County Management Association, 1995. Http://www.icma.org.

Caring for Our Children: Labor's Role in Human Services Reform, by Marcia Calicchia and Laura Ginsburg, Public Employee Department, AFL-CIO, 1996. (202) 393-2820.

Challenges to Data Capacity for Outcome-Based Accountability, by Nancy Dunton, "The Evaluation Exchange: Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services," Vol. 2, No. 1, 1996. Http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp/eval/issue3/dunton.html.

Contracting for Performance in Welfare Reform, by Jessica Yates, Welfare Information Network, August 1997. Http://www.welfareinfo.org/jessicacontract.htm.

Community Health Progress Measures; An Inventory, by the Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities Progress Measures Action Team, 1996. Http://www.healthycommunities.org.

Community Indicators Handbook; Measuring Progress Toward Healthy and Sustainable Communities, by Tyler Norris Associates, Redefining Progress and Sustainable Seattle, 1997.

Designing and Managing Programs: An Effectiveness Based Approach, by Peter Kettner, Robert Moroney and Lawrence Martin, Sage Publications, 1990. Http://www.sagepub.com.

Establishing a Performance Management System for Targeted Welfare Programs, by Jeffrey Zornitsky and Mary Rubin of Abt Associates, for the National Commission for Employment Policy, August 1988.

Focus on Client Outcomes: A Guidebook for Results-Oriented Human Services, by the Community Services Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, March 1996. (612) 296-7031.

Follow-up Analyses of the National JTPA Study: Final Report, by Larry Orr, Burt Barnow, Robert Lerman and Erik Beecroft, Abt Associates, for the U.S. Department of Labor, July 1997.

From Quality Control to Quality Improvement in AFDC and Medicaid, edited by Fredrica D. Kramer, National Academy of Sciences, 1987.

Managing for Results: Analytic Challenges in Measuring Performance, U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), May 30, 1997. GAO/HEHS/GGD-97-138. Http://www.gao.gov/reports.htm.

Managing for Results: State Experiences Provide Insights for Federal Management Reforms, GAO, Dec. 21, 1994. GAO/GGD-95-22. Http://thorplus.lib.purdue.edu:8100/gpo/GPOAccess.cgi.

Measuring the Performance of Human Services Programs, by Lawrence Martin and Peter Kettner, Sage Publications, 1996. Http://www.sagepub.com.

Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, by the United Way of America, 1996. Http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes/.

Outcomes and Performance Glossary, by the Alliance for Redesigning Government. Http://www.clearlake.ibm.com/Alliance/clusters/op/glossary.6.html.

Reaching Public Goals: Managing Government for Results, by NPR, October 1996. Http://www.npr.gov/library/papers/bkgrd/cover.html.

Replacing Welfare: Options for the Future, by Keon Chi, Council of State Governments, Solutions, Vol. 5, No. 2,1997.

Report to Congress: Recommendations on Performance Standards for the JOBS Program, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Sept. 30, 1994.

Resource Guide of Results-Based Accountability Efforts, by the Harvard Family Research Project, August 1996. Http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp/releases/rba/efforts/.

Restructuring and Reinventing State Workforce Development Systems, by Jill Hyland, “Stateline,” National Governors’ Association, Jan. 21, 1997.

The New Oregon Trail: Accountability for Results, Special Report #7, The Policy Exchange: The Institute for Educational Leadership, 1996. Http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/progsys/oregon/newtrail/ieldoc.htm.

The Oregon Option: Early Lessons from a Performance Partnership on Building Results-Driven Accountability, Alliance for Redesigning Government, July 1996. Http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/progsys/oregon/lessons.htm.

The Status of Research and Indicators on Nonprofit Performance in Human Services, United Way of America, August 1996. Http://www.unitedway.org/outcomes/ispaper.html.

Toward Results-Oriented Intergovernmental Systems: An Historical Look at the Development of the Oregon Option Benchmarks, by Mark G. Popovich, for the Alliance for Redesigning Government, July 1996. Http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/progsys/oregon/history/intro.htm.

Using Performance Indicators to Improve the Effectiveness of Welfare-to-Work Programs, by Timothy J. Bartik, Working Paper 95-36. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. 1995. Http://www.upjohninst.org/publications/wp/95-36.pdf.

Welfare to Work: Current AFDC Program Not Sufficiently Focused on Employment, by GAO, Dec. 19, 1994. GAO/HEHS-95-28. Http://thorplus.lib.purdue.edu:8100/gpo/GPOAccess.cgi.

Welfare to Work: Measuring Outcomes for JOBS Participants, by GAO, April 17, 1995. GAO/HEHS-95-86. Http://thorplus.lib.purdue.edu:8100/gpo/GPOAccess.cgi.

Appendix D: Glossary of Key Terms

(Based in Part on Alliance for Redesigning Government and United Way of America, Resource Network on Outcome Measurement)

ACTIVITIES. Activities are what a program does with its inputs - the services it provides - to fulfill its mission. Examples are sheltering homeless families, educating the public about signs of child abuse, and providing adult mentors for youth. Program activities result in outputs.

BENCHMARKS. Benchmarks are performance data that are used for comparative purposes. A program can use its own data as a baseline benchmark against which to compare future performance. It also can use data from another program as a benchmark. In the latter case, the other program often is chosen because it is exemplary and its data are used as a target to strive for, rather than as a baseline.

INITIATIVE (or PROJECT). A planned course of action to remedy a problem or to take advantage of an opportunity.

INPUTS. Inputs are resources a program uses to achieve program objectives. Examples are staff, volunteers, facilities, equipment, curricula, and money. A program uses inputs to support activities.

ISSUE. A concern, problem or challenge motivating people to action.

MISSION. An organization's mission states the purposes it serves. By specifying its mission, an organization can decide upon appropriate outcomes and performance measures for its work. Mission is often defined through a strategic planning process, and is linked to its vision.

OUTCOMES. Outcomes are benefits for participants during or after their involvement with a program. Outcomes may relate to knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, behavior, condition, or status. Examples of outcomes include greater knowledge of nutritional needs, improved reading skills, more effective responses to conflict, getting a job, and having greater financial stability. For a particular program, there can be various "levels" of outcomes, with initial outcomes leading to longer-term ones. For example, a youth in a mentoring program who receives one-to-one encouragement to improve academic performance may attend school more regularly (short-term), which can lead to getting better grades (intermediate), which can lead to graduating (long-term).

OUTCOME STATEMENT. An Outcome Statement clarifies desired outcomes by specifying: the name of the initiative or issue; the primary client, beneficiary or stakeholder of the initiative; what will be changed; how it will be changed; the amount of change sought; and, the time frame for the change. By providing detail on the intended result, Outcome Statements offer additional direction to community improvement initiatives, allow them to measure results and assess progress, and foster accountability for actions.

OUTCOME INDICATOR (or INDICATOR). Outcome Indicators are quantitative measures of the characteristics of people, organizations or communities. They are the specific items of information that track an initiative's success in achieving specified outcome targets. They describe observable, measurable characteristics or changes. For example, a program whose desired outcome is that participants pursue a healthy lifestyle might define a "healthy lifestyle" as not smoking; maintaining recommended weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels; getting at least two hours of exercise each week; and wearing seat belts consistently. The number and percent of program participants or community residents who demonstrate these behaviors, then, is an indicator of how well the initiative is doing with respect to the desired outcome.

OUTCOME TARGETS. Outcome targets are numerical objectives for an initiative's or a program's level of achievement on its outcomes. After a program has had experience with measuring outcomes, it can use its findings to set targets for the number and percent of participants expected to achieve desired outcomes in the next reporting period. It also can set targets for the amount of change it expects participants to experience.

OUTPUTS. Outputs are products of a program's activities, such as the number of meals provided, classes taught, brochures distributed, or participants served. Another term for "outputs" is "units of service." A program's outputs should produce desired outcomes for the program's participants, but they usually are not outcomes themselves.

OUTPUT INDICATOR. Measures of the quantity of products or units of service provided to a service population. They also include "workload" measures that reflect the amount of effort expended to produce a product or provide a service. Examples of output indicators include: number of student-days of instruction and the number of students promoted/graduated; the amount of asphalt used to repair highways and the number of potholes filled.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT. The process of defining a mission and desired outcomes, setting performance standards, linking budget to performance, reporting results, and holding appropriate people or organizations accountable for results (outcomes).

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS. Standards against which to measure performance. Potential standards of comparison include:

- Previous performance, e.g., the percentage of lane miles of roads in satisfactory condition this year compared to last year's percentage.
- Performance of similar organizations, e.g., percentage of graduates from a public high school who attend college compared to the rate for other public high schools.
- Performance of the best organizations, e.g., percentage of public high school graduates who attend college compared to graduates from prestigious preparatory schools. (This is called "bench marking".)
- Pre-set targets, e.g., next year 85 percent of the lane miles of highway will be rated satisfactory or better, and in three years 95 percent will meet this standard.

STRATEGIC PLANNING. Strategic planning is a process of defining the vision, mission, goals and objectives of an organization. Through the planning process, a jurisdiction or agency identifies the outcomes it wants to achieve through its programs and the specific means by which it intends to achieve these outcomes.

VISION. The ideal statement of what an organization's or initiative's constituents or community would look like if its mission were fully achieved.

Faculty Biography

Lyle Wray, Ph.D.

Lyle Wray became Executive Director of the Citizen's League in 1992. The Citizen's League was established in 1952, and has as its mission "to involve citizens in identifying and framing critical public policy choices, forging recommendations, and implementing solutions." As the organization's chief executive, Lyle oversees such initiatives as *Minnesota Journal*, a monthly public policy publication; *Minnesota Agenda*; study committees which have issued more than 300 reports and statements; *Mind Openers,* a series of public policy breakfasts; an online computer service; and the *Speak Up* policy discussion groups.

Prior to joining the staff of the Citizen's League, Dr. Wray was Dakota County Administrator for five years. Dakota County is located along the Mississippi River southeast of the Twin Cities. Dakota County's population is around 300,000, and it had an annual budget of some $147 million and a workforce of 1,300 at that time. Before becoming its chief administrative officer, Lyle was the County's human services director for two years.

He was director of the quality assurance and protective services division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services from 1984 to 1986; compliance monitor from 1980 to 1984 for the *Welsch Consent Decree* issued by the United States District Court ; program director in developmental disabilities at the Brainerd Regional Treatment Center in 1979-80; and mental retardation services division director in the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Department of Social Services form 1978 to 1979.

Dr. Wray has an extensive academic background in various areas of psychology. He received his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. In 1972, 1975 and 1980, respectively, from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. He is an active member of numerous professional and civic associations, including the National Civic League Council of Advisors, the International City/County Management Association, and the United Way of Minneapolis Area Research and Planning Committee. He was vice president of the National Association of County Administrators from 1990 to 1992, and he was president of the Minnesota chapter of the American Society for Public Administration in 1991-92.