

## Barr Foundation Grantee Resource: Developing Outputs and Outcomes

As part of your grant application, you will construct a series of outputs and outcomes that describe how you plan to measure progress and what success would look like. This brief guide is intended to help you build rigorous and specific metrics that will become the basis of future reporting on progress to the Foundation. Ultimately, this should be a collaborative process with your program officer.

### 1. The Role of Metrics

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Evaluation, well done, fulfills three main goals:



It is important for grantee and the Foundation to have a shared understanding the progress we're making. By reflecting on progress and challenges, we hope to learn valuable lessons to improve our programs. Ultimately, this process leads to increased impact.

### 2. Basic Terminology

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<b>METRIC</b>	A discrete statement describing a specific output or outcome related to the proposed grant. Ideally, all metrics should contain 5 key pieces of information (see next page).
<b>OUTPUTS</b>	Outputs tell the story of what you produced or your organization's activities. Output measures do not address the value or impact of your work. As a rule, if the metric is referring to something the grantee will do or produce, then it is an output.
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	Outcomes are the changes in the world that occur as a result of the activities, products, or services completed or delivered by the grantee. Put differently, if the outputs are successfully completed, outcomes are the benefits that would accrue to participants and/or target audiences.

### 3. The 5 Components of a Good Metric

We recommend that you include these 5 pieces of information in every metric.

1. **WHO** will complete the output or be the beneficiary of the outcome?
2. **WHAT** is the activity or result expected to be achieved?
3. **BY WHEN** will it occur?
4. **HOW MUCH** will be done or accomplished (i.e., how many or what percent)?
5. **HOW WILL WE KNOW** the result was achieved?

*Example output:* By January 2021 (**BY WHEN**), 190 (**HOW MUCH**) Massachusetts educators (**WHO**) will participate in learning excursions to visit innovative school models (**WILL DO WHAT**), as tracked by participant enrollment records. (**HOW WE KNOW**).

*Example outcome:* By January 2021 (**BY WHEN**), 80% (**HOW MUCH**) of educator participants in learning excursions (**WHO**) develop a deeper understanding of personalized learning principles and practices (**WILL DO WHAT**), as measured by grantee staff analysis of participants' reflections after each visit, obtained through surveys, post-visit discussions, and other means (**HOW WE KNOW**).

#### HOW WILL WE KNOW

There are multiple ways of knowing whether an output or outcome is achieved. In some cases, organizations may conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups with clients. In other cases, organizations will rely on service or administrative records. In other cases, staff hold the knowledge of whether something was achieved (i.e., if a person was hired or a regulation changed) based on observation or judgment.

### 4. Selecting the Right Metrics

When deciding what metrics to include, consider the most important **deliverables** to be produced as part of the grant—these are your outputs. Then imagine the ways in which you would know if the project was **successful**—these are your outcomes. They could include increasing the diversity of program participants, increasing the advocacy capacity of an organization, improving the college and career readiness of students, etc.

While a project or program will often have many expected outputs and potential outcomes, it is important to identify the **small number** of metrics that are most important for gauging progress and/or learning that can benefit future projects. Again, this should be a **collaborative** process with your program officer, who can assist you in determining the best metrics to include.

Other considerations when selecting metrics:

- Think through how the activities you conduct lead to the results you seek. Choose the metrics that best tell this story for your organization;
- Include outputs and outcomes that occur during the grant period; in some cases, you might include outcomes that are only beginning to occur during the grant period;
- Focus on data that you are already collecting, for yourself or other funders;
- Don't worry about getting locked in by metrics, they can be amended if plans change; and
- Not every output or outcome is directly measurable, you may need to find a proxy or exclude some items.

## 5. Sample Outputs and Outcomes

Below are some sample outputs and outcomes from across Barr’s grantmaking areas. When drafting outcomes, less is more. Please strive for a focused set of outputs and outcomes that are clear, concise, and relevant to your goals and to Barr’s programmatic goals. If you’re not clear about Barr’s programmatic goals, ask your program officer. Also, please note there is no need to pair outputs and outcomes. It is common for multiple outputs to lead to a single outcome.

### Sample Outputs

### Sample Outcomes

#### ARTS

- By October 2020, 30+ public offerings including performances by international and local troupes, block parties, ongoing drop-in activities, workshops and demonstrations conducted by and in collaboration with local organizations, as tracked by our events log.
- By October 2019, a dedicated staff position is created and filled to lead district programming and additional part-time staff is added to support box office and production, as determined by human resources.

- By October 2019, the size and diversity of audiences drawn to public gathering spaces and cultural offerings increases, including families, nearby residents, and young professionals, as measured by participant surveys.
- By October 2019, the organization is positioned to be a proactive, adaptive, and inspiring cultural leader and desirable partner, as measured by qualitative examples identified by staff and feedback gathered from local community leaders.

#### EDUCATION

- By January 2021, 80 percent of School District’s students will engage in two high-quality projects per school year, as measured by student participation levels in Project-Based Learning projects as well as teacher survey data.
- By January 2021, an inclusive design team led by a core group of educators, students, school and district administrators, and community partners meets monthly to develop an implementation plan, as evidenced by monthly meeting minutes and an implementation plan document.

- Students demonstrate improved mastery of rigorous academic content by June 2021, as indicated by a 10-percentage point increase in both math and ELA state assessment scores for students engaging in two projects per academic year compared to a matched comparison group of students.
- Annually, 95% of graduates will be enrolled in a two-or-four-year college, technical school, or certification program, enlisted in a branch of the military, or meaningfully employed within six months of graduating, as measured by National Student Clearinghouse data and alumni surveys.

#### CLIMATE

- By August 2018, a set of enforceable regulations aligned to GWSA emissions targets that set declining emissions caps for each sector of the Massachusetts economy are drafted and presented to key stakeholders.
- By 2020, a final comprehensive report including comprehensive business plans for up to three promising new or expanded services is released to the public, including a public forum to present and discuss findings with stakeholders.

- By July 2021, the costs of low- and no-carbon resources in the electric sector have decreased by at least 10%, as measured by change over July 2016 baseline.
- By 2020, project partners launch at least one new water transportation service, using alternative clean fuel vessels that contribute to a net reduction in CO2 and particulate emissions.

SECTOR EFFECTIVENESS

- By December 2019, the organization will disseminate five research publications to its members that bring data-based insights to the field about effective practices, as tracked by web statistics and marketing team records.
- By the end of 2020, 50 additional foundations will use tools to assess board performance, generating data that is incorporated into publicly available benchmarks.
- By the end of the grant term, nonprofits participating in the program will demonstrate high quality feedback practices and measure increasing effectiveness based on key metrics.
- By the end of 2021, a relationship has been established between routine board self-assessment and stronger board performance, based on self-reported data and third-party longitudinal research.

## 6. Suggested Resources

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- [Level Best](#): How Small & Grassroots Nonprofits Can Tackle Evaluation & Talk Results
- [Data Playbook](#): general evaluation guide with good description of how to apply different social science methods
- [Guidestar Common Results Catalog](#): index of common metrics
- [Community Toolbox](#): comprehensive community change resource, including logic models and theories of change
- [Dabbling in the Data](#): participatory data analysis strategies
- [Advocacy Strategy Framework](#): includes ideas for possible interim outcomes for advocacy work

### Acknowledgements

The Barr Foundation gratefully acknowledges the inspiration and support of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and Engage R+D in developing this resource. Questions and/or feedback about this guide should be sent to Yvonne Belanger, Director, Learning & Evaluation, [ybelanger@barrfoundation.org](mailto:ybelanger@barrfoundation.org).