ACL’s Logic Model Guidance

Administration for Community Living
Office of Performance Evaluation

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview ................................................. 1  
What is a Logic Model? ......................... 2  
Why Should You Develop a Logic Model? .......... 3  
Logic Model Template ....................... 4  
  *Figure 1. ACL Logic Model Template* ........ 4  
Logic Model Components and Definitions .......... 5  
  *Figure 2. Logic Model Structure* ........... 6  
How to Use a Logic Model ..................... 7  
Steps to Building a Logic Model ............. 8  
  *Figure 3. W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Structure* .... 8  
  **Step 1:** What is the need or purpose for the program/grant? .... 9  
     Including Stakeholders .................. 9  
     External Factors ...................... 10  
  **Step 2:** What are inputs? ............... 11  
  **Step 3:** What are activities? .......... 12  
  **Step 4:** What are outputs? .......... 12  
  **Step 5:** What are the desired immediate and intermediate outcomes? .... 13  
  **Step 6:** What are the ultimate outcomes to be achieved? .... 15  
Examples of Program Logic Models .......... 16  
  *Example 1.* Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) ..... 17  
  *Example 2.* Protection & Advocacy for Voting Accessibility (PAVA) .... 19  
  *Example 3.* AIDD NAS Interdisciplinary Training Implementation Logic Model .......... 20  
Logic Model Resources ..................... 21  
ACL Logic Model Template .................. 22
Overview

This guide presents a brief primer on the development and use of logic models for clarifying program theory, demonstrating progress towards objectives, and answering evaluation questions. This primer is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to the development and use of logic models and should be used in conjunction with additional resources, including consultation with ACL’s Office of Performance & Evaluation (OPE).

Developing and using logic models is critical for federal agencies to influence resource allocation, make data-driven decisions, and assist with effective program implementation. Logic models help organizations understand (and explain) how a program works as well as whether it is progressing towards its stated objectives and having an impact on organizational goals and priorities. Developing a logic model is an opportunity to clarify programmatic concerns surrounding investments (inputs), actions (activities and outputs), anticipated results (outcomes and impacts), and it aids an organization in optimizing actions in alignment with its mission.
What is a Logic Model?

A logic model is a **visual** and **systematic** way to describe the relationships between available resources, program activities, and anticipated changes or results. Logic models show how a program is intended to “work” and how a series of activities is intended to achieve expected outcomes.1

This knowledge of how a program operates serves several functions, particularly

- clarifying program theory (i.e., explaining why a program should be effective),
- demonstrating a program’s progress (i.e., documenting progress towards an identified outcome), and
- informing program evaluation questions and performance indicators
- describing the impact of a grant or program.

The use of a logic model for these purposes clarifies communication concerning resource allocation, usage, and impact.


**Logic models**, due to their visual depictions of activities, can be used to communicate with diverse audiences—particularly those with varying views and backgrounds in program development or evaluation.
Why Should You Develop a Logic Model?

First and foremost, developing a logic model clarifies thinking and aids an organization in identifying outcomes and ways to document and measure progress toward defined objectives. Logic models provide a map for what to do, or what is occurring, and why it should contribute to successful progress toward a goal.

During program design and planning, developing a logic model can assist in formalizing program strategy and enhance the ability to explain and illustrate program concepts to key stakeholders (e.g., staff, clients/consumers, Congress). It also promotes a shared understanding of what is expected to happen and how change will be measured for program management and evaluation purposes (see ACL’s Performance Strategy). Furthermore, the design and planning stages of building logic models require exploring best practice research, practitioner experience, and federal guidance to develop and describe the logic behind the activities needed to achieve desired outcomes.

Logic models also assist program implementation and monitoring due to their focus on identifying the types of data necessary to document results and improve programming. Attention to these aspects of a program can aid in tracking resources, noting accomplishments, and making adjustments in practice as necessary.
Logic Model Template

OPE developed a logic model template (see Figure 1) to assist staff with developing or updating a logic model. The template has a section to include the title of the program or grant. It also contains prelabeled logic model components. At the bottom of the template is a section for adding any key statutes or mandates. Once you complete your logic model, please share it with a member of OPE.

Figure 1. ACL Logic Model Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEED/PURPOSE</th>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ULTIMATE OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Insert Name of Program/Grant

Use ACL’s Logic Model template to develop a logic model and share your model with OPE.

Authorizing Statute[s]/Mandates:
Logic Model Components and Definitions

Logic models have five main components that describe planned actions and intended results:

- need/purpose,
- inputs (i.e., resources),
- activities,
- outputs, and
- outcomes (immediate, intermediate, and ultimate [impact]).

Synonyms for these terms are used by many logic model developers throughout key resources. This guide will utilize these particular terms due to their adoption by ACL.

Figure 2 introduces the structure of a logic model and defines the components. The use of the arrow in the logic model reinforces the directionality of the figure and reflects the influence one component has on the next.
Your PLANNED WORK describes what resources you think you need to implement your program and what you intend to do.

Inputs (i.e., resources) include human, financial, organizational, and community resources available to direct toward doing the activity.

Activities are what the program does with the resources.
Examples are processes, tools, events, technology, and actions that are a part of implementing a program/grant.

Outputs are the direct products of program activities and may include types, levels, and targets of services to be delivered by the program.
Examples are number of people served, number of events held, and number of units of service provided.

Ultimate Outcome (i.e., impact) is the fundamental intended or unintended change occurring in organizations, communities, or systems as a result of program activities over an extended period, within 7 to 10 years.

Outcomes are specific changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, status, or level of functioning.

Short-term outcomes (i.e., immediate outcomes) should be attainable within 1 to 3 years.

Long-term outcomes (i.e., intermediate outcomes) should be achievable within a 4- to 6-year timeframe.

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How to Use a Logic Model

Logic models “read” from left to right, describing programs from the planning phase through the desired results. They illustrate a chain of “If...then...” statements that connect program components. Logic models assist in answering many questions, including:

- Why is the program/grant important?
- What is the fundamental purpose of the program/grant?
- How can research and demonstration projects be incorporated into program planning and implementation?
- How can the theory and structure of the program/grant be effectively communicated to staff, stakeholders, constituents, and leadership?
- What are the outputs and immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes?
- How should outcomes be measured?
- When are midcourse adjustments and improvements needed?

Each of these questions is critical during the development and review of a logic model.

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Steps to Building a Logic Model

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation recommends thinking of the impact desired before considering the actions needed to reach the desired goals. This approach promotes thoroughness and leads a logic model developer to consider the ultimate goal and then the necessary steps and components required to achieve it.

Figure 3. W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Structure

The W.K. Kellogg Logic Model Structure shown above (Figure 3) uses a slightly different format to that recommended by OPE. Still, the examples it provides for what can be an input, an output, and an outcome are useful to reference when developing a logic model.

In alignment with OPE's recommendations, the following is a step-by-step guide to developing a logic model.

**STEP 1: WHAT IS THE NEED OR PURPOSE FOR THE PROGRAM/GRANT?**

If the program/grant is required via a statute or mandate, the legislation will specify the aim of the program/grants (the need or purpose.). How does the goal of the program/grant relate to ACL's mission, vision, values, goals, or objectives? Giving careful consideration to this question is critical because the next option is to involve stakeholders, who often share a common goal but do not always have the same perspective. Framing the logic model using ACL's perspective will save time by guiding stakeholders in the same direction and distinguishing ACL's priorities.

**Including Stakeholders**

Developing a logic model that describes how a federal program operates in community context, is a challenging task. Federal agencies, by necessity, often possess a macro-level view of programs. Logic models require an understanding of “community” level (micro-level) contexts, resources, capacities to provide program activities, and abilities to measure and document outputs and outcomes.
For this reason, federal staff partner with practitioners and researchers when developing logic models. Such partnerships enhance the quality of program theory, clarify the contexts in which a program will operate, and identify program activities, outputs, and outcomes that are realistic. The inclusion of a range of stakeholders helps bridge the gap between how a program should ideally function and how it may actually function.

**External Factors**

Not all logic models explicitly describe external or contextual factors. Some describe the context or a problem to overcome in an associated narrative. Many logic models include them in the graphic model, as seen in *Figure 3*.

The inclusion of external factors—including the “situation” (i.e., assumptions, needs and assets, problems, stakeholders) and the “priorities” (i.e., mission, vision, values, mandates, resources, local dynamics)—assists the developer in framing the problem to be addressed or goal to be achieved, the action to be taken (i.e., resources and activities), and the intended results of these actions (i.e., outputs, outcomes).

While developing or describing the situation as an external factor, the logic model developer drafts statements that describe the current condition or problem to overcome, with consideration of the impacted stakeholders.

*For example, in a logic model describing the Adult Protection System, one contextual statement could be “Older adults and adults with disabilities are subject to maltreatment—abuse, neglect and exploitation (ANE)—by others or through self-neglect.”*
As modeled in Figure 3, it is essential to consider the larger priorities of ACL's mission, vision, values, etc., when considering external factors. For example, ACL’s mission is to “maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers.” Maltreatment-abuse, neglect and exploitation by others, and self-neglect are challenges to the independence, well-being, and health of older adults and adults with disabilities. As such, there is significant alignment between ACL’s mission and the interest in addressing the abuse of older adults.

One way to think about the external factors of “situation” and “priorities” is to think of them as “where you are.” Statements made should clarify the current condition or problem to overcome, including who the impacted stakeholders are and how the proposed effort aligns with ACL’s mission, vision, and values. Then you can begin to consider outcomes or impact (where you want to be).

**STEP 2: WHAT ARE INPUTS?**

It is important to describe inputs (i.e., resources) needed to support the activities proposed. Inputs include needed funding, staff, facilities, training materials, etc.

Inputs include needed funding, staff, facilities, training materials, etc. It is also important to describe the inputs (i.e., resources) needed to support the activities proposed.
STEP 3: WHAT ARE ACTIVITIES?

Activities are the “interventions” or actions that produce the direct products. Activity statements describe what is occurring or planned to occur. Identifying activities, or planning them for a new program, should be done in collaboration with program implementers so they are accurate descriptions of what is occurring or realistic expectations of what can be done with the proper inputs. Activities should be based on best practice, and there should be demonstrated evidence that they support the outcomes and impact described in the logic model. Examples of program activities include conducting trainings on specified topics, providing a service (e.g., peer counseling, information and referral, congregate meals), or providing technical assistance. There should be a direct product for every program activity to verify completion of the activity.

STEP 4: WHAT ARE OUTPUTS?

Outputs are measurable, but they should be viewed through the lens of “dosage” or “ingredients” needed to reach an outcome and achieve impact. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation presents participants as outputs, and direct products. Figure 3 provides additional examples.

Participants are individuals targeted by the activity. They may be the recipients of an activity but are not necessarily the recipients of the program.

*For example, for an activity of training staff in a new skill, those staff are the participants as they are the target of the activity, even if they are not the recipients of the program itself.*
Direct products contribute to an outcome. Examples are documents, templates, community networks, number of people reached, number of units of service provided, etc. Every program/grant should have a direct product, or an activity leading to the development of the outcome.

The following examples of output statements, adapted from the *CDC Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program Evaluation Guide* (n.d.), illustrate how logic model output statements can be written:

- *Example 1:* Number of state-level partnerships created
- *Example 2:* Number of health care professionals trained in clinical guidelines
- *Example 3:* Number of community health communication campaigns developed

**STEP 5: WHAT ARE THE DESIRED IMMEDIATE AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES?**

Immediate and intermediate outcomes are the steps needed to progress toward the long-term outcome. Immediate outcomes (short-term outcomes) examine changes in attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, skills, status, or levels of functioning that contribute to intermediate outcomes. These are the first changes expected as a result of a program activity.

Intermediate outcomes are specific, measurable changes in things like behavior, decision-making practices, and policies expected to result from program activities.

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5 For more information, see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. (n.d.). *Evaluation guide: Developing and using a logic model.* Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/docs/logic_model.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/docs/logic_model.pdf)
In other words, when you are informed, you can take meaningful action. The following example is from CDC Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention:⁶

*An example of short-term outcome or impact would be “changes in knowledge, skills, or beliefs.” The intermediate outcomes or impacts are “an increased proportion of partners treated; increased condom use; changes in policies or behaviors.”*

Viewed together, these examples align with the University of Wisconsin’s Division of Extension (2003) recommendation to focus on anticipated changes in learning, which lead to changes in action and, finally, changes in conditions, when determining an appropriate scale for an outcome or impact. Outcome statements can explicitly state a period and criteria for “success,” though these statements are not mandatory.

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⁶ For more information, see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of STD Prevention. (n.d.). *Identifying the components of a logic model.* Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Components%20of%20a%20Logic%20Model.pdf
STEP 6: WHAT ULTIMATE OUTCOMES WILL THE PROGRAM/GRANT ACHIEVE?

A logic model describes a series of steps needed for the program to reach its ultimate goal(s). Ultimate outcomes are organizational-, community-, or system-level changes expected as a result of the program.

Achieving a desired impact is often an ongoing or long-term activity. *Figure 2* shows immediate and intermediate outcomes as precursor steps to achieving ultimate impact, but this is a good example of how determining what constitutes immediate and intermediate could be relative. To differentiate between outcomes and the time necessary to achieve them, think of changes in learning or thinking as occurring rapidly (immediately). In other words, they must occur before an outcome change occurs. Applying changes in learning or thinking to action takes longer, so that creates an intermediate change. Changes in conditions are a result of changes in learning or thinking, and subsequently an action. While the timeframes provided in *Figure 1* are helpful, the most important concept is that ultimate outcomes are built on intermediate outcomes, which are in turn built on immediate outcomes.

Examples of ultimate outcomes or impacts include improved conditions, increased capacity, and/or changes in programmatic reach. Impact statements describe change or movement toward an ideal condition. Use words like “increase” or “decrease” to describe a desired change or movement. Identifying goals “big” enough to be viewed as an impact can be challenging, but logic model developers can often look to their organization’s strategic goals or priorities for examples. When drafting ultimate outcome statements, look back to the contextual statements to help define the large or systemic changes to be achieved.
The CDC Division of STD Prevention uses a logic model structure similar to ACL’s. Though its areas of focus are different, examples they provide can help illustrate the “scale” of change desired for long-term, intermediate, and short-term outcomes or impact.

*For example, in a program focusing on sexually transmitted disease prevention, the CDC states that “reduced STD prevalence; changes in morbidity and/or mortality” are desired long-term outcomes or impacts. This level of impact is the appropriate scale for developing long-term outcome or impact statements.*

**Examples of Program Logic Models**

The logic model development recommendations and template provided are not the only way to present a logic model. Stylistic variations exist, as do synonyms for several of the key components presented. The template provided should be viewed as a starting point.

It is important to recognize that logic models should be updated based on new information such as effectiveness of practice or changes in context which can occur through policy changes.

This logic model (*Example 1*) presents a comprehensive description of the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) program. This example more closely follows the column structure presented in the ACL template.

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7 For more information, see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of STD Prevention. (n.d.). Identifying the components of a logic model. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Components%20of%20a%20Logic%20Model.pdf
Example 1. Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes (Changes in knowledge, skill, attitudes, and values)</th>
<th>Medium-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes (Changes in condition, status, and experience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACL contract funding – through the DD Act | Project Management and Evaluation  
Annual strategic plan; monthly report on emerging T/TA needs and trends; self-monitoring process for assessing progress on outcomes; annual evaluation on how T/TA has supported P&As; T/TA with specific attention on the needs of legal advocacy; use evidenced based strategies, resources and tools; apply innovative techniques while maintaining cost-efficiency; develop resources of broad relevancy and provide individualized support to more complex needs  
Knowledge Development, Sharing and Transfer  
Redesign T/TA website; develop and delivery of trainings using technology and peer to peer techniques; develop and disseminate high quality, expert analysis legal advocacy resources; provide rapid response legal and operational support; provide individualized, outcome oriented T/TA  
Strengthening Peer to Peer Contacts and Networking  
Establish and maintain a cadre of P&A/legal advocacy experts; electronic means of supporting peer-to-peer networking  
Collaboration  
Foster partnership with federal agencies, P&As and other key stakeholders; electronic work plans outlining shared goals; establish a participatory group to provide guidance in the design and implementation of the T/TA contract; electronic work plans to address issues related to pressing disability issues; relevant documents to identify and address emerging priorities and needs  
Information Management  
Web-based information management system of services and supports for electronic submission of federal reports and applications; establish a system that accommodates change to information management systems maintained by the contractor; web-based federal reporting information management system with interactive components; web-based information management system for P&As to report on current and past efforts; T/TA to P&A and federal staff on the PPR and SGP web-based information management system; PAIMI annual report | Data reflecting P&A satisfaction with T/TA and P&A outcomes  
# of specialized T/TA provided by topic  
# of resources added to library  
# on site trainings and # of attendees  
# Web based trainings and number of attendees  
# of conferences attended and # of conference presentations with # of participants  
# Listserv correspondence  
# conference calls and emails  
# Legal and disability advocacy resources updated  
# Legal and disability advocacy resources developed  
# of T/AG meetings | Development of a foundational program in order to advance knowledge in the following areas:  
• The P&A program, including the history of the program and disability rights movement  
• Historical and emerging issues in the legal field, including civil rights law  
• Various effective approaches to legal advocacy focused on the protection of and advocacy for the rights of individuals with disabilities  
• Historical and emerging issues in the disability field and how they relate to legal advocacy aimed at the protection of and advocacy for the rights of individuals with disabilities  
• Standard P&A practices for individual and systemic legal advocacy, investigations, information and referral, monitoring, and public outreach  
• Measurement and evaluation of P&A effectiveness  
• Planning for P&A activities  
• Personnel management  
• Fiscal management  
• Historical and emerging promising practices in effective P&A operations | Improved P&A performance (e.g., legal advocacy services to include individual and systems advocacy), operations, and outcomes  
Improve P&A achievement and/or maintenance of statutory compliance, and achieve statutory compliance when needed  
Improved collaboration with other entities funded under the DD Act and PAIMI Act  
Increased ability of P&As to: engage in complex litigation and systemic advocacy;  
• demonstrate leadership in the disability community in their review of HCBS transition plans and implementation of Olmstead  
• develop capacity in new practice areas—such as juvenile justice and monitoring  
• utilize their access authority more effectively in correctional facilities and other facilities housing individuals with disabilities allowing P&As to represent a greater cross section of individuals with disabilities  
• re-invigorate P&A performance through re-structuring their organization, legal practice, Board practices and implementation of P&A principles and values  
P&As positioned as leaders and catalysts of systems change, capacity building and advocacy at the national, state/territory, and local levels  
Improvements in living conditions  
Increased percentage of cases closed that meet ACL regulations |
The next two logic models (*Examples 2 & 3*) describe the implementation of federal grants rather than a program. As you can see, they follow many of the same conventions as those previously described but use statements or requirements from federal grant opportunity announcements (FOAs) for the need/purpose (external factors). They also more clearly link opportunities and outputs than in the previous examples.
### Example 2. Protection & Advocacy for Voting Accessibility (PAVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Medium-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ACL grant funding – through HAVA | Continually assess HAVA related T/TA needs of P&As  
Regular discussions, needs assessments, annual HAVA Program Performance Reports; teleconferences; obtain feedback from Training and Advocacy Support Center (TASC); review evaluations from HAVA related training activities; query P&As about their T/TA needs; annual survey of P&A network; identify P&As that would benefit from targeted outreach; Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) GoVoter Advisory Committee | # of knowledge transfer strategies developed and used | P&As are more well-versed in the use of voting systems and technologies as they affect individuals with disabilities | Increased accuracy of assessments of the availability and use of systems and technology for individuals with disabilities |
| NDRN and NFB staff support | Provide timely and informative T/TA and tools to the P&As  
One-on-one T/TA to P&A staff by answering questions, explaining details, troubleshooting, educating, etc.; web-based trainings; teleconference open to P&A network to share information; sessions at annual conference addressing voting issues; targeted outreach; SABE Voter Education Teams internet based trainings; Voting Listserv; quarterly articles; update and maintain websites; content on voting issues; SABE Voter Education Toolkit | # of resources developed and disseminated | P&As are able to demonstrate and evaluate the use of such systems and technologies by individuals with disabilities (including blindness) | The meaningful involvement of, and input from, the P&As and individuals with disabilities |
| P&A staff support | Identify promising practices from the Network that improve voting access  
Collect information on innovative practices; share information using Voting Listserv, website posts, discussions, etc.; | # of peer to peer exchanges | Improved ability for P&As to meet HAVA stature requirements | Improved work related to voting for individuals with disabilities |
| | Monitor voting related trends affecting people with disabilities nationally  
Integrate critical voting issues into T/TA activities; participate in national voting coalitions and meetings; work with elections administration community and voting technology manufacturers; monitor national election listservs and publications | # training sessions held | | Increased identification of modifications to improve non-visual access |
| | | # consultations provided | | |
| | | # evaluation webinars | | |
| | | # Voter Experience Survey responses | | |
| | | SABE Voter Project Facebook analytics | | |
| | | # attendees at teleconferences | | |
| | | | | Increase inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the voting process |
| | | | | Improved proficiency in the use of voting systems and technology among voting center staff and individuals with disabilities |
Example 3. AIDD NAS Interdisciplinary Training Implementation Logic Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need/Purpose</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Ouptuts</th>
<th>Immediate Outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate Outcomes</th>
<th>Ultimate Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This FOA supports the Secretary’s priority to address the opioid crisis. The grant will address through training gaps in access to and delivery of quality treatment and services to infants, young children and families impacted by neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). The purpose of the NTI is to train interdisciplinary teams on emerging knowledge and evidence-based practices in screening, monitoring and care for children with NAS, or impacted by related substance exposure.</td>
<td>AIDD funding of a 3-year cooperative agreement @ $451,952 annually Project Officer Support URC support to include meetings with federal partners and the grantees and in disseminating findings Initial report with recommendation(s) from current NAS pilot</td>
<td>Implementation of a NAS Interdisciplinary Training Curriculum in Targeted States to address health, education and behavioral strategies for professionals to improve outcomes of children and families impacted by NAS in the highest need states as determined by the grantee.</td>
<td>Number of interdisciplinary teams trained in NAS strategies Number of participants from rural and urban areas Number of participants by discipline (e.g., health, allied health, education, behavioral health, family systems, early childhood, etc). Number of States/UCEDDs participating in NAS trainings. Number of collaborative partnerships among agencies at the local, state and national levels to jointly address NAS. Number of NAS trainings conducted. Demographic data of participants including gender, race, ethnicity, education, SES. Number of participants continuing in more than one or all trainings. Number/types of NAS training products/materials disseminated.</td>
<td>(s) Professionals trained report increased knowledge in NAS and trauma-informed care approaches. (2) Professionals report increased confidence in treating NAS and other family challenges. (3) Providers/caregivers report increased educational, health and behavioral supports. (4) Caregivers report increased access to quality community services.</td>
<td>Reduction in gaps in access and delivery of quality education and support services to children and families impacted by neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) or by related substance exposure. Providers more capable of serving this population.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Logic Model Resources

There are a large number of quality logic model development and other related resources available to program administrators, implementers, and evaluators. The resources referenced below are freely available examples.


# ACL Logic Model Template

Insert Name of Program/Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEED/PURPOSE</th>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ULTIMATE OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Authorizing Statute[s]/Mandates:
Developed by Jennifer Tillery, ACL Sr. Social Science Analyst
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