

Tips for Setting Good Objectives

Program Objective: What are you trying to do?

A well-defined program objective is THE MOST important component of a good plan. If the objective is too broad, the decisions made from this point on will be vague, virtually guaranteeing an ineffective campaign. Your objective is not your mission. Your objective is the next step in your overall plan for achieving your mission. Generally, objectives can be divided into three categories: behavior change, policy change (which can mean government or corporate policy) and fundraising.

“Stopping global climate change,” “saving the children” and “raising more money” are admirable and important endeavors, but they are too broad. Many things will have to happen to make these visions a reality. If you start with too broad an objective, you'll end up with an overly broad audience and vague messages. You need to hone in on an objective that is **DOABLE and MEASURABLE over the next 12-24 months**. For instance:

- Behavior Change Objective

Bad Example: *“Increasing healthy eating in my community”*

Better Example: *“Increase the number of families graduating from healthy cooking classes by 75% by the end of 2016.”*

- Policy Change Objective

Bad Example: *“Making the streets safer”*

Better Example: *“Enact a joint use agreement with three elementary schools in our neighborhood by the start of the 2016 school year.”*

- Fundraising Objective

Bad Example: *“Raise more money”*

Better Example: *“Attract 100 new donors who each give at least \$50 by September 2016.”*

Evaluating the Objective

Write your communication objective:

Is it a good objective? Use the following checklist to evaluate:

	YES	NO
• Is the objective doable and achievable in the next 12-24 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is there a clear audience target that makes this objective achievable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Are there specific ways to measure your progress to let you know you're headed in the right direction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The answer to all these questions should be “Yes.” If not, go back and refine your objective.

More Examples of Good Objectives

“Fully implement a CPTED program in two neighborhood parks with 70% of changes made by July 1, 2017.”

“Increase the number of corner stores taking part in the Healthy Bodega program by 30% by the end of 2016.”

“Recruit two city council members and five leaders from faith communities to our advisory board by fall 2016.”