

Results Worksheet Guide

The following are definitions of the terms used in Results First:

Results. The specific intended accomplishments to be achieved by a program. These are clearly stated and well understood by all who help make them happen. They are the consequences of our activities and those of nonprofits in whom we invest. *Results are commitments, not aspirations and they contain the specific minimal level of change that a program must make to be successful.*

Milestones. These are things that must be accomplished on an incremental basis to forecast that a program will reach its results. Milestone management is the approach for generating and using information to make course corrections where needed. *Milestones go beyond a work plan to focus on what participants must get out of and use from program steps.*

Verification. This is what we do to confirm the level of result achievement when the program ends. It includes clarity on the yardstick to be used to show change and the specific level of change achieved. *With some exceptions we are not evaluating programs. We are validating accomplishment within programs.*

Development of Results:

When developing your result, use the following statement format on the worksheet provided: *“Of the [insert # of unduplicated clients along with a brief participant description], we anticipate serving, [insert specific # of persons to achieve the result] will get to [insert the stated result, as defined above].”*

One good way to start is with the good or service you offer and then ask the question “So what?” So you produce a resource directory. So what? So...at least 100 persons report reading it and connecting with a resource that they did not know about. Whatever you offer—a workshop, counseling, training, or anything else—focus on what your participants get from attending.

Results should have the following characteristics:

- They are numbers, not percentages alone. (80% achieving a result is great if the number is 100, but not if it is 10.
- They focus on behaviors rather than attitudes or knowledge. It is much easier to verify behavior than such expressions as “empowered” or “higher self-esteem”. If helpful, start with a condition or disposition and ask yourself what an empowered person can achieve that a non-empowered one cannot. This gets you to something you can verify.
- They specify the amount of change to be achieved. If you simply state that students will improve in reading, then a very tiny increment of improvement would count. If you say they will improve by one grade level or one level on the Florida reading comprehension scale, we know how much gain you will achieve. In most programs there is a threshold level of something good going up or something bad going down that is needed to really make a difference.
- They are doable with a big stretch. Set your result high enough to make a real difference, but not so high as to be impossible to achieve. If you set the target quite low such as to be easy to achieve, other applicants in your arena may be more competitive for investment.
- They speak to what is achieved at the end of the program, not interim accomplishments that are actually milestones.
- They focus separately on different participants. In some programs, there is a result for children, for example, and a different result for their parent or caregiver. In that case, state results separately for each kind of participant.
- In stating the number of participants that achieve the results, start with the total unduplicated number of participants you plan to serve for the year.

Developing milestones:

Milestones shift the focus, from what you do from your program steps. Start by thinking of individual participants and how they incrementally progress from the time they enter the program to when they achieve the result. Focus not on their participating, but on their getting the needed gain from participation to forecast that they will be successful in getting to the intended gain.

- Define the time for each milestone in terms of how many days, weeks, or months from the starting date you think it should occur. This is especially important if you have rolling start times. With clarity on individuals and information on how many persons are projected to begin in each program month you can readily compute how many persons have achieved each milestone on a monthly and quarterly basis that we will request for reporting.
- In some cases, the milestones are assessments or check points in a standardized program, which is fine. After so many weeks, a teen needs to score at x or y on a given assessment to be deemed on track. To be milestones, they must be strong predictors of a participant achieving the result.
- Don't wait until your participant is deep into the program to determine a milestone. They should begin at the first possible point they can be observed. This gives you the most time to adjust the program if course correction is needed to succeed. Staff interacting with participants often know quite early if a participant is likely to achieve the result. Most report they look for engagement, not just participation. This can lead to a first milestone of engagement—which is different from passive participation.
- Make sure the milestones can be readily verified as part of the program. Data generated and tracked by the program is fine, including what staff “see and hear” from participants that indicates they are making needed progress.
- If you cannot readily find a starting point, an approach that often works is to: List your services—from enrollment through workshops, trainings, counseling, or anything else you do on a worksheet. For each service, ask: “So what?” What does the participant need to gain from this? Often several steps are needed to achieve one milestone.

One good starting point is to ask what you first see and hear that tells you a participant is likely to be successful—whether a student getting to grade level, a teen avoiding pregnancy, a family keeping an adopted child or anything else. Typically your staff that directly interact with participants have the best insights into this. Early milestones are the best milestones, in that they let you take action at the earliest possible point rather than simply go through the rest of a program that is unlikely to work for a participant.

Another good starting point is to think of your program as a funnel. If you start with 100 participants you are unlikely to end with that many at the result. Projecting and then tracking the number at each key milestone of participant progression is a great practice. If you lose more persons at each milestone than you projected you would you will soon not have enough participants progressing to achieve your result.

Verifying milestones:

This is where you figure out how you will know that participants have achieved the milestones you have set. Here you will describe the yardstick or verification tool you will use and to what extent it is predictive of milestone (and result) achievement.

- Focus not on methods for evaluating (e.g., we will use a survey or a pre/post-test), but on the actual yardsticks you will use to verify the individual's accomplishment. In many programs, you have proven instruments available for this purpose.
- For any specific assessments, or other tools that you are using to show progress, note any evidence that it is an accurate predictor of the result being present.
- Where you think direct interaction and observation is stronger than a formal assessment, note what it is that staff or others will see and hear that shows participants have achieved the result.
- Where possible, include your participants' perspective. What is their take on gains made? E.g., that ____ will offer examples of what they are doing differently based on what they learned in our program. Satisfaction is a weak surrogate for using a program effectively.

Examples:

Result: Of the 50 high-risk parents, we anticipate serving, 42 will achieve the behavior goals in the areas which moves them out of the "at-risk range" for child abuse/neglect and they have no new reported instances of child/abuse neglect.

Milestone 1: Parents can point to insights from initial assessment and are committed to achieve the set goals in Their Parenting Improvement Plan.

Typical time to achieve: 2-3 weeks.

Verification: Staff has documented the insights of parents following the initial assessment as well as parent's visible commitment to achieving their goals in the Parenting Improvement Plan.

Milestone 2: Parents have actively engaged within the first four weeks, demonstrating (not just knowing) new skills learned.

Typical time to achieve: 4 weeks.

Verification: Staff has documented evidence of parent engagement in the program through the skills they have seen the parents put into practice during this time in the program.

Milestone 3: After 8 weeks, parents are advancing toward completion of their behavioral goals within the timelines set in the Parenting Improvement Plan.

Typical time to achieve: 8 weeks.

Verification: Parents have made documented progress in the behavior goals and have been demonstrating their skills during supervised home visit observations.

Milestone 4: Parents have met all goals in their parenting plan, placing them out of the risk range for child abuse/neglect.

Typical time to achieve: 18 months.

Verification: There have been no new reports of child abuse/neglect involving the parents.

Results First Worksheet

Result	
Milestone 1	
Time to Achieve	
Verification	
Milestone 2	
Time to Achieve	
Verification	
Milestone 3	
Time to Achieve	
Verification	
Milestone 4	
Time to Achieve	
Verification	