

SMART GOALS

In the M-A-C AIDS Fund's applications, grant applicants are asked to provide up to three SMART goals.

S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym for the 5 steps of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based goals.

This is a simple tool used by organizations and businesses to avoid vague goal-setting in order to create an actionable plan for important results. The acronym SMART has a number of slightly different variations, which can be combined and used to provide a more comprehensive definition for goal-setting:

S	Specific, significant, stretching
M	Measurable, meaningful, motivational
A	Agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented
R	Realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented
T	Time-based, time-bound, timely, tangible, trackable

Goals should describe desired accomplishments, not activities. Below are more broad definitions.

- **Specific:** Goal objectives should address the five Ws: who, what, when, where, and why. Make sure the goal specifies what needs to be done, with a timeframe for completion. Use action verbs like create, design, develop, implement, produce, etc. A goal is specific when it is well-defined and clear to anyone that has a basic knowledge of the project.
- **Measurable:** Goal objectives should include numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, cost, etc. How will you and your staff member know when the goal has been successfully met? Focus on elements such as observable actions, quantity, quality, cycle time, efficiency, and/or flexibility to measure outcomes, not activities. A well-measured goal means you know if the goal is obtainable, how far away completion is, and you will know when it has been achieved.
- **Achievable:** Goal objectives should be within the organization's control and influence. Is the goal achievable with the available resources? Is the goal achievable within the timeframe originally outlined? Consider authority or control, influence, resources, and work environment support to meet the goal. It is also key to be in agreement with all the stakeholders about what the goals should be.
- **Relevant:** Goals should be instrumental to the mission of the organization. Why is the goal important? Is it results-oriented?
- **Time-based:** Goal objectives should identify a definite target date for completion and/or frequencies for specific action steps that are important for achieving the goal. By when should this goal be accomplished? A well timed goal means you have enough time to achieve the goal and not too much time which can affect project performance.

Not SMART: Our goal is to help our HIV-positive clients be healthier and have stable housing.

SMART: Our goal is to implement an innovative housing program in FY2015 in Richmond that will provide stable housing to 40% of our homeless HIV-positive clients within six months of seeking our services.