



## What is a vision statement?

A **vision statement** for a community health initiative conveys what the group believes are the ideal conditions for your community. It communicates what success would look like.

Having a clear vision has several advantages. It can: draw people to common work, encourage stakeholder buy-in, help articulate the group's work to others, and provide a basis for other important elements of planning.

The vision statement should contain brief phrases that convey the community's dreams for the future.

Examples include: healthy children, active adults, caring parents, safe neighborhoods, access to opportunity, health for all.

## What is a mission statement?

A **mission statement** describes what the group is going to do, and why it is going to do it. Although like vision statements, mission statements are more concrete and action oriented.

The why portion of a mission statement might refer to a problem or to a goal.

The what portion of the statement communicates the broad approach to be used.

Mission statements communicate your group's overarching goals. Mission statements should be concise, outcome oriented, and inclusive.

Here's an example: "To reduce diabetes and cardiovascular disease [the why] through a collaborative partnership to promote healthy nutrition, physical activity, and access to health services [the what]").

# What are objectives?

**Objectives** refer to specific measurable results for the broad goals of the initiative. They generally lay out how much of what will be accomplished by when. Setting objectives can help prioritize goals and activities, keep the focus on the mission, and provide benchmarks for accountability. There are four basic types of objectives:

- » **Process/implementation objectives** refer to the implementation of activities necessary to achieve objectives. An example would be the number of training sessions delivered.
- » **Community/system objectives** refer to changes in the environment to be sought to address the mission. These typically consist of new or enhanced programs, policies, and practices. Examples include: a new walking/bike path (for physical activity), available interpreters in safety net clinics (access to health services), or expanded after-school programs (prevention of substance abuse and adolescent pregnancy).
- » **Behavioral objectives** look at changing the behaviors of people and the products (or results) of their behaviors. For example, a group addressing cardiovascular disease might develop an objective around increasing physical activity (behavior) or the product of behavior (individuals achieving healthy weight).
- » **Community-level outcomes** go beyond individual behavior to outcomes for groups of people. For example, a group working to prevent childhood obesity might look to reduce the percentage of children/youth with an unhealthy body mass index (BMI).

## **Ensure objectives are “SMART + C”:**

- » Specific
- » Measurable, at least potentially
- » Achievable
- » Relevant, to the mission
- » Timed, with date for attainment
- » Challenging, requiring extraordinary effort

Be flexible with deadlines in creating objectives; for instance, if the objective is important but may not happen right away, keep it but extend the timeline for attainment. Defining objectives is a process; it may require second and third versions for clarity and completeness.

## **Example of SMART + C statements for objective type:**

- » Implementation objective: By 2013, the curriculum will be implemented in all participating schools.
- » Community/system change objective: By 2014, there will be a least one walking/biking path on the main routes to the elementary school.
- » Behavioral objective: By 2015, the percentage of children/adults reporting regular physical activity will increase by 30%.
- » Population-level objective: By 2020, the number of new cases of breast cancer will decrease by 20%.