

Writing SMART Grant Objectives

A Practice Worksheet for Food Pantries, Meal Programs & Related Organizations

Quick Reference: The SMART Framework

S — Specific: Clearly states what will happen, who will be served, and how.

M — Measurable: Includes a number, percentage, or other indicator that can be tracked and verified.

A — Achievable: Realistic and attainable given your organization's capacity, budget, and staffing.

R — Relevant: Directly connected to your program's mission and the community need you're addressing.

T — Time-Bound: Includes a specific deadline, grant period, or time frame (e.g., "by December 31," "within 12 months").

PART ONE: Identify What's Missing

Each objective below is missing one or two SMART elements. Read each one carefully, circle the missing element(s) from the S–M–A–R–T list, and then write a revised version that makes the objective fully SMART.

Objective 1:

The food pantry will increase the number of households receiving fresh produce.

Which SMART element(s) are missing or weak? Circle or write below:

S — M — A — R — T

Missing element(s) and explanation:

How would you revise this objective?

Objective 2:

By December 31 of the grant year, our senior meal program will improve participant satisfaction with meal quality, as measured by a post-meal survey administered quarterly to all enrolled participants.

Which SMART element(s) are missing or weak? Circle or write below:

S — M — A — R — T

Missing element(s) and explanation:

How would you revise this objective?

Objective 3:

Within 6 months, 90% of participants enrolled in our nutrition education series will report increased confidence in preparing healthy, low-cost meals at home, as measured by pre- and post-class surveys.

Which SMART element(s) are missing or weak? Circle or write below:

S — M — A — R — T

Missing element(s) and explanation:

How would you revise this objective?

Objective 4:

Our agency will distribute more culturally appropriate food boxes to immigrant families in our service area during the upcoming grant period.

Which SMART element(s) are missing or weak? Circle or write below:

S — M — A — R — T

Missing element(s) and explanation:

How would you revise this objective?

Objective 5:

We will offer monthly cooking classes that teach budget-friendly meal preparation skills to low-income adults.

Which SMART element(s) are missing or weak? Circle or write below:

S — M — A — R — T



Missing element(s) and explanation:

How would you revise this objective?

PART TWO: Write Your Own SMART Objectives

Now it's your turn. Think about a program or service your organization currently offers or is planning. Using the SMART framework, write two grant objectives for that program. Be prepared to share your objectives with the group for feedback and discussion.

Tips before you write: *Start by identifying your program's main goal. Then ask: What specifically will change? For whom? By how much? By when? Is that target realistic?*

My SMART Objective 1:

Write your objective here:

SMART Self-Check:

- Specific — Does it say exactly what will happen, for whom, and how?
- Measurable — Is there a number, percentage, or clear indicator of success?
- Achievable — Is the target realistic given your capacity and resources?
- Relevant — Does it connect directly to your program goals and community need?
- Time-Bound — Does it include a deadline or time period?

My SMART Objective 2:

Write your objective here:

SMART Self-Check:



- Specific — Does it say exactly what will happen, for whom, and how?
- Measurable — Is there a number, percentage, or clear indicator of success?
- Achievable — Is the target realistic given your capacity and resources?
- Relevant — Does it connect directly to your program goals and community need?
- Time-Bound — Does it include a deadline or time period?

Group Sharing & Peer Feedback

When sharing your objectives with the group, your peers will offer feedback using these guiding questions:

1. Which SMART elements are clearly present? How do you know?
2. Is anything missing or unclear? What specific language would strengthen it?
3. Does the target feel achievable for an organization of your size? Why or why not?
4. Is there a baseline or current data point that could make this objective even stronger?

Notes from peer feedback:

Remember: Strong grant objectives don't just describe activity — they describe change. Show funders what will be different, for whom, and by when.

