

Developing Effective Objectives with the SMARTIE Framework

The Operational Plan outlines key departmental work that contributes to the County's vision and mission. Each objective should be measurable, realistic, and aligned with strategic priorities.

1. Gather People

- Include input from staff across the County, clients, partners, and the public.

2. Align Contributions

- Choose the overall result that you want for the people that you serve. An example might be, "All children in Santa Cruz County can walk or bike to school."
 - Hint: Use existing results! The County's Vision and Equity Statement is a result. Your organization or department strategic plan is also a result. There may be additional results that your work aligns to: Board policy, Regional, State, or Federal policy and plans, etc.

3. Get Data

- What data might tell you if the result is being reached? If you are aligning to the County Strategic Plan, you can look to our [Community Indicators](#) to start. The next place to look is [DataShare](#).
- Once you have a data point, look at how the data is trending, and work with your team to set a target for where you want the data to trend in the future.

4. Get Focused

- When you look at the data, ask yourself who would benefit most if you were able to shift the indicator that you picked above? To do this you will have to disaggregate your data. This means that you might look to see if there are different outcomes by race/ethnicity, geography, income, or other factors.

5. List and Prioritize

- Make a list with two columns: Helping and Hindering. What is currently helping people to reach the target we identified above, and what is hindering people from reaching the target?
- Prioritize: Rank your list by impact and validate with staff and partners.

6. Draft Objectives Using SMARTIE

- **Specific:** The objective addresses a validated priority from your team list.
- **Measurable:** The objective has quantifiable performance measures:
 - How much did we do?
 - How well did we do it?
 - What difference did we make?
 - Is anybody better off?
- **Achievable:** The objective is supported by department and County leadership, and is resourced through the Proposed Budget.
- **Relevant:** The objective creates incentives to change patterns of behavior.
- **Time-bound:** The objective has a timeline that creates urgency and accountability within the team.
- **Inclusive:** The objective is validated with people that will be impacted by the change, helping to identify unintended consequences.
- **Equitable:** The objective works primarily to benefit the focus population identified in your disaggregated data.