

# FUNDAMENTALS OF MEASUREMENT TOOLS USED TO MEASURE COMMUNITY ACTION OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

## WHAT IS A MEASUREMENT TOOL?

DOCUMENTS THAT PROVE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES.

We need data to support and provide evidence (for each indicator or service we are pursuing):

- of what we have done (activity, service, **output**) and
- what has happened (change, progress, **outcome**)

<b>OUTPUT MEASUREMENT TOOLS</b> document the services/processes provided by the agency or done by the customer.	<b>OUTCOME MEASUREMENT TOOLS</b> document the change that has happened and the progress made towards a goal.
An intake form would document how many people were enrolled (output) in a program, but it would not prove what happened to them.	A pre- and post-test would document the change in skill or knowledge (outcome).
A log of payment would show an individual received a rent payment (output) but would not prove that the individual maintained housing for 30 days.	A follow up call to see if an individual was still in the housing unit would provide data regarding the status of maintaining housing (outcome).
A roster of individuals receiving food boxes (output) would document the service provided but would not prove increased food security.	A survey could be used to prove if the food services they received had increased food security (outcome).

### MEASUREMENT TOOLS VS SCALE/MATRIX

A scale or matrix by itself is NOT a measurement tool but stores the data from a measurement tool. A measurement tool is needed to determine where the client falls on the scale/matrix, which can then be used to track client progress. EXAMPLE: A survey to determine whether a client is “in crisis,” “safe,” or “thriving” is the measurement tool being used to determine the state of the client on a scale. The movement of a client from “in crisis” to “safe” on the scale after six months of service and a follow-up survey demonstrates client progress.

You have to make sure the measurement tool is appropriate for the indicator. For example, attendance records for a class would not be a good measurement tool if the indicator is "getting a job." Below is a list of examples of measurement tools:

OUTCOME	OUTCOME Measurement tools	OUTPUT	OUTPUT Measurement tools	Data Storage
Attain a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED)	<b>Copy of Diploma or Certificate</b>	HSED Classes	<b>Enrollment form at HSED Classes</b>	File cabinet
Attain a job	<b>Employment records</b>	Resume workshops	<b>Sign-in sheets in resume workshops</b>	Case files
Increased school readiness	<b>Pre-post tests</b>	Early childhood education classes	<b>Intake forms for early childhood program</b>	Agency program database
Increased nutrition skills	<b>Self-reported surveys</b>	Cooking classes	<b>Participation records at cooking classes</b>	File cabinet
Increased physical health	<b>Health records</b>	Fitness and wellness classes	<b>Activity log</b>	Individual case records

### MEASUREMENT TOOLS VS STORAGE

A measurement tool is NOT the place where you enter and store data. A database or file cabinet is where you keep documentation about what you found after you've used a measurement tool to determine if an outcome was achieved. Then you enter the number of people who achieved the outcome into your database.

**EXAMPLE:** A report card is the document that would show a child's grades and that would allow you to determine if they improved or not. The data from the report card is entered into your electronic data system, so you can retrieve, aggregate and analyze it later. The report card is the measurement tool. The database is the storage system. The chart above shows this difference.

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