MICHIGAN HEALTH ENDOWMENT FUND

EVALUATION APPROACH: HOW TO GUIDE

Evaluation can be a powerful tool to inform decision-making and ensure that scarce resources are used effectively. To help us better understand the impact of our grantmaking, and to help our grantees learn about what interventions and programs do and don't work, we at the Health Fund prioritize evaluation and evaluative thinking. We strongly encourage applicants to use evaluation tools to inform their program design.

While we do not require formal evaluation plans as part of your grant application, we do ask that you demonstrate a reasonable plan for the anticipated relationship between your project activities, outputs, short- and long-term outcomes, and the overall impact(s) you're aiming to achieve. You should also be able to demonstrate a plan for how to measure progress toward those outcomes.

To gather this information, the Health Fund requires that each applicant submit a document outlining and visually depicting a proposed **evaluation approach**. This evaluation approach should be uploaded as a separate document in the "Request Documents" section in Fluxx. This evaluation approach is a separate document from the work plan (also required), but they should complement one another.

The precise format of your evaluation approach document is up to you, the applicant. It could be a logic model, a strategy map, a diagram, a table, or another format—we've shared a few examples in the following pages. These are provided merely as guidance. Please note that, regardless of the format you choose, the evaluation approach should not exceed 3 pages total, and must address each of the **five key terms** highlighted below.

KEY TERMS TO INCLUDE

1. **Inputs** are the resources your organization devotes to a project or program, whether they be human, financial, capital, organizational, or community resources. Expertise, such as a consultant or a partner organization, can be also considered an input.

2. **Activities** are the work! They are the specific things you propose to do as part of your project or program. Activities produce movement toward outcomes**.** They might include trainings, outreach to create a partnership, developing curricula, or even direct health services.

3. **Outputs** are the direct, tangible results that tell the story of what you produced via your activities. They are evidence that a program's activities were performed as planned. Outputs might be training classes offered, or the total number of people served by an activity. However, output measures do not address the value or impact of a project's activities.

4. **Outcomes** are specific improvements that occur as a result of your organization's work. Outcomes occur over time, ranging from short-term to long-term. For example, a short-term outcome might be increased provider knowledge of clinical guidelines, whereas a longer-term outcomes might be that a health system implements new clinical guidelines. An outcome is not the publication of a report or outreach to a number of people. Long-term outcomes typically involve behavior change, systems and environmental change, or health outcomes.

5. **Impact** is the ultimate goal(s) that your organization hopes to achieve. This could be during and beyond the grant period.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are many resources that can walk you through the process of building your evaluation approach. As background, a **logic model** is a graphic depiction (road map) that presents the shared relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for your program. It depicts the relationship between your program's activities and its intended effects.

A theory of change is a description of the causal chain and effect that links strategies to outcomes; whereas a logic model is a graphical representation of this theory of change. Although the theory of change shows forward movement, an organization often begins its planning process by articulating its intended outcomes and then working backward to determine the most effective strategies to achieve them.

The following resources are available to provide more background and help:

- CDC Approach to Evaluation: https://www.cdc.gov/eval/approach/index.htm
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation Step-by-Step Guide to Evaluation: https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2017/11/wk-kellogg-foundation-step-by-step-guide-to-evaluation and Logic Model Development Guide: https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2006/02/wk-kellogg-foundation-logic-model-development-guide
- "Tearless" Logic Model Process Guide: https://www.gjcpp.org/pdfs/2011-0010-tool.pdf
- University of Minnesota Children, Youth, and Families Evaluation Tools: https://cyfar.org/what-logic-model

CONTACT US

The evaluation team at the Health Fund understands that terms like logic models can be daunting to some. We are happy to talk with potential applicants about your proposed project evaluation approach. To learn more, please contact us.

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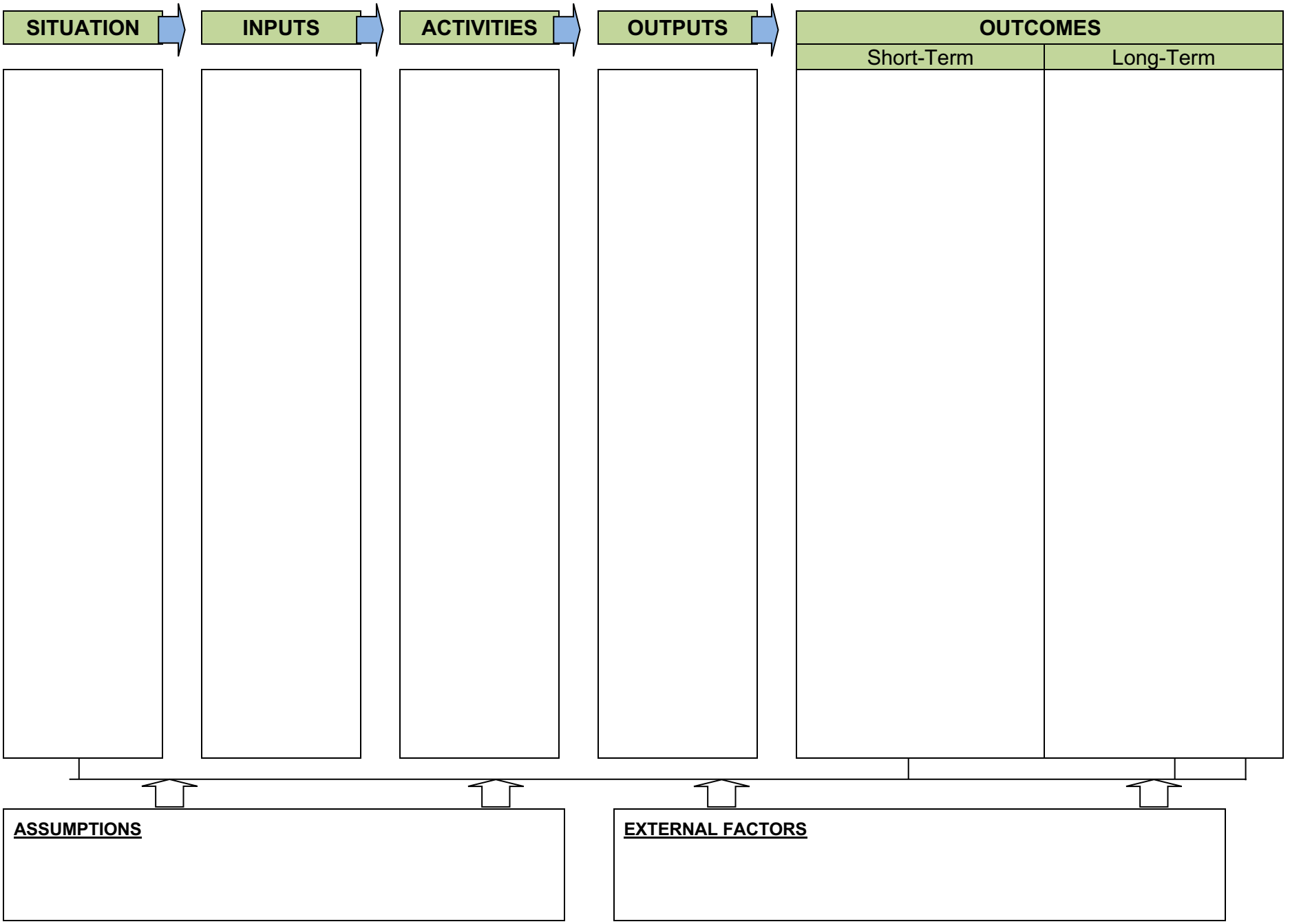
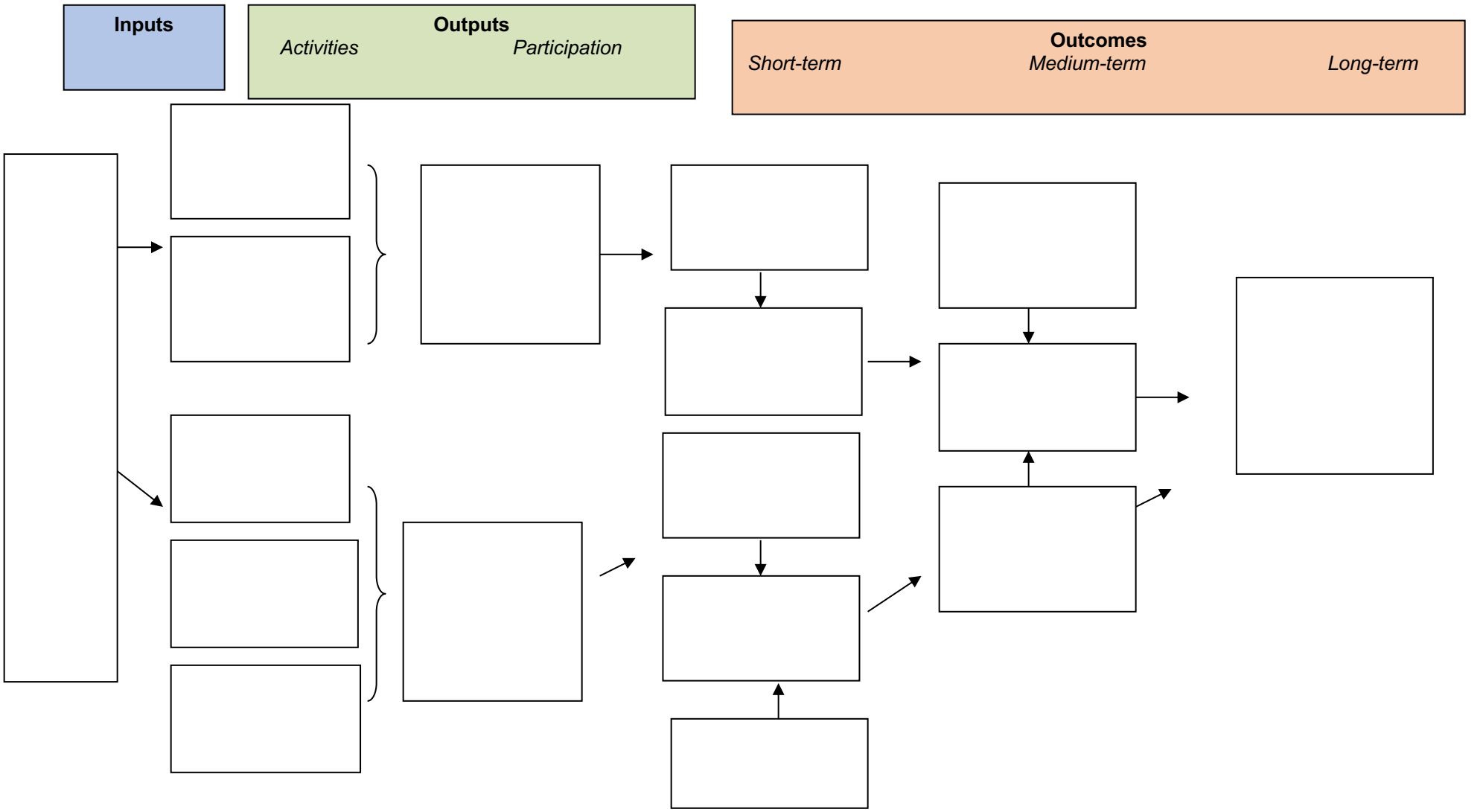
Evaluation Approach: Sample 1 (Logic model)



Evaluation Approach: Sample 2

INTENDED IMPACT(S):					
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Evaluation Approach: Sample 3



Assumptions

External Factors