

The following material was presented during CIP writing workshops hosted by the Heart of Illinois United Way in December 2022.

A. Benefits of Continuous Improvement Plans

(adapted from: <https://theleanway.net/5-Benefits-of-Continuous-Improvement>)

- Engaged Staff and Colleagues
- Lower Staff Turnover
- Improvement of Processes
- Improvement of Outcomes
- Better Client Service
- Improvement of Agency Culture

B. What is a Continuous Improvement Plan?

(<https://www.liveabout.com/planning-for-continuous-improvement-in-the-workplace-2275281>)

A continuous improvement plan is a set of activities designed to bring gradual, ongoing improvement to products, services, or processes through constant review, measurement, and action.

C. Topic Examples of potential Continuous Improvement Plans

- New Executive Director / Board Members
- Staff Retention/Recruitment
- Implementation of an agency wide software/accounting system changes
- Change of site location / program hours
- Remodel of facility (accessible issues)
- Client incentives
- Addition of amenities

D. Evaluating some CIPs using SMART

- **S**pecific: State the task targeted for improvement
- **M**easurable: What data will support and prove the task will be met?
- **A**ctionable/**A**ttainable: Provide a description of the actions that will be taken, or the likelihood this goal can be achieved.
- **R**elevant: Ensure that the goal is relevant to the program or agency.
- **T**imebound: Provide a timeline for accomplishment of this CIP

Reconstructing a CIP (Example 1)

“Bad” CIP: Staff will start to hand deliver feedback survey to clients as they were leaving the program.

Reconstructed CIP using SMART:

Specific + Measurable + Actionable/Attainable + Relevant + Timebound

We will increase our client feedback collection rate by 20% by July 31, 2023. We will accomplish this by providing clients 10 minutes to complete the survey as they exit the program. This effort supports our program goal of ensuring measurable client input for delivered services and focuses on the CIP Category of Client Feedback/Satisfaction and the CIP Area of Client Feedback Collection/Rate of Response.

Reconstructing a CIP (Example 2)

“Bad” CIP: Sent program fliers to other non-for-profit partners to market program and services.

Reconstructed CIP using SMART:

Specific + Measurable + Actionable/Attainable + Relevant + Timebound

As a result of a review of our outputs, we will increase our marketing efforts with potential clients at our non-profit partners. We will accomplish this by sending a minimum of 100 fliers to 6 agencies by July 31, 2023. This effort supports our program goal of maximizing community partners for increased awareness and potential enrollment of low-income households in our targeted service area. It focuses on the CIP Category of Program Results and the CIP Area of Client Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention and Management.

Reconstructing a CIP (Example 3)

“Bad” CIP: Wednesday weekly check in meetings to discuss program delivery, structure, safety, and planning.

Reconstructed CIP using SMART:

Specific + Measurable + Actionable/Attainable + Relevant + Timebound

In an effort to continue COVID-19 agency protocols, we will institute a minimum of eight Weekly Check-In Meetings with all management staff. We will determine the effectiveness of this CIP through a verbal review process at the conclusion of the first eight weeks. This effort supports the program goal of safety and services for enrolled clients while focusing on the CIP Category of Leadership Engagement and the CIP Area of Communication/Engagement with Staff.

E. Below are phrases and key words that help provide context and descriptive narrative to CIPs. It is possible to many of these in one CIP to identify all the components of a SMART goal.

- Include staff titles, names of partners/organizations
- Within number of days, weeks, months
- As a result of
- Achieved on (list date)
- Increase by %, number of, dollar amount
- Decrease by %, number of, dollar amount
- To better collect
- Cultivate relationships
- Marketing program services
- In order to
- Implemented by
- Established on
- Under development
- Ongoing
- Evaluate the effectiveness of
- Created interventions for
- Beginning on
- Related to
- Assessed by
- Compare/contrast