

**Getting Started: A Self-Administered Guide to Theory
of Change Development and Advocacy Evaluation
EXERCISES**

Developing an Outcome Map

Element ONE:

**Identify Needs, Purposes and Frames for
Communication and Evaluation**

Step 1. Brainstorm relevant audiences for a theory of change Outcome Map.

Main Audiences	Target Audience Y/N?	<i>You are successful if.....</i> What are the primary interests/needs of the audience?

Step 2. Prioritize relevant strategies and outcome areas to highlight in your Outcome Map.

A major news source is putting together a summary of your past year of work. What is the **headline** that would best communicate success to your target audience(s)? What would your target audience most want to read or hear?

The headline could address.....

What work you have done	Examples
Types of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of data products • Development of media spots/press releases • Provide training/technical assistance • Sponsor/facilitate meetings and events • Conduct research/evaluation • Legislative advocacy • Identify strategies and tactics for Universal Pre-K campaign

OR

What you have accomplished as a result of your work	Examples
How much have you done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of hits on CLIks • # of downloads of policy/ issue briefs/newsletter • # of public and nonprofit organizations receiving products • # and types of attendees at conferences/ meetings • Open rate of our KC news alert email message • # of policy makers who received the data book • # 3 press releases sent to daily newspaper, TV stations, radio stations

Effectiveness (outcomes) of your work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative report tracking policy changes • Public citation of use of KC products by policymakers • # of instances where products are cited in policy debates (legislative record search) • Evidence of policymaker engagement (i.e. press releases, citations in bill language) • # of child advocacy groups that use data/ products (State Child Advocate Survey) • # of research proven initiatives used in state
Strategic accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected message to frame key issue • Selected topic/frame/approach for development of data products • Selected approaches to disseminate messages/data products

Step 3. Identify the breadth of your efforts and your model for change.

This could be your model if.....	
Social Change Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a broad, long term view of your work • The primary focus of your work is to change conditions related to the health, well-being, or prospects of a particular population/group (e.g. vulnerable children) or aspect of the environment
Policy Change Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a long-term view of your work • The primary focus of your work is related to development, adoption or implementation of a broad policy agenda (e.g. K-12 reform) or specific policy-related outcome
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are implementing a specific strategy within a specific time period • The primary focus of your work is to influence a broad policy agenda or a specific policy-related outcome through advocacy tactics. Advocacy tactics include message development, data product development and dissemination, coalition-building, development of champions, legislative advocacy.

Step 4. Determine the length of time between strategy implementation and outcome achievement that will be depicted in theory of change.

Thinking about the “headline” you identified above to communicate success to your target audience:

- How long will it take to implement the strategies and/or achieve the range of desired accomplishments, outcomes and goal(s)? Will it likely take 1-3 years? 3-5 years? 5-10 years? 10 years or more?

Headline	1-3 years?	3-5 years?	5-10 years?	10 years or more?

Consider: What implications does your working timeframe have in terms of the particular strategies and activities that will be implemented and/or outcomes (changes, results) that will be achieved in the short term, intermediate term and longer term?

Step 5. Determine vantage point(s) for depicting a theory of change Outcome Map.

This could be your vantage point if SOME or ALL of the following are true.....	
<p>50,000 foot view</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your organization has identified a social change model • Your organization typically works in a context of collaboration and partnership to achieve shared goals • You want your Outcome Map to show how your organization’s strategies connect with those of other groups, and with a broad, long-term goal <p>See examples: Connecticut Association for Human Services, Children First For Oregon: “Fostering Success”</p>
<p>30,000 foot view</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your organization engages in multiple strategies directed towards a broad, long-term goal (e.g. a policy-related goal) • Your organization has adopted a social change or a policy-change model • You want your Outcome Map to portray the strategies and expected outcomes reflected by the whole of your organization’s work, and the connections among strategies/outcomes. • You want your Outcome Map to help express your organization’s particular role or contribution within a broader effort <p>See examples: Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Action for Children North Carolina</p>
<p>10,000 foot view</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your organization is engaged in a specific strategy directed at a specific policy-related goal. • Your organization has adopted an advocacy model. • You want your Outcome Map to portray the set of related activities that are encompassed within a particular strategy and the resulting short- and intermediate-term outcomes <p>See examples: Children First for Oregon Fostering Success Strategic Communications Campaign, GA Family Connection Partnership – Strategy 1 Map</p>

Outcome Map EXAMPLES

Connecticut Association for Human Services Advocacy Efforts - DRAFT Theory of Change

Resources

Activities

Outcomes

Goals

- Service philosophy & rationale
- AECF funding & national KIDS COUNT efforts
- CAHS Policy Team
- Meetings
- Partners & collaborators
- Data sources
- Issue momentum & media attention
- FES network members

- Inform the debate**
- Kids Count: produce and disseminate state data products and policy briefs
 - Conduct public forums and facilitate discussions
 - Issue press releases

- Mobilize stakeholders for legislative action and use of best practices**
- Family Economic Success (FES) Network: distribute legislative updates and alerts

Educate and lobby policymakers

- Lead and participate in collaborative advocacy initiatives**
- Opportunity and Prosperity Campaign
 - Early childhood alliance

- STRENGTHENED BASE OF SUPPORT**
- Increased support for CAHS agenda among advocates, service providers, low-income people, business leaders and general public

- STRENGTHENED ALLIANCES**
- Partners and stakeholders will consistently frame and articulate CAHS promoted messages
 - Strengthened and expanded network of advocates focused on income and asset building

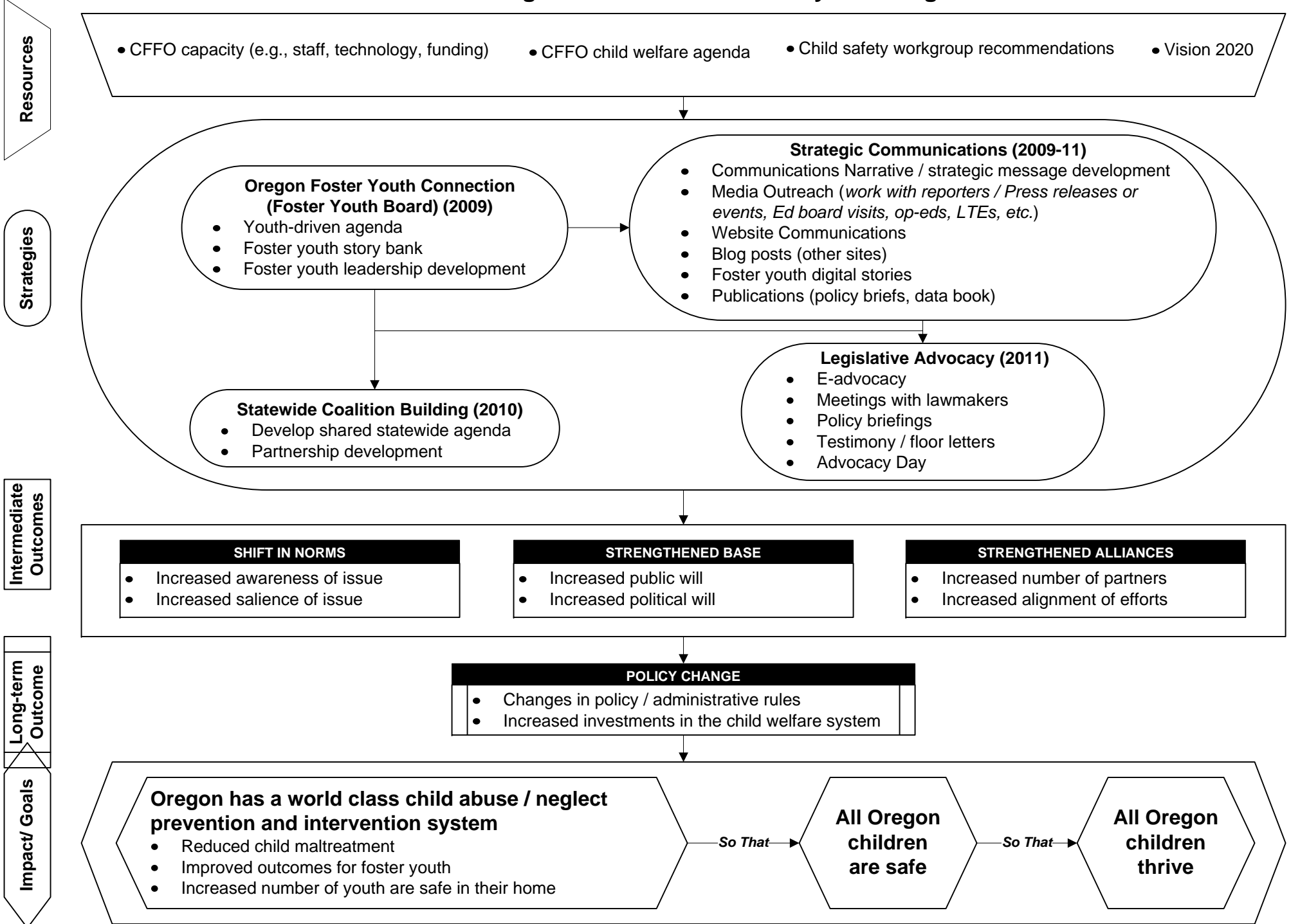
- ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**
- Increased use of data products / resources
 - CAHS staff consistently frame and articulate its messages
 - Increased credibility of CAHS as a resource for data expertise

- IMPROVED POLICIES**
- Increased willingness of policy makers to promote and act upon messages framed by CAHS
 - Increased/maintained prioritization of child poverty goals by legislators and elected state officials
 - Increased targeted policy "wins" related to poverty reduction & improving the lives of poor, working families

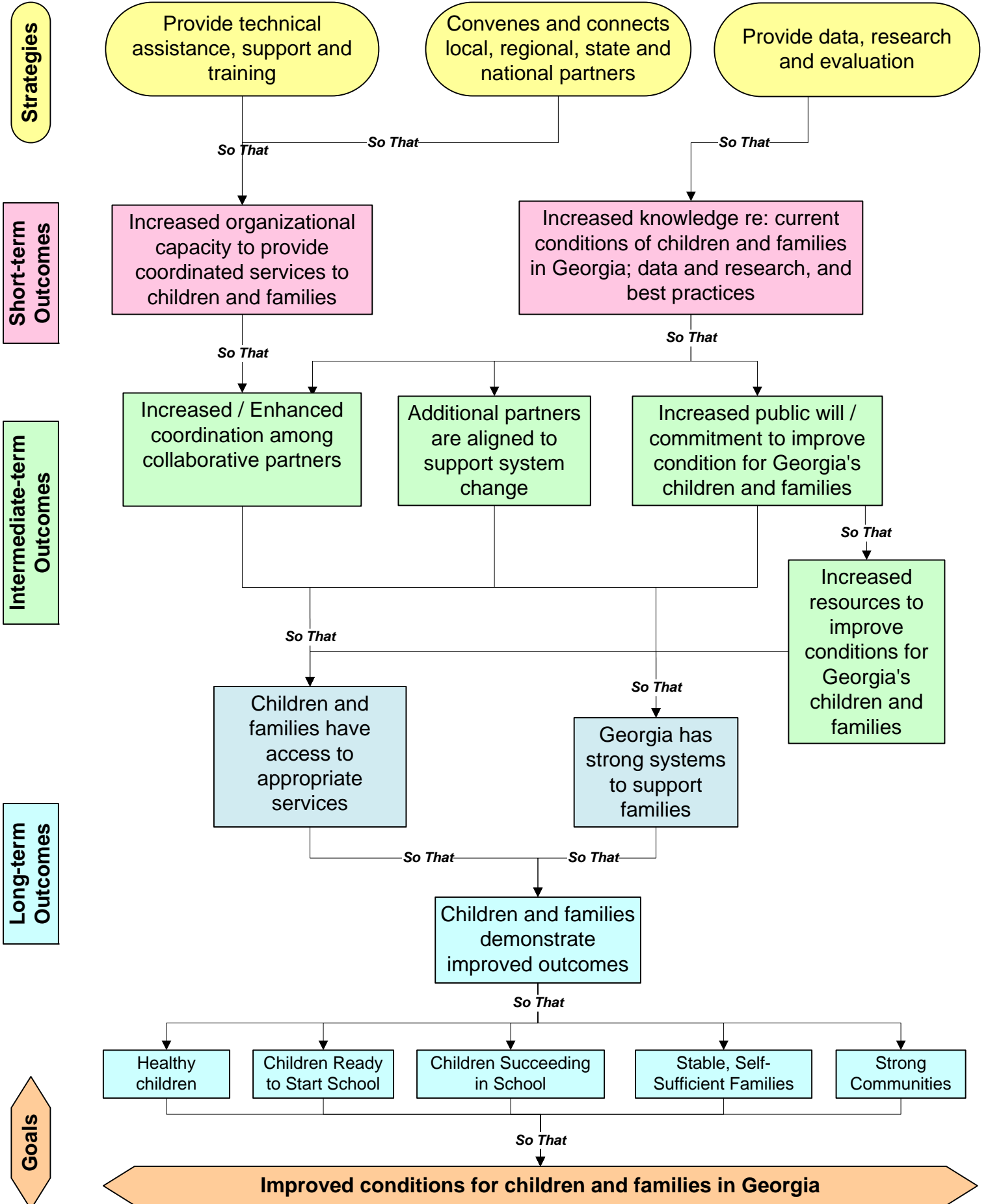
IMPACT
Increased income and assets for families

All children and families thrive

Children First for Oregon “Fostering Success” DRAFT Theory of Change



Georgia Family Connection Partnership Theory of Change Outcome Map



Action for Children North Carolina Organizational Theory of Change

Values

Sound Operations; Accountability;
Equity; Public-Private Engagement

Resources

Staff, Fellows/ Leadership and Innovation/ Office Procedures and Technology

Strategies

Increase Action for Children's capacity

Build local capacity to address children's issues

Advocate for state policy that addresses children's issues

Tools

Communication

Research

Advocacy and Lobbying

Community Engagement

Budget and Policy Analysis

Short-Term Outcomes

Increase organization's visibility

Increase public and policymaker awareness of children's issues

Strengthen partnerships and alliances

Increase availability and use of data and evidence in policymaking

Intermediate Outcomes

Increase in public and political will to address children's issues

Increase alignment and collaboration on identification of solutions and policymaking efforts

Long-Term Outcomes

Increase implementation of evidence-based practice and policies to address children's issues

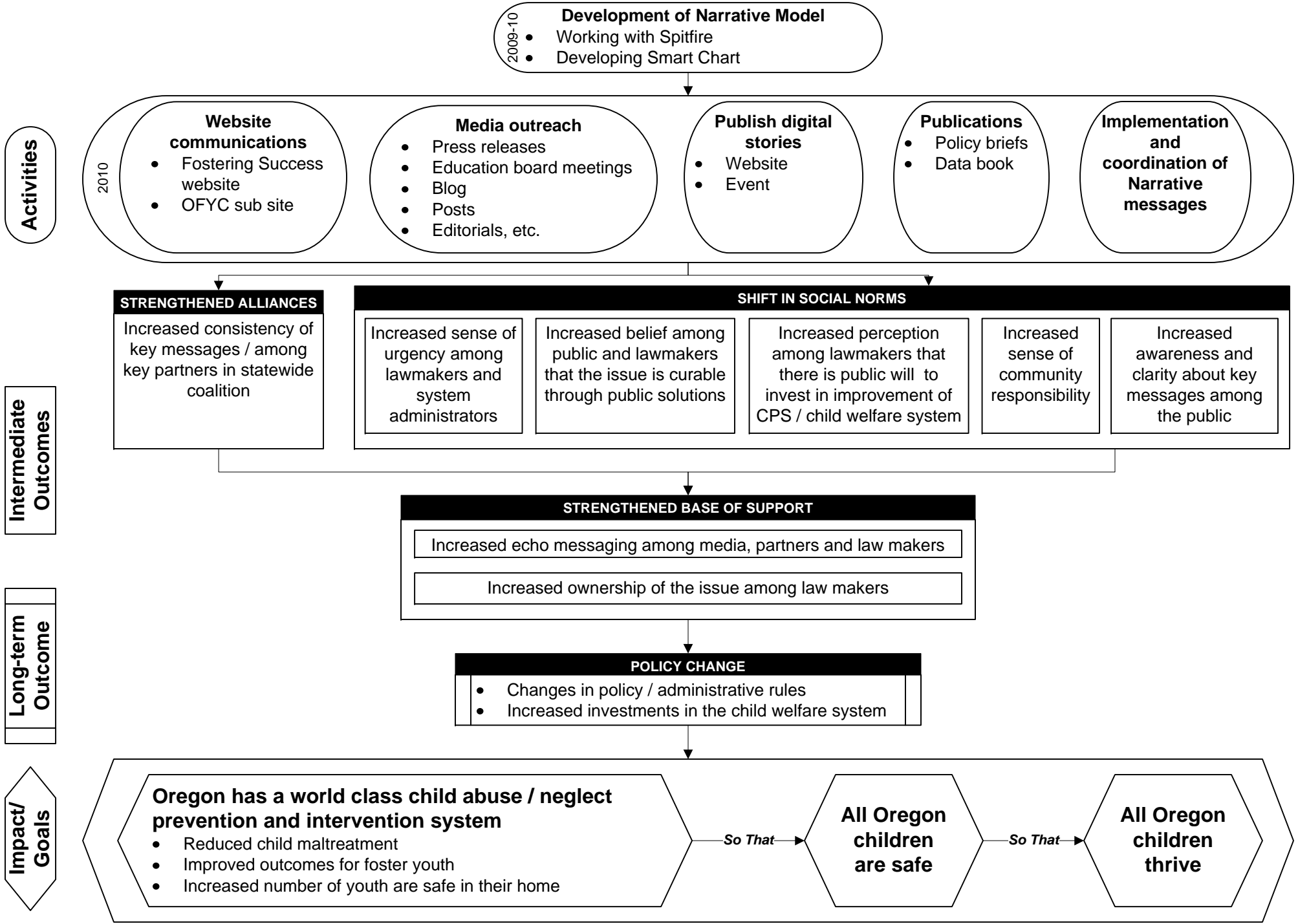
Increase state and private investment to improve children's outcomes

Improve child-serving institutions uniformly across the state to improve conditions for children on the ground

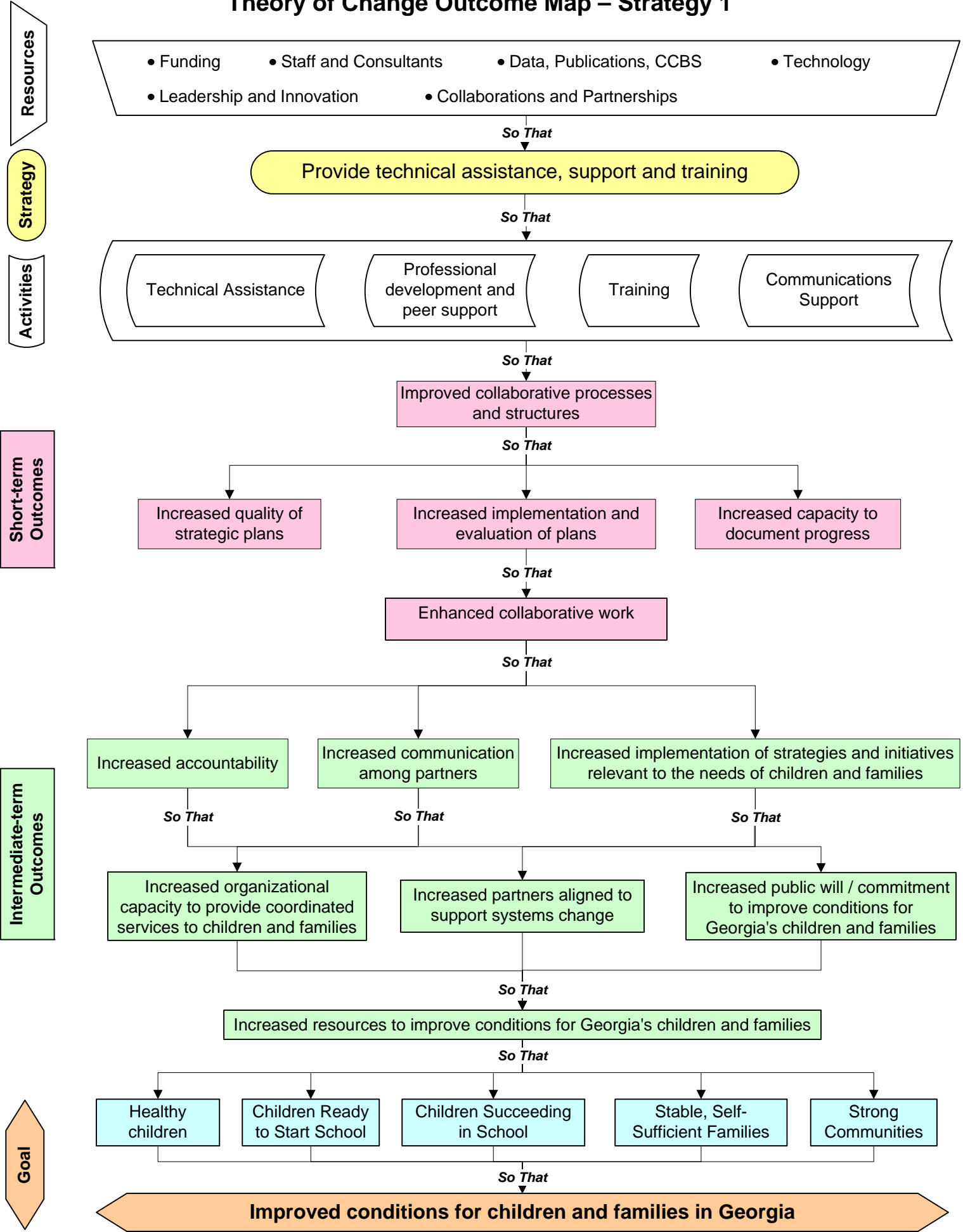
Goal

All children (0 to 21) are healthy. All children (0 to 21) are safe in their homes, schools and communities. All children (0 to 21) have economic security. All children (0 to 21) are provided the opportunity and resources to succeed in their education.

Children First for Oregon "Fostering Success" Strategic Communications DRAFT Theory of Change



Georgia Family Connection Partnership Theory of Change Outcome Map – Strategy 1



Developing an Outcome Map

Element TWO:

**Identify a Process for Developing a
Theory of Change Outcome Map**

Step 1. Determine stakeholders in the theory of change design process –e.g. staff only, staff and others (e.g. board), broader partner/stakeholder input and feedback, designated work group.

Identify who will lead/contribute to the process of developing your theory of change outcome map?

Consider:

- Appetite” for planning
- Time available
- Leadership

Step 2. Carry out development of a theory of change Outcome Map.

Example: 3-6 month Outcome Map development process

- 1-2 individuals identified to facilitate the process.
- Staff or another identified small (5-8 person) work group develop an initial draft Outcome Map [typically accomplished in 2-5 work sessions; 2-4 hours each]. Work group should include facilitators, representatives of the organization’s executive/management team, some with solid knowledge of strategies and implementation, a variety of perspectives.
- Draft Outcome Map is shared and vetted with a broader group of stakeholders (e.g. other staff, Board, partners, funders) and feedback is collected and documented.
- Draft Outcome Map is refined by staff or work group based on feedback received (typically accomplished in 1-2 work sessions, 2-3 hours each).
- Second draft is shared for minor comments and adoption.
- Formal adoption following minor revisions (revisions at this point are primarily to clarify or amplify)

Example: 6-12 month Outcome Map development process

- 1-2 individuals identified to facilitate the process.
- A list of all key stakeholders is developed, and input regarding elements of the Outcome Map is sought from key stakeholders [typically accomplished via multiple meetings or work sessions that occur over a 1-3 month time frame]
- Input regarding stakeholders' input/initial Outcome Map development is summarized.
- A small work group is identified (5-8 people).
- Based on input from key stakeholders, the work group prepares a draft Outcome Map [typically accomplished in 1-3 work sessions; 2-4 hours each]. Work group should include some of those who participated in the broad input gathering process.
- Draft Outcome Map is shared back with those stakeholders who provided initial input. Feedback is collected and documented.
- Draft Outcome Map is refined by work group based on feedback received [typically accomplished in 1-2 work sessions, 2-3 hours each]
- Second draft is shared for feedback.
- Second draft Outcome Map is refined by work group based on feedback received [typically accomplished in 1-2 work sessions, 2-3 hours each]
- Third draft is shared for minor comments and adoption.
- Formal adoption following minor revisions (revisions at this point are primarily to clarify or amplify)

Developing an Outcome Map

Element THREE:

Design a Useful Theory of Change Outcome Map

Step 1. Start at the END: Clarify goals.

What is the ultimate goal of your work?

List the ultimate **goal/impact** in the “Goal” rectangle at the bottom of the “Outcome Map Exercise” on page 8.

It is important to develop a group consensus about this goal. Typically the statements are broad enough to make everyone feel comfortable, included and inspired.

Step 2. Identify the main strategy that your organization/partnership will implement towards the goal or mission.

Consider specific **strategies** which address your ultimate impact. These strategies may include program strategies, campaigns, initiatives, collaborations, public awareness efforts, capacity-building efforts, community mobilization efforts and so on. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Media campaign
- ▶ Facilitate Alliance for Education
- ▶ Community organizing
- ▶ Provide technical assistance
- ▶ Conduct research and program evaluation
- ▶ Develop data products
- ▶ Speakers’ Bureau

Fill in the strategy “Strategies” ovals in the “Exercise: Outcome Map” on page 8.

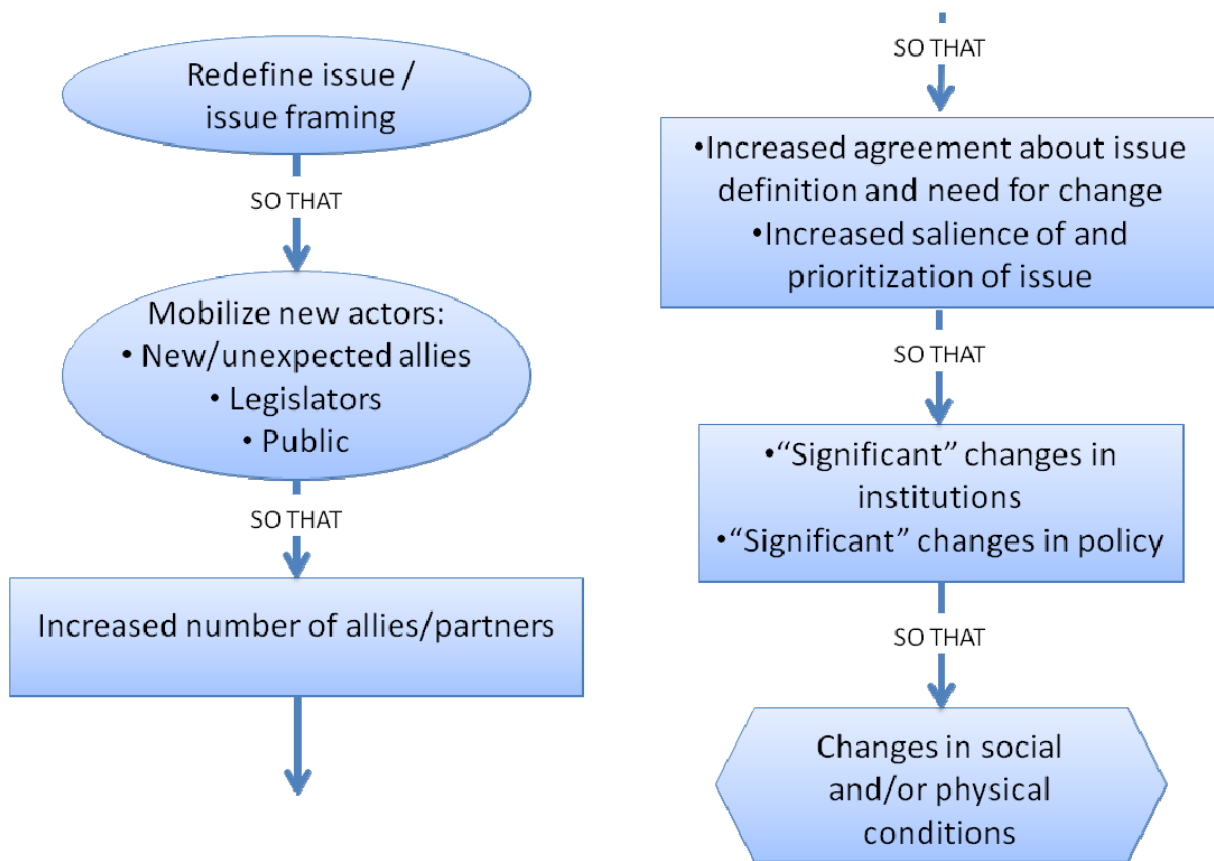
Step 3. Begin filling in “the middle.” Identify meaningful interim outcomes that are likely to occur on the way to the goal/mission.

Create "So That" Chains. Take the first strategy identified on your outcome map and create a "so that" chain based on the following question:

"We do [strategy] so that _____ results for individuals, families, organizations or communities"

The answer should be the direct change, result or **outcome** of the strategy. Repeat this question until you have linked each strategy to your goal. Fill in the “Outcomes” rectangles in the middle part of the “Outcome Map Exercise” on page 8.

“So That” Chain Example: “Large Leaps”



In *A Guide To Measuring Advocacy and Policy*, ORS identified several outcome areas that represent the interim steps and infrastructure that create the conditions for changes in society and the environment as well as outcome areas that reflect the end-game: policy adoption, funding or enforcement in various jurisdictions, e.g., local, state, federal. ORS then distilled these outcomes into six distinct categories representing the essential changes in lives, community conditions, institutions and systems that result from advocacy and policy work. These outcome categories are as follows: ¹

1. SHIFT IN SOCIAL NORMS

Description: the knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviors that comprise the normative structure of culture and society. Advocacy and policy work has become increasingly focused on this area of changes in recognition of the importance of aligning advocacy and policy goals with **core and enduring social values and behaviors**.

¹ Descriptions of Outcome Areas and the Table on pages 5-7 excerpted from: *A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*. (2007) Organizational Research Services on behalf of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available at: www.organizationalresearch.com and www.aecf.org.

2. STRENGTHENED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Description: the skill set, staffing and leadership, organizational structure and systems, finances, and strategic planning among of non-profit organizations and formal coalitions that plan and carry out advocacy and policy work. The development of these core capacities is critical **organizational conditions** to the ability to implement and sustain advocacy and policy change efforts.

3. STRENGTHENED ALLIANCES

Description: the level of coordination, collaboration and mission alignment among community and system partners—including nontraditional alliances, e.g., bipartisan alliances; unlikely allies. These **structural changes in community and institutional relationships and alliances** have become essential forces in presenting common messages, pursuit of common goals, enforcement of policy changes and insuring the protection of policy ‘wins’ in the event that they are threatened. .

4. STRENGTHENED BASE OF SUPPORT

Description: the grassroots, leadership and institutional support for particular policy changes. The **breadth and depth of support among the general public, interest groups and opinion leaders** for particular issues provides a major structural condition for supporting changes in policies. This outcome category spans many layers of culture and societal engagement including increases in civic participation and activism, “allied voices” among informal and formal groups,” the coalescence of dissimilar interest groups, actions of opinion leader champions, and positive media attention.

5. IMPROVED POLICIES

Description: the **stages of policy change in the public policy arena**. These stages include policy development, adoption, implementation and funding. This has frequently been the past focus of measuring the success of advocacy and policy work. It is certainly the major focus of such work but is rarely achieved without changes in the preconditions to policy change identified in the other outcome categories.

6. CHANGES IN IMPACT

Description: the **ultimate changes in social and physical lives and conditions**, .i.e., changes in individuals, populations and physical environments, that motivate policy change efforts. Changes in impacts are long-term outcomes and goals. They would be important to monitor and evaluate in those funding situations in which grant makers and advocacy organizations view themselves as partners in social change. These types of changes are influenced by policy change but typically involve far more strategies, including direct interventions, community support, personal and family behaviors, than policy change alone.

The table below presents these outcome categories along with samples of outcomes and the strategies that are associated with these broad outcomes. Please note that the order of outcomes is not intended to represent their importance or priority.

Table. Menu of Outcomes for Advocacy and Policy Work

1. SHIFT IN SOCIAL NORMS	
Examples of Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Changes in awareness ◆ Increased agreement of the definition of a problem (e.g., common language) ◆ Changes in beliefs ◆ Changes in attitudes ◆ Changes in values ◆ Changes in the salience of an issue ◆ Increased alignment of campaign goal with core societal values ◆ Changes in public behavior
Examples of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Media campaign ◆ Message development (e.g., defining the problem, framing, naming) ◆ Development of trusted messengers and champions
Unit of Analysis (e.g. Who or What Changes?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individuals at large ◆ Specific groups of individuals ◆ Population groups
2. STRENGTHENED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	
Examples of Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improved organizational capacity of organizations involved with advocacy and policy work (e.g., non-profit management, strategic abilities; capacity to communicate and promote advocacy messages; stability) ◆ Increased ability of coalitions working toward policy change to identify policy change process (e.g., venue of policy change, steps of policy change based on strong understanding of the issue and barriers, jurisdiction of policy change)
Examples of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Leadership development ◆ Organizational capacity building ◆ Communication skill building ◆ Strategic planning
Unit of Analysis (e.g. Who or What Changes?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advocacy organizations ◆ Not-for profit organizations ◆ Advocacy coalitions ◆ Community organizers, leaders
3. STRENGTHENED ALLIANCES	
Examples of Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased number of partners supporting an issue ◆ Increased level of collaboration (e.g., coordination) ◆ Improved alignment of partnership efforts (e.g., shared priorities, shared goals, common accountability system) ◆ Strategic alliances with important partners (e.g. stronger or more powerful relationships and alliances)
Examples of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Partnership development ◆ Coalition development
Unit of Analysis (e.g. Who Changes?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individuals ◆ Groups ◆ Organizations ◆ Institutions

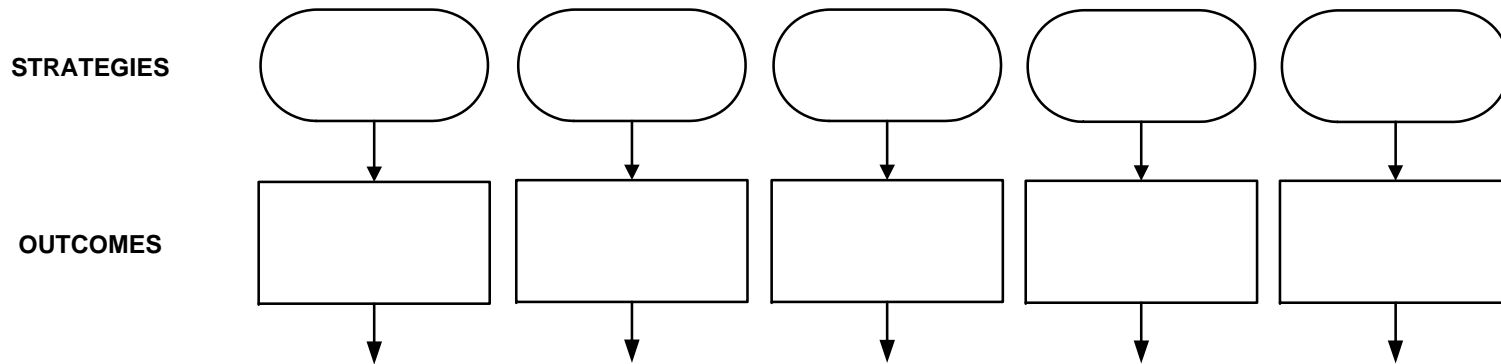
4. STRENGTHENED BASE OF SUPPORT	
Examples of Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased public involvement in an issue ◆ Increased level of actions taken by champions of an issue ◆ Increased voter registration ◆ Changes in voting behavior ◆ Increased breadth of partners supporting an issue (e.g., number of “unlikely allies” supporting an issue) ◆ Increased media coverage (e.g., quantity, prioritization, extent of coverage, variety of media “beats,” message echoing) ◆ Increased awareness of campaign principles and messages among selected groups, e.g., policy makers, general public, opinion leaders) ◆ Increased visibility of the campaign message (e.g., engagement in debate, presence of campaign message in the media) ◆ Changes in public will
Examples of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Community organizing ◆ Media campaigns ◆ Outreach ◆ Public/grassroots engagement campaign ◆ Voter registration campaign ◆ Coalition development ◆ Development of trusted messengers and champions ◆ Policy analysis and debate ◆ Policy impact statements
Unit of Analysis (e.g. Who or What Changes?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individuals ◆ Groups ◆ Organizations ◆ Institutions
5. IMPROVED POLICIES	
Examples of Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Policy Development ◆ Policy Adoption (e.g., ordinance, ballot measure, legislation, legally-binding agreements) ◆ Policy Implementation (e.g., equity, adequate funding and other resources for implementing policy) ◆ Policy Enforcement (e.g., holding the line on bedrock legislation)
Examples of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Scientific research ◆ Development of “white papers” ◆ Development of policy proposals ◆ Pilots/Demonstration programs ◆ Educational briefings of legislators ◆ Watchdog function
Unit of Analysis (e.g. Who or What Changes?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Policy planners ◆ Administrators ◆ Policy makers ◆ Legislation/laws/formal policies

6. CHANGES IN IMPACT	
Examples of Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improved social and physical conditions (e.g., poverty, habitat diversity, health, equality, democracy)
Examples of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Combination of direct service and systems-changing strategies
Unit of Analysis (e.g. Who or What Changes?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Population ◆ Ecosystem

Definition of outcomes is a crucial step of your evaluation design. We suggest that advocacy and policy efforts can be viewed in the context of one or more of these broad outcome categories, or “outcome rectangles.”

Discuss your organization's outcomes as they fit into the areas described in the table on pages 5-7, and add relevant outcomes to the map below.

Exercise: Outcome Map



(Complete Chain from Outcomes to Goal)

GOAL

