

SMARTIE Goal Setting for Organizations & Community Groups

SMART goals are a widely recognized framework for setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives. The SMART acronym helps us remember how to set effective goals:

- ☑ **Specific:** The goal identifies a particular action or event that will take place.
- ☑ **Measurable:** The goal and its benefits are quantifiable.
- ☑ **Achievable:** The goal is attainable, given available resources.
- ☑ **Realistic:** The goal is challenging but also allows for the likelihood of success.
- ☑ **Timely:** The goal defines the timeframe in which it will be accomplished.

Adding "Inclusive" and "Equitable" elements to SMART goals turns them into SMARTIE goals. The SMARTIE framework promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in goal-setting and reminds organizations and community groups to look for unconscious biases.

- ☑ **Inclusive:** The goal fosters a sense of belonging, involvement, and representation for all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, identities, or characteristics. Inclusion aims to ensure that everyone feels valued, heard, and respected within a group, organization, or community. Inclusive goals actively seek the involvement and participation of individuals from underrepresented or marginalized groups, recognizing that their perspectives and contributions are essential for creating a more diverse and vibrant community.
- ☑ **Equitable:** The goal prioritizes fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits among individuals or groups, especially when there are historical or systemic disparities. Equity aims to address and rectify existing inequalities to ensure that everyone has a level playing field. Equitable goals recognize that achieving equality requires acknowledging and addressing existing disparities, as different individuals or groups may need different levels of support or resources to reach the same level of opportunity and success.

Here are some additional tips that can help you set effective goals:

1. **Develop several goals, but not too many.** A list of five to seven items gives you several things to work on over a period of time.
2. **State goals as declarations of intention, not items on a wish list.** “We want to establish an on-farm community-oriented compost site” lacks power. “We will start an on-farm community-oriented compost site” is intentional and powerful.
3. **Attach a date or timeline to each goal.** State what you intend to accomplish and by when. A good list should include short-term and long-term goals. You may want a few goals for the current year and some for two- or three-month intervals.
4. **Be really specific.** “Outreach to the potential farmer partners” is too general; “Tell five potential farmer partners about the project before the end of the month” is better.

Review and revise your list. Experiment with different ways of stating your goals. Goal setting improves with practice, so play around with it.



Adapted from Kairsten Nitsch, *How to Start a Community Garden* (The GardenWorks Project, 2017) and Vermont Garden Network (vtgardens.org). The Composting Association of Vermont is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. The On-Farm Composting Toolkit was funded by a USDA Rural Utilities Solid Waste Management Grant. **Get the full toolkit at www.onfarmcomposting.org.**