

Overview

Agency Priority Goals (APGs) were created by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Memorandum M-10-24 and later codified in statute by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA). **APGs are specific, implementation-focused goals that identify a tangible, near-term result or achievement that leadership wants to accomplish within a two-year period.** Agency heads select a limited number of these goals, identify goal leaders and organize implementation teams to deliver on these outcomes, regularly conduct data-driven reviews of progress, and report results on a quarterly basis. This effectively motivates agency staff to work harder and smarter to improve performance and ensure accountability for outcomes.

Setting APGs helps agencies communicate their impacts publicly, show responsible and effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and highlight the use of performance management to deliver results. **There are several principles for setting APGs that enable a greater chance for mission success.** Not every principle is appropriate for every agency, so consider how the principles fit into your agency's unique culture, structure, and business practices.

Successful APGs have:

- ❑ **Leadership:** Senior leadership commitment and engagement
- ❑ **Clarity:** Well-designed and clearly articulated goal, measures, targets, and strategies
- ❑ **Alignment:** Direct connection to longer-term Strategic Objective outcomes in the agency's Strategic Plan
- ❑ **Ownership:** Agency and goal team ownership of the APG and validation from senior agency leaders, the White House, and OMB
- ❑ **Routines:** Adherence to routines to provide consistent and continuous focus. Includes regular data-driven reviews chaired by the Agency Deputy Secretary
- ❑ **Data:** Use of data to monitor progress, inform decision-making, and enable organizational learning

Consider APGs that:

- ❑ Involve work **across organizational units** within an agency (i.e., bureaus, subcomponents, offices) and/or **jointly with another agency** to advance common outcomes
- ❑ **Scale up** successful activities or interventions supported by a strong evidence base
- ❑ **Continue** previous APGs that remain a priority for agency leadership, but with more ambitious targets
- ❑ Elevate and **accelerate activities that are losing momentum** and need encouragement
- ❑ **Align with key mission** areas to allow program and line staff to see their role and feel accountable
- ❑ Have **robust data available** to measure success

Strengthen your APGs by:

- ❑ Establishing a **formal governance** structure
- ❑ Developing a **model/map** that outlines the connection between your APG and the supporting indicators/ programs/ projects through your implemented strategies (e.g., logic model, goal map, theory of change)
- ❑ Embedding APG indicators in goal/ program **leadership performance plans**
- ❑ Ensuring a **dedicated goal leader** who spends time focusing fully on the success of this goal
- ❑ **Seeking input** from peer agencies with similar mission types, stakeholder groups, and Congress
- ❑ Using **evidence**, including evaluation results and relevant research, to shape the goal and associated indicators