



THIRDPLATEAU

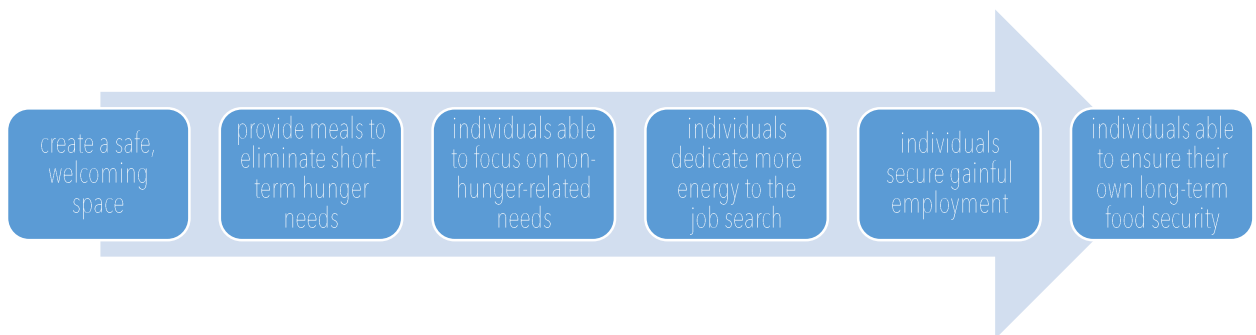
## Understanding Theory of Change and Logic Model

Theories of Change and Logic Models are incredible tools to ensure internal program alignment, reinforce organizational culture, and communicate mission-driven priorities and high-level strategy in a clear and compelling way. Though these two frameworks are inherently linked, there are fundamental differences between them that are critical to understand in order to create and use a Theory of Change and/or Logic Model effectively.

### THEORY OF CHANGE

**Defined:** A visual map that captures the necessary preconditions that connect your inputs and activities to your long-term outcomes and impact.

**Explained:** Imagine standing at the beginning of a long chain of standing dominoes. The very last domino in the chain represents the impact your organization strives to have (e.g. ending hunger). The chain of dominoes is so long that you can't reach that last domino yourself; instead, if you want the last domino to fall and your organization to achieve that final impact, you have to knock down the dominoes directly in front of you and hope that the chain reaction goes according to plan. **A Theory of Chain defines the dominoes in that chain, wherein each domino represents a specific precondition or environment that your organization attempts to cultivate.** For example, a simplified Theory of Change for a soup kitchen might look like this:



**Best practices:** A good Theory of Change is used for internal and external communication and therefore needs to be succinct, clear, and visually appealing. A Theory of Change does not need to be contained within one linear progression (like the basic example above), but it should be able to fit on a single page.

**Uses:** A Theory of Change is a qualitative approach to an organization's purpose and impact, and is therefore ideal for storytelling.

### LOGIC MODEL

**Defined:** A breakdown of the quantitative indicators of success at every stage, from inputs and activities through outputs, outcomes, and impact.

- Input: what we need to run our programs



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- Activities: our programs
- Outputs: the **immediate** result of running our programs
- Outcomes: what we're hoping will happen, **long-term**, as a result of running our programs
- Impact: the ultimate goal of our programs

**Explained:** Again, imagine the chain of dominoes. This time, however, instead of the dominoes representing qualitative preconditions, **a Logic Model's dominoes represent specific, measurable elements of your work and the results you expect.** For example, a simplified Logic Model for a soup kitchen might look like this:

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food</li> <li>• volunteers</li> <li>• partners</li> <li>• facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serve 3 meals/day, 7 days/week</li> <li>• Build partnerships with key social service agencies in the area to provide weekly sessions with social workers and 50 job training sessions/month</li> <li>• Build partnerships with affordable housing developers in the area who control 500 housing units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5,000 meals/week</li> <li>• 200 job training graduates/year</li> <li>• 50 affordable housing units earmarked for our population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% of soup kitchen users gainfully employed within 12 months</li> <li>• 30% of soup kitchen users secure permanent housing within 12 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of area individuals able to ensure their own long-term food security</li> </ul>

**Best practices:** A good Logic Model is written in bullet points and each bullet point contains a specific metric of success. It is critical to recognize that no organization can control for all of the elements in a Logic Model. Instead, it's helpful to think about your inputs, activities, and outputs as your "sphere of control;" your short-term outcomes as your "sphere of influence;" and your long-term outcomes and impact as your "sphere of concern."

**Uses:** This quantitative approach is ideal for benchmarking and accountability.