How to Include Social Capital in a Human Services Program Logic Model

This document provides examples of how hypothetical human services programs that incorporate into their design strategies to help participants build and use social capital could depict their social capital activities in a logic model. For more resources, visit https://aspe.hhs.gov/social-capital.

What is social capital and why would I include it in my program?

Social capital refers to connections, networks, or relationships among people and the value that arises from them. It can be accessed or mobilized to help individuals succeed in life, and it produces information, emotional and financial support, and other resources such as access to education, childcare, or employment. Many human services programs incorporate social capital elements to improve participants' outcomes, even if they do not use the term explicitly. For example, social capital strategies may include peer supports (e.g., peer support groups, peer navigators), mentoring, faith-based assistance focused on relationship-building, and family strengthening activities.

There are several key types of social capital that play different roles in helping us achieve different outcomes. These types include:

- **Bonding**, with people like us
- **Bridging**, with people different from us
- **Linking**, with institutions or individuals in positions of power

Figure 1

Organizations may work with participants to build and leverage positive social capital in their lives in order to improve program outcomes. For example, evidence shows that peer support models that build social capital—or relationships among participants—may help connect individuals to employment and promote health and well-being.[1,2]

Additionally, intentionally considering both participants' social capital and a program's connections with other organizations can help programs identify resources and partnerships. This may include other faith- and community-based organizations that programs can partner with or refer families to as additional resources.

Why would I create a social capital logic model for my program?

Logic models can depict social capital's role in improving participant outcomes. Logic models are a common tool that programs use to visualize how their activities relate to program goals. They are a "graphic depiction (roadmap) that presents the shared relationships among the

[1]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 2019. "Peer-to-Peer Supports: Promoting Employment and Well-Being." Retrieved from: https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/aspe-files/261791/promotingemploymentwellbeing.pdf

[2] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 2019. "The Role of Social Capital in Supporting Economic Mobility." Retrieved from: https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/aspe-files/261791/socialcapitalsupportingeconomicmobility.pdf

resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for [a] program. [They] depict the relationships between [a] program's activities and its intended effects."[3] While they typically illustrate all aspects of a program, the examples illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 focus specifically on social capital aspects and demonstrate how hypothetical human services programs might depict the relationship between activities focused on developing and using social capital and their intended outcomes.

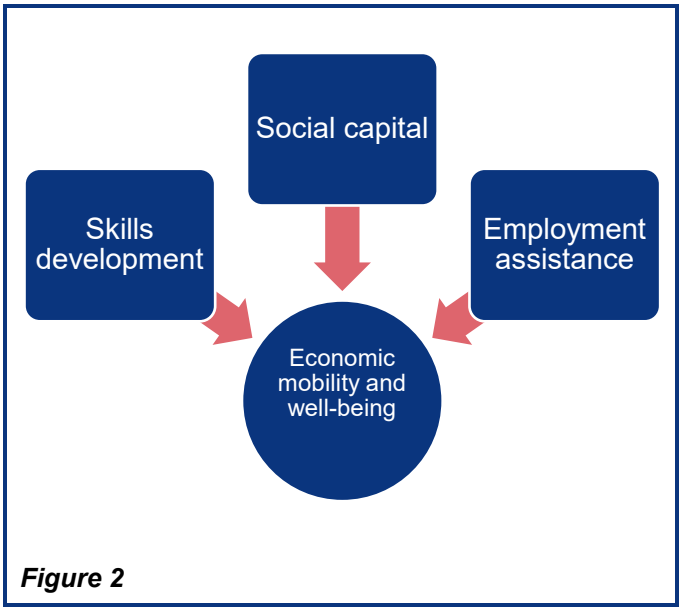


Figure 2

Not all programs will use all three types of social capital, use them in the same way, or to achieve the same goals, so a logic model can help programs concretely understand the role social capital plays in achieving program goals and participant outcomes in their specific program. Logic models can also identify possible metrics with which to measure social capital and evaluate its role in achieving program goals. However, while these examples focus specifically on social capital, it is often one element among many aspects of a program's overall approach, as shown in Figure 2.

How does social capital operate in programs?

While the example logic models provided at the end of this document show how social capital can fit into a structured, linear process, in practice social capital is organic and operates in many ways. For example, if an individual engaging in an employment and training program has high levels of social capital—such as friends to rely on for childcare during a job interview and connections to an employer—it may help improve their program outcomes, such as gaining employment. Having a job may then increase one's connections, expanding their social capital to relationships with new colleagues and potentially supporting further improvements in additional outcomes. In this way, social capital may be self-reinforcing and is not necessarily a linear process. This potentially cyclical process is illustrated in Figure 3. Programs can strategically leverage social capital, and the many ways in which it operates, to improve participant outcomes.

[3] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Program Performance and Evaluation Office. 2018. "Logic Models." Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/eval/logicmodels/index.htm

Programs may help individuals build and leverage a combination of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. For example, programs with peer groups might build bonding social capital among individuals with similar backgrounds. A program might build bridging social capital by, for example, pairing individuals of different backgrounds in mentoring relationships. Connecting unemployed participants with employers in the community might be one way to build linking social capital. Each type of social capital is important, and programs can carefully consider which type(s) align with program goals.

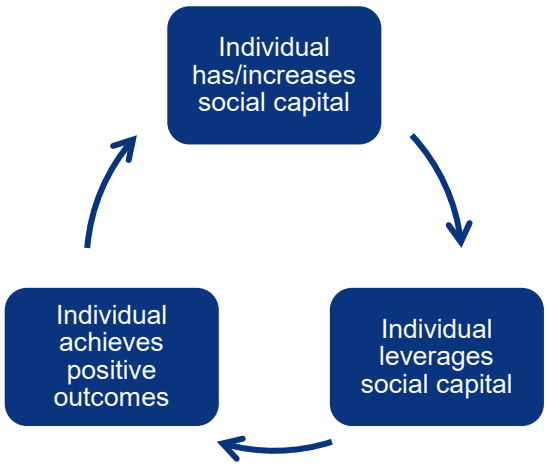


Figure 3

What are the example logic models below?

Logic models for two hypothetical programs are provided below. Figure 4 is for a **reentry mentoring program** seeking to decrease recidivism and increase employment and housing stability among individuals reentering from incarceration. In this hypothetical program, mentoring pairs from different backgrounds meet weekly to build a relationship and to increase access to resources and services in the community.

The example logic model in Figure 5 is for a **peer support employment program** seeking to increase employment for low-income fathers with barriers to employment. Its main social capital components are a weekly peer support group and social capital skills classes, and it also offers non-social capital elements such as basic skills classes (e.g., resume writing, interview preparation, etc.) and childcare during class and group hours.

Like many actual programs, these hypothetical programs do not solely focus on social capital; rather, they incorporate social capital-building activities into their programming to achieve their ultimate program goals. However, the examples focus specifically on the programs' social capital components to illustrate the relationship between social capital activities and programs' intended outcomes. Creating a social capital logic model can give programs a clear understanding of this connection and can identify opportunities to evaluate social capital's role in achieving goals.

See "Social Capital Logic Model Worksheet" for a blank logic model you can tailor for your specific program's goals and activities.

Figure 4
Hypothetical Program: Reentry Mentoring Program

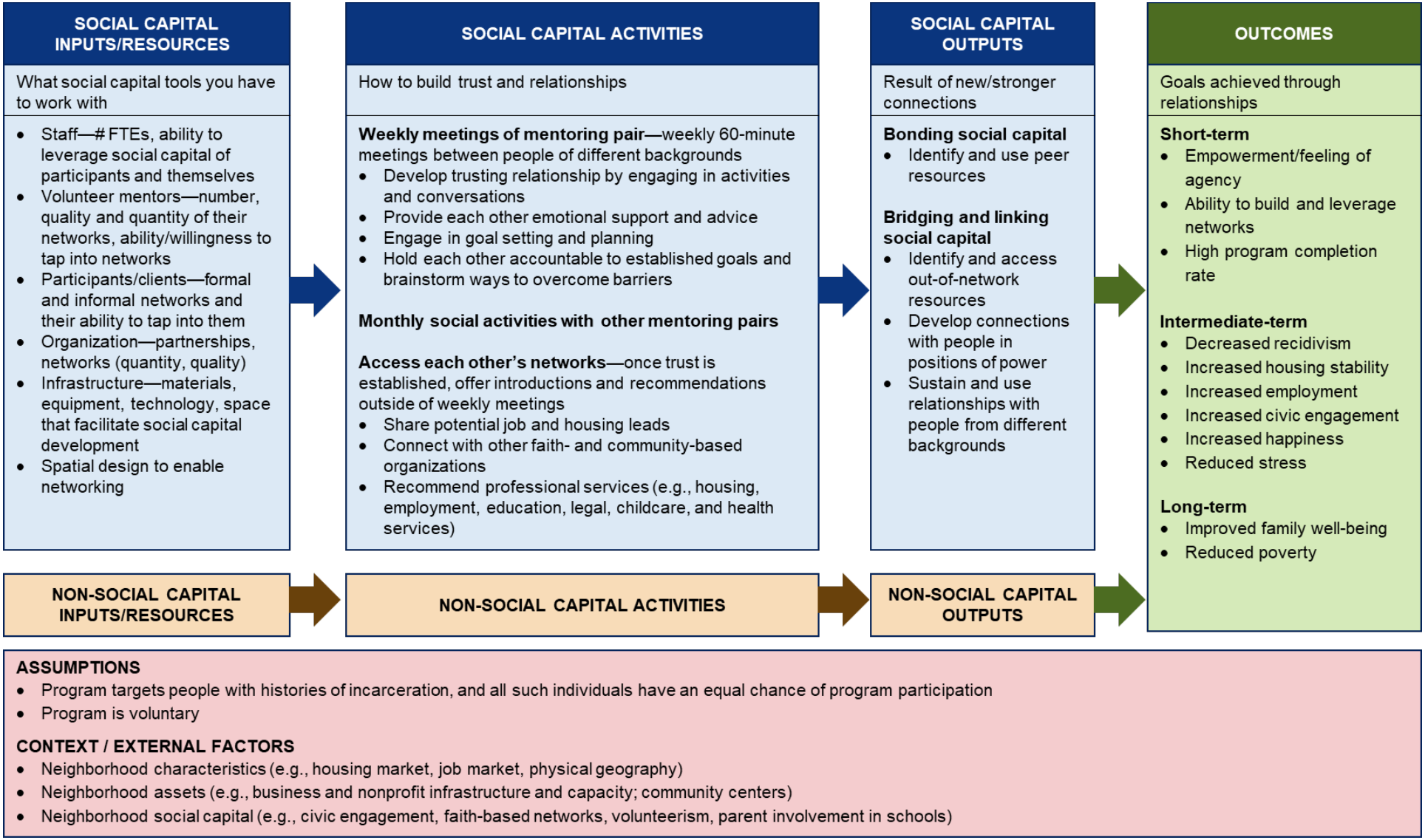
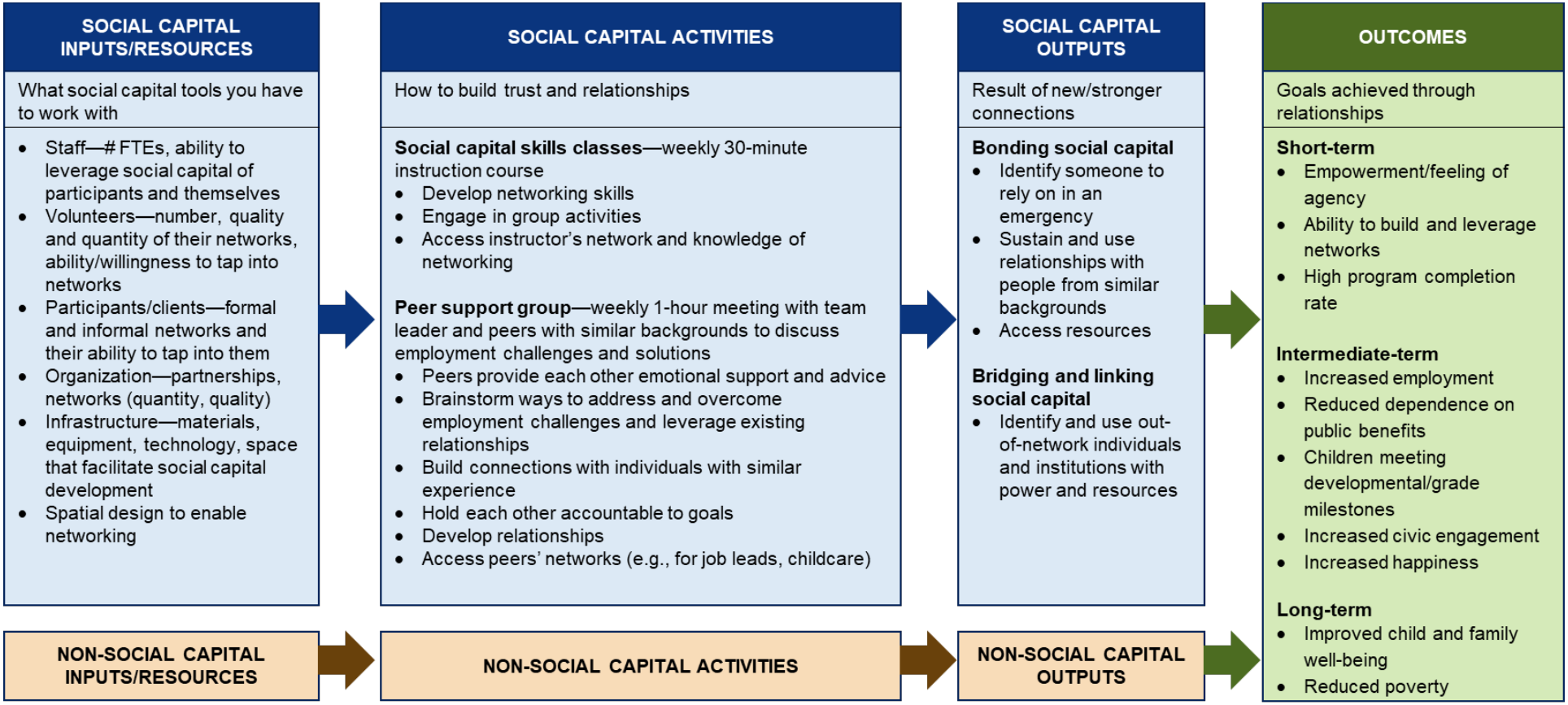
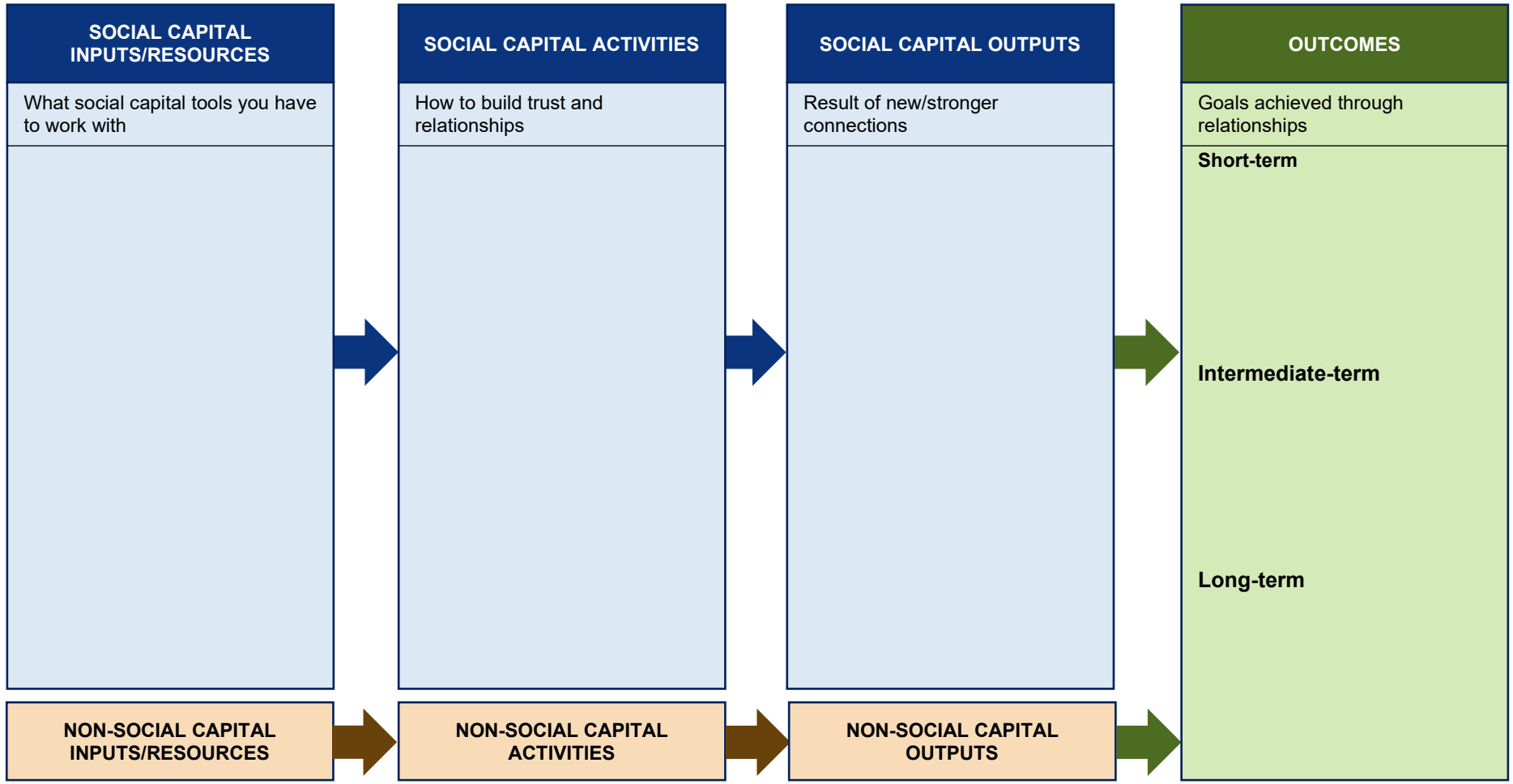


Figure 5
Hypothetical Program: Peer Support Employment Program



Social Capital Logic Model Worksheet
Use this blank logic model example to map out social capital components of your own program.



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