Collaborative for Implementation Practice
UNC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Implementation Plan Template and Examples

Introduction

The Implementation Plan Template is designed to guide implementation teams in developing a plan for implementation across the four stages: exploration, installation, initial implementation and full implementation. The implementation plan should be collaboratively developed by the implementation team together with community partners and members of the focus population who will have a role in the implementation of the selected program or practice. Planning is a critical exercise that will help you document implementation goals at each stage and identify specific strategies to achieve these goals. Once the team has identified goals and strategies, they should document timelines for enacting each strategy, person(s) responsible, resources needed and data necessary to determine if progress is being made at each stage of implementation.

The implementation plan may need to be amended or adjusted as implementation advances, particularly if unforeseen circumstances arise. As either conditions or contexts change, the team may need to reconsider the strategies for achieving each implementation goal, or even the goals themselves.[1]

Implementation Plan Template

Project:	
Date:	
Implementation team members:	
Project result:	
Timeline:	

[1] Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2019, June). *Implementation in action*. Retrieved from https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/guidelines/implementation-action

EXPLORATION

This stage might include the following potential goals:

- Developing an implementation team (identifying members, building buy-in) to support the work as it progresses through the stages
- Identifying needs and assets within a community and focus population
- Identifying and learning about possible programs or practices that might align with the focus population's needs and assets
- Growing relationships with practitioners, organizational and systems leaders, community partners and members of the focus population who are supporting implementation
- Assessing practitioner, organizational and community readiness and creating readiness for change
- Developing communication processes to support the work
- Learning what it takes to implement the program or practice effectively, including needs related to developing related staff competencies and organizational/systems changes (e.g., new policies)
- Making a decision on whether to proceed with a selected program or practice

Action Planning

- What are our implementation goals for this stage?
- What strategies will we use to achieve these goals and make progress on implementation benchmarks to achieve implementation outcomes?
- What are next steps or activities that we need to revisit?

Implementation goal *Why is this important?*	Strategies *How will we accomplish this goal?*	Timeline *Start–Finish*	Person(s) responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we're making progress?[2] *What data will be used?*

[2] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in *Implementation Action Guide #5: Identify Implementation Stage and Progress*.

INSTALLATION

This stage might include the following potential goals:

- Convening the implementation team regularly to gather and use data for assessing implementation
- Ensuring the implementation team has the appropriate knowledge, skills, functions and authority to support infrastructure development and improvement of the program or practice
- Developing timely feedback loops among practitioners, leaders, community partners and the focus population to ensure bidirectional and inclusive communication
- Gathering feedback on how the program or practice will be implemented from stakeholders including practitioners, leaders, community partners and members of the focus population
- Identifying what data will be used to measure implementation progress
- Discussing how data will be used to support communication, decision making and continuous improvement
- Securing and developing the implementation infrastructure needed to put the program or practice into place as intended

Action Planning

- What are our implementation goals for this stage?
- What strategies will we use to achieve these goals and make progress on implementation benchmarks to achieve implementation outcomes?
- What are next steps or activities that we need to revisit?

Implementation goal *Why is this important?*	Strategies *How will we accomplish this goal?*	Timeline *Start–Finish*	Person(s) responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we're making progress?[3] *What data will be used?*

[3] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in *Implementation Action Guide #5: Identify Implementation Stage and Progress*.

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

This stage might include the following potential goals:

- Convening the implementation team regularly to gather and use data to assess implementation
- Gathering data and feedback through multiple sources including individuals and families in the focus population to check in on how implementation is going
- Developing improvement strategies through the implementation team's analysis of data and feedback
- Communicating with practitioners, leadership, community partners and the focus population about implementation progress, improvement strategies and successes
- Refining implementation supports based on these data

Action Planning

- What are our implementation goals for this stage?
- What strategies will we use to achieve these goals and make progress on implementation benchmarks to achieve implementation outcomes?
- What are next steps or activities that we need to revisit?

Implementation goal *Why is this important?*	Strategies *How will we accomplish this goal?*	Timeline *Start–Finish*	Person(s) responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we're making progress?[4] *What data will be used?*

[4] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in *Implementation Action Guide #5: Identify Implementation Stage and Progress*.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

This stage might include the following potential goals:

- Convening the implementation team regularly to gather and use data for ongoing improvement
- Planning for and securing any resources needed to sustain the implementation team and the use of the program or practice
- Collecting and analyzing fidelity and outcomes data
- Communicating with and gathering feedback from practitioners, leadership, community partners and the focus population about implementation progress, improvement strategies and successes
- Monitoring and improving infrastructure as needed

Action Planning

- What are our implementation goals for this stage?
- What strategies will we use to achieve these goals and make progress on implementation benchmarks to achieve implementation outcomes?
- What are next steps or activities that we need to revisit?

Implementation goal *Why is this important?*	Strategies *How will we accomplish this goal?*	Timeline *Start–Finish*	Person(s) responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we're making progress?[5] *What data will be used?*

[5] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in *Implementation Action Guide #5: Identify Implementation Stage and Progress*.

Implementation Plan Example #1

This implementation plan example is based on a fictional project to scale positive youth development programs that focus on educational and employment opportunities for youth with relevant cross-system and community partners. In this example, the implementing site is expanding its partner network to provide coordinated educational and employment opportunities for youth, focusing on collaborative partnerships with the public school district, the health care system, community colleges, the governor's office and the county child welfare agency. In preparation for implementation, the site developed a three-level implementation team structure:

- Leadership team — includes directors and managers from each of the respective partners and meets monthly to coordinate and address implementation challenges
- Implementation team — includes project managers and site supervisors with direct responsibility for supporting staff who are implementing the positive youth development program components, as well staff members and youth representatives
- Task teams — include implementation team members who are focused on communication, data use and capacity development

The implementation team wanted to apply a stage-based perspective and prioritize implementation efforts to coordinate, monitor and improve implementation strategies. First, the team conducted an analysis of their stages of implementation and concluded the majority of their positive youth development program components were in the exploration and installation stages as they were working with partners to expand the educational and employment opportunities for focus youth. The team then conducted an Implementation Drivers Checklist to understand infrastructure supports needed to implement the program components. The team used the findings from the checklist to discuss implementation goals with the leadership team. The team drafted the stage-based implementation plan based on the implementation goals identified for exploration and installation and will continue to meet to develop future stage-relevant goals.

Project: Positive Youth Development Site Implementation

Date: Summer 2020

Implementation team members: Project managers and site supervisors who have direct responsibility for supporting staff implementing the positive youth development educational and employment program components, as well staff members and youth representatives

Project result: To substantially increase positive education and employment outcomes for youth and young adults who have experienced public systems or homelessness and/or are parents by (1) improving youth-serving systems and institutional practices, and (2) scaling the research-based positive youth development program components

Timeline: Summer 2020 – Summer 2024

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN EXAMPLE #1							
Implementation stage	**Implementation goal(s)** *Why is this important?*	**Strategies** *How will we accomplish this goal?*	**Timeline** *Start–Finish*	**Person(s) responsible**	**Resources needed**	**Anticipated adaptive challenges**	**How will we know if we're making progress?[6]** *What data will be used?*
Exploration	Continue to grow relationships with community partners focused on youth education and employment.	Attend youth advocacy community council meetings.	May 2020 – ongoing	Senior supervisor from lead site agency	Time and support to attend council meetings	Partners have had a negative experience working with partners in the past.	Bidirectional communication with board members (meeting minutes) Development of coordinated services for youth (youth feedback surveys)
	Continue to understand the needs and assets of youth, from their perspective.	Hold quarterly advisory gatherings with youth partners.	May 2020 – ongoing	One data task team member, one communication task team member and one youth implementation team member (cofacilitators)	Time, support and funding to provide compensation for youth participation	Youth partners are apprehensive to share feedback. Youth partners have competing priorities and limited time to attend advisory gatherings.	Youth voice and perspectives are included at leadership and team meetings (meeting minutes).
Installation	Establish effective supervision and coaching at partner organizations for staff implementing educational and	Develop a supervisor learning community that meets monthly to support supervisors at partner sites.	May 2020 – ongoing	Two implementation team members (site supervisor leads, facilitating the learning	Time and effort for supervisors to participate, and effort for implementation	Buy-in across supervisors is limited. Supervisors have competing priorities and responsibilities,	Feedback from supervisors on relevance, usefulness and buy-in (learning

[6] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in Implementation Action Guide 5.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN EXAMPLE #1							
Implementation stage	**Implementation goal(s)** *Why is this important?*	**Strategies** *How will we accomplish this goal?*	**Timeline** *Start–Finish*	**Person(s) responsible**	**Resources needed**	**Anticipated adaptive challenges**	**How will we know if we're making progress?[6]** *What data will be used?*
	employment program components.			community meetings)	team members to facilitate	leaving limited availability to attend and fully participate.	community notes/minutes)
	Establish regular communication pathways with stakeholders regarding the educational and employment program components.	Assign responsibilities for facilitating bidirectional communication within partner agencies. Assign communication efforts to identified stakeholders.	May 2020 – ongoing	Each implementation team member (facilitating bidirectional communication with their agency and identified stakeholders)	Time for the implementation team to discuss communication efforts, shared language for consistency and any feedback received	Stakeholders have competing priorities, leaving limited availability to fully engage in communication efforts.	Feedback from stakeholders on communication loop success (feedback surveys)
	Develop fidelity monitoring tools and process for educational and employment program components.	Identify existing fidelity resources. Draft fidelity monitoring plan, including metrics and data collection and analysis plan. Share/vet plan with implementation and leadership teams. Develop protocols to support use of fidelity monitoring plan within the partnerships	July 2020 – ongoing	Data task team	Support and time for the data task team Fidelity and data analysis resources	Data task team has limited availability and resources to support development of fidelity measures. There is limited buy-in to develop these tools.	Identification and/or development of fidelity measures (documented fidelity resources) Development of fidelity monitoring plan (completed fidelity monitoring plan)

Implementation Plan Example #2

This implementation plan example was developed for a place-based initiative — Best Start Kids (BSK) — in a single county in a Southeastern state. The county includes two small cities and an expansive surrounding rural area. BSK seeks to improve population results for all children ages 0–8 in the county and to reduce disparities in child outcomes. Through a multisector approach, BSK will support healthy pregnancies and births; on-track development for children at 12, 24 and 36 months; school readiness by kindergarten; and grade-level reading success by grade 3. This multisector approach includes four priorities: 1) a family navigation system, 2) expansion and integration of evidence-based programs (EBPs) including Healthy Steps, 3) continuous quality improvement (CQI) of community-based programs and 4) the development of an integrated data system.

Implementation is supported by a backbone organization, a local nonprofit that provides strategic, programmatic and financial oversight for BSK. The backbone organization has formed four design teams, one for each priority area. A leadership team with representation from each of the design teams facilitates the development of shared infrastructure across the priority areas. Each of the design teams has completed the implementation planning tool for their specific priority area. The leadership team reviews the teams' implementation plans and identifies a set of overarching strategies and benchmarks for the full initiative.

Project: Best Start Kids

Date: Summer 2020

Design team members: Each design team has representatives from the backbone organization, community partners, county families, staff from local funders, EBP local coordinators and consultants. Co-leaders for each team include staff from the backbone organization and a local community partner.

Leadership team members: Co-leaders from each of the design teams, the CEO of the backbone and a local funder

Project result: To improve outcomes and reduce disparities for children ages 0-8 in the county.

Timeline: January 2020 to December 2021 — this is a snapshot within a 10-year initiative. In year 3, the four priority areas of the initiative are in different stages. The integrated data system is in exploration, the family navigation system is in installation, and the expansion of EBPs and the CQI of community-based programs are both in the initial implementation stage. The leadership team meets to discuss the status of each priority area and to plan overarching activities that will help align and strengthen the initiative as a whole.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN EXAMPLE #2							
Implementation stage	**Implementation goal(s)** *Why is this important?*	**Strategies** *How will we accomplish this goal?*	**Timeline** *Start–Finish*	**Person(s) responsible**	**Resources needed**	**Anticipated adaptive challenges**	**How will we know if we're making progress?[7]** *What data will be used?*
Exploration	**Integrated Data System**						
	Develop an understanding of the concerns associated with families consenting to have personal data included in the IDS.	Conduct family focus groups. Engage families in IDS design team.	January 2020 – December 2021	Community engagement specialist from backbone organization	Time and support to gather and analyze data, vet findings and identify implications	Families have not been empowered to share authentic feedback. Focus group recruitment doesn't result in a diverse set of families that reflect the focus population. Design team members may not have an ability to respond to concerns raised by families.	Vetted findings (with families) and identified implications of findings on IDS design and use (notes from vetting focus groups)

[7] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in Implementation Action Guide 5.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN EXAMPLE #2							
Implementation stage	Implementation goal(s) *Why is this important?*	Strategies *How will we accomplish this goal?*	Timeline *Start–Finish*	Person(s) responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we're making progress?[8] *What data will be used?*
Installation	Family Navigation System						
	Test protocols for family navigation in two local pediatric offices and one hospital.	Recruit two local pediatric offices and one hospital partner to test the feasibility of using the family navigation protocol.	January 2020 – December 2021	Three implementation team members including maternal and child health specialist from the backbone organization, partner from local hospital and local funder	Support from local pediatric offices and hospitals (critical for defining activities and vetting feasibility of family navigation in pediatric offices)	There is buy-in from leadership at the pediatric offices and the hospital partner but not from nurses or staff. Pilots sites are not representative of all pediatric offices and hospitals (e.g., they may be better resourced than other sites).	Feedback from nurses on feasibility of using protocol including the time it takes to complete, clarity of the questions and usefulness for referrals (feedback surveys)
Initial Implementation	Expansion of Evidence-Based Programs						
	Grow workforce in rural areas for Healthy Steps expansion where hiring a full-time Healthy Steps	Gather feedback from local pediatric offices serving rural populations on strategies to	January 2020 – December 2021	Three members from EBP design team including local funder, local Healthy Steps coordinator and	Time to travel to offices and protocol for gathering information	There might not be shared agreement on the most pressing needs of pediatric offices serving rural areas;	List of recommendations from pediatricians for growing workforce for Healthy Steps

[8] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in Implementation Action Guide 5.

	specialist is not feasible.	address part-time Healthy Steps specialist staffing, including job sharing and telehealth.		representative from the backbone		they may not view Healthy Steps expansion as a priority. BSK is not well positioned to address staffing and infrastructure challenges in rural areas.	expansion in rural areas (interview data from pediatric offices)
	Continuous Quality Improvement for Community-Based Programs						
	Understand if current CQI capacity-building practices are developing CQI capacity in local programs as intended.	Conduct survey of local programs to assess changes in CQI capacity.	January 2020 – March 2020	External evaluator	Financial resources to contract with evaluator and survey software	There is lack of clarity and shared understanding on what the current CQI capacity-building practices are. There is a risk in transparently sharing results if capacity is not improving. There is not a willingness to change the practice if capacity is not improving.	Assessment of changes from baseline CQI capacity at start of CQI coaching in year 2 to CQI capacity in year 3 (survey data from CQI coaches and local programs)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN EXAMPLE #2							
Implementation stage	Implementation goal(s) *Why is this important?*	Strategies *How will we accomplish this goal?*	Timeline *Start–Finish*	Person(s) responsible	Resources needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we're making progress?[9] *What data will be used?*
Across Stages	Leadership						
	Understand community partners' perceptions of BSK initiative at year 3.	Conduct community town hall meetings to gather feedback from local partners and to understand if BSK is addressing disparities in access to services.	June 2020 – December 2020	CEO of backbone organization with support from external evaluator	Space for town hall meetings Agenda for meetings Note takers	Community partners haven't been engaged in previous years and aren't familiar with the initiative. It is unclear how feedback can or will be used. There is limited space to pivot if disparities are not being adequately addressed.	Synthesized feedback from community partners on whether they perceive BSK is making a positive impact on disparities in access for children ages 0–8 in the county (notes from town hall meetings) Action plan developed based on feedback (completed action plan)

[9] Progress represents benchmarks identified as important at each stage. More information can be found in Implementation Action Guide 5.