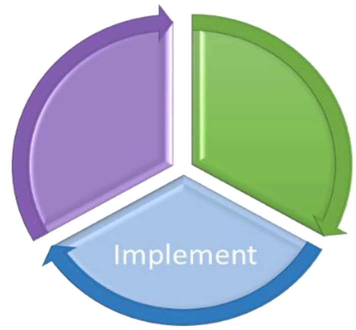
PREPARE TO IMPLEMENT



Purpose:

In this stage, you will identify and assemble the implementation team and will develop a Work Plan that will establish concrete action items for implementing your program or program change. Clearly planning and outlining your implementation steps will identify who and when work plan activities are to be completed.

TOOLS

- **Work Plan**
- **Budget**
- **Program Description**
- **Logic Model**
- **Indicator Development**

1: Identify your implementation team

In this first step, you will identify and assemble an implementation team that actively works together to ensure the successful implementation of the program or program change.

Step 1a: Consider roles, responsibilities, and objectives

Consider the following roles, responsibilities, and objectives when you are ready to identify and assemble the implementation team:

- Increase staff "buy-in" and readiness for the program or program change;
- Build relationships with stakeholders, including priority and/or target populations;
- Participate in the implementation process, including involvement in multiple decisions, tasks, action items, and adjustments to support and promote the program or program change;
- Assess the commitment to the program's process and outcomes;
- Use evidence-informed activities to support the program or program change; and
- Problem-solve and ensure sustainability of the program's implementation (Metz & Bartley, 2012).

Step 1b: *Consider team member's knowledge expertise, skills, and experiences*

To support the team's roles, responsibilities, and objectives, implementation team members ideally would have the following knowledge, expertise, skills, and experiences:

- Knowledge and understanding of the program activities and how they connect to the program outputs and outcomes (refer to the **Logic Model** and/or **Program Description** for more information);
- Knowledge of best practices for implementation; and
- Experience using data and/or evaluation results to improve programs (Metz & Bartley, 2012).

Guiding Questions

- How will the implementation team be recruited?
- What knowledge, expertise, skills, experiences, and competencies do potential implementation team members have that would be beneficial in successfully changing or implementing the program?

2: Create a Work Plan

Once you have identified and assembled an implementation team, it is important to document the work that the team will be carrying out. This includes identifying tasks and deliverables necessary to implement the program or program change, establishing the timeline for completion of the identified tasks and deliverables, and identifying who is responsible for their completion.

The **Work Plan** tool may be used to document the various activities and tasks associated with implementing a program or a program change. The work plan tool is a tool that allows you to plot tasks on a timeline.

> ***Tips:***
> 1. *Select one person who will be responsible for updating the **Work Plan** regularly.*
> 2. *Consult the work plan at each group meeting to ensure tasks and activities are up to date.*
> 3. *It may be helpful to refer to task numbers from other documents instead of the full description/name.*

Step 2a: Determine specific and detailed tasks

Detail the work plan as if someone external to the implementation team was going to implement the program or program change. Once the work plan has been completed, it will be easier to see the implementation's full development and where tasks may overlap.

The work plan should include detailed and specific tasks to support the implementation of program activities, outputs, and outcomes, which may have been documented in the **Program Description** and/or **Logic Model** tools. Tasks are identified under the "program activities" field as part of the "action" section of the program description tool, whereas tasks are part of the "intervention / components" section of the logic model. The logic model also identifies deliverables in the "outputs" section.

There may be tasks that are necessary for implementation that are not considered program activities. These tasks need to be included in the work plan and may need to be started and/or completed before the program or program change is implemented. For example, you may need to educate staff, develop communication products, and/or obtain materials or human resources. Some tasks may also include altering internal policies and procedures (Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, 2012).

Step 2b: Identify tasks contingent on other tasks

Consider the tasks that can be completed simultaneously and/or independent of one another. If there are some tasks contingent on other tasks, you may want to identify them in some way (e.g., asterisks). For example, if you have identified launching a questionnaire as a key deliverable, then associated tasks may include drafting survey questions and consulting with an Epidemiologist or Program Evaluator. Lastly, some tasks may not result in a tangible product or deliverable, and several tasks may contribute towards a single deliverable.

> ***Build in Extra Time!***
> *It may be helpful to build in extra time to complete tasks contingent on others, to minimize the impact of delay in the overall timeline.*

Step 2c: *Assign tasks*

List the "person(s) responsible" for each task. It may be useful to have someone accountable for each deliverable. They may, in turn, delegate tasks to comply with the **Work Plan** deadlines.

Step 2d: *Complete tasks*

The "completed date" will not be filled in until the listed task has been completed. The timeline can be altered accordingly, if required.

Guiding Questions

- Have all the tasks and deliverables been identified, as well as the person(s) responsible for completing each?
- Does the **Work Plan** identify a clear plan for what will happen and when it should occur?
- What is the implementation start date for the program or program change?
- Have timelines and resources considered the demands related to assessing and addressing potential unintended health equity impacts of the chosen program activities or program change? (Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, 2012)
- Has enough time been allocated to complete the tasks?
- Has staff learning and skill development been considered?
- Are there others who need to be consulted in the development and approval of the work plan? (e.g., Consultations with Program Evaluators or Epidemiologists; approval by Senior Leaders, etc.)

3: Build program buy-in and readiness

When implementing a new program or making a program change, it may take time for the organization, stakeholders, team members, and clients to adjust. The implementation team is an integral part of leading buy-in and change at all levels of the program, program change, and organization. As such, it is vital that the professional development and learning needs required for the group to effectively implement the program or program change be considered.

> *"Developing the competence of practitioners is a key component of this stage to ensure that programs are implemented with fidelity" (Metz & Bartley, 2012).*

Step 3a: Assess the impact of the program or program change

Consider who may be affected by the program or program change, the different ways they may react, and how you can support those groups through the changes. The change process may begin at this stage and continue after the implementation date. Once you have identified the potential impacts of the program or program change, consider factoring them into the team's professional development and learning needs to make team members better front-line champions of the program or program change.

Step 3b: Identify professional development and learning needs

Identify the professional development and learning needs of the implementation team and the staff involved with the program or program change. Education should provide knowledge related to theory, skills, abilities, and the underlying values of the program by using adult learning principles. Most importantly, those involved in the implementation need to learn when, how, and with whom to use the new skills and practices (Metz & Bartley, 2012).

Step 3c: Provide professional development and learning opportunities

Provide education to the implementation team and staff. This is an opportunity to introduce the rationale and interventions / components of evidence-informed practices, as well as to practise new skills in a safe, supportive learning environment (Metz & Bartley, 2012). Always include cultural safety, as well as cultural humility components into training, education, and professional development to ensure staff possess the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse populations (Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, 2012).

"Changes in skill levels, organizational capacity, organizational culture, and so on require education, practice, and time to mature" (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005)

For more information about cultural safety and health equity, refer to the *Health Equity* concept guide.

Guiding Questions

- Who may be affected by this program implementation or change?
- What are the professional development and learning needs of the implementation team and staff needed to effectively implement the program or program change?
- Have required stakeholders been identified to support the learning and education needs of the implementation team and staff (e.g. Health Equity Advisory Taskforce)?
- How will the program address systemic barriers to health equity (e.g. access to programs)?

4: Assign or acquire resources for staffing and program infrastructure

Ensuring that sustainable funding, human resources, and policy development strategies exist contribute to the successful and sustainable implementation of your program or program change (Fixsen et al., 2005). As such, before implementing a program or a change, it is important to assess what resources are required to implement and then deliver the program, and to either plan to assign or acquire the necessary resources.

Step 4a: Identify and acquire resources

Determine how to obtain the resources needed to deliver the program as planned; these may be outlined in the **Logic Model** and/or **Program Description**, if one has been developed. What is the most effective way to obtain these resources based on your program activities? Consider that resources may need to be more extensive when implementing programs for priority populations (Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, 2012). Examples of possible staffing and program resources needed are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Examples of resources required for program activities.

Types of Resources		
Material & Supplies	**Financial**	**Human**
• Office space and furniture • Office services • Clinical Supplies • Medications • Equipment • Educational supplies • Daily stipends or childcare • IT solutions (database development)	• Program funding (internal) • Funding from grants • In-kind contributions • Funding reallocation through PBMA proposal	• Program Staff • Support Staff • Administrative support • Program Planning and Evaluation Team • Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Team • Communications support • Privacy support • IT support • Management support • Contract Services to support program deliverable
List of Request Forms		
• Program Planning and Evaluation Request • Project Approval Request Form • Scope of Work Request • Communications Services Request Form • Copyright Permission Request Form • Human Resources & Labour Relations Services (HRLR) Recruitment Request Form • IT Request Form • Library Request Forms • RAC Review Request Form • Request to Recruit Participants for External Research Projects Form		

Once you have identified the resources you will need to implement the program or program change, review the **Indicator Development** tool to determine if you need additional resources to collect and monitor indicators. Having adequate resources will avoid constraints that may impact the feasibility of the indicators you are collecting and monitoring.

Step 4b: Document budget

Finalize and document the proposed budget using the **Budget Tool** and submit for approval, as required.

Guiding Questions

- What internal and/or external support is required to obtain the required resources?
- What is the program budget? What funding is budgeted to make this program change or implement the new program?

5: Build linkages with organizational and community supports

Engagement with internal and external stakeholders, including priority and target populations, is important throughout the planning and development process. Such engagement becomes especially key at this point. When priority populations are involved in this process, it ensures greater alignment and collaboration with complementary projects and partners (Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, 2012).

In the IMPLEMENT phase, stakeholders may play a key role in:

- Providing input on the program's activities, outputs, and outcomes, as reflected in the **Logic Model** and/or **Program Description** tools;
- Providing resources for the implementation of a program's activity/task;
- Supporting the development and monitoring of key indicators; and
- Providing feedback by highlighting areas for improvement and those that are successful.

For more information on building linkages with stakeholders, refer to the *Engage Stakeholders* concept guide.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: ***The implementation date for my program is set. Due to delays on some activities I don't have enough time to complete all my program development tasks/activities. What do I do?***

A: Speak with your manager about delaying the implementation date and/or acquiring more resources to complete the listed tasks/activities. If neither is possible, work with your manager to prioritize implementation steps to meet the implementation date.

Q: ***Staff education is an essential part of my program development and implementation. What are some strategies I can use to help staff education be successful?***

A: When educating staff, it is important to reiterate the purpose of the program and the reasons these strategies were chosen. You want to make sure staff are able to secure time needed to participate in learning activities. You will also want to ensure health equity and cultural safety are ingrained into the education that is being provided. Where possible, try to incorporate the following adult learning principles:

- Allow staff to help guide the learning process
- Encourage staff to use previous knowledge and experience
- Create imminent opportunities for staff to practise new skills
- Ensure practice scenarios are as realistic as possible
- Provide a supportive environment to receive feedback
- Consider the skills required to implement each activity (Knowles M.S., Holton E.F., & Swanson R.A, 2012)

Refer to the *Health Equity* concept guide for more information on health equity.

Prepare to Implement Stage **Checklist** Items relevant to Staff; Items relevant to the Program Manager		
☐	Step 1: Identify and assemble your implementation team	
	☐	Considered the implementation team's roles, responsibilities, and objectives
	☐	Considered potential team members' knowledge, skills, and experiences
	☐	Send the list of the implementation team with their possible contributions, roles, and responsibilities to the Manager
	☐	Provide feedback on the implementation team list and suggest the next step (back for editing or finalizing the list)
	☐	Assemble the implementation team
	☐	Provide approval for staff to start the **Work Plan**
☐	Step 2: Implementation team develops a work plan with tasks, person(s) responsible, timelines and duration of each task	
	☐	Create tasks with timelines
	☐	Identify tasks that may be contingent on other tasks
	☐	Tasks are assigned to the implementation team members
	☐	Send to Manager for approval
	☐	Consultation with stakeholders (e.g., Program Evaluators or Epidemiologists) to review the work plan when needed
	☐	Reviews and approves the work plan
☐	Step 3: Build program buy-in and readiness	
	☐	Assess impact of the program and/or program change
	☐	Identify the implementation teams' professional development and learning needs
	☐	Provide professional development and learning opportunities to the implementation team
☐	Step 4: Acquire resources for staffing and program infrastructure	
	☐	Required resources are identified and acquired
	☐	The implementation team completes the **Budget Tool** and sends to the Manager
	☐	Consultation with stakeholders (e.g., Program Evaluators or Finance) to review the budget when needed
	☐	Reviews and approves the budget for the program
☐	Step 5: Build linkages with organizational and community supports	
	☐	Engage internal and external stakeholders to collect feedback

References

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of literature*

Knowles M.S., Holton E.F., & Swanson R.A. (2012). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (Seventh Edition ed.): Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group

Metz, A., & Bartley, L. (2012). *Active implementation frameworks for program success: How to use implementation science to improve outcomes for children*. Retrieved from Chapel Hill, North Carolina:

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