Best Practices for Developing an Implementation Plan  
A Guide for Office of Adolescent Health and  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families PREP Innovative Strategies Grantees

What is an implementation plan?  
An implementation plan is a management tool designed to illustrate, in detail, the critical steps in developing and starting a project. It is a guide or map that helps program staff be proactive rather than reactive in developing their program and identifying any challenges along the way. It allows any person working on the program, regardless of his or her level of involvement, to fully understand the goal of the program and how it is to be accomplished. It ensures that everyone working on the project is on the same page and any discrepancies are resolved before they become costly to the project or population served.

Why is an implementation plan important?  
An implementation plan allows stakeholders on the project to think through critical components before beginning, thereby saving time, energy, and money. By detailing all critical steps before starting the project, stakeholders can anticipate factors they otherwise would not consider until encountered and identify potential problems and challenges on the front end. The planning becomes proactive instead of reactive, which allows best practices to be used and ensures that energy and time are spent on implementing a high quality, well-thought-out program rather than “putting out fires.”

How will an implementation plan be used?  
Grantees will use an implementation plan as their guide through the first year of development and piloting. By having all persons refer to a common document, program managers and directors can be sure that program intentions and goals are interpreted consistently by all staff and not subject to individual interpretation. The implementation plan should be reviewed in staff meetings and updated as necessary. It is a guide for developing the program and planning for the piloting of the program.

What constitutes the implementation phase?  
The first year is all about implementation planning and piloting. During the first 6 months, programs should be developing and finalizing their implementation plans. During months 7–12, programs should be pilot testing their program, with OAH approval, and tweaking implementation plans as necessary.

What elements should be included in an implementation plan?  
- Grantee name  
- Program model: Which evidence-based program is being used?  
- Goal of the program: What does this program hope to achieve?
• **Number of sites that will be replicating the program model:** What is the total number of sites that will be implementing the program?

• **Name(s) of the site(s) implementing the program:** Identify the sites; e.g., Franklin Middle School, Teen Development Center, etc.

• **Identify the facilitators at each site:** Who will actually be doing the on-the-groundwork?

• **Number of facilitators/staff already hired:** How many of the staff already work for your agency?

• **Number of facilitators/staff to be hired:** How many staff do you still have to hire to reach capacity?

• **Recruitment strategy for staff:** How are staff going to be recruited? With what qualifications? Who will do the interviewing, hiring, etc.?

• **Retention strategy for staff:** What is the plan to prevent staff attrition? How much staff attrition can you tolerate? How will you prevent burnout? How will you provide or support staff development? How will staff be supervised?

• **Staff training:** How will staff be trained on the intervention, by whom, when? Will they be trained on other key factors related to working with this population (e.g., adolescent development, cultural issues specific to your population)?

• **Description of each site’s setting:** What type of setting (e.g., a school, community organization, clinic, other)?

• **Description of the location at each site where groups will meet:** For example, will it be a waiting room, a classroom, a clinic office, the teen lounge at the program center?

• **Dates and times when will the program be implemented:** List—e.g., Starting March 7, 2011, every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 4pm-6pm for six weeks.

• **Number of groups that will receive the program intervention at each site during the year:** How many cycles of youth will go through the program?

• **Number of youth to be served per group:** How many do you anticipate in each group?

• **Recruitment strategy for clients at each site:** Specify how the clients will be made aware of this program. Will you ensure personal contact with potential participants and their parents? Conduct mailings? Meet with school officials to request their assistance? Go to locations where members of your target population gather? Develop flyers to distribute throughout the community? Utilize peer recruitment? Do you need to develop parent permission forms? Describe marketing strategies, materials development, etc.

• **Client retention strategy at each site:** How will you keep youth involved and interested throughout the entire intervention? What happens if there is attrition?

• **Proposed adaptations and rationale for proposed adaptations:** What are the core elements of the intervention, and what are the key elements? Key elements are those
that can be adapted, such as updating statistics, changing the names of role-play activities, and replacing supplemental materials.

- **Add-on activities:** Are there other activities that are being added to the programming?

- **Proposed plan to provide referrals to health care services:** Where will participants be referred? Is an appointment needed? Is a referral letter needed? What type of relationship does your agency have with this program? What is the plan to ensure patient followed through on referral?

- **Fidelity monitoring tools:** What tools will you use to collect data from facilitators in order to monitor fidelity to the intervention?

- **Plan for monitoring fidelity:** How will the monitoring tools be implemented? What training can be offered to ensure fidelity to the program model?

- **Plan for addressing lack of fidelity (if necessary):** How will you address a failure to maintain fidelity? Who will address that issue?

- **Data Collection:** What data are going to be collected? How will data be collected? Who will monitor data collection procedures?

- **Evaluation:** Who is conducting the evaluation? What key questions should be asked and answered? How will those questions be answered? Will sufficient data be collected to provide those answers?