

FIVE-YEAR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCE: A Guide for State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grantees

State Apprenticeship Expansion Technical Assistance

October 2024

American Institutes for Research® | AIR.ORG



Contents

About This Resource	3
Planning for Implementation	4
Foundations of Strategic Implementation	6
Implementation Foundations: Engage Strategic Partners	7
Implementation Foundations: Communication	12
Implementation Foundations: Assess Potential Risks and Challenges	14
Implementation Action Planning	17
Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Prioritize Action Steps	18
Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Developing a Work Plan	26
Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Tracking Progress	30
Appendix	i

About This Resource

As part of applications for State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant funds, states were required to submit a five-year strategic plan addressing how they would use funds to expand, diversify, and modernize their states' Registered Apprenticeship systems. Now that states have completed their first year in their strategic plan, it's important to take time to understand and plan for further implementation. This resource is designed to support grantees in translating their five-year strategic plans into high-quality implementation plans. It offers a framework to guide grantees' development of their implementation plans and tools to streamline and support progress toward grant goals and outcomes. (Grantees that wish to strengthen their five-year strategic plan before creating an implementation plan may wish to use the [Five-Year Planning Toolkit](#).)

How to Use This Resource

This resource is designed to be used by grant leadership and programmatic staff members and, when appropriate, with strategic partners. This resource is divided into two sections: one section focuses on foundations of implementing strategic plans and the other on the implementation planning cycle. Included in this resource are completed examples of templates for tools to support each foundation and phase of the implementation cycle. Blank templates can be found in the [appendices](#) for ease of use. It is not necessary for grantees to complete every template in this resource to develop a high-quality implementation plan. We recommend beginning with the [Planning for Implementation Readiness Reflection](#) table in [Appendix A](#) and then selecting one to two tools from each subsequent section of the resource to complete to support the development of an [implementation action plan](#). Grantees may wish to work with their technical assistance coach to determine which templates will best meet their implementation planning needs.

Planning for Implementation

A robust planning process is the foundation of strong implementation. While a strategic plan is developed based on the desired results or outcomes of a grant, the implementation plan is an essential tool for managing the process of achieving the planned goals and outcomes. Strong implementation plans are supported by tools to organize and manage project tasks, clear internal and external responsibility and accountability lines, and ongoing strategic communication, risk assessment, and continuous improvement.

A strategy has been implemented successfully when the stated goals are fulfilled within the expected timeframe and/or target performance outcomes have been achieved or exceeded. Effective implementation efforts can support longer-term sustainability by generating ongoing support through strengthened and expanded strategic partnerships, impact through systems-level change, and development of innovative strategies or practices.

The implementation of a strategic plan offers opportunities to:

- Organize and communicate the details of how goals will be achieved
- Identify specific tasks and action items for broad strategies
- Develop supporting tools, processes, and procedures to carry out the strategies as envisioned
- Gain a deeper understanding of strengths and opportunities for impact
- Apply what you have learned from strategy implementation to future planning efforts

Implementation Readiness Reflection

Prepare for implementation by reviewing the goals and strategies you developed for your five-year strategic plan using the following prompts in the Implementation Readiness Reflection table below.

Reflection Prompt	Considerations
Why is this goal important enough to be included in the plan?	• Reflect on the original thinking behind the goal, including key advocates, champions, and strengths that can be leveraged to achieve it. What, if anything, has changed since the goal was developed, and how might that impact implementation efforts? Does the goal need to be modified based on any changes since the submission of the strategic plan?

Reflection Prompt	Considerations
Who needs to be involved to achieve the outcome?	- Consider who needs to be at the table to achieve this goal, including internal and external leaders, partners, decision-makers, champions, etc. - Consider the staff capacity and expertise that will be beneficial in achieving this goal and the network of partners, participants, providers, and/or champions that may have valuable feedback or input into the process.
What resources are needed to accomplish your goal?	Reflect on the resources that will be required to achieve the goal (funding, personnel, timeframe) and if there are sufficient resources available. What strategies, processes, or resources need to be adjusted?
By when must this goal be accomplished?	Consider the target date for deliverables in the context of your overall grant and program model design. Think backward from your final deadline to anticipate check-in points. Factor additional outreach events (such as National Apprenticeship Week) and professional development activities (such as conferences and trainings) into your planning.
How will you know that you have met your goal?	Consider the measurements and milestones that can be used to assess your progress along the way, including the information you will need to collect or access and the supporting data collection tools or processes that may need to be implemented.
What if your goal falls off track?	Consider the contingency options and strategies to identify and mitigate risks to successfully achieve your goal. What challenges or opportunities did you anticipate during strategic planning that may be risks to your implementation success?

A version of the above **Implementation Readiness Reflection** table with space to answer the prompt questions can be found in [Appendix A](#). Some of the responses to the reflection may be used to populate the plan or assist with determining which tools in this resource should be used to develop the implementation plan.

Foundations of Strategic Implementation

Effective strategic plan implementation is rooted in key priorities carried through each step of the implementation cycle. By integrating these foundational practices throughout your implementation activities, you can strengthen support and engagement from internal team members and external partners, develop capacity and opportunities for alignment across organizations, and anticipate and mitigate potential barriers to progress.

Engage Strategic Partners: Strategic partnerships are critical in both strategic planning and implementation efforts. Strong partnerships support capacity, sustainability, and alignment of efforts across the apprenticeship ecosystem. Partner engagement for implementation activities includes analysis, prioritization of relationships to develop or strengthen, and intentional conversations to foster support for implementation efforts.

Communication: Strong communication practices promote awareness, commitment, and support from team members and partners. By tailoring your communication approach to the awareness level and expected support with clear action steps, you can make implementation progress more efficient and effective.

Assess Potential Risks and Challenges: Assessing potential risks and challenges throughout the implementation process will help ensure that the planned activities and progress to goals remain on track for completion and aligned to target outcomes. A proactive approach to anticipating risks to implementation progress can help teams develop mitigation strategies.

The following sections will provide an overview of the implementation foundations and corresponding resources to support plan development.



Engage Strategic Partners



Communication



Assess Potential Risks & Challenges

Implementation Foundations: Engage Strategic Partners

Integrating partnership voice and working toward shared goals are critical to effective implementation of a strategic plan. Strategic partners will have broad levels of interest, information, and impact. Mapping strategic partners and their potential impact on the implementation of the strategic plan through a partner analysis can provide key insights for establishing strategic conversations and partnerships while also identifying additional capacity for implementation.

Engage Strategic Partners



Assess Strategic Partner Influence, Interest, and Impact

Partner analysis focuses on identifying those partners and parties who are most likely to have influence, interest, and impact on the overall health of the project. There are multiple methods for conducting a partner analysis. One method is to identify a partner and then specifically ask questions about this partner's interest, influence, and impact.¹ To do this analysis, first make a list of all partners and groups that are most likely to be impacted by or have an impact on plan implementation. Then use the following questions to deepen understanding of the partners:

- *Will this partner be interested in our plan? Why are they likely to be interested in our plan? Why are they not?*
- *Does this partner have power or influence to block or facilitate any of our strategies? How could they hinder or support our work?*
- *How will this partner be directly impacted by this work, either positively or negatively?*

States can use a chart such as the **Example of Influence, Interest, and Impact Partner Analysis** on the following page to organize the answers to these questions. Be sure to include any other relevant information pertaining to each partner.

¹ Reed, M.S., & Rudman, H. (2023). Re-thinking research impact: Voice, context and power at the interface of science, policy and practice. *Sustainability Science*, 18, 967–981. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-022-01216-w>

Example of Influence, Interest, and Impact Partner Analysis

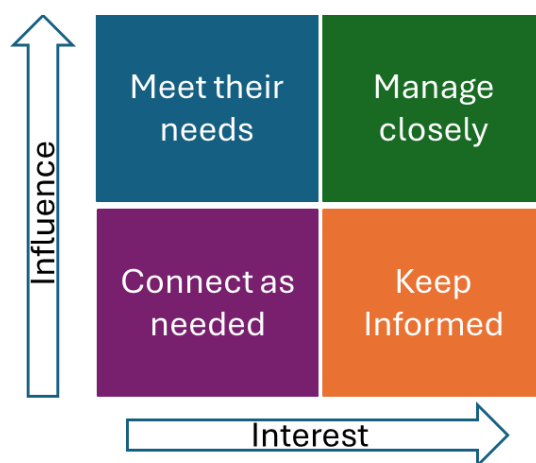
Relevant Party	Interest	Influence	Impact	Other Relevant Information
Name of organization or group	Why are they likely to be interested in this plan?	How might they have power to block or facilitate this plan?	How might they directly benefit from or be negatively impacted by this plan?	What else should we know about engaging this party?
Example: Governor's office	<i>Plan aligns with governor's workforce priority indicators.</i>	<i>Influence state agencies to participate in implementation plan. Request changes to the five-year plan.</i>	<i>Success would positively impact priority indicators.</i>	<i>Governor requested their Workforce Policy Advisor receive regular updates on milestones.</i>

A version of the above **Influence, Interest, and Impact Partner Analysis** chart with space to answer the questions can be found in [Appendix B](#). The results of analyzing partner influence, interest, and impact may be used to support strategic conversations with partners and develop strategies around communicating with partners.

Prioritize Strategic Partners

Another method for completing a partner analysis is to group and prioritize strategic partners by their influence and likely impact on the plan. This can be done by using a power/interest grid (see **Power/Interest Grid for Partner Analysis** on the right).² Arrange partners in one of the four quadrants in the grid based on their level of likely influence and interest in the plan. Partners with stronger influence but less interest will be closer to the top left corner, while partners with strong influence and interest will be closer to the top right corner. Partners with little interest or influence will be closest to the bottom left corner, while partners with strong interest but little influence will be closer to the bottom right.

Power/Interest Grid for Partner Analysis

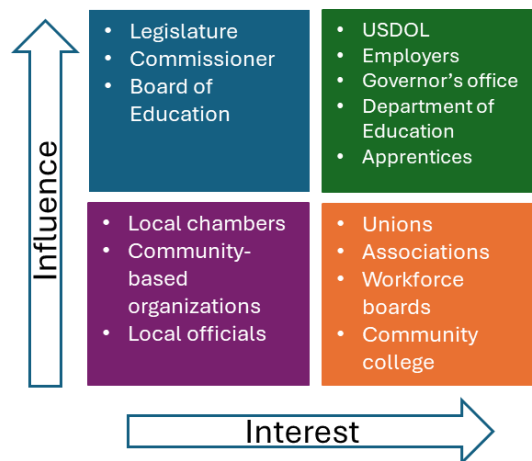


² Eden C. and Ackermann F. (1998) *Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management*, London: Sage Publications. 121-125 344-346.

A partner's location on the grid will inform methods and frequency of communication. The quadrants include:

- **Manage Closely:** Partners with a high level of influence and high level of interest have the biggest impact on a plan's success and should be closely managed to ensure they agree with and support the plan. These partners will require frequent communication and opportunities to provide feedback on implementation activities. For example, in the grid on the right, a state ranked the governor's office as having a high level of influence and interest in the top right corner.
- **Meet Their Needs:** Partners who have a high level of influence but may not have a strong interest in the plan should still be consulted regularly. These partners can influence a plan's direction or delay implementation and should be kept satisfied and monitored closely for potential challenges or opportunities to increase interest. In the example to the right, the state included the legislature, commissioner, and Board of Education in the top left corner.
- **Keep Informed:** Partners who have a high level of interest but have limited influence should be kept informed. They can provide helpful insights regarding potential risks to the plan as well as valuable feedback to support plan implementation and make connections to support strategies. In the above example, the state included partners such as unions, associations, and workforce boards in the bottom right square.
- **Connect as Needed:** Partners who have little influence or interest in the plan should be informed as needed about planned activities. In our example, the state identified community-based organizations and local officials as partners to connect with as needed in the bottom left square.

Example of a Power/Interest Analysis Grid



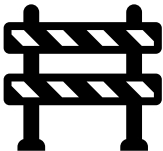
Use the results of the partner analysis to inform the communication plan and determine who should be included in strategic conversations. See [Appendix C](#) for a blank version of the Power/Interest Grid template.

Hold Strategic Conversations for Plan Implementation

Strategic conversations can be used to promote alignment with partners and/or define key actions for plan implementation. Strategic conversations should include partners who have a high level of interest, influence, and impact on plan implementation. These conversations

should be focused on reviewing the strategy, discussing the current state of activities and goals, analyzing potential risks or roadblocks, and confirming priorities and planning actions. The following is an example of what an agenda for a strategic conversation could include.

Example of an Agenda for Strategic Conversations

	Strategy Review	• Review the overall strategy, context, and must-know information. • Remind participants of shared vision/key goals, upcoming milestones, and priority deliverables.
	Discuss Current State	• Anchor the discussion around a specific goal and/or strategy for deeper analysis of implementation efforts. • Update on quarterly progress and review list of open issues/challenges. • What did we learn in the last 30 days and what will we do in the next 30?
	Analyze Potential Risks or Roadblocks	• Analyze for gaps in resources, strategies, or partnerships. • Assess pending changes and/or threats to implementation or ongoing progress.
	Confirm Priorities	• Identify decisions to be made. • Based on decisions made, update the action steps, key performance indicators (KPIs), etc. • Assign accountability for next steps.
	Action Planning	• Check for upcoming milestones or checkpoints for the task. • Identify key messages/updates to be shared with stakeholders.

A blank template of the **Agenda for Strategic Conversations** can be found in [Appendix D](#).

Whatever level of interest, influence, and impact partners have, understanding these connections can provide important insights that will support the development of an implementation plan. Doing partner analysis and holding strategic conversations are two activities that will support other foundational aspects of implementation planning: communication and assessing potential risks and challenges.

RESOURCES

- Use the results of Partner Ecosystem Mapping Tool in the [*Five-Year Planning Toolkit*](#) to help identify strategic partners.
- [What Is Stakeholder Analysis? Definition, Examples and Template](#) (Tractivity)

Implementation Foundations: Communication

An inclusive and collaborative implementation process leverages the diverse perspectives of a variety of individuals and organizations who may offer meaningful contributions to program success. Developing a communication approach at the outset of implementation planning supports transparency, accountability, and ongoing collaboration.

Communication



Develop a Tailored Approach to Communication

Consider the variety of individuals or organizations that need to be regularly updated on implementation efforts and progress. A targeted approach to communication can support consistent, efficient updates and ongoing engagement in implementation efforts. Consider the level of awareness and understanding the audience may have about the grant and the broader strategic vision as well as their role in supporting implementation efforts.

This information can help you determine appropriate timelines, messaging, and mechanisms for ongoing communication about implementation efforts. You may consider different frequencies or depths of information based on awareness, involvement, or responsibility levels.

Communication strategies might include:

- Newsletters, reports, or brief email updates about program progress on a regular basis (quarterly, monthly, etc.) to a distribution list of key people from each group
- Program updates and success stories or achievements delivered through standing meetings, an organization's website, social media, or staff meetings/workshops, or delivered to governing bodies
- Informational sessions or individual meetings to share progress, seek support, etc.

The following template provides an example of how grantees can plan communication based on an audience's awareness level, support of strategies, and responsibilities. Using the results of the partner analysis in the previous section of this resource, grantees can prioritize who should be considered in communication planning and what level of communication is required. Grantees should identify each audience's awareness level and understanding of goals and strategies as well as their support level and responsibility for implementation. After these have been identified, grantees can then develop a strategy for communicating with the audience that is appropriate to their level of influence and interest.

Communication Planning Template

Audience (individual or group)	<i>Who should be updated?</i>	<i>E.g., State Advisory Committee</i>
Awareness level	<i>How much do they know about the grant or program?</i>	<i>Low programmatic awareness</i>
Understanding of goals and strategies	<i>What is their understanding of the broader strategic vision?</i>	<i>Strong understanding of goals, limited understanding of the strategy</i>
Support of implementation efforts	<i>What is their role in implementation efforts?</i>	<i>High level of support of implementation efforts</i>
Actions or responsibilities for implementation	<i>What specific actions or responsibilities should they take based on the update?</i>	<i>General oversight responsibilities</i>
Communication strategy	<i>How will implementation progress be shared?</i>	<i>High-level updates in quarterly meetings with progress relative to goals/dashboards</i>

Use the blank version of the **Communication Planning Template** in [Appendix E](#) to identify audiences and develop a communication strategy.

RESOURCES

- Seven Techniques to Effective and Impactful Communication in [Impactful Partner Communication: Principles and Techniques](#) webinar recording (WorkforceGPS)
- [Effective Communication for Strategic Planning](#) (Financial Management)

Implementation Foundations: Assess Potential Risks and Challenges

Assessing potential risks and challenges is a foundational piece for implementing a strategic plan. To ensure that activities remain on track, states should proactively identify challenges and risks that may delay goal completion and develop strategies to mitigate or prevent these challenges. To identify potential barriers to goal completion, states should perform risk assessments at the beginning of the implementation plan design phase and at regular intervals (e.g., monthly or quarterly) throughout the plan duration.

Assess Potential Risks & Challenges



Methods for Risk Assessment

A **Risk Assessment Matrix** is used to evaluate potential risks and their likelihood of impacting a strategy. To conduct a risk assessment, identify all potential risks, both internal and external, that may pose a threat to plan implementation. These risks could include changes in administration or staffing, delays in procurement approval, or annual activities such as National Apprenticeship Week. Assign a rating to each risk based on the likelihood it will occur from 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely). Then assign a value from 1 (insignificant) to 5 (catastrophic) to each risk based on its potential impact. Using the **Risk Assessment Matrix** below, calculate the overall value of each potential risk by multiplying the likelihood value by the impact value.

Risk Assessment Matrix

		Impact				
		Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Significant (3)	Severe (4)	Catastrophic (5)
Likelihood	Almost Certain (5)	Medium 5	High 10	Very high 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	Very Likely (4)	Medium 4	Medium 8	High 12	Very high 16	Extreme 20
	Likely (3)	Low 3	Medium 6	Medium 9	High 12	Very high 15
	Unlikely (2)	Very low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	Medium 8	High 10
	Rare (1)	Very low 1	Very low 2	Low 3	Medium 4	Medium 5

For example, a grantee might identify the risk as a new President being elected. In this scenario, the likelihood of this happening is a 5, or almost certain. The impact of this risk is a 2, minor impact to the work, as grant funds have already been disbursed and the statement of work has already been approved. Multiplying the likelihood (5) by the impact (2) assigns a risk value of 10 or high risk. As another example, a grantee might identify delays in approval by the legislature to access the grant funding. The grantee may assign the likelihood of this occurring a 3, likely, and its impact a 5, catastrophic, as no work can proceed until funding is approved. This gives a value of 15, very high, to this risk (see **Example of Risk Assessment Results** below).

Example of Risk Assessment Results

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Value	Strategy
<i>New President elected</i>	5	2	10 (5 x 2)	<i>Have monthly check-ins with the federal project officer (FPO) to stay up to date on any changes.</i>
<i>Delays in legislature approving funding</i>	3	5	15 (3 x 5)	<i>Schedule meeting with House/Senate Committee Chair to brief on plan and grant award.</i>

Use the assigned risk value to prioritize which potential risks to plan for, creating a strategy to mitigate negative effects or delays. In the above examples, a grantee would prioritize time developing strategies for how best to prevent and/or mitigate delays in legislative approval in order to continue progress toward goals and performance outcomes. A blank Risk Assessment Template can be found in [Appendix F](#).

Root Cause Analysis Tool

When activities are delayed or unsuccessful, states can conduct a root cause analysis to identify the cause of those delays and challenges and develop solutions. There are multiple methods and tools for root cause analysis, one of the most commonly used being the Five Whys Technique.³ This technique includes choosing a problem statement and then asking why the problem is occurring. Continue to ask a why question using the answer to the previous question until the root issue has been identified.

³ Serrat, O. (2009, February). [The five whys technique](#). Asian Development Bank.

For example, **“No one came to our apprenticeship job fair.”**

Why? “We only marketed it on social media.”

Why? “We didn’t have flyers for our partners to hand out.”

Why? “The flyers were delivered late and couldn’t be used.”

Why? “The design was delivered to the printer too late to make the deadline.”

Why? “The communications request was delayed in the marketing department.”

Why? “The designer was on a planned vacation.”

A potential solution to this issue would be to develop a plan with the marketing department for all planned communication activities and review key deadlines on a quarterly basis. While not all challenges or risks are preventable, having a strategy to mitigate the negative consequences of those risks can prevent extensive delays in implementation of the strategic plan.

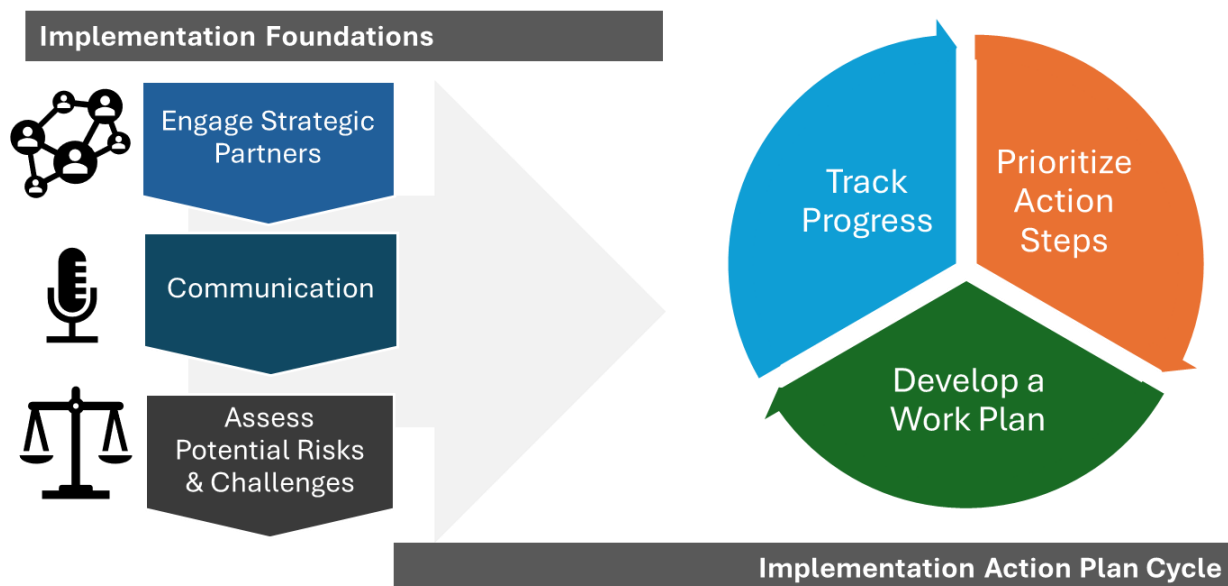
The [Appendix G: Root Cause Analysis template](#) provides additional reflection questions to help grantees identify challenges and define the root cause in combination with the five whys technique. Use the template to identify the root cause of the challenge and potential solutions for resolving the issue(s) preventing or delaying progress.

RESOURCES

- [Asana Risk Assessment Template](#)
- [Root Cause Analysis Explained: Definition, Examples, and Methods](#) (Tableau)
- [5 Whys](#) (Lean Enterprise Institute)

Implementation Action Planning

The implementation action planning cycle is an iterative process. As action steps are prioritized, develop a work plan and track progress against the work plan. The implementation foundations serve as cross-cutting themes to be considered throughout the cycle.



Prioritize Action Steps: First, action steps and specific deliverables will be identified to support the goals and strategies outlined in the strategic plan. Next, the supporting strategies and action steps will be prioritized by urgency and importance to inform the best order of completion. Finally, KPIs will be developed to track progress and successful completion.

Develop a Work Plan: A work plan further develops the implementation action steps and supports communication and accountability across team members. The process of developing a work plan will include identifying responsibilities, developing a timeline, delegating staff ownership of tasks, and assigning completion status updates.

Track Progress: Tracking the progress of implementation efforts may involve developing supporting tools and systems for tracking progress toward goals. This can help a team manage resources and identify opportunities to refine strategies. Implementation progress may be discussed with internal team members and external partners to provide updates and opportunities for analysis and collaboration.

Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Prioritize Action Steps

Prioritizing the strategies and supporting action steps for the goals of your strategic plan will help you focus on the right tasks in the right order and organize time and resources more effectively. Based on these priorities, a full implementation plan can be developed to manage risk and track progress toward goals. As a first step, list the implementation action steps that support each goal and strategy, and name the deliverable corresponding to those tasks. Next, assign priority levels to the strategies and action steps. The third step is to develop KPIs to help measure the progress of completing that action step and the ultimate impact of that activity.

Step 1: Identify Implementation Action Steps & Deliverables

Use the goals of your state's five-year strategic plan to develop supporting strategies and identify action steps for implementation. While the goal is the high-level impact outcome of your program, strategies will illustrate how you plan to achieve your goal. Each strategy should be supported by specific implementation action steps detailing how your strategy will be executed.



Each implementation action step should have a corresponding deliverable that can be used to track progress or to know when an action step has been completed (see the following **Sample Implementation Plan Template with Action Steps and Deliverables Identified**). Action step deliverables may be smaller pieces of collateral that are part of a broader project or program

deliverable (e.g., updated data for a report, list of contacts for outreach or engagement, materials for and/or delivery of a training session or meeting).

Sample Implementation Plan Template with Action Steps and Deliverables Identified

Goal: Develop a network of sector partners to create and expand new RAPs in a target occupation.		
	Strategy: Establish a collaborative partner network to market RAPs.	
	Implementation Action Steps	Deliverable
	<i>Example: Crosswalk goals and membership of similar networks, committees, and working groups.</i>	<i>Example: List of shared networks, committees, and working groups across key partners</i>
	<i>Example: Identify target partner organizations and representation to include in network.</i>	<i>Example: Outreach list of target partner organizations</i>

A blank Implementation Plan Template for identifying action steps and deliverables to meet your goals can be found in [Appendix O](#). Throughout the rest of this resource, we will add concepts to the Sample Implementation Plan Template that will support moving through the action planning cycle.

RESOURCES

- [Developing a Strategic Plan and Organizational Structure](#) (University of Kansas Community Tool Box)

Step 2: Assign Priority Levels to Strategies & Action Steps

Prioritizing strategies and supporting action steps can increase efficiency by identifying the best order for completing parts of the work and driving team focus on specific goals and tasks. Working through tasks by priority level can also build momentum to sustain ongoing implementation efforts by increasing productivity, managing workloads, and planning time and resources.

Considerations for assigning priority levels to strategies:

- **Urgency:** Time-based priorities will be developed around deadlines and due dates. Consider the cadence of key meetings, reviewers/approvers, or events that may impact the completion of the task. This can help you allocate a suitable amount of time for items to be developed, reviewed, and approved through the appropriate channels.
- **Importance:** Impact priorities may have substantial consequences or impact on goals. While there may not be a deadline driving urgency for impact priorities, these types of priorities have the potential to make future work easier by strengthening partnerships, aligning goals, etc.

The **Eisenhower Matrix** is a tool that was developed based on the time management approach used by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to categorize tasks based on urgency and importance.⁴ Using a grid, tasks can be ranked by urgency and importance to determine when they should be completed or prioritized.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do first —Complete the action now.	Do later —Schedule a time to complete the action later.
Not Important	Do next —Identify someone else to complete the action.	Do last or delete —Remove the action from your list.

- **Critical Priority:** Tasks placed in the Urgent/Important top left square need immediate attention and will have clear consequences if not completed. These tasks may be critical to reaching a goal or will likely derail work if not completed. They should be

⁴ Corporate Finance Institute. (n.d.). *Eisenhower Matrix*.
<https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/eisenhower-matrix>

prioritized for completion first and allocated appropriate attention and resources to avoid negative consequences.

- **High Priority:** Tasks placed in the Important/Not Urgent top right square may be crucial in the long term but are not currently time-sensitive. They are less pressing than urgent tasks and may have more flexible deadlines. They can be scheduled to be completed at a future time.
- **Medium Priority:** Tasks placed in the Urgent/Not Important bottom left square may need quick action but may not have substantial consequences. They can be delegated, outsourced, automated, or potentially delayed until more urgent or more important tasks are completed.
- **Low Priority:** Tasks placed in the Not Important/Not Urgent bottom right square may be nice to accomplish but might also be distractions or unnecessary. This type of work may be more procedural in nature and can be completed during downtime.

Teams can enhance their efficiency and make use of their limited resources by focusing on High Priority items as much as possible to reduce the occurrence and minimize time spent on Critical Priority tasks. The process of evaluating task levels is iterative and ongoing as items are completed and circumstances change. The blank **Eisenhower Matrix** template found in [Appendix H](#) can be used to determine the urgency and importance of the identified deliverables for your implementation plan.

The Sample Implementation Plan below includes the priority level for action steps and deliverables in the left-hand column. After determining the priority level of the strategy, action steps, and deliverables, the priority level should be added to the implementation plan to assist staff and partners in understanding which action steps should be focused on first. Use the blank version of the Implementation Plan in [Appendix O](#) to add priority levels to your implementation plan.

Sample Implementation Plan with Priority Levels Added to Strategies and Action Steps

Goal: Develop a network of sector partners to create and expand new RAPs in a target occupation.		
Priority Level <i>High</i>	Strategy: Establish a collaborative partner network to market RAPs.	
Priority Level	Implementation Action Steps	Deliverable
<i>Medium</i>	<i>Example: Cross-walk goals and membership of similar networks, committees, and working groups.</i>	<i>Example: List of shared networks, committees, and working groups across key partners</i>
<i>High</i>	<i>Example: Identify target partner organizations and representation to include in network.</i>	<i>Example: Outreach list of target partner organizations</i>

RESOURCES

- [How to Prioritize Strategic Initiatives](#) (Harvard Business School)
- [How to Get Stuff Done: The Eisenhower Matrix](#) (*Forbes*)
- [The Eisenhower Matrix](#) (The Decision Lab)

Step 3: Develop Key Performance Indicators for Action Steps

KPIs measure the progress in the process of completing the action step. They function as checkpoints to track progress toward the action step outcome over a specific timeframe. Strong KPIs will follow the SMART goal formula of being *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound*.

Each KPI should be supported by ongoing measurement to track, compare, and assess long-term performance and progress. This will help you demonstrate the impact of the outcome.

Types of metrics can include the following:

- **Activity measures** track activity and may be reflected as a percentage or number in activities or processes (e.g., *number of leads in pipeline*).
- **Outcome measures** track progress against a defined outcome, such as a percentage increase, change, or results (e.g., *percent increase in participants or programs*).
- **Project measures** track the progress of a project such as a percentage complete, a deliverable, or completion of a process or activity (e.g., *75 percent completion of policy development and approval*).
- **Target structure** indicates a number goal within a specific timeframe (e.g., *XX programs developed by the end of Program Year 2025*).

As you develop progress measures for your action steps, identify the data that will be needed to assess progress, and confirm the tools and processes for accessing that information. The following **KPI Planning Chart** includes question prompts to help you reflect on which KPIs are necessary and how and when they will be measured. A blank version of the chart can be found in [Appendix I](#).

KPI Planning Chart



What is your desired outcome?

Example: 200 new apprentices enrolled



How are you going to measure progress?

Enroll 50 apprentices in the next 4 cohorts.



How can you influence the outcome?

Develop referral pipelines through industry partners, sector-specific apprentice and employer success stories, and targeted social media outreach campaigns.



How often will you evaluate performance?

Quarterly



How will you know when you've achieved the KPI?

200+ new apprentices enrolled



What standard measures will show the impact of this outcome?

Total participant enrollment rates, cohort enrollment rates, conversion rates of referrals

In the following **Sample Implementation Plan Template**, the KPI outcomes with measure and tracking information as well as goal, strategy, and action step numbers have been added to the action step, deliverable, and priority levels in the right-hand column. Use the blank version of the **Implementation Plan Template** in [Appendix O](#) to record outcome, measure, and tracking information for each of your identified deliverables and action steps.

Sample Implementation Plan Template with KPI Outcomes and Measure & Tracking Information

Goal #1	Goal Develop a network of sector partners to create and expand new RAPs in a target occupation.			
Strategy # 1.A	Priority Level <i>High</i>	Strategy: Establish a collaborative partner network to market RAPs.		
Action Step #	Priority Level	Action Step	Deliverable	KPI: Outcome, Measure, & Tracking Information
1.A.1	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Example: Cross-walk goals and membership of similar networks, committees, and working groups.</i>	<i>Example: List of shared networks, committees, and working groups across key partners</i>	<i>50% of networks, committees, and working group goals cross-walked by Q2</i> <i>100% cross-walked by Q3</i>
1.A.2	<i>High</i>	<i>Example: Identify target partner organizations and representation to include in network.</i>	<i>Example: Outreach list of target partner organizations</i>	<i>20 target partners identified by Q1</i> <i>50 target partners identified by Q2</i>

RESOURCES

- [Avoid These Pitfalls When Measuring Your Strategy's Performance](#) (Harvard Business Review)

Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Developing a Work Plan

To develop and manage the implementation work plan, you will compile the work done under implementation foundations and prioritized action steps. In this next section, we will discuss how to identify responsibilities and a timeline and assign staff.

Timeline

Each action step should have a timeline identified with due dates to ensure that activities are accomplished.

Consider different types of dates to manage implementation progress:

- **Milestones** reflect markers in your project where meaningful change may occur (e.g., completion of a training program or approval of program standards).
- **Target dates** indicate when a task is expected to be completed but can be adjusted due to circumstances.
- **Deadlines** are hard dates by which an action must be completed, or the strategy may fall significantly behind. Deadlines may revolve around budget cycles or timelines for review or approval of deliverables.

Status

Progress should be reviewed regularly (e.g., biweekly or monthly) and used to make course corrections to the implementation plan. Action steps should be regularly reviewed and assigned a status update. This can help anticipate barriers to timely completion, shift timelines, and assess overall progress.

Responsibilities

Each action step should have an individual assigned to be responsible for its completion (noted as an implementation lead). They should be able to offer updates on the progress status, anticipated resource needs, timing considerations, and potential risks or roadblocks that might delay implementation. This individual may act in a project or task management role for an activity or set of activities within a strategy. They should be positioned to ensure peer or partner contributions to the successful completion of the activity.

Assignment of Staffing Using a RACI Chart

A Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed or “RACI” chart is a tool used to clarify roles and responsibilities for plan implementation. Each person is assigned a role for each task, and roles are defined as:⁵

- **Responsible:** People who do the work and complete the task (may be more than one person).
- **Accountable:** Owns the project or activity, provides oversight when decisions need to be made, and signs off when the activity is complete (only one person should be accountable).
- **Consulted:** Key stakeholder who needs to be consulted and provide input (more than one person may be consulted).
- **Informed:** People who need to be informed but do not contribute to the activity (more than one person may be informed).

Grantees can use a RACI chart to designate staff responsibilities within the lead agency or in conversation with strategic partners to help grantees identify partner roles and responsibilities. In the below example, the two identified deliverables from our sample implementation plan are placed in the left column. The two agencies charged with supporting this strategy are the state’s Department of Labor and Department of Education (see second row center and right columns). The Department of Labor Grant Manager and Program Coordinator are both responsible (R) for completing these deliverables, the Department of Education staff members are expected to provide input (C), and the accountability (A) for completion lies with the Department of Labor Division Director.

⁵ Harned, B. (2024, January 17). What is a RACI chart? How to use RACI to assign project roles. *TeamGantt Blog*. <https://www.teamgantt.com/blog/raci-chart-definition-tips-and-example>

Example of a RACI Chart Outlining Roles for Staff Members in Two State Agencies

Strategy: Establish a collaborative partner network to market RAPs.

Agency	Department of Labor			Department of Education	
Staff	Grant Manager	Division Director	Program Coordinator	Division Director	Work-Based Learning Coordinator
1.A.1 List of shared networks, committees, and working groups across key partners	R	A	R	C	C
1.A.2 Outreach list of target partner organizations	R	A	R	C	C

To create a RACI chart, work with partners to identify which staff members will be supporting implementation. Use the identified deliverables and associated tasks for each strategy to create your chart and assign a RACI task to each staff member. A blank version of the RACI chart can be found in [Appendix J](#).

RESOURCES

- [What Is a RACI Chart? How This Project Management Tool Can Boost Your Productivity \(Forbes\)](#)

On the following page, our sample implementation plan includes three new columns on the far right. The first new column is for the implementation lead, the person who has been identified as accountable for the action step. The second column is for due dates, which should apply to completion metrics when appropriate and the deliverables. The third column on the far right is for tracking the status of the project. Use the blank version of the implementation plan in [Appendix O](#) to fill in the implementation lead and due dates for your work plan, and then review activities and determine the status of each action step.

Sample Implementation Plan Template with Implementation Lead and Due Dates

Goal #1	Goal Develop a network of sector partners to create and expand new RAPs in a target occupation.						
Strategy # 1.A	Priority Level <i>High</i>	Strategy: Establish a collaborative partner network to market RAPs.					
Action Step #	Priority Level	Action Step	Deliverable	KPI	Implementation Lead	Due Dates	Status
1.A.1	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Example: Cross-walk goals and membership of similar networks, committees, and working groups.</i>	<i>Example: List of shared networks, committees, and working groups across key partners</i>	<i>50% of networks, committees and working group goals cross-walked by Q2</i> <i>100% cross walked by Q3</i>	<i>Division Director</i>	<i>12/31/2025</i> <i>3/31/2026</i>	<i>Delayed</i>
1.A.2	<i>High</i>	<i>Example: Identify target partner organizations and representation to include in network.</i>	<i>Example: Outreach list of target partner organizations</i>	<i>20 target partners identified by Q1</i> <i>50 target partners identified by Q2</i>	<i>Division Director</i>	<i>9/30/2025</i> <i>12/31/2025</i>	<i>On Track</i>

Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Tracking Progress

Tracking the progress of your action steps and strategy completion will help you manage the resources and partnerships that you've developed to fulfill the vision of your strategic plan. Progress tracking offers the opportunity to make adjustments to tasks and priority levels and minimize the impact of obstacles that may arise. Having a clear implementation plan that includes KPIs, task ownership, and timelines makes tracking progress easier to manage and communicate across the team.

Develop a Progress Chart to Communicate at a High Level

A visual cue of activities is an efficient way to communicate progress and outcomes at a high level for partners and leadership. It also helps the team and partners see the relationship between action steps and strategies. Simple dashboard or scorecard tools can be developed to represent the timeline of action steps and note status updates toward completion. This type of tool can offer the team, leadership, and strategic partners a quick view and update regarding what is on track and what areas may be impacted by delays. Systems for developing these visuals might include color-coding tables, developing charts or graphs, or using software to create live dashboards. It is important to use clear and concise language, as well as visuals and formats, that align with the audience and purpose.

Implementation progress tools like scorecards or dashboards can be developed at a basic level by manipulating tables, spreadsheets, or SmartArt graphics in Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, or Word. Additional project management tools may include list and board views of tasks, mobile app functionality, email automation of deadlines and task assignments, and more.

Ultimately, the team will need systems, tools, and supporting processes to track task deadlines and progress. This information should be accessible to key team members and designed to support communication and collaboration across goal areas.

Consider answers to these questions in developing tools to track implementation progress:

- How will this tool be used?
- What data/information will be needed to update the tool, and how will that be accessed?
- What resources and skill sets are available to create the tool?
- What will be the process for maintaining and updating the tool?
- With whom will the tool be shared, and what level of detail is appropriate, based on their general understanding of the work?

Examples of Progress Tracking

The following examples demonstrate types of progress and goal tracking. Grantees should choose one method of tracking progress that best meets their needs. In the **Sample Goal Progress Chart by Quarter** below, the goal is located in the top row. Each action step to be completed is listed in the second row, and each deliverable corresponding to each action step is listed in the bottom row.

Action steps and deliverables are tracked by assigning a status every quarter in the appropriate column. Activities that have been completed are identified in dark green, and activities that are delayed are highlighted in yellow. Activities that are on track are in light green, and activities that are ongoing are light green, with the status in italic font. A blank version of the **Goal Progress Chart by Quarter** is located in [Appendix K](#).

Sample Goal Progress Chart by Quarter

Goal #1: Engage Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) as Potential RAP Sponsors						
	Develop Training and Outreach Plan	Training Needs Assessment Discussions with LWDBs	Update Sponsor Information Packet with Targeted Messaging for LWDBs	1:1 Meetings and Presentations to Local Workforce Boards and American Job Center (AJC) Partners	Sponsor Training for Local Workforce Boards	Host Sponsor Info Sessions and Office Hours for LWDBs
Q1	Completed	Delayed				
Q2		Completed	Delayed	Completed		Completed
Q3			Completed	Ongoing	On Track	Completed
Q4			On Track	Ongoing		
Deliverable	Training and Outreach Plan	Summary and internal Report of Training Needs	Updated Sponsor Packet	Meeting Materials	Training Materials and Feedback	Update ongoing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document

The **Sample Kanban Board** provides a visual representation of the overall project. A kanban board breaks the project into three main parts: to do, in progress, and completed. Each action step is placed in the To Do column. Once the work begins it moves to the In Progress column. Once the work is finished, it moves to the Completed column where the deliverable is noted. A blank template of the following sample kanban board can be found in [Appendix L](#).

Sample Kanban Board

Goal #1: Engage Local Workforce Development Boards as Potential RAP Sponsors		
To Do	In Progress	Completed
Sponsor Training for Local Workforce Boards	Update Sponsor Information Packet with Targeted Messaging for LWDBs	Training and Outreach Plan for LWDB Engagement
	1:1 Meetings and Presentations to Local Workforce Boards and AJC Partners	Training Needs Assessment

The chart below is an example of the use of a Gantt chart to track goals by month. A Gantt chart is a project management tool used to track timelines and schedules for parts of a project. A Gantt chart is the most detailed method of tracking a project example and can provide an overall picture of your implementation plan's health and track implementation phases as well as when people start and complete deliverables and action steps.

In the **Sample Goal Progress Gantt Chart by Month** below, implementation action steps are placed in the left two columns. Tasks are scheduled by month. Notice that in the Gantt chart, in addition to marking if a deliverable will be completed during the month, there is also time identified for deliverable drafting and review processes.

Sample Goal Progress Gantt Chart by Month

Strategy 1: Strategic communications to promote awareness among employers and potential apprentices													
No.	Implementation Action Step	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1.1	Development of a communication and outreach plan												
1.2	Set up calendar and templates for social media campaigns												
1.3	Run targeted monthly social media campaigns												
1.4	Kickoff meeting with website design team												
1.5	Kickoff meeting with cross-partner Communications Advisory Workgroup												
1.6	Develop quarterly communication update reports on campaign progress and reach												
1.7	Monthly and quarterly meetings with Communications Advisory Workgroup and subcommittees												
1.8	National Apprenticeship Week activities												

Project timeline key	Deliverable drafting and review process (includes time and flexibility considerations for review process and challenges in obtaining data)	Deliverable complete	Ongoing activity

A blank version of the **Goal Progress Gantt Chart by Month** can be found in [Appendix M](#) to help you track your implementation plan progress.

RESOURCES

- [What is a Gantt chart?](#) (Association for Project Management)
- [What Is a Gantt Chart? The Ultimate Guide](#) (*Forbes*)
- [What Is a Kanban Board? The Ultimate Guide](#) (*Forbes*)

Changes in the plan are a natural result of tracking progress and refining implementation efforts. As changes are made to the implementation plan, it's important to note the changes being made and the reason for making those changes. Ensure that new versions of the plan are appropriately labeled and organized while archiving older versions so you can refer back to them later if needed.

Keep Lines of Communication Open to Ensure Progress

To ensure progress, it is important to regularly communicate with staff members so that everyone understands their role for continuing implementation and potentials for delay can be mitigated. Holding regular check-in meetings to review the status of each activity and analyze any delays or work that should be discontinued can support further action planning and ensure that resources and staff capacity are prioritized effectively.

The following **Agenda for Implementation Progress Conversations** provides an outline for holding progress conversations, with prompts for each part of the agenda. Unlike the agenda for engaging strategic partners, this agenda is focused solely on the health of the implementation plan and is designed to be used for staff that are accountable and responsible for the activities identified in the implementation plan.

A blank template **Agenda for Implementation Progress Conversations** can be found in [Appendix N](#). Use the prompts in the example on the following page to design an agenda to support implementation progress conversations with staff.

Agenda for Implementation Progress Conversations



Status Update

Review

- What has been accomplished so far? What has changed since the last progress check-in?
- Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the plan? If not, why?
- Are the goals still realistic?
- What can be learned from implementation to improve future planning efforts?



Analyze Progress Factors

- Are there any delays or new factors from strategies or action steps that may impact progress in other areas?
- Stop/start/continue—identify what's not working and can be stopped, what needs to happen and should start, and what's working well and should continue.
- Check and confirm priority levels, activity ownership, and resource needs.
- Analyze project for gaps in resources, strategies, or partnerships.



Action Planning

- Based on decisions made, update the action steps, KPIs, etc.
- Assign accountability for next steps including individual responsibilities and timeline for tracking progress.

Use the Implementation Plan to Make Progress

While a strategic plan is developed based on the desired results or outcomes of a grant, an implementation plan is crucial for managing the process of achieving the planned goals and outcomes. The foundations to strategic implementation (engaging strategic partners, communication, and assessing potential risks) support use of the implementation action planning cycle to create a robust plan for implementation success.

Tools that are chosen to support the implementation plan should be appropriate and supportive of ensuring progress for staff. While creating an implementation plan requires time and work, having a document that allows staff, leadership, and strategic partners to understand plan progress and the actions required to implement a strategic plan can provide an opportunity for stronger partnerships and alignment of programs and capacity.

Guide to Appendices

Tool	Purpose & Application	Location
Planning for Implementation		
Implementation Readiness Reflection	Use first to review and reflect on goals and strategies developed for your strategic plan.	Appendix A – ii-iii
Implementation Foundations: Engage Strategic Partners		
Influence, Interest, and Impact Partner Analysis	Use to deepen your understanding of the interest, influence, and impact of strategic partners.	Appendix B – iv
Power/Interest Grid for Partner Analysis	Use to group and prioritize partners to inform communication methods and frequency.	Appendix C – v
Agenda for Strategic Conversations	Use to promote alignment with partners and/or define key actions for plan implementation.	Appendix D – vi
Implementation Foundations: Communication		
Communication Planning Template	Use to plan communication strategy based on audience’s awareness level and the results of the partner analysis.	Appendix E – vii
Implementation Foundations: Assess Potential Risks and Challenges		
Risk Assessment Template	Use to evaluate potential future risks and their likelihood of impacting your strategic plan.	Appendix F – viii
Root Cause Analysis	Use to identify the root cause of the challenge and potential solutions for resolving the issue(s) preventing or delaying progress.	Appendix G – ix
Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Prioritize Action Steps		
Eisenhower Matrix	Use to prioritize tasks, allocate resources effectively, and balance urgent demands with long-term objectives.	Appendix H – x
KPI Planning Chart	Use to reflect on which KPIs are necessary and how they will be measured.	Appendix I – xi
Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Developing a Work Plan		
RACI Chart	Use to identify and clarify roles and responsibilities for plan implementation.	Appendix J – xii
Implementation Action Plan Cycle: Tracking Progress		
Goal Progress Chart by Quarter	Use to communicate at a high level progress on outcomes, action steps, and strategies.	Appendix K – xiii
Kanban Board by Goals	Use to communicate at a high level progress on outcomes, action steps, and strategies.	Appendix L – xiv
Goal Progress GANTT Chart by Month	Use to communicate at a high level progress on outcomes, action steps, and strategies.	Appendix M – xv
Agenda for Implementation Progress Conversation	Use to hold progress conversations and hold regular check in meetings with staff.	Appendix N - xvi
Implementation Action Template	Use to create your implementation action plan for the five-year SAEF strategic plan.	Appendix O - xvii

Appendix A: Implementation Readiness Reflection

Prepare for implementation by reviewing the goals and strategies you developed for your five-year strategic plan using the following prompts.

Reflection Prompt	Considerations	Notes
Why is this goal important enough to be included in the plan?	<i>Reflect on the original thinking behind the goal including key advocates, champions, and strengths that can be leveraged to achieve it. What, if anything, has changed since the goal was developed, and how might that impact implementation efforts? Does the goal need to be modified based on any changes since the submission of the strategic plan?</i>	
Who needs to be involved to achieve the outcome?	<i>Consider who needs to be at the table to achieve this goal including internal and external leaders, partners, decision-makers, champions, etc. Consider the staff capacity and expertise that will be beneficial in achieving this goal and the network of partners, participants, providers, and/or champions that may have valuable feedback or input into the process.</i>	
What are you trying to accomplish?	<i>Reflect on the resources that will be required to achieve the goal (funding, personnel, timeframe) and if there are sufficient resources available. What strategies, processes, or resources need to be adjusted?</i>	

Reflection Prompt	Considerations	Notes
By when must this goal be accomplished?	<i>Consider the target date for deliverables in the context of your overall grant and program model design. Think backward from your final deadline to anticipate check-in points. Factor additional outreach events (e.g., National Apprenticeship Week/Month) and professional development activities (e.g., conferences and training) into your planning.</i>	
How will you know that you have met your goal?	<i>Consider the measurements and milestones that can be used to assess your progress along the way, including the information you will need to collect or access and the supporting data collection tools or processes that may need to be implemented.</i>	
What if your goal falls off track?	<i>Consider the contingency options and strategies to identify and mitigate risks to successfully achieve your goal. What challenges or opportunities did you anticipate during strategic planning that may be a risk to your implementation success?</i>	

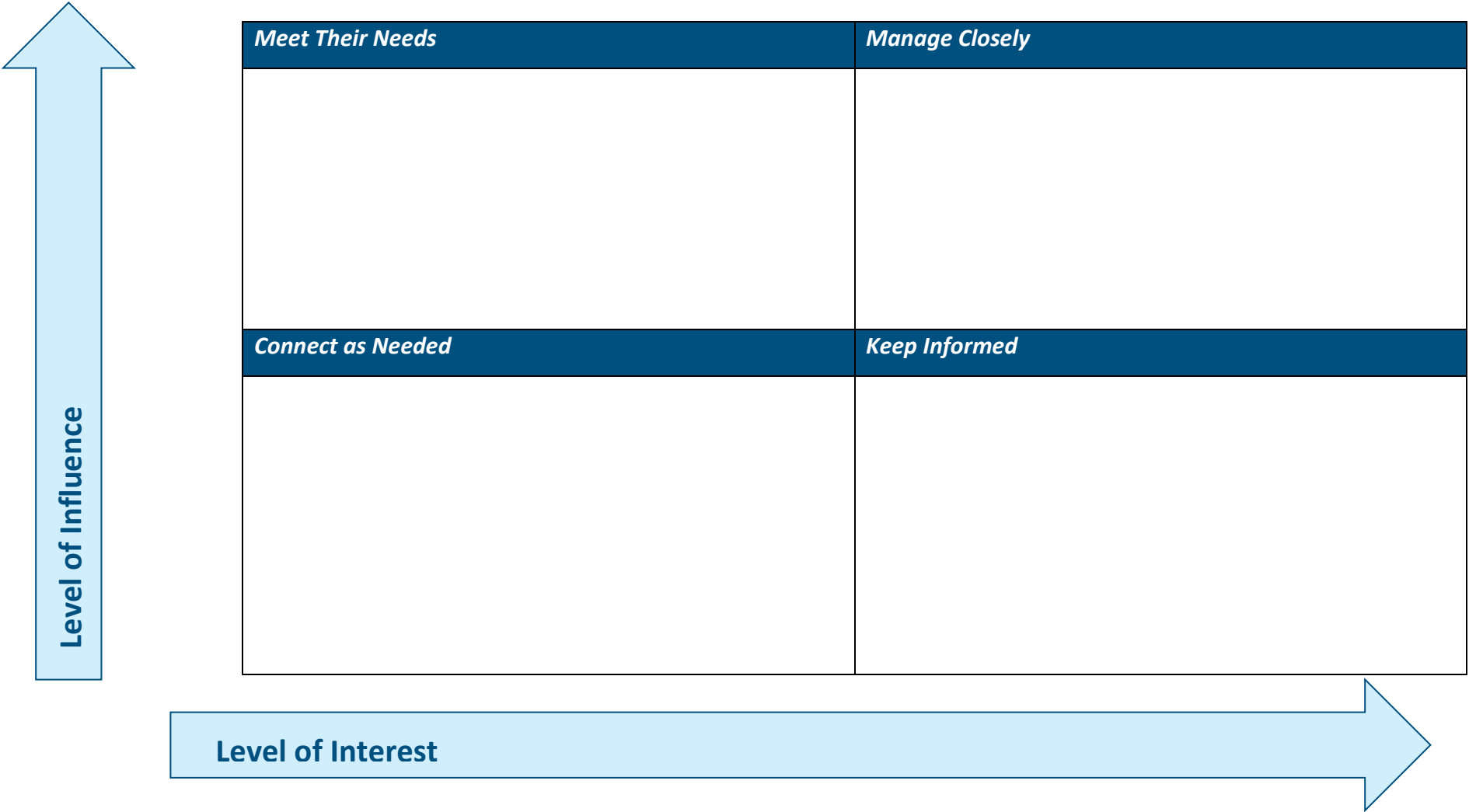
Appendix B: Influence, Interest, and Impact Partner Analysis

List all partners and groups that are most likely to be impacted by or have an impact on plan implementation, and analyze their interest, influence, and impact using the corresponding prompt questions.

Relevant Party	Interest	Influence	Impact	Other Relevant Information
Name of organization or group	Why are they likely to be interested in this plan?	How might they have power to block or facilitate this plan?	How might they directly benefit from or be negatively impacted by this plan?	What else should we know about engaging with this party?

Appendix C: Power/Interest Grid for Partner Analysis

Arrange partners in one of the four quadrants in the grid based on their level of likely influence and interest in the plan. Partners with a high level of influence should be closer to the top of the grid, and partners with strong interest should be closer to the right side of the grid.



Appendix D: Agenda for Strategic Conversations

Use the template below to develop an agenda for strategic conversations with partners. Refer to the [Example of an Agenda for Strategic Conversations](#) for ideas for each section of the agenda. Be sure to include who will be leading the discussion for each part of the agenda, timing for the discussion, and an objective for the meeting.

Meeting Name:

Objective:

Location:

Date:

Time:

Time	Item
	Introduction & Opening Remarks
	Strategy Review a. b.
	Discuss Current State a. b.
	Analyze Potential Risks or Roadblocks a. b.
	Confirm Priorities a. b.
	Action Planning a. b.
	Adjourn

Next Meeting Date:

Appendix E: Communication Planning Template

Identify key individuals and/or organizations that will need to be updated on implementation progress. Use the prompts below to develop a tailored communication approach.

	Individual/ Organization #1	Individual/ Organization #2	Individual/ Organization #3	Individual/ Organization #4	Individual/ Organization #5	Individual/ Organization #6
Audience (individual or group) <i>Who should be updated?</i>						
Awareness level <i>How much do they know about the grant or program?</i>						
Understanding of goals and strategies <i>What is their understanding of the broader strategic vision?</i>						
Support of implementation efforts <i>What is their role in implementation efforts?</i>						
Actions or responsibilities for implementation <i>What specific actions or responsibilities should they take based on the update?</i>						
Communication strategy <i>How will implementation progress be shared?</i>						

Appendix F: Risk Assessment Template

Identify potential internal and external risks that may pose a threat to plan implementation. Assign a rating to each risk based on the likelihood of occurrence and the potential impact. Calculate the overall value by multiplying the likelihood value by the impact value, and create a strategy to mitigate negative effects or delays.

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Value	Risk Mitigation Strategy
<i>New President elected</i>	5	2	10 (5 x 2)	<i>Have monthly check-ins with the FPO to stay up to date on any changes.</i>
<i>Delays in legislature approving funding</i>	3	5	15 (3 x 5)	<i>Schedule meeting with House/Senate Committee Chair to brief on plan and grant award.</i>

Appendix G: Root Cause Analysis

Use the prompts in the table below to reflect on the deeper root causes of a challenge.

Step	Considerations	Notes
Identify the challenge.	Define the problem and describe what has occurred.	
Collect information about the problem, including the frequency, duration, and effect.	- What sources have you used to gather information about the problem? - What challenges have you had collecting data? - Who needs to be involved to help identify the problem? - What additional sources, if any, will help you to identify the problem?	
Contributing factors	What factors are contributing to the problem?	
Determine and specify what should have happened.	What is the ideal situation? What does it look like if practices or processes are done as intended or expected?	
Determine the causes—5 whys.	Review the sequence of events, assess the environmental conditions, and use “why” to drill down to detailed processes to identify the root cause.	Challenge: - Why #1: - Why #2: - Why #3: - Why #4: - Why #5: - Root cause issues:
Identify potential solutions.	What are possible solutions to the root cause you identified?	

Appendix H: Eisenhower Matrix

Use the template below to rank the urgency and importance of each task so you can determine when they should be completed or prioritized.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do first —Complete the action now.	Decide —Schedule a time to complete the action later.
Not Important	Delegate —Identify someone else to complete the action.	Do last or delete —Remove the action from your list.

Appendix I: KPI Planning Chart

In the top row, identify action steps that will need to be tracked and measured. Using the prompts in the first column on the left, complete the KPI Planning Chart for each action step.

Action Step				
What is your desired outcome?				
How are you going to measure progress?				
How can you influence the outcome?				
How often will you evaluate performance?				
How will you know when you've achieved the KPI?				
What standard measures will show the impact of this outcome?				

Appendix J: RACI Chart

Use the template below to assign staff to each deliverable, assigning one or more as Responsible (R), one staff member as Accountable (A), one or more as Consulted (C), and one or more as Informed (I).

Strategy:						
Agency						
Staff						
Deliverable:						
Deliverable:						
Deliverable:						
Deliverable:						

Appendix K: Goal Progress Chart by Quarter

Use the chart below to track activities and deliverables for your implementation plan for each goal. In the second row, write out each action step from your implementation plan. In the bottom row, write out each deliverable that corresponds to each action step. Track progress for each quarter using **Complete**, **On Track**, **Ongoing**, **Delayed**, or **Paused**.

Goal #:						
Action Step						
Q1						
Q2						
Q3						
Q4						
Deliverable						

Appendix L: Kanban Board by Goals

Use the kanban board below to identify the status of each action step for the goals in your strategic plan. Action steps that have not started should be placed in the To Do column. Action steps that have started should be in the In Progress column. Once a deliverable for an action step is completed, the action step should be moved to the Completed column.

Goal #:		
To Do	In Progress	Completed

Appendix M: Goal Progress Gantt Chart by Month

Use the template below to develop a Gantt chart for each strategy in your implementation plan. Develop a timeline for each action step using the project timeline key to denote when deliverables will be drafted, if an activity is ongoing, and when a deliverable should be complete.

Strategy:													
No.	Implementation Action Step	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1.1													
1.2													
1.3													
1.4													
1.5													
1.6													
1.7													
1.8													
Project timeline key		Deliverable drafting and review process (includes time and flexibility considerations for review process and challenges in obtaining data)					Deliverable complete				Ongoing activity		

Appendix N: Agenda for Implementation Progress Conversations

Use the template below to develop an agenda for implementation progress conversations with staff members. Refer to the sample [Agenda for Implementation Progress Conversations](#) for ideas for each section of the agenda. Be sure to include who will be leading the discussion for each part of the agenda, timing for the discussion, and an objective for the meeting.

Meeting Name:

Objective:

Location:

Date:

Time:

Time	Item
	Opening Remarks and Overview of Agenda
	Status Update - a. - b.
	Analyze Progress Factors - a. - b. - c.
	Action Planning - a. - b.
	Adjourn

Next Steps:

Appendix O: Implementation Action Plan Template

Use the Implementation Action Plan Template to develop a work plan for each goal and strategy of your five-year strategic plan. Refer to the [Implementation Action Planning](#) section of this resource for descriptions of each part of the template. In the top two rows of the template fill out your goal and strategy information, identifying a priority level for the strategy. In the white boxes below list the action steps needed to complete the strategy, the action step number, the priority level for each action step, expected outcomes or deliverables for each action step, measures to determine progress in the KPI column, an implementation lead, due dates, and status.

Goal #	Goal						
Strategy #	Priority Level	Strategy					
Action Step #	Priority Level	Action Step	Deliverable	KPI	Implementation Lead	Due Dates	Status

Disclaimer

Prepared by AIR for the Office of Apprenticeship, U.S. Department of Labor. This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Labor under Contract Number 1605C2-21-A-0008 TA for OA State Grants BY. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

About the American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, with headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance to solve some of the most urgent challenges in the U.S. and around the world. We advance evidence in the areas of education, the workforce, human services, health, and international development to create a better, more equitable world. The AIR family of organizations now includes IMPAQ, Maher & Maher, and Kimetrica. For more information, visit [AIR.ORG](https://www.air.org).



AIR® Headquarters
1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | [AIR.ORG](https://www.air.org)