

## **Continuous Improvement Plan Guide and Template**

This template is designed to assist the organization in thinking about how to plan and implement quick wins, mid-term improvements, and longer-term improvements. The template contains the key areas that the organization should think through prior to implementing an improvement.

This template can be used in multiple ways:

First, a leader of an organization may use the template to think independently about the organization when planning for an improvement. The leader can use the template to ensure they have thought through all aspects of the improvement prior to moving forward. In an improvement situation, where leaders want to think through the steps of the improvement plan independently, they must ensure a sound diagnosis by including senior staff and stakeholders in the “assessment phase” prior to writing the plan and after the plan is developed to obtain feedback prior to implementing it.

Second, the leader of an organization may use the template with their leadership team, allowing the leadership of the organization to think together when planning for the improvement.

Third, a department/unit within the organization may use the template to plan an improvement within the department/unit, allowing all staff within the unit to clearly understand the purpose for the improvement and the role each member of the department/unit will plan in carrying out the improvement.

Fourth, a facilitator can use the template to guide a team from the organization through thinking and problem solving to plan improvements within the organization prior to implementation. The use of a facilitator allows for full participation of all team members and to obtain insight from a third party.

Regardless of which of the above methods is utilized, the template can assist an organization in developing an understanding of all of the things that must be thought through prior to implementing an improvement.

Taking time to think about the organization, whether independently or as a team, is the work of leading any organization.

The objectives of the template are to help agency leaders drive quick wins, mid-term improvements, and longer-term improvements that maintain high-quality core service delivery, curtails or eliminates activities outside the core services, targets improvement in areas of greatest return on investment, and identifies and eliminates inefficiencies.

Creating detailed plans for improvement that begin with a sound diagnosis of strengths and needs, drive immediate action, detail communication actions at every step, take advantage of quick wins, identify non-negotiable items, and leverage working teams and taskforces within the organization help position an improvement effort for success and sustainability.

The improvement planning template is a shell format that includes elements contained in most sound improvement plans. Users are, however, encouraged to modify this template to meet their unique needs. The following are the minimum elements of a sound improvement plan:

- Assessment of Current Situation: Findings, root causes and remedies
- Rationale: Why will you implement the improvement?
- Objective: What will success look like for the organization and the client?
- Timeframes for Improvement Initiatives: When will the improvement take place? Will the improvement be rapid or long term? Responsible Group: Who will be accountable for implementing the improvement?
- Activities/Task that will be engaged in to Support the Improvement: Who will do what by when?
- Overcoming Obstacles
- Communicating the Improvement Effort: What will you say and to whom?
- Monitoring Plan Progress: How will you chart your progress? What methods/tools will you use?
- Sustaining the Improvement Effort: How will you ensure the improvement effort continues to be implemented? What methods/tools will you use for accountability?
- Budget and Resource Implications

## **Continuous Improvement Plan Template**

Complete this template only after completing a thorough assessment of the current situation. Include senior leaders and key stakeholders in the assessment and share findings (both current strengths and challenges) to ensure a high level of confidence in the findings, root causes, and remedies.

**Brief Description:** What do you intend to do?

**Rationale:** Why do you intend to do it (your business case)?

**Objective:** What will success look like for the organization and its clients?

**Timeframes for Improvement Initiatives:** When will the improvements take place? Quick win improvements typically can be implemented within 0-90 days. Mid range improvements take 3-6 months. Long range improvements take 6 months to 2 years.

**Responsible Group:** Who will be accountable for implementing the improvements?

**Specific Activities and Tasks:** Who will do what by when?

**Overcoming Obstacles:**

Potential Obstacle	How We'll Overcome It


**Communicating the Improvement Effort:** What will you say and to whom? Who will deliver the message (director, managers, or supervisors)? What form will the message be delivered in (written, verbal)? Where will the information be shared (all staff meeting, department/unit meetings)?

**Monitoring Plan Progress:** How will you chart your progress? What will you track? What methods/tools will be used?

**Sustaining the Improvement Effort:** How will you ensure the improvement effort continues to be implemented? What methods/tools will you use for accountability?

**Budget and Resource Implications:** Is this a “no-cost” “low-cost” effort or will money be needed to support the improvement? If funds are needed how will they be secured? What resources, if any, will you need and who will you need them from?

## **Improvement Plan Goals and Action Steps At-a-Glance**

The following chart can be developed for each identified goal in the improvement plan. The chart provides an at-a-glance view of the improvements committed to in the continuous improvement process. The chart can keep everyone on the page about the intended improvement and can assist with on-going monitoring and evaluation of the improvement.

### **Goal Statement:**

<b>ACTION STEP</b>	<b>BENCHMARK* (Quality)</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>