



## Implementation

**T**he implementation phase is when the new law, rule, or procedure is “rolled out,” and new services or practices begin, or undesirable practices are stopped. The implementation process is very important and demanding. To be successful the implementation process must have sufficient resources (money, time, and training) to support the change effort, and these resources should be built into the change proposal. It is essential to pay close attention to both the *process* of implementation and the *outcomes* of policy change. A focus on process addresses questions such as “Did the training that was called for in the legislation happen as planned?”, or “Was there an organized way to communicate to everyone involved what the change was supposed to be and what their role was?”

A focus on the *outcome* of the policy change addresses the question, “Did the policy change produce the results that we expected?” If the policy did not achieve what your group wanted, the policy cycle may need to begin all over again. If it was well implemented, but the results you expected didn’t happen perhaps the solution you chose was not on target. Your group may need to rethink the definition of the issue, and perhaps look for new possible solutions. If the new policy was poorly or partially implemented, no one will know whether the new policy was a good idea or not.

Some of the participants in “Stepping Up” reported that they were very involved in implementation either through serving on committees that worked out the details of implementation, or through directly being a part of the implementation process. Other groups reported that they had little or no direct involvement in implementation.



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“...When the state was getting ready to actually roll [the policy change] out ... they ... ran that policy by us first. We got to be part of that process ... making sure that it is the language we agreed with, we agreed with the process of how it worked or what would happen. We were involved from the very beginning to the very end.”

### Monitoring

Monitoring the process of implementation will clarify whether the policy was implemented the way it was supposed to be. Approaches to monitoring can be either formal (e.g., checklists, review of statistics from databases, regular meetings with agency and administrative personnel), or use informal means such as conversations with individuals and groups affected by the policy to gather information about how the implementation process is going, and to follow-up with decision-makers and administrators to be sure they are aware of any implementation issues.



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“...Right now we are working on the implementation process and finding out whether it is really happening. We hear sometimes, ‘Hey, it is happening,’ and sometimes not.”

### Evaluation

Sometimes evaluation of a new or changed policy involves research by an outside body (often a university or private contractor) but it can also consist of collecting observations and information that young people and their partners make, or collecting and organizing informal feedback. In the “Stepping Up” study, only one of the new policies had a formal evaluation attached to it.



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“Having youth involved in evaluation projects to guide the work that you need to do in your community and evaluating yourself and opening up that feedback loop... : I wish we had a better process for it because most of it [feedback] just comes in the form of complaints.”