What is an Action Plan?
An action plan is a guide for actual implementation and running of a project, created after the logic model.

How are Action Plans different from Logic Models?
Logic models are often confused with action plans. While there are some overlaps, the difference is subtle but very important. An action plan is a manager’s guide for running the project. It shows, often through a set of program objectives and a timeline or task outline, what staff or others need to do to implement a project (e.g., hire outreach worker, launch media campaign, revise curriculum).

A logic model illustrates the changes that occur as a result of hiring an outreach worker, launching a media campaign, or using revised curricula. (For example, trained outreach workers lead to more information about prevention services in a high-risk neighborhood; increased contacts with outreach workers leads to a greater proportion of hard-to-reach clients coming in for services).

Writing Effective Action Plans
An effective action plan outlines specific activities and measurable outcomes. Doing a logic model first can help in preparing an effective action plan by breaking out some of the elements. It can also help in thinking about whether the activities will achieve the desired outcomes.

What are the key steps to preparing Action Plan?

Step 1. Take the logic model and detail the activities necessary to achieve each outcome. You do not need to do a detailed breakdown at this point. (Example: Activity 1. Develop partnership for development of curriculum between school districts 1, 2 & 3, Nowhere County and Friday Night Live.)

Step 2. Take the first year or project of your plan and create an action plan. An action plan has five elements:
  › Outcomes
  › Activities
  › Resources
  › Responsibilities
  › Timeline
Outcomes.
The short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes can be lifted directly from the logic model. These provide the focus or “end goal” for the activities.

Activities
The strategies in the logic model are the broad categories of services or approaches that are needed to achieve the desired outcomes. Activities are the detailed directions for implementing those strategies.

Activities are broken down into discrete tasks and action steps. “Action steps” can be further broken out to provide a blow-by-blow account of what needs to be done. It should be sufficiently detailed that a new staff member could pick up the action plan and know exactly what to do.

Activity 1. Develop partnership for development of curriculum between school districts 1, 2 & 3, Nowhere County and Friday Night Live.
   Task 1. Convene monthly, 2-hour meetings with 2 or more representatives from each collaborative member.
       Action step 1. Contact representatives to set meeting schedule for next 3 months.
       Action step 2. Book meeting room for dates.
           Conduct on-line literature search.
           Contact other school districts, counties and FNL administration.

Step 3. For each activity identify resources, responsibilities and timelines. (It may be helpful to construct four columns: activities, resources, responsibility and timeline.)

Resources quantify who and what is needed to carry out the activities on your action plan, such as numbers of facilities, materials, etc. (Example: Meeting room, model curriculum, representatives from school districts 1, 2 and 3, Nowhere County and Friday Night Live.)

Responsibilities identify who is responsible for carrying out the task. (Example: Program Coordinator.)

Timelines give a specific start/end date to the activity. It is sometimes visually helpful to have the timelines column divided into blocks of time (months or weeks) that can then be shaded to represent the period for the activity.

Step 4. Review your plan with the partners involved. Will the activities lead to the expected outcomes? Is the plan doable? Do your partners commit to doing the activities listed and to providing the resources in the time specified? Are there any barriers that might prevent these tasks being accomplished? Are there holidays or events that might change the timing?

Step 5. For each year or new project create a new action plan.
This tip sheet drew from many sources, but some of the most useful were:
with a link to "Everything You Wanted to Know About Logic Models, But Were Afraid to Ask" Schmitz and Parsons and

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/N-Writing_Effective_Action_Plans_54961_7.doc

from a workshop by Jane Reisman, Ph.D. and Marc Bolan, Ph.D., The Evaluation Forum (Seattle)