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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Rehabilitation Services Administration
Training Programs Unit

Needs Assessment, Workplan and Evaluation Guide for the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Program

Introduction

The ten regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Centers funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) provide technical assistance (TA) and continuing education (CE) to state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies and their partners to improve their performance under and compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Partners are entities that are actively engaged with state VR agencies in the provision of VR and independent living (IL) services to individuals with disabilities. To assist state VR agencies and their partners to improve their performance and compliance, regional TACE Centers must:

(1) Identify the performance and compliance needs of VR agencies and their partners by conducting annual needs assessments of their regions and participating in exit conferences that are part of RSA's monitoring process for state VR agencies;
(2) Establish advisory committees to provide input on their annual needs assessments;
(3) Develop annual workplans that identify the nature and scope of TA and CE to be provided to state VR agencies and their partners to meet the performance and compliance needs identified through annual needs assessments;
(4) Coordinate and collaborate with each other and with other entities to deliver TA and CE according to their workplans; and
(5) Evaluate whether the TA and CE provided was of high quality and met the performance and compliance needs of state VR agencies and their partners.

TACE Centers will submit annual needs assessment reports[1], workplans and data using an Excel spreadsheet. Paper submissions are neither required nor accepted. This document provides instructions for accessing the Excel Spreadsheet and completing a needs assessment report or workplan. The Excel Spreadsheet does not contain instructions, so TACE Centers need to reference this document when completing their needs assessment reports and workplans online.

For assistance with the process and content of a needs assessment report or workplan, contact Douglas Zhu at (202) 245-6037 or Douglas.Zhu@ed.gov.

[1] For the purposes of this document, the "needs assessment" is the process by which a TACE Center assesses needs and a "needs assessment report" is the document submitted to RSA based on that needs assessment.

Abbreviations and Terms

Abbreviations

APR: Annual Performance Report – The report submitted to RSA by the TACE Center for purposes of determining whether to provide continuation funding.

CAP: Corrective Action Plan[2] – If a monitoring report has one or more compliance findings, the VR agency must develop a CAP that includes specific steps the agency will take to complete the corrective action, the timetable for completing those steps, and the methods the agency will use to evaluate whether the compliance finding has been resolved.

PIP: Program Improvement Plan – If a VR agency fails to meet its standards and indicators, the agency must develop a PIP that outlines the specific steps the agency will take to improve its performance and the timetable for completing those steps.

Terms

Advisory committee: A regional committee established by a TACE Center to provide input on its annual needs assessment and for other purposes to be determined by the TACE Center. An advisory committee must include representatives from each state VR agency in the region; RSA's IL training and technical assistance grantees; individuals with disabilities or parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives of the individuals; members of minority groups; trainees; providers of VR and IL services; and RSA. The RSA representative is an *ex officio* member of the committee.

Continuing Education: Continuing education generally is training for individuals designed to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Such events can be delivered to large or small groups, in-person, or via telecommunications or other distance education mechanisms. Examples of continuing education include classes, workshops, and presentations.

Partner: Any entity that is actively engaged with a state VR Agency in the provision of VR or IL services to individuals with disabilities. Partners may include, but are not limited to: Community Rehabilitation Programs, Client Assistance Programs, Centers for Independent Living, State Rehabilitation Councils, Statewide Independent Living Councils, Designated State Agencies, State Educational Agencies, American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects, Randolph-Sheppard Programs, Projects with Industry, One-Stop Centers, Assistive Technology Act Programs, programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture, Workforce Investment Boards, institutions of higher education, and entities responsible for administering state Medicaid programs.

State VR Agency: General VR agencies, agencies serving the blind and visually impaired, and combined agencies funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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[2] In limited instances, this is how client assistance program is abbreviated in drop-down menus. These instances are noted.

Technical Assistance (TA): Technical assistance helps and supports agencies and partners to develop and implement strategies and resources to improve their outcomes, policies, procedures, practices, or capacity. TA assists agencies or partners to problem-solve to achieve a mutually agreed upon goal. TA may involve multiple contacts and interactions over an extended period of time. TA may be provided in person, by electronic media such as telephone, video or e-mail and by other means. The following are examples of tA: consultation, facilitation, logistical support, analysis, assessment/evaluation, outreach, and resource sharing.

TA Network: This term references the group of RSA- and NIDRR-funded grantees and others who will coordinate and collaborate with TACE Centers and RSA to provide TA and CE. The TA Network includes entities such as ILRU SILC-NET and CIL-NET; RSA-funded Parent Information and Training Centers; the RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation; the RRTC in Neuromuscular Diseases; the Center for Personal Assistance Services; the RRTC on Enhancing the Functional and Employment Outcomes of Individuals Who Experience a Stroke; the RRTC for Community Living and Employment for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; the RRTC on Disability in Rural Communities; Advanced Psychiatric Rehabilitation Research on Employment and Community Integration; the RRTC on Employment Policy and Individuals with Disabilities; the RRTC on Disability Statistics and Demographics; the RRTC on Substance Abuse, Disability, and Employment; the RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention; the RRTC on Aging with a Physical Disability; the RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation; the Research and Technical Assistance Center on Vocational Rehabilitation Program Management; and the Research and Technical Assistance Center on the Effective Delivery of Rehabilitation Technology.

Workplan: A TACE Center's plan for addressing the needs identified in its needs assessment report.

Needs Assessment

Conducting a Needs Assessment

The main sources of information about the performance and compliance needs of agencies and partners include RSA reports[3], RSA state teams, agencies, partners, and your advisory committee[4]. The information you solicit from these sources must be sufficient to respond to the requirements of the needs assessment report. Therefore, you should review these requirements prior to beginning your needs assessment process. You will institute your own process for collecting information from these sources using the guidelines below:

Assessing the Needs of Agencies

- You must review all monitoring reports, CAPs, and PIPs for agencies in your region that have been issued since your last needs assessment. These reports and plans identify the performance and compliance needs upon which the agency and RSA have agreed and for which the agency is requesting, or may request, TA or CE from you. If these reports have not been provided to you, contact the staff member of RSA's Technical Assistance Unit on the appropriate state team.

- You must meet (either in-person or via technology) with appropriate representatives of every agency in your region to identify needs not included in RSA reports and to discuss the report-related needs for which the agency is requesting TA or CE.

- You should communicate with RSA's state team for every state in your region once you have reviewed RSA's reports and spoken with each agency. Contact a staff member of RSA's Technical Assistance Unit to find the members of these teams.

Assessing the Needs of Partners

- You must compile a list of partners for every agency in your region annually. You can create the list in cooperation with agencies in your region or based on your own knowledge and experience. However, you should confirm the final list with the agencies in your region. At a minimum your list of partners must include: American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects, Centers for Independent Living, Client Assistance Programs, Community Rehabilitation Programs that have provider agreements with state VR agencies, and Randolph-Sheppard Programs (through the state's Business Enterprise Program).
- You must develop a mechanism for identifying the needs of the partners included on your list. This can include individual meetings or teleconferences, surveys, requests via e-mail, or other means.

[3] These include monitoring reports, CAPs, and PIPs.

[4] This does not prohibit you from seeking information from other sources.

- You must request information about a partner's needs directly from that partner when an agency brings a partner to your attention, unless there is a justification for not doing so.

Involvement of your Advisory Committee

- You must convene your advisory committee (either in-person or via technology) annually to discuss the performance and compliance needs you have identified for which agencies and partners are requesting TA and CE. The advisory committee can provide additional information about needs not identified through the previously mentioned sources. The committee also may be able to provide information that helps you determine when and how to allocate your time and resources via your workplan. You may choose to involve the advisory committee in making workplan decisions, but you are not required to do so.

Completing a Needs Assessment Report

You enter your needs assessment report into the Excel spreadsheet once you have identified the performance and compliance needs of agencies and their partners, have worked with those agencies and partners to set goals and objectives (see below for guidance on goals and objectives), and determined when you can begin to address the needs. There is no limit to the number of needs you can identify in the needs assessment report.

You are required to read all RSA reports as part of your needs assessment and to enter information about these needs into the needs assessment report. You will also be responsible for entering information related to those needs not identified by RSA reports.

Any needs identified by RSA through monitoring or other means (for which the agency has requested TA) should automatically be included in the needs assessment, and much of the needs assessment information will be provided by RSA (see below). For these needs, the TACE Center must assign a workplan year or reflect that the agency/partner does not want TA or CE (see below). Workplan information then will be provided only for those needs you plan to address in the following year.

You will likely identify a number of needs that RSA does not identify, but will not be able to undertake activities to address all of those needs in the following year. For those needs not identified by RSA, you only provide needs assessment information when you plan to address the need in the next workplan. The TACE Center can hold onto information about needs to be deferred and enter information about those needs when they are prepared to address them.

The list of needs includes the following items:

- Agency or agency/partner
- Need
- Source of need
- Area of need
- Information supporting need

- Goal
- Objectives for this goal

<u>Agency or Agency/Partner:</u>

Instructions - If you identify two agencies or partners as having the same need, the information for these entities must be the same throughout the needs assessment and workplan. For example, the information supporting the need, the source that identified the need, the goals, objectives, and activities all must be the same. If any of these will differ for an agency or partner, you must create separate entries.

Abbreviations for partners who are affiliated with agencies follow a colon after the three-letter abbreviation for the agency. The following is a guide to the partner abbreviations:

- One-stop Center (1-stop)
- Department of Agriculture Program (Ag. Program)
- American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects (AIVRS)
- Assistive Technology Act Programs (AT Act Program)
- Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
- Client Assistance Program (CAP)[5]
- Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)
- Developmental Disabilities Agency (DDA)
- Institution of Higher Education (IHE)
- State Medicaid Program (Medicaid)
- Mental Health Agency (MHA)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (MSF)
- Projects with Industry (PWI)
- Randolph-Sheppard Program (RS)
- State Educational Agency (SEA)
- Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILC)
- State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
- Substance Abuse Agency (Substance Abuse)
- Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

<u>Need:</u>

Instructions - Your entry is a simple statement of need that is no more than one or two sentences long. This statement must be written in a manner that can easily translate into a goal statement, as needs are turned into goals. The following are examples of appropriate needs statements:

"Southwest Combined needs to decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans."

[5] This is the one instance in which CAP stands for Client Assistance Program rather than Corrective Action Plan.

"Northeast General needs to reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE."

These are an appropriate needs statement because they include phrases that indicate an expected result – "to decrease" or "to "reduce" – and clearly identify what must be decreased/reduced (length of time to achieve an employment outcome, number of drop-outs). The examples also are measurable: the agency can measure whether the time it takes for returning veterans to achieve employment outcomes has decreased or whether the number of drop-outs has been reduced.

The following needs statement would not be as strong if it were written as: "Southwest Combined needs to improve the quality of services provided to returning veterans." First, it is difficult to measure whether the quality of services has improved. Second, the underlying reason for improving the quality of services is to produce employment outcomes. Improving the quality of services is *how* one meets a need, not a need itself.

Remember: Do not confuse a need with the method for meeting a need. TA and CE are not needs, they are ways you meet needs.

Instructions - You will choose from the following to respond to this item:

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- case management system
- data management
- fiscal management
- internal and external communication processes
- personnel management
- quality assurance activities
- service delivery system
- strategic planning

You should limit multiple selections as much as possible by choosing the answer that is most germane to the need or that encompasses the majority of the need. A guide to what is included in these areas (with the exception of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) can be found at:

http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/107-reports/2009/monitoring-2009-info-guide.doc

Select American Recovery and Reinvestment Act when the need relates to using stimulus funds or when an agency/partner is paying you for assistance using stimulus funds. You most likely need to choose both ARRA and another selection because ARRA funds will be used to impact one of the other areas. For example, if an agency will use ARRA funds to improve its case management system with your assistance, you would select both ARRA and case management system.

<u>Source of need:</u>

Instructions - You will choose from the following to respond to this item:

- Advisory committee
- Agency
- Partner
- RSA

You can select as many of the above as apply if more than one source independently identified the same need. Do not select more than one source if a primary source identified a need and the second source only confirmed the need, however.

<u>Information supporting need:</u>

Instructions - The information you provide here must describe to the unfamiliar reader why the agency has the need in question and how it has or potentially may affect agency performance. It also should describe the nature and causes of the need to the extent they are known and include data when possible. The following is an example of appropriate information supporting a need. It relates to one of the examples previously given:

"Due to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, Southwest Combined reports a 17% increase in requests for services from returning veterans. Veterans have unique rehabilitation needs because of the nature of their injuries, the high likelihood of PTSD or other mental health issues, and their involvement in other service systems, particularly the VA. Counselors working with returning veterans are reporting difficulty in addressing their needs appropriately due to a lack of training and experience. As a result, it is taking approximately 6-9 months longer to achieve a successful employment outcome for a veteran."

This example includes strong evidence of the need: data showing that the number of requests from veterans is increasing and that they are taking longer to achieve employment outcomes. Further, this example explains potential causes of the need – both the unique characteristics of veterans and the lack of staff preparedness. This is important because the cause of the need should drive the activities in your subsequent workplan.

<u>Goal:</u>

Instructions - In this section, you will convert your previous needs statement into a goal statement. A goal statement is the outcome to be achieved by the agency/partner once its need has been met. When possible, include a target to be achieved and a timeline for achieving the target.

This is not the goal of the TACE Center; it is the goal the agency or partner hopes to achieve with your TA or CE. The agency/partner is the owner of the goal and is responsible for determining whether the goal has been met and for monitoring progress toward its goal, unless the goal is compliance-related. The TACE Center and RSA can assist the agency/partner in setting goals and evaluating progress if requested by the agency/partner, but neither the TACE

Center nor RSA holds the agency/partner accountable for reaching the goal unless the goal is compliance-related.

Below are examples of converting the previous needs statements into goal statements:

> **Need:** Southwest Combined needs to decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans.
>
> **Goal:** In two years, Southwest Combined will decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans to be consistent with the length of time for other populations.
>
> **Need:** Northeast General needs to reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE.
>
> **Goal:** In two years, Northeast General will reduce by 20% the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE.

<u>Objective:</u>

Instructions -Objectives are what must be accomplished to meet the goal previously stated. An objective should be measurable, and when possible include a target to be achieved and a timeline for achieving that target. The uninformed reader should be able to understand how the agency/partner should be able to achieve its goal if the objective(s) is/are completed. The connection between the objective and the information supporting the need in your needs assessment report also should be clear. The following are examples:

> **Need:** Northeast General needs to reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE.
>
> **Goal:** In two years, Northeast General will reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE by 20%.
>
> **Objectives:** Conduct an analysis to determine the factors creating the long delay between eligibility and implementation of the IPE.

Develop measurable goals, including annual and long-term targets to reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE and strategies to achieve the goals.

Note that the objectives are linked – the second cannot be completed without completing the first. This must be taken into account when developing your workplan.

> **Need:** Southwest Combined needs to decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans.

> **Goal:** In two years, Southwest Combined will decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans to be consistent with the length of time for other populations.
>
> **Objectives:** Increase the number of CRP staff who have knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the rehabilitation needs of returning veterans.

Note that this does not say the objective is to train counselors. Training is an activity to meet an objective, it is not the objective itself. Also note that there is a clear connection between this objective and the basis of need presented in the needs assessment report, which stated that "Counselors working with returning veterans are reporting difficulty in addressing their needs appropriately due to a lack of training and experience."

If there is more than one objective associated with a goal, it is possible that you won't begin working on that objective right away. However, you should enter all of the information you can about all objectives, even those you will not begin until later. In your workplan, you will enter the expected start and end dates of the activities related to each objective and this will indicate that they fall into later program years.

Agencies that have been monitored will have a CAP for addressing compliance issues, if applicable. Some objectives you identify will be tied to this CAP. The CAP sets forth timelines, so your timeline for meeting the objective must be consistent.

Agencies that fail to meet standards and indicators will have a PIP. Some objectives you identify will be tied to this PIP. The PIP sets forth timelines, so your timeline for meeting the objective must be consistent.

<u>How you will know the objective was met?</u>:

Instructions -You describe the intended outcome that will result from meeting this objective. For example:

> **Objective:** Conduct an analysis to determine the factors creating the long delay between eligibility and implementation of the IPE.
>
> **How will you know the objective was met?:** A written report that identifies the factors creating the long delay between eligibility and implementation of the IPE will be complete by May 2011.
>
> **Objective:** Increase the number of CRP staff who have knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the rehabilitation needs of returning veterans.
>
> **How will you know the objective was met?:** Pre-and post-tests of CRP staff will show increased knowledge of best practices for serving consumers with PTSD.

<u>What has/will result(ed) from meeting this objective?</u>

Instructions -Skip this item when creating a new needs assessment report. See instructions for updating a needs assessment report below.

TACE Program Year to Begin Supporting Objective:

Instructions -You must come to agreement with each agency on a timeline for addressing its needs, bearing in mind any timelines set forth in CAPs or PIPs or the goals previously stated. You will indicate when you will begin working toward objectives from the following selections:

- Agency/partner plans to address this objective
- Agency/partner has addressed this objective
- Agency/partner no longer requests TA or CE
- To be addressed in program year 2014
- To be addressed in program year 2015
- To be addressed in program year 2016
- To be addressed in program year 2017

Make your selection based on the bullets that follow. The first three bullets apply only to needs that are identified in RSA monitoring reports, CAPs, or PIPs.

- Select Agency/partner plans to address this objective when a monitoring report, CAP, or PIP identifies an objective but the agency/partner says it will address it without your assistance. You should instruct them to inform RSA.

- Select Agency/partner has addressed this objective when a monitoring report, CAP, or PIP identifies an objective but the agency/partner says it has resolved it on its own. Select this only if the agency/partner has finished, not if they are in the process. You should instruct them to inform RSA.

- Select Agency/partner no longer requests TA or CE when an agency/partner informs you it does not want TA or CE despite a request in its monitoring report, CAP, or PIP. You should instruct them to inform RSA.

- Selecting Agency/partner plans to address this objective, Agency/partner has addressed this objective, Agency/partner no longer requests TA or CE takes a need out of “active” status. This means you do not need to complete any workplan information related to it.

- For all objectives for which an agency/partner wants assistance, you must project the Program Year in which you will begin providing TA or CE. Select To be addressed in Program Year 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 to designate the TACE Program Year in which you intend to begin addressing the objective. This does not mean you must address the objective completely in that year, as some may take more than a year to address.

- If necessary, you can change the Program Year when you submit a new or update an existing needs assessment report.

Date completed:

Instructions -Skip this item when creating a new needs assessment report. See instructions for updating a needs assessment report below.

The Project Director or Principle Investigator with the authority to submit the needs assessment report to RSA must fill out the signature page.

Updating a Needs Assessment Report

You will update your needs assessment reports annually in July to provide information on any objectives that you have met. The July update will serve as your APR for the purposes of continuation funding and will serve as your final report for the given needs assessment report. You have met an objective once all activities associated with that objective are complete (the activities are described in your workplan). You will update your needs assessment by providing the following information:

RSA will convene a meeting of the TA Network to share its analysis of needs assessments from the entire TACE Program and provide a forum to plan coordination and collaboration across regions and within the TA Network, as well as provide additional information about available expertise.

Workplan

Your workplan is where you describe the activities you will conduct to meet the objectives specified in your needs assessment report. Please do not confuse activities with events, as an activity may be composed of several events. For example, three conference calls with a state director to provide TA on the same need is one activity with three events. Similarly, a four-session training on best practices for working with consumers with a particular disability is one activity with four events.

Once you have completed your needs assessment report and met with other TACEs and the TA Network during the annual TA Network meeting, a number of steps must be taken to complete your workplan:

(1) You will collaborate with the appropriate agency or partner on a preliminary proposal for activities that will address the objectives specified in your needs assessment report and inform them of the individuals with the expertise and experience to carry out the activities you propose;
(2) You will consult with RSA on the activities you propose to conduct to address the objectives and on the individuals you propose to conduct the activities;
(3) RSA will review and provide feedback on the information you provide regarding activities and individuals proposed to conduct the activities, and you will revise, as necessary;
(4) You will discuss with the appropriate agency/partners any changes to your workplan that result from RSA's feedback; and
(5) You will implement the workplan and update it at least annually to provide data on the activities you have completed. Instructions for updating an existing workplan follow the instructions for creating a new workplan. You will report on activities to achieve each objective. You should include all activities associated with an objective, even those you may not complete during the program year of the workplan you are creating.

Description of Activity:

The uninformed reader should be able to understand what you are doing, how you will do it, and how the activities will lead to the accomplishment of the objective.

Example 1:

Need: Northeast General needs to reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE.

Goal: In two years, Northeast General will reduce the number of individuals who drop out of the VR process prior to the development of the IPE by 20%.

Objective: Conduct an analysis by May 2011 to determine the factors creating the long delay between eligibility and implementation of the IPE.

Activity: By January 2011, we will review and analyze agency policies and procedures for processing cases from eligibility to implementation of the IPE.

Activity: By February 2011, we will facilitate two 90-minute conference calls -- one with agency management and one with counselors -- to discuss in detail the steps between request for VR services and the development of the IPE.

Activity: In March and April 2011, we will facilitate a workgoup of agency staff to analyze the information derived from the first two activities and provide additional input.

Activity: In May 2011, we will draft and submit a report to Northeast General that identifies the factors creating a long delay between eligibility and implementation of the IPE and suggests ways to eliminate or reduce those factors.

Example 2:

Need: Southwest Combined needs to decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans.

Goal: In two years, Southwest Combined will decrease the length of time it takes to achieve employment outcomes for returning veterans to be consistent with the length of time for other populations.

Objective: By December 2009, increase the number of CRP staff who have knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the rehabilitation needs of returning veterans.

Activity: In October 2009, train 10 CRP staff in best practices for counseling individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) through two 1-hour webinars.

Activity: In November 2009, train 10 CRP staff to understand VA policies and procedures and their relationship to VR through one 2.5 hour webinar.

Activity Category:

Instructions - You may select one of the following for each activity you propose:

- Technical Assistance
- Continuing Education
- Both

Make your selection based on the definitions provided in the “Abbreviations and Terms” section of this manual. It is preferable to separate an activity that has both TA and CE components into two separate activities when possible. Select “Both” when a single activity combines TA and CE, however.

Activity Type:

Instructions - You will respond to this item by selecting one of the following that is applicable to your activity type(s):

- Consultation
- Facilitation
- Logistical support
- Analysis
- Assessment/evaluation
- Outreach
- Resource sharing
- Training

Make your selection(s) based on the bullets that follow.

- **Consultation** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts directly provide advice, information or feedback to an agency or partner based on their expertise in order to address a need. The advice, information, or feedback generally is applied to a particular issue or issues. Consultation should be distinguished from analysis and assessment/evaluation, which are described below. Consultation can take place face-to-face, via teleconference, or via other computer-based technology.

- **Facilitation** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts bring different parties together and assist those parties to work with each other to address a need. The TACE Center has an active role in supporting the work of the parties, but the focus is on the expertise of the parties rather than the expertise of the TACE Center staff or subcontractor. The facilitation generally is applied to a particular issue or issues. An example is hosting a series of teleconferences to create dialogue between an agency and a client assistance program. Facilitation should be distinguished from logistical support and resource sharing, which are described below. Facilitation can take place face-to-face, via teleconference, or via other computer-based technology.

- **Logistical support** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts assist with the planning and/or execution of a TA or CE activity being conducted by an agency or partner in order to address a need. The TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts do not lead the activity, they support an agency or partner that leads the activity. An example would be assisting and agency or partner with its conference.

- **Analysis** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts review existing information/data and organize or summarize this information/data for the benefit of an agency or partner in order to address a need. This is a neutral treatment of the information/data and does not include drawing conclusions from and making recommendations (see assessment/evaluation). An example would be an agency requesting that a TACE Center assist with analyzing its RSA-911 data. Analysis can take place through the TACE Center reviewing documents or other materials without agency or participation, through discussion with the agency or partner face-to-face or via technology, or a combination of these.

- **Assessment/evaluation** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts review an agency's or partner's programs, policies, procedures or other information/data with the intent of identifying issues and making recommendations for improvement in order to address a need. An example would be an agency requesting that a TACE Center review its order of selection policy and compare it to agency data to determine whether the policy is being consistently and correctly applied, to identify causes of inconsistent application, and to recommend ways to correct inconsistency. Assessment/evaluation can take place through the TACE Center reviewing documents or other materials without agency participation, through discussion with the agency or partner face-to-face or via technology, or a combination.

- **Outreach** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts work with organizations on behalf of an agency or partner in order to address a need. As an example, a TACE Center or subcontracted expert may work with SHRM or the USBLN on behalf of an agency or partner in order to establish connections with employers that benefit the agency or partner. This can take place face-to-face or via technology.

- **Resource sharing** is a TA activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts develop a formal mechanism to share information with or between agencies and partners in order to address a need. An example of resource sharing is a community of practice. This can take place face-to-face or via technology.

- **Training** is either a TA or CE activity in which TACE Center staff or subcontracted experts increase the knowledge skills and abilities of personnel at agencies or partners. Training for TA purposes occurs when the increase in knowledge, skills, and abilities is intended to address a performance or compliance need or the training is related to implementation of policies, practices, and procedures. Training for CE purposes occurs when the increase in knowledge, skills, and abilities is intended to increase the capacity of the organization or meet requirements such as CSPD or certification. Training can take place face-to-face, via teleconference, or via other computer-based technology.

Delivery Method:

Instructions -You will respond to this item by listing one of the following applicable delivery methods:

- Meeting (face-to-face)
- Meeting (teleconference)
- Meeting (computer-based)
- E-mail
- Training (face-to-face)
- Training (teleconference)

- Training (computer based)
- Train the trainer (face-to-face)
- Train the trainer (teleconference)
- Train the trainer (computer-based)
- Conference (dedicated)
- Conference session
- Information exchange (interactive)
- Information exchange (static)

Make your selection(s) based on the bullets that follow.

- **Meeting (face-to-face) –** A face-to-face meeting can be part of consultation, facilitation, analysis, assessment/evaluation, and outreach, but it is not training. A "summit" or "balcony session" is a kind of meeting.

- **Meeting (teleconference) –** Self-explanatory.

- **Meeting (computer-based) –** This is a meeting held using an e-room or other form of online service such as a webinar, but not a training delivered via webinar.

- **E-mail –** This is an ongoing formal exchange of information via e-mail that approximates a face-to-face discussion or teleconference. Simply exchanging e-mails with an agency or partner about a need does not constitute a TA activity, however.

- **Training (face-to-face) –** Self-explanatory, but does not include train the trainer.

- **Training (teleconference) –** Telephone-based training but does not include train the trainer.

- **Training (computer based, synchronous) –** This is training held using an e-room or other form of online service, such as a webinar. This is distinguished from tutorial or desktop session because this training is delivered live and the content is not static.

- **Training (computer based, asynchronous)** = This is training held using an interactive, but not live, format and using tools such as discussion boards, quizzes, and written assignments. It may or may not involve the use of courseware such as Blackboard or Desire To Learn.

- **Tutorial or desktop session –** This is static training available on-demand either on-line or using another form of technology (such as CD-ROM or DVD). Although users may interact with the content in some ways (quizzes, branching scenarios, etc.), they do not interact with other users or an instructor.

- **Train the trainer (face-to-face) –** Self-explanatory.

- **Train the trainer (teleconference) –** Telephone based.

- **Train the trainer (computer-based) –** Self-explanatory. This includes synchronous training, asynchronous training, and static tutorials or desktop sessions, each designed to train the trainer.

- **Conference (dedicated) –** A conference is "dedicated" when the purpose of and all activities at the conference address a particular need. A workshop is a type of dedicated conference and is different from a training based on its length and intensity.

- **Conference session –** A conference session happens at a general conference that is not dedicated to addressing a particular need.

- **Information exchange (synchronous) –** An interactive information exchange allows members to share information "live" on a regular basis through teleconferences, webinars, or other means where participants communicate directly. Communities of practice likely fit here or under "Information exchange (asynchronous)" – see below.

- **Information exchange (asynchronous) –** A static information exchange allows members to share information through means such as bulletin boards, listservs, wikis, etc. If a community of practice uses both static and dynamic means, select dynamic.

- **Survey –** Self-explanatory.

<u>Recipient Entity(ies):</u>

Instructions - You will identify as many entities as will be involved in the receipt of TA or CE. It is expected that you list the agency/partner already associated with the goal and objective for this activity, but there may be additional partners who are involved in and receive TA or CE.

<u>Expert(s) to conduct this activity:</u>

Instructions - Identify the expert(s) mutually agreed-upon by the agency and TACE Center who will deliver the TA or CE. Indicate whether the expert(s) is/are a member(s) of the TACE Center staff or a subcontractor. Describe the qualifying experience and expertise related to the delivery of this TA and CE for each individual.

The selection of the individual(s) who will provide the TA or CE is negotiated between the agency/partner and the TACE Center during the development of the workplan. When developing the workplan, the TACE Center and agency/partner should agree on the expertise and experience necessary to deliver the TA or CE. The TACE Center is then responsible for identifying individuals with that experience and expertise, taking availability and cost into account. The TACE Center or agency/partner can request RSA's assistance if an agreement about who will provide the TA or CE cannot be reached.

<u>Cost - Planned:</u>

Instructions - To estimate cost, you can include:

- Staff time for planning the activity; and
- Staff time for carrying out the activity; and
- Materials for the activity (including technology development and use); and
- Travel and lodging and other arrangements (conference room rental, etc.) for the activity; or
- Or, if using a subcontractor, cost of subcontractor.

Do not include administrative, indirect, or other general overhead expenses in your cost estimate.

<u>Cost – Actual :</u>

Instructions - Skip this item when creating a new workplan. See instructions for updating a workplan below.

<u>Start Date – Planned:</u>

Instructions - Use a number to enter the planned start of the activity by month and year.

<u>Start Date – Actual:</u>

Instructions - Skip this item when creating a new workplan. See instructions for updating a workplan below.

<u>End Date – Planned:</u>

Instructions - Use a number to enter the planned end of the activity by month and year.

<u>End Date – Actual:</u>

Instructions - Skip this item when creating a new workplan. See instructions for updating a workplan below.

<u>Target audience:</u>

Instructions - You may use one of the following selections to respond to this item for each activity you propose:

- Directors (also include Deputy or Assistant Directors here).
- Policy and planning staff
- Human resources staff
- Data staff
- Fiscal staff

- Quality assurance staff
- Counselors
- Job developers
- Job coaches
- Caseworkers/case managers
- Assistive technology specialists
- Council members (such as SRC members, SILC members, members of a partner's board, WIB members, etc.)
- Teachers
- Transition specialists
- Unknown

If you have more than one target audience, you may select more than one response.

Remember, the audience is tied to an agency or partner you identified as the recipient entity. Therefore, the list does not include all possible types of counselors or case managers, because you indicate the type of case manager or counselor when you indicate the recipient entity. If a target audience has more than one role (such as the data staff is also responsible for quality assurance), list the role that is most germane to the TA or CE in which they will participate.

In some cases, an activity does not have a target audience because TACE Center staff are working internally. Here are two examples:

> **Activity:** By January 2011, we will review and analyze agency policies and procedures for processing cases from eligibility to implementation of the IPE.
>
> **Activity:** In May 2011, we will draft and submit a report to Northeast General that identifies the factors creating a long delay between eligibility and implementation of the IPE and suggests ways to eliminate or reduce those factors.

Do not use the term "Unknown" when creating a new workplan. This choice is applicable only after the activity has taken place. It is only to be used when entering the "Actual Number" of participants when a participant does not identify him or herself.

<u>Actual Number (of Target Audience):</u>

Instructions - Skip this item when creating a new workplan. See instructions for updating a workplan below.

Updating *a Workplan*

You will update your workplan annually to provide information on any activities that you have completed. The July update will serve as your APR for the purposes of continuation funding. You will update your workplan by providing the following information about any activity you have completed:

Cost – Actual:

Instructions - Enter the actual cost after the TA or CE has been provided. The guidelines given above for estimating cost apply to calculating your actual cost.

Start Date – Actual:

Instructions - You enter the actual start date (month and year) once you have conducted the first event associated with the activity. If the activity is three teleconferences with a state director, the actual start date is the date on which you held the first conference call.

End Date – Actual:

Instructions - You enter the actual end date (month and year) once you have completed all events associated with the activity. If the activity is three teleconferences with a state director, the actual end date is the date on which you held the last conference call.

Actual Number (of Target Audience):

Instructions - You enter the actual number of participants from every audience after the TA or CE has been provided and you have collected data.