Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers

OMB Clearance Request for Data Collection Instruments

Part B: Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission

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Prepared by:

IMPAQ International

INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared to support the clearance of data collection instruments for the National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) within the U.S Department of Education (ED) is conducting this evaluation. In the introduction to the supporting statement, we provide a description of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers program, the evaluation questions and study design. The remaining sections of this document respond to specific instructions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the preparation of a supporting statement.

This document describes a request for clearance of six data collection instruments for phase one of the evaluation: 1) Design-focused Interview Guide for Center Staff, 2) Implementation-focused Interview Guide for Center Staff, 3) Interview Guide for Technical Assistance (TA) Recipients, 4) Center Staff Survey, 5) TA Recipient Survey, and 6) TA Event Observation Guide. A separate, phase 2 proposal will be submitted at a later date for clearance of outcomes-focused data collection instruments, including interview protocols for Comprehensive Center Staff and TA recipients. The outcome-focused protocols and their related burden hours will be submitted to OMB as a phase 2 package after the first data collection site visits are complete.

The Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers

Title II of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (F.T AA, Section 203)[1] authorized the Comprehensive Center (CC) Program, a discretionary grant program establishing technical assistance centers. The CCs were last awarded in 2012, to "provide technical assistance to State educational agencies (SEAs) that builds their capacity to support local educational agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools, especially low-performing districts and schools; improve educational outcomes for all students; close achievement gaps; and improve the quality of instruction" (77 FR 33564)[2].

In 2012, the Department of Education awarded new five-year grants to 15 Regional Centers and 7 Content Centers under the Comprehensive Centers program. The Regional Centers each serve one to seven U.S. states, territories, and possessions. They provide technical assistance (TA) that builds the capacity of SEAs to implement, support, scale up, and sustain initiatives that help districts and schools improve student outcomes. The Regional Centers focus their work on seven Federal priority areas:

1. Implementing college- and career-ready standards and aligned, high-quality assessments for all students;
2. Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders;
3. Turning around the lowest-performing schools;
4. Ensuring the school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten;

[1] http://www2.ed.gov/programs/newccp/legislation.html

[2] https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/06/06/2012-13735/applications-for-new-awards-comprehensive-centers-program#h-4

5. Building rigorous instructional pathways that support the successful transition of all students from secondary education to college without the need for remediation, and careers;
6. Identifying and scaling up innovative approaches to teaching and learning that significantly improve student outcomes; and
7. Using data-based decision-making to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes.

The Content Centers provide the Regional Centers and SEAs with in-depth content knowledge and expertise by providing information, publications, tools, and specialized technical assistance. The 7 Content Centers are:

1. Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation
2. Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
3. Center on School Turnaround
4. Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
5. Center on College and Career Readiness and Success
6. Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity
7. Center on Innovations in Learning

The National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers

The National Evaluation is charged with examining and documenting how the individual CCs intend to build SEA capacity (theories of action) and what types of activities they actually conduct to build capacity. It will also explore and document the outcomes of the capacity building efforts. It is designed to build on the previous evaluation of the CCs, which documented the type, extent, and quality of services provided.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will address broad questions in three areas:

- **Program Design: How did the CCs design their work?** In addressing this evaluation question, we seek to identify how the CCs designed their work as TA providers, including the underlying theories of action driving the work. The evaluation will seek to surface the theories of action and definitions of capacity building employed by CCs, as well as describe CCs' plans for assessing the needs of their constituencies and developing TA work plans to address those needs.
- **Program Implementation: How did the CCs operate?** In addressing this evaluation question, we seek to identify the various strategies CCs used to build capacity, describe the characteristics of those strategies, and document the extent to which CCs implemented the TA as planned. We will also seek to identify the common challenges and barriers CCs faced in building capacity, and ways they met those challenges.
- **Program Outcomes: What was the result of the CCs' work?** In addressing this evaluation question, we seek to identify the extent to which CCs achieved their goals and objectives, particularly as they relate to building their constituents' capacity. We will also explore the extent to which outcomes aligned with and supported the CCs'

theories of action, and to identify factors that may have contributed to CCs' success (or failure) in achieving expected outcomes.

Focus on Two Federal Priority Areas

As a way to focus the evaluation to gather data in depth rather than breadth, the evaluation will limit data collection on the implementation and outcomes questions to two of the seven federal priority areas: identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders, and ensuring the school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten. All of the Regional Centers have implemented projects and strategies that address the effective teachers and leaders priority, so it clearly represents an issue of nationwide focus. It is an area where most SEAs have significant needs for technical assistance and capacity building, as many are newly moving into a role in which they are choosing and implementing educator evaluation systems or supporting districts and schools as they hire and evaluate their professional staff. This priority is also tied to school reform efforts and large federal funding streams such as the Race to the Top initiative, the School Improvement Grants, and the Teacher Incentive Fund.

Early learning is a high-profile issue, recently gaining renewed attention from SEAs, the Department of Education, and President Obama. States vary in the attention and funding they have historically given to early childhood education, from universal full-day prekindergarten in some states to no state-supported pre-K at all in others. Research evidence is clear, however, that high-quality early education leads to better student outcomes, thus leading states to increase their focus on this issue. Given the overarching nature of the Great Teachers and Leaders priority, and the recent policy focus on early learning efforts, we believe that focusing on these two priorities will allow us to learn about how CCs developed SEA capacity in these two areas and what difference it made.

Data Sources

Data collection for this study will consist of surveys of TA recipients, interviews of SEA staff, surveys and interviews of CC staff, and observations of TA events.

TA recipient surveys

- Purpose: To gather information about TA received in selected priority areas from the CCs, understand the actions resulting from participating in TA, and examine outcomes related to that TA
- Sample: All SEA and possibly district staff who received TA from the CCs in the selected priority areas, along with Regional Center staff receiving TA from Content Centers
- Timing: Once yearly, beginning in the first quarter of 2015 (following OMB approval)

CC staff and SEA interviews

- Purpose: To gather information about the Centers' capacity building efforts, theories of action, program implementation, and outcomes;

- Sample: A purposeful sample of Center Directors, Managers, Evaluators, and TA staff; Recipients of CC TA, including SEA and possibly LEA staff, and other CCs;
- Timing: In coordination with site visits (projected to occur in Q2 2015).

CC staff surveys

- Purpose: To gather information from multiple CC TA staff about the nature, successes and challenges of their work building SEA capacity or Regional Center capacity, and to help identify high-leverage projects for more detailed study;
- Sample: All Center staff providing TA;
- Timing: Once yearly, beginning in the first quarter of 2015 (following OMB approval).

TA event observations

- Purpose: To obtain detailed data about the strategies that CCs used to support capacity building and achieve planned outcomes;
- Sample: Observable services or events that are planned for the selected priority areas in profiled projects, or projects that are potential profiled projects;
- Timing: In coordination with site visits if possible, except for virtual events such as webinars, which will be observed as they occur.

Evaluation reports

The evaluation will produce four reports. The first report will be an interim report focusing on how the CCs designed their work as technical assistance providers. The report will describe the CCs' underlying theories of action and definitions of "capacity building," and explain how the Centers assessed their constituencies' needs and developed work plans to address those needs. This report will be available in the first quarter of 2016.

Two interim summative reports (projected date: first quarter 2017) will be produced to address the program implementation and outcomes questions, one report for each of the two selected priority areas. These reports will demonstrate how and to what extent the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center program has built state capacity in these priority areas. The reports will include descriptions of the strategies used to build SEA capacity, common challenges faced and ways the CCs sought to address them, the extent to which CCs achieved their goals and objectives, factors that may have contributed to success (or failure) in achieving expected outcomes, and the extent to which CCs' outcomes aligned with and supported their theories of action. The interim summative reports will also include six profiles of multi-year projects, which will be selected and analyzed to illustrate how the CCs have successfully worked to build capacity related to project design and planning, implementation, and outcomes.

A final report will be produced in September 2018. The final report will summarize findings documented in the interim reports and update findings based on new data. The report shall provide a full summary of lessons learned on the CCs' efforts to build capacity.

DESCRIPTION OF STATISTICAL METHODS (PART B)

1. Describe the potential respondent universe (including a numerical estimate) and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, state and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

As described in the introduction above, the study team has purposively selected two of the seven Federal priority areas of the 22 Comprehensive Centers (CCs), and proposed to include the universe of CC staff and TA recipients who are heavily involved with CC activities in those priority areas. See Exhibit 1 for a more detailed description of sampling by instrument.

The two selected Federal priority areas are

1. Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders, and
2. Ensuring the school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten.

The selection of two priority areas in no way implies that the Department has a preference for these areas over others, or that the CCs or states should shift the focus of their efforts to these areas. Rather, this narrowing of focus allows us to target our resources in such a way that we are able to learn more about specific capacity-building activities and outcomes.

The target population, which includes the 22 CCs and their state education agency constituents, is small. Furthermore, each CC is unique, as it serves a different set of constituents with different capacity building needs. Sampling within this small population might not involve some of the work of some CCs. However, focusing on only two of the seven Federal priorities means that our data collection efforts will target projects related to these priorities, thus reducing burden on respondents. Therefore, in the interest of data quality with this small population, statistical methods to identify a probability sample from a larger respondent universe will not be used.

Project Profiles

There is one additional sample selection component within this study. We will profile a small number of projects in depth to illustrate how capacity building can be implemented. Profiles of up to three successful projects will be developed within each of the selected Federal priority areas. We will employ a purposeful selection process to identify projects for these profiles as follows:

- In the surveys in 2015 and in the first data collection site visits (Q2 2015), site visitors will collect information from CC staff about the projects within the selected priority areas that might be appropriate for project profiles. These may be multi-year, high-leverage projects that serve multiple state departments of education and/or that address critical capacity needs. One project per key priority area will be identified for consideration at each Regional Center and at the relevant Content Centers.
- Site visitors will conduct observations of events delivered as part of these projects during the site visits if feasible given cost and availability of staff.
- In mid-2015 the evaluators will identify the six most promising projects based on:
    - State department of education feedback, via the surveys and interviews, on the effectiveness or outcomes of the projects, and
    - Evidence from CC staff interviews as to the projects' progress in meeting their benchmarks, goals, and objectives.

Evaluators will gather details on these projects through documents and continued interviews and observations through the first quarter of 2017 (see timeline in Exhibit 1). Stakeholders outside of the CCs and state education agencies, such as partner organizations and school districts, may be considered for additional interviews if needed to develop a thorough understanding of the implementation and outcomes of a given project.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information, including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection.**
- **Estimation procedure.**
- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification.**
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**
- **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

The data collection procedures are discussed below. Exhibit 1 includes each instrument, its purpose, its administration time, its estimated sample, and the research questions addressed. All instruments are on yearly data collection cycles except for the observations, which will take place on an ongoing basis beginning in the second quarter of 2015, or upon OMB approval, as relevant observable activities are identified.

Exhibit 1. Instruments, Purpose, Timing, Sample, and Research Questions

Instrument	Purpose	Administration timing	Estimated sample	Major research questions addressed
1. Design-focused interviews with CC staff	Understand design/theory of action/capacity building model	Q2 2015	All CCs' leadership staff; estimated total of 88 respondents (average of 4 per CC)	1. How did CCs define capacity building? Did their definitions change over time? If so, how? 2. What theories of action did CCs use to guide their general capacity-building work? Did the theories change over time? If so, how? 3. How did CCs assess the needs of their constituencies?
2. Implementation-focused interviews with CC staff	Understand program implementation, including key strategies, partnerships, successes and challenges, in the two priority areas	Q2 2015 and Jan-Feb 2016	Leadership and staff who work on projects in selected priority areas; estimated total of 132 (6 in each CC)	4. What strategies did CCs employ to achieve their outcomes? 5. To what extent did CCs implement technical assistance to their constituencies as planned? 6. To what extent and how did CCs collaborate with each other?
3. Outcomes-focused interviews with CC staff*	Understand technical assistance outcomes, including longer term outcomes, and follow up on projects identified for profiles	Jan-Feb 2017 *Note: this protocol will be developed after the first site visit and is not included in this package for review*	CCs with work in the two selected priority areas; staff who work on projects in those areas; estimated total of 88 respondents (4 per CC)	7. To what extent did CCs achieve their goals and objectives?
4. Interviews with TA recipients	Understand CCs' implementation strategies and outcomes, including how CCs and SEAs work together in the two selected priority areas	Q2 2015, Jan-Feb 2016 and 2017 ***Note: the protocol for the last interview will be developed after the first site visit and is not included in this package for review***	State education and Regional Center staff identified by CCs as key contacts or participants in key CC projects in the selected priority areas; Estimated total of 88 (average of 4 per CC)	4. What strategies did CCs employ to achieve their outcomes? 5. To what extent did CCs implement technical assistance to their constituencies as planned? 7. To what extent did CCs achieve their goals and objectives?

5. CC staff online survey	Understand CC staff individual roles and perceptions of projects in the two priority areas, including how projects build capacity	Q1 2015, Nov 2015, Nov 2016	All CC staff and partners who provide TA in the selected priority areas; estimated total of 264 (average of 12 per CC)	4. What strategies did CCs employ to achieve their outcomes? 5. To what extent did CCs implement technical assistance to their constituencies as planned? 7. To what extent did CCs achieve their goals and objectives?
6. TA recipient survey	Investigate how technical assistance recipients, including state education staff and other participants as relevant, perceive and use the services they receive, and how these services have helped them build capacity	Q1 2015, Nov 2015, Nov 2016	TA recipients in the selected priority areas; estimated total of 440 respondents (about 20 per CC)	7. To what extent did CCs achieve their goals and objectives?
7. TA event observations	Provide observational data about the strategies that CCs used to support capacity building and achieve planned outcomes. Will inform project profiles.	On an ongoing basis beginning in Q2 2015, as relevant observable activities are identified	Observable events of TA activities in the two selected priority areas; estimated total of 10 observations per year, with one CC staff member providing background information about each event	4. What strategies did CCs employ to achieve their outcomes? 5. To what extent did CCs implement technical assistance to their constituencies as planned? 7. To what extent did CCs achieve their goals and objectives?

*Phase 2 OMB submission

CC staff interviews (instruments 1-3)

CC staff will be interviewed as part of yearly site visits to each CC, taking place in early 2015, 2016, and 2017. There are three separate interview protocols because the evaluation team will be focusing on different evaluation questions, and therefore asking different interview questions during site visits as the work of the CCs progresses. Instrument 1 is a protocol for interviewing CC leaders in a group setting during the site visits about how they design their work with constituents (see Appendix A). It will be administered once in the second quarter of 2015. Instrument 2 (see Appendix B) focuses on the implementation of the technical assistance work, and will be administered in a group setting in the 2015 and 2016 site visits. Respondents for Instrument 2 will include staff members who are working on projects in the two selected federal priority areas. Instrument 3 will be administered in the 2017 site visits. It will be addressed in a later OMB submission.

For all of the CC staff interviews, the evaluation team will work with a coordinator from each CC who will help schedule the site visits. The evaluation team will provide guidelines for the selection of participants in interviews, and will follow recommendations from CCs regarding staff to be included in each interview. Each site visit team will consist of an evaluator from IMPAQ (the site liaison) and a consultant from a subcontractor. The evaluators have expertise in the study design and evaluation methods, while the consultants have expertise in technical assistance to state and local education agencies. Having the two visitors work as a team during the site visits will enhance the accuracy of the data gathered. The use of experienced interviewers, coupled with careful preparation, will guide the specific wording of each question and probe on the protocol, to ensure the interviews are customized appropriately to address the unique situations of each interviewee. The same pair of visitors will attend all site visits of the CCs to which they are assigned, and both site visitors will attend all interviews if possible. However, site visitors may conduct interviews separately if this is necessary to collect information from all respondents. Because of this, and to ensure accurate notes, each interview will be audio recorded if the interviewees permit. The IMPAQ evaluator (site liaison) for each site will have ultimate responsibility for completing and submitting the specified set of standard deliverables on the checklist for each site visit.

Throughout the process of data collection and reporting, the contractors will make all efforts to protect the privacy of respondents participating in the site visits. The study team will not identify by name any of the interviewees, nor will the study team attribute quotes by name, although the study team will identify the names of states and CCs in final reporting.

The study leaders will train the site visit teams so that all team members share a consistent understanding of the study, the research questions, the interview questions and probes, and the data collection needs. Prior to each wave of site visits all site visitors will convene in Washington, DC and Oakland, CA for a half-day training session. The session will address the research questions, site visit logistics and activities, site pre- and post-visit communication, data collection procedures on site (including a review of the interview protocols), and data handling. The site visit task leaders will develop a site visitor guide with a checklist that will outline all tasks the site visitors need to perform before, during, and after each visit. During the months of site visits there will be regular meetings of the site visitors and study leaders to discuss issues and concerns.

Technical assistance recipient interviews (instrument 4)

Prior to each visit, site visitors will ask Center staff to identify the key SEA representatives they have worked with on each major project within the two selected priority areas (up to two projects per priority area). State education agency representatives may include Chief State School Officers and their deputies, division leaders, and middle managers and technical staff within divisions, as relevant to the projects. Evaluators will contact the respondents and conduct these interviews in person, if feasible in conjunction with site visits to the centers, or by telephone. These interviews (see Appendix C) will include questions about planning, needs identification, and ongoing communication between the Centers and the state education agencies, implementation of projects in the selected priority areas, and outcomes of these projects.

CC staff online survey (instrument 5)

The CC staff survey (see Appendix D) will be administered once per year via online survey software prior to the site visits, starting in Q1 2015. The survey includes questions about technical assistance implementation in projects under the two selected federal priorities. Each CC's list of projects will be unique to that CC's work plan, but the questions asked about the projects will be the same from survey to survey. The survey addresses the kinds of technical assistance involved in each project, the role of the respondent, challenges and supporting factors, staff members and collaborators on each project, and perceptions of capacity building. It also asks for suggestions for projects suitable for project profiles.

IMPAQ staff will contact each of the CCs to obtain the list of respondents for each site. The evaluation team will provide guidelines for the selection of survey respondents (people who are involved in technical assistance with projects in the two selected federal priority areas), and will follow recommendations from CCs regarding staff to be included in each survey. Participants will receive a survey link via email.

The study team will not identify by name any of the survey respondents, nor will the study team attribute quotes by name.

Technical assistance (TA) recipient online survey (instrument 6)

The TA recipient survey (see Appendix E) will be administered once per year via online survey software, starting in Q1 2015. It will be addressed to state education agency staff, as well as to school district staff and other relevant stakeholders who are direct recipients of TA from CCs. The survey includes questions about technical assistance received from CCs during past 12 months under the two selected Federal priorities. Similar to the CC staff survey, the list of TA activities provided by each CC will be unique, but the questions asked about the TA will be the same from survey to survey. The survey addresses specific TA received, actions taken as a result of the received TA, and statements about individual and organizational capacity built under the two selected federal priorities. It also asks for the most helpful aspects of TA, challenges encountered, and specific plans to use TA in upcoming months.

IMPAQ staff will ask each of the CCs for the list of specific TA activities delivered in past 12 months and for the contact information for their TA recipients (including SEA staff, LEA staff and other as applicable). The evaluation team will provide guidelines as to what constitutes a TA activity (such as a workshop, webinar, consultation, product, and toolkit). TA recipients will receive survey links via email.

The study team will not identify by name any of the survey respondents, nor will the study team attribute quotes by name.

Technical assistance event observations (instrument 7)

Observations of TA events will provide detailed data about the strategies that CCs use to support capacity building and achieve planned outcomes. These data will inform research questions about differences in strategies between CCs, characteristics of strategies, and the extent of collaboration with other CCs. Follow-up data on the capacity building outcomes of the event may be obtained through the TA recipient surveys and interviews, particularly for events that are part of the projects to be profiled.

In preparation for each observation, observers will gather information from the CC staff leading the event or extant documents in order to identify:

- Goals of the event/needs to be addressed
- How these goals relate to the CC's theory of action, workplan, and relevant strategy or project plan
- Intended audience
- Expected outcomes of the event
- As relevant, other background on the planning or preparation for the event

A structured protocol for the observations, including questions to be addressed prior to the event, is included as Appendix F.

During the meetings/site visits with CCs, or in follow-up calls as needed, the evaluators will ask CC staff members to identify observable services or events of profiled projects (or potentially profiled projects) that are planned for the two selected Federal priority areas in the coming year. These events may include webinars, stakeholder meetings (virtual or in-person), and in-person training events, workshops, or presentations. When possible, observations will be conducted in conjunction with site visits. Observations of webinars or other virtual events will be conducted as they are scheduled. Observations will focus on a convenience sample of high-leverage activities that may illustrate the capacity building process. For example, rather than observing training events where individuals impart knowledge to other individuals, we will attempt to observe more dynamic events, such as roundtables or cross-state events and planning sessions, where we might be able to observe how the CCs work with their constituents and how the constituents respond.

Emails will be sent to respondents to inform them and request participation in surveys and interviews. Email templates can be found in Appendix G.

3. **Describe methods to maximize response and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

The evaluation team has designed instruments so that they are easy to understand and place as little burden on participants as possible, which will encourage response.

CC staff interviews and surveys

In Winter 2013, IMPAQ evaluators conducted brief phone calls with CC leadership to introduce themselves and the goals of the overall evaluation. In spring/summer 2014, site liaisons and consultants visited each CC to introduce themselves and to have informal conversations about the work of the CCs. We believe these interactions have resulted in cooperative relationships between CCs and evaluators. This spirit of cooperation and the eagerness of CCs to have their work understood by a larger audience are likely to result in high response rates for interviews and surveys.

Site liaisons will have the opportunity to plan the list of CC staff survey participants with CC directors or their designees. Once the participant list is selected, the evaluation team will notify intended respondents via email several days prior to the survey release, in order to let them know to expect an upcoming online survey link. Approximately one week after the survey links have gone out, IMPAQ staff will begin to follow up with any nonrespondents. This will initially involve email reminders to respondents, followed by telephone calls.

Interviews will take place in a group setting during site visits, unless scheduling difficulties necessitate individual interviews. Site liaisons will identify the lists of participants in advance with CC directors. Site liaisons and consultants will then interview identified participants in person during site visits. In the event that some identified CC staff members are participating in site visits via videoconferencing or teleconferencing, site visitors will conduct the interviews using these technologies. If some CC staff members are not able to participate in site visits at all, but should be included in interviews, site visitors will (with the help of CC directors) plan follow-up calls or videoconferences with them to conduct the interviews.

The evaluation team anticipates a 100 percent response rate for the interviews and a 90 percent response rate for the CC staff surveys.

TA recipient surveys and interviews

Based on our experience, we expect an 80 percent response rate for the TA recipient surveys. We will take the following steps to maximize response rate. Evaluators will rely on CC staff to identify TA recipients with whom they have worked or who have participated in CC-organized events such as workshops and webinars and to provide us with their contact information. Once we send surveys to recipients, several rounds of email reminders will be sent to any nonrespondents. If these are not successful, we will proceed with phone or mail follow-up to boost the overall response rates.

Regarding the TA recipient interviews, evaluators will ask CCs for the contact information of key TA recipients in projects in the two selected priority areas. Evaluators will contact the TA recipients using the following procedures: 1) All identified SEA recipients will receive an initial contact via email, requesting their participation in a one-hour interview, and providing an overview of the scope and purpose of the evaluation. The general purpose of the interview and the topics to be covered will also be described. 2) If there is no response within a week, evaluators will follow up by telephone within one week of sending each email. 3) If the first telephone call does not reach the respondent or does not accomplish scheduling the interview, evaluators will continue to follow up through a combination of email and telephone. If in-person interviews cannot be arranged during a site visit, telephone interviews will be arranged to accommodate the respondents' schedules within the next two months. We expect that this flexibility will result in a response rate of 80%. If a respondent is unreachable or completely unavailable for an interview, evaluators will ask the relevant CC for names of alternate TA recipients who might serve as replacements or representatives.

4. **Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.**

Study team members have pre-tested drafts of the interview protocol questions with up to nine respondents from CCs. Responses to the questions were collected by site liaisons via interview notes and used to make revisions to the instruments in terms of wording, flow, length, and order of questions. The interview protocol notes were also used to inform the construction of the survey items.

5. **Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other persons who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

The following individuals and organizations are involved in data collection, analysis, and consulting on statistical aspects of the study design.

Responsibility	Organization	Contact Name	Telephone Number
Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director	IMPAQ International	Cheri Fancsali	443-259-5406
Co-Principal Investigator	IMPAQ International	Phyllis Weinstock	510-597-2423
Associate Education Research Scientist	Institute of Education Sciences, ED	Amy Johnson	202-208-7849
Research Scientist	Institute of Education Sciences, ED	Joy Lesnick	202-219-2013
Technical Working Group Member	Consultant	Margaret Goetz	609-737-2464

Technical Working Group Member	Consultant	Thomas Adams	530-848-9728
Technical Working Group Member	Consultant	Constancia Warren	212-367-4595
Analytic Support	IMPAQ International	Kelley Akiya	510-597-2411
Task Lead, Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Andrea Beesley	443-832-2313
Task Lead, Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Anne Chamberlain	443-259-5215
Analytic Support	IMPAQ International	Maria DiFuccia	202-774-1948
Task Lead, Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Michaela Gulemetova	202-774-1956
Analytic Support	IMPAQ International	Ashley Hunt	202-774-1949
Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Kay Magill	510-597-2418
Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Nada Rayyes	510-597-2422
Analytic Support	IMPAQ International	Eliana Saltares	202-774-1972
Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Raquel Sanchez	510-282-4794
Site Liaison	IMPAQ International	Linda Toms Barker	808-934-9297
Technical Assistance Expert, Site Visitor	Consultant	Michelle Feist	804-252-5714
Technical Assistance Expert, Site Visitor	Consultant	Deborah Jonas	503-381-4164
Technical Assistance Expert, Site Visitor	Consultant	Leslie Rennie-Hill	410-206-0394
Technical Assistance Expert, Site Visitor	Consultant	Paul Smith	541-543-9179
Technical Assistance Expert, Site Visitor	Consultant	Michelle Swanson	804-252-5714