

APPENDIX C

4. INTERVIEWS WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is <insert number> and the expiration date is <insert date>.

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[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Below are suggested introductory remarks. While it is not necessary to follow this as a script, it is important that you cover all of the main points contained here.]

I work for IMPAQ International, and we are evaluating the system of Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study.

As part of our study, we will be interviewing recipients of Center work. The purpose of the study is to gather data to describe the work of the Centers and how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education. We will use the information we learn from our visit today to report our results to the U.S. Department of Education. What you have to say is important to us and we appreciate your helping us understand the Centers’ work. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 60 minutes.

*[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: **Please read the following to the respondent(s):***

“Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. The reports prepared for this study will include information that is summarized and aggregated and should not associate responses with a specific Center, state, district or individual. Findings from the interview data will be reported in summary form and individuals will not be identified by name. However, respondents’ roles and the CC they work with may be identified in the report, which may lead to individuals’ being identified. Other than this situation that we have made respondents aware of, we will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.”

Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy?

To start, do you mind if we audio record our session for the accuracy of my note taking?

Individual Information and Knowledge of Centers

1. Please describe your position and your responsibilities with the SEA.
2. How long have you been in this position? How long have you worked with the SEA?
3. Please describe any other background particularly relevant to your current work with the SEAs?
4. When did you first work with or receive services from any of the Comprehensive Centers? Which Centers have you worked with or received technical assistance from since that time?
5. I would like to focus now on the Centers that are currently funded (funded Centers since late 2012). We'd like to hear about ways you've worked with or received services from these Centers. How did the Center try to learn about your needs?

PROBES:

What data or documents did the Center request?

Whom did the Center interview?

What was discussed in the early contacts/meetings?

Have you had regular contact with them since the first contact?

Is this typically in person, by phone, or by e-mail?

6. Please describe the major projects or services the Center has provided you or that you've participated in with the Center(s).
7. How are decisions made about what services the Center should provide to the SEA?
8. How would you characterize the specific role of the Center(s) in serving the SEAs, as distinct from other TA providers available to the SEA?
9. What are you most hoping to get from the Center? What needs do you hope the Center will address?

PROBE:

In what ways do you hope the Center will build your capacity?

10. Do you believe the Centers have been effective in addressing the needs of the SEA and the state? If yes, please describe how and what evidence you have of their effectiveness. If no, please explain why and how/in what ways they have not been effective in serving the SEA/state needs.

Project Background

Now we'd like to discuss one or two specific projects that the Center staff has identified as illustrative that they are implementing with your SEA:

11. How would you briefly describe the _____ project to someone who isn't familiar with it?
12. What are the key strategies and activities—including training events, products, meetings—that are part of achieving the goals?
13. How does the project fit into the overall work at the SEA or your division?

PROBES:

*Are there other initiatives or projects at the SEA that are related to this project?
What is the policy or regulatory context for this project?*

14. What prompted this particular project? What needs does it address? Why did you decide to work with the Center on this?
15. How did you work with the Center to develop this project?

PROBES:

Did your staff suggest the strategy or activities the Center might undertake to address the needs, or did the Center recommend the strategy? Please describe how you arrived at the project plan.

16. Is there any part of the local context (political, fiscal, legal, economic, etc.) that you think played a role in the project's early development?

PROBES: *How did it impact what your team was thinking and doing in relation to this project? Did your office have any Federal or state grant money behind this project?*

17. Can you tell me about the other SEA or other state agency team members on this project? Specifically, what are the titles or positions of SEA staff, and what are their respective roles on the project?

PROBE: *[Ask about other agency staff (such as workforce staff for college and career readiness, or human services staff for early childhood) where appropriate.]*

18. Whom from the relevant Center(s) do you work with on this project?
19. Who else from outside the SEA or the Center is involved in this project?

PROBES:

LEAs?

Other Centers?

Other partners (TA providers or consultants, universities, foundations, etc.)

20. How often do you meet or talk with Center representatives, or other key constituents, if relevant, regarding planning and implementation of the project? With which Center

representatives do you meet? What do you discuss? How do these discussions inform implementation of the project?

***PROBES:** How would you describe the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations involved in the project?*

Project Goals and Progress

21. Ultimately, what will we “see” if this project is successful? In other words, what are your hoped-for outcomes from this project?
22. Have the SEA needs or goals changed or shifted since the project began? [If so] Please tell us about that. How has this affected your work with the Center on the project?
23. So far, has the project been implemented as planned? Please describe the progress of implementation so far, as well as any deviations from plans. What are the reasons for any changes in plans?
24. Has any part of the local or state context changed in a way that has impacted the project’s implementation or success since its early development? How?

Project Outcomes

25. Have you used any products or materials produced by the Center through this project (including webinars, trainings, presentations)? [If so] have you been able to make use of what you learned? [If so] can you explain how? [If not] can you explain why?
26. Do the products/materials or technical assistance events help address the project goals, and if so, how?
27. What have been the major challenges related to this project (if any)? Please describe them. How were the challenges addressed (if at all)?
28. In your opinion, what has been the most successful aspect of this project? Please describe it.
29. What have been the outcomes so far? Have you seen changes in your or your organization’s capacity? Please describe any changes in each of these types of capacity and the evidence of the change:
 - Knowledge and skills (e.g., knowledge, expertise, skills, will, understanding necessary to implement something)
 - Organizational (e.g., interaction, collaboration, communication among individuals in a system; evaluation and feedback on processes and structures for continuous improvement)

- Structural/policy change (e.g., policies, procedures, and formalized practices) **PROBE:**
Has your capacity to work with LEAs improved?

30. Are you or the SEA as an organization doing anything differently now, that you have not mentioned above, as a result of this project and the TA from the Center?

PROBES:

How are you using new knowledge or skills?

How has the TA influenced policies and procedures or practices at the SEA?

How has the TA influenced the SEA's internal interactions, collaboration and communications?

31. Are there plans in your agency to build on, replicate, or continue this project or this line of work? Are you planning to do this with or without the Center(s)? What are the next steps?

32. Overall, have you learned any lessons from this project's implementation? Any recommendations you might make to Comprehensive Centers based on either successes or challenges of this project? Any lessons for your own agency?