PROTOCOL—ACTIVITY LEADER

Instructions for the Site Visit Team

Prior to going on the site visit, draw on the background document review to prepopulate as much information as you can on the following topics: (a) key grant activities, (b) grantee and grantee partners, (c) overall funding for grant and funding by type of activity, and (d) monitoring indicators. Focus your questions on missing information or items where the respondent account differs substantially from information gleaned from the document review.

Respondent Information

- **Respondent name:**
- **Respondent title and position:**
- **Respondent affiliation:**
- **Respondent contact information:**
- **Respondent background.** What is your professional background (for example, training, experience)?
- **Respondent involvement in cluster.** How long have you been involved in this cluster? What are your responsibilities related to the cluster? What are your responsibilities related to this grant?

Cluster Partnerships and Operations

1. **What is your organization's role in grant activities? What are its goals?**

   Organization's role in grant activities. When did your organization get involved with grant activities? Was it involved in grant development and strategic planning related to grant use? If so, please describe its role in the process. What role(s) does your organization play in grant implementation?

   Organization's goals. What motivated your organization to get involved in grant activities? What does it hope to achieve?

2. **What is your organization's history of working with grant partners? How have cluster partnerships developed over time?**

   Key players in cluster and their roles. Which organizations do you collaborate with to implement this grant? What are their roles?

Maturity of cluster. Have you collaborated with any of these organizations in the past? If yes, please describe the nature and purpose of the collaboration? How long did it last? How successful was it? Did you receive any federal funding in the course of this past collaboration?

Cluster Communication and Engagement

3. How well do cluster partners communicate with one another?

Communication mechanisms. Have the cluster's communication strategies been effective? Do you feel that your organization has access to relevant information in a timely fashion? Are any changes needed to how communication is organized in the cluster? If so, why? What factors have facilitated and/or impeded effective communication?

4. What is the quality of partner engagement?

Degree and determinants of support. Do you and your cluster partners share consensus on and support the cluster's (a) purpose, (b) strategy, and (c) activities? Why or why not?

Grant Funding

5. To what degree is the funding provided sufficient?

Grant funding. Has your organization received any funding through the JIAC grant? If so, what amount? Is this funding sufficient for conducting the activities planned?

Matched and leveraged funding. Have entities affiliated with the cluster provided any additional matching funds for this activity? From what sources? Have your organization or partner organizations provided any additional in-kind resources (such as donated office or training space, supplies, volunteer time) for this activity?

Grant Activities

6. What kinds of activities is your organization conducting under the JIAC grant? Are they similar in content and scope to the planned activities described in the grant proposal?

Content, purpose, scope, and duration of activities. [SUMMARIZE BASED ON DOCUMENT REVIEW AND CONFIRM ACCURACY]. Are there any other key activities that your organization is conducting under the JIAC grant? What are the purpose and objective of those activities? What are their scope and duration?

Features of training or other ETA activities. What kinds of training do you offer using the JIAC grant? [PROBE FOR TYPES OF TRAINING: CLASSROOM, ONLINE, SOFT SKILLS, JOB SEARCH, INCUMBENT WORKER, ON-THE-JOB TRAININGS, OTHER.]. Do you provide these free of charge to participants? If no, what is the average fee participants have to pay'? What proportion of the total costs of the activity do participants have to cover? [GET COPIES OF ACTIVITY MATERIALS, SUCH AS TRAINING SYLLABUS OR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION MATERIALS, IF AVAILABLE.]

Leveraging of existing experience. Did your organization conduct similar activities prior to this grant? Were these activities designed specifically for this grant, or did the grant build on existing efforts?

7. What types of individuals do your grant activities serve?

Beneficiaries served. [SUMMARIZE AND CONFIRM KINDS OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED BASED ON QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORTS. IF RESPONDENTS HAVE ADDITIONAL MONITORING DATA ON BENEFICIARY DEMOGRAPHICS, OBTAIN COPIES OF SUCH REPORTS]. How do participants served by grant activities compare with the types of individuals that your organization typically serves?

8. How does your organization conduct recruitment and intake? How does it promote inclusion of underserved populations?

Recruitment and intake. How does your organization recruit participants for these activities? What types of outreach does it conduct? How does it conduct intake? What application procedures, if any, do participants need to complete? What eligibility criteria does your organization apply to select amongst applicants?

Inclusion. Is your organization taking any specific steps to promote inclusion of historically underrepresented and excluded groups? From your perspective, how successful are these efforts?

9. What steps does your organization take to assist participants with improving their employment outcomes?

Assistance with finding and retaining employment. Does your organization assist with job placement? If yes, at what stage do you offer this assistance to participants, and what does this assistance include? What strategies, if any, has your organization adopted to boost employment retention? How do you help participants upgrade employment/increase income?

10. **What have your organization's experiences been with grant implementation?**

Experiences with implementation. What has helped your organization in structuring and implementing grant activities? What has posed challenges? What have been some of the lessons learned?

Grant Monitoring

11. **What metrics does your organization use to monitor activity progress?**

Metrics used. Does your organization use any metrics, other than those mentioned in the quarterly progress reports, to measure progress?

Inclusion/omission of metrics. [ASK ONLY IF RELEVANT] Your organization appears to be tracking the following metrics for ETA activities in the quarterly progress reports that were not included in the grant proposal [PROVIDE LIST]. Why were these metrics added? The grant proposal included the following metrics for ETA activities that do not appear to be tracked in the quarterly reports [PROVIDE LIST]. Why are these metrics no longer used?

Frequency and method of data collection. How often does your organization collect data and report it to the funding agency? How does it collect data on the various metrics? In your opinion, how reliable are the data?

12. **What steps are taken to ensure high quality data collection on outcomes?**

Data validation by your organization. What steps does your organization take to ensure high quality data collection? To what degree does your organization validate information submitted by your frontline staff?

Data validation by cluster management staff. What steps do [NAME OF CLUSTER MANAGER] or [NAME OF FUNDING STREAM ADMINISTRATOR] take to verify the accuracy of the data that you submit? Do they conduct case reviews? Do they require supporting information for aggregate outcome measures that you report? To the best of your knowledge, do they systematically review the data that your organization provides? Do they impose any penalties for submitting incomplete or inaccurate data?

13. **How easy is it to track and report on monitoring data?**

Ease of reporting on grant metrics. Which metrics are hardest to track, and which ones are easiest to track? Has your organization faced difficulties in tracking and reporting on grant metrics? If yes, please describe these challenges. What steps did your organization take to resolve them?

14. **What is the rate of outcome achievement? What factors play a role in outcome achievement?**

Cluster progress. To what degree has your organization made progress toward key target outputs and outcomes?

Determinants of progress. What has helped your organization in making progress toward achieving target outputs and outcomes? What has impeded your organization in making progress?

Reliance on and Utilization of External Technical Assistance for Grant Activities

15. **What support do federal agencies and cluster partners provide? What is the quality of this support?**

Federal agency role. Does your organization receive any kind of direct technical assistance from federal agencies? If so, from which agencies, and what kinds of assistance do they provide? [PROBE FOR NON-FUNDING PARTNERS]. How is this support provided? Typically, who initiates this technical assistance (that is, do you request assistance, or does the federal partner reach out to offer it offer it)?

Quality of federal assistance. What is the quality of assistance provided by federal staff? Is it useful? Is it adequate? Is it timely? Do federal staff have the capacity and resources to assist you? [PROBE FEDERAL STAFF'S WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE IN THEIR MONITORING VS. REQUIRING STRICT COMPLIANCE]

16. **What support do other cluster partners provide to your organization? What is the quality of this support?**

Cluster role in providing technical assistance. Have cluster partners (that is, the cluster manager, funding stream administrator, or other partners) provided any technical assistance or other supports in implementing the grant? If yes, what kinds of assistance did they provide? How is this support provided? Typically, who initiates this technical assistance (that is, does your organization request assistance, or do the cluster partners reach out to offer it)?

Quality of support from cluster partners. What is the quality of assistance provided by cluster partners? Is it useful? Is it adequate? Is it timely? Do you feel that cluster partners have the capacity and resources to assist you?

Gaps in support. What other kind of supports would have been helpful to your organization for grant implementation? Who is best placed to provide this support (for example, federal agency partners, or cluster manager)?

Why did you not receive this assistance (for example, is it that you did not request it or that you requested it but did not receive it)?

Program Management and Sustainability

17. What plans has the cluster created to promote sustainability?

Formal plans for sustainability. Has your organization or the cluster created any formal plans to promote sustainability? If yes, how were these plans created? Who led the effort? What was your organization's involvement? What do these plans include? How far along is this planning (initial stages, advanced stages)?

Factors facilitating/impeding planning for sustainability. What factors have facilitated planning? If no planning has been conducted, why not? What factors are impeding such planning?

Program Replicability and Lessons Learned

18. How replicable are grant activities, and what are the lessons learned?

Replicability. Can the activities conducted under the grant be replicated? If not, why not?

Facilitating factors. What factors have facilitated grant implementation? What are the greatest strengths of the cluster? What do you believe are your three greatest successes?

Impeding factors. What factors have impeded grant implementation? What are the limitations of the cluster? What have been your greatest challenges?

Lessons learned. What three things would you change about how your organization and/or the cluster implemented grant activities?