

**OUTCOMES-FOCUSED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS
NATIONAL EVALUATION OF COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS**

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Introduction

Suggested introductory remarks *(Cover all main points here):*

My name is <Interviewer Name> and I work for IMPAQ International. We are researching the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study.

(If applicable) You may recall that we talked last year about [name of Center].

As part of our study, we will be interviewing recipients of technical assistance from the Comprehensive Centers. The purpose of the study is to describe the work of the Centers, especially how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education, and to help inform the future work of the Centers. What you have to say is important to us. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 60 minutes.

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. 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 our note taking? (Interviewer: Respondents will have been identified by the Centers as technical assistance recipients of projects in the two priority areas —teacher/leader effectiveness and early learning. Respondents should be staff of state agencies or offices responsible for administration of one of the two priority areas. In most cases the respondent will work for an office or division within the state department of education. Occasionally the respondent may work for a state agency other than the department of education, such as an office of early childhood. When administering the protocol, you may substitute for “state education agency” or “SEA” or “your agency or office” the specific name of the respondent’s office or agency as she or he generally refers to it.)

Individual and Project Information

1. We understand that you work for (name of agency and office or division if relevant). Is this correct? Please describe your position and your responsibilities.
2. When did you first start working with the [Center name]?
3. We’ll be discussing the [project name] that you worked on with the [Center name]. We understand that this project (*Interviewer provide description based on recent Center interview.*) Is this an accurate description, including an accurate description of the Center’s role in the project? (If not, ask the respondent to explain or add information.) If the project is ongoing, please describe any planned activities for the remainder of the project.
4. Please describe your involvement in this project since it started. Were others in your agency involved? If so, please describe their involvement.
5. We understand that the goals of the project for your agency are _____? Is this correct? If not, please correct this or describe any additional goals.
6. Have there been changes in your needs, goals or objectives for the project since its inception? If so, how has this affected your work with the Center on this project?

Measuring Outcomes

7. We’d like to understand how you measure(d) project progress and outcomes. How do you measure or determine whether the project is meeting its goals and objectives? Has the Center worked with you on measuring or tracking outcomes for the project? If so, please

describe how they have done this. Do you need more help in measuring project progress and outcomes?

Outcomes of the Project

8. We'd now like to discuss the project outcomes, especially the Center's role in producing them.

We are now going to read through a list of types of agency capacity and ask you to look at the handout for reference. Please tell us which of these categories of capacity has been built by the Center's work with you on this project so far, and we will then follow up about the details. We will give you a chance to describe other kinds of project outcomes as well.

Interviewer now reads through the handout, including types of capacity and definitions. After the reading of the handout, the respondent is asked to identify which outcomes on the list were produced by this project.

For each outcome identified by the respondent, probe for a detailed description of capacity changes, and ensure that each of the following is addressed:

- i. What are you, your staff, or your agency doing differently now that you did not do before? *(Interviewer, probe for detail on specific behaviors, skills, or processes as relevant.)*
- ii. Was this an intended or unintended outcome of this project (from your agency's perspective)?
- iii. How do you know that the Center's work on this project contributed to this change? What evidence do you have? *(Interviewer, refer to answers under #8 if applicable.)*
- iv. What technical assistance strategies or services provided by the Center worked well in producing this change? How and why? What strategies or services did not work as well? Why?
- v. What are the challenges in producing this outcome (building this type of capacity change or other outcome in your agency)? How did the Center address these challenges?

The handout will include these:

- a. *Knowledge and skills or human capacity:* Any changes in SEA staff knowledge, expertise or skills resulting from the project.

- Includes increased content knowledge or policy knowledge.
 - Management or technical skills.
- b. *Organizational capacity, including structural, fiscal, or material capacity:* Any changes in SEA organizational capacity resulting from the project. By changes in organizational capacity, we mean any of the following:
- SEA agency restructuring.
 - Changes in SEA agency processes and procedures.
 - Changes in communication and coordination across staff and divisions of the SEA or other agencies.
 - Improvements in SEA use of resources.
 - Changes in SEA performance management and continuous improvement.
 - Other.
- c. *Policy development or design:* Any changes in the SEAs' capacity to develop or inform the development and design of state policy, including recommendations, advising to Boards of Education and legislators.
- d. *Capacity for policy implementation, including political capacity:* Any changes in how SEAs implement policy. What we mean here are changes in how SEAs do any of the following:
- How SEAs work to “roll out,” disseminate, or spread a policy or practice throughout the state.
 - How SEAs work with LEAs and other stakeholders in the state, for example, in supporting, guiding, or communicating with them.
- e. *Other capacity changes for the SEA that you would like to describe.*
9. Has the project had any other outcomes we haven't discussed, including any unrelated to capacity building? If so, please describe. *(Interviewer, for each change described, ask the following:)*
- i. What is happening in your agency or state now that did not happen before? *(Interviewer, probe for detail on specific behaviors, skills, policies or processes as relevant.)*
 - ii. Was this an intended or unintended outcome of this project (from your agency's perspective)? Did you expect the project to produce these changes, or were these changes unexpected?

- iii. How do you know that the work on Center’s work on the project contributed to this change? What evidence do you have? *(Interviewer, refer to answers under #8 if applicable.)*
 - iv. What activities, services or products technical assistance strategies or services provided by the Center worked particularly well in producing this change? How and why? Did any strategies or services did not work as well? Why?
 - v. What were the challenges in working on this area of capacity? What are the challenges in producing this outcome (building this type of capacity change or other outcome in your agency)? How did the Center address these challenges?
10. *(If not already addressed)* Have you begun to take over or own the project activities, information, or processes, without the Centers’ help, to any degree? Please explain how you are doing this and sustaining the work. Do you know what your next steps are for moving forward? What do you think will be the biggest challenges? Do you think you will require additional support to sustain the work, and if so, in what way?
11. *(For completed projects)* Did the project achieve its goals for your agency? Did the Center meet your expectations for their work on the project? Please explain. If any goals or objectives, or expectations for the Center, were not achieved, to what do you attribute this?
12. *(For projects still in process)* Is the project meeting its goals so far? Is the Center meeting your expectations for their work on the project so far? If any goals or objectives (or expectations for the Center) have not been achieved, to what do you attribute this?

Priority Area Overview

We’d now like to ask about your work with the Center in the area of *[teacher/leader effectiveness or early learning]* overall.

13. Since 2012, has the local or state context or focus for this priority area (teacher/leader effectiveness or early learning, as per the specific interview) changed for your agency? If yes, how has it changed? How has this affected your work with the Center?
14. Do you believe the Centers have been effective in addressing the needs of the SEA and the state in this priority area? 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.

15. Considering all of your work with the Center within this priority area over the last *[applicable number]* years, to what extent and in what ways did the Center contribute to your agency's capacity? What were the major outcomes that achieved in this area?
16. What Center technical assistance strategies, services, or products were the most effective in this priority area and why? What "worked" for building your agency's capacity in this priority area? What did not work?
17. What challenges (outside of those already discussed) made it difficult to build your agency's needed capacity in this priority area? Please give examples. How likely are these challenges (or others) to persist moving forward? What additional supports might you need to continue building or sustaining capacity in this area?
18. Do you have any lessons or recommendations for the Comprehensive Centers based on your experience in this project or the priority area overall? Did you learn any lessons for your own agency? Please explain.

Thank you very much for your time today. Your input has been very helpful.