Instrument 1: Technical Assistance (TA) Center Director Interview Protocol for Environmental Scan

Interview Facilitation Guide

We have 4 senior interviewers who will be conducting the interviews given their particular focus and expertise. To support the fidelity of implementation, we have outlined guidance to be used in each interview session.

1. Introduce the interviewer(s).
2. Explain the purpose of the study and topics to be covered in the interview. Interviewers will read the following statement to interview respondents at the beginning of each interview:

   We are conducting this interview as part of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Data Governance Consulting & Support project focused on assessing technical assistance supporting states, localities, and Tribes' data integration for statistical and research purposes. This study is being carried out under a contract for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by SRI International (SRI), an independent, nonprofit research institute, and AnLar, a technical assistance and research organization. The study is not intended to examine the outcomes of your TA center/organization nor will findings be attributed to you.

   We are conducting interviews to understand the landscape of available technical assistance and support to states, localities, and Tribes related to data sharing, linking, and integration for statistical and research purposes. We are talking to multiple centers, including yours, to learn about the technical assistance, products, and supports available to various audiences. The information you provide will be used to better understand the landscape of current technical assistance available. Upon completion of the study, findings will be available for the general public.

3. Explain the provisions for protecting respondent's privacy. Interviewers will read the following statement to interview respondents at the beginning of each interview:

   As part of the study, the study team will share its findings with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. However, the results of the interviews will be summarized across all the TA center directors participating in interviews. Individuals will not be identified by name in any form of analysis or report, and data will be reported in a manner that does not reveal your identity. In addition, when we need to use quotes to help illustrate the findings, we will use them anonymously. Except for what is already public, the study team will store all data collected for the study in secure environments and will protect the confidentiality of the information you provide. Finally, your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may decline to respond at any time.

4. Advise the respondent that the interview will last approximately 45–60 minutes.

5. Explain that a member of the study team may follow-up by phone to clarify responses to interview questions.

6. Invite questions from the respondent.

7. Ask permission to audio record the interview using the following statement:

   We would like to record this conversation to ensure that we accurately capture your comments. If you agree, we would retain the recording only until we can validate the notes, at which point the voice recording would be destroyed. The transcripts will be destroyed at the end of the study. If at

any point you would like to say something off the record, I will stop the recording. Do you agree to allow us to record the interview?

8. Confirm respondent's current roles and responsibilities within the center/organization.

9. After the interview, please write an analytic memo in OneNote to capture key themes and quotes you heard during the interview.

Notes: (1) Before conducting interviews, interviewers will review relevant data collected as part of the environmental scan (e.g., description of the TA center, resources and documents the TA center has created to support data linkage and integration for research purposes, relevant case studies). (2) Interviewers will be directed to seek clarification of any response they judge to be vague or incomplete. The primary strategy for seeking clarification will be to ask respondents to provide specific examples to illustrate their responses. A second strategy will be to ask respondents to "say more" or to "expand on" or "explain the meaning of" a particular comment.

Interview Questions

Structured Questions	Follow-up Prompts
Background (appx. 5 mins.)	
1. How long have you been in your current role as [ROLE NAME]?	
2. What are your TA center/organization's activities around data linkage and integration?	
3. What is your TA center/organization's substantive area of focus? *(e.g., early childhood, education, housing, employment)* *[If this information is available from the TA center/program website, please confirm the substantive focus area(s)]*	• [If there is more than one substantive area of focus]. What is your TA center/organization's primary substantive area of focus?
Uses and needs of integrated data systems to support research (appx. 10–15 mins.)	
4. Who are your primary recipients of TA related to data linkage and integration?	• How is the audience for your work established (funders, federal grant)?
5. In what ways do TA recipients use integrated data systems and data linkage? For what purposes?	
Resources and supports (appx. 15–20 mins.)	
6. How has your TA center/program supported [states, localities, Tribes] to develop and use integrated data systems and linked data more generally in research?	• What types of topics do you provide support on? (e.g., purpose and vision, stakeholder engagement, data governance, legal agreements, technical infrastructure, staff capacity, identification and organization of data elements and associated attributes) • What strategies do you use to provide TA that will be effective at meeting the needs of your target audience(s)? • Does your TA center/organization try to incorporate TA best practices (e.g., provide consistent communication, differentiate support, use adult learning strategies)? • Does your TA center/organization provide different levels of support (e.g., universal, targeted, tailored) depending on a TA recipient's needs? • How frequently do TA providers at your TA center/program typically interact with a specific [state, locality, Tribe]?
7. What impacts have you observed as a result of the TA services your [TA center/organization] has provided?	• *[Probe for increased capacity, new questions answered, problems/issues solved, a specific example; ask if there are any written case study examples they can share if not already provided on their website]* • How are TA impacts measured and determined? (e.g.,

Structured Questions	Follow-up Prompts
	informal observations, pre-/post assessments, structured evaluations)
8. What are the challenges to providing TA to support [states, localities, Tribes] in using integrated data systems and linked data for research and statistical purposes?	• Are there any requests for TA related to data linkage and integration that you are unable to meet? • If so, what are they? And what are some of the challenges or barriers to providing these supports? (e.g., TA recipients having the capacity/time/resources to actively participate in TA) • If you had unlimited resources, what do you wish you could do more of to meet the needs of your primary audiences' data integration efforts?
Coordination, collaboration, and cooperation with other TA Groups (appx. 10 mins.)	
9. To what extent does your TA center/organization coordinate support for using integrated data systems and linked data sets for research or statistical reporting purposes with other TA centers/organizations, that serve the needs of states, localities, and Tribes?	• With what other TA centers/organizations do you coordinate? • What factors served as an impetus to coordinate or collaborate with these other TA groups? • What strategies or processes have you used to facilitate this coordination? • What benefits have you observed through this coordination and collaboration? *[Probe for leveraging resources, increased efficiency, increased effectiveness, ask for a specific example.]* • Are there areas where your TA center/organization would like to develop more coordination and collaboration with other TA centers/organizations? If so, please describe. • What are the barriers to coordinating and collaborating with other TA centers/organizations?
Funding (appx. 5 mins.)	
10. What is [TA center/organization]'s primary source of funding?	• How long is the initial term of your primary source of funding? • Does your TA center/organization also rely on funding from additional sources? If so, what are these other funding sources?
11. How does your [TA center/organization] secure funding?	• Will your TA center/program need to reapply for funding? • Will your TA/organization seek new or additional funding in the future?
12. Does your TA center/organization experience any challenges related to funding?	• *[Probe for stability of funding, insufficient funding]*
Wrap Up (appx. 5 mins.)	
13. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not covered but is important for the study to capture about your TA center/organization's services and supports related to data linkage and	

Structured Questions	Follow-up Prompts
integration?	