# Instrument 4: Technical Assistance (TA) Recipient Interview Protocol for Needs Assessment

## 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 [state, locality, Tribe] nor will findings be attributed to you.*

   *We are conducting interviews to learn about what supports states, localities, and Tribes are seeking to enhance their ability to integrate data for statistical and research purposes. With this goal we are interested in talking to you about what supports you believe would be useful and what supports you are currently receiving. This information will be used to identify ways to better support your data integration efforts across federal program offices. 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 recipients 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 role within the program/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 |
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| **Background (appx. 5 mins.)** | |
| 1.  How long have you been in your current role as [ROLE NAME]? | |
| 2.  What are your responsibilities related to data linkage and integration for research or statistical reporting purposes? | |
| 3.  What is your [state/locality/Tribe] area(s) of focus? *(e.g., early childhood, education, health, housing, employment)* | |
| 4.  How many years have you been engaged in work related to data sharing, linkage, and integration? | |
| 5.  How would you describe your level of experience with developing and using integrated or linked data for research purposes? (e.g., novice, experienced, expert) | |
| **Uses and needs of integrated data systems to support research (appx. 10–15 mins.)** | |
| 6.  In what ways does your [state/locality/Tribe] use (or want to use) integrated data systems and data linkage? | • For what purposes?<br>• What are the opportunities available to your [state/locality/Tribe} if you are able to successfully integrate data?<br>• To what extent does your [state/locality/Tribe] have experience with developing a use case? (A use case describes what you want to accomplish through data integration) |
| 7.  What are some of the challenges your [state/locality/Tribe] has encountered when developing or using linked data and integrated data systems to support research? | • *[Can prompt with the following examples: understanding and navigating multiple agency structures, knowing what stakeholders to engage and when to engage them, documenting data governance policies, limited staff capacity, limited funding]* |
| 8.  What were and are your [state/locality/Tribe's] specific needs related to developing and using linked data and integrated data systems? | • What do you wish you could do that you cannot do right now?<br>• What supports would you need to enhance your ability to use integrated data for research purposes? |
| **Resources and supports (appx. 15–20 mins.)** | |
| 9.  What TA supports and resources has your [state/locality/Tribe] used to help you meet these needs? | • What has been the most helpful and why?<br>• What has been the least helpful and why? |
| 10. Are there specific types of strategies that TA | • *[Prompt, if needed, with these examples:* |

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| providers use that your [state/locality/Tribe] has been found to be most effective? | *trusting relationship, consistent communication, differentiated support]* |
| 11. How frequently does your [state, locality, Tribe] interact with TA providers? | • How do you interact with TA providers? (e.g., phone, email, videoconference) |
| 12. What impacts have you observed as a result of the TA services your [state, locality, Tribe] has received? | • *[Probe for increased capacity, new questions answered, problems/issues solved, a specific example]*<br>• How are TA impacts measured and determined? (e.g., informal observations, pre-/post assessments, structured evaluations) |
| 13. What, if any, challenges has your [state, locality, Tribe] experienced with respect to having your TA needs related to data linkage and integrated data systems met? | |
| 14. Has your [state, locality, Tribe] made any requests for TA related to data linkage and integration that a TA provider was unable to meet? | • If *so*, what were they?<br>• And what were the barriers to providing these supports? |
| 15. If you had unlimited resources, what supports would you want TA providers to provide to help you to enhance your ability to use linked or integrated data for research purposes? | • Why doesn't this exist now?<br>• What types of expertise might be needed to provide these supports? |
| **Coordination, collaboration, and cooperation with other TA Groups (appx. 10 mins.)** | |
| 16. Does your [state/locality/Tribe] work with more than one TA center/program on issues related to data integration, linkage, and sharing? | • If yes, which TA centers/organizations do you work with?<br>• Did a TA provider refer you to another TA center?<br>• What are the main reasons for accessing services and supports from multiple TA centers/organizations?<br>• What are the benefits to using services and supports from multiple TA centers/ organizations?<br>• Are there any drawbacks or challenges to working with multiple TA providers to address your [state/locality/Tribe's] needs related to data integration, linkage, and sharing? |
| **Wrap Up (appx. 5 mins.)** | |
| 17. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not covered but is important for the study to capture about your experience accessing TA services and supports related to data linkage and integration? | |