Technical Assistance Listening Session Facilitation Guide

Introduction and Consent

Thank you for taking part in today's discussion about the needs, challenges, and opportunities for technical assistance provision in TANF agencies and other human services programs serving people with low incomes. My name is [INSERT] and I am with [OPRE/OFA] in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A representative(s) from AIR, the contractor assisting ACF with this effort, is on the call as well, to assist with note-taking. The goal of these listening sessions is to hear from a wide range of constituent groups, including researchers, technical assistance providers, program administrators, and practitioners, about current programmatic and research- and evaluation-related technical assistance efforts, unmet needs, and factors that facilitate and hinder technical assistance efforts. The information you provide will be used to inform ACF's understanding of technical assistance needs and will help inform ACF's future technical assistance provision.

We anticipate that this discussion will take up to 90 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and you can decide not to participate at any point. The information you provide will be kept private and names of individual respondents will not be included in any summary reports. We appreciate your insights and are grateful for your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is #0970-0356 and the expiration date is 02/29/2024.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Is it alright if we record this conversation? The recording will not be shared with anyone outside our research team. Once we finalize our notes, we will delete the recording.

Definitions of Technical Assistance & Current/Recent Technical Assistance Efforts

1. How do you define programmatic technical assistance and research- and evaluation-related technical assistance?

2. What are the goals of programmatic technical assistance efforts? Of research- and evaluation-related technical assistance efforts?

3. What are existing approaches to programmatic technical assistance and research- and evaluation-related technical assistance in state and local TANF agencies? In human services programs serving people with low incomes?
    o   Who provides the technical assistance? Who receives it?
    o   What topics are covered and how are the topics decided?
    o   What is the method of delivery (e.g., webinars, 1-on-1 consultations, communities of practice, etc.)? Does this vary by topic?
    o   What is the typical frequency/duration/length of engagement of technical assistance?

4. How would you describe the effectiveness of the technical assistance provided?
   o What are agency/program perceptions of their experiences? What are TA providers perceptions?
   o Are technical assistance efforts formally/informally/not evaluated?
   o [If formally evaluated] With what methods, measures, outcomes?
   o [If informally evaluated] What approach has been used?
   o [If not evaluated] Why not?

5. What are examples of current or recent successes in technical assistance efforts? What factors facilitated that success?

6. What are existing challenges in current or recent technical assistance efforts? What factors hinder success? Does this vary by type of technical assistance, topic, or organization type?

Unmet Technical Assistance Needs

7. Thinking broadly, what technical assistance or supports do agencies and programs need to better serve their clients?
   o What do program administrators (leadership) need?
   o What do practitioners (supervisors and frontline staff) need?

8. Are there existing technical assistance efforts (programmatic, research- and evaluation-related, or other) that are successfully meeting these needs? If so, what are these?

9. Are there unmet needs among TANF agencies and other human services programs that could be addressed through technical assistance (programmatic, research- and evaluation-related, or other)?

Improving Technical Assistance Provision

10. How can technical assistance providers reach and serve a wide range of agencies and programs?
    o What are strategies for identifying and engaging organizations (state and local TANF agencies, employment and training programs, and other human services programs) that may benefit from technical assistance?

11. What do leaders and staff within agencies and programs need to successfully engage in technical assistance (level of effort, supports, and other important factors)?
    o What types of technical assistance do organizations and agencies most value and why?

12. What do technical assistance providers need to deliver effective technical assistance (level of effort, supports, and other important factors)?
    o Does this vary by type of technical assistance, and if so, how?

13. How might an ideal technical assistance model be structured?
    o Consider the entire process, from initial engagement through completion.
    o Does the ideal model vary by type of organization? By technical assistance focus? By other factors?

14. Is there anything else about the needs, challenges, and opportunities for technical assistance provision in TANF agencies and other human services programs serving people with low incomes that we have not talked about but you think we should know?

Thank you so much for your time. We appreciate all that you have shared. You will be receiving an electronic gift card with a nominal honorarium to the email address you entered during registration. Please reach out to opreconvening@air.org if you have not received it within 2 business days.