

# **Technical Assistance Listening Sessions**

## **Formative Data Collections for ACF Research**

**0970 - 0356**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part B**

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Submitted By:  
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Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

## **Part B**

### **B1. Objectives**

#### *Study Objectives*

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) plans to conduct a series of virtual listening sessions designed to gather the input and perspectives of multiple constituency groups to inform ACF's understanding of the technical assistance (TA) needs, challenges, and opportunities in the field. Through these sessions, ACF seeks to broaden its understanding of both programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA for TANF agencies and human services programs that can improve services. Information shared during these listening sessions will inform strategies for ACF's future provision of technical assistance.

#### *Generalizability of Results*

This information collection is intended to inform ACF of current TA processes and needs within the field; it is not intended to produce generalizable results.

#### *Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses*

The listening sessions will be 90 minutes in duration and convened virtually on Zoom. All listening sessions will be structured to facilitate group discussion and ensure detailed feedback can be gathered from all participants. Summaries of each individual session, a comprehensive synthesis across sessions, and a brief public-facing summary will be drafted at the conclusion of all listening sessions. The themes highlighted across constituency group sessions will provide foundational knowledge to ACF to better understand the types of TA as well as the existing TA needs, challenges, and opportunities to help agencies improve their programming and services, and to support improved outcomes for clients. The listening sessions and accompanying summaries will inform ACF's approach to future TA projects.

As noted in Supporting Statement A, this information is not intended to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

### **B2. Methods and Design**

#### *Target Population*

The study will engage approximately 180 participants across a range of constituency groups, including current TA providers; academic and other researchers; state, local, and tribal TANF administrators; program providers serving TANF eligible populations through human services programs (particularly employment and training programs); and practitioners and frontline staff.

In concert with ACF, the contractor will identify potential respondents who can provide their expertise and experiences related to programmatic TA and/or research- and evaluation-related TA. Some participants will be purposively selected and others will be identified through posted advertisements. Participants will not be representative of the population of TA providers, researchers, TANF administrators, or practitioners. Instead, we aim to obtain variation in participants to understand the

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range of experiences and perspectives related to programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA.

### *Respondent Recruitment*

The listening sessions seek to obtain feedback from multiple constituency groups through respondent recruitment that includes both direct invitation and advertisement through online newsletters (see *Respondent Recruitment – Technical Assistance Listening Session Opportunity*). Direct invitations to researchers and TA providers will be emailed to individuals who are known to OPRE and the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) staff through existing or past TA-related projects. To reach a wide range of respondents, advertisements seeking TA providers, program administrators, and practitioners will be posted on the OPRE landing page for the [Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development Grants and Evaluation Support](#) project, a current TA-related project; published in the OPRE newsletter, OFA PeerTA newsletter, and Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency newsletter; and sent via email to TANF Regional Program Managers and to the members of the Community Advisory Board of the [Advancing Contextual Analysis and Methods of Engagement](#) to circulate among their networks. Registration links will be sent to all individuals who respond to the recruitment advertisements, provided that they have a valid email, represent an appropriate organization (e.g., TANF agency, human services program), and hold a targeted role (e.g., practitioner, TANF administrator). Registration will remain open until all spots are filled.

### **B3. Design of Data Collection Instruments**

#### *Development of Data Collection Instrument(s)*

The Listening Session Discussion Guide (see *Instrument 1 – Technical Assistance Listening Session Discussion Guide*) was developed to include the minimum number of semi-structured questions that will sufficiently cover the topics of interest to ACF. The Guide begins with foundational questions related to definitions and experiences related to TA, then asks about participants' needs and challenges with respect to TA, and concludes by asking how TA could be better structured and delivered to improve its effectiveness. The sessions will be convened on Zoom and discussion will be facilitated by OPRE and OFA staff.

### **B4. Collection of Data and Quality Control**

The contractor will set up the Zoom meetings and facilitation tools and will provide the discussion questions to participants in advance of the sessions. Participants will be identified by OPRE and OFA based on their prior TA engagement with these individuals and through advertisements in online newsletters. Participants will be selected if they represent target organizations (e.g., TANF agency, human services provider) and roles (e.g., practitioner, TA provider) until all spots in a given session are filled. The sessions will be facilitated by content experts within OPRE and OFA to ensure that the discussions result in a deeper understanding of TA needs, processes, and challenges. Prior to the sessions, all session facilitators will participate in an hour-long orientation of the discussion guide. In addition, all facilitators will participate in a pre-session "walk through" with the contractor to ensure clear understanding of the session agenda, roles, and responsibilities. The contractor will attend all sessions to facilitate and troubleshoot any technical needs. The contractor will additionally take notes during all sessions. Following each session, the contractor will produce a summary of the session. Once all sessions are complete, the contractor will draft an internal-facing synthesis summarizing all sessions and a brief public-facing summary. Findings will assist OPRE and OFA in future TA delivery.

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**B5. Response Rates and Potential Nonresponse Bias**

*Response Rates*

The listening sessions are not designed to produce statistically generalizable findings and participation is wholly at the respondent's discretion. Response rates will not be calculated or reported.

*NonResponse*

As participants will not be randomly sampled and findings are not intended to be representative, non-response bias will not be calculated. Participant information, including name, email, organization, and role, will be collected for registration purposes only. Respondent demographics will not be collected or reported in written materials associated with the data collection.

The contractor will track invitees who participate in the listening sessions and those who refuse participation.

**B6. Production of Estimates and Projections**

The data gathered from the listening sessions will be for internal use only and will be used solely to inform ACF's approach to future TA provision. The data will not be used to make policy decisions.

**B7. Data Handling and Analysis**

*Data Handling*

All discussions from the listening sessions will be summarized in reports. The sessions will be recorded to ensure accurate capture of all participants' responses.

*Data Analysis*

Following each listening session, a report will be produced that summarizes the discussion. Once all listening sessions are completed, a final report will synthesize emerging themes across all sessions. A brief public-facing summary will be produced.

*Data Use*

The information collected through the listening sessions will be used to identify TA needs and inform ACF's approach to future TA provision.

**B8. Contact Person(s)**

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**Attachments**

- Instrument 1 - Technical Assistance Listening Session Discussion Guide
- Respondent Recruitment - Technical Assistance Listening Session Opportunity