The TA Network

Who We Are

The Technical Assistance Network for Children’s Behavioral Health (TA Network) is the new national technical assistance center for states and communities funded by the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program (Children’s Mental Health Initiative or CMHI). The Institute for Innovation and Implementation (The Institute) at the University of Maryland, School of Social Work, will lead the TA Network as the coordinating entity and centralized contact. In addition to The Institute, the TA Network core partners include (in alphabetical order):

- **Accountability Solutions, Inc. (ASI)**, led by Kelly Hyde;
- **The Center for Community Learning, Inc. (CCL)**, led by Catalina Booth, Myriam Monsalve Serna, and colleagues;
- **The Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. (CHCS)**, including Kamala Allen, Dayana Simons, and colleagues;
- **The Family-Run Executive Director Leadership Association (FREDLA)**;
- **Human Service Collaborative (HSC)**, including Sheila Pires, Ira Lourie, and Cliff Davis;
- **The National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH)**, led by Sandra Spencer;
- **Portland State University (PSU)**, including Janet Walker, Nancy Koroloff, and Susan Richardson; PSU hosts the National Wraparound Initiative (NWI), Pathways to Positive Futures, and Reclaiming Futures programs;
- **The University of South Florida (USF)**, College of Community and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Child and Family Studies, led by Mario Hernandez and colleagues Mary Armstrong, Kathy Lazear, and others;
- **The University of Washington (UW)**, including Eric Bruns; UW co-hosts the Wraparound Evaluation and Research Team; and
- **Youth M.O.V.E. (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) National (YMN)**, led by Lacy Kendrick Burk.

In addition to our core partners, the TA Network includes a rich, diverse group of advisors, consultants and other resource organizations. Coaching and technical assistance will be provided by many individuals who are part of the TA Network Partner Organizations and Consultant Pool, as well as by our colleagues at the National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health at Georgetown University. The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) will continue to provide technical assistance to tribal and urban Indian grantees under a separate contract, and we look forward to sharing resources and collaborating with NICWA.

Our Technical Assistance Model

The TA Network’s mission is to develop effective service systems and establish a skilled and well-prepared workforce that can expand and sustain community-based systems of care across the United States to benefit all children and youth with behavioral health needs and their families.

The expertise of the TA Network’s core partners is organized into the subject matter hubs below:

- **Cultural and Linguistic Competence**: Center for Community Learning and University of South Florida.
- **Families and Youth**: FREDLA, National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, Youth M.O.V.E. National.
- **Systems and Finance**: Center for Health Care Strategies, Human Service Collaborative, University of Maryland.
- **Wraparound, Evidence-Based and Promising Clinical Practice, Services and Supports**: Portland State University and University of Washington (NWI), Accountability Solutions, Inc., and University of Maryland.
We recognize and value the wealth of national, regional, state and local capacity that has evolved within and across systems of care during the past 25 years. We are committed to delivering field-driven, data-informed, and culturally responsive technical assistance that complements, enhances, and leverages technical assistance provided to the grantee sites through other grants and contracts, including technical assistance capacity developed within the grantee states and communities. Our approach will incorporate flexibility and strive to deliver expertise tailored to the specific needs of states and communities within a rapidly changing and increasingly sophisticated climate driven by health reform, technological advances and other major shifts affecting children, youth, and families. As illustrated in the TA Network’s Theory of Change, the TA Network’s Training and Technical Assistance model includes a flexible array of options along a continuum of system of care development through the provision of generalized, individualized, and intensive technical assistance (TA).

**Generalized TA: Online**

- Generalized TA’s online assistance benefits all system of care grantees, family- and youth-run organizations, and other system-building partners.
- This generalized level of assistance also offers access to the TA Network Resource Center, a comprehensive web-based resource, that will:
  - Serve as a central hub to house practical information on the national landscape and what states are doing to improve children’s behavioral health;
  - Provide timely information related to state and federal health reform efforts that impact children’s behavioral health;
  - Highlight best practices in system reform, financing, program redesign, and clinical practice.
- Access is also offered to our Online Training Center and Online Learning Communities.
- While developed for CMH grantees, generalized TA might also benefit other system partners, such as Child Welfare, Juvenile Services, Education, Housing and those responsible for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Block Grant plans, health reform implementation, and Medicaid redesign.
Individualized TA: Online and Distance Communication Technologies

- This tailored approach is based on the needs of the grantees, including assignment of a systems coach when desired to assist in the development of individualized and dynamic TA Plans. Systems coaches will be assigned based on responses to the State and Community Information Exchange (see below); assignment of systems coaches will change as grantee needs change.
- TA teams can be established through access to a set number of consultations hours annually.
- Rapid Response TA system aids state and community grantees who have specific questions or requests for particular resource material, or who want access to a content expert for brief telephone or e-mail consultation.
- Individualized planning helps build in-state training and TA capacity (i.e., state Centers of Excellence).

Intensive TA: Includes On-Site Support

- This level of assistance is focused on those grantees that are in stages of development where an intensive and customized approach will accelerate their ability to advance system of care expansion and sustainability.
- This assistance may include, with SAMHSA approval, onsite TA visits and peer-exchange site visits.
- In-depth Training and Technical Assistance are available for the development of Centers of Excellence, including training of trainers for Primer Hands On and Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Recognizing that systems change is complex, our model acknowledges that grantee communities and states are likely to be in various stages of development, depending on the area of focus, and may need generalized or individualized assistance in one area and intensive TA in another. The TA Network’s model is flexible enough to assist system of care grantee communities with their needs at each component of the building of their systems. The TA Network is committed to working with you to ensure that the provision of all TA provided to individuals, organizations, localities, and states is coordinated, strategic, and useful.

To support statewide expansion and sustainability, states with more than one CMHIs cooperative agreement will be organized into state cohorts. While this broader statewide focus will not preclude individual grantee communities from accessing individualized TA, we wish to support coordination of grantee community efforts with broader state reform agendas and vice versa. States will be offered systems coaches, who will be matched to grantees based upon their self-identified areas of focus. **Systems coaches** will assist grantees in developing TA Plans and tapping into specific content expertise from our TA Network partners and consulting pool, as well as peer-to-peer opportunities. States and grantees are not required to have a systems coach; in order to determine the best approach to receiving TA from the TA Network, grantees will be asked to complete a State and Community Information Exchange.

You will soon receive from us the first of what will become regular (every four to six months) **State and Community Information Exchanges (SCIE)**, to support your ability to reflect on and identify the most compelling areas of reform, with which you could use support from the TA network in the near term. Based on your responses to the SCIE, you can let us know in a systematic way your key priorities in the short term, and the kind of TA you anticipate you will need (for example, whether you want a systems coach, or Rapid Response TA, or access to specific content expertise). These SCIEs will help us facilitate the strategic and efficient use of TA resources.
We recognize that some grantee communities have their own technical assistance capacity and do not want the point of contact provided by a systems coach. In order to individualize the TA process, we will assign each state to a **Technical Assistance Support Coordinator**. These coordinators, or “TASCs,” will act in a supportive role both for grantees and for TA providers, serving as the administrative liaisons for each grantee community. Grantees will also have access to our **Rapid Response TA System**, through which grantees can pose questions, request content expertise, and seek help via e-mail or telephone. Rapid Response TA requests will be triaged to the appropriate TA Network partner or consultant in our pool for response.

The TA Network model maximizes the value of lived experience and peer-to-peer support, and leverages this wealth of knowledge strategically. Our approach relies heavily on facilitating peer-to-peer sharing and learning, including opportunities for system of care grantee communities to visit other states and communities engaged in exemplary practice.

We are committed to **building and engaging expertise within states and communities**, as well as growing state- and local-level capacity for peer-to-peer exchange. We are also determined to **expand the use of technology** for up-to-date and timely information-sharing to create a true convergence of system of care grantee communities, states, and partners across the nation. Most importantly, the TA Network’s approach seeks to **leave grantees with internal capacity**, such as Centers of Excellence, to continue to propel their reform efforts forward after CMHI funding ends.

We do not want to inundate you with communications; however, we also recognize that during this transition period, regular updates will be helpful. As we continue to solidify our infrastructure, please feel free to contact us via e-mail at: TANetwork@ssw.umaryland.edu or by phone at (410) 706-8300. Also, be on the lookout for the first State and Community Information Exchange, which will help us to allocate TA resources in a way that meets your needs at this juncture. We look forward to working with you very much!
Technical Assistance (TA) Network for Children’s Behavioral Health

The mission of the TA Network is to support and advance a system of care development, expansion, and sustainability by using a data and field-driven model of technical assistance that draws on national, regional, and local expertise to build the capacity of grantees and strengthen state and local “in-house” technical assistance capacity.

- Connecting SOC communities to State Expansion efforts
- Implementing Affordable Care Act
- Initial & Ongoing Assessment
- Dynamic Data & Field-driven Strategies & Plan

TA Network...
- With extended capacity beyond what a centralized entity can achieve
- That ensures ongoing relevance to all child-serving systems (e.g., BH, CW, JJ, ED, Medicaid, etc.)
- That incorporates cultural and linguistic competence both within the TA Network itself and woven throughout the TA provided to the SOC grantee communities
- That exemplifies family-driven and youth-guided SOC, both within the leadership and staffing of the TA Network and in the TA provided to the SOC grantee communities
- That supports the provision of evidence-informed, community-based services and supports for children and adolescents with behavioral health needs and their families in the least restrictive setting possible
- With a CIQ framework that assesses overall impact of TA process and outcomes and allows for rapid cycle change helping to avoid doing “more of the same”
- That recognizes and utilizes the wealth of national and regional expertise to accommodate field-driven TA, data-driven TA, and an increasingly sophisticated climate
- Able to respond quickly and effectively to the rapidly changing environmental context
- That connects with, supports, and builds on existing in-state TA capacity
- That helps build the capacity of states and localities to have their own TA infrastructure

Goals for Communities and States...
- Create better ways of making systems of care operational by connecting to larger systems of care, e.g., HCR
- Develop better understanding of how to incorporate evidence-based practices and outcomes in system, policies, and regulations
- Strategic approaches to using TA in system reform and Medicaid redesign
- Develop meaningful connections with state and local networks of TA providers to move toward a sustainable “in-state” TA infrastructure (e.g., Centers of Excellence)

An enhanced delivery system and improved outcomes for children, youth, and families