



Early Learning Challenge Collaborative

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Q:** What are examples of the types of more intensive technical assistance that will be provided?
- A:** Some examples are high level assistance with strategic visioning and planning for the state's application; facilitation of the state's team planning discussions; topical expertise in specific areas such as kindergarten readiness assessment, QRIS, or data systems; and expert feedback on draft applications.
- Q:** What about assistance with the cost of grant writing?
- A:** The majority of technical assistance offered will be strategy and content expertise. If a state's primary need is with grant writing costs, or with identifying experienced grant writers, we'll make every effort to assist.
- Q:** When and where will the in-person meeting be held? Is attendance mandatory?
- A :** We are planning for early September in Chicago. A tentative date is September 8th and 9th. At the highest level of participation in the ELCC support, attendance at this high-impact meeting will be expected by the state's designated team. Finalized dates will be communicated to all interested states as soon as possible, so that states can plan on attendance in the event they are selected for this level of TA.
- Q:** This is a highly competitive initiative for states. How will confidentiality and/or conflict of interest be handled?
- A:** We are aware of both the competitive nature of the awards as well as the collective objectives to advance early childhood systems in states more broadly. We seek to address both sides of the coin through options of both peer learning as well as individualized state-by-state TA. In addition, states that participate in peer discussion at the in-person meeting will sign confidentiality agreements, and all consultants providing technical assistance to states will sign confidentiality and conflict-of-interest agreements to assure discretion and respect for sensitive information.

SELECTION PROCESS

- Q:** How many states will be selected for intensive TA?
- A:** The precise number will depend upon state interest, depth and dosage of TA needed, and the parameters of our available funding. Just a reminder that all interested states will receive a certain level of services, including tools and templates for application planning, as well as access to expertise on specific content areas through webinars.

Q: How will selections be made? By whom?

A: Through conference among a set of experts, we'll identify selected states for more intensive technical assistance using historical performance of state programs and investment in EC through existing data sets, the responses received from states, along with filters such as geography, size, and demographics.

Q: Is it necessary that a Governor's office staff member or designee be the key contact? Why?

A: In order for the technical assistance partnership to be as effective and fruitful as possible, it is critical that the key state partners include and be led by a high ranking official, with the leadership, influence, and capacity to advance early learning reform in the state. States where governors' offices clearly endorse, participate, and/or designate a high ranking official will be given priority. States applying for technical assistance without strong gubernatorial support must make a compelling case for how they will utilize alternative leadership and influence to make change.

Q: What are the most important factors in the selection for states to be aware of?

A: The Collaborative is interested in partnering with a diverse group of states that most clearly show readiness for reform, assertive leadership, and a commitment to making the most of a technical assistance partnership that connects high-ranking state leaders (those with the most influence to advance early learning reform) with national experts.

Q: When will decisions be made, and the TA begin?

A: We understand timelines are tight. Our goal is to come to quick but thoughtful agreements about states' strengths, leadership, and commitment AND about what states need for successful visioning, planning, and articulation in an application and how the ELCC can best provide those supports. We anticipate decisions made, and TA process to begin, by early August. Our goal, which is ambitious, is August 9.

Q : What happens if there is a major change in the guidance and we don't want to apply anymore?

A: We recognize the possibility that the release of the RFP may trigger a shift in direction or, in some cases, a state's decision to not apply. In this extreme case, the commitment of the state to participate in the technical assistance will be waived.

THE NEXT PHASE

Q: After states are awarded grants through RTT-ELC, what will be the Collaborative's role?

A: The ELCC will provide technical assistance in 2012 to awarded states, as needed and desired by states, to ensure successful implementation and utilization of funds. The ELCC will also convene a learning community of non-awarded states, to learn insights and best practices from the winning states and the ELC experience, thereby continuing to focus on helping states advance in their thinking and planning around systems building. The ELCC will also put emphasis in 2012 to understand the policy implications from the work and share them with policy makers to inform federal policy.