



Strengthening Working Families Initiative

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITY MENU

OVERVIEW OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor—Employment and Training Administration, Mathematica Policy Research and its partner, the Urban Institute, will provide technical assistance (TA) to the 14 H-1B Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grantees during the grant period of performance. The TA will support SWFI grantees in their ongoing efforts to successfully reduce barriers to employment, including access to child care, for low- and middle-skilled workers.

Technical assistance approach

Mathematica's TA approach is grounded in a systematic and collaborative program improvement process that brings social science theory, research evidence, and practice wisdom together. The grantees have already designed creative strategies in their SWFI projects. We will support the implementation of those strategies through a collaborative, evidence-informed approach. Our TA coaches will work with grantees to identify areas for TA needs, locate or develop evidence-based solutions, and build grantees' capacity to implement and refine programs now and sustain them in the future.

Technical assistance activities and resources

TA activities and resources aim to provide grantees and their grant partners with tools, resources, information, and support that will help them achieve their goals and meet the objectives of the SWFI grant program. Each grantee will be assigned a TA coach, who will provide regular, customized TA. In addition, the TA team will provide a range of supplemental TA resources and activities that address common challenges, focus on topics of interest, and highlight best practices at a program- and systems-level. The TA activities will include:

- **Webinars.** Interactive webinars led by subject matter experts will convey information on key areas of interest to SWFI grantees.
- **Written resource materials.** The TA team will create resource materials such as tip sheets on best practices, newsletters, and answers to frequently asked questions. The team will also connect grantees to existing tools and resources relevant to SWFI grants. All materials will be made available to grantees on the SWFI Community of Practice (CoP) site.
- **Community of Practice (CoP).** The SWFI CoP WorkForce GPS site will serve as a technical assistance resource and a place for SWFI grantees to communicate and share information. The CoP will house all SWFI TA materials, including recordings of webinars and written resources. It will also contain moderated online discussion boards so grantees can connect directly with one another.
- **Peer-learning opportunities.** Grantees with similar goals and/or challenges will have opportunities to share and learn from each other through teleconference calls or webinars.



Strengthening Working Families Initiative

- **Coaching calls.** The TA coaches will serve as a consistent and primary TA contact for each grantee. Through regular phone calls, grantees and their TA coaches will check in about grant progress and discuss and address TA needs.
- **Site visits.** Program-level TA may be provided to grantees on-site on a limited basis. Site visits may, for example, be used to address a specific program-level challenge, such as engage in strategic planning, or facilitate partnerships among stakeholders.

SWFI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

SWFI grantees will have access to a highly qualified team of subject matter experts and TA coaches, who will provide grantees with programmatic support in the development, implementation, and operation of their SWFI grants. Coaches will work closely with the national office of the Department of Labor and the regional Federal Project Officers (FPOs) to ensure that grantees receive high-quality support.

The TA coach role does not supplant that of the FPO in the monitoring and oversight of SWFI grant activities. Rather, TA coaches will work to complement and collaborate with FPOs. For example, FPOs monitor quarterly performance reports and performance outcomes. Coaches may also examine such reports and outcomes to identify areas where TA is needed; however, grantees neither report to nor are accountable to TA coaches. Below are some examples of topics typically handled by the FPOs and TA coaches.

FPOs' guidance	TA coaches' support
Clarification of the SWFI funding opportunity announcement , including definitions	Organizational structure. Staffing, systems, processes
Statement of Work (SOW) modifications	Program communication. Outreach, messaging, recruitment strategies
Fiscal questions, allowable expenditures, and budget	Participant services. Case management, job training and education, child care access, other supportive services
Quarterly performance outcomes against targeted outcomes	Partnerships. Identifying, engaging, and collaborating with partners, navigating systems change
Other policy questions, as they arise	Sustainability. Bringing the program to scale, making data-driven decisions, planning for long-term implementation and institutionalization of policies and practices



Strengthening Working Families Initiative

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COACHES

The TA coaches, who will provide customized support and regular one-on-one assistance, are:

Elizabeth Brown, ebrown@mathematica-mpr.com. Ms. Brown is a specialist in conducting needs assessments and determining TA priorities. She provides TA to employment and training agencies across the country and has conducted systems analyses and process studies for a number of workforce development and human services programs.

Jessica Harding, jharding@mathematica-mpr.com. Dr. Harding has experience building partnerships between child care entities and community organizations to improve access to child care for low-income populations. She has provided TA both to Early Head Start programs and community colleges.

Lily Roberts, lroberts@mathematica-mpr.com. Ms. Roberts has experience with two-generational programs, employment and training programs, and data use at community colleges. She provides TA to 11 cities, beyond the SWFI grantees, on implementing children's savings account programs.

Talia Kahn-Kravis, tkahnkravis@mathematica-mpr.com. Ms. Kahn-Kravis has experience in adult training and education, coaching practices, and financial literacy. She provides TA and program improvement and evaluation support to public agencies across the country, beyond SWFI grantees.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SENIOR SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Senior subject matter experts will work with grantees to provide support that focuses on systems-level needs. Senior SMEs will participate in convenings, some peer learning activities, webinars, and other TA activities during the grant period. In addition, SMEs will periodically engage with grantees through the online SWFI CoP. Please work with your coach to coordinate collaboration with SMEs on an as needed basis. Senior SMEs on the TA team are:

Gina Adams, senior fellow in the Labor, Human Resources, and Population Center at the Urban Institute and co-director of Urban's Kids in Context Initiative. Ms. Adams has in-depth knowledge of federal and state policies, programs, implementation strategies, and funding in the areas of early education, child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten. She is an expert in how early care and education programs intersect with programs and policies in workforce development, as well as in other welfare, health, nutrition, and safety net programs. Ms. Adams co-leads Bridging the Gap, which examines the systems, policies, and practices that affect access to child care for low-income, low-skilled parents seeking education and training.

Shayne Spaulding, senior research associate in the Income and Benefits Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Ms. Spaulding has spent nearly 20 years in the workforce development field as an evaluator, TA provider, and program manager. Her research has focused on evaluations of various workforce development and postsecondary education programs and strategies, including programs for young noncustodial fathers, sectoral employment programs, social-purpose staffing agencies, youth-focused



Strengthening Working Families Initiative

programs, community college innovations, and employer engagement strategies. Ms. Spaulding co-leads Bridging the Gap with Ms. Adams.

REQUESTING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We look forward to working with you and are here to meet your needs! If you have any suggestions, including topics for future TA opportunities, please contact your TA coach. You can also request TA by sending an email to the SWFI mailbox at SWFI@dol.gov. Please remember to include your grant name and grant number and provide a courtesy copy to your FPO.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Your honest feedback is important to us. To ensure that the TA is meeting your needs, grantees will be able to submit feedback through:

- **Interactive polls.** During webinars, grantees will be asked to answer real-time polling questions about their needs and interests.
- **SWFI mailbox.** At any time, grantees can email swfi@dol.gov to express their TA needs and/or any concerns, feedback, or suggestions about the provision of TA.
- **TA coaches.** During regular coaching calls, grantees are encouraged to indicate their TA needs and impressions of planned or received TA to their coach directly.