

Getting the Most Out of T/TA: Tips for T/TA Recipients

From an Evaluation of T/TA in Child Welfare

Supporting Change
in Child Welfare

An Evaluation of Training
and Technical Assistance



TIP SHEET 1

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) is a means of building capacity by improving the ability of individuals, teams, organizations, networks, or communities to create measurable and sustainable results. Training is delivered in small- or large-group settings (such as seminars, workshops, and courses) and is designed to teach key concepts related to a particular topic. Technical assistance is targeted support in response to a specific need. T/TA can be general or tailored to its audience. It can be delivered remotely or on site and in a one-time event or an ongoing process.

Findings from the 2015 report *Supporting Change in Child Welfare: An Evaluation of Training and Technical Assistance* indicate that organizations can maximize the benefits of T/TA by using the following tips:

- 1 BE OPEN TO CHANGE.** Your organization is most likely to benefit from T/TA if it is open and actively seeks help. If providers reach out to you, be open to how they can help your organization. Consult with your team, and be sure your organization agrees on how T/TA will benefit your organization, before you engage in it.
- 2 GET YOUR LEADERSHIP ON BOARD.** You may understand the challenges you face, but make sure your executive team and other leadership understand the problems and how T/TA can help.
- 3 BE PATIENT AT THE BEGINNING.** Although you may be eager to jump to problem-solving, allow adequate time up front for assessment. This is a time to review data, policies, and protocols, as well as evidence-supported solutions, with your provider. It may take several months.
- 4 DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** Although T/TA providers have valuable expertise, you are the expert on your jurisdiction, processes, and needs. Invest time with providers to review relevant documentation together and participate in assessment activities, including efforts to measure readiness for change and the capacity of your organization.
- 5 COMMUNICATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS.** Discuss timelines, roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes with your provider and come to agreement on them. Expect to make midcourse adjustments to your approach based upon data or other feedback mechanisms.
- 6 DEDICATE A TEAM TO WORK WITH THE T/TA PROVIDER.** To benefit most from T/TA, staff in your organization must dedicate time to learning and changing. They must prioritize the T/TA and related activities as a key component of their work.
- 7 THINK AHEAD.** T/TA providers are well aware of national trends and can share promising practices from other jurisdictions. Learn about emerging shifts in child welfare and consider how they may affect your agency and the work you are doing.
- 8 WORK TOGETHER.** Build a supportive and trusting relationship with your provider. If you invest time getting to know each other, your provider will be better able to serve you.

The report *Supporting Change in Child Welfare: An Evaluation of Training and Technical Assistance* identifies facilitators and barriers that States and Tribes experienced accessing federally funded T/TA. The tips presented here can inform practical decision-making of child welfare and related agencies that want to get the most out of their T/TA. For more information, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/capacity/cross-center-evaluation>.

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