NTACT THE COLLABORATIVE
Improving Opportunities & Outcomes

Evaluation Plan: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C)

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Evaluation Plan: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C)

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Introduction

Project Overview

The need for a sustained focus on secondary transition, and therefore the basis for the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C), is evident in the persistence of significant disparities between the in- and post-school achievement of individuals with disabilities compared to individuals without disabilities. To overcome these disparities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) mandates transition planning and services for students with disabilities (SWD), and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014), expands the population of SWD to be served by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, requiring VR agencies to provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services in collaboration with their education partners. More recently, the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act (Perkins V, 2018) included provisions that focus on ensuring that high-risk populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities, youth who are homeless, youth in foster care) access and succeed in career and technical education (CTE; National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, 2018). Although federal legislation and programs aim to improve outcomes for students and youth with disabilities, their impact has fallen short of intent.

In 2019, only 18% of SEAs reported full compliance with the IDEA transition requirements, as indicated in their annual performance reports to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). In the same year, for the first time in VR program history, more than 50% of the individuals served by the VR program were youth younger than 25 years old (Rehabilitation Services Administration [RSA], 2020). OSEP's Annual Report to Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 2020) reported 63.5% of SWD spent more than 80% of the school day in the general curriculum: an increase from 58.5% in 2008. However, only 17% of students with intellectual disability (ID) and 13.3% of students with multiple disabilities spent the majority of the day with peers without disabilities. In 2007-08, 59% of SWD graduated with a regular diploma. This rate rose to 70.5% in 2016-17, with concurrent decreases in dropout rates. While positive, the gains are lesser in magnitude than those of students without disabilities. Additionally, OSEP (2020) noted that students with ID were the least likely group to graduate. Enrollment in postsecondary education differs for students with and without disabilities (19.4% vs. 80.6%; IES, NCES 2019), and paralleled in employment in 2019 (19.3% vs. 66.3%; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020a). In July 2020, the national unemployment rate was 10.2% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020b) and higher for individuals with disabilities ages 16-24 (Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2020). Consistent with the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, the NTACT:C aims to enhance data-driven decision making by state

and local education and VR personnel to improve the post-secondary outcomes of students with disabilities in these key areas.

NTACT:C's Theory of Change draws on the personnel's extensive knowledge and expertise serving both State Education Agencies and State VR agencies and will progress toward successful completion of project outcomes by implementing proven strategies including clearly articulated work plans, communication mechanisms, data-driven coaching, and stakeholder engagement. The aim of NTACT:C is to improve implementation of effective practices and sustainable systems by SEAs and state VR agencies as they support LEAs and service providers. As such the NTACT:C holds the expectation that all students and youth with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, have the potential to succeed in postsecondary education, training, employment, and community engagement.

The NTACT:C will build capacity of State Education and VR Agencies to use data-driven decision-making; collaborate; provide quality professional development; and institute systems to support local education agencies, VR, and stakeholders to implement evidence-based and compliant transition-focused practices. These practices will include the provision of pre-employment transition services and other transition services.

The focus and beneficiaries are all students and youth with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities or other marginalized populations who will be prepared to graduate from high school with the knowledge, skills, and supports for postsecondary education, training, employment, and community engagement. The Center partners will translate knowledge of effective practices in education and vocational rehabilitation for the target population into delivering three levels of technical assistance for States. Implementation and outcome measures for success are related to the four capacity building efforts with States and the 13 outcomes from the priority and cooperative agreement, as articulated in an evaluation plan advised by external evaluators.

The NTACT:C partners are committed to successfully achieving the project's noted goals through the provision of technical assistance across the three primary levels of Universal, Targeted, and Intensive and in so doing, achieve its primary outcomes.

Universal TA (UTA), characterized as ***"Take and Use,"*** are resources accessible through the Center's website and social media platforms (Take) that are intended to facilitate wide-scale implementation at State and local levels to ensure effective and compliant practices (Use).

Targeted TA (TTA), characterized as ***"Teach and Coach***," is proactively offered to individual States (***Specific*** **TTA)** or small groups of States (***Focused*** **TTA)**. The Center is poised to anticipate and respond to State-specific requests of varying duration and intensity (e.g., one meeting or multiple), recognizing that situations arise that need immediate support. ***Specific*** and ***Focused TTA*** are designed to provide topical, specific, and directed information training (Teach) and support (Coach). TA activities will be virtual (e.g., web-based meetings, asynchronous discussions) and in-person (e.g., on-site, the Center's Capacity Building Institute.

Intensive TA (ITA), characterized as ***"Coach and Sustain,"*** reflects the implementation science understanding that changes in practice take time, resources, and intensive supports. The scale-up of an effective practice from installation to implementation necessitates intensive coaching by the TA Center to the State, and by the State to local administrators and practitioners (***Scale-Up*** **ITA**). Some states in the exploration phase will require identification of a system's capacity and priorities for implementation. NTACT:C will assess readiness through a purposeful infrastructure analysis across education and VR systems and their partners. Ongoing intensive support is necessary for States engaged in either ***Systems*** or ***Scale-Up*** coaching to ensure the system is prepared

for sustainable improvements (***Systems* ITA**). The Center will work with States at different stages through these two intensive levels of TA, recognizing the nationwide need for a continuum of collaborative systems.

Throughout the evaluation plan, we define *capacity* as having the knowledge and skill(s) relative to specific content as well as commitment by system partners. For example, having the *knowledge* and skills relative to pre-employment transition services means knowing what the five required services are, being familiar with examples and non-examples of each, and having the skills to deliver pre-employment transition services effectively.

Throughout the evaluation plan, we use the term "states" to be inclusive of the 60 states, territories, entities, freely associated states' education agencies and 78 VR agencies.

Project Goals and Objectives

Through delivery of a multi-tiered approach to technical assistance, the NTACT:C aims to achieve four overarching goals:

Goal 1: NTACT:C products and services are high quality, relevant, and useful.

Goal 2: TA systems change SEA, LEA, and VR staff attitudes, knowledge, and/or skills.

Goal 3: TA systems change SEA, LEA, and VR agencies' behavior, policy, and practice.

Goal 4: TA systems change state or local conditions or programmatic outcomes.

The 13 project objectives involve building capacity and improving outcomes in (a) interagency agreements; (b) professional development; (c) evidence-based transition services; (d) career pathways; (e) access and participation in career and technical education (CTE); (f) data sharing agreements; (g) data collection and evidence-based decision-making; (h) alternative diploma options; (i) effective dropout prevention models; (j) implementing transition services and pre-employment transition within a MTSS framework; (k) improving transition services for high-risk students with disabilities; (l) parent involvement; and (m) improved VR service delivery for students and youth with disabilities.

Project Logic Model

The logic model, depicted in Table 1, serves as a visual representation for the NTACT:C's organizational structure and approach to enacting the theory of change. The logic model is presented as a series of "if-then" statements across the sequential planning, implementation, and results phases.

- **Activities** – activities are focused on the development and provision of a) online Universal Technical Assistance (UTA); b) specialized Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA), including Communities of Practice (CoP) and the Capacity Building Institute; and c) both systems and scale-up Intensive Technical Assistance (ITA). Collaboration with key stakeholders is also integrated into the project.

- **Outputs** – outputs for the project align with activities and are specific to the type of technical assistance and/or collaboration involved. UTA outputs primarily focus on electronic and online delivery of information including an accessible website, knowledge translation resources, training via multiple formats, literature reviews, and strategic communications. TTA outputs include tools and resources such as implementation practice guides, practice fidelity checklists, various coaching and peer-based resources, training materials and resources, technical assistance and coaching, and peer-based mentoring. ITA outputs involve all elements available through UTA and TTA but additionally include

state-level program quality measures, needs assessments, interagency and related agreements, toolkits, and ITA agreements with states. Collaboration outputs focus on joint projects and publications.

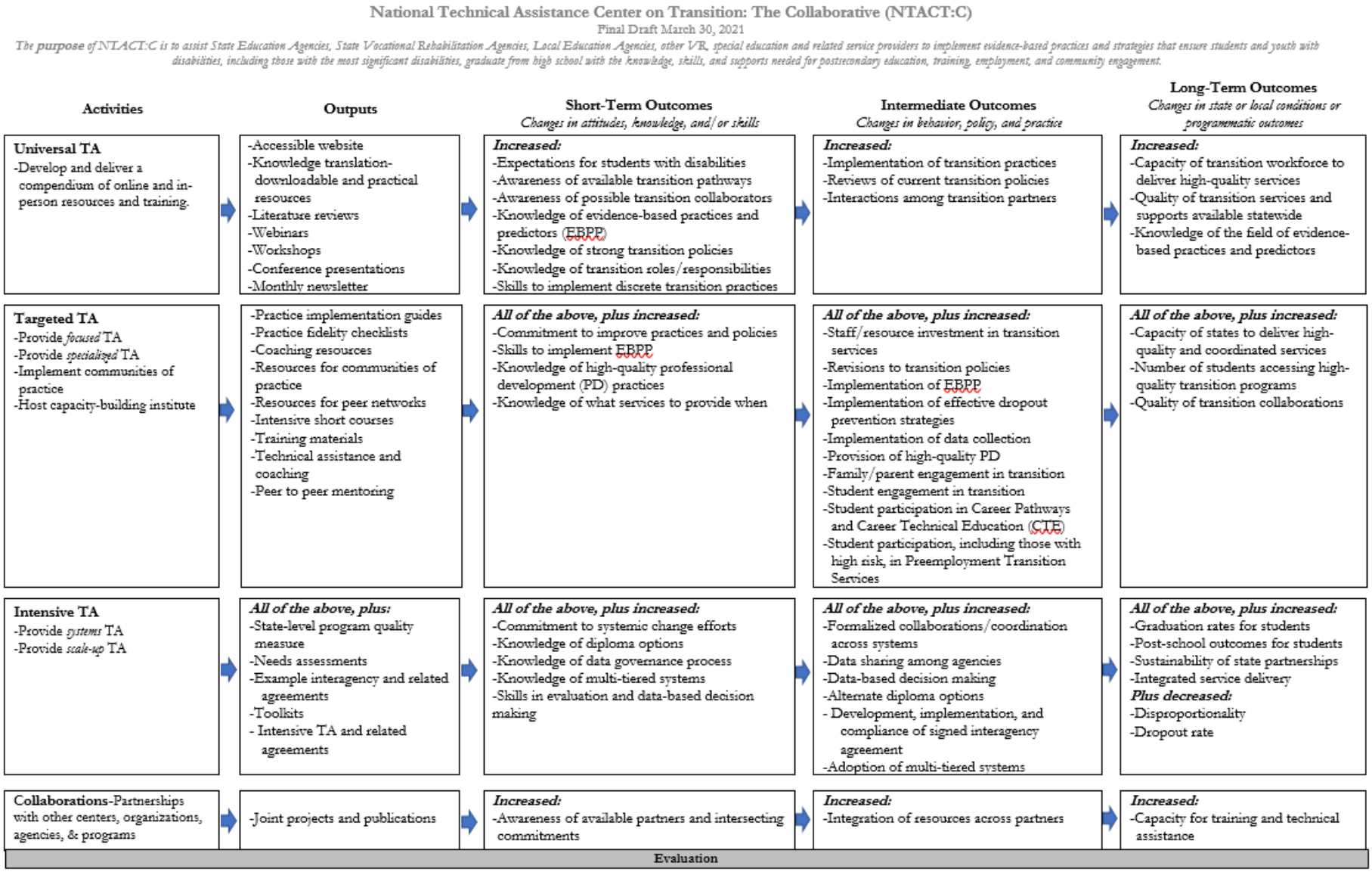
- **Short-term Outcomes** – the project's short-term outcomes focus on changes in attitude, knowledge, and skills. Through the provision of UTA, we aim to increase (1) expectations for students with disabilities, (2) awareness of transition services, 3) awareness of potential transition collaborators, (4) knowledge of evidence-based practices and predictors (EBPP), (5), knowledge of strong transition policies, roles, and responsibilities, and (6) skills to implement specific transition practices. TTA includes all objectives from UTA and additionally include increasing (7) commitment to improving practices and policies, (8) skills to implement EBPP, (9) knowledge of high-quality professional development practices, (10) knowledge of which services to apply and when. ITA includes all objectives from UTA and TTA and further increases (11) commitment to systemic change efforts, (12) knowledge of diploma options, data governance processes, and multi-tiered systems, and (13) skills in evaluation and data-based decision making. Collaboration efforts aim to increase awareness of available partners and intersecting commitments regarding the transition process for students with disabilities.

- **Intermediate Outcomes** – medium-term or intermediate outcomes for the project focus on changes in behavior, policy, and practice. UTA aims to increase (1) implementation of transition practices, (2) reviews of current transition policies, and (3) interactions among transition partners. TTA and ITA includes all aims of UTA and further seeks to increase (4) staff and resource investment in transition services, (5) revisions to transition policies, (6) implementation of EBPP, (7) implementation of effective dropout prevention strategies, (8) implementation of effective data-collection processes, (9) provision of high quality professional development, (10) family/parent and student engagement in transition, (11) student participation in career pathways and Career and Technical Education (CTE), and (12) student, including high-risk, participation in Pre-Employment Transition Services. Collaboration efforts aim to increase the integration of resources across key partners and stakeholders.

- **Long-term Outcomes** – long-term outcomes focus on changes in state and/or local conditions as well as programmatic transition outcomes. UTA aims to increase (1) capacity of the transition workforce to deliver high-quality services, (2) the quality of transition services and supports available statewide, and (3) knowledge of evidence-based practices and predictors. TTA includes all elements of UTA and further aims to increase (4) the capacity of states to deliver high-quality and coordinated transition services, (5) the number of students accessing high-quality transition programs, and (6) the quality of transition collaborations. ITA outcomes include all elements of UTA and TTA and further aim to increase (7) graduation rates for students with disabilities, (8) post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, (9) sustainability of state partnerships, and (10) integrated service delivery. ITA also aims to (11) improve transition services for high-risk students with disabilities, and (12) decrease the dropout rate of students with disabilities. Regarding collaboration and partnerships, ITA aims to increase state-level capacity for the provision of training and technical assistance among service providers.

- **Evaluation** – across the project timeline, internal and external evaluation efforts will support all stated activities and provide timely reporting of project outputs and outcomes.

Table 1
Project Logic Model



Evaluation Plan

Overview

Central to the evaluation plan is the use of a structured, systematic, data-driven approach aimed at providing information to guide project implementation decisions with confidence, in a timely manner, and that can be measured efficiently, effectively, and accurately. Formative evaluation efforts, designed to measure process and progress across the three levels of technical assistance, will guide development and improvement of activities through the duration of the project. Summative evaluation efforts will measure long-term student outcomes. To accomplish these tasks, the evaluation plan will follow several key operational principles involving: a) adequate and objective evaluation capacity; b) a centralized design and monitoring approach; c) full input and participation by target audiences/stakeholders; and d) utilization of the most rigorous, appropriate and feasible design and data collection strategies.

Evaluation Questions and Performance Measures

The purpose of NTACT:C is to assist State Education Agencies, State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, Local Education Agencies, other VR, special education and related service providers to implement evidence-based practices and strategies that ensure students and youth with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, graduate from high school with the knowledge, skills, and supports needed for postsecondary education, training, employment, and community engagement.

The following evaluation questions and performance measures are organized according to the project logic model and will be used to guide and demonstrate the NTACT:C's progress toward achieving project objectives. The targets for performance measures are based on NTACT:C staff members' experience in the field as well as what seems realistic to achieve during the project period. Although we will measure the quality, relevance, and usefulness of the Center's products and services, the majority of the evaluation efforts focus on measuring short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes (Moore & Lammert, 2019). We will use an independent review panel of experts—drawing from NTACT:C's Advisory Board, PRO Teams, users, and other stakeholders—to conduct an annual review of newly developed products and services.

We define **quality** as the degree to which the product content or the content delivered through the service is consistent with current evidence or policy (TAandDStudygroup.com, 2014). In keeping with OSEP's two dimensions for quality: **substance and communication**, we will evaluate substance as "Does the content delivered through the service reflect evidence of conceptual soundness and quality, grounded in legislation or policy?". We will evaluate communication as "Is the content delivered through the service presented in such a way so as to be clearly understood, as evidenced by being well-organized, free of editorial errors and appropriately formatted?" (Sanchez, Carlson, & Willis, 2018).

We define **relevance** as how well the product content or the content delivered through the service addresses current educational problems or issues (TAandDStudygroup.com, 2014). In keeping with OSEP's three dimensions for relevance: **need, pertinence, and reach**, we will evaluate need as "Does the content delivered through the service attempt to solve an important problem or deal with a critical issue?"; pertinence as "Does the content delivered through the service address a problem or issue recognized as important by the target audience(s)?"; and reach as "To what extent is the content delivered through the service applicable to diverse segments of the target audience(s)?"

We define **usefulness** as how readily the content of the product or the content delivered through the service can be accessed and used by its target audience (TAandDStudygroup, 2014). In keeping with OSEP's two

dimensions for usefulness: **ease and suitability**, we will evaluate ease as "Does the content delivered through the service address a problem or issue in an easily understood way, with directions or guidance regarding how the content can be used to address the problem or issue?"; and suitability as "Does the service provide the target audience(s) with information or resources that can be used again or in different ways to address the problem or issue?"

I. **<u>Outputs. NTACT:C products and services are high quality, relevant, and useful.</u>**

a. **Evaluation Question:** Are NTACT:C TA products and services of high quality, as determined by NTACT:C's Advisory Board and/or users of the products and services?

i. ***Quality Performance Measure:*** At least 80% of TA products and services will be determined to be of high quality for education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice.

b. **Evaluation Question:** Are NTACT:C TA products and services relevant to education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice, as determined by NTACT:C's Advisory Board and/or users of the products and services?

i. ***Relevance Performance Measure:*** At least 80% of TA products and services will be determined relevant to education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice.

c. **Evaluation Question:** Are NTACT:C TA products and services useful to improving education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice, as determined by NTACT:C's Advisory Board and/or users of the products and services?

i. ***Usefulness Performance Measure:*** At least 80% of TA products and services will be determined useful in improving education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice.

II. **<u>Short-Term Outcomes. TA systems change SEA, LEA, and VR staff attitudes, knowledge, and/or skills.</u>**

a. **Evaluation Question:** Do SEA, LEA, and VR staff access a variety of resources aimed at increasing awareness of available transition pathways and collaborators?

i. ***Use Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of states will have one education staff member and one vocational rehabilitation staff member report using two or more types of resources reflecting the 13 objectives defined in the Cooperative Agreement with OSERS.

b. **Evaluation Question:** Does TA increase knowledge of transition evidence-based predictors and practices (EBPP)?

i. ***Knowledge Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents indicate an increased knowledge of transition services and/or EBPP.

ii. ***Data Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of states that receive TTA and/or ITA on data use will report increased knowledge of data use to support implementation of pre-employment transition services, special education indicators (1, 2, 13, or 14), EBPP.

c. **Evaluation Question:** Does TTA and/or ITA increase knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality transition focused PD?

i. ***PD Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents that receive TA for high-quality PD will report increased knowledge for delivery of high-quality transition focused PD.

ii. ***PD Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents that receive TA for delivery of high-quality PD indicate an increase in their skills for delivery of high-quality transition focused PD.

III. <u>Intermediate Outcomes. TA systems change SEA, LEA, and VR agencies' behavior, policy, and practice.</u>

a. **Evaluation Question:** Does TTA or ITA change transition practices, policies, and implementation of EBPP?

i. ***Collaboration Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of states that receive ITA will report increased ratings of interagency collaboration over time.

ii. ***Data Sharing Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of states that receive ITA for data sharing agreement will report developing or refining a data sharing agreement with one or more state or local agencies/entities.

iii. ***Family Engagement Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of states that receive TTA and/or ITA for family/parent engagement will report an increase in parent/family involvement.

iv. ***Career Pathways and CTE Measure:*** At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents receiving TTA and/or ITA specific to career pathways and CTE will modify/change transition practices to better provide career pathways options and CTE to students or youth, including those in underserved/at-risk students/youth.

v. ***Dropout Prevention Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of local entities that receive TTA and/or ITA to implement effective dropout-prevention strategies will show an increase in school attendance, improved academic performance, and/or decreased suspensions/expulsions for students and youth with disabilities, including under-served/at-risk populations.

vi. ***Partner Collaboration Performance Measure:*** NTACT:C will collaborate with at least five entities to deliver UTA, TTA, and/or ITA to improve delivery of transition services.

IV. <u>Long-Term Outcomes. TA systems change state or local conditions or programmatic outcomes.</u>

a. **Evaluation Question:** Does TA change state and/or local implementation of systematic improvement in the delivery of transition services?

i. ***PD Performance Measure:*** At least 80% of survey respondents in states that received ITA to improve their delivery of PD report that the state delivered high quality PD.

ii. ***Systems Change Performance* Measure**: At least 67% of ITA states focused on systems-change in years 1, 2, or 3 will report systemic change in special education and/or vocational rehabilitation were sustained in years 4 or 5.

iii. ***Collaboration Performance Measure:*** At least 75% of states that receive ITA for interagency collaboration will achieve a new or revised interagency agreement.

b. **Evaluation Question:** Does TA transition service delivery result in improved student engagement and outcomes?

i. ***Transition Service Engagement Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of states that receive TTA and/or ITA report an increase in the number of students engaging in EBPP transition services, including CTE, provided by school or pre-employment transition services provided by VR.

ii. ***Dropout Performance Measure***: At least 67% of local entities that receive ITA to implement effective dropout-prevention strategies will show a decrease in dropout rates for students with disabilities, as measured via local data-collection efforts.

iii. ***Employment and Postsecondary Education Performance Measure:*** At least 67% of projects that receive ITA to improve pre-employment transition services and/or VR service delivery will increase competitive integrated employment and/or postsecondary education, as measured via local data, Indicator B14, and/or RSA 911 second quarter after exit.

Formative and Summative Evaluation

The evaluation strategy for NTACT:C involves both formative and summative components. Data will be collected from SEA, LEA, and VR agencies in alignment with the relevant level of technical assistance (intensive, targeted, and/or universal) and goals associated with the TA event and or plan. Technical assistance specialists will facilitate data collection as appropriate to the level of TA and specific activity. For example, a TTA training sequence on pre-employment transition services may utilize pre/post-design or post-then pre-design. To ensure quality, we will utilize a variety of standardized data collection templates. Measures will be standardized and administered to participants in a timely manner. The evaluation team will review and summarize data, and then disseminate results and/or evaluation briefs to relevant stakeholders in timely fashion to encourage use of data to inform action and decision-making (e.g., to the management team, the NTACT:C Advisory Board, and/or technical assistance specialists, TA recipients and other stakeholders).

Formative and Summative Data Sources, Methods, and Timing

Table 2 highlights the detailed approach to the NTACT:C evaluation strategy across formative and summative elements.

Formative Evaluation

The NTACT:C formative evaluation efforts will focus on monitoring and assessing project activities and outputs including the numbers and types of services provided, products delivered, and stakeholders served. Formative measures are designed to assess the reach, quality, relevance, and usefulness of activities and products in meeting participant needs. The aims are to monitor and report on (a) project progress, (b) implementation of activities, (c) project outputs, (d) short-term outcomes, and (e) project fidelity.

The evaluation team is responsible for developing the measures and implementing the data collection system(s). Technical assistance specialists implementing technical assistance at the levels of UTA, TTA, and ITA are responsible for inputting data into the established tracking mechanisms. An interim TA Tracker will be used to gather data during Year 1 of the project as the more robust TA Tracker is developed for data collection use in Years 2-5.

Non-probability, purposive sampling methods will be used throughout the formative evaluation process to allow the technical assistance and evaluation teams to identify and select appropriate samples. Criteria for selecting samples will include (a) state received technical assistance relative to one or more specific TA topics (e.g., family engagement, pre-employment transition services), (b) geographical location, (c) targeted audiences (state v local entities), (d) student populations (e.g., LGBTQ+, military, at-risk of dropping out), and (e) agency (education and/or VR), as appropriate. The intent in selecting states for formative evaluation will be to reach a broad sampling of states across the selection criteria.

Formative Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Formative data will be summarized and reported to relevant audiences on a regular basis for use in monitoring progress. Project Officers will receive quarterly and annual progress reports and TA specialists and the management team will receive summaries of results from formal TA events. Results of the formative evaluation will be used to revise materials, expand reach, improve knowledge of TA specialists, and modify delivery of TA.

A variety of data sources will be used to inform the formative evaluation process including (a) archival documents (e.g., schedules, agendas, meeting notes, attendance sheets), (b) products (e.g., TA materials, toolkits, guides, briefs, trainings, etc.), (c) evaluation surveys (e.g., measures of quality, relevance, and usefulness), (d) assessments (e.g., pre-post change in knowledge), (e) databased TA tracking system, (f) RSA-911 administrative data, and (g) State Performance Plan data.

Outputs relative to ***reach*** will include counts of (a) unique website visitors; (b) registered users; (c) users with downloads; (d) users by role; (e) downloads; (f) webinars; (g) newsletters; (h) frequency of social media posts; (i) presentations; (j) likes and engagements; (k) email and phone requests, and (l) type of resource (e.g., toolkit, DIY, etc.). Outputs pertaining to ***quality, relevance, and usefulness*** will include systematic collection of feedback and evaluation from Advisors and Project Related Outcomes (PRO) team members, and purposively selected recipients of TA known to have used the TA product, tool, or service being evaluated.

Collection of baseline data will be driven by the goals of the ITA plan and, if appropriate, the TTA plan. When possible, we will use existing data (e.g., RSA 911 data, Indicator data, or other data available at the state or local level) as baseline and ongoing data sources to reduce undue burden on the state or local agency by requesting additional data collection. When extant data are not available, the evaluation team, in collaboration with the TA specialists will work with the state to determine how best to collect baseline data.

Formative Data Collection Schedule

Formative data used to monitor progress and implementation will be collected on an ongoing basis and reported quarterly and annually. Primary sources for output data include website analytics (UTA), social media and strategic communications analytics, training data (number of webinars; engagement data regarding registrant demographics, role, and attendance), and number of TA requests. Primary sources for short-term outcomes data will involve analyzing advisory council ratings/input, TA implementation fidelity measures, and pre-post survey data measuring increases/changes in knowledge, attitude, and skill gains. These data will be collected point in time following specific UTA events including webinars and workshops, TTA activities including individualized coaching activities and peer networks, and ITA activities based on the customized ITA plans developed with the states. The TA Tracker will serve as a key repository for data collection.

Table 2. NTACT:C Formative and Summative Evaluation Overview

Evaluation Question	Logic Model Outcome	Performance Measure	Instrument	Formative / Summative	Ready by 3 + 2	Timeline for collection
I. Outputs. NTACT: C products and services are high quality, relevant, and useful.						
Are NTACT: C TA products and services of high quality as defined by NTACT:C's Advisory Board and/or users of the products and services?	GPRA measure	TA products and services will be determined to be of high quality for education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice by at least 80% of reviewers.	Product survey – draft	Formative & summative	Interim	Annual collection prior to writing the continuation report (APR)
Are NTACT:C TA products and services relevant to education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice as defined by NTACT:C's Advisory Board and/or users of the products and services?	GPRA measure	TA products and services will be determined relevant to education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice by at least 80% of reviewers.	Product survey – draft	Formative & summative	Interim	Annual collection prior to writing the continuation report (APR)
Are NTACT:C TA products and services useful to improving education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice as defined by NTACT:C's Advisory Board and/or users of the products and services?	GPRA measure	TA products and services will be determined useful in improving education and/or vocational rehabilitation policy or practice by at least 80% of reviewers.	Product survey – draft	Formative & summative	Interim	Annual collection prior to writing the continuation report (APR)

Evaluation Question	Logic Model Outcome	Performance Measure	Instrument	Formative / Summative	Ready by 3 + 2	Timeline for collection
II. Short-Term Outcomes. TA systems change SEA, LEA, and VR staff attitudes, knowledge, and/or skills.						
Do SEA, LEA, and VR staff access a variety of resources aimed at increasing awareness of available transition pathways and collaborators?	· Increased awareness of available partners and intersecting commitments · Increased awareness, knowledge, and skills regarding EBPP	At least 67% of states will have one education staff member and one vocational rehabilitation staff member report using two or more types of resources reflecting the 13 objectives defined in the Cooperative Agreement with OSERS.	From website registration, downloads, post-TA surveys of TTA and ITA recipients	Formative	Interim data	Quarterly, annually
Does TA increase knowledge of transition evidence-based predictors and practices (EBPP)?	· Increased awareness, knowledge, and skills regarding EBPP · Increased knowledge of multi-tiered systems · Increased skills in evaluation and data-based decisioning	At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents indicate an increased knowledge of transition services and/or EBPP.	Post-TA survey – draft	Formative	Interim data	Per TA event
	· Increased data-based decision making	At least 67% of states that receive TTA and/or ITA on data use will report increased knowledge of data use to support implementation of pre-employment transition services, SPP/APR Indicators (1, 2, 13, or 14), EBPP.	Post-TA survey – draft	Formative	Interim data	Per TA event
Does TTA and/or ITA increase knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality transition focused PD?	· Increased awareness, knowledge, and skills regarding EBPP.	At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents for high-quality PD will report increased knowledge for delivery of high-quality transition focused PD.	Post-TA survey – draft	Formative	Interim data	Per TA event

	· Increased knowledge of high-quality professional development (PD) practices	At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents for delivery of high-quality PD indicate an increase in their skills for delivery of high-quality transition focused PD.	Post-TA survey – draft	Formative	Interim data	Per TA event
Evaluation Question	**Logic Model Outcome**	**Performance Measure**	**Instrument**	**Formative / Summative**	**Ready by 3 + 2**	**Timeline for collection**
III. Intermediate Outcomes. TA systems change SEA, LEA, and VR agencies' behavior, policy, and practice.						
Does TTA or ITA change transition practices, policies, and implementation of EBPP?	· Increased implementation of transition practices	At least 67% of states that receive ITA will report increased ratings of interagency collaboration over time.	Collaboration scale – draft	Formative & Summative	Interim data	Annual
	· Increased number of formalized collaborations/ coordination across systems · Increased data sharing among agencies	At least 67% of states that receive ITA for data sharing agreement will report developing or refining a data sharing agreement with one or more state or local agencies/entities.	· Collaboration scale – draft · Survey of state leads in states that receive ITA and/or TTA. · Specific measures will be individualized based on the ITA plan with the state, as needed. – TBD	Formative & Summative	Interim data	Annual
	· Increased family/parent engagement in transition	At least 67% of states that receive TTA and/or ITA for family/parent engagement will report an increase in parent/family involvement.	· Survey of state leads in states that receive ITA and/or TTA. · Specific measures will be individualized based on the ITA plan with the state, as needed. – TBD	Formative & Summative	Interim data	Annual

	· Increased student and youth participation in Career Pathways and CTE.	At least 67% of TTA and/or ITA survey respondents receiving TTA and/or ITA specific to career pathways and CTE will modify/change transition practices to better provide career pathways options and CTE to students or youth, including those in underserved/at-risk students/youth.	· Survey of state leads in states that receive ITA and/or TTA. · Online Planning Tool –exists · Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment (PISA) – exists · Specific measures will be individualized based on the ITA plan with the state, as needed. – TBD	Summative	No	Annual
	· Increased implementation of effective dropout prevention strategies	State/agency recipients of TTA and/or ITA that addresses implementation of effective dropout-prevention strategies will report an increase in school attendance, improved academic performance, and/or decreased suspensions/ expulsions for students and youth with disabilities, including under-served/at-risk populations.	Local data – EWS, data local dashboard, or NTACT Core Data Tool – TBD	Summative	No	Annual
	· Quality of transition collaborations	NTACT:C will collaborate with at least five entities to deliver UTA, TTA, and/or ITA to improve delivery of transition services.	TA Tracker	Summative	No	Annual
Evaluation Question	**Logic Model Outcome**	**Performance Measure**	**Instrument**	**Formative / Summative**	**Ready by 3 + 2**	**Timeline for collection**
IV. Long-Term Outcomes. TA systems change state or local conditions or programmatic outcomes.						

Does TA change state and/or local implementation of systematic improvement in the delivery of transition services?	· Increased capacity of transition workforce to deliver high-quality services · Increased quality of transition services and supports available statewide · Increased knowledge of the field of evidence-based practices and predictors	At least 67% of survey respondents in states that received ITA to improve their delivery of PD report that the state delivered high quality PD.	· Survey of state leads in states that receive ITA and/or TTA. · Specific measures will be individualized based on the ITA plan with the state, as needed. – TBD	Summative	No	Annual
	· Increased commitment to systemic change efforts	At least 67% of ITA states focused on systems-change in years 1, 2, or 3 will report systemic change in special education and/or vocational rehabilitation were sustained in years 4 or 5.	· Survey of state leads in states that receive ITA and/or TTA. · Specific measures will be individualized based on the ITA plan with the state, as needed. – TBD	Summative	No	Annual
	· Increased quality of transition collaborations · Increased development, implementation, and compliance of signed interagency agreement	At least 67% of states that receive ITA for interagency collaboration will achieve a new or revised interagency agreement.	· Survey of state leads in states that receive ITA and/or TTA. · Specific measures will be individualized based on the ITA plan with the state, as needed. – TBD	Summative	No	Annual

Does TA on transition service delivery result in improved student engagement and outcomes?	· Increased capacity of transition workforce to deliver high-quality services · Increased quality of transition services and supports available statewide	At least 67% of states that receive TTA and/or ITA report an increase in the number of students engaging in EBPP transition services provided by school or pre-employment transition services provided by VR.	· Transition Services Rating Scale for school (would need to be part of agreement with TTA or ITA state to collect these data) – exists · RSA-911 data for VR -APR/SPP data	Summative	No	Annual
	· Decreased dropout rates · Increased graduation rates for students · Improved post-school outcomes for students	At least 67% of local entities that receive ITA to implement effective dropout-prevention strategies will show a decrease in dropout rates for students with disabilities as measured via local data collection efforts.	Local data: dropout rates, graduation rates, PSO, RSA 911 data	Summative	No	Annual
	· Increased student participation in Career Pathways and Career Technical Education (CTE) · Increased Student participation, including those with high risk, in Preemployment Transition Services	At least 67% of projects that receive ITA to improve pre-employment transition services and/or VR service delivery will increase competitive integrated employment and/or postsecondary education as measured via local data, Indicator B14, and/or RSA 911 second quarter after exit.	Local CTE data, RSA 911 data	Summative	No	Annual

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation efforts will focus on data collection, analysis, and reporting to measure the project's success in meeting the stated short-term and intermediate outcomes. The NTACT:C evaluation team, in close consultation with project leadership and technical assistance staff, will thoughtfully identify and/or develop the survey and interview tools needed to effectively gather information in a meaningful way. The team will ensure that data collection tools are feasible and practical to administer. While the goal is to influence positively longer-term outcomes, actualization of the project's ability to empirically demonstrate effectiveness in this regard may be limited due to project timelines. Longer-term and sustainable outcomes are typically seen beyond the initial implementation phase.

Baseline data will be necessary for comparative purposes to effectively measure increases and progress toward meeting intermediate and longer-term project objectives and goals. For states that participated in previous intensive TA from either NTACT or WINTAC and who continue focusing on the same outcomes, we will work with the state to identify relevant baseline data that precedes NTACT:C. The evaluation team intends to utilize existing administrative data sources including the RSA-911 Case Service dataset as well as the IDEA indicator data made available by the Department of Education as appropriate.

Summative Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Summative data will be analyzed and reported annually. Project Officers will receive quarterly and annual progress reports. TA specialists and the management team will receive summary results to help inform TA recipients and teams of progress being made toward outcome goals.

Summative data will be used for descriptive and comparative purposes with a specific intent on measuring changes including increases leading to the successful achievement of intermediate and longer-term outcomes. A variety of data sources will be used to inform the formative evaluation process and may include (a) evaluation surveys (e.g., measures of quality, relevance, and usefulness), (b) assessments (e.g., pre-post change in knowledge, statistical analyses, etc.), (c) TA tracking system, (d) RSA-911 administrative data, and (e) State Performance Plan data. When appropriate, comparative groups will be identified at the state or local levels. Data analysis will match the evaluation question and data collection method (e.g., t-test; Chi-squared) as appropriate.

Descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to provide measurable, quantitative data in a manageable form. This approach will allow the evaluation team to provide and report on large amounts of data in a sensible manner, and effectively evaluate the effectiveness of the NTACT:C in achieving the identified outcomes.

Summative Data Collection Schedule

Summative data used to measure change will be collected on an ongoing basis and reported out quarterly and annually. Primary sources for ongoing summative data include administrative data sets, the databased TA tracking system, evaluation surveys, assessments, and state performance plan data.

Data Management and Analysis

Data will be organized and stored in a secure Dropbox accessible to all staff. We will utilize a variety of management tools either commercially available or uniquely developed to support data collection (e.g., Google Analytics to record downloads from websites; Qualtrics to collect survey data; TA Tracker to record the number, type, and contacts of technical assistance events).

Both quantitative (e.g., survey) and qualitative (e.g., focus group) data will be collected across stakeholder groups including educators, VR professionals, service partners, managers, policy makers, and administrators. Survey data will be collected using online survey software (e.g., Qualtrics) and downloaded into Excel/CSV or SPSS files for analysis. Participant demographic information including geography, professional role, length of time in job, and gender will be collected; identifiers such as name and birth date will not be included. When conducting focus groups, we anticipate using semi-structured interview questions, with 10-12 participants per focus group. The number of focus groups will be determined based on the purpose of the data collection. Focus group data will be collected and stored using digital audio recording (e.g., MP3) with interviewee consent. Focus group recordings will be transcribed into Microsoft Word documents and subsequently analyzed by the evaluation team using thematic analysis; coding in NVivo or similar qualitative software as appropriate.

The Principal Investigator (PI) will be responsible for overall quality assurance, with the evaluation team undertaking specific activities to ensure quality control. Detailed protocols for extracting data from the secondary source will be developed. Quality regarding extraction, maintenance, and storage of the data will be assured through routine monitoring by the evaluation team and periodic cross-checks against the protocol. While focus group protocols are being developed, standards and systems for note taking, recording, transcribing, and storing data will be defined. Focus groups will always involve two evaluators. Quality control for the qualitative data collection will be assured through internal discussion and training on the protocols.

Documentation, Administrative, and Metadata

The RSA-911 data set is available upon request from the U.S. Department of Education-Rehabilitation Services Administrations and all accompanying guidance regarding the specific case service data elements is publicly available. Researchers and evaluators are customarily granted access to the de-identified RSA-911 data by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Data is transmitted in Excel/CSV format which allows for ease in uploading into SPSS statistical software for analysis and is clearly labeled according to fiscal and program year. Similarly, administrative Individuals with Disabilities Education Action (IDEA) indicator data provided by ED will be managed in a comparable manner.

The RSA-911 Case Service Report Manual serves as the accompanying data code book used to define specific data elements and is available at https://rsa.ed.gov/performance/rsa-911-policy-directive. All non-evaluation research will be submitted to the University of Oregon Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and approval prior to conducting research.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

All evaluation efforts will be conducted in compliance with the University of Oregon's Research Compliance Services. While it is anticipated that program evaluation efforts aligned with training and technical assistance activities will meet exemption criteria (https://research.uoregon.edu/node/212664), evaluators will ensure integrity and rigor consistent with human subjects' protection requirements, nonetheless. As an example, a document explaining the purpose, approach, and dissemination strategies (including plans to share data) of the evaluation, and accompanying participant consent forms will be prepared. A verbal explanation will also be provided to interviewees and/or focus group participants regarding the voluntary nature of the project. Commitments to maintain confidentiality will be maintained by ensuring recordings are not shared beyond the evaluation team. Transcripts will be anonymized and details that can be used to identify participants will be removed from transcripts and concealed in write-ups.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights

The institutional partners will jointly own and manage the data generated. Online and archival sources will be cited and clearly acknowledged in the database and evaluation outputs. Permission will be sought from secondary sources to share evaluation findings before posting on public websites.

Storage and Backup

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte will provide secure cloud-based data storage to the evaluators via Dropbox.com (https://www.dropbox.com). All data stored in Dropbox are protected with centralized security controls and multi-layered encryption (https://www.dropbox.com/features/security). In addition to secure data storage, Dropbox provides a platform for secure file sharing among researchers. The internal and external evaluators working on the project will adhere to all university security measures, policies, and protocol related to data storage and sharing (https://oneit.uncc.edu/iso/guideline-research-data-security). All data stored in the secure project's Dropbox account is backed-up daily. Additional secure data-storage options, including use of an FTP server, may be explored for use by the evaluation team.

Access and Security

The PI will be responsible for managing evaluator access to the secure Dropbox service and ensuring compliance across all university data security policies and protocol. The Office of OneIT at UNCC provides high quality oversight and support for all hardware and software (https://oneit.uncc.edu/iso/guideline-research-data-security). Furthermore, project staff will work with the campus Data Security Officer to develop a Data Security Plan if warranted.

The UNCC Office of OneIT ensures rigorous regulatory compliance and provides high quality support including access to the most current updates regarding endpoint security solutions and certifications (https://oneit.uncc.edu/security/standards-guidelines).

Data Preservation

The PI will retain the data collected according to established protocol following the final project close-out date. Original data will be retained if possible and securely stored. The PI, in close collaboration with the evaluation team, will be responsible for ensuring adequate documentation of the evaluation and procedures. Data and files retained may consist of, but are not limited to, the following documents: protocol application; consent forms; submissions to the IRB; responses regarding initial approval, changes, and continuing review; other correspondence including reports, unanticipated problems and noncompliance; correspondence with sponsors; study instruments such as surveys and focus group protocol; interview recordings and transcripts; and data sets and analyses of data.

Once final data analysis is complete, the PI, or designee, will submit the necessary paperwork to close the study, if relevant. Submission of the closure report marks the beginning of the data retention period. Following IRB confirmation of the closure report, the study will be archived. The PI will closely follow all data retention and preservation requirements as noted by University of Oregon. The evaluators will review and assess appropriate timing on requesting project closure with the federal project officer prior to taking action.

Data Sharing

The most appropriate means of sharing the evaluation findings and data generated through the project will be through Knowledge Translation activities, peer-reviewed articles, briefing reports, presentations at professional conferences, and online through institutional websites. The project will have a dedicated space on an

established website to facilitate dissemination activities, and other partners will be encouraged to host project findings and final products on their websites.

Upon completion of the project, findings will be submitted to the National Clearinghouse on Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) which serves as the central repository for archiving, sharing and training materials for all projects funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (https://ncrtm.ed.gov).

There are no known restrictions on sharing findings from this project. However, the project is being conducted in partnership with federal and state public programs, and as such, all evaluation findings and reports will be shared with the state Vocational Rehabilitation and Education agencies and OSEP and RSA project officers for review prior to dissemination.

Responsibilities and Resources

The PI will direct the data management process overall, with members of the evaluation team responsible for ensuring data production, maintenance, back-up and other quality control activities. The evaluators will be responsible for routine supervision of the dataset development and maintenance; and data extraction, processing, and inputting for the dataset will be undertaken by members of the evaluation team. UNCC and the evaluation team will share responsibility for collecting and transcribing focus group and interview data. The PI will be responsible for ensuring adherence to all relevant university standards and protocol regarding data management.

Data to be Available for the Project 3+2 Review

Interim formative data regarding quality, relevance, and usefulness of products and technical assistance will be available for the NTACT:C's 3 +2 review (see Table 2). These data will be collected from states that have received ITA and or TTA, and or UTA during the first 18 months of the project. We anticipate that available data elements will center around (a) interagency collaboration among SEA/LEA and VR; (b) UTA reach as evident from counts and frequencies; (c) extent of collaboration with other national TA Centers; (d) TTA based on specific TA provided to states; and (e) initial implementation and engagement data noting progress toward meeting ITA and TTA goals and outcomes.

Resources Available for Evaluation

The project evaluation team involves both internal and external members. The External Team, comprising Catherine (Cayte) Anderson, Erik Carter, and Ellie Hartman, will guide the evaluation efforts. This team is responsible for (a) designing the Center's comprehensive evaluation strategy; (b) identifying and/or modifying existing data collection tools for use across universal, targeted, and intensive TA efforts; (c) developing unique data collection tools, as needed, including surveys, focus group questions and protocol, and similar materials; (d) coordinating data collection with federal, state, local, and community-based stakeholders; (e) providing training and support in specific methods to the TA team members responsible for ITA within states; (f) analyzing data to report on changes and improvements across the defined measures; and (g) serving in a consultative role on all phases of the evaluation.

The Internal Team, led by Charlotte Alverson and assisted by Ken Hergenrather, Matthew Klare, and administrative support, is responsible for (a) data collection across universal, targeted, and intensive TA efforts; (b) analysis and dissemination of relevant evaluation information to partners; (c) data management across the TA levels; and (d) data reporting quarterly, annually, and as requested. The project has budgeted adequately for project evaluation including staff and contractor FTE and physical resources needed to complete the work. Staff time allocations are listed in Table 3.

Table 3
Person Loading Chart

Person	Role	FTE
Internal Evaluators		
Charlotte Alverson	Internal Evaluation Lead	0.35
Ken Hergenrather	Internal Evaluator	0.10
Matthew Klare	Internal Evaluator	0.40
Doctoral Support	Evaluation Support	0.50
External Evaluators		
Cayte Anderson	External Evaluator	0.30
Erik Carter	External Evaluator	0.05
Ellie Hartman	External Evaluator	0.25

Select References

Moore, H. & Lammert, J. (2019). *Making project measures meaningful: Quality, relevance, usefulness, and beyond!* Rockville, MD: Westat, Center to Improve Program and Project Performance.

Sanchez, C., Carlson, E., & Willis, K. (2018). Performance Measure Collection for the OSEP Parent Program 2018 [PowerPoint slides].

TAandDstudygroup.com, personal communication (2014)