PROGRAMMATIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Q: What is technical assistance (TA)?

A: Technical Assistance (TA) are a set of resources and supports designed to help grantees implement their CSG grants. TA is intended to convey information, skills, and expertise to grantees from a TA coach, subject matter experts (SME), or other grantees.

The overarching goal of TA is to support the implementation of grantees’ apprenticeship models and to maximize the impact of these projects.

Typically, TA is delivered to grantees to assess programmatic areas for improvement, identify barriers or specific needs for program implementation, and generating solutions to achieve outcomes.

Q: How will the TA Team assess my technical assistance needs?

A: We use information gathered from the needs assessment, performance reporting, surveys, prior grantee reports, coaches’ notes, DSI recommendations, and feedback from the FPOs. Beginning with the first call with CSG grantees, TA coaches will walk-through an annual TA Needs Assessment to capture grantees’ promising practices and innovations and to identify current and emergent issues. The assessment will be part of the data reviewed that is used to create tailored TA activities for each grantee as well as meet more universal needs of the entire cohort of CSG grantees.

Q: What types of TA will be available to the CSG grantees?

A: TA will be based on a three-tier system depending upon grantees’ specific needs and requests. Our goal is to provide relevant TA that will assist grantees with common issues and challenges that they experience. The three tiers of TA are:

Tier 1 Individualized Coaching:

**TA Coach:** Each grantee is assigned a TA Coach who will meet with individual grantees monthly to support their program implementation, addressing challenges and sharing resources. During the first two calls, the TA Coach will conduct a TA needs assessment to develop a Quarterly Coaching Plan for each grantee that outline the specific needs of each grantee and how individual coaching will meet those needs.

**Quarterly Coaching Plans:** Your coach will work with you to develop an individualized TA Plan that outlines the assistance you will need over a three-month period. The team will also develop a universal Quarterly Coaching Plan that will outline the resources we will deliver for the benefit of all the grantees.

Tier 2 SME and Peer Engagement:

**Group:** Regular events, such as webinars, will be offered on a regular basis on topics such as the characteristics of a high-quality apprenticeship program, industry updates, and employer
engagement. Topics will be selected based on the TA needs assessment that includes grantees’ input, coaches’ feedback, and DOL and Safal team’s analysis of performance and other grantee data.

**Peer-to-peer exchange:** Can be based on industry, region, topic, or organization type. These exchanges are designed for similarly situated grantees to meet on an ad hoc basis and discuss ideas, concerns, and lessons learned. This method is helpful because grantees hear from other grantees who might share similar concerns.

**SME calls:** Involve consultation with an expert in a particular subject, industry and/or program area, depending on TA needs. The Safal TA team can provide SMEs on apprenticeship models, IT, cybersecurity, and several other subjects by request and such requests would ideally align with goals in the grantee’s Quarterly Coaching Plan.

**Tier 3 Site Visits:**

**Onsite or Virtual Site Visits:** Grantee site visits are a way for grantees and coaches to take a deeper dive into programmatic improvements. The site visit will allow grantees to receive the highest level of individual TA. Site visits are driven by several factors including, but not limited to, TA Coach determination, FPO or National Program Office Division of Strategic Investments (DSI) request, TA needs assessment, and grantee request for deeper technical assistance.

**Other TA Support**

**Tools and Resources:** The Safal team will develop case studies, promising practice reports, toolkits, and other resources to support CSG grantees such as access to SMEs. The first resource you will receive is a TA Guide available no later than April 30, 2021 that will contain more details about the TA offerings and how to leverage TA to improve your program outcomes.

**Q: How were coaches assigned?**

A: Safal and DOL considered several factors in the coach assignments including the grantee’s 1) focus area for apprenticeship expansion, 2) technical assistance needs assessment, 3) type of organization, and lastly, 4) geographic location/time zone in relationship to the coach’s location and time zone. In our experience, grouping grantees with a coach based on a shared characteristic can facilitate the grantees’ ability to discuss common challenges and share lessons learned.

**Q: Is it possible to change my TA coach?**

A: Please contact Michelle Carson at michelle.carson@safalpartners.com or call 785.250.1882 to discuss.

**Q: Are grantees required to participate in TA events and monthly individual TA calls with their TA coach?**

A: The CSG Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement on Section E. 3. Grant Recipient Technical Assistance Training (pg. 52), states “Grantees are required to participate in all ETA training activities related to grantee orientation, financial management and reporting, performance reporting, product
dissemination, and other technical assistance training as appropriate during the grant period. These sessions may occur via conference calls, virtual events such as webinars, and in-person meetings. Applicants should budget for at least two staff members.”

We recognize that staff availability may not always work for all planned TA activities, but grantees should strive to participate in technical assistance as often as schedules allow. We are here to support you and therefore will work with your schedule to provide TA. Additionally, we want to remain flexible in the approach and meet you where you are and when you need it. TA coaching calls may not be required to occur monthly if the FPO, grantee and TA coach determines that TA not needed with that level of frequency. For example, for one month a grantee may decide to cancel their scheduled coaching call. Alternatively, a grantee may choose to meet with their TA coach two or three times during another month.

Q: Where can I find information on the five Characteristics of High-Quality Apprenticeship programs?

A: The CSG Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement on Section I. A. Program Purpose (pg. 8-9), states “All apprenticeship programs funded through the grant program must include recognized standards of high-quality apprenticeship programs. Moreover, apprenticeship programs should 1) include a paid, work-based learning component, 2) embed a required educational or instructional component that results in the issuance of an industry-recognized credential, and 3) meet appropriate quality assurance standards, can help fill current job vacancies.”

Q: Where can I find more information on the Apprenticeship Success Factors?

A: TA Coaches will share a document with you that describes the CSG Success Factors and associated characteristics. As part of understanding your TA needs, your TA Coach will ask you to self-assess your progress toward these Success Factors. The TA you receive will be designed to help you meet the benchmarks.

For additional TA on the Characteristics of High-Quality Apprenticeship Programs and Apprenticeship Success Factors, please review the Success Factors and the Characteristics of High-Quality Apprenticeships webinar for CSG Grantees:

https://h1bsa.workforcegps.org/sitecore/content/global/events/2020/09/02/12/36/Success-Factors-and-the-Characteristics-of-High-Quality-Apprenticeships

Q: I am interested in hearing from other grantees that are focusing on the Healthcare (IT, Manufacturing) industry, how do I find out which grantees are focusing on the Healthcare (IT, Manufacturing) industry?

A: Ask your TA coach for assistance in connecting to other Healthcare (IT, Manufacturing) grantees.

Q: What type of question or request is appropriate for my TA Coach or the TA team?

A: Your TA coach and members of the TA team can answer questions or respond to requests related to program design and strategy, resources for achieving the apprenticeship Success Factors, how to access
an industry-specific SME, finding and utilizing promising practices, and questions related to TA offerings and resources.

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