State Monitoring System Self-Assessment

### Introduction

USDOL/ETA, in partnership with Maher & Maher, developed a [National Framework for Monitoring and Oversight](https://grantsapplicationandmanagement.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/05/22/03/20/Framework_for_Monitoring_Oversight) to meet states’ need to understand the critical components of an effective monitoring approach. The Framework is based on input gathered from monitoring experts at the federal and state levels and highlights the essential elements of an effective system for monitoring and oversight. Each element is deemed “essential” because it is necessary to ensure a comprehensive approach that drives a continuous improvement cycle beginning with the identification of issues, resolving problems, and sharing best practices.

State monitoring system generally work with local areas and other grantees/subgrantees. We have used the terms local areas and grantees and subgrantees throughout the self-assessment to accommodate for all state structures. States are encouraged to assess their current monitoring approach against the essential elements in the Framework. This self-assessment was developed as a tool to support that effort by providing indicators of the essential elements, an area for notes and planning as well as references back to each element in the Framework. Should the self-assessment process identify areas for improvement, states are encouraged to engage in internal discussion and planning as well as work with their Federal Project Officers to develop strategies and next steps for improvement. For information about each of these areas, as well as monitoring tools developed by other states, see the [Grants Application and Management Community of Practice](http://grantsapplicationandmanagement.workforcegps.org).. To access related federal monitoring requirements, see ETA’s [Core Monitoring Guide](https://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/2018_Core_Monitoring_Guide.pdf), Relevant Laws and Regulations (e.g. [WIOA](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15977.pdf)), and the Uniform Guidance at [2 CFR Part 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl) and [2 CFR Part 2900](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=d1765c8da6462cdf310a8684f3eb9333&ty=HTML&h=L&mc=true&r=PART&n=pt2.1.2900).

### Instructions

Monitoring management and staff are encouraged to carefully read the Framework and then complete this self-assessment. For each of the factors in the sections that follow, select a rating from 1 to 5 that reflects your/your team’s perspective on where your state stands. For example, consider a rating of “1” appropriate if your region is very strong and a “5” if significant improvement is needed. Each team member may choose to complete the assessment individually and then convene to compare answers. Or, you may decide to complete it as a team together.

Leave plenty of time to engage in an honest discussion about each indicator (bulleted statements on the left), and to provide thoughtful strategies for addressing challenges and identifying next steps.

#### Element 1: Understanding the Goals and Value of Monitoring and Oversight

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| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
| **Monitoring to Meet Statutory and Regulatory Requirements** | | |
| * Our state is aware of the federal requirements for Monitoring and Oversight, including specific provisions regarding the timing and content of reviews as well as when on-site monitoring is required. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring system meets the federal requirements for monitoring and oversight. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach can effectively gauge compliance in key areas such as eligibility determination, appropriate and accurate documentation, and access to and delivery of required services. |  |  |
| * Our monitoring system looks at the quality of services delivered, and outcomes achieved. |  |  |
| **To drive continuous improvement** |  |  |
| * Our monitoring system drives continuous improvement through corrective action, training & technical assistance, which can lead to compliance and effectiveness and improved performance resulting in sustained funding and return on investment. |  |  |
| **To advance strategic priorities** |  |  |
| * Our monitoring approach looks at whether the local area is advancing strategic priorities consistent with the board’s local plans. |  |  |

#### Element 2: Building Organizational Support and Capacity for Monitoring

| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Effective monitoring structure** |  |  |
| * Our management team considered the size and structure of the local system, monitoring requirements, grant portfolio, capacity, and efficiency when deciding on our state’s monitoring structure. |  |  |
| * The size and structure of our monitoring team supports the work required. |  |  |
| **Written Monitoring Policies and Procedures to Ensure Clear Understanding** | | |
| * Our state monitoring policy includes objectives, definitions of key monitoring terms, definitions of state and local monitoring roles, and identified actions including a resolution process. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring procedures include areas of focus and priorities, state monitoring activities, state and local responsibilities, local responsibilities for monitoring subrecipients, and commitments/ expectations regarding monitoring reports and issue resolution. |  |  |
| **Training to Ensure Skills and Capacity of Staff Performing Monitoring Functions** | | |
| * Our state has a training plan in place for new monitors. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring training plan includes an overview of policies and grant requirements, job shadowing/mentoring, supervised monitoring, and ongoing learning. |  |  |
| **Consistent and Comprehensive Communication Across Monitoring and Other Staff** | | |
| * Our state monitoring system includes protocols to ensure ongoing communication between the monitoring staff and the staff of other related units such as policy, fiscal, and performance. |  |  |

#### Element 3: Establishing and Sustaining Effective Relationships

| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monitoring as a Partnership Across Levels to Ensure Compliance and Effectiveness** | | |
| * Our state monitoring approach is based on collaboration and open communication across the federal, state and local levels. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach encourages and expects monitors to engage in positive and effective communication strategies with grantees. |  |  |
| **Monitors Have Key Communication Roles** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes expectations that monitors effectively fulfill various communication roles including relationship builders, subject matter experts, and drivers of continuous improvement. |  |  |
| * Our state provides training to support and build monitors’ capacity in their roles of relationship builders, subject matter experts, and drivers of continuous improvement. |  |  |

#### Element 4: Conducting Data-Driven Analysis

| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continuous Monitoring** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring system requires staff to engage in various monitoring and oversight activities throughout the year, including but not limited to risk assessments, desk reviews, information collections, on-site monitoring reviews, etc. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes the collection and consistent updating of key information on grantees and/or subrecipients to provide a “profile” for state monitoring and other staff. |  |  |
| * Our state stores this “profile” for easy access and information sharing among state staff when engaging in continuous monitoring activities. |  |  |
| **Comprehensive Data Analysis Process and Tools** | | |
| * Our state monitoring system has established processes and tools to support the cross-unit data analysis that leads to a comprehensive understanding of local area compliance and effectiveness. |  |  |
| * In our monitoring process, we review the information collected, analyze the information, and resolve any issues identified through the analysis. |  |  |
| **Qualitative vs. Quantitative Data** |  |  |
| * Through our monitoring data analysis, we look at a variety of sources including qualitative and quantitative sources. |  |  |

#### Element 5: Using Comprehensive and Current Monitoring Tools

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| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
| **Monitoring Tools** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring unit has the tools outlined in the Framework and/or other tools that support effective on-site and continuous monitoring. |  |  |
| **Features of Strong Monitoring Tools** |  |  |
| * Our monitoring tools include a simple design, key information needed including hyperlinks to law/regs/policy; and are easily accessible, customizable and shareable. |  |  |
| **Keeping Monitoring Tools Current with Policy and Technology** | | |
| * Our state monitoring system has a process in place to regularly review our monitoring tools, assess for effectiveness and update as needed. |  |  |
| * Our state regularly explores ways to streamline the design and use of our monitoring tools through technology. |  |  |

#### Element 6: Conducting Effective On-Site Monitoring

| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
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| **Monitoring Scope** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes the development and updating of a monitoring plan that outlines the areas to be monitored and the focus of each review. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach is sufficiently flexible to modify the plan to address risks or issues that are identified through continuous monitoring throughout the year. |  |  |
| **Preparation for On-site Monitoring** |  |  |
| * Our state monitors use a clearly defined written process for preparing for on-site monitoring, including using data to develop a strategy/schedule for the review and communication with the grantee and/or sub-recipient and pre-review desk work. |  |  |
| **On-site Monitoring Activities** |  |  |
| * Our state monitors follow a clearly defined procedures for on-site monitoring which includes identification/execution of key activities (entrance/ exit meetings, interviews, file reviews, etc. |  |  |
| **Effective Interviewing and File Review Approaches** | | |
| * Our state invests in training for monitors on engaging staff through interviews and discussion |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes written procedures on conducting an effective participant file review, including selecting a sample of appropriate size and diversity that may provide insight into identified risks and process for accessing the files on-site (if hard copy). |  |  |
| **Exiting the Review** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring system includes written procedures regarding on-site communication of review results, including timing of that communication and how to structure and execute the exit meeting. |  |  |

#### Element 7: Leveraging Monitoring as a Tool for Continuous Improvement

| Topic Area | Rating (1-5) | Notes and Next Steps |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Communicating Findings, Corrective Action, Areas of Concern and Effective Practices** | | |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes training monitors on how to craft clear and well-written reports, monitoring report template(s), procedures for report writing, and clearly defined process for report issuance. |  |  |
| **Findings, Area of Concern, and Effective Practices Definitions** | | |
| * Our state monitors have written definitions for key terms used in monitoring reports that are consistent with the definitions in the Framework. |  |  |
| * Our state has provided training and/or instruction to staff (monitors) to ensure they fully understand the key terms used in monitoring reports. |  |  |
| **Managing Corrective Action** |  |  |
| * Our state monitors view findings and identified issues as “co-owned” by the state and sub-recipient and require active tracking and follow-up. A tracking tool may be used to monitor all corrective actions. |  |  |
| **Developing and Delivering Technical Assistance** | | |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes written guidance defining technical assistance and its critical role in helping to resolve issues at the local level. |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes defined expectations and process for monitors to document, share and leverage strong practices. |  |  |
| **Targeted Technical Assistance** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring approach includes written guidance and process for monitors to develop technical assistance plans in collaboration with grantees and/or subrecipients. |  |  |
| **Technical Assistance to Address Themes** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring system has a defined approach to use monitoring results to develop and deliver technical assistance to improve compliance and outcomes across the state. |  |  |
| **Continuous Improvement Strategies** |  |  |
| * Our state monitoring system strategically engages in proactive and ongoing efforts to drive continuous improvement across our workforce system (e.g. risk assessment to inform technical assistance, professional development, virtual platform to share strong practices, self-monitoring, holistic engagement across state staff, etc.) |  |  |