



Uniting on Common Ground

An Evaluation of Technical Assistance
for AEEF Regional Partnership Building



ARIZONA EARLY EDUCATION FUNDS

Eva Marie Shivers, J.D., Ph.D.

Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change
Indigo Cultural Center, Inc.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Arizona Early Education Funds (AEEF) were established as a public/private partnership to help communities across Arizona build the quality and capacity of early care and education programs for children birth to age five. To begin to change outcomes for young children and their families and ensure that every child in Arizona starts school ready to succeed, one of AEEF's funding strategies involved Regional Partnership Development. In order to overcome the vast fragmentation of the early care and education system, AEEF committed to investing resources that would require regions to work together to stimulate collaboration. The resulting Regional Partnerships were established on the principle of local implementation and state accountability. A larger goal of funding a network of AEEF's Regional Partnerships was to help build the infrastructure necessary to disseminate *First Things First* funds. To help ensure success, local communities and Regional Partnerships were supported by a state level entity that provided professional development, technical assistance, accountability and resources.

The broad goal of this evaluation is to document the process of AEEF Technical Assistance so that we can build the capacity for more statewide technical assistance and community partnership-building. More specifically, this evaluation will highlight findings about the process and effectiveness of AEEF's Technical Assistance in order to provide guidance for:

- Smooth transition to *First Things First* Regional Councils
- Future TA capacity-building efforts
- Effective approaches for Regional Partnerships
- Future funding priorities for Regional Partnerships and TA services.

Results

One could characterize the AEEF technical assistance strategy as a Margaret Mead approach to funding systems building, investing in "passionate individuals" working together to produce change, rather than prescribing a specific structure or set of activities.

The AEEF technical assistance is based on an *Asset-Based Community Development* model. This strategy involves investing in Regional teams of committed leaders in early childhood development and health from both the public and private sectors, including community agencies, service providers, and advocacy organizations. It does not specify a specific organizational or governance structure, recognizing that each Region often already has a number of different planning and governance structures around early learning. Instead, AEEF's technical assistance is designed to enable Regions to work through existing structures or create new structures where appropriate, and to provide additional resources and information to strategically move the Region's overall early childhood agenda forward.

AEEF's technical assistance has two major components:

- 1) Individualized consulting for each Partnership and
- 2) State-wide coordination and assistance for Partnerships.



Who are the Technical Assistance Consultants?

The TA Coordinating Agency (UWT) recruited and gathered 14 highly educated and experienced consultants to help the Partnerships complete their work. Each Partnership was assigned to one specific TA Consultant.

Key Findings:

- 90% of the TA Consultants have at least a Masters Degree; 40% have a Ph.D.
- They come from varied professional backgrounds such as – developmental psychology, education, political science, social work, nonprofit business management, and creative writing.
- The average amount of time they have been serving as consultants in any field is 11 years.
- The average amount of time they have been serving as consultants in the field of Early Childhood Development is 3.5 years.

What are the Regional Partnerships' Experiences with AEEFs TA Consultants?

The Regional Partnerships responded overwhelmingly that their experience with both their TA Consultant and the TA Coordinating Agency was highly positive. Average ratings based on Partnership-defined objectives, AEEF's Scope of Work (See Appendix A), and TA Effectiveness were "excellent," "exceeding expectations," and "highly effective." In fact it was difficult to discover any trends in the data that varied from a score of "excellent." (See attached Tables)

Examples of Helpful Tasks and Strategies provided by TA Consultants included:

- Assistance with grant applications
- Being present as a sounding board (coaching, mentoring)
- Big picture, visioning – keeping partnership focused
- Developing "Operational Guidelines"
- Guidance in using a grassroots approach
- Encouraging inclusion of minorities and parents in the Partnerships
- Keeping Partnerships on track in a timely fashion
- Framing knowledge about Early Childhood
- Providing cutting edge research and best practices

What are the Partnerships' and Consultants' Experience with State-Wide TA Coordination?

Both the Partnerships and the Consultants were exceedingly satisfied with the coordination of TA efforts. (See attached Tables.) The most helpful aspect of the TA Coordination was the Monthly State-Wide Regional Partnership Meetings. These meetings served as a forum for representatives from each Partnership and the all the TA Consultants to come together to discuss a variety of issues including: progress on goals, challenges, new directions in state policies, best practices, new resources, etc.

Room for Growth...

Despite the excellence of any program or initiative, there's always room for growth. Feedback from the focus group revealed the following themes:

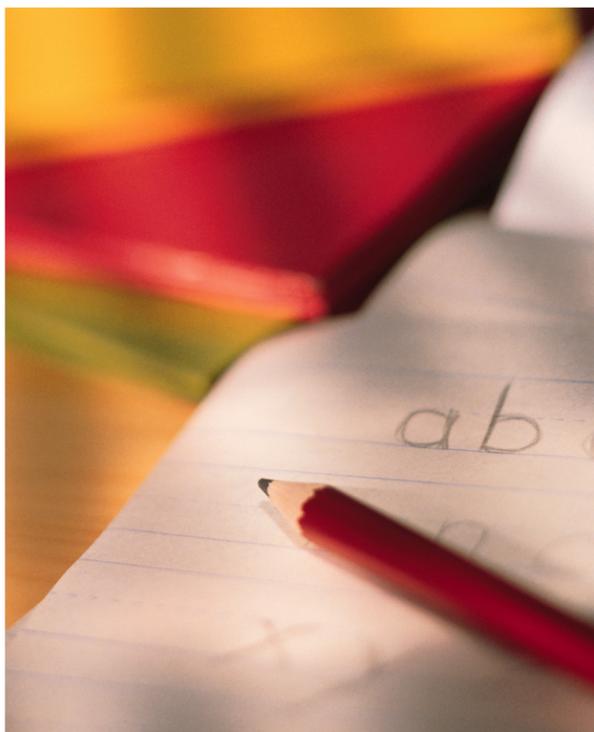
- Increase TA capacity within different regions of the state to promote "community-insiders"
- More opportunities for TA Consultants' training and growth
- Learn from each others' expertise
- Share more resources with each other
- View other TA models in the state and country
- Have more conference calls/meetings with one another



Implications

- AEEF's Technical Assistance is working well and a great investment of funds.
- The key to success seems to be highly trained and experienced consultants and an asset-based community model.
- Partnerships are working well and are anxious to collaborate with on-going efforts of *First Things First*.
- Investing in more training and support for the TA Consultants might yield even greater returns.

INTRODUCTION



Background

Across the country, public and private sector partners are joining forces to improve early development systems – such as health and early care and education – as part of a greater effort to improve the lives of children and families in their communities. These partnerships have many forms, and can have diverse plans for helping young children. Although each partnership is unique, they typically share some common characteristics: bringing together public- and private-sector partners; working together towards shared goals and objectives; and each partner contributing time, expertise and other resources. The public/private partnership in the state of Arizona is a noteworthy example of applying this “common purposes” framework.

In 2004 the Arizona philanthropic community and the Governor initiated the AEEF to raise private, philanthropic resources to support high quality early care and education in Arizona. To date, the funds have generated \$4 million. To begin to change outcomes for young children and their families and ensure that every child in Arizona starts school ready to succeed, one of AEEF’s funding strategies involved Regional Partnership development. In order to overcome the vast fragmentation of the early care and education system, AEEF committed to investing resources that would require regions to work together to stimulate collaboration and leadership development. The resulting Regional Partnerships were established on the principle of local implementation and state accountability. A larger goal of funding a network of AEEF

Regional Partnerships was to help build the infrastructure necessary to disseminate *First Things First* funds (formerly known as Proposition 203).

The initial discussion to create a statewide ballot initiative began four years ago and an effort to formally place Proposition 203 on the ballot started in 2005. Passed into law by the voters of Arizona, Proposition 203’s stated intent is to provide the necessary coordination and funding for early childhood development and health programs in Arizona. In order to accomplish this it creates a revenue stream, governance models, and delivery system. The delivery system is predicated on a Regional Council model making local decisions about what the priorities are for a region.

There is broad and intentional overlap between the AEEF Regional Partnerships and the regional council’s created by Proposition 203. However, both efforts have unique characteristics. (See www.arizonaearlyeducationfunds.org for a detailed analysis of AEEF Regional Partnerships and FTF Regional Councils, Brecon Group, 2006). As there are considerable similarities between both governing structures, the findings from this evaluation might prove insightful to the ongoing effort to establish effective technical assistance or “coaches” to *First Things First*’s Regional Councils.

Comprehensive Community Initiatives

States developing comprehensive early learning systems have to simultaneously ensure that a strong community infrastructure is in place. Successful early learning systems are seamless when communities are equipped to raise public awareness, identify existing resources and unmet needs, deliver quality services, and document evidence of success. A common method of promoting “ready communities” is to use a “Comprehensive Community Initiative” model. Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI) are neighborhood- or locally-based efforts that seek to improve the lives of children and families and to improve conditions in the local community. There are two main principles that guide CCIs – comprehensiveness and community building. Comprehensiveness refers to efforts that seek to capitalize on bringing together stakeholders from different sectors like education, business, faith community, etc. Community building refers to the goal of increasing a community’s capacity to enhance the well being of its residents. Empowering individuals, associations or other community institutions, can strengthen capacity. Though these two principles may seem broad and straightforward, translating them into practice is a complicated endeavor.

How has Arizona integrated the CCI model into its efforts? As part of the AEEF effort, a grant process was initiated. The grant process was designed to foster the development of Regional Partnerships in order to build local capacity in communities across the state to coordinate, support and promote comprehensive early care and education programs and

services. The AEEF Regional Partnership grant effort worked to both identify the various levels of development of existing partnerships and create new partnerships (where none existed) in regions (broadly defined as counties) throughout the state. Regional Partnerships applied for direct funding –or grants – in order to strengthen the capacity of their partnerships. There are currently 16 Regional Partnerships that have been operating for various lengths of time ranging from over two years to just under 6 months. (See www.arizonaearlyeducationfunds.org for detailed evaluation of the AEEF’s Regional Partnership activities, Lecroy & Mulligan, 2007.)

Technical Assistance for CCI’s

Technical Assistance is a vital resource, especially useful in community mobilization and involving key stakeholders. The provision of Technical Assistance in Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) can take several forms and can serve several functions. Technical Assistance may be provided centrally by a funder, or it may be sought by the CCI governance entity and other participants. It may be furnished by one or multiple Technical Assistance consultants. It may focus on process issues (such as governance, committee development, strategic planning) or programmatic issues (such as service provision, advocacy, public awareness campaigns). Technical Assistance consultants may be used as supplementary staff to get concrete work done, or they may be asked to promote long-term capacity building by focusing on the transference of skills and knowledge to community partners or organizations (Aspen Institute, 1997). Each of these choices on how TA is structured may change as the CCI develops and these choices can also impact how well a CCI’s objectives are ultimately carried out.

The Aspen Institute’s Roundtable on CCI issues some recommendations for successful Technical Assistance strategies (1997):

- An initiative must be clear about its definition of the problem and what is needed, so it can use technical assistance effectively and not be driven by it.
- It is critical to engage technical assistance providers who know how to listen to the initiative and community, provide practical options to accomplish what needs to get done, and then allow the initiative to decide next steps.
- Technical assistance need not come from professionals or academics; at times, peer-to-peer consulting or input from neighborhood people can be the best assistance, especially in areas such as community organizing or recruiting and engaging residents.
- Community control of technical assistance funding and contracts can help make sure the initiative gets what it wants.

Introducing AEEF Technical Assistance

To help ensure success in Arizona, and prepare communities for the influx of funding from *First Things First*, Regional Partnerships are not only granted direct funding, but as a result of a RFP process, they are also supported by a state-wide entity that provides professional development, Technical Assistance, accountability and resources. To date, AEEF has provided \$1.2 million specifically earmarked for the provision of Technical Assistance. This funding is completely separate from the direct funding (e.g., grants) received by each of the Regional Partnerships.

A major component of supporting the work of AEEF’s Regional Partnerships includes the provision of Technical Assistance. Some of the major tasks with which the state-wide Technical Assistance entity was charged include: 1) building a cadre of professionals with a broad set of skills and abilities who could serve as consultants to the Regional Partnerships; 2) overseeing, managing and scheduling the work of all the consultants; and 3) creating/organizing the agenda and schedule for the monthly statewide communication forums and provide technical assistance to Regional Partnerships during the forums. Additionally, AEEF’s Technical Assistance was designed to assist each of the Regional Partnerships with twelve distinct objectives. (See Box.)

AEEF’S SCOPE OF WORK Technical Assistance

- Creating & sustaining Partnerships
- Completing & analyzing community assessments
- Developing a strategic plan
- Ensuring quality
- Promoting professional development
- Defining performance measures
- Developing resources
- Implementing local marketing & public awareness campaigns
- Implementing research & evaluation
- Implementing an accountable system of finance & budgeting
- Monitoring & reporting systems
- Building leadership capacity

All of the objectives for AEEF’s Technical Assistance were created by a collaborative effort from members of the School-Readiness Board, AEEF, committee members from Proposition 203, and the Brecon Group, Inc. For a description of the entire AEEF’s Scope of Work, see **Appendix A**.

Evaluation of Technical Assistance

In general, evaluations for Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI) can have several different purposes. They can be formative (i.e., a learning experience) and provide feedback to key stakeholders in the initiative. Second, evaluations can serve as evidence of whether progress on desired outcomes is being made. And finally, they can be used as a “social learning tool” for stakeholders not directly involved in the initiative, and generalizations from the findings can be used to inform future policy, practice, and research.

The broad goal of this evaluation is to describe and explore AEEF’s Technical Assistance so that we can strengthen the capacity for effective statewide Technical Assistance and community partnership-building. More specifically, this evaluation will highlight findings about the process and effectiveness of AEEF’s Technical Assistance in order to provide guidance for:

- Future TA capacity-building efforts
- Effective approaches with Regional Partnerships
- Future funding priorities for Regional Partnerships and TA services
- Guidance for implementation of *First Things First’s* Regional Councils.



In the work of Regional Partnerships – as with most CCIs – it is common to experience tension between process vs. product and insiders vs. outsiders (Aspen Institute, 1997). Some of the challenges involved in evaluating the work of CCIs include: locating and using appropriate measures and methods; finding a balance between reporting measurable outcomes as well as process indicators; using imported benchmarks to define “success” while still trying to honor local goals; and being mindful of the political implications of the findings in an evaluation.

This evaluation represents an initial attempt at developing measures and strategies for collecting data on Technical Assistance for Regional Partnerships, as there is a dearth of existing evaluations in the literature from which we could draw. However, we extended the literature on early care and education consultants and CCI development to create the evaluation framework used here. This evaluation, which is exploratory and descriptive in nature, seeks to answer the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the background characteristics of the Technical Assistance Consultants?
How did they rate effectiveness of the Consultants?
2. What are the Regional Partnerships’ experiences with the Technical Assistance Consultants?
How did they rate effectiveness of the Consultants?
3. What are the Regional Partnerships’ experiences with the TA Coordinating Agency?
How did they rate effectiveness of the Coordinating Agency?
4. What are the Consultants’ experiences with the Regional Partnerships and the TA Coordinating Agency?
How did they rate effectiveness of the Coordinating Agency?
5. What are the experiences of the Coordinating Agency in providing Technical Assistance?

Exploring the answers to these questions is critical in maximizing the learning that can come out of the AEEF Technical Assistance initiative. Specifically, these questions provide a framework for understanding the links between objectives posited by AEEF and the strategies used by the TA coordinating-agency. Understanding these links can move us closer to answering the broad question, “How have we expanded our knowledge about what makes effective Technical Assistance for communities in Arizona?” The research questions posed in this evaluation also attempt to reflect the balance between “inside” and “outside” knowledge by acknowledging the experiential knowledge of the participants, while at the same time trying to frame responses in an “objective” assessment of the progress and effectiveness of AEEF’s Technical Assistance.

METHODS



Participants

Participants for this evaluation included the Technical Assistance Coordinating-Agency, Consultants that were hired by the TA Coordinating-Agency, and representatives from the Regional Partnerships.

The Coordinating-Agency that received the contract to coordinate the Technical Assistance for the Regional Partnerships was *United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona – Community Development, First Focus on Kids*. The key staff involved in coordinating this entire effort included one coordinator and one manager. Since 1999, the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona (UWT) has demonstrated considerable success at establishing and running completely integrated community councils in the area of child and youth development using strength-based guiding principles and a partnership model.

There were 12 TA Consultants (out of a possible 14) who participated in this evaluation. And 16 (out of a possible 17) Regional Partnerships participated in the evaluation as well ¹. Responses from the Regional Partnerships were collected from the Partnership Coordinator and one key staff person.

¹ One Consultant and one Community Partnership were excluded from this evaluation because they were not funded through AEEF, and were an affiliation of the TA Coordinating-Agency, United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona.

Procedure

A mixed-methodology, participatory approach was used in the design and implementation of this evaluation. A participatory approach to research involves the use of participants or community members in all aspects of the evaluation – from designing research questions to interpreting the results. A participatory process introduces perspectives of the participants into the fabric of the inquiry (Park, 2001). This approach was used in attempts to reduce the inherent tension within the “us” vs. “them” nature of the evaluation enterprise (Aspen Institute, 1997). AEEF, Regional Partnership members, Consultants and the TA Coordinating-Agency were consulted throughout various aspects of this evaluation – including the design of the evaluation, methodology and instrumentation, questions and themes explored, and interpretation of findings.

The first stage of gathering information included an informal “interview” with the TA Coordinating-Agency. This “interview” included gathering background information about Technical Assistance, a description of on-going support and coordination, perceptions about the effectiveness of the TA thus far, and suggestions and recommendations for themes the evaluation should pursue. The notes from this “interview” were used to develop some of the questions for the questionnaires and focus groups.

The second stage of the evaluation consisted of distributing a questionnaire to Regional Partnership coordinators and a separate, but similar, questionnaire to the TA Consultants. Questionnaires were completed and returned either by mail, via e-mail, or in-person at the monthly statewide Regional Partnership meeting. Self-administered questionnaires were used for several reasons: 1) they were flexible in the sense that a wide range of information could be collected; 2) participants’ responses were standardized and therefore useful for making comparisons and determining descriptive statistics – like means and ranges; and 3) anonymity and privacy encouraged more candid and honest responses.

The third stage of information gathering involved conducting separate focus groups with the Regional Partnerships and the TA Consultants. The purpose of the focus groups was to capture responses from a group-perspective, and explore nuanced themes that the questionnaires could not adequately address. Focus groups are best used in situations where the concept or area that researchers are interested in is relatively less known, and the evaluation is expected to gain much from involvement of the interested community (Edmunds, 1999). Additionally, focus group methodology allows diverse perspectives to emerge.



Each focus group session lasted approximately 1.5 hours. They were tape-recorded, and administrative staff from AEEF completed the transcription. Questions and protocols for both focus groups were based on broad research questions of the evaluation, preliminary responses to the questionnaires, recommendations from the TA Coordinating-Agency, and current developments in the evolving state early childhood system – *First Things First*. (See Appendix E & F.) These issues/questions were used to establish broad categories of codes. Once apriori coding categories were established, the second step of the analysis required looking through the transcripts for the themes representing codes.

Instruments

Regional Partnership Questionnaire.

This questionnaire was divided into four main sections:

- 1) How well has your TA Consultant helped you reach your unique Partnership objectives;
- 2) How effective is your TA Consultant on reaching objectives established by the “Technical Assistance Scope of Work.” (See Appendix A);
- 3) Evaluation of Consultants’ Knowledge, Skill and Interpersonal Style;
- 4) Evaluation of effectiveness of TA Coordinating-Agency². An example of the questionnaire used can be found in Appendix C.

² The 3rd and 4th sections of this questionnaire were adapted from Parsons, R.D. & Meyers, J. (1984). *Developing Consultation Skills*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

TA Consultants’ Questionnaire.

This questionnaire was divided into three main sections:

- 1) Education and professional experience;
- 2) Self-assessment on effectiveness in reaching objectives established by the “Technical Assistance Scope of Work.” (See Appendix A);
- 3) Evaluation of effectiveness of TA Coordinating-Agency and Skills and Knowledge³. An example of the questionnaire used can be found in Appendix D.

³ The 3rd section of this questionnaire was also adapted from Parsons, R.D. & Meyers, J. (1984). *Developing Consultation Skills*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The protocol on both versions of the questionnaires consisted of items on **Likert rating scales** and items that solicited a **descriptive response**.

An example of an item on a Likert rating scale is:

“Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with your TA Consultant.”

An example of a descriptive response item is:

“What aspects of United Way’s Technical Assistance were particularly strong and/or useful?”

RESULTS



One could characterize AEEF’s Technical Assistance strategy as a Margaret Mead approach to funding systems building, investing in “passionate individuals” working together to produce change, rather than prescribing a specific structure or set of activities.

The United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona (UWT) based their Technical Assistance on an *Asset-Based Community Development* model. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) initiatives focus on identifying and utilizing the assets of a community – which include the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, the resources of the public, private and non-profit institutions, and the physical and economic resources of local places, so the community itself can respond to its own needs and issues (Kretzmann, McKnight, Dobrowolski, & Puntenney, ABCD Institute, 2005).

AEEF’s community development strategy involves investing in regional teams (mostly designated by county) of committed leaders in early childhood development and health from both the public and private sectors, including community agencies, service providers, and advocacy organizations. AEEF’s community development strategy does not specify a specific organizational or governance structure, recognizing that each Region often already has a number of different planning and governance structures around early learning. Instead, AEEF’s Technical Assistance model is designed to enable Regions to work through existing structures or create new structures where appropriate, and to provide additional resources and information to strategically move the Region’s overall early childhood agenda forward. AEEF’s Technical Assistance has two major components: 1) Individualized consulting for each Regional Partnership and 2) State-wide coordination and assistance for Regional Partnerships.

Who are the Technical Assistance Consultants?

One of the major objectives of AEEF’s Technical Assistance was to identify a cadre TA Consultants with a range of skills, abilities and experience working in various regions in the state. The TA Coordinating-Agency (UWT) recruited and gathered 14 highly educated and experienced consultants to help the Regional Partnerships complete their work. Consultants were recruited based on a combination of their experience in partnership-building as well as their content expertise. The TA Coordinating Agency specifically sought consultants who had diverse areas of expertise – not all consultants had specific expertise in the field of early childhood development/education. Each Regional Partnership was assigned to one specific TA Consultant.

Key Findings:

- 90% of the TA Consultants have at least a Masters Degree; 40% have a Ph.D.
- TA Consultants come from varied professional backgrounds such as – developmental psychology, education, political science, social work, nonprofit business management, sociology and creative writing.
- The average amount of time they have been serving as consultants in any field is 11 years.
- The average amount of time they have been serving as consultants in the field of Early Childhood Development is 3.5 years.
- 60% of the TA Consultants report that they had professional experience in direct service (e.g., teaching, nursing, etc.)
- 50% of the TA Consultants are assigned to more than one Region/County.
- Nearly all of the TA Consultants are highly committed to their profession of being a community consultant (e.g., view position as their primary career – not just a “paycheck” or a stepping-stone to another career; anticipate still being a consultant 5 years from now).

What are the Regional Partnerships' Experiences with AEEFs TA Consultants?

When asked the broad question: "What is the role of a TA Consultant," Regional Partnerships responded with the following themes: guidance, support, development of tools and evaluations, facilitating the partnership's development and capacity, and encouraging creative ways of thinking.

Regional Partnerships rated how well their TA Consultant helped them with their Partnership's specific objectives. The objectives for which the Partnerships reported receiving highly effective assistance are listed in Table 1 below:



Table 1

Partnership-Articulated Objectives

Please rate how effective the TA has been at helping you achieve your stated objectives [4 = excellent].

	Mean
Create big vision and purpose for Partnerships	4.00
Develop Logic Model - write grant proposals	4.00
Build/Enhance Partnership	3.60
Self assessment - including Discovery Tool	3.00
Professional development for Early Childhood professionals	3.00
Governance and organizational structure	3.00

Initially, there seemed to be some uncertainty about how Regional Partnerships would make "good-use" of their TA Consultants – despite the provision of written guidance materials from the TA Coordinating-Agency. Most of the Partnerships had no previous experience or frame of reference for working with a TA Consultant. Several Partnerships reported that they initially worked with their Consultant on preparing their grant application to AEEF. Several others reported that they initially asked their Consultant to help them with establishing the organizational structure for their Regional Partnership.

Many, but not all, of the Regional Partnerships reported that having more explicit communication about the possible roles the TA Consultant could play would have been useful. Other suggestions for overcoming this initial barrier included: receipt of a TA Consultant's job description; taking their TA Consultant on a "community-tour" at the beginning stages of their work together; providing TA Consultants with background information about existing resources of the community and where they currently are in the process of establishing a cohesive early-learning system.

Most of the Regional Partnerships reported that their Technical Assistance Consultants are currently involved with all aspects of the Partnerships' work. The Regional Partnerships reported receiving Technical Assistance on a wide range of topics.

Some of the commonly reported tasks and strategies included:

- Assistance with grant applications
- Being present as a sounding board (coaching, mentoring)
- Big picture, visioning – keeping partnership focused
- Developing "Operational Guidelines"
- Bringing in new Partnership members
- Guidance in using a grassroots approach
- Encouraging inclusion of minorities and parents in the Partnerships
- Keeping Partnerships on track in a timely fashion
- Framing knowledge about Early Childhood Development/Education
- Providing cutting edge research and best practices
- Assistance with evaluation (needs assessment) and development of assessment tools

In regards to communication, Regional Partnerships reported that their TA Consultants' mode and frequency of communication was based on the Partnerships' needs at the time. Some reported bi-weekly communication – others reported monthly communication – while others reported that they arranged time for communication prior to Regional Partnership meetings. Common modes of communication included teleconferencing and email. The content of the communication with TA Consultants tended to focus on themes like: updates on current developments within the Regional Partnership; Consultant distributing information about new research or best-practices; Consultants helping

the Partnerships to keep up with and learn from what other Regional Partnerships were doing; Partnerships asking questions about specific topics; Consultant acting as moderator for communication among Regional Partnership members.

Regional Partnerships rated the effectiveness of the TA Consultants on the following domains – AEEF Scope of Work Objectives, Knowledge and Skills, Interpersonal Skills. Overall, AEEF TA Consultants received impressive ratings in all these domains. The next 3 tables (Table 2, 3, 4) list ratings on specific items.

Table 2

Objectives from "Scope of Work" Document (Appendix A)

Please rate how well the TA you have received to date met your expectations for the following objectives. [1 = Falling far below expectations; 4= Exceeding expectations]

	Mean
Developing an ECE community-wide strategic plan (SOW #3)	4.00
Supporting action implementation (SOW #6)	3.78
Building leadership capacity (SOW #8)	3.70
Promoting professional development (SOW #4)	3.57
Creating, enhancing and maintaining partnerships (SOW #1)	3.56
Completing self assessments like the Discovery Tool (SOW #2)	3.30
Developing resources to grow the partnerships (SOW #5)	3.22
Ensuring key community stakeholders are engaged in the Partnership (SOW #10)	3.00
Developing resource materials that can assist Partnerships (SOW #9)	2.80
Implementing local marketing and public awareness campaigns (SOW #7)	2.75

Table 3

Ratings of Consultant's Knowledge and Skills

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with your Consultant. [4 = strongly agree]

	Mean
Consultant demonstrates respectful awareness of cultural diversity	3.73
Consultant demonstrates effective organizational skills	3.60
Consultant has worked to clarify our roles and responsibilities	3.60
Consultant elicits information and is good listener	3.45
Consultant versed in EC content and building collaborations	3.45
Consultant provides prompt feedback	3.40
Consultant recommends app strategies and resources	3.40



Table 4

Ratings of Consultant's Interpersonal Skills

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with your Consultant. [4 = strongly agree]

	Mean
Comfortable to talk with	3.82
Demonstrates flexibility and openness	3.82
Generally pleasant	3.82
Supported active participation in consultation process	3.82
Creative in examining problems and options	3.80
Respectful and caring	3.64
Expresses ideas, but not overpowering	3.45

What were the Partnerships' Experiences with State-Wide TA Coordination?

The Partnerships were very satisfied with the coordination of TA efforts. Statewide TA Coordination received particularly high ratings in the areas of flexibility, quality and effectiveness. (See Table 5.)

Table 5

Ratings of Consultant's Interpersonal Skills

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with your Consultant. [4 = strongly agree]

	Mean
UW flexible enough to change if wasn't meeting our needs	3.50
UW TA has been effective	3.50
Overall quality of UW TA was high	3.44
UW TA received was tailored to our needs	3.40
TA process met our expectations	3.33
Methods for gathering information to assess our needs were helpful	3.22
Reason for providing United Way was TA clearly defined	2.89

Statewide Regional Partnership Meetings

One of the most salient findings in this evaluation is that the Partnerships really valued their experiences in the statewide monthly meetings that were coordinated and facilitated by the TA-Coordinating agency. These meetings served as a forum for representatives from each Partnership and the all the TA Consultants to come together to discuss a variety of issues including: progress on goals, challenges, new directions in state policies, best practices, new resources, etc. In particular there were two broad themes that emerged in regards to the usefulness of these statewide monthly meetings – 1) receiving information/resources and 2) feeling empowered.

In regards to receiving information during the statewide monthly meetings, Partnerships reported that they liked learning about what other Partnerships were doing, they liked learning about other resources available in their region and around the state, and they benefited from information shared by guest speakers who presented focused information on particular topics like the on-going development of *First Things First* efforts. One Partnership Coordinator commented: "My understanding of partnership development, systems, early childhood systems and systems change had to grow radically to do my job well, and the TA [I received from United Way] was very helpful to my personal professional development."

Partnerships also reported that they often left the statewide monthly meetings feeling empowered by the recognition that they were all contributing to a major statewide movement. In addition, Partnerships felt empowered by understanding that many of the other Partnerships were also experiencing the same struggles and frustrations in their own regional work. In the words of one Partnership Coordinator: "United Way's TA helped me feel that we are really all in this together."

What were the Consultants' Experiences?

How did Consultants define **their role** with Partnerships?

- Responding and supporting Partnerships' needs.
- Community assessments, facilitating meetings and moving things forward.
- Being proactive.
- Asking questions to take a holistic approach.
- Raising Partnership's awareness of state programs and resources.
- Assisting with planning.
- Bringing a different perspective.
- Staying focused on the larger picture and not getting lost in the details.
- Finding out where a Partnership is in the process.
- Assistants teaching Partnerships how to work with a Consultant.
- Cheering them on.

Some of the commonly reported **barriers and challenges in the initial process:**

- Partnerships didn't know what to expect from us.
- Challenging to focus and strategize priority areas.
- Differences in the willingness and ability to use the [Self-Assessment] Tool ("Discovery Tool").
- Negotiating different leadership styles and how Partnerships viewed their need for Technical Assistance.

Some of the **common strategies** Consultants reported using with Partnerships included:

- Responding to concerns over the phone
- Attending partnership meetings
- Initiating new projects and/or new directions
- Working with Partnerships on an as-needed basis
- Providing training and workshops on particular issues



Consultants' Self-Evaluation on SOW Objectives

We asked Consultants to rate themselves on the same AEEF Scope of Work Objectives on which the Partnerships also rated them. Consultants' self-rating and the Partnerships' ratings on the SOW Objectives were highly correlated ($r = .72, p < .05$). We also asked Consultants to indicate how prepared they felt they were in being able to help Partnerships reach each SOW Objective. In general, Consultants felt that they were effective and well-prepared to assist Partnerships with the "process" of Partnership-building (e.g., building leadership capacity, conducting community assessments). However, they felt less effective and well-prepared to facilitate more of the "product" type of activities (e.g., developing resource materials, implementing public awareness campaigns). (See Table 6.)

Table 6

Objectives from "Scope of Work" Document (Appendix A)

Please rate how well the TA you have received to date met your expectations for the following objectives.
[1 = Falling far below expectations; 4= Exceeding expectations]

	Mean	% of Consultants who reported they felt prepared & supported to meet this objective
Completing self assessments like the Discovery Tool (SOW #2)	3.70	67%
Assisting Partnerships in conducting community assessments (SOW #11)	3.64	79%
Building leadership capacity (SOW #8)	3.62	87%
Creating, enhancing and maintaining partnerships (SOW #1)	3.57	100%
Supporting action implementation (SOW #6)	3.40	87%
Developing an ECE community-wide strategic plan (SOW #3)	3.27	71%
Ensuring that key community stakeholders are engaged in the Partnership (SOW #10)	3.20	93%
Developing resources to grow the partnerships (SOW #5)	3.11	56%
Promoting professional development (SOW #4)	2.92	60%
Developing resource materials that can assist Partnerships (SOW #9)	2.92	53%
Implementing local marketing & public awareness campaigns (SOW #7)	2.83	53%

What were the Consultants' Experiences with State-Wide TA Coordination?

Like the Partnerships, the Consultants also rated the TA-Coordination very highly in both effectiveness and knowledge & skills. (See Tables 7 & 8.)

Table 7

Effectiveness in Supporting Consultants' Work

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with United Way coordination. [4 = strongly agree]

	Mean
Support and assistance from UW has been effective	3.63
UW flexible enough to change if wasn't meeting our needs	3.57
Process of working with UW met our expectations	3.57
Overall quality of UW TA was high	3.57
Support received from UW was tailored to our needs	3.29
UW's Methods for gathering information to assess our needs was helpful	3.25

Table 8

TA Coordinator Knowledge and Skills

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with United Way coordination. [4 = strongly agree]

	Mean
UW Coordinators versed in Early Childhood content and building collaborations	3.78
UW Coordinator demonstrates respectful awareness of cultural diversity	3.67
UW Coordinator recommends appropriate strategies and resources	3.56
UW Coordinator demonstrates effective organizational skills	3.56
UW Coordinator has worked to clarify our roles and responsibilities	3.50
UW Coordinator provides prompt feedback	3.38

In addition to rating TA-Coordination on the above-scales, Consultants also reported during the focus group that other helpful aspects of TA-Coordination included: receiving the bio-sketches of the other Consultants, receiving consistent feedback from the Coordinating-Agency, and attending the same statewide monthly meetings as the Partnerships. Specifically, Consultants reported that the monthly meetings also helped them figure out what their roles were as TA Consultants.

Room for Growth...

Despite the excellence of any program or initiative, there's always room for growth. Feedback from the focus group revealed the following themes:

- Desire for closer communication with the broader efforts of the Arizona Early Education Funds and *First Things First*.
- Increase TA capacity within all regions of the state to promote "community-insiders."
- More opportunities for TA Consultants' training and growth
 - Learn from each others' expertise
 - Share more resources with each other
 - Partner with and assist one another with TA
 - View other TA models in the state and country
 - Have more conference calls/meetings with one another

One of the constant themes that emerged in both the Partnerships' and the Consultants' feedback revolved around the initial challenges of not quite knowing the role of Technical Assistance from both the Consultants as well as the TA Coordinating-Agency.

Consultants suggested future strategies to **overcome initial barriers** and challenges:

- Consultants sharing ideas and resources with each other.
- Speaking with other consultants about their Partnerships.
- Having a "get to know you" process.
- Meeting the Partnerships where they are – not where we think they should be.



What were the TA Coordinating Agency's Experiences?

We also asked the TA Coordinating Agency for some insight into their experiences providing technical assistance to both the Regional Partnerships as well as the TA Consultants.

What were some of your most rewarding experiences working with Regional Partnerships?

1. Seeing communities that previously had no infrastructure for early childhood education really organize around the issue. For example: [in two small counties that were combined into one Regional Partnership] though the partnership is small, several school principals and other important decision makers from around the two counties have become members of the partnership. [Another Regional Partnership] has also done a great deal of work in the towns bordering Utah, an area that is often left out of the process. Because of their hard work, the counties are much more aware of early childhood education and *First Things First*.
2. The increase in leadership of the coordinators has been particularly impressive in the last year and a half. We were able to develop new early childhood advocates and professionals in rural communities, where none existed before.
3. Related, the sharing of knowledge between coordinators and partnerships has been wonderful. [The coordinator] in Coconino County and [the coordinator] in Yavapai County communicate regularly, for example. At a recent statewide meeting on parent engagement, one coordinator said "I realized after listening and talking to everyone that I don't have to invite parents to meetings to include them meaningfully – there are many other effective way of including them." This is a lesson we could not teach by simply stating it; the coordinator learned it because it came from her peers. We have also built a community of early childhood professionals from across the state that is extremely cohesive.
4. It has been rewarding to see how the work we are doing with the partnerships will be an asset to *First Things First's* development of an early education system. Especially in areas where very little was being done for early childhood education, *First Things First* is lucky that they will have community work to build on and expand.

What were some of your biggest challenges working with Regional Partnerships?

1. Partnerships needed to reach a certain level of development before they really understood how to make the most of Technical Assistance. We noticed early on that the "B" and "C" level partnerships used their consultants more often and for a wider variety of assistance. "A" level partnerships mainly used TA to facilitate meetings in the beginning.
2. It was sometimes challenging for us to provide meaningful assistance to the partnerships at statewide meeting because they were in such different places of development. Early on, we had a meeting on community assessment. Some of the

"A" level partnerships felt it wasn't helpful to them. Over time, they used the information presented, but we also want them to leave each meeting feeling that it was worth their time.

3. It has been a challenge to see how the AEEF's partnerships will merge or transform as a result of *First Things First*. It remains challenging to lead a group that is not sure how their work will evolve in the future. However, in many cases, this challenge has emboldened Regional Partnerships to work even harder on their goals.

If you had more money/resources, what would you do differently?

1. Because we had limited dollars for Technical Assistance, each partnership was asked to budget for its TA Consultant's time. Though some of the newer partnerships who weren't as experienced with TA didn't use all of their TA dollars, many ran out of funds. We would definitely have provided more time with TA Consultants if we had more money.
2. In a way, I think it was good for the partnerships to have limited resources from AEEF; they grew to realize the need to solicit additional funding from other sources.

What were your most rewarding experiences working with TA Consultants?

1. We were both amazed by the credentials of our TA Consultants the first time we met with them. Though not all of them had experience in early childhood, they had a great deal of complimentary knowledge of topics like community assessment, evaluation, facilitation, etc. They have really worked as a team to learn from each other and provide the Regional Partnerships with a broad range of assistance.
2. Many of the consultants have worked with the same Regional Partnerships from the beginning of AEEF. They have formed very close, collaborative relationships with the coordinators. Developing the partnerships' infrastructures has really been a team effort.

What were some of your biggest challenges working with TA Consultants?

1. Some of the consultants were added recently, due to the funding of additional Regional Partnerships and the growth of the original partnerships. Because they were lacking the history of AEEF, it was sometimes a challenge to bring them up to speed.
2. Because the TA Consultants live all around the state, it was difficult for them to meet aside from the monthly statewide meetings. Though we did hold several meetings for the consultants only, participation was limited.

If you had more money/resources, what would you do differently with the TA Consultants?

1. Again, we probably would have provided more hours of Technical Assistance. Along the same lines, one consultant we originally hoped to work with was too expensive for our budget.

DISCUSSION

This section will highlight some of the major findings that can shape our overall framework for thinking about distinct aspects of AEEF's Technical Assistance. First, it is apparent that the TA Coordinating-Agency was successfully able to convene a highly skilled group of committed TA Consultants. Based on their extensive previous experience with community collaborations they were able to recruit consultants from different parts of the state. Since the majority of the Consultants came from the Tucson area and Maricopa County, one particular challenge seemed to be the lack of Consultant capacity within the other Regions around the state. Building capacity in this area also points to a need for on-going professional development of Consultants, which was also articulated by the Consultants participating in this evaluation. As we think about effective professional development and building capacity for more TA Consultants we should also consider that an essential characteristic displayed by almost all of the Consultants in this study was an affinity for the emotional labor and commitment involved in their work with AEEF. One question we may want to explore is: "How can we develop professional pathways and models that encourage and deepen one's compatibility with the level of emotional labor inherent in this type of work, in order to build our pool of qualified TA Consultants?"

Process vs. Product – In regards to the content of the TA provided to Partnerships, it seems as though the focus was mostly on building and growing Partnerships. This is what is referred to as "process" and contrary to other literature on Technical Assistance with community collaboration initiatives, it seems as though AEEF's TA focus on operational guidelines and governance seemed to be very successful. On the other hand, both Partnerships and Consultants reported that "product" oriented activities were a bit more of a challenge. This finding is not surprising considering that many Partnerships were newly formed. It would not be surprising to discover in the next evaluation of TA that the Partnerships and Consultants have now moved on to tackling more "product" oriented types of tasks.

Effectiveness – The Regional Partnerships responded overwhelmingly that their experience with both their TA Consultant and the TA Coordinating-Agency was highly positive. Average ratings based on Partnership-defined objectives, AEEF's Scope of Work (Appendix A), and TA Effectiveness were "excellent," "exceeding expectations," and "highly effective." In fact it was difficult to discover any trends in the data that varied from a score of "excellent." These findings demonstrate that the *United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona's* model for delivering Technical Assistance is working very well, and could most likely be expanded and replicated to achieve similar results.

How is TA used in other States/Initiatives? – The model and strategies used in AEEF's Technical Assistance is highly consistent with the way TA is used in other states. This section presents a condensed "primer" on how TA is generally used

in other states and in other community initiatives. By and large, initiatives report more success with "technical" Technical Assistance (on issues such as housing development or school reform) than with "process" technical assistance (on topics such as strategic planning, management, or community engagement) (Bruner, 1993). Given the complexity of the task at hand, initiatives may be served by designating a "coach" or "consultant" for the initiative: an objective party who can provide advice, support, guidance, and encouragement to the various players in the initiative. One of the primary roles of the consultant would be to help the other players in the initiative to recognize and work through the fundamental tensions that must be negotiated as the initiative develops (Aspen Institute, 1997). This role could be played by an individual or institution. One emerging mechanism for managing this process is the locally based intermediary – such as *United Way of Tucson*. Politically independent, in part because it does not compete for funding with local agencies, and able to work at various levels, the intermediary can convene diverse stakeholders to discuss options for change, help to staff the change process, and build local capacity for reform, often using data and research as organizing tools.

Technical assistance can serve many functions, and can be especially useful in community mapping, in community mobilization and involving residents, and in involving key influencers. Technical assistance is also valuable in forming the mission, goals and objectives, in creating an action plan, identifying changes to be sought, and strategies and tactics for achieving change, in annual planning sessions, and in developing financial sustainability. Perhaps most frequently, technical assistance is mentioned in connection with designing and implementing program evaluation. It is important that the intensity of the technical assistance match the complexity of the partnership.

Technical assistance falls into a set number of categories: enhancing experience and competence; enhancing group structure and capacity; removing social and environmental barriers; and enhancing environmental support and resources. To be most useful technical assistance needs to respond to the needs expressed and identified by the community. Some propose establishing "enabling systems" for community partnerships that would provide training programs for skills development; telephone and on-site consultation on organizational development; information and referral services; mechanisms for creating linkages among key community institutions and individuals; incentive grants and methods of recognizing achievements; and publications to promote partnerships (Bruner, 1993).

As we move forward in developing regional governance and infrastructure for early childhood development, it is imperative to continue to investigate on-going efforts of others – whether in state or out of state – to enhance our delivery of technical assistance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating a community partnership is a craft – not an exact science. It involves many variables, many people, and multiple issues, which can pull the effort in different directions. The process of building a partnership that works with Technical Assistance consultants is usually fluid, not linear. Technical assistance for community partnerships, to be successful, must reflect the community's context. What will work in South Phoenix is different from what will work for the Navajo Nation.

Further, each community partnership faces different challenges. The election of a new mayor, a change in funding priorities of the local funder, or the retirement of a longtime leader can be a formidable challenge to a community partnership no matter where it is located.

All of these observations are intended to drive home the message that each community partnership's Technical Assistance is unique. There is no cookbook. Rather, community partners and their Technical Assistance consultants need to work through these issues for themselves, using the experience of others as guidance. Our hope is that the results from this evaluation can also be used as a planning tool or "social learning tool" that can be used to forge a path that will be useful to other communities as well – whether they be outside of Arizona or even outside the arena of early care and education.

The major findings from this evaluation are highlighted below:

We now have considerable evidence that clearly demonstrates that some form of expert-sharing – whether we call it "consulting" or "coaching" is working very well and is a wise investment of funds.

The key to success seems to be highly trained and experienced consultants and an asset-based community model. There is a clear need to continue to foster support to increase training for the TA Consultants, particularly in the areas of assessment and evaluation as well as community organizing and strategic planning. Investing in more training and support for the TA Consultants will likely yield even greater returns, and will move us closer to having an impressive capacity of highly skilled consultants and coaches throughout the entire state.



The Regional Partnerships are evolving and working very well *within* regions and *across* regions – demonstrating that they are meeting their charge of establishing and enhancing community infrastructure for effective early childhood systems-building. It appears that the public/private partnership in the state of Arizona is well on its way to overcoming the vast fragmentation of the early care and education system, and is wisely investing resources that require regions to work together to stimulate collaboration and leadership. The Regional Partnerships are looking forward to working hand-in-hand with on-going efforts of *First Things First* – with the larger goal of continuing to build the infrastructure necessary to ensure the success of a high quality, comprehensive early childhood system in Arizona.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

(Prepared by Brecon Group)

AEEF Statewide TA Outline

The Scope of Work is as follows:

- Develop an overall technical assistance plan to assure the development and implementation of Regional Partnerships in Arizona that will include at least the following elements:
 1. Creating and sustaining Partnerships
 2. Completing and analyzing community assessments – including completion of the Discovery Community Assessment Tool
 3. Developing an early care and education community-wide strategic plan
 4. Ensuring services are of high quality
 5. Promoting professional development
 6. Implementing research and evaluation
 7. Defining performance measures
 8. Developing resources to grow the partnerships and support the action implementation
 9. Implementing local marketing and public awareness campaigns
 10. Establishing systems to monitor and report on the progress
 11. Implementing an accountable system of finance and budgeting
 12. Building leadership capacity
- Identify a cadre of technical assistance consultants with a range of skills, abilities, and experience working in various regions of the State.
- Develop, negotiate, and manage performance contracts with technical assistance consultants.
- Facilitate a half-day retreat with consultants and the Arizona Early Education Funds Executive Director to determine strengths and abilities of the team and to assign tasks for completion prior to Early Education Learning Summits for Regional Partnership development.
- Develop resource materials that will be included on the web-site to assist Regional Partnerships in their planning and implementation.
- Oversee, manage, and schedule the work of all technical assistance consultants and troubleshoot issues as they arise.
- Help create the agenda and schedule for the statewide communication forums and provide technical assistance to potential Partnerships at the forums.

APPENDIX B

AEEF Technical Assistant Expertise

CONSULTANT	FUNCTION								
	Partnership Development	Asset Based Community Development	Research & Evaluation	Organization Development	Leadership Development	Communications & Marketing	Resource Development	Early Childhood Education	Budget & Fiscal Management
A	●	●		●	●	●		●	
B	●		●	●	●		●		●
C	●	●				●	●		●
D	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
E	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
F	●		●			●	●		
G	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
H	●			●	●	●			
I	●		●	●		●	●	●	
J	●	●	●			●		●	
K	●		●				●		●
L	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
M	●	●	●		●			●	
N	●			●	●	●			●
O	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
P	●	●	●	●		●			

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTNERSHIP COORDINATORS

Instructions for completing the Technical Assistance Evaluation Forms

The results from this evaluation will be used for the following purposes:

- To enhance technical assistance delivery to the Partnerships
- To highlight the importance of effective technical assistance in establishing the infrastructure for “First Things First”
- To understand the process for creating and supporting a highly skilled group of TA Consultants

Be assured that your responses on these evaluation forms will remain confidential! This means that neither your name, your Partnership’s name, nor your Consultant’s name will be mentioned in any report or presentation of the findings. All the responses from the Partnerships will be aggregated, so no single Partnership or Consultant will be singled out at any time. The only person who will have access to individuals’ names is Dr. Shivers.

These forms are designed to be completed by the Project Coordinator of each Partnership. To the best of your ability try to capture what you believe is the sentiment of your Partnership. If you have a leadership team or committee, then it would be okay to ask them to offer input. But please try to limit involvement to ONLY those members who have had extensive knowledge and involvement with the Partnership and the Technical Assistance.

This will be the first of three rounds of technical assistance evaluations that will be conducted over the next year, because we expect that as your partnership grows and moves on to implementing other objectives, your experiences with TA will also most likely shift and change.

The deadline for Dr. Shivers receiving these forms is Friday, August 10, 2007.

During our next Regional Partnership meeting, we will discuss your completed forms individually (so confidentiality will remain intact), and we will also have a group feedback session. Please remember to print a copy of these forms for your own files and bring them with you to our August 14 meeting.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Shivers: eshivers@indigoculturalcenter.com

Thank you for your cooperation.

AEEF/United Way Technical Assistance Evaluation Form		Partnership Level _____ Partnership Name _____ Consultant's Name _____ Date _____ Person filling out form _____			
Partnership Objectives					
Please list your Partnership's main objectives and rate how effective the Technical Assistance (including State-Wide Monthly Regional Partnership Meetings) has been in helping you reach each of your objectives. (1 = poor; 4 = excellent).					
OBJECTIVES (no more than 5, please)	1	2	3	4	Not Applicable
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
Technical Assistance Objectives					
How well has the Technical Assistance your partnership has received to date (including work with your Consultant and monthly State-Wide Regional Partnership meetings) met your expectations for the following objectives? Check the appropriate box.					
TA Objective	Falling far below expectations	Minimally meeting expectations	Adequately meeting expectations	Exceeding expectations	Not Applicable
1. Creating, enhancing and maintaining Partnerships					
2. Completing community assessment (including Discovery Tool)					
3. Developing an early care and education community-wide strategic plan					
4. Promoting professional development					
5. Developing resources to grow the partnerships					
6. Supporting action implementation					
7. Implementing local marketing and public awareness campaigns					
8. Building leadership capacity					
9. Developing resource materials that are included on the web site to assist Partnerships in their planning and implementation.					
10. Ensuring that key community stakeholders are engaged in the partnership.					

Please briefly answer the following questions (no more than 3 sentences for each answer).				
1. In the beginning, what were your expectations of what your Consultant's role should be?				
2. How do you see your Consultant's role now?				
3. What types of specific requests did you make of your Consultant?				
4. In response to these requests, how responsive and effective was the assistance you received?				
Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with your Consultant (If you have worked with more than one Consultant, please make several copies of this page, and fill out items 8-21 for each Consultant – even if you are no longer working with them.)				Consultant's Name _____ Length of time with Partnership _____
Effectiveness of Technical Assistance Coordinators	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. the reason for providing United Way TA was clearly defined.				
2. methods for gathering information to assess our needs were helpful				
3. the United Way TA we received was tailored to our needs				
4. the United Way TA was flexible enough to change if it wasn't meeting our needs				
5. the United Way TA has been effective				
6. the process of working with United Way TA's met our expectations				
7. the overall quality of United Way TA was high				
Consultant's knowledge and skills				
8. our Consultant is versed not only in early childhood content, but also in the process of building collaborations				
9. our Consultant demonstrates respectful awareness of the unique cultural diversity in our community				
10. our Consultant recommends appropriate strategies and resources				
11. our Consultant elicits information from others and is a good listener				
12. our Consultant demonstrates effective organizational skills (e.g., uses time efficiently, is prepared for each meeting)				
13. our Consultant provides prompt feedback				
14. our Consultant has worked collaboratively to clarify our roles and responsibilities throughout the learning process				
Consultant's interpersonal style				
15. our Consultant is comfortable to talk with				
16. our Consultant demonstrates flexibility and openness				
17. our Consultant is generally pleasant				
18. our Consultant expresses ideas without being overpowering				
19. our Consultant has supported our active participation in the partnership process				
20. our Consultant is respectful and caring				
21. our Consultant is creative in examining problems and options				

AEEF Technical Assistance

Please fill out this form based on your experience with your Consultant as well as the United Way TA coordinators.

Overall...

22. What aspects of United Way's Technical Assistance were particularly strong and/or useful?

23. What aspects of United Way's Technical Assistance were weak or not useful?

24. In what way did United Way's Technical Assistance advance your professional knowledge or contribute to the quality of any services your Partnership delivered to children, families or communities?

25. Suggestions for improvement?

Adapted from Parsons, R.D. & Meyers, J. (1984). Developing consultation skills. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Thank You For Your Time!!!

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TA CONSULTANTS

Instructions for completing the Technical Assistance Evaluation Forms

The results from this evaluation will be used for the following purposes:

- To enhance technical assistance delivery to the Partnerships
- To highlight the importance of effective technical assistance in establishing the infrastructure for "First Things First"
- To understand the process for creating and supporting a highly skilled group of TA Consultants

Be assured that your responses on these evaluation forms will remain confidential! This means that neither your name, nor your Partnership's name will be mentioned in any report or presentation of the findings. All the responses from the Consultants will be aggregated, so no single Consultant will be singled out at any time. The ONLY person who will have access to individuals' names is Dr. Shivers.

These forms are designed to be completed by each individual Consultant, and should reflect your experience with the partnerships and your experience with the TA coordinators.

This will be the first of three rounds of technical assistance evaluations that will be conducted over the next year, because we expect that as partnerships grow and move on to implementing other objectives, your experiences assisting them also will most likely shift and change.

The deadline for Dr. Shivers receiving these forms is Friday, August 10, 2007.

During our state-wide consultant's meeting on August 21, we will discuss your completed forms individually (so confidentiality will remain intact), and we will also have a group feedback session. Please remember to print a copy of these forms for your own files and bring them with you to our August 21st meeting.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Shivers:
eshivers@indigoculturalcenter.com

Thank you for your cooperation.

Questionnaire for Consultants

Date: _____ **Name:** _____

Appointed to Partnership by United Way? yes no Partnership-initiated Consultant? yes no

Name(s) of Partnerships with whom you work: _____

Your Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some High School Community College Degree (AA)

High School Graduate/GED Degree from a College or University (BA, BS)

Vocational School Masters Degree field _____
(example: information technology, cosmetology, business, etc.)

Some College Courses Doctoral Degree field _____

Other Professional Degree _____

Your Experiences And Intentions

1. For how many years have you been providing consultation and training? _____

2. For how many years have you been providing consultation and training in the field of early childhood? _____

3. Have you ever provided direct services in the field of early childhood education/development/health (e.g., teacher, director, nurse, home visitor)? yes no Please list: _____

4. For how many years have you been providing some services in the field of early childhood, including direct service and the years you have been providing consultation and training? _____

5. Do you plan to be in your position as a consultant:

a. 1 year from now: yes no maybe

b. 2 years from now: yes no maybe

c. 5 years from now: yes no maybe

Your Work Style In Supporting Partnerships

1. As a part of your normal job responsibilities as a consultant do you:

a. Attend most partnership meetings. yes no

b. Provide training and workshops to partnership. yes no

c. Respond to partnerships' concerns over the phone. yes no

d. Work with partnerships on an as-needed basis? yes no

e. Initiate projects/new directions? yes no

f. Other, specify: _____

3. What best describes the area(s) in which you provide consultation or training?

a. Rural (population less than 50,000)

b. Urban (population more than 50,000)

c. Both rural and urban

4. What are the names of counties in which you provide consultation? _____

Your Current Position As An Aeeef Consultant

1. Circle the number on the scale that best matches your beliefs about these statements:

1: Strongly does not represent the way I feel 2: Does not really represent the way I feel 3: I have no opinion
4: Somewhat represents the way I feel 5: Strongly represents the way I feel

"I see my current position as a consultant as..."	strongly disagree	disagree	no opinion	agree	strongly agree
a. ...my career or profession.	1	2	3	4	5
b. ...a stepping stone to a related career or profession.	1	2	3	4	5
c. ...a job with a paycheck.	1	2	3	4	5
d. ...a way of helping to improve child outcomes in AZ.	1	2	3	4	5
e. ...I feel respected for the work that I do for partnerships.	1	2	3	4	5
f. ...I see that my work is making a difference.	1	2	3	4	5
g. ...I want to help the early education field.	1	2	3	4	5
h. ...I feel partnerships appreciate what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
i. ...the work that I do is very difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
j. ...I feel well-equipped to do the work that I do.	1	2	3	4	5
k. ...I have an opportunity to learn and grow professionally.	1	2	3	4	5
l. Other: _____					

Technical Assistance Objectives		Partnership's Name: _____				
How well has the Technical Assistance your partnership has received to date (including work with your Consultant and monthly State-Wide Regional Partnership meetings) met your expectations for the following objectives? Check the appropriate box.						
TA Objective	Falling far below expectations	Minimally meeting expectations	Adequately meeting expectations	Exceeding expectations	Not Applicable	
1. Creating, enhancing and maintaining Partnerships						
2. Completing community assessment (including Discovery Tool)						
3. Developing an early care and education community-wide strategic plan						
4. Promoting professional development						
5. Developing resources to grow the partnerships						
6. Supporting action implementation						
7. Implementing local marketing and public awareness campaigns						
8. Building leadership capacity						
9. Developing resource materials that are included on the web site to assist Partnerships in their planning and implementation.						
10. Ensuring that key community stakeholders are engaged in the partnership.						
11. Assisting partnerships in conducting community assessments						

Support and Preparation for your work with Partnerships
A. Please list the objectives (from the list above) for which you feel you are prepared and supported:
B. Please list the objectives (from the list above) for which you feel <i>you need more</i> preparation and support:

United Way TA Coordination Effectiveness				
Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement as it applies to your current experience with the United Way TA coordination.				
Effectiveness of Supporting Consultants	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. methods for gathering information to assess our needs were helpful				
2. the support we received was tailored to our needs				
3. the support was flexible enough to change if it wasn't meeting our needs				
4. the support and assistance from United Way has been effective				
5. the process of working with United Way TA's met our expectations				
6. the overall quality of United Way TA was high				
Coordinator knowledge and skills				
7. our Coordinator is versed not only in early childhood content, but also in the process of building collaborations				
8. our Coordinator demonstrates respectful awareness of the unique cultural diversity in our communities				
9. our Coordinator recommends appropriate strategies and resources				
10. our Coordinator demonstrates effective organizational skills (e.g., uses time efficiently, is prepared for each meeting)				
11. our Coordinator provides prompt feedback				
12. our Coordinator has worked collaboratively to clarify our roles and responsibilities throughout the learning process				

Please fill out this form based on your experience with the United Way TA coordination.
Overall...
22. What aspects of United Way's Technical Assistance Coordination were particularly strong and/or useful?
23. What aspects of United Way's Technical Assistance Coordination were weak or not useful?
24. In what way did United Way's Technical Assistance advance your professional knowledge or contribute to the quality of any services you delivered to your Partnership(s)?
25. Suggestions for improvement?
<i>Adapted from Parsons, R.D. & Meyers, J. (1984). Developing consultation skills. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</i>
Thank You For Your Time!!!

APPENDIX E

FEEDBACK SESSION GUIDING QUESTIONS

Regional Partnerships

**Partnerships’ Scope of Work
Technical Assistance Consultants**

1. How do you see the role/purpose of your individual consultants?
(Prompt: are you making “good use” of your individual consultant?)
2. How did you communicate with your consultant what type of assistance you needed?
(Prompt: Did you and your consultant create an individualized plan of action for your partnership?)
(What was your mode and frequency of communication with consultant?)
3. Early on, what types of barriers did you experience in regards to making good use of your consultant?
4. Early on, what would have made it easier for you to make use of your consultant?
(What do you wish you would have known then that you know now?)
5. Think about your current level – A or B or C – what do you suspect will be your main objectives and how can your consultant help you reach your new objectives? (Prompt: will the type of assistance you needed as a Level A Partnership be the same or different now that you have “stepped up”?)

Technical Assistance Coordinators

1. How do you see the role/purpose of United Way TA Coordinators? (Prompt: how do the folks at Tucson United Way help you reach your Partnership goals?)
2. Please take a moment to think about all the ways you have used TA Coordinators to help you, what assistance has been the most useful to your partnership?
3. What has been particularly useful about the monthly Regional Partnership meetings?
4. What other topics would you like to see covered?
5. Other suggestions for improvement?

Community Engagement

1. Who are the hard-to-reach community stake-holders in your region?
2. How has your consultant helped you involve hard-to-reach groups?
3. What would you like to see your consultant do in regards to helping you continue to outreach to hard-to-reach groups?
(Prompt: What are the barriers to engaging these groups?)

Evaluation

1. Has your partnership developed a way to start tracking the impact it’s having on the community; or the change that’s happening in the community? (What have been your tracking methods so far? Have they been useful? How does your consultant work with you on these tracking effectiveness/tracking change issues?)

Preparing for Regional Councils

Let’s take a moment to review the statutory language in regards to the role of the Regional Councils under Prop 203. . .

1. Pretend that you are a staff member of the ECDH Board and you are in the process of developing a plan for each region to have a technical assistance staff person who works with them. What would be some of the main qualifications you would want the technical assistance staff to have?
2. As you are writing the job description to recruit and hire consultants, what key job responsibilities would you include in your job description?
3. Would you be interested in having more opportunities to discuss the differences and similarities between the AEEF Partnerships and the Regional Councils? What questions would you be most interested in asking?

APPENDIX F

FEEDBACK SESSION GUIDING QUESTIONS

TA Consultants

**Partnerships’ Scope of Work
Technical Assistance Consultants**

6. How do you see your role/purpose with your Partnerships?
7. How do your Partnerships communicate with you when they need assistance? (Prompt: Did you and your Partnerships create an individualized plan of action?) (What was your mode and frequency of communication with Partnerships?)
8. Early on, what types of barriers did you experience in regards to feeling like your talents were being put to good use?
9. Early on, what would have made it easier for you to be effective with your Partnerships?
(What do you wish you would have known then that you know now?)
10. Think about your Partnerships’ current level – A or B or C – what do you suspect will be your main objectives as your Partnerships move through a new level? (Prompt: will the type of assistance they need as a Level A Partnership be the same or different now that they have “stepped up”?)

Technical Assistance Coordinators

6. How do you see the role/purpose of United Way TA coordinators?
(Prompt: how do the folks at Tucson United Way help you be an effective consultant?)
7. Please take a moment to think about all the ways you have used LaVonne and Erin to help you, what assistance has been the most useful to you in your work with the Partnerships?
8. What technical assistance has been the most useful to you in your professional development as a consultant?
9. What has been particularly useful about the monthly Regional Partnership meetings?
10. What other topics would you like to see covered?
11. Other suggestions for improvement?

Community Engagement

4. Who are the hard-to-reach community stake-holders in your regions?
5. How have you and your Partnerships tried to reach hard-to-reach groups?
6. What are the barriers to engaging these groups?

Evaluation

1. Have your partnerships developed a way to start tracking the impact they’re having on the community; or the change that’s happening in the community? (What have been your tracking methods so far? Have they been useful?)
2. How do you see your role in working with Partnerships on these tracking effectiveness/tracking change issues?
3. What support would you need in order to offer effective evaluation TA to the Partnerships?

Preparing for Regional Councils

Let’s take a moment to review the statutory language in regards to the role of the Regional Councils under Prop 203. . .

4. Pretend that you are a staff member of the ECDH Board and you are in the process of developing a plan for each region to have a technical assistance staff person who works with them. What would be some of the main qualifications you would want the technical assistance staff to have?
5. As you are writing the job description to recruit and hire consultants, what key job responsibilities would you include in your job description?
6. What else do you feel you need to know in order to help your Partnerships figure out a new strategy in regards to preparing for the emergence of Regional Councils?



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