



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems: Summary of Year One Technical Assistance Activities

Prepared by the Human Services Research Institute
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Introduction

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) provides technical assistance to State agencies, Tribes, and Territories to advance person-centered thinking, planning, and practice to support people with disabilities and older adults with long-term service and support needs. In the spring of 2019, we began accepting applications for technical assistance—with the capacity for 15 States to receive up to 100 hours per year for three years. There was a positive response, and 33 applicants submitted technical assistance requests. After meeting with all the applicants, we selected a final list to receive technical assistance.¹

Each State developed a technical assistance plan that outlines the goals and objectives they hope to achieve with support from NCAPPS and national subject matter experts. While the plans reflect the unique circumstances present in each State, there are also common areas of interest and targeted activity across the selected States. In addition, during the application process, we noted that many of the applicants requested support in similar areas. In this brief, we describe the common themes that arose from the applications; provide a brief summary of each State’s activities to enhance person-centered thinking, planning, and approaches; and provide examples of products expected to result from the technical assistance.

NCAPPS Technical Assistance States

Colorado	North Dakota
Connecticut	Ohio
Georgia	Oregon
Hawaii	Pennsylvania
Idaho	Texas
Kentucky	Utah
Montana	Virginia

¹ Due to an unforeseen change in lead project staff, one state had to suspend their technical assistance engagement.

Common Themes in Technical Assistance Requests

The following themes were common in the 33 technical assistance requests submitted to NCAPPS in 2019.

Staff Training and Competency

The most common request for technical assistance centered around staff training and competencies in person-centered thinking, planning, and practice. Applicants requested support with finding training programs, identifying ways to provide consistent training, developing core competencies and standards, and evaluating the effectiveness of training.

Participant Engagement

Applicants were strongly encouraged to identify goals related to participant engagement. These goals seemed to fall into two groups:

- System-level participant engagement—engaging with participants to inform agency policy and practice; and
- Individual-level participant engagement—providing education and information to participants to increase their understanding of and expectations for person-centered thinking, planning, and practice.

Measurement and Quality Improvement

Many applicants noted a need to develop and implement measures for person-centered thinking, planning, and practice. They outlined goals for measurement and quality improvement activities that incorporate person-centered principles. Many applicants sought to enhance their capacity to measure person-centered thinking, planning, and practice so that they can better incentivize high-quality services using value-based payment models.

Cross-System Consistency in Planning and Practice

Applicants were encouraged to leverage existing cross-system and cross-agency relationships and collaborations and pursue an integrated approach to technical assistance. Just over half of the 33 applicants identified specific goals related to increasing consistency in person-centered thinking, planning, and practice. These agencies were interested in strategies to leverage existing resources and braid funding when possible to maximize person-centered initiatives. Several applicants outlined goals to enhance cross-system consistency through their No Wrong Door systems. As described on the [No Wrong Door website](#), these systems are designed to serve as “one-stop” coordinated entry points into the long-term service and support system for anyone seeking those services, regardless of age, income, or disability.

Payment and Managed Care

A few states identified goals specific to payment models. Of these, four applicants reported recent or planned transitions to a managed care LTSS environment. These applicants expressed concern about assuring fidelity to person-centered principles within managed care and sought assistance building safeguards and incentives into managed care arrangements. Two applicants were particularly interested in expanding the reach of their self-direction programs, noting that these programs enable person-centered practice through high levels of choice and control.

Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

Seven applicants identified goals specific to enhancing cultural and linguistic responsiveness in person-centered practices. These applicants saw a need to better understand how person-centered thinking, planning, and practice might be supported among individuals and communities from different cultures, including those that place less of an emphasis on individuals than do white Western cultures. Two applicants noted a desire to strengthen relationships with tribal nations and to increase their responsiveness to tribal populations.

Other Practice-Related Goals

Ten applicants articulated various other goals related to increasing the extent to which their practices incorporate person-centered principles. These included:

- expanding and enhancing specific person-centered practices of peer support and supported decision-making;
- modifying current practices such as assessments, screening, and referral to incorporate person-centered principles;
- balancing risk and safety concerns with person-centered practice;
- articulating the value of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice to stakeholders while also correcting common misperceptions that person-centered practice is associated with higher risk for individuals and for agencies due to intentional and unintentional misuse of funding; and
- laying out the relationship between person-centered practice and the social determinants of health in the context of recent initiatives to address poverty and housing instability in the service user populations.

State Activities

Colorado

Lead agency: Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

Population: Older adults, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and brain injury

The Colorado team identified a need to enhance access to person-centered Medicaid-funded planning, supports, and services for people with brain injury. They are working to **redesign the Transitional Living Program for individuals with brain injury** and plan to assess the person-centeredness of the program. In addition, they seek to improve person-centered practices by improving training and tools and assessing the quality of supports and services for diverse groups of people.

Connecticut

Lead agency: Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services State Unit on Aging

Population: All populations

In Connecticut, several person-centered training frameworks are used. The team is working to **identify core competencies across agencies and population groups** that will be used across LTSS and health systems and programs. They are also focused on improving participant engagement in the person-centered planning process through outreach and education.

Georgia

Lead agency: Georgia Department of Human Services/Division of Aging Services

Population: All populations

In support of a true No Wrong Door system, the Georgia team seeks to weave person-centered practices across its networks. To do so, they are working to develop criteria to evaluate person-centered practice across systems. These criteria will provide the foundation for policy updates, consistent training and technical assistance for direct service providers, and monitoring and evaluation across systems. The team seeks to create a **shift in culture for how human services, no matter the population, are delivered.**

Hawaii

Lead agency: Hawaii Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division

Population: All Medicaid LTSS populations

The Hawaii team is working collaboratively to establish a core set of person-centered practice competencies for staff at multiple levels. These will be used across populations and agencies. Hawaii is also focused **on exploring the relationship between person-centered practice and the social determinants of health** in the context of recent initiatives to address poverty and housing instability.

Idaho

Lead agency: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare/Division of Medicaid

Population: All Medicaid populations

The Idaho team is working to develop a person-centered planning facilitation waiver service including training and certification requirements. The team is also looking to develop a shared definition of person-centered planning for use across DHW, and to **lay the groundwork for later development of quality metrics and quality assurance processes.** They seek to leverage this technical assistance opportunity to identify current best practice from other states and mold those practices into Idaho's unique systems.

Kentucky

Lead agency: Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

Population: Older adults, physical disability, brain injury, and No Wrong Door population

The Kentucky Department for Aging & Independent Living has embarked on a **journey to upend the current system and transform to an integrated service delivery system.** To support this goal, the team will engage in a strategic visioning process guided by Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) principles to establish a foundation, culture, and strategic direction for planned system changes. This visioning process will shape upcoming changes and embed person-centered thinking into the culture of change.

Montana

Lead agency: Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Senior and Long-Term Care

Population: All populations served by Medicaid waivers

The Montana team seeks to increase knowledge of person-centered planning and develop a shared definition of person-centered planning for use across DPHHS. They are focused on **increasing stakeholder engagement with service users, families, providers, and tribal nations** regarding person-centered thinking and planning, and they aim to develop a stakeholder engagement plan with specific action steps.

North Dakota

Lead agency: North Dakota Department of Human Services

Population: All populations served by DHS

Technical assistance provided in North Dakota will build on the work of an existing cross-division work group charged with establishing a systemwide culture change for person-centered practices. The team seeks to **develop a strong and consistent statewide vision and universal understanding of person-centeredness across all DHS and partner agencies, beginning with leadership.** The team also seeks to deliver services and supports in a manner consistent with person-centered values.

Ohio

Lead agency: Ohio Department of Medicaid

Population: Older adults, physical disabilities, brain injury, and mental health

The Ohio team seeks to enhance stakeholder involvement to guide person-centered practices. To this end, the team is looking to identify strategies and approaches to effectively engage with a range of stakeholders. The team will also work to **create person-centered planning tools to guide discussions and decisions around self-directed service options**. In later years, the team will work with other NCAPPS grantees to develop materials that convey the benefits of person-centered planning for use with target audiences.

Oregon

Lead agency: Oregon Department of Human Services/Aging and People with Disabilities

Population: Older adults and physical disabilities

Oregon desires to **move from an overarching belief in person-centered planning to policies and processes that support it in action**. To begin, the Oregon team will develop a unified vision and definition for person-centered planning to be shared across programs. The team will also develop methods to engage with stakeholders, including older adults and people with disabilities. They are also seeking to establish person-centered practices that are culturally responsive, particularly to the needs of tribal members.

Pennsylvania

Lead agency: Pennsylvania Department of Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Office

Population: ADRC users (all populations) and MLTSS populations

The Pennsylvania team is focused on enhancing Person-Centered Counseling practices by revising existing forms and exploring certification and competencies consistent with No Wrong Door guidance. They also seek to improve the quality monitoring process for person-centered planning in the managed care program known as Community HealthChoices and **develop a survey to measure consumer satisfaction and improve stakeholder engagement**.

Texas

Lead agency: Medicaid and CHIP/Policy and Program Development/Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Population: All populations served by HHSC

Because Texas has a large, dispersed population with diverse cultures and needs and a wide span of stakeholder groups, HHSC has identified a need to align policy and practice across the state for all populations across the lifespan. HHSC formed a steering committee, composed of agency leadership and key stakeholders including service users and families, to **define and prioritize goals and action steps for achieving a person-centered system**.

Utah

Lead agency: Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities

Population: Physical disabilities, brain injury, intellectual and developmental disabilities

The Utah DSPD is updating its Person-Centered Support Plan process to comply with the CMS Final Rule. The team is hoping to learn how to best support providers during their transformation to compliance and how to best educate individuals and families. They will identify ways to engage with self-advocates, service users, and families and draft a communications strategy that outlines a plan for **increasing stakeholder buy-in and awareness of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice**. They will also work to ensure that person-centered thinking and planning are translated into practice through revised Person-Centered Support Planning standards and procedures.

Virginia

Lead agency: Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Population: No Wrong Door population

The Virginia team seeks **to align the No Wrong Door system with person-centered thinking and practices**, including the Direct Connect Tool, Options Counseling training, and the Communication, Referral, Information and Assistance (CRIA) assessment. As part of this effort, they will work to enhance stakeholder engagement and expand outreach to those who were not previously targeted for information or training. This stakeholder engagement will include reviewing means for disseminating information to individuals who may access No Wrong Door and the Direct Connect tool, identifying means to better understand and improve the user experience, identifying needed outreach materials, and finalizing a marketing plan.

Anticipated Products

A range of products and deliverables are expected to result from the technical assistance. Many of these products may be of interest to a broad audience focused on advancing person-centered thinking, planning, and practice. In many cases, these products will be created in collaboration with national subject matter experts and will be made available on the [NCAPPS website](#) (under “Resources”). Below we provide a list of selected products grouped by category.

National Environmental Scans

At the time of writing, the NCAPPS team had produced two environmental scans and was in the process of completing a third. These include scans focused on:

- **Definitions and principles** of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice
- **Approaches and tools** related to person-centered planning
- **Quantitative and qualitative indicators** of person-centered practice

Because person-centered resources are ever-evolving, NCAPPS environmental scans are designed to function as “living documents,” with readers encouraged to bring new and unidentified resources to the attention of the NCAPPS team so they can be incorporated as appropriate.

Visioning, Definitions, and Strategic Planning

Many technical assistance recipients are engaged in “visioning” exercises to craft definitions and principles of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice that reflect the uniqueness of their local communities. These exercises have involved a review of national and other local definitions and principles. Others are engaged in strategic planning processes to better-establish person-centered principles in their local systems. As NCAPPS supports these efforts, we will work to share:

- Materials produced through visioning processes
- Locally developed definitions and principles
- Person-centered steering committee charters
- Strategic plans for person-centered steering committees

Training, Assessment, and Evaluation

Additional products are being developed to aid States in growing and measuring staff competencies, establishing rigorous training programs for staff at multiple levels, and developing methods for determining whether efforts to enhance person-centered thinking, planning, and practice are effective. These include:

- An agency self-assessment measurement tool
- Training plans, tools, and materials
- Person-centered thinking, planning, and practice outcome measures and data collection training materials
- Person-centered planning evaluation protocols and materials
- Measures for assessing service user and family experience

Participant Engagement

All technical assistance recipients are engaged in rigorous efforts to ensure that people who use services and their families are engaged at multiple levels and in multiple ways so that the system is as responsive as possible to their vision, values, and priorities. Some recipients are also focused on improving communications with service users, families, providers, and other stakeholders to articulate the value of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice and to generate broad-based community support for systems change activities. Tools anticipated to emerge from this process include:

- A stakeholder engagement asset mapping tool
- Stakeholder engagement plans
- Communications strategies
- Marketing plans
- Best practices for outreach to diverse stakeholder communities

About NCAPPS

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) is an initiative from the Administration for Community Living and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to help States, Tribes, and Territories to implement person-centered practices. It is administered by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and overseen by a group of national experts with lived experience (people with personal, first-hand experience of using long-term services and supports).

NCAPPS partners with a host of national associations to deliver knowledgeable and targeted technical assistance.

You can find us at <https://ncapps.acl.gov>



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