

The RCORP-TA Response to RCORP Grantees' Challenges and Needs: A Review of the March 2022 Request for Information and Subsequent Technical Assistance

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key findings and recommendations are based on an analysis of the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) in which Rural Community Opioid Response Program (RCORP) grantees reported project successes and challenges for the reporting period September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022 as well as anticipated challenges and needs for future technical assistance (TA). We used data on individual and group TA to examine the extent to which the TA provided to grantees during the six-month period that followed the RFI data reporting aligned with the reported challenges and anticipated TA needs of grantees, as this was the most complete data available at the time of this report.

FINDINGS

- The top three successes reported by grantees across cohorts during the September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022 reporting period were overdose prevention and naloxone distribution (31.2%, n=93), consortium growth and/or engagement (28.9%, n=86), and access to treatment services (27.5%, n=82).
- Workforce challenges related to both hiring/recruitment and retention were among the top three challenges during the September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022 reporting period cited by 42.3% of grantees (n=126). TA related to workforce issues during the following 6-months (March 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2022) accounted for 9% (n=9) of group TA offerings and 0.3% (n=4) of individual TA events. The six workforce learning collaborative sessions were attended by 23 different individuals from only eight different consortia, which may suggest workforce-related TA offerings did not adequately meet the needs of grantees.
- Stigma was a top-three reported challenge during the September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022 reporting period for more than one fifth of grantees (22.5%, n=67), and only one group TA event addressed stigma from March 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2022. Roughly half (55.2%, n=37) of the grantees who reported stigma as a top three challenge received individual TA on the topic.
- Nearly half of all grantees (45.1%, n=138) were provided at least one individual TA event covering the topic of stigma. Approximately one third (31.9%, n=44) of the grantees receiving stigma TA reported stigma as a challenge or anticipated challenge/TA need.
- More than one third (37.0%, n=37) of group TA events did not definitively match to an RFI topic. The most common non-RFI topics covered by group TA were adolescents/youth and other population-specific topics, which made up 10% (n=10) and 7% (n=7) of group TA, respectively. It is unclear whether these are areas in which grantees struggle because they are not queried in the RFI.
- The most frequently covered RFI topics by group TA events included data and reporting (17%, n=17), medication-assisted treatment (14%, n=14), workforce (9%, n=9), and recovery and harm reduction, both accounting for 6% (n=6) of the

group TA events. Of these offerings, only workforce (42.3%, n=126) and data and reporting (20.8%, n=62 of grantees) were reported as a top three challenge by more than one fifth of grantees during the September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022 reporting period.

- The top anticipated challenge and need for TA in the March 2022 RFI across all RCORP cohorts was workforce hiring and recruitment (20.1%, n=60), followed by stigma (14.4%, n=43), and billing and coding (12.8%, n=38). Ascertaining whether these needs change after receipt of TA could be assessed with the next reporting period RFI data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include RFI topics as a field in the Individual TA Tracker and the RCORP-TA Activities Worksheet to ensure the most accurate accounting of the alignment of TA events to address the challenges and TA needs reported by grantees.
- Consistently track the grantee name/number in attendance reports for all group TA events to properly attribute group TA to specific grantees.
- Consider RFI data when determining what topics should be covered by TA delivered to grantees.
- Further evaluation should address the following questions:
 - Are grantees' challenges and anticipated challenges/TA needs consistent across RFI reporting periods, and are the patterns of TA provided the same?
 - What is the best type of TA (individual vs. group) to address grantees' challenges with stigma and other top challenges?
 - Given the few workforce TA offerings/events, could workforce-related TA offerings be developed to help reduce the challenges grantees are facing with workforce recruitment, hiring, and retention?
 - Do grantees' report fewer needs for TA for the top anticipated challenges (workforce hiring and recruitment, stigma, billing and coding) in the next RFI reporting period, after receiving TA in these areas?
 - How does the cumulative intensity of TA received vary by grantee, and how is it related to grantee outcomes?
 - How frequently do grantees utilize the TA Resource Portal, what specific resources are they utilizing, and to what effect?

PURPOSE

This report reviews the reported successes, challenges, and anticipated challenges/future technical assistance (TA) needs from the Request for Information (RFI) survey of Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) grantees from the most recent available RFI administered in March 2022 (Reporting period September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022). The report also examines the TA offered and provided to RCORP grantees during the six-month period that followed with the aim of assessing how the TA that the JBS International TA Team offered and provided aligned with the challenges and TA needs reported by grantees.

METHODS

The WWAMI Rural Health Research Center (RHRC) RCORP-TA Evaluation Team conducted quantitative analyses of the successes, challenges, and anticipated challenges reported in the March 2022 RFI. We categorized and summarized the TA offered and provided to grantees from March 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2022, the timeframe immediately following the March 2022 RFI. To determine how well the TA offered and provided aligned with the challenges reported by grantees, we compared frequencies of reported and anticipated challenges from the RFI to the frequencies of the RFI topics covered by TA events.

DATA SOURCES

Data sources that were available, and available time periods of data, at the time of this analysis are listed below. See appendix for further details.

Individual TA Tracker Data. We used data available in the JBS TA tracker as of September 21st, 2022. There were a total of 1,203 individual TA events that occurred in the timeframe of interest for the cohorts included in this report.

Group TA Data. We used three sources of data on group TA events. There were a total of 100 group TA events. Group TA data in this report provides a snapshot of what was available as of October 17th, 2022. JBS informed us that they are updating the RCORP-TA Activities Worksheet.

- **Learning Collaborative Data.** The JBS TA team provided the WWAMI RHRC data on Learning Collaborative events that occurred in March, April, and May of 2022.
- **RCORP-TA Activities Worksheet.** These data captured TA that was provided to more than one grantee or to a specific cohort (group TA) from June 1st – August 31st, 2022.
- **RCORP-TA Resource Portal Event Calendar.** We obtained data from the RCORP-TA Resource Portal Event Calendar for TA events that occurred between March 1st, 2022, and August 31st, 2022, which we categorized as group TA.

Request for Information (RFI). The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) administered the Request for Information (RFI) Survey to RCORP grantees in March 2022 for the reporting period of September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022. Survey respondents included grantees from the Implementation I, Implementation II, Implementation III, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), and Psychostimulant Support RCORP cohorts. We analyzed responses to the following questions:

1. Please select the top three areas where you feel you've had successes during the current reporting period.
2. Please select the top three areas where you feel you've had challenges during the current reporting period.
3. Please select up to three areas where you are anticipating having challenges and/or needing targeted technical assistance in the future.

Response rates for the March 2022 RFI are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Request for Information (RFI) Response Rates by RCORP Cohort for the March 2022 Reporting Period (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022)

Cohort	N	Missing Responses	Response Rate
Implementation I	80	0	100%
Implementation II	91	3	96.7%
Implementation III	78	4	94.9%
Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Treatment Expansion	12	0	100%
Neonatal Abstinence	30	1	96.7%
Psychostimulant Support	15	0	100%
All Cohorts	306	8	97.3%

MEASURES

RFI Topics. Table 2 shows a list of RFI topics queried for each of the three questions on successes and challenges. We assigned TA events to corresponding RFI topics as shown in Table 3. Some TA events addressed multiple RFI topics.

Individual TA. We defined individual TA as any TA delivered (1) directly to a grantee by a Technical Expert Lead (TEL), (2) by another individual/organization partnering with JBS to provide individual TA, or (3) via a peer-to-peer call facilitated by a JBS TEL. Individual TA is comprised of customized resource/product development, grantee deliverable review/support, monthly/quarterly calls with grantees, other coaching (non-monthly/quarterly call), peer-to-peer calls, resource dissemination, site visits, targeted TA trainings (e.g., billing and coding trainings) and other types of individual TA (e.g., facilitating an introduction to another grantee).

Group TA. Group TA included events delivered in a group setting that were either open to all grantees, open to specific cohorts, or available to RCORP grantees even though they were not sponsored by the JBS RCORP-TA team (e.g., webinars and events hosted by other organizations). Group TA events included ask-a-grantee sessions, book events, data coordinator calls, ECHO sessions, learning collaboratives, learning series, panels, Q&A sessions, summits, webinars, and workshops.

ANALYSIS

We computed descriptive statistics for all grantees and by cohort.

FINDINGS

RFI Successes

Overall, the most frequently selected top-three successes in the March 2022 RFI were 'Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution' (31.2%), 'Consortium Growth and/or Engagement' (28.9%), and 'Access to Treatment Services' (27.5%). Table 4 shows that grantees from the smaller cohorts all reported Care Coordination as a top-three success (MAT cohort: 33.3%; NAS cohort: 48.3%; Psychostimulant Support cohort: 26.7%). Both cohorts whose funding started in September 2021 (Implementation III and Psychostimulant Support) reported 'Consortium Growth and/or Engagement' as their top success (39.2% and 60% respectively). These proportions were considerably higher than other cohorts further along in their grants reported.

Table 2. Topics Included in the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) Reporting Period (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022)

RFI Topic	RFI Topic <i>continued</i>
Access to Treatment Services	Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution
Billing/Coding	Prevention
Care Coordination	Prison/Jail Populations
Competing Priorities	Recovery
Consortium Growth and/or Engagement*	Service Capacity
Contingency Management**	Stigma
COVID-19 Pandemic	Telehealth/Telemedicine
Data and Reporting	Tribal Populations
Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by Substance Use Disorder/ Opioid Use Disorder (SUD/ OUD)	Workforce - DATA Waivers
Funding Availability	Workforce - Hiring and Recruitment
Harm Reduction	Workforce - Retention
Medication-Assisted Treatment	Working with Other Service Systems

*Not asked of MAT grantees.

**Only applies to Psychostimulant grantees.

Table 3. Event Content Areas and their Corresponding Request for Information (RFI) Topic from the March 2022 RFI Reporting Period (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022)

Event Content Area	RFI Topic
Best Practices	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
Child Welfare	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
Community Engagement	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
Consortium/Partnership Development	Consortium Growth/Engagement
Contingency Management	Contingency Management
COVID	COVID-19 Pandemic
Criminal Justice	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
Data/Evaluation Support	Data and Reporting
Harm Reduction	Harm Reduction
Health Disparities/Health Equity	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
MAT/Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)	MAT
Mental Health and Social Determinants	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
Polysubstance Use	Determined by Event Description and Additional Notes
Prevention Strategies	Prevention

Table 4. Top Three Successes Reported by RCORP Cohort in the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) Reporting Period (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022)

Top Three Reported Successes			
RCORP Cohort*	1 st Most Selected	2 nd Most Selected	3 rd Most Selected
Implementation I n=80	Access to Treatment Services (32.5%, n=26)	Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution (40.0%, n=32)	Medication-Assisted Treatment (25.0%, n=20)
Implementation II n=88	Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution (34.1%, n=30)	Consortium Growth and/or Engagement (31.8%, n=28)	Access to Treatment Services (23.9%, n=21)
			Prevention (23.9%, n=21)
			Recovery (23.9%, n=21)
Implementation III n=74	Consortium Growth and/or Engagement (39.2%, n=29)	Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution (29.7%, n=22)	Medication-Assisted Treatment (27.0%, n=20)
Medication-Assisted Treatment n=12	Medication-Assisted Treatment (58.3%, n=7)	Access to Treatment Services (41.7%, n=5)	Care Coordination (33.3%, n=4)
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome n=29	Care Coordination (48.3%, n=14)	Access to Treatment Services (34.5%, n=11)	Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/OD (27.6%, n=8)
			Medication-Assisted Treatment (27.6%, n=8)
Psychostimulant Support n=15	Consortium Growth and/or Engagement (60.0%, n=9)	Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/OD (33.3%, n=5)	Care Coordination (26.7%, n=4)
			Prison/Jail Populations (26.7%, n=4)
All cohorts n=298	Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution (31.2%, n=93)	Consortium Growth and/or Engagement (28.9%, n=86)	Access to Treatment Services (27.5%, n=82)

*Cohort counts reflect the number of respondents, not the number of total grantees in the cohort.

RFI Challenges

Table 5 shows that the 'COVID-19 Pandemic' was the most frequently reported top-three challenge overall, selected by 39.6% of grantees (ranging from 58.6% of NAS grantees to 8.3% of MAT grantees). 'Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment' was a top challenge for all grantees (31.2%), with its biggest impact on Psychostimulant Support grantees: 46.7% of them selected it as a top-three challenge. Other top challenges cited by various grantees included 'Stigma,' 'Prison/Jail Populations,' 'Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/OD,' and 'Access to Treatment Services.'

Table 5. Top Three Challenges Reported by RCORP Cohort from the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) Reporting Period (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022)

Top Three Reported Challenges			
RCORP Cohort*	1 st Most Selected	2 nd Most Selected	3 rd Most Selected
Implementation I n=80	COVID-19 Pandemic (32.5%, n=26)	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (32.5%, n=26)	Prison/Jail Populations (23.8%, n=19)
Implementation II n=88	COVID-19 Pandemic (40.9%, n=36)	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (29.6%, n=26)	Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/ODU (20.5%, n=18)
Implementation III n=74	COVID-19 Pandemic (44.6%, n=33)	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (32.4%, n=24)	Stigma (24.3%, n=18)
Medication-Assisted Treatment n=12	Stigma (33.3%, n=4)	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (25.0%, n=3)	Access to Treatment Services (16.7%, n=2)
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome n=29	COVID-19 (58.6%, n=17)	Stigma (31.0%, n=9)	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (24.1%, n=7)
Psychostimulant Support n=15	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (46.7%, n=7)	Data and Reporting (33.3%, n=5)	COVID-19 Pandemic (26.7%, n=4)
All cohorts n=298	COVID-19 Pandemic (39.6%, n=118)	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (31.2%, n=93)	Stigma (22.5%, n=67)

*Cohort counts reflect the number of respondents, not the number of total grantees in the cohort.

Request for Information (RFI) Anticipated Challenges and TA Needs

In contrast with challenges experienced during the reporting period, ‘COVID-19 Pandemic’ was not one of the top three anticipated future challenges/TA needs of any cohort. The top anticipated challenge/TA need for all cohorts was ‘Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment,’ indicating that grantees expected this challenge to continue. Implementation I, NAS, and Psychostimulant grantees also reported ‘Workforce – Retention’ as an anticipated challenge, further underscoring that grantees were concerned about facing challenges with capacity and workforce. Grantees frequently reported ‘Stigma’ as an anticipated challenge (Implementation II: 17.0%; Implementation III: 16.2%; NAS: 24.1%; Psychostimulant Support: 13.3%). Implementation III and NAS grantees had also reported ‘Stigma’ as a top-three challenge during the March 2022 reporting period, indicating that stigma endures as an area where grantees need support.

Table 6. Anticipated Challenges and/or Technical Assistance (TA) Needs by RCORP Cohort from the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) Reporting Period (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022)

Top Three Anticipated Challenges/TA Needs				
RCORP Cohort*	1 st Most Selected	2 nd Most Selected	3 rd Most Selected	None [†]
Implementation I n=80	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (18.8%, n=15)	Funding Availability (13.8%, n=11)	Workforce – Retention (12.5%, n=10)	40.0% (n=32)
Implementation II n=88	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (19.3%, n=17)	Billing/Coding (18.2%, n=16)	Stigma (17.0%, n=15)	20.5% (n=18)
Implementation III n=74	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (17.6%, n=13)	Stigma, (16.2%, n=12)	Billing/Coding (12.2%, n=9)	24.3% (n=18)
	Data and Reporting (17.6%, n=13)		Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/OD (12.2%, n=9)	
Medication-Assisted Treatment n=12	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (16.7%, n=2)	Access to Treatment Services (8.3%, n=1)		58.3% (n=7)
		Data and Reporting (8.3%, n=1)		
		Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/OD (8.3%, n=1)		
	Funding Availability (16.7%, n=2)	Prison/Jail Populations (8.3%, n=1)		
		Telehealth/Telemedicine (8.3%, n=1)		
	Tribal Populations (8.3%, n=1)			
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome n=29	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (27.6%, n=6)	Stigma (24.1%, n=7)	Workforce – Retention (20.7%, n=6)	20.7% (n=6)
Psychostimulant Support n=15	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (33.3%, n=5)	Workforce – Retention (26.7%, n=4)	Billing/Coding (13.3%, n=2)	13.3% (n=2)
			Prevention (13.3%, n=2)	
			Service Capacity (13.3%, n=2)	
			Stigma (13.3%, n=2)	
All cohorts n=298	Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment (20.1%, n=60)	Stigma (14.4%, n=43)	Billing/Coding (12.8%, n=38)	27.9% (n=83)

*Cohort counts reflect the number of respondents, not the number of total grantees in the cohort.

†Grantees selected 'None at This Time.'

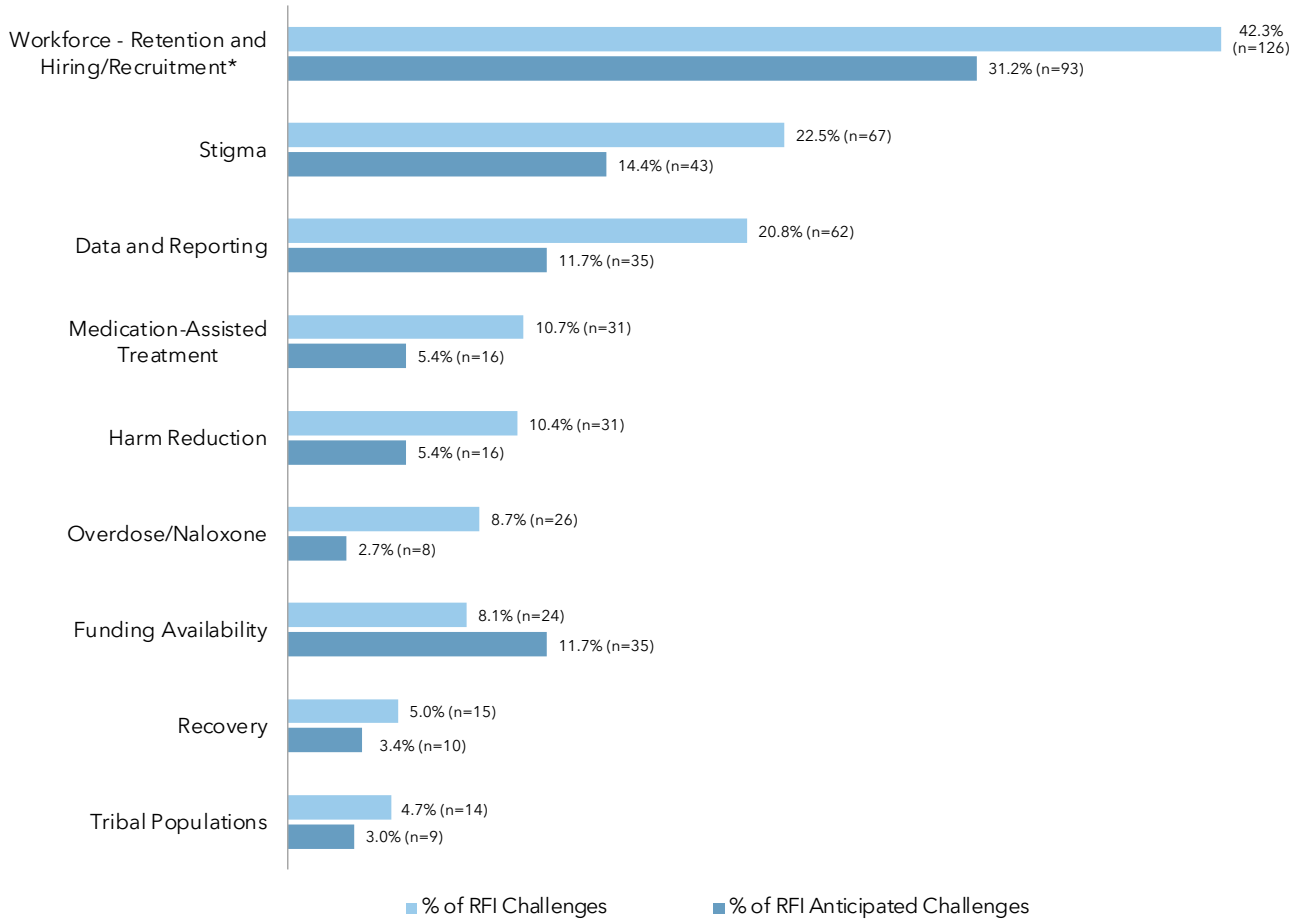
Group TA

There were 100 group TA events that covered a variety of RFI topics and other topics relevant to RCORP grantees' needs. Figure 1 shows the percentages of reported challenges and anticipated challenges/TA needs for all RCORP cohorts from the March 2022 RFI that were covered by group TA events. Figure 2 displays the topic areas covered by group TA events.

There were clear discrepancies between the frequencies of the group TA provided and the reported challenges and anticipated challenges/TA needs for the RFI topics of 'Workforce' and 'Stigma.' We categorized TA events that addressed either workforce recruitment/hiring or workforce retention as 'Workforce' events. Grantees reported these workforce-related challenges more frequently than any other, both for the March 2022 RFI reporting period (42.3%, n=26) and as anticipated challenges/TA needs (31.2%, n=93). While 'Workforce' was only covered by 9.0% (n=9) of the group TA events, these offerings included six sessions of a workforce learning collaborative taking place over the course of three months. These TA events may have included a higher intensity of learning than other TA events. The six workforce learning collaborative sessions were attended by 23 different people from eight separate consortia. 'Data and Reporting' accounted for 20.8% (n=62) of grantees' top-three challenges and a similar proportion, 17.0% (n=17), of group TA events. Like 'Workforce,' 'Data and Reporting' group TA events included five data learning collaboratives, each with three sessions. Beginning in August 2022, the JBS RCORP-TA team began facilitating regularly scheduled data coordinator meetings for each cohort, which demonstrated responsiveness to grantees' data and reporting needs. Group TA events that corresponded with the RFI topic 'Funding Availability' included four webinars on grant-writing.

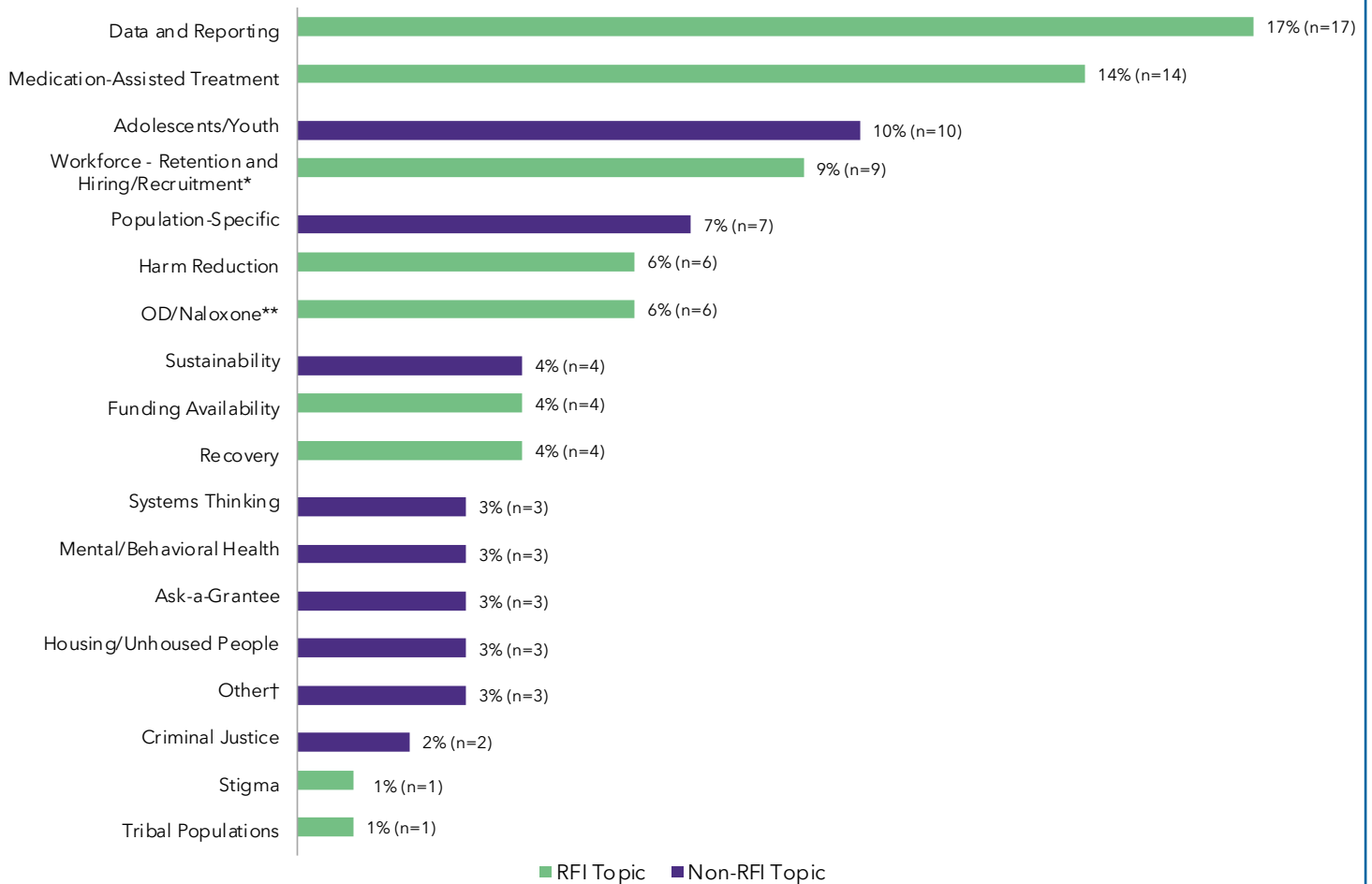
In addition to the data and workforce learning collaboratives, JBS offered both sustainability and adolescent learning collaboratives. Some group TA events (17.0%, n=17) were structured around grantee questions. These events included 'Ask-a-Grantee' sessions, Q&A events, panels, and 'Office Hours with Dr. C.' The RCORP-TA Resource Portal Event Calendar included webinars focusing on a variety of populations including adolescent/youth Latino communities, LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, tribal populations, unhoused populations, and women. Some of these webinars were recorded and available on demand.

Figure 1. Reported Challenges and Anticipated Challenges from the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) (September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022) Covered by Group TA



*Workforce – Retention and Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment were combined into one category.
 †RFI topic areas with no TA events are not listed.

Figure 2. Group Technical Assistance (TA) Events by Topic Areas Both Included and Not Included in the March 2022 Request for Information (RFI) (March 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2022)



*Workforce – Retention and Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment were combined into one category.
 †‘Other’ includes categories that did not have a clearly identifiable topic.
 **Overdose Prevention and Naloxone Distribution.

Individual TA

The format of individually delivered TA allows grantees to receive assistance targeted to the goals of their cohort and the needs of their organization and/or consortium that are not met by group TA.

Implementation Grantees

We were able to categorize 65.0% (n=581) of all events delivered to Implementation grantees into one or more RFI topics. Monthly/quarterly calls made up 48.5% (n=434) of the individual TA events delivered to Implementation grantees. The format of monthly/quarterly calls allowed for grantees to receive TA covering multiple topics in one event. Stigma was a top anticipated challenge for 16.3% (n=34) of all Implementation grantees and was one of the most frequently covered RFI

areas by individual TA (17.0%, n=152). Additional frequently covered RFI topics for Implementation grantees included 'Harm Reduction' (19.8%, n=177), 'Prevention' (16.0%, n=143), and 'Recovery' (13.5%, n=121). These were among the top reported challenges of the three Implementation cohorts.

Implementation I: 19 Implementation I grantees (23.8%) reported 'Prison/Jail Populations' as a top challenge, and two individual TA events for Implementation I grantees addressed that RFI topic.

Implementation II: 'Billing/Coding' was a top anticipated challenge for 16 (18.2%) Implementation II grantees. Three of the seven (42.8%) targeted 'RCORP Billing and Coding Trainings' that took place during the reporting period were delivered to Implementation II grantees.

Implementation III: 'Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/ODU' was a top reported challenge for Implementation III grantees, but no TA could be definitively identified for grantees in this cohort on this topic. However, nearly one quarter of individual TA events provided to Implementation III grantees had an 'Event Content Area' of 'Community Engagement' (24.5%, n=79), which may overlap with 'Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/ODU.'

Medication-Assisted Treatment-Expansion Grantees. Almost two thirds (62.0%, n=31) of the 50 TA events provided to MAT grantees matched at least one RFI topic. The most frequently reported challenge for MAT grantees was 'Stigma,' which made up just 8.0% (n=4) of the individual TA delivered. Additional frequently covered RFI topics in individual TA for MAT grantees include 'Harm Reduction,' 'Recovery,' and 'MAT' (all 12.0%, n=6). The top anticipated challenges of MAT grantees varied greatly. 'Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment' and 'Funding Availability' were the most anticipated challenges (16.7%, n=2) in this cohort, and were the only anticipated challenges reported by more than one grantee. One of the two grantees who reported 'Workforce – Hiring/Recruitment' as a challenge received TA on this topic, and no grantees in this cohort received 'Funding Availability' TA.

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Grantees. There were 108 recorded TA events for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome grantees, 71.2% (n=77) of which matched at least one RFI topic. 'Stigma' was the second most reported challenge (31.0%, n=9) and the second most anticipated challenge (24.1%, n=7) for NAS grantees and made up 8.3% (n=9) of the individual TA events provided. Other heavily covered RFI topics included 'Care Coordination' (11.1%, n=12), and 'Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/ODU' (8.3%, n=9).

Psychostimulant Support. Almost all 139 TA events provided to Psychostimulant Support grantees matched at least one RFI topic (93.5%, n=130). The most common topic of TA provided to Psychostimulant Support grantees was 'Contingency Management' (30.2%, n=42), a topic only queried for this cohort. Psychostimulant Support grantees also received a higher proportion of TA on 'Engaging Populations Directly Impacted by SUD/ODU' (17.9%, n=25) and 'Prison/Jail Populations' (10.1%, n=14) than other cohorts.

DISCUSSION

A review of the TA offered and provided to RCORP grantees showed that grantees had access to and received TA that covered many different RFI topics. Commonly reported challenges for grantees such as data and reporting and stigma were heavily covered TA topics, either through group or individual TA or both. TA on data and reporting was of high intensity as there were multiple offerings for multi-day data learning collaboratives covering various data topics. Stigma was a top-three challenge reported by nearly a quarter of all grantees. TA addressing stigma was provided almost exclusively through individual TA events, ranging from a low of 8.0% of MAT grantee's individual TA events to a high of 17.0% of individual TA events provided to Implementation grantees. Nearly half of all grantees received at least one individual TA event covering the topic of stigma,

and roughly one third of those grantees reported it as a challenge or anticipated challenge/TA need. One group TA event covered stigma in the time period of interest. TA needs regarding stigma may be better served through individual TA, as grantee TA needs related to stigma may vary by cohort and geographic region. This is a question for further investigation.

The COVID-19 pandemic and workforce recruitment were among the top reported challenges for all cohorts, and workforce recruitment was also the most reported anticipated challenge among all grantees. Though grantees received limited TA on these topics, it is important to note that these challenges are part of a bigger problem affecting the workforce nationwide and likely would not be ameliorated by TA alone, but it is worth exploring if there are TA offerings that could help address these challenges. Approximately four of ten grantees who reported challenges with hiring or recruitment during the time period of interest also reported it as an anticipated challenge/TA need. This, coupled with the fact that individuals from only eight different consortiums attended workforce learning collaboratives, suggests that more, or different, TA may be needed to address workforce issues. Grantees also had access to the RCORP-TA Resource Portal, which has a wealth of information and TA resources that grantees could seek out on their own. The extent to which and how grantees use the information available on the Portal is not known.

Limitations to this report include that the matching of event content areas to RFI topics was performed by WWAMI RHRC evaluators who were not present for any of the TA events analyzed in this report, and only about two thirds of TA events could be definitively categorized into an RFI topic. Categorization of TA events to RFI topics relied on matching TEL-provided categories and notes, which varied in level of detail. An additional limitation of this report is that TA was reported by frequency rather than intensity, and intensity of TA activities varied greatly. Simple counts of events are an incomplete measure of quantity TA provided and do not address quality. The WWAMI RHRC plans to develop measures of TA intensity in the future. Further, the counting of TA events does not account for the potential use of information available on the TA portal by grantees. These resources may have an impact that our methods do not capture. At the time of this report data were only consistently available for a 6-month period. Data going back to September of 2021 have since been made available to WWAMI RHRC evaluators, and preliminary inspection shows that the patterns in the types of TA events delivered remain the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WWAMI RHRC Evaluation team recommends including RFI topics as a field in the Individual TA Tracker and the RCORP-TA Activities worksheets to ensure a complete accounting that will enable aligning grantee TA events with the challenges and anticipated challenges/future TA needs reported by grantees. We also recommend considering RFI data when determining what topics should be covered by TA delivered to grantees. To properly attribute TA to specific grantees, we further recommend consistently tracking the grantee name/number in all attendance reports for group TA events.

Further evaluation is recommended to address the following questions:

- Are grantees' challenges and anticipated challenges/TA needs consistent across RFI reporting periods, and are the patterns of TA provided the same?
- What is the best type of TA (individual vs. group) to address grantees' challenges with stigma and other top challenges?
- Given the few workforce TA offerings/events, could workforce-related TA offerings be developed to help reduce the challenges grantees are facing with workforce recruitment, hiring, and retention?
- Do grantees' report fewer needs for TA for the top anticipated challenges (workforce hiring and recruitment, stigma, billing and coding) in the next RFI reporting period, after receiving TA in these areas?
- How does the cumulative intensity of TA received vary by grantee, and how is it related to grantee outcomes?

- How frequently do grantees utilize the TA Resource Portal, what specific resources are they utilizing, and to what effect?

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Data Sources

Data sources that were available, and available time periods of data, at the time of this analysis are listed below. More comprehensive data covering a broader timeframe and attendance lists were made available to the WWAMI RHRC after the completion of analysis for this report.

Individual Technical Assistance Tracker Data. We used Individual Technical Assistance Tracker data titled, 'Individual TA All Cohorts Nov 2020 – Sep 2022', which was uploaded to the 'TTATS Individual TA Exports' folder of the WWAMI-JBS Sharing Workspace on Smartsheet on September 21st, 2022. There were a total of 5,169 individual TA events recorded across all cohorts, 1,203 of which occurred in the timeframe of interest for the cohorts included in this report.

Learning Collaborative Data. We used data from Learning Collaborative events that occurred in March, April, and May of 2022, provided to the WWAMI RHRC via email on June 28, 2022.

RCORP-TA Activities Worksheet. We used data from the RCORP-TA Activities Worksheet on WWAMI-JBS Sharing Workspace on Smartsheet to review TA that was provided to more than one grantee or to a specific cohort (group TA) from June 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2022, which is what was available at the time of this report. The JBS RCORP-TA Team informed us that they are updating the RCORP-TA Activities Worksheet. The data in this report provides a snapshot of what was available as of October 17th, 2022.

RCORP-TA Resource Portal Event Calendar. We obtained data from the RCORP-TA Resource Portal Event Calendar that occurred between March 1st, 2022, and August 31st, 2022. The calendar is available on the RCORP-TA Resource Portal website (www.rcorp-ta.org). Events that did not have a clearly identifiable topic and were categorized as 'Other' include 'HRSA Cancer Community Conversation: Advancing Equity in Cancer Prevention in Primary Care and Rural Health Settings,' 'Special Book Discussion with Sam Quinones: The Least of Us - True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth,' and 'Phase 1 Webinar - Building Bridges to Better Health: A Primary Health Care Challenge.'

Request for Information (RFI). The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) administered the Request for Information (RFI) Survey to RCORP grantees in March 2022 for the reporting period of September 1st, 2021 – February 28th, 2022. RFI data files were dated June 1st, 2022 and uploaded to the JBS International File Sharing website on June 7th, 2022. Survey respondents included grantees from the Implementation I, Implementation II, Implementation III, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), and Psychostimulant Support RCORP cohorts. We analyzed responses to the following questions:

1. Please select the top three areas where you feel you've had successes during the current reporting period.
2. Please select the top three areas where you feel you've had challenges during the current reporting period.
3. Please select up to three areas where you are anticipating having challenges and/or needing targeted technical assistance in the future.

Data Preparation

We categorized and coded TA events to match RFI topics using Microsoft Excel. We assigned events to RFI topics based on the 'Event Content Area,' 'Event Description,' and 'Event Additional Notes' fields of the database. Events that did not

have an 'Event Content Area' that corresponded to an RFI area, as well as events with limited detail, were assigned an area of 'Other.' We used 'TA Event' and 'Notes' fields to assign RFI topics for the group events listed in the 'RCORP-TA Activities' worksheet. We assigned RFI topics to events listed in the 'RCORP-TA Resource Portal Event Calendar' based on titles and descriptions. Each TA event could be assigned more than one RFI area.

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FUNDING

This report was supported by the HRSA of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$9,672,053 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, or an endorsement by, HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Burchim SE, Andrilla CHA, Patterson DG. *The RCORP-TA Response to RCORP Grantees' Challenges and Needs: A Review of the March 2022 Request for Information and Subsequent Technical Assistance*. Evaluation Brief. WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington; December 2022.

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