

# An Assessment of the RCORP Individual Technical Assistance (TA) Tracking Database: Findings and Recommendations

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### FINDINGS

- The average number of technical assistance (TA) events that Technical Expert Leads (TELs) recorded in the TA Tracker database per grantee was 7.5, ranging from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 29. Psychostimulant Support grantees had the highest average number of TA events per grantee with 12.3, and Implementation I grantees had the lowest average with 6.6.
- Thirty (9.8%) RCORP grantees had no TA recorded in the TA tracker. Implementation I grantees accounted for 46.7% (n=14) of the grantees with no recorded TA. One TEL accounted for 60.0% (n=18) of the grantees with no recorded TA in the TA tracker.
- There was considerable variability in the quantity of recorded TA by each TEL, ranging from an average of 0.1 to 18.1 TA events per assigned grantee, with an overall average of 5.3.
- 'Monthly/Quarterly Calls with Grantee' made up a little over half (52.8%, n=946) of the recorded TA across all cohorts but made up 95.0% (n=76) of the TA for the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion cohort's recorded TA.
- About a quarter of all TA recorded (26.6%, n=475) in the TA Tracker was determined to be passive TA, meaning the TEL provided the grantee with a resource rather than delivered the TA themselves.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand the types of TA that are recorded in the TA Tracker (e.g., Learning Collaboratives, Webinars, Office Hours with Dr. C), to ensure a comprehensive accounting of the TA provided to RCORP grantees.
- Develop standards for use of the TA tracker to address accuracy, completeness, and consistency in how TA events are recorded for grantees.

## PURPOSE

This report details the content and completeness of the JBS Individual Technical Assistance (TA) Tracker data for the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program Technical Assistance (RCORP-TA) Evaluation. The JBS TA Tracker is a database that Technical Expert Leads (TELs) use to record TA provided to grantees. All TA is referred to as recorded

TA, under the assumption that there was likely additional TA provided that was not recorded in the TA tracker. The purpose of this report is to evaluate and provide feedback regarding the utility, consistency, and completeness of the data in the TA tracker, as the tracker will serve as an important database for the TA evaluation.

## METHODS

The WWAMI Rural Health Research Center (RHRC) Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Technical Assistance (TA) Evaluation Team conducted an analysis of the content of the Individual TA Tracker. We analyzed data detailing the TA provided to the Implementation I, Implementation II, Implementation III, Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, and Psychostimulant Support RCORP cohort grantees from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## DATA SOURCES

**Individual Technical Assistance Tracker Data.** We used Individual Technical Assistance Tracker data made available in the 'TTATS Individual TA Exports' folder of the WWAMI-JBS Sharing Workspace on Smartsheet. The folder contains a separate file for each cohort. There was a total of 1,789 individual TA events recorded across all cohorts.

**Request for Information (RFI) Data.** Grantees with no recorded TA had their information cross-referenced with the RFI data for the reporting period of March 2022 (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022), which was dated June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and uploaded to the JBS International File Sharing website on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**TEL Assignments.** Data for TEL assignments came from the 'Grantee PO and TEL Assignments.xlsx' file, provided to the WWAMI RHRC on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## MEASURES

**Average TA Recorded per RCORP Grantee.** The average number of recorded TA events per grantee in the reporting period (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022) was calculated across all grantees and for each cohort individually.

**Average TA Occurrences Per Grantee as recorded in the TA Tracker by TEL.** Average TA per grantee by TEL was calculated two different ways. For TELs providing TA to their assigned grantees, the number of recorded TA events was divided by the total number of assigned grantees. For TELs providing TA to grantees other than those assigned to them, the number of TA events recorded was divided by the distinct number of grantees (assigned to a different TEL) for which they recorded TA.

**Direct vs. Peer Networking.** WWAMI RHRC RCORP evaluators coded each TA event as either direct or peer networking based on 'Event Delivery Mode'. Direct indicates that a TEL is providing TA directly to the grantee, while peer networking indicates an event where grantees can exchange information with their peers. Peer-to-peer calls may have been, but were not necessarily facilitated or attended by a TEL. All peer-to-peer calls were determined to be peer networking while other TA event types were determined to be direct.

**Grantee Codes.** Grantee codes were assigned to each grantee for confidentiality purposes.

**Intensity.** WWAMI RHRC RCORP evaluators coded each TA event as either low, medium, or high intensity. See Table 1 for a breakdown of the categorization of TA event intensity.

**Passive vs. Active.** WWAMI RHRC RCORP evaluators coded each TA event as either passive or active based on 'Event Delivery Mode.' All resource dissemination events were determined to be passive, while other TA event types were determined to be active. Recorded TA events categorized as 'Other' or 'Other Coaching (non-Monthly Quarterly call)' were determined to be passive if resource dissemination was indicated in 'Event Description' or 'Event Additional Notes.'

**Request for Information (RFI) Data Challenges.** These data came from the March 2022 RFI. Grantees were asked to select the top three areas where they felt they have had challenges during the reporting period, (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022).

**Technical Assistance (TA) Event Type.** TA event type is determined in 'Event Delivery Mode' field in the TA tracker.

**Technical Expert Lead (TEL) Code.** TEL codes were assigned to each TEL for confidentiality purposes.

**Table 1. Intensity Categorization of Technical Assistance Event Types Recorded in the TA Tracker (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

TA Event Type	Intensity
Customized TA Resource/Product Development	High
Site Visit	High
Targeted Training	High
Grantee Deliverable Review/Support	Medium
Monthly/Quarterly Calls with grantee	Medium
Other	Medium (except where details describe resource dissemination)
Other Coaching (non-Monthly/Quarterly call)	Medium (except where details describe resource dissemination)
Peer-to-peer Call	Medium
Resource Dissemination	Low

## ANALYSIS

All data provided by the JBS TA team were downloaded as Microsoft Excel document, and all analyses were performed in Microsoft Excel and SAS Software, Version 9.4. Standard statistical methods were used to calculate the counts and averages of TA recorded. Additional coding of resources to indicate passive vs. active, direct vs. peer networking, and intensity measures were done in Excel.

## FINDINGS

There were 1,789 total recorded TA events in the Individual TA tracker. Table 2 shows the average number of recorded TA events overall and by RCORP cohort. The Psychostimulant Support cohort had the highest average number of recorded TA events per grantee with 12.3, and Implementation I grantees had the lowest average with 6.6. All of the Implementation cohorts had at least one grantee without any recorded TA.

**Table 2. Recorded Technical Assistance (TA) Counts by RCORP Cohort (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

Recorded TA Event Type	RCORP Cohort*						
	Imp I n=80 grantees (26.1%)	Imp II n=91 grantees (29.7%)	Imp III n=78 grantees (25.5%)	MAT n=12 grantees (3.9%)	NAS n=30 grantees (9.8%)	Psych n=15 grantees (4.9%)	Total N=306 grantees (100%)
Mean	6.6	6.7	7.4	8.4	8.9	12.3	7.5
Minimum	0	0	0	5	1	2	0
Maximum	29	29	22	18	29	28	29

\*Imp I = Implementation I, Imp II = Implementation II, Imp III = Implementation III, MAT = Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion, NAS = Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, Psych = Psychostimulant Support.

**Grantees with No Recorded Technical Assistance.** There were 30 grantees (9.8%) with no TA recorded in the 'TTATS Individual TA Exports' dataset. The breakdown of cohort and assigned TEL for these grantees can be seen in Table 3. Fourteen Implementation I grantees (17.5%), eight Implementation II grantees (8.8%), six Implementation III (7.7%), and two Psychostimulant Support grantees (13.3%) had no recorded TA. TEL T is the assigned TEL for 60% (n=18) of the grantees with no recorded TA. The TEL with the next highest number of assigned grantees without recorded TA is TEL P, with 10% (n=3) of the cases. Yet grantees with no recorded TA had reported challenges that might benefit from TA. The most recent RFI from the March 2022 reporting period (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022) asked grantees to select the top 3 areas where they feel they have had challenges. All grantees with no recorded TA identified at least one challenge in this reporting period which corresponds to the TA Tracker data reported here. An analysis of this data for the grantees without recorded TA shows that the top three most reported challenges for these grantees include COVID-19 (46.7%, n=14), workforce - hiring/recruitment (40.0%, n=12), and data and reporting (26.7%, n=8). Two Implementation III grantees had neither recorded TA nor data available for the March 2022 RFI as of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

**Table 3. RCORP Grantees with No Recorded Technical Assistance (TA) in the TA Tracker by Cohort (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

Grantee Name*	Cohort	Most Recent Assigned TEL*†
Grantee 101	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 102	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 103	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 104	Implementation I	TEL P
Grantee 105	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 106	Implementation I	TEL P
Grantee 107	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 108	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 109	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 110	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 111	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 112	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 113	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 114	Implementation I	TEL T
Grantee 201	Implementation II	TEL S
Grantee 202	Implementation II	TEL T
Grantee 203	Implementation II	TEL T
Grantee 204	Implementation II	TEL O
Grantee 205	Implementation II	TEL T
Grantee 206	Implementation II	TEL T
Grantee 207	Implementation II	TEL T
Grantee 208	Implementation II	TEL J
Grantee 301	Implementation III	TEL L
Grantee 302	Implementation III	TEL M
Grantee 303	Implementation III	TEL O
Grantee 304	Implementation III	TEL T
Grantee 305	Implementation III	TEL P
Grantee 306	Implementation III	TEL M
Grantee 401	Psychostimulant Support	TEL M
Grantee 402	Psychostimulant Support	TEL F

\*The identity of the grantees and TELs are suppressed for confidentiality purposes but is available upon request.

†TEL assignments provided to the WWAMI RHRC June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Table 4. Recorded Technical Assistance (TA) Event Type by RCORP Cohort (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

Recorded TA Event Type	RCORP Cohort*						
	Imp I n=80 grantees (26.1%)	Imp II n=91 grantees (29.7%)	Imp III n=78 grantees (25.5%)	MAT n=12 grantees (3.9%)	NAS n=30 grantees (9.8%)	Psych n=15 grantees (4.9%)	Total N=306 grantees (100%)
<b>Total TA Events Recorded by Cohort**</b>	<b>424 (23.7%)</b>	<b>515 (28.8%)</b>	<b>473 (26.4%)</b>	<b>80 (4.5%)</b>	<b>167 (9.3%)</b>	<b>130 (7.3%)</b>	<b>1,789 (100%)</b>
Customized TA Resource/Product Development	2 (0.4%)	1 (0.2%)	6 (1.3%)	1 (1.3%)	4 (2.3%)	1 (0.8%)	15 (0.8%)
Grantee Deliverable Review/Support	20 (4.7%)	7 (1.3%)	2 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (7.7%)	39 (2.2%)
Monthly/Quarterly Calls with grantee	199 (46.9%)	308 (59.8%)	226 (47.8%)	76 (95.0%)	88 (52.7%)	49 (37.7%)	946 (52.8%)
Other	5 (1.2%)	5 (1.0%)	4 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.8%)	15 (0.8%)
Other Coaching (non-Monthly/Quarterly call)	44 (10.4%)	51 (9.9%)	56 (11.8%)	1 (1.3%)	14 (8.4%)	14 (10.8%)	180 (10.0%)
Peer-to-peer Call	40 (9.4%)	17 (3.3%)	41 (8.7%)	2 (2.5%)	26 (15.6%)	19 (14.6%)	145 (8.1%)
Resource Dissemination	111 (26.2%)	122 (23.7%)	137 (29.0%)	0 (0%)	32 (19.2%)	36 (27.6%)	438 (24.5%)
Site Visit	2 (0.4%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.2%)
TelECHO	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (<0.1%)
Targeted Training	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	6 (0.3%)

\*Imp I = Implementation I, Imp II = Implementation II, Imp III = Implementation III, MAT = Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion, NAS = Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, Psych = Psychostimulant Support.

\*\*Percentages for RCORP cohort and Total TA Recorded by Cohort are row percentages. All other percentages are column percentages.

**Recorded Technical Assistance by Cohort.** Table 4 shows the breakdown of TA event type by cohort. The most common TA event type recorded for all cohorts was ‘Monthly/Quarterly Calls with Grantee’, which made up 52.9% (n=946) of all recorded TA events across cohorts. ‘Monthly/Quarterly calls with Grantee’ made up 95.0% of the TA recorded for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion grantees. Resource dissemination was the second most recorded TA event type (24.5%, n=438) of all recorded TA events. Variation in the distribution of the type of TA event by cohort may be due to differences in cohort timelines, as well as differences in cohort needs. The TA Tracker lacks

documentation that identifies grantees who attended TA events (Webinars, Learning collaboratives, Office hours with Dr. C, etc.) This reduces the ability to create an accurate picture of TA receipt.

**Measures of Technical Assistance Type and Intensity.** The majority of individual TA events recorded was active, direct, and of low or medium intensity. The MAT Expansion cohort stands out for having 98.8% active TA recorded, and only one passive TA event recorded. The breakdown of TA type and intensity is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Recorded Technical Assistance (TA) Categorizations by RCORP Cohort (September 1st, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

Measure of Recorded TA	RCORP Cohort*						
	Imp I n=80 grantees (26.1%)	Imp II n=91 grantees (29.7%)	Imp III n=78 grantees (25.5%)	MAT n=12 grantees (3.9%)	NAS n=30 grantees (9.8%)	Psych n=15 grantees (4.9%)	Total N=306 grantees (100%)
<b>Total TA Recorded by Cohort**</b>	<b>424</b> (23.7%)	<b>515</b> (28.8%)	<b>473</b> (26.4%)	<b>80</b> (4.5%)	<b>167</b> (9.3%)	<b>130</b> (7.3%)	<b>1,789</b> (100%)
Active vs. Passive							
Active	295 (69.6%)	379 (73.6%)	332 (70.2%)	79 (98.8%)	135 (80.8%)	94 (72.3%)	1,314 (73.4%)
Passive	129 (30.4%)	136 (26.4%)	141 (29.8%)	1 (1.3%)	32 (19.2%)	36 (27.7%)	475 (26.6%)
Direct vs. Peer Networking							
Direct	384 (90.6%)	498 (96.7%)	432 (91.3%)	78 (97.5%)	141 (84.4%)	111 (66.5%)	1,644 (91.9%)
Peer Networking	40 (9.4%)	17 (3.3%)	41 (8.7%)	2 (2.5%)	26 (15.6%)	19 (14.6%)	145 (8.1%)
Intensity							
High	5 (1.8%)	4 (0.8%)	7 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	7 (4.2%)	1 (0%)	24 (1.3%)
Medium	290 (68.3%)	375 (72.8%)	325 (69.6%)	79 (98.8%)	128 (76.6%)	93 (72.3%)	1,290 (72.1%)
Low	129 (30.4%)	136 (26.4%)	141 (30.2%)	1 (1.3%)	32 (19.2%)	36 (27.7%)	475 (26.5%)

\*Imp I = Implementation I, Imp II = Implementation II, Imp III = Implementation III, MAT = Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion, NAS = Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, Psych = Psychostimulant Support.

\*\*Percentages for RCORP cohort and Total TA Recorded by Cohort are row percentages. All other percentages are column percentages.

**Recorded Technical Assistance by Technical Expert Lead.** Table 6 shows the average number of recorded TA events per assigned grantee for each of the 20 TELs with assigned grantees. The numbers are listed in descending order, starting with the TEL with the highest average count of recorded TA. The average number of TA events recorded by a TEL is 5.3, ranging from 0.1 to 18.1 recorded TA Events per assigned grantee. Table 7 shows the average count of TA

events that TELs recorded for grantees for which they were not the assigned TEL. On average, TELs record 1.7 TA events to grantees other than those which they were assigned, with a range of 1.0 to 4.0.

**Table 6. Average Recorded Technical Assistance per Assigned Grantee by Technical Expert Lead (TEL) (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

TEL*	Recorded TA Events	Assigned Grantees	Average TA Events
TEL A	290	16	18.1
TEL B	129	12	10.8
TEL C	139	15	9.3
TEL D	166	19	8.7
TEL E	124	17	7.3
TEL F	63	9	7.0
TEL G	122	18	6.8
TEL H	102	18	5.7
TEL I	77	15	5.1
TEL J	43	10	4.3
TEL K	50	12	4.2
TEL L	66	16	4.1
TEL M	60	17	3.5
TEL N	54	16	3.4
TEL O	44	15	2.9
TEL P	21	11	1.9
TEL Q	8	7	1.1
TEL R	6	6	1.0
TEL S	4	5	0.8
TEL T	1	19	0.1

\*The identity of TELs is suppressed for confidentiality purposes but is available upon request.

**Table 7. Average Recorded Technical Assistance (TA) for Other Technical Expert Lead's (TEL) Grantees by TEL (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

TEL*	Recorded TA Events	Unique Grantees	Average TA Events
TEL U	44	11	4.0
TEL F	40	12	3.3
TEL G	2	1	2.0
TEL C	8	4	2.0
TEL A	30	16	1.9
TEL V	19	10	1.9
TEL H	7	4	1.8
TEL E	12	7	1.7
TEL D	13	8	1.6
TEL N	8	5	1.6
TEL W	6	5	1.2
TEL I	9	8	1.1
TEL X	9	9	1.0
TEL B	2	2	1.0
TEL O	2	2	1.0
TEL P	3	3	1.0
TEL Y	2	2	1.0
TEL L	4	4	1.0

\*The identity of TELs is suppressed for confidentiality purposes but is available upon request.

**Inconsistencies in the Technical Assistance Tracker.** Evaluation of the TA tracker revealed inconsistencies in recording of TA events.

- The 'Event Description' field in the TA tracker varies in the amount of information provided, which ranges from blank to multiple paragraphs.
- The 'Other Coaching (non-Monthly/Quarterly calls)' and 'Other' TA event types do not appear to be used in the same way by all TELs. There were 41 recorded events that were identified by the WWAMI RHRC RCORP evaluators that could potentially be attributed to a different event category. For example, there were 15 entries with an 'Event Delivery Mode' of 'Other' or 'Other Coaching (non-Monthly/Quarterly calls)' that were described as linkage to resource in a different TA Tracker field. Without more information, it is unclear why these events were not categorized as resource dissemination.
- There are 116 entries in the TA tracker that are listed as 'Ongoing' rather than 'Closed,' but have an end-date listed. It is unclear what the designation of 'Ongoing' means in these cases.
- There are 12 recorded peer-to-peer call events with a unique 'Event Title' in the TA tracker that do not indicate that there was more than one grantee in attendance. The remaining peer-to-peer calls have recorded TA events with a matching 'Event Title' to indicate the event took place with more than one RCORP grantee.

**Formatting and Entry.** The 'Content Area' field is difficult to view and understand. Multiple selections for 'Content Area' are listed without spaces, making the data difficult to read and interpret. Additionally, there is not a field to record that multiple TELs participated in a TA event. For some entries, additional TELs were listed in the 'Event Description' field. It is unclear whether there were multiple TELs involved in TA events if they are not recorded consistently.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The WWAMI RHRC RCORP TA Evaluation team propose the following recommendations to improve the completeness, content, and utility of the TA Tracker:

- Expand the types of TA that are recorded in the TA Tracker (e.g., Learning Collaboratives, Webinars, Office Hours with Dr. C).
- Train TELS to record all TA events so that there is a comprehensive record of all TA that was provided.
- Develop standards for entering TA into the TA tracker to ensure consistency in the way TA is recorded by all TELS.
- Provide guidance for when to use the 'Other Coaching (Non-monthly/Quarterly Calls)' and 'Other' categories.
- Record separate entries for all grantees who are involved in peer-to-peer calls, or other events with multiple grantees participating.
- Provide a standard for what information should go in the 'Event Description' field.
- Consider formatting the 'Event Content Area' field differently so the content areas can be more readily analyzed. The way that this field is currently formatted does not separate the text between different content areas. This makes it difficult to separate the data and provide summary statistics on the content areas covered by TA events.
- Consider adding fields for additional TELS who provided TA for each event. Currently this information is stored in the description field. This would allow TA to be attributed to all TELS who participated.
- Consider adding a field for how the TA event was initiated, whether that be by the grantee via the RCORP TA Portal, by the grantee via phone call/email, by the TEL themselves, or any other common ways that TA is initiated.

## AUTHORS

C. Holly A. Andrilla, MS, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington  
Signe E. Burchim, MS, WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington

## 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

Andrilla CHA, Burchim SE. *An Assessment of the RCORP Individual Technical Assistance (TA) Tracking Database: Findings and Recommendations*. Evaluation Brief. WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington; September 2022.

University of Washington • School of Medicine  
Box 354982 • Seattle WA 98195-4982  
phone: (206) 685-0402 • fax: (206) 616-4768  
<https://familymedicine.uw.edu/rhrc>