

# UCEDD Tip Sheets



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ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES  
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## Technical Assistance

### What is Addressed in this Tip Sheet?

This tip sheet will provide guidance on the technical assistance (TA) core function. According to the [UCEDD logic model](#), technical assistance is a “direct problem-solving services provided UCEDD faculty/staff to assist individuals with developmental and other disabilities, families, programs, agencies, or other entities in improving their outcomes, services, management, and/or policies.”

### Why is this Important?

Continuing Education is a UCEDD core function, according to the [DD Act Section 153\(a\)\(2\)\(B\)](#):

Provision of community services-- (i) that provide training or technical assistance for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, professionals, paraprofessionals, policymakers, students, and other members of the community

Further, the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) issued a final rule in 2015 providing guidance on implementing the DD Act ([45 C.F.R § 1328.6 2015](#)). In this guidance, OIDD specifically mentions the need for each UCEDD to have a written plan for how their program will implement the core functions as outlined in the DD Act. This is echoed in the UCEDD

funding opportunity, in which each applicant must provide a five-year plan for carrying out the core functions within the context of their settings (HHS-2018-ACL-AOD-DDUC-0251, p. 14, in the section Content and Form of Application Submission).

functions as outlined in the DD Act. This is echoed in the UCEDD funding opportunity, in which each applicant must provide a five-year plan for carrying out the core functions within the context of their settings (HHS-2018-ACL-AOD-DDUC-0251, p. 14, in the section Content and Form of Application Submission).

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## How have other UCEDDs structured their TA programs?

### The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



At the Boggs Center, TA reaches a variety of audiences, from direct support professionals and clinicians to provider organization leaders, systems leaders, people with disabilities and their families.

Their primary goals for TA include:

- Helping organizations develop effective implementation strategies to build capacity and increase sustainability
- Tying TA assistance directly to existing training opportunities
- Helping people move from knowledge to practice

Much of their technical assistance happens through state entities, which include the New Jersey Department of Education, the Department of Children and Families, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

### Examples of TA

The Boggs Center's longest-running TA program on a single topic, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Schools (PBSIS), has reached more than 200 schools across New Jersey. The TA structure for this program contains three tiers. The first tier is the universal interventions approach that teaches and reinforces a consistent set of behavior expectations for students, staff and settings school-wide. The secondary interventions approach provides small group and individual support for students with repeated problem behaviors. The third tier is the individualized interventions approach, which provides assessment-driven individual support plans for students with disabilities who have complex needs. This multi-tier approach is used in other projects and has helped inform best practices across the UCEDD.

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**The primary goal of The Boggs Center's technical assistance is to increase community inclusion for people with disabilities.**

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With the NJ Department of Education, the Boggs Center implements a project called Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition, or PCAST. The goal of the project is to increase the use of person-centered practices in Individualized Education Program (IEP) development. The center provides TA to schools who want to learn how to use structured conversations to learn more about students' transition goals.

The TA that the center provides to the Department of Children and Families is their most clinical-based mode of technical assistance. It focuses on providing consultation to child support teams working with children who have intensive behavior support needs. The project created a unique opportunity to provide a feedback loop to state systems leaders and as a result, some therapy practices have changed and adapted to better meet the needs of the population.

### Effective strategies

- **Enlist leadership in the planning stages.** Doing this at the onset and then checking in periodically helps to create buy-in. It also increases involvement from the top so that implementers feel supported.
- **Document progress.** Collect internal stories of success and cultivate advocates who can speak to those positive experiences. Progress documentation is critical to effecting change, replicating proven strategies, and creating a system feedback loop.
- **Build capacity, but don't leave too soon.** Make sure that leadership is involved in mapping out a plan for implementation, then check in periodically. TA is crucial for ensuring that effective techniques are properly implemented and widely used. Be consistent with follow-up to ensure long-term sustainability.

The primary goal of The Boggs Center's technical assistance is to increase community inclusion for people with disabilities. For that to come to fruition, day-to-day practices need to change as well as systems. The Boggs Center is the bridge from the university to the community, uniquely positioned through their partnerships to affect change at the state level.

## Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota

Institute on Community Integration

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The Institute on Community Integration (ICI) maintains "an intensive focus on policies and practices that affect children, youth, and adults with disabilities, and those receiving educational supports."

### Examples of TA

The TIES Center is ICI's national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. TIES is an acronym that stands for:

- Time
- Instructional Effectiveness
- Engagement
- State Support for Inclusive Practices

TIES provides three levels of technical assistance: universal, targeted, and intensive. It is currently in the process of providing intensive TA to the state of Maryland on the topics of communicative competence, standards-based academic instruction and IEPs, organizational change, and English

learners with disabilities. The TIES TA structure includes leadership teams at the state, district, and school levels. There is intentionally a significant amount of overlap in team membership at all three levels, which increases communication, knowledge sharing, and support across teams. All three teams contributed to the creation and testing of a tool that identifies best practice indicators for inclusive education. The tool is called ROXIE, which stands for Reflecting on Opportunities for EXcellence in Inclusive Education. ROXIE helps the leadership teams communicate the nuances of a very complex issue by identifying evidence-based practices at their respective levels, which in turn helps inform action plans for including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In 2019 the state of Maryland awarded a \$100,000 grant to each of the project's two focus districts, to support their work with the TIES center.

Another of ICI's most popular programs is Check& Connect, which is a monitoring intervention used for K-12 students who are at risk of dropping out of school. It has earned the distinction from the What Works Clearinghouse of being the only dropout prevention intervention to show positive effects for student retention. As a result of that recognition, demand for the program increased, along with the need for training on how to implement the Check & Connect model. ICI created a four-step process for training and TA, starting with a review of the manual, Implementing with Fidelity. The guided review is followed by administrative training, mentor training, and implementation training. The last step provides up to a year of customized TA and support.

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**ROXIE helps the leadership teams communicate the nuances of a very complex issue by identifying evidence-based practices at their respective levels, which in turn helps inform action plans for including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities**

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### Effective strategies

- **Planful TA.** Some states and larger organizations have the resources to invest in well-designed TA projects. But many other TA needs arise that are unfunded. UCEDDs have to strike a balance between meeting the needs and requirements of technical assistance as defined by the DD act, but also being mindful of going after TA contracts that provide a healthy source of income.
- **Relevant TA.** It's helpful to keep track of the hours of TA provided, and for which topics and organizations. This helps UCEDDs identify areas of maximum impact and makes it easier to communicate progress information to stakeholders.

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## What are the Relevant resources?

- [Webinar: Model Services by UCEDDs](#)
- [UCEDD Logic Model](#)
- [AIM Delaware](#)
- [Career Life Studies Certificate Program](#)
- [The UC Davis MIND Institute Social Skills Training Group Program](#)

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## For More Information

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