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>> In the archive.

>> VALDEZ: Sounds good. All right, everyone, hello and welcome to our fourth installment of our Coffee and TA Series focusing on technical assistance. My name is Luis Valdez and I'm a product specialist here at AUCD. We would like to thank all of you for joining us today. Before we begin, I would like to address a few logistical details. Before each individual program presentation, we will provide a brief introduction of our speakers. Following the culmination of all of the presentations, there will be a time for questions. Because of the number of participants, your telephone lines will be muted throughout the call. However we will unmute your phone one at a time during the Q&A time at the end. You will need to press star and the pound sign on your phone to request to be unmuted to ask your question. If you are using the microphone on your computer you can raise your hand by clicking the little icon at the top of the screen that looks like a person raising their hand. You can submit questions at any point during the presentations via the chat box on your webinar console. You may send a chat to the whole audience or to the presenters only. We will compile your questions throughout the webinar and address them at the end. Please note we may not be able to address every question and may combine some questions. This webinar is being recorded and will be available on AUCD's webinar library. There will also be a short five-question evaluation survey at the close of the webinar. We invite you to provide feedback on this webinar and to provide suggestions for future topics.

As mentioned, we are hosting a multi-part series on the UCEDD core functions as categorized in NIRS. We will start off with a quick overview of how the DD Act mandates this core function followed IADD's definition of technical assistance based on their logic model revised in 2012. We will then have presenters from two different UCEDDs expanding upon how their program addresses these core functions through their program activities. We will then

conclude with a period for question and answers.

Previously we held our first three installments on interdisciplinary preservice preparation specifically for UCEDDs without a LEND program work training grant, continuing education and community training. The archive of those webinars are available on AUCD's webinar library. This particular installment will focus on the next core function, technical assistance. Here is a list as a heads-up of our upcoming webinars planned in this series.

Section 153 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 referred to as the DD Act covers the purpose and scope of activities to be undertaken by the National Network of UCEDDs outlining a series of core functions. The act includes a specific text, provision of community service, that provide training or technical assistance for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, professionals, care professionals, policymakers, students and other members of the community. That text was subsequently split into two UCEDD core functions, community training and technical assistance.

Further, IADD issued a final rule in 2015 providing guidance on implementing the DD Act. In this guidance IADD specifically mentions the need for each UCEDD to have a written plan for how their program will implement the core function. This will also be a topic of a future installment of this series.

This is also echoed in the UCEDD funding opportunity in which each applicant must provide a five-year plan for carrying out the core functions as outlined in the DD Act.

And finally, based on IADD's logic model in which they provide definitions for each core function, the definition provided for technical assistance is as follows, direct problem-solving services provided by the UCEDD faculty/staff to assist individuals with developmental and other disabilities, families, programs, firms, agencies, or other entities in improving their outcomes, services, management, and/or policies.

First we have Colleen McLaughlin. Colleen is the Associate Director of the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. She is responsible for directing the center's disability policy and community training and technical assistance initiatives. In collaboration with the Executive Director, she coordinates the Center's UCEDD-related functions in strategic planning. She received her Master's in education from Temple University and Bachelor's in science from the University of Pittsburgh. Her work has focused on inclusive community supports and services for people with intellectual disabilities. With more than five years experience working at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University and ten years of experience at the Boggs Center, she brings expertise in self-determination, direct support workforce development, service coordination, quality improvement, systems change and disability policy.

Please join me in welcoming Colleen McLaughlin.

>> McLAUGHLIN: Hi, everyone. Thanks, Luis. I'm glad to be able to be here tonight to share some of our experiences at the Boggs Center providing technical assistance.

So one of the things that we strongly believe and learn through years of experience is that technical assistance is really critical to implementation of any best practice. And the TA that we provide at the Boggs Center reaches a variety of people from day-to-day practitioners such as

Direct Support Professionals and clinicians but also provider organization leaders, our systems leaders, people with disabilities and families. And we approach this through a variety of methods.

One of the things we really want to do is be able to support organizations to develop effective implementation strategies so that they can really build capacity and then sustain these efforts, especially as turnover occurs within their organizations.

And one of the things that we really take great effort to, since we also do a large amount of training, is that we tie our technical assistance directly to our training opportunities with our ultimate goal, which is helping people move from that information from knowledge to practice and then eventually so it's habit.

We have three major focus areas in terms of partners at the state level. And we do a lot of our technical assistance through contracts with the state entities. So we have contracts with our Department of Education in New Jersey. We have a subaward through another repurpose entity with our Department of Children and Families children's system of care and then our adult supports and services. We do a lot of work through our Division of Developmental Disabilities. And those are the three areas I'm going to focus on today. And provide some examples of our technical assistance.

I'm going to start with the education system. And through our work with the Department of Education, we have a long-standing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in schools project. This has been in existence since 2003. And it's probably one of our longest-running technical assistance efforts on a single topic. It has reached more than 200 schools across the state. And it's the schools that have been able to implement the strategies with fidelity that have shown significant decreases in office conduct referrals as well as a variety of other successes.

I'm probably going to dive in a little bit more with this because we use a lot of the positive behavioral support in schools strategies across all of our technical assistance areas. Our PBIS program uses a model that's very similar to other PBIS models in the fact that we're using a three-tiered approach. The first tier is the universal interventions approach that really teaches and reinforces a consistent set of behavior expectations for students, staff and settings school-wide. So the efforts reach not just kids with disabilities but all kids within the school.

Then there's a secondary interventions approach, which really provides small group and individual support for students with repeated problem behaviors. And then the third tier is the individualized interventions approach that really provides assessment-driven individual support plans for students with disabilities who may have the most intense needs.

And given that this project is really long standing, we've been able to learn a lot from it. And one of the things we like to do at our UCEDD is cross pollinate our projects and use learning from our projects to really infuse best practice into our other projects. So we really try to use this multi-tier approach regardless of whether it's PBIS or whether it's working with adults supports and services. And it's been really, really successful in that way.

One of the things we always try to do across the board, whether it be the education,

children or adult service system is we make it a point to make sure we meet with organizational leadership before getting started with the technical assistance to really make sure that everybody is on the same page and start to plan in a strategic way. Doing this at the onset and then also periodically really helps us to create buy-in. And it also increases the support from the topdown so that all of the people implementing it at the various organizations feel supported and have someone to go to at their organization. We also try to collect internal stories and have those champions involved in those meetings so that they can share the real boots-on-the-ground type of experiences. In addition to the PBIS project under the Department of Education, we also have a very strong community-based instruction project. We have a team of training and consultation specialists that have been teachers in the past. And experience with CBI. Working with a variety of school districts to implement community based instruction for students with disabilities. Typically at the age of transition. And our goal there is to help these schools teach -- provide CBI to the students so that they can successfully gain employment. And the goal with that then is be the employment -- the employment not just be while the student is in the school but also that they have those skills to seek employment upon graduation, as well.

One of our newer projects within the Department of Education is our PCAST programming, the person-centered approaches in schools and transition project and the goal for this project is really to increase the use of person-centered practices in the Individualized Education Program development process, the IEP process.

In this we not just train school teams but provide technical assistance to school teams to teach them how to use structured conversations that are useful in learning about the students' transition goals. Through this we provide technical assistance to help transition teams develop one-page profiles. And most importantly, really actively engage the student in their own planning. So that they have clearly defined goals for what they want to achieve after graduation, as well as what the school -- as well for school life.

And it's been really -- all of these projects have been really successful. And overall have done a lot to really increase students' self-determination and increase the voice of students and parents within the school districts.

So within the children's system of care, this is probably one of the more clinically-based modes of technical assistance that we provide at the Center. A few years ago in New Jersey services for children with disabilities moved from New Jersey's Division of Developmental Disabilities to the Department of Children and Families. So that children are served in one department and then adults are served in another department. And as you can imagine with any systems change, there's significant capacity-building needs related to education with working with a new population. Adapting existing models of services to meet the needs of a new service recipient. As well as building sustainable efforts across the board.

And we've been involved in this effort since the transition over and it's a continual work in progress.

With this primarily right now our technical assistance focuses on providing consultation to

child support teams that are working with kids with really intensive behavior support needs. Typically those for which services have been extremely hard to find. They have been ineffective. Or the child is at risk of out-of-home placement. Or the child has been placed out of the home and is getting ready to come back into the home and they want to make sure supports are effectively in place.

One of the big things with this project is we have had a unique opportunity to provide a feedback loop to our state systems leaders at the children's system of care to really help them flesh out the needs to children with disabilities. And as a result of our technical assistance and the creation of this feedback loop, some of therapy practices have been changed and adapted to better meet this population. Which has been really great. And it's a continual work in progress.

So moving on to adult supports and services, we have a variety of technical assistance efforts really focused under our contract with our Division of Developmental Disabilities. In -- with adults, we also have a project that's focused on positive behavioral supports and supporting people with dual diagnosis.

One of the things that we do with this is we work directly with service provider organizations throughout the state to help them implement positive behavioral supports through a team-based approach. And that's really our focus of the technical assistance is one of the things we learned is that oftentimes organizations don't know how to implement a team-based approach. It's sometimes one-off. A clinician or a behaviorist giving the plan to address a core professional with the assumption that it's just going to be followed through with.

So one of the things that we do in our TA is really strategize with the organization and help them cultivate teams in ways that work best within their organization.

So our goal with this is really to help the providers, first of all, conduct effective evaluations, develop a behavior support plan, but then help the agency and sometimes consultant behaviorist work in partnership with Direct Support Professionals and frontline supervisors to ensure the successful implementation of these behavior plans.

The other thing that we want to do is infuse a concept of positive behavior approaches to be implemented across the organization regardless of the existence or need for a behavior plan. So we want to make sure that they are using these techniques on a wide-spread basis.

And the other thing we do with the PBIS and dual diagnosis project is we have expertise in our center and collaborators with NADD so one of the things we'll do is go into organizations and provide technical assistance to help them implementation the NADD credential. This includes helping them to identify the training needs that they may need to help their staff obtain the knowledge and skills they need to have the credential. Figuring out who in their organization is going to pursue the NADD credential first. And then helping them to really expand it so they have credentialed Direct Support Professionals and clinicians organization-wide.

This year we were really lucky to launch a new quality improvement initiative with our

Division of Developmental Disabilities. And through that we have been able to launch Council on Quality and Leadership personal outcome measures. We're helping them right now to infuse concepts into some of the state planning and monitoring tools. That's a work in progress that really just got started. And we're excited to see what comes out of that.

As part of this effort, the Boggs Center and the Division of Developmental Disabilities each have two personal outcomes certified trainers and we recently started to offer the four-day interviewer training to interested providers. Now, we could have easily stopped there and provided the training and assumed that the providers would just go off and running with that. But through our experience the technical assistance is really critical. So part of this effort is we're providing technical assistance to help each of the organizations implement and use the implementation process successfully from conducting the effective interviews after training. But also in helping them to identify how to use the information they pull from those interviews.

So we really start a process very similar to our other technical assistance efforts where we have met with provider leadership first, mapped out a game plan, implemented the training. And at the beginning we'll meet at least monthly with each of the provider organizations to help them build a Strategic Plan and implement the strategies so it becomes a sustainable effort.

Our ultimate goal with that is obviously improved quality service and more importantly better outcomes for people with disabilities. And then we also hope that the agencies will eventually pursue the QL accreditation through the process.

We have a very long history of working together with people with disabilities and families. As all UCEDDs do. The majority of our technical assistance efforts in this area really focus on increasing the voice of people with disabilities and families and empowering them to share what they want and need out of supports and services and out of their lives.

Some of our trainings that we offer include a self-advocate as a co-trainer. So one of the things we do to really increase the availability of self-advocates that are able to go out and do peer-to-peer training is we do targeted coaching with self-advocates to help them to develop their communication skills and presentation skills. And we do this an a one-to-one basis. And we also do this through our partners in the policymaking program and other efforts sometimes with our Community Advisory Committee.

In addition to these efforts, we also have an information and referral email line and we get frequent phone calls, as many people do. And we really provide a great deal of assistance navigation technical assistance and we do -- all of our staff have some hand in the pot with that in terms of just really helping people to navigate the system. The good thing is we always keep our tabs on those, the referrals we're getting, in terms of information. And we're gathering this information to determine what the needs of the New Jersey stakeholders are. And we use this to develop a variety of informational publications. And this input has really resulted in dozens of information or publications at this point in time.

This year we're actually really excited to launch another technical assistance effort where we're collaborating with DDD as well as the DD Council and the Community of Practice for

supporting families. A project that many of you probably know about that's run out of the UCEDD in the University of Missouri Kansas City. We had the opportunity to introduce that project through our DDLS when Shelly Reynolds came to speak a few years ago. We brought her back again this year and introduced the opportunity to DDD and write the proposal to get that off the ground this year so we're excited to start that.

Obviously employment is a really important topic. And we have -- even before helping New Jersey to become an Employment First state we focused on increasing employment for people with disabilities. And we have a long-standing training series that we're constantly reviewing and revising to meet the needs. It's currently required training for employment specialists and job coaches throughout the state. But since then we have really expanded our efforts in technical assistance a great deal so that we're able to better support organizations that have traditionally provided shelter workshops and day habilitation services. So that they can shift their business model to one that really focuses on employment and actively engaging people in their communities. Rather than the traditional place-based models. So that's really grown over the past couple of years. And we're looking forward to seeing the outcomes of our efforts.

Since I've been -- we've been working on a variety of Direct Support Professional workforce development activities for probably more than two decades now. It's a really strong focus of our center. We are currently the state's policy direct support system administrator. And in this role we provide day-to-day technical assistance to agencies that utilize that learner management system and the curriculum.

The other thing we do in that role is support our state in data collection and identification of ways to better utilize the training to meet the educational needs of DSPs most effectively.

In addition to that, a few years ago we launched a New Jersey-specific career pathway that utilizes the college direct support combined with mentoring and portfolio development and we provide technical assistance to organizations -- really one-on-one to organizations that are interested in adopting that career path. In addition to that we also provide technical assistance to help provider organizations implement NADSP the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals credentials and we have recently embarked on technical assistance related to implementing apprenticeship programs. And we have worked within Rutgers actually providing some technical assistance to some of our partners in labor and management on apprenticeship models specifically geared towards Direct Support Professionals.

And we're really excited about our partnership we recently built with the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges to expand educational and credentialing opportunities for Direct Support Professionals but also increase postsecondary opportunities for people with disabilities. And that technical assistance is really going to start this coming year.

And then really in terms of the technical assistance we provide, we recognize the quality improvement and increasing community inclusion for people with disabilities is really the primary goal of all of our technical assistance efforts. And in order for that to come to fruition, there's the day-to-day practice level things that need to happen. But there's also a great deal of systems change that needs to happen. And as the UCEDD, we're obviously the bridge from the

university to the community. But where we're at, we're uniquely situated through our partnerships to also be a bridge to the state level. And as such, with all of our technical assistance efforts, we're really able to create a feedback loop to our partners at the state level.

So the information we gain through our day-to-day technical assistance, we're able to keep accurate documentation, rate stories of success as well as challenges, and relay that to our partners at the date level. This really helps to give them information they need to guide their efforts and make changes to policy and practice.

We also are able to, as all UCEDDs, bring national best practice that we make available -- that's made available through our network here with AUCD. And then also our connections to state leadership and program staff. We make it available to -- I'm sorry; we make it available to state leadership and their program staff through direct contacts. And we also have some training projects to bring these best practices to the state like our Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series. And we also reach out to consultants to bring them in to provide technical assistance to our state partners, as well.

And then just to wrap up, some of the things -- the tips and tricks that we have learned through our technical assistance efforts is it's really, really critical to enlist organizational leadership and create that buy-in and support. We also make sure we document progress. The successes, the challenges, and next steps. Sometimes the documentation is the most challenging thing. But it's really critical to be able to increase action, replicate the strategies and then create that system feedback loop.

It's also an easy way to create the feedback loop with the people actually receiving the technical assistance. We have learned that it really helps to share the documentation with them so that they are pushed a little more to continue that sustainability.

Whenever we're working with a provider or a systems leader, we always leave with next steps. And then the other thing we try to do, we want to make sure we build capacity but we don't want to get out too soon. We want to have consistent follow-up with the organizations and people we're providing technical assistance to so that sustainability exists. So while the school or organization may be off to the races and good to go, we may taper back some of our technical assistance. But we'll at least touch base to make sure that the momentum is carried forward. Especially when turnover of leadership or core professionals or educators change because we know that's really important. We'll turn it over to the next group. Thank you.

>> VALDEZ: Thank you, Colleen. Next we have Jana Ferguson, Terri Vandercook, Kelly Nye-Lengerman and Barbara Kleist. Jana Ferguson is a project coordinator for the Institute on Community Integration University of Minnesota where she works in the area of transition to provide training and technical assistance to districts on Check & Connect and expanding the circle around the country. Terri Vandercook is the Assistant Director of the TIES Center. She previously was an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Special education at the University of St. Thomas and coordinator for the program in developmental disabilities. Kelly Nye-Lengerman is a research associate at the University of Minnesota through the Institute on Community Integration. She leads the Community Living & Employment area of ICI. Barbara

Kleist is the Program Director for entrepreneurial and development programs at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration. Please join me in welcoming Jana, Terri, Kelly and Barbara.

>> NYE-LENGERMAN: Hi, good afternoon everybody. This is Kelly and you get sort of a four-for-one deal here today. My colleagues and I are going to share a few examples, successes, challenges, pitfalls around technical assistance today here specifically in Minnesota. And we have been in existence as an organization and as an institute for over 30 years now. And really as part of our mission not only is it sort of legislatively mandated within the DD Act to be able to provide technical assistance, it's really core to the mission of who we are as an organization, how we onboard staff, how we connect partners and policymaking, how we connect with advocates and families, is really the underpinning of the work. So much that we do as an organization is really focused on that informal technical assistance and support that we give our fields and industries in our state.

So I'm excited to be able to share that with you today. I think one of the things that you're going to hear from my colleagues here that I think we struggle with around technical assistance is we're a larger UCEDD and with that we have a number of different centers and projects and activities. And while the core to our UCEDD has technical assistance components, so do many of our other grants and contracts. And many of them are in different areas, as you'll hear from Terri, Jana and Barb. And so part of the challenge as Colleen had said was documenting that technical assistance and circling back.

So sometimes it's really important to consider and think about as a center what are the ways that we're internally sort of communicating with each other about what we're doing in the technical assistance space. So we avoid duplication or we avoid any mixed messaging.

So I believe I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Terri, at the moment. And she's going to talk a little bit about the technical assistance space that she works with within the TIES Center.

>> VANDERCOOK: Okay, thank you, Kelly. As Kelly indicated, the ICI work covers the entire age range from children who are very young through adults.

So the project that I'm going to say just a little bit about is the TIES Center. And that TIES project focuses on elementary and middle school level students. And the TIES Center is, as the slide indicates the National Technical Assistance Center on inclusive practices and policies for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

And this graphic tells you both what TIES stands for and also gives you a better sense of what our focus is.

So what we are focused on doing is increasing the time, the instructional effectiveness, the engagement, and by engagement we are referring to engagement with typical peers in the school community as well as engagement in the general education curriculum. And then lastly state support for inclusive practices.

We, like many technical assistance centers, provide technical assistance across the universal, targeted, and intensive. And because the time is really limited today, I'm going to say

just a little bit about some of the work we have been doing with the TIES Center related to intensive technical assistance.

So we are in our second year of -- this is a five-year project. And last year we went through a selection process to identify the first state that we would work with intensively on inclusive education. And Maryland was selected. And right now we are in the process of identifying a second state to be the focus of intensive TA.

So this is -- it's really our structure for supporting intensive technical assistance. So you can see by looking at the graphic that we use leadership teams across the levels of state, district and school. And we think that's really important by evidence-based practices in schools, as you know, are influenced by a broad array of factors at the Federal, state and district school levels so we think it's really important to work across each of those levels. A couple of other things I would point out in our intensive TA structure, you may notice that there is intentional overlap in the team membership across the state, district and school teams. And we do that intentionally because we want there to be supports and cross communication across those different leadership teams so that they can share perspectives with one another, share information, as well as problem identification and solving problems at the appropriate level.

One thing that we have been in -- one specific activity that we did with each of the leadership teams this past year, we are creating a tool that identifies best practice indicators for inclusive education and we creates a version of that tool for the state, district and school level. And we took the leadership teams through the reflecting upon those best practices, identifying priorities, and then creating action plans to make progress in their creation of inclusive school communities. And that best practice indicator, we refer to it as the ROXIE, which stands for Reflecting on Opportunities for Excellence in Inclusive Education. And what that tool did was also help us to communicate with each of those leadership teams both the breadth and the depth of what's involved in this complex issue in creating and supporting inclusive school communities. Then when you look at the bottom down there where it says support at all levels, three things that each of the teams have to address, we have to focus on in our collaborative work, is a focus on communicative competence for students with significant cognitive disabilities, standards-based academic instruction and IEPs and then effective organizational change. And those are a priority because we have learned that those are essential if we want to include students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

And then the last thing I would point out with that graphic is that you can see TIES personnel partner with the leadership teams at each level. And then one more second here, I'm going to just share one challenge, one success. One challenge, creating this TA model, we want it to be one -- our goal is we want this to be a model that states could use on their own and that it would be manageable and effective in supporting inclusive education for all students, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

The challenge is, it's hard to know right now how successful we're being because we're kind of creating the model and the support as we're engaged and working with them. So it feels like it's not at all manageable or would be manageable for the state. So that's a challenge that

we have to continue to make sure we're paying attention to.

And then one success I would share is that Maryland provided significant monetary resources to our two identified focus districts this past year, which to us really indicated a large commitment to the work of our partnership. They provided \$100,000 grant to each district to support the partnership's work with the TIES Center.

So that was my quick five minutes. And now I'm not sure who is next. But the slides will probably tell us. Community Living & Employment, who is taking that? Is that back to you, Kelly.

>> NYE-LENGERMAN: That is Kelly. This is Kelly and I am back. I am going to go really quickly through this. One of the other programmatic areas that we have at ICI is focused on Community Living & Employment. And it really represents kind of a large group of projects, not all of them are shown on here, from our project of national significance with our RISP project that looks at residential information systems data, our Research and Training Center on community living, we work as part of the PROMISE TA center in partnership with AUCD and run and support an online community group and dissemination tool called Self Advocacy Online.

And so those are just a couple of examples. One of the things that I wanted to point out in the work that we do in this particular area is across ICI and Colleen you did a nice job explaining this earlier, too, is really this sort of cycle of training, technical assistance, research policy. And the sort of cyclical cycle that we use research to inform policy. We use training to inform technical assistance. Technical assistance develops the right kinds of strategies for good research. And so within ICI holistically, there are a number of different areas that we regularly are conducting research -- funded research projects in that really drive to our expertise in specific TA areas.

Here is my little cycle of learning that I talked a little bit about. I think one of the things I would like to point out, particularly in this program area, but I would believe that it is true in our other spaces, as well, is that some of our grants and projects have planful TA. As Terri talked about they have a good plan, they have a good design. Organizations or states are making investments. But there are also many, many spaces where there's this just-in-time TA stuff that's not funded. The organization that comes to you and says we really could look for these supports or we would red light like a staff person to walk with us through this journey so we're developing the most inclusive XYZ practice.

And one of the big challenges for I think UCEDDs in general is balancing that. How do you make sure that we are meeting the needs and requirements of technical assistance as defined by the DD Act and within our mission? So what happens for some of those -- most small and large asks that are not necessarily large funded projects, I don't necessarily have the answer for that per se. I would say we really try to balance that and be mindful of the things that are more formal and funded because those are the things that help us keep the lights on but that we also don't ignore those just-in-time or sometimes unfunded asks because sometimes they lead to bigger and better things. And sometimes a little bit of support, even if it's unfunded, can go a long way.

So just as an example of how technical assistance also informs our training component is that using some of the technical assistance modeling that Terri has talked about and Barb is going to reference is it really informs the different types of trainings that we do related to positive support practices, person-centered thinking, DSP work, as well. So we really use that cyclical process. So I think keep technical assistance fresh and keep technical assistance relevant.

In addition, we keep track, as I know many UCEDDs do, through NIRS about how many hours of technical assistance are we doing each year? How many organizations are we touching? How does that fit with our training? And how in this particular slide here this is one way we choose to try to make impactful statements about training and technical assistance that are easy for our stakeholders or our general partners to understand what it is that we do.

A couple of other examples in the Community Living & Employment area, I mentioned Self Advocacy Online. And this is really a universal approach in the sense that it's really meant to be information, tools and resources that are accessible for all. RISP is around -- Residential Information Systems Project is really focused on helping at a high level within states to understand and better utilize information about Medicaid, residential supports for people.

And kind of going down into this intensive area here, we work with AUCD as a partner on the Promise. That stands for Promoting Readiness Of Minors In Supplemental Security Income TA center. As well as our regional cohort model of positive supports and those are dedicated similar to Terri's technical assistance projects that have -- I wouldn't necessarily say significant. But they have something associated with them so it does make them slightly easier to implement across topical areas as well as across different systems both at individual, organizational, state and Federal level. So I'm going to turn it over here to my colleague Jana who is going to talk about the work that they do related to technical assistance through the Check & Connect program.

>> FERGUSON: Thanks, Kelly. My name is Jana. And my primary role is to do training and technical assistance at ICI with Check & Connect. And Check & Connect was a program developed at ICI, a monitoring intervention used with K12 students who are showing warning signs with disengagement of school and who are at risk of dropping out. And we are the only dropout prevention intervention to show positive effects for staying in school through What Works Clearinghouse. And as part of that as we developed the program and got that recognition, we had more and more demand for training on how to implement the Check & Connect model. And so this is our training model. Starting with implementing with fidelity, which is our manual which walks folks through on how to implement the program.

Then we have our administrative training. The preparation and implementation training, which sets folks up for thinking through all of the steps that they need to do in order to implement with fidelity. We train the mentors and then a fidelity of implementation training following a year of implementation.

And so we have technical assistance embedded in each one of these as has been alluded to a few times in our presentation today. One-and-done training really isn't effective because you

get -- as much as we believe that we deliver quality training, we just know that folks are not -- just cannot absorb all of the information in order to implement the program with fidelity.

And so we have a variety of different types of technical assistance that we build into each of these levels.

We exist across the nation. And internationally. But what I would really like to highlight here in the map is those states that are in yellow. And those are the ones where we have Check & Connect being implemented and supported by a state agency. And we can also include Minnesota on that map now. We've got a few more coming on board over the next few months.

But why that is really important as is we were alluding to, again, in previous conversations, we really have that topdown support put in place in these states where our state level has put that Check & Connect and their student engagement as a top priority. And so they are supporting Check & Connect across the state, not just financially, although the financial piece is very helpful. But also putting really strong structures in place in the beginning. Versus some of our sites that we just do one training, it can be a little bit more challenging to do that follow-up piece that I'll talk about in just a few minutes.

As our program is very customized, all of our technical assistance is customized, as well. So sometimes that's a specific follow-up presentation. Maybe there's other stakeholders who need more information. Helping our coordinators plan professional development to continue to support mentors. Helping to make some decisions to help move the program forward. Helping them to track data in a more meaningful way. Or other -- any other special requests or one-on-one assistance. So the majority is done via phone or web. As we are, as you saw, international.

So some of the biggest challenges we have are facilitating the time to support sites. And also that idea of I don't know what I don't know. So I think this has been, again, stated a few times that if we're very planful in TA from the beginning, that's where we're seeing more success. So if we do a training and then try to follow up and say, hey, what do you need, a lot of times people say, oh, I think we're fine. So we've been trying to increase success by doing some of these pieces.

Doing a lot of planning in advance before we even go in to do training. We are planning when the TA is going to happen. We deliver our training. Then help to -- we evaluate our training and help them to evaluate their program, review that. And then look at all of our different evaluation tools, provide sites with evaluation tools, and then say, okay, given the information that we see on your evaluations that we have set up in advance, so we're doing them multiple times throughout the year, how can we be responsive to increase our fidelity of implementation?

And with that, I will hand it over to Barb.

>> KLEIST: Thank you, Jana. [Off microphone] one of the other areas [indiscernible] direct support workforce training and technical assistance. And we do that in five areas. And here are some examples of our direct support workforce technical assistance that we provide in a variety

of different ways. With our national partner, that's the National Association for Direct Support Professionals, working with them at a universal level to develop professional core competencies that I believe Colleen referenced. The College of Direct Support, that's one of those [indiscernible] of developing online training. And then also providing the technical assistance to help organizations and states implement training in a way that ensures fidelity and [indiscernible].

Also at a universal level in terms of workforce we are co-editors with the national frontline -- national frontline -- frontline initiative -- excuse me; Frontline Initiative newsletter. As well as the frontline supervisor competency steps.

Recently we finished a film to really try to bring broader awareness around the direct support workforce crisis system called invaluables. And we are building a technical assistance -- providing technical assistance around implementing how organizations might use that film in their communities to promote the profession of direct support.

At a targeted level some of the examples of direct support technical assistance would be a number of toolkits that we have developed around products. Code of Ethics. At an intensive level we have three key projects that we've been working on.

We have several key projects in the last 20 years. But right now we are working with an organization in Tennessee to develop a comprehensive workforce data collection [indiscernible]. Research out of that. And then we will use that with fidelity and additional tools in the areas of workforce development.

I apologize, I've been advancing my slides but not on the screen.

So some examples of tools in workforce development are things like targeted marketing. Ready-made PSAs --

>> Excuse me, Barbara, can you speak up a little louder barbaric. Thank you. Is that better?
>> That is much better.

>> KLEIST: Okay. Thank you. Realistic job previews and then there are options where we have provided technical assistance to organizations to ANCOR, which is the national association for providers, we developed a customized toolkit for their members of these above tools. The Arc of the United States. And then we have also developed a guide for helping families who are using self-direction and find, choose and keep great DSPs. One of the key things about all of our technical assistance in workforce is we start with the voice of the DSP, the voice of the person being supported, and the voice of the families. That was the foundation to the thinking that we are developing our -- and providing our technical assistance.

Colleen -- our colleague, Colleen, referenced the College of Direct Support that's an online product we developed, a training product. And with that comes technical assistance. And currently there are 80 courses and 486 lessons. It offers more than 400 online instructional hours. And it's made available to organizations in 38 states and 2 countries. And since its inception currently we have about 450,000, rounding up, learners completing over roughly 8 million lessons.

And that work is guided by a national board of editors. We do -- in our workforce we spend

a fair amount of time providing technical assistance. Again, helping organizations really think about how they want to implement training. And then also with organizations who are implementing special projects, such as apprenticeships or they may be trying to develop a career lattice or ladder program.

And then just some workforce challenges and successes. On the positive side there are -- our technical assistance we provide and developing an occupational title is the Direct Support Professional. We've been surfacing in codifying core competencies. We have participated in CMS letter -- developing the CMS letter to states in the toolkit and developing datasets. Some of the challenges we continue to face are ongoing shifts in demographic changes. Wages. Turnover. Vacancies, some of the problems in the workforce also affect our work. So we focus some of our technical assistance around those challenges.

And with that, I'm going to turn it over I believe to give it back to you, Kelly.

>> NYE-LENGERMAN: It is but I'm actually going to skip over these because I would like to bring us to the end of the closing of our section because we only have a few minutes left and I wanted to give audience members an opportunity to be able to ask questions of the folks from Minnesota and questions of Colleen and AUCD. So I'm actually going to stop right there. If it's okay I'll leave that closing slide up there. But I wanted to open it up to questions or turn it back over to Anna and Luis.

>> VALDEZ: Great, thank you so much for that. We now have time for questions and answers. If you have a question please press star and pound sign on the telephone keypad and the conference call system will unmute you in the order in which you indicated you have a question.

You may also type them into the chat box below in the slides. And I will read them aloud for the presenters.

(Standing by).

>> VALDEZ: You can also click the icon that looks like a little person raising their hand if you have a question.

Okay. So I see a question here by Becky Pretzel. Great projects. Do you answer these in NIRS as a combination of community education and TA? And how do you evaluate your TA?

>> FERGUSON: Hi, this is Jana.

>> NYE-LENGERMAN: This is Kelly and I can answer -- oh, go ahead, Jana.

>> FERGUSON: I can just answer to how I do it. I enter TA into NIRS. I don't do a combination of community and TA. I do TA and capacity building as I'm primarily building capacity within staff to continue to implement. And then do continued evaluation, two different ways of evaluating. I do a direct evaluation, so a survey. But then also I do the fidelity measures several times each year. So another piece to evaluate effectiveness of TA is that if I'm -- if I'm doing a good job, then our fidelity of implementation should be improving.

>> NYE-LENGERMAN: And this is Kelly and I would say, yes. I would say when possible, I think we try to cover as many bases as we can with our NIRS entry. So many things -- I would say many things can fall into both kind of the training side and the technical assistance side as

well as sometimes technical assistance is also embedded within maybe some broader research projects. So for example, you might be doing a project related to an intervention for employment professionals but on the side you're giving a number of different calls or requests for information or support around best practices in employment say, for example. And if we are responding to those, which we would, we would not only enter the research activities that we do for the project, but we would also make a separate entity calling out specific TA that was done as part of that project.

I would say that evaluation is a little bit more dicey. At least in my experience. I won't state for the rest of my colleagues. While there are some tools built within NIRS around some core evaluation questions, I would say sometimes we do see that. Other times probably the best method of more formal evaluation is if your TA is actually built into your grant or your contract. Because in those regards, then there are a few more -- there are often more clearer benchmarks that say, we're going to do an annual survey about the technical assistance that we provided. So for example with the PROMISE TA Center we connected with a -- with the directors a number of times in different years in phone calls, surveys and events to get feedback on the technical assistance that they are receiving as well as what they are projecting for their future technical assistance needs.

So I guess I found in my professional experience is it's a little bit easier when some of that evaluation is actually built in at the frontend.

>> VALDEZ: Great, thank you, everyone. And I see that we're just at time. So I want to thank all of you for attending this webinar. This webinar has been recorded and will be archived in the webinar library and AUCD.org. If you would like any more information about the UCEDD Resource Center, please feel free to contact under the circumstances.

Please take a few moments to complete our survey.

>> NYE-LENGERMAN: Have a great afternoon, everyone.

(Beep).

>> Thank you. Have a great day. Bye bye.