DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGIES CENTER

2025 Application (SAMPLE)

Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center's 2025 State Technical Assistance Program

State Application Form

The purpose of this application form is to help the Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center learn more about your State's current goals and technical assistance (TA) needs.

It is suggested that the State staff responsible for completing the application confer with all participating State agencies and other relevant State staff to assure the completed application reflects a collaborative approach to engaging in this initiative.

Overview

The Direct Care Workforce (DCW) Strategies Center (the Strategies Center) is pleased to offer Technical Assistance (TA) to States focused on the recruitment, training, and retention of the direct care workforce (DCW). This opportunity is open to all States, including those that received TA in 2024 from the Strategies Center. Within this application, States will select from two TA options, with varying levels of support: State Advancement Lab **(SAL)** and Peer-Learning Collaboratives, described below.

All participating states will also have the option to participate in forthcoming Strategies Center workshops and webinars on topics of cross-cutting interest, outside of opportunities outlined in this application.

TA Themes

The Strategies Center TA is intended to help States identify, implement, and sustain efforts that support direct care workers throughout their careers. An expanded, efficient, optimally trained direct care workforce also improves the lives of those they serve, helping more older adults and people with disabilities live independently and engage fully in their communities.

In order to maximize resources and facilitate deeper learning, the Strategies Center has organized 2025 TA into three key themes, reflecting the journey of an individual direct care worker. In this application, States will rank themes in order of interest and indicate a preliminary milestone (or project) related to their top-ranked theme. Below are descriptions of themes and

exemplative milestones. These milestones are meant to offer a sense of potential concepts; the Strategies Center anticipates that States will choose milestones of most salience for their unique context. States will also have the opportunity to revise milestones post-award.

- **Joining the Workforce:** This thematic area centers on elevating awareness of direct care careers and building clear routes into the workforce. It includes strategies to increase visibility of the profession through marketing and public education campaigns. It involves building partnerships with high schools, community colleges, and workforce development programs to create clear on-ramps into the field. This area also encompasses the design and implementation of internships and training programs that equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to successfully begin a career in direct care.

  Sample State Milestone:

  - Developing a strategic plan to engage new DCWs, including the development of a request for proposals for a marketing partner.
  - Developing a plan for creating or engaging a matching service/worker registry.

- **Wellbeing at Work:** This thematic area focuses on creating supportive and sustainable conditions both within and around the workplace that enable DCWs to stay engaged in the workforce and deliver high-quality care efficiently. It includes the implementation of employer-sponsored benefits and wrap-around supports such as child-care and transportation that can increase workplace productivity and engagement. This theme also encompasses new employment structures that increase flexibility and stability; technologies that streamline workflow and reduce administrative burden; and coaching, peer support, and supervision models that strengthen connection and retention.

  Sample milestone:

  - Launching a formal partnership with provider association(s) to develop a training infrastructure.
  - Developing a plan for collecting and analyzing data regarding worker retention, employer culture, and more.

- **Career Progression:** This thematic area focuses on opportunities to support long-term career development and workforce stability among DCWs. It includes strategies to build career ladders and lattices, expand access to ongoing education and skills development, and promote the use of stackable credentials, badges, and competency-based training models. This area also includes defining and standardizing DCW roles and titles; creating specialized tracks that reflect areas of expertise such as behavioral health, dementia care, or complex medical support; and supporting portability of credentials across employers and settings.

  Sample milestone:

  - Creating a formalized career lattice for DCWs.
  - Creating an inventory of training opportunities and mapping them to core competencies.

TA Approach: Systems Change Process

The Strategies Center uses a standard systems change process to guide the provision of TA. Subject matter experts will use this systems change framework to guide States through the following steps to reach key goals and milestones: (1) foundation; (2) milestone selection; (3) strategy and workplan formation; and (4) implementation, evaluation, and validation. This process offers TA to States at any stage of their systems change efforts while providing the guidance, tools, and evidence-based models necessary to assure a comprehensive approach to their endeavors.

TA Options

Option 1: State Advancement Lab (SAL)

- **Approach:** States will establish and refine one-to-two milestones and work to achieve them through expansive, hands-on support from an SME team, described below; SAL States may focus on more than one theme during their engagement. SAL States will also have the option to participate in one Peer-Learning Collaborative (PLC) described below. The Strategies Center anticipates a one-year commitment to participate in this option.
- **Subject Matter Expert (SME) Support:** Each State will be connected to an SME team, headed by a lead SME. This SME team will work with the State to establish and refine milestone/s and develop a strategy and workplan for achievement, using a systems change framework. States will receive up to 250 hours of SME team support; a portion of

this support can be dedicated to work the State will pursue through their participation in a thematic PLC, described below.

- **Eligible States:** This option is only open to States that participated in 2024 Strategies Center Intensive Technical Assistance (ITA) or PLC offerings.

Option 2: Peer-Learning Collaboratives

- **Approach:** States will be grouped into theme-based cohorts. States will select a single milestone within the chosen theme to work toward through structured, monthly meetings with peers and SME support, described below. The Strategies Center anticipates a nine-month commitment to participate in this option.
- **SME Support:** Each State will be connected to an SME with expertise relevant to their theme and milestone for up to 100 hours of individualized support.
- **Eligible States:** All States can apply.

The following application solicits information about your State's preferred TA option, background on TA needs, and information on the proposed participating State team.

Part I: TA Selection

I-A. Select Your State or Territory

Please select one: *

[select dropdown]

I-B. Prior Participation

Please check which boxes describe your State's participation in the 2024 Strategies Center TA offerings: *

☐ Intensive Technical Assistance

☐ Peer-Learning Collaborative

☐ Attended Strategies Center webinar(s)

☐ None

I-C. Desired TA Option

Please select up to two TA options for which your State wishes to apply. Note that only States participating in the 2024 Strategies Center ITA or PLC offerings may apply for the SAL option. *

☐ State Advancement Lab (only available to States participating in the 2024 Strategies Center ITA or PLC offerings)

☐ Peer-Learning Collaborative (PLC)

I-D. PLC TA Themes

Please rank the themes in order of greatest interest for your State (e.g. 1=of most interest).

Joining the Workforce *

[select dropdown]

Wellbeing at Work *

[select dropdown]

Career Progression *

[select dropdown]

Part II: Background on Technical Assistance Needs

II-A. Brief Description of Relevant Work

Did your State participate in the 2024 Strategies Center ITA or PLC offerings? *

○ Yes

◉ No

If your State did not receive TA from the Strategies Center previously, please provide a brief description of activities in your State to build and strengthen the direct care workforce to support services for older adults and people with disabilities. In this description, please highlight any relevant TA efforts in which your State participates. Identify the roles of key partner agencies, including TA efforts in which those agencies participate, and any notable accomplishments to date associated with these activities. (500-word limit) *

Word Count: **0 / 500**

II-B. TA Option and Draft Milestone Background

Please describe the rationale for your top-ranked TA option and share one draft milestone your State may pursue related to your top-ranked theme; note that this milestone can be refined post-award. In the description, please discuss how this work will support your State's planned goals related to the development, retention, and/or expansion of the direct care workforce to support the provision of services for older adults and persons with disabilities. If your State participated in 2024 Strategies Center ITA or PLC offerings, discuss how this participation will build upon the prior TA received. (500-word limit) *

Word Count: **0 / 500**

II-C. Additional Information

Please share any additional information that will be useful to the Strategies Center in assessing your application (500-word limit or upload additional documents).

Word Count: **0 / 500**

Optional File Upload:

Upload is limited to one file, so if you have multiple files, please combine into one PDF. Maximum file size is 1GB.

✚ Select a file | | ❷

Part III: Team Composition

III-A. State Agency Submitting Application

Please indicate which State agency or office submits this application and will drive this effort forward (e.g. Medicaid, Aging and Disability, Intellectual and Developmental Disability, or Workforce Development agencies): *

Indicate the name of the highest official within this agency: *

<input field (empty)>

III-B. Acknowledgements

The State Agency's leadership acknowledges that the State is seeking this technical assistance opportunity: *

◉ Yes

○ No

III-C. Key Contacts

The State Agency must indicate a staff lead, administrative point of contact, a preliminary list of State team participants, and an optional list of other external representatives (non-State) team participants.

The **staff lead** must be an employee that holds a senior management position within the lead agency and is capable of allocating adequate staff resources to the project. That employee must hold a position with the authority to leverage TA supports to complete the milestone/s.

State Agency Lead Name *

<input field (empty)>

Agency *

<input field (empty)>

Title *

<input field (empty)>

Email Address *

<input field (empty)>

Telephone Number *

<input field (empty)>

Please share an **administrative point of contract** who can help organize conversations with the Strategies Center on an ongoing basis if different from the State agency lead.

Is the administrative point of contact different from the State agency lead? *

◉ Yes

○ No

Administrative Point of Contact Name *

<input field (empty)>

Title *

<input field (empty)>

Email Address *

<input field (empty)>

Telephone Number *

<input field (empty)>

Once selected, States will need to assemble a **State team** that will regularly participate in Strategies Center TA activities. This team should consist of senior and mid-level leaders in agencies (e.g. Medicaid, Aging and Disability, Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce Development agencies) that oversee initiatives

impacting the chosen milestone. Applicants should indicate whom they think may be on this team, however, SMEs are also available to offer guidance to States in assembling and finalizing their teams.

State team: *

States can optionally identify **external representatives** from relevant non-State entities to participate on their team, such as individuals from workforce association chapters, advisory committees, or others. Please indicate if there are other external representatives who may be on this team and note that SMEs can assist States on this topic post-award.

External representatives:

Submission Date *