

Partner Plan Act Collaboration Institute

Request for Supports (RFS)

BACKGROUND

Illinois Action for Children (IACF) is implementing a system of statewide supports to assist community collaborations to improve local early childhood systems. Known as Community Systems Statewide Supports (CS3), the supports are funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and will ensure that communities are working to help children birth through five – especially those from low-income families or families with multiple needs – enter kindergarten healthy, safe, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

CS3 will increase Illinois' system-building capacity through a comprehensive training and technical assistance approach. We intend to support early childhood systems-building at the state, regional, and local levels by building the capacity of a broad base of system actors to understand, practice, and support system-building efforts as they address targeted local early childhood problems.

IACF has partnered with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Community Systems Development Subcommittee of the Illinois Early Learning Council to design the Collaboration Institute. We invite all early learning collaborations in Illinois to complete the RFS for the Collaboration Institute, where communities wishing to receive more in-depth support will focus on increasing enrollment in early learning programs and quality of programs serving young children and their families.

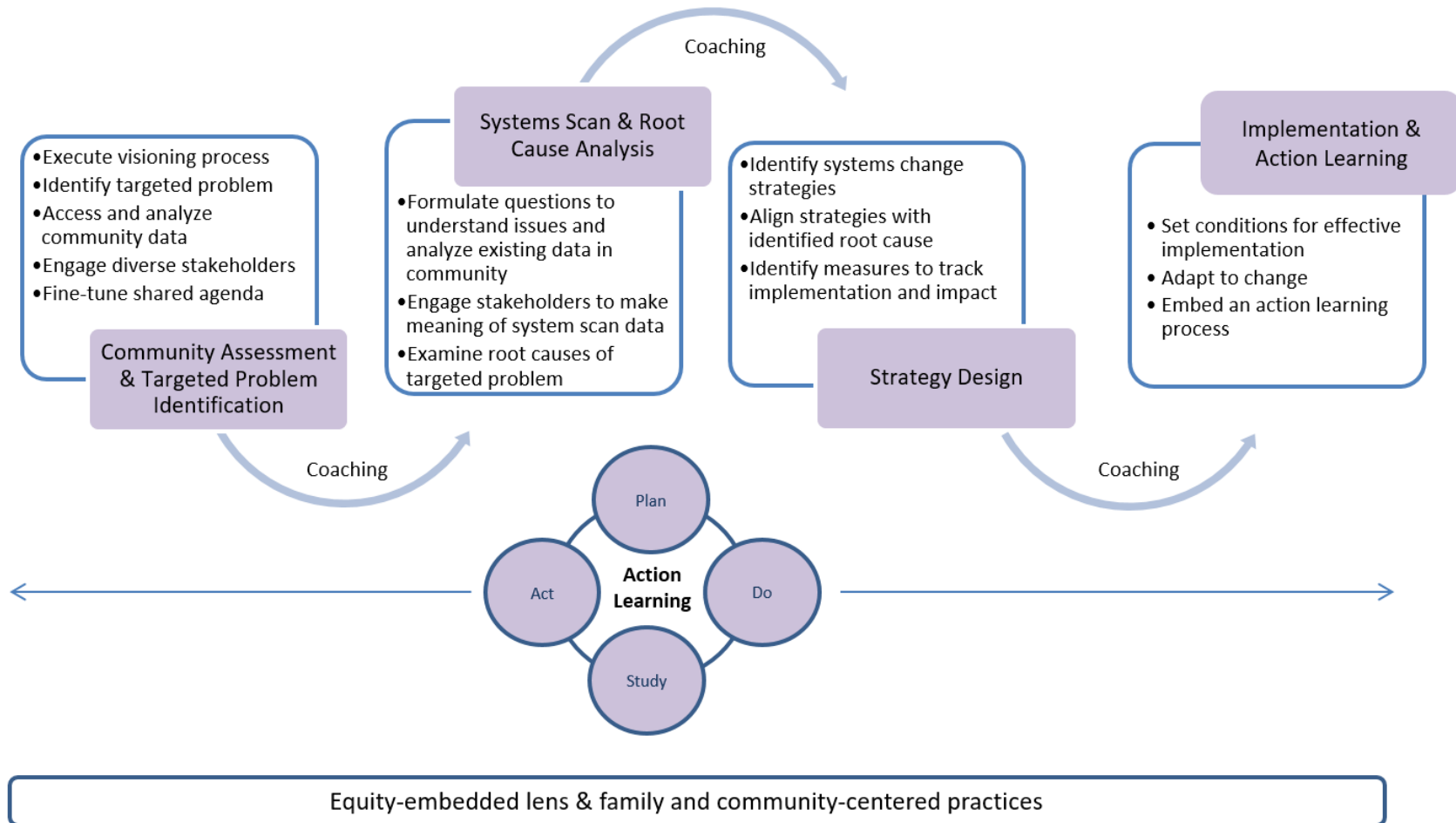
THE COLLABORATION INSTITUTE FRAMEWORK

Nine collaboration teams will be accepted in total. Teams accepted to the Institute will form yearlong cohorts. Four main trainings will include:

- Community Assessment & Targeted Problem Identification
- Systems Scan & Root Cause Analysis
- Strategy Design
- Implementation & Action Learning

These components draw upon our experience with previous community systems development initiatives such as the Innovation Zones and the ABL Change Framework developed by Drs. Pennie Foster-Fishman and Erin Watson at Michigan State University. Community systems work will be approached with the goal of equitable outcomes for all children and authentic engagement of families and community members in the process.

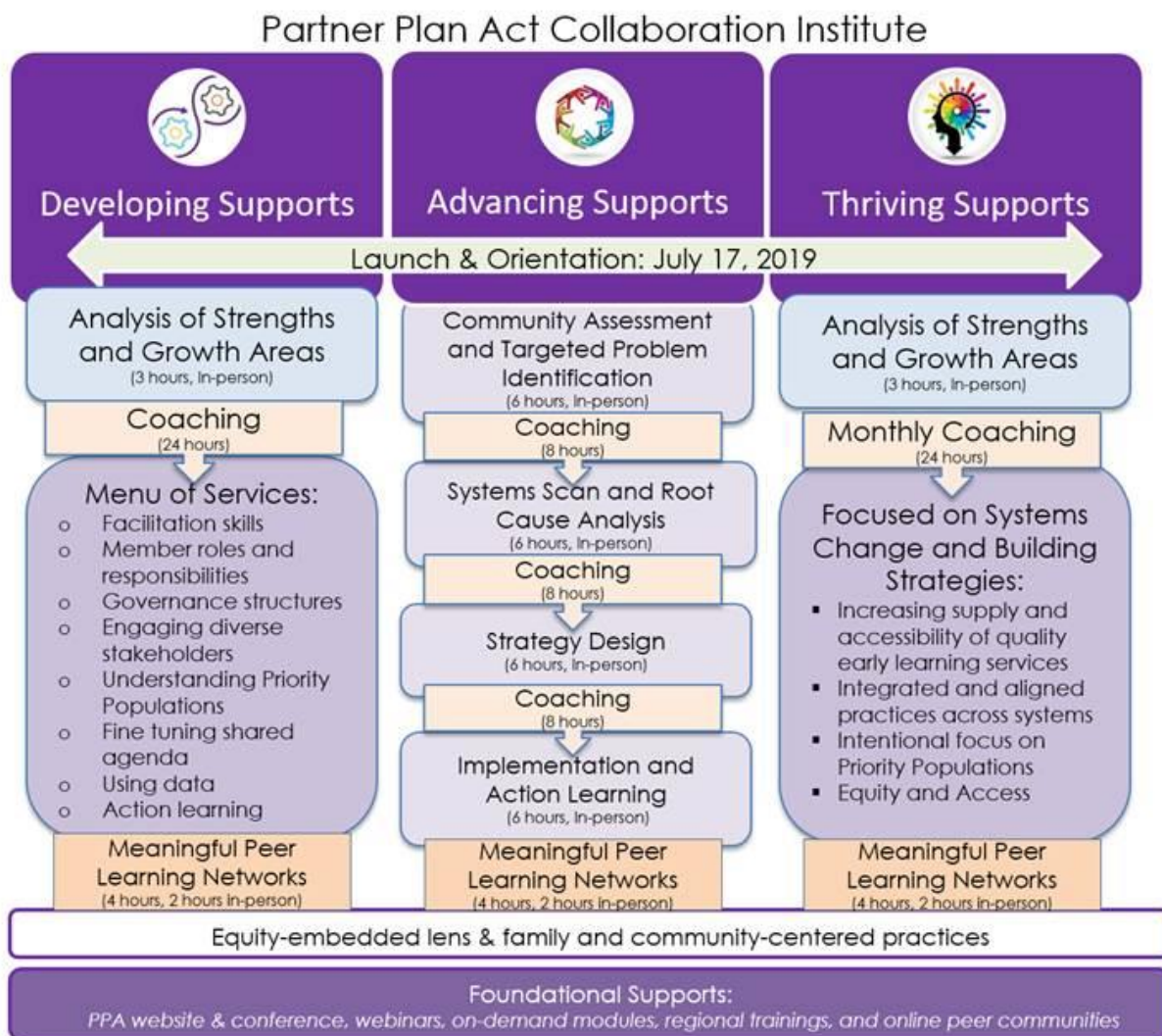
Community Systems Statewide Supports Framework



Based on their RFS, collaboration teams of 3-5 individuals will be offered one of three levels of support:

- Level 1: *Developing supports* include 24 hours of coaching and technical assistance in-person or over the phone around the menu of services listed below.
- Level 2: *Advancing supports* include four in-person trainings (24 hours) and monthly coaching, with 24 hours of coaching for the year.
- Level 3: *Thriving supports* include monthly coaching with 24 hours of coaching for the year.

In addition, all Institute collaborations will receive: 1) an orientation; 2) access to an online peer learning community; 3) on-demand online modules and webinars; 4) foundational trainings; and 5) the Partner Plan Act conference.



GOALS OF CS3

Community Systems Statewide Supports' Goals:

1. Increase collaborations' understanding and use of common systems-change tools in order to increase enrollment in early learning programs and quality of programs serving young children and their families
2. Increase quality training and technical assistance for systems-change within Illinois
3. Legitimize, define, and build the capacity of collaboration leaders

EXPECTATIONS OF INSTITUTE COLLABORATIONS

As Institute participants, collaborations will select a team of 3-5 individuals who will be expected to apply the concepts, tools, and methods they have learned as they execute a local systems-building/change initiative. Local initiatives should tie into the state's vision of early childhood systems collaboration and seek to address the issue that not all children entering kindergarten are safe, healthy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn. Collaboration initiatives may be new or already underway, and will focus on increasing enrollment in early learning programs and/or quality of programs serving young children and their families.

Evaluation and action learning are an important part of the Collaboration Institute. The CS3 team wants to ensure that progress is being made toward both collaboration team outcomes and the CS3 team outcomes. Teams will be asked to participate in an evaluation process which includes surveys, interviews and quarterly reports throughout the year as part of CS3's quality improvement process. Each collaboration team will complete self-assessments (Analysis of Strengths & Growth Areas and Equity Tool) at the beginning and end of its time in the cohort. These tools will be used to help collaborations identify areas of support as well as areas of strength.

Collaboration Teams' Outcomes:

1. Increase capacity for systems change leadership at the local level
2. Build an effective governance structure
3. Create systems-level change that increases enrollment in early learning programs and/or quality of programs serving young children and their families

Acknowledging that collaboration members already have a full workload, the design and execution of these yearlong cohorts is intended to be as practical as possible. Knowing that participation will place additional demands on collaboration team members' time, we want to clearly state expectations for your involvement and the benefits we aim for you to receive.

Community collaboration teams will be...	
Expected to:	Benefits:
Engage in various learning opportunities including training and coaching	Learn concepts, tools, and methods to support systems-change/development work
Be flexible and adaptive as we engage in an action learning process with the cohort	Conduct community needs assessment, define strategies and meet the collaboration's goals
Examine equity and authentic engagement of families in collaboration's communities	Get additional coaching support
Apply concepts, tools, and strategies to deepen local systems-building/change work	Inform state policy around community systems development
Work collaboratively with CS3 Trainer/Coaches and other specialized consultants	Learn from others' experiences through deliberate reflection with other teams and CS3 Trainer/Coaches
Participate in the evaluation process which will include surveys, interviews, and quarterly reports	Develop capacity to lead change at the local level effectively
Contribute to the cohort's action learning process through reflection and participation in occasional calls and/or meetings	Gain first-hand insight into discoveries of CS3 project which may influence the state's work
Attend all trainings with the entire 3-5 person team if receiving Level 2 supports	Build the capacity of the entire team to better promote and embed practices within collaborations
Engage the entire 3-5 person team during the Analysis of Strength and Growth areas if receiving Level 1 or Level 3 supports	Generate greater understanding of needs and buy-in for the collaboration's CS3 goals

TRAINING TOPICS & SCHEDULE

Level 1 (Developing Supports) & Level 3 (Thriving Supports)

Date	Topic
July 17, 2019	Launch Meeting -Orientation to Collaboration Institute -Relationship-Building
July 2019 – May 2020	Coaching Online Peer Learning Communities
May 20, 2020	Culminating Event

Level 2 (Advancing Supports)

Date	Topic
July 17, 2019	Launch Meeting -Orientation to Collaboration Institute -Relationship-Building
July 31, 2019	Training 1: Community Assessment & Targeted Problem Identification
August 2019 – October 2019	Coaching Online Peer Learning Communities
October 23, 2019	Training 2: Systems Scan & Root Cause Analysis
November 2019 – January 2020	Coaching Online Peer Learning Communities
January 29, 2020	Training 3: Strategy Design
February 2020 – April 2020	Coaching Online Peer Learning Communities
April 29, 2020	Training 4: Implementation & Action Learning
May 20, 2020	Culminating Event

RFS PROCESS & TIMELINE

The RFS questions are meant to give CS3 a sense of your collaboration's capacity and readiness to engage in systems-change work. Please reflect deeply as you complete your self-assessment and the open-ended questions, since we will be using the information you provide to determine whether collaborations will receive Level 1, 2, or 3 supports (described on page 3).

- Level 1 Supports:** A collaboration receiving *Developing Supports* will be in the beginning stages of systems-change work; it may be a fairly new collaboration and still be working on foundational elements such as bringing different stakeholders to the table and creating a shared agenda. It may also be an older collaboration that has undergone changes that require an in-depth review of fundamental systems work. The supports the collaboration will receive include 24 hours of coaching and technical assistance.
- Level 2 Supports:** A collaboration receiving *Advancing Supports* will be more firmly established, have defined governance structures, commit to increasing parent and community member leadership within the collaboration, and work to fulfill unmet community needs. The supports the collaboration will receive include four in-person trainings and 24 hours of coaching.
- Level 3 Supports:** A collaboration receiving *Thriving Supports* will be well-established, have a significant presence in the community, commit to increasing parent and community member leadership within the collaboration, and be looking to evaluate the impact of their initiatives and strategies. The supports the collaboration will receive include 24 hours of coaching.

All collaborations intending to submit a RFS must first complete a consultation call with Grace Araya, CS3 Project Director, before submitting. This is to ensure that collaborations have a clear understanding of all expectations and benefits of participating in the Collaboration Institute prior to completing a RFS. Please contact Grace at grace.araya@actforchildren.org well before the submission deadline to arrange a consultation call at which all collaboration team members must be present. A RFS submitted without conducting a consultation call will not be accepted.

The RFS is comprehensive. It should be completed with collaboration members and submitted by the collaboration leader. The RFS should be a maximum of seven pages and must be received by Grace Araya no later than **May 31, 2019** by the end of business day at grace.araya@actforchildren.org. Please email the completed electronic file along with a scan of the signature page. Nine total collaboration teams will be accepted. Collaborations will be notified of the results by June 7, 2019.

When completing the open-ended questions in the RFS, please use the scoring guide on the next page to assist you in writing your responses.

<p>QUESTIONS? If you have questions please contact Grace Araya, Director of Community Systems Statewide Supports at Illinois Action for Children at grace.araya@actforchildren.org or 773-564-8870.</p>
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SCORING GUIDE

Nine total collaboration teams will be accepted. A lower score does not necessarily disqualify a collaboration from receiving targeted supports. Rather, it will be used to inform what level of supports a collaboration will receive.

Collaboration Team Information (10 points)
Collaboration name and service area listed
Minimum of 3 and up to 5 members committed to full participation who are key leaders within the collaboration, including the collaboration leader and a parent/community member (if applicable)
Self-Assessment (10 points)
All components completed
Collaboration Overview (10 points)
Has clearly defined vision/mission/purpose
Has clearly defined and distributed leadership
Meets on a regular basis
Has a clearly defined governance and decision-making structure
Diverse Perspectives (10 points)
Actively engages stakeholders from across sectors
Actively works to engage parents and community members
Actively identifies and works on minimizing or eliminating barriers to participation/engagement
Actively works to align efforts toward a shared vision
Activities & Strategies (20 points)
Current issue or focus area is related to state's early childhood vision
Has identified the priority populations
Strategies used demonstrate commitment to priority populations
Strategies used demonstrate commitment to community systems-change/development
Capacity & Readiness (20 points)
Has willingness and desire to learn ways to integrate system-building/change approaches
Shows readiness to work on increasing enrollment or quality of early learning programs
Demonstrates commitment to using data and evaluation to guide continuous improvement
Skill Development & Goals (10 points)
What collaboration hopes to gain from participation
Challenges that collaboration hopes to address as a result of learning new practices and methods for systems-change and strategy design
Team Selection (10 points)
Demonstrates attempt to incorporate team members from a variety of sectors