

**National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)
Application for Intensive Technical Assistance**

**State-wide, Tribal Organization, or Territory Implementation of the Pyramid Model
within Early Childhood Center Based Programs**

Background

Purpose of this RFA

States, tribal organizations, and territories are invited to apply to receive intensive technical assistance (TA) from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) to implement, scale up, and sustain the Pyramid Model within inclusive classroom programs. Entities currently engaged in state-wide implementation efforts and seeking to strengthen, expand, or enhance their implementation are also eligible to apply. The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the US Department of Education to provide T/TA to build the capacity of systems to implement and sustain the Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social Emotional Competence of Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children (Pyramid Model).

This intensive TA opportunity will support states, tribal organizations, and territories in establishing or enhancing broad cross-sector Pyramid Model efforts.

Goal and Outcomes of the Technical Assistance

The goal of the two-year intensive TA is to build the capacity of a State, Tribal Organization, or Territory to establish, strengthen, or expand the implementation of the Pyramid Model in early childhood programs across their state to meet the *social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all young children (birth-5 years) including children with and or at risk for disabilities in inclusive environments.*

This intensive TA opportunity will guide the state, tribal organization, or territory to achieve the following six outcomes:

- 1) Enhance the capacity of the state, tribal organization, or territory to implement and sustain the Pyramid Model through the work of a collaborative cross-sector leadership team;
- 2) Establish a professional development network of professionals (program implementation coaches) who will provide ongoing training and coaching on evidence-based practices to local Pyramid Model implementation programs;
- 3) Establish and support cohorts of local implementation programs;
- 4) Establish an evaluation system that includes data on implementation fidelity and outcomes for the cross-sector leadership team and local implementation programs;
- 5) Develop a 3-year sustainability and scale-up plan for the leadership team and local implementation programs; and

- 6) Enhance inclusion and efforts to eliminate exclusionary discipline in implementing and scaling up the Pyramid Model.

The NCPMI approach for building capacity reflects lessons from multiple successful state-wide implementation efforts related to the Pyramid Model and implementation science. NCPMI will guide the entity leadership team in putting these essential components in place (https://challengingbehavior.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/roadmap_6_roadmap-to-statewide-implementation.pdf),

Essential Components for Implementation and Scale-Up

- State, Tribal Organization, or Territory Leadership Team - convene a collaborative cross-sector leadership team (this may be an already existing group) to align Pyramid Model implementation within the current service delivery context, develop policies, procedures, and other mechanisms to plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain the Pyramid Model and practices. The Leadership Team will use the State Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/BoQ_StateTeam.pdf to develop their implementation and scale-up plan.
- Professional Development Network - establishing a network of [Pyramid Model program implementation coaches](#) (i.e., coaches that work with implementation program leadership teams) to build the capacity of the workforce, provide ongoing professional development events, and provide consultation and leadership team coaching for local program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model framework with fidelity.
- Implementation [Programs](#) – The state will ensure that programs are recruited and trained in program-wide implementation of the approach. Program implementation coaches from the professional development network will provide training and coaching to the local leadership teams of 4-6 local programs to serve as initial demonstrations of the effectiveness of the Pyramid Model and practices in those sites. Implementation programs will select classroom practitioner coaches (i.e., coaches who work with implementing classroom providers) who will be trained and supported by the program implementation coaches to use [practice-based coaching](#) to support classroom providers reaching fidelity on PM practices.
- Data for Decision-Making – Data tools and data decision-making will be used by the cross-sector State, Territory, or Tribal Leadership Team, professional development network, and local implementation program leadership teams to strengthen implementation fidelity and ensure the promotion of child and family outcomes.
https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/roadmap/roadmap_7_Data.pdf .

Intensive T/TA Provided by NCPMI across Two Calendar Years:

An NCPMI Planning TA professional will be assigned to provide TA to the cross-sector leadership team leading the Pyramid Model initiative. They will work closely with the PM coordinator(s) of the cross-sector Leadership Team to help with agenda-setting and team processes, provide documents and materials, provide data and evaluation tools, and support evaluation activities.

An NCPMI professional development team will be assigned to provide training and guide your implementation efforts. The NCPMI professional development team will assist in identifying the professional development network of program implementation coaches, providing initial training events, assisting in recruiting and identifying implementation programs, providing data and evaluation tools, and supporting evaluation activities.

In year one, NCPMI will support the installation of the essential components. In year two, NCPMI will be a resource and provide technical assistance as the entity moves into implementation and scale-up. TA will be a combination of virtual and on-site meetings and training events.

- Monthly virtual TA meetings with the NCPMI coordinator(s)
- A minimum of 4 on-site or virtual TA meetings per year to facilitate or assist the cross-sector Leadership Team
- Approximately eight on-site or virtual training events per year and TA support to the professional development network of program implementation coaches and participants from implementation programs (i.e., leadership teams, practitioners, and practitioner coaches)
- Regularly scheduled support to the cross-sector Leadership Team, Professional Development Network of program implementation coaches, and implementation programs, including conference calls and webinars
- Assistance with developing data and accountability systems for documenting outcomes and ensuring fidelity and continuous improvement
- Provision of training materials and data decision-making tools
- Assistance with creating a plan for sustainability and scale-up

Readiness, Resources, and Responsibilities:

The process of the state, tribal organization, or territory leadership (entity) team collaboration and system enhancement is intensive, requiring a significant commitment of staff, time, and fiscal resources. However, the intensive engagement will lead to high-fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model, resulting in a more competent and confident workforce and better outcomes for children and their families.

NCPMI will select an entity ready to plan, implement, and sustain these components or an entity ready to reengage and move forward by reflecting on the current Pyramid Model implementation and developing a plan to implement and sustain. Therefore,

NCPMI will only select a state, tribal organization, or territory that demonstrates evidence that they can:

- Dedicate at least [1.0 FTE](#) *solely* to this effort of appropriately trained and experienced staff to coordinate and evaluate the effort, including the supervision of the professional development network of program implementation coaches, recruitment and support of implementation programs, and serving as the liaison to the Center staff (The 1.0 FTE may be shared across two or three people across agencies).
- The team must identify and appoint a team member who coordinates data collection and leads ongoing formative and summative evaluation activities.
- Allocate a minimum of \$20,000 per year (above the allocation of the 1.0 FTE funding for staffing the coordinator position) to the Pyramid Model implementation work, including ensuring that the professional development network of program implementation coaches is supported, implementation programs are trained and coached, and expenses are allocated for meetings, materials and professional development events described in Table 1 and attendance at the annual National Training Institute (NTI).
- Fulfill the responsibilities and commitments in Table 1.
- Demonstrate commitment to developing or sustaining the cross-sector Leadership Team, Professional Development Network of program implementation coaches, implementation programs, and evaluation components.
- Space and technology capacity for virtual meetings with the cross-sector Leadership Team, program implementation coaches, implementation program leadership teams, and practitioner coaches.
- Plan for scaling up and sustaining the effort.

Table 1 provides detailed information about the resources and responsibilities that are required of the applicant.

Application Requirements

In the application narrative, the applying state, tribal organization, or territory must describe how they will meet the following requirements.

I. [Convene a State, Tribal Organization, or Territory Leadership Team](#)

The six outcomes listed above will be achieved by the cross-sector collaborative team with the training and technical assistance provided by NCPMI. The PM coordinator(s) will convene the Leadership Team of decision-makers or their representatives every month. Participants must include the IDEA 619 Preschool Coordinator (who submits the application) and a team member from your OSEP-funded Parent Training and Information Center or Community Parent Resource Center. Other key members might be personnel involved in typical early childhood program settings such as Head Start, child care, public school preschool, and other inclusive programs and settings where children with disabilities or at risk for disabilities and their families receive their special

education and related services. Other agencies we recommend include state-wide T/TA initiatives, PBIS Initiatives, infant and early childhood mental health, maternal and child health, child welfare, family organizations, and higher education (e.g., community college, 4-year institutions).

II. Designate a [Coordinator](#) or Coordination Roles

Applications must describe how the State, Tribal Organization, or Territory Leadership Team will staff the Pyramid Model implementation and scale-up effort by providing the name, position, and contact information of the coordinator(s). If not yet hired, describe plans to meet these requirements before the start of TA.

Description of the staffing considerations include:

- Four major functions:
 1. Coordinating and facilitating the Leadership Team
 2. Coordinating, monitoring, and supporting the professional development network of program implementation coaches and implementation programs
 3. Collecting, analyzing, and sharing evaluation data
 4. Serving as liaison with NCPMI
- Staffing should total at least 1.0 FTE. This FTE might be allocated to two to three people in the role of coordinators.
- Knowledge, skills, and experiences related to the functions above reflect senior-level positions with expertise in early education, systems and policies, professional development, collaborative teamwork, evaluation and data decision-making, and project coordination.

III. Describe the State, Tribal Organization, or Territory Vision, System, Strengths, Challenges

A. Vision

Vision for entities new to Pyramid Model implementation: What is the vision for your team in the next 2 to 3 years in professional development and coaching related to the social, emotional, and behavioral development of children birth to five years of age with or at risk for disabilities and their families? Describe how the vision relates to equitable access for historically underserved populations and communities in your state and access to services in inclusive environments. Describe how partnering with NCPMI would help to realize that vision.

OR

Vision for states that currently have a Pyramid Model initiative: If you have a state leadership team and are seeking to rebuild, refocus, or reconnect the Pyramid Model work in your state, describe the vision for your state team in the next 2-3 years. Describe how the vision relates to equitable access for historically

underserved populations and communities in your state and access to services in inclusive environments. Describe how partnering with NCPMI would help to realize that vision.

B. Strengths and Challenges

Strengths and Challenges section for entities new to Pyramid Model implementation

Provide a description of your context and the major professional development, system improvement, and partnership efforts related to implementing evidence-based practices to address young children's social-emotional outcomes and enhance equity. In the description, provide information on the following and include reflections on your strengths and challenges:

- 1) Describe the current state of social-emotional learning in your state, tribal organization, or territory and how this project can support and strengthen your goals.
- 2) Describe other activities promoting social-emotional outcomes (e.g., professional development, policy, State Systemic Improvement Plan, collaborative strategic initiatives/activities/goals).
- 3) Describe other TA activities in which your IDEA Part B 619 program or entity guiding preschool special education services is engaged and how those efforts might align with your participation in Intensive TA for implementing the Pyramid Model.
- 4) Describe any current or past training efforts related to the Pyramid Model, including who provided the training, the content, the length of the training, and the audience.
- 5) Describe cross-sector teams or work that has occurred including professional development systems, coaching networks, or training outside of preschool special education, such as Head Start or child care that would increase collaborative efforts for this project.

Strengths and challenges section for existing state leadership teams

If you currently have a state leadership team and are seeking to rebuild, refocus, or reconnect the Pyramid Model work in your state with the help of the NCPMI team:

- 1) Describe the state-level Pyramid Model work currently happening and the functioning of the state leadership team.
- 2) Include the description of the current functioning of the four essential structures (<https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/statewide/>):
 - State Leadership Team
 - Implementation Programs/Sites

- Professional Development Network of Trainers and Coaches
 - Evaluation/Data Informed Decision Making
- 3) Reflect on your state's strengths and challenges with state-wide implementation and describe how technical assistance can enhance the work of your state leadership team and Pyramid Model implementation.
 - 4) Describe other activities promoting social-emotional outcomes (e.g., professional development, policy, State Systemic Improvement Plan, collaborative strategic initiatives/activities/goals).
 - 5) Describe other TA activities in which your IDEA Part B 619 program or entity guiding preschool special education services is currently engaged and how those efforts might align with your participation in Intensive TA for implementing the Pyramid Model.

IV. Resource Allocation

Describe how your team will meet the following requirements:

- Allocate a minimum of \$20,000 per year (above the allocation of funding to staffing the coordinator) to the Pyramid Model implementation work, including ensuring that the professional development network of program implementation coaches is supported, implementation programs are trained and coached, and expenses are allocated for meetings and professional development events included in the sequence of TA activities and attendance at the annual National Training Institute (NTI).
- Dedicate at least 1.0 FTE of appropriately trained and experienced staff to coordinate and evaluate the effort, including the supervision of the professional development network of program implementation coaches, recruitment and support of implementation programs, and serving as the liaison to the Center staff (this may be two to three people);

Describe how your leadership team will meet the requirements listed in **Table 1**.

Submission Instructions

Application Transmission Process

Please upload your application on or before February 12, 2025. If you experience any issues uploading your application, contact Lise Fox, lisefox@usf.edu.

Application Review

Applications will be evaluated on responses to the application requirements.

Supports for Your Application

- NCPMI will offer one webinar to answer questions for interested states, tribal organizations, and territories. This call will be on **January 16 at 4 pm ET**. To

attend the call, use this link: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0sf-itpj0oGtTkQPM_IFEiOf1dPaBwLiyq

- If you would like additional information about NCPMI and the Pyramid Model, please visit the website (www.challengingbehavior.org)
- For information about the state capacity-building process and components, see the resources that can be found here <https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/statewide/>
- Review a sample job description for the state PM coordinator(s): http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/sig/2_2_state_coordinator.pdf
- For information on other states that are implementing the Pyramid Model, see reports and products that are posted here <https://challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-nation/state/state-work/>

Checklist of Required Application Components and Order

1. Commitment/cover letter with signature of the state Section 619 Preschool Coordinator (or director of preschool special education services). The letter should document support for and intent to collaborate with NCPMI if selected.
2. State, Tribal Organization, or Territory Leadership Team Roster (see sample [template](#)) with letters of commitment (pdf into one file for upload). Commitment letters from all team members with signatures indicating a commitment to serve on the team for multiple years and at least monthly meetings of approximately two hours. If possible, letters should indicate resources that will be devoted to the initiative (e.g., time, staff, fiscal, in-kind).
3. Identification of the PM coordinator(s) with explicit discussion about how their experience relates to the PM coordinator(s) roles.
4. Application Narrative that explicitly addresses Application Requirements II-IV and requirements of Table 1. Please limit this to 15 pages double spaced.
5. SSIP or other system-wide documents that are related to the initiative.

Table 1. Responsibilities & Resources

State Leadership Team

1. **Establish a leadership team.** Implementation and scale-up will be guided by a leadership team of state, tribal, or territory decision-makers or their representatives. The IDEA 619 Preschool Coordinator must be a team member and will apply on behalf of the team. Participants **must include** a team member from your OSEP-funded state Parent Training and Information Center or Community Parent Resource Center. Other key members might consist of personnel involved in typical preschool settings such as Head Start, Child-Care, public-school preschool, and other inclusive programs and settings where children with disabilities or at risk for disabilities and their families receive their special education and related services. Other agencies include system-wide T/TA initiatives, PBS Initiatives, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Maternal and Child Health, Child Welfare, family organizations, and higher education (e.g., community college, 4-year institutions). We recommend no more than 15 members (this team may be a steering committee of a larger group).
2. Letters of commitment from leadership team members to acknowledge agreement to multi-year participation for implementation and scale-up.
3. With the TA and training support from NCPMI, the cross-sector leadership team will:
 - a) establish and provide oversight of the professional development network of program implementation coaches;
 - b) organize and attend Pyramid Model training events;
 - c) develop a system for the recruitment of Pyramid Model implementation programs;
 - d) establish policies and procedures for data collection from local programs to evaluate the effort; and
 - e) develop policies and procedures and a sustainability plan to ensure expansion and scale-up for implementing the Pyramid Model.
4. Identify and appoint PM coordinator(s) who will coordinate the leadership team's work and act as liaison to NCPMI. Convene at least monthly meetings of the cross-sector leadership team and meet monthly with NCPMI staff.
5. Identify and appoint a team member as an evaluation coordinator who coordinates data collection and leads ongoing formative and summative evaluation activities.
6. Identify and appoint a PM Professional Development Coordinator (could be the same as #4 and 5) to coordinate the work of the Professional Development Network of Program Coaches, who will be engaged in training and technical assistance activities to implementation programs. The person providing PD Coordination will oversee the activities of the professional development network of program implementation coaches, identify implementation programs, invite trainees, and be responsible for training logistics.
 - a. The coordinator will be a member of the cross-sector Leadership Team and will report on the professional development network and

Table 1. Responsibilities & Resources

implementation programs to the leadership team, attend all the training events, and serve as point of contact for NCPMI.

- b. The coordinator will work with the state team's evaluation coordinator to report coach and program data back to the state team.
7. Allocate a minimum of \$20,000 per year to cover meetings, materials, professional development costs, support to implementation programs, and support to the professional development network of implementation coaches. These funds might come from current budgets, collaborative agencies, grants, or other sources.

Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches

8. Identify a network of accomplished T/TA professionals who will serve as the professional development network of program implementation coaches and provide ongoing training and implementation coaching to local programs for their implementation of Pyramid Model practices. These activities include:
 - training of practitioners,
 - training of practitioner coaches from implementation programs,
 - training and support to program leadership teams, and
 - training/guidance related to data decision-making and supporting all expansion activities.
9. With technical assistance from NCPMI, develop a training plan for the implementation of training events and follow up coaching/TA.
10. Program implementation coaches will participate in the training and support of practitioner coaches, program-wide leadership teams, and provide support and training to new cohorts of program implementation coaches
11. Program implementation coaches will:
 - Provide coaching visits/contact to:
 - guide the implementation program's leadership team
 - support the delivery of coaching to practitioners by practitioner coaches
 - support implementation programs to use and analyze data
 - Monitor the implementation program's progress and fidelity of implementation.
 - Coordinate collection of implementation program data on implementation outcomes.
 - Meet monthly with cadre of program implementation coaches
 - Regularly report implementation program data to the cross-sector leadership team and professional development coordinator.

Table 1. Responsibilities & Resources

Implementation Programs

- 12.** The State Leadership Team will select approximately 4-6 programs for the initial cohort that are quality programs serving children birth-5 with or at risk for disabilities in inclusive settings.
- 13.** The State Leadership Team uses an [application](#) and selection process for implementation programs to assure commitment to Pyramid Model implementation.
- 14.** Implementation programs must identify a program leadership team (program director, practitioner coach, practitioners, a professional to provide behavior support, family member, and other members) to attend Leadership Team training, Pyramid Model practice training/modules, and participate in monthly leadership team meetings.
- 15.** Implementation programs ensure all providers have or will complete Pyramid Model practices training/modules and commit to post-training implementation and participation in coaching.
- 16.** Implementation programs must identify a professional who will serve as a behavior specialist and implement a collaborative teaming process to develop individualized behavior support plans. NCPMI will train and mentor these professionals.
- 17.** Implementation programs must identify a person(s) who will serve in the role of practitioner coach and complete the Pyramid practices training/modules, an initial 12-hour training on the use of practice-based coaching, a 12-hour training on the use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) and/or Teaching Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS), and monthly 90-minute coaching calls.
- 18.** Programs must be willing to work collaboratively with the program implementation coach and NCPMI team to ensure the implementation of practices with fidelity and to collect data on program implementation and outcomes.
- 19.** Programs must be willing to serve as a demonstration site and provide presentations and information to other programs interested in implementation and outcomes related to Pyramid Model implementation.

Table 1. Responsibilities & Resources

Evaluation

20. The PM coordinator(s) and data/evaluation coordinator will work with NCPMI staff and the leadership team to design and conduct formative and summative evaluations of all major activities. Evaluation elements include:

Leadership Team

- State Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality
- Action Plan and progress toward implementation of the plan
- Meeting minutes and meeting evaluations
- Scale Up and Sustainability Plan (e.g., policies, resources)
- Institutionalizing the Pyramid Model and practices into professional development

Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches

- Program coaching activities
- Evaluations of training events

Implementation programs:

- Program fidelity of implementation
- Practitioner fidelity of implementation
- Practitioner coaching implementation
- Child social-emotional outcomes
- Family survey of satisfaction