



Promise Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Self-Assessment Tool

Overview of the Self-Assessment Tool

This self-assessment tool contains several categories and, within each category, a set of statements your community can use to assess your current plan and capacity for developing a strong Promise Neighborhood implementation plan. The results of this assessment will assist you in identifying your strengths, parts of the planning process that will be particularly challenging, and where you most need technical assistance to complete your plan.

The categories are based on the areas of primary focus identified in the guidelines for Promise Neighborhoods planning grants, as well as the Promise Neighborhoods Institute partners' experience in developing a "cradle to college" pipeline for children's healthy development, school success, and college graduation.

Sections 1 and 2 address "big picture" issues communities need to address to successfully complete their planning process and be prepared for implementation:

- *Being prepared to manage a community process that is designed to improve results for all children and youth in the target neighborhood, and*
- *Developing a strong business plan.*

Sections 3-10 focus on the key components of a planning process that all need to integrate in order to develop to a strong and feasible implementation plan. Working through these sections will give you a sense of how ready you are to proceed with your planning around:

- *Engaging children, youth, and families,*
- *Structuring effective and accountable partnerships,*
- *Using data for learning, continuous improvement, and accountability,*
- *Developing a pipeline of programs, services, supports, and opportunities,*
- *Creating strategic and sustainable financing plans,*
- *Addressing policy and regulatory issues,*
- *Developing a communications plan, and*
- *Deepening the organizational and leadership capacity in your lead agency and partners.*

Section 10 is designed to help your community be strategic about your readiness and capacity to be an informed and empowered consumer of technical assistance. The planning process will be complex and challenging; your lead agency and partners will need to make good decisions about using your time and resources to participate in learning opportunities and acquire the assistance that will help you produce a strong plan.

Using the Self-Assessment Tool

The self-assessment tool is designed to engender thoughtful discussion among leaders and senior managers in your lead and partner agencies and organizations. It may be beneficial to set aside the time needed to walk through the entire assessment together. This provides the advantage of assuring that everyone who is accountable for parts of the planning process understand the big picture, how their efforts will need to relate to others, and what kinds of deliverables are expected in order to create a comprehensive business plan for implementation. Using the self-assessment tool together will also allow you to begin to prioritize and develop a sequence for all of technical assistance you think you will need during the planning period.

For each statement, the group using the self-assessment tool should have a brief discussion regarding the extent to which it accurately describes where you are in the planning process. You might ask the following kinds of questions to guide your discussion:

- What strengths are we building on?
- Who is responsible for doing the work? How ready do they feel to begin? What kinds of similar experiences have they had in the past?
- What worries do we have about this part of the plan?
- What are some gaps in capacity we need to address?
- What barriers might we face as we begin planning?

After your discussion, you have four options in response to each of the statements in the self-assessment:

1 = We do not have a plan or the capacity do this. If you rate yourself “1” on particular statements, you may want to consider sequencing the technical assistance you will need to address this area, beginning with planning and facilitation help to strengthen this part of your plan, and then defining and acquiring any capacity building assistance, learning, skill building, and other assistance you need to carry out the plan.

2 = We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out. If you rate yourselves “2” on a given statement, you will want to look carefully at your existing plan and identify what you think you need to learn, any relationships that may need to be built or strengthened, technical expertise they may be lacking, or additional skills people in your community will need to carry out this part of the plan.

3 = We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan. Rating yourself “3” on particular statements is an indication that you feel confident about your capacity in this area, but feel that the planning process you have described could use strengthening. In this case you might consider seeking planning and facilitation support to revisit and flesh out the plan you outlined in your federal planning grant proposal (or other process you used to develop your plan) and think carefully about who needs to participate in any assistance received in order for them to embrace and feel ready to implement the resulting plan.

4 = We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out. These are areas where you feel comfortable with both your plan and the capacity you have to carry it out and are ready to hit the ground running.

Once you have rated all of the statements in a particular category, you can use the space provided for “Comments and Priority Needs” to capture your overall strengths and list the ideas you have for acquiring and making use of any TA you have identified you need. After you complete the assessment, you can compile a list of TA needs and begin prioritizing them by asking the following kinds of questions:

- How clear are we about what is driving the need for this technical assistance?
- Which are highest priority needs? Which needs are less pressing? Are there any needs on our list that would be helpful, but are not absolutely essential to completing our plan?
- Do we have ideas about who can help us, or do we need advice and support in thinking through our options?
- How ready and willing are the people in our community who need to participate?
- Given the way our work plan is sequenced, when do we need this help in order to stay on track?

The Promise Neighborhoods Institute is interested in your experience using this tool and would love to hear your suggestions for improving it. In addition, if your community is willing to share the list of priority technical assistance needs you develop, we will use that data to target resources through the PNI website and to inform our overall TA strategy and use of resources during the planning process.

Categories for Self-Assessment

Below are the 11 categories to reflect on for your current plan and capacity to develop a strong Promise Neighborhood:

1. [Managing a Community-wide Results Process](#)
2. [Creating an Overarching Business Plan](#)
3. [Authentically Engaging Children, Youth, and Families](#)
4. [Structuring Effective and Accountable Partnerships and Collaborations](#)
5. [Using Data for Learning, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability](#)
6. [Developing an Evidence-based Pipeline of Supports, Services, and Opportunities](#)
7. [Developing a Strategic and Sustainable Financing Plan](#)
8. [Addressing Policy and Regulatory Issues](#)
9. [Developing a Communications Plan to Build Public and Political Will](#)
10. [Deepening Organizational and Leadership Capacity](#)
11. [Accessing and Making Effective Use of Technical Assistance](#)

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

2. Creating an Overarching Business Plan	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have clear sense of the elements a results-driven business plan will contain and have a plan in mind and the capacity to develop it 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we need to structure our efforts to address the following issues during the planning process so that we produce the information and deliverables needed to create our business plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engaging the community, ○ Creating accountable partnerships, ○ Using data for learning and accountability, ○ Developing our pipeline, ○ Developing a financing plan, ○ Addressing policy and regulatory issues, ○ Developing a communications plan to build public and political will, and ○ Building organizational and leadership capacity 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have identified and have in place the capacity-staff, consultants, expertise, and tools-we need to develop our business plan 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

3. Authentically Engaging Children, Youth, and Families	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan and the capacity to ensure that the voice and perspectives of families are at the center of our planning process and will help drive the development of a responsive, effective, and family-centered pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have good relationships with neighborhood residents and local leaders and are prepared to work with them to develop a range of ways in which they can participate in efforts to achieve our desired results 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are prepared to work closely with neighborhood residents of different racial, ethnic, and language groups 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we will involve children, youth, and families in conducting our needs assessment and segmentation analysis 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for engaging children, youth, and families in the development and delivery of our pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are clear about the roles that residents of the target neighborhood will play in making decisions about our Promise Neighborhoods initiative 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for assuring that residents of the target neighborhood have access to the information needed to hold us accountable for the quality and effectiveness of the supports, services, and opportunities that make up our pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

4. Structuring Effective and Accountable Partnerships and Collaborations	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan in place for structuring and supporting the work of our Advisory Board/Committee during the planning process 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are clear how decisions will be made as we develop our Promise Neighborhoods plan 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have clearly defined roles and responsibilities of partner organizations 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are clear about how we will work with schools and our local school district during the planning process 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for how partners will regularly review data to guide the development of our plan and begin to align their policies and practices with the implementation approach we outline in our business plan 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan in place for constructively addressing conflict during our planning process 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for developing an effective approach to governance and decision making for the implementation phase of our work 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

5. Using Data for Learning, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a process in place and the capacity to carry out our needs assessment and segmentation analysis 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have defined the indicators we will use for our needs assessment 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We know what data we have can easily access and what we may need to gather in alternative ways 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have a plan for using both qualitative and quantitative data for our needs assessment 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We know how we will disaggregate the data we collect during our needs assessment and how we will interpret that data to conduct our segmentation analysis 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a process in place and the capacity to build a longitudinal data system during our planning year 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We know what administrative data are available and how we will combine them into individual records 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have defined additional data that will be needed and have a plan for collecting them 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are aware of the range of confidentiality issues and regulations that must be addressed 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have defined and have a plan for addressing technology and data system issues 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have a plan in place and the capacity to set challenging but achievable targets for each of the indicators we are using to measure our success 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have a plan in place and the capacity needed to develop a plan for using data in real time for program improvement and accountability 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan in place and the capacity to design a local evaluation and work with a national evaluator 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we will use the data produced by our local evaluation for planning and continuous improvement 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan in place and the capacity to share data and report progress regularly to families, funders, and other stakeholders 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

6. Developing an Evidence-based Pipeline of Supports, Services, and Opportunities¹	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed a process and work plan for developing our pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are clear how we will use the data from our needs assessment and segmentation analysis to inform the development of our pipeline and assure we target our interventions effectively 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we will address any of the invitational priorities we have chosen to focus on (i.e., unique learning needs of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency; internet connectivity; civic engagement; and/or arts and humanities) as we build our pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we will assure that our pipeline is effective and produces results for different racial, ethnic, and language groups in our target neighborhood 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have identified the existing evidence-based interventions that we will build on 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we will develop plans to expand the reach of these individual interventions so that we serve more young people over time and are able to achieve better results at the scale we are seeking 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have identified gaps in our continuum and have a process in mind for identifying the evidence-based practices we will use to fill those gaps 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have identified the process we will use for assuring seamless linkages among the different interventions in our pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have identified a process for planning to “roll-out” and expand the reach of the entire pipeline over time 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a process in place for identifying and building the staff and management capacity and infrastructure (e.g., highly qualified frontline staff, aligned professional development, results-oriented performance assessments, strong management processes) that will be needed to deliver the evidence-based interventions 				

¹ See Appendix A for the various areas a comprehensive cradle to college pipeline needs to address. Your community may need more assistance in some of these areas than others.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have identified the staff, partners and consultants who will be responsible for designing and developing the implementation plan for our pipeline				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other...				
Comments & Priority TA Needs:				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

7. Developing a Strategic and Sustainable Financing Plan	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an overall plan for costing out our Promise Neighborhoods approach 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are clear about the results we want to achieve over time and have set targets to measure our progress toward those results 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how many children and families we need to serve over time to achieve our desired results 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed a set of assumptions about how we will expand our interventions over time (e.g., adding evidence-based interventions to the continuum, expanding the service area, creating the capacity and infrastructure needed to reach more children and their families) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for estimating the costs of achieving results of that magnitude that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program: The cost of starting-up and delivering the evidence-based interventions that make up our continuum ○ Infrastructure: Administrative/management, data and evaluation, training, technical assistance, communications, community outreach and engagement, policy/advocacy, and working with systems, etc. ○ Expansion and Cost Escalation: goals for expanding the services in the continuum, the service area, and the number of children, youth, and families served 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for and the capacity to present and analyze our cost assumptions in different ways (e.g., broken down by result area, by intervention, by cost per participant, etc.) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a process developed to map and analyze the current funding we can apply to implement our plan and the gaps in funding that exist 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for and the capacity to create a strategic plan with a variety of funding approaches to fill the gaps in resources and sustain our efforts over time 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have strong relationships with local funders and plan to use local resources to leverage state and federal funding 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

8. Addressing Policy and Regulatory Issues	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are prepared to map the range of local, state, and federal policies that can either support or impede our ability to achieve the results we are seeking 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for and the capacity to develop a targeted policy advocacy agenda, with clear goals and targets for needed policy changes, based on our read of the current economic and policy environment 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have the partnerships in place needed to successfully carry out our policy advocacy agenda 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan in place for identifying federal policies and regulations that would impede the implementation of our Promise Neighborhoods plan and for sharing them with the Secretary of Education 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

9. Developing a Communications Plan to Build Public and Political Will	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have the capacity to create a communications plan that will help us build support for our work 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have experience communicating about the conditions, strengths, and needs of our target neighborhood 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are clear about the audiences with which we want to communicate (e.g., policymakers, funders, the general public) and what we want them to do if our communication is successful 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know how we will use quantitative and qualitative data to communicate with the public, policymakers, and funders about the need for our work and the progress we make over time 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have experience using a variety of communications channels and vehicles, including social media, to communicate with the public, policymakers, and funders 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

10. Deepening Organizational and Leadership Capacity	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have defined what a culture of accountability needs to look like in the context of our Promise Neighborhoods approach 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for deepening or developing a culture of accountability in our lead agency, partner organizations, and community as a whole 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for developing systems of support and accountability for front-line workers, managers, and leaders in the organizations that will deliver the pipeline 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have defined the leadership characteristics, qualities, and skills needed for our approach to succeed 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a plan for providing support to leaders in the community, our lead agency, and our partner organizations 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

- 1 – We do not have a plan or the capacity to do this.
- 2 – We have a good plan but need capacity building support and assistance to carry it out.
- 3 – We have the capacity but need help more fully developing our plan.
- 4 – We have a good plan and the capacity needed to carry it out.

11. Accessing and Making Effective Use of Technical Assistance	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are aware of the range of technical resources that are available to support us during the planning process 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have conducted an assessment of our highest priority technical assistance needs 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a process in mind for defining what we need to learn, the skills and relationships we need to build, and the technical expertise we need to develop our overall business plan 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have experience and a process for defining the results we want from TA providers and monitoring the delivery of technical assistance for quality and effectiveness 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have experience participating in a community of practice and a clear sense of what we could contribute and what we hope to learn by working with colleagues from other communities 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other... 				
<p>Comments & Priority TA Needs:</p>				

APPENDIX A

Creating a Cradle to College Pipeline of Programs, Services, Supports, and Opportunities

Creating a pipeline that results in all young people developing optimally, succeeding in school, and ultimately graduating from college requires a range of process and content expertise. Communities need to identify a range of programs, services, supports, and opportunities that result in good developmental and educational outcomes across the lifespan of a community's children and youth. In addition, they must attend to the policies, systems changes, and frontline practice that ensure the pipeline is having its desired effect, for the right number of children and youth, and that it is sustainable over time.

Pages 2 and 3 of this Appendix contain a list of the area/categories of programs, services, supports, and opportunities needed to develop an effective pipeline. Responding to the following statements for *each* of the areas identified will help your community assess where you feel prepared to develop an implementation plan and where you may need additional assistance as you design your pipeline:

- 1. We have information about the quality and effectiveness of the programs, services and opportunities that are currently available in the target neighborhood.***
- 2. We have identified the existing evidence-based intervention(s) that we will build on.***
- 3. We know how we will assure the intervention is effective and produces results for different racial, ethnic, and language groups in our target neighborhood.***
- 4. We know what it would take to expand the reach of this intervention so that we are able to reach more young people over time and are able to achieve better results at the scale we are seeking.***
- 5. We know what issues we need to address to assure this part of the continuum is linked seamlessly to other parts of the continuum.***
- 6. We have a process in place for identifying and building the staff and management capacity and infrastructure (e.g., highly qualified frontline staff, aligned professional development, results-oriented performance assessments, strong management processes) that will be needed to deliver this particular evidence-based intervention.***
- 7. We have identified the staff, partners, and consultants who will be responsible for designing and developing the implementation plan for this part of our continuum.***

Academic Programs, Services, Supports and Opportunities

- High-quality early learning programs and policies, including:
 - Use of developmentally appropriate early learning measures across multiple domains of learning
 - Transition activities, alignment and partnerships between early learning programs and schools
 - Professional development
 - Coordinated programs and services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable young children
 - Parent and Family Engagement
 - Coordinated data systems and use of data to make decisions
- Effective K-12 programs and policies, including:
 - Effective teachers and school leaders
 - Instructional and assessment practices that meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners
 - Use of data about student growth to make decisions
 - High quality college and career readiness standards with aligned instruction and assessment
 - Developmentally appropriate out-of-school time opportunities that are aligned with the school curriculum
 - Parent and family engagement
 - Multiple pathways for students to earn high school diplomas
- Effective college and career readiness programs and interventions
- Effective approaches to assuring college retention and success

Family and Community Programs, Services, Supports, and Opportunities

- Prenatal care
- Developmentally appropriate health and mental health interventions and services
- Nutrition programs and services, including access to affordable and healthy food
- Access to safe recreational spaces and regular opportunities for physical activity
- Family support and parenting education

- Family literacy
- Support for social networks and connections
- Access to needed social services
- Youth development programs and opportunities
- Community safety programs and interventions
- Quality affordable housing
- Employment training, placement, retention, and advancement
- Family asset building
- Transportation
- Access to technology and other 21st Century learning tools