

**Notice of Support Availability:  
Pay for Success Administrative Data Training and Technical  
Assistance Services**

Issued January 18, 2019

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## What Is the Notice of Support Availability?

This notice of support availability, or NoSA, (1) offers training and technical assistance (TTA) from the Urban Institute (Urban) to potential Pay for Success projects or (2) supports existing programs nationwide. The specific focus of the Pay for Success Administrative Data (PFS-AD) assistance is to help sites improve their access to and use of detailed administrative data for project development. This is the third NoSA released by Urban through PFS-AD.

Projects supported by Urban's PFS-AD may be located anywhere in the United States and must address one of these three broad issue areas:

- Youth development: Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives, including through crime-reduction initiatives focused on juvenile delinquency and victimization prevention and response
- Economic opportunity: Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged people
- Healthy futures: Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness

**Urban is offering training and technical assistance only and is not offering direct grantmaking or other monetary investment; the NoSA will not be used to distribute subgrants or other funding to support recipients' services or staff.** Submitting an application does not guarantee an organization will receive support.

Applications will be selected on a rolling basis. Questions about the project or application can be submitted to Brian Bieretz at [bbieretz@urban.org](mailto:bbieretz@urban.org).

## What Is the Urban Institute?

Founded in 1968 to understand problems facing America's cities and assess the War on Poverty programs, the Urban Institute brings decades of objective analysis and expertise to policy debates. Today, our research portfolio topics range from the social safety net to health and tax policies; the well-being of families and neighborhoods; and trends in work, earnings, and wealth building.

Urban believes in the power of evidence to improve lives and strengthen communities. Our analyses and recommendations help expand opportunities for all people, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the fiscal health of governments and the effectiveness of public policies. Our work engages communities at the state, county, and city levels as we gather data and evaluate programs. Urban Institute scholars blend academic rigor with on-the-ground collaboration, partnering with policymakers, community leaders, practitioners, and the private sector to diagnose problems and find solutions.

## What Is Pay for Success?

Pay for success is an innovative financing mechanism that shifts financial risk from a traditional funder—usually government—to a new investor(s), who provides up-front capital to scale an evidence-based social program to improve outcomes for a vulnerable population. If an independent evaluation shows that the program achieved agreed-upon outcomes, then the investment is repaid with interest by the traditional funder. If not, the investor takes the loss. By prioritizing outcomes, performance management, evidence, and the strategic deployment of resources, PFS has the potential to improve social service delivery to vulnerable populations, yielding benefits to individuals, government, and society at large.

## What Is PFS-AD?

PFS-AD is a direct technical assistance effort for addressing the administrative data challenges commonly faced by

communities pursuing PFS projects. Funded in part by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service Social Innovation Fund, this effort's goal is to support PFS project stakeholders' access to and use of high-quality, low-cost data for planning and evaluation. This includes helping local areas improve their capacity to access and use administrative data.

High-quality PFS projects rely on data to inform project development from **feasibility to transaction structuring to implementation**. Each PFS deal requires timely data on service recipients and outcomes, and access to detailed, linked administrative data is vital. For PFS to have a lasting impact, developing local capacity for ongoing data sharing is vital. Further, the work necessary to advance PFS can have lasting benefits to local communities regardless of final project's shape or financing mechanism.

Local entities often face significant challenges accessing and using administrative data from different service systems, and addressing these challenges may require considerable resources. Developing the expertise and capacity to identify data stewards, navigate privacy and data security requirements, draft legal agreements, establish information technology systems and architecture, document and enforce data policies and procedures, establish research approaches and protocols, link longitudinal individual-level data, and complete complex analyses can all carry significant learning curves. Local data intermediaries can help, but they may not be available in all areas. Even sites with fully developed, integrated data systems may be constrained by data security concerns, legal questions, procurement mechanisms, data quality concerns, or a lack of public understanding about the benefits of using administrative data to improve government services.

**The goal of Urban's PFS-AD assistance is to help selected sites address some of these challenges, or others they identify, in order to further their projects or support existing programs.**

## Who Is Eligible to Apply for Training and Technical Assistance Services?

Eligible applicants are

- A. Located in the United States;
- and**
- B. nonprofit organizations, public or nonprofit universities, state and local governments (and other political subdivisions), tribes, or faith-based organizations;<sup>1</sup>
- and**
- C. currently engaged in **work commonly associated with PFS project development**, including (but not limited to) target population identification, intervention selection, data collection and analysis, transaction structuring, or implementation activities, for a project that addresses at least ONE of the following broad focus areas:

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<sup>1</sup> Eligible nonprofit organizations include those defined in 2 CFR 200.70: "Nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including IHEs, that: (a) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (b) Is not organized primarily for profit; and (c) uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization."

- Youth development: Preparing America’s youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives, including through crime-reduction initiatives focused on juvenile delinquency and victimization prevention and response
- Economic opportunity: Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged people
- Healthy futures: Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness

Applicants receiving assistance from an intermediary or other organization (Urban’s Pay for Success Initiative, Social Finance, Third Sector, etc.) **are** eligible to apply for support under this NoSA. Urban’s team will work with applicants and the other organizations to ensure PFS-AD efforts are complementary and not duplicative.

Applicants will be rated on their ability to describe their current administrative data-related challenges and specific deliverables, tasks, or activities as well as on their capacity to work with the PFS-AD team to complete all of the work within the estimated six-month window.

## What Services Will Urban Provide?

The Urban Institute will **provide discrete deliverables** to sites based on the specific needs identified in their applications and in follow-up conversations with Urban held during an **abbreviated needs assessment and TTA delivery period**. Because sites exploring PFS may encounter a range of administrative data-related challenges, Urban’s PFS-AD services are intended to be flexible and individualized in order to help sites navigate the challenges unique to their context and stage of project development. These services are estimated to be valued at a minimum of \$75,000 per TTA engagement.

Data challenges that may be addressed through PFS-AD include assistance during feasibility, transaction structuring, or implementation phases of development. For example, TTA may include help (a) accessing, linking, and analyzing administrative data in order to identify service recipients and comparison groups, (b) identifying outcome measures for PFS initiatives, or (c) preparing data systems to aid the independent evaluation of a PFS-funded intervention. Or TTA could focus on helping projects establish sustainable data-sharing agreements and procedures to monitor and track outcomes over time.

Some examples of PFS-AD TTA activities that have already been provided include (but are not limited to)

- identifying datasets and data sources necessary to inform PFS interventions,
- launching and/or supporting data sharing working groups,
- developing data sharing agreements,
- developing data storage and security plans,
- cleaning datasets and assessing data quality,
- linking datasets,
- designing data analysis plans,
- conducting analyses to inform PFS project development and PFS evaluations,
- designing data collection procedures.

We encourage sites to apply that are **already engaged in developing projects** (e.g., those requiring assistance working through specific administrative data-related challenges related to enrollment or tracking outcomes) and have **specific data-related requests that** can be addressed through Urban’s TTA.

## How Will Assistance Be Provided?

For each TTA engagement, PFS-AD staff will first complete an **abbreviated TTA planning process** in collaboration with the selected site to identify the site’s TTA needs and goals, specific administrative data-related activities and deliverables, and the timeline for TTA engagement. These goals, activities, and expected deliverables will be documented in a memorandum of understanding.

A dedicated team of Urban staff and other subject area experts will then assemble for each site, to provide direct TTA assistance to fulfill the goals identified in the TTA plans. **The engagement period will be at least six months and will not extend beyond September 30, 2019.** Urban’s TTA teams will primarily work remotely from Washington, DC, and conduct in-person through site visits during the assistance period.

## How Will PFS-AD TTA Services Be Awarded?

All eligible applications will be reviewed for responsiveness to the questions listed in the application and following conversation with Urban. Each eligible application will be scored on the elements listed below:

PFS-AD problem statement (75%):

- 25%**      **Articulate administrative data-related challenges:** Applicants are more likely to be selected if they can clearly articulate their project development to date and the specific ways that administrative data challenges have complicated their progress.
- 50%**      **Articulate specific assistance the site wants from Urban, including any deliverables, to the best of their ability:** Sites should describe why they believe those tasks will be able to be completed within the six-month window and include an estimated timeline for the work.

Organizational capacity and commitment to project development (25%):

- 10%**      **Express commitment to project development:** Applicants are more likely to be selected if they have established existing partnerships for project development and/or support for project development from key stakeholders such as government officials (e.g., a mayor, legislative body, or council), service providers, or other relevant organizations.
- 15%**      **Demonstrate capacity to participate in PFS-AD TTA and begin working immediately:** Applicants must identify an individual point of contact from the lead or partner organization for the PFS-AD project as well as any additional staff who could help the site actively participate in PFS-AD technical assistance. This can include, for example, PFS project managers, data managers, policy analysts, agency leadership equipped to provide access to PFS stakeholders and decisionmakers, or data analysts who can work with the PFS-AD team to collect or analyze data.

**Urban may follow up with applicants to obtain more information to inform the selection process.**

## What Are the Expectations of Selected TTA Applicants?

Selected applicants will be expected to

- commit to an agreed-upon period of engagement and scope of work by signing a memorandum of understanding with Urban;

- be active participants in the TTA process, including maintaining regular correspondence with the PFS-AD TTA team and facilitating site visits, meetings, and conference calls with the TTA team;
- be able to begin work immediately on specific TTA activities
- review and respond to materials in a timely manner;
- designate a project lead and point of contact for communication with the PFS-AD TTA team; and
- as feasible, allow PFS-AD team to share or publish nonproprietary tools or documents developed through the PFS-AD project that might inform other PFS sites facing similar administrative data-related challenges.

Specific levels of effort and expectations for selected site staff will be established through the TTA planning and memorandum of understanding development process.

## About the Application Process

### TIMELINE:

- **January 18, 2019:** Release NoSA on pfs.urban.org. Applications will be selected on a rolling basis.
- **Within five business days of application submission,** Urban will request a call with the site to discuss the project. Following the call, sites may be asked to submit additional materials.
- **Within three business days of the call or of receiving additional documents,** Urban will inform the recipients of selection.
- **On or before March 31, 2019:** Urban will close the NoSA on March 31, 2019. If four sites are selected before March 31, or if Urban TTA providers have reached capacity, Urban will close the NoSA.
- **Date of recipient selection through September 2019:** Urban will finalize a workplan with new sites and work on deliverables through virtual and in-person technical assistance. Urban will ensure that adequate time is available for sites to review documents and provide feedback before final delivery.
- **September 30, 2019:** Deliver final deliverables to service recipients (earlier if ready).

### ELIGIBILITY:

- A. Are you a nonprofit organization, public or nonprofit university, state or local government (or other political subdivisions), tribe, or faith-based organization located in the United States?
- B. Are you currently engaged in work commonly associated with PFS project development, including (but not limited to) target population identification, intervention selection, data collection and analysis, transaction structuring, or implementation activities, for a project that addresses youth development, economic opportunity or healthy futures?

**If you can answer yes to items A and B, you are eligible to apply. Email [bbieretz@urban.org](mailto:bbieretz@urban.org) if you have any questions about your eligibility.**

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### APPLICATION LETTER DESCRIPTION

**If you are moving forward with your application, address each of the following items in your application letter. If selected, actual TTA may not be limited to what is written in your application. Additional information about your project and program can be provided in a follow-up phone call as well. Your total narrative should be no longer than two pages.**

1. Provide primary contact information for the applicant, including name, title, phone number, email address, agency/organization name, location (city, county, state), and organization type (e.g., nonprofit or government agency).
2. Describe your PFS project, the data-related challenges your project has encountered, and how you envision Urban supporting your organization. If selected, actual TTA may not be limited to the challenges listed in the application letter.
  - What policy areas, populations, interventions, and outcomes could your project or program include? If you haven't decided on all of these elements, you may include that outstanding question as an area of assistance from Urban.
  - Describe specific requests for technical assistance, such as topic-specific literature reviews, target population analyses, evaluation design guidance, and data landscape analyses.
  - Describe any known administrative data and/or data systems needed to support the project or program.
3. Describe the existing partners for this project. For each planning partner, including your own organization, provide the following information:
  - Each organization's role in the PFS project
  - Any services already provided by that partner or any relationship to existing data
  - The key staff in the partner organizations that will participate in PFS-AD TTA

Email completed letters to **Brian Bieretz, policy analyst, at [bbieretz@urban.org](mailto:bbieretz@urban.org)**. Please include **"PFS-AD Application for TTA"** in the subject line.