



NON PROFIT IMPACT TEAM **SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Formerly, Capacity Technical Assistance & Training Workshops
- Funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Probation

April 2020 - December 2020



This Executive Summary highlights key information about the *COVID-19 Short-Term Technical Assistance Program* from a year-long evaluation conducted by the Center for Nonprofit Management (CNM). The full project report documents findings related to the design, process, and implementation of the Technical Assistance Program drawn from data from key informant interviews, focus groups with staff and program participants who worked with NIT consultants, and the project tracking tools.

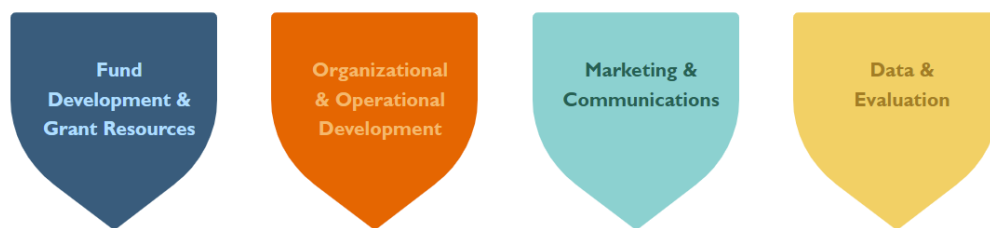
I. Background

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) partners with community residents and stakeholders to reduce violence related injuries and deaths. The Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI) serves to align Los Angeles County services and initiatives and apply a comprehensive, place-based approach through innovative programs, policies, and partnerships. TPI's uses a place-based and public health focus and builds on the core values of community empowerment and systems change.

Based on the success of the 2017-18 Training and Technical Assistance Pilot Project ("pilot project") in South Los Angeles, TPI designed a Capacity Building Technical Assistance & Training program to strengthen the capacity of grassroots nonprofit organizations through a series of workshops with an anticipated start date of April 2020. The program design rapidly evolved to address the challenges nonprofit organizations were facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide immediate, targeted one-on-one consultations to nonprofit organizations.

Funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Probation, the TTA Program focused on providing support to at least 100 organizations that serve juvenile justice-involved or violence- and trauma-impacted youth and families across all Los Angeles County Service Planning Areas ("SPAs"). The re-designed program launched in April 2020 and operated through December 2020.

One-on-one consultations addressed these areas of organizational capacity:



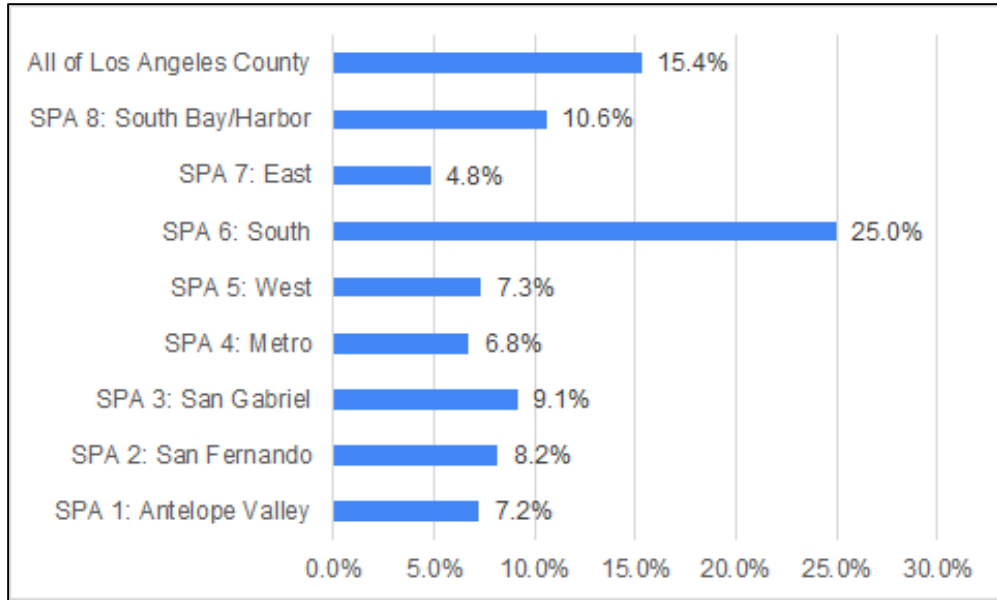
II. Outcomes

The NIT Outreach and Recruitment Process Yielded Requests for Assistance from 104 CBOs. The outreach and recruitment process evolved over the first half of the program's implementation as some strategies that did not yield the intended results were discontinued and other approaches tested. CBOs received notification of the program via email, direct communication, or in some cases, via partner websites. A total of 104 community based organizations across the county submitted Requests for Assistance.

The NIT delivered tailored technical assistance to 100 small, grassroots CBOs across all Supervisorial Districts and SPAs. The ten consultants working as the Nonprofit Impact Team created Action Plans for 100 organizations that provide services across all Supervisorial Districts and Service Planning Areas. A

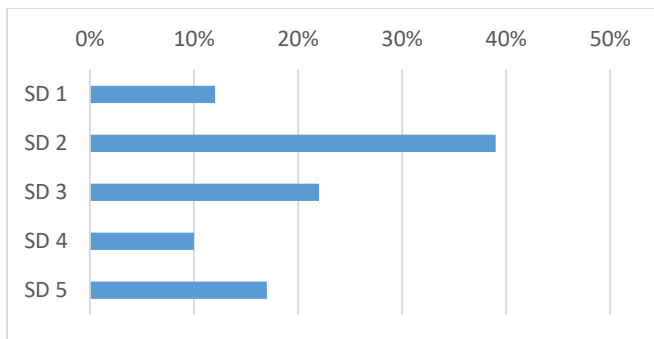
total of 96 organizations completed their plans of action, with 12 organizations receiving multiple technical assistance projects. In all, 108 short-term technical assistance projects were delivered through the project.

Figure 1. SPAs in which Requesting Organizations Provided Services



Organizations requesting and receiving services represented all of the five Supervisorial Districts with the largest number from SD 2 and SD 3.

SDs in which Requesting Organizations Provided Services



Of the CBOs served through the program, 97 CBOs serve youth and/or families who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, at-risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system, or impacted by violence and trauma. Over 75% of the client organizations serve youth 6 to 18 years old, and/or individuals impacted by trauma. Over 55% of client organizations provide youth mentoring and/or counseling services. The most common services provided by CBOs requesting to participate in the TTA Program included youth tutoring/mentoring services, counseling, food assistance and arts programs. Notably, many Executive Directors had personal experience in trauma and violence.

The consultation services provided may have been inaccessible without the program. The TTA Program allowed CBOs to access a subject matter specialist that they otherwise would not have the resources to engage. Even without the pressures of a global pandemic, organizations at all stages of development are often stretched by the organizational commitment of staff and financial resources that accompanies a capacity building process that can stretch over several months. These challenges are intensified for smaller organizations.

The CBOs who accessed technical assistance through the TTA Program were primarily 3-5 years old or newer; about 31% were established between 2016 and 2020. The organizations were typically (1) operating with a small budget, some funding themselves out of pocket; (2) inexperienced in nonprofit management; and (3) functioning with a start-up infrastructure. These organizations reported a small staff – 80% reporting less than 10 people – often comprised of an Executive Director (in many cases, part time) and volunteers. Despite challenges, participants report that the technical assistance helped to strengthen their organization.

High Levels of Program Satisfaction and Desire for Additional Technical Assistance. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the technical assistance they received through the TTA Program. The following figure presents client satisfaction data from a survey of clients who completed their technical assistance consultation by November 2020.

Figure 2



“[My organization] is much more stable today only because of the coaching I received.”
 – TTA Program Participant

During the focus groups, participating organizations expressed a desire to receive more technical assistance.

“For the future, there should be a follow-up. Technical assistance is just the initial step. The initial technical assistance just scratches the surface.” – TTA Program Participant

III. Lessons Learned & Recommendations

The evolution of the program design to a one-on-one consultation model meant that the NIT team had to “learn by doing” in their role of capacity builders to organizations trying to adjust to new realities on the ground.

Lessons learned emerged in the following domains:

- Learning and adjusting TA approach to address increased urgency of needs and vulnerability of grassroots CBOs;
- Creating strategies and processes to respond to needs of organizations at different stages of development;
- Developing management tools and processes that balanced responsiveness to community needs with data collection and other administrative requirements.

Drawn from the perspectives of staff and participants, and data documented through the evaluation process, the following recommendations are offered for future iterations of the project:

1. Refine outreach and recruitment strategies to reach historically marginalized CBOs and their leaders
2. Clarify program eligibility and process, and language accessibility, and include information in outreach and recruitment efforts
3. Adjust program model to align with needs and resources of organizations; consider offering various levels of service tailored to organizations at differing stages of development
4. Improve project management and data collections systems for efficient client tracking and case review and evaluation.
5. Strengthen supports for NIT staff development and team capacity building

IV. Conclusion

The TTA program mobilized the resources of the Trauma Prevention Initiative to help strengthen Los Angeles County community-based organizations and respond to the needs of small CBOs serving juvenile justice-involved- or violence and trauma-impacted youth and families throughout all the Service Planning Areas. During a time of upheaval and heightened need that was challenging for even well-established large nonprofit organizations, the rapid delivery of one-on-one consultations provided crucial support for many small CBOs to increase their capacity and avoid crises and closures that would impact the provision of essential services to marginalized communities.

“The nonprofit sector, the third largest employer in the United States is in a state of uncertainty and flux in the wake of the pandemic and economic instability. Not surprisingly, POC-led nonprofits, which tend to be smaller, less resourced, and community-based, face an even more

*challenging set of circumstances. Their very survival—and that of the communities who rely on them—is at stake”.*¹

High levels of satisfaction reported on the client survey reveal that organizations valued the support they received. While many factors influenced the ultimate outcome of each organization’s technical assistance engagement, participants clearly stated that their participation strengthened their organizations.

This is an important accomplishment in keeping with TPI’s community empowerment approach and support for community identified solutions to prevent violence. DPH’s investment in the capacity of community based organizations that serve impacted youth and families is a key contribution to the vitality of smaller and younger organizations, an important but under-resourced segment of the social service ecosystem. The lessons learned from this project can inform future LA County efforts to work with community based organizations to deliver services to marginalized groups.

¹ [On the Frontlines: Nonprofits Led by People of Color Confront COVID-19 and Structural Racism](#)