*Project Description*

The project description must consist of a narrative describing the proposed project (Items A-E) using the format below and in the order listed. The narrative must be limited to five (5) pages. Refer to the *Complex Communication Needs Scoring Rubric* to strengthen the quality of your proposal.

1. **Goal and Expected Outcomes**

The applicant must provide specific goals and outcomes related to the development of resources and professional development to Louisiana school employees to support the needs of students with complex communication needs. The students in this focus area are to be those who have significant or multiple disabilities (including students with autism spectrum disorders), and who often enter/exit school without a formal communication system. The project must provide for the following:

* Conduct training and technical assistance on the provision of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems for students who require such supports, to include
* assessing the communication needs of students (to include definition of communication and its components, identification of communicative intent and communication mode, and identification of unconventional forms of student communication);
* consideration of sensory and motor factors as they impact communication efforts;
* selection of communication targets (to include targets related to both expressive and receptive language, determining tangible symbolic representations, and providing instruction aligned to communication targets);
* selection of AAC for students (to include definition/description of AAC, various forms of AAC, and how AAC is used with students with complex disabilities);
* teaching communication (to include a description of evidence-based practices used in the process);
* embedding communication within the context of literacy/academic instruction; and
* monitoring the progress of students’ use of AAC.
* **NOTE:** The training and technical assistance plans may incorporate the use of nationally recognized resources pertaining to AAC (e.g., [National Center and State Collaborative {NCSC} Communication Tool Kit](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page)). The resources and training materials developed by the project will be housed on the LDOE website and are intended for review and use by school personnel, family members and others who provide support to students with complex communication needs.
* Train a *minimum* of 50 school personnel (e.g., special education teachers, Speech/ Language Pathologists) on the provision of AAC systems for students with complex disabilities.
* Provide on-site technical assistance to a *minimum* of three school systems on the provision of AAC systems for individual students with complex disabilities. This technical assistance must target a *minimum* of 10 students with AAC need. The recipients of this on-site technical assistance must include teams of personnel (e.g., special education teachers, Speech/Language Pathologists, parents of the students requiring AAC) who support these individual students. The technical assistance plans must include an evaluation component related to the effectiveness of the implementation of AAC systems for targeted students.
1. **Description of Activities**

The applicant must describe the activities that will be performed in order to achieve expected outcomes.

1. **Stakeholder Involvement**

The applicant must describe the plan for incorporation of a stakeholder group to guide the development of resources and provision of professional development/technical assistance related to AAC. The group must include, at a minimum, representation from the following: Speech Language Pathologists, special educators, Occupational therapists, university personnel, LaPTIC (Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center), Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative, Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disorders project, and an individual who utilizes AAC. The group will 1) review and evaluate professional development materials and processes developed by the project, and 2) make written recommendations to the LDOE on state capacity building efforts regarding the support of students who require AAC which should be targeted beyond year one of this project.

1. **Evaluation Plan**

The applicant must describe the evaluation plan and procedures. The evaluation must address the effectiveness of project activities.

1. **Expansion Plan Beyond Year 1**

The applicant must describe conditions for continuing the project into year two and three.

**Scoring Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **Score** |
| **Goals/Expected Outcomes**  | The application:* describes a coherent and comprehensive plan for building the capacity of schools to provide AAC systems for students with complex communication needs, including
	+ targeting of specific outcomes which incorporate a *minimum* of 1) 50 school personnel trained in AAC, 2) three school systems to receive on-site TA, and 3) targeted assistance focused on a *minimum* of ten students with AAC needs.
	+ development/compilation of comprehensive resources (e.g., webinars, videos, training materials) for educators and parents pertaining to AAC supports to be made available to the LDOE for housing on its website.
	+ a collaborative structure for the creation of recommendations for future capacity building efforts for LA schools to support students’ AAC needs.
 | The application:* includes a plan to train personnel to provide AAC systems for students with complex communication needs.
* includes targets pertaining to students who use AAC.
* indicates resources related to AAC will be made available to the LDOE for housing on its website.
* describes the development of recommendations for future capacity building efforts.
 | The application:* includes a marginal plan to train personnel to provide AAC systems for students with complex communication needs.
* includes vague or unrealistic targets pertaining to students who use AAC.
* includes vague reference to resources to be made available to the LDOE.
* mentions the development of recommendations for future plans.
 | The application:* does not include a plan to train personnel on AAC systems.
* does not include targets pertaining to students who use AAC.
* does not include the development of resources for the LDOE.
* does not address the development of future plans.
 |  |
| **Activities** | The application:* describes a clear connection between the activities in the application and the expected outcomes related to AAC supports for both students and the personnel who serve them.
* includes activities based on best practices related to the provision of PD and TA to adult learners in a collaborative structure, and incorporates nationally recognized resources to the extent applicable.
* includes PD content related to best practices in the provision of AAC supports, and clearly aligns with all of the content described in the goals and expectations section (part A) of the application packet.
 | The application:* describes activities that will be performed to support the goals of the project.
* includes some reference to collaborative structures in the PD and TA plans.
* references the PD content described in in the goals and expectations section (part A).
 | The application:* minimally describes activities that will be performed to support the goals of the project.
* includes vague reference to the use of collaborative structures in the PD and TA plans.
* includes minimal reference to the PD content described in the goals and expectations section (part A).
 | The application:* does not describe activities that will be completed with grant funds.
* does not address the use of collaborative structures.
* does not reference the PD content described in the goals and expectations section (part A).
 |  |
| **Stakeholder Involvement** | The application:* describes how a broad-based stakeholder group (including representation from the groups specified on page 2 of the application) will be used to guide the work of the project, including the provision of input and feedback on
	+ the development of resources for housing on the LDOE website.
	+ implementation and monitoring of PD/TA pertaining to AAC.
	+ the creation of recommendations for future capacity building efforts for LA schools to support students’ AAC needs.
 | The application:* describes how a stakeholder group will provide input on the development of resources, implementation of PD/TA, and making recommendations for future capacity building efforts.
 | The application:* minimally describes input from a stakeholder group.
 | The application:* does not include input from a stakeholder group.
 |  |
| **Evaluation Plan** | The application:* describes how the results of the PD/TA will be measured, including
	+ effectiveness of project activities (e.g., feedback from PD/TA participants).
	+ increased skills of personnel.
	+ increased use of AAC systems by students who have complex communication needs.
* describes how the quality of the resources (e.g. content, thoroughness, user-friendliness) developed by the project will be vetted and evaluated.
 | The application:* describes how the results of the PD/TA will be measured, with some reference to both student and personnel outcomes.
* includes information about evaluating the quality of resources developed by the project.
 | The application:* minimally describes how the results of the PD/TA will be measured.
* minimally describes how resources developed by the project will be evaluated.
 | The application:* does not describe how the results of the PD/TA will be measured.
* does not describe how the quality of resources developed by the project will be evaluated.
 |  |
| **Expansion beyond year 1** | The application:* describes how the work of the project could be expanded into year two and three, with an increased impact upon the number of personnel trained, number of districts receiving on-site technical assistance, and number of students supported in Braille materials.
* describes how teachers and other school personnel statewide will continue to provide guidance in this process.
 | The application:* describes a plan to continue project into year two and three.
* references the use of school personnel in the process.
 | The application:* minimally describes plans to continue the project.
 | The application:* states the intent to continue project, but does not provide a plan.
 |  |
| **Total** |  |

***Note abbreviations:***  *PD (Professional Development), TA (Technical Assistance), AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)*