

Needs Assessment Development Module 2 Facilitator's Guide

Module 2: Review of Examples and Lessons Learned

Overall Goal: To support a State or district in developing a comprehensive needs assessment process that can be used by schools for implementation at the local level. Please note that this module focuses on developing a standard needs assessment process rather than conducting a needs assessment at the school level.

Module Purpose: Inform needs assessment development through a review of needs assessment tools and processes developed by peer States or districts, as well as a review of any needs assessment process currently or formerly utilized in the State or district.

Participant Outcomes: As a result of this module, participants will be able to do the following:

- Reflect and provide feedback on previous needs assessment processes.
- Inform development of a needs assessment process through review of other State or district examples.

Materials

The following materials are recommended for the work session and associated activities:

- Module 2 Presentation slide deck
- Participant agenda
- Chart paper
- Sticky notes (2 colors)
- Handout 1: Approach and Organization of Needs Assessment From Example States
- Copies of at least two other State or district needs assessment materials
 - For example, Arizona (<http://www.azed.gov/cna/>) and Georgia (<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/School-Improvement-Services/Pages/Georgia%E2%80%99s-Systems-of-Continuous-Improvement.aspx>) have released publicly available needs assessment materials, which are included as Handouts 2–3. Please note that the inclusion of these example needs assessment materials does not reflect their importance, nor is it intended to represent or be an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Draft purpose statements from first work session

- Note: These are not used until the end of the module, but it is helpful to keep those statements posted during the entire module as they will spark conversation and reflection throughout the development process.

- Poster for exit tickets

Preparation Required: One member of the participant group (preferably State or district staff) should come prepared to provide an overview of any past needs assessment process that was utilized in this State or district. That overview should respond to the following questions:

- What was the process called?
- How was the process used?
- What were the roles of the school and district in the needs assessment process?
- How were the final reports and data findings used by the school, district, and State?
- What challenges did you encounter with this process?
 - How was the process received by schools and districts?
 - What challenges did they encounter with implementation?
 - What did you like about this process? What did others (e.g., districts or schools) like about it?

Optional Preparation: If time allows, it is helpful if participants are provided the opportunity to review other State materials in advance of the meeting. If this is done, they should be asked to make note of sections or elements that capture their attention and come to the meeting prepared to discuss.

Agenda Outline

Table 1 provides a detailed outline of the agenda for the work session. It includes timing, slide numbers, activities, and materials. This outline provides facilitators with a big-picture view of this module and the corresponding activities. You may need to allot additional time for the activities depending on the audience’s familiarity with the content.

Table 1. Detailed Outline of the Agenda

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Welcome, Overview, and Introductions	10 min.	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introduce facilitators. • Review the overall goals and purpose for developing a needs assessment, and preview activities for this module. 	Presentation slide deck	Whole group

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Ice Breaker	10 min.	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct ice breaker of choice as a way of facilitating introductions from participants (name, title, role). 	N/A	Whole group
Setting the Stage: Meeting Norms	5 min.	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review norms on the slide and pick one to focus on today; determine whether any should be added. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation slide deck Chart paper 	Whole group
Introducing the Organizing Principles: Content, Process, Presentation	10 min.	8–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review terminology; ask probing questions to clarify understanding. 	Presentation slide deck	Whole group
Activity: Learning From the Past: Reflect on Successes and Challenges	55 min. <i>(may vary depending on amount of information shared)</i>	12–15	<p><u>Presentation (30 min):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State or district staff provide an overview of a past needs assessment process and how it was implemented (10–15 min.—see prompts). Participants use sticky notes to capture their takeaways (one color for pluses, one color for deltas) to inform next activity. Q&A about process: Participants ask clarifying and probing questions (5–10 min). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation slide deck Sticky notes in two colors Three chart papers (one each for <i>content</i>, <i>process</i>, and <i>presentation</i>) 	Whole group

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
<p>Activity: Learning From the Past: Reflect on Successes and Challenges (continued)</p>	<p>55 min. <i>(may vary depending on amount of information shared)</i></p>	<p>12–15</p>	<p><u>Plus/delta affinity group (15 min.):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to share what they put on the sticky notes. Ask each participant to do one plus and then one delta, moving around until all ideas are captured. As each is read, ask others whether they wrote the same idea and, if so, collect them to post in little stacks, allowing participants to see how many people had the same takeaway. Categorize sticky notes by putting them on Content, Process, or Presentation chart, depending on what the notes refer to. <p><u>Whole-group discussion (5–10 min.):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and reflect on what is shared on chart paper. Label affinity groups for clarity. • Ask any clarifying questions about what is written. • Add additional comments as needed directly onto chart paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation slide deck • Sticky notes in two colors • Three chart papers (one each for <i>content, process, and presentation</i>) 	<p>Whole group</p>

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
<p>Activity: Review of Other State or District Tools and Processes</p>	<p>80 min. <i>(Note that this may take longer based on group size and number of example needs assessments being reviewed.)</i></p>	<p>16–19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide into small groups by the number of State or district needs assessments being reviewed; move seats and tables as necessary. • Facilitator provides overview and orientation—whole group (5 min.). <p><u>Review materials in small groups (45 min.):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-group facilitator orients small group to the materials they are reviewing and responds to questions (5 min.). • Participants engage in individual review (15 min.). • Participants engage in sharing rounds (25 min. or 3–4 min./person, allowing for clarifying questions)—see prompts. Can go around more than once if needed, but make sure each person identifies at least one thing. • Small-group facilitator captures thoughts on chart paper as participants share out, categorizing on the fly as either content, process, or presentation (separate chart papers for each). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation slide deck • Handout 1: Approach and Organization of Needs Assessment • Handout 2: Arizona Effective School-Level Systems Descriptions (or other State or district example framework) • Handout 3: Arizona Complete Comprehensive Needs Assessment Rubric (or other State or district example framework) • Three chart papers for each small group (one each for <i>content</i>, <i>process</i>, and <i>presentation</i>) 	<p>Small groups; each group reviews materials from one State or district.</p>

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Activity: Review of Other State or District Tools and Processes (continued)	80 min. <i>(Note that this may take longer based on group size and number of example needs assessments being reviewed.)</i>	16–19	<p><u>Small groups share out to larger group (15 min. each):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group selects a reporter (not the facilitator) who identifies to the large group which State or district needs assessment process was reviewed and then provides highlights in terms of takeaways about content, process, and presentation. Large group asks clarifying questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation slide deck Handout 1: Approach and Organization of Needs Assessment Handout 2: Arizona Effective School-Level Systems Descriptions (or other State or district example framework) Handout 3: Arizona Complete Comprehensive Needs Assessment Rubric (or other State or district example framework) Three chart papers for each small group (one each for <i>content</i>, <i>process</i>, and <i>presentation</i>) 	Small groups; each group reviews materials from one State or district.

Agenda Item	Time	Slides	Activities	Materials Needed	Participant Configuration
Reflection	15 min.	20–21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants reflect: How has the experience of reviewing other processes and reflecting on the [State or district] process changed your thinking about needs assessments? • Participants reflect: Based on what you learned today, are there any changes you would make to the draft purpose statement(s)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft purpose statements 	
Next Steps	5 min.	22–23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to suggest a name for their State or district needs assessment process (exit ticket exercise). • Preview the next module. 	Chart paper for exit tickets	Whole group

Script

The following slide-by-slide script provides guidance to facilitators as they present the content and learning activities included in the work session based on this module. Reviewing the entire guide prior to facilitating the work session is highly recommended.

Module 2: Review Examples and Lessons Learned

Facilitation Note:

*Officially welcome the participants.
Introduce yourself and fellow facilitators.
Discuss your relevant background
experiences to build participant confidence
in your skills as facilitators.*

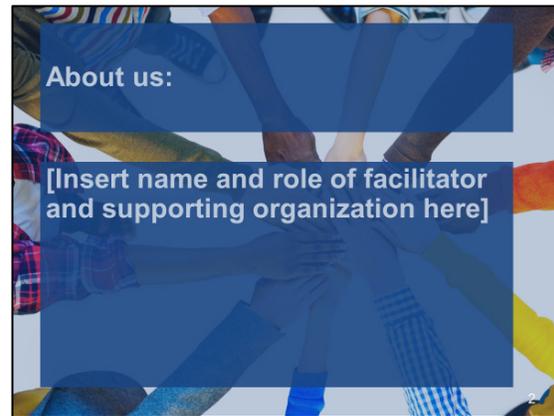
** Note: Other entities using this
presentation may insert their logo in place
of the State Support Network logo.*



Slide 1

Facilitation Note:

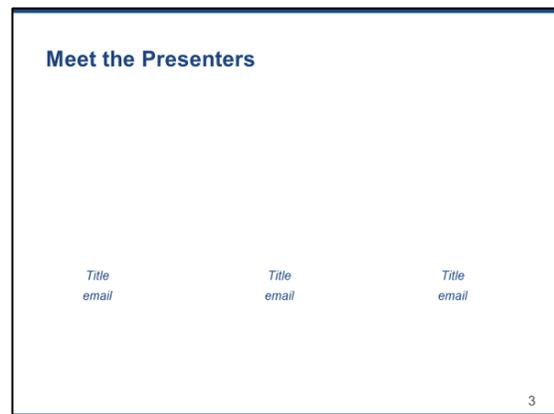
*If you are presenting on behalf of an
organization (e.g., a regional educational
service center), you may use this slide to
introduce your organization supporting this
work, or you may replace this slide with
your own “about us” slide.*



Slide 2

Facilitation Note:

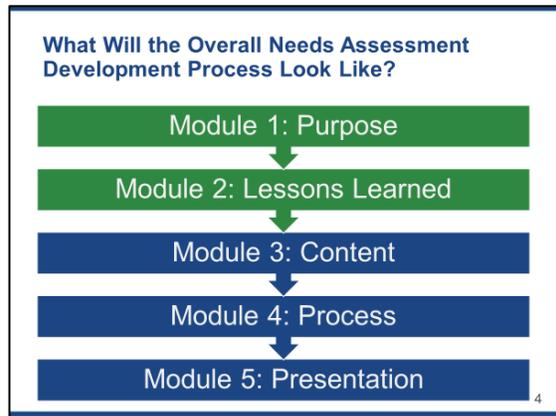
*Introduce presenters and (if desired) go
around the room to allow participants to
introduce themselves.*



Slide 3

Explain:

“Throughout the process, we work toward progressively greater detail level, starting with the broadest scope (the purpose) and gradually working down to the details of action planning. This approach ensures that each level of detail answers to the next highest level of magnitude. The framework gets us to achieve the purpose, ensure the data collected are aligned to the framework, and so on.”



Slide 4

Facilitation Note: Review outcomes.

Outcomes

During this session, participants will do the following:

- Reflect and provide feedback on previous needs assessment processes used in [selected States or districts].
- Inform development of the new needs assessments process through review of other state examples.

Slide 5

Facilitation Note: Review purpose.

Agenda, Module 2

1. Welcome, Overview, and Introductions
2. Organizing Principles: Content, Process, Presentation
3. Learning From the Past
4. Review of Other State Education Agency (SEA) Tools and Processes
5. Large-Group Discussion
6. Reflect on Session and Next Steps

Slide 6

Facilitation Note:

Look at the norms on the slide and pick one to focus on today.

Ask: “Are there other norms you typically use in your agencies?”

Ask: “What else might our group struggle with? What norms might support productive dialogue and respectful decision making?”

Facilitation Note: Insert “manage technology” if no one else offers it.

Norms for Interaction

- Be present.
- Share the air.
- Assume goodwill.
- Respect what is shared.
- Honor the thoughts behind all perspectives.
- Ask for clarification when you disagree or don't understand.
- Others?



Slide 7

Explain:

“We’re going to take a few minutes to talk about the organizing principles of needs assessment. Organizing principles provide common language and a lens for discussing what goes into and comes out of the needs assessment. We will use these throughout the development process to capture and organize learning on the types of development and work that need to be done.

To begin with, today we’ll be gathering information and lessons learned from other State or district needs assessment processes as well as your prior experiences with needs assessment. That information will be categorized by Content, Process, and Presentation, so we can make use of it in forthcoming design sessions.”

Organizing Principles

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Slide 8

Explain:

“When determining the *content* of the needs assessment, take into consideration the domains of inquiry; the critical questions the needs assessment will answer; and what data, resources, and artifacts will to be used. What’s the focus? What are you looking at? Consider the purposes of the needs assessment you discussed in Module 1 when asking these questions.

Content

What will the needs assessment cover and include?

What data sources will be utilized and how will they align to the overall focus?



Slide 9

In terms of the success elements, the *framework* and the *data sources* make up the content. We will be focusing on Content in Module 3.”

Explain:

“When determining the *process* of the needs assessment, think about the activities. What are people doing at the local level? Take into consideration the phases of implementation, major milestones, and roles and responsibilities.

In terms of the success elements, Process encompasses (but is not limited to!) *stakeholder engagement* as well as *collaborative identification of improvement needs*.

We will be focusing on Process in Module 4.”



Process

How will the needs assessment unfold at the local level? Who is responsible for the process?

How will the state support implementation of the initiative?

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Slide 10

Explain:

“When determining the *presentation*, think about what the end users—people at the school or district level who are completing the needs assessment—will work with. This includes the structure and organization of the needs assessment document or documents, or web platform, you will create. It also includes tools and collateral to support implementation, including your communications plan for rolling it out to the field.”

Presentation is not tied to a specific success element. However, it is a very important consideration during the planning process and will be the focus of Module 5.

Presentation

How will the needs assessment process, data, and outcomes be organized and disseminated?

What tools and collateral will you create to support implementation at the local level?



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Slide 11

Explain:

“Next we will take a look at your past experience with needs assessment, reflect on what worked and didn’t, and then build consensus for what to keep and what to change.

We do this because, while starting over sometimes feels easier, we can also lose institutional knowledge and buy-in that way. We want to take this opportunity to learn from the past so as to keep what’s working and not reinvent the wheel.”



Slide 12

Explain:

“[The participant presenter] will provide an overview of the needs assessment process that has most recently been used by this agency. During the presentation, we’d like for you to capture your takeaways on sticky notes.

There are three important instructions:

1. Make sure you write only one thought per sticky note. We are going to be putting them on chart paper and moving them around, so we need to make sure each note contains only one item.
2. Make sure you use [selected color] for pluses, or positive elements we should keep, and [selected color] for deltas, or challenges we should change or avoid. The colors are important because they won’t go on a plus/delta chart, and we need the visual reference.
3. Ask questions of the presenter!

Facilitation Note:

The actual colors for the activity don’t matter as long as they are different. Just pick two colors based on supplies you have at hand.

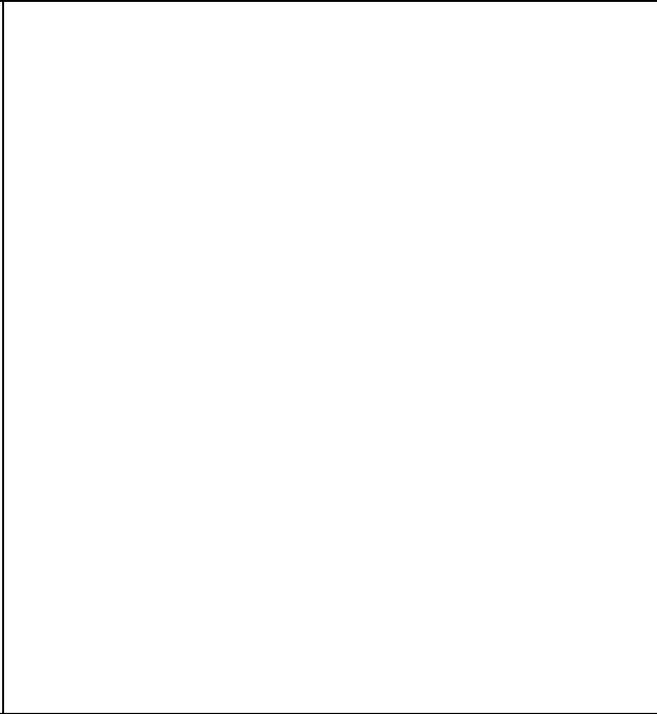
State staff providing the overview should cover the following (and should be given this guidance in advance so they are prepared):



Slide 13

- *What was the process called?*
- *How was the process used?*
- *What were the roles of the school and district in the needs assessment process?*
- *How were the final reports and data findings used by the school and district? By the State?*
- *What challenges did you encounter with this process?*
 - *How was the process received by schools and districts?*
 - *What challenges did they encounter with implementation?*
- *What did you (State) like about this process?*
 - *What did districts like about it?*
 - *What did schools like about it?*

Facilitation Note:
Monitor activity and encourage participants to jot down thoughts throughout the presentation, rather than waiting for the end. Explain that you are leaving this slide up to provide some prompts, though responses need not answer these questions directly.



Plus/Delta Prompts

What were some lessons learned from this past experience (pro and con)?

What did you personally like and not like about this process?

How did it drive school improvement (or fail to meet that goal)?

How did it reflect the elements of a successful needs assessment?

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Slide 14

Facilitation Note:
Invite participants to share what they put on the sticky notes. Ask each participant to do one plus and then one delta, moving around until all ideas are captured. As each is read, ask others whether they wrote the same idea and, if so, collect them to post in little stacks, allowing participants to see how many people had the same takeaway. Categorize sticky notes by putting them on Content, Process, or Presentation chart, depending on what the notes refer to.



Organize Plus/Delta Feedback

- Content
- Process
- Presentation

15

Slide 15

Whole-group discussion (5–10 min):

- Review and reflect on what is shared on chart paper. Label affinity groups for clarity.
- Ask any clarifying questions about what is written.
- Add additional comments as needed directly onto chart paper.

Explain:

“Now, we will break into small groups to review needs assessment processes from different States.”

Facilitation Note:

- Divide into small groups by the number of needs assessments being reviewed; move seats and tables as necessary.
- Provide overview to the large group about which State or district materials are being reviewed and identify small group facilitators. Note: Materials from Arizona and Georgia are included as examples, but other State or district materials may be substituted.
- If some or all participants have reviewed materials in advance, acknowledge this and provide the opportunity for them to pull material or notes from their laptops for this exercise.



Review of Other State or District Tools and Processes

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Slide 16

Explain:

“To review the materials we’ve drawn from other [States or districts], we will use a variation of the three-level text review process.

In a moment, your small-group facilitator will provide an overview of the materials your group will be reviewing, and then you’ll have 15 minutes to scan those materials individually. During your scan, flag what captures your attention—choices this State or district made that seem significant to you.



Discussion Protocol

Each person will do the following:

- Review tools and processes related to needs assessments from other states.
- Identify and cite a section of the example that is significant to you based on your work or local context.
- Describe the potential implications for your work based on this example.

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Slide 17

Then we will move to small-group discussions where you share what you flagged with others in your group and discuss the implications for the needs assessment process you will develop.

Each group will review only one plan, but we will report out from small groups when we are finished.”

Facilitation Note:

- *Small-group facilitator orients small group to the materials they are reviewing and responds to questions (5 min.).*
- *Participants engage in individual review (15 min.).*
- *Participants engage in sharing rounds (25 min. or 3–4 min. per person, allowing for clarifying questions):*
 - *Cite a section of the tool that you see as significant and read aloud or describe, providing the page number.*
 - *Say why you think it’s significant (e.g., interpretation, connection to past experiences, thoughts about success elements).*
 - *Say what you see as the implications for your work on this needs assessment process. You may select anything that feels notable—positive or not!*
 - *Make sure each person identifies at least one thing. Go around the room to allow multiple rounds of sharing if needed.*
- *Small-group facilitator captures thoughts on chart paper as participants share out, categorizing on the fly as either Content, Process or Presentation (separate chart papers for each).*

Facilitation Note:

Transition from small groups back to large group for share-outs. Depending on the room configuration, this may or may not require moving seating.

Large-Group Discussion

18

Slide 18

Facilitation Note:

Small groups share out to larger group (15 min. each):

- *Each group selects a reporter (not the facilitator) who identifies to the large group which needs assessment process was reviewed and then provides highlights in terms of takeaways about content, process, and presentation.*
- *Large group asks clarifying questions.*
- *Lead facilitator captures and comments on themes overall.*

Review of Other State Tools and Processes

- What did we learn that will inform the content of our needs assessment?
- What did we learn that will inform our needs assessment process?
- What did we learn that will inform the presentation of our needs assessment?

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Slide 19

Facilitation Note:

Transition to the final section of this module.

Reflect on Module and Next Steps

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Slide 20

Facilitation Note:

Questions are animated on the slide so they can be presented one at a time. Begin by asking how thinking has changed, then move on to asking whether the group would like to make any changes to the draft purpose statements, based upon their experience today. (Purpose statements should have been posted throughout the module.)

Ask:

- Does anyone have thoughts or revelations about needs assessments you'd like to share, having been through this larger reflection process?
- Let's revisit the draft purpose statements we created in light of the notes we've just captured about these important considerations. Have you changed your mind about anything? Are there any refinements you'd like to make?

Reflection

- How has the experience of reviewing other processes and reflecting on [State or district name] process changed your thinking about needs assessments?
- Based on what you learned reviewing sample materials today, are there any changes you would make to the draft purpose statement(s)?

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Slide 21

Explain:

“Your needs assessment process needs a name! Your exit ticket today is to provide at least one suggestion and post it on chart paper as you depart. Consider:

- What terms will inspire?
- What terms will be easily understood?
- Can an acronym be used?”

Between now and the next meeting, you will need to develop or select a needs assessment framework for [State or district name]. You do not need to have the process fully articulated, just the selected framework.

Facilitation Note:

Ask participants to use sticky notes to jot down their thoughts (color does not matter). Post on chart paper provided as they depart the room (following the next slide).

Next Steps

Exit Ticket: This process needs a name!

- What terms will inspire?
- What terms will be easily understood?
- Can an acronym be used?

Between now and the next meeting: Develop or select a needs assessment framework for [State or district name].

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Slide 22

Explain:

“So far we have:

- Drafted a purpose statement for our needs assessment.
- Learned about the elements of a successful needs assessment.
- Reflected on our past needs assessment experiences.
- Reviewed needs assessment processes used in other States or districts.

When we meet next, we will begin mapping out the content for our needs assessment.

This slide shares the outcomes for that meeting.”

Module 3: Content

During this module, participants will do the following:

- Become familiar with the topics included in the needs assessment framework.
- Draft guiding questions for each topic.
- Practice mapping data sources to the identified guiding questions.

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Slide 23