

**2015/16 Capacity Building Grant Program
Request for Applications
June 18, 2015**



Important Dates:

June 18, 2015 – RFA Launch

July 15, 2015 – Pre-Application Information Session

July 22, 2015 – Notice of Intent to Apply Due

August 17, 2015, by 3:00 p.m. – Applications Due

October 2015 - Award Announcements

Capacity Building Project Summary

Capacity Building Grant Program Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase grantee ability to pursue research, evaluation and system-enhancing grants on behalf of regional projects • Support the expansion and sustainability of proven interventions • Promote evidence-based models and tools • Enhance shared measurement systems and use of available data to support outcomes reporting • Minimize duplication and redundancies in services • Strengthen regional indicators by focus area and support the creation of regional needs statements • Bolster coalition efforts focused on strengthening Commission priorities
Cohort	A cohort is a group of organizations that share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.
Collective Impact	Collective impact <i>requires</i> all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions (see definition of <i>cohort</i> above). Collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.
Criteria for Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness and accuracy of the application • Project meets a demonstrated need • Proposal offers detailed assessment of the cohort's level of readiness • Proposed project expenditures clearly align with cohort need and readiness level • Application addresses the sustainability of continued cohort effort toward a shared goal, and discusses opportunities to leverage other investments. • Cohort describes and justifies the role of each cohort member, and addresses any significant absence of potential regional partners in pursuit of shared outcomes.
Deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 18, 2015: RFA Released • July 15, 2015, 3:30-5:00 p.m.: Pre-Application Information Session • July 22, 2015: Letter of Intent to Apply Due • August 17, 2015 by 3:00 p.m.: Applications Due to Commission • October 2015: Awards Announced
Eligibility	<p>Applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach as a cohort/coalition; a successful proposal will forward a cohort that is comprised of a reasonable number of stakeholders to address the problem being targeted. • Conduct a self-assessment of cohort readiness • Articulate a clear delineation of cohort member roles • Develop a clear plan on how funding will be used to bolster readiness of the cohort to pursue collective impact and larger grant opportunities • Identify cohort goals related to priority • Not request funds for direct services
Readiness	The ability of a potential cohort to pursue a common agenda related to a Commission priority.
Resources Available	\$500,000; no set number of cohorts

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I. OVERVIEW OF CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT PROGRAM

The Children and Families Commission

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County (The Commission) is a leader in promoting, supporting and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age. The Commission's mission is to provide leadership as a funder, convener, and planner to support healthy development and learning for Orange County's young children.

The Commission envisions an Orange County in which all young children are healthy and ready to learn. The Commission was created as a result of Proposition 10, the California Children and Families Act of 1998, which added a 50-cent sales tax on tobacco products sold in California and required that funds raised be used to support education, health and child development programs for children from the prenatal stage through age five. Funds collected statewide are allocated to local county commissions based on each county's birth rate.

In support of its mission, the Commission's 2015 Strategic Plan includes the goal category of Capacity Building, which is focused on promoting an effective, quality delivery system for young children and their families. Historically, the Commission has focused on building the capacity of individual agencies in support of its mission. This year's focus is on building the capacity of cohorts to pursue collective impact on critical Commission priorities.

The Commission is now requesting applications from cohorts of organizations interested in participating in the 2015/16 Capacity Building Grant Program. What follows is an overview of the planned program, the focus of this Request for Application (RFA).

For more information on the Commission visit: www.occhildrenandfamilies.com.

Program Objectives

The 2015/16 Capacity Building Grant Program is designed to strengthen the ability of regional providers to work collectively on improving health and educational outcomes for children ages 0-5 in Orange County, and to improve the region's chances of attracting larger, regional grants. Organizations are invited to submit applications that articulate how capacity building resources might help strengthen collective impact strategies being used to address issues related to children and families. The intent of the capacity building support is to:

- Increase cohorts ability to pursue research, evaluation and system-enhancing (for example, quality improvement or increased service capacity) grants on behalf of regional projects (i.e. federal grant readiness)
- Support the expansion and sustainability of proven interventions
- Promote the use of evidence-based models and tools
- Enhance shared measurement systems and use of data to support outcomes reporting
- Minimize duplication and redundancies in services
- Strengthen regional indicators by focus area and support the creation of regional

- needs statements
- Bolster coalition efforts focused on strengthening Commission priorities

In support of these goals, the Commission engaged in an assessment process to help identify investments that could strengthen cohorts focused on the same priorities. The assessment findings and the resulting “stages of readiness” matrix that can be used by applicants during this process are discussed further below.

Organizations interested in applying for funding must:

- Approach as a cohort/coalition; a successful proposal will forward a cohort that is comprised of a reasonable number of stakeholders to address the problem being targeted.
- Conduct a self-assessment of cohort readiness (see Stages of Readiness section below)
- Articulate a clear delineation of cohort member roles
- Develop a clear plan on how support will be used to bolster readiness of the cohort to pursue collective impact and larger grant opportunities
- Identify cohort goals related to the priority area

Applicants that are accepted for participation in the Capacity Building Program will receive a combination of resources in support of the proposed project/identified priorities.

Additional Background

The Commission’s 2014 Annual Planning meeting included a presentation on federal and national funding trends. One key trend was the increased importance being placed on multi-agency, multi-sector collaborations working to achieve common goals and objectives, described most recently as collective impact strategies. The Commission directed staff to develop a strategy to use the Commission’s Capacity Building granting process to strengthen nonprofit organizations’ ability to collect data and report outcomes in pursuit of sustainability and collective impact. This strategy was intended to better position local agencies to compete for national funding.

In preparation for this grant cycle, Commission staff, with support from The Olin Group, implemented an assessment designed to explore the following:

1. To what extent are Commission grantees implementing evidence-based programs and what is their experience with replicating or expanding evidence-based models?
2. What is the experience of Commission grantees with participating in multi-agency cohorts, known as collective impact?
3. How do Commission grantees rate themselves regarding their experience and ability to evaluate their programs?
4. What do Commission grantees consider their best strategies for sustainability of their programs?
5. What desire, capacity, experience, and success do Commission grantees have with applying for federal grants?

Based on the findings, it appeared that Commission funded-grantees, while achieving positive results and proficient in local collaboration to grow and support effective programs, still need to develop competencies in the following areas to increase their competitiveness for national, federal or other discretionary grant competitions:

- Deeper understanding of service coordination and collaboration as they relate to collective impact
- Implementing and effectively utilizing evaluation systems
- Federal grant preparedness, grant application procedures, reporting, resources/personnel
- Fund development

At its most simplistic, collective impact requires all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

For a more in depth discussion on this issue, visit www.collectiveimpactforum.org.

Award Allocation

This cycle has a total award allocation of up to \$500,000, and will provide selected cohorts with funding and/or technical assistance to build capacity.

Eligible Applicants/Projects

Capacity Building Grant applicants must be a cohort or coalition of organizations that serve children ages 0 – 5 and their families and their services link to the Commission’s Strategic Plan (see Strategic Plan Goals at http://occhildrenandfamilies.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Strategic_Plan_2015.pdf).

Organizations do not have to be a Commission grantee to participate in a cohort. There is no prescribed structure for eligible cohorts. Cohorts can be formed around any number of collaborative ventures; for example, around cross-sector collaboration, around a geographic area, or around an outcome listed in the Commission Strategic Plan. It is the intent of this RFA to invite and engage cohorts across a variety of strategies and focus areas.

Each cohort must identify a project lead and commit to identifying a common goal. While the Commission understands the importance of a strong backbone organization in the success of collective impact, the lead agency does not have to commit to serving as the “backbone organization” for the cohort at this time. Cohorts will work with Commission staff to create 12 month work plans with clearly delineated deliverables that reflect the project goals. The contract will release resources based on achievement of these deliverables. All cohorts will be asked to present a final report to Commission staff describing progress made and describing the anticipated next stages for growth and improvement of the shared effort.

Resources cannot be used to support provision of direct services. See *the Capacity Building Grant Program Summary* on page 2 of the RFA for a list of definitions related to the process.

Key Dates

Monday, June 18, 2015	RFA Released
Wednesday, July 15, 2015, 3:30-5:00 p.m.	Pre-Application Information Session
Wednesday, July 22, 2015	Notice of Intent to Apply Due
Monday, August 17, 2015 by 3:00 p.m.	Applications Due to Commission
October 2015	Awards Announced

Pre-Application Information Session

Applicants are encouraged to attend the Pre-Application Information Session scheduled for July 15, 2015 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. This session will provide details about the program, and allow potential applicants to ask questions about project eligibility or other elements of the grant application and process. Attendance at the Pre-Application Information Session is not required; however, it will be the only opportunity for prospective applicants to have questions addressed.

Information Session

Date/Time: July 15, 2015, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Location: The Village at 17th Street

1505 E. 17th Street, Suite 200 (Upstairs CASA Training Room)

Santa Ana, CA 92705

Tel: 714.361.1417

RSVP and RFA Questions

In this RFA, the Commission has attempted to provide all the information that is available with regard to this program. It is the responsibility of each Applicant to review, evaluate and, where necessary, request clarification of information. Respondents may not contact any Commission staff directly in regards to this RFA.

To RSVP to the Pre-Application Information Session, and to submit any questions related to the RFA that you would like addressed, please email Rhonda Diaz at Rhonda.diaz@cfcoc.ocgov.com by Monday, July 13.

A written summary of all questions and answers posed via email and at the conference will be available on the Commission website at www.occhildrenandfamilies.com by July 22, 2015.

Notice of Intent to Apply

All agencies interested in submitting a proposal must submit the mandatory Notice of Intent (Attachment A) by July 22, 2015 at 3:00pm by email to Rhonda Diaz at rhonda.diaz@cfcoc.ocgov.com

Application Submittal Guidelines

Proposals must be signed by an authorized representative of each participating member of the cohort. The Cohort Member Profile form, Form B, is the form all cohort members must complete and sign. The project lead will sign both the application cover sheet as well as submit a completed member profile form. . Proposals without original, authorized signatures will be rejected.

This RFA does not commit the Commission to award a contract or to pay any associated cost. The proposal preparation cost is solely the responsibility of the Applicant. Proposals must be valid for a minimum of one hundred twenty (120) days from the due date of this RFA.

The proposal package, described below, must be received on or **before 3:00 p.m. on August 17, 2015. NO PROPOSAL WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE AND TIME.**

Proposal packages must be hand delivered to:

Children and Families Commission of Orange County
Contract Services
Attn: Kim Goll, Operations & Strategy Director
1505 E. 17th Street, Suite 230
Santa Ana, CA 92705
Main Number: (714) 834-5310

The proposal must clearly meet all of the requirements of this RFA. The Applicant is solely responsible for reviewing all requirements and instructions to ensure that each is clearly addressed in the proposal. Respondents that deviate from format requirements risk having deviating pages removed from their proposal.

The Commission may reject any proposal that is conditional, incomplete, or deviates from the specifications in this RFA. The Commission reserves the right to waive, at its sole discretion, any procedural irregularity, immaterial defect, or other impropriety deemed reasonably correctable or not warranting rejection of the proposal.

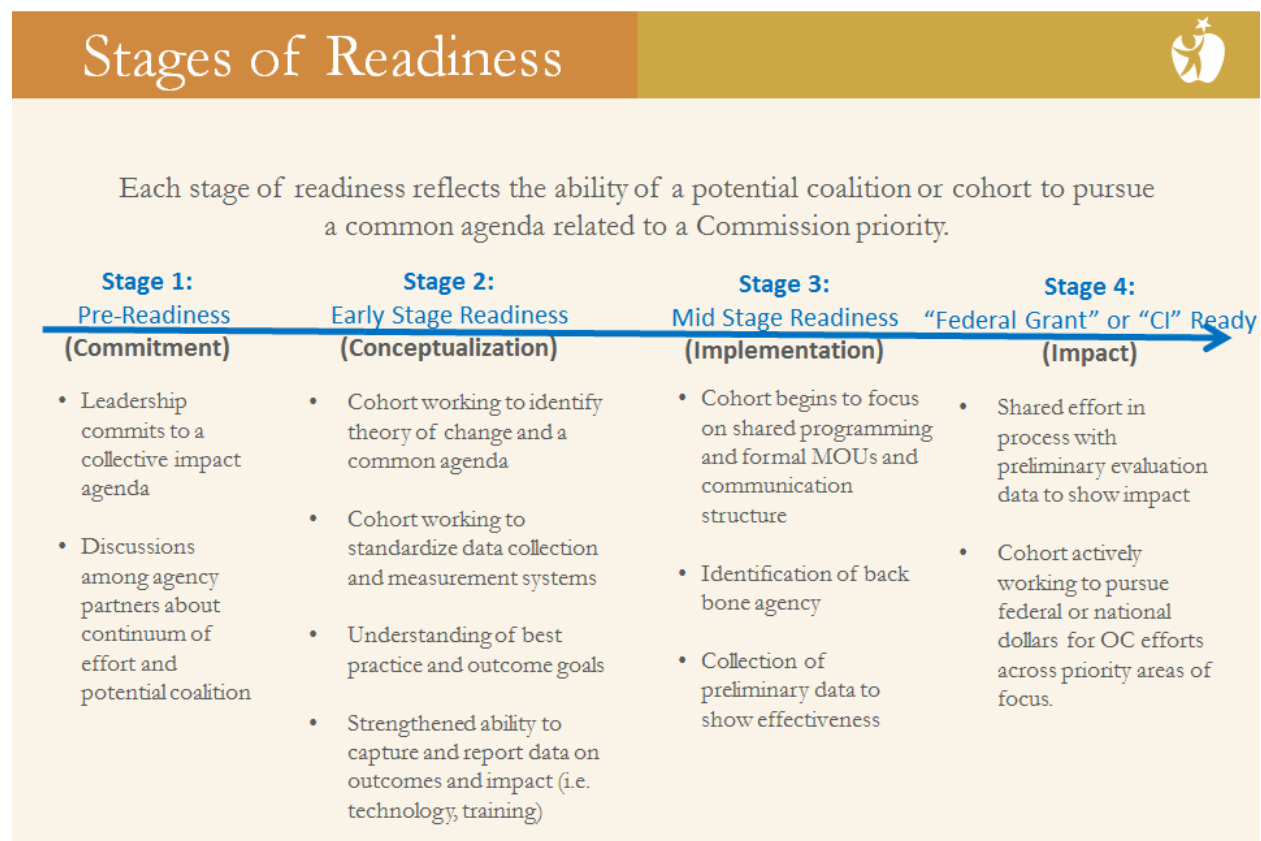
The proposal package will consist of one (1) hard/paper copy of all sections, including original signatures on Form B for each cohort member, submitted in a 3 ring binder and one (1) thumb drive with an electronic copy of all sections in PDF format. The proposal package should use the Attachment forms provided in this RFA. Please limit responses to the page limit identified for each section, proposal must be on 8.5 by 11 inches pages, 12 point font, 1 inch margins.

The 2015/16 Capacity Building Grant RFA and instructions are also available on the Commission's website www.occhildrenandfamilies.com.

II. STAGES OF READINESS

A critical component of the proposal process is the cohort's self-assessment of where it falls on a continuum of "readiness" to achieve collective impact. While readiness can be defined by many criteria, for the purposes of this Capacity Building Grant Program the Commission has provided the following matrix to guide discussion and response to the proposal questions.

In their proposal, applicants will have an opportunity to describe the current level of readiness of the cohort and what resources or investments will support the cohort's evolution on the continuum. Funding is intended to move the cohort along the continuum. The Commission is interested in supporting cohorts wherever they fall on the continuum of readiness. Commitment to supporting the readiness of the cohort will be a significant factor in the selection.



An additional resource to help assess your organization's ability to pursue collective impact can be found here: <http://collectiveimpactforum.org/readiness-assessment>.

III. ALLOWABLE TYPES OF SUPPORT

It is important to note that this RFA seeks an authentic self-assessment of readiness and needed supports, and as such the proposal questions have been designed to invite honest discussion and requests for resources.

The following types of support are available, depending on the self-identified stages of readiness. While examples are provided, the Commission will work with each participating cohort to define what support is needed to be move to the next stage of readiness. The table below is not an attempt to limit requests from applicants, but to provide examples of the types of capacity building investments being supported by this grant cycle.

Identified Capacity Need	Examples of Support	Correlating Stage of Readiness
Coalition building, and continued assessment of readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitation• Analysis of cohort assets and resources• Identification of additional cohort partners	1
Capacity building and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asset mapping• Strategic/business planning• Cohort theory of change creation and identified common outcomes• Identification of best practices	2
Collective program design, shared measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of current evaluation measures• Evaluation training• Business planning	3
Program evaluation; pursuit of system-enhancing funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fund development and federal grant writing support• Match funding strategies and support	4

IV. CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated on the following:

1. Completeness and accuracy of the Application.
2. Proposed project/requested support meets a demonstrated need in the cohort's ability to effect change on a priority issue related to Orange County children ages 0 – 5.
3. Proposal offers detailed assessment of the cohort's level of readiness to pursue collective impact strategies.
4. Proposed project expenditures clearly align with cohort need and readiness level, and promote the objectives of the Capacity Building program (as described on page 3).
5. Application addresses the sustainability of continued cohort effort toward a shared goal, shows in kind commitment to the process, and discusses opportunities to leverage other investments.
6. Cohort describes and justifies the role of each cohort member, and addresses any significant absence of potential partners in pursuit of shared outcomes. A successful proposal will describe a cohort that is comprised of a reasonable number of stakeholders to address the problem being targeted.
7. Milestone and deliverables discussed are comprehensive, reasonable, and feasible to implement within a 12-month time-frame, to be determined at the contract phase.

V. CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

As a condition of Commission funding, all applicants that are recommended for funding are required to comply with the terms and provisions of the Commission's standard grant agreement and any additional funding conditions specific to the selected organization's Capacity Building Grant.

Cohorts will work with Commission staff to create 12 month work plans with clearly delineated deliverables that reflect the project goals. The contract will release resources based on achievement of these deliverables. All cohorts will be asked to present a final report to Commission staff describing progress made and describing the anticipated next stages for growth and improvement of the shared effort.

To obtain an electronic copy of the Commission's standard grant agreement, please contact Rhonda Diaz at rhonda.diaz@cfcoc.ocgov.com.

VI. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Grant applications must include each of the following sections, in the order shown. All incomplete applications will be rejected and not considered for funding.

The proposal package will consist of one (1) hard/paper copy of all sections, including original signatures on Form A for each cohort member, submitted in a 3 ring binder and one (1) thumb drive with an electronic copy of all sections in PDF format. The proposal package should use the Attachment forms provided in this RFA. Please limit responses to the page limit identified for each section (must be on 8.5 by 11 inches pages, 12 point font, 1 inch margins.)

Part 1: Application Form	Complete the attached Application Form.
Part 2: Narrative and Forms	<p>Include a maximum of seven (7) pages, each page on 8.5 x 11 inch paper, single-spaced, 12 point font size, with one inch margins on all sides.</p> <p>Complete the following forms* in support of your project narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Form A: Cohort Readiness Assessment● Form B**: Cohort Member Profile <p><i>*Forms are not included in the seven (7) page narrative limit.</i> <i>**One (1) Form B must be completed by each cohort member.</i></p>
Part 3: Required Documentation	Each cohort member that is part of a Capacity Building Grant application must submit a complete list of the organization's current Board of Directors including names, board position, and professional position or employment.

PART 1: APPLICATION FORM

Instructions: Complete all information in full.

Project Lead on behalf of Cohort:		
<i>Application Contact Information</i>		
Mailing Address:	Project Contact:	
	Contact Phone:	
	Contact Fax:	
	Contact Email:	
Project Summary (120 words max):		
Commission Priority:		
<p>I have read and understand the application and supporting materials and acknowledge and agree: the support requested in this application will not supplant any existing organization resources.</p> <p>Authorized Officer or Director Signature of Project Lead:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Print Name and Title:</p> <p>_____</p>		
OFFICE USE ONLY		
Application Form	Yes No	Comments:
Project Narrative – no more than 7 pages	Yes No	
Project Narrative – all questions answered	Yes No	
Form A: Cohort Readiness Assessment	Yes No	
Form B: Cohort Member Profile	Yes No	
Required Documents	Yes No	

PART 2: PROJECT NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

The Project Narrative should not exceed a maximum of seven (7) pages, on standard paper 8.5x11 inches, single spaced, 12 point font size, with one inch margins on all sides. The project narrative should answer the following questions:

1. Cohort Description

- a. Provide a brief description of the cohort, its history working together and a self-assessment of its readiness to effectively pursue collective impact strategies. Fill out *Form A: Cohort Readiness Assessment* in support of this description.
- b. Describe any previous experience the project lead (or the cohort, if applicable) has had implementing a collaborative project.
- c. Briefly describe the role each member may play in a collective impact strategy. Each cohort member must fill out *Form B: Cohort Member Profile* in support of this description.

2. Project Description

- a. Discuss the Commission priority area on which your cohort will focus (see Strategic Plan Goals at http://occhildrenandfamilies.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Strategic_Plan_2015.pdf)
- b. Provide a detailed description of the purpose of the Capacity Building Grant. What goals does the cohort have, and what outcomes are anticipated through this project?

3. Theory of Change

- a. Describe the *cohort's* theory of change in relation to addressing the need described. For example, "IF our cohort can achieve, A, B and C.... THEN the community will benefit through X, Y and Z."
- b. Applicants can present their proposed theory of change in narrative or visual form, within the seven (7) page limit.

4. Technical Assistance Resources Needed

- a. What technical assistance or system improvements need to be supported to achieve the theory of change described? (Refer to page 9 for examples.)
- b. Describe any non-Commission funds or support that you anticipate might also be used for the project, i.e. in-kind contributions from cohort members, or other grant funding.

5. Project Impact

- a. How will this cohort effort improve outcomes in the priority area?
- b. How will the cohort continue to deepen its ability to work together in Year 2, and what investments might it need after this first year?

Form A: Cohort Readiness Assessment

Instructions:

It is anticipated that your cohort will not fit completely into any one stage. The table below is designed to allow you to describe the characteristics of your cohort, both what it has achieved to date and what it has yet to achieve, so that it can support the proposed request for technical assistance toward a strengthened collaborative.

Please format the table below so that it can accommodate your discussion under each column. The Stages of Readiness chart on page 8 and the Examples of Support chart on page 9 will help you complete this form.

- *Indicators:* In each row, your cohort has an opportunity to identify the current indicators that describe your cohort's ability to pursue goals together. For example, you have submitted a grant together, have established MOUS, have a referral network, share data, etc.). It also provides an opportunity to describe indicators you have not yet achieved (i.e. you have conducted a shared evaluation.)
- *Anticipated Improvement:* Please describe the anticipated improvement to the cohort's ability to work toward a shared goal that you believe the project will result in (this description should align with your narrative response to Question 2b, 3a and 5a). Your response will most likely show evolution from one stage of readiness into another, regardless of where your achieved indicators are placed.
- *Types of support:* Please list the types of support you believe would best support the cohort's evolution toward Stage 4 collective impact (this description should align with your narrative response to Question 4a).
- *Anticipated Deliverables:* Describe the tangible outcomes that will result from any technical assistance provided (i.e., a strategic plan, trained staff, landscape analysis, etc.).

Form A: Cohort Readiness Assessment

Stage of Readiness	Indicators		Anticipated Improvement to Cohort Through Project	Types of Support Requested	Anticipated Deliverables/ Outcomes of Project
	Achieved	Not Yet Achieved			
1 Pre-Readiness (Commitment)					
2 Early Stage Readiness (Conceptualization)					
3 Mid Stage Readiness (Implementation)					
4 Collective Impact Ready (Impact)					

Form B: Member Profile and Contribution

Instructions: The table below allows each member to share organization specific information. The applicant organization (project lead) must fill out and sign both the cover sheet and the member profile form. All other cohort members need only fill out the member profile form below.

Please format the table below so that it can accommodate information provided in each row. Additional pages (up to 2 pages Maximum) can be used to support responses.

Organization Name	
Primary Cohort Representative (Name/Title/Email/Phone)	
Secondary Cohort Representative (Name/Title/Email/Phone)	
No. of Children 0-5 Served	
No. of Parents Served (of children 0-5)	
Number of Providers Served	
Annual Budget	
No. of Employees	
No. of Years in Existence	

Additional Questions:

- 1) Please describe the interventions/programs that are relevant to the cohort project (use a * to identify those that are evidence-based)
- 2) Please describe any relevant staff experience in relation to the proposed project and cohort objectives. Who will be participating in this project?
- 3) Please describe any in-kind contribution your organization is willing to make to the cohort. Examples might include staff time, meeting space, access to consultants or vendors, or leveraged funding.

I have read and understand the RFA. I acknowledge and affirm that this proposal is submitted in response to the RFA, that it includes information that is true and accurate, and reflects my organization's commitment to the project.

Authorized Signature: _____

Print Name _____

Title: _____

Attachment A: Mandatory Notice of Intent to Apply

Notice of Intent to Apply is due by 3:00 p.m., July 22, 2015 by email to Rhonda Diaz at rhonda.diaz@cfcoc.ocgov.com. Cohorts only need to submit one Notice of Intent with the lead agency's primary contact information included and a list of all other collaborative agencies participating included in the description.

Yes, I am/we are interested in submitting a response to the Request for Applications for the 2015/16 Capacity Building Program.

Primary Contact for Application submittal is:

Name_____

Organization _____

Street Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Telephone_____

Fax_____

Email_____

To facilitate collaboration, we will post a list of expected applicants on our website. Please provide a brief description of your cohort that you would like included. Your description should include name of current cohort members and a lead agency if one has been selected.
