

Improving state capacity to report special education fiscal data

Context

Created in November 2014, the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR) will provide technical assistance to state educational agencies (SEAs) to help them meet their federal obligation to collect and report special education fiscal data. The specific reporting requirements supported by the CIFR are:

- » Maintenance of state financial support (MFS)
- » Allocation of IDEA Part B subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs)
- » LEA Maintenance of effort (MOE)
- » Coordinated early intervening services (CEIS)

Targeted Objectives

- » Increase SEA knowledge of underlying fiscal requirements and calculations necessary to submit valid and reliable data
- » Improve the capacity of SEA staff to collect and report accurate fiscal data on the provision of services to students ages 3 to 21+ under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B

Conceptual Framework

The CIFR at WestEd will help states build their knowledge of and capacity to implement IDEA fiscal requirements through four main areas of activity (see the Conceptual Framework graphic on the next page):

- » knowledge development,
- » tool and template development,
- » technical assistance and dissemination, and
- » coordination and collaboration.

The Conceptual Framework is guided by three key principles:

Differentiated system of technical assistance.

To address each state's specific needs, the CIFR will offer *general*, *targeted*, and *intensive* levels of support.

PROJECT PARTNERS

WestEd

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) at Utah State University

Westat

The Improve Group
(external evaluator)

CIFR CO-DIRECTORS

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Multiple feedback loops.

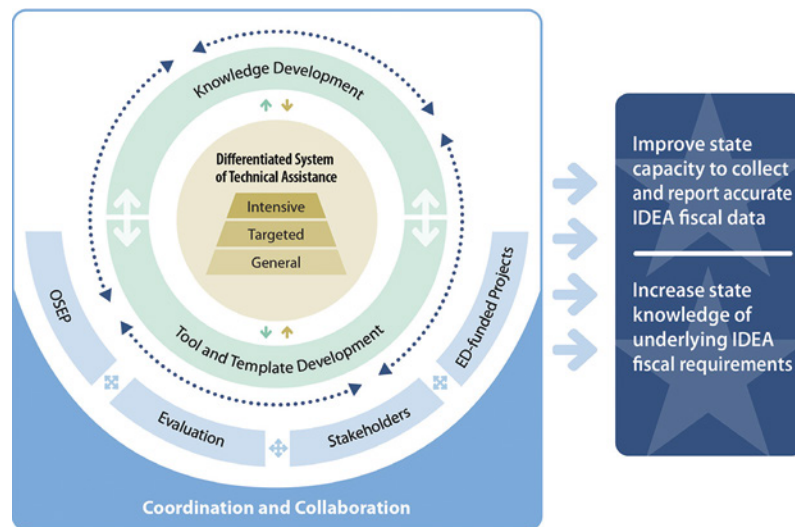
To help assure sustainable changes, CIFR has built in internal and external feedback loops.

Coordination and collaboration.

To provide services efficiently and effectively, the CIFR will coordinate and collaborate with the

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), other ED-funded centers, stakeholders, and The Improve Group, which is responsible for external evaluation of the Center.

The management structure is configured to facilitate ongoing feedback about all aspects of the work among project teams and the external evaluator.



Approach

The **Leadership Coordination and Collaboration Team (LCCT)** will guide the establishment and articulation of the CIFR's vision and implementation through a cooperative agreement with OSEP and collaboration with other TA Centers.

Project teams, led by nationally known experts, will coordinate their efforts to build state capacity to manage and report IDEA fiscal data.

- » **Knowledge Development** team activities include development and implementation of the CIFR Year 1 survey of all 60 IDEA Part B programs and analysis of the data and data notes from LEA MOE/CEIS data collections.
- » The **Tool and Template Development** team will, among its several tasks, develop tools and templates to support the TA work of the Center and to assist states in collecting valid and reliable state MFS and LEA MOE/CEIS data.
- » The **Technical Assistance and Dissemination** team will support general, targeted, and

intensive TA services. Targeted TA will be facilitated through communities of practice and CIFR content specialists. Intensive TA will be provided to up to 10 states at a time.

- » The **Technology and Communications** team will support the work of the CIFR, providing leadership to develop and utilize digital solutions to improve effectiveness of project services.

The Improve Group will collaborate with the CIFR to conduct an **External Evaluation** that provides rapid feedback to project leaders to drive continuous improvement and objective progress reports to OSEP.

The Center will solicit guidance from a **Stakeholder Group** comprised of parents, LEA and SEA administrators and other key constituents, and a **Senior Advisory Group** representing a breadth and depth of knowledge and experience in IDEA fiscal compliance and funding issues.