



Virginia Head Start Association

www.headstartva.org

Questions/Guidelines to Consider When Contracting for T/TA

1. Do you need a consultant? Examine your requirements, your current staffing/required skill set. Think about other programs in your region or “neighbors.” Is this something you could “buddy up” for?
2. Be specific about what you want the consultant/contractor to do. It’s a good idea to have a Statement of Work in hand before you start looking for someone. That way, both you and the contractors know what is expected of them.
3. Find someone who can communicate with you. That means someone who works to help you understand them rather than someone who makes you do the work to understand them. Don’t get bowled over by jargon or buzzwords. If you don’t understand, let them know you want them to speak your language, and make sure they explain themselves to your satisfaction.
4. Find out what Head Start experience the prospective contractor(s) have, both as individuals and as a corporation. Was this a successful experience? For example, if this person was a Head Start director, what were the results of their last review?
5. What other trainings or TA have they conducted recently, and where?
6. Ask for references from other grantees with whom they have worked.
7. Ask them to provide varied samples of training materials (e.g., job aids, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc.)
8. Ask for the resumes of the individuals who will be doing training or TA. If they are reluctant to share, that’s a dead giveaway.
9. Ask how they keep abreast of the state of the art in Head Start; how they ensure that the information they provide or the TA they deliver is authentic and accurate.
10. Check in with your colleagues in other programs to see if they have heard of/used these folks.

11. Check in with your program specialists to see if they have information. They cannot specifically recommend or veto a specific provider, but they can help programs think through their decisions.
12. Is the rate reasonable and/or affordable? Is the amount of time allocated reasonable? Does the rate include planning time? What is the ratio of planning to presentation? Does the rate include expenses? If not, what expenses does the consultant expect you to pay? Are these expenses allocable under your Federal grant? **Would a reasonable person do this?!**
13. Does the scope of work fit with your training plans?
14. Question to self: does this person really know what he/she is doing or is he/she just a good salesperson?
15. What kind of energy will this person bring to your program? Is the person upbeat and positive? Can this person adequately support the kind of environment you are trying to build in your program, or does this person bring a negative energy? "Things are really going to get tough for Head Start, so you might want to hire me to get you through it"!
16. Make sure you get a written contract, memorandum of understanding, or Scope of Work Agreement.