

Association of Bay Area Governments

Executive Board

May 19, 2022

Agenda Item 11.a.

Technical Assistance Portal

Subject

Presentation on ABAG/MTC's Technical Assistance Portal.

Background

Staff have historically provided an array of technical assistance (TA) products and support to local jurisdictions across the topics of energy, housing, land use, resilience and transportation. Enhancing ABAG/MTC technical assistance offerings has the potential to augment local resources and enable Bay Area jurisdictions to address the region's goals. To that end, in 2019 staff conducted an assessment of ABAG/MTC TA offerings with the direction to 1) evaluate the suite of existing TA programs, 2) identify opportunities to adapt programs to best meet the needs of local jurisdictions, and 3) ensure continued alignment with Plan Bay Area 2050.

The assessment identified the following goals for ABAG/MTC TA programs:

- Build institutional capacity for jurisdictions and agencies
- Address local challenges that may inhibit jurisdictions from pursuing regional goals
- Achieve greater regional consistency in planning and implementation outcomes
- Foster alignment between local outcomes and the regional vision set forth in Plan Bay Area 2050

The assessment also identified two models through which ABAG/MTC TA is delivered:

1. Direct Assistance: a focused intervention that provides specific services to an agency. Support is tailored to address a discrete goal and to fulfill specific tasks. Intended to bridge gaps in staffing and/or technical expertise, this model is typically delivered on a temporary basis. Examples include the Priority Development Area (PDA) Technical Assistance and Regional Housing Technical Assistance (RHTA) programs.
2. Capacity Building: strategies to enhance an agency's technical expertise and strengthen institutional knowledge. The goal is to equip agency leadership and staff with specific skillsets that allow them to address complex issues and/or improve processes. This model can help agencies launch new programs, strategies, or policies that are aligned with regional goals. An example includes the Bay Area Regional Energy Network's (BayREN) energy code compliance and enforcement training for local governments.

The assessment concluded with recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of TA programs. The recommendations were informed by the project's Technical Advisory Committee, as well as national best practices, surveys and interviews with local jurisdictions, ABAG/MTC staff, and other metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) with technical assistance programs. The recommendations included the following:

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- Build on the strengths of existing TA offerings
- Create a more cohesive and well-coordinated TA delivery system
- Improve the ability of local jurisdictions to access MTC's TA offerings
- Consistently align existing TA offerings to better meet evolving regional goals and metrics, including those defined in Plan Bay Area

As a first step to implement the assessment recommendations, the TA Portal was developed to improve jurisdictions' access to the wide variety of ABAG/MTC TA program offerings.

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Historically, ABAG/MTC's many technical assistance programs have been scattered throughout the ABAG and MTC websites. The most repeated comment local agencies provided through the TA assessment survey is that the ABAG/MTC programs are hard to find. The Portal provides an opportunity to bring the TA programs together and provide more visibility so that local partners can more easily utilize the available resources.

The Portal launched in September 2021 and is located on the ABAG website - abag.ca.gov/technical-assistance. The TA programs found on the Portal reflect the diversity and range of ABAG/MTC offerings in the categories of energy, housing, land use, resilience and transportation and infrastructure.

A key Portal feature to highlight is a filter tool for easy searching by program name, topic area (e.g., housing elements, wildfires, transit) or type (e.g., data set, guide, presentation, training, webinar). While the primary audience for the Portal is local jurisdiction staff who work in the category areas, the Portal also serves as a resource for county transportation agencies (CTAs) and other regional agency staff.

Issues:

None.

Recommended Action:

Information.

Attachments:

A. Presentation

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Reviewed:



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