

SECTION 1

Overview of the DD Act and ADD

The DD Act

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-402) (DD Act) contains three complimentary grant programs designed to assist individuals with developmental disabilities in reaching their maximum potential through increased independence, productivity, inclusion, and community integration. The three grant programs are:

- 1) State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Councils)
- 2) Protection and Advocacy (P&As) Systems
- 3) University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)

The DD Act also includes the *Projects of National Significance* (PNS), which is a discretionary grant program. PNS grant projects do not fall under MTARS, but are reviewed through an alternate process.

Developmental Disabilities

There are approximately 4.5 million individuals with developmental disabilities in the United States. Developmental disabilities (DD) are severe, life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical impairments, manifested before age 22. Developmental disabilities result in substantial limitations in three or more areas of major life activities:

- self-care
- receptive and expressive language
- learning
- mobility
- self-direction
- capacity for independent living
- economic self-sufficiency

Without appropriate services and supports, the choices open to people with developmental disabilities including where they live, work, and play are minimal. Limited options lead to people being isolated rather than fully integrated and included in the mainstream of society. Persons with developmental disabilities often require individually

planned and coordinated services and supports. In order to live successfully in the community they need services and supports related to housing, employment, education, civil and human rights protection, health care, transportation, and recreation.

ADD

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) is the Federal agency responsible for the implementation and administration of the DD Act. Organizationally, ADD is located within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is part of the Department's Administration for Children and Families. ADD's mission is to improve and increase services to and assure that individuals with developmental disabilities have opportunities to make their own choices, contribute to society, have supports to live independently, and are free of abuse, neglect, financial and sexual exploitation, and violations of their legal and human rights.

State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Councils)

Councils pursue systems change that promotes improved outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Councils pursue capacity building to develop and expand projects that successfully deliver services and supports. Councils also support advocacy activities that promote self-determination and inclusion in the community. Examples of Council activities include demonstration of new approaches, outreach, training, public education, and providing information to policy-makers.

Protection and Advocacy (P&As) Systems

P&As protect the legal and human rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. P&A strategies include legal, administrative, and other remedies (e.g., mediation and alternative dispute resolution); information and referral; investigation of incidents of abuse and neglect; and education of policy-makers.

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)

UCEDDs are either components of a university system, or are public or not-for-profit entities associated with a university. UCEDDs are required to carry out four core functions:

- 1) Interdisciplinary pre-service preparation and continuing education
- 2) Community services, which includes services, training, and technical assistance

- 3) Research
- 4) Information dissemination

In terms of its organizational structure, the DD Act requires UCEDDs to be associated with a University. To meet this requirement of the Act, the majority of UCEDDs are “housed” at a University and situated within a major organizational unit of the University, such as a School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, or a College of Education. Within this unit, the UCEDD functions as an independent entity carrying out the core functions. The UCEDD director reports to the leadership (such as a Dean or Provost) of the organizational unit.

Because they are generally independent entities within an organizational unit of the University, UCEDDs do not recruit and formally admit students to their program. Instead, students are recruited from other academic programs in the University, such as Pediatrics, Nursing, Education, Occupational Therapy, Dentistry, Nutrition, etc. Students will typically spend part of their academic training with the UCEDD.

SECTION 2

Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review System (MTARS)

Overview of the MTARS

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) uses the Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review System (MTARS) to evaluate three of its grant programs:

- 1) State Developmental Disabilities Councils (Councils)
- 2) State Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As)
- 3) University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services (UCEDDs).

Under the terms of the DD Act, ADD must conduct oversight to determine the extent to which grantees are helping individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have more opportunities to live, participate, and contribute to community life.

ADD established the MTARS to monitor individual grant programs, to address areas where grantees may benefit from technical assistance, and to identify innovative practices that may assist other grantees.

The title Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review System was carefully and thoughtfully chosen to show the close relationship between monitoring and technical assistance. MTARS is not strictly a monitoring process, nor is it strictly a technical assistance process, but a balance of the two.

MTARS benefits ADD, the States experiencing an MTARS, and all ADD grantees nationwide. ADD relies on MTARS as a significant component of its Federal stewardship and utilizes the information obtained from MTARS reviews to strengthen its position when justifying its programs to Federal oversight agencies. MTARS recipients learn from reviewers how to become even more effective in bettering the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. All grantees gain through the sharing of innovative practices that are highlighted through the MTARS process.

In addition, the information collected through the monitoring process helps ADD comply with the requirements of two programs that seek to

increase government accountability: the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). GPRA was enacted by Congress in 1993 to promote program performance and to provide greater accountability for results within Federal government by requiring agencies to develop measurable goals and to report results to Congress. PART was developed by the Office of Management and Budget in 2002 to complement GPRA by more closely aligning budget decisions with performance information. The PART assessment is published as an element of the President's budget and is used to supplement the budget analysis process so that budget decisions reflect a program's performance and effectiveness.

MTARS Monitoring Elements

Since 1999 MTARS has evolved from a primary focus on mere compliance with the law to one that is more dynamic and takes into consideration the following six elements:

- 1) Program compliance with the DD Act
- 2) Accountability and achievement of program goals
- 3) Collaboration with other DD programs within the State
- 4) Fiscal management
- 5) Technical assistance needs
- 6) Innovative practices

This dynamic model reflects the climate of accountability in Federal Government. In this climate, there is an increasing emphasis on justifying programs and budgets by showing their positive impact on people. It is no longer sufficient to only document program compliance by describing procedures or processes. Rather, programs must show how they are achieving goals of the DD Act thereby impacting people with disabilities. This Federal climate expands responsibilities for Federal stewardship. It is also an opportunity to bring more attention to the impact grantees have in the State.

In its role as federal steward, ADD has modified the MTARS process to include a number of elements that capture how programs working alone or in collaboration with the network partners are achieving important outcomes for people with developmental disabilities and their family members. The sections that follow describe in more detail the six different elements of the MTARS.

Program Compliance

ADD is the Federal steward that ensures its programs operate consistent with the Act and with regulations. The program compliance element of the MTARS asks the question: *Are ADD programs doing what the law requires?* The compliance element is concerned with process. Compliance is seen as the minimum at which ADD grantees must operate.

During an MTARS, grantees are asked to demonstrate *compliance* with the law by documenting how each meets requirements regarding such areas as collaboration, program administration, organization administration, evaluation and reports, and fiscal management.

Accountability and Achievement of Program Goals

While it is important to determine compliance with the Act, compliance in and of itself does not guarantee effectiveness in implementing the purpose of the Act. MTARS is also concerned with outcomes and impact. The accountability element of the MTARS asks the question: *Are ADD programs making a difference in people's lives?*

Grantees are asked to demonstrate *accountability* with program activities based on four principles:

- 1) *Responsiveness of grantees to stakeholders*, that is the extent to which the grantee seeks and utilizes input from stakeholders (e.g., individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, funding entities, contractors, service providers, policy makers, etc.).
- 2) *Relationship between goal and objective setting and actual outcomes*, that is the extent to which grantee's goals and objectives are stated in measurable terms and achieved through the implementation of relevant activities that achieve results.
- 3) *Impact of ADD grantees on consumers and service systems*, that is the kind of difference ADD grantees in a State have made on people and service systems.
- 4) *Validation of data*, that is ensuring that the data collected by a grantee gives a full and accurate picture of what the grantee is doing.

Program Collaboration

This element of the MTARS asks the question: *Is the DD Network partnering in a strategic way to make a difference in people's lives?* This element is concerned with outcomes and impact from a collaborative perspective. Grantees are asked to provide evidence of *collaboration* with programs in the DD network and by documenting the number of projects having substantive joint efforts among DD programs in the State, the extent of collaboration within a project, the areas addressed by these joint efforts, and the impact of collaboration on project outcomes. MTARS reviewers pay particular attention to grantees' participation in each other's planning process to identify barriers and to pursue collaborative efforts to overcome those barriers.

Fiscal Management

This element of the MTARS asks the question: *Are ADD programs adhering to fiscal management requirements?* The fiscal management element is concerned with monetary tracking and accountability. Grantees are asked to demonstrate *fiscal management* through the appropriate oversight, monitoring, accounting, and use of ADD funds. To this end, they are asked to document fiscal responsibility in the use of federal funds.

Technical Assistance

This element of the MTARS asks the question: *What technical assistance will bring ADD Programs into compliance and/or enhance program performance?* The technical assistance element is concerned with process and outcomes/impact.

Technical assistance to ADD grantees is not limited to the needs that arise during an MTARS review. ADD, through its technical assistance contracts and other resources, is ready to help grantees at any time to remedy issues and address areas where help is needed to yield better outcomes.

Because MTARS is comprehensive in scope, involves follow-up activities, and has many opportunities for dialogue with ADD staff, peers, and consumers, it is advantageous for grantees to disclose areas where they would like to improve so that technical assistance resources can be activated early in the MTARS process.

Program Innovation

This element of the MTARS asks the question: *What innovative practices will benefit other ADD programs?* It is concerned with program improvement, expansion, and awareness. The MTARS is one vehicle ADD uses to identify *innovative practices* that can be added to the strategies used by other grantees to do an even better job. ADD is proud of all the good work that grantees do each day to better the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and seeks innovative practices to recognize, promote, and disseminate throughout the nation.

Self-assessment Checklists

Given the variety of elements related to MTARS, ADD has created a set of self-assessment checklists to streamline the review process. The self-assessment checklists are comprised of four parts:

- 1) Program Compliance
- 2) Program Operations and Practices
- 3) Innovative Practices
- 4) Fiscal

In addition, there is a checklist for the DD Council Chairperson.

The self-assessment checklists capture each element of the MTARS process (e.g., compliance, accountability, collaboration, fiscal management, technical assistance, and innovative practices).

The checklists for each program appear in the back of this notebook. The DD Council Self-assessment checklists appear in *Tab C*, the P&A Self-assessment checklists appear in *Tab D* and the UCEDD Self-assessment checklists appear in *Tab E*.

ADD works with grantees to complete and fully utilize the checklists. This process is described in more detail in Section 5 of the notebook.

MTARS Activities and Phases

In general, the MTARS spans the Federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). The process is divided into four phases:

- 1) Planning
- 2) Pre-site visit
- 3) Site visit
- 4) Post-site visit

ADD utilizes the *planning* phase to organize and manage the MTARS activities for the year. It includes tasks such as identifying the States to be reviewed, preparing a yearly budget, establishing review teams, making team assignments, and training individuals who serve as reviewers.

The *pre-site visit* phase includes activities such as scheduling the visit, completing checklists, conducting the site visit and, if possible, the public forum via videoconference, reviewing materials, discussing with grantees findings from the review of materials, and preparing an agenda for the site visit.

The *site visit* activities include a public forum, if not conducted during the pre-site visit phase, interviews of grantee staff, interviews of individuals associated with grantee activities, observation of grantee activities, provision of technical assistance, and an exit meeting. Site visits are labor-intensive and generally take four days to complete.

The *post-site visit* phase includes report writing, follow-up on technical assistance delivery and program improvements, and the dissemination of innovative practices.

SECTION 3

MTARS Team

MTARS Team Structure

Generally, the MTARS Team is comprised of the following people:

- ✓ ADD Central Office Program Specialists
- ✓ Council Peer Reviewer
- ✓ P&A Peer Reviewer
- ✓ UCEDD Peer Reviewer
- ✓ Individuals with developmental disabilities/family members
- ✓ Fiscal Reviewer

The MTARS Team is managed by the *Team Coordinator*, who is an ADD Staff person.

The MTARS Team has an on-site coordinator, who is an ADD Staff person.

ADD divides the larger MTARS Team into three Program Teams. The use of program teams makes it possible for reviewers to focus on one program and accomplish more during the site visit. The Program Teams are:

- 1) DD Council Program Team
- 2) P&A Program Team
- 3) UCEDD Program Team

In cases where there are two or more UCEDDs in the State, ADD will have a team for each UCEDD.

Each of the Program Teams consists of a minimum of three people, including a/an:

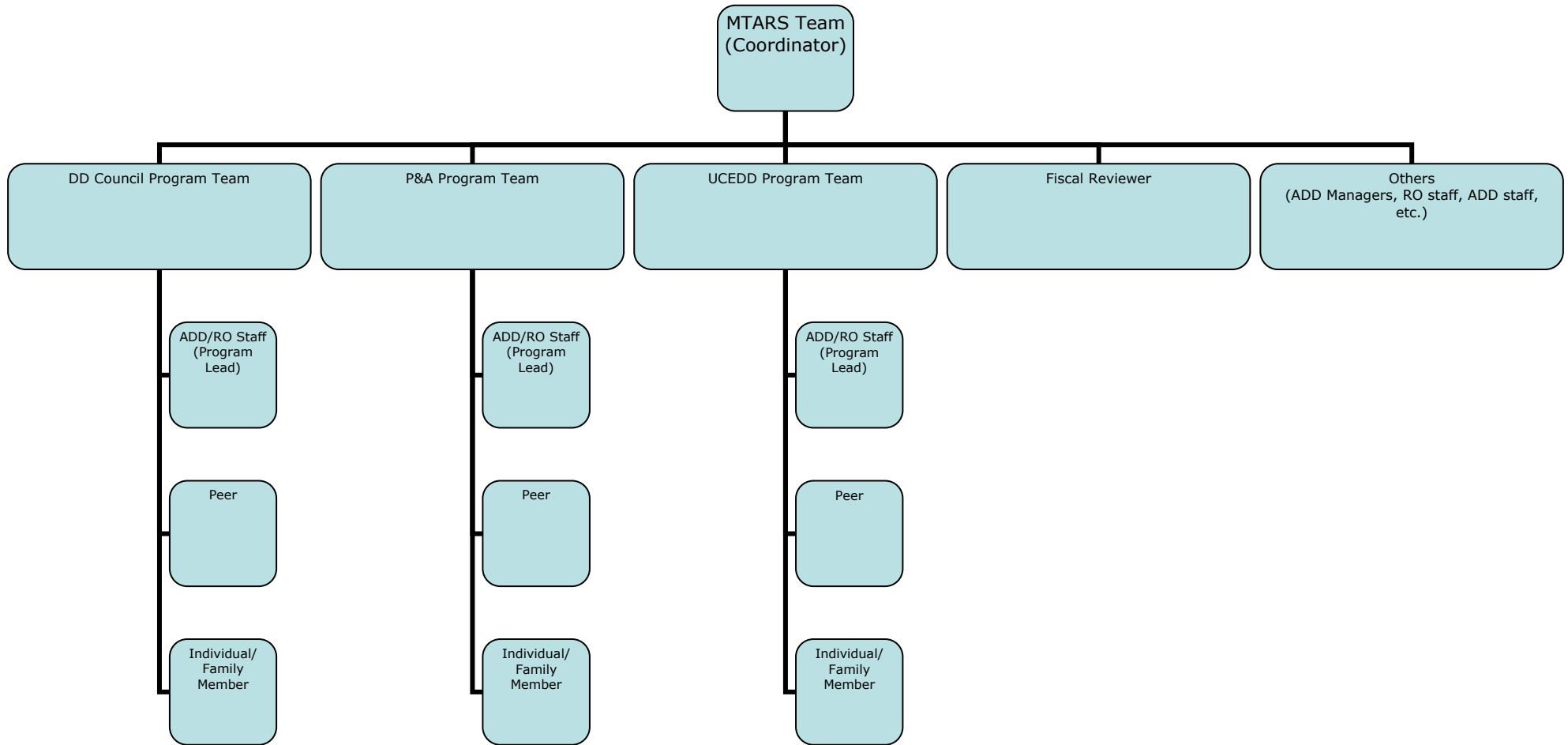
- 1) ADD staff person
- 2) Director of a grant program in another State
- 3) A person with a direct or indirect experience with developmental disabilities

The ADD Staff person serves as the *Program Lead* for the team.

The fiscal reviewer functions independently of the Program Teams. They schedule with the grantees a time during the site visit week to visit the program to conduct the fiscal review. They meet with staff responsible for fiscal-related matters. They typically spend one day at each program.

The Review Team members presented above is the norm. However, there may be instances when additional people accompany the team. For example, an ADD manager may participate in MTARS. There may be additional ADD and/or Regional Office staff who participates in the review as trainees or co-leads. Individuals with developmental disabilities may request to bring a personal support person on the site visit. The personal support person is not an active participant. See the Figure on the next page for an overview of the MTARS team configuration.

MTARS Team Configuration



Selection of Non-federal Team Members

Non-federal team members are selected by ADD. Factors that may be considered when selecting a non-federal team member include:

- ✓ Currently working with State as part of an ADD technical assistance contract
- ✓ From a State with similar demographics
- ✓ From a State of similar size and geography
- ✓ From a grant program of similar size and with a similar area of emphasis
- ✓ Experience and expertise in area where technical assistance has been requested

Some non-federal team members may be selected from a pool of individuals who have participated in a prior review. Other reviewers may be individuals who are newly trained in the MTARS process and participate as a reviewer for the first time.

Team Member Responsibilities

Each member of the MTARS team has specific responsibilities.

There is a *Team Coordinator* is responsible for the following:

- ✓ Overall coordination of the review including joint aspects of the site visit planning, scheduling, and report writing
- ✓ Providing oversight in the planning for the public forum
- ✓ Coordinating logistics, including hotel accommodations
- ✓ Providing (through the ADD Project Officer) peer, consumer and assistant names and itinerary information to the ADD Logistics Contractor
- ✓ Developing and disseminating the overall site visit schedule in coordination with the grantees and Program Leads
- ✓ Coordinating the initial conference call with the grantees
- ✓ Coordinating the videoconference for the State Overview and DD Network collaboration presentations
- ✓ Ensuring that on-site coordinator has necessary logistical information for site visit, including the master schedule and conference call numbers
- ✓ Participating via conference call in team meeting to discuss DD Network collaboration
- ✓ Participating via conference call in Exit Meeting
- ✓ Writing Parts 1 and 2 of the report

- ✓ Coordinating the completion of the final report

The *On-site Coordinator* is responsible for the following:

- ✓ Facilitating the videoconference for the State Overview and DD Network collaboration presentations
- ✓ Leading the public forum
- ✓ Facilitating any full team meetings that occur on-site
- ✓ Leading the Exit Meeting and presenting collaboration report at the Exit Meeting
- ✓ Providing the team coordinator with notes and report from the Exit Meeting on collaboration
- ✓ Assisting the team coordinator as needed in writing Part 2 of the report on collaboration

The *On-site Coordinator* also serves as the *Program Lead* for one of the program teams.

The *Program Lead* is responsible for the following:

- ✓ Determining the MTARS team composition
- ✓ Selecting and recruiting appropriate peer and consumer reviewers
- ✓ Determining the agenda for respective program review
- ✓ Making individual team member assignments
- ✓ Making sure team members have information about the site visit
- ✓ Identifying areas/issues of focus during the site visit
- ✓ Drafting the report section pertaining to their respective program
- ✓ Arranging technical assistance
- ✓ Reporting all issues to the Team Coordinator

The *Regional Office Reviewer* may be involved with the following:

- ✓ Performing a review of grantees' fiscal management
- ✓ Participating in training, teleconferences, and the site visit
- ✓ Providing notes to Program Lead for use in drafting report

The other two members of the team (the director and the person with a direct or indirect experience with developmental disabilities) is assigned responsibility for:

- ✓ Functioning as an agent of the Federal government with a monitoring and oversight responsibility
- ✓ Reviewing grantee self-assessment checklists and related materials

- ✓ Participating in discussions with program team members about the grantee self-assessment checklists to identify areas of inquiry for the site visit
- ✓ Providing technical assistance while on site
- ✓ Sharing experience and expertise that grantee may find useful for addressing specific administration, planning, design, or other operational issues
- ✓ Providing insight and suggestions regarding the grantee facility, level of services, and relationship with individual with developmental disabilities and family members
- ✓ Serving as a consultant to the team and grantees on disability issues
- ✓ Participating in training, videoconferences, teleconferences, the site visit, and report writing
- ✓ Sharing responsibilities for conducting interviews
- ✓ Providing notes to Program Lead for use in drafting report

With these responsibilities comes a time commitment associated with the MTARS. Reviewers are expected to participate in up to one day of training if they have not participated in an MTARS, the Entrance Meeting and Public Forum videoconference, at least one team meeting to review grantee materials, at least one conference call with the grantee in preparation for the site visit, and in a four day site visit. In addition, reviewers are expected to read the materials relevant to their specific assignment. After the site visit, reviewers contribute to and comment on the draft report. Non-federal reviewers are compensated for time associated with the training and on-site visit.

Standards of Conduct

MTARS team members have access to a great deal of sensitive information about the ADD programs. All information and materials received and reviewed should be considered confidential. Team members should only discuss information from the review with other MTARS team members and not grantees being reviewed and representatives from the membership associations. See *Tab F* tips for effective team work and standards of conduct for team members.