



2021 Charter School Programs Project Directors' Meeting

Monday, February 22, 2021 | Virtual Presentation



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What to Expect When Getting Monitored

Everything You Were Afraid to Ask, But Need to Know

2021 CSP Project Directors' Meeting



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Introductions and Session Objectives/Overview

Session Objectives/Overview

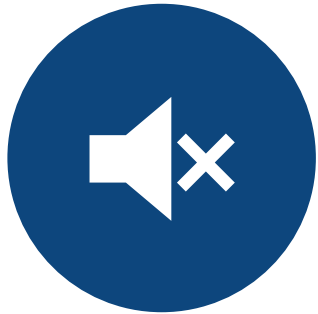
- Clarify expectations regarding monitoring, including what content is monitored as well as how to prepare for monitoring

Introductions

- Sara Allender, WestEd
- John Flaherty, WestEd
- Carol Cohen, MSG
- Kim Standing, Westat



Norms for Discussion



Remember to mute yourself.



Utilize the chat for questions and comments.



Respond to the survey.



Look for the Hints!

Please update your Zoom profile to your first name, last name, and organization.



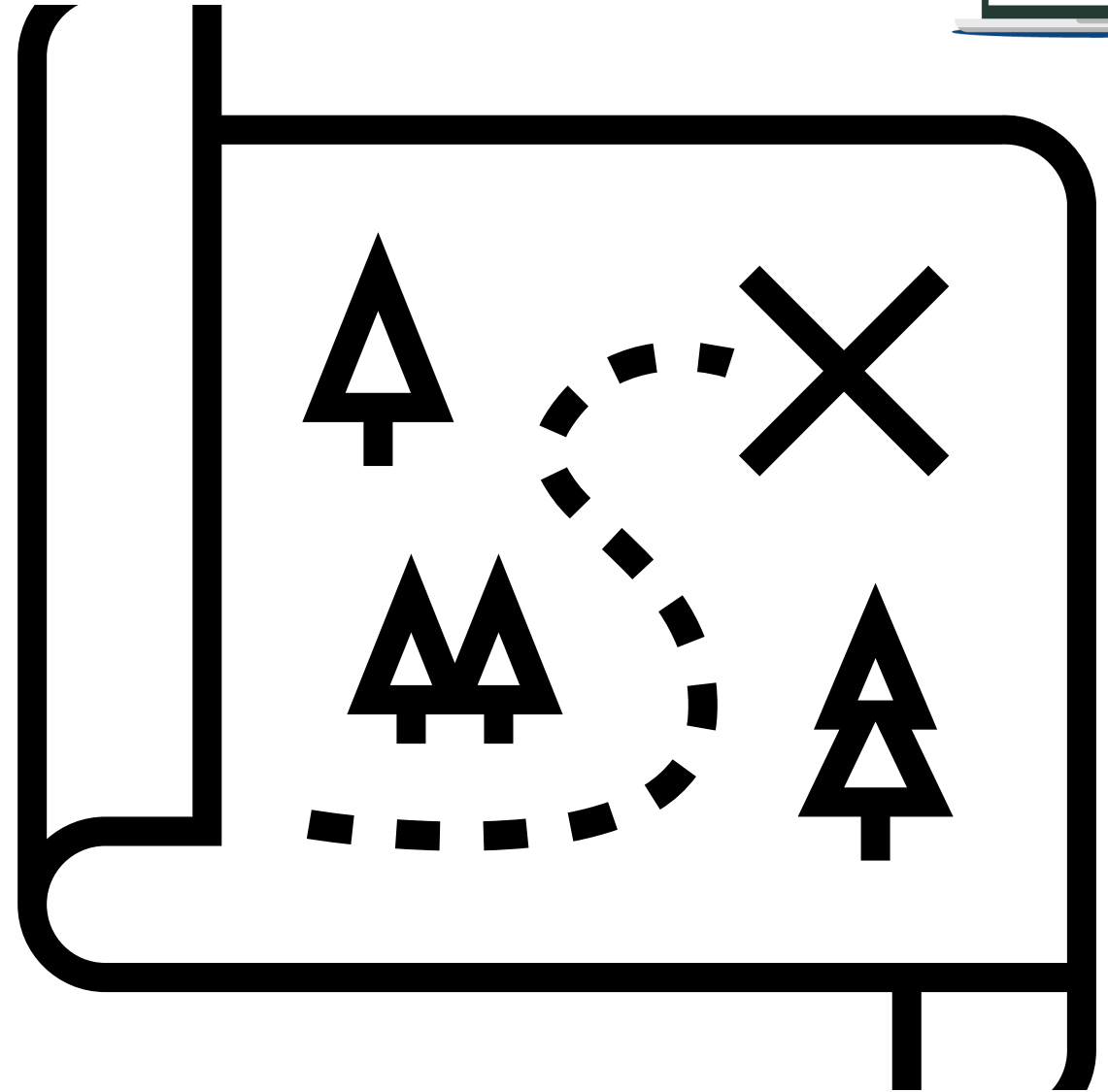
This session is being recorded so you and your peers may access it at a later date.





Agenda

- What is Monitoring?
- What Does Monitoring Cover?
- How Can You Best Prepare for Monitoring?
- What Happens During Monitoring?
- What Happens After Monitoring?





But First...

WestEd

- Monitors a subset of SE, CMO, and Developer grantees annually
- Collects award data from all SE, CMO, and Developer grantees annually

MSG

- Monitors a subset of CE grantees annually
- Conducts quarterly monitoring of all CE grantees
- Provides other TA support to CSP's CE program

Monitoring fundamentals are the same for all CSP grantees; indicators and processes may vary.





What Is Monitoring?

Definition

- Monitoring is the regular and systematic examination of a grantee’s administration and implementation of a federal education grant, contract, or cooperative agreement administered by ED.
- ED policy requires every Program office overseeing discretionary or formula grant programs to prepare a monitoring plan for each of its programs.

Purposes

Ensure fiscal and programmatic accountability

Support and improve grantee capacity

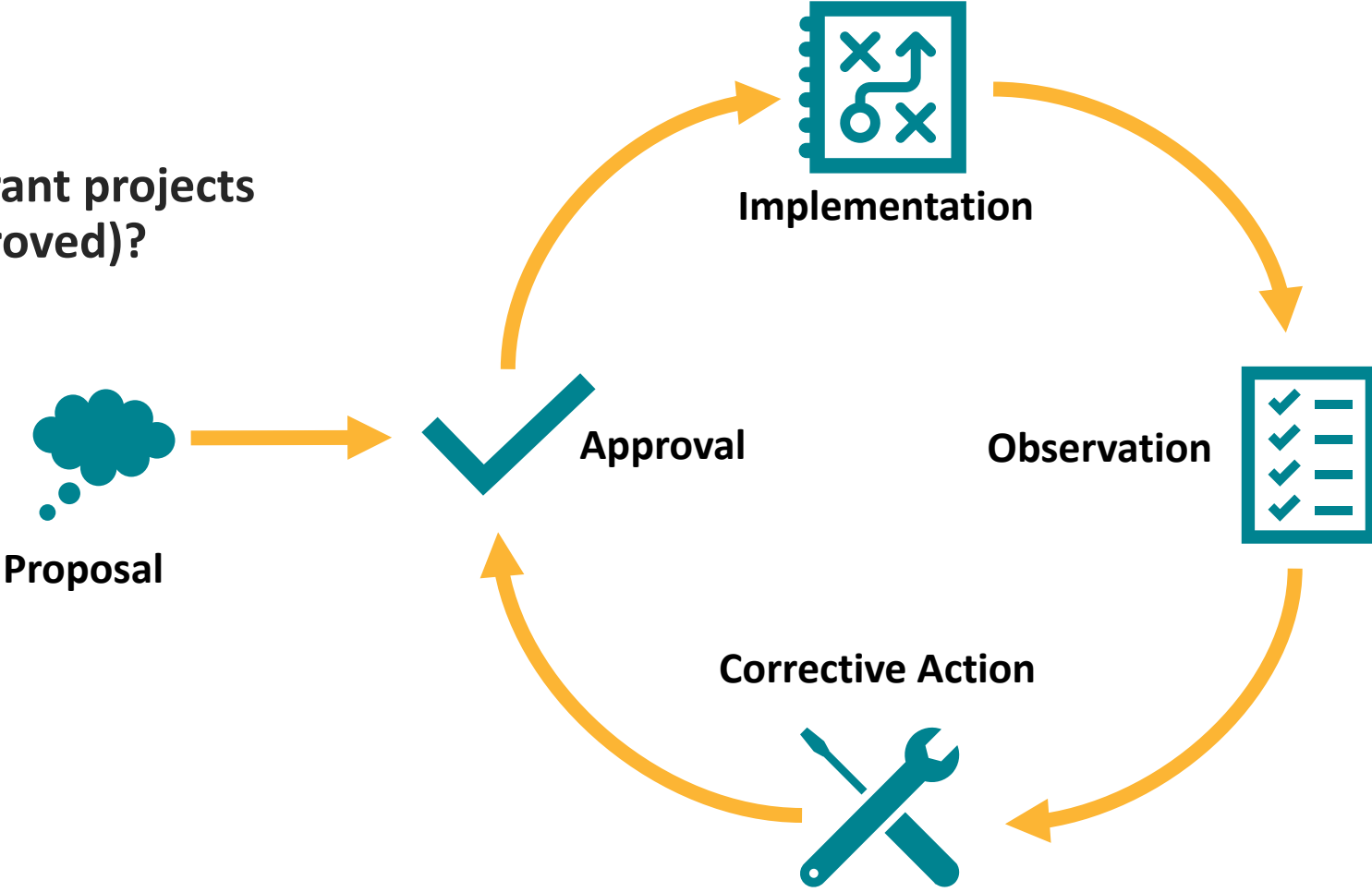
Assist grantees with effective planning and implementation of grant projects

Serve as ED's eyes and ears



Monitoring at a Glance

- Are grantees implementing their grant projects as proposed (or amended and approved)?





What Is Monitoring? Why Me? Why Now?

Why me?

- Each CSP grantee is eligible for a monitoring visit at least once during its project period.
- Grantees designated by ED as high risk may enjoy additional monitoring.
- ED uses a risk assessment to annually determine what subset of grantees will be selected.

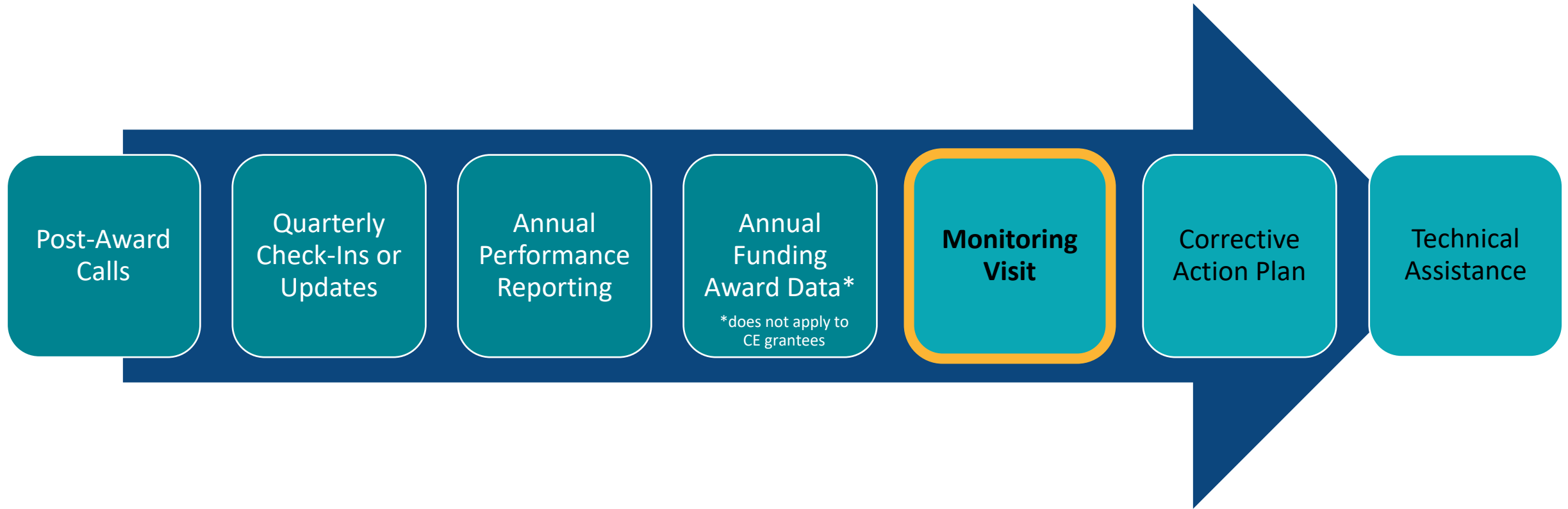
Why now?

- Monitoring typically occurs during the second or third year of a five-year grant.
- CE grantees are typically monitored once every four years.
- Monitoring can occur earlier in a grant or more regularly, if needed.





Where Do Site Visits Fit in Performance Management Efforts?



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What Does Monitoring Cover?

Are grantees implementing their grant projects as proposed (or amended and approved)?

- Each grant has a specific set of indicators.
- Aligned with statute and annual competition announcements
- Aligned with Uniform Guidance and other fiscal regulations
- Links directly to grant applications and CE performance agreements

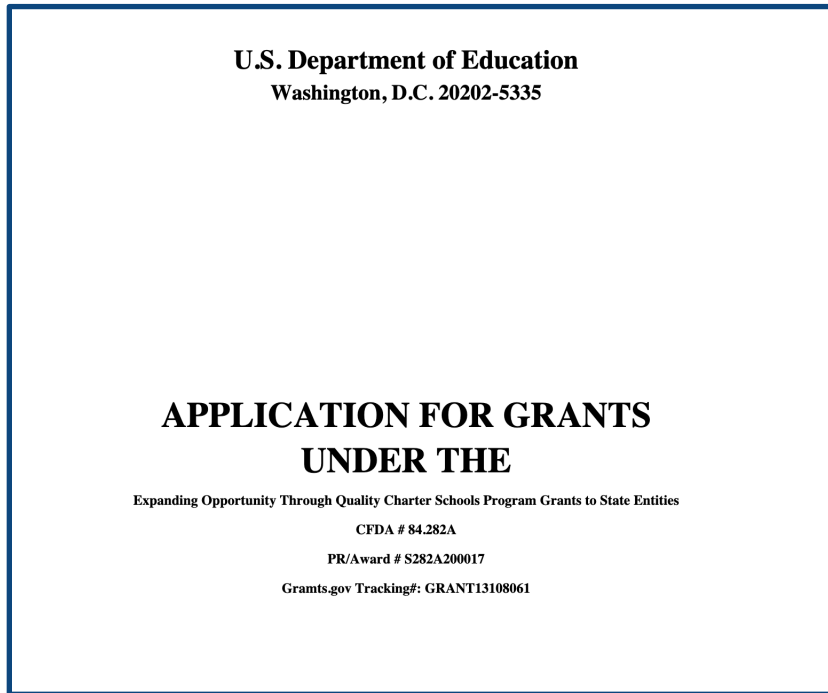
Common areas of interest

- Meets federal definition of a charter school
- Competition priorities
- Lottery and enrollment
- Assisting educationally disadvantaged students/communities in need
- Use of funds
- Fiscal controls
- Grant conditions
- Grant performance





If Nothing Else....



- We cannot overstress the importance of **reading** the approved grant application for monitoring.
- We strongly encourage grantees to regularly review the original application and any waivers or amendments.
- The monitoring team will have explored every nook and cranny of the application.





But Also...

US Department of Education Washington, D.C. 20202		S354A020022							
GRANT AWARD NOTIFICATION									
1 RECIPIENT NAME	Capital Impact Partners 2011 Crystal Dr #750 Arlington, VA 22202	2 AWARD INFORMATION	PRAWARD NUMBER S354A020022 ACTION NUMBER 21 ACTION TYPE Administrative AWARD TYPE Discretionary						
3 PROJECT STAFF	RECIPIENT PROJECT DIRECTOR Will Robison wrobison@capitalimpact.org EDUCATION PROGRAM CONTACT Clifton A. Jones (202) 205-2204 clifton_jones@ed.gov EDUCATION PAYMENT HOTLINE G5 PAYEE HELPDESK 888-336-8930 edcaps_user@ed.gov	4 PROJECT TITLE	S4.354A Charter Schools Capital Access Program						
5 KEY PERSONNEL	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>NAME</th> <th>TITLE</th> <th>LEVEL OF EFFORT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			NAME	TITLE	LEVEL OF EFFORT			
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LAWS & GUIDANCE / ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
Part B — Public Charter Schools

SEC. 5201 | SEC. 5202 | SEC. 5203 | SEC. 5204 | SEC. 5205 | SEC. 5206
SEC. 5207 | SEC. 5208 | SEC. 5209 | SEC. 5210 | SEC. 5211

Subpart 1 — Charter School Programs

SEC. 5201. PURPOSE.
It is the purpose of this subpart to increase national understanding of the charter schools model by —

- (1) providing financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools;
- (2) evaluating the effects of such schools, including the effects on students, student academic achievement, staff, and parents;
- (3) expanding the number of high-quality charter schools available to students across the Nation; and
- (4) encouraging the States to provide support to charter schools for facilities financing in an amount more nearly commensurate to the amount the States have typically provided for traditional public schools.

SEC. 5202. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.
(a) IN GENERAL—The Secretary may award grants to State educational agencies having applications approved pursuant to

- ← • Don't forget your other key resources:
 - The GAN
 - CSP statute, regulations, and guidance
- ← • The monitoring indicators are all based in these documents.



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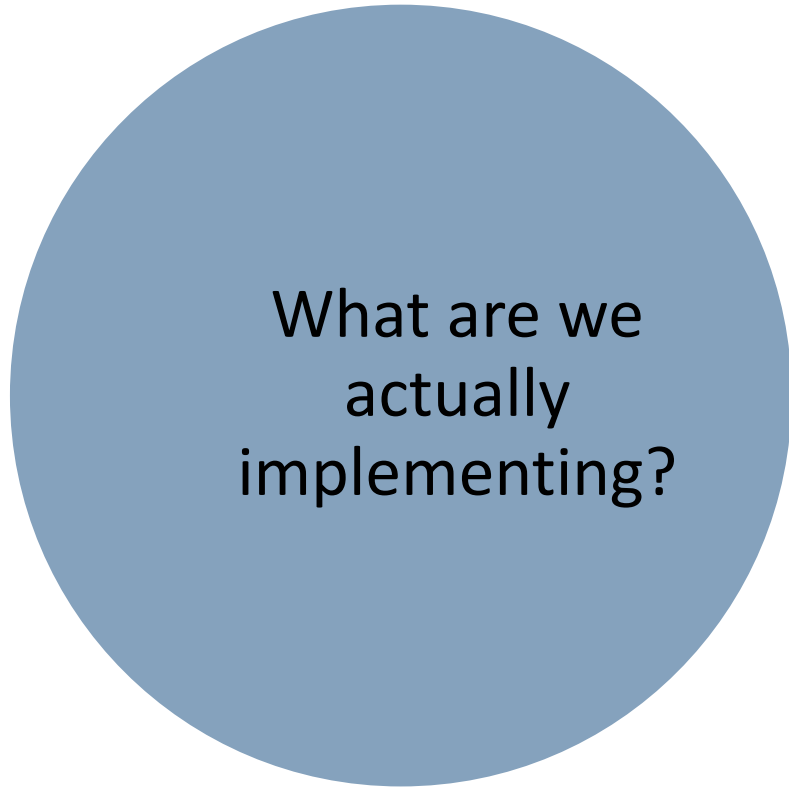


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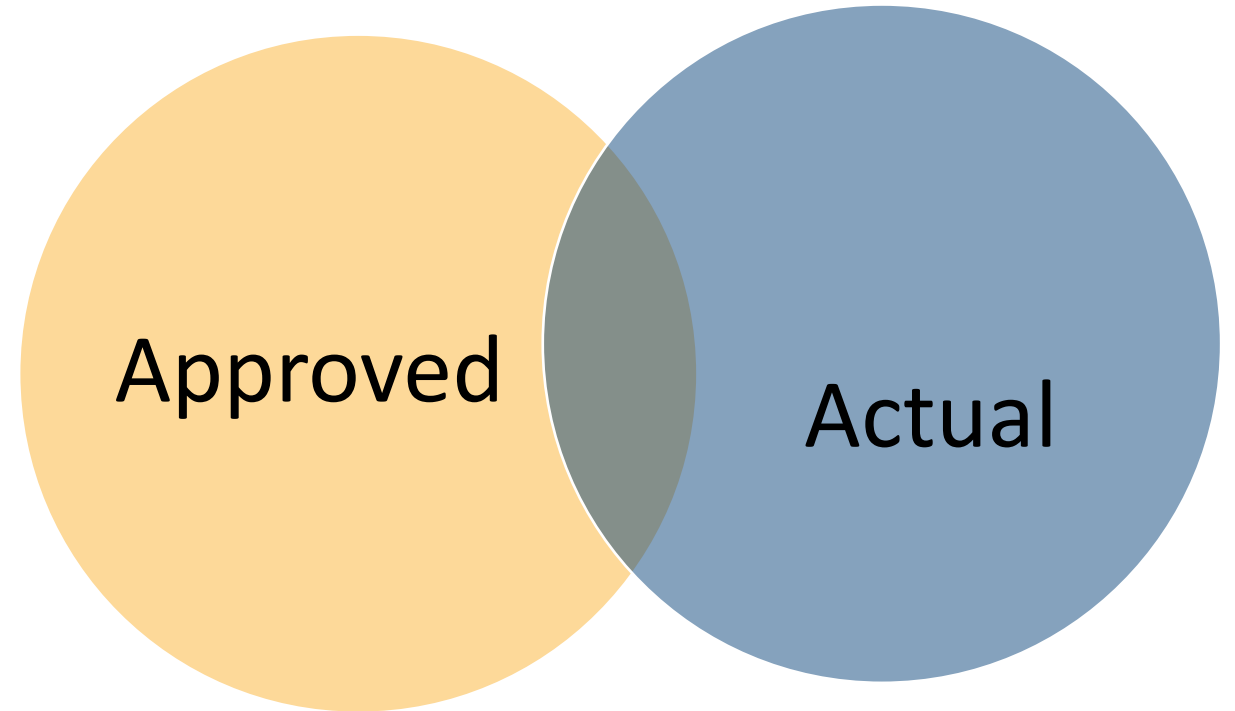
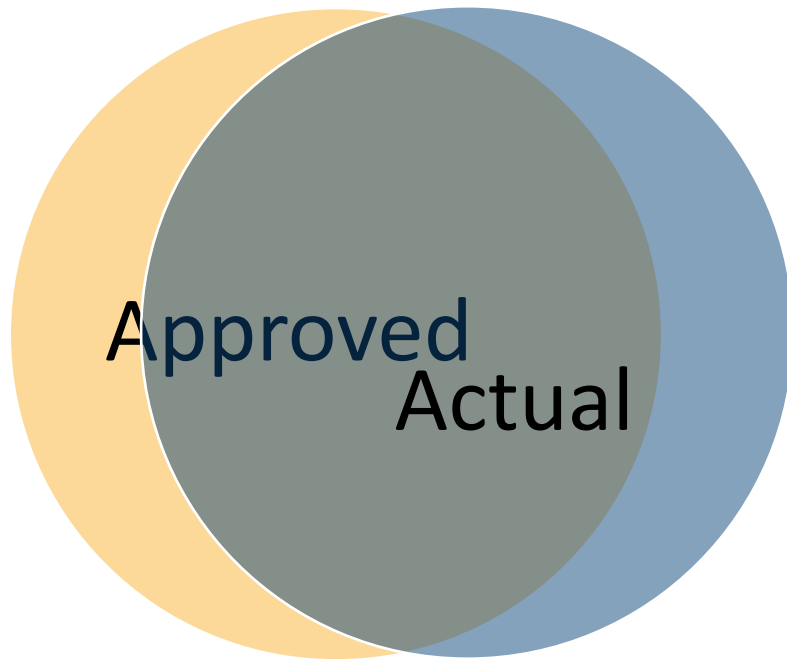


Ask Yourself/Your Team: What Is Your Venn Diagram?





Ask Yourself/Your Team: What Is Your Venn Diagram? Approved vs Actual



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How Can You Best Prepare for Monitoring?

From Day 1...

- Gather your team. Do not proceed alone.
- Read and reread your approved grant application and any amendments or waivers.
- Document conversations and decisions from Program Officers in writing.
- Maintain adequate grant records and files.
- Document key policies and practices in writing (e.g., closure, conflict of interest).

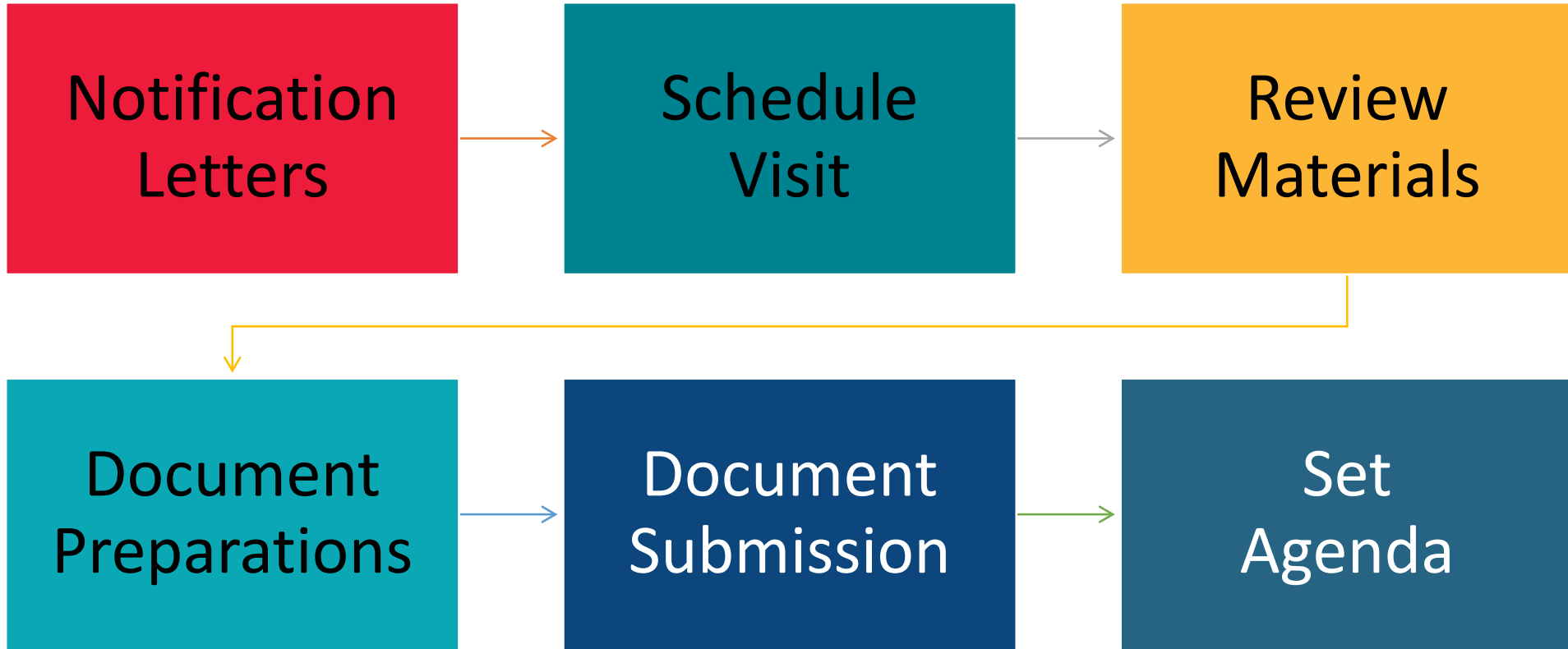
Periodically Ask Yourself...

- **Am I implementing my grant project as proposed (or amended and approved)?**





Preparing for a Monitoring Visit



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Types of Monitoring Visits

- **Multi-site visits** are for grantees that have more than one grant-funded school supported by their grant.
 - For SEs or CMOs, 4-6 grant-funded schools are included (based on risk and geography).
 - Interviews with grant-funded schools typically include the school director, business manager, and governing board members.
 - For CEs, 2-5 schools are included (depending on geography).



- **Single-site visits** are for grantees that have one grant-funded school supported by their grant.



- **Regardless of the number of grant-funded schools, all site visits will be conducted remotely this year.**
 - Interviews will be blocked in 1-3 hour segments or as agreed upon with the grantee.





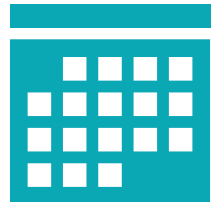
Preparing for a Monitoring Visit – First Steps

Notification Letter

- A notification letter is sent by CSP or by the monitoring contractor on behalf of CSP.
- It details the nature of the visit and available resources.
- It outlines major next steps.

Schedule Visit

- Identify a few viable options.
- Follow up with the contractor as soon as possible to schedule visits.
- **HINT 1:** Putting off a visit doesn't make it easier.
- **HINT 2:** After a visit is scheduled, the contractor will identify which, if any, grant-funded schools will be included in the visit.





Preparing for a Monitoring Visit – Next Steps

Review Materials

- One-on-one pre-visit call
- Monitoring Handbook
 - Every indicator
 - Evaluation criteria
 - Acceptable evidence
- Grantee webinars as available
- **HINT:** Help is available. Don't hesitate to reach out.



Document Preparation

- Collect and share documents that meet acceptable evidence descriptions, including but not limited to
 - Correspondence with Officer(s);
 - Financial documents (budget, expenditures); and
 - Business policies.
- **HINT 1:** These are probably the documents you access on a regular basis.
- **HINT 2:** Don't send EVERYTHING.



Preparing for a Monitoring Visit – Final Steps

Electronic Document Submission

- Organize documents by indicator and section.
- Share them electronically with the monitoring team approximately 4 weeks before the visit.
- **HINT:** There can be too much of a good thing.

Create Agenda

- Template provided by the contractor
- Identify key staff to participate in interviews
 - Project Director attends all grantee interviews
 - Grants management
 - Business manager/back-office provider
 - Governing board
 - School staff (director, teachers, parents)
- Share information with the contractor approximately 4 weeks before the visit.
- **HINT:** Agenda setting can be an iterative process. Starting the process early is helpful.





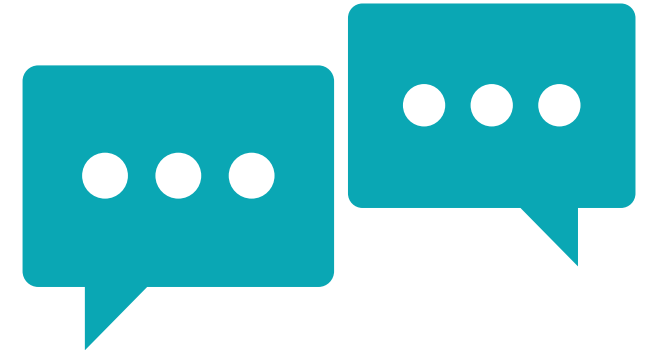
Discussion: Preparing for Monitoring Visits

New Grantees

- What questions do you have about preparing for monitoring?
- What are you most nervous/anxious about preparing for monitoring?

Experienced Grantees

- What preparations have made your visits successful?
- What advice would you share with your colleagues?





What Happens During Monitoring?

Grantee Interviews

- **The central question remains: Are grantees implementing their grant projects as proposed (or amended and approved)?**
- Interviews will hew closely to the indicators in the Monitoring Handbook
- Interviews with Project Director, grants management, business office, data team*

*Specific interviewees will vary depending on grantee

Grant-Funded School Interviews

- Interviews focus on experiences as a grant-funded school, including but not limited to
 - Impacts of the grant/credit enhancement on the school;
 - School performance;
 - Lottery and enrollment practices;
 - Business procedures;
 - Experience applying for funds (if applicable);
 - Specific uses of CSP funds; and
 - Grant monitoring and other oversight or TA by grantee.
- Interviews with principal/director, business manager, teachers (as available), and parents (as available)*



What Happens During Monitoring? Follow-Up

Follow-Up Questions

- Monitors debrief regularly during the site visit.
- Monitors may ask follow-up questions on the previous interviews' content.

- **HINT:** Be prepared to revisit some content.



Additional Document Requests

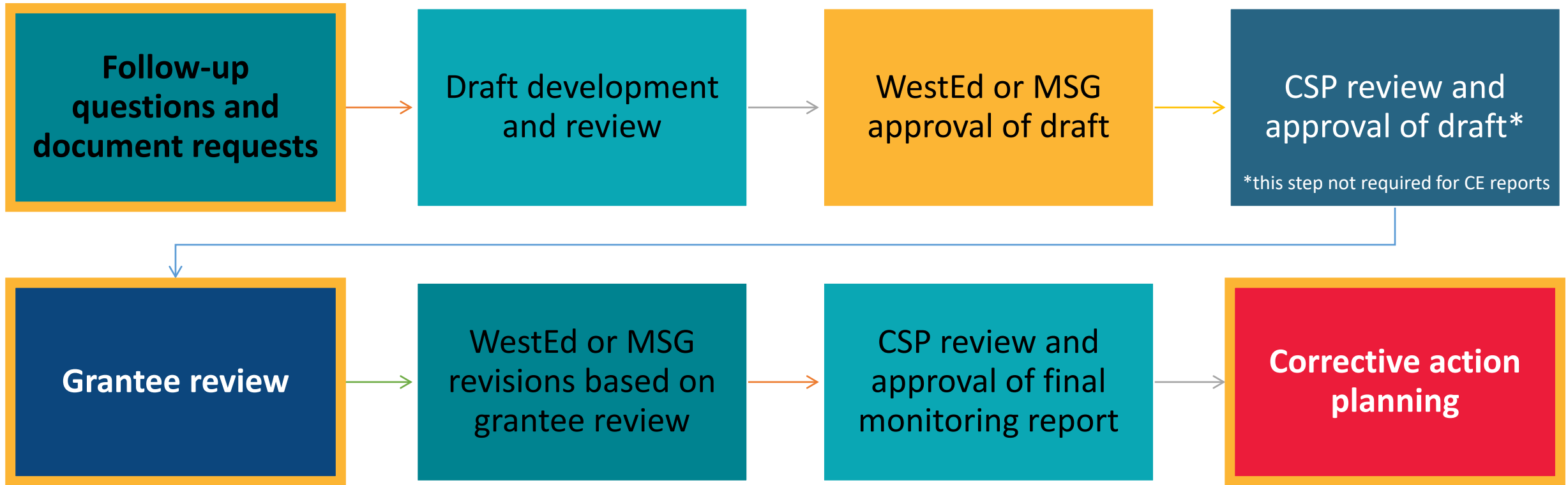
- Monitors may ask for additional documentation throughout the interviews.

- **HINT:** Create a new subfolder in the previously shared documents folder for “Site Visit” or “Follow-Up Requests.”





What Happens After Monitoring?





Breakout Room Discussions – 10 Minutes

New Grantees

- What questions do you have about the monitoring and reporting process?
- What makes you most nervous/anxious about the visits or reports?

Experienced Grantees

- What aspects of the site visits and reporting process surprised you?
- What aspects of the site visits and reporting have challenged you?
- What advice would you share with your colleagues?





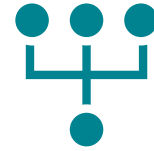
Key Takeaways



Don't go it alone.



Get familiar with your grant application and requirements.



Codify grant project changes and get CSP approval.



Ask questions. Help is available.



Be prepared.



Have More Questions?

Upcoming Webinars:

Common Monitoring Findings and How to Avoid Them for CMO/Developer Grantees

Wednesday, April 21 @ 2 p.m. ET/11 a.m. PT

Common Monitoring Findings and How to Avoid Them for SE Grantees

Wednesday, April 28 @ 2 p.m. ET/11 a.m. PT



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One Last Request...

Please take our survey to let us know how we did.





Next Steps

- Optional Breakout Sessions for 2021's lucky winners to discuss specific preparation questions, etc.
 - SE, Developer, and CMO grantees meet with WestEd staff
 - Notification letters have been sent to 48 identified grantees
 - CE grantees meet with MSG staff
 - Civic Builders
 - Community Loan Fund of New Jersey
 - IFF
 - Local Initiatives Support Corporation
 - Raza Development Fund
 - Reinvestment Fund

