

# Partner Plan Act Collaboration Institute Information for *Request for Supports*

## **BACKGROUND**



Illinois Action for Children (IAC) operates a system of statewide supports to assist community collaborations improving local early childhood systems. Known as Community Systems Statewide Supports (CS3), the supports are funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and will ensure that communities are working to help every young child – regardless of race, ethnicity, income, language, geography, ability, immigration status, or other circumstance – receive the strongest possible start to life so that they grow up safe, healthy, happy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

CS3 increases Illinois' system-building capacity through a comprehensive training and technical assistance approach. We support early childhood systems-building at the state, regional, and local levels by building the capacity of a broad base of system actors to understand, practice, and support system-building efforts as they address targeted local early childhood problems.

We invite all existing and emerging early childhood collaborations in Illinois that wish to receive in-depth support to strengthen their collaborations to complete the Request for Supports for the Collaboration Institute.

## **THE COLLABORATION INSTITUTE FRAMEWORK**

Collaboration teams that are accepted to the Collaboration Institute form a yearlong cohort. Teams receive 24 hours of virtual coaching and technical assistance over twelve months, usually in the form of two hours of monthly coaching. They also receive: 1) an orientation/kick-off event; 2) an equity training; 3) access to an online peer learning community; 4) access to on-demand online modules and webinars; 5) access to foundational trainings; 6) virtual end-of-year celebration; and 6) the Partner Plan Act conference.

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| <br><b>Coaching Supports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kickoff</li><li>• Monthly coaching sessions</li><li>• Equity Training</li><li>• Resources and tools to support team goals</li><li>• Focus on building capacity</li><li>• End-of-Year Celebration</li></ul> | <br><b>Optional Foundational Supports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On-demand learning modules</li><li>• Trainings and workshops</li><li>• Webinars</li><li>• Online Peer Learning Community</li><li>• Annual Partner Plan Act conference</li></ul> |
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Collaborations are welcome to join the institute with an issue, strategy, or project in mind and will receive monthly individualized coaching to support the team in meeting its goal(s). Collaborations that are newly-established and/or do not yet have an issue, strategy, or project in mind are strongly encouraged to apply to explore their needs and goals with a coach.

### **GOALS OF CS3**

#### **Community Systems Statewide Supports' Goals:**

1. Increase collaborations' understanding and use of common systems-change tools in order to build the capacity of existing early childhood collaborations and support the efforts of communities working to develop new early childhood collaborations
2. Increase quality training and technical assistance for systems-change within Illinois
3. Legitimize, define, and build the capacity of collaboration leaders

### **EXPECTATIONS OF COLLABORATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE INSTITUTE**

- **A Committed Collaboration Team** - As Institute participants, collaborations will select a team of 3-5 individuals who will be expected to apply the concepts, tools, and methods they have discovered or learned through coaching in order to meet their goals. Collaboration efforts should align with the State's vision of early childhood collaborations and goal of ensuring that every young child receives what they need to grow up safe, healthy, happy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.
- **Buy-in and Communication** - Participating collaboration teams should have the full support of their greater collaboration and will be responsible for sharing learned concepts, tools, and methods with all collaboration members. Moreover, individual team members should have the full support of their respective supervisors.
- **Participation in Evaluation Process** - Evaluation and action learning are an important part of the Collaboration Institute. The CS3 team wants to ensure that progress is being made toward both collaboration team outcomes (see below) and the CS3 team goals (see above). Teams will be asked to participate in an evaluation process which may include surveys, interviews, and quarterly reports throughout the year as part of CS3's quality improvement process.

#### **Collaboration Teams' Outcomes:**

1. Increase capacity for systems change leadership at the local level
2. Build an effective governance structure
3. Create systems-level change that improves the lives of young children and their families

Acknowledging that collaboration members have a full workload, the design and execution of these cohorts is intended to be as practical as possible, while still providing tools for systems-level

change. Knowing that participation will place additional demands on collaboration team members' time, we want to clearly state expectations for your involvement and the benefits we aim for you to receive.

| <b>Community collaboration teams will...</b>   |  |
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| <b>Be expected to:</b>   | <b>Benefits:</b>   |
| Engage in monthly coaching   | <i>Learn concepts, tools, and methods to support systems-change/development work</i>                     |
| Be flexible and adaptive as we engage in an action learning process with the cohort                | <i>Identify and meet the collaboration's goals</i>   |
| Examine equity and authentic engagement of families in collaboration's communities                 | <i>Increase awareness and action related to equity and family engagement</i>                             |
| Apply concepts, tools, and strategies to deepen local systems-building/change work                 | <i>Enhance your systems change efforts and impact</i>  |
| Work collaboratively with CS3 Trainer/Coaches and other specialized consultants                    | <i>Gain individualized support tailored to your team and community</i>                                   |
| Participate in the evaluation process which may include surveys, interviews, and quarterly reports | <i>Contribute to the continuous improvement of the CS3 project</i>                                       |
| Attend all required events with the entire 3–5-person team   | <i>Build the capacity of the entire team to better promote and embed practices within collaborations</i> |

### **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE**

| <b>Date</b>                             | <b>Topic</b>                                 |
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| <b>July 22, 2026</b> (virtual)          | Cohort 9 Kick-Off (Orientation)              |
| <b>August – September 2026</b>          | Coaching<br>Online Peer Learning Communities |
| <b>October 6 and 20, 2026</b> (virtual) | Two-part Equity Training                     |
| <b>October 2026 – June 2027</b>         | Coaching<br>Online Peer Learning Communities |
| <b>Date TBD</b>                         | Partner Plan Act Conference                  |
| <b>June 16, 2027</b>                    | End-of-Year Celebration                      |

### **APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE**

The questions on the *Request for Supports* are meant to give the CS3 team a sense of your collaboration's capacity, willingness, and readiness to engage in systems-change work. Please reflect deeply as you respond to the open-ended questions.

All collaborations planning to submit a *Request for Supports* must first complete a consultation call with Ruby Flores, CS3 Training and Coaching Manager, before submitting. This is to ensure that collaborations have a clear understanding of all benefits and expectations of participating in the Collaboration Institute prior to completing a *Request for Supports*. Please contact Ruby at [floresr@actforchildren.org](mailto:floresr@actforchildren.org) well before the submission deadline to arrange a consultation call at which all collaboration team members must be present. If your collaboration is seeking to continue with Cohort 9 directly from Cohort 8, you may complete the consultation call with your current coach. A *Request for Supports* submitted without conducting a consultation call will not be accepted.

The *Request for Supports* is comprehensive. It should be completed with collaboration members and submitted by the collaboration leader; it must be received by Ruby Flores no later than 5:00pm on **June 12, 2026** at [floresr@actforchildren.org](mailto:floresr@actforchildren.org). Collaborations will be notified of the results by **June 19, 2026**.

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| <p><b>QUESTIONS?</b> If you have questions please contact Ruby Flores, CS3 Training and Coaching Manager at Illinois Action for Children at <a href="mailto:floresr@actforchildren.org">floresr@actforchildren.org</a>.</p> |
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