



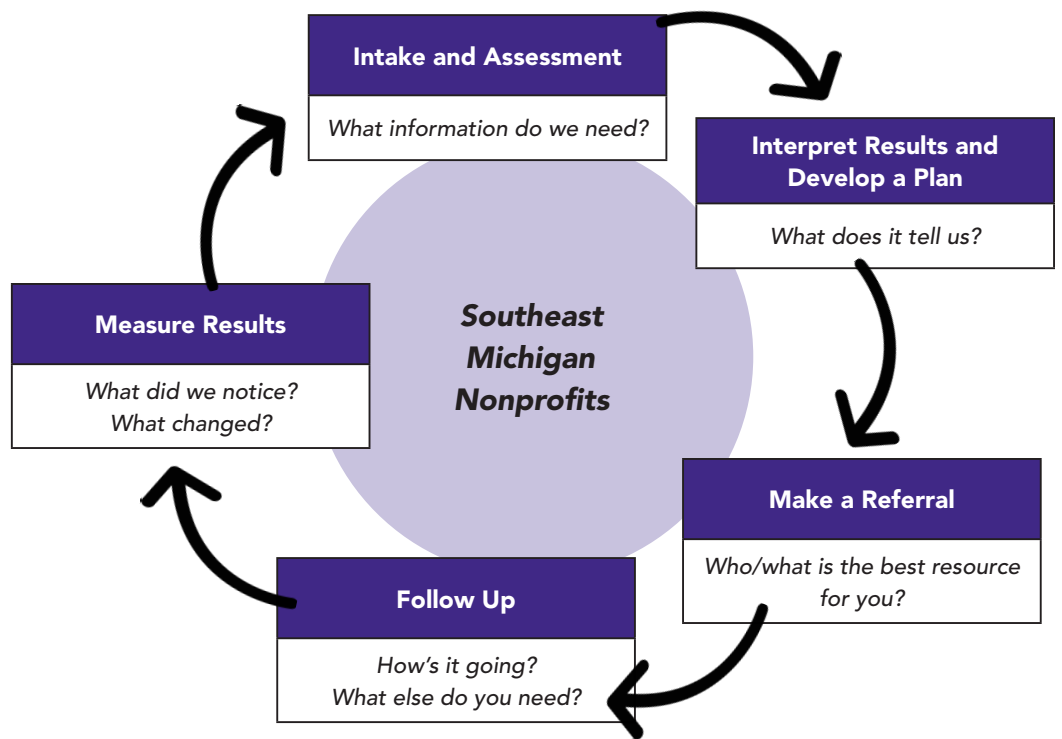
MCR staff at a Co.act event in 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF CO.ACT DETROIT.

Our process for TA continuously asks the questions, "What's next?" and "What's changed?" for the nonprofit organization. Our model is grounded in listening to and learning from nonprofit organizations, working with them as partners to identify needs and goals, formulate action plans, connect them to relevant resources, and measure progress towards success.

Though more resource- and time-intensive, effective TA provides more customized, relevant support to address organizational needs. As organizations' needs are met and their internal functioning is strengthened, they are better equipped to contribute to network capacity for social change.

Later in the chapter, a series of case studies will illustrate how TA and other capacity building interventions have been put into practice by partners of the Collaborative.

**FIGURE 2.**  
**Technical Assistance Process<sup>6</sup>**



**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STANDARDS OF PRACTICE**

While our approach to TA is not new, it is guided by key standards of practice:

**Effective Communication**

TA providers and nonprofits should communicate early and often to establish and maintain clarity about goals for the TA engagement.

**Mutual Learning**

TA providers and nonprofit leaders both possess expertise. Respect and value for the knowledge and experience of both the service provider and the nonprofit should be reflected in the TA engagement. TA should be offered in such a way that mutual learning can occur to inform both the service provider and the nonprofit.

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from a graphic created by Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW)

**FIGURE 3. Technical Assistance Process<sup>7</sup>**



### Co-creation

TA providers should work collaboratively with nonprofits to determine the scope of the TA engagement. TA providers should not prescribe goals or action plans for nonprofit organizations. This can include working together to identify and prioritize areas of need, identifying goals, and/or plans for connecting nonprofits to additional service providers to address those needs.

### Independence and Choice

Nonprofits should have autonomy in working with consultants. In a TA engagement, the nonprofit organization should have the freedom to choose its consultant, which helps foster trust and accountability.

### Strength-Based

TA providers need to recognize, engage, and build upon nonprofits' strengths through the TA engagement.

### Customized

TA providers must recognize that organizations may require different tools and approaches based on the lifecycle of the organization, the cultural context in which they operate, or other factors. They should not deliver services based on a "one-size-fits-all" model. In short, they should recognize the value of meeting nonprofit organizations where they are.

### Outcomes-Driven

TA providers need to work with nonprofit organizations to identify desired outcomes and progress measures, and to track improvements. TA providers should not prescribe what success looks like for nonprofit organizations.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AT CO.ACT DETROIT

As a hub for nonprofit support that will be working with a pool of TA providers (as well as other capacity building providers), Co.act will need to define standards of practice with its network of providers. We believe that the standards above are a great place to start.

Co.act's network of providers will also need to outline and systematize a shared TA process flow. A sample TA process flow for the center is shared in Figure 3 above.

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from a graphic created by Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW)