



Sharing Ideas and Resources Across the Network: Guidelines

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One of our network's most valuable assets is the combined knowledge and expertise of colleagues serving in state deaf blind projects. The NCDB website, including the State Project Portal, provides members of the OSEP-funded deaf-blind community with access to online tools to share ideas, strategies, and materials. When we share knowledge, we enrich our abilities and build stronger national supports for children who are deaf-blind. The information on this page is meant to offer guidance on how and where to share your ideas and resources.

Why We Share

- To provide practical information
- To identify resources of value for other project staff
- To move specialized knowledge to common knowledge
- To gain insight and apply best practices throughout the network
- To increase coordination and reduce duplication
- To demonstrate that state needs are national needs
- To improve equity of services received by children and families
- To access colleagues' knowledge and experience

Where to Share

There are ever-increasing ways to exchange information, both within the network and on external platforms (e.g., Listserv, Facebook).

The **State Project Portal** is a private group for state project staff. Conversations and resources in the portal address needs related to technical assistance and project management. If you have strategies or materials that work for your project, it is likely that others across the network will find them valuable too. Posting questions, fostering conversations, and sharing materials can inform TA activities and strengthen state and national efforts.

National initiative group pages are public spaces on the NCDB website. Conversations, information, and resources in these groups specifically address work related to implementing initiatives. The online tools available in the State Project Portal are also available in the national initiative group spaces.

Sharing Ideas

Forums are the center of communication within groups. Use them to share current information about projects or initiatives, offer strategies, or pose questions or concerns to other group members.

Sharing Materials

The **Materials** tool within the State Project Portal or initiative groups provides space for projects to share and organize resources. It provides for uploading files to share your project's good works.

Wikis allow users within a group to collaboratively develop information. A wiki creates a web page where members can create, edit, or organize content. The wiki editor allows users to add images, videos, links, files, tables, and formatting options. Saved edits to wiki content are immediate and can be viewed in your browser. The [wikis](#) section under site "Help" provides instructions and examples.

When using Materials or Wikis consider the following recommendations:

Authority: When you share a resource, make sure you include the title, author or project name, and date. Other users need this information to credit the resource accurately. Create a clear title for your item when you upload it.

Annotate: Use the description box to provide information about the content. Include the intended use for the resource and indicate any restrictions regarding its use and whether other projects are free to adapt it. A simple statement such as *State deaf-blind projects have permission to adapt this tool for use by their own projects*, works well. If you have a suggested or preferred citation for how to credit the resource, include that too.

Crediting: If you incorporate, use, or distribute materials created by others, remember to give them credit. It is important to cite the name of the author or project when you use or adapt their work. For example, *Adapted with permission from [document name, state deaf-blind project name, date (if available)]*.

Public Domain: Don't assume that products created by state projects are exempt from copyright restrictions. State and network products are not automatically in the public domain. Even those produced using federal dollars with an educational purpose may still be covered by copyright. When you share a product indicate any use considerations, acknowledge authorship, and maintain the product's integrity. If you use portions of a tool or product, make sure you credit that information appropriately.

Creative Commons: Products licensed under Creative Commons are not subject to copyright law, but have legal considerations under their license. Sharing and adapting the material is allowed if you follow the license terms and credit the creator.

Materials with a Copyright: Many forms of published work are protected under copyright law. Journal articles that discuss strategies, innovations, or practices are the most likely type of copyright protected material that users will want to share across our network. It's not unusual to have copies of journal articles for individual use. This falls under fair use considerations (see below). Distribution for multiple use without permission is where copyright considerations typically apply. In general, avoid posting copyrighted material.

Fair Use: Fair use refers to the section of the Copyright Act that specifies instances in which copyrighted materials can be used without permission. In our network, using materials for educational purposes is covered by fair use.

Copyright and fair use considerations are explained in greater detail by the [Copyright Information Center](#) at the University of Chicago. This site provides clear explanations of important issues and concepts and has a checklist for determining fair use.

Video and Photos: Copyright considerations also apply to videos and photos, especially if they are commercial productions. If you share project or network products that include video or digital images, make sure that permission has been granted for the use of those assets beyond your project.

Accessibility

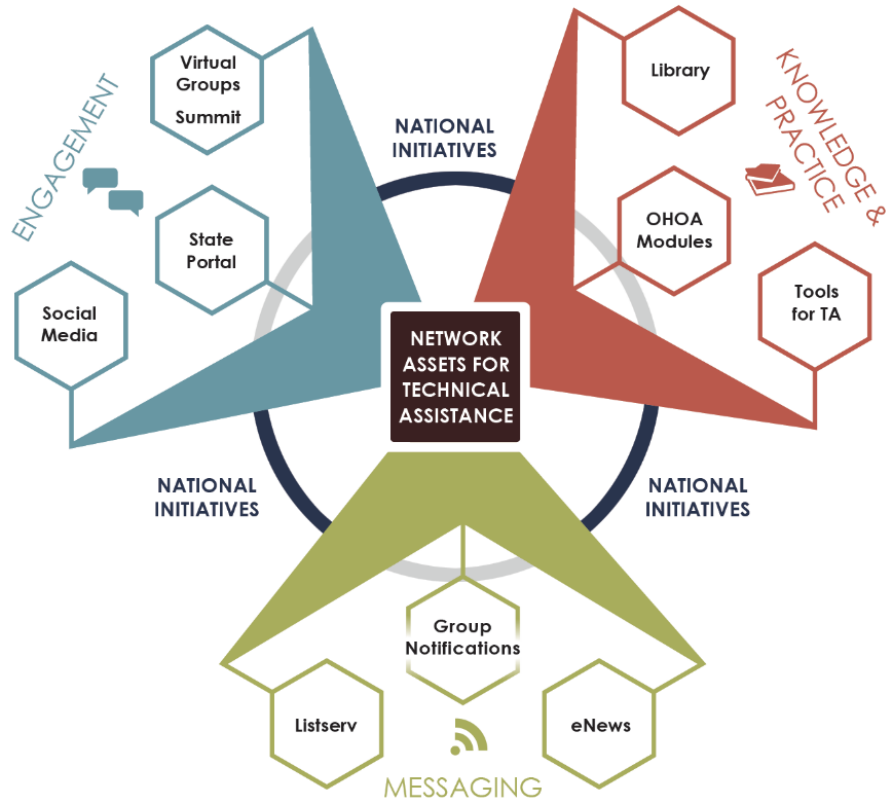
It is important to consider the accessibility of digital information and products. Together we are moving toward a deeper understanding of standards of accessibility and the role that upfront design considerations play in creating materials that are universally useable.

Documents: Accessible documents paired with assistive technology help ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to information. The [Quick Reference Card: Create Accessible Word Documents](#) site outlines necessary considerations.

PowerPoint Presentations: Many of the concepts that apply to Microsoft Word also apply to PowerPoint. Due to the presentation nature of PowerPoint files, there are additional guidelines to keep in mind. The site, [Make Your PowerPoint Presentations Accessible](#), provides a quick reference to creating accessible PowerPoint presentations.

If you have questions about any of the information presented in this document, contact Gail Leslie (leslieg@wou.edu).

This image provides a visual representation of how the tools we use to access knowledge and share ideas form the foundation for our collaborative national technical assistance work.



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