# Developing a Shared Process Measure for Implementation Projects in Child Welfare

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# Acknowledgments


- Truly a collaborative effort!
- Additional contributors to development of the measure include:
  - Sarah Kaye, Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center
  - Julie Morales, Mountains and Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center
  - David Lambert, Northeast and Caribbean Implementation Center
  - Jeff Chambers and Ryan Spohn, Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center

# Workshop Objectives and Format

- Describe our experiences assessing the process of implementation in systems change
  - Foundation and background of the ICs and measurement tool
  - How and why we expanded established implementation frameworks to apply to child welfare
  - Our plans for measurement consistency, common language, and assessment
  - How the measure is integrated with other instruments and sources to inform implementation; project examples

# The Context: Measuring Implementation

# Child Welfare Implementation Centers

- Funded by Children's Bureau in 2008 to provide States and Territories, Tribes, and Tribal Consortia individualized training and technical assistance (T/TA) to:
  - Improve child welfare administration and practice
  - Support program improvement and implement effective programs
  - Pursue sustainable and positive systems change
  - Improve outcomes for children, youth & families

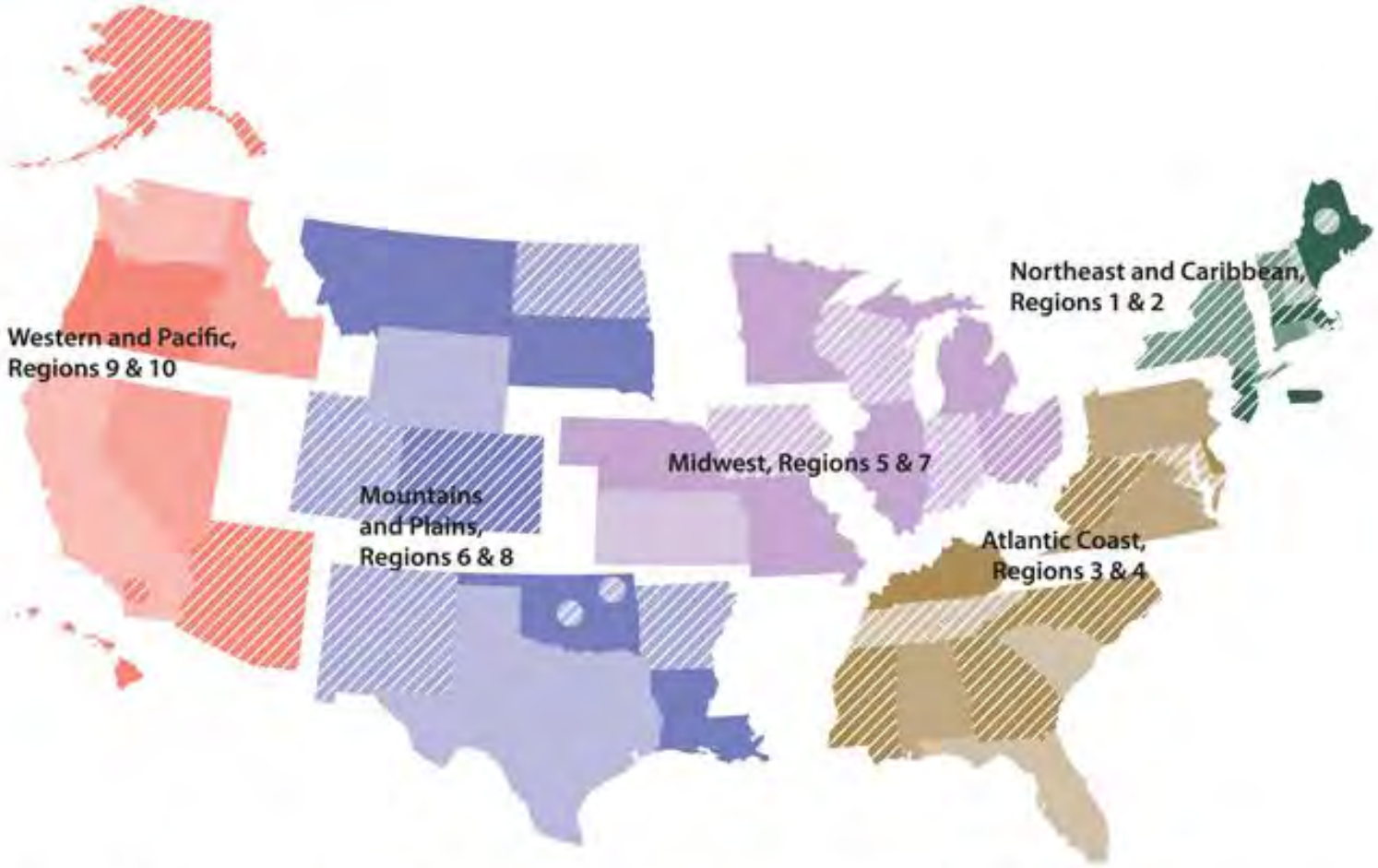
# Implementation Centers: Filling the Gap

- States and Tribes are sometimes without the resources necessary to implement comprehensive strategic plans
- Implementation Centers provide in-depth and long-term consultation and technical assistance to States and Tribes
- Provide peer networking opportunities for states and tribes in defined service regions
- Also charged with evaluation of implementation projects

# Who are the Implementation Centers?

| Implementation Center | Organization |
|---|---|
| Northeast & Caribbean Implementation Center (NCIC) | University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service |
| Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC) | University of Maryland School of Social Work, Ruth H. Young Center for Families & Children |
| Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center (MCWIC) | University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center on Children, Families & the Law |
| Mountains & Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center (MPCWIC) | University of Texas at Arlington, Center for Child Welfare partnering with the University of Denver, Butler Institute and The Native American Training Institute (NATI) |
| Western & Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (WPIC) | American Institutes for Research, partnering with National Indian Child Welfare Association, Center for the Study of Social Policy, National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at Georgetown University, and the Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida |

# Geographic Assignments and Projects




**Diagonal lines indicate States/Tribes/Counties where implementation projects are being conducted.*

# Examples of Systems Change Projects

- Statewide Practice Model
- Centralized Intake System
- Data management systems
- Culturally-responsive foster parent training model
- Disproportionality reduction
- Youth engagement model

# Context

- Opportunity:
  - 25 systems change projects in public child welfare agencies, including tribal child welfare
  - Dedicated resources to evaluate *implementation* as well as *interventions*
- Challenges:
  - Variation in systems, outcomes, interventions, scope, size
  - Different conceptual orientations about implementation
  - Different methodologies for collecting process data
- Charge:
  - Utilize common measures across implementation projects

# Other Important Implementation Project and Intervention Differences

- Scope: statewide, regional or local
- Some projects are really several projects:
  - Example: MCWIC's Partners for Ohio's Families Project
- Some interventions are evidence-based; some are not
- The purpose of some projects is change at the *system* level rather than the *program or practice* level
  - Example: WPIC's Alaska Native Disproportionality Reduction Project

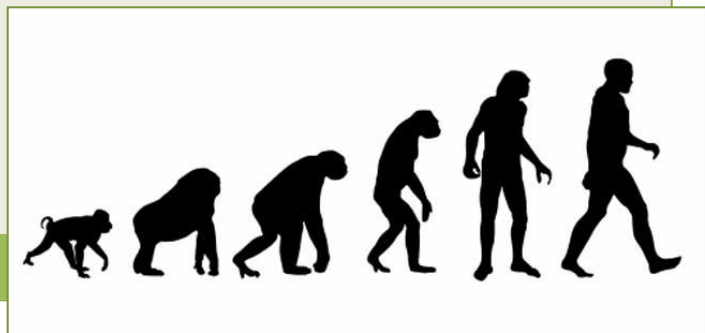
# What do we hope to accomplish?

- Describe the timing, sequence and duration of implementation efforts of systems change in jurisdictions across the country
- Compare patterns of implementation strategies by systems, intended outcome, intervention, size, and/or scope
- Develop theories of what it takes to successfully implement systems reforms in child welfare

# Expanding the Framework

# Evolution of the Implementation Process Measure

- Organized around our unifying NIRN+ framework
  - Implementation processes described within drivers
  - Key activities are assessed across stages
- Completed by evaluators every 6 months
- Automated into a Qualtrics data collection system that all evaluators can access



# Drivers vs. Stages in Project Implementation

- NIRN's implementation *drivers* provide a framework for organizing implementation projects that is:
  - Comprehensive
  - Integrated
  - Compensatory

# Drivers vs. Stages in Project Implementation

- Evaluating the progress of IC projects as organized by the NIRN *drivers* has proven effective
  - We find that it puts state/tribal staff, project managers, evaluators, and directors "on the same page"
  - Salience rating (i.e., importance/relevance)
  - Installation rating

# Drivers vs. Stages in Project Implementation

- NIRN's implementation *stages* reflect the functional steps of implementing a system-change intervention
  - NIRN Stages: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, Full Implementation, Innovation
  - However, implementation is a process
  - Not always linear in practice

# Drivers vs. Stages in Project Implementation

- We found that evaluating the progress of IC projects as organized by the NIRN *stages* can be frustrating
  - Projects are diverse both within and across ICs
  - Non-linear movement difficult to operationalize

# Drivers vs. Stages in Project Implementation

- Capturing the intersection of drivers and stages would require a process measure too complex to produce data at a comparable level of analysis across projects
  - Thus, our process measure focuses on drivers
  - An overall assessment is made regarding project stage
  - Resulting data reflects activities by driver and stage as they are occurring in practice

# Implementation Drivers

- Leadership
- Staff Selection
- Training
- Coaching
- Performance Appraisal
- Facilitative Administration
- Systems Intervention
- Decision Support Data Systems

# Additions/Alterations to Stages and Drivers

- Alterations to Drivers
  - Addition of shared vision, values and mission; stakeholder engagement; and cultural responsiveness (central to WPIC theory of change)
- Alterations to Stages
  - Inclusion of a *design/installation* stage
  - Elimination of *innovation* as a stage

# Assessing an Intervention versus System Change

- Differences speak to the challenges and opportunities of applying an existing framework to the dynamic task of child welfare systems change

# Description of the Measurement Tool

## Section I

- Project Demographics
  - Nature of the project, scope, duration, focus of the change (system-wide, supervisors, middle management)
- Implementation Stage (Exploration, Installation, etc)
  - At proposal
  - Every 6 months
  - End goal
- Administration Methods
  - E.g. Single interview, group rating, document review

# Description Part 2
# Ratings of Implementation Drivers

**Rates the Salience (Importance/Relevance) of 11 Implementation Drivers on a 3-point scale:**

(1) ***Low*** – the driver had little or no importance/relevance during this period

(2) ***Moderate*** – the driver had some importance/relevance during this period, or there was discussion or planning to address this driver in the future

(3) ***High*** – the driver had substantial importance/relevance during this reporting and a significant amount of effort occurred to leverage the driver to support implementation

# Description Part 3
# Degree of Driver Installation

**Rates the Installation of 11 Implementation Drivers on a 4-point scale:**

(0) *NA for drivers with low salience* during this reporting period,

(1) *Not Yet Initiated*,

(2) *Initiated or Partially in Place*, or

(3) *Fully In Place*.

Detailed notes are taken and **specific implementation activities** are further rated using the scale above

# Measurement Analyses/Fidelity

# Measurement Analyses

- Early stage of conceptualizing methods for exploring the reliability and validity of the process measure
  - Focus on face validity – identifying the correct constructs
  - Focus on inter-rater reliability – defining methods for increasing consistency of coding (within and across ICs)
- The low N – may prohibit typical methods for validating the process measure – IC evaluator group will continue to consider methods to increase relevance and consistency of coded items

# Measurement Analyses- Process of Implementation

- Individual evaluations of implementation projects have considered specific research methods for measuring the process of implementation at different stages of implementation.
- Examples:
  - Needs assessments
  - Readiness assessments
  - Organizational climate assessments
  - Service gap analyses
  - Fidelity assessments (when the “intervention” or “system change” is sufficiently delineated).

# Utility and Results from 2 Sites

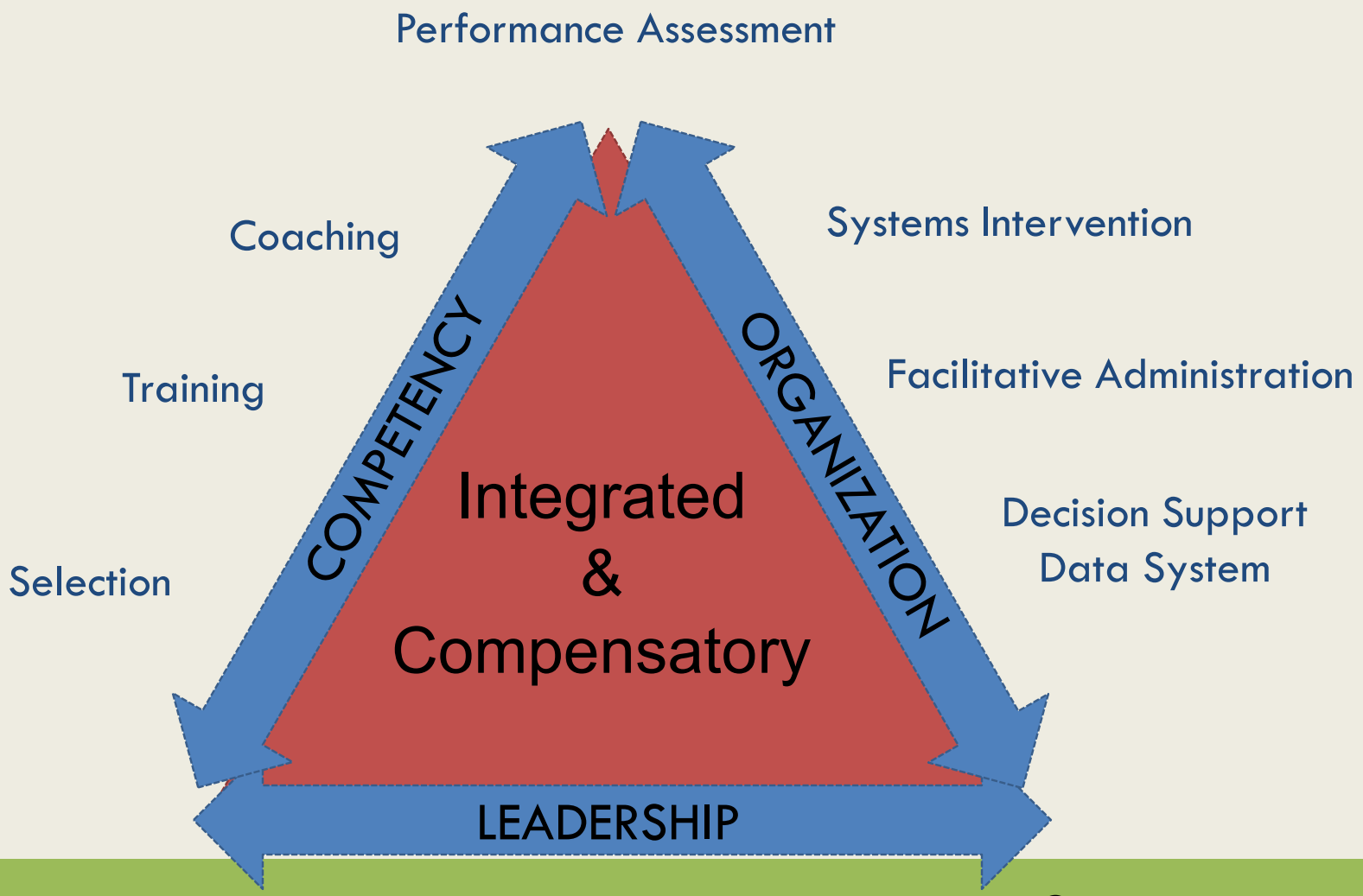
**PROJECT 1**

**ACCWIC – WV IMPLEMENTATION OF A SAFETY MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION**

# ACCWIC: WV Implementation of SAMS

- State-wide implementation of a well specified, systematic continuum of safety assessment, and intervention decision-making from receipt of referral to case closure.
- Leadership teams use the NIRN drivers to plan & implement activities to support the implementation process

# National Implementation Research Network: Implementation Drivers

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# ACCWIC's Integrated Evaluation Framework

- Supporting implementation
  - Individually tailored
  - Collaboratively defined
  - Shared in a continuous feedback loop
- Building capacity
  - Organizational Assessment
  - Staff, Consumer, Stakeholder Feedback
  - Monitoring and Quality Assurance
  - Performance (fidelity) and Outcomes Measurement

# Stage-Based Evaluation Activities

West Virginia

| Stage of Implementation | Purpose of Evaluation |
|---|---|
| Exploration | Inform intervention development |
| Installation | Inform implementation strategy |
| Initial Implementation | Test implementation strategies<br>Monitor fidelity |
| Full Operation | Test intervention model |
| Innovation | Refine model |
| Sustainability | Maintain performance |

# Project 2
# Mountains and Plains (MPCWIC)

## MPCWIC's Evaluation Overview

2009-2010

**Phase I: Process**

Organizational Readiness at Project Level

Perceptions of Workgroup Functioning

Satisfaction with IC Process and Assistance

2010-2011

**Phase II: Process and Baseline Outcomes**

All of Phase I +

Agency Readiness and Current Practices in Implementation Zones

Training baselines

Knowledge and uptake of Implementation Science/Strategies

2011-2012

**Phase II: Process and Outcomes**

All of Phases I & II +

Fidelity of specific practices (case study agencies)

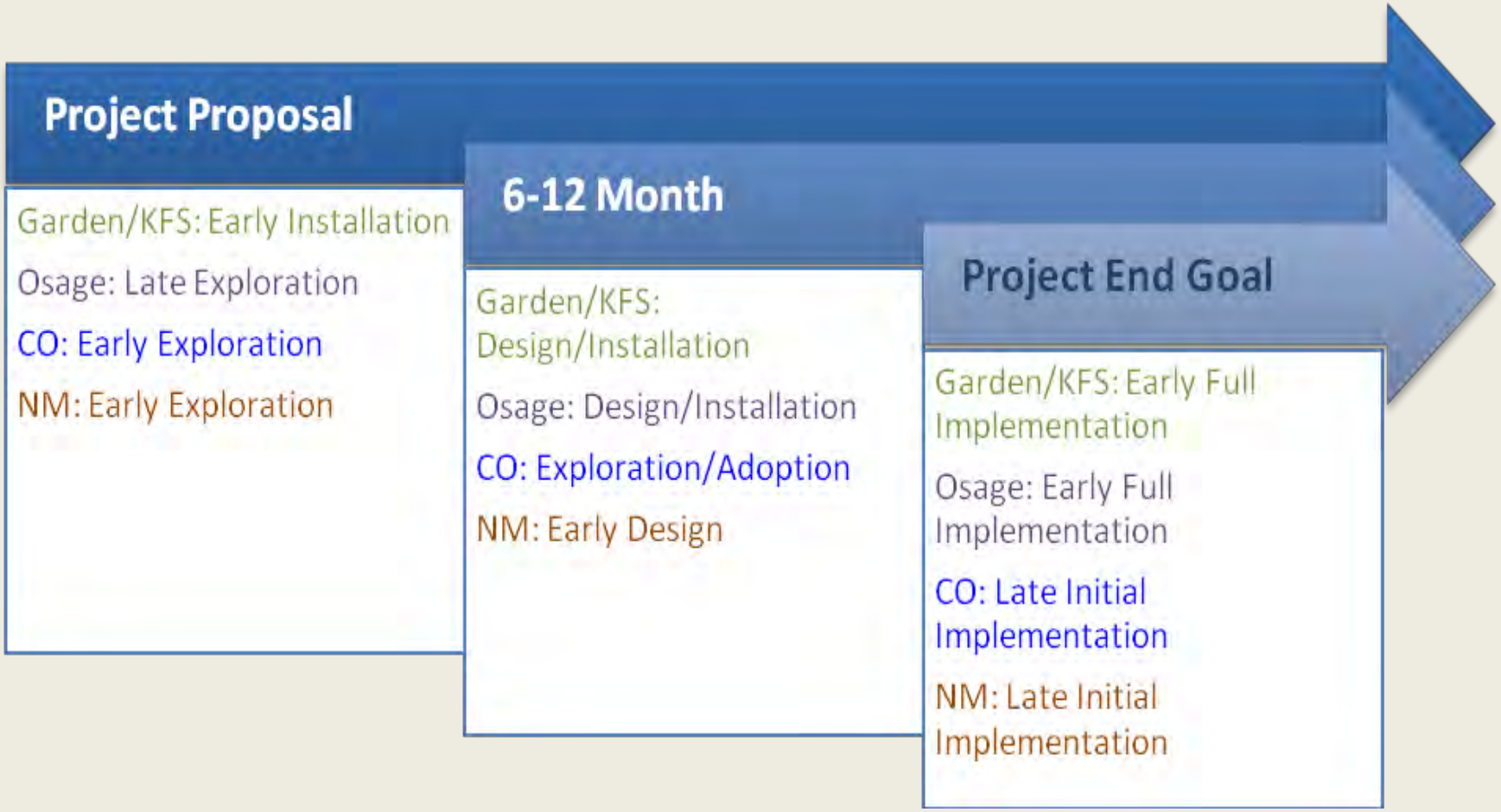
Uptake and fit of Intended Key Components of the Project-level goals e.g.

•Peer sharing

•Compendium of Best Practices

**Implementation Process Measure**

# Project Status and Goals



# MPCWIC Process Findings

- Progress through implementation stages is related to the stage where projects start, as well as how much effort is directed towards drivers
- **Tribal projects** had more drivers initiated or already in place than the state projects by months 6-12
- By 6-12 months, tribal projects focused on training and coaching components
- By 6-12 months, **state projects** focused on leadership, stakeholder engagement, and shared mission, vision, and values
  - Communication, inclusivity, and visible, reliable leadership have been major themes
- Not yet initiated or only partially in place were:
  - Staff selection, facilitative administration, systems intervention, and data systems

# MPCWIC Major Accomplishments

- All sites have Practice Models
- Business Process Maps and Data Systems for Tribes
- Sustainability Practices/Risk Management
- Implementation Guide with Repeatable Process at the county agency-level (CO)
- Executed Communication Plans

# Learn More

| Implementation Centers | Website |
|---|---|
| Northeast & Caribbean Implementation Center (NCIC) | ncic.muskie.usm.maine.edu |
| Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC) | www.accwic.org |
| Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center (MCWIC) | www.mcwic.org |
| Mountains & Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center (MPCWIC) | www.mpcwic.org |
| Western & Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (WPIC) | www.wpicenter.org |

# Questions?