

TITLE IV-E CHILD WELFARE WAIVER DEMONSTRATIONS

Suggested Evaluation Plan Outline

The Evaluation Plan is a key deliverable described in Sections 3.5 and 5.5 of the Terms and Conditions for each waiver demonstration. The following is a proposed outline of the types of content that should be addressed in the plan, including a description of the process, outcome, and cost components for the evaluation.

I. Introduction

- A. Briefly describe the overall purpose of the child welfare demonstration project, its components and associated interventions, target population(s), and how the evaluation will contribute to understanding whether and how the demonstration accomplished its goals.
- B. Identify the specific research questions or hypotheses that the evaluation will address.

II. Evaluation Design

- A. **Logic model:** Present a detailed logic model that illustrates the conceptual linkages between core demonstration components and associated interventions; expected outputs; and short-term, intermediate, and distal outcomes. The logic model should clearly articulate how specific activities or services are expected to produce or influence their associated outcomes.¹
- B. **Research Methodology:** Describe the overarching research methodology that will guide the evaluation effort. Explain the rationale for the methodology selected and describe any other methodologies that were considered and why they were ruled out. Discuss procedures for minimizing design contamination (i.e., ensuring that comparison group/sites are not exposed to demonstration services or activities). Depending on the methodology used, provide the following technical details:
 - a. Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT): Describe procedures for randomly assigning cases to experimental and control groups, including the decision points for assigning cases and the person(s) responsible for the assignment process. Discuss procedures for ensuring the integrity of the assignment process.
 - b. Propensity Score Matching (PSM) or Other Case Matching Methodologies: Describe the criteria on which cases will be matched and procedures for selecting a matched sample.
 - c. Longitudinal/Historical Analysis:
 - Identify the specific time periods or intervals that will provide the basis for comparisons over time.

¹For more information on logic models please see JBA's publication titled *Evaluation Resource Guide for Children's Bureau Discretionary Grantees* (October 2011), available online at www.jbassoc.com.

- Identify the time periods/intervals prior to waiver implementation that will be used to establish a historical baseline.
 - If appropriate, identify the specific cohorts of cases that will be tracked over time. Include information on the composition of the cohorts (families or individual children) and the timeframe/point of reference used to develop them (e.g., all children entering out-of-home placement between Year A and Year B).
- d. Comparison Group/Comparison Site: Describe the criteria for selecting comparison groups/sites; explain how these criteria demonstrate the comparability of the comparison groups/sites with the experimental group.

C. Target Population(s)/Sampling Plan:

- Describe the target population(s) and the estimated number of children/families/caregivers/caseworkers/supervisors/etc. that will receive interventions/services both initially and during the course of the demonstration. Indicate whether the population to be served will include existing/active child welfare cases or if it will be limited to new child welfare cases.
- *For designs involving random assignment or case matching*: Specify the expected sample size for the demonstration (experimental) group and the comparison/control group. Discuss procedures/methods for determining an appropriate sample size, for drawing the sample, and for minimizing sampling bias. If sample selection will continue throughout the duration of demonstration, specify the timeframe during which sampling will occur and expected rates of entry over time (e.g., X number of cases will be sampled and assigned each month).

III. Process Evaluation

For this component of the evaluation, address in detail the following elements:

- A. Outputs/Output Measures:** Identify the specific programs, services, activities, policies, and procedures that will be studied as part of the process evaluation, as well as contextual variables that may affect their implementation. Where appropriate, identify specific, quantifiable output measures that will be tracked as part of the process evaluation (e.g., number of families enrolled, number of services provided).
- B. Fidelity Assessment:** Describe methods for assessing the degree to which demonstration programs, services, and activities are implemented with fidelity, i.e., as originally designed or intended. Identify the core components of each key demonstration program, service, and/or activity and describe methods for assessing the degree of fidelity to each.
- C. Implementation Science/Developmental Evaluation:** Describe how principles of implementation science may be incorporated into the evaluation process, i.e., conducting readiness assessments to implement activities or using ongoing results to inform changes in the design or execution of demonstration programs, activities, procedures, and policies.
- D. Data Sources and Collection Procedures:** For each of the outputs and other factors to be studied as part of the process evaluation, identify specific data sources

or data collection methods (e.g., administrative data, surveys, interviews), any existing or planned instruments that will be used to collect the data, and data collection timeframes. Indicate whether the proposed data sources are derived from case-level or aggregate-level data. Consider including a table similar to the following that links outputs to measures/indicators, data sources, etc.:

Output	Measure/ Indicator	Data Source(s)	Collection Interval	Target/ Benchmark	Person(s) Responsible
A statement of what will occur as a result of offering each service or activity, e.g., "parents will attend classes"	An output stated in quantifiable form, e.g., "number of parents who attend class"	The source(s) of information for the measure, e.g., "class attendance log"	The frequency and duration with which data will be collected, e.g., "weekly following completion of each class"	(If appropriate) A performance goal against which success is measured, e.g., "75 percent of enrolled parents will complete the course"	Identify the person(s) responsible for collecting data for this output, e.g., "class trainer"

E. Data Analysis: Describe the quantitative and qualitative methods that will be used to analyze data collected for the process evaluation. Identify any software tools that will be used to conduct these analyses (e.g., statistical software packages, qualitative research software).

IV. Outcome Evaluation

For this component of the evaluation, address in detail the following elements:

A. Outcomes/Outcome Measures: Identify the specific short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes that will be tracked as part of the outcome evaluation. Where appropriate, operationalize outcomes in discrete, quantitative terms (e.g., number and proportion of children that achieve permanency, number and proportion of children that re-enter foster care).

B. Data Sources and Collection Procedures: For each of the outcomes described above, identify specific data sources or data collection methods (e.g., administrative data, surveys, interviews), any existing or planned instruments that will be used to collect the data, and data collection timeframes. Indicate whether the proposed data sources are derived from case-level or aggregate-level data. Consider including a table similar to the one provided in the Process Evaluation section above that summarizes outcome measures, data sources, etc.

C. Data Analysis: Describe the quantitative and qualitative methods that will be used to analyze data collected for the outcome evaluation. Identify any software tools that will be used to conduct these analyses (e.g., statistical software packages, qualitative research software).

IV. Cost Analysis

For this component of the evaluation, address in detail the following elements:

A. Methodology: Describe the type of cost analysis that will be conducted:

- a. Simple Cost Analysis: A basic categorization and analysis of service delivery costs (e.g., average cost per case, change in ratio of costs for in-home versus out-of-home services).
- b. Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: Assesses the financial cost of a program/service in relation to its effectiveness (i.e., cost per successful outcome).
- c. Cost-Utility Analysis: Similar to a cost-effectiveness analysis, except that effectiveness is measured in terms of length of life (survival) or quality of life (e.g., cost per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY) saved).
- d. Cost-Benefit Analysis: Compares two or more programs in terms of their respective costs and monetized benefits (i.e., what are the net benefits of Program A compared with Program B)?

B. Data Sources and Collection Procedures: Identify specific data sources or data collection methods for the cost analysis (e.g., functional assessments, accounting databases, surveys), any existing or planned instruments that will be used to collect the data, and data collection timeframes. Indicate whether the proposed data sources are derived from case-level or aggregate-level data.

C. Data Analysis: Describe the quantitative methods that will be used to analyze the cost data. Identify any software tools that will be used to conduct these analyses.

V. Quality Control and Human Subjects Projection

- **Quality Control:** Describe policies and procedures for maintaining the quality, integrity, and security of data that are collected as part of evaluation.
- **Human Subjects Protection:** Describe procedures for obtaining informed consent from the recipients of waiver-funded services and for protecting their privacy. Provide examples of research consent forms or describe plans for developing them. Identify the Institutional Review Board (IRB) that will be used for the evaluation and the procedures and timeline for submitting an IRB application.

VI. Evaluation Team: Identify the Principal Investigator (PI) for the evaluation and other key members of the evaluation team. Provide CVs, resumes, or career briefs for team members that highlight their educational background/credentials, experience conducting program evaluations of similar size and scope, and experience conducting evaluations in child welfare or other human service settings.