Federal Fiscal Year 2012
Child Welfare Demonstration Summaries

The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, Public Law 112–34, signed into law on September 30, 2011, provided the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with authority to approve up to ten title IV-E child welfare demonstration projects in each of fiscal years 2012–2014. These demonstration projects involve the waiver of certain requirements of titles IV-E and IV-B of the Social Security Act, allowing for more flexible use of Federal funds in order to test new approaches to service delivery and financing structures. It is anticipated that this flexibility will result in improved outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system, while remaining cost neutral to the Federal government.[1] Public Law 112–34 also established a requirement that the title IV-E agency conducting a demonstration must implement at least two child welfare program improvement policies (from a list provided in statute) within three years of the waiver application. One of the program improvement policies must be a policy the State has not implemented prior to the submission of the application, the other policy or policies may have been previously implemented.

On September 28, 2012, HHS approved nine demonstration projects; Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. This document provides a summary of the interventions to be implemented in each of these States, as well as each demonstration's proposed evaluation design and cost neutrality methodology. Also included is a brief description of the program improvement policies the State has implemented and/or plans to implement during the demonstration period.

ARKANSAS

Program

The Arkansas Department of Children and Families is proposing a five-year child welfare demonstration that seeks to expand the array of evidence-based and evidence-informed services available to in-home and out-of-home child welfare cases. Additionally, the State will implement a comprehensive practice model that spans the continuum of child welfare practice from initial maltreatment investigations to post-reunification services and develop and implement a child welfare administrative case review system. The State will select and implement evidence-based screening tools and functional assessments from options such as the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, the Child Behavior Checklist, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and the Emotional Quotient Inventory—Youth Version, as well as expand training on trauma-informed care to child welfare caseworkers, supervisors, and foster parents. Programs and processes like Differential Response, Family Team Meetings, Foster Home Targeted Recruitment, and Administrative Case Review will be implemented. Initiatives like the Zero To Three/Arkansas Pilot for Safe Babies Court Team and

[1] As required by Section 1130(h) of the Social Security Act, all State waiver demonstrations must be cost-neutral to the Federal Government, i.e., the total amount of Federal funds used to support a demonstration project cannot exceed the amount of Federal funds that would have been expended by a State under titles IV-B and IV-E in the absence of the demonstration.

Permanency Roundtables will be expanded. The State will also select and implement an evidence-based Parenting Education Program.

Evaluation

The State will implement a longitudinal research design for the evaluation of its demonstration that analyzes historical changes in key child welfare outcome measures and expenditures. To the extent possible, the State's analysis of process and outcome findings will be based on case-level data from the State's child welfare information systems, case records, and other data sources as appropriate. To the extent feasible, the State will also conduct one or more quasi-experimental sub-studies of programs funded by the demonstration project.

Cost Neutrality

The State's demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by providing a statewide capped allocation of title IV-E foster care maintenance and administration costs, based on historic claims. Title IV-E costs for training and the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies

The State has completed implementation of a title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program and has increased the age limit for title IV-E programs. Arkansas is committed to establishing specific programs to prevent foster care entry or provide permanency as well as recruiting and supporting high quality foster homes.

COLORADO

Program

The Colorado Department of Human Services plans to use flexible funding to support three primary service interventions to be implemented statewide: family engagement, trauma-informed child assessment, and trauma-focused behavioral health treatments. Examples of trauma-informed assessment tools that may be utilized through the demonstration include: Child Observation Record, Battelle Development Inventory, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Child Development Inventory, Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale, Clinical Assessment Package for Assessing Client's Risk and Strengths, Social Skills Rating System, Child and Adolescent Adaptive Functioning Scale, 4-D Strengths-Based Assessment Tools for Youth in Care, and the Family, Friends, and Self Form. The demonstration's interventions will be integrated into and coordinated with existing initiatives in Colorado to create a trauma-informed system of care. Additionally, individual counties will implement other service interventions based on local need and readiness to implement, including Permanency Roundtables, Kinship Supports, and Market Segmentation. The target population will include all children with screened-in reports of abuse or neglect and those already receiving services through an open child welfare case during the demonstration period regardless of custody status or title IV-E eligibility. The demonstration will be implemented in up to 64 counties in the State; however, each county will implement some or all service interventions in varying stages during the demonstration time period.

Evaluation

The project's evaluation will employ a matched case comparison design and a time-series

analysis. The outcome evaluation will examine changes in child functioning, parenting capacity, maltreatment recurrence, reunifications occurring within 12 months, and re-entry rates within 12 months of discharge. The process evaluation will focus on organizational structure, staffing, interagency relationships, provider/service development, and family and youth involvement in agency policy and case planning activities. The cost study will examine changes over time in expenditures and revenues, and will seek to link cost information to outcomes findings.

Cost Neutrality

Colorado's demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by providing a statewide capped allocation of title IV-E foster care maintenance and administration costs, based on historic claims. Title IV-E costs for training and the SACWIS will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies

Colorado has identified the need to improve its existing policies addressing the health and mental health needs of children in foster care and will also develop and implement strategies to limit the use of congregate care.

ILLINOIS

Program

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) plans to use flexible funding to support the provision of evidence-based interventions (EBIs) to children ages 0–3 in Cook County in out-of-home placement, regardless of title IV-E eligibility, and their caregivers. These interventions are designed to enhance the caregivers' (i.e., biological parents, extended family, and foster caregivers) capacity to respond to the regulatory, emotional, and behavioral needs of the young child. Guided by screening and assessment of children and families, and through contracts between DCFS and private agencies, the waiver demonstration will incorporate three EBIs: Child-Parent Psychotherapy for children with the highest level of risk/need and their caregivers; Nurturing Parenting Program for moderate risk biological parents; and Circle of Security for moderate risk caregivers. Additionally, the State has identified the following assessment tools that may be utilized for the demonstration: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3rd edition, Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Socio-Emotional, and Denver Developmental Screening Test II.

Evaluation

The project's evaluation will employ a quasi-experimental design whereby DCFS teams and contracted provider agencies that implement the EBIs will first be randomly assigned to an experimental group or to a treatment-as-usual (comparison) group, followed by rotational assignment of eligible children to a DCFS team or contracted provider agency in one of these groups. The outcome evaluation will assess the impact of the interventions on child development, behavioral problems, adaptive behaviors, placement rates, length of stay, and re-entry rates. The process evaluation will measure differences between the experimental and comparison groups on installation of policies and procedures, organizational readiness, fidelity to the interventions, and service outputs. The cost study will involve a comparative analysis of the

costs of services received by the waiver versus comparison groups by service type, funding source, service provider, and costs per child and family, as well as a cost-effectiveness component that examines the costs incurred for each successful outcome achieved through the demonstration.

Cost Neutrality

The State's waiver demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality for the experimental group will be assessed based on an analysis of title IV-E foster care, adoption assistance, and guardianship costs for cases within the treatment-as-usual group.

Program Improvement Policies

Illinois has implemented a title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program and is committed to implementing a Foster Care Bill of Rights.

MASSACHUSETTS

Program

Massachusetts plans to implement four interventions statewide through performance-based contracts with private agencies to integrate congregate care treatment and community-based treatment under a unified service model. Participants will be children and youth ages 0–21 transitioning out of congregate care, independent living, or pre-independent living settings into the community, as well as those at-risk of congregate care placement, and their families. The demonstration is comprised of these interventions: Follow Along Services, intensive home-based interventions to prepare for, and following, the transition to the home/community; Stepping Out Services, which include ongoing supports for youth transitioning to independent living settings; Continuum Services, intensive supports to children and youth at risk for residential placement and their families; and Family Partners, which is available to all families on a voluntary basis. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment will be utilized to assess eligibility for receipt of demonstration-funded services.

Evaluation

Massachusetts proposes a pre-post research design comparing outcomes for a cohort of children that exit congregate care during calendar year 2012 with outcomes for children who are in, at risk of, or enter out-of-home care on or after January 1, 2013. The outcome evaluation will measure changes in permanency, safety, well-being, and youth development. The process evaluation will include fidelity measures, provider survey data and utilization data, among other data sources. The cost analysis will examine pre- and post demonstration cost data.

Cost Neutrality

Massachusetts' demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by providing a statewide capped allocation of title IV-E foster care and administration costs, based on historic claims for children placed in congregate care. Title IV-E costs for children in foster care who are not part of the target population for the demonstration, as well as costs for training, SACWIS, and any costs for youth ages 18–21 will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies
The State implemented a Foster Care Bill of Rights in 2009 and through the demonstration will develop a description of procedures to assist youth in foster care to reconnect with biological family members.

MICHIGAN

Program
Michigan plans to use flexible funding to expand the secondary and tertiary prevention service array provided to families with children ages 0–5 that are determined by a child welfare agency to be at high and intensive risk for maltreatment and in need of longer-term services, regardless of income or title IV-E eligibility. Children referred to the demonstration will be screened for trauma using the Trauma Screening Checklist and the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children. Using performance-based contracting, the State intends to contract with private agencies in three demonstration sites (Kalamazoo, Muskegon, and Macomb Counties) to engage families and coordinate and provide supportive services to the target population for a 15-month period. Guided by screening, assessment, and the specific needs of children and families, the demonstration will incorporate evidence-based interventions such as Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start, Healthy Families America, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Evaluation
The project's evaluation will employ an experimental design through which families will be randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions using a 2:1 assignment ratio of eligible families. Families in the control group will be provided "services as usual," while families in the experimental group will receive the enhanced services. The outcome evaluation will focus on the impact of expanded child welfare services and supports on child safety, permanency, and child and parental well-being. The process evaluation will examine the demonstration project's impact on organizational, service, contextual, and participant satisfaction measures. The cost study will assess differences between the control and experimental groups in resources, services, costs, activities, and staffing, and whether those costs are matched or exceeded by the benefits produced.

Cost Neutrality
Michigan's waiver demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assessed based on an analysis of title IV-E foster care costs for cases within the control group.

Program Improvement Policies
The State increased the age limit for title IV-E programs in 2011 through its Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act. Through the demonstration Michigan will also implement a Foster Care Bill of Rights.

PENNSYLVANIA

Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is proposing a five-year child welfare demonstration project to develop a new case practice model focused on family engagement, assessment, and the introduction or expanded use of evidence-based practices. The target population will include children aged 0–18, regardless of title IV-E eligibility, who are (1) in placement, discharged from placement, or who are receiving in-home services at the beginning of the demonstration period; or (2) at-risk of or enter placement during the demonstration. The demonstration will initially be implemented in Allegheny, Dauphin, Lackawanna, Venango, and Philadelphia Counties, with the goal of further expansion based upon the readiness and capacity of each individual county. Assessment tools that may be utilized include, but are not limited to, the following: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, Service Process and Needs, Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3rd edition, Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale, Traumatic Events Screening Inventory, Adults Needs and Strengths Assessment, Family Advocacy and Support Tool, and the Restriction of Living Environment Measure.

Evaluation

The project's evaluation will include a statewide interrupted time-series design using propensity score matching, a meta-analysis of common interventions, and county-level evaluations of specific interventions in each of the five participating counties. The outcome evaluation will examine key safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The process evaluation will assess the planning process, implementation readiness and fidelity measures, and quality of services. The cost study will examine changes over time in expenditures and revenues, and will seek to link cost information to outcome findings.

Cost Neutrality

Pennsylvania's demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by establishing a statewide capped allocation from which capped allocations for each of the participating counties will be derived. The capped allocation will include title IV-E foster care maintenance and administrative costs, based on historic claims and non-SACWIS child welfare information costs. If the State plan is amended to increase the age limit of children in foster care, title IV-E costs for children ages 18 to 21 will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies

An amendment to the State's title IV-E plan that exercises the option to implement a title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program was approved in 2009. Pennsylvania is also committed to increasing the age limit for title IV-E programs.

UTAH

Program

The Utah Department of Human Services is proposing a five-year child welfare demonstration project that seeks to increase the State's capacity to provide quality in-home services, conduct trauma-informed child and family assessments, and increase service coordination with local and regional human service providers in an effort to improve safety and well-being outcomes for children and families. Utah's demonstration has three primary components: (1) the implementation of an evidence-based child and family functional assessment tool; (2) the

development and implementation of caseworker tools and training, including a focus on trauma-informed practice, screening and assessment, and strengthening families protective and promotive factors; and (3) increased community coordination and implementation of evidence-based programs including the implementation of at least one new evidence-based or evidence-informed in-home service in targeted communities. The State's choice of a specific child and family assessment tool is to be determined; however, the selected assessment will be used in conjunction with the State's Structured Decision Making Safety and Risk Assessment. The tool under consideration is the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Comprehensive Multi-system Assessment (CANS-MH), a modified version of CANS currently used in the State for children in foster care.

Evaluation

The State will implement a longitudinal research design that analyzes historical changes in child welfare outcomes and expenditures. Longitudinal changes in child welfare outcomes will be analyzed by measuring the progress of successive cohorts of children entering the State's child welfare system toward achievement of the demonstration's primary goals. To the extent possible, the State's evaluation will include comparative analyses that assess differences in outcomes between children and families that do and do not receive enhanced waiver-funded assessments, casework, and in-home services.

Cost Neutrality

Utah's waiver demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by providing a statewide capped allocation of title IV-E foster care and administration costs, based on historic claims. Title IV-E costs for training and SACWIS will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies

The State has implemented a policy to address the health and mental health needs of children in foster care and through the demonstration will establish a Foster Care Bill of Rights.

WASHINGTON

Program

The Washington Department of Social and Health Services is proposing a five-year child welfare demonstration project that seeks to develop and implement Family Assessment Response (FAR), a differential response pathway for screened-in allegations of abuse and neglect as an alternative to traditional Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations. The program is intended for families who are determined to present a low to moderate risk to the child's immediate safety, health and well being and who, with services and supports, are able to have the child remain safely in the home. The FAR program includes three primary components: (1) a comprehensive assessment of the child's safety, health and well-being, as well as any barriers the family faces in keeping the child safely at home; (2) concrete supports and voluntary services, such as housing vouchers, food, clothing, utility assistance, mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, and medical and dental care; and (3) linkage to an expanded array of evidence-based programs and services that promote family stability and preservation, such as Homebuilders, Functional Family Therapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Project SafeCare, and The Incredible Years.

Evaluation
The State's evaluation will involve a matched case comparison design in which FAR-eligible cases residing in geographic jurisdictions in which FAR services are initially offered (the experimental group) are matched with cases who meet FAR eligibility criteria but who reside in jurisdictions in which FAR services are not yet available (the matched comparison group). These families will receive services that are available through the State's traditional CPS investigation track. Comparison group cases will be matched to FAR program participants using propensity score matching or a similar case matching methodology.

Cost Neutrality
Washington's demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by providing a statewide capped allocation of title IV-E foster care and administration costs, based on historic claims. Title IV-E costs for training and SACWIS will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies
The State passed legislation in 2011/2012 to increase the age limit for title IV-E programs through its Extended Foster Care Program. Through the demonstration the State plans to develop and implement procedures to assist youth in foster care to reconnect with biological family members.

WISCONSIN

Program
Wisconsin intends to provide post-reunification supports facilitated by child welfare case managers who will develop, in collaboration with the family, an individualized 12-month post-reunification plan. The plan will include, as appropriate, trauma-informed evidence-based practices such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy; Child-Parent Psychotherapy; and Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Additional services may include crisis stabilization; in-home therapy; substance abuse and mental health services for parents; and linkages to other community services. Assessment tools that will be implemented under the demonstration include the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening test for five-year olds entering kindergarten and the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths instrument. Initial implementation will begin in Milwaukee County with all newly-reunified children and families receiving these supports. Dependent upon cost savings generated during Year 1 of the demonstration, the State will expand these activities to the 71 non-Milwaukee counties targeting children aged 0–5. In Years 2–5, the State will invest all savings generated statewide into further expansion of the post-reunification supports.

Evaluation
The State's evaluation will involve a matched case comparison design with a longitudinal research study of safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The demonstration group will be comprised of children who receive 12-months of post-reunification supports, while the matched comparison group will be comprised of an equal number of children with similar characteristics who were eligible for but did not receive demonstration services. The cost

evaluation will assess the degree to which the provision of 12 months of post-reunification supports generates title IV-E foster care savings.

Cost Neutrality

Wisconsin's demonstration will be cost-neutral to the Federal Government; cost neutrality will be assured by providing a statewide capped allocation of title IV-E foster care and administration costs, based on historic claims. Title IV-E costs for training and SACWIS will be claimed separately and will be reimbursed in addition to the amount of the capped allocation.

Program Improvement Policies

The State implemented a title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program statewide in 2011. Through the waiver demonstration the State plans to address the health and mental health needs of children in foster care.