

TITLE IV-E CHILD WELFARE WAIVER DEMONSTRATIONS

Suggested Initial Design and Implementation Report Outline¹

The Initial Design and Implementation Report is a key deliverable described in Sections 2.4 and 5.2 of the Terms and Conditions for each demonstration. The following is a proposed outline of the type of content to be included in the report, which should summarize the activities the title IV-E agency will need to complete in order to implement its demonstration.

I. Overview

The overview should include a short introduction to the demonstration that summarizes the problem(s) the title IV-E agency is attempting to address, the target population(s) and the project's components and associated interventions. Depending on the scope of the demonstration, State projects may have one component or several.

In addition, the overview should articulate the demonstration's overall theory of change, including the expected short-term and long-term outcomes of the project and how and why the demonstration components and associated interventions are expected to address the identified needs of the target population(s). The theory of change provides an opportunity to tell a concise story of how the title IV-E agency is defining the problem(s) it hopes to address and to outline the intended outcomes. More importantly, the theory of change should demonstrate the series of connections that link the problems and needs being addressed with the actions the title IV-E agency will take to achieve desired outcomes. This overview might include a series of "if-then" statements that address the logical result of an action and should provide the title IV-E agency's conceptual link between the identified problem and potential solutions.

Sharing the theory about why a program or intervention is proposed to work will be a worthwhile activity as the first step in the demonstration's initial design and implementation because it provides all stakeholders with a chance to understand one another's thinking and to clearly identify what outcomes the title IV-E agency will be using to measure its success.

The Children's Bureau (CB) welcomes drafts of this section of the Initial Design and Implementation Report. The title IV-E agency may want to consider submitting its theory of change to CB for review and discussion in advance of developing the remaining sections of the Initial Design and Implementation Report.

II. Clearly Defined Target Population(s)

Section II should describe the target population(s) for each of the demonstration's components and associated interventions, noting exclusions, geography/locations, or eligibility criteria as appropriate. In this section, the plan should:

- Describe the ***characteristics and needs*** of the identified target population(s).

¹ Authorization to implement the approved demonstration is contingent upon approval of the Initial Design and Implementation Report by the Children's Bureau (CB).

- **Characteristics** are generally related to demographics or past experiences that are not readily changeable (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, or placement history).
- The **needs** define the circumstances and conditions that are amenable to change (e.g., difficulty dealing with past and present trauma, loss of connection to family members, lack of parental skills and abilities to manage behavior).
- Provide an estimate of the number of children/families who will initially be enrolled in the demonstration.

The attached “Target Population Template” is available to assist title IV-E agencies in thinking through the above elements. The template is not a required deliverable but instead is provided as a resource to support the development of this section of the Initial Design and Implementation Report.

III. Clearly Defined Demonstration Components and Associated Interventions

Section III should describe the demonstration’s components and the associated list of interventions for each of the identified target populations.

Depending on the scope of the demonstration, State projects may have one component or several, each with its own associated intervention(s). For example, a demonstration may have one component addressing front-end case work practice with a focus on differential response implementation and a second component focusing on achieving permanency for older youth in foster care.

In this section, the plan should describe:

- The demonstration component(s) and associated interventions planned for each target population;
- Who will receive demonstration programs and services (e.g., child, parents, foster parents, caseworkers);
- How the demonstration’s components and associated interventions will address the various needs of the target population(s);
- The outcomes expected for each demonstration component and associated interventions;
- The existing research and/or data linking each demonstration component and associated interventions to the identified safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes the demonstration is supposed to address;
- The program development and/or adaptation work that needs to be done to prepare the demonstration for implementation.

The attached “Intervention Template” is available to assist title IV-E agencies in thinking through the above elements. The template is not a required deliverable but instead is provided as a resource to support the development of this section of the Initial Design and Implementation Report.

IV. Assessing Readiness to Implement the Demonstration

Section IV should include an analysis and overview of the requirements for the system, organizations, and community partners in implementing each component of the demonstration as intended, as well as specific activities to be completed prior to implementation. This includes:

- Assessing the fit of each key demonstration component and associated interventions with community values, culture, and context.
- Assessing the title IV-E agency and/or local jurisdiction’s capacity to implement the demonstration, including available training and technical assistance resources and capacity. Assessments of the capacity to implement should focus on:
 - Organizational and Systems Capacity, including a description of:
 - Leadership support;
 - Staff characteristics (e.g., number of staff, roles in the demonstration, qualifications in terms of education and experience);
 - Availability of technical and financial resources to implement the program as intended;
 - Availability and quality of linkages to and support from community organizations;
 - Current processes and service system functioning that need attention because they are incompatible or not aligned with successful implementation and therefore will not facilitate achieving the desired goals and outcomes.
 - Implementation supports (e.g., infrastructure enhancements, policy changes) that need to be developed to ensure that demonstration components are able to be executed as intended.

V. Work Plan

Section V should provide a plan and estimated timeline for activities associated with the implementation of each component of the demonstration. To the extent possible, this section should include a ***description of the key tasks, responsible parties, timeframes for beginning and completing activities, and products or benchmarks of progress*** that will serve as evidence of completing the activities, noting the phasing or staging of providers, services, or other activities if there are multiple implementation locations. Title IV-E agencies may choose to include a Gantt chart to support the narrative. Activities that may be particularly time-consuming or require action or approval by those outside of the child welfare agency to complete (e.g., State legislation, contractual agreements) should be identified. This section should address:

- **Developmental Activities:** A summary of the title IV-E agency's plan to develop the resources needed to support the demonstration, including:
 - Cost estimates for interventions and activities associated with each demonstration component;
 - Decisions of how title IV-E dollars will be allocated, including projections of how savings will be realized;
 - Selection of, and contracts with any partnering agencies;
 - Expected processes and dates for hiring needed staff, and schedules for training staff;
 - Developing supervision and coaching plans;
 - Installing or modifying any required data systems²;
 - Plans for initiating service delivery (e.g., referral protocols that describe how families or children will be selected to participate in the demonstration, how these selections will be made, and how the suitability of services will be determined; selection of first implementing units/sites; and when and how staff will begin providing services associated with the initiative/interventions);
 - Development of pro-active problem-solving protocols.

- **Teaming and Building an Accountable, Collaborative Governance Structure:** Detailed information should be included related to the teaming structure to manage implementation of the demonstration, including:
 - Identification and description of the lead agency, partner organizations, and collaborative partners and their respective roles and responsibilities, including financial commitments;
 - Description of the standards of quality and safety and practice requirements identified by the title IV-E agency to be incorporated into any agreements with public and private providers that are expected to provide supports and services;
 - Identification of implementation teams along with clarified purpose, core features, functions of the teams, communication protocols that link teams, and teaming challenges or risks;
 - Identification and description of management procedures, positions, and functions;
 - Description of the processes for monitoring progress in implementation, including ongoing identification of barriers or emerging implementation issues.

- **Communication Plan and Strategies:** A description of the processes, procedures, and strategies for maintaining efficient and effective communication internally among all applicable partners, and externally with the public and policymakers.

- **Quality Assurance:** A framework for continuous quality improvement and implementation and a description of the role of monitoring and evaluation in informing the implementation and refinement of the demonstration project's components.

² Activities conducted as part of the demonstration that affect the title IV-E agency's Child Welfare Information System may require the submission of an Advance Planning Document to ensure compliance. See <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pi1005.pdf> for more information. Agencies are encouraged to contact the Division of State Systems within CB for further assistance.

- **Evaluation Schedule:** A timeline illustrating the inter-relationship between demonstration and evaluation activities, including efforts to engage a third-party evaluator and the evaluator's expected hire date in relation to the proposed start date of the demonstration.
- **Phase Down Plan:** A description of the plan for phasing down the demonstration so that case plans for children and their families can be adjusted, if necessary, for the post-demonstration portion of their placement.

VI. Training and Technical Assistance Assessment

Section VI should include a description of the training and technical assistance (T/TA) resources the title IV-E agency anticipates it will need in order to implement the demonstration, making note of any strengths and gaps in those resources. The agency should consult with CB to determine the extent to which CB's Training and Technical Assistance Network can be used to support the implementation and evaluation of the demonstration.

VII. Anticipated Major Barriers and Risk Management Strategies

Section VII should identify any anticipated major barriers to executing the implementation of demonstration components and associated interventions and any planned strategies to address them.