



Westat

Permanency Innovations Initiative Evaluation Team (PII-ET)

Permanency Innovations Initiative Contractor Profile: April 2014

OVERVIEW:

The federal Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) is a 5-year, \$100 million Presidential Initiative designed to support six grantees to develop and implement innovative intervention strategies to reduce long-term foster care stays and improve child and family outcomes. PII also includes a technical assistance team (PII-TTAP) and an evaluation team (PII-ET), to provide advice and guidance on implementation and evaluation.

CONTRACTOR OVERVIEW:

PII-ET is led by Westat, a research and survey organization with extensive skills and experience in custom research and program evaluation studies. PII-ET also includes James Bell Associates (JBA), the University of North Carolina School of Social Work (UNC), Ronna Cook Associates (RCA), and AndyB.org, INC. The team will design and conduct rigorous cross-site and local evaluation plans that will document the implementation and effectiveness of the PII project.

PROJECT ROLE:

PII-ET is working collaboratively with the six PII grantees, the Children's Bureau (CB, the grant funder), Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE, the evaluation funder), and the PII Training and Technical Assistance Project (PII-TTAP) to:

1. Design comprehensive evaluation plans to test the intervention strategies implemented by the individual grantees
2. Carry out the rigorous evaluations detailed in each individual evaluation plan
3. Conduct a cross-site evaluation .

PII-ET assigned a site liaison to offer site-specific guidance on defining the study population (through data mining), logic model development, evaluation design, data collection, cost analysis and quality assurance. PII-ET site liaisons work directly with the grantees through site visits and phone calls throughout the duration of the grant. Team members also engage regularly in coordination calls with PII-ET, OPRE and CB.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

During the five-year period, PII-ET will develop a series of reports, documenting the process and the outcomes of the PII project. Deliverables include multiple topical briefs, the Study Design Report, Annual

Reports and a Final Evaluation Report. These reports will include both findings from the process of implementing PII and also from the outcomes that resulted due to the intervention.

APPROACH:

The PII evaluation will be structured along a PICO framework, referring to four components.

- P is the **population** targeted by the Grantee.
- I is the **intervention** being evaluated.
- C is the **comparison** to the intervention.
- O is the intended **outcome** of implementing the intervention.

A complete evaluation needs all four components, and the PICO framework guides the process of formulating well-framed research questions and developing solid plans for addressing them. After the completion of usability testing, which assesses data collection procedures, PII-ET will work through two evaluation phases:

1. **Formative Evaluation** – is an “early warning” trial of the process of monitoring the intervention and what happens for the target population as a result. This phase focuses on the achievement of selected short-term outcomes with a portion of the target population over a brief period of time.
2. **Summative Evaluation** – occurs after formative evaluation. It is the process of determining if the intervention produced the desired short and long-term outcomes.

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD:

As described in the original CB program announcement, very few interventions developed for child welfare populations have been rigorously evaluated. PII-ET will contribute to the evidence base of child welfare programs by evaluating the:

- Interventions’ ability to remove barriers to permanency among children and youth in foster care through an experimental or quasi-experimental study in six sites
- Process of implementation
- Training and technical assistance model
- Organizational readiness and change which occurred among the grantees to support the intervention
- Cost effectiveness of the interventions

These findings will inform program administrators, policymakers, and service providers of effective strategies for implementing innovative programs and identify which interventions worked for which target populations.

For more information about this project, contact: George Gabel , at (301) 251-4223 or georgegabel@westat.com.

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