

IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project Evaluation Overview

1) What are the goals of the evaluation?

- To meet federal requirements, each state's IV-E waiver demonstration project must undergo a rigorous evaluation by a third-party evaluator.
- The main goal of the evaluation is to test the hypothesis that the Post-Reunification Supports (P.S.) Program will improve the safety, permanency, stability, and well-being of children and families, and reduce recurrence of maltreatment and re-entry into out of home care.
- The evaluation will also provide valuable lessons learned regarding implementation successes or challenges that may be applied to future programming.

2) What kind of evaluation will Wisconsin be implementing?

Per federal requirements, the evaluation will include three components:

- A **process evaluation** documenting the demonstration project implementation process;
- An **outcome evaluation** comparing measures of safety, permanency, and well-being for children who received waiver-funded services to those of a comparison group of children who did not receive these services (e.g., those who live in counties *not* implementing the P.S. Program)
- A **cost analysis** examining the costs of the key demonstration elements, including costs associated with agency case management, service delivery and other supports, as well as savings generated through the provision of the P.S. Program.

In addition, Wisconsin's project requires development of a **predictive risk model** to help target demonstration services to children who have reunified with their parent(s) and are most at-risk of re-entry into out-of-home care (OHC).

3) What kinds of evaluation activities will be involved?

- Researchers will use eWiSACWIS data to measure most elements of project implementation (e.g., completion of case worker visits, child and family assessments service planning), as well as some of the outcomes of interest (e.g., maltreatment recurrence, re-entry into OHC).
- Parents in both the treatment and comparison groups will also be asked to complete a family survey to gauge differences in outcomes such as parent engagement, stress, coping skills, and social support, and to learn more about family experiences with P.S.
- Researchers will also conduct site visits, focus groups, and interviews with agency caseworkers and supervisors to better understand program successes and challenges.
- Specialized data collection tools will be developed to capture service receipt and expenditure data to support the evaluation components described above. These tools will be created to meet basic reporting needs and will likely include web-based survey or comparable on-line data collection tools.

4) Who will complete the evaluation?

- Through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process, DCF hired and has contracted with researchers from the Children and Family Research Center (CFRC) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to complete the evaluation. Dr. Tamara Fuller is the Principal Investigator.
- The CFRC is an independent research organization created jointly in 1996 at the School of Social Work by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The Center has extensive experience evaluating child welfare initiatives including previous IV-E Waiver Demonstrations and Illinois' statewide Differential Response. (See: <http://www.cfrc.illinois.edu/>)
- The DCF Waiver Evaluation Team and Steering Committee will oversee the work of the evaluators throughout the project.
- Wisconsin will also receive federally provided evaluation technical assistance from James Bell Associates.