

About the Capacity Building Collaborative

In 2015, the Children’s Bureau restructured its technical assistance delivery system by creating the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. The collective goal of the Collaborative is to build the capacities of state, local, and tribal child welfare systems to successfully undertake practice, organizational, and systemic reforms necessary to implement federal standards and achieve better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The Collaborative is composed of three Capacity Building Centers: the Center for States, Center for Tribes, and Center for Courts. The Centers’ services are organized under three major categories:

- Product development and information dissemination, including the development and release of Web site content, publications, and other resources
- Training and peer networking, including the delivery of in-person and online courses or “learning experiences,” virtual presentations, and facilitated peer discussions
- Jurisdiction-specific consultation and coaching, including workshops and site visits to states, tribes, and courts to provide customized support

Services in the first two categories are targeted to either a broad audience (universal services) or to specific groups such as adoption managers or Court Improvement Program (CIP) directors (constituency services). All of the Centers offer tailored support to jurisdictions (the third category), and the Center for States and Center for Tribes also engage jurisdictions in capacity building projects over a sustained period of time (tailored services).

About the Cross-Center Evaluation

James Bell Associates and ICF International are conducting a cross-center evaluation of the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative under a 5-year contract awarded in 2015. Each Center also has its own local evaluation team.

The cross-center evaluation is designed to respond to a set of evaluation questions posed by the Children’s Bureau to increase knowledge about the Centers’ service interventions and their effectiveness, recipients’ satisfaction with services, and collaboration within and across Centers.

The Collaborative is a partnership of the Center for States, Center for Tribes, and Center for Courts. The cross-center evaluation will examine the services and level of collaboration across the Centers.

Service Interventions

- What are the capacity building service interventions delivered by the centers? To what degree are they evaluable?
- To what degree are centers following common protocols?
- To what degree are service interventions being delivered/performed as designed? What is being received (i.e., intensity, frequency)?

Service Quality

- How satisfied are recipients with services received?

Service Interventions Outcomes

- How effective are the service interventions?
- Which service approaches are most effective and under what conditions?

Relationships Across and Within Centers

- How and to what extent are key partners across and within the Centers collaborating?

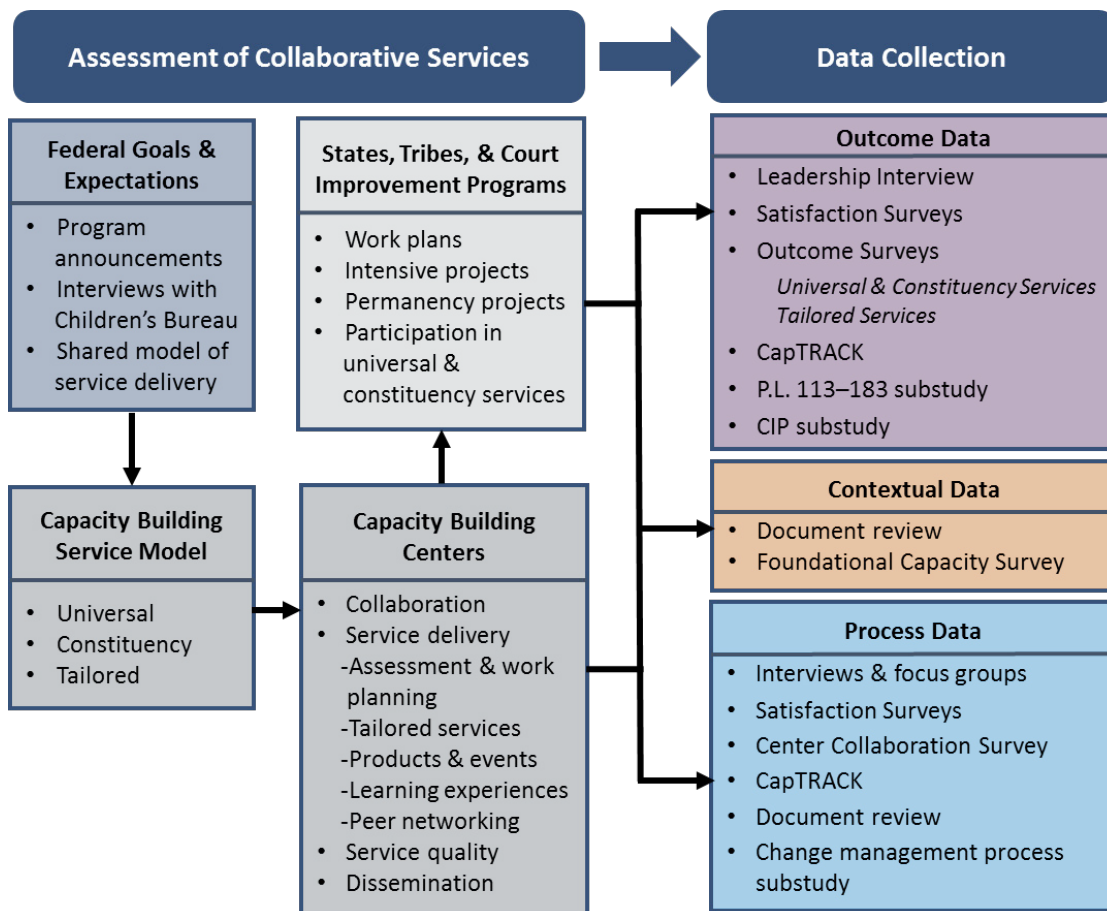
Three substudies will cover other topics: a formative examination of Centers’ design and adherence to a common service approach; effectiveness of a continuous quality improvement (CQI) intervention delivered to CIPs; and response to Public Law 113–183, which included provisions for child welfare agencies.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation will use a mixed-method, longitudinal approach to evaluate the Centers and their service interventions as they are designed and implemented over the course of the study. Some of the data will be collected by the cross-site evaluation team, while other data will be provided by the Centers and their evaluators. The design has three phases.

Assessment and Design. The evaluation team will review program announcements and conduct interviews with Children’s Bureau staff. The team will use this information to clarify federal expectations, understand associated changes in the Centers’ service models, and inform the development of evaluation instruments. Assessment is outlined in exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Framework for the Cross-Center Evaluation of the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative



Evaluation Implementation and Data Collection. The evaluation team will collect qualitative and quantitative data to describe how Centers operate, their effectiveness, and the conditions associated with service delivery and effectiveness. Data collection is outlined in exhibit 1.

CapTRACK, a service delivery tracking system, will be a primary data source. Centers will use CapTRACK to capture data about center processes and workflow; service type, frequency, modality, and topic; service strategies and recipients; service dosage and consumption; and outcomes.

Cross-center evaluators will collect process data regarding Centers’ implementation of services by coding progress reports, strategic plans, and protocols; administering an annual collaboration survey to all Center staff; and conducting annual interviews with Center directors and federal staff. Satisfaction surveys completed by recipients will also gather information about key aspects of service delivery.

The cross-center team will assess the effectiveness of Centers’ service interventions through multiple methods. First, the team will interview state and tribal child welfare directors and CIP directors in the second and fourth year of the evaluation. The team will also collect survey data to assess increased awareness, knowledge, and/or skills among recipients of select products, events, and learning experiences. The team will administer a survey to jurisdictions involved in longer-term tailored services; this survey will focus on a defined component of the jurisdictions’ capacity building plan. The survey will assess increases in organizational capacities, and knowledge and skills in applying a change management process. The evaluation will also gather contextual information through a survey that Centers administer during their assessment process.

Analysis, Reporting, and Dissemination. The evaluation team will merge and analyze data to examine whether Centers’ services were implemented as intended and the reasons for changes. Analytic models will explore whether results are associated with the type and extent of capacity building services received. The team will examine patterns in these associations across states, tribes, and CIPs.

Data Sources and Collection Methods

Key data collection activities are shown in exhibit 2 and described on the following pages. The cross-center evaluation team will continue to collaborate with the Center evaluation teams via monthly calls to ensure smooth data collection and data sharing, review and refine instruments, and reduce duplication and respondent burden.

Exhibit 2. Data Collection Activities for the Cross-Center Evaluation of the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative

Activity*	FFY 2015	FFY 2016	FFY 2017	FFY 2018	FFY 2019
Leadership Interview		•		•	
Satisfaction Surveys		•	•	•	•
Foundational Capacity Survey+			•	•	
Outcome Surveys					
Universal & Constituency Services Surveys+		•	•	•	•
Tailored Services Survey (Capacity Survey)			•	•	
CapTRACK		•	•	•	•
Progress Reports	•	•	•	•	•
Annual Interviews & Focus Groups	•	•	•	•	•
Center Collaboration Survey		•	•	•	
Substudies		•	•	•	•

* Timeline contingent upon Office of Management and Budget approval.

+ Data to be collected by Centers and provided to cross-center evaluation team.

Leadership Interview

The Leadership Interview will collect data from child welfare directors (or their designees) from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, as well as tribal child welfare directors and CIP directors who receive tailored services. Leaders will discuss jurisdictions' experiences with Center services, factors influencing their decisions to engage in services, and facilitators and barriers to service utilization. The interviews will also capture perceptions of service effectiveness and contextual factors that influence capacity.

Satisfaction Surveys

Evaluators will administer a series of short surveys after individuals participate in Center activities or access key products. The surveys will assess perceptions of quality of universal, constituency, and tailored services. To reduce burden, much of the satisfaction data will be collected in conjunction with outcomes data.

Foundational Capacity Survey

To capture contextual data regarding the organizational health and functioning of child welfare agencies and courts, this standardized assessment will be integrated into each Center's assessment processes. The assessment will examine availability of staffing, fiscal, and material resources; infrastructure such as training systems, service array, and evaluation; and organizational culture and climate.

Outcome Surveys

Universal and Constituency Services Surveys. Centers will use common sets of survey items to assess changes in awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills after participating in select events, learning experiences, and peer engagement activities and after accessing products and resources. Data will be shared with the cross-center evaluation team to be used in analysis of service effectiveness.

Tailored Services Survey (Capacity Survey). The cross-center evaluation team will use this online survey to capture perceived changes in five dimensions of organizational capacity after receiving tailored services: resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, organizational culture and climate, and

engagement and partnership. The survey will use a "post-then-pre" inquiry method.

CapTRACK

The cross-center evaluation team developed the CapTRACK system to allow Centers to record details about direct, tailored capacity building services they provide to states, tribes, and courts. Centers will record service recipients, service types and delivery methods, content areas, targeted capacity domains, aspects of jurisdictions' change process, and milestones achieved. They will also record the completion, release, and delivery of products and events. CapTRACK's linked forms align with Centers' service delivery models and processes. Centers will use standardized CapTRACK reports and queries to monitor service delivery.

Progress Reports

Each Center submits semiannual or annual progress reports to the Children's Bureau. The cross-center evaluation team will review and code select information from the reports to understand expanded activities, including outreach, collaboration or consultation across Centers, and innovative product development.

Annual Interviews and Focus Groups

The cross-center evaluation team will conduct semistructured annual interviews and focus groups with federal staff and Center directors to explore issues such as contextual factors that affect service delivery, barriers, and approaches to facilitate capacity building.

Center Collaboration Survey

The cross-center evaluation team will administer this online survey annually to Center staff. The survey will capture perspectives on the experience of delivering capacity building services to states, tribes, and CIPs, and collaboration within and across Centers.

Substudies

Change Management Process Substudy. In federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016 and 2017, the cross-center evaluation team will interview Center staff to explore similarities and differences in Centers' approaches to

operationalize and use an evidence-informed change management process. The team will supplement the interview data with meeting observations, document review, and CapTRACK data. The team will provide Centers with formative feedback to support refinements.

CIP CQI Tailored Services Substudy. The Center for Courts will conduct regional CQI workshops on topics of interest to CIPs (e.g., quality of legal representation, judicial engagement). The cross-center evaluation team will examine short-term and intermediate outcomes, increases in capacity, and use of the change management process among CIPs that receive different levels of tailored services following the workshops.

Public Law 113–183 Substudy. This 2014 law included many provisions for child welfare agencies, including modifications of title IV-E requirements for identifying, reporting, and determining services to victims of sex trafficking, and requirements related to the reasonable and prudent parent standard and developmentally appropriate activities for children in foster care. In FFY 2016–2018, the cross-center evaluation team will use a collective impact approach to examine how capacity building services are incorporated into state and tribal activities to support implementation of the law. The team will also examine data from state IV-E plans, interviews with federal staff, annual surveys of key informants, and the Collaborative’s services and learning management data systems.

Reporting and Dissemination

The cross-center evaluation team will share findings promptly with the Children’s Bureau and providers to identify needed modifications. Products may include reports, presentations, and Webinars. Topical evaluation briefs will also be developed based on emerging priorities for the Collaborative or the Children’s Bureau (e.g., literature review). As CapTRACK becomes fully operational, the team will submit reports on service activity for federal project officers and providers to support CQI.



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