

Grants to Address Trafficking Within the Child Welfare Population

Mid-Cycle Synthesis of Process Evaluation Findings

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Introduction

The Children’s Bureau (CB), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), awarded funding to nine grantees in 2014 to address trafficking within the child welfare population (exhibit 1). The grantees have made significant progress toward increasing awareness of child trafficking and improving cross-system responses to trafficking within the child welfare population.

This synthesis, the second in a series of reports about the child trafficking grant cluster,¹ summarizes process evaluation findings to date in the third of 5 years of funding. It focuses on grantee progress toward shared, cluster-wide outputs and outcomes. The information came from a review of grantee semiannual progress reports covering the period of September 30, 2014, through September 29, 2016, and data submitted to James Bell Associates (JBA), the cluster’s evaluation technical advisor, as of February 2017.

Exhibit 1. Grants to Address Trafficking Within the Child Welfare Population, 2014

Grantee	State	Project Name	Evaluator
Arizona State University (ASU)	Arizona	Sex Trafficking and Arizona’s Vulnerable Youth: Identification, Collaboration, and Intervention (STAVY)	ASU
California Department of Social Services (CDSS)	California	The California Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking (PACT) Project	Resource Development Associates
State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families (CTDCF)	Connecticut	Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) Project	ICF International
Healing Place Serve (HP Serve)	Louisiana	Louisiana Children’s Anti-Trafficking Initiative (LACAT)	Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund
Justice Resource Institute (JRI)	Massachusetts	Massachusetts Child Welfare Trafficking Grant (CWTG)	Northeastern University
King County Superior Court (King)	Washington	King County CSEC Program	University of Washington School of Medicine
Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc. (Our Kids)	Florida	Miami CARES (Community Action Response to Exploitation and Sex Trafficking)	University of South Florida
University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMD)	Maryland	The Child Sex Trafficking Victims Support Initiative	UMD
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC)	North Carolina	Project NO REST (North Carolina Organizing and Responding to the Exploitation and Sexual Trafficking of Children)	UNC

¹ For a summary of the projects’ core components and evaluation plans, see the previous report in this series: James Bell Associates. (2016). *Grants to Address Trafficking Within the Child Welfare Population: Summary of Program and Evaluation Plans*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Process Evaluation Findings to Date

As described in the first synthesis, the JBA evaluation technical advisor led the development of a cluster-wide logic model (exhibit 2).² The logic model highlights 11 outputs and short-term and intermediate outcomes that are shared among the grantees, as well as 6 long-term child-level trafficking and well-being outcomes that are ultimate goals for all grantees.³ The process evaluation data reported by grantees have focused on establishing cross-system partnerships, improving infrastructure, and increasing awareness of trafficking. Using the logic model as a framework, findings from these shared outputs and short-term outcomes are described below.

Establishing Partnerships and Improving Infrastructure

Output 3.1: Cross-system partnerships are established to develop coordinated responses and practices

As a core requirement of the grant, each project includes strategies to develop or enhance effective cross-system partnerships to address barriers in identifying children involved in child welfare who are victims of or at risk for trafficking. In response, output 3.1 is a common output across all grantees in the cluster. The multidisciplinary teams and task forces facilitated by the grantees include representation from a range of stakeholders, including public child welfare agencies, juvenile justice departments, state agencies and commissions (e.g., departments of youth services, mental health, and public health; Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women), corrections (e.g., police departments, juvenile detention, adult probation), court and legal stakeholders (e.g., court-appointed special advocates, administrative offices of the court, attorneys general, county attorneys, American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, superior courts), service providers (e.g., substance abuse, mental health, homelessness), human trafficking survivors, universities, and evaluation partners.

The grantees are using a variety of strategies to develop and support cross-systems partnerships. For example, several grantees held annual summits or events to bring stakeholders together to discuss challenges and lessons learned regarding best practices for identification and service provision. CDSS held an event in September 2015 with the theme “Partnership: The Power to Do More,” which convened more than 55 stakeholders from child welfare, probation, the legal community, and service providers. ASU holds an annual summit on child sex trafficking attended each year by more than 100 professionals in child welfare, law enforcement, and juvenile justice. These meetings provide an opportunity to engage stakeholders outside of the core group that regularly attend multidisciplinary advisory group meetings and offer dedicated time for peer learning and problem solving. Each grantee leverages multiple funding sources to support its cross-systems partnerships. Braiding funding streams allows grantees to ensure the sustainability of their efforts beyond any one funding source or time period.

² See exhibit 4 in the previous report in this series.

³ Only some of the grantees will collect data and report on these long-term outcomes; it is not a requirement of these grants.

Exhibit 2. Cluster Logic Model: Grants to Address Trafficking Within the Child Welfare Population, 2014

The goal of the grants is to build greater awareness and a better response to the problem of child trafficking within the child welfare population.

Process			Outcomes		
1.0 Inputs	2.0 Activities	3.0 Outputs	4.0 Short-Term Outcomes	5.0 Intermediate Outcomes	6.0 Long-Term Outcomes
1.1 Nine grantee projects 1.2 Multidisciplinary stakeholders from each grantee project 1.3 Support & leadership from federal project officers & CB 1.4 Evaluation technical assistance (TA) from JBA 1.5 Peer learning among grantees 1.6 Collaboration with other CB initiatives 1.7 Written materials & resources	2.1 Statewide, cross-system, multidisciplinary partnerships are developed or enhanced 2.2 Policies are developed aimed at prevention, identification, & intervention for child welfare victims of trafficking 2.3 Child welfare staff are trained on how to identify & work with trafficking victims 2.4 Appropriate trauma-focused, & evidence-based programs (EBPs) are provided to trafficking victims 2.5 Databases are developed or enhanced to systematically track child welfare-involved youth who are victims of trafficking 2.6 Dissemination plans are developed to share lessons learned with a broad audience 2.7 Sustainability plans are developed to ensure projects continue after the grant period 2.8 Additional grant-specific activities are implemented	3.1 Cross-system partnerships are established to develop coordinated responses & practices 3.2 Number of policies developed 3.3 Number of trainings conducted & number of staff trained 3.4 Number of trauma-focused services & EBPs implemented 3.5 Databases created & number of data elements available 3.6 Dissemination plans developed 3.7 Sustainability plans developed 3.8 Number of grant-specific activities implemented	4.1 Improved infrastructure to provide a coordinated response to child trafficking 4.2 Increased state-level & local awareness of trafficked youth 4.3 Proposed policies/bills drafted & presented to state legislature for approval 4.4 Increased knowledge of the needs of trafficked youth across systems 4.5 Improved ability to quickly identify trafficked youth 4.6 Improved capacity of organizations to adequately serve trafficked youth 4.7 Increased accessibility of trauma-focused & evidence-based services for trafficked youth 4.8 Improved collection, sharing, & use of data across system partners 4.9 Data collection methods enhanced for children served by child welfare & contracted service providers 4.10 Increased capacity to contribute to & expand extant research on trafficked youth among grantees	5.1 Decreased entry into trafficking among at-risk youth 5.2 Improved identification of trafficked youth 5.3 Improved cross-system response to child trafficking 5.4 Policies adopted & proposed bills signed into law 5.5 Reduction in trauma for trafficked youth after they have been identified 5.6 Decreased number of days trafficked youth are missing from care 5.7 Increased reliable housing for trafficked youth 5.8 Increased number of trafficked youth with an adult mentor 5.9 Decreased number of criminal justice system contacts among trafficked youth 5.10 Increased resources for the scientific study of child trafficking	6.1 Decreased incidence of child trafficking 6.2 Increased successful exits from trafficking for child welfare involved youth <i>Well-Being</i> 6.3 Improved cognitive functioning among trafficked youth 6.4 Improved physical health & development among trafficked youth 6.5 Improved emotional/behavioral functioning among trafficked youth 6.6 Improved social functioning among trafficked youth

Note: Common outputs and outcomes are shown in bold. Not all grantee projects will be able to collect and report data for long-term outcomes.

Exhibit 3 provides an overview of the main strategies grantees are using to maintain and strengthen cross-system partnerships and to achieve output 3.1.

Exhibit 3. Evidence of 3.1: Cross-System Partnerships Are Established to Develop Coordinated Responses and Practices

Response and Practice	ASU	CDSS	CTDCF	HP Serve	JRI	King	Our Kids	UMD	UNC
Regular meetings of multidisciplinary advisory group/task force	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Participation/representation of project staff on other trafficking task forces	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Development and support of specialized subcommittees		•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Formal convening of stakeholders	•	•	•	•	•	•		• ⁴	•
Braiding of multiple funding streams to support work	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Short-term outcome 4.1: Improved infrastructure to provide a coordinated response to child trafficking

One of the common short-term outcomes of the work of these cross-system partnerships is to improve the infrastructure that exists within and across fields to respond to child trafficking. To date, the multidisciplinary teams supported by the grantees have established many formal processes and agreements among their partners, including memoranda of understanding (MOUs), information sharing agreements, and continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes. Three grantees (CDSS, King, and UMD) have created formal MOUs to establish clear expectations among project partners. The enhancement of data systems to record and monitor trafficking has also been a common strategy used by the grantees. For example, both ASU and CDSS have supported efforts to establish case-level trafficking variables in child welfare data systems. Communication processes and information sharing across systems and partners have also been streamlined. For example, UNC established a project listserv that is used to provide updates about project progress, information on training opportunities, and information dissemination. HP Serve used one-on-one meetings with stakeholders to discuss and address barriers to cross-system coordination in order to identify areas for improved communication processes.

⁴ UMD hosts a formal convening of stakeholders, however, it is supported by funding outside of this project.

Exhibit 4 displays examples of the strategies grantees are using to achieve shared short-term outcome 4.1.

Exhibit 4. Evidence of 4.1: Improved Infrastructure to Provide a Coordinated Response to Child Trafficking

Response	ASU	CDSS	CTDCF	HP Serve	JRI	King	Our Kids	UMD	UNC
Systems to record and monitor trafficking have been established or enhanced	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
MOUs and data-sharing agreements exist across project partners		•		•		•		•	
Communication processes and information sharing exist across systems, and partners have been streamlined	•	•	•	•	•	•			•
CQI processes are in place, including functions for reporting information on risk, referral, enrollment, and services to stakeholders and providers			•	•		•	•	•	
Training and TA are sought from outside sources	•		•	•		•		•	
Training of trainers is conducted to expand local capacity			•	•		•			
Case-level multidisciplinary teams are developed, supported, and facilitated		•	•		•	•	•		

Assessing Collaborative Functioning: The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

Led by the JBA evaluation technical advisor, the grantees agreed to administer the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (hereafter referred to as the Wilder) a minimum of three times over the grant period to assess changes in system collaboration. The Wilder includes 40 items in 20 factors essential to the successful functioning of collaborative groups (e.g., mutual respect, understanding, trust, appropriate cross-section of members). The inventory produces an overall summary score as well as a score for each of the 20 factors. Scores between 1.0 and 2.9 indicate

an area of concern to be addressed, between 3.0 and 3.9 indicate borderline areas deserving some discussion, and between 4.0 and 5.0 indicate strengths not needing attention. Respondents to the survey included members of the multidisciplinary team/task force/coalition that are meeting together for the purposes of the grant. Individual evaluation teams were given discretion to identify exactly who should participate.

The number of respondents who completed a Wilder in the first year of the project ranged from 5 to 33 with an average of 20 respondents per grantee. On average, the groups had met together for 8 months and all but one of the groups discussed trafficking exclusively. Respondents included a range of group members, including child welfare administrators and frontline staff; representatives from juvenile justice, law enforcement, mental health, and education agencies; service providers; court officials (judges, attorneys, CASAs); and victim advocates.

As a cluster, the summary score for the first administration of the Wilder was a 3.8, which demonstrates the grantees' collaborative groups are functioning well but have areas for improvement. Exhibit 5 displays the cluster's average score for each factor. The areas of greatest strength included the five factors with scores above 4.0: Factors 6, 3, 20, 18, 16, and 17. These factors suggest the timing and climate for collaborative work focused on trafficking is favorable. Factor 19 was rated the lowest across the cluster (mean = 3.2) indicating respondents did not feel there were sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time to accomplish their goals. Grantees are using project-specific Wilder data to identify areas for improvement among their own collaborative groups. Data from the next two administrations of the Wilder will be used to examine trends over time in the collaborative groups' strengths and functioning.

Exhibit 5. Findings From the First Administration of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

Factor	Mean Score
Factor 6: Members see collaboration as in their self-interest	4.5
Factor 3: Favorable political and social climate	4.3
Factor 20: Skilled leadership	4.2
Factor 18: Unique purpose	4.2
Factor 16: Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	4.0
Factor 17: Shared vision	4.0
Factor 8: Members share a stake in both process and outcomes	3.9
Factor 10: Flexibility	3.9

Factor	Mean Score
Factor 14: Open and frequent communication	3.9
Factor 15: Established informal relationships and communication links	3.9
Factor 4: Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	3.8
Factor 1: History of collaboration	3.7
Factor 2: Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community	3.7
Factor 5: Appropriate cross-section of members	3.7
Factor 7: Ability to compromise	3.7
Factor 12: Adaptability	3.6
Factor 13: Appropriate pace of development	3.6
Factor 9: Multiple layers of participation	3.4
Factor 11: Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	3.4
Factor 19: Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	3.2

Increased Awareness of Trafficking

Output 3.3: Number of trainings conducted and number of staff trained

All the grantees are conducting trainings to increase awareness and knowledge of trafficking. As of September 2016, the grantees had conducted over 300 trainings for over 3,500 stakeholders from a variety of fields including child welfare, juvenile justice, the legal community, education, mental health, law enforcement, service providers, and community members. Under the guidance of the JBA evaluation technical advisor, the grantees worked together to develop the Trafficking Awareness Survey (TAS), a pre- and posttraining survey to measure changes in knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy around the issue of trafficking. The JBA evaluation technical assistance team reported initial psychometric testing of the instrument in the first synthesis. Results of a second round of psychometric testing are reported below.

Continued Psychometric Testing

The first synthesis included a detailed description of the psychometric properties derived from the grantees' initial administration of this new instrument. The validity and reliability of the TAS

was retested using a second round of TAS data derived from pre- and posttest surveys (n = 1,064) administered during trainings held in the grantees' third semiannual reporting period (October 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016).⁵ Participants were demographically similar to those who participated in the initial testing.

The second round of psychometric testing resulted in similar moderate to high internal consistency in the three subscales (knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy), with all Cronbach's alpha scores ≥ 0.67 and most > 0.90 . Factor analysis again supported the presence of three constructs in pretests, whereas four constructs emerged from the survey at posttesting: beliefs, self-efficacy, and two dimensions of knowledge (awareness of child trafficking and knowledge of processes to identify and serve youth victims of trafficking).

The findings from two rounds of psychometric testing suggest the TAS is a reliable tool to assess increases in awareness of trafficking and related constructs among a range of stakeholders.

Shared Short-Term Outcome 4.2: Increased state-level and local awareness of trafficked youth

Cluster-Level Changes in Knowledge, Beliefs, and Self-Efficacy

Paired t-tests confirmed the differences between trainees' mean scores on the TAS at pretest and posttest were statistically significant ($p < .001$) in all three survey domains: knowledge of trafficking, beliefs about trafficking, and self-efficacy to identify and respond to youth victims of trafficking. These results suggest that across the cluster, the trainings provided by grantees have been successful in increasing participants' knowledge of trafficking, shifting their beliefs around trafficking issues, and increasing their self-efficacy to identify and respond to youth victims of trafficking.

Influence of Training Characteristics on Changes in Knowledge, Beliefs, and Self-Efficacy

The curriculum and format of each of the trainings differ by grantee. Given the large TAS dataset available, the grantee evaluators wanted to explore whether different characteristics of the trainings themselves are predictive of or correlated with changes in knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy. The JBA evaluation technical advisor requested the grantees submit information about training delivery (e.g., in-person versus online), trainer type (e.g., single trainer, team of trainers), trainer qualifications (e.g., level of education, certifications), training length, curriculum type (e.g., established curriculum, custom training), target audience, training topics, and training strategies (e.g., lecture, small group discussion, role play). Four of the nine grantees submitted information about their training content and format.⁶

Using TAS data through the third semiannual reporting period (October 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016), the JBA team conducted correlation and regression analyses of gains in knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy based on trainees' survey scores and four training characteristics: (1)

⁵ A brief technical report with more details regarding initial and second round psychometric testing is available from the Author by request.

⁶ Some grantees chose not to submit this information because the trainings in their state were not funded by this grant and due to the voluntary nature of their participation.

Curriculum type, (2) Training length, (3) Inclusion of trafficking survivors, and (4) Use of videos in the trainings. Some variables were not included in the analyses because there was insufficient variation across the trainings. Specifically, the trainings were generally similar in terms of delivery (mostly in-person), trainer type (usually a team of trainers), trainer qualifications (most had specialized training), target audience (mainly child welfare and juvenile justice professionals), training topics (focused on trafficking knowledge), and training strategies (generally presentations and hard copy materials). Results from the analyses that included the four training characteristics with measurable degrees of variation (curriculum type, length, inclusion of survivors, and use of videos) are summarized below.

Statistically significant correlations were found between trainees' gains in the Knowledge scale of the TAS and each of the four training characteristics (ranging from 0.15 to 0.28; all at $p < .01$ level). However, the correlation between these variables and knowledge gains was very small, with regression analysis indicating that each characteristic accounted for less than 1 percent of the variance in Knowledge score gains, except for Training Length, which accounted for 2 percent of the variance.

Statistically significant correlations were found between trainees' gains in the Belief scale and two of the four training characteristics: Curriculum Type and Training Length ($p < .05$). Again, the size of these correlations was very small, with neither Curriculum Type nor Training Length accounting for more than 1 percent of the variance in Belief score gains.

Statistically significant correlations were also found between trainees' gains in the Self-Efficacy scale and two of the four training characteristics: Curriculum Type and Training Length ($p < .01$). Once again, neither variable accounted for more than 1 percent of the variance in Self-Efficacy score gains.

In summary, these results suggest the choice of curriculum and training length have a measurable but relatively small impact on knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy among training attendees.

Intermediate and Long-Term Outcomes

As described in the first synthesis, the overall goal of these projects is to improve outcomes for youth who are victims or at risk of trafficking; however, collecting and reporting data for these intermediate and long-term outcomes is not a requirement or expectation of these grants. While a few of the grantees are incorporating child-level data collection in their evaluations, no cluster-level data is presently available for the intermediate or long-term outcomes listed in the logic model.

Appropriate Indicators of Success for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking

Youth victims of human trafficking experience complex trauma with lasting effects. An emerging learning indicates traditional benchmarks in child welfare may not best capture immediate and intermediate success or improvement related to efforts for this subpopulation of youth in out-of-home care. The grantee evaluators have discussed that variations on child welfare outcomes for youth victims of trafficking may be more sensitive to the types of small changes typically observed in this population. For example, a typical child welfare indicator is the number of runaway episodes; however, child welfare professionals report even when individual progress is observed, youth victims of trafficking continue to run frequently. For this population, the number of runaway episodes may not be as important as the number of days youth victims of trafficking were missing from out-of-home care during each episode. Fewer days missing from out-of-home care over time may be an indication the youth is breaking ties with her or his trafficker and is building trust with service providers. Another traditional goal of child welfare programs is to decrease the number of days children spend in out-of-home care. However, some service providers recommend that youth victims of trafficking spend at least 18 months in care to adequately address the complex trauma suffered. The grantee evaluators will continue to explore the most important and relevant indicators to measure for youth victims of trafficking.

Conclusion

At the midpoint of the grant period, the grantees have demonstrated considerable progress toward the cluster-wide goals of a coordinated response to child trafficking and an increased awareness of trafficking among child welfare professionals and other stakeholders. Grantees have been successful in establishing or enhancing cross-system partnerships and have the infrastructure in place to ensure effective coordination of identification processes and service delivery. The grantees have also provided an impressive volume of trafficking trainings that have increased participant knowledge, shifted their beliefs, and increased their self-efficacy to identify and respond to youth victims of trafficking. These process evaluation findings add to the knowledge base about effective approaches emerging to address child trafficking. Additionally, the development, implementation, and testing of the TAS as a proven tool for assessing awareness and knowledge gains across a wide range of stakeholders is an important contribution to the field. Examples of grantees' activities and accomplishments illustrating progress on short-term outcomes were highlighted above. As the projects progress and data accumulate, this cluster is poised to demonstrate how specific collaboration and coordination strategies contribute to the intermediate and long-term outcomes of the cluster. JBA may provide an additional synthesis of final evaluation findings at the conclusion of the grant period.