

ARIZONA CHILD WELFARE WAIVER DEMONSTRATION SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

I. Overview

Provide a brief summary of major demonstration activities completed to date, as well of any significant evaluation findings. Summarize any major changes to the design of the demonstration or to the evaluation since the previous semi-annual report (NOTE: Any significant changes to the design of the proposed demonstration or evaluation must be approved by the Children's Bureau before they are implemented).

The Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS, Department) began initial implementation of Arizona's title IV-E waiver demonstration project, known as Fostering Sustainable Connections, on July 1, 2016. Therefore, the reporting period of this semi-annual report is July 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016. During this time, the Department launched initial implementation in three sites, two offices in Maricopa County and one office in Pima County. There are a total of three Family Engagement Specialists (FESs) who are currently involved in the project and actively partner with the assigned Child Safety Specialist for each case the FESs are working. To date, the FESs have worked with 42 children in Maricopa and Pima counties; many of these children are part of a sibling group. There have been seven children (16.7%) placed with relatives, four (9.5%) placed in a less restrictive family-like setting, and two (4.8%) are pending placement with relatives.

Arizona State University (ASU) is actively engaged in the evaluation of Fostering Sustainable Connections. Most of the evaluation work accomplished has been for the process evaluation study, although significant preparation for the outcome study has also taken place, including ethics approval and data capacity development. Additionally, ASU is collecting data for the demonstration sub-study on child well-being.

II. Demonstration Status, Activities, and Accomplishments

Provide a detailed overview of the status of the demonstration in the following areas:

- A. Numbers and types of services provided to date. Note in particular the implementation status of any innovative or promising practices.

Fostering Sustainable Connections attempts to reduce the time children spend in congregate care settings by enhancing family/fictive kin search and engagement activities, expanding the Team Decision-Making (TDM) process, and supporting the action plans created in partnership with the family/fictive kin with available in-home reunification, placement stabilization, and other needed services. The work of the FESs is a key factor for achieving the desired outcomes. In order to track the work the FESs are completing, they are required, monthly, to enter data into the FES Tracking Workbook. This assists the FES supervisors, the Department, and ASU to ensure the fidelity of Fostering Sustainable Connections and measure outcomes. The data collected in the workbook include:

- Total number of children referred to FSC

- Age of child
- Current placement type
- Engagement activities the FES completed with child/youth
- Family/Supports found
- Database searches used
- After FSC placement type
- Family/Supports identified
- Services put in place

To date, the FESs have worked to engage 42 children and their family/fictive kin. The children's ages ranged from five to 17 years old, all of whom were in either shelter or group home settings at the start of the FES becoming involved. Innovative Family Finding activities have included six connectedness maps, one eco map, one genogram, 22 mobility maps, five safety circles, and four trees of life. Database searches have been conducted through the DCS Family Locate Unit, Lexis Nexis, Seneca, White pages, Zaba Search, and social media. These search and engagement activities have resulted in seven (16.7%) children being placed with relatives, two (4.8%) pending placement, and four (9.5%) placed in less restrictive family-like settings. These activities also identified an additional 20 family members and other individuals as supports for the children. Upon working with the children and their family/fictive kin, services put in place included eight referrals for behavioral health services, four families connected to receive income support, and seven linked to community-based services.

Ensuring a structure is in place to support implementation is essential to the success of Fostering Sustainable Connections. Therefore, the Department established the statewide implementation team and site-based implementation teams. The statewide implementation team began meeting in October 2015 with representation from each regional leadership, policy, contracts, budget, behavioral health, ASU, and other internal and external partners. The team meets monthly to ensure implementation is occurring as intended. Each implementation office has a site-based team established with members that consist of office leadership, DCS specialists, TDM facilitators, provider liaisons, and others the office has identified to participate. Each team is supported by the Department's Program Development Unit. An implementation guide (Exhibit A) is used to guide the Program Development Unit and each site-based team throughout initial implementation. The guide provides:

- an overview of the implementation structure and process;
- the core elements of the Fostering Sustainable Connections model;
- training, coaching, and peer-to-peer learning approach;
- evaluation requirements; and
- sustainability planning.

The Avondale office and Tempe office site-based implementation teams were established in March 2016 in preparation for the July 1, 2016, initial implementation. Each team met every two weeks through May 2016 and monthly thereafter. In the beginning, the Department's Program Development Unit was heavily involved in supporting each of the

offices' site-based teams. Through time and with technical assistance provided by the Program Development Unit, each site-based team was able to organize, schedule, and facilitate their own meetings. The Program Development Unit now provides technical assistance as needed. Overall, Fostering Sustainable Connections has been successfully implemented in both offices.

The Pima office site-based implementation team began in September 2016 with initial implementation in October 2016. The Program Development Unit continues to be heavily involved in the site-based team meetings in order to provide direction and technical assistance.

- B. Other demonstration activities begun, completed, or that remain ongoing (e.g., introduction of new policies and procedures, staff training).

Staff training began in April 2016:

- FESs received training from April – July 2016 from the Family Finding purveyor, which included coaching sessions through December 2016.
- FESs received facilitation training in August 2016.
- FESs and TDM Facilitators received training on the Life Long Connections TDM process in September 2016.
- Avondale and Tempe FESs, staff, and TDM Facilitators received the overview of Fostering Sustainable Connections in May and June 2016.
- Pima office FES, staff, and TDM Facilitators received the overview of Fostering Sustainable Connections in September 2016.

As the Department expands to other offices, training will be offered to the staff within the identified offices prior to initial implementation. Additionally, as the Department onboards new FESs, training will be provided specific to their duties. This training is six sessions over the course of five months. Family Finding techniques are taught and coached while the FES works with a small number of cases initially, typically three children.

In addition to the trainings, a peer-to-peer learning convening took place for all members of the Avondale and Tempe site-based teams in September 2016. This was an opportunity for them to discuss challenges that they had faced, problem solve, and share successes each office realized during the initial implementation stage. Positive feedback was provided regarding the convening, thus a formal peer-to-peer learning convening has been scheduled quarterly for the group. This will allow them to learn from each other, not only upon initial implementation, but throughout. The next convening occurred in January 2017 and included individuals from the Pima office.

Simultaneously, Child Safety Specialists and FESs have engaged external partners including attorneys, guardians ad litem, judges, etc. by providing them the Fostering Sustainable Connections core and direct messages (included in Exhibit A), in addition to having conversations with them about why each child has been chosen for Fostering

Sustainable Connections. Moreover, presentations have been given to external partners in various venues; a media release (Exhibit B) was provided by the Department in August 2016 outlining Fostering Sustainable Connections; and a family was interviewed in November 2016 to share their experience. The interview is currently being edited for release.

Another aspect of the FESs work is fidelity measurement of the family/fictive kin search and engagement activities as designed for Fostering Sustainable Connections. This includes a fidelity tool (Exhibit C) the FES supervisors are using during their monthly reflective supervision with the FESs. This tool was modified from the Family Finding model, with consultation from the purveyor and ASU. Results are being tracked to ensure fidelity to the model. Fidelity monitoring also includes observations of Blended Perspectives Meetings (BPMs) facilitated by the FESs. The BPM is an activity that brings the family and other key participants together to connect or reconnect the child and family. This meeting brings together the family network and others who support the child to provide a blended perspective so family/fictive kin that do not know the child or have not been in contact with the child for some time can learn about the child and his or her greatest strengths and needs. Thus far, there have been a total of five BPMs held and two observations completed for purposes of ensuring fidelity.

C. Challenges to implementation and the steps taken to address them.

The Avondale, Pima, and Tempe offices have launched initial implementation, successfully addressing several implementation challenges, which included needs to:

- communicate precisely who must attend each training;
- clearly describe the role of the FES so that the right people are recruited;
- ensure each site-based team has 10 to 12 members that will support implementation; and
- identify the right type of cases for Fostering Sustainable Connections.

Each site-based team has remained positive and excited throughout the process, despite the challenges they have faced. The teams continue to promote the program within their office and community. The Department's Program Development Unit also continues to actively work with each office to address the barriers and challenges they face.

D. All demonstrations with a trauma focus (e.g., implementing trauma screening, assessment, or trauma-focused interventions) should report on each of the data elements listed below. For activities that are not being implemented as part of the demonstration, please indicate this with "N/A." If information is currently unknown, please indicate an approximate date that the data will be available.

- Target population(s) age range(s)
- Type of trauma screens used
- Number of children/youth screened for trauma
- Type of trauma/well-being assessments used¹

¹ Include any trauma and well-being assessments for which data is available.

- Number of children/youth assessed for well-being/trauma
- Type of trauma-focused evidence-based interventions (EBI's) used
- Number of children/youth receiving trauma-focused EBIs²
- Percentage of children and youth receiving trauma-informed EBIs who report positive functioning at follow up³
- Number of parents/caregivers:
 - Screened for trauma
 - Assessed for trauma
 - Treated for trauma
- Number of clinicians trained in trauma-focused EBIs⁴

Section II should address both activities and accomplishments that have been completed to date as well as any that remain in progress or that have been delayed. It may be helpful to include an updated work plan or Gantt chart that highlights progress in implementing the demonstration.

The Arizona Title IV-E waiver demonstration project does not include a trauma focus; thus this section does not apply.

III. Evaluation Status

Provide a detailed overview of the status of the evaluation in the following areas:

- A. Numbers of children and families assigned to the demonstration (including to any comparison/control groups if appropriate); note if current sample sizes differ significantly from original sample size estimates.

To date, 10 children have been assigned to the child well-being sub-study of the project evaluation. The target of 60 children with 30 from Fostering Sustainable Connections and 30 from a comparison group, remains the goal for the first year of the evaluation. ASU is working with the Department for the transfer of data from the state database, which will include data for all children in the population.

- B. Major evaluation activities and events (e.g., primary and secondary data collection, data analysis, database development).

Process Evaluation Activities: The major process evaluation activities completed to date include:

- Secured Institutional Review Board (IRB) (ethics) approval for the process study.
- Revised fidelity tools for implementation at case level (allows for collection of additional process data).
- Conducted initial site visits to the Avondale, Tempe, and Pima offices.

² Include all children that have received any portion of the EBI(s).

³ A jurisdiction may define "positive functioning" in any manner that is consistent with the definition used for the local evaluation of the waiver demonstration.

⁴ This may include initial training and follow-up training.

- Designed and administered the Readiness Survey in Maricopa and Pima counties (TCU – Organizational Readiness Change) and the statewide collaboration survey (Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory).
- Facilitated the group assessment process to assess implementation drivers (The National Implementation Research Network) – with an action planning meeting scheduled for January 2017 to review the results.
- Consulted on the design of the FES Tracking Workbook tool to collect data on all children receiving Fostering Sustainable Connections with respect to the components of the intervention, service referrals, and family involvement.

Outcome Evaluation Overview: The major outcome evaluation activities completed to date include:

- Secured IRB (ethics) approval for analysis of DCS outcome data and collection of child well-being data from children and their caregivers.
 - Selected three different child/youth social emotional well-being tools for administration to very young children (Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional), school-aged children (Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2nd edition), and adolescents (Youth Quality of Life- Short Form).
 - Developed and implemented child/youth and caregiver interview protocols for the child well-being sub-study including incentives for participation.
 - Developed Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) to allow DCS to transfer data to ASU in a way that meets DCS security criteria.
 - Consulted with the Department’s Data Management Analyst on all data needs for creating matched samples and baseline outcome data.
 - Developed sampling design/tracking tool, to allow completion of matched sample using propensity score matching.
 - Developed programming for data extracts to examine outcome variables including days in care, number of placements, restrictiveness of placement, type of permanency, re-reports, re-entries, as well as descriptive characteristics and service data.
 - Secured ASU data storage space, software, and data collection staff and analysts.
 - Trained data collection staff in data collection procedures including informed consent and child/youth assent processes, interviewing techniques, and completing tracking procedures for future interviews.
 - Completed data collection on child/youth well-being for nine children/youth in Maricopa County and one in Pima County. Of those, all ten children/youth completed the Behavior and Emotional Rating Scale-Second Edition (BERS-2) for children/youth and all ten had a caregiver also complete the BERS-2 for caregivers. Two of the ten youth completed the Youth Quality of Life-Short Form (YQOL-SF) in addition to the BERS-2.
- C. Challenges to the implementation of the evaluation and the steps taken to address them.

None to report at this time.

IV. Significant Evaluation Findings to Date

Summarize any significant process, outcome, or cost evaluation findings available to date. (NOTE: Evaluation findings may also be presented in a separate report or addendum to the semi-annual progress report prepared by the jurisdiction's evaluator).

Findings from the Wilder Collaboration Inventory and the TCU Organizational Readiness for Change surveys were reported and are attached (Exhibit D, Exhibit E and Exhibit F). In summary, results from the Wilder Collaboration Inventory indicate that participants felt:

- The time is right for this collaboration.
- Participants are dedicated to making this project succeed.
- There is respect amongst the professionals involved in the group.
- Those in leadership positions have the necessary collaborative skills.
- The goals of the project are clear and understood by both individual members and the group.
- What the collaboration is trying to accomplish would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish on its own and there is a history of collaboration within the community.
- All of the organizations that need to be involved in this project may not be currently represented.
- The process for making decisions may not be clear and there is insufficient time for collaboration and communication.
- More time, resources, and people power need to be invested in the group's collaborative efforts.
- There may be a low level of trust amongst members.
- Community leaders, as well as the broader community, may not seem hopeful about what the group can accomplish.

Results from the TCU Organizational Readiness for Change surveys indicates:

- Staff in all three offices felt that guidance for staff would be beneficial in:
 - Engaging parents in placement and permanency decisions.
 - Record keeping and information systems.
 - Improving rapport with clients.
 - Referring clients and families to appropriate programs.
 - Using client assessments to guide case planning.
 - Improving communications among staff.
 - Setting specific goals for improving services.
- Agreed strengths within the offices include:
 - Access to the Internet at their workplace is adequate and they have the ability to access community support resources.
 - Meetings with supervisors occur frequently regarding client progress and needs.
- Challenges that are represented in each office are:

- The amount of time staff has to devote to meeting with parents/children.
- Number of staff to meet parent/children needs.
- Level of training of staff.
- Response to staff concerns.
- The length of time it takes to get computers repaired.
- Regarding their personal development, staff in the offices agreed:
 - Their professional development is important to them.
 - They are considered a source of expertise on child welfare issues and staff often seek out their advice and opinions on child welfare practices.
 - They are effective and confident in their jobs and are able to adjust quickly to changes.
 - They give high value to the work they do and regularly update their training and skills.
 - They accomplish what they set their mind to and influence the decisions of staff.
 - They like what they do and who they work with and are viewed as leaders by staff.
- Staff from each office noted regarding collaboration in the workplace:
 - Staff are given broad authority to make decisions about how to best support families.
 - Staff members are quick to help one another.
 - The duties of their positions are clearly related to the goals of the Department.
 - They are under a lot of pressure and feel this impacts the effectiveness of the Department.
 - Staff often show signs of high stress - strain and frustration are common.
 - They feel that management does not have a clear plan for the future regarding Fostering Sustainable Connections.

Results from these instruments were used to assist the statewide and site-based implementation team during initial implementation, and will continue to assist as the Department expands into other offices.

V. Recommendations and Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period

Describe major demonstration and evaluation activities that will be started, continued, or discontinued during the subsequent reporting period. Highlight any recommendations for changes to the design and implementation of the demonstration or evaluation based on challenges encountered during the current or prior reporting period, or based on evaluation findings to date (please see earlier caveat about securing prior approval from the Children's Bureau).

The Department is currently working to onboard additional FESs with a contract provider that will allow the Department to expand Fostering Sustainable Connections into other offices. It is anticipated the Department will gain four FESs within this next reporting period, and begin initial implementation in four offices in Maricopa County. The identified FESs have already been trained in the Family Finding model and techniques, but will need to be trained in the Fostering Sustainable Connections model and facilitation. The

timeframes for training, readiness activities, and initial implementation within new offices is described in the Fostering Sustainable Connections Phase-in Plan (Exhibit G).

The Department's Program Development Unit will continue to support the Avondale and Tempe offices by providing ongoing technical assistance and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Additionally, the Department will continue to provide frequent support and technical assistance to the Pima office. Members of each office's site-based team are also on the statewide implementation team, which allows for continual feedback to be provided to the team while working through any barriers.

Regarding the evaluation, once the DCS data elements are received, ASU will conduct the propensity score matching to create the comparison group sample for year one of the project. This will allow in-person data collection to proceed for the 30 comparison group children and their caretakers. The in-person data collection protocols are working well and will continue until the sample size ($N = 60$) is reached for year one of the evaluation. The data will be analyzed and reported once data collection is complete. Additional data from the Department is needed to calculate baseline entry and exit rates to congregate care. A Secure File Transfer Protocol has been developed between the Department and ASU for this purpose.

An action planning meeting has been scheduled with the Evaluation Committee for January 26, 2017, to review the NIRN implementation driver assessment and the results of the Maricopa and Pima County Organizational Readiness assessments. As new offices are included in Fostering Sustainable Connections, additional organizational readiness assessments will be administered. Additionally, the Wilder Collaboration Inventory will be re-administered to the statewide implementation team in January 2017.

Lastly, ASU has volunteered to participate in testing of the cost evaluation toolkit that was developed by James Bell and Associates. The pilot timeframe and expectations will be further provided by James Bell and Associates.