

Synthesis: Collaboration Between TANF and Child Welfare to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes

The purpose of this grant cluster was to demonstrate models of effective collaboration between child welfare (CW) agencies and agencies responsible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Such models of effective collaboration were theorized to result in improved outcomes for children, youth, and families who are involved with CW or are at risk of involvement.

Summary of Projects

- **Funding Opportunity Announcement**
- **Grantees**
- **Primary Target Population**
- **Key Program Interventions/Activities**

Funding Opportunity Announcement

In 2006, the Children's Bureau published a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for Collaboration Between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Child Welfare to Improve Child Welfare Program Outcomes. This announcement reflected recognition of the overlap in the service population of the two programs:

A significant number of families are involved with both welfare and child welfare systems. More than half of all foster children come from families that are eligible for welfare and most of the families that receive in-home support services through the child welfare system are on welfare (FOA, p. 2).

“Dual-system” families must navigate two complex systems that often have conflicting requirements and timelines. Service gaps as well as service duplication can occur when case plans are not coordinated. In addition to families already receiving services from both systems, some family members who currently receive services from only one system have characteristics or needs that could potentially benefit from services of the other system. For example, grandparents and other kin serving as primary caregivers of their relatives' children frequently struggle with financial hardships.

The interconnections between the two programs reflect the role of poverty, often accompanied by parental stress, as a risk factor for child abuse and neglect. In addition, many families receiving services from either or both systems are also affected by other co-occurring issues, such as substance abuse, domestic violence, or mental health issues.

The FOA was based on the premise that the multifaceted needs of families and children could be better served through a collaborative response between agencies addressing CW and TANF, as well as partnerships with other social service providers (e.g., substance abuse, mental health, education, housing, and aging). Improved collaboration across the agencies—including improvements in the ways in which financial, human, and administrative resources are used—was thought to be able to improve the effectiveness of each agency in using supports and resources and collectively meeting the needs of families. Ultimately, collaborative services were



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau



intended to promote self-sufficiency as well as child and family safety, permanency, and well-being.

The purpose of the collaborative initiative was threefold:

- To demonstrate models of effective collaboration between TANF and CW agencies that would improve outcomes for children and youth who were in, or were at risk of entering, the CW system
- To evaluate and document the processes and outcomes of these collaborations
- To develop identifiable sites that other States/locales seeking improved collaboration between TANF and CW agencies could look to for guidance, insight, and possible replication

Funding was available for demonstration projects to assist jurisdictions over 5 years in planning, implementing, and evaluating collaborative efforts. The projects were intended to support activities such as interagency planning, policy development, comprehensive family assessment, blending or braiding of interagency finances, development of information and data sharing mechanisms, addressing confidentiality issues, and cross-training of TANF and CW staff.

FOA Information

FOA Title:	Collaboration Between TANF and Child Welfare to Improve Child Welfare Program Outcomes
FOA Number:	HHS-2006-ACF-ACYF-CW-0103
CFDA Number:	93.556
Approved Project Period:	9/30/2006-9/29/11

Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Grant
Anticipated Total Priority Area Funding:	\$2,400,000 per budget period
Anticipated Number of Awards:	0 to 6
Ceiling on Amount of Individual Awards:	\$400,000 per budget period
Floor on Amount of Individual Awards:	None
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$400,000 per budget period
Length of Project Periods:	60-months (5 12-month budget periods)
Match:	Grantees must provide at least 10% of the total approved cost of the project

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for grant awards included:

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Special district governments
- Native American Tribal governments (federally recognized)

Applicants had to demonstrate a strong commitment on the part of the CW and TANF agencies, and any other agencies identified as part of the project, to collaborate on this project, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and budgets.

Grantees

Note: For ease of reading, projects will be identified by the State abbreviation for the State in which they are located. For example, Alaska's Cook Inlet Tribal Council project will be referred to as "AK."

State: Alaska (AK)
Project Title: Cook Inlet Tribal Council Collaboration Between TANF and Child Welfare to Improve Child Welfare Program Outcomes

Lead Agency: Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)
Collaborating Partners: CITC Departments of Child and Family Services, Employment and Training, Education, and Recovery Services

Award Number: 90CW1135
Contact: Cristy Allyn Willer
907.793.3600
cwiller@citci.org

Target Population: American Indian and Alaska Native families served by CITC in the Cook Inlet Region

Key Grant Activities:

The AK project integrated activities of four service programs (CW, TANF, Education, and Employment & Recovery) by:

- Creating a standardized intake form and processes
- Building a centralized "Welcome Center" for collocated programs
- Analyzing data systems and creating processes to assess data across systems
- Implementing an interdepartmental program leadership council

Site Visit Report:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/funding/funding_sources/sitevisits/CITC.cfm#page=summary

State: California (CA)
Project Title: Linkages Project

Lead Agency: California Department of Social Services
Collaborating Partners: Child Welfare Services, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWorks), Child and Family Policy Institute of California

Award Number: 90CW1138
Contact: Danna Fabella
925.324.5258
Danna.fabella@cfpic.org

Target Population: Dual-system families. Some counties targeted all CW families with open TANF cases, while others focused on a subset of families (families involved in emergency CW response, families involved in family reunification, adults with TANF sanctions, or homeless families)

Key Grant Activities:

The CA project expanded the Linkages collaborative model from 17 counties to more than 30 counties. Cross-county, systems-level, and support activities included:

- Statewide oversight committee
- Structured planning process
- Joint training of CW and CalWORKS staff

- Consultation and technical assistance
- Meetings, newsletters, intranet site, and other peer sharing
- Production of videos and outreach resources
- Development of planning, implementation, and evaluation resources (Linkages Toolkit)

Direct service activities at the county level featured:

- Mutual identification of clients
- Coordinated case planning
- Resource sharing
- Joint case conferencing
- Joint case management

Project Website:

http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_001.htm

Site Visit Report:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/funding/funding_sources/sitevisits/linkages.cfm#page=summary

State:

Colorado (CO)

Project Title:

Jeffco Community Connection Collaboration Project

Lead Agency:

Jefferson County Human Services

Collaborating Partners:

Jefferson County Division of Children, Youth, and Families (CYF), Colorado Works (TANF), Jefferson County System of Care, Jeffco Prosperity Project

Award Number:

90CW1136

Contact:

Natalie Williams
303.271.4003
nwillia@jeffco.us

Target Population:

Dual-system families, including kinship families, children in foster care, and families receiving in-home services

Key Grant Activities:

The CO project promoted collaboration between TANF and CW through:

- Implementation of collaborative cross-department case planning
- Cross-system training
- Development of data-sharing technology

Service components for families featured:

- Family group conferencing
- Comprehensive family assessment
- Parent Partner mentoring
- Interagency service delivery related to life skills, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health screening and referral
- Job resource development/career planning

Site Visit Report:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/funding/funding_sources/sitevisits/jeffco.cfm#page=summary

State:

Louisiana (LA)

Project Title:

Louisiana Kinship Integrated Service System (LA KISS)

Lead Agency: Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (Formerly Louisiana Department of Social Services)

Collaborating Partners: Child Welfare Program, Economic Stability Program, Council on Aging, Louisiana Youth Enhancement Services

Award Number: 90CW1139

Contact: Patricia Washington
504.599.1853
Patricia.washington@LA.gov

Target Population: Kinship families receiving CW and/or TANF services in the Greater New Orleans Region

Key Grant Activities:
The LA project developed a multilevel partnership between the State's CW and economic stability (ES) program. Activities included:

- Cross-training two CW staff in ES and two ES workers in CW
- Analysis of survey information on staff and family perceptions, knowledge, and needs
- Referral and advocacy services to kinship care families
- Implementation of an integrated system of care across DCFS offices

Site Visit Report:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/funding/funding_sources/sitevisits/louisiana.cfm#page=summary

State: New York (NY)

Project Title: Next Steps TANF-Child Welfare Collaboration Project

Lead Agency: Rockland County Department of Social Services

Collaborating Partners: Child Welfare, TANF and Employment Units, Board of Cooperative Education Services, West Street Child Care Learning Center, and Others

Award Number: 90CW1137

Contact: Elizabeth Kohlmeier
Elizabeth.kohlmeier@dfa.state.ny.us

Target Population: Mothers with very young children who were receiving TANF services

Key Grant Activities:
NY established a Steering Committee of partner agencies, community organizations, and local businesses. The NY project expanded the Next Steps Program to provide mothers with services related to:

- Employment assistance
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- Parenting education
- Father involvement
- Mentoring

Site Visit Report:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/funding/funding_sources/sitevisits/rocklandco.cfm#page=summary

Primary Target Population

The Children's Bureau designed the FOA to address the needs of families involved with both TANF and CW systems. The FOA allowed grantees to either broadly address these dual-system families or to focus on specific subgroups. While some projects approached the target audience

in a geographic area broadly, others defined their audiences more narrowly—for example, LA’s KISS project focused specifically on meeting the needs of kinship families receiving either CW and/or TANF services, while NY’s Next Steps program focused specifically on mothers of very young children (and older children later) who were receiving TANF services. The CA project encompassed more than 30 different counties, each of which defined their own target population based on identified needs.

The target population groups reflected the geographic diversity of the service areas of the five projects. Two projects served suburban county residents—Jefferson County, CO, and Rockland County, NY. CA was a statewide project with multiple counties containing major metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas. AK’s project served American Indian and Alaska Native families in the Cook Inlet region surrounding Anchorage, while LA targeted families recovering from Hurricane Katrina in the Greater New Orleans Region.

Key Program Interventions/Activities

As noted above, the FOA encouraged the planning and implementation of a wide range of collaborative activities. Key activities for each project are summarized under the grantee profiles in the section above. Through these grants, the Children’s Bureau offered jurisdictions the opportunity to develop and evaluate varied models of collaboration. Some grantees opted to expand an existing program or model. CA, for example, extended Linkages—a collaborative TANF/CW project initiated in 2000 under private foundation funding—and expanded from 17 counties to more than 30 counties across the State. NY expanded Next Steps, an existing welfare-to-work program, to combine employment readiness services with parenting education, mother/child activities, behavioral therapy, peer-to-peer mentoring, and outreach to fathers. While all grantees worked to improve collaboration between CW and TANF agencies, several projects also worked to integrate services of other partnering agencies, such as those related to education (AK and NY), child care and early childhood development (NY), recovery/substance abuse (AK), and aging (LA). Several grantees (AK, CO, LA) also built on the approaches of existing collaborative systems of care¹ in their areas.

Given that the primary intention of the grant solicitation was to facilitate systems collaboration, much of the grantees’ effort was focused on organizational-level activities intended to break down departmental “silos” and align and coordinate systems. Organizational-level activities common across the group included:

- **Convening steering committees and interagency councils.** These oversight bodies brought together representatives from CW, TANF, other agencies, and community groups and were responsible for providing leadership, planning the initiative, and monitoring project implementation and evaluation activities.
- **Joint and cross-training.** CW and TANF staff were offered training to better understand the other agency’s goals, services, policies, and programs and to recognize their shared objectives in supporting families. For example, CA worked with Regional Training Academies to develop joint training modules (see <http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/training-toolkit>.) Through training, staff not only gained new knowledge and built skills, but also developed relationships with partnering agency staff.

¹ Systems of care refer to partnerships among an array of service agencies and families working together to provide integrated, individualized care and community-based support to children and families.

- **Data sharing.** A critical component of most projects, as well as a significant challenge, was developing processes and systems that enabled data sharing across CW and TANF agencies to support identification of mutual clients and provide more comprehensive assessment of needs and services.
 - LA designed a case management system with a new database and calendar that enabled CW and TANF project staff to track and monitor services and case progress of mutual clients.
 - AK conducted an extensive technical analysis of an existing web application and created new processes to share data across divisions.
 - CO developed processes to share files and data between the different databases used by TANF and CW, implemented automated reporting of family assessment information, and designed a data scorecard to monitor outcomes (view a sample scorecard at https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/site_visit/jeffco_CFSR_scorecard.pdf).
- **Development of service integration procedures.** Several projects devoted considerable time and effort to the development of new policies, procedures, and practices that promoted integrated service delivery.
 - AK built a centralized “welcome center” and developed a standardized intake form, thereby streamlining processes and eliminating duplication for clients participating in multiple programs (CW, TANF, Education, and/or Recovery).
 - CA developed a series of toolkits that offer guidelines and sample templates for various aspects of service integration (see <http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/>).

Grantees varied in the proportion of their efforts that focused on organizational-level activities as compared with direct services. While some projects appeared more heavily weighted toward infrastructure development and implementing systems-level change (e.g., AK), others focused more on changes at the service level (e.g., NY). Most projects had aspects of each.

Over the grant period, grantees introduced new services and expanded existing services to meet the needs of target populations. Direct service activities included:

- **Family engagement and decision-making.** Several projects adopted a family-centered approach and implemented family decision-making techniques intended to promote increased family engagement.
 - CO offered family group conferencing to a subgroup of program participants to help families develop their own plans for ensuring the protection of their children and also to facilitate communication among families, CW workers, and TANF workers (see https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/site_visit/jeffco_FGC_brochure.pdf).
 - NY engaged participants in the program’s planning efforts and implemented outreach efforts for father involvement.
 - CA developed a guide for enhancing family participation drawing from the experiences and lessons learned in Linkages’ sites (see http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/pdfs/LInkages_Guidelines_Final_CDSS_Online.pdf).
- **Comprehensive family assessment.**² As encouraged by the FOA, comprehensive family assessments were used by several projects to identify and broadly assess service needs.

² Comprehensive family assessment (CFA) is the ongoing practice of informing decision-making by identifying, considering, and weighing factors that impact children, youth, and their families. CFA focuses not only on the presenting issues, but also on the underlying reasons for behaviors

- Comprehensive family assessment was a core component of CO services.
- The North Carolina Family Assessment Scales were used as tools to assess family functioning, strengths, and needs in both CO and AK.
- **Referral and advocacy services.** Based on comprehensive family assessments and case planning activities, program participants were referred to services to meet their needs related to career services, parenting, education, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, life skills, and others.
- **Coordinated case planning and case management.** CW and TANF staff worked together across jurisdictions to develop and streamline joint case plans or coordinate services and timelines of separate CW and TANF plans. In CA, for example, 87 percent of participating counties reported coordinated case planning and 52 percent reported joint case management.
- **Mentoring.** Two projects included a mentoring component.
 - In CO, Parent Partners who had previously received CW services served as peer mentors for families currently receiving services, attended Family Group Conferences, administered comprehensive family assessments, and advocated for families on various committees within the CW agency and the community.³
 - In NY, mentoring was provided by volunteers, many of whom were Department of Social Service workers and served as “information resources.”

Overarching Themes

- Common Challenges
- Successful Strategies
- Common Lessons Learned

Common Challenges

Grantees identified multiple and interrelated challenges in their efforts to achieve collaboration between CW and TANF agencies. Common challenges included:

- **Accurate identification and tracking of families served in both CW and TANF systems.** All of the projects encountered difficulties in identifying and tracking families served by both CW and TANF, in large part because each program had traditionally maintained its own data system. This posed critical obstacles to the central goal of the grant initiative to ensure coordination in service delivery to dual-system families and also hindered program evaluations. Some projects were able to develop supports (e.g., automated reports) to pull and compare information from separate data systems, while others relied on cumbersome and time-consuming staff efforts to match data. CA counties developed various ways to systematically identify families, including monthly match lists of mutual clients and information system checks at intake and key points in the case lifespan. (For more information on county

and conditions affecting children and parental protective capacities. Children’s Bureau guidelines for CFA, which address collaboration between CW and community partners, are available from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/cfa-guidelines-for-cw>.

³ For more information on the Jeffco Parent Partner Program and its perceived benefits, see Leake, et al., 2012, <http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol12/iss1/6/>.

approaches to matching, see [http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/assessment-planning-toolkit/program-design-road-map/creating-match-lists/.](http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/assessment-planning-toolkit/program-design-road-map/creating-match-lists/))

- **Information sharing.** Challenges in sharing information about mutual clients were attributed to the separate data systems issue noted above, as well as confidentiality concerns, and staff mistrust or misconceptions of the other agency. Projects worked to overcome this barrier through training efforts, dispelling misconceptions about policies related to information sharing, and obtaining client consent through release forms. Several projects reported that information sharing was less of a problem where CW and TANF programs were collocated within the same organization. In addition, some noted that over time, as data and positive results were shared through evaluation and monitoring activities, staff increasingly recognized the benefits of shared data and became more motivated to share information more routinely.
- **Participant recruitment.** Several projects had trouble recruiting and maintaining participants in project services. This was particularly problematic for projects that focused more heavily on service delivery rather than systems change efforts. To respond, projects investigated underlying participation issues, increased outreach to target audience members, and changed communication, referral, and recruitment processes. Some projects found that actively engaging participants in planning and implementation of program activities helped alleviate participant resistance.
- **Staff resistance.** In most of the project jurisdictions, CW and TANF employees have had a long history of working separately. Breaking down the established silos was not always easy. Some projects witnessed an ebbing of resistance over time as staff from different programs spent more time together in training and conferences, interacted at a collocated site, and/or gained better recognition of the benefits of collaboration for both agencies and families. To help break down the barriers between CW and TANF staff, CA developed a communication strategy and various media products focused on the positive impact of collaboration (see www.cfpic.org/toolkit/communication-toolkit/).
- **Economic environment.** The grant period coincided with a nationwide economic recession, which had a negative impact on the projects. The recession placed added strains on agency budgets and in some cases led to staff cutbacks and increased workloads. This climate lessened the abilities and/or willingness of some staff to participate in the new collaborative efforts. In addition, the recession and tough job market exacerbated financial pressures on family members and made it increasingly difficult for program participants to achieve self-sufficiency outcomes.
- **Evaluation.** The FOA required each project to conduct an evaluation documenting the processes and outcomes of their collaborations. Several evaluations experienced data collection issues (discussed further below), which limits the ability to generalize their findings.

Successful Strategies

Several strategies were identified by projects as influential in enhancing the collaborative process, including:

- **Ongoing education, communication, and interaction across programs.** The grant projects brought together programs that previously had been isolated from each other despite

serving common clients. Cross-training was a central component of most grant projects to help educate staff on the services and goals of the other program and on the benefits of working together. In addition, regularly scheduled group meetings and other forums to discuss policies and procedures were useful in breaking down barriers.

- **Service collocation.** Bringing services under one roof enhanced staff familiarity with other programs, removed logistical challenges to coordinated services, and increased the ease with which clients accessed multiple services.
 - LA established service centers that helped support families in a central location rather than requiring them to go to separate facilities.
 - AK staff from different departments worked shifts in a shared “welcome center,” which exposed them to a broader perspective of various programs and family needs.
 - Collocation of NY’s program with onsite child care was helpful in facilitating mothers’ participation in education, parenting, and therapy services.
- **Compatible/shared procedures.** Projects that invested in the development of compatible procedures advanced the institutionalization of collaboration.
 - A key output of AK’s project was a standardized intake form and process, which replaced 37 separate forms and processes previously used, provided staff with more comprehensive information on family needs, and reduced the number of times that program participants had to provide similar information.
 - CA’s Linkages project developed practice protocols that outline specific steps for identifying mutual clients, sharing information, and conducting coordinated case planning (see <http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/>).
- **Readiness assessment.** Assessments to determine readiness for collaboration can help determine where to start and where to build capacity.
 - As they initiated their program, LA conducted environmental surveys among CW and economic stability workers and customer satisfaction surveys among kinship caregivers, and the results were used to help identify areas most needing attention.
 - CA developed an assessment and planning component in their toolkit to help counties determine readiness for service collaboration and to provide planning guidance (see <http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/assessment-planning-toolkit/>).
- **Outreach/Marketing.** To educate stakeholders about the benefits of collaboration and their initiatives, sites adopted outreach strategies and developed marketing materials.
 - For example, CA’s Linkages produced a suite of communication materials, including videos, newsletters, and adaptable PowerPoint presentations tailored to different audiences yet conveying common messages about the value and impact of the collaborative initiative (see <http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/communication-toolkit/>).

Common Lessons Learned

Through varied approaches, the five projects developed infrastructure and implemented interagency practices to promote TANF and CW collaboration. Their collective implementation and evaluation experiences point to several lessons learned, including those below.

- **Leadership commitment is essential to successful implementation.** Stakeholders across sites noted that success of their initiatives hinged on strong and visible commitment to

collaboration at the highest levels of the agency and clear communication of such commitment to staff at all levels.

- **Relationship building sets the foundation for collaboration.** Formal activities (e.g., cross-training, routine meetings), informal activities (e.g., meals), and shared working experiences promoted relationship building between CW and TANF staff. Projects also worked toward incremental relationship building between staff and program participants. In some cases, this required changing families' negative perceptions of CW and allaying their fears that CW involvement would lead to removal of their children. Relationship building was supported by meaningful engagement and individualized, family-centered services.
- **Taking time to plan and prepare is indispensable.** Collaboration between CW and TANF can represent a significant culture shift as well as organizational and practice changes. The experiences of these projects point to the need for comprehensive assessment and planning before moving ahead with implementation of collaborative strategies and practices. In addition, their experiences suggest that to institutionalize collaboration, jurisdictions need to focus on systems/organizational issues, such as policy changes, compatible information systems, environmental barriers, and staffing needs.
- **Data collection and technological capacity are important considerations in developing and evaluating collaborative efforts.** Data collection and alignment of data from CW and TANF systems were critical elements and considerable challenges in this grant effort and posed limitations in terms of client identification, case tracking, and program evaluation. Future CW/TANF collaborative efforts will need to carefully assess data compatibility across partners and build data management capacity.
- **Meaningful collaboration stems from shared accountability.** The collaborative efforts rested on each partnering program recognizing and accepting shared responsibility for achieving outcomes related to child safety, permanency and family stability, and economic self-sufficiency.

Additional lessons learned specific to individual sites can be found in each grant's site visit report, available from https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/funding/funding_sources/tanfcw.cfm.

Evaluation

The FOA required each grantee to engage in a rigorous evaluation in order to demonstrate potential linkages between project activities and improved outcomes. Each project worked with a local evaluator to construct a logic model, develop a design for a process and outcome evaluation, and collect and analyze data. The evaluation summaries in the Appendix provide a brief overview of each project's research design, data collection tools and methods, evaluation challenges, and selected process and outcome findings as described in project reports.

- Evaluation Challenges
- Evaluation Findings

Evaluation Challenges

The TANF/CW projects experienced a variety of evaluation challenges, which for some had a negative impact on the rigor of their evaluations. All of the projects reported some degree of difficulty identifying and tracking clients whose data resided in separate systems. Several projects

reported smaller than anticipated service populations and/or high attrition rates, resulting in small sample sizes. Other obstacles noted in single project reports included incompatibilities between evaluator and program data systems, turnover and lack of continuity among evaluation contractors and their activities, and changes resulting from agency restructuring.

Additional issues were related to proposed research designs. One project (CO) that relied on random assignment found that clients self-selected out of more intensive interventions. While two projects had initially planned to implement a matched case comparison design, they found that such an approach was not feasible. In AK, there were not sufficient numbers of cases or data (e.g., key socioeconomic factors) needed for the matching design. In NY, staff experienced difficulties in identifying matches among the county's TANF participants.

Evaluation Findings

Programs reported some promising findings related to enhanced TANF/CW coordination and its benefits for participating agencies and service recipients. In particular, two of the strongest evaluations (AK and CA) demonstrated encouraging trends. It is difficult, however, to analyze results across projects because of the significant differences among the projects, their program and evaluation objectives, and their evaluation approaches. In addition, because of the evaluation challenges and resultant limitations, caution must be used in drawing inferences or making generalizations from these findings.

There were perceived improvements in collaborative processes. For example, interviews and surveys with participating staff in CA showed the following:

- The vast majority of participating counties reported that Linkages had moderately or greatly improved their internal operations (97 percent), always or usually enabled cost sharing and maximizing of resources between CW and TANF agencies (91 percent), and improved staff effectiveness (83 percent).
- Three-quarters of case workers reported that Linkages increased their ability to be successful with their clients, and a similar percentage reported having higher job satisfaction as a result of the collaboration.

In addition, interviews and surveys of service recipients in other States suggested customer satisfaction and positive perceptions of project benefits:

- Mothers receiving services from Next Steps saw the NY program as beneficial in helping them navigate CW and TANF systems and perceived improvements in their parenting and child development knowledge.
- Kinship caregivers who received LA KISS services observed that services were more family-focused and generally preferred the services of cross-trained TANF/CW workers as compared with traditional services.
- Family members perceived the CO program to be a substantial source of support resulting in increased access to resources.

The local evaluations examined various indicators to assess case-level outcomes related to aspects of safety, permanency, child and family well-being, parental capability, and family self-sufficiency. The AK project demonstrated positive, statistically significant changes in family outcomes. In particular, clients showed improvements in the domains of environment (e.g., housing stability, income/ employment, and food and nutrition), parental capabilities, family interactions, family safety (e.g., child abuse, domestic violence), and child well-being (e.g., school behavior, mental health, relationships). In addition, participants with concurrent TANF and CW

services performed significantly better than families receiving only CW services on 37 of 48 items measured on the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale.

Several projects, however, were not able to present substantial or conclusive evidence of positive client outcomes. There may be several contributing factors, including the data challenges discussed earlier, particularly, small sample sizes. In addition, child and family outcomes were likely negatively affected by many contextual and environmental factors outside the control of the collaborative effort, notably the poor economic environment and agency changes. Furthermore, coordinated service delivery and child and family data were only observed for a short period of time, while long-term outcome changes for these families with complex problems and multifaceted needs may take more time.

- Overall, the project evaluations appear to suggest improvements in coordination between CW and TANF systems and benefits for families receiving such services as well as the agencies providing them. Additional research and evaluation will be helpful to advance the evidence base and more fully explore the impact of TANF/CW collaborative strategies.

Products

The following products related to TANF/CW collaboration were developed by the TANF/CW projects and are available online.

- Evaluation and Final Reports
- Guidelines and Tools
- Communication Materials

Evaluation and Final Reports

- **Assessing Outcomes Among Dual-System Welfare and Child Welfare Involved Families. Final Program Evaluation Report.** (CO)
http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/Record?w=NATIVE%28%27SIMPLE_SRCH+ph+is+%27%27Assessing+Outcomes+Among+Dual-System+Welfare+and+Child+Welfare+Involved+Families%27%27%27%29&upp=0&rpp=25&order=native%28%27year%27Descend%27%29&r=1&m=1
- **Final Report: Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) Collaboration Between TANF and Child Welfare to Improve Child Welfare Program Outcomes.** (AK)
http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/Blob/83752.pdf?w=NATIVE%28%27SIMPLE_SRCH+ph+is+%27%27Agency+Without+Walls+Final+Report%27%27%27%29&upp=0&rpp=25&order=native%28%27year%27Descend%27%29&r=1&m=1
- **Linkages Project. Statewide Evaluation Final Report.** (CA)
http://www.cfpic.org/pdfs/Linkages-Final-Evaluation-Report_Sept-2011.pdf
- **Louisiana Kinship Integrated Service System, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services: Final Report.** (LA)
http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/Record?w=NATIVE%28%27SIMPLE_SRCH+ph+is+%27%27Kinship+Integrated+Service+System%27%27%27%29&upp=0&rpp=25&order=native%28%27year%27Descend%27%29&r=1&m=1

- **Rockland County, NY, Department of Social Services TANF-Child Welfare Collaboration Project: Final Project Report.** (NY)
<http://tinyurl.com/mx4oz3p>

Guidelines and Tools

- **Guidelines for Enhancing Family Participation Through Coordinated Case Planning.** Drawn from the Linkages' experiences, this publication presents principles and tips for effective family engagement practices when CW and TANF work together.
http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/pdfs/LInkages_Guidelines_Final_CDSS_Online.pdf
- **Linkages Toolkits.** Seven toolkits offer recommendations, program examples, and sample templates useful for jurisdictions pursuing TANF/CW collaboration. Toolkits address:
 - Definitions/key elements (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/definitional-toolkit/>)
 - Assessment and planning (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/assessment-planning-toolkit/>)
 - Training (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/training-toolkit/>)
 - Evaluation (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/evaluation-toolkit/>)
 - Communication (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/communication-toolkit/>)
 - Fiscal approaches (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/fiscal-toolkit/>)
 - Sustainability (<http://www.cfpic.org/toolkit/sustainability-toolkit/>)

Communication Materials

- **Linkages Challenge Video and Communication Materials.** An inspirational video depicts the challenges of collaboration and how two CA counties overcame barriers to better serve children and families. http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_009.htm
- **Informational Brochures.** CO materials describe :
 - JeffCo Community Connection Collaboration Project
https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/site_visit/jeffco_CCC_brochure.pdf
 - Family Group Conferences
https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/site_visit/jeffco_FGC_brochure.pdf

Appendix: Evaluation Summaries

The evaluation summaries below provide a brief overview of each project's research design, data collection tools and methods, evaluation challenges, and selected process and outcome findings as described in project reports.

Alaska, Cook Inlet Tribal Council Collaboration Between TANF and Child Welfare

- Evaluator: Gary Leonardson
Research Design: Quasi-experimental, nonequivalent comparison group design that compared clients receiving services from one department, two departments, and three departments
- Data Collection Sources/Tools:
- North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) (modified version)
 - Case data
- Evaluation Challenges:
- Insufficient cases and information to complete initially planned matched case design
 - Difficulties in accessing client records and data

- Data issues resulting from data being housed on distinct data systems

Process Findings:

- Improvements in interprogram coordination and communication
- Development of standardized data intake process

Client Outcome Findings:

- Clients showed statistically significant pre- to posttest improvements in the NCFAS domains of environment, parental capabilities, family interactions, family safety, and child well-being
- Participants with concurrent TANF and CW services performed better on the majority of NCFAS items, particularly those related to parental capabilities, family interactions, child well-being, and readiness for reunification

California, Linkages Project

Evaluator: Harder + Company Community Research
Research Design: Comparison group design analyzing county indicator data for program population and comparison group not receiving services; longitudinal prospective study of changes in staff perceptions over time

Data Collection Sources/Tools:

- Customized implementation survey
- Customized organizational change survey
- Customized staff survey
- Case studies
- Case data as reported by counties

Evaluation Challenges:

- Disparate CW and TANF data systems, which made it difficult to identify and track outcomes of shared clients
- Lack of comparability across counties reflecting variations in definitions of target populations and service models
- Less than anticipated data available on service populations
- Small sample sizes

Process Findings:

- Improvements in how county CW and TANF staff worked with each other, including adoption of each other's goals, improved internal operations, enhanced resource sharing, and service coordination
- Caseworker reports of increased effectiveness and higher job satisfaction

Client Outcome Findings:

- Promising trends were found in statewide data related to:
 - Lower recurrence of substantiated maltreatment
 - Success in resolving TANF sanctions
 - Reductions in time receiving cash aid
- Results were inconclusive or not promising for outcomes related to:
 - Family reunification
 - Foster care reentry
 - Monthly cash grant amounts
 - Monthly earnings

Evaluation Report:

http://www.cfpic.org/pdfs/Linkages-Final-Evaluation-Report_Sept-2011.pdf

Colorado, Jeffco Community Connection Collaboration Project

Evaluator: Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work

Research Design: Experimental design that compared families randomly assigned to 3 interventions: (1) comprehensive family assessment (CFA) only; (2) CFA and family group conferencing (FGC); and (3) CFA, FGC and parent partner mentor

Data Collection Sources/Tools:

- Comprehensive family assessment data
- North Carolina Family Assessment Scale-General Services (NCFAS-G)
- FGC observation protocol
- Client satisfaction surveys
- Online caseworker survey
- Case studies

Evaluation Challenges:

- Small sample size and follow-up sample size
- Self-selection of clients out of assigned groups, particularly the more intensive interventions
- Difficulties tracking dual-system families

Process Findings:

- Interviews suggested that families perceived the program to be a substantial source of support
- Families expressed that participation engaged them in case planning and decision-making, increased family support, and improved access to resources

Client Outcome Findings:

- Participants reported decreased levels of stress at case closure as indicated on a comprehensive family assessment tool
- While qualitative feedback suggested positive benefits, no statistically significant differences were found in outcome data indicators

Evaluation Report:

http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/Record?w=NATIVE%28%27SIMPLE_SRCH+ph+is+%27%27Assessing+Outcomes+Among+Dual-System+Welfare+and+Child+Welfare+Involved+Families%27%27%29&upp=0&rpp=25&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&r=1&m=1

Louisiana, LA Kiss

Evaluator: Louisiana State University, School of Social Work, Office of Social Service Research and Development

Research Design: Experimental research design with random assignment of CW kinship cases to treatment and control groups

Data Collection Sources/Tools:

- Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory
- Environmental survey of CW and TANF staff
- Children's Depression Inventory
- Customized client data form
- Customized satisfaction survey

Evaluation Challenges:

- Retaining and tracking clients
- Data sharing negatively affected by use of different technologies
- Agency restructuring that resulted in changes in staff and work climate

- Smaller than expected number of participants

Process Findings:

- Increase in worker interagency knowledge
- Workers' perceived improvements in family-focused services
- Strong caregiver satisfaction with program services
- Caregivers' reports of feeling respected by project staff

Client Outcome Findings:

- While there were some signs of improvement in family economic stability, child well-being, safety, and permanency, no findings were statistically significant

Evaluation Report:

http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/Record?w=NATIVE%28%27SIMPLE_SRCH+ph+is+%27%27Kinship+Integrated+Service+System%27%27%27%29&upp=0&rpp=25&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&r=1&m=1&

New York, Rockland County Next Steps

Evaluator: Research Works, Inc.
Research Design: Descriptive research. Initially planned match comparison group design to examine differences in outcomes between program participants and nonparticipating TANF recipients.

Data Collection Sources/Tools:

- Intake and exit interviews of program participants
- Interviews of key staff
- Attendance record analysis

Evaluation Challenges:

- Lack of continuity among three different evaluators over the project period
- Lack of usable data from early project period
- Difficulties in accessing information needed to establish proposed matched group for comparison
- High program attrition rates
- Small sample size

Process Findings:

- Mixed support for interagency collaboration

Client Outcome Findings:

- Participant interviews suggested some evidence of improved parenting skills and child development knowledge
- There were insufficient data to draw conclusions regarding changes in economic self-sufficiency or physical, developmental, and emotional health of children and parents

Evaluation Report (See Attachment C):

<http://tinyurl.com/mx4oz3p>