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UPLIFT - Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork
Final Report

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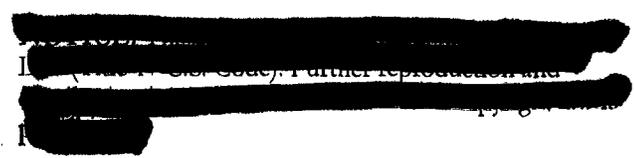


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Executive Summary

Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) started as a seventeen month planning grant in 1999, followed by a three year effort to modify systems and reduce adoption barriers, improve cross-jurisdictional communication, and provide child welfare-judicial joint training. The ultimate goal of Project UPLIFT was to increase and facilitate inter-jurisdictional placements for waiting children. The two objectives of the Project UPLIFT Implementation Phase were to:

- Increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements, and
- Provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Services, interventions, and training activities to meet the implementation objectives were provided through collaborative efforts and are listed below in chronological order. If the activity was a multi-year effort, it is listed in the first year in was part of the project.

- Collaborative Council
- Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)
- Training to use the AFRR
- January 2001 Juvenile Judges Winter Conference
- 2001 Collaborative Council Member Survey
- Fall 2001 Judicial Conference with Judicial Survey
- 2001 County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey
- Report to the Colorado General Assembly on Improving the Process of Achieving Permanency for Colorado’s Waiting Children in Safe / Healthy Adoptive Homes.
- “Parent’s Choices” Instructional Video with accompanied written guide
- Caseworker Termination Training
- January 2002 State Judicial Conference
- Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Training
- Research on Dependency and Neglect Appeals.
- September 2002 Judicial Family Issues Conference
- “Tic, Toc, Watch the Clock” Judicial Training
- January 2003 State Judicial Conference
- Adolescent Connection Pilot Program
- The installation of real time and digital equipment in district courtrooms
- Two Court of Appeals Symposiums on changing rules regarding time frames for the appeal process, and
- 2004 County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey.

Results

There are decreased barriers to adoption as a result of the project. Activities that directly supported that included several stakeholder trainings.

As a result of the project real time and digital equipment was installed in several district court rooms. The Colorado Supreme Court Rule outlining the timeframes for the

Appellate Court process will be implemented. It is expected that the approval of the Rules with a proposed January 1, 2005 implementation will have a significant impact on reducing the time for children to achieve permanency.

Lessons Learned

Objective 1 Lessons learned

- √ The implementation application was due prior to the focus group identified barriers being validated, across systems or counties, or judicial districts.
- √ A comprehensive strategic planning process with all key stakeholders at the state policy making level at the very beginning would have strengthened the project.
- √ Collaborative Council members need to be stakeholders and at a level that has the power to make decisions affecting their organizations.
- √ Surveys need to be short, to the point, and focused.
- √ Identify a built-in reward system to insure accurate and complete survey information provided in a timely manner.

Objective 2 Lessons learned

- √ Understand the resources available and provide accommodations as required to meet stated goal or refine the goal.
- √ Make sure the outcomes are measurable and that data reporting systems are available to supply the required data in the format that is useable
- √ There was no coordinated effort to examine the various Internet Adoption related search engines and to look at either combining or tapping into existing systems.
- √ To the extent possible coordinate schedules and work as a team to anticipate conflicts in setting training opportunities.
- √ Build in enough time when any longitudinal data is expected.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Background information

Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) started as a seventeen month planning grant (October, 1, 1999 through February 28, 2001) to determine the adoption barriers from both child welfare and judicial aspects of permanency planning. At the time of the original request for a planning grant, in the metropolitan Denver alone, at least forty percent of children free for adoption due to the termination of parental rights lacked an adoption plan, and at least another ten percent of the waiting children did not have plans that would specifically lead to permanency.

In the beginning of the planning phase a Collaborative Council was formed to ensure cross-system participation; organize the format, prepare initial questions, and schedule six focus groups; and provide overall project guidance in both the planning and implementation phases of the grant. Additional discussion regarding the Collaborative Council and its membership is provided later on in this chapter. After the first Collaborative Council meeting, Project UPLIFT began by soliciting input into the project from district judges at the January 2000 Colorado Juvenile Judges Conference. To determine the barriers to permanency at the county level throughout the state and to prepare for an implementation grant application, six focus groups were held in different regions of the state and involved key stakeholders from Child Welfare, State Judicial, advocacy groups, service providers, and private adoption agencies. The purpose of the focus groups was to learn what the specific adoption issues and barriers to permanency were at the county level, to implement collaborative planning and begin to identify state level strategies to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions in Colorado. Focus groups were held in Colorado Springs (El Paso and Teller Counties), Pueblo (Pueblo County), Grand Junction (Mesa, Delta and Montrose Counties), Durango (LaPlata and Archuleta Counties and including input from the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe), Ft. Morgan (Morgan, Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Yuma and Washington Counties), and Greeley (Larimer and Weld Counties). The focus groups were beneficial in keying in on and identifying the needs of county workers to promote and expedite the adoption process.

The implementation phase started on April 1, 2001 and ended March 31, 2004, and including several elements, each discussed in detail in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Evaluation Reports for activities held in year three of the implementation phase are provided in Appendix C: Data Collection Instruments, since they were not included in previous bi-annual reports submitted during the course of the project.

Throughout the course of project UPLIFT, there was a combined effort with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Division (CDHS), State Judicial Department (SJD), and private non-profits to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions, and identify and address the barriers to permanency placement for Colorado's waiting children. CDHS and SJD policy and fieldwork data were used to improve cross-jurisdictional communication and provide appropriate training opportunities for both state and county/district level CDHS, SJD and private agency personnel. The project training

was provided to support quality and permanent adoptive placements and services to Colorado's waiting children. Caseworkers' resistance to inter-jurisdictional adoptions and the fragmented recruitment efforts statewide were issues the project addressed, as well as judicial challenges of court backlogs and appellate delays. The implementation phase drew on proactive Colorado initiatives to modify systems and reduce adoption barriers, improve cross-jurisdictional communication, and provide child welfare-judicial joint training. The ultimate goal of Project UPLIFT was to increase and facilitate inter-jurisdictional placements for Colorado's waiting children. The two project implementation objectives to address the goal were:

1. Increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements, and
2. Provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Project Model

The six Focus Groups as described on page one, were held during May, June and September 2000, throughout the state. Barriers were identified that helped formulate the project model for implementation of the project. Identified barriers included:

At the county department of human/social services level:

- ✓ Insufficient communication between counties and other states,
- ✓ Sense of ownership regarding adoptive families,
- ✓ Limited confidence in pre-finalization,
- ✓ Lack and/or availability of post-adoption services,
- ✓ Size of caseloads,
- ✓ County tendency to place younger children first,
- ✓ Reluctance on the part of rural counties to place urban children,
- ✓ Lack of training in Family Group Decision Making,
- ✓ Need for caseworker training on preparing for terminations,
- ✓ Lack of confidence/acceptance of home studies done outside the immediate area,
- ✓ Costs associated with inter-jurisdictional placement travel and coordination,
- ✓ Lack of caseworker Internet access for family searches,
- ✓ Need for speedier paternity determinations,
- ✓ ICPC process issues, and
- ✓ Complications and varying rules in applying the Indian Child Welfare Act.

At the judicial system level:

- ✓ Interstate Compact issues and how to speed the process when awaiting completion of out of state home assessments.
- ✓ Subsidies and the process on how they are determined.
- ✓ Private agencies' role in special needs adoption verses infant adoption planning.
- ✓ Inconsistency from the bench regarding processes that meet ASFA standards,
- ✓ Increased number of appeals in termination cases,
- ✓ No requirement for judges to have experience in area to which they are assigned,
- ✓ Transfer of termination cases to the appellate system hinders tracking, statistical reporting and status of children in care,

- ✓ District Court changes related to ASFA creating new demands on time/resources,
- ✓ Need for more “front-loading” to find other kin,
- ✓ Insufficient caseworker presentation of information to the courts,
- ✓ Need for Guardian ad Litem support for out of state placements,
- ✓ Need for more Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and
- ✓ Need for joint training on family group conferencing.

General system adoption issues:

- ✓ Lack of broad range caseworker planning,
- ✓ Lack of continuity between the foster care and adoption specializations,
- ✓ Financial and workload resistance by private agencies to perform special needs adoption functions,
- ✓ Perception on the part of some caseworkers that their role is a protection specialist, rather than a permanency planning specialist,
- ✓ Limited creativity in identifying potential adoptive families,
- ✓ Frequent caseworker changes and lack of adoption training,
- ✓ Need to include other community partners in early permanency planning efforts,
- ✓ Decisions made without team input,
- ✓ Underutilization of interstate adoption resources for waiting children, and
- ✓ The need for more cross-system training.

The Collaborative Council reviewed the transcripts from the Focus Groups and formulated a plan to meet the identified needs as outlined above. The Collaborative Council was comprised of representatives from the following key stakeholder groups:

One Judge,
One Magistrate,
Three County Department of Human Services representatives,
One State Judicial representative,
One Colorado Department of Human Services representative,
Two County Attorneys,
Two City Attorneys,
One representative from the Adoption Exchange,
One Guardian-ad-Litem (GAL),
One Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) representative,
One Training Consultant representative,
One Private Adoption Agency representative,
Two Court Facilitator representatives, and
The Project Evaluators.

Additional discussion of the Collaborative Council role and responsibilities is provided later in Chapter 1 under collaborative efforts.

Project UPLIFT supported new statutes from the Colorado legislature to positively affect adoptive family resources availability by supporting the creation, and implementation of the Adoptive Family Resource Registry, under the leadership of the Adoption Exchange.

Training was provided to caseworkers throughout the state to county adoption workers and supervisors as well as state staff and private adoption agencies.

In response to the permanency barriers identified and a desire for counties and the courts to work together for solutions to the long term needs of a Colorado's waiting children, youth and their families several project activities were implemented. The activities are listed in alphabetical and not chronological order:

- ✓ Adolescent Connection Pilot Program
- ✓ Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)
- ✓ AFRR adoption worker training
- ✓ Appellate Court research
- ✓ Child welfare caseworker training
- ✓ Collaborative Council participation and input
- ✓ Community training of adoption service providers
- ✓ County level termination training
- ✓ Installation of real time and digital equipment in 10 district judicial courtrooms
- ✓ Judicial Community training "Tic, Toc, Watch The Clock"
- ✓ "Parent's Choices" video for parents considering relinquishment.
- ✓ Report to the Colorado State Legislature
- ✓ Seminars and workshops at state judicial and child welfare conferences
- ✓ Training curriculum development

Collaborative Efforts

From the very beginning application process, Project UPLIFT was a collaborative effort involving the Colorado Department of Human Services Child Welfare Division, Loving Homes, Inc., State Judicial, Nicholson, Spencer and Associates and an outside contractor, Custer Enterprises, to provide a quality evaluation. Initially stated roles of each of the agencies comprising the administrative team were as follows, however, some changes in training options occurred after the project started:

Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) served the project as the lead agency and as such their role was to:

- Provide project direction and coordinate focus with collaborative partners.
- Enlist county administrative support,
- Facilitate communication with key agencies,
- Provide needed statistical data, and
- Conduct ICPC and ICAMA training.

Loving Homes, Inc., a private adoption agency, served the project as the coordinating agency and as such their role was to:

- Provide project coordination,
- Design training on ICPC and ICAMA with CDHS,
- Conduct training on Family Group Decision Making,
- Disseminate project information across system lines,
- Facilitate Project Evaluator's role, and

- Coordinate training and resource manual with CDHS.

Colorado State Judicial actively participated in the project and their role was to:

- Enlist state and district court support and participation,
- Delineate judicial concerns, assessing cross-system protocols,
- Compile needed statistical data, and
- Facilitate communication with courts, county attorneys, and GAL's.

The Adoption Exchange actively participated in the project and their role was to:

- Disseminate child specific placement needs to counties and agencies,
- Link the AFRR to the project through CDHS,
- Provide needed statistical data, and
- Facilitate communication in the private sector.

Nicholson, Spencer and Associates served as the judicial training team and their role in the project was to:

- Conduct training on termination of parental rights,
- Address Family Group Decision Making training issues,
- Assist with judicial and legal community training,
- Facilitate communication within court districts and judicial sectors, and
- Work with Loving Homes and CDHS staff to develop training units.

Upon notification of initial funding the Collaborative Council (CC) was formed and met quarterly throughout the planning phase and the first two years of the implementation phase. The CC members participated in quarterly meetings to guide the project and make recommendations for improvement to achieve project objectives in a timely and collaborative manner. It should be noted that not all CC members served throughout all 53 months of Project UPLIFT. As individual CC members had their job functions change or moved on to other positions, personnel changes occurred within the CC membership and new members joined the CC to continue the appropriate representation mix. These changes in CC membership also served to increase the exposure of the Project. A list of CC membership representation is provided in the project model discussion earlier in Chapter 1. As part of the planning phase, the CC expanded on the preliminary cross-jurisdictional needs assessment by identifying barriers presented by the Colorado county adoption workers, challenges created by the judicial system, as well as general system adoption issues. In the second year of implementation a key stakeholders meeting was added two weeks prior to the full CC meeting to get input and update on all project activities, set the formal agenda for the full council meeting and recommend courses of action that the entire CC membership could consider. This strategy enhanced the ability of the full CC to provide quality input in a timeframe that made the most of everyone's valuable time. Stakeholder and full CC meetings were each held twice in the final year as the need for planning decreased. The last meeting of the stakeholders was in December 2003, and the last full Collaborative Council took place on January 15, 2004.

All Project UPLIFT tasks are performed under the guidance of the Representative of the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Collaborative Council. Loving Homes, Inc. served as the project coordinating agency.

Special Issues

There were several unique components to Project UPLIFT, and some of the specific training design and training opportunities outlined initially did not occur, due to the death of Janelle Peterson, designated Project Coordinator, and expert in the design of training on ICPC and ICAMA and in conducting training on Family Group Decision Making.

Another unforeseen issue was the state fiscal crisis following the events on September 11, 2001, that saw state tax revenues take a nosedive, and produce a rippling effect of personnel and service downsizing throughout all levels of state and county government. Colorado is still feeling the effects of these drastic changes and trying to adjust.

Three reports were made to the Colorado Legislature Joint Budget Committee and the Health, Environment, Welfare and Institutions Committees of both the Senate and the House in 2002. Under the direction of the Colorado State Judicial Department two commission reports were submitted. Project UPLIFT reported on the implementation of HB 1299 in November 2002.

Funding Information

The Project UPLIFT funding began in 1999, as a 17-month planning grant for a total of \$100,000 federal support. Loving Homes provided an in-kind contribution of part of the evaluator's contract, project coordination and administration plus associated fringe benefits for Loving Homes staff and equipment depreciation for a total of \$17,550 in-kind support. The total for both the federal and in-kind support came to \$117,550 for the 17-month planning grant. The CDHS project director was also an in-kind contribution, but not itemized on the budget. The cost each year of the three year Project UPLIFT Implementation Grant was \$250,000 in federal support with a \$27,880 in-kind contribution from Loving Homes for a sub total of \$833,640 for the implementation phase. The total federal contribution to Project UPLIFT over for the 53-month effort was \$850,000, with a total in-kind contribution of \$100,640.

Evaluation Plan and Data Collection Methods

An outside, third party evaluator, Custer Enterprises contracted with Project UPLIFT to provide a quality project evaluation. The evaluation plan was to:

1. Collect quantitative data wherever possible, and resort to qualitative methods where necessary.
2. Monitor all training provided under the Project by means of participant feedback forms, and evaluator participation at the first few sessions, to provide the Project Director and training organization with initial reports based on the first sessions so that modifications to the curriculum and/or delivery could be made in a timely manner. Subsequently full reports were provided at the conclusion of the training based on the full set of feedback forms.

3. Monitor symposia by means of participant feedback forms and evaluator participation with a report to the Project Director and facilitator so that changes as necessary can be made for subsequent symposia.
4. Provide evaluation tools, tabulate, evaluate all state judicial juvenile and family issues conferences and provide reports to State Judicial and the Collaborative Council.
5. Make use of advanced statistics, e.g., Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), where applicable. Use descriptive statistics (mean, mode, etc.) wherever numbers can be collected and the statistics would be meaningful in context.
6. Evaluate the Collaborative Council using meeting minutes, evaluator's notes, and surveys of the participants.
7. Evaluate the Adolescent Connection Pilot Component using workers' time logs, "Intent to Adopt" and "Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact" forms to discover any differences between workers and how they spent their time. A series of ANOVAs was used to determine any difference in the effectiveness of the workers (there were), and to discover if the way in which the various workers spent their time had an effect (it did). The later ANOVA results lead to guidelines on how workers should partition their time amongst the various required tasks.
8. Evaluate the relative effectiveness of the "real time" and "digital" court recording equipment with respect to the time it takes to get a transcript to the Court of Appeals after the appeal is filed. A three way ANOVA is planned once the data become available.
9. Use the Colorado DHS database, Trails, for statewide statistics on children in state care including adoption, inter-jurisdictional placements and other relevant data.
10. Prepare the Final Project UPLIFT Report.

Chapter 2 – Process Evaluation

Work Plan to meet the Implementation Objectives

The two objectives of the Project UPLIFT Implementation Phase were to:

1. Increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements.
2. Provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Loving Homes, Inc. served as the coordinating agency to work with the CDHS and State Judicial, with the Adoption Exchange, Custer Enterprises, and Nicholson, Spencer & Associates assisting with specialized service plans and activities. All contracts for specific work were negotiated and monitored by Loving Homes, Inc. and specific services are discussed as part of the work plan. In addition, four Adolescent Connection Caseworkers received a contract to provide services to children and youth in specific counties. The Adoption Exchange received a contract to administer the Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR). An Appellate Court Researcher, Darcie Bolton, received a contract to provide baseline research on Dependency and Neglect Appeal time frames. Custer Enterprises received contracts each year to provide the comprehensive project evaluation. Nicholson, Spencer & Associates received a contract to provide training, curriculum, and produce an instructional video.

A discussion of the services, interventions, and training for all UPLIFT activities to meet the implementation objectives are outlined below by objective and are in chronological order. If the activity was a multi-year effort, that will be stated along with the duration, intensity, staffing, target population and collaborative efforts. Copies of evaluation tools for the trainings and services provided by the project were included in bi-annual reports. Additional copies are available upon request.

Project UPLIFT helped to establish and financially support the operation of the **Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)** through a contract with The Adoption Exchange and with assistance from the CDHS. Funds from Project UPLIFT partially covered operating and management expenses of this automated system. The Registry provided another option to caseworkers and families in the pursuit of inter-jurisdictional placement of children. The Adoption Exchange hired a coordinator to oversee the registry, register families and caseworkers, and provide training to access and use the system. The AFRR was first showcased at the Colorado Child Welfare Conference held in Vail, Colorado in June 2000, and over the course of the project and up to August 18, 2003, over 150 adoption workers, county adoption supervisors and state staff were trained on the new system in over eleven scheduled training workshops held throughout the state. The trainings were held throughout the state to minimize travel time for attendees and as a result 17 different counties were present at one or more of the trainings. Evaluation feedback forms were developed. Project evaluators tabulated feedback forms, and made reports on training feedback to the Adoption Exchange and made reports on training outcomes to the project leadership and the full Collaborative Council at regularly

scheduled meetings. A training manual was developed, and provided to county department caseworkers. The AFRR Coordinator at the Adoption Exchange presented the AFRR to family groups interested in adopting, and wrote numerous articles that appeared in regional Adoption newsletters. In addition to operating the Registry, the Adoption Exchange provided the project with data sets, and provided the AFRR training throughout the state in order to increase use of this automated system. Feedback from caseworkers trained to access and use the system found the training helpful, and although they indicated they would likely use the AFRR, they probably would not use it regularly. Internet access for caseworkers was an issue for many attendees. AFRR usage was monitored both by the Adoption Exchange and the evaluators routinely. The last Adoption Exchange report, dated January 14, 2004, indicated that 79 qualified families from 22 states are enrolled with 31 of them being from Colorado. The key factor hindering the success of the program continues to be the lack of caseworker participation. This lack of caseworker usage leads to continued frustration among the families enrolled and diminishes their motivation to re-enroll.

In October 2001, and again in February 2004 adoption caseworkers and supervisors in 23 county departments of human/social services were surveyed. In the 2001 survey, Internet access to search for families seeking to adopt was an issue with only 12 counties providing Internet access to caseworkers, and only 6 counties indicated that their caseworkers routinely use the Internet. This information made it axiomatic that AFRR would not be widely used in the counties. In the February 2004 Survey, questions were asked to determine county satisfaction with the AFRR and to evaluate the effectiveness of the AFRR itself. Results indicated that AFRR is only one of several tools available to search for families, and it is still not widely used by adoption caseworkers. The 2004 Survey Report and a comparison between the 2001 and 2004 surveys are provided in Appendix B. The two reports were not finished at the time the last bi-annual report was submitted in June 2004, and that is why it is being included in an appendix of this Final Evaluation Report. Because the 2001 survey was reported earlier, it is only summarized here for reference.

The October 2001 County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey was distributed to 23 county departments of human/social services. All 23 counties responded. The counties included all 10 large counties, 11 medium sized counties and 2 small counties. According to the information provided over 636 children had been placed in adoptive homes from these counties in the previous 12-month period. The number of caseworkers in the child welfare or adoption units numbered 146, with an average caseload per worker of 21. On average the supervisors believed the optimum caseload size should be between 14-15 for a mixed caseload. Thirty-nine of the caseworkers were new hires, and some counties reported they had openings they were unable to fill. Thirteen respondents indicated there were not enough training spots available to train workers, and at the time of the survey 98 caseworkers in these counties needed training in adoption issues, and 51 caseworkers had no training in adoption issues.

Nineteen counties did not have a written policy encouraging communication and collaboration with other counties or states regarding inter-jurisdictional adoptions.

Twenty counties did not have a written policy regarding the acceptance (with or without conditions) of home studies performed outside the immediate area. Recommendations based on the results of the survey are provided in Chapter 5.

Project UPLIFT sponsored the **Juvenile Judges Winter Conference** held in January 2001, and the Project Director and Magistrate Evelyn Sullivan made an effective presentation on achieving permanency for children that made an appropriate introduction to Project UPLIFT's implementation phase, letting the local and district level judiciary know about the project. The project evaluators evaluated the entire judicial conference, and provided feedback to the Collaborative Council and to State Judicial.

The **Collaborative Council** was surveyed in March 2001, to determine whether or not the membership believed the project was on track, and meeting the goals and objectives as set out in the grant application. Results of the survey were very positive, and the evaluator's report was distributed and discussed with the project leadership, and council members. As a result of the survey to twelve council members, more counties were invited to join the council for a more balanced statewide input. The survey results were also discussed in the next 2001 bi-annual report to the federal government.

Judicial Survey at the Fall 2001 Judicial Conference was prepared by the project evaluators, reviewed by the Collaborative Council, and distributed on September 30, 2001 at the conference luncheon. The purpose of the survey was to address inter-jurisdictional adoption issues and solicit opinions from Judges and Magistrates. Fifty-one surveys were completed and tabulated. Of the surveys completed 26 were from Magistrates, 22 from District Court Judges, 2 from Juvenile Court Judges and 1 from an Appellate Court Judge. As a result of the survey workshops and seminars addressing identified issues were presented at all relevant annual state judicial conferences. Evaluations of the conferences were a part of the scope of work for the Project UPLIFT evaluators. All conference evaluation reports were submitted to the project leadership and the Collaborative Council for review and comment. The bi-annual reports included feedback on the seminars presented at the various state judicial and family issues conferences held.

In October 2001, Evaluators completed a final report to the Colorado General Assembly regarding **Improving the Process of Achieving Permanency for Colorado's Waiting Children in Safe and Healthy Adoptive Homes**. The report was delivered to the Project Director, for submission to the Colorado General Assembly. House Bill 99-1299 required this report to be submitted to address three major areas:

1. Progress of adoptive placement of children in the legal custody of county departments of county departments of human/social services,
2. Aspects of the process that may be improved to achieve the goal of permanency for the greatest number of children in safe and healthy adoptive homes, and
3. Recommendations regarding improvements that could be made.

Through the collection of data, research and surveys, the report was completed in conjunction with the work of the project, effectively demonstrating the cross-system effectiveness of Project UPLIFT.

“Parent’s Choices” Instructional Video with accompanied written guide for caseworkers and parent use was developed based on input from the Collaborative Council to provide another instrument and tool to expedite permanency and demonstrate the importance of inter-jurisdictional searches as a way to achieve that goal. The package was designed for use by county caseworkers, judicial districts, GAL’s and shown to parents as they counseled families in their choices regarding the termination of parental rights. The video and guide were scripted, storyboarded and produced under a grant contract to Nicholson, Spencer and Associates with review and input from the Collaborative Council. The video presents a case scenario of a child whose birth parents are unable to complete a treatment plan thus leading to a permanency planning process and inter-jurisdictional placement of the child with kin in another state. The purpose of the video was to increase parent’s awareness of the judicial/social services processes in a dependency case, and was designed to enable parents to visually and emotionally understand the impact of their decisions on the permanent plan for their child(ren).

The video clearly portrays the trauma that a child experiences when parents are unwilling or unable to do whatever it takes for the child to safely return home. Some parents engage in a Family Service Plan (FSP) but do not remedy the circumstances that result in a child being unsafe. The video shows the results when adults make decisions that cause the Court to order that another permanent living arrangement must be made for the child.

The accompanied written video guide clearly and succinctly outlines the dependency and neglect process in Colorado, the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practice, and the FSP process. Details for visitation are outlined as well as the concept for kinship care. As a background to what the video is demonstrating the steps in the permanency process are briefly outlined for parents to understand the steps involved. In addition the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is outlined as well as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

The video and guide package was distributed throughout Colorado free of charge, and marketed to others at a cost recovery rate of \$30.00 plus tax and shipping.

In the summer and fall of 2001, Nicholson, Spencer and Associates (NS&A) wrote the curriculum for **Caseworker Termination Training**. Throughout the process, NS&A consulted with the Project UPLIFT leadership team, made presentations and solicited feedback from the Collaborative Council. The purpose of the training was to enhance the competency level of child welfare caseworkers’ ability to write service plans and acquire judicial decisions regarding termination of parent/child relationships. The training sessions included support of the caseworker’s ability to implement the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The training was pilot field tested in October 2001, and refined on the feedback from those attending the field test. The training was delivered on six occasions between November 13, 2001 and April 5, 2002. Five training sites, Colorado Springs,

Denver, Durango, and Grand Junction were used to minimize attendee travel time. Trainees completed feedback forms that were developed by the project evaluators. Each training was evaluated based on the completed feedback forms. Completed forms were tabulated, and a report was generated. The training was very well received, and the trainees overwhelmingly (94%) believed the content included information they could use in practice, and that the training should be offered to other practitioners. The trainees suggested that future training should be two days rather than one, and that there should be an introductory class followed by a more advanced class.

Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Training was sponsored by Project UPLIFT in May 2002. The purpose of the training was to enable county workers to have the ability to appropriately respond to racial and ethnical barriers by possessing a better understanding of cultural competence and diversity for all children in the foster care system. To address cultural issues that prevent cross-jurisdictional placements due to a lack of understanding as to how other cultures best meet basic human needs Project UPLIFT sponsored three Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) trainings conducted by Valerie Morgan Austin, an attorney with the Office of Civil Rights based in Denver. The training was available either on site, or by teleconferencing. Seventy-seven participants representing 10 counties participated. The majority of participants were caseworkers, however private adoption agencies, county adoption supervisors, county/state administrators, and county attorneys were also represented. Participants were asked to complete a training feedback evaluation form, and the evaluators prepared a report and presented it to the project director and the Collaborative Council. The report was also referenced in the appropriate biannual report. In summary, all participants agreed that the trainer knew the subject well, presented a positive attitude and solicited questions and feedback. Ninety-six percent of those attending indicated the training contained information they could use in practice. Ninety-three percent indicated that as a result of the training they have the ability to apply MEPA/IEP standards to cases and make decisions that are based on sound child welfare practice.

The project contracted with Darcie Bolton, in the fall of 2002 to conduct research on **Dependency and Neglect Appeals**. The research consisted of a review of Colorado Court of Appeals 2001 cases in dependency and neglect proceedings. One specific focus was to review the cases for overall trends and timeliness throughout the appellate process. Findings are discussed in Chapter 4. As a result of this research, activities for the third year were developed that included the installation of digital and real time recording equipment in nine judicial district courtrooms, and two Court of Appeals Symposiums were held to look at restructuring the appellate process on dependency and neglect cases.

“Tic, Toc, Watch the Clock” or **“Getting to Permanency in a Timely Fashion”** was a series of one-day, six-hour training opportunities for Colorado’s judges, magistrates, court facilitators and county attorneys representing the petitioner in dependency and neglect cases. The purpose of the training was to identify the urgency and time frames for the permanency planning process, explore the roles and responsibilities of the professionals in the process, understand the impact of new federal legislation, and become familiar with Title IV-E and social services code requirements.

The curriculum was developed and delivered by Nicholson, Spencer and Associates after input from the Collaborative Council. Three trainings were held in January and February 2003. One or more representatives from 12 different county or judicial districts attended.

Three training dates had to be canceled due to lack of sign up participation from judges and other legal professionals, and the training that occurred had to be re-scheduled three times. These reschedulings occurred as a result of many factors related to changes in the Judicial Department. Attendance was hampered as a result of many activities, including training opportunities being offered by State Judicial at the same time, and was not related to a lack of interest in the topic of inter-jurisdictional barriers to permanency. The evaluations indicate that the judges, magistrates, court facilitators, and county attorneys were pleased with the information and opportunity to learn more about the assessment and case planning information caseworkers use in their preparation for court cases. Two documents were provided to the judges in addition to a book on separation and loss and an expansive notebook containing resources for the judges. The judges that were able to make it were disappointed that more judges were not in attendance but recent and severe cut backs in state funding for the judicial department was often given as the reason more judges did not attend.

In addition, many local and state issues contributed to the State Judicial need for re-scheduling and canceling some of the training dates. The trainings that did occur were very well received and feedback forms returned, and ratings of competencies, trainer skills, and workshop content were all in the high 90% range. The evaluations reflect the overwhelmingly positive regard the judges had for the curriculum and the trainer. Many barriers were confronted and resolutions were discussed and hopefully implemented by the various judicial districts represented in the training. Trainees said they came away with a better comprehension of how the process should progress, a better understanding of the role of each of the players, the importance of permanency planning, a greater understanding of trauma and stages of separational loss and the impact the court process has on all parties. All trainees received a notebook full of resources and copies of Claudia Jewett's book, "**Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss.**" as well as "Resource Guidelines – Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases".

Adolescent Connection Pilot Program – an eight-month program ended in February 2003 that supported fifty-six adolescent participants with the goal of re-establishing supportive relationships and if possible, permanent living relationships, with individuals previously involved with the adolescents, including parents and other relatives. The program achieved a high degree of documented success providing one hundred twenty-two connections. Lessons learned are outlined in Chapter one of this report.

The final year of the Project focused on helping the judicial system eliminate or reduce factors that lead to delays in child permanency. Activities in the third year included:

1. The installation of real time and digital equipment in district courtrooms with the goal to make transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average of 112 days.

2. Conduct two Court of Appeals Symposiums to focus on changing the Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process.
3. Support for the active use of the Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR) to increase the number of children placed across jurisdictional lines.
4. Conduct a second county adoption supervisors survey to determine county level use and issues regarding the use of the AFRR.

Real time and Digital Equipment was provided to over 25 county court rooms in 9 judicial districts for the purpose of making transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average time frame of 112 days. A preliminary report on the use of the equipment in the first six months of 2004 is provided in Appendix B, and titled “Court Recording Equipment Upgrade Report”. As of the date the final report is being submitted, not enough data (appeals filed and processed) is available to make any informed judgments regarding the effects this equipment will make. The equipment has not been in use for very long, not enough appeal cases have used the equipment and The Court of Appeals rules have not yet been changed.

Two **Court of Appeals Symposiums** were held in February 2004. State Judicial and the Court Improvement Project with the support of the Chief Judge of the Colorado Court of Appeals hosted the symposiums. The focus of the forums was to focus on changing the Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process.

The **Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)** use was addressed in reports from the Adoption Exchange and earlier in this chapter. One of the primary goals of the second adoption supervisors survey conducted in 2004 was to determine county level use and issues regarding the use of the AFRR. The 19 counties reporting indicated that staff all had access to the Internet, and that it was more readily available for use. This is a definite improvement over what was reported in 2001. AFRR was listed as a tool available. However, when asked what tools have been helpful in seeking and obtaining inter jurisdictional placements AFRR is only one of several tools available to search for families, and it is still not widely used by adoption caseworkers. Tools used with more frequency included, in order of use, kinship search, AdoptUSKids, CARR photo listing, adoption parties, and newspaper ads. The 2004 County Adoption Supervisor and Child Welfare Administrator Survey report is provided in Appendix – B, along with a comparison report titled “Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor Survey Results: 2001 vs. 2004”. The 2004 Survey contained 32 questions, some of them multi-part, as compared to the 2001 Survey that contained 22 items. Respondents were from the same 23 counties. In 2001, all 23 counties responded. In 2004 only 19 surveys were received.

Research Questions

The first implementation phase objective was to increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements. Questions to assess the level of achievement of objective one are:

1. Was training provided to judges, the legal community, caseworkers, supervisors, and partner agencies as an integral part of increasing the number of inter-jurisdictional adoptions?
2. Was a resource pool of waiting families developed using the AFRR as a means of sharing resources more effectively?
3. How successful was the project in developing collaborative relationships with other agencies and organizations?
4. Did the project demonstrate the advantages of inter-jurisdictional placements in culturally appropriate environments and services for children?

In answer to question number one, several specific training opportunities were made available throughout the state in varied venues to include all key stakeholders and to support inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements. The training opportunities provided have been highlighted, with evaluation data provided for each training.

Children continue to achieve permanency in shorter time frames. Counties report anecdotally that the spirit of the law to provide expedited permanency planning is being met. The number of inter-jurisdictional adoptions statewide has increased, as illustrated by the Trails data provided in Chapter 4. The courts as a whole have improved their compliance with the EPP timelines and a Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process is in the process for implementation in January 2005.

The resource pool of waiting families has increased, however the use of the AFRR by caseworkers has declined and that issue is discussed elsewhere in this chapter and also in the reports provided in Appendix B.

The project was very successful in developing collaborative relationships with public and private agencies and organizations. Several MOU's were negotiated with most key stakeholders in providing adoption and support systems to Colorado's waiting children and are still in place and functioning. Additional funding sources for specific projects have also been negotiated and some are still in the planning stages.

The project did provide MEPA training, and as a matter of best practice policy, all placements consider culture factors and appropriate placement environments for children and youth. The core training, as well as the annual Child Welfare conferences continues to address and reinforce culturally appropriate environments and services for children throughout Colorado. At the state and county level, this is a priority.

Objective one of the Project UPLIFT implementation phase was to increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements.

Before discussing the lessons learned in the project, it should be noted that the project lost its leader, Janelle Peterson, CEO of Loving Homes and designated Project UPLIFT Coordinator, shortly after the planning phase started. Janelle suddenly became ill, was hospitalized from May 20, 2000, until she passed away on October 3, 2000. In addition, and unfortunately, early on in the planning phase, the federal authority requested the completion of the implementation phase application.

Objective 1 Lessons learned

- √ It would have been extremely helpful not to have had to submit the implementation application so close to the start of the initial planning phase, because, based on the focus group input barriers were not validated, across systems or counties, or judicial districts. If the opportunity were available to start over, it would have been very valuable to have more time to validate focus group input. One of the ways this could have occurred would have been to conduct a comprehensive strategic planning process with all key stakeholders at the state policy making level. And, as a second step request local validation and buy-in regarding the implementation objectives and activities to meet those objectives.

- √ Regarding the Collaborative Council, by the end of the first year of implementation it was made clear that the full Collaborative Council meetings were way too long. Decision makers did not have that much time to devote to small portion of their workload, therefore, the UPLIFT project leadership jointly decided to have two shorter audience focused meetings each quarter rather than one long one including the full council. Many details could be discussed. Starting in the second year of implementation a stakeholders meeting, with the project leadership and decision makers only was added and convened two weeks prior to the full Collaborative Council Meeting. The Stakeholder Meeting's purpose was to get input on what was happening at CDHS, SJD and at private agencies that would impact UPLIFT and hear an update on all project activities. As issues arose that would require a course change, or involve a decision at a higher department level the stakeholders would recommend and propose some possible choices of appropriate courses of action for the full council membership to consider. The stakeholders also set the formal agenda for the full council meeting. This strategy enhanced the ability of the full council to provide quality input in a time frame that made the most of everyone's valuable time. All council members felt that this change made sense, and valued their contribution to the project. Stakeholder and full council meetings were each held twice in the final year as the need for planning decreased.

- √ Regarding the County Adoption Surveys, there were two reasons for the first survey, first it was a legislative imperative and second to guard against the anticipated failure of the Trails system to provide the data. The second survey was broader in scope, and based upon lessons we learned from the first survey. In future surveys the evaluators can learn from the mistakes made. The evaluators will provide more planning guidance at the beginning. It is very important to make sure that results of all surveys are available to participants that take the time to complete and return the survey.

Next time, the survey needs to include a built-in reward system for accurately and completely responding to the survey in a timely manner.

The second implementation phase objective was to provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Objective 2 Lessons learned

- √ Based on the October 2001 County Adoption Supervisor survey it was clear more county level access to the Internet was needed, and this was going to impact AFRR use and value to some county departments. There were no funds available to address this nor was there a recommendation to the state department to solicit buy-in to remedy this deficit. In addition, the design of the TRAILS statewide reporting system did not include the AFRR, nor was there any state level support to include it.
- √ There was no coordinated effort to examine the various Internet Adoption related search engines and to look at either combining or tapping into existing systems. The AFRR was established by a legislative initiative, and then was not supported properly so that it had a chance to be successful.
- √ It is important to coordinate schedules and work as a team to anticipate conflicts in setting training opportunities. Specific time frame Judicial Training was developed by Project UPLIFT and occurred in January and February 2003, after being re-scheduled three times. These rescheduling occurred as a result of many factors related to changes in the Judicial Department. Attendance was hampered as a result of many activities, including training opportunities being offered by State Judicial at the same time, and was not related to a lack of interest in the topic of inter-jurisdictional barriers to permanency.
- √ More time is required when any longitudinal data is expected. For example, in year three of the implementation phase digital and real time equipment was installed in district court rooms. The equipment has only been in place for about six months. It is way too early to make any informed judgments regarding the effects this equipment will make over time to reduce the time of appeal. The equipment has not been in use for very long and The Court of Appeals rule has not yet been changed.

Chapter 3 – Outcome Evaluation **Outcome Objective**

Improved Service Coordination

Coordination of services was improved as a direct and indirect result of Project UPLIFT. The Commission on Families in Colorado Courts Final Report in August 2002, found a need for special training in family issues for judges and magistrates hearing family cases. The Commission recommended training in the fundamentals of family law, and provision of docket coverage to allow adequate time for training. The goal was to provide thorough and ongoing training for judicial officers to enable the courts to make better-informed decisions for families. Project UPLIFT was able to support the Commission's recommendation by providing several seminars in several judicial conferences starting with the Juvenile Judges Winter Conference in January 2001.

Decreased Barriers to Adoption

There are decreased barriers to adoption as a result of the project. To identify barriers and provide project direction focus groups were followed by several surveys. Activities that directly supported the following stakeholder training opportunities reaching over 1000 human service and judicial professionals: Training to use the AFRR, five judicial conferences, three state child welfare conferences, caseworker training to enhance the competency level of child welfare caseworkers' ability to write service plans and acquire judicial decisions regarding termination of parent/child relationships, Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Training to provide best practice policy in considering culture factors and appropriate placement environments for children and youth, and judicial training to identify the urgency and time frames for the permanency planning process, explore the roles and responsibilities of the professionals in the process, understand the impact of new federal legislation, and become familiar with Title IV-E and social services code requirements.

The "Parent's Choices" Instructional Video with accompanied users guide clearly and succinctly outlines the dependency and neglect process in Colorado, the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practice, and the FSP process. The permanency process steps are briefly outlined for parents to understand the course of action involved. In addition the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is outlined as well as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The video and guide package was distributed throughout Colorado free of charge, and marketed to other states.

Results on the research conducted on Dependency and Neglect Appeals lead to the installation of real time and digital equipment in district courtrooms to make transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average of 112 days. In addition, two Court of Appeals Symposiums were conducted to focus on changing the Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process.

Decreased Time in Out-of-Home Care

Children continue to achieve permanency in shorter time frames. Counties report anecdotally that the spirit of the law to provide expedited permanency planning is being met. The number of inter-jurisdictional adoptions statewide has increased, as illustrated by the Trails data provided in Chapter 4. The courts as a whole have improved their compliance with the EPP timelines and a Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process is in the process for implementation in January 2005.

From the data the project was able to compile from county surveys and the state Trails data system there does appear to have been a documented decrease in the time children and youth are in out-of-home care.

Certainly the biggest project success in decreasing time in out-of-home care came from the **Adolescent Connection Pilot Program** – an eight-month program that supported fifty-six adolescent participants with the goal of re-establishing supportive relationships and if possible, permanent living relationships, with individuals previously involved with the adolescents, including parents and other relatives. The program achieved a high degree of documented success providing one hundred twenty-two connections. The report on that program is provided in Appendix A.

The collaboration with state judicial was also a contributing factor that will continue to have a positive impact on decreasing time in out of home care, particularly after the change in time frames for the appeal process.

Chapter 4 – Use of Program Implementation Data to Understand Outcomes

At the time the application for Project UPLIFT was written the grant request author reported that there were 1,060 cases of children in the legal custody of counties in Colorado and that of those 725 children were free for adoption. When the grant was funded, evaluators requested baseline data from the CDHS Division of Child Welfare Research and Data Analysis Unit with yearly status reports. The CDHS and the data unit have graciously tried to provide the evaluators with the needed data to support Project UPLIFT needs. However, there have been several challenges to meeting this request.

The State of Colorado started the implementation of Trails, the new Automated Tracking System in January 2001, according to Ronald M. Ozga, Applications Director, Children Youth and Families Services, CDHS, Office of Information Technology Services. Trails is managed by the CDHS Division of Child Welfare Research and Data Analysis Unit. The conversion of data into the Trails Automated Tracking System is still taking place, and the system continues to evolve. County caseworkers that enter data into Trails are still being trained at the time this report is submitted (July 2004). Along with the conversion into Trails, many of the data field definitions have been modified or changed.

Unfortunately the changes being made are not compatible with the evaluator needs for Project UPLIFT. The data reported below is a “snapshot” look at what the data is for the particular month reported, and not a yearly report of numbers of children served over time, and because data field definitions change, some fields in the tables are blank. Because of this, it is impossible to draw firm conclusions regarding the impact Project UPLIFT has had on increasing inter-jurisdictional placements. Nevertheless, we present the available data here in this report with the above understanding and ask the reader to draw whatever conclusions they feel appropriate. The documented closure goal for all children in out of home placement between 12/2000 and 12/2003 according to data provided from the Trails Automatic Tracking System is outlined in the table starting below and continuing on page 2:

	12/00	12/01	12/02	12/03
No Value Entered into Trails		63	55	40
Case Plan Not Yet Established	71	21	4	
Non-relative Adoption	1,207	873	894	914
Emancipation		249	86	15
Guardianship	58	26	14	5
Legal Guardianship/Permanent Custody (non-relative)		11	18	15
Long Term Foster Care		682	417	183
Live with Other Relatives	236	101	56	31
Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement/LT Relative		62	130	
Other Planned Perm. Living Arrangement/Emancipation	541	240	363	412
	12/00	12/01	12/02	12/03
Other Planned Perm. Living Arrangement/LT Foster Care	972	222	404	558

Planned Specified Permanent Living Arrangement		14	17	14
Permanent Placement with Relative/Adoption		156	273	334
Permanent Placement with Relative/Legal Guardianship		112	161	186
Remain Home	337	613	561	362
Return Home	3,860	3,931	4,104	3,988
09	1			
Total	7,283	7,376	7,557	7,225

Of the children having a Closure of Adoption in Out of Home Care:

	12/00	12/01	12/02	12/03
Child Placed Out of State		55	35	20
Unable to Determine/Missing Data		79	86	124
Child Placed in Colorado		739	773	770
Total	1,207	873	894	914

Did particular policies, practices or procedures appear to be particularly effective in fostering the attainment of desired outcomes? Yes, two examples come immediately to mind. First, this was particularly true with regard to the research contract let in 2002 to focus on achieving and expediting permanency in cases appealed to the Colorado Court of Appeals. Darcie Bolton, a contract worker from State Judicial, reviewed Colorado Appeals dependency and neglect proceedings from July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001. The focus of the inquiry was to review the cases for overall trends and timeliness throughout the appellate process and determine if the particular jurisdiction from which the appeal arose had any bearing on its timelessness. The third part of the research was to search case law, rules, and policies nationwide for best practices in other states that could expedite permanency in Colorado. Traditionally, Colorado expedites dependency and neglect appeals by giving them precedence on the Court’s docket.

That one-year timeframe studied 3,313 dependency and neglect cases that were filed in trial courts in Colorado, and of those, 124 were appealed to the Court of Appeals. Of the 124 cases that were appealed, 81 cases were ruled on by the Court of Appeals while the other 43 cases were closed, consolidated, or dismissed. The research focused on the 81 cases ruled on by the Court of Appeals, and of those, 79 addressed termination of parental rights and 2 addressed allocation of parental responsibilities.

An examination of the 81 cases ruled upon by the Court of Appeals lead to several interesting findings regarding trends and timeliness. First, the beginning stage of the appellate process may take an excessive number of days. Specifically, from the time the appealing party files his or her notice of appeal to the time the record of the proceedings is received by the appellate court took anywhere from 61 to 259 days. While the Colorado Appellate Rules allow 90 days between the notice of appeal and the filing of

the record, the average number of days for this procedure is 112 days. Second, the 81 cases studied took anywhere from 258 to 649 days to resolve and averaged 354 days. For the children who are the subjects of these appeals, the time frames indicate even further delays in achieving permanency and a loving home.

This research was shared with the Collaborative Council and the Chief Justice of the Colorado Court of Appeals. As a direct result, one of the third year project objectives focused on system change with State Judicial including the installation of real time and digital recording systems in district court rooms and two Court of Appeals Symposiums aimed at reforming the appeal process in order to reduce the overall time required to resolve the issues.

Second, the Adolescent Connection Component Pilot was particularly effective in fostering the attainment of desired outcomes to provide permanency for waiting children and youth. Grant funds were used to provide contract caseworkers to specifically assist counties in finding connections for children and youth. This additional person in the county was able to focus on finding connections for the youth. And, by being an “outsider” was able to better interact with youth and their extended family members. County administration was able to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy without having to commit scarce resources to the endeavor. One very successful, effective and time saving tool contract caseworkers employed was to access Internet resources such as servers, directories, record files, search engines, and governmental databases to search for lost relatives or old family friends for youth. The most effective search engine for the contract caseworkers in Colorado was <http://www.merlindata.com>.

What characteristics of staff fostered attainment of desired outcomes? Throughout the 53-month endeavor the Project UPLIFT staff team, members of the Collaborative Council at any given time, and contract workers all demonstrated competence, diligence, and a sincere commitment and desire to impact and improve policies and procedures that expedite permanency for Colorado’s waiting children.

Were there project components that appeared to be more effective than others?

The Adolescent Connection Component was by far the most effective component of Project UPLIFT. The eight-month effort resulted in 122 permanent connections for 57 of Colorado’s waiting youth AND 14 youth found loving homes through adoption.

In evaluating the various trainings that were delivered it was extremely helpful to review the participant comments on the most important things learned, ways the training will help their customers, and how the training could have been improved. Trainers, evaluators and the Collaborative Council reviewed the comments made, and as warranted improvements were implemented in subsequent trainings to make the training more responsive to trainee and county program needs.

The impact of the State Judicial third year grant components would have been better understood if the grant had one more year to evaluate the outcomes. Because the real time and digital equipment has been in place and in regular use for less than a year, it really is not possible to evaluate the long-term impact this will have on making transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average of 112 days. In addition the results of the two Court of Appeals Symposiums can be reported, but not the changing of the Supreme Court Rule regarding timeframes for attorneys during the appeal process. Fortunately, the long-term impact will be evaluated as a component of a new project, if the application submitted earlier this month is funded. The State Court Administrator, Gerald A. Marroney has provided a collaboration and support letter verifying that they will provide the data for that longitudinal study.

Did any project components produce unintended consequences? Yes, in the October 2001 survey of adoption supervisors, Internet access to search for families seeking to adopt was an issue throughout the state with only 6 counties out of the 23 surveyed indicating that their caseworkers routinely use the Internet. This information made it axiomatic that AFRR would not be widely used in the county caseworkers to match waiting children in their caseloads with loving families looking for children to adopt.

The second survey of adoption supervisors verified the issues regarding caseworker use of the AFRR. The survey is discussed in Chapter 2, and a copy of the survey report is provided in Appendix – C. In summary, the results of the second survey confirmed:

1. All 19 counties reporting indicated that staff has some access to the Internet and that access has become more available to workers since the last survey.
2. However routine access to assist caseworkers with Internet family searches to match waiting children with approved families is not available to all county adoption workers employed in Colorado.
3. At least four other Internet based search engines are available and used more frequency than the AFRR.
4. Not all county staff have had AFRR training and few staff use the AFRR. Reasons stated included: no placements, caseworker time constraint, experience with AFRR, lack of awareness, and supervisor not encouraging use.

Chapter 5 – Recommendations for Future Policies, Programs and Evaluations

In this chapter project staff discuss programmatic recommendations for future policies, programs, projects and evaluations to program administrators and federal adoption opportunity grant administrators based on evaluation results and lessons learned.

A. The Collaborative Council was composed of state and county level decision makers as well as county and district level line staff. The council was instrumental in reviewing project procedures and activities, making positive suggestions for improvements, making project course directions in a timely manner, and keeping all decision makers informed. As discussed in Chapter 2, lessons learned, by the end of the first year of implementation, it was clear that Collaborative Council meetings were too long and time consuming.

Recommendations:

The Collaborative Council (CC) should be multi-level. It should be composed of decision makers and the evaluators. The staff work and resources should be delegated to one or more Council members who would take the work off-line and report progress back to the CC. The CC should not spend time trying to solve problems on-line, only identify problems and hear reports. This greatly reduces the time required. It is imperative that the decision makers attend and buy into action plans; experience has shown that they are reluctant to do so if meetings are devoted to minutia.

1. Include agency/department leadership decision makers (not staff) on advisory councils so that problem identification and policy decisions can be considered and made at the highest implementation level. These council members should have the authority to commit resources, not just report back to the real decision maker.
2. Identified problems should be assigned to a subcommittee for recommended plan(s) of action and possible resolution. Resources should be committed at the time of subcommittee formation by those having them. The subcommittee should report back with one or more proposed solutions. The CC would restrict itself to identifying problems, hearing reports, and adopting or rejecting plans.
3. Schedule meetings, invite the appropriate attendees, publish a formal agenda (e.g., subcommittee reports, problems to be discussed) in advance of the meeting and provide choices to make the most of everyone's time. Follow up with phone calls to make sure key members will be in attendance. Solicitation of suggested problem areas should be made well in advance so they can be included on the agenda so that all interested parties will be motivated to attend.

B. Community Focus Groups were held at the very beginning of the planning process and as a result of feedback from the focus groups, an overall project focus and direction was established. Lessons were learned that would improve future projects.

Recommendations:

1. Provide a brief or background paper to attendees prior to the focus group or symposium meeting to give time to collect thoughts and ideas.
2. Include all agencies and entities involved in the issue (i.e. adoption in this case).

3. Include all geographic areas, counties and/or districts to be involved.
4. Provide recorders for focus groups and break out meetings.
5. Follow-up with a strategic planning process to validate issues and ideas recorded.

C. Access to the appropriate data is critical to reporting results of an initiative. As stated in Chapter 4, Research and Data Analysis Unit staff at CDHS indicated that some fields were being left blank by caseworkers at the time that the new Trails system was being implemented. Therefore, the extent to which Project UPLIFT had an impact on inter-jurisdictional placements over the 53-month project could not be determined with any accuracy. This situation was not within the control of any collaborative partner or the project itself.

Recommendation: Data collection protocols need to be established at the very beginning of a project with appropriate agreements in the form of memorandums of understanding (MOU) in place to assure access to the appropriate data. If necessary provide a budget line item in the grant to support data collection by appropriate staff with the necessary access permissions, or make access available to evaluator staff.

D. Results of the October 2001 County Adoption Supervisor Survey, discussed in Chapter 2, produced both service and training recommendations. The recommendations were stated in the Evaluation Report, and considered in the implementation of the project. The recommendations are still appropriate today and for other projects.

Service Recommendations:

1. Insure services provided by all agencies follow the child when a child is placed in another jurisdiction. Examples of the service agencies include Community Center Boards, local education agencies including Boards of Cooperative Education, Medicaid, Mental Health, and regional public health organizations.
2. Provide Internet availability and flexibility to all adoption caseworkers.
3. Provide fiscal flexibility to counties to support identified post-adoption services.
4. Develop a procedure to address allocations of subsidies.
5. Convene a work group to determine whether or not written policies are needed in Colorado to foster collaboration among counties and states to support inter-jurisdictional adoptions.

Training Recommendations:

1. Include adoption issues in initial Child Welfare caseworker CORE Training.
2. Develop a training curriculum addressing disrupted adoption issues.
3. Schedule and deliver more training opportunities outside of major metropolitan areas through long distance learning venues to increase participation of local social services staff and decrease the amount of time away from home and work.

E. A September 2002 Commission report to the Colorado Legislature concerning out of home placement deviations had implications on project activities and addressed the issue

of costs to county departments to provide out of home care in cases when a judge or magistrate orders a different placement than the one advocated by the department.

Recommendations:

1. Keep abreast of other state task force and commission work that may have an impact on the current project activities.
2. Validate information for accuracy.

F. The short Adolescent Connection Component Pilot was extremely successful, so much so that counties and project staff alike all wished there were funds to continue the program. As a result, this summer Colorado has applied for funding with this initiative being a focus. Important lessons were learned from this pilot. Many case files lack clear and succinct information about family connections. Youth may know of family and others from their past but usually do not know full names and contact information. Because contractors are not employees of the county departments, parents are often able to move beyond their anger at the system to do what is best for their child(ren).

Recommendations:

1. Build relationships with county departments and keep them informed.
2. A clear set of guidelines, protocols, policies and procedures to implement the program must be agreed upon at the onset.
3. Employ skilled child welfare or adoption caseworkers as contractors.
4. Reinforce with contractors that it is more important to spend more time on finding connections and less time reviewing case files.
5. View each youth in positive terms, and not for their diagnoses or weaknesses.
6. Keep accurate case records and update regularly and use an action plan.
7. Meet with or correspond by email with each county caseworker on a weekly basis to keep everyone on track and informed.
8. Provide grant funding to pay for and use a variety of Internet search engines to find lost family and other contacts.
9. Use phone cards to support contact between new connections and the youth.
10. Provide travel funds in the budget to facilitate face-to-face contact between youth and relatives or contacts.

Appendix A: Example of Successes

Adolescent Connection

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

The Adolescent Connection is a part of year two of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Adoption Opportunity Grant # 90-CO-0096/01. The purpose of Project UPLIFT is to demonstrate and use a combined effort with the Colorado Department of Human Services, State Judicial and private non-profits to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions and to address and identify the barriers to placements. Project UPLIFT is designed to modify systems to reduce adoption barriers.

Project UPLIFT provided an outstanding opportunity to pilot a new, innovative program to facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections and placements for Colorado's waiting youth. The program, called **Adolescent Connection**, connected adolescent youth with previously involved adults in order to reestablish supportive relationships, and in some cases permanent relationships, as these young people approach adulthood and emancipation.

Four Adolescent Connection Workers (AC Workers) were hired on an eight-month contract with grant monies and the first workers began work in May, 2002. All the AC Workers had child welfare social work education, training and experience.

The Colorado counties in the pilot included: Adams, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, and Mesa. A total of fifty-nine youth, ages seven through 18 years of age were assigned to the AC Workers. During the program, county staff removed three youth from the program due to unforeseen complications in the individual cases. Therefore, data on these youth is fragmented and not included in the analysis.

In preparation for the program Project UPLIFT staff collected information and sample forms from other states that have experience in going the extra mile to establish connections for their waiting youth. From the samples, the Adolescent Connection Supervisor, AC Workers, and the evaluator developed specific forms to use in this pilot.

Fifty-six youth participated to conclusion in the pilot. Ethnic make up included one Asian / Pacific Islander, eight Black, thirty-five Caucasian, nine Hispanic, and three Native American youth.

Many of the youth had multiple barriers to making connections and a few had no barriers.

The evaluation methodology included both qualitative as well as quantitative analyses. The quantitative portion was innovative in that a unique measure of success was constructed that results in a single number that includes both the estimated importance (adoption being more important to the youth than, for example, a telephone call), permanency and number of relationships. Advanced statistical procedures were used, including analysis of variance, that incorporated this measure.

A total of one hundred twenty-two connections were made with a mean success level of 7.20 for the youth participating. Forty-seven of the participating youth had at least one connection; only eight had none, and of these two did not wish any. These connections have proven to be very beneficial to the youth involved. Thus 87% of the youth were benefited. The remainder have a great many severe barriers that discourage personal relationships.

Ninety-one of the connections made were inter-jurisdictional. Of the inter-jurisdictional connections two resulted in adoptions in progress, seven resulted in intents to adopt with a form signed, two resulted in intents to reunify with family, three resulted in intents to adopt with no

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

form signed totaling fourteen very highly positive outcomes; these highly positive cases were 25% of the youth. **These fourteen youths represent a substantial savings to the taxpayer over and above the program cost!**

Forty-four youth did not change their initial goal, and nine did after they received more information about the connections they wished to establish. In some cases the change of goal occurred after a long distance trip, or face to face discussions with the adult they wanted a connection with, or other choices became available as the process of finding connections proceeded.

A correlation matrix was constructed using success level, age, gender, race, level of care, number of failed adoptions, the 7 barriers to adoption, number of interjurisdictional contacts, the total number of contacts, the AC Worker code, and the eight measures of how the AC Workers spent their time. Two statistically significant correlations with the success level were found: with total number of contacts found and the worker. Another set of correlations was found between the worker and three of the barriers; this type of correlation is usually considered disturbing because it tends to indicate that the sampling methodology was less than ideal. An analysis showed that any error in sampling technique had minimal consequences. Nevertheless a conclusion is included that it might be wise to pay special attention to the sampling process in future programs.

It was expected that there might be differences in the approaches, methods and effectiveness of the AC Workers. An analysis showed that one worker was 164% more effective than the average of the other three. A detailed analysis appears on page 15.

Four conclusions are listed:

1. The Adolescent Connection Program produced a very positive economic impact.
2. Many youth benefited and none were harmed. At the same time many families benefited and none were harmed.
3. There seem to be significant differences in the effectiveness of the AC Workers.
4. More effort in supervising and monitoring of the sampling techniques should be expended.

A *caveat* is included pointing out that programs of this type cannot establish causal relationships.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Introduction

The Adolescent Connection is a part of year two of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Adoption Opportunity Grant # 90-CO-0096/01. The purpose of Project UPLIFT is to demonstrate and use a combined effort with the Colorado Department of Human Services, State Judicial and private non-profits to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions and to address and identify the barriers to placements. Project UPLIFT is designed to modify systems to reduce adoption barriers. Year two of the implementation grant for Project UPLIFT provided an outstanding opportunity to pilot a new, innovative program to facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections and placements for Colorado's waiting youth. The program, called Adolescent Connection, connected adolescent youth with previously involved adults in order to reestablish supportive relationships and in some cases permanent relationships as these young people approach adulthood and emancipation.

Four Adolescent Connection Workers (AC Workers) were hired on an eight-month contract with grant monies and the first workers began work in May, 2002. All the AC Workers had child welfare social work education, training and experience; in fact, one AC Worker was a retired County Supervisor in Child Welfare. Two of the AC Workers had direct knowledge of family connections and history in some of the caseloads. The Colorado counties in the pilot included: Adams, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, and Mesa. A total of fifty-nine youth, ages seven through 18 years of age were assigned to the AC Workers. During the course of the program, county staff pulled three youth from service by the AC Worker due to complications in their cases. Therefore, data on the three youth dropped is not included in the analysis.

In preparation for the program Project UPLIFT staff collected information and sample forms from other states that have experience in going the extra mile to establish connections for their waiting youth. From the samples, the Adolescent Connection Supervisor, AC Workers, and the evaluator developed specific forms to use in this pilot. The forms included an Initial Intake Form, Contact with Child Form, Final Report Form, Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact Form, and Intent to Adopt or Not Adopt Form. Samples of the forms are provided in Appendix A, "Forms" beginning on page 20. Prior to presenting the analysis of the data, this report will set the stage by discussing the barriers encountered to achieve connections and what is perceived to be the "value added" for this approach.

Demographics of Youth Participating

Fifty-six youth participated to conclusion in the pilot. The mean age was 14.3 years of age. The median and mode age was 15 years of age. Of these youth thirty-one were male and twenty-five were female. Ethnic make up included one Asian / Pacific Islander, eight Black, thirty-five Caucasian, nine Hispanic, and three Native American youth. The level of care for the youth included twenty-five in Family Foster Home care, two in Kinship care, one in a Group Home, fifteen in Residential Treatment Centers, and thirteen in Child Placement Agencies. Thirty-six had no failed adoptions, thirteen had one failed adoption, six youth had two failing adoptions, and one youth's record failed to specify.

Many of the youth had multiple barriers to making connections and a few had no barriers. Fourteen youth had diagnosed attachment disorders. Twenty youth had at least one behavioral problem, nine had two serious behavior problems and three youth had three serious behavioral problems as a barrier to making connections. Twelve youth had at least one criminal charge filed

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against them for various offenses, two youth had two charges against them, and one youth had three criminal charges against them. Only one youth had a felony conviction. Six youth had significant medical issues that would impact a permanent placement. Five youth had one diagnosed developmental barrier that impeded their education and social interaction, one youth had two diagnosed developmental barriers, and one youth had three. Twenty-one youth had diagnosed and serious mental health barriers that impeded their connections, five youth had two serious mental health barriers and two youth had three.

Barriers to establishing connections

The frequency of changes in the individual caseworkers handling some cases has led to a lack of continuity and stability for some of the youth in establishing agency trust and the ability to make connections for the youth in the care of social services. Sometimes caseworker and/or Guardian ad Litem (GAL) biases have hindered the connection process for youth.

Families of the youth in the pilot tend to experience significant amounts of chaos and disruption in their lives, and in some cases there is a lack of stability for some family members. Some birth parents do not have the ability to provide structure or the protection needed for the level of care required for their youth. Some extended family members expressed frustration in working with social services. In some instances there is a lack of transportation resources to facilitate connection and frequent contact with the youth. In other instances there are significant health problems of the birth parents or former foster parents. In the cases of extreme mental health issues of the youth, some birth families are not capable of handling the situation on a day to day basis. In some cases the birth parents are deceased.

Some youth have low motivation, or an unwillingness to work at relationships, or oppositional behaviors that affect their lives. Others are immature and/or have unrealistic expectations. In some instances the youth have a great fear of the system and what the "system" will do to block or hinder the relationship with family members. For some youth there have been an incredibly large number of placements for example 13 placements in 2 years, 25 in 10 years, 22 in 15 years while in foster care. Criminal and destructive behaviors, e.g. setting fires, property destruction, cruelty to animals, stealing or other multiple barriers are reported for some youth. Multiple mental health barriers are present for some cases. Finally, some of the youth are old enough and have gone through so much trauma in their lives they are not interested in adoption and are looking forward to emancipation and adulthood.

One example of an extremely difficult case involves a 15-year old male. The previous foster home was going to adopt him and paperwork was progressing through the system. Suddenly, at the last minute, the foster mother decided to adopt a younger female foster child instead. The youth was removed from the home after he hit his foster sister. His out of control behavior has escalated in the past year to the point that now he is on the verge of being detained at Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) due to stealing/shoplifting and other criminal behaviors. The GAL reports he does not have much hope for the youth, because the youth has become so angry that it will be hard to get through to him. The youth, as a result of being rejected by the pre-adoptive family, has lost trust in adults and has refused to work on his anger.

Another example involves a 15-year old female that has two failed adoptions and several severe mental health issues. The former adoptive mother works outside the home and has no one to supervise the youth. Her former adoptive father had two nearly fatal accidents recently sustain-

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ing a traumatic brain injury and other injuries. He gets too nervous and upset to be with the youth. There are several professional and former family friends that have agreed to provide contacts, but only for short visits and telephone calls.

Methodology

The methodology for dealing with a dependent variable for a correlation matrix and analysis of variance (ANOVA) is described here. Also described in this section are the AC Workers methods. The general methodology for generating and presenting descriptive statistics is conventional and straightforward; consequently they will not be discussed here.

Success Level Coding

In order to make use of advanced statistical measures it was necessary to create a "success" criterion, the dependent variable. Inasmuch as one of the goals was to provide permanent relationships, a scale was constructed that weights the estimated permanency of a relationship as well as the number of relationships. In constructing the scale the evaluators were cognizant of the historical fragility of the types of relationships children and youth develop in the child welfare system. Nevertheless, it was decided that, **on average**, the ranking of the various relationships would be valid.

Parameters for Estimating Permanency of a Relationship

Two parameters were identified for use in developing the ranking, both of which have to deal with an *a priori* estimation of the permanency of a relationship. The two parameters are a signed, *Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact* form and the type of existing relationship between the contact and the subject adolescent.

Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact

The *Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact* form, hereafter referred to as DMC, was developed by Project UPLIFT in order to formalize the willingness of a person (or family) to maintain contact with the subject adolescent. A sample of the form appears in "Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact" on page 24. Persons expressing willingness to maintain contact with the subject adolescent were asked if they were willing to complete the form and sign it. The completed signed form is used to help estimate the relative permanency of the relationship. Relationships with a person returning the signed form are judged, on average, to be more lasting than those who did not return the signed form, even though the form states that it is not a legal document.

Type of Existing Relationship

Four types of existing relationships were identified:

1. birth parent(s),
2. kin other than parents,
3. foster parents, and
4. others.

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These four types represent a combination of biology and history. It was judged that, on average, the strongest relationship was "birth parent(s)" followed in descending order by the remaining types, ending at "others," the weakest.

Relationship Ranking

Sixteen different levels of contact-adolescent relationships were identified. They range from "No contacts established" to "Reunification with birth parent(s)." A zero rank is assigned to "No contacts established" and fifteen to "Reunification with birth parent(s)." Each of the sixteen rankings is discussed below. In the discussion that follows, the term "Other" means not kin and not foster parent. The complete list is:

0. No contacts established.
1. Youth intends to remain.
2. Other intent to maintain contact but no DMC
3. Foster parents intent to maintain contact but no DMC
4. Kin intent to maintain contact but no DMC
5. Birth parent(s) intent to maintain contact but no DMC
6. Other with DMC
7. Foster parent with DMC
8. Kin with DMC
9. Birth parent(s) with DMC
10. Other intent to adopt
11. Foster parents intent to adopt
12. Kin intent to adopt
13. Birth parent(s) intent to reunify
14. Adoption in progress
15. Reunification with birth parent(s)

No Contacts Established — This ranking (0) means that the subject adolescent desired additional contacts but the AC Worker was not able to identify any person willing to provide such contact.

Youth Intends To Remain — This ranking (1) means that the subject adolescent intends to remain in the system until emancipation — no relationships desired other than the current ones.

Other Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (2) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written. The person or family is not kin or a previous or present foster parent.

Foster Parents Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (3) means that the AC Worker found a present or previous foster parent (not kin) willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written.

Kin Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (4) means that the AC Worker found a blood relative not a parent willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written.

Birth Parent(s) Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (5) means that the AC Worker obtained a verbal statement from the subject adolescent's parent or parents willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written.

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Other With DMC — This ranking (6) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to maintain contact and a DMC had been received by the time this report was written. The person or family is not kin or a previous or present foster parent.

Foster Parent With DMC — This ranking (7) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to maintain contact and a DMC had been received by the time this report was written. The person or family is not kin.

Kin With DMC — This ranking (8) means that the AC Worker found a blood relative not a parent willing to maintain contact and a DMC had been received by the time this report was written.

Birth Parent(s) With DMC — This ranking (9) means that the AC Worker obtained a DMC from one or both of the birth parents by the time this report was written.

Other Intent To Adopt — This ranking (10) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to adopt the subject adolescent. A signed form was obtained. The person or family is not kin or a previous or present foster parent.

Foster Parent(s) Intent To Adopt — This ranking (11) means that the AC Worker found a present or previous foster family willing to adopt the subject adolescent. A signed form was obtained. The person or family is not kin.

Kin Intent To Adopt — This ranking (12) means that the AC Worker found a blood relative or family willing to adopt the subject adolescent. A signed form was obtained. The person or family is not the parent of the subject adolescent.

Birth Parent(s) Intent To Reunify — This ranking (13) means that the AC Worker obtained a statement of intent to reunify from one or both birth parents. This ranking was assigned if the AC final report contained this statement and contact between the adolescent and the birth parent(s) was currently possible or had a reasonable expectation of becoming possible in the foreseeable future.

Adoption In Progress — This ranking (14) means that there was an adoption in progress. In order for a relationship to be assigned this ranking, no legal barriers to adoption could exist, and a formal application to adopt had to be filed with the court having jurisdiction. It was felt that an adoption by kin or by a non-kin family would, on average, be equally permanent so one ranking was provided for both possible cases.

Reunification With Birth Parent(s) — It was felt that the most permanent relationship the subject children and youth could have would be a reunification with one or both of the birth parents; accordingly this relationship was assigned the highest rank (15).

Scoring Procedure

The procedure for assigning a score was to designate the highest ranking relationship as the integer portion of a real number, e.g., 10 (other intent to adopt). Then for each remaining relationship, in descending rank order, add one digit to the decimal fraction corresponding to the rank of the relationship. For example a youth with three relationships of "Foster parent intent to adopt" with rank 11, "Kin with DMC" with rank 8, and "Other intent to maintain contact but no DMC" with rank 2 would be scored as 11.82. This procedure results in a single number that includes the

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estimated importance (adoption being more important to the youth than, for example, a telephone call), permanency and number of relationships.

Adolescent Connection Workers Methods

Adolescent Connection Workers (AC Workers) used many tools to find connections for the youth. First they reviewed the case file and discussed it with the current caseworker, and former caseworkers if the youth had more than one. The youth was also an important source of information. And before any attempt to contact the adult was made, it was discussed with the youth, and an agreement to try to contact them was made before a search was initiated. Anyone that had been or was a contact for the youth, that the youth wanted to find, was interviewed if they could be found. This included birth parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, former adoptive parents, former foster parents, extended family, friends of the youth or their family, therapists, house-parents, teachers (present and past), Guardian ad Litem, and neighbors of the birth family. Any possible connection was explored. Internet search engines proved invaluable in finding some contacts. As appropriate, background checks were made on the adult contacts to ensure the safety of the youth in making the connection.

It was anticipated that there might be differences in the approaches, methods and effectiveness of the AC Workers. Therefore the AC Workers were instructed to log how they used their time. The logs were then categorized into eight measures.¹ The measures are:

1. The number of times the AC Worker talked to the subject youth.
2. The number of hours spent talking to the subject youth.
3. The number of hours spent talking to contacts for the subject youth.
4. The number of hours spent reviewing the case and/or talking to the case worker, the case worker's supervisor, and others on behalf of the subject youth.
5. The number of hours spent on forms for the subject youth.
6. The number of hours spent searching the internet for the subject youth's contacts.
7. The number of hours spent traveling to interview the subject youth.
8. The total number of hours spent on behalf of the subject youth.

Results

Goal Changes

Forty-four youth did not change their initial goal, and nine did after they received more information about the connections they wished to establish. In some cases the change of goal occurred after a long distance trip, or face to face discussions with the adult they wanted a connection with, or other choices became available as the process of finding connections proceeded.

Number of Connections

A total of one hundred twenty-two connections with a mean success level of 7.04 were made for the youth participating. Forty-seven of the participating youth had at least one connection; only eight had none, and of these, two did not wish any. **Ninety-one, or 75%, of the connections**

1. This was done so any significant differences could be quantified.

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made were inter-jurisdictional. For sixteen of the youth there were no inter-jurisdictional connections made, and for six youth no adults that the AC Worker communicated with were willing or able to make a commitment to be a contact for the youth. These adults had at some point in the youth's life, had a connection with the youth.

Inter-jurisdictional Connections

Of the inter-jurisdictional connections two resulted in adoptions in progress, seven resulted in intents to adopt with a form signed, two resulted in intents to reunify with family, three resulted in intents to adopt with no form signed totaling fourteen highly positive outcomes. This represents 25% of the youth.

Of the ninety-one inter-jurisdictional contacts made, fifty-three, or 58%, were within the state of Colorado representing fifteen different counties. The in-state inter-jurisdictional contacts had to be in another jurisdiction from the resident jurisdiction of the youth to be counted in this total. There were thirty-eight, or 42%, inter-jurisdictional contacts across state or international lines with 22 states and one country represented.

Achieving a Success Level of 10 and Above

Adolescent Demographics

Fourteen of the adolescents participating were able to achieve connections at a level of 10 and above. Twelve, or 86%, of the connections established were inter-jurisdictional.

The adolescents ranged in age from 10 years old through 15 years old. One adolescent was 10 years of age, one was 12 years of age, three were 13 years of age, five were 14 years of age, and four were 15 years of age. Eight adolescents were males and six were females. Eleven adolescents were Caucasian and three were Hispanic.

Three adolescents had no barriers to making connections reported. Eleven adolescents had at least one barrier. All the barriers were documented and in most cases came with a diagnosis. One adolescent had two failed adoptions and one had one failed adoption. Two adolescents had attachment disorders, seven had behavior disorders, three had legal problems, one had a medical problem requiring special attention, three had developmental or educational special needs, and seven had mental health issues.

Success Level by Worker

Most of the workers drew cases from only one county. Worker four drew cases from two counties.

Worker #1

Worker #1 had one 14-year-old male Hispanic that was being adopted by a foster mother. The adolescent had no failed adoptions and no barriers identified. Thirty-two and one half-hours were logged on behalf of the adolescent.

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Worker #2

Worker #2 had a total of six Caucasian adolescents with success levels at 10 or above. Three were males and three were females. One adolescent was 10-years old, three were 13-years old, and two were 15-years old. None of the adolescents had failed adoptions, and two had no barriers listed. One adolescent had two barriers and the other three had one barrier each identified. Three adolescents had a success level of 10, meaning signed forms with the intent to be adopted by a person or family that was not kin or a foster parent to the adolescent. Three adolescents had a success level of 12, meaning the worker found a blood relative or family willing to adopt the adolescent, had a signed form, and for two of the youth an additional contact without a declaration to maintain contact form was obtained. The person or family is not the parent of the adolescent. This appeared to be the easiest caseload.¹

The mean hours spent to achieve the success connections for the six adolescents was 12.71 hours. This is far fewer hours per case than any of the other workers. The number of hours spent to reach the success level achieved is significant because the probability of that occurring by chance is one in two million. It should also be noted that worker #2 logged almost no time traveling to interview adolescents, and within that caseload had the fewest number of barriers to making connections.

Worker #3

Worker #3 had one 15-year-old Caucasian male that the worker obtained confirmation that his mother intends to reunify. An ICPC has been done and the results of it are pending. The adolescent has six identified barriers to achieving connections. Twenty-nine hours and 23 minutes were logged on behalf of the adolescent.

Worker #4

Worker #4 had two counties, and had a total of six success level connections at the level of 10 or higher. The mean hours spent to achieve these six connections was 41.13 hours.

County A

Two adolescents had success levels of 13 (reunify with birth parent) and two had success levels of 12 (kin to adopt). One Caucasian female was 15 years old, had two failed adoptions, six documented barriers and a success level of 12.89. The other three had no failed adoptions. The other Caucasian female was 14, had 2 documented barriers and a success level of 13.88. Both males were 14 years old, one was Caucasian, had two barriers and a success level of 12.89. The other 14 year old male was Hispanic, had one barrier and a success level of 13.89. The mean hours spent to achieve the success connections for the four adolescents was 43.2 hours.

County B

Two adolescents had success levels of 10 and 12. One Hispanic 12-year old male had one failed adoption, three barriers and had a success level of 10.44. One Caucasian 14-year old female had nine documented barriers and had a success level of 12.87. The mean hours spent to achieve the success connections for the two adolescents was 36.9 hours.

1. See "Number of Behavior Problems Analysis of Variance" on page 14.

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Success by Level of Care

All five levels of care were represented for the fourteen adolescents achieving connections at a level of 10 and above. Level of care refers to the type of facility where the youth resided at the time of the AC Worker's first contact. Five resided in Family Foster Home care. One adolescent resided in Kinship care and one adolescent resided in a Group Home. Four adolescents resided in Residential Treatment Centers and three adolescents resided in Child Placement Agencies.

Economic Impact

The average cost of care is \$2,115 per month.¹ (This is an average of three levels of care: Residential Treatment Center, Child Placement Agency Foster Home or Group Home, and County Foster Home.)

Savings Until Emancipation

The average age of these 14 youth was 13. The age of emancipation is 18. This means, for this group of 14 youth, five years of savings is expected. **The expected savings over the five years is \$1,419,600.**

Correlation Matrix

A correlation matrix was constructed using success level, age, gender, race, level of care, number of failed adoptions, the 7 barriers to adoption, number of interjurisdictional contacts, the total number of contacts, the AC Worker code, and the eight measures of how the AC Workers spent their time. The correlation matrix appears on page 19.

The column and row headings are as follows:

- "SL" is the dependent variable Success Level as described in the section "Methodology" on page 5.
- "Age" is the chronological age of the youth, in years.
- "Sex" is the gender of the youth, coded as 1 for male, 2 for female.
- "Race" is the ethnic make up of the youth. It is coded as 1 for Asian, 2 for Black, 3 for Caucasian, 4 for Hispanic and 5 for Native American.
- "LC" indicates the type of facility where the youth resided. It is coded as 1 for Family Foster care, 2 for Kinship care, 3 for Group Home, 4 for Residential Treatment Centers, and 5 for Child Placement Agency.
- "# F A" indicates the number of failed adoptions.
- "Atch D" indicates a diagnosed attachment disorder barrier to adoption.
- "B" indicates a diagnosed behavioral disorder barrier to adoption.
- "Flny" indicates the number of felony convictions.
- "Lgl" indicates the number of legal problems, not as severe as felonies.
- "Med" indicates the number of medical problems that are barriers to adoption.
- "DD" indicates the number of special education diagnoses that are barriers to adoption.

1. The dollar costs in this section are from the AC Program Supervisor. See Appendix C: "PROJECTED SAVINGS" on page 33 for details.

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- “MH” indicates the number of diagnosed mental health problems that are barriers to adoption.
- “# IJ” is the number of inter-jurisdictional contacts found.
- “TC” is the total number of contacts found regardless of jurisdiction.
- “W#” indicates which AC Worker handled the case.
- “# TY” indicates the number of times the AC Worker talked with the youth.
- “hr. TY” indicates the number of hours the AC Worker talked with the youth.
- “hr. TC” is the number of hours the AC Worker talked with contacts for the youth.
- “hr. CR” is the number of hours the AC Worker spent reviewing the case with the case worker, the case worker’s supervisor and others in a professional services role that would have information specific to finding connections for the child.
- “hr. FM” is the number of hours spent working on forms.
- “hr. IN” is the number of hours spent searching the internet for contact information.
- “Tvl Tm” is the number of hours spent on travel.
- “Tot hrs” is the total number of hours spent on the subject youth’s behalf.

Significant Correlations With Success Level

Two statistically significant correlations with the success level, hereafter referred to as SL, are:

1. the correlation between SL and the total number of contacts found, and
2. the correlation between SL and the AC Worker.

Correlation Between SL and the Total Number of Contacts

The correlation between SL and the total number of contacts found (TC) is 0.56 and accounts for about 31% of the variability. The statistical probability of this correlation being due to random chance is 0.00000759. A correlation between SL and the total number of contacts found seems reasonable. Since SL is a measure of the “quality” and quantity of contacts established, it stands to reason that the more contacts found the greater the probability that one or more of them will meet the needs of the youth.

Correlation Between SL and the AC Worker

The correlation between SL and the AC Worker (W#) is 0.40 and accounts for about 16% of the variability. The statistical probability of this correlation being due to random chance is 0.0025. An analysis of variance describing the differences between the AC Workers is presented in “Worker Number vs. Barriers Analyses” on page 14.

Correlations Between AC Worker and Three Barrier Measures

Three disturbing correlations exist between AC Worker and three of the barrier measures, the number of failed adoptions (#F. A., $r = 0.35$), behavioral problems (B, $r = 0.31$), and mental health (MH, $r = 0.29$). These correlations are significant at the 0.05 level. They are disturbing because they tend to indicate that the sampling techniques were not adequate. For a further discussion of these findings, see “AC Worker Differences” on page 13.

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Correlations Between Age and Time Spent

There are six statistically significant correlations at the 0.05 level involving age and worker activities. The correlations are between age and:

1. the number of times talked with youth (# TY, $r = 0.36$),
2. the number of hours spent talking with the youth (hr. TY, $r = 0.37$)
3. the number of hours spent talking with contacts for youth (hr. TC, $r = 0.35$),
4. the number of hours spent reviewing the case (hr. CR, $r = 0.34$),
5. the number of hours spent working on forms (hr. FM, $r = 0.31$), and
6. the number of hours spent on travel (Tvl Tm, $r = 0.41$).

The first five of these correlations are not surprising and not significant from a social or program point of view. They are not surprising because the older youth have more extensive experiences than the younger youth, more contacts, a larger case file, etc., all leading to a greater expenditure of effort.

In the case of travel time, it is hard to read any social or program significance into the apparent relationship between age and travel time: in this sample of youth, the older simply required more travel time to reach. In another study of this nature, the correlation would probably not exist. Such statistical "anomalies" have non-zero probabilities and are to be expected occasionally.

AC Worker Differences

It was expected that there might be differences in the approaches, methods and effectiveness of the AC Workers. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was therefore planned. That analysis shows that there were differences. The notation W1, W2, W3, W4, indicate the four AC Workers. AC Worker W1 had an average "success level" (SL) of about 5.1 per subject youth; worker W3 had an average SL of about 5.9; worker W 2 had an average SL of about 6.2; and worker W4 had an SL of about 9.6. These are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The analysis appears below.

The most striking feature of the summary is that worker W4 had 186% higher average SL than worker W1. Indeed, if one takes the average SL of workers W1, W2 and W3 (5.85) and compares it with that of worker W4 one finds that W4 had a 164% higher SL than the average of the other three. One is immediately tempted to hypothesize that W4 had a much easier case load to work with. Accordingly it was decided to test this hypothesis.

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
W1	10	51.30	5.13	7.75
W2	18	111.90	6.22	19.43
W3	10	59.22	5.92	15.81
W4	18	172.20	9.57	10.46

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	176.08	3.00	58.69	4.24	0.01	2.78
Within Groups	720.22	52.00	13.85			
Total	896.29	55.00				

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Worker Number vs. Barriers Analyses

The correlation matrix indicated significant correlations for worker number (W#) and number of failed adoptions (#FA), behavior problems (B), and mental health problems (MH). Accordingly, it was decided to do ANOVAs for these variables by worker number. The analyses appear in the following sub-sections. The #FA analysis was not significant at the 0.05 level. The B analysis was significant at the 0.01 level. The MH analysis was not significant at the 0.05 level. The averages from the ANOVAs show that workers W3 and W4 had the most difficult case loads, if indeed there were differences in the case loads. This statement is based on the generally accepted statement that more behavior problems means a more difficult case load.

Not only did these analyses not confirm that W4 had an easier case load, they showed that W4 probably had one of the most difficult case loads!

Number of Failed Adoptions Analysis of Variance

The analysis shows that any differences between the set of youth each worker received as measured by the number of failed adoptions was not significant at the 0.05 level of probability. The analysis appears below:

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
W1	10	1	0.1	0.1
W2	18	5	0.277778	0.330065
W3	10	7	0.7	0.677778
W4	18	12	0.666667	0.588235

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.228175	3	1.076058	2.474669	0.071736	2.782599
Within Groups	22.61111	52	0.434829			
Total	25.83929	55				

Number of Behavior Problems Analysis of Variance

This analysis shows that there were significant differences between the set of youth each worker received as measured by the number of behavior problems at the 0.01 level of probability. The analysis appears below:

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
W1	10	7	0.70	0.46
W2	18	6	0.33	0.24
W3	10	14	1.40	0.93
W4	18	20	1.11	1.05

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	9.28	3	3.09	4.69	0.0057	2.78
Within Groups	34.28	52	0.66			
Total	43.55	55				

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Number of Mental Health Problems Analysis of Variance.

The analysis shows that any differences between the set of youth each worker received as measured by the number of mental health problems was not significant at the 0.05 level of probability. The analysis appears below:

SUMMARY				
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
W1	10	2	0.20	0.40
W2	18	13	0.72	0.45
W3	10	7	0.70	0.46
W4	18	17	0.94	0.88

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.58	3	1.19	2.05	0.12	2.78
Within Groups	30.26	52	0.58			
Total	33.84	55				

Adolescent Connection Workers Use of Time

At this point it has been shown that there are differences in the worker's average SLs and that it is probably not due to the high scoring workers having a less difficult case load than the lower scoring workers.

It was decided to perform a series of ANOVAs on the *a priori* eight measures of time use to elucidate, if possible, the differences in how the different workers used their time. The eight measures of time use are:

1. The number of times the worker interviewed the youth.
2. The number of hours the worker spent interviewing the youth, not including travel time.
3. The number of hours the worker spent talking to contacts for youth.
4. The number of hours the worker spent reviewing the case.
5. The number of hours the worker spent on forms.
6. The number of hours the worker spent searching the internet.
7. The number of hours the worker spent traveling to interview the youth.
8. The total time spent on behalf of the youth.

The results are shown in tabular form. The rows represent the eight measures. Column 1 is the name of the measure, column 2 presents the statistical level of significance, column 3 presents the mean for worker 1 (W1), column 4 is the mean for W2, column 5 is the mean for W3, column 6 is the mean for W4, and column 7 is W4's rank. Table 1: "Worker's Use of Time" on page 16 shows the results.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Table 1: Worker's Use of Time

Measure	Significance	W1	W2	W3	W4	W4 Rank
No. times the worker interviewed the youth.	0.001	1.1	1.2	1.7	2.9	1
The number of hours spent interviewing the youth	0.0005	1.3	1.7	2.0	4.0	1
The number of hours spent talking to contacts for youth.	0.005	7.0	4.4	11.6	11.6	1 (tied)
The number of hours spent traveling to interview the youth.	< 0.0001	1.50	0.04	2.14	2.76	1
The number of hours spent reviewing the case.	< 0.0001	19.7	2.9	13.7	10.2	3
The number of hours spent on forms.	< 0.0001	7.2	4.2	11.3	7.4	3
The number of hours spent searching the internet.	< 0.005	0.2	1.1	3.6	2.7	3
The total time spent on behalf of the youth.	< 0.0001	36.2	14.0	44.4	38.8	2

Table 1 brings out a pattern. Notice that the first three rows are concerned with communicating with the youth and contacts for the youth. The remaining rows are not directly concerned with communicating with the youth and contacts for the youth. Worker 4 ranked highest in the three categories dealing directly with the objectives of the program: finding contacts for the youth and reconnecting them with the youth. On the remaining categories this worker ranked somewhere in the middle, i.e., neither highest or lowest, except for the "number of hours spend traveling to interview the youth," which is neither a peripheral use of time nor direct communication with the youth or contacts for youth.

Lessons Learned

Each of the AC Workers were asked to provided five "lessons learned." Their responses appear in Appendix B, "Lessons Learned" beginning on page 26.

Conclusions

The following conclusions seem justified. They are listed in order of importance.

1. The Adolescent Connection Program produced a very positive economic impact.
2. Many youth benefited and none were harmed. At the same time many families benefited and none were harmed.
3. There seem to be significant differences in the effectiveness of the AC Workers.
4. More effort in supervising and monitoring of the sampling techniques (case selection) should be considered.

Economic Impact

There is a very positive economic impact for the taxpayer.

First year savings repay the cost of the program over three times if all 14 intents to adopt come to fruition. Even if the four adoptions already in progress or completed are the only ones successful, the savings are still positive; and in human terms immeasurable.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Over the expected period to emancipation, in this case five years, the cost of the program is repaid over 17 times, assuming all 14 adoptions are completed and are successful.

Value Added For The Participants Of The Pilot

Over the course of the pilot, families, professionals, foster parents, and acquaintances have come forward to take a larger role in the lives of the youth. This has benefited all concerned.

In one case there has been a change of attitude and commitment on the part of a GAL to support reunification of a youth and his biological father, after the birth father's validated ability to provide a stable home for the youth.

On the part of the youth participating there has been noticeable change in behaviors when a family connection is made, giving the youth hope and direction. One of the pilot's primary focuses was to foster well being and stability for the youth.

In one case, after termination of parental rights, a biological mom has put her life together. The youth's goal of being with her mother is coming to fruition. Supervised face to face contacts were initiated and reunification with Mom is proceeding on schedule.

In another case a youth in foster care had no contact with most of his family for approximately three years. Several relatives were found and contacts began immediately. Although prognosis is still guarded because of the issues involved, reconnection with family has thus far been very positive for the youth and family members.

Significant Differences In the Effectiveness Of the AC Workers

AC Worker number 4 was the most effective, despite having one of the most difficult case loads. Worker 4 ranked first in effort directed toward finding and re-connecting youth and their contacts. **The message seems clear: stay focused on the objective.** This is not to say that the other categories should be neglected: worker 4 ranked towards the middle on these categories.

Better Sampling Techniques

The correlation between three of the barrier measures and the worker number is disturbing; but this correlation might simply be due to chance. The mathematical fact is that, even with perfect sampling techniques, there is a non-zero probability that a correlation result such as this will happen.

We, the evaluators, are not overly concerned: all the workers and county supervisors were given the same instructions on selecting cases, and those instructions included "not to cherry pick." And there remains the fact that the highest scoring worker received one of the most difficult case loads. If anything, this would tend to say that the error, if any, caused a reduction in the differences between workers' results.

Still, future programs might want to consider expending a little extra time and effort to ensure that the sampling techniques (case selection) are flawless.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Caveat

Project UPLIFT provided an outstanding opportunity to pilot a new, innovative program to facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections and placements for Colorado's waiting youth. The program, called Adolescent Connection, connected adolescent youth with previously involved adults in order to reestablish supportive relationships, and in some cases permanent relationships, as these young people approach adulthood and emancipation.

As such it is not a rigorous, controlled experiment. Except under very special and rigorously controlled circumstances, experimenting with human subjects is unethical, immoral and illegal. Project UPLIFT's Adolescent Connection did not enjoy those special circumstances; true experiments to determine causal relationships were out of the question for a multitude of reasons. So the statistical results presented here cannot determine causal relationships. The statistical studies reported here are intended to help reduce the fog of variability when dealing with information deriving from human activity in a social environment; they cannot determine cause and effect. The reader is cautioned to take them for what they are: indications of where the truth may be.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Correlation Matrix

	SL	Age	Sex	Race	LC	# F. A.	Atch D	B	Flny	Lgl	Med	DD	MH	#IJ	TC	W#	# TY	hr. TY	hr. TC	hr. CR	hr. FM	hr. IN	Tvl Tm	Tot hrs
SL	1.00																							
Age	0.15	1.00																						
Sex	0.06	0.05	1.00																					
Race	0.16	-0.13	-0.15	1.00																				
LC	0.10	0.26	-0.11	-0.19	1.00																			
# F. A.	0.18	0.20	0.03	0.20	0.08	1.00																		
Atch D	-0.02	0.12	0.23	-0.23	0.26	0.34	1.00																	
B	0.07	-0.03	-0.08	-0.11	0.18	0.27	0.20	1.00																
Flny	-0.04	0.05	0.15	-0.19	0.09	-0.09	-0.08	0.02	1.00															
Lgl	-0.21	0.17	-0.06	-0.20	0.20	-0.21	0.13	0.22	0.11	1.00														
Med	-0.01	0.09	0.15	-0.19	0.31	0.19	0.47	0.13	-0.05	0.21	1.00													
DD	0.09	0.18	-0.19	-0.04	0.04	-0.05	0.09	0.07	-0.05	0.21	-0.02	1.00												
MH	0.11	0.25	-0.02	0.02	0.00	0.16	-0.15	0.32	-0.12	0.10	0.06	0.06	1.00											
#IJ	0.35	0.15	0.10	0.14	0.10	0.58	0.22	0.31	-0.05	-0.21	0.24	-0.03	0.21	1.00										
TC	0.56	0.25	0.00	0.17	0.18	0.41	0.12	0.27	-0.10	-0.17	0.16	-0.10	0.21	0.77	1.00									
W#	0.40	0.15	-0.07	0.14	0.19	0.35	0.07	0.31	-0.20	-0.16	-0.10	0.06	0.29	0.57	0.62	1.00								
# TY	0.15	0.36	-0.09	0.10	0.13	0.37	0.10	0.21	0.01	0.14	-0.13	-0.05	0.37	0.18	0.24	0.41	1.00							
hr. TY	0.28	0.37	-0.09	0.05	0.27	0.45	0.19	0.24	-0.03	-0.04	0.00	0.03	0.30	0.34	0.36	0.53	0.83	1.00						
hr. TC	0.25	0.35	-0.01	-0.09	0.40	0.50	0.25	0.29	-0.06	-0.09	0.13	0.04	0.19	0.47	0.51	0.38	0.33	0.56	1.00					
hr. CR	0.06	0.34	0.09	-0.04	0.41	0.07	0.14	0.17	0.09	0.29	0.31	-0.07	0.03	0.11	0.12	-0.08	0.06	0.07	0.43	1.00				
hr. FM	0.16	0.31	0.14	0.01	0.44	0.35	0.28	0.28	-0.05	0.14	0.43	0.00	0.06	0.46	0.37	0.20	0.14	0.25	0.57	0.62	1.00			
hr. IN	-0.08	0.11	-0.06	-0.13	0.33	0.28	0.38	0.34	-0.10	0.06	-0.03	0.13	0.09	0.32	0.20	0.40	0.20	0.29	0.36	-0.01	0.34	1.00		
Tvl Tm	0.29	0.41	0.11	-0.05	0.53	0.22	0.09	0.29	0.00	0.10	0.04	0.00	0.24	0.31	0.46	0.47	0.47	0.48	0.58	0.47	0.45	0.26	1.00	
Tot hrs	0.20	0.44	0.06	-0.07	0.55	0.40	0.30	0.34	-0.01	0.14	0.27	0.01	0.16	0.43	0.43	0.31	0.34	0.49	0.85	0.78	0.81	0.40	0.70	1.00

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Appendix A: Forms

The following forms were developed and used for Adolescent Connection pilot program. The forms presented here are templates except for the "Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact." The completed forms were as long as four pages each in length, depending on the information provided. The forms are:

1. Initial Intake Review
2. Contact with Child
3. Final Report
4. Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact (DMC)
5. Declaration of Intent to Adopt or Not to Adopt

The forms appear on the following pages.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Initial Intake Review

***Client Name:**

Current Caseworker:

Ethnicity:

County:

DOB:

*** Age:**

SSN:

Current placement:

***Level of Care (ffh, kh, gh, RTC):**

State ID#:

***Legal Status:**

TPR and date:

Of months in County's Custody Up to date of TPR:

Adoption date(s) & failed date(s):

Identified Connections: *Indicate any issues involved*

Birth Family: *Parents, Grandparents, siblings, Aunts/Uncles etc.*

Past Foster Parents: *(also Adoptive Parents if appropriate)*

Professional Connections: *Teachers, therapists, supervisors, advocates, etc.*

Organizational Connections: *Churches, clubs etc.*

Commonalities/Interests: *hobbies etc.*

Barriers Identified: *Age, attitudes, length of time in care*

Plan to Address:

AC Worker:

Time:

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Contact with Child

***Client Name:**

Current Caseworker:

Ethnicity:

County:

Location of interview:

***Child's identified goal:**

Connections identified by child:

Barriers:

AC Worker:

***Time: (include travel time)**

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Final Report on Case

***Client Name:**

County:

Inter-jurisdictional Location of Contacts Established:

***Success Rate:** *(refers to legal connection made)*

1. Reunited with birth parent
2. Reunited with family
3. Connected with former foster parent
4. Connected with other relationship-specify
5. Established a long term support relationship with contracts

***Child's initial goal:** *(did it change?)*

***Barriers** and How Addressed:

AC Worker:

***Total time spent on case:**

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact

(I, We) _____ have received notice
that _____ is ready to have contact.
Child's name and DOB

(I, We) do declare our intent and commitment to maintain contact with

Child's name

This is how often I/We intend to have contact _____
Frequency / how (i.e. weekly visits)

Name, mailing address and phone number:

(I/We) do understand that it is very important to have regular contact with said child. Regular contact means no less contact than every other week and during Holidays and Birthdays.

(I/We) also understand that this document is not a legal document.

Date and Signature _____

- Copy to the family
- Copy to the child
- Copy to the caseworker

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Declaration of Intent to Adopt or Not Adopt

(I, We) _____ have received notice
that _____ is legally free or may become
Child's name and DOB
legally free to be adopted.

Circle area of this form according to your wishes.

(I, We) do declare our intent to adopt _____
Child's name

(I, We) do declare our intent to not adopt _____
Child's name

(I/We) do understand that if we intend to adopt and are selected as the adoptive family, we must file our petition to adopt within six (6) months of the date the child becomes legally free for adoption.

Caseworker Date

Foster Mother Date

Foster Father Date

Copy to the foster family
Copy to the child's file

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Appendix B: Lessons Learned

The following "Lessons Learned" are unedited except for minor formatting.

From Worker #3

FIVE LESSONS LEARNED:

1. To meet with or correspond by e-mail with each caseworker on a weekly basis as they did not always keep me informed as to what was happening on a case, particularly if a youth had moved and why. I usually learned this information from a third party.

Prior to meeting with the caseworker and their supervisor for the final time, write an Action Plan for the caseworker as to what needs to be done, i.e., background checks, etc. I did an Action Plan after the final meeting and did not receive it back from the caseworker for final editing.
2. Many of the youth have symptoms of Reactive Attachment Disorder, even youth who grew up with a parent or relative. Knowing more about Reactive Attachment Disorder would be helpful when working with these youth and when discussing their issues with relatives/kin.
3. How caring Colorado's professionals are who work with children/youth involved with social services. Many of the contacts I found were former caseworkers of Boulder County Department of Social Services, clinicians, and/or case managers from Residential Treatment Centers and Child Placement Agencies.
4. A paid Internet site for people searches will save time in finding and verifying relative/kin addresses and phone numbers, and the information on it would be current within a couple of months. I found that some information on the free Internet sites was not current but several years old. The historical data on a paid site would also help in locating the correct person. There is no historical data on a free Internet site unless you are willing to pay upwards from \$9.99 for one search. Departments within a social service agency should be willing to share their expertise and paid Internet sites to help another department locate people. After all, are they not all working for the same goal?
5. Type the "Contacts Established" form immediately after talking with each relative/kin, and send the Declaration forms immediately after that. Declaration forms were sent out after a lot of time had passed from when the people expressed a desire to stay in contact with the youth. I re-read all my notes to type the "Contacts Established" form and this was done at the very last. This could have been done as the case was being worked.

Submitted by AC Worker # 3

3/4/03

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

From Worker #4

1. In almost all instances, there is at least one (and often multiple) person(s) who had connections that were broken or discontinued and they wish to be reconnected with the youth. (In every circumstance where connections were re-established, the youth was able to identify the people available, although not necessarily where they were.)
2. In many cases, the helping professionals involved with the youth had biases that influenced reluctance to look at people identified. Many professionals, although in the helping professions, had difficulty believing that people could make sufficient changes to be possible considerations for the youth.
3. Most case records were abysmally lacking in succinct, available and coherent information that told what had happened in the child's life and who the important people was in the child's life.
4. Persons who had not been appropriate resources for a youth as a child may be appropriate for consideration as the youth becomes older. If the youth is more able to self protect and the adult has become more stable in their own lives, relationships that were previously not viable may be at this time.
5. Cases seem to take on a momentum of their own and often there has been little or no consideration given to going back to re-assess the current status of people in the youth's life.

Submitted by AC Worker # 4

3-3-03

UPLIFT Adolescent Connections Evaluation Report
Appendix C: From the Adolescent
Connections Supervisor

LESSONS LEARNED

**Cheryl Jacobson/Recruitment and
Retention Specialist**

Diligent Search

- **Case files lacked clear and succinct information about family connections and others involved in a child's life**
 - Information must be collected at case opening and recorded in a permanent and prominent place in the file
 - Information must be regularly updated
- **Youth may know of family or others from their past but lack full names and addresses**
 - Once a family member is contacted they provide information about other family members resulting in the establishment of multiple connections for youth
 - The longer youth remain in care, the more difficult it becomes to locate family members due to moves and information being lost to memory.
- **Paternity information and information regarding paternal relatives is much less available than maternal information**
- **More efforts must be directed toward completion of diligent searches**

Contractors

- **Must be skilled and experienced**
- **Because of the contractor's independence from the county department, parents are often able to move beyond their anger at the system to do what is best for their child**
- **One contractor reported he received more thanks from youth and parents on this 6 month project than he had received in 22 years of casework practice**

Clear/Written Principles

- Principles must be clearly outlined to guide day-to-day decisions
- Contractors must think differently than caseworkers and without clear values and principles, it is too easy to fall into past casework practices

Challenge Previously Held Beliefs

- No child is too hard to be placed for adoption
- It is not right for any professional to make that decision on behalf of a youth
 - This project accepted any youth who was in the custody of the county department and for whom termination of parental rights could be obtained if an adoption connection was established
 - This project included youth with difficult issues and successfully found placements

Contractor Characteristics

- Tenacity
- The belief that people change
- The belief that relationships are important
- The ability to be open and forthright about issues
- The ability to communicate clearly
- The ability to accept people's ambivalence and help them move through it
- Be willing to challenge their own beliefs
 - 75% of the problem is adult attitudes regarding older youth and permanency
- Be able to see youth for their positives
 - Plan around the youth's needs but not focus on a diagnosis such as seeing a youth as "a reactive attachment disorder" which may have led to believing that the youth was not able to be placed
 - This project did not direct contract workers to read files extensively in order to collect data about diagnosis, so conclusions can not be made about caseload difficulties

Time Well Spent...More Placements Established

- Successful contractors spent more time with the youth and their connections

__ Worker 2 and Worker 4 both structured their time in this way and the most connections

__ Worker 2 had a total of six adolescents with success levels at 10 or above with a mean time of 12.7 hours

__ Worker 4, whose contract was for twice the amount of time and had, two counties, had six adolescents with success levels at 10 or above with a mean time of 41.1 hours

- Less successful contractors spent more time on reading case files

More intense time spent in contact with the youth and connections will produce more positive and more permanent connections.

Agency Barriers

- Time needs to be spent educating the county department about the philosophy and goals of the Adolescent Connections Project
 - Best if the contractor can attend staff meetings
 - Due to budget limitations, this was done one on one with caseworkers and supervisors
 - Two contractors had previously been employed in the counties they were assigned and their work was readily respected by the caseworkers and supervisors—barriers due to differing philosophies were more readily overcome
 - Once caseworkers saw results, some changed their case practices to embrace these ideas

TOOLS

- Use of Internet tools with historical addresses and phone numbers of individuals is critical
- Use of phone cards to support contact between the new connections and the youth
- Travel funds to facilitate face to face contact between the youth and relative/others

Cost Effectiveness

- Cost effective during times of budget cuts
- Cost savings analysis data....(attached)

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

ADOLESCENT CONNECTIONS

COST EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM

PROJECT SUPERVISOR

Inter-jurisdictional Connections

Types of Most Permanent Connections established

Adoption in Progress	Intent to Adopt Signed Contract	Reunification with Family	Intent to Adopt No Contract
2	7	2	3

*Total 14 with average age of 13 years

Level of Care of Youth at Pilot Intake/Monthly Average Cost of Care

Residential Treatment Center (RTC)	Child Placement Agency Foster Home or group home	County Foster Home
4 youth	4 youth	6 youth
\$3,900	\$1,423	\$1022

*Monthly average cost of three levels of care=\$2,115

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

PROJECTED SAVINGS

Number of Youth	Average Monthly Cost of Care	Years of Placement Costs Saved	Average Monthly Adoption Subsidy Costs	Total Savings
4 already placed 2 require adoption subsidy	\$2,115	5	\$425	\$507,600 Minus \$51,000 = \$456,000
All 14 youth *	\$2,115	5	\$425	\$1,776,600 Minus \$357,000 = \$1,419,600

*Savings for all 14 youths assumes that individuals stating a willingness to adopt will do so and a placement will be made

Multiplying the average yearly cost of care by the number of youth and subtracting the yearly cost of average adoption subsidies determined total Savings.

Appendix B: 2004 Evaluation Reports

Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor Survey Results: 2001 vs. 2004

Court Recording Equipment Upgrade Report

Court of Appeals Symposium

**Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor or
Child Welfare Administrator Survey 2004 Results**

**Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor or
Child Welfare Administrator Survey 2004 Results**

Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor Survey Results: 2001 vs. 2004

Prepared by Custer Enterprises
July 26, 2004 – two pages total

Background

In October 2001 and February/March 2004, 23 Colorado Adoption Supervisors and County Child Welfare Administrators were surveyed to determine ongoing issues and successes in achieving permanency for children in their legal custody. The counties included all 10 large counties as well as eleven medium size counties and two small counties to achieve a balanced sample representation of the issues and challenges throughout Colorado. The survey information was requested to assist the Project UPLIFT Evaluators in completing reports to the Colorado Department of Human Services and to the Federal Government. The Collaborative Council and the Project UPLIFT leadership determined that conducting a second survey was the best way to evaluate county adoption unit outcomes as they related to the grant, to make the report as accurate as possible, since the Trails Automated System was not designed nor was it able to provide the data in a format that accurately tracks all the grant elements.

This report is a comparison of the two surveys. The 2004 Survey contained 32 questions, some of them multi-part, as compared to the 2001 Survey that contained 22 items. Respondents were supervisors in their respective departments of social/human services. In 2001, all 23 counties responded. In 2004 only 19 surveys were received.

Survey Results.

The 2004 response by the counties was disappointing in two respects: despite repeated requests over several months duration, including telephone conversations, four counties did not respond at all; and the general quality of responses was poor. Only nine questions out of a total of 32 questions were answered from all 19 respondents. In addition, two large counties reported "data not available" for question 2, "How many children received permanency placement by adoption from your county between October 1, 2001 through December 31, 2003 in all jurisdictions?"

Many of the questions on the two surveys are different. What follows is a comparison of the results 2001 vs. 2004 for the questions that were the same or similar.

In 2001 the average caseload per worker was 21 with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 47. In 2004 the average adoption caseload per worker was 12.93 with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 30 (14 counties reporting).

Interestingly, in 2001, 13 of the 23 counties reported that there were not enough caseworker training slots available, and that an aggregate of 98 caseworkers over 23 counties needed training. In 2004, 16 of 18 respondents reported that there was training available relevant to adoption issues and reported that the 118 caseworkers needed

training with only 16 counties reporting. In addition to the 118 caseworkers, two counties wrote in "all" instead of providing a number. Given that feedback, it is not clear how many caseworkers need training at this point of time.

In 2001, the respondents reported that there were 51 caseworkers that had had no training in adoption issues. In 2004, there were 67 caseworkers that had no training with only 16 counties reporting. The inference there is that the situation regarding adoption issues training is getting worse rather than better in Colorado.

In 2001, 3 counties had a written policy encouraging communication and collaboration with other counties or states regarding inter-jurisdictional adoption. In 2004, 6 of 11 counties reporting did, indicating a slight improvement.

In 2001, 3 counties had a written policy regarding the acceptance (with or without conditions) of home studies performed outside the immediate area. In 2004, 7 of 18 counties did, indicating an improvement in the number of counties that have implemented a written policy regarding the acceptance of home studies done outside the county.

In 2001, 6 counties reported that their caseworkers routinely used the Internet, and only 12 counties indicated they had Internet access. In 2004, 16 of 18 counties routinely use the Internet and it is available to all 19 reporting, indicating a greatly improved access to the Internet and the resources available on the Internet.

In 2001, 15 counties reported that 100% of their caseworkers understand and use the ICPC. In 2004, 13 of 17 reporting counties report that 100% of their caseworkers understand and use the ICPC. Because the same counties we surveyed both times, this report is disturbing.

Conclusions.

Colorado still has a long way to go to consistently provide quality services to its waiting children. Even though Project UPLIFT made some strides there continue to be significant ongoing county level issues with some notable successes in achieving permanency for children in county legal custody.

The evaluators believe it is important to share the survey results as soon as possible after the report is submitted and accepted by the project director and the state agency administering the grant. Providing that level of feedback to the counties submitting the information, builds confidence in the work of the project, and provides a better understanding of the issues and implications statewide. The survey results need to be shared with the social/human services leadership and stakeholders at the county and state levels. In that way, improvements in quality staff training and services to children and their families can be a priority.

Court Recording Equipment Upgrade Report

For the period January 1, 2004 through June 30, 2004

Effect on Time to Deliver Transcripts

Prepared By Custer Enterprises
July 29, 2004 – two pages total

Background

Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) began as a 17 month planning grant in 1999, as an Adoption Opportunity Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Grant #90- CO-0948/01. The purpose of the planning phase was to determine the adoption and permanency planning barriers from both child welfare and judicial aspects. As a result of a successful planning phase, the Colorado Department of Human Services was awarded a three year implementation grant to increase available adoptive resources for children and support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements through changes in system approaches. A Collaborative Council, comprised of state and county human service, judicial, and CASA representatives was convened to guide the project. In October 2001, Colorado Judges and Magistrates were surveyed to better understand the Interjurisdictional barriers from a judicial perspective. As a result, workshops were provided at state judicial conferences; digital and real time recording equipment was purchased for a select number of Colorado Courts hearing the largest numbers of Dependency and Neglect and Termination of Parental Rights cases; and two 2004 Court of Appeals Symposiums were convened.

In the third year of implementation Project UPLIFT, digital and real time recording equipment was installed in 9 judicial districts involving over 25 courtrooms. The State Court Administrators office negotiated Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the nine Districts on the acceptance and use of the equipment.

Districts received what they needed in terms of the types of equipment that would support their courtrooms. Digital equipment was installed in Districts #1, 2, 4, 10, and 18, and included recording decks, digital clocks, microphones, speakers, mixers, headphones, LAN connectivity, cabling and support contracts in a total of eleven courtrooms. Real time equipment was installed in Districts #4, 8, 13, 17, 18 and 20 and included computer real time set-ups with all necessary supporting software and hardware for over 14 courts.

Results

Three transcripts were produced using the digital equipment. No transcripts were produced using the real-time equipment. Thirty-three transcripts were produced using the court reporter's equipment, presumably not digital and not real-time. Two transcripts were produced using unknown equipment. Descriptive statistics appear below.

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range	Min	Max	Count
Digital	80.3	73	13.6	24	72	96	3
Other	89.9	90	8.49	54	63	117	33

Statistical tools used to detect a difference between two samples are generally regarded as being unreliable when the cell size is less than five. In the case of Digital recording equipment, the cells size is only 3. This means that there is insufficient data for reliable statistical analyses, and so none were performed. (A three way ANOVA had been planned using the factors of Other, Digital and Real-time.)

In addition to sample size, another factor could be at work. The Court of Appeals rules have not yet been changed, and so 90 days is still allowed to get the transcript to the Court of Appeals. Transcripts ready in less than 90 days could be allowed to wait until it is convenient to deliver them to the Court of Appeals, thus artificially increasing the Standard Deviation and reducing the power of the statistics to detect a difference.

Conclusion

A reliable analysis on the effect of the new recording equipment on the time it takes to deliver a transcript to the Court of Appeals must wait until there is sufficient data available.

Court of Appeals Symposiums

Prepared by Custer Enterprises
July 26, 2004 – five pages total

Executive Summary

The 2004 Court of Appeals Symposiums were jointly funded by State Judicial, the Court Improvement Project and Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons In Future Teamwork) Grant. Two symposiums were convened to facilitate input from front range and western slope individuals involved in the court appeals process. The first symposium was held at the Adams' Mark Hotel in Grand Junction on Friday, February 13, 2004. The second symposium was held at the Denver Athletic Club, in Denver on Friday, February 20, 2004.

A total of fifty-three participant feedback forms were collected: eighteen in Grand Junction and thirty-five in Denver. A total of seventeen different professional occupations were represented.

Twenty of the twenty-three questions asked for a yes/no response. The yes/no questions were phrased positively, so that a yes answer meant that the respondent viewed the process positively. Of the 965 responses to yes/no questions, 948 or 98.2% were yes.

One of the primary goals for the symposiums was to develop a set of recommendations for revising the way appeals in Termination of Parental Rights cases are processed. The question "To what extent do you agree with the recommendations?" all most some none" was provided to determine if the symposium had succeeded in this goal. Of the forty-five responses to this question forty-two or 93.3% indicated "all" or "most". One of the questions asked on the feedback form was repeated for both the morning and afternoon sessions. "Do you agree that reform is needed in Colorado?" This question was repeated for two purposes: to see if the participants thought reform is needed and to see if their opinion changed from morning to afternoon. All of the respondents who attended both morning and afternoon sessions answered yes to these questions indicating no change in opinion from morning to afternoon. One respondent, a court reporter who left at lunch, answered "no" in the morning session.

Both symposiums were very well received as the completed feedback forms indicate. The participants overwhelmingly agreed that reform is needed in Colorado, and that it is possible to achieve a workable solution based on the recommendations made. The aggregate scores for the morning sessions were 98.6% positive. The aggregate scores for the afternoon sessions were 98.9% positive. Questions addressing the general overall entire symposium were 97.3% positive.

Introduction

The 2004 Court of Appeals Symposium was jointly funded by State Judicial, the Court Improvement Project and Project UPLIFT. Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) began as a 17 month planning grant in 1999, as an Adoption Opportunity Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Grant #90- CO-0948/01. The purpose of the planning phase was to determine the adoption and permanency planning barriers from both child welfare and judicial aspects. As a result of a successful planning phase, the Colorado Department of Human Services was awarded a three year implementation grant to increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements through positive and innovative changes in system approaches. A Collaborative Council, comprised of state and county human service, judicial, and CASA representatives was convened to guide the project. In October 2001, Colorado Judges and Magistrates were surveyed to better understand the Interjurisdictional barriers from a judicial perspective. As a result, workshops were provided at state judicial conferences; digital and real time recording equipment was purchased for a select number of Colorado Courts hearing the largest numbers of Dependency and Neglect and Termination of Parental Rights cases; and two 2004 Court of Appeals Symposiums were convened.

The first 2004 Court of Appeals Symposium was held at the Adams' Mark Hotel in Grand Junction on February 13, 2004, and the second was held at the Denver Athletic Club, in Denver on February 20, 2004. Each one day symposium began at 9:00 AM and ended at 3:00 PM. The same feedback form was distributed at both symposiums consisting of a one-sided, one-page document with twenty-three questions, twenty of which asked for a yes/no response. Not all participants were able to attend the entire day, however, wherever possible, feedback forms were collected from those participants that had to leave early. A total of 3 participants left during or after the morning session in Grand Junction. A total of 5 participants left after the morning session in Denver. A total of 53 participant feedback forms representing 17 professional groups were collected: 18 in Grand Junction and 35 in Denver.

The participants were asked to identify their professional duties, and the table below indicates the professional duties and the frequency of each profession represented.

Table 1: Professional Duties Frequency

County Attorney	11	Clerk's Office Staff	2
GAL	10	CASA	1
Court Facilitator	5	COA	1
Caseworker	4	DHS Supervisor	1
Respondent Attorney	4	DHS Consultant Attorney	1
Appellate Judge	3	Law Clerk	1
Judicial Branch Staff Attorney	3	State Staff	1
Court Reporter	2	UPLIFT Trainer	1
District Judge	2		

Results

Morning Session. There were 10 yes/no questions on the feedback form. The question number (Q#) the questions, the total participants answering the question (N), the number answering yes (#Yes), the number answering no (#No), the percentage of yes answers (%Yes), and the percentage of No answers (%No) are shown.

Table 2: Morning Session Results

Q #	Question	N	# Yes	# No	% Yes	%No
1	Do you understand the goals and objectives of the symposium?	53	53	0	100	0
2	Do you agree with the symposium objectives?	51	51	0	100	0
3	Did the presented visuals relate to children's permanency needs?	50	49	1	98	2
4	Were the issues and their parameters explained in enough detail?	50	50	0	100	0
5	Were the national trends in D&N appellate reform adequately covered?	50	47	3	94	6
6	Was the case law presentation helpful?	40	38	2	95	5
7	Do you agree that reform is needed in Colorado?	53	52	1	98.1	1.9
8	Did the morning facilitator keep your session focused?	53	53	0	100	0
9	Was the brain-storming pro-active (i.e., not a gripe session)?	48	48	0	100	0
10	Was your professional group able to identify common challenges, concerns and ideas?	47	47	0	100	0
Aggregates		495	488	7	98.6	1.4

Comments

Question #5, "Were the national trends in D&N appellate reform adequately covered?" invited participants to indicate what was missing if they answered "no." Three participants wrote in a response. The responses were "very brief," "would want more information & detail re: what other states are doing," and "global review needed."

Question #6, "Was the case law presentation helpful?" received the fewest responses (40) than any other morning session question, and was not presented the same way in Grand Junction and Denver. Three respondents made marginal notes. They were: "Only 2 cases but they contain important constitutional issues," "What presentation?," and "I don't remember this." (Three pages of the power point presentation discussed national trends. Handouts of the power point were provided in the packet distributed as they arrived. A web search findings for Court of Appeals case law were mentioned. A limited number of handouts were available at the Grand Junction Symposium, and from Daniel Gallagher by request and via email at the Denver Symposium. The handout document referenced was titled "Expediting Dependency Appeals: Strategies to Reduce Delay" by Ann L. Keith and Carol R. Flango published by the State Justice Institute and the National Center for State Courts.)

Afternoon Session. There were 6 afternoon feedback form questions. Four questions were yes/no. One question had 3 possible answers and one question had four possible answers. Because some participants left before the afternoon session a total of 48 responses are reported.

Yes or No Questions. The question number (Q#) the questions, the total participants answering the question (N), the number answering yes (#Yes), the number answering no (#No), the percentage of yes answers (%Yes), and the percentage of No answers (%No) are shown.

Table 3: Afternoon Session Yes/No Results

Q #	Question	N	# Yes	# No	% Yes	%No
11	Do you agree that reform is needed in Colorado?	48	48	0	100	0
12	Did the afternoon facilitator keep your session focused?	47	47	0	100	0
13	Was your small group able to agree on necessary reforms?	37	36	1	97.3	2.7
15	Was there enough time for discussion on the recommendations?	46	45	1	97.8	2.2
Aggregates		178	176	2	98.9	1.1

Comments. Two respondent wrote comments regardingon question #13, “Was your small group able to agree on necessary reforms?” The responses were identical: “somewhat.” The respondents making these comments did not check either the yes or no box.

Question 14, “Was the small group time allotted: too short, about right or too long” had 3 possible answers. Forty of the 48 respondents marked one of the choices. Of these, 2 or 5% checked “too short,” 37 or 92.5% checked “about right,” and 1 or 2.5% checked “too long.” One respondent, not checking any box, provided a comment to Question 14, and that comment was “varied.”

Question 16, “To what extent do you agree with the recommendations?” And the 4 possible answers were: all, most, some or none”. Forty-five of the 48 participants responded to this question. Of these, 14 checked “all,” 28 checked “most,” 3 checked “some,” and none checked “none.” This means that 63.3% agreed with most or all of the recommendations.

Overall. The “Overall” section contained 7 questions of a general nature that pertained to the entire symposium. All of the questions were yes/no except for question 18. Question 18 referenced the physical facilities and had three parts: the first two (18a and 18b) were yes/no and 18c had three possible answers. In the discussion that follows after the yes/no table, question 18 is labeled 18a, 18b and 18c to identify its three parts, respectively.

There were 6 yes/ no questions in the Overall section. The question number (Q#) the questions, the total participants answering the question (N), the number answering yes (#Yes), the number answering no (#No), the percentage of yes answers (%Yes), and the percentage of No answers (%No) are shown on Table 3 beginning on the next page.

Table 4: Overall Yes/No Results

Q#	Question	N	#Yes	#No	%Yes	%No
17	Did you feel that you were able to contribute to the rule-making process?	46	45	1	97.8	2.2
18a	Able to hear	50	47	3	94	6
18b	Able to see	47	45	2	95.7	4.3
19	Were the possible solutions examined in enough depth?	47	46	1	97.9	2.1
20	Were the handouts adequate and appropriate?	51	50	1	98	2
21	Were there enough handouts for everyone?	51	51	0	100	0
	Aggregate	292	284	8	97.3	2.7

Physical Facilities Partitioning. The answers above involved 2 facilities in 2 different physical locations, one in Grand Junction and the other in Denver. The responses to questions 18a, 18b and 18c are partitioned between the 2 facilities. Please note that **Question 18c** was not a yes/no question, and is therefore not in Table 4.

Question 18a Of the respondents reporting poor hearing conditions, all three attended the Grand Junction symposium. One Grand Junction respondent wrote a marginal comment “hearing difficult,” but did not check either the yes or no box on the form.

Question 18b Of the respondents reporting poor seeing conditions, one attended Grand Junction and one from Denver.

Question 18c was not a yes/no question. The question related to the room temperature and the 3 choices were: “too cool, about right, or too warm.” Fifty-two responses were received for this question. Seven or 13.5% responded “too cool,” 44 or 84.6% responded “about right,” and one or 1.9% responded “too warm.” Six of the seven respondents responding “too cool” attended the Grand Junction symposium. (During the Grand Junction symposium the facilitators asked the hotel to turn up the heat.) The Denver responses included one “too cool” and one “too warm;” all the rest were “about right.”

General Comments. Six respondents wrote general comments that pertained to no specific section on the feedback form. Each comment was mentioned by only one respondent. The comments, accompanied by the evaluator’s insertions enclosed in square brackets ([]) are:

Superb seminar! [Written by same respondent who didn’t remember the case law presentation.]

Very good facilitators!

Thank you!

Go with version of Iowa program, excellent handouts!

Would have liked handout of Iowa's power point [presentation].

Reform most definitely needed.

Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey 2004 Results

Background

In February and March 2004, 23 Colorado Adoption Supervisors and County Child Welfare Administrators were surveyed to determine ongoing issues and successes in achieving permanency for children in their legal custody. The counties included all 10 large counties as well as eleven medium size counties and two small counties to achieve a balanced sample representation of the issues and challenges throughout Colorado. This was the second time the 23 counties were surveyed by Project UPLIFT.

The survey information was requested to assist the Project UPLIFT Evaluators in completing the final report on the grant to the Colorado Department of Human Services and to the Federal Government. The Collaborative Council and the Project UPLIFT leadership determined that conducting a second survey was the best way to evaluate county adoption unit outcomes as they related to the grant, to make the report as accurate as possible, since the Trails Automated System was not designed nor was it able to provide the data in a format that accurately tracks all the grant elements.

The survey contained 32 questions, some of them multi-part, as compared to the 2001 survey that contained 22 items. The 2001 survey was multiple purpose in that in addition serving as the basis for a bi-annual report to the Federal Government it was also used as the basis for a Colorado Department of Human Services report to the Colorado Legislature. Therefore, the survey content elements were a compromise. A separate document describes the changes that were observed between 2001 and 2004.

Survey Results

Respondents were supervisors in their respective departments of social/human services. Nineteen surveys were received in the 2004 Survey, representing 1,198 children being placed in an adoptive home in between 10/01/01 and 12/31/03. It must be noted, however, that the number of children is a gross understatement because two large counties reported that the data was not available and only 19 counties returned the survey. The 2001 number of children was 636 and that was based on all 23 counties reporting. The results for each of the 32 questions are reported. The format varies by the type of question asked, and not all counties answered all questions. For each of the Question a result table is provided that includes a "Count" column. That column refers to the number of responses received for that question.

Question 1

How many children are currently in your county's legal custody?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
337.6	48.5	13.0	521.6	1591	9	4600	4726	14

Question 2

How many children received permanency placement by adoption from your county between October 1, 2001 through December 31, 2003 in all jurisdictions?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
66.6	13.0	2.0	102.5	357	1	358	1198	18

Question 3

How many placements were finalized using purchase of service?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
19.1	0.0	0.0	51.7	194	0	194	325	17

Question 4

In the Planning Phase, are secondary workers assigned to achieve earlier permanency for EPP cases? (y/n)

Yes	No	Sometimes	Count
9	9	1	19

Question 5

Have you had an increase in inter jurisdictional placements since Oct. 2001? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
13	6	19

Question 6

Of all your permanency placements please indicate the number placed for adoption in another: (fill in the table)

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
County	17.63	3.00	0.0	37.05	147.0	0.0	147.0	282	16
State	8.86	2.00	0.0	13.03	41.00	0.0	41.00	124.00	14
Country	0.23	0.0	0.0	0.60	2.00	0.0	2.00	3.00	13

Question 7

How many of your staff understand and use the ICPC?

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
13	4	0	0	0	17

Question 8

How many placements were finalized using the ICPC process and Colorado supervision?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
6.44	2.00	0.00	11.16	41.00	0.00	41.00	103.00	16

Question 9

Question 9 is two-part. Each part appears below.

*Did your county use purchase of service dollars to facilitate interjurisdictional placements?
(y/n)*

Yes	No	Count
7	12	19

If yes, for how many cases?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
2.14	2.00	3.00	0.90	2.00	1.00	3.00	15.00	7

Question 10

Question 10 is two-part. Each part appears below. Note that two counties reported yes to the first part, but did not report how many cases, and do not appear in the statistics for the second part.

Did your county use purchase of service dollars to facilitate interjurisdictional placements?

Yes	No	Count
18	0	19

If yes, for how many cases?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
11.88	2.00	1.00	31.17	129.00	1.00	130.00	202.00	17

Question 11

Question 11 is two-part, but no county answered the second part, so it is not reported.

Did your county use courtesy home study, placement approval and supervision using the ICPC process?

Yes	No	Count
4	14	18

Question 12

Does your county have a written policy regarding the acceptance (with or without conditions) of home studies performed outside the immediate area? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
7	11	18

Question 13

Does your county have a written policy encouraging communication and collaboration with other counties or states regarding interjurisdictional adoption? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
6	11	17

Question 14

Please indicate the average length of time the ICPC process has delayed the ICPC placement: (fill in the table)

3 months or less	4-6 months	7-12 months	More than 12	Count
2	8	8	1	19

Question 15

Please indicate the average frequency the ICPC process has delayed the ICPC placement: (fill in the table)

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	Count
1	2	3	11	2	19

Question 16

In the table below, please write the names of the three states that have most often caused ICPC delays and the average amount of delay for that state. Leave table blank if you have had no trouble with ICPC delays

State	3 months or less	4 - 6 months	7-12 months	13 months or more

Fifteen counties specified at least one state. Twelve counties specified at least two states. Five counties specified three states. A total of 32 responses were received.

In addition to the number of counties specifying one or more states, this question requires two data sets to adequately report the results. The first data set is a table reporting the frequency of delays. The second data set is a table of the states, the number of times they

were mentioned, a listing of the frequency of each delay time, and an overall score (big numbers mean greater delays).

Frequency of Delay

3 mo. Or less	4-6 months	7-12 months	More than 12	Count
4	14	8	6	32

State Delays

The data for state delays suffers from low numbers. This means that for states having less than five mentions, the data should be regarded as being statistically questionable.

The N column is the number of mentions for that state. Note that the N column does not always equal the sum of the four delay columns for that state because sometimes a state was mentioned but no delay specified. The score column is a weighted average of the delays for that state.

Three states had one delay not specified. The states were CA, NB, and TX. The score for NB is not computable because no delay observations were specified. The notation " \leq " means less than or equal to. The notation " $>$ " means greater than.

State	N	\leq 3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	$>$ 12 months	score
OR	1	0	0	0	1	4.00
NV	1	0	0	0	1	4.00
FL	1	0	0	1	0	3.00
GA	1	0	0	1	0	3.00
CA	12	0	5	4	2	2.73
AZ	3	0	2	0	1	2.67
KS	3	1	0	2	0	2.33
MO	1	0	1	0	0	2.00
AR	1	0	1	0	0	2.00
IN	2	0	2	0	0	2.00
AK	1	0	1	0	0	2.00
NM	2	1	1	0	0	1.50
TX	4	2	1	0	0	1.33
NB	1	0	0	0	0	

Question 17

Question 17 is a two-part question. No respondent answered the second part.

*If you have had problems with ICPC placements, do you continue to seek ICPC placements?
(y/n)*

Yes	No	Count
17	1	18

Question 18

Please indicate which of the following tools have been helpful in seeking and obtaining inter jurisdictional placements. Please check the box that best indicates the frequency of use in the past year.

The Count column indicates the number of responses for that row. Respondents tended to omit any frequency of use for a tool if they did not use it, i.e., they neglected to place check the "0" column.

Item	Count	Number of times used in the past year			
		0	1-3	4-5	more than 5
AFRR	10	4	1	1	4
Photo Listing (CARR)	14	2	3	2	7
Adoption Parties	12	5	3	2	3
Newspaper Ads	12	6	1	1	4
AdoptUSKids	14	5	3	1	5
Kinship Search	17	0	4	3	10

Question 19

Does your staff have access to the internet? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
19	0	19

Question 20

Has internet access become more available to workers since Oct. 2001? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
18	0	18

Question 21

Question 21 is a two-part question.

Does your staff routinely use the internet? (y/n) If not, why?

Yes	No	Count
16	2	18

One of the two respondents who answered "no" specified a reason. The reason was:

Time constraints & limited internet access.

Question 22

How many have had AFRR training? 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
5	3	1	3	4	16

Question 23

Question 23 is a two-part question.

How many use the AFRR? 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

If 25% or less, why?

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
4	1	1	5	5	16

Five respondents provided an answer to the "why" portion of the question.

Response	Count
No placements	1
Caseworker time constraint. Not enough time to spend looking for permanent placements.	1
Experience with associated unit.	1
We are a small county -- all AFRR searches are done by the Foster/Adoption Worker.	1
I was not aware of this as a resource, therefore I have not encouraged staff to utilize it.	1

Question 24

How many use the Adoption Exchange/Colorado Adoption Resource Registry (CARR)?

100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
7	6	1	2	2	18

Question 25

How many use AdoptUSKids? 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
6	4	1	3	4	18

Question 26

How many use other adoption related search engines?

100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
1	2	3	3	9	18

Question 27

Do you have written procedures to respond to inquires about children who have been seen on photo listings, web sites, etc., to assure that all people are responded to in a timely and courteous way? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
6	12	18

Question 28

What is the average adoption case-load per worker? _____

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
12.93	13.50	2.00	9.68	28.00	2.00	30.00	181.00	14

Question 29

Is training available relevant to adoption issues? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
16	2	18

Question 30

Is training available relevant to post-adoption issues? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
15	3	18

Question 31

How many caseworkers currently need training in adoption issues? _____

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
7.38	1.5	0.00	19.63	80.00	0.00	80.00	118.00	16

In addition, two counties wrote in "all."

Question 32

How many caseworkers have no training in adoption issues? _____

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
4.31	0.00	0.00	12.41	50.00	0.00	50.00	69.00	16

In addition, two counties wrote in "all."

31

**NATIONAL ADOPTION INFORMATION
CLEARINGHOUSE**

Final Report Cover Sheet

Grant Number: 90-CO-0948

Grant Name and Address: Colorado Department of Human Services,
1575 Sherman, Denver, CO 80203-1714

Telephone Number: 1-303-866-3797

Project Title: Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork

Approved Project Period: 10-01-1999 through 03-31-2004

Principal Investigator's and Author's Name and Telephone Number: Dr. Carole Custer,
Custer Enterprises – Project Evaluator contract agency 719-783-0245

Date of Report: July 26, 2004

Report Number: (Number sequentially beginning with 1) -11-

Name of Federal Project Officer: Margaret Parker

Date Reviewed by Federal Project Officer: _____

Comments, (if any): _____

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Executive Summary

Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) started as a seventeen month planning grant in 1999, followed by a three year effort to modify systems and reduce adoption barriers, improve cross-jurisdictional communication, and provide child welfare-judicial joint training. The ultimate goal of Project UPLIFT was to increase and facilitate inter-jurisdictional placements for waiting children. The two objectives of the Project UPLIFT Implementation Phase were to:

- Increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements, and
- Provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Services, interventions, and training activities to meet the implementation objectives were provided through collaborative efforts and are listed below in chronological order. If the activity was a multi-year effort, it is listed in the first year in was part of the project.

- Collaborative Council
- Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)
- Training to use the AFRR
- January 2001 Juvenile Judges Winter Conference
- 2001 Collaborative Council Member Survey
- Fall 2001 Judicial Conference with Judicial Survey
- 2001 County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey
- Report to the Colorado General Assembly on Improving the Process of Achieving Permanency for Colorado's Waiting Children in Safe / Healthy Adoptive Homes.
- "Parent's Choices" Instructional Video with accompanied written guide
- Caseworker Termination Training
- January 2002 State Judicial Conference
- Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Training
- Research on Dependency and Neglect Appeals.
- September 2002 Judicial Family Issues Conference
- "Tic, Toc, Watch the Clock" Judicial Training
- January 2003 State Judicial Conference
- Adolescent Connection Pilot Program
- The installation of real time and digital equipment in district courtrooms
- Two Court of Appeals Symposiums on changing rules regarding time frames for the appeal process, and
- 2004 County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey.

Results

There are decreased barriers to adoption as a result of the project. Activities that directly supported that included several stakeholder trainings.

As a result of the project real time and digital equipment was installed in several district court rooms. The Colorado Supreme Court Rule outlining the timeframes for the

Appellate Court process will be implemented. It is expected that the approval of the Rules with a proposed January 1, 2005 implementation will have a significant impact on reducing the time for children to achieve permanency.

Lessons Learned

Objective 1 Lessons learned

- √ The implementation application was due prior to the focus group identified barriers being validated, across systems or counties, or judicial districts.
- √ A comprehensive strategic planning process with all key stakeholders at the state policy making level at the very beginning would have strengthened the project.
- √ Collaborative Council members need to be stakeholders and at a level that has the power to make decisions affecting their organizations.
- √ Surveys need to be short, to the point, and focused.
- √ Identify a built-in reward system to insure accurate and complete survey information provided in a timely manner.

Objective 2 Lessons learned

- √ Understand the resources available and provide accommodations as required to meet stated goal or refine the goal.
- √ Make sure the outcomes are measurable and that data reporting systems are available to supply the required data in the format that is useable
- √ There was no coordinated effort to examine the various Internet Adoption related search engines and to look at either combining or tapping into existing systems.
- √ To the extent possible coordinate schedules and work as a team to anticipate conflicts in setting training opportunities.
- √ Build in enough time when any longitudinal data is expected.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Background information

Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) started as a seventeen month planning grant (October, 1, 1999 through February 28, 2001) to determine the adoption barriers from both child welfare and judicial aspects of permanency planning. At the time of the original request for a planning grant, in the metropolitan Denver alone, at least forty percent of children free for adoption due to the termination of parental rights lacked an adoption plan, and at least another ten percent of the waiting children did not have plans that would specifically lead to permanency.

In the beginning of the planning phase a Collaborative Council was formed to ensure cross-system participation; organize the format, prepare initial questions, and schedule six focus groups; and provide overall project guidance in both the planning and implementation phases of the grant. Additional discussion regarding the Collaborative Council and its membership is provided later on in this chapter. After the first Collaborative Council meeting, Project UPLIFT began by soliciting input into the project from district judges at the January 2000 Colorado Juvenile Judges Conference. To determine the barriers to permanency at the county level throughout the state and to prepare for an implementation grant application, six focus groups were held in different regions of the state and involved key stakeholders from Child Welfare, State Judicial, advocacy groups, service providers, and private adoption agencies. The purpose of the focus groups was to learn what the specific adoption issues and barriers to permanency were at the county level, to implement collaborative planning and begin to identify state level strategies to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions in Colorado. Focus groups were held in Colorado Springs (El Paso and Teller Counties), Pueblo (Pueblo County), Grand Junction (Mesa, Delta and Montrose Counties), Durango (LaPlata and Archuleta Counties and including input from the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe), Ft. Morgan (Morgan, Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Yuma and Washington Counties), and Greeley (Larimer and Weld Counties). The focus groups were beneficial in keying in on and identifying the needs of county workers to promote and expedite the adoption process.

The implementation phase started on April 1, 2001 and ended March 31, 2004, and including several elements, each discussed in detail in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Evaluation Reports for activities held in year three of the implementation phase are provided in Appendix C: Data Collection Instruments, since they were not included in previous bi-annual reports submitted during the course of the project.

Throughout the course of project UPLIFT, there was a combined effort with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Division (CDHS), State Judicial Department (SJD), and private non-profits to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions, and identify and address the barriers to permanency placement for Colorado's waiting children. CDHS and SJD policy and fieldwork data were used to improve cross-jurisdictional communication and provide appropriate training opportunities for both state and county/district level CDHS, SJD and private agency personnel. The project training

was provided to support quality and permanent adoptive placements and services to Colorado's waiting children. Caseworkers' resistance to inter-jurisdictional adoptions and the fragmented recruitment efforts statewide were issues the project addressed, as well as judicial challenges of court backlogs and appellate delays. The implementation phase drew on proactive Colorado initiatives to modify systems and reduce adoption barriers, improve cross-jurisdictional communication, and provide child welfare-judicial joint training. The ultimate goal of Project UPLIFT was to increase and facilitate inter-jurisdictional placements for Colorado's waiting children. The two project implementation objectives to address the goal were:

1. Increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements, and
2. Provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Project Model

The six Focus Groups as described on page one, were held during May, June and September 2000, throughout the state. Barriers were identified that helped formulate the project model for implementation of the project. Identified barriers included:

At the county department of human/social services level:

- ✓ Insufficient communication between counties and other states,
- ✓ Sense of ownership regarding adoptive families,
- ✓ Limited confidence in pre-finalization,
- ✓ Lack and/or availability of post-adoption services,
- ✓ Size of caseloads,
- ✓ County tendency to place younger children first,
- ✓ Reluctance on the part of rural counties to place urban children,
- ✓ Lack of training in Family Group Decision Making,
- ✓ Need for caseworker training on preparing for terminations,
- ✓ Lack of confidence/acceptance of home studies done outside the immediate area,
- ✓ Costs associated with inter-jurisdictional placement travel and coordination,
- ✓ Lack of caseworker Internet access for family searches,
- ✓ Need for speedier paternity determinations,
- ✓ ICPC process issues, and
- ✓ Complications and varying rules in applying the Indian Child Welfare Act.

At the judicial system level:

- ✓ Interstate Compact issues and how to speed the process when awaiting completion of out of state home assessments.
- ✓ Subsidies and the process on how they are determined.
- ✓ Private agencies' role in special needs adoption verses infant adoption planning.
- ✓ Inconsistency from the bench regarding processes that meet ASFA standards,
- ✓ Increased number of appeals in termination cases,
- ✓ No requirement for judges to have experience in area to which they are assigned,
- ✓ Transfer of termination cases to the appellate system hinders tracking, statistical reporting and status of children in care,

- ✓ District Court changes related to ASFA creating new demands on time/resources,
- ✓ Need for more “front-loading” to find other kin,
- ✓ Insufficient caseworker presentation of information to the courts,
- ✓ Need for Guardian ad Litem support for out of state placements,
- ✓ Need for more Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and
- ✓ Need for joint training on family group conferencing.

General system adoption issues:

- ✓ Lack of broad range caseworker planning,
- ✓ Lack of continuity between the foster care and adoption specializations,
- ✓ Financial and workload resistance by private agencies to perform special needs adoption functions,
- ✓ Perception on the part of some caseworkers that their role is a protection specialist, rather than a permanency planning specialist,
- ✓ Limited creativity in identifying potential adoptive families,
- ✓ Frequent caseworker changes and lack of adoption training,
- ✓ Need to include other community partners in early permanency planning efforts,
- ✓ Decisions made without team input,
- ✓ Underutilization of interstate adoption resources for waiting children, and
- ✓ The need for more cross-system training.

The Collaborative Council reviewed the transcripts from the Focus Groups and formulated a plan to meet the identified needs as outlined above. The Collaborative Council was comprised of representatives from the following key stakeholder groups:

One Judge,
One Magistrate,
Three County Department of Human Services representatives,
One State Judicial representative,
One Colorado Department of Human Services representative,
Two County Attorneys,
Two City Attorneys,
One representative from the Adoption Exchange,
One Guardian-ad-Litem (GAL),
One Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) representative,
One Training Consultant representative,
One Private Adoption Agency representative,
Two Court Facilitator representatives, and
The Project Evaluators.

Additional discussion of the Collaborative Council role and responsibilities is provided later in Chapter 1 under collaborative efforts.

Project UPLIFT supported new statutes from the Colorado legislature to positively affect adoptive family resources availability by supporting the creation, and implementation of the Adoptive Family Resource Registry, under the leadership of the Adoption Exchange.

Training was provided to caseworkers throughout the state to county adoption workers and supervisors as well as state staff and private adoption agencies.

In response to the permanency barriers identified and a desire for counties and the courts to work together for solutions to the long term needs of a Colorado's waiting children, youth and their families several project activities were implemented. The activities are listed in alphabetical and not chronological order:

- ✓ Adolescent Connection Pilot Program
- ✓ Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)
- ✓ AFRR adoption worker training
- ✓ Appellate Court research
- ✓ Child welfare caseworker training
- ✓ Collaborative Council participation and input
- ✓ Community training of adoption service providers
- ✓ County level termination training
- ✓ Installation of real time and digital equipment in 10 district judicial courtrooms
- ✓ Judicial Community training "Tic, Toc, Watch The Clock"
- ✓ "Parent's Choices" video for parents considering relinquishment.
- ✓ Report to the Colorado State Legislature
- ✓ Seminars and workshops at state judicial and child welfare conferences
- ✓ Training curriculum development

Collaborative Efforts

From the very beginning application process, Project UPLIFT was a collaborative effort involving the Colorado Department of Human Services Child Welfare Division, Loving Homes, Inc., State Judicial, Nicholson, Spencer and Associates and an outside contractor, Custer Enterprises, to provide a quality evaluation. Initially stated roles of each of the agencies comprising the administrative team were as follows, however, some changes in training options occurred after the project started:

Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) served the project as the lead agency and as such their role was to:

- Provide project direction and coordinate focus with collaborative partners.
- Enlist county administrative support,
- Facilitate communication with key agencies,
- Provide needed statistical data, and
- Conduct ICPC and ICAMA training.

Loving Homes, Inc., a private adoption agency, served the project as the coordinating agency and as such their role was to:

- Provide project coordination,
- Design training on ICPC and ICAMA with CDHS,
- Conduct training on Family Group Decision Making,
- Disseminate project information across system lines,
- Facilitate Project Evaluator's role, and

- Coordinate training and resource manual with CDHS.

Colorado State Judicial actively participated in the project and their role was to:

- Enlist state and district court support and participation,
- Delineate judicial concerns, assessing cross-system protocols,
- Compile needed statistical data, and
- Facilitate communication with courts, county attorneys, and GAL's.

The Adoption Exchange actively participated in the project and their role was to:

- Disseminate child specific placement needs to counties and agencies,
- Link the AFRR to the project through CDHS,
- Provide needed statistical data, and
- Facilitate communication in the private sector.

Nicholson, Spencer and Associates served as the judicial training team and their role in the project was to:

- Conduct training on termination of parental rights,
- Address Family Group Decision Making training issues,
- Assist with judicial and legal community training,
- Facilitate communication within court districts and judicial sectors, and
- Work with Loving Homes and CDHS staff to develop training units.

Upon notification of initial funding the Collaborative Council (CC) was formed and met quarterly throughout the planning phase and the first two years of the implementation phase. The CC members participated in quarterly meetings to guide the project and make recommendations for improvement to achieve project objectives in a timely and collaborative manner. It should be noted that not all CC members served throughout all 53 months of Project UPLIFT. As individual CC members had their job functions change or moved on to other positions, personnel changes occurred within the CC membership and new members joined the CC to continue the appropriate representation mix. These changes in CC membership also served to increase the exposure of the Project. A list of CC membership representation is provided in the project model discussion earlier in Chapter 1. As part of the planning phase, the CC expanded on the preliminary cross-jurisdictional needs assessment by identifying barriers presented by the Colorado county adoption workers, challenges created by the judicial system, as well as general system adoption issues. In the second year of implementation a key stakeholders meeting was added two weeks prior to the full CC meeting to get input and update on all project activities, set the formal agenda for the full council meeting and recommend courses of action that the entire CC membership could consider. This strategy enhanced the ability of the full CC to provide quality input in a timeframe that made the most of everyone's valuable time. Stakeholder and full CC meetings were each held twice in the final year as the need for planning decreased. The last meeting of the stakeholders was in December 2003, and the last full Collaborative Council took place on January 15, 2004.

All Project UPLIFT tasks are performed under the guidance of the Representative of the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Collaborative Council. Loving Homes, Inc. served as the project coordinating agency.

Special Issues

There were several unique components to Project UPLIFT, and some of the specific training design and training opportunities outlined initially did not occur, due to the death of Janelle Peterson, designated Project Coordinator, and expert in the design of training on ICPC and ICAMA and in conducting training on Family Group Decision Making.

Another unforeseen issue was the state fiscal crisis following the events on September 11, 2001, that saw state tax revenues take a nosedive, and produce a rippling effect of personnel and service downsizing throughout all levels of state and county government. Colorado is still feeling the effects of these drastic changes and trying to adjust.

Three reports were made to the Colorado Legislature Joint Budget Committee and the Health, Environment, Welfare and Institutions Committees of both the Senate and the House in 2002. Under the direction of the Colorado State Judicial Department two commission reports were submitted. Project UPLIFT reported on the implementation of HB 1299 in November 2002.

Funding Information

The Project UPLIFT funding began in 1999, as a 17-month planning grant for a total of \$100,000 federal support. Loving Homes provided an in-kind contribution of part of the evaluator's contract, project coordination and administration plus associated fringe benefits for Loving Homes staff and equipment depreciation for a total of \$17,550 in-kind support. The total for both the federal and in-kind support came to \$117,550 for the 17-month planning grant. The CDHS project director was also an in-kind contribution, but not itemized on the budget. The cost each year of the three year Project UPLIFT Implementation Grant was \$250,000 in federal support with a \$27,880 in-kind contribution from Loving Homes for a sub total of \$833,640 for the implementation phase. The total federal contribution to Project UPLIFT over for the 53-month effort was \$850,000, with a total in-kind contribution of \$100,640.

Evaluation Plan and Data Collection Methods

An outside, third party evaluator, Custer Enterprises contracted with Project UPLIFT to provide a quality project evaluation. The evaluation plan was to:

1. Collect quantitative data wherever possible, and resort to qualitative methods where necessary.
2. Monitor all training provided under the Project by means of participant feedback forms, and evaluator participation at the first few sessions, to provide the Project Director and training organization with initial reports based on the first sessions so that modifications to the curriculum and/or delivery could be made in a timely manner. Subsequently full reports were provided at the conclusion of the training based on the full set of feedback forms.

3. Monitor symposia by means of participant feedback forms and evaluator participation with a report to the Project Director and facilitator so that changes as necessary can be made for subsequent symposia.
4. Provide evaluation tools, tabulate, evaluate all state judicial juvenile and family issues conferences and provide reports to State Judicial and the Collaborative Council.
5. Make use of advanced statistics, e.g., Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), where applicable. Use descriptive statistics (mean, mode, etc.) wherever numbers can be collected and the statistics would be meaningful in context.
6. Evaluate the Collaborative Council using meeting minutes, evaluator's notes, and surveys of the participants.
7. Evaluate the Adolescent Connection Pilot Component using workers' time logs, "Intent to Adopt" and "Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact" forms to discover any differences between workers and how they spent their time. A series of ANOVAs was used to determine any difference in the effectiveness of the workers (there were), and to discover if the way in which the various workers spent there time had an effect (it did). The later ANOVA results lead to guidelines on how workers should partition their time amongst the various required tasks.
8. Evaluate the relative effectiveness of the "real time" and "digital" court recording equipment with respect to the time it takes to get a transcript to the Court of Appeals after the appeal is filed. A three way ANOVA is planned once the data become available.
9. Use the Colorado DHS database, Trails, for statewide statistics on children in state care including adoption, inter-jurisdictional placements and other relevant data.
10. Prepare the Final Project UPLIFT Report.

Chapter 2 – Process Evaluation

Work Plan to meet the Implementation Objectives

The two objectives of the Project UPLIFT Implementation Phase were to:

1. Increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements.
2. Provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Loving Homes, Inc. served as the coordinating agency to work with the CDHS and State Judicial, with the Adoption Exchange, Custer Enterprises, and Nicholson, Spencer & Associates assisting with specialized service plans and activities. All contracts for specific work were negotiated and monitored by Loving Homes, Inc. and specific services are discussed as part of the work plan. In addition, four Adolescent Connection Caseworkers received a contract to provide services to children and youth in specific counties. The Adoption Exchange received a contract to administer the Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR). An Appellate Court Researcher, Darcie Bolton, received a contract to provide baseline research on Dependency and Neglect Appeal time frames. Custer Enterprises received contracts each year to provide the comprehensive project evaluation. Nicholson, Spencer & Associates received a contract to provide training, curriculum, and produce an instructional video.

A discussion of the services, interventions, and training for all UPLIFT activities to meet the implementation objectives are outlined below by objective and are in chronological order. If the activity was a multi-year effort, that will be stated along with the duration, intensity, staffing, target population and collaborative efforts. Copies of evaluation tools for the trainings and services provided by the project were included in bi-annual reports. Additional copies are available upon request.

Project UPLIFT helped to establish and financially support the operation of the **Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)** through a contract with The Adoption Exchange and with assistance from the CDHS. Funds from Project UPLIFT partially covered operating and management expenses of this automated system. The Registry provided another option to caseworkers and families in the pursuit of inter-jurisdictional placement of children. The Adoption Exchange hired a coordinator to oversee the registry, register families and caseworkers, and provide training to access and use the system. The AFRR was first showcased at the Colorado Child Welfare Conference held in Vail, Colorado in June 2000, and over the course of the project and up to August 18, 2003, over 150 adoption workers, county adoption supervisors and state staff were trained on the new system in over eleven scheduled training workshops held throughout the state. The trainings were held throughout the state to minimize travel time for attendees and as a result 17 different counties were present at one or more of the trainings. Evaluation feedback forms were developed. Project evaluators tabulated feedback forms, and made reports on training feedback to the Adoption Exchange and made reports on training outcomes to the project leadership and the full Collaborative Council at regularly

scheduled meetings. A training manual was developed, and provided to county department caseworkers. The AFRR Coordinator at the Adoption Exchange presented the AFRR to family groups interested in adopting, and wrote numerous articles that appeared in regional Adoption newsletters. In addition to operating the Registry, the Adoption Exchange provided the project with data sets, and provided the AFRR training throughout the state in order to increase use of this automated system. Feedback from caseworkers trained to access and use the system found the training helpful, and although they indicated they would likely use the AFRR, they probably would not use it regularly. Internet access for caseworkers was an issue for many attendees. AFRR usage was monitored both by the Adoption Exchange and the evaluators routinely. The last Adoption Exchange report, dated January 14, 2004, indicated that 79 qualified families from 22 states are enrolled with 31 of them being from Colorado. The key factor hindering the success of the program continues to be the lack of caseworker participation. This lack of caseworker usage leads to continued frustration among the families enrolled and diminishes their motivation to re-enroll.

In October 2001, and again in February 2004 adoption caseworkers and supervisors in 23 county departments of human/social services were surveyed. In the 2001 survey, Internet access to search for families seeking to adopt was an issue with only 12 counties providing Internet access to caseworkers, and only 6 counties indicated that their caseworkers routinely use the Internet. This information made it axiomatic that AFRR would not be widely used in the counties. In the February 2004 Survey, questions were asked to determine county satisfaction with the AFRR and to evaluate the effectiveness of the AFRR itself. Results indicated that AFRR is only one of several tools available to search for families, and it is still not widely used by adoption caseworkers. The 2004 Survey Report and a comparison between the 2001 and 2004 surveys are provided in Appendix B. The two reports were not finished at the time the last bi-annual report was submitted in June 2004, and that is why it is being included in an appendix of this Final Evaluation Report. Because the 2001 survey was reported earlier, it is only summarized here for reference.

The October 2001 County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey was distributed to 23 county departments of human/social services. All 23 counties responded. The counties included all 10 large counties, 11 medium sized counties and 2 small counties. According to the information provided over 636 children had been placed in adoptive homes from these counties in the previous 12-month period. The number of caseworkers in the child welfare or adoption units numbered 146, with an average caseload per worker of 21. On average the supervisors believed the optimum caseload size should be between 14-15 for a mixed caseload. Thirty-nine of the caseworkers were new hires, and some counties reported they had openings they were unable to fill. Thirteen respondents indicated there were not enough training spots available to train workers, and at the time of the survey 98 caseworkers in these counties needed training in adoption issues, and 51 caseworkers had no training in adoption issues.

Nineteen counties did not have a written policy encouraging communication and collaboration with other counties or states regarding inter-jurisdictional adoptions.

Twenty counties did not have a written policy regarding the acceptance (with or without conditions) of home studies performed outside the immediate area. Recommendations based on the results of the survey are provided in Chapter 5.

Project UPLIFT sponsored the **Juvenile Judges Winter Conference** held in January 2001, and the Project Director and Magistrate Evelyn Sullivan made an effective presentation on achieving permanency for children that made an appropriate introduction to Project UPLIFT's implementation phase, letting the local and district level judiciary know about the project. The project evaluators evaluated the entire judicial conference, and provided feedback to the Collaborative Council and to State Judicial.

The **Collaborative Council** was surveyed in March 2001, to determine whether or not the membership believed the project was on track, and meeting the goals and objectives as set out in the grant application. Results of the survey were very positive, and the evaluator's report was distributed and discussed with the project leadership, and council members. As a result of the survey to twelve council members, more counties were invited to join the council for a more balanced statewide input. The survey results were also discussed in the next 2001 bi-annual report to the federal government.

Judicial Survey at the Fall 2001 Judicial Conference was prepared by the project evaluators, reviewed by the Collaborative Council, and distributed on September 30, 2001 at the conference luncheon. The purpose of the survey was to address inter-jurisdictional adoption issues and solicit opinions from Judges and Magistrates. Fifty-one surveys were completed and tabulated. Of the surveys completed 26 were from Magistrates, 22 from District Court Judges, 2 from Juvenile Court Judges and 1 from an Appellate Court Judge. As a result of the survey workshops and seminars addressing identified issues were presented at all relevant annual state judicial conferences. Evaluations of the conferences were a part of the scope of work for the Project UPLIFT evaluators. All conference evaluation reports were submitted to the project leadership and the Collaborative Council for review and comment. The bi-annual reports included feedback on the seminars presented at the various state judicial and family issues conferences held.

In October 2001, Evaluators completed a final report to the Colorado General Assembly regarding **Improving the Process of Achieving Permanency for Colorado's Waiting Children in Safe and Healthy Adoptive Homes**. The report was delivered to the Project Director, for submission to the Colorado General Assembly. House Bill 99-1299 required this report to be submitted to address three major areas:

1. Progress of adoptive placement of children in the legal custody of county departments of county departments of human/social services,
2. Aspects of the process that may be improved to achieve the goal of permanency for the greatest number of children in safe and healthy adoptive homes, and
3. Recommendations regarding improvements that could be made.

Through the collection of data, research and surveys, the report was completed in conjunction with the work of the project, effectively demonstrating the cross-system effectiveness of Project UPLIFT.

“Parent’s Choices” Instructional Video with accompanied written guide for caseworkers and parent use was developed based on input from the Collaborative Council to provide another instrument and tool to expedite permanency and demonstrate the importance of inter-jurisdictional searches as a way to achieve that goal. The package was designed for use by county caseworkers, judicial districts, GAL’s and shown to parents as they counseled families in their choices regarding the termination of parental rights. The video and guide were scripted, storyboarded and produced under a grant contract to Nicholson, Spencer and Associates with review and input from the Collaborative Council. The video presents a case scenario of a child whose birth parents are unable to complete a treatment plan thus leading to a permanency planning process and inter-jurisdictional placement of the child with kin in another state. The purpose of the video was to increase parent’s awareness of the judicial/social services processes in a dependency case, and was designed to enable parents to visually and emotionally understand the impact of their decisions on the permanent plan for their child(ren).

The video clearly portrays the trauma that a child experiences when parents are unwilling or unable to do whatever it takes for the child to safely return home. Some parents engage in a Family Service Plan (FSP) but do not remedy the circumstances that result in a child being unsafe. The video shows the results when adults make decisions that cause the Court to order that another permanent living arrangement must be made for the child.

The accompanied written video guide clearly and succinctly outlines the dependency and neglect process in Colorado, the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practice, and the FSP process. Details for visitation are outlined as well as the concept for kinship care. As a background to what the video is demonstrating the steps in the permanency process are briefly outlined for parents to understand the steps involved. In addition the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is outlined as well as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

The video and guide package was distributed throughout Colorado free of charge, and marketed to others at a cost recovery rate of \$30.00 plus tax and shipping.

In the summer and fall of 2001, Nicholson, Spencer and Associates (NS&A) wrote the curriculum for **Caseworker Termination Training**. Throughout the process, NS&A consulted with the Project UPLIFT leadership team, made presentations and solicited feedback from the Collaborative Council. The purpose of the training was to enhance the competency level of child welfare caseworkers’ ability to write service plans and acquire judicial decisions regarding termination of parent/child relationships. The training sessions included support of the caseworker’s ability to implement the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The training was pilot field tested in October 2001, and refined on the feedback from those attending the field test. The training was delivered on six occasions between November 13, 2001 and April 5, 2002. Five training sites, Colorado Springs,

Denver, Durango, and Grand Junction were used to minimize attendee travel time. Trainees completed feedback forms that were developed by the project evaluators. Each training was evaluated based on the completed feedback forms. Completed forms were tabulated, and a report was generated. The training was very well received, and the trainees overwhelmingly (94%) believed the content included information they could use in practice, and that the training should be offered to other practitioners. The trainees suggested that future training should be two days rather than one, and that there should be an introductory class followed by a more advanced class.

Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Training was sponsored by Project UPLIFT in May 2002. The purpose of the training was to enable county workers to have the ability to appropriately respond to racial and ethnical barriers by possessing a better understanding of cultural competence and diversity for all children in the foster care system. To address cultural issues that prevent cross-jurisdictional placements due to a lack of understanding as to how other cultures best meet basic human needs Project UPLIFT sponsored three Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) trainings conducted by Valerie Morgan Austin, an attorney with the Office of Civil Rights based in Denver. The training was available either on site, or by teleconferencing. Seventy-seven participants representing 10 counties participated. The majority of participants were caseworkers, however private adoption agencies, county adoption supervisors, county/state administrators, and county attorneys were also represented. Participants were asked to complete a training feedback evaluation form, and the evaluators prepared a report and presented it to the project director and the Collaborative Council. The report was also referenced in the appropriate biannual report. In summary, all participants agreed that the trainer knew the subject well, presented a positive attitude and solicited questions and feedback. Ninety-six percent of those attending indicated the training contained information they could use in practice. Ninety-three percent indicated that as a result of the training they have the ability to apply MEPA/IEP standards to cases and make decisions that are based on sound child welfare practice.

The project contracted with Darcie Bolton, in the fall of 2002 to conduct research on **Dependency and Neglect Appeals**. The research consisted of a review of Colorado Court of Appeals 2001 cases in dependency and neglect proceedings. One specific focus was to review the cases for overall trends and timeliness throughout the appellate process. Findings are discussed in Chapter 4. As a result of this research, activities for the third year were developed that included the installation of digital and real time recording equipment in nine judicial district courtrooms, and two Court of Appeals Symposiums were held to look at restructuring the appellate process on dependency and neglect cases.

“Tic, Toc, Watch the Clock” or **“Getting to Permanency in a Timely Fashion”** was a series of one-day, six-hour training opportunities for Colorado’s judges, magistrates, court facilitators and county attorneys representing the petitioner in dependency and neglect cases. The purpose of the training was to identify the urgency and time frames for the permanency planning process, explore the roles and responsibilities of the professionals in the process, understand the impact of new federal legislation, and become familiar with Title IV-E and social services code requirements.

The curriculum was developed and delivered by Nicholson, Spencer and Associates after input from the Collaborative Council. Three trainings were held in January and February 2003. One or more representatives from 12 different county or judicial districts attended.

Three training dates had to be canceled due to lack of sign up participation from judges and other legal professionals, and the training that occurred had to be re-scheduled three times. These reschedulings occurred as a result of many factors related to changes in the Judicial Department. Attendance was hampered as a result of many activities, including training opportunities being offered by State Judicial at the same time, and was not related to a lack of interest in the topic of inter-jurisdictional barriers to permanency. The evaluations indicate that the judges, magistrates, court facilitators, and county attorneys were pleased with the information and opportunity to learn more about the assessment and case planning information caseworkers use in their preparation for court cases. Two documents were provided to the judges in addition to a book on separation and loss and an expansive notebook containing resources for the judges. The judges that were able to make it were disappointed that more judges were not in attendance but recent and severe cut backs in state funding for the judicial department was often given as the reason more judges did not attend.

In addition, many local and state issues contributed to the State Judicial need for re-scheduling and canceling some of the training dates. The trainings that did occur were very well received and feedback forms returned, and ratings of competencies, trainer skills, and workshop content were all in the high 90% range. The evaluations reflect the overwhelmingly positive regard the judges had for the curriculum and the trainer. Many barriers were confronted and resolutions were discussed and hopefully implemented by the various judicial districts represented in the training. Trainees said they came away with a better comprehension of how the process should progress, a better understanding of the role of each of the players, the importance of permanency planning, a greater understanding of trauma and stages of separational loss and the impact the court process has on all parties. All trainees received a notebook full of resources and copies of Claudia Jewett's book, "**Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss.**" as well as "Resource Guidelines – Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases".

Adolescent Connection Pilot Program – an eight-month program ended in February 2003 that supported fifty-six adolescent participants with the goal of re-establishing supportive relationships and if possible, permanent living relationships, with individuals previously involved with the adolescents, including parents and other relatives. The program achieved a high degree of documented success providing one hundred twenty-two connections. Lessons learned are outlined in Chapter one of this report.

The final year of the Project focused on helping the judicial system eliminate or reduce factors that lead to delays in child permanency. Activities in the third year included:

1. The installation of real time and digital equipment in district courtrooms with the goal to make transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average of 112 days.

2. Conduct two Court of Appeals Symposiums to focus on changing the Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process.
3. Support for the active use of the Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR) to increase the number of children placed across jurisdictional lines.
4. Conduct a second county adoption supervisors survey to determine county level use and issues regarding the use of the AFRR.

Real time and Digital Equipment was provided to over 25 county court rooms in 9 judicial districts for the purpose of making transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average time frame of 112 days. A preliminary report on the use of the equipment in the first six months of 2004 is provided in Appendix B, and titled “Court Recording Equipment Upgrade Report”. As of the date the final report is being submitted, not enough data (appeals filed and processed) is available to make any informed judgments regarding the effects this equipment will make. The equipment has not been in use for very long, not enough appeal cases have used the equipment and The Court of Appeals rules have not yet been changed.

Two **Court of Appeals Symposiums** were held in February 2004. State Judicial and the Court Improvement Project with the support of the Chief Judge of the Colorado Court of Appeals hosted the symposiums. The focus of the forums was to focus on changing the Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process.

The **Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR)** use was addressed in reports from the Adoption Exchange and earlier in this chapter. One of the primary goals of the second adoption supervisors survey conducted in 2004 was to determine county level use and issues regarding the use of the AFRR. The 19 counties reporting indicated that staff all had access to the Internet, and that it was more readily available for use. This is a definite improvement over what was reported in 2001. AFRR was listed as a tool available. However, when asked what tools have been helpful in seeking and obtaining inter jurisdictional placements AFRR is only one of several tools available to search for families, and it is still not widely used by adoption caseworkers. Tools used with more frequency included, in order of use, kinship search, AdoptUSKids, CARR photo listing, adoption parties, and newspaper ads. The 2004 County Adoption Supervisor and Child Welfare Administrator Survey report is provided in Appendix – B, along with a comparison report titled “Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor Survey Results: 2001 vs. 2004”. The 2004 Survey contained 32 questions, some of them multi-part, as compared to the 2001 Survey that contained 22 items. Respondents were from the same 23 counties. In 2001, all 23 counties responded. In 2004 only 19 surveys were received.

Research Questions

The first implementation phase objective was to increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements. Questions to assess the level of achievement of objective one are:

1. Was training provided to judges, the legal community, caseworkers, supervisors, and partner agencies as an integral part of increasing the number of inter-jurisdictional adoptions?
2. Was a resource pool of waiting families developed using the AFRR as a means of sharing resources more effectively?
3. How successful was the project in developing collaborative relationships with other agencies and organizations?
4. Did the project demonstrate the advantages of inter-jurisdictional placements in culturally appropriate environments and services for children?

In answer to question number one, several specific training opportunities were made available throughout the state in varied venues to include all key stakeholders and to support inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements. The training opportunities provided have been highlighted, with evaluation data provided for each training.

Children continue to achieve permanency in shorter time frames. Counties report anecdotally that the spirit of the law to provide expedited permanency planning is being met. The number of inter-jurisdictional adoptions statewide has increased, as illustrated by the Trails data provided in Chapter 4. The courts as a whole have improved their compliance with the EPP timelines and a Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process is in the process for implementation in January 2005.

The resource pool of waiting families has increased, however the use of the AFRR by caseworkers has declined and that issue is discussed elsewhere in this chapter and also in the reports provided in Appendix B.

The project was very successful in developing collaborative relationships with public and private agencies and organizations. Several MOU's were negotiated with most key stakeholders in providing adoption and support systems to Colorado's waiting children and are still in place and functioning. Additional funding sources for specific projects have also been negotiated and some are still in the planning stages.

The project did provide MEPA training, and as a matter of best practice policy, all placements consider culture factors and appropriate placement environments for children and youth. The core training, as well as the annual Child Welfare conferences continues to address and reinforce culturally appropriate environments and services for children throughout Colorado. At the state and county level, this is a priority.

Objective one of the Project UPLIFT implementation phase was to increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements.

Before discussing the lessons learned in the project, it should be noted that the project lost its leader, Janelle Peterson, CEO of Loving Homes and designated Project UPLIFT Coordinator, shortly after the planning phase started. Janelle suddenly became ill, was hospitalized from May 20, 2000, until she passed away on October 3, 2000. In addition, and unfortunately, early on in the planning phase, the federal authority requested the completion of the implementation phase application.

Objective 1 Lessons learned

- √ It would have been extremely helpful not to have had to submit the implementation application so close to the start of the initial planning phase, because, based on the focus group input barriers were not validated, across systems or counties, or judicial districts. If the opportunity were available to start over, it would have been very valuable to have more time to validate focus group input. One of the ways this could have occurred would have been to conduct a comprehensive strategic planning process with all key stakeholders at the state policy making level. And, as a second step request local validation and buy-in regarding the implementation objectives and activities to meet those objectives.

- √ Regarding the Collaborative Council, by the end of the first year of implementation it was made clear that the full Collaborative Council meetings were way too long. Decision makers did not have that much time to devote to small portion of their workload, therefore, the UPLIFT project leadership jointly decided to have two shorter audience focused meetings each quarter rather than one long one including the full council. Many details could be discussed. Starting in the second year of implementation a stakeholders meeting, with the project leadership and decision makers only was added and convened two weeks prior to the full Collaborative Council Meeting. The Stakeholder Meeting's purpose was to get input on what was happening at CDHS, SJD and at private agencies that would impact UPLIFT and hear an update on all project activities. As issues arose that would require a course change, or involve a decision at a higher department level the stakeholders would recommend and propose some possible choices of appropriate courses of action for the full council membership to consider. The stakeholders also set the formal agenda for the full council meeting. This strategy enhanced the ability of the full council to provide quality input in a time frame that made the most of everyone's valuable time. All council members felt that this change made sense, and valued their contribution to the project. Stakeholder and full council meetings were each held twice in the final year as the need for planning decreased.

- √ Regarding the County Adoption Surveys, there were two reasons for the first survey, first it was a legislative imperative and second to guard against the anticipated failure of the Trails system to provide the data. The second survey was broader in scope, and based upon lessons we learned from the first survey. In future surveys the evaluators can learn from the mistakes made. The evaluators will provide more planning guidance at the beginning. It is very important to make sure that results of all surveys are available to participants that take the time to complete and return the survey.

Next time, the survey needs to include a built-in reward system for accurately and completely responding to the survey in a timely manner.

The second implementation phase objective was to provide positive and innovative changes in system approaches to increase inter-jurisdictional placements.

Objective 2 Lessons learned

- √ Based on the October 2001 County Adoption Supervisor survey it was clear more county level access to the Internet was needed, and this was going to impact AFRR use and value to some county departments. There were no funds available to address this nor was there a recommendation to the state department to solicit buy-in to remedy this deficit. In addition, the design of the TRAILS statewide reporting system did not include the AFRR, nor was there any state level support to include it.
- √ There was no coordinated effort to examine the various Internet Adoption related search engines and to look at either combining or tapping into existing systems. The AFRR was established by a legislative initiative, and then was not supported properly so that it had a chance to be successful.
- √ It is important to coordinate schedules and work as a team to anticipate conflicts in setting training opportunities. Specific time frame Judicial Training was developed by Project UPLIFT and occurred in January and February 2003, after being re-scheduled three times. These rescheduling occurred as a result of many factors related to changes in the Judicial Department. Attendance was hampered as a result of many activities, including training opportunities being offered by State Judicial at the same time, and was not related to a lack of interest in the topic of inter-jurisdictional barriers to permanency.
- √ More time is required when any longitudinal data is expected. For example, in year three of the implementation phase digital and real time equipment was installed in district court rooms. The equipment has only been in place for about six months. It is way too early to make any informed judgments regarding the effects this equipment will make over time to reduce the time of appeal. The equipment has not been in use for very long and The Court of Appeals rule has not yet been changed.

Chapter 3 – Outcome Evaluation

Outcome Objective

Improved Service Coordination

Coordination of services was improved as a direct and indirect result of Project UPLIFT. The Commission on Families in Colorado Courts Final Report in August 2002, found a need for special training in family issues for judges and magistrates hearing family cases. The Commission recommended training in the fundamentals of family law, and provision of docket coverage to allow adequate time for training. The goal was to provide thorough and ongoing training for judicial officers to enable the courts to make better-informed decisions for families. Project UPLIFT was able to support the Commission's recommendation by providing several seminars in several judicial conferences starting with the Juvenile Judges Winter Conference in January 2001.

Decreased Barriers to Adoption

There are decreased barriers to adoption as a result of the project. To identify barriers and provide project direction focus groups were followed by several surveys. Activities that directly supported the following stakeholder training opportunities reaching over 1000 human service and judicial professionals: Training to use the AFRR, five judicial conferences, three state child welfare conferences, caseworker training to enhance the competency level of child welfare caseworkers' ability to write service plans and acquire judicial decisions regarding termination of parent/child relationships, Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Training to provide best practice policy in considering culture factors and appropriate placement environments for children and youth, and judicial training to identify the urgency and time frames for the permanency planning process, explore the roles and responsibilities of the professionals in the process, understand the impact of new federal legislation, and become familiar with Title IV-E and social services code requirements.

The "Parent's Choices" Instructional Video with accompanied users guide clearly and succinctly outlines the dependency and neglect process in Colorado, the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practice, and the FSP process. The permanency process steps are briefly outlined for parents to understand the course of action involved. In addition the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is outlined as well as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The video and guide package was distributed throughout Colorado free of charge, and marketed to other states.

Results on the research conducted on Dependency and Neglect Appeals lead to the installation of real time and digital equipment in district courtrooms to make transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average of 112 days. In addition, two Court of Appeals Symposiums were conducted to focus on changing the Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process.

Decreased Time in Out-of-Home Care

Children continue to achieve permanency in shorter time frames. Counties report anecdotally that the spirit of the law to provide expedited permanency planning is being met. The number of inter-jurisdictional adoptions statewide has increased, as illustrated by the Trails data provided in Chapter 4. The courts as a whole have improved their compliance with the EPP timelines and a Supreme Court Rule regarding time frames for attorneys during the appeal process is in the process for implementation in January 2005.

From the data the project was able to compile from county surveys and the state Trails data system there does appear to have been a documented decrease in the time children and youth are in out-of-home care.

Certainly the biggest project success in decreasing time in out-of-home care came from the **Adolescent Connection Pilot Program** – an eight-month program that supported fifty-six adolescent participants with the goal of re-establishing supportive relationships and if possible, permanent living relationships, with individuals previously involved with the adolescents, including parents and other relatives. The program achieved a high degree of documented success providing one hundred twenty-two connections. The report on that program is provided in Appendix A.

The collaboration with state judicial was also a contributing factor that will continue to have a positive impact on decreasing time in out of home care, particularly after the change in time frames for the appeal process.

Chapter 4 – Use of Program Implementation Data to Understand Outcomes

At the time the application for Project UPLIFT was written the grant request author reported that there were 1,060 cases of children in the legal custody of counties in Colorado and that of those 725 children were free for adoption. When the grant was funded, evaluators requested baseline data from the CDHS Division of Child Welfare Research and Data Analysis Unit with yearly status reports. The CDHS and the data unit have graciously tried to provide the evaluators with the needed data to support Project UPLIFT needs. However, there have been several challenges to meeting this request.

The State of Colorado started the implementation of Trails, the new Automated Tracking System in January 2001, according to Ronald M. Ozga, Applications Director, Children Youth and Families Services, CDHS, Office of Information Technology Services. Trails is managed by the CDHS Division of Child Welfare Research and Data Analysis Unit. The conversion of data into the Trails Automated Tracking System is still taking place, and the system continues to evolve. County caseworkers that enter data into Trails are still being trained at the time this report is submitted (July 2004). Along with the conversion into Trails, many of the data field definitions have been modified or changed.

Unfortunately the changes being made are not compatible with the evaluator needs for Project UPLIFT. The data reported below is a “snapshot” look at what the data is for the particular month reported, and not a yearly report of numbers of children served over time, and because data field definitions change, some fields in the tables are blank. Because of this, it is impossible to draw firm conclusions regarding the impact Project UPLIFT has had on increasing inter-jurisdictional placements. Nevertheless, we present the available data here in this report with the above understanding and ask the reader to draw whatever conclusions they feel appropriate. The documented closure goal for all children in out of home placement between 12/2000 and 12/2003 according to data provided from the Trails Automatic Tracking System is outlined in the table starting below and continuing on page 2:

	12/00	12/01	12/02	12/03
No Value Entered into Trails		63	55	40
Case Plan Not Yet Established	71	21	4	
Non-relative Adoption	1,207	873	894	914
Emancipation		249	86	15
Guardianship	58	26	14	5
Legal Guardianship/Permanent Custody (non-relative)		11	18	15
Long Term Foster Care		682	417	183
Live with Other Relatives	236	101	56	31
Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement/LT Relative		62	130	
Other Planned Perm. Living Arrangement/Emancipation	541	240	363	412
	12/00	12/01	12/02	12/03
Other Planned Perm. Living Arrangement/LT Foster Care	972	222	404	558

Planned Specified Permanent Living Arrangement		14	17	14
Permanent Placement with Relative/Adoption		156	273	334
Permanent Placement with Relative/Legal Guardianship		112	161	186
Remain Home	337	613	561	362
Return Home	3,860	3,931	4,104	3,988
09	1			
Total	7,283	7,376	7,557	7,225

Of the children having a Closure of Adoption in Out of Home Care:

	12/00	12/01	12/02	12/03
Child Placed Out of State		55	35	20
Unable to Determine/Missing Data		79	86	124
Child Placed in Colorado		739	773	770
Total	1,207	873	894	914

Did particular policies, practices or procedures appear to be particularly effective in fostering the attainment of desired outcomes? Yes, two examples come immediately to mind. First, this was particularly true with regard to the research contract let in 2002 to focus on achieving and expediting permanency in cases appealed to the Colorado Court of Appeals. Darcie Bolton, a contract worker from State Judicial, reviewed Colorado Appeals dependency and neglect proceedings from July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001. The focus of the inquiry was to review the cases for overall trends and timeliness throughout the appellate process and determine if the particular jurisdiction from which the appeal arose had any bearing on its timelessness. The third part of the research was to search case law, rules, and policies nationwide for best practices in other states that could expedite permanency in Colorado. Traditionally, Colorado expedites dependency and neglect appeals by giving them precedence on the Court's docket.

That one-year timeframe studied 3,313 dependency and neglect cases that were filed in trial courts in Colorado, and of those, 124 were appealed to the Court of Appeals. Of the 124 cases that were appealed, 81 cases were ruled on by the Court of Appeals while the other 43 cases were closed, consolidated, or dismissed. The research focused on the 81 cases ruled on by the Court of Appeals, and of those, 79 addressed termination of parental rights and 2 addressed allocation of parental responsibilities.

An examination of the 81 cases ruled upon by the Court of Appeals lead to several interesting findings regarding trends and timeliness. First, the beginning stage of the appellate process may take an excessive number of days. Specifically, from the time the appealing party files his or her notice of appeal to the time the record of the proceedings is received by the appellate court took anywhere from 61 to 259 days. While the Colorado Appellate Rules allow 90 days between the notice of appeal and the filing of

the record, the average number of days for this procedure is 112 days. Second, the 81 cases studied took anywhere from 258 to 649 days to resolve and averaged 354 days. For the children who are the subjects of these appeals, the time frames indicate even further delays in achieving permanency and a loving home.

This research was shared with the Collaborative Council and the Chief Justice of the Colorado Court of Appeals. As a direct result, one of the third year project objectives focused on system change with State Judicial including the installation of real time and digital recording systems in district court rooms and two Court of Appeals Symposiums aimed at reforming the appeal process in order to reduce the overall time required to resolve the issues.

Second, the Adolescent Connection Component Pilot was particularly effective in fostering the attainment of desired outcomes to provide permanency for waiting children and youth. Grant funds were used to provide contract caseworkers to specifically assist counties in finding connections for children and youth. This additional person in the county was able to focus on finding connections for the youth. And, by being an “outsider” was able to better interact with youth and their extended family members. County administration was able to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy without having to commit scarce resources to the endeavor. One very successful, effective and time saving tool contract caseworkers employed was to access Internet resources such as servers, directories, record files, search engines, and governmental databases to search for lost relatives or old family friends for youth. The most effective search engine for the contract caseworkers in Colorado was <http://www.merlindata.com>.

What characteristics of staff fostered attainment of desired outcomes? Throughout the 53-month endeavor the Project UPLIFT staff team, members of the Collaborative Council at any given time, and contract workers all demonstrated competence, diligence, and a sincere commitment and desire to impact and improve policies and procedures that expedite permanency for Colorado’s waiting children.

Were there project components that appeared to be more effective than others?

The Adolescent Connection Component was by far the most effective component of Project UPLIFT. The eight-month effort resulted in 122 permanent connections for 57 of Colorado’s waiting youth AND 14 youth found loving homes through adoption.

In evaluating the various trainings that were delivered it was extremely helpful to review the participant comments on the most important things learned, ways the training will help their customers, and how the training could have been improved. Trainers, evaluators and the Collaborative Council reviewed the comments made, and as warranted improvements were implemented in subsequent trainings to make the training more responsive to trainee and county program needs.

The impact of the State Judicial third year grant components would have been better understood if the grant had one more year to evaluate the outcomes. Because the real time and digital equipment has been in place and in regular use for less than a year, it really is not possible to evaluate the long-term impact this will have on making transcripts available in 21 days compared to the current average of 112 days. In addition the results of the two Court of Appeals Symposiums can be reported, but not the changing of the Supreme Court Rule regarding timeframes for attorneys during the appeal process. Fortunately, the long-term impact will be evaluated as a component of a new project, if the application submitted earlier this month is funded. The State Court Administrator, Gerald A. Marroney has provided a collaboration and support letter verifying that they will provide the data for that longitudinal study.

Did any project components produce unintended consequences? Yes, in the October 2001 survey of adoption supervisors, Internet access to search for families seeking to adopt was an issue throughout the state with only 6 counties out of the 23 surveyed indicating that their caseworkers routinely use the Internet. This information made it axiomatic that AFRR would not be widely used in the county caseworkers to match waiting children in their caseloads with loving families looking for children to adopt.

The second survey of adoption supervisors verified the issues regarding caseworker use of the AFRR. The survey is discussed in Chapter 2, and a copy of the survey report is provided in Appendix – C. In summary, the results of the second survey confirmed:

1. All 19 counties reporting indicated that staff has some access to the Internet and that access has become more available to workers since the last survey.
2. However routine access to assist caseworkers with Internet family searches to match waiting children with approved families is not available to all county adoption workers employed in Colorado.
3. At least four other Internet based search engines are available and used more frequency than the AFRR.
4. Not all county staff have had AFRR training and few staff use the AFRR. Reasons stated included: no placements, caseworker time constraint, experience with AFRR, lack of awareness, and supervisor not encouraging use.

Chapter 5 – Recommendations for Future Policies, Programs and Evaluations

In this chapter project staff discuss programmatic recommendations for future policies, programs, projects and evaluations to program administrators and federal adoption opportunity grant administrators based on evaluation results and lessons learned.

A. The Collaborative Council was composed of state and county level decision makers as well as county and district level line staff. The council was instrumental in reviewing project procedures and activities, making positive suggestions for improvements, making project course directions in a timely manner, and keeping all decision makers informed. As discussed in Chapter 2, lessons learned, by the end of the first year of implementation, it was clear that Collaborative Council meetings were too long and time consuming.

Recommendations:

The Collaborative Council (CC) should be multi-level. It should be composed of decision makers and the evaluators. The staff work and resources should be delegated to one or more Council members who would take the work off-line and report progress back to the CC. The CC should not spend time trying to solve problems on-line, only identify problems and hear reports. This greatly reduces the time required. It is imperative that the decision makers attend and buy into action plans; experience has shown that they are reluctant to do so if meetings are devoted to minutia.

1. Include agency/department leadership decision makers (not staff) on advisory councils so that problem identification and policy decisions can be considered and made at the highest implementation level. These council members should have the authority to commit resources, not just report back to the real decision maker.
2. Identified problems should be assigned to a subcommittee for recommended plan(s) of action and possible resolution. Resources should be committed at the time of subcommittee formation by those having them. The subcommittee should report back with one or more proposed solutions. The CC would restrict itself to identifying problems, hearing reports, and adopting or rejecting plans.
3. Schedule meetings, invite the appropriate attendees, publish a formal agenda (e.g., subcommittee reports, problems to be discussed) in advance of the meeting and provide choices to make the most of everyone's time. Follow up with phone calls to make sure key members will be in attendance. Solicitation of suggested problem areas should be made well in advance so they can be included on the agenda so that all interested parties will be motivated to attend.

B. Community Focus Groups were held at the very beginning of the planning process and as a result of feedback from the focus groups, an overall project focus and direction was established. Lessons were learned that would improve future projects.

Recommendations:

1. Provide a brief or background paper to attendees prior to the focus group or symposium meeting to give time to collect thoughts and ideas.
2. Include all agencies and entities involved in the issue (i.e. adoption in this case).

3. Include all geographic areas, counties and/or districts to be involved.
4. Provide recorders for focus groups and break out meetings.
5. Follow-up with a strategic planning process to validate issues and ideas recorded.

C. Access to the appropriate data is critical to reporting results of an initiative. As stated in Chapter 4, Research and Data Analysis Unit staff at CDHS indicated that some fields were being left blank by caseworkers at the time that the new Trails system was being implemented. Therefore, the extent to which Project UPLIFT had an impact on inter-jurisdictional placements over the 53-month project could not be determined with any accuracy. This situation was not within the control of any collaborative partner or the project itself.

Recommendation: Data collection protocols need to be established at the very beginning of a project with appropriate agreements in the form of memorandums of understanding (MOU) in place to assure access to the appropriate data. If necessary provide a budget line item in the grant to support data collection by appropriate staff with the necessary access permissions, or make access available to evaluator staff.

D. Results of the October 2001 County Adoption Supervisor Survey, discussed in Chapter 2, produced both service and training recommendations. The recommendations were stated in the Evaluation Report, and considered in the implementation of the project. The recommendations are still appropriate today and for other projects.

Service Recommendations:

1. Insure services provided by all agencies follow the child when a child is placed in another jurisdiction. Examples of the service agencies include Community Center Boards, local education agencies including Boards of Cooperative Education, Medicaid, Mental Health, and regional public health organizations.
2. Provide Internet availability and flexibility to all adoption caseworkers.
3. Provide fiscal flexibility to counties to support identified post-adoption services.
4. Develop a procedure to address allocations of subsidies.
5. Convene a work group to determine whether or not written policies are needed in Colorado to foster collaboration among counties and states to support inter-jurisdictional adoptions.

Training Recommendations:

1. Include adoption issues in initial Child Welfare caseworker CORE Training.
2. Develop a training curriculum addressing disrupted adoption issues.
3. Schedule and deliver more training opportunities outside of major metropolitan areas through long distance learning venues to increase participation of local social services staff and decrease the amount of time away from home and work.

E. A September 2002 Commission report to the Colorado Legislature concerning out of home placement deviations had implications on project activities and addressed the issue

of costs to county departments to provide out of home care in cases when a judge or magistrate orders a different placement than the one advocated by the department.

Recommendations:

1. Keep abreast of other state task force and commission work that may have an impact on the current project activities.
2. Validate information for accuracy.

F. The short Adolescent Connection Component Pilot was extremely successful, so much so that counties and project staff alike all wished there were funds to continue the program. As a result, this summer Colorado has applied for funding with this initiative being a focus. Important lessons were learned from this pilot. Many case files lack clear and succinct information about family connections. Youth may know of family and others from their past but usually do not know full names and contact information. Because contractors are not employees of the county departments, parents are often able to move beyond their anger at the system to do what is best for their child(ren).

Recommendations:

1. Build relationships with county departments and keep them informed.
2. A clear set of guidelines, protocols, policies and procedures to implement the program must be agreed upon at the onset.
3. Employ skilled child welfare or adoption caseworkers as contractors.
4. Reinforce with contractors that it is more important to spend more time on finding connections and less time reviewing case files.
5. View each youth in positive terms, and not for their diagnoses or weaknesses.
6. Keep accurate case records and update regularly and use an action plan.
7. Meet with or correspond by email with each county caseworker on a weekly basis to keep everyone on track and informed.
8. Provide grant funding to pay for and use a variety of Internet search engines to find lost family and other contacts.
9. Use phone cards to support contact between new connections and the youth.
10. Provide travel funds in the budget to facilitate face-to-face contact between youth and relatives or contacts.

Appendix A: Example of Successes

Adolescent Connection

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

The Adolescent Connection is a part of year two of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Adoption Opportunity Grant # 90-CO-0096/01. The purpose of Project UPLIFT is to demonstrate and use a combined effort with the Colorado Department of Human Services, State Judicial and private non-profits to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions and to address and identify the barriers to placements. Project UPLIFT is designed to modify systems to reduce adoption barriers.

Project UPLIFT provided an outstanding opportunity to pilot a new, innovative program to facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections and placements for Colorado's waiting youth. The program, called **Adolescent Connection**, connected adolescent youth with previously involved adults in order to reestablish supportive relationships, and in some cases permanent relationships, as these young people approach adulthood and emancipation.

Four Adolescent Connection Workers (AC Workers) were hired on an eight-month contract with grant monies and the first workers began work in May, 2002. All the AC Workers had child welfare social work education, training and experience.

The Colorado counties in the pilot included: Adams, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, and Mesa. A total of fifty-nine youth, ages seven through 18 years of age were assigned to the AC Workers. During the program, county staff removed three youth from the program due to unforeseen complications in the individual cases. Therefore, data on these youth is fragmented and not included in the analysis.

In preparation for the program Project UPLIFT staff collected information and sample forms from other states that have experience in going the extra mile to establish connections for their waiting youth. From the samples, the Adolescent Connection Supervisor, AC Workers, and the evaluator developed specific forms to use in this pilot.

Fifty-six youth participated to conclusion in the pilot. Ethnic make up included one Asian / Pacific Islander, eight Black, thirty-five Caucasian, nine Hispanic, and three Native American youth.

Many of the youth had multiple barriers to making connections and a few had no barriers.

The evaluation methodology included both qualitative as well as quantitative analyses. The quantitative portion was innovative in that a unique measure of success was constructed that results in a single number that includes both the estimated importance (adoption being more important to the youth than, for example, a telephone call), permanency and number of relationships. Advanced statistical procedures were used, including analysis of variance, that incorporated this measure.

A total of one hundred twenty-two connections were made with a mean success level of 7.20 for the youth participating. Forty-seven of the participating youth had at least one connection; only eight had none, and of these two did not wish any. These connections have proven to be very beneficial to the youth involved. Thus 87% of the youth were benefited. The remainder have a great many severe barriers that discourage personal relationships.

Ninety-one of the connections made were inter-jurisdictional. Of the inter-jurisdictional connections two resulted in adoptions in progress, seven resulted in intents to adopt with a form signed, two resulted in intents to reunify with family, three resulted in intents to adopt with no

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

form signed totaling fourteen very highly positive outcomes; these highly positive cases were 25% of the youth. **These fourteen youths represent a substantial savings to the taxpayer over and above the program cost!**

Forty-four youth did not change their initial goal, and nine did after they received more information about the connections they wished to establish. In some cases the change of goal occurred after a long distance trip, or face to face discussions with the adult they wanted a connection with, or other choices became available as the process of finding connections proceeded.

A correlation matrix was constructed using success level, age, gender, race, level of care, number of failed adoptions, the 7 barriers to adoption, number of interjurisdictional contacts, the total number of contacts, the AC Worker code, and the eight measures of how the AC Workers spent their time. Two statistically significant correlations with the success level were found: with total number of contacts found and the worker. Another set of correlations was found between the worker and three of the barriers; this type of correlation is usually considered disturbing because it tends to indicate that the sampling methodology was less than ideal. An analysis showed that any error in sampling technique had minimal consequences. Nevertheless a conclusion is included that it might be wise to pay special attention to the sampling process in future programs.

It was expected that there might be differences in the approaches, methods and effectiveness of the AC Workers. An analysis showed that one worker was 164% more effective than the average of the other three. A detailed analysis appears on page 15.

Four conclusions are listed:

1. The Adolescent Connection Program produced a very positive economic impact.
2. Many youth benefited and none were harmed. At the same time many families benefited and none were harmed.
3. There seem to be significant differences in the effectiveness of the AC Workers.
4. More effort in supervising and monitoring of the sampling techniques should be expended.

A *caveat* is included pointing out that programs of this type cannot establish causal relationships.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Introduction

The Adolescent Connection is a part of year two of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Adoption Opportunity Grant # 90-CO-0096/01. The purpose of Project UPLIFT is to demonstrate and use a combined effort with the Colorado Department of Human Services, State Judicial and private non-profits to increase inter-jurisdictional adoptions and to address and identify the barriers to placements. Project UPLIFT is designed to modify systems to reduce adoption barriers. Year two of the implementation grant for Project UPLIFT provided an outstanding opportunity to pilot a new, innovative program to facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections and placements for Colorado's waiting youth. The program, called Adolescent Connection, connected adolescent youth with previously involved adults in order to reestablish supportive relationships and in some cases permanent relationships as these young people approach adulthood and emancipation.

Four Adolescent Connection Workers (AC Workers) were hired on an eight-month contract with grant monies and the first workers began work in May, 2002. All the AC Workers had child welfare social work education, training and experience; in fact, one AC Worker was a retired County Supervisor in Child Welfare. Two of the AC Workers had direct knowledge of family connections and history in some of the caseloads. The Colorado counties in the pilot included: Adams, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, and Mesa. A total of fifty-nine youth, ages seven through 18 years of age were assigned to the AC Workers. During the course of the program, county staff pulled three youth from service by the AC Worker due to complications in their cases. Therefore, data on the three youth dropped is not included in the analysis.

In preparation for the program Project UPLIFT staff collected information and sample forms from other states that have experience in going the extra mile to establish connections for their waiting youth. From the samples, the Adolescent Connection Supervisor, AC Workers, and the evaluator developed specific forms to use in this pilot. The forms included an Initial Intake Form, Contact with Child Form, Final Report Form, Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact Form, and Intent to Adopt or Not Adopt Form. Samples of the forms are provided in Appendix A, "Forms" beginning on page 20. Prior to presenting the analysis of the data, this report will set the stage by discussing the barriers encountered to achieve connections and what is perceived to be the "value added" for this approach.

Demographics of Youth Participating

Fifty-six youth participated to conclusion in the pilot. The mean age was 14.3 years of age. The median and mode age was 15 years of age. Of these youth thirty-one were male and twenty-five were female. Ethnic make up included one Asian / Pacific Islander, eight Black, thirty-five Caucasian, nine Hispanic, and three Native American youth. The level of care for the youth included twenty-five in Family Foster Home care, two in Kinship care, one in a Group Home, fifteen in Residential Treatment Centers, and thirteen in Child Placement Agencies. Thirty-six had no failed adoptions, thirteen had one failed adoption, six youth had two failing adoptions, and one youth's record failed to specify.

Many of the youth had multiple barriers to making connections and a few had no barriers. Fourteen youth had diagnosed attachment disorders. Twenty youth had at least one behavioral problem, nine had two serious behavior problems and three youth had three serious behavioral problems as a barrier to making connections. Twelve youth had at least one criminal charge filed

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against them for various offenses, two youth had two charges against them, and one youth had three criminal charges against them. Only one youth had a felony conviction. Six youth had significant medical issues that would impact a permanent placement. Five youth had one diagnosed developmental barrier that impeded their education and social interaction, one youth had two diagnosed developmental barriers, and one youth had three. Twenty-one youth had diagnosed and serious mental health barriers that impeded their connections, five youth had two serious mental health barriers and two youth had three.

Barriers to establishing connections

The frequency of changes in the individual caseworkers handling some cases has led to a lack of continuity and stability for some of the youth in establishing agency trust and the ability to make connections for the youth in the care of social services. Sometimes caseworker and/or Guardian ad Litem (GAL) biases have hindered the connection process for youth.

Families of the youth in the pilot tend to experience significant amounts of chaos and disruption in their lives, and in some cases there is a lack of stability for some family members. Some birth parents do not have the ability to provide structure or the protection needed for the level of care required for their youth. Some extended family members expressed frustration in working with social services. In some instances there is a lack of transportation resources to facilitate connection and frequent contact with the youth. In other instances there are significant health problems of the birth parents or former foster parents. In the cases of extreme mental health issues of the youth, some birth families are not capable of handling the situation on a day to day basis. In some cases the birth parents are deceased.

Some youth have low motivation, or an unwillingness to work at relationships, or oppositional behaviors that affect their lives. Others are immature and/or have unrealistic expectations. In some instances the youth have a great fear of the system and what the "system" will do to block or hinder the relationship with family members. For some youth there have been an incredibly large number of placements for example 13 placements in 2 years, 25 in 10 years, 22 in 15 years while in foster care. Criminal and destructive behaviors, e.g. setting fires, property destruction, cruelty to animals, stealing or other multiple barriers are reported for some youth. Multiple mental health barriers are present for some cases. Finally, some of the youth are old enough and have gone through so much trauma in their lives they are not interested in adoption and are looking forward to emancipation and adulthood.

One example of an extremely difficult case involves a 15-year old male. The previous foster home was going to adopt him and paperwork was progressing through the system. Suddenly, at the last minute, the foster mother decided to adopt a younger female foster child instead. The youth was removed from the home after he hit his foster sister. His out of control behavior has escalated in the past year to the point that now he is on the verge of being detained at Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) due to stealing/shoplifting and other criminal behaviors. The GAL reports he does not have much hope for the youth, because the youth has become so angry that it will be hard to get through to him. The youth, as a result of being rejected by the pre-adoptive family, has lost trust in adults and has refused to work on his anger.

Another example involves a 15-year old female that has two failed adoptions and several severe mental health issues. The former adoptive mother works outside the home and has no one to supervise the youth. Her former adoptive father had two nearly fatal accidents recently sustain-

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ing a traumatic brain injury and other injuries. He gets too nervous and upset to be with the youth. There are several professional and former family friends that have agreed to provide contacts, but only for short visits and telephone calls.

Methodology

The methodology for dealing with a dependent variable for a correlation matrix and analysis of variance (ANOVA) is described here. Also described in this section are the AC Workers methods. The general methodology for generating and presenting descriptive statistics is conventional and straightforward; consequently they will not be discussed here.

Success Level Coding

In order to make use of advanced statistical measures it was necessary to create a "success" criterion, the dependent variable. Inasmuch as one of the goals was to provide permanent relationships, a scale was constructed that weights the estimated permanency of a relationship as well as the number of relationships. In constructing the scale the evaluators were cognizant of the historical fragility of the types of relationships children and youth develop in the child welfare system. Nevertheless, it was decided that, on average, the ranking of the various relationships would be valid.

Parameters for Estimating Permanency of a Relationship

Two parameters were identified for use in developing the ranking, both of which have to deal with an *a priori* estimation of the permanency of a relationship. The two parameters are a signed, *Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact* form and the type of existing relationship between the contact and the subject adolescent.

Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact

The *Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact* form, hereafter referred to as DMC, was developed by Project UPLIFT in order to formalize the willingness of a person (or family) to maintain contact with the subject adolescent. A sample of the form appears in "Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact" on page 24. Persons expressing willingness to maintain contact with the subject adolescent were asked if they were willing to complete the form and sign it. The completed signed form is used to help estimate the relative permanency of the relationship. Relationships with a person returning the signed form are judged, on average, to be more lasting than those who did not return the signed form, even though the form states that it is not a legal document.

Type of Existing Relationship

Four types of existing relationships were identified:

1. birth parent(s),
2. kin other than parents,
3. foster parents, and
4. others.

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These four types represent a combination of biology and history. It was judged that, on average, the strongest relationship was "birth parent(s)" followed in descending order by the remaining types, ending at "others," the weakest.

Relationship Ranking

Sixteen different levels of contact-adolescent relationships were identified. They range from "No contacts established" to "Reunification with birth parent(s)." A zero rank is assigned to "No contacts established" and fifteen to "Reunification with birth parent(s)." Each of the sixteen rankings is discussed below. In the discussion that follows, the term "Other" means not kin and not foster parent. The complete list is:

0. No contacts established.
1. Youth intends to remain.
2. Other intent to maintain contact but no DMC
3. Foster parents intent to maintain contact but no DMC
4. Kin intent to maintain contact but no DMC
5. Birth parent(s) intent to maintain contact but no DMC
6. Other with DMC
7. Foster parent with DMC
8. Kin with DMC
9. Birth parent(s) with DMC
10. Other intent to adopt
11. Foster parents intent to adopt
12. Kin intent to adopt
13. Birth parent(s) intent to reunify
14. Adoption in progress
15. Reunification with birth parent(s)

No Contacts Established — This ranking (0) means that the subject adolescent desired additional contacts but the AC Worker was not able to identify any person willing to provide such contact.

Youth Intends To Remain — This ranking (1) means that the subject adolescent intends to remain in the system until emancipation — no relationships desired other than the current ones.

Other Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (2) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written. The person or family is not kin or a previous or present foster parent.

Foster Parents Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (3) means that the AC Worker found a present or previous foster parent (not kin) willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written.

Kin Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (4) means that the AC Worker found a blood relative not a parent willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written.

Birth Parent(s) Intent To Maintain Contact But No DMC — This ranking (5) means that the AC Worker obtained a verbal statement from the subject adolescent's parent or parents willing to maintain contact but no DMC was received by the time this report was written.

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Other With DMC — This ranking (6) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to maintain contact and a DMC had been received by the time this report was written. The person or family is not kin or a previous or present foster parent.

Foster Parent With DMC — This ranking (7) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to maintain contact and a DMC had been received by the time this report was written. The person or family is not kin.

Kin With DMC — This ranking (8) means that the AC Worker found a blood relative not a parent willing to maintain contact and a DMC had been received by the time this report was written.

Birth Parent(s) With DMC — This ranking (9) means that the AC Worker obtained a DMC from one or both of the birth parents by the time this report was written.

Other Intent To Adopt — This ranking (10) means that the AC Worker found a person or family willing to adopt the subject adolescent. A signed form was obtained. The person or family is not kin or a previous or present foster parent.

Foster Parent(s) Intent To Adopt — This ranking (11) means that the AC Worker found a present or previous foster family willing to adopt the subject adolescent. A signed form was obtained. The person or family is not kin.

Kin Intent To Adopt — This ranking (12) means that the AC Worker found a blood relative or family willing to adopt the subject adolescent. A signed form was obtained. The person or family is not the parent of the subject adolescent.

Birth Parent(s) Intent To Reunify — This ranking (13) means that the AC Worker obtained a statement of intent to reunify from one or both birth parents. This ranking was assigned if the AC final report contained this statement and contact between the adolescent and the birth parent(s) was currently possible or had a reasonable expectation of becoming possible in the foreseeable future.

Adoption In Progress — This ranking (14) means that there was an adoption in progress. In order for a relationship to be assigned this ranking, no legal barriers to adoption could exist, and a formal application to adopt had to be filed with the court having jurisdiction. It was felt that an adoption by kin or by a non-kin family would, on average, be equally permanent so one ranking was provided for both possible cases.

Reunification With Birth Parent(s) — It was felt that the most permanent relationship the subject children and youth could have would be a reunification with one or both of the birth parents; accordingly this relationship was assigned the highest rank (15).

Scoring Procedure

The procedure for assigning a score was to designate the highest ranking relationship as the integer portion of a real number, e.g., 10 (other intent to adopt). Then for each remaining relationship, in descending rank order, add one digit to the decimal fraction corresponding to the rank of the relationship. For example a youth with three relationships of "Foster parent intent to adopt" with rank 11, "Kin with DMC" with rank 8, and "Other intent to maintain contact but no DMC" with rank 2 would be scored as 11.82. This procedure results in a single number that includes the

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estimated importance (adoption being more important to the youth than, for example, a telephone call), permanency and number of relationships.

Adolescent Connection Workers Methods

Adolescent Connection Workers (AC Workers) used many tools to find connections for the youth. First they reviewed the case file and discussed it with the current caseworker, and former caseworkers if the youth had more than one. The youth was also an important source of information. And before any attempt to contact the adult was made, it was discussed with the youth, and an agreement to try to contact them was made before a search was initiated. Anyone that had been or was a contact for the youth, that the youth wanted to find, was interviewed if they could be found. This included birth parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, former adoptive parents, former foster parents, extended family, friends of the youth or their family, therapists, house-parents, teachers (present and past), Guardian ad Litem, and neighbors of the birth family. Any possible connection was explored. Internet search engines proved invaluable in finding some contacts. As appropriate, background checks were made on the adult contacts to ensure the safety of the youth in making the connection.

It was anticipated that there might be differences in the approaches, methods and effectiveness of the AC Workers. Therefore the AC Workers were instructed to log how they used their time. The logs were then categorized into eight measures.¹ The measures are:

1. The number of times the AC Worker talked to the subject youth.
2. The number of hours spent talking to the subject youth.
3. The number of hours spent talking to contacts for the subject youth.
4. The number of hours spent reviewing the case and/or talking to the case worker, the case worker's supervisor, and others on behalf of the subject youth.
5. The number of hours spent on forms for the subject youth.
6. The number of hours spent searching the internet for the subject youth's contacts.
7. The number of hours spent traveling to interview the subject youth.
8. The total number of hours spent on behalf of the subject youth.

Results

Goal Changes

Forty-four youth did not change their initial goal, and nine did after they received more information about the connections they wished to establish. In some cases the change of goal occurred after a long distance trip, or face to face discussions with the adult they wanted a connection with, or other choices became available as the process of finding connections proceeded.

Number of Connections

A total of one hundred twenty-two connections with a mean success level of 7.04 were made for the youth participating. Forty-seven of the participating youth had at least one connection; only eight had none, and of these, two did not wish any. **Ninety-one, or 75%, of the connections**

1. This was done so any significant differences could be quantified.

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made were inter-jurisdictional. For sixteen of the youth there were no inter-jurisdictional connections made, and for six youth no adults that the AC Worker communicated with were willing or able to make a commitment to be a contact for the youth. These adults had at some point in the youth's life, had a connection with the youth.

Inter-jurisdictional Connections

Of the inter-jurisdictional connections two resulted in adoptions in progress, seven resulted in intents to adopt with a form signed, two resulted in intents to reunify with family, three resulted in intents to adopt with no form signed totaling fourteen highly positive outcomes. This represents 25% of the youth.

Of the ninety-one inter-jurisdictional contacts made, fifty-three, or 58%, were within the state of Colorado representing fifteen different counties. The in-state inter-jurisdictional contacts had to be in another jurisdiction from the resident jurisdiction of the youth to be counted in this total. There were thirty-eight, or 42%, inter-jurisdictional contacts across state or international lines with 22 states and one country represented.

Achieving a Success Level of 10 and Above

Adolescent Demographics

Fourteen of the adolescents participating were able to achieve connections at a level of 10 and above. Twelve, or 86%, of the connections established were inter-jurisdictional.

The adolescents ranged in age from 10 years old through 15 years old. One adolescent was 10 years of age, one was 12 years of age, three were 13 years of age, five were 14 years of age, and four were 15 years of age. Eight adolescents were males and six were females. Eleven adolescents were Caucasian and three were Hispanic.

Three adolescents had no barriers to making connections reported. Eleven adolescents had at least one barrier. All the barriers were documented and in most cases came with a diagnosis. One adolescent had two failed adoptions and one had one failed adoption. Two adolescents had attachment disorders, seven had behavior disorders, three had legal problems, one had a medical problem requiring special attention, three had developmental or educational special needs, and seven had mental health issues.

Success Level by Worker

Most of the workers drew cases from only one county. Worker four drew cases from two counties.

Worker #1

Worker #1 had one 14-year-old male Hispanic that was being adopted by a foster mother. The adolescent had no failed adoptions and no barriers identified. Thirty-two and one half-hours were logged on behalf of the adolescent.

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Worker #2

Worker #2 had a total of six Caucasian adolescents with success levels at 10 or above. Three were males and three were females. One adolescent was 10-years old, three were 13-years old, and two were 15-years old. None of the adolescents had failed adoptions, and two had no barriers listed. One adolescent had two barriers and the other three had one barrier each identified. Three adolescents had a success level of 10, meaning signed forms with the intent to be adopted by a person or family that was not kin or a foster parent to the adolescent. Three adolescents had a success level of 12, meaning the worker found a blood relative or family willing to adopt the adolescent, had a signed form, and for two of the youth an additional contact without a declaration to maintain contact form was obtained. The person or family is not the parent of the adolescent. This appeared to be the easiest caseload.¹

The mean hours spent to achieve the success connections for the six adolescents was 12.71 hours. This is far fewer hours per case than any of the other workers. The number of hours spent to reach the success level achieved is significant because the probability of that occurring by chance is one in two million. It should also be noted that worker #2 logged almost no time traveling to interview adolescents, and within that caseload had the fewest number of barriers to making connections.

Worker #3

Worker #3 had one 15-year-old Caucasian male that the worker obtained confirmation that his mother intends to reunify. An ICPC has been done and the results of it are pending. The adolescent has six identified barriers to achieving connections. Twenty-nine hours and 23 minutes were logged on behalf of the adolescent.

Worker #4

Worker #4 had two counties, and had a total of six success level connections at the level of 10 or higher. The mean hours spent to achieve these six connections was 41.13 hours.

County A

Two adolescents had success levels of 13 (reunify with birth parent) and two had success levels of 12 (kin to adopt). One Caucasian female was 15 years old, had two failed adoptions, six documented barriers and a success level of 12.89. The other three had no failed adoptions. The other Caucasian female was 14, had 2 documented barriers and a success level of 13.88. Both males were 14 years old, one was Caucasian, had two barriers and a success level of 12.89. The other 14 year old male was Hispanic, had one barrier and a success level of 13.89. The mean hours spent to achieve the success connections for the four adolescents was 43.2 hours.

County B

Two adolescents had success levels of 10 and 12. One Hispanic 12-year old male had one failed adoption, three barriers and had a success level of 10.44. One Caucasian 14-year old female had nine documented barriers and had a success level of 12.87. The mean hours spent to achieve the success connections for the two adolescents was 36.9 hours.

1. See "Number of Behavior Problems Analysis of Variance" on page 14.

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Success by Level of Care

All five levels of care were represented for the fourteen adolescents achieving connections at a level of 10 and above. Level of care refers to the type of facility where the youth resided at the time of the AC Worker's first contact. Five resided in Family Foster Home care. One adolescent resided in Kinship care and one adolescent resided in a Group Home. Four adolescents resided in Residential Treatment Centers and three adolescents resided in Child Placement Agencies.

Economic Impact

The average cost of care is \$2,115 per month.¹ (This is an average of three levels of care: Residential Treatment Center, Child Placement Agency Foster Home or Group Home, and County Foster Home.)

Savings Until Emancipation

The average age of these 14 youth was 13. The age of emancipation is 18. This means, for this group of 14 youth, five years of savings is expected. **The expected savings over the five years is \$1,419,600.**

Correlation Matrix

A correlation matrix was constructed using success level, age, gender, race, level of care, number of failed adoptions, the 7 barriers to adoption, number of interjurisdictional contacts, the total number of contacts, the AC Worker code, and the eight measures of how the AC Workers spent their time. The correlation matrix appears on page 19.

The column and row headings are as follows:

- "SL" is the dependent variable Success Level as described in the section "Methodology" on page 5.
- "Age" is the chronological age of the youth, in years.
- "Sex" is the gender of the youth, coded as 1 for male, 2 for female.
- "Race" is the ethnic make up of the youth. It is coded as 1 for Asian, 2 for Black, 3 for Caucasian, 4 for Hispanic and 5 for Native American.
- "LC" indicates the type of facility where the youth resided. It is coded as 1 for Family Foster care, 2 for Kinship care, 3 for Group Home, 4 for Residential Treatment Centers, and 5 for Child Placement Agency.
- "# F A" indicates the number of failed adoptions.
- "Atch D" indicates a diagnosed attachment disorder barrier to adoption.
- "B" indicates a diagnosed behavioral disorder barrier to adoption.
- "Flny" indicates the number of felony convictions.
- "Lgl" indicates the number of legal problems, not as severe as felonies.
- "Med" indicates the number of medical problems that are barriers to adoption.
- "DD" indicates the number of special education diagnoses that are barriers to adoption.

1. The dollar costs in this section are from the AC Program Supervisor. See Appendix C: "PROJECTED SAVINGS" on page 33 for details.

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- “MH” indicates the number of diagnosed mental health problems that are barriers to adoption.
- “# IJ” is the number of inter-jurisdictional contacts found.
- “TC” is the total number of contacts found regardless of jurisdiction.
- “W#” indicates which AC Worker handled the case.
- “# TY” indicates the number of times the AC Worker talked with the youth.
- “hr. TY” indicates the number of hours the AC Worker talked with the youth.
- “hr. TC” is the number of hours the AC Worker talked with contacts for the youth.
- “hr. CR” is the number of hours the AC Worker spent reviewing the case with the case worker, the case worker’s supervisor and others in a professional services role that would have information specific to finding connections for the child.
- “hr. FM” is the number of hours spent working on forms.
- “hr. IN” is the number of hours spent searching the internet for contact information.
- “Tvl Tm” is the number of hours spent on travel.
- “Tot hrs” is the total number of hours spent on the subject youth’s behalf.

Significant Correlations With Success Level

Two statistically significant correlations with the success level, hereafter referred to as SL, are:

1. the correlation between SL and the total number of contacts found, and
2. the correlation between SL and the AC Worker.

Correlation Between SL and the Total Number of Contacts

The correlation between SL and the total number of contacts found (TC) is 0.56 and accounts for about 31% of the variability. The statistical probability of this correlation being due to random chance is 0.00000759. A correlation between SL and the total number of contacts found seems reasonable. Since SL is a measure of the “quality” and quantity of contacts established, it stands to reason that the more contacts found the greater the probability that one or more of them will meet the needs of the youth.

Correlation Between SL and the AC Worker

The correlation between SL and the AC Worker (W#) is 0.40 and accounts for about 16% of the variability. The statistical probability of this correlation being due to random chance is 0.0025. An analysis of variance describing the differences between the AC Workers is presented in “Worker Number vs. Barriers Analyses” on page 14.

Correlations Between AC Worker and Three Barrier Measures

Three disturbing correlations exist between AC Worker and three of the barrier measures, the number of failed adoptions (#F. A., $r = 0.35$), behavioral problems (B, $r = 0.31$), and mental health (MH, $r = 0.29$). These correlations are significant at the 0.05 level. They are disturbing because they tend to indicate that the sampling techniques were not adequate. For a further discussion of these findings, see “AC Worker Differences” on page 13.

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Correlations Between Age and Time Spent

There are six statistically significant correlations at the 0.05 level involving age and worker activities. The correlations are between age and:

1. the number of times talked with youth (# TY, $r = 0.36$),
2. the number of hours spent talking with the youth (hr. TY, $r = 0.37$)
3. the number of hours spent talking with contacts for youth (hr. TC, $r = 0.35$),
4. the number of hours spent reviewing the case (hr. CR, $r = 0.34$),
5. the number of hours spent working on forms (hr. FM, $r = 0.31$), and
6. the number of hours spent on travel (Tvl Tm, $r = 0.41$).

The first five of these correlations are not surprising and not significant from a social or program point of view. They are not surprising because the older youth have more extensive experiences than the younger youth, more contacts, a larger case file, etc., all leading to a greater expenditure of effort.

In the case of travel time, it is hard to read any social or program significance into the apparent relationship between age and travel time: in this sample of youth, the older simply required more travel time to reach. In another study of this nature, the correlation would probably not exist. Such statistical "anomalies" have non-zero probabilities and are to be expected occasionally.

AC Worker Differences

It was expected that there might be differences in the approaches, methods and effectiveness of the AC Workers. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was therefore planned. That analysis shows that there were differences. The notation W1, W2, W3, W4, indicate the four AC Workers. AC Worker W1 had an average "success level" (SL) of about 5.1 per subject youth; worker W3 had an average SL of about 5.9; worker W 2 had an average SL of about 6.2; and worker W4 had an SL of about 9.6. These are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The analysis appears below.

The most striking feature of the summary is that worker W4 had 186% higher average SL than worker W1. Indeed, if one takes the average SL of workers W1, W2 and W3 (5.85) and compares it with that of worker W4 one finds that W4 had a 164% higher SL than the average of the other three. One is immediately tempted to hypothesize that W4 had a much easier case load to work with. Accordingly it was decided to test this hypothesis.

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
W1	10	51.30	5.13	7.75
W2	18	111.90	6.22	19.43
W3	10	59.22	5.92	15.81
W4	18	172.20	9.57	10.46

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	176.08	3.00	58.69	4.24	0.01	2.78
Within Groups	720.22	52.00	13.85			
Total	896.29	55.00				

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Worker Number vs. Barriers Analyses

The correlation matrix indicated significant correlations for worker number (W#) and number of failed adoptions (#FA), behavior problems (B), and mental health problems (MH). Accordingly, it was decided to do ANOVAs for these variables by worker number. The analyses appear in the following sub-sections. The #FA analysis was not significant at the 0.05 level. The B analysis was significant at the 0.01 level. The MH analysis was not significant at the 0.05 level. The averages from the ANOVAs show that workers W3 and W4 had the most difficult case loads, if indeed there were differences in the case loads. This statement is based on the generally accepted statement that more behavior problems means a more difficult case load.

Not only did these analyses not confirm that W4 had an easier case load, they showed that W4 probably had one of the most difficult case loads!

Number of Failed Adoptions Analysis of Variance

The analysis shows that any differences between the set of youth each worker received as measured by the number of failed adoptions was not significant at the 0.05 level of probability. The analysis appears below:

SUMMARY					
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	
W1	10	1	0.1	0.1	
W2	18	5	0.277778	0.330065	
W3	10	7	0.7	0.677778	
W4	18	12	0.666667	0.588235	

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.228175	3	1.076058	2.474669	0.071736	2.782599
Within Groups	22.61111	52	0.434829			
Total	25.83929	55				

Number of Behavior Problems Analysis of Variance

This analysis shows that there were significant differences between the set of youth each worker received as measured by the number of behavior problems at the 0.01 level of probability. The analysis appears below:

SUMMARY					
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	
W1	10	7	0.70	0.46	
W2	18	6	0.33	0.24	
W3	10	14	1.40	0.93	
W4	18	20	1.11	1.05	

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	9.28	3	3.09	4.69	0.0057	2.78
Within Groups	34.28	52	0.66			
Total	43.55	55				

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Number of Mental Health Problems Analysis of Variance.

The analysis shows that any differences between the set of youth each worker received as measured by the number of mental health problems was not significant at the 0.05 level of probability. The analysis appears below:

SUMMARY					
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	
W1	10	2	0.20	0.40	
W2	18	13	0.72	0.45	
W3	10	7	0.70	0.46	
W4	18	17	0.94	0.88	

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.58	3	1.19	2.05	0.12	2.78
Within Groups	30.26	52	0.58			
Total	33.84	55				

Adolescent Connection Workers Use of Time

At this point it has been shown that there are differences in the worker's average SLs and that it is probably not due to the high scoring workers having a less difficult case load than the lower scoring workers.

It was decided to perform a series of ANOVAs on the *a priori* eight measures of time use to elucidate, if possible, the differences in how the different workers used their time. The eight measures of time use are:

1. The number of times the worker interviewed the youth.
2. The number of hours the worker spent interviewing the youth, not including travel time.
3. The number of hours the worker spent talking to contacts for youth.
4. The number of hours the worker spent reviewing the case.
5. The number of hours the worker spent on forms.
6. The number of hours the worker spent searching the internet.
7. The number of hours the worker spent traveling to interview the youth.
8. The total time spent on behalf of the youth.

The results are shown in tabular form. The rows represent the eight measures. Column 1 is the name of the measure, column 2 presents the statistical level of significance, column 3 presents the mean for worker 1 (W1), column 4 is the mean for W2, column 5 is the mean for W3, column 6 is the mean for W4, and column 7 is W4's rank. Table 1: "Worker's Use of Time" on page 16 shows the results.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Table 1: Worker's Use of Time

Measure	Significance	W1	W2	W3	W4	W4 Rank
No. times the worker interviewed the youth.	0.001	1.1	1.2	1.7	2.9	1
The number of hours spent interviewing the youth	0.0005	1.3	1.7	2.0	4.0	1
The number of hours spent talking to contacts for youth.	0.005	7.0	4.4	11.6	11.6	1 (tied)
The number of hours spent traveling to interview the youth.	< 0.0001	1.50	0.04	2.14	2.76	1
The number of hours spent reviewing the case.	< 0.0001	19.7	2.9	13.7	10.2	3
The number of hours spent on forms.	< 0.0001	7.2	4.2	11.3	7.4	3
The number of hours spent searching the internet.	< 0.005	0.2	1.1	3.6	2.7	3
The total time spent on behalf of the youth.	< 0.0001	36.2	14.0	44.4	38.8	2

Table 1 brings out a pattern. Notice that the first three rows are concerned with communicating with the youth and contacts for the youth. The remaining rows are not directly concerned with communicating with the youth and contacts for the youth. Worker 4 ranked highest in the three categories dealing directly with the objectives of the program: finding contacts for the youth and reconnecting them with the youth. On the remaining categories this worker ranked somewhere in the middle, i.e., neither highest or lowest, except for the "number of hours spend traveling to interview the youth," which is neither a peripheral use of time nor direct communication with the youth or contacts for youth.

Lessons Learned

Each of the AC Workers were asked to provided five "lessons learned." Their responses appear in Appendix B, "Lessons Learned" beginning on page 26.

Conclusions

The following conclusions seem justified. They are listed in order of importance.

1. The Adolescent Connection Program produced a very positive economic impact.
2. Many youth benefited and none were harmed. At the same time many families benefited and none were harmed.
3. There seem to be significant differences in the effectiveness of the AC Workers.
4. More effort in supervising and monitoring of the sampling techniques (case selection) should be considered.

Economic Impact

There is a very positive economic impact for the taxpayer.

First year savings repay the cost of the program over three times if all 14 intents to adopt come to fruition. Even if the four adoptions already in progress or completed are the only ones successful, the savings are still positive; and in human terms immeasurable.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Over the expected period to emancipation, in this case five years, the cost of the program is repaid over 17 times, assuming all 14 adoptions are completed and are successful.

Value Added For The Participants Of The Pilot

Over the course of the pilot, families, professionals, foster parents, and acquaintances have come forward to take a larger role in the lives of the youth. This has benefited all concerned.

In one case there has been a change of attitude and commitment on the part of a GAL to support reunification of a youth and his biological father, after the birth father's validated ability to provide a stable home for the youth.

On the part of the youth participating there has been noticeable change in behaviors when a family connection is made, giving the youth hope and direction. One of the pilot's primary focuses was to foster well being and stability for the youth.

In one case, after termination of parental rights, a biological mom has put her life together. The youth's goal of being with her mother is coming to fruition. Supervised face to face contacts were initiated and reunification with Mom is proceeding on schedule.

In another case a youth in foster care had no contact with most of his family for approximately three years. Several relatives were found and contacts began immediately. Although prognosis is still guarded because of the issues involved, reconnection with family has thus far been very positive for the youth and family members.

Significant Differences In the Effectiveness Of the AC Workers

AC Worker number 4 was the most effective, despite having one of the most difficult case loads. Worker 4 ranked first in effort directed toward finding and re-connecting youth and their contacts. **The message seems clear: stay focused on the objective.** This is not to say that the other categories should be neglected: worker 4 ranked towards the middle on these categories.

Better Sampling Techniques

The correlation between three of the barrier measures and the worker number is disturbing; but this correlation might simply be due to chance. The mathematical fact is that, even with perfect sampling techniques, there is a non-zero probability that a correlation result such as this will happen.

We, the evaluators, are not overly concerned: all the workers and county supervisors were given the same instructions on selecting cases, and those instructions included "not to cherry pick." And there remains the fact that the highest scoring worker received one of the most difficult case loads. If anything, this would tend to say that the error, if any, caused a reduction in the differences between workers' results.

Still, future programs might want to consider expending a little extra time and effort to ensure that the sampling techniques (case selection) are flawless.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Caveat

Project UPLIFT provided an outstanding opportunity to pilot a new, innovative program to facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections and placements for Colorado's waiting youth. The program, called Adolescent Connection, connected adolescent youth with previously involved adults in order to reestablish supportive relationships, and in some cases permanent relationships, as these young people approach adulthood and emancipation.

As such it is not a rigorous, controlled experiment. Except under very special and rigorously controlled circumstances, experimenting with human subjects is unethical, immoral and illegal. Project UPLIFT's Adolescent Connection did not enjoy those special circumstances; true experiments to determine causal relationships were out of the question for a multitude of reasons. So the statistical results presented here cannot determine causal relationships. The statistical studies reported here are intended to help reduce the fog of variability when dealing with information deriving from human activity in a social environment; they cannot determine cause and effect. The reader is cautioned to take them for what they are: indications of where the truth may be.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Correlation Matrix

	SL	Age	Sex	Race	LC	# F. A.	Atch D	B	Flny	Lgl	Med	DD	MH	#IJ	TC	W#	#TY	hr. TY	hr. TC	hr. CR	hr. FM	hr. IN	Tvl Tm	Tot hrs
SL	1.00																							
Age	0.15	1.00																						
Sex	0.06	0.05	1.00																					
Race	0.16	-0.13	-0.15	1.00																				
LC	0.10	0.26	-0.11	-0.19	1.00																			
# F. A.	0.18	0.20	0.03	0.20	0.08	1.00																		
Atch D	-0.02	0.12	0.23	-0.23	0.26	0.34	1.00																	
B	0.07	-0.03	-0.08	-0.11	0.18	0.27	0.20	1.00																
Flny	-0.04	0.05	0.15	-0.19	0.09	-0.09	-0.08	0.02	1.00															
Lgl	-0.21	0.17	-0.06	-0.20	0.20	-0.21	0.13	0.22	0.11	1.00														
Med	-0.01	0.09	0.15	-0.19	0.31	0.19	0.47	0.13	-0.05	0.21	1.00													
DD	0.09	0.18	-0.19	-0.04	0.04	-0.05	0.09	0.07	-0.05	0.21	-0.02	1.00												
MH	0.11	0.25	-0.02	0.02	0.00	0.16	-0.15	0.32	-0.12	0.10	0.06	0.06	1.00											
#IJ	0.35	0.15	0.10	0.14	0.10	0.58	0.22	0.31	-0.05	-0.21	0.24	-0.03	0.21	1.00										
TC	0.56	0.25	0.00	0.17	0.18	0.41	0.12	0.27	-0.10	-0.17	0.16	-0.10	0.21	0.77	1.00									
W#	0.40	0.15	-0.07	0.14	0.19	0.35	0.07	0.31	-0.20	-0.16	-0.10	0.06	0.29	0.57	0.62	1.00								
#TY	0.15	0.36	-0.09	0.10	0.13	0.37	0.10	0.21	0.01	0.14	-0.13	-0.05	0.37	0.18	0.24	0.41	1.00							
hr. TY	0.28	0.37	-0.09	0.05	0.27	0.45	0.19	0.24	-0.03	-0.04	0.00	0.03	0.30	0.34	0.36	0.53	0.83	1.00						
hr. TC	0.25	0.35	-0.01	-0.09	0.40	0.50	0.25	0.29	-0.06	-0.09	0.13	0.04	0.19	0.47	0.51	0.38	0.33	0.56	1.00					
hr. CR	0.06	0.34	0.09	-0.04	0.41	0.07	0.14	0.17	0.09	0.29	0.31	-0.07	0.03	0.11	0.12	-0.08	0.06	0.07	0.43	1.00				
hr. FM	0.16	0.31	0.14	0.01	0.44	0.35	0.28	0.28	-0.05	0.14	0.43	0.00	0.06	0.46	0.37	0.20	0.14	0.25	0.57	0.62	1.00			
hr. IN	-0.08	0.11	-0.06	-0.13	0.33	0.28	0.38	0.34	-0.10	0.06	-0.03	0.13	0.09	0.32	0.20	0.40	0.20	0.29	0.36	-0.01	0.34	1.00		
Tvl Tm	0.29	0.41	0.11	-0.05	0.53	0.22	0.09	0.29	0.00	0.10	0.04	0.00	0.24	0.31	0.46	0.47	0.47	0.48	0.58	0.47	0.45	0.26	1.00	
Tot hrs	0.20	0.44	0.06	-0.07	0.55	0.40	0.30	0.34	-0.01	0.14	0.27	0.01	0.16	0.43	0.43	0.31	0.34	0.49	0.85	0.78	0.81	0.40	0.70	1.00

Appendix A: Forms

The following forms were developed and used for Adolescent Connection pilot program. The forms presented here are templates except for the "Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact." The completed forms were as long as four pages each in length, depending on the information provided. The forms are:

1. Initial Intake Review
2. Contact with Child
3. Final Report
4. Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact (DMC)
5. Declaration of Intent to Adopt or Not to Adopt

The forms appear on the following pages.

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Initial Intake Review

***Client Name:**

Current Caseworker:

Ethnicity:

County:

DOB:

*** Age:**

SSN:

Current placement:

***Level of Care (ffh, kh, gh, RTC):**

State ID#:

***Legal Status:**

TPR and date:

Of months in County's Custody Up to date of TPR:

Adoption date(s) & failed date(s):

Identified Connections: *Indicate any issues involved*

Birth Family: *Parents, Grandparents, siblings, Aunts/Uncles etc.*

Past Foster Parents: *(also Adoptive Parents if appropriate)*

Professional Connections: *Teachers, therapists, supervisors, advocates, etc.*

Organizational Connections: *Churches, clubs etc.*

Commonalities/Interests: *hobbies etc.*

Barriers Identified: *Age, attitudes, length of time in care*

Plan to Address:

AC Worker:

Time:

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Contact with Child

***Client Name:**

Current Caseworker:

Ethnicity:

County:

Location of interview:

***Child's identified goal:**

Connections identified by child:

Barriers:

AC Worker:

***Time: (include travel time)**

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Final Report on Case

***Client Name:**

County:

Inter-jurisdictional Location of Contacts Established:

***Success Rate:** *(refers to legal connection made)*

1. Reunited with birth parent
2. Reunited with family
3. Connected with former foster parent
4. Connected with other relationship-specify
5. Established a long term support relationship with contracts

***Child's initial goal:** *(did it change?)*

***Barriers** and How Addressed:

AC Worker:

***Total time spent on case:**

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact

(I, We) _____ have received notice
that _____ is ready to have contact.
Child's name and DOB

(I, We) do declare our intent and commitment to maintain contact with

Child's name

This is how often I/We intend to have contact _____
Frequency / how (i.e. weekly visits)

Name, mailing address and phone number:

(I/We) do understand that it is very important to have regular contact with said child. Regular contact means no less contact than every other week and during Holidays and Birthdays.

(I/We) also understand that this document is not a legal document.

Date and Signature _____

- Copy to the family
- Copy to the child
- Copy to the caseworker

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

Project Uplift Adolescent Connections

Declaration of Intent to Adopt or Not Adopt

(I, We) _____ have received notice
that _____ is legally free or may become
Child's name and DOB
legally free to be adopted.

Circle area of this form according to your wishes.

(I, We) do declare our intent to adopt _____
Child's name

(I, We) do declare our intent to not adopt _____
Child's name

(I/We) do understand that if we intend to adopt and are selected as the adoptive family, we must file our petition to adopt within six (6) months of the date the child becomes legally free for adoption.

Caseworker Date

Foster Mother Date

Foster Father Date

Copy to the foster family
Copy to the child's file

Appendix B: Lessons Learned

The following "Lessons Learned" are unedited except for minor formatting.

From Worker #3

FIVE LESSONS LEARNED:

1. To meet with or correspond by e-mail with each caseworker on a weekly basis as they did not always keep me informed as to what was happening on a case, particularly if a youth had moved and why. I usually learned this information from a third party.

Prior to meeting with the caseworker and their supervisor for the final time, write an Action Plan for the caseworker as to what needs to be done, i.e., background checks, etc. I did an Action Plan after the final meeting and did not receive it back from the caseworker for final editing.

2. Many of the youth have symptoms of Reactive Attachment Disorder, even youth who grew up with a parent or relative. Knowing more about Reactive Attachment Disorder would be helpful when working with these youth and when discussing their issues with relatives/kin.
3. How caring Colorado's professionals are who work with children/youth involved with social services. Many of the contacts I found were former caseworkers of Boulder County Department of Social Services, clinicians, and/or case managers from Residential Treatment Centers and Child Placement Agencies.
4. A paid Internet site for people searches will save time in finding and verifying relative/kin addresses and phone numbers, and the information on it would be current within a couple of months. I found that some information on the free Internet sites was not current but several years old. The historical data on a paid site would also help in locating the correct person. There is no historical data on a free Internet site unless you are willing to pay upwards from \$9.99 for one search. Departments within a social service agency should be willing to share their expertise and paid Internet sites to help another department locate people. After all, are they not all working for the same goal?
5. Type the "Contacts Established" form immediately after talking with each relative/kin, and send the Declaration forms immediately after that. Declaration forms were sent out after a lot of time had passed from when the people expressed a desire to stay in contact with the youth. I re-read all my notes to type the "Contacts Established" form and this was done at the very last. This could have been done as the case was being worked.

Submitted by AC Worker # 3
3/4/03

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

From Worker #4

1. In almost all instances, there is at least one (and often multiple) person(s) who had connections that were broken or discontinued and they wish to be reconnected with the youth. (In every circumstance where connections were re-established, the youth was able to identify the people available, although not necessarily where they were.)
2. In many cases, the helping professionals involved with the youth had biases that influenced reluctance to look at people identified. Many professionals, although in the helping professions, had difficulty believing that people could make sufficient changes to be possible considerations for the youth.
3. Most case records were abysmally lacking in succinct, available and coherent information that told what had happened in the child's life and who the important people was in the child's life.
4. Persons who had not been appropriate resources for a youth as a child may be appropriate for consideration as the youth becomes older. If the youth is more able to self protect and the adult has become more stable in their own lives, relationships that were previously not viable may be at this time.
5. Cases seem to take on a momentum of their own and often there has been little or no consideration given to going back to re-assess the current status of people in the youth's life.

Submitted by AC Worker # 4
3-3-03

UPLIFT Adolescent Connections Evaluation Report
Appendix C: From the Adolescent
Connections Supervisor

LESSONS LEARNED

**Cheryl Jacobson/Recruitment and
Retention Specialist**

Diligent Search

- Case files lacked clear and succinct information about family connections and others involved in a child's life
 - Information must be collected at case opening and recorded in a permanent and prominent place in the file
 - Information must be regularly updated
- Youth may know of family or others from their past but lack full names and addresses
 - Once a family member is contacted they provide information about other family members resulting in the establishment of multiple connections for youth
 - The longer youth remain in care, the more difficult it becomes to locate family members due to moves and information being lost to memory.
- Paternity information and information regarding paternal relatives is much less available than maternal information
- More efforts must be directed toward completion of diligent searches

Contractors

- Must be skilled and experienced
- Because of the contractor's independence from the county department, parents are often able to move beyond their anger at the system to do what is best for their child
- One contractor reported he received more thanks from youth and parents on this 6 month project than he had received in 22 years of casework practice

Clear/Written Principles

- Principles must be clearly outlined to guide day-to-day decisions
- Contractors must think differently than caseworkers and without clear values and principles, it is too easy to fall into past casework practices

Challenge Previously Held Beliefs

- No child is too hard to be placed for adoption
- It is not right for any professional to make that decision on behalf of a youth
 - This project accepted any youth who was in the custody of the county department and for whom termination of parental rights could be obtained if an adoption connection was established
 - This project included youth with difficult issues and successfully found placements

Contractor Characteristics

- Tenacity
- The belief that people change
- The belief that relationships are important
- The ability to be open and forthright about issues
- The ability to communicate clearly
- The ability to accept people's ambivalence and help them move through it
- Be willing to challenge their own beliefs
 - 75% of the problem is adult attitudes regarding older youth and permanency
- Be able to see youth for their positives
 - Plan around the youth's needs but not focus on a diagnosis such as seeing a youth as "a reactive attachment disorder" which may have led to believing that the youth was not able to be placed
 - This project did not direct contract workers to read files extensively in order to collect data about diagnosis, so conclusions can not be made about caseload difficulties

Time Well Spent...More Placements Established

- Successful contractors spent more time with the youth and their connections
 - ___ Worker 2 and Worker 4 both structured their time in this way and the most connections
 - ___ Worker 2 had a total of six adolescents with success levels at 10 or above with a mean time of 12.7 hours
 - ___ Worker 4, whose contract was for twice the amount of time and had, two counties, had six adolescents with success levels at 10 or above with a mean time of 41.1 hours
- Less successful contractors spent more time on reading case files

More intense time spent in contact with the youth and connections will produce more positive and more permanent connections.

Agency Barriers

- Time needs to be spent educating the county department about the philosophy and goals of the Adolescent Connections Project
 - Best if the contractor can attend staff meetings
 - Due to budget limitations, this was done one on one with caseworkers and supervisors
 - Two contractors had previously been employed in the counties they were assigned and their work was readily respected by the caseworkers and supervisors—barriers due to differing philosophies were more readily overcome
 - Once caseworkers saw results, some changed their case practices to embrace these ideas

TOOLS

- Use of Internet tools with historical addresses and phone numbers of individuals is critical
- Use of phone cards to support contact between the new connections and the youth
- Travel funds to facilitate face to face contact between the youth and relative/others

Cost Effectiveness

- Cost effective during times of budget cuts
- Cost savings analysis data....(attached)

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

ADOLESCENT CONNECTIONS

COST EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM

PROJECT SUPERVISOR

Inter-jurisdictional Connections

Types of Most Permanent Connections established

Adoption in Progress	Intent to Adopt Signed Contract	Reunification with Family	Intent to Adopt No Contract
2	7	2	3

*Total 14 with average age of 13 years

Level of Care of Youth at Pilot Intake/Monthly Average Cost of Care

Residential Treatment Center (RTC)	Child Placement Agency Foster Home or group home	County Foster Home
4 youth	4 youth	6 youth
\$3,900	\$1,423	\$1022

*Monthly average cost of three levels of care=\$2,115

UPLIFT Adolescent Connection Evaluation Report

PROJECTED SAVINGS

Number of Youth	Average Monthly Cost of Care	Years of Placement Costs Saved	Average Monthly Adoption Subsidy Costs	Total Savings
4 already placed 2 require adoption subsidy	\$2,115	5	\$425	\$507,600 Minus \$51,000 = \$456,000
All 14 youth *	\$2,115	5	\$425	\$1,776,600 Minus \$357,000 = \$1,419,600

*Savings for all 14 youths assumes that individuals stating a willingness to adopt will do so and a placement will be made

Multiplying the average yearly cost of care by the number of youth and subtracting the yearly cost of average adoption subsidies determined total Savings.

Appendix B: 2004 Evaluation Reports

Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor Survey Results: 2001 vs. 2004

Court Recording Equipment Upgrade Report

Court of Appeals Symposium

**Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor or
Child Welfare Administrator Survey 2004 Results**

**Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor or
Child Welfare Administrator Survey 2004 Results**

Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor Survey Results: 2001 vs. 2004

Prepared by Custer Enterprises
July 26, 2004 – two pages total

Background

In October 2001 and February/March 2004, 23 Colorado Adoption Supervisors and County Child Welfare Administrators were surveyed to determine ongoing issues and successes in achieving permanency for children in their legal custody. The counties included all 10 large counties as well as eleven medium size counties and two small counties to achieve a balanced sample representation of the issues and challenges throughout Colorado. The survey information was requested to assist the Project UPLIFT Evaluators in completing reports to the Colorado Department of Human Services and to the Federal Government. The Collaborative Council and the Project UPLIFT leadership determined that conducting a second survey was the best way to evaluate county adoption unit outcomes as they related to the grant, to make the report as accurate as possible, since the Trails Automated System was not designed nor was it able to provide the data in a format that accurately tracks all the grant elements.

This report is a comparison of the two surveys. The 2004 Survey contained 32 questions, some of them multi-part, as compared to the 2001 Survey that contained 22 items. Respondents were supervisors in their respective departments of social/human services. In 2001, all 23 counties responded. In 2004 only 19 surveys were received.

Survey Results.

The 2004 response by the counties was disappointing in two respects: despite repeated requests over several months duration, including telephone conversations, four counties did not respond at all; and the general quality of responses was poor. Only nine questions out of a total of 32 questions were answered from all 19 respondents. In addition, two large counties reported "data not available" for question 2, "How many children received permanency placement by adoption from your county between October 1, 2001 through December 31, 2003 in all jurisdictions?"

Many of the questions on the two surveys are different. What follows is a comparison of the results 2001 vs. 2004 for the questions that were the same or similar.

In 2001 the average caseload per worker was 21 with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 47. In 2004 the average adoption caseload per worker was 12.93 with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 30 (14 counties reporting).

Interestingly, in 2001, 13 of the 23 counties reported that there were not enough caseworker training slots available, and that an aggregate of 98 caseworkers over 23 counties needed training. In 2004, 16 of 18 respondents reported that there was training available relevant to adoption issues and reported that the 118 caseworkers needed

training with only 16 counties reporting. In addition to the 118 caseworkers, two counties wrote in "all" instead of providing a number. Given that feedback, it is not clear how many caseworkers need training at this point of time.

In 2001, the respondents reported that there were 51 caseworkers that had had no training in adoption issues. In 2004, there were 67 caseworkers that had no training with only 16 counties reporting. The inference there is that the situation regarding adoption issues training is getting worse rather than better in Colorado.

In 2001, 3 counties had a written policy encouraging communication and collaboration with other counties or states regarding inter-jurisdictional adoption. In 2004, 6 of 11 counties reporting did, indicating a slight improvement.

In 2001, 3 counties had a written policy regarding the acceptance (with or without conditions) of home studies performed outside the immediate area. In 2004, 7 of 18 counties did, indicating an improvement in the number of counties that have implemented a written policy regarding the acceptance of home studies done outside the county.

In 2001, 6 counties reported that their caseworkers routinely used the Internet, and only 12 counties indicated they had Internet access. In 2004, 16 of 18 counties routinely use the Internet and it is available to all 19 reporting, indicating a greatly improved access to the Internet and the resources available on the Internet.

In 2001, 15 counties reported that 100% of their caseworkers understand and use the ICPC. In 2004, 13 of 17 reporting counties report that 100% of their caseworkers understand and use the ICPC. Because the same counties we surveyed both times, this report is disturbing.

Conclusions.

Colorado still has a long way to go to consistently provide quality services to its waiting children. Even though Project UPLIFT made some strides there continue to be significant ongoing county level issues with some notable successes in achieving permanency for children in county legal custody.

The evaluators believe it is important to share the survey results as soon as possible after the report is submitted and accepted by the project director and the state agency administering the grant. Providing that level of feedback to the counties submitting the information, builds confidence in the work of the project, and provides a better understanding of the issues and implications statewide. The survey results need to be shared with the social/human services leadership and stakeholders at the county and state levels. In that way, improvements in quality staff training and services to children and their families can be a priority.

Court Recording Equipment Upgrade Report

For the period January 1, 2004 through June 30, 2004
Effect on Time to Deliver Transcripts

Prepared By Custer Enterprises
July 29, 2004 – two pages total

Background

Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) began as a 17 month planning grant in 1999, as an Adoption Opportunity Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Grant #90- CO-0948/01. The purpose of the planning phase was to determine the adoption and permanency planning barriers from both child welfare and judicial aspects. As a result of a successful planning phase, the Colorado Department of Human Services was awarded a three year implementation grant to increase available adoptive resources for children and support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements through changes in system approaches. A Collaborative Council, comprised of state and county human service, judicial, and CASA representatives was convened to guide the project. In October 2001, Colorado Judges and Magistrates were surveyed to better understand the Interjurisdictional barriers from a judicial perspective. As a result, workshops were provided at state judicial conferences; digital and real time recording equipment was purchased for a select number of Colorado Courts hearing the largest numbers of Dependency and Neglect and Termination of Parental Rights cases; and two 2004 Court of Appeals Symposiums were convened.

In the third year of implementation Project UPLIFT, digital and real time recording equipment was installed in 9 judicial districts involving over 25 courtrooms. The State Court Administrators office negotiated Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the nine Districts on the acceptance and use of the equipment.

Districts received what they needed in terms of the types of equipment that would support their courtrooms. Digital equipment was installed in Districts #1, 2, 4, 10, and 18, and included recording decks, digital clocks, microphones, speakers, mixers, headphones, LAN connectivity, cabling and support contracts in a total of eleven courtrooms. Real time equipment was installed in Districts #4, 8, 13, 17, 18 and 20 and included computer real time set-ups with all necessary supporting software and hardware for over 14 courts.

Results

Three transcripts were produced using the digital equipment. No transcripts were produced using the real-time equipment. Thirty-three transcripts were produced using the court reporter's equipment, presumably not digital and not real-time. Two transcripts were produced using unknown equipment. Descriptive statistics appear below.

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range	Min	Max	Count
Digital	80.3	73	13.6	24	72	96	3
Other	89.9	90	8.49	54	63	117	33

Statistical tools used to detect a difference between two samples are generally regarded as being unreliable when the cell size is less than five. In the case of Digital recording equipment, the cells size is only 3. This means that there is insufficient data for reliable statistical analyses, and so none were performed. (A three way ANOVA had been planned using the factors of Other, Digital and Real-time.)

In addition to sample size, another factor could be at work. The Court of Appeals rules have not yet been changed, and so 90 days is still allowed to get the transcript to the Court of Appeals. Transcripts ready in less than 90 days could be allowed to wait until it is convenient to deliver them to the Court of Appeals, thus artificially increasing the Standard Deviation and reducing the power of the statistics to detect a difference.

Conclusion

A reliable analysis on the effect of the new recording equipment on the time it takes to deliver a transcript to the Court of Appeals must wait until there is sufficient data available.

Court of Appeals Symposiums

Prepared by Custer Enterprises
July 26, 2004 – five pages total

Executive Summary

The 2004 Court of Appeals Symposiums were jointly funded by State Judicial, the Court Improvement Project and Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons In Future Teamwork) Grant. Two symposiums were convened to facilitate input from front range and western slope individuals involved in the court appeals process. The first symposium was held at the Adams' Mark Hotel in Grand Junction on Friday, February 13, 2004. The second symposium was held at the Denver Athletic Club, in Denver on Friday, February 20, 2004.

A total of fifty-three participant feedback forms were collected: eighteen in Grand Junction and thirty-five in Denver. A total of seventeen different professional occupations were represented.

Twenty of the twenty-three questions asked for a yes/no response. The yes/no questions were phrased positively, so that a yes answer meant that the respondent viewed the process positively. Of the 965 responses to yes/no questions, 948 or 98.2% were yes.

One of the primary goals for the symposiums was to develop a set of recommendations for revising the way appeals in Termination of Parental Rights cases are processed. The question "To what extent do you agree with the recommendations?" all most some none" was provided to determine if the symposium had succeeded in this goal. Of the forty-five responses to this question forty-two or 93.3% indicated "all" or "most". One of the questions asked on the feedback form was repeated for both the morning and afternoon sessions. "Do you agree that reform is needed in Colorado?" This question was repeated for two purposes: to see if the participants thought reform is needed and to see if their opinion changed from morning to afternoon. All of the respondents who attended both morning and afternoon sessions answered yes to these questions indicating no change in opinion from morning to afternoon. One respondent, a court reporter who left at lunch, answered "no" in the morning session.

Both symposiums were very well received as the completed feedback forms indicate. The participants overwhelmingly agreed that reform is needed in Colorado, and that it is possible to achieve a workable solution based on the recommendations made. The aggregate scores for the morning sessions were 98.6% positive. The aggregate scores for the afternoon sessions were 98.9% positive. Questions addressing the general overall entire symposium were 97.3% positive.

Introduction

The 2004 Court of Appeals Symposium was jointly funded by State Judicial, the Court Improvement Project and Project UPLIFT. Project UPLIFT (Understanding Permanency Lessons in Future Teamwork) began as a 17 month planning grant in 1999, as an Adoption Opportunity Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Grant #90- CO-0948/01. The purpose of the planning phase was to determine the adoption and permanency planning barriers from both child welfare and judicial aspects. As a result of a successful planning phase, the Colorado Department of Human Services was awarded a three year implementation grant to increase available adoptive family resources for children and sibling groups through organized support of inter-jurisdictional adoptive placements through positive and innovative changes in system approaches. A Collaborative Council, comprised of state and county human service, judicial, and CASA representatives was convened to guide the project. In October 2001, Colorado Judges and Magistrates were surveyed to better understand the Interjurisdictional barriers from a judicial perspective. As a result, workshops were provided at state judicial conferences; digital and real time recording equipment was purchased for a select number of Colorado Courts hearing the largest numbers of Dependency and Neglect and Termination of Parental Rights cases; and two 2004 Court of Appeals Symposiums were convened.

The first 2004 Court of Appeals Symposium was held at the Adams' Mark Hotel in Grand Junction on February 13, 2004, and the second was held at the Denver Athletic Club, in Denver on February 20, 2004. Each one day symposium began at 9:00 AM and ended at 3:00 PM. The same feedback form was distributed at both symposiums consisting of a one-sided, one-page document with twenty-three questions, twenty of which asked for a yes/no response. Not all participants were able to attend the entire day, however, wherever possible, feedback forms were collected from those participants that had to leave early. A total of 3 participants left during or after the morning session in Grand Junction. A total of 5 participants left after the morning session in Denver. A total of 53 participant feedback forms representing 17 professional groups were collected: 18 in Grand Junction and 35 in Denver.

The participants were asked to identify their professional duties, and the table below indicates the professional duties and the frequency of each profession represented.

Table 1: Professional Duties Frequency

County Attorney	11	Clerk's Office Staff	2
GAL	10	CASA	1
Court Facilitator	5	COA	1
Caseworker	4	DHS Supervisor	1
Respondent Attorney	4	DHS Consultant Attorney	1
Appellate Judge	3	Law Clerk	1
Judicial Branch Staff Attorney	3	State Staff	1
Court Reporter	2	UPLIFT Trainer	1
District Judge	2		

Results

Morning Session. There were 10 yes/no questions on the feedback form. The question number (Q#) the questions, the total participants answering the question (N), the number answering yes (#Yes), the number answering no (#No), the percentage of yes answers (%Yes), and the percentage of No answers (%No) are shown.

Table 2: Morning Session Results

Q #	Question	N	# Yes	# No	% Yes	%No
1	Do you understand the goals and objectives of the symposium?	53	53	0	100	0
2	Do you agree with the symposium objectives?	51	51	0	100	0
3	Did the presented visuals relate to children's permanency needs?	50	49	1	98	2
4	Were the issues and their parameters explained in enough detail?	50	50	0	100	0
5	Were the national trends in D&N appellate reform adequately covered?	50	47	3	94	6
6	Was the case law presentation helpful?	40	38	2	95	5
7	Do you agree that reform is needed in Colorado?	53	52	1	98.1	1.9
8	Did the morning facilitator keep your session focused?	53	53	0	100	0
9	Was the brain-storming pro-active (i.e., not a gripe session)?	48	48	0	100	0
10	Was your professional group able to identify common challenges, concerns and ideas?	47	47	0	100	0
Aggregates		495	488	7	98.6	1.4

Comments

Question #5, "Were the national trends in D&N appellate reform adequately covered?" invited participants to indicate what was missing if they answered "no." Three participants wrote in a response. The responses were "very brief," "would want more information & detail re: what other states are doing," and "global review needed."

Question #6, "Was the case law presentation helpful?" received the fewest responses (40) than any other morning session question, and was not presented the same way in Grand Junction and Denver. Three respondents made marginal notes. They were: "Only 2 cases but they contain important constitutional issues," "What presentation?," and "I don't remember this." (Three pages of the power point presentation discussed national trends. Handouts of the power point were provided in the packet distributed as they arrived. A web search findings for Court of Appeals case law were mentioned. A limited number of handouts were available at the Grand Junction Symposium, and from Daniel Gallagher by request and via email at the Denver Symposium. The handout document referenced was titled "Expediting Dependency Appeals: Strategies to Reduce Delay" by Ann L. Keith and Carol R. Flango published by the State Justice Institute and the National Center for State Courts.)

Afternoon Session. There were 6 afternoon feedback form questions. Four questions were yes/no. One question had 3 possible answers and one question had four possible answers. Because some participants left before the afternoon session a total of 48 responses are reported.

Yes or No Questions. The question number (Q#) the questions, the total participants answering the question (N), the number answering yes (#Yes), the number answering no (#No), the percentage of yes answers (%Yes), and the percentage of No answers (%No) are shown.

Table 3: Afternoon Session Yes/No Results

Q #	Question	N	# Yes	# No	% Yes	%No
11	Do you agree that reform is needed in Colorado?	48	48	0	100	0
12	Did the afternoon facilitator keep your session focused?	47	47	0	100	0
13	Was your small group able to agree on necessary reforms?	37	36	1	97.3	2.7
15	Was there enough time for discussion on the recommendations?	46	45	1	97.8	2.2
Aggregates		178	176	2	98.9	1.1

Comments. Two respondent wrote comments regardingon question #13, “Was your small group able to agree on necessary reforms?” The responses were identical: “somewhat.” The respondents making these comments did not check either the yes or no box.

Question 14, “Was the small group time allotted: too short, about right or too long” had 3 possible answers. Forty of the 48 respondents marked one of the choices. Of these, 2 or 5% checked “too short,” 37 or 92.5% checked “about right,” and 1 or 2.5% checked “too long.” One respondent, not checking any box, provided a comment to Question 14, and that comment was “varied.”

Question 16, “To what extent do you agree with the recommendations?” And the 4 possible answers were: all, most, some or none”. Forty-five of the 48 participants responded to this question. Of these, 14 checked “all,” 28 checked “most,” 3 checked “some,” and none checked “none.” This means that 63.3% agreed with most or all of the recommendations.

Overall. The “Overall” section contained 7 questions of a general nature that pertained to the entire symposium. All of the questions were yes/no except for question 18. Question 18 referenced the physical facilities and had three parts: the first two (18a and 18b) were yes/no and 18c had three possible answers. In the discussion that follows after the yes/no table, question 18 is labeled 18a, 18b and 18c to identify its three parts, respectively.

There were 6 yes/ no questions in the Overall section. The question number (Q#) the questions, the total participants answering the question (N), the number answering yes (#Yes), the number answering no (#No), the percentage of yes answers (%Yes), and the percentage of No answers (%No) are shown on Table 3 beginning on the next page.

Table 4: Overall Yes/No Results

Q#	Question	N	#Yes	#No	%Yes	%No
17	Did you feel that you were able to contribute to the rule-making process?	46	45	1	97.8	2.2
18a	Able to hear	50	47	3	94	6
18b	Able to see	47	45	2	95.7	4.3
19	Were the possible solutions examined in enough depth?	47	46	1	97.9	2.1
20	Were the handouts adequate and appropriate?	51	50	1	98	2
21	Were there enough handouts for everyone?	51	51	0	100	0
Aggregate		292	284	8	97.3	2.7

Physical Facilities Partitioning. The answers above involved 2 facilities in 2 different physical locations, one in Grand Junction and the other in Denver. The responses to questions 18a, 18b and 18c are partitioned between the 2 facilities. Please note that **Question 18c** was not a yes/no question, and is therefore not in Table 4.

Question 18a Of the respondents reporting poor hearing conditions, all three attended the Grand Junction symposium. One Grand Junction respondent wrote a marginal comment "hearing difficult," but did not check either the yes or no box on the form.

Question 18b Of the respondents reporting poor seeing conditions, one attended Grand Junction and one from Denver.

Question 18c was not a yes/no question. The question related to the room temperature and the 3 choices were: "too cool, about right, or too warm." Fifty-two responses were received for this question. Seven or 13.5% responded "too cool," 44 or 84.6% responded "about right," and one or 1.9% responded "too warm." Six of the seven respondents responding "too cool" attended the Grand Junction symposium. (During the Grand Junction symposium the facilitators asked the hotel to turn up the heat.) The Denver responses included one "too cool" and one "too warm;" all the rest were "about right."

General Comments. Six respondents wrote general comments that pertained to no specific section on the feedback form. Each comment was mentioned by only one respondent. The comments, accompanied by the evaluator's insertions enclosed in square brackets ([]) are:

Superb seminar! [Written by same respondent who didn't remember the case law presentation.]

Very good facilitators!

Thank you!

Go with version of Iowa program, excellent handouts!

Would have liked handout of Iowa's power point [presentation].

Reform most definitely needed.

Project UPLIFT County Adoption Supervisor or Child Welfare Administrator Survey 2004 Results

Background

In February and March 2004, 23 Colorado Adoption Supervisors and County Child Welfare Administrators were surveyed to determine ongoing issues and successes in achieving permanency for children in their legal custody. The counties included all 10 large counties as well as eleven medium size counties and two small counties to achieve a balanced sample representation of the issues and challenges throughout Colorado. This was the second time the 23 counties were surveyed by Project UPLIFT.

The survey information was requested to assist the Project UPLIFT Evaluators in completing the final report on the grant to the Colorado Department of Human Services and to the Federal Government. The Collaborative Council and the Project UPLIFT leadership determined that conducting a second survey was the best way to evaluate county adoption unit outcomes as they related to the grant, to make the report as accurate as possible, since the Trails Automated System was not designed nor was it able to provide the data in a format that accurately tracks all the grant elements.

The survey contained 32 questions, some of them multi-part, as compared to the 2001 survey that contained 22 items. The 2001 survey was multiple purpose in that in addition serving as the basis for a bi-annual report to the Federal Government it was also used as the basis for a Colorado Department of Human Services report to the Colorado Legislature. Therefore, the survey content elements were a compromise. A separate document describes the changes that were observed between 2001 and 2004.

Survey Results

Respondents were supervisors in their respective departments of social/human services. Nineteen surveys were received in the 2004 Survey, representing 1,198 children being placed in an adoptive home in between 10/01/01 and 12/31/03. It must be noted, however, that the number of children is a gross understatement because two large counties reported that the data was not available and only 19 counties returned the survey. The 2001 number of children was 636 and that was based on all 23 counties reporting. The results for each of the 32 questions are reported. The format varies by the type of question asked, and not all counties answered all questions. For each of the Question a result table is provided that includes a "Count" column. That column refers to the number of responses received for that question.

Question 1

How many children are currently in your county's legal custody?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
337.6	48.5	13.0	521.6	1591	9	4600	4726	14

Question 2

How many children received permanency placement by adoption from your county between October 1, 2001 through December 31, 2003 in all jurisdictions?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
66.6	13.0	2.0	102.5	357	1	358	1198	18

Question 3

How many placements were finalized using purchase of service?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
19.1	0.0	0.0	51.7	194	0	194	325	17

Question 4

In the Planning Phase, are secondary workers assigned to achieve earlier permanency for EPP cases? (y/n)

Yes	No	Sometimes	Count
9	9	1	19

Question 5

Have you had an increase in inter jurisdictional placements since Oct. 2001? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
13	6	19

Question 6

Of all your permanency placements please indicate the number placed for adoption in another: (fill in the table)

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
County	17.63	3.00	0.0	37.05	147.0	0.0	147.0	282	16
State	8.86	2.00	0.0	13.03	41.00	0.0	41.00	124.00	14
Country	0.23	0.0	0.0	0.60	2.00	0.0	2.00	3.00	13

Question 7

How many of your staff understand and use the ICPC?

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
13	4	0	0	0	17

Question 8

How many placements were finalized using the ICPC process and Colorado supervision?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
6.44	2.00	0.00	11.16	41.00	0.00	41.00	103.00	16

Question 9

Question 9 is two-part. Each part appears below.

*Did your county use purchase of service dollars to facilitate interjurisdictional placements?
(y/n)*

Yes	No	Count
7	12	19

If yes, for how many cases?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
2.14	2.00	3.00	0.90	2.00	1.00	3.00	15.00	7

Question 10

Question 10 is two-part. Each part appears below. Note that two counties reported yes to the first part, but did not report how many cases, and do not appear in the statistics for the second part.

Did your county use purchase of service dollars to facilitate interjurisdictional placements?

Yes	No	Count
18	0	19

If yes, for how many cases?

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
11.88	2.00	1.00	31.17	129.00	1.00	130.00	202.00	17

Question 11

Question 11 is two-part, but no county answered the second part, so it is not reported.

Did your county use courtesy home study, placement approval and supervision using the ICPC process?

Yes	No	Count
4	14	18

Question 12

Does your county have a written policy regarding the acceptance (with or without conditions) of home studies performed outside the immediate area? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
7	11	18

Question 13

Does your county have a written policy encouraging communication and collaboration with other counties or states regarding interjurisdictional adoption? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
6	11	17

Question 14

Please indicate the average length of time the ICPC process has delayed the ICPC placement: (fill in the table)

3 months or less	4-6 months	7-12 months	More than 12	Count
2	8	8	1	19

Question 15

Please indicate the average frequency the ICPC process has delayed the ICPC placement: (fill in the table)

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	Count
1	2	3	11	2	19

Question 16

In the table below, please write the names of the three states that have most often caused ICPC delays and the average amount of delay for that state. Leave table blank if you have had no trouble with ICPC delays

State	3 months or less	4 - 6 months	7-12 months	13 months or more

Fifteen counties specified at least one state. Twelve counties specified at least two states. Five counties specified three states. A total of 32 responses were received.

In addition to the number of counties specifying one or more states, this question requires two data sets to adequately report the results. The first data set is a table reporting the frequency of delays. The second data set is a table of the states, the number of times they

were mentioned, a listing of the frequency of each delay time, and an overall score (big numbers mean greater delays).

Frequency of Delay

3 mo. Or less	4-6 months	7-12 months	More than 12	Count
4	14	8	6	32

State Delays

The data for state delays suffers from low numbers. This means that for states having less than five mentions, the data should be regarded as being statistically questionable.

The N column is the number of mentions for that state. Note that the N column does not always equal the sum of the four delay columns for that state because sometimes a state was mentioned but no delay specified. The score column is a weighted average of the delays for that state.

Three states had one delay not specified. The states were CA, NB, and TX. The score for NB is not computable because no delay observations were specified. The notation "<=" means less than or equal to. The notation ">" means greater than.

State	N	<= 3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	> 12 months	score
OR	1	0	0	0	1	4.00
NV	1	0	0	0	1	4.00
FL	1	0	0	1	0	3.00
GA	1	0	0	1	0	3.00
CA	12	0	5	4	2	2.73
AZ	3	0	2	0	1	2.67
KS	3	1	0	2	0	2.33
MO	1	0	1	0	0	2.00
AR	1	0	1	0	0	2.00
IN	2	0	2	0	0	2.00
AK	1	0	1	0	0	2.00
NM	2	1	1	0	0	1.50
TX	4	2	1	0	0	1.33
NB	1	0	0	0	0	

Question 17

Question 17 is a two-part question. No respondent answered the second part.

*If you have had problems with ICPC placements, do you continue to seek ICPC placements?
(y/n)*

Yes	No	Count
17	1	18

Question 18

Please indicate which of the following tools have been helpful in seeking and obtaining inter jurisdictional placements. Please check the box that best indicates the frequency of use in the past year.

The Count column indicates the number of responses for that row. Respondents tended to omit any frequency of use for a tool if they did not use it, i.e., they neglected to place check the "0" column.

Item	Count	Number of times used in the past year			
		0	1-3	4-5	more than 5
AFRR	10	4	1	1	4
Photo Listing (CARR)	14	2	3	2	7
Adoption Parties	12	5	3	2	3
Newspaper Ads	12	6	1	1	4
AdoptUSKids	14	5	3	1	5
Kinship Search	17	0	4	3	10

Question 19

Does your staff have access to the internet? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
19	0	19

Question 20

Has internet access become more available to workers since Oct. 2001? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
18	0	18

Question 21

Question 21 is a two-part question.

Does your staff routinely use the internet? (y/n) If not, why?

Yes	No	Count
16	2	18

One of the two respondents who answered "no" specified a reason. The reason was:

Time constraints & limited internet access.

Question 22

How many have had AFRR training? 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
5	3	1	3	4	16

Question 23

Question 23 is a two-part question.

How many use the AFRR? 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

If 25% or less, why?

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
4	1	1	5	5	16

Five respondents provided an answer to the "why" portion of the question.

Response	Count
No placements	1
Caseworker time constraint. Not enough time to spend looking for permanent placements.	1
Experience with associated unit.	1
We are a small county -- all AFRR searches are done by the Foster/Adoption Worker.	1
I was not aware of this as a resource, therefore I have not encouraged staff to utilize it.	1

Question 24

How many use the Adoption Exchange/Colorado Adoption Resource Registry (CARR)?
 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
7	6	1	2	2	18

Question 25

How many use AdoptUSKids? 100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
6	4	1	3	4	18

Question 26

How many use other adoption related search engines?

100% 75% 50% 25% none.

100%	75%	50%	25%	None	Count
1	2	3	3	9	18

Question 27

Do you have written procedures to respond to inquires about children who have been seen on photo listings, web sites, etc., to assure that all people are responded to in a timely and courteous way? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
6	12	18

Question 28

What is the average adoption case-load per worker? _____

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
12.93	13.50	2.00	9.68	28.00	2.00	30.00	181.00	14

Question 29

Is training available relevant to adoption issues? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
16	2	18

Question 30

Is training available relevant to post-adoption issues? (y/n)

Yes	No	Count
15	3	18

Question 31

How many caseworkers currently need training in adoption issues? _____

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
7.38	1.5	0.00	19.63	80.00	0.00	80.00	118.00	16

In addition, two counties wrote in "all."

Question 32

How many caseworkers have no training in adoption issues? _____

Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Count
4.31	0.00	0.00	12.41	50.00	0.00	50.00	69.00	16

In addition, two counties wrote in "all."