

Starting with the End in Mind: The Evaluation Framework for the RBS Initiative

Evaluation Issues to be Covered

- + The requirements of AB 1453**
- + The role of the evaluation in RBS policy development**
- + The importance of implementation analysis**
- + How the evaluation will work (and what we don't know yet)**
- + Assistance with implementing the evaluation in your county**

Legislative Evaluation Requirements

- + Outcomes for children and youth
 - Permanency
 - Average length of stay
 - Rates of entry and re-entry into group care
- + Involvement of youth and their families
- + Client satisfaction
- + County utilization of the RBS system
- + Cost analysis
 - Payments to providers
 - Program costs
 - Impact on state-county of AFDC-FC program costs

Outcome Criteria in the Framework

+ Safety

- Behavior change and stability
- Reduced involvement with legal system
- Increased feelings of safety and self-efficacy

+ Permanence

- Increased quality and quantity of positive family, school, peer and community relationships
- For post-program youth, living in a lifelong relationship with committed caregiver or parent
- For in-program youth, caregiver or parent commitment to provide permanent home

+ Well-Being

- Life skills acquisition
- Physical and emotional well-being
- Educational progress

Other Outcomes of Interest

- + Reduction in disproportionality
- + Improvements in county-level service system efficiency
 - Referrals
 - Assessments
 - Case management and follow-up
 - Local policy change
 - Data sharing
- + Development of new funding mechanisms
- + Improved provider and staff capacity
- + State-level policy development

How Evaluation Informs RBS Policy

- + Answers basic question, “Does it work?”
 - Outcomes for children and youth
 - Outcomes for families
 - Improvements in service system and provider capacity
 - Cost savings or no net cost increase
 - “Implementable”
- + Assists state agencies and providers groups with dissemination of best practices

Implementation Analysis

- + Before we can assess the impacts of the new service model, we have to be able to describe what it is and how it works. How can we say “it works” if we don’t know what “it” is?
- + Implementation analysis compares the intended program design with what is actually developed
- + Implementation analysis documents the process used to create the complex relationships needed for RBS programs
- + Documentation of organizational and system baselines is important

RBS Evaluation Design Features

- + Tracking of individual participants over time
- + Multiple measures of change
 - Behavior
 - Education
 - Legal involvement
 - Attitudes
 - Family participation
 - Others?
- + Combination of quantitative and qualitative methods
- + Comparison group
- + Integration of outcome and cost data
- + Implementation analysis

What We Don't Know Yet

- + Will there be common assessment tools?
- + What common participant-level data system will we use?
- + To what extent will the evaluation address county-specific questions?
- + How will be responsibility for data collection be allocated?
- + Over what time period will outcomes be tracked?
- + What methods for measuring costs will we use?

Evaluation Tasks in 2008

- + Clarify policy issues with Leadership Team
- + Convene county and expert advisory group to refine design decisions and help with implementation planning
- + Finalize statewide design and select instruments and indicators
- + Submit IRB request
- + Assist counties with evaluation TA (pre-application) and planning (post-application)
- + Evaluate early implementation process
- + Collect baseline organizational and community data in participating counties

Discussion questions

- + What outcomes are most important to measure in your county?
- + How would you document the current organizational and system-level capacity for RBS reform in your county?

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