Regional Partnership Grants Cross-Site
Evaluation and Evaluation-Related
Technical Assistance

RPG Cross-Site Evaluation and Technical Assistance:

Second Annual Report

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Policy Research

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RPG Cross-Site Evaluation and Technical Assistance: Second Annual Report

April 2015

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RPG
Regional Partnership Grants
and Cross-Site Evaluation

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

During the first year of the 2012 Regional Partnership Grant program (RPG2), Mathematica and its subcontractors worked with the Children's Bureau (CB), the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW), and the grantees and their evaluators to establish evaluation designs and set the stage for the remaining four years of the grant. We (1) designed the cross-site evaluation, (2) provided evaluation-related technical assistance (TA) to grantees, (3) assessed the program plans and evaluation designs that grantees initially proposed, (4) selected or developed measures and instruments for use in the cross-site evaluation, and (5) explored whether a data collection system created during RPG1 could be updated for obtaining evaluation and performance indicator data from grantees. The first annual report on the RPG National Cross-site Evaluation and Evaluation-related TA (RPG cross-site evaluation) project described progress in these areas (Strong, Avellar, & Ross, 2015).

In year 2, Mathematica, Walter R. McDonald & Associates (WRMA), and Synergy Enterprises, Inc. (Synergy), built on the year 1 activities and focused on three areas:

1. Preparing to obtain data from grantees

   a. Providing standardized instruments to grantees

   b. Obtaining Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance

   c. Designing and developing the data collection system for RPG2

2. Providing TA and monitoring progress

   a. Providing TA, monitoring, and peer learning opportunities

   b. Responding to challenges grantees faced

3. Engaging a subset of grantees in the impact study of the cross-site evaluation

   a. Identifying grantees to participate

   b. Losing some grantees from the study

   c. Reestimating the power of the study to detect impacts

A. The second annual report

This second annual report describes activities and progress in each of these areas. The report is intended for the Children's Bureau (CB), which sponsors the RPG program and the cross-site evaluation, as well as other stakeholders with whom CB may wish to share the report. It is organized as follows:

Section B of this chapter provides a detailed list of the activities conducted under Mathematica's contract during the period covered by this report. Chapter II reviews how Mathematica prepared to obtain cross-site evaluation data from grantees. Our provision of evaluation-related TA is described in Chapter III, along with challenges grantees encountered. Chapter IV discusses the cross-site evaluation impact study and how the loss of several grantees from the study will affect the statistical power of the study. Implications of these experiences and

next steps for the cross-site evaluation are laid out in Chapter V. Appendix A contains templates developed for the memorandums of agreement (MOAs) we established with grantees in order to share copyrighted instruments with them and obtain data for the cross-site evaluation.

B. An overview of work conducted under the contract during year 2

Work on the RPG cross-site evaluation is organized into 12 tasks. Mathematica and WRMA completed Task 4 (develop, refine, and finalize performance indicators) during year 1. Task 11 (final evaluation report) does not begin until year 5. Table I.1 summarizes the activities conducted under the remaining tasks between October 1, 2013, and September 30, 2014, and identifies the contractual deliverables completed.

Table I.1. Activities on tasks during year 2 of the RPG cross-site evaluation

Task and subtask number	Task and subtask title	Contractual deliverable(s) relevant for the period	Activities
Task 1	**Participate in project orientation**		
1.2	Prepare and update project work plans	Updated work plan	Submitted plan for Option Year 1 October 17, 2013 Submitted plan for Option Year 2 August 29, 2014
1.3	Facilitate and coordinate biweekly or monthly teleconference	Agenda for call Summary of call and follow-up action plan	Calls and summaries 2013: October 18 November 1 and 15 Calls and summaries 2014: December 6 and 20 January 10 and 17 February 7 and 21 March 7 and 20 April 18 May 16 June 6 July 25 August 18 September 18
1.4		Agenda for meeting Summary of meeting and follow-up action plan	D. Strong and S. Avellar met with M. Brodowski and E. Stedt at RPG annual meeting held in April 2014.
1.5	Expert consultation	List of proposed experts Agenda for meeting Summary of meeting	A meeting of experts was not requested. However, during the year, we consulted individually with Joe Ryan on the design of the impact study and with Allison Metz on the design of the implementation study.
1.6	Ad hoc briefings	Agenda for meeting Summary of meeting and follow-up action plan	None requested
Task 2	**Conduct program strategy confirmation process and evaluability/readiness assessment and develop grantee evaluation profiles**		
2.2	Collaborate with NCSACW on the development and updating of grantee evaluation profiles		Completed all evaluation profiles, except Virginia grantee: Completed 14 of 17 profiles and sent to NCSACW for incorporation into the existing profiles in December 2013. Completed 15th profile and sent to NCSACW in January 2015. Completed 16th profile (IA-Seasons) and sent to NCSACW in February 2015.

Task and subtask number	Task and subtask title	Contractual deliverable(s) relevant for the period	Activities
Task 3	**Formulate preliminary and final design and analysis plans for the national cross-site evaluation**		
3.2	Presentation and finalization of evaluation design	Final approved evaluation design	Design report: Submitted draft evaluation design report on November 25, 2013. CB accepted the recommendation. Received comments from CB on January 14, 2014. Submitted draft executive summary of design report in March 2014. Completed revisions of design report; at COR request, on April 21, 2014, we shared with the grantees for fact-checking, with comments due by May 2. Received comments and made minor corrections in May, then sent out the final PDF for 508 compliance. Completed 508 compliance for the report and stand-alone executive summary, which CB announced to the listserv on June 20, 2014. Impact study recruitment: Sent memo on criteria for inclusion to grantees and began discussing during monthly calls in summer 2013 (base year). Began discussing potential sites with CB in October 2013. Finalized selection of sites and included list in draft design report submitted on November 25, 2013. Added language to MOAs for grantees participating in the impact report (see Optional Task B). **This task is complete.**
Task 5	**Review existing data collection system; develop and pilot test data collection system for performance indicators and evaluation data**		
5.2	Transition, maintenance, updates, and pilot test of data collection system	Final transition of old system to new system, as needed	Gave CB a high-level overview of data collection system (ESL and OAISIS) on December 6, 2013, and repeated overview for grantees in December 17 webinar. Developed forms to collect ESL data; circulated forms and data dictionary to grantees on January 24, 2014. Held webinar on using the forms on January 27, 2014. Designed and finalized landing page in February 2014. Circulated memo on April 18, 2014, describing process and schedule for rollout of the RPG data system. Held webinar introducing OAISIS on April 23, 2014. Held webinar on May 14, 2014, on using the OAISIS tools for standardized instruments and administrative data tools. Held webinar on June 2, 2014, on using the ESL for grantee ESL administrators. Held webinar on June 10, 2014, on using the ESL for caseworkers/frontline staff. Launched ESL on June 11, 2014. The OAISIS system was ready to accept data as of August 30, 2014. Opened the system to accept grantee uploads on September 29, completing this task. **This task is complete.**
5.3	Develop pilot training and draft user guide	Draft user guide Draft system documentation	Submitted draft OAISIS user guide to CB on April 4, 2014. Submitted draft ESL user guide to CB on May 20, 2014. Submitted slides and materials for all ESL and OAISIS trainings mentioned under Tasks 5.2 and 5.4 to CB before each training webinar. **This task is complete.**

Task and subtask number	Task and subtask title	Contractual deliverable(s) relevant for the period	Activities
5.4	Pilot test data collection system	Pilot test Final system documentation	<u>ESL</u>: Engaged three grantees to pilot test ESL; conducted an orientation for them on April 21, 2014, then gathered feedback from each pilot grantee by April 24. <u>OAISIS</u>: CB approved moving the first OAISIS upload period to October 2014 (instead of April) and conducting beta tests in July. Subsequently, we advised dropping the beta test, for two reasons: (1) to conserve resources, and (2) because the October upload was essentially a pilot test for all grantees. CB accepted the recommendation. **This task is complete.**
5.5	Prepare final user guide and system documentation	Final user guide Final system documentation	Sent version 2 of the ESL data dictionary and version 1 of the ESL user guide to grantees on June 12, 2014. Posted the final OAISIS user guide and data dictionary to OAISIS on September 29, 2014. **This task is complete.**
Task 6	**Preparation and submission of OMB and IRB clearance packages as necessary**		
6.1	Prepare OMB clearance package	Final OMB clearance package	*Federal Register* published 30-day notice on December 3, 2013. Provided final package, including statements A and B, all data collection instruments, and information for the ICRAS, to CB. CB uploaded them by December 20. No questions were received from OMB. CB received OMB clearance on March 18, 2014. CB announced this via the listserv on March 24. **This task is complete.**
6.2	Secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval	IRB application	Began preparing the necessary documents to request IRB approval for the cross-site evaluation. Submitted for internal review in July 2014. Submitted IRB application to New England Institutional Research Board on August 18, 2014, and received approval August 27. In August, we started to obtain IRB approval for the cross-site evaluation requested by the PA grantee's IRB. Submitted the site-specific IRB application for the PA grantee on September 12, 2014, and received a notification of exemption on September 23. **This task is complete.**
Task 7	**Data collection for cross-site evaluation**		
7.1	Development of cross-site evaluation instruments	Final instruments	Made final revisions to staff and partner surveys after pilot tests held in base year. Translated all instruments without existing Spanish versions into Spanish by December 2013. **This task is complete.**
7.3	Timely execution of data collection activities	Collect data	On September 12, 2014, circulated a revised template for use in October 2014 SAPR
7.5	Coordination and monitoring of data collection activities	Data quality and monitoring	Recommended to CB that we drop referral data from the ESL and household roster from the outcome data, to reduce grantee burden. CB approved. Began developing data assessment, cleaning, and analysis specifications for ESL and OAISIS data; also, scoring specifications. Sent memo to grantees on June 26 describing how and when we will send them scores and providing information

Task and subtask number	Task and subtask title	Contractual deliverable(s) relevant for the period	Activities
			(including sources and costs) for obtaining scoring manuals or other information on the selected standardized instruments. Received semiannual progress reports from grantees in October 2013 and April 2014; reviewed and extracted data for second report to Congress.
7.7	Storage and safeguarding of data collected	Storage of data	Submitted data security plan on October 31, 2013.
Task 8	**Provide evaluation technical assistance (TA) to grantees**		
8.1	Provide TA on evaluation, performance measurement, and continuous quality improvement	Ongoing TA	Webinar on administrative records for safety domain on October 2, 2013. Webinar on administrative records for permanency on October 30, 2013. Webinar on TEDS data elements to be obtained for the cross-site evaluation from state substance abuse agencies February 20, 2014. Monthly calls with grantees: Developed protocols for CSLs to monitor evaluation progress. Launched helpdesk in February 2014 for questions about data collection or instruments. Circulated memo to grantees on February 27 describing helpdesk and how to make a request via email or by telephone. Developed a bank of adaptable questions on evaluation implementation progress for CSLs to use on calls with grantees. CSL planned TA site visit to Iowa-Seasons for October.
8.2	Coordinate, facilitate, and support an evaluation peer learning network across the grantees	Peer learning network meetings monthly, as needed	Held work group call on March 6, 2014, to discuss timing of follow-up data collection with grantees and evaluators. Finalized recommendations and sent memo to all grantees on March 27. Planned and held a day of sessions for RPG evaluators at the RPG annual meeting in April 2014.
8.3	Provide technical assistance activities tools and material for knowledge management	TA tools	We posted slides and recordings of all webinars, including all ESL and OAISIS training webinars, to CPM. Circulated memo on March 27, 2014, with recommendations on the timing for collecting follow-up data. Developed a TA recording to discuss how to define program exit, to complement a memo on the topic distributed on March 7, 2014. Posted the recording to CPM in April. Posted to CPM information on securing data-sharing agreements with administrative agencies, as well as a sample agreement; notified grantees via the listserv on May 9, 2014.
Task 9	**Coordinate with the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare and other TA providers**		
9.2			Sent CB a draft agenda for the evaluator track at the 2014 RPG annual meeting and began planning the sessions. Developed sessions and materials for conference; circulated materials on April 24, 2014, via the listserv. Attended the RPG annual meeting and held multiple sessions with evaluators; presented update on the cross-site evaluation at a combined grantee/evaluator session.

Task and subtask number	Task and subtask title	Contractual deliverable(s) relevant for the period	Activities
9.3			Participated in national partner calls 2013: October 21 November 1 and 15 2014: February 7 and 21 March 21 April 4 and 18 May 9; discussed second R2C. August 13 Coordinated on second report to Congress. Coordinated in developing forms for grantees to provide data on trauma (see Task 10.5).
Task 10	Prepare reports		
10.1	Prepare TA reports		Submitted 12 TA reports, one with each monthly progress report.
10.2	Prepare annual reports to Congress		Submitted draft 2012 RPG first report to Congress on December 17, 2013. Received comments from CB by January 14, 2014. Sent revised first report to Congress to CB on March 20, 2014. CB forwarded comments from ACF on the first report to Congress on July 17, with additional instructions on July 22. We made requested changes and submitted track changes and clean versions to CB on July 25. Requested and received additional information from NCSACW for the R2C2 in July, receiving it by July 28 and 31.
10.3	Prepare monthly progress reports		Submitted 12 monthly progress reports on time.
10.4	Prepare annual reports		Drafted first annual report (submitted to CB in December 2014).
10.5	Prepare ad hoc reports and/or special topics research briefs		Received request on September 10 from CB for information on how grantees are addressing trauma in their RPG programs. Developed a form for grantees to provide the information as part of their October 2014 semiannual progress reports (due October 30). [Circulated request on October 21; received forms from CB on November 3; extracted information, organized it, and sent it on November 6 to CB.]
Task 12	Conduct strategic knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer activities		
12.1	Strategic dissemination		Submitted proposal for panel discussion on evaluation-related TA to the May 2014 Welfare Reform Evaluation Conference. Received rejection notice March 14, 2014.
Optional Task B	Enhanced support for grantees' participation in the cross-site evaluation		
	Develop draft plan for review Finalize and implement plan		Licensed copyrighted instru3ments. Developed Spanish translations as needed. Executed MOAs and NDAs with all grantees and third parties as follows: Sent draft MOAs to all grantees by November 26, 2013. MOAs were fully executed as of the following dates: CA- Center Point, Inc. 3/31/14 GA-Georgia State University Research Foundation 1/29/14 IA-Judicial Branch, state of Iowa 4/9/14 IA-Northwest Iowa Mental Health/Seasons Center (2/3/14) IL-Children's Research Triangle 1/13/14

Task and subtask number	Task and subtask title	Contractual deliverable(s) relevant for the period	Activities
			KY-Department for Community-Based Services 1/27/14 MA-Commonwealth of Massachusetts9/23/14 ME-Families and Children Together 12/30/13 MO-Alternative Opportunities 1/24/14 MT-Center for Children and Families 12/13/13 NV-Division of Child and Family Services 12/30/13 OH- Summit County Children Services 3/10/14 OK-Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services 12/30/13 PA-Health Federation of Philadelphia 1/17/14 TN-Helen Ross McNabb Center December 13, 2013 TN-Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services 1/24/14 VA-Rockingham Memorial Hospital 8/30/2014 Provided all standardized outcome instruments, including English and Spanish versions of the copyrighted instruments in January 2014, to the eight grantees that had already executed their MOAs and necessary NDAs, and subsequently to remaining grantees as their MOAs were completed. To expedite the Massachusetts MOA, we executed an NDA with DPH, to allow the grantee to review the copyrighted cross-site evaluation instruments before a signed MOA.

COR = contracting officer's representative; CPM = Collaborative Project Management; ESL = Enrollment and Services Log; ICRAS = Information Collection Request, Review, and Approval System; IRB = Institutional Review Board; MOA = memorandum of agreement; NCSACW = National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare; NDA = non-disclosure agreement; OAISIS = Outcome and Impact Study Information System; OMB = Office of Management and Budget; SAPR = semi-annual progress report; TEDS = Treatment Episode Data Set

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II. OBTAINING DATA FROM GRANTEES

Mathematica will obtain data for the cross-site evaluation by conducting surveys and site visits, as well as from grantees. During the third year of the grant program, we will administer a survey to RPG grantees and their partners (the RPG partner survey) to study their collaborations, and a survey of frontline staff and supervisors (the RPG staff survey) to study their experience providing selected evidence-based programs and practices (EBPs) to RPG participants. During that time, we will plan for and launch site visits to all RPG grantees, with most of the visits held at the beginning of year 4, in fall 2015. These data will be used in the implementation and partner studies. For the implementation study, however, Mathematica will also use data provided by the grantees, and, for the outcomes study, we will rely entirely on grantees for our data.[1] During year 2, Mathematica devoted significant resources to establishing the infrastructure to obtain these grantee-provided data. Late in the year, after CB received OMB clearance for the cross-site evaluation, grantees began providing data.

This chapter briefly describes the infrastructure necessary to obtain implementation and outcome data from grantees, and how Mathematica, WRMA, and Synergy developed that infrastructure. Putting the infrastructure in place required three main steps: (1) providing grantees with the standardized instruments selected for measuring outcomes, (2) providing CB with materials and information to request OMB clearance for all data collection associated with the cross-site evaluation, and (3) designing and developing an automated data collection system through which grantees could submit implementation and outcome data. We describe each of these steps in Sections A, B, and C, respectively.

A. Providing standardized instruments

The RPG funding opportunity announcement said: "Grantees should be aware that the evaluation and reporting on performance measures for this funding program requires a great deal more effort than is typical for discretionary grants" (Administration for Children and Families 2012a). To support grantees' ability to meet these expectations, CB allocated optional funds for the cross-site evaluation to unspecified types of financial support for grantees to participate in the cross-site evaluation. After the slate of recommended standardized instruments was finalized, Mathematica recommended the funds be used to purchase, on behalf of grantees, licenses and administrations for those instruments that were copyrighted by their authors or publishers. CB approved this recommendation as a way to benefit all grantees, albeit at different levels depending on their planned sample sizes.

Mathematica asked each grantee to estimate the number of baseline and follow-up administrations they would need for each instrument, because this number varied. It depended on what combination of the instruments each grantee planned to administer, their planned sample sizes, and (for some instruments with different versions for children of different ages), the ages of children they expected to serve. With this information, Mathematica (1) approached the relevant publishers, (2) purchased the necessary licenses, and (3) executed formal agreements with each grantee in order to pass along the permissions needed to use the instruments.

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[1] For details, see the RPG cross-site evaluation design report (Strong et al., 2014).

Approaching publishers. Mathematica approached four publishers to purchase seven instruments that are copyrighted for the RPG grantees. These publishers are (1) PAR Inc., (2) Pearson, (3) The Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA), and (4) Family Development Resources. Four of the cross-site evaluation instruments were not copyrighted; therefore, because they are in the public domain, they did not require purchase or permission from a publisher. Table II.1 shows the instrument(s) purchased from each publisher, as well as each instrument's outcome domain.

In approaching the publishers, Mathematica used the preliminary estimates of the total number of administrations for program and comparison group members for the 17 RPG grantees. Mathematica then estimated the cost to purchase administrations of these instruments from the appropriate publishers. Negotiations with the publishers on lowering the cost per administration allowed the purchase of the instruments to be feasible with the allotted funds. Therefore, Mathematica purchased all requested baseline and follow-up administrations for all planned treatment and control or comparison group members for the 17 grantees.

Table II.1. Publishers of standardized instruments purchased for RPG grantees

Instrument	Outcome domain
Publisher: PAR Inc.	
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children (Briere et. al. 2001)	Child well-being
Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function; Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Preschool (Gioia, Isquith, Guy, & Kenworthy, 2000)	Child well-being
Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (Abidin 1995)	Family functioning
Publisher: Pearson	
Infant-Toddler Sensory Profile (Dunn, 2002)	Child well-being
Socialization Subscale, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, Second Edition (Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005)	Child well-being
Publisher: The Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA)	
Child Behavior Checklist-Preschool Form, Child Behavior Checklist-School Age Form (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000, 2001)	Child well-being
Publisher: Family Development Resources	
Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (Bavolek & Keene, 1999)	Family functioning

Purchasing necessary licenses and rights. To purchase administrations of the instruments, Mathematica entered into license agreements with the four publishers. Each publisher required different terms for its agreements, but all agreements included the expectation of proper use and protection of the instrument. In addition, all publishers included the number of administrations purchased under the license agreements.

Three of the four publishers involved (Pearson, ASEBA, and Family Development Resources) allowed Mathematica to replicate their items and provide the instruments to grantees in a paper or electronic format. Grantees received a paper version, as well as a fillable PDF version, of the instruments these three publishers provided. However, the other publisher, PAR, did not allow Mathematica to distribute its instruments in any format other than hard copy. All

materials from this publisher were distributed in hard copy to all grantee sites via FedEx, because the instruments could not be sent electronically or downloaded from a web portal or other storage device. All PAR instruments must be administered on paper to participants in the RPG evaluation.

Formal agreements. Mathematica typically enters into a formal agreement with grantees when there are expectations that data sharing will occur. In this case, an MOA was also necessary to allow grantees to administer the standardized instruments under Mathematica's license (see Appendix A for the MOA template). The MOA described the expectations for data submitted to the cross-site and how Mathematica protects the data, as well as the terms of the publishers' licensing agreements that grantees must abide by to receive and administer the standardized instruments.

The MOA also contained two exhibits. Exhibit A listed each licensed instrument that the grantee requested and the allotted number of administrations per instrument. Exhibit B described all the data the grantees agreed to provide to Mathematica (including service and outcomes data) and comparison group data for those in the impact study. Each grantee received a customized MOA for review and signature, then returned the MOA to Mathematica for countersignature. Some grantees suggested revisions to the MOA; these were reviewed and accepted by Mathematica's contracts department on a case-by-case basis, then returned to the grantee for signature. In most cases, grantees also executed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) if they were working with a third party (such as an evaluator) who would also be administering or working with the standardized instruments. This NDA was executed between the grantee and the third party to ensure that the third party would also uphold the licensing terms set forth by the publishers. Upon executing the MOA (and, often, an NDA), the instruments were distributed to grantees.

B. OMB clearance

In addition to finalizing the cross-site evaluation design and selecting or developing data collection instruments, Mathematica worked with CB to seek clearance for data collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. No. 96-511). As part of this process, Mathematica prepared a draft OMB package that included supporting statements, as well as burden estimates (number of responses, hours, and cost). Mathematica also filled out the Information Collection Request, Review and Approval System templates and provided CB with drafts of the 60- and 30-day notices. Working iteratively with CB, Mathematica made edits to the draft OMB package for CB to submit for OMB approval.

The process began with submission of a 60-day notice of the planned information collection to the *Federal Register* on August 16, 2013. The 60-day notice included a description of the RPG cross-site evaluation, providing a high-level overview of (1) the implementation and partnership study, and (2) the outcomes study. The 60-day notice also included a table with the annual burden estimates, detailing the type of data collection, number of respondents, number of responses per respondent, average number of hours per response, and total burden hours. The 60-day notice was published on September 19, 2013, and invited public comment on the planned information collection. No comments were received. The 30-day notice appeared in the *Federal Register* on December 3, 2013. It announced submission of the information request for OMB

review and invited comments, although no comments were received. The 30-day notice included the same description and burden estimates as in the 60-day notice, but it provided more detail on the data collection activities and included annualized burden estimates for each activity. CB submitted all finalized materials to OMB on December 20, 2013. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) received OMB approval on March 18, 2014, and no revisions were requested (OMB control number 0970-0444; expiration date March 31, 2017).

C. RPG data collection system

In May 2013, CB gave Mathematica and WRMA permission to develop a new data collection system when initial plans to adapt the RPG1 system proved unsuitable (Strong, Avellar, & Ross, 2015). The design of the cross-site evaluation required two separate web-based components: one for twice-yearly batch uploads of outcome data from standardized instruments and administrative records to be developed by WRMA, and a second for anytime entry of registration and service data. WRMA staff chose not to develop the latter component of the system, so Mathematica engaged its second subcontractor, Synergy, to do so. Design of the linked systems was thus a collaborative effort of the three firms. It began in July 2013 and continued throughout year 2.

1. The portal, or "landing page"

The landing page, developed by WRMA and hosted by Mathematica, provides a single point of entry to the Enrollment and Services Log (ESL) and Outcome and Impact Study Information System (OAISIS) for the RPG cross-site evaluation. The RPG landing page was designed for the 2012 five-year RPG grantees to use. Anyone with the URL can access the landing page, but only those with credentials can then gain access to the ESL or OAISIS. For convenience, the landing page also includes a link to the RPG Collaborative Project Management (CPM) system operated by Children and Family Futures. Those with credentials, including earlier RPG grantees and other RPG stakeholders, can obtain information from CPM on the RPG program, including information about the cross-site evaluation. It is also the portal to the first RPG data collection system, used by the earlier cohorts of RPG grantees.

2. The ESL

The ESL is a real-time data collection system made up of four key parts. The application is hosted on a Windows 2008 R2 server. It employs a Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 database, IIS 7.5, and the .net Framework 4.0. The ESL is hosted on Synergy's servers and is available to users who have an internet connection. The ESL facilitates data capture as close to the time of enrollment and services as possible by allowing users to enter data at any time they prefer. Mathematica developed three tools that also support grantees' use of the system. The first tool is hard-copy forms that replicate the data entered into the system. The forms enabled grantees to collect and store enrollment and services data in hard copy before completion of the ESL. After the ESL was launched, many grantees continued using the forms to record data for later entry, and/or as a backup. The other two tools are a data dictionary (Henke, Kerachsky, & Francis, 2014), and a user guide (Henke, Francis, McLeod, & Kerachsky, 2014).

Users. Each grantee designated one or more ESL grantee administrators who can set up RPG cases in the ESL.[2] Administrators, in turn, can establish permissions for staff who will enter additional information on each case, as well as information on enrollment in individual EBPs and session information for the focal EBPs the grantees are tracking. These users may be therapists, caseworkers, or others who deliver program content, or they may be data entry personnel.

Information collected. For all cases receiving RPG services, the ESL records a variety of information. The ESL includes a reporting function that allows users to download their data at any time, for their own use. Fields include:

- Demographic information about RPG case members at enrollment

- Enrollment and exit dates for each case that enrolls in the RPG project, whether exit is due to program completion or other reasons

- Enrollment and exit dates for all EBPs offered as part of the RPG project

For the focal EBPs, the system also collects information on each service delivery contact, including:

- Basic session details (such as duration, who attended, location, and activities)

- Topics covered during the session, which Mathematica developed by reviewing program materials (such as manuals) for each of the focal EBPs. Because topics covered in the focal EBPs overlap, 6 separate topic matrices were created, rather than 10.

- Session quality, as reported by staff

- Participant engagement, as reported by staff

Training. To prepare grantees for using the ESL, Mathematica first provided an overview of the system in December 2013 and again at the April 2014 RPG annual meeting. ESL forms were finalized in January 2014, when Mathematica held a training webinar on how to use the forms. We held a training webinar for grantee administrators, and a second for all users, in June. We circulated a data dictionary and user guide, then opened the ESL for grantee use in early June.[3]

Relationship to OAISIS. The ESL and OAISIS are independent systems with no real-time interface. Yet grantee, case, and individually identifying information must be common across the two applications. To meet this requirement, the ESL provides an on-demand extract to OAISIS with a roster of all grantees, cases, focal children, family functioning adults, and recovery

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[2] An "RPG case" refers to the family, household, or group of people enrolling in RPG services as a unit. This includes, at a minimum, the focal child, family functioning adult, and recovery domain adult. It should also include any other people who may receive RPG services in relation to those three key case members.

[3] We circulated an early version of the data dictionary to grantees that were initially planning to develop their own online data collection systems for use in their local evaluations so that, if they preferred, they could replicate variables in the ESL and provide extracts from that system for the cross-site evaluation. Although several grantees explored this approach, none used it; instead, all grantees enter data directly into the ESL.

domain adults. When grantees upload their data to OAISIS, the system verifies that all OAISIS records have corresponding matches in the ESL.

3.   OAISIS

OAISIS is designed for batch uploads of data in specific file types. It is hosted by WRMA on their servers and, in addition to its software and programing, includes a number of tools WRMA developed for use with the system. The OAISIS application is hosted on a Windows 2008 R2 server. It employs a Microsoft SQL Server 2012 database, IIS 7, and the .net Framework using C#. One set of tools was designed for data obtained from the standardized instruments selected for the cross-site outcome evaluation. These are "fillable" PDF versions of the instruments into which grantee staff enter responses after they administer the instrument in another format (such as a hard copy) and Excel spreadsheets grantees can populate from their database as an alternative to PDFs. Unlike the ESL, these tools were designed for preparing and submitting data, rather than collecting it.

Additional tools were created for administrative records. For records in the recovery domain to be requested from the state substance abuse treatment agency, grantees can populate Excel spreadsheets with identifying information for the RPG adults for whom they request such data. Grantees prepare the matching file, then submit it to the relevant agency, along with spreadsheets for the agency to provide the requested data. After checking the data they receive, grantees can prepare corrected and cleaned versions for upload. For safety and permanency data to be obtained by the state or county child welfare agency, grantees can populate an Access database with matching information and submit to the relevant agency. If they have other mechanisms for requesting these administrative data, grantees can populate these databases themselves. The database is designed to export the data into XML format, for uploading to OAISIS. A user guide provides instructions and contains a data dictionary for the administrative records.

Users. WRMA asked each grantee to identify a "data manager" as a point of contact with grantee or evaluator staff engaged in the collection, organization, maintenance, and submission of outcome data. This person manages the preparation and submission of data during the upload periods.

Information collected. Grantees use OAISIS to upload data from the standardized instruments specified for use in the RPG cross-site evaluation. These instruments provide data to establish scores to be used as constructs in the child well-being domain of the cross-site evaluation, as well as in the adult recovery and family functioning domains. Upon their upload to OAISIS, files undergo verification and validation checks to foster data quality. These checks range from ensuring that files actually contain data to ensuring the integrity of ID values to testing the validity of dates. OAISIS currently checks for more than 50 possible data errors.

Training. Mathematica and WRMA held trainings to support grantees in obtaining and submitting data to OAISIS. WRMA held webinars in October 2013 on safety and permanence data, and Mathematica held a webinar in February on recovery data. WRMA gave an overview of OAISIS in an April 2014webinar and held a session describing data submission tools at the RPG annual meeting that same month. In May 2014, a WRMA webinar described use of the tools for administrative data. In August 2014, a final training webinar explained how to prepare

and upload the PDFs, Excel files, and XML files to OAISIS. WRMA opened the system for uploads on September 30, 2014.

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III. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORTING GRANTEES

TA supports grantee teams in their efforts to conduct evaluations that meet criteria set out in the funding opportunity announcement for RPG2 (Administration for Children and Families, 2012a). That announcement asked grantees to use comparison groups and to develop, then implement, evaluation designs that were as rigorous as possible given their circumstances. Along with other activities and resources supported by the cross-site evaluation contract, TA is intended to enhance the ability of grantees to contribute RPG program and evaluation data to the cross-site evaluation and for use in reporting to Congress on grantee performance. To accomplish these goals, Mathematica provides TA in response to specific requests from grantees or their federal project officers (FPOs). It also monitors grantees' progress implementing their programs and evaluations—mostly through teleconferences with grantee teams—to identify other possible needs. This chapter describes the type and quantity of TA-related activities during the second year of the contract and discusses challenges (and, in a few cases, opportunities) grantees encountered during the year and how Mathematica responded. Several of these challenges will also affect our ability to conduct the impact analysis planned as a component of the cross-site evaluation, which we consider in Chapter IV.

A. TA, monitoring, and peer learning activities

The cross-site evaluation liaisons (CSLs) provide TA in response to specific requests and through ongoing telephone communication. During the year, Mathematica established a helpdesk to address questions related to the data that grantees provide for the cross-site evaluation. We also facilitated peer learning activities so that grantees can capitalize on each other's knowledge and experience.

1. TA requests

The volume of formal requests for TA was much lower than during the first year of the RPG2 program.[4] As described in the first annual report, during the first year of the project, federal fiscal year (FFY) 2013, we received 36 requests for TA. Most were for help with evaluation design and planning. During FFY 2014, we received 16 requests (Table III.1). Because most grantees began their evaluations during the year, the nature of the requests shifted; the most common topic of requests was data collection. When CSLs receive such requests, they use a SharePoint-based system to enter information about each request (TA request tickets) to track their status and provide CB with monthly reports of TA requested and provided. This lower volume of requests is misleading as an indicator of the quantity of assistance that grantees requested, however, because grantees submitted many additional requests through a second procedure that we established, described next.

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[4] "TA requests" have been defined for the project as requests that include or require (1) the provision of materials and tools (such as examples of consent forms or tools to calculate statistical power), (2) review of grantee or external reference documents, (3) provision of specialized TA by a member of the cross-site evaluation team other than the CSL (such as a survey researcher), or (4) expertise from someone outside the team (such as another expert at Mathematica). Requests were made by the RPG grantees or local evaluators, or sometimes by the FPOs.

Table III.1. TA Request tickets opened during FFY 2014 (year 2 of the cross-site evaluation)

	Number of requests
Number of TA requests received October 2013– September 2014	**16**
Topics of TA requests:	
Data collection	8
Administrative data	2
Outcomes	1
Random assignment	1
Authorship	1
Consent process	1
Identifying a new evaluator	1
Intake/enrollment	1

2. RPG helpdesk

To help grantees comply with many requirements to provide data for the cross-site evaluation, Mathematica established a separate system for them to submit questions or request assistance. This RPG "helpdesk" approach is designed to avoid overburdening the CSLs with questions about use of the RPG data collection system, quickly direct questions to staff who developed and operate the system, and track and expedite grantees' requests. Grantees or evaluators can submit questions or requests for assistance via email or a toll-free telephone number. Staff who work on the helpdesk first enter the request into a tracking system, then respond to the person who submitted the question or request to provide an answer, or (if input is needed from another member of the evaluation team), to let the person know it was received and that we will provide a response within three business days. Staff then follow up to obtain the information.

During the year, we received 174 requests to the helpdesk, primarily with questions on the ESL system used to collect implementation data from grantees (Table III.2). Grantees also submitted questions on the use of standardized instruments and general data collection. Without the helpdesk, grantees might have submitted these as TA requests instead, which would have increased the volume of those requests handled directly by the CSLs and reported in Table III.1.

Table III.2. Helpdesk tickets received from October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014

Topic	In process[a]	Completed/closed	Total requests
Administrative data	0	10	10
Appropriate reporter for standardized instruments	0	6	6
ESL: paper forms	0	22	22
ESL: web	2	77	79
IRB	0	2	2
OAISIS	0	13	13
Use of standardized instruments	0	25	25
General data collection	0	17	17
Total	**2**	**172**	**174**

[a]In process as of September 30, 2014; since resolved.

3. Calls with grantees

CSLs participated in recurring teleconference meetings with grantees, their evaluators, and the cognizant program management liaison (PML) and FPOs for the site. During the calls, CSLs delivered TA and monitored the status of local evaluations (such as when enrollment in the evaluation began, the level of enrollment to date, and the extent of baseline or follow-up data collection). Grantees also discussed program implementation, so CSLs learned about progress enrolling and serving RPG cases and any potential changes in EBPs or other program elements that could affect local or cross-site evaluations. Calls were planned for once every one or two months. In addition to these regularly scheduled meetings, CSLs and the cross-site evaluation team often participated in other calls related to TA and grantee monitoring. For example, the CSLs often talked with PMLs and FPOs to prepare for upcoming grantee teleconferences or to discuss issues that arose during the teleconference, or they held calls to deliver TA. During the second year, CSLs participated in 192 calls of various types (Table III.3).

Table III.3. Call tickets from October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014

	Number of calls
Total number of calls conducted by CSLs	**192**
Call type	
Regularly scheduled teleconference with grantee, CSL, PML, and FPO[a]	113
Check-in with CSL, PML, and FPO to discuss grantee-related issues	53
Provision of TA requested by grantee or FPO	19
Discussion of RPG programmatic issue(s) (initiated by PML)	3
Planning for TA site visit	2
Evaluation-focused (requested by grantee)	1
Other FPO requested	1
Main topics discussed[b]	
Grantee-collected data (training, processes, questions)	49
Intake, enrollment, and consent	42
Implementation/programmatic issues	36
Sample size	29
Administrative data (agreements, processes, questions)	26
Treatment and comparison group formation	24
IRB	24
Random assignment	10
Tracking sample members	7
Staff and staffing issues	6
Baseline equivalence	3
Fidelity	2
Crossover/contamination	1
Systems or collaboration outcomes	1

[a] Regularly scheduled calls typically addressed evaluation- and program-related topics.

[b] Topics discussed were tracked beginning with calls held in March 2014; calls could include more than one topic.

CSL = cross-site evaluation liaisons; FPO = federal project officer; IRB = Institutional Review Board; PML = program management liaison.

Calls could cover many topics, but usually focused on one or two main ones (Table III.3). The most common topics involved discussions of data collection and study or program intake, enrollment, or consent. Issues involving the creation of program and comparison groups were also frequently discussed topics: intake, enrollment, and consent (42 calls); sample size (29 calls); treatment and comparison group formation (24 calls); and random assignment (10 calls).

Program implementation or issues (36 calls) and staffing (6 calls) were also main topics on some calls, as characterized by CSLs.

4. Peer learning

At the first RPG annual meeting, held in Washington, DC, in April 2013, grantees and evaluators expressed interest in several potential peer learning activities, as well as trepidation about finding the time for such activities because of other demands on their time for RPG (Strong, Avellar, & Ross, 2015). For example, during the first year, CB, Mathematica, and NCSACW held more than 12 webinars—most of them focused in whole or in part on the cross-site evaluation. Mathematica organized several work group calls to obtain feedback on selecting outcome instruments. Additional webinars and work groups were planned during year 2 to address cross-site evaluation data collection plans and requirements. These webinars and work groups (in addition to the monthly calls) kept grantees and evaluators busy, so they requested that Mathematica not begin evaluation-related peer learning activities until the pace of these required webinars and calls slowed.

As a result, peer learning activities during year 2 occurred during sessions at the RPG annual conference, held in April 2014 in conjunction with the National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) in New Orleans, Louisiana. The format of the conference provided about one and a half days for participants in CB grant clusters to meet with each other. CB organized a daylong leadership seminar for grantees but asked Mathematica to plan a separate optional agenda for local and cross-site evaluation teams during that same time. After a welcome and self-introductions, there were five evaluation-focused sessions:

Session 1: "Planning for Follow-Up Data Collection: Tips on Tracking Sample Members and Boosting Response Rates," presented by Angela D'Angelo (Mathematica) and Terri Tobin (Advocates for Human Potential, Inc., evaluator for the Massachusetts Family Recovery Project)

Session 2: "Using Enrollment and Service Log (ESL) Data for Evaluation and Program Improvement," presented by Juliette Henke (Mathematica)

Concurrent session 3: (1) "The RPG Impact Study: Progress, Design, and Reporting," discussion led by Russ Cole and Sarah Avellar (Mathematica) for grantees participating in the cross-site evaluation impact study; and (2) "RPG Evaluation Forum," discussion led by Debra Strong and Juliette Henke (Mathematica) for other grantees to discuss evaluators' roles in data collection, local studies being conducted in addition to outcomes, and rules for follow-up data collection

Session 4: "Outcome and Impact Study Information System (OAISIS) Standardized Instruments and Tools," presented by Sunil Leelaram (WRMA)

Session 5: "Administrative Data: Progress, Successes and Challenges," panel discussion led by Sarah Avellar (Mathematica) with Ying-Ying T. Yuan (WRMA) and Ken DeCerchio (NCSACW)

B. Challenges and opportunities that grantees encountered

Evaluation—particularly when it involves complex programs and families with multiple barriers—can be difficult. In the second year, grantees and local evaluators experienced both challenges and successes. Their teams often had to be flexible and creative to adjust to the actualities of evaluation or changes in planned program enrollment or structure.

1. Low enrollment: 11 grantees

Most grantees struggled with lower than expected enrollment. Although it was a common challenge, the underlying reasons varied substantially across teams. The grantees could be grouped broadly into two categories: (1) those that had reasonable enrollment in services but low enrollment in the evaluation, and (2) those that had low enrollment in services and thus in the evaluation. We discuss each in turn:

- **Low enrollment in the evaluation only.** Four grantees (Center Point, California; Children's Research Triangle, Illinois; Seasons Center, Iowa; and the Kentucky Department of Community Based Services) achieved reasonable enrollment in program services but were unable to include many families in the evaluation. The Illinois grantee, for example, mainly served children in the state's care, but the state did not yet have the legal right to consent to the evaluation on the children's behalf. Understandably, the grantee was reluctant to approach the parent who was losing parental rights to obtain such consent. Kentucky, which had particular difficulty convincing families who would be in the comparison group to participate in the evaluation, needed to refine its recruiting technique to engage more families. The local evaluator worked with the CSL to develop recruiting techniques, such as emphasizing the importance of the evaluation and developing ways to avoid refusals or convince those who refused participation in the study to reconsider (called "refusal conversion"). Center Point experienced delays putting evaluation procedures in place, such as concluding agreements with Mathematica for using the cross-site instruments. These delays postponed enrollment in the evaluation. Seasons Center was unable to enroll many program participants in its evaluation, for reasons that remain unclear.

- **Low enrollment in services.** Seven grantees (the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Alternative Opportunities, Missouri; the Center for Children and Families, Montana; the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services; Summit County Children Services, Ohio; the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; and Rockingham Memorial Hospital, Virginia) had difficulty enrolling families in program services; consequently, they had few candidates for the evaluation. Again, the reasons varied. The Montana grantee, for example, had a weak relationship with the child welfare agency, its primary source of referrals. Summit County Children Services struggled because most people refused the voluntary alcohol and drug assessment at intake, leaving the grantee unable to determine eligibility for RPG services. Oklahoma had one partnership that was not yielding the expected number of referrals. The site team determined that this was because the agency was not a contract child welfare treatment provider; therefore, child welfare workers were not required to make referrals to the agency. Massachusetts experienced a learning curve: the grantee initially had some difficulty balancing intake efforts with available openings, but more recently has run at or near full capacity. Alternative Opportunities had low enrollment in two of its six focal EBPs (the Matrix Model and Parent

and Child Interactive Therapy) because, according to the grantee's assessments, the EBPs are not suitable for most of their families. For other grantees, the reasons for low enrollment were not as clear-cut. Rockingham, for example, struggled with both program and evaluation operations.

2. Program services in flux: 3 grantees

Most of the grantees offered an array of services to families, which allowed them to meet varying needs but were complicated to develop. Three grantees (the Georgia State University Research Foundation; Families and Children Together, Maine; and Alternative Opportunities) were still refining their RPG programs in the second year:

- The Georgia grantee dropped two EBPs from its roster of services: Celebrating Families! and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) for children. It eliminated Celebrating Families! because that EBP provided services similar to those already offered by the drug court through which the grantee recruited families. It dropped TF-CBT for children because the parent they worked with through the drug court typically was not the custodial parent, so the staff did not have easy access to the children.

- Families and Children Together had difficulty settling on a definition of the RPG program. This uncertainty permeated other aspects as well, such as who should be eligible for the evaluation.

- By the end of year 2, the Alternative Opportunities program still had not begun offering TF-CBT as initially planned because of limited staff capacity and low enrollment. In addition, as described earlier, enrollment is low in two other focal EBPs they offer (the Matrix Model and Parent and Child Interactive Therapy).

3. Evaluation redesign: 4 grantees

Grantees' evaluation plans were not always feasible to implement. As discussed in more detail in Chapter IV, three grantees (the Center for Children and Families, Summit County Children Services, and the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services) that had originally planned to conduct randomized controlled trials (RCTs) switched to quasi-experimental evaluations (QEDs) that will have administrative data only on the comparison group (this design is ineligible for the cross-site impact study). (For Montana and Ohio, this was related to problems of low enrollment, as discussed above.) In addition, one grantee (Rockingham) had planned a QED but experienced a number of setbacks, which required it to reconsider its plans. For example, the grantee determined that the original evaluator was not meeting its needs, and had to identify a replacement. The replacement evaluator, however, also had difficulty developing an evaluation plan, so the final design was still undetermined.

4. Opportunities

Faced with these and other challenges, grantees had to be flexible and creative, which led to opportunities and successes. For example, Center Point's initial arrangement with a site that would be a source for comparison group members fell through when the site backed out of the initial agreement. The grantee was able to identify and secure an agreement with an alternative site, allowing it to proceed with the original evaluation plan. Other grantees have modified their processes to increase enrollment (a common problem, as described above). For example, the

Health Federation of Philadelphia expanded its referral sources to increase enrollment, including developing a partnership with the agency that manages substance abuse treatment for the Philadelphia court system. Georgia State University established a partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to help the site reach out to children. The Ohio grantee co-located a staff person to conduct alcohol and drug assessments four days per week at the child welfare office to increase the proportion of cases assessed for substance use disorders.

Another success was that, by the end of year 2, most grantees (14 of the 17) had secured data-sharing agreements to obtain information from child welfare and substance abuse treatment agencies. This process required grantee teams to identify liaisons, cultivate relationships, and negotiate terms mutually agreeable to the grantee and the agency. The process was not always straightforward, but the grantee teams were persistent, and most ultimately were successful. The grantees that had not yet finalized agreements (Center Point, the Helen Ross McNabb Center in Tennessee, and Rockingham Memorial Hospital) were continuing to work on obtaining them.

C. How the cross-site evaluation team responded

To support grantees and local evaluators, CSLs and other cross-site team members provided regular assistance by telephone and email, as well as some enhanced efforts. The enhanced efforts allowed CSLs to help grantees work through more complicated issues (such as an evaluation redesign). CSLs provided written feedback to grantees, engaged other members of the cross-site evaluation team to offer suggestions and feedback, and, in some cases, visited the sites.

1.   Revised assessments of evaluation plans

When grantees substantially changed their evaluation plans, the CSLs reassessed the rigor and feasibility of the revised plans. We have provided verbal feedback to grantees and included other team members in the discussions to brainstorm alternative designs (for example, selecting a reasonable alternative comparison group). For some grantees, we also have provided extensive written feedback.For example:

- We engaged the Montana team in several rounds of verbal consultations on the proposed approach, reviewed two written versions of the plan, and drafted a memo highlighting its strengths and flagging some lingering concerns.

- Nevada has been less engaged than other grantees in TA. We tried to discuss issues of rigor with the grantee when redesigning its evaluation. The grantee team indicated they would discuss this internally and update us on their decisions.

- We held several calls with the Ohio grantee in addition to the regular check-in calls. Some of these calls involved other members of the cross-site team (such as the lead of the impact study); during the calls, we discussed their evaluation ideas and raised questions about the comparability of proposed comparison groups. We also developed a template, using the evaluability assessment as a foundation, to help them structure their evaluation plans. We will review the resulting plan.

- For Virginia, we held many telephone calls and provided four rounds of detailed feedback on the evolving evaluation plans, as well as numerous, less formal email comments and suggestions.

2.   Site visits

Site visits allow the CSL to interact with multiple staff, observe some program operations, and devote extended time to working with grantee and local evaluation staff. A site visit is particularly useful for grantees that have challenges in several areas or are addressing an intractable problem. In year 2, the CSLs conducted or planned site visits to two grantees (the Seasons Center in Iowa and Maine's Families and Children Together). The visits allowed the CSLs and grantee teams to identify strategies for addressing issues; in some cases, the visits served as a catalyst for the grantees to develop possible solutions in preparation for the visits.

3.   Other TA tools and information

In addition to providing advice during calls and responding to TA or helpdesk questions via email or telephone, the cross-site evaluation team developed materials to address common challenges). For example, we wrote a memo on the timing of follow-up data collection suggesting how grantees might implement data collection procedures to deal with participants who exited, dropped out, or re-entered their RPG programs. To formulate a recommended approach, we first held a work group call to solicit input from grantees and local evaluators on the core elements and length of their programs, as well as rates at which participants typically completed or dropped out of programs. In another memo, we provided information on scoring the standardized instruments used for the cross-site evaluation. The memo furnished instructions for scoring publicly available instruments, as well as sources where grantees could obtain more information on scoring for other instruments (such as scoring instructions and/or norming tables to help interpret scores).

Obtaining data from non-RPG caretakers

The problem:

The cross-site evaluation team developed guidelines for grantees to select the most knowledgeable reporter for the instruments used in the cross-site evaluation. For example, the instruments in the child well-being domain should be answered by the focal child's primary caregiver.[a] However, that person (who could be a foster parent, for example) may not be receiving RPG services and may not know about the evaluation. Several grantees or their evaluators that needed to collect child well-being data from people in these situations were concerned about how much to say about the evaluation or the parents' situations, as well as how to engage the caretaker to take the time needed to provide the requested information.

TA provided:

We provided recommendations and tools to address concerns and questions about collecting child well-being data in these circumstances. A memo (RPG-157, Appendix A) advised grantees to protect the privacy of RPG clients by not revealing the type of services they were enrolled in (or any details about the RPG program) when communicating with the out-of-home caregiver. The memo suggested sending an advance letter to the respondent so he or she is aware of the study before receiving a call from the evaluation team, using a script to guide the calls or visits to the respondent to ensure that only appropriate information is shared, and avoiding refusals (such as by using incentives or other approaches). A sample advance letter, telephone call script, and tip sheet for staff were attached to the memo.

[a] The appropriate reporter is the focal child's primary caregiver who has cared for the child for at least 30 days before data collection. If the child has had more than one primary caregiver in the past 30 days (for example, was removed from the home in the past month), then the instruments would not be administered.

IV. THE CROSS-SITE EVALUATION IMPACT STUDY

The cross-site implementation, partner, and outcomes components of the RPG cross-site evaluation include all grantees and are intended to provide important descriptive information to address research questions posed by CB. As described in the statement of work for the RPG cross-site evaluation (Administration for Children and Families, 2012b), CB was also interested in assessing the effectiveness of projects proposed by the grantees. To meet this objective, Mathematica designed a cross-site impact study to compare outcomes for people with access to RPG services to those in groups that did not receive RPG services but may receive a different set of services (business as usual). This "impact study" component of the cross-site evaluation was designed to include grantees who were conducting a randomized controlled trial (RCT) or using a quasi-experimental design (QED) and could provide primary data from some or all of the selected standardized instruments for both treatment and comparison groups in their evaluations (Strong et al., 2014; Strong, Ross, & Avellar, 2015).

This chapter identifies seven grantees initially expected to be included in the impact study and shows whether each planned an RCT or a QED (Section A). Section B discusses challenges some of these selected grantees faced during year 2 that threatened their ability to conduct the RCT or QED as they initially planned. Section C discusses implications of these challenges for the cross-site evaluation impact study.

A. Grantees eligible for the cross-site impact study

During the first year of the project, Mathematica assessed grantees' evaluation plans and identified likely candidates for the impact study. The grantees identified for the impact study had the potential, and wanted, to conduct rigorous evaluations meeting the necessary criteria.

Five grantees were planning to conduct RCTs, and two were planning QEDs. All seven planned to collect primary data on the comparison groups (Table IV.1). Based on impact findings that focused on administrative data from RPG1 (Boles et al., 2012), we estimated that the impact study would be well-powered to detect impacts—assuming that the grantees were able to implement their planned designs.

B. Challenges

As members of the cross-site evaluation team know from Mathematica's experience conducting evaluations, implementing a rigorous evaluation is challenging. It can be difficult, for example, to build support for random assignment among staff at agencies that will refer potential program participants or other key partner organizations, conduct random assignment, and follow up with sample members to collect data. Despite their commitment to rigorous evaluation, three of the seven grantees experienced challenges to their initial evaluation plans during the second year of RPG and changed their evaluation designs in ways that eliminated them from participation in the impact study.[5]

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[5] Additional grantees have encountered challenges early in the third year of the program.

Rigorous Evaluation Designs

RCTs:

Random assignment creates two groups of individuals that should be the same, on average, except that one group receives an intervention. In other words, the two groups should be indistinguishable on most, if not all, of their characteristics—those that can be measured ("observed") and those that cannot ("unobserved"). This increases confidence that any differences in outcomes between the two groups after an intervention can be attributed to that intervention. Without randomization, individual selection, or characteristics that relate to both program participation and subsequent outcomes, may introduce bias in comparisons made across groups.

QEDs:

The goal of a **quasi-experimental design** is to overcome selection bias by establishing the "equivalence" of observable characteristics between treatment and comparison groups. Equivalence on observable characteristics can be created through matching on observable pre-intervention characteristics. QEDs, however, cannot ensure equivalence on unobservable characteristics. Given that limitation, the most compelling QEDs are those that establish equivalence on observable pre-intervention characteristics that are highly correlated with outcomes and/or the selection mechanism.

Center for Children and Families (Montana). To evaluate the impact of the Family Treatment Matters (FTM) program on child and family outcomes, the Center for Children and Families originally proposed to conduct an RCT. Under the proposed design, eligible families who consented to participate in the program and the evaluation would be randomly assigned to one of the two study groups. Families assigned to the treatment group would be offered a chance to participate in the RPG program, and the rest would be referred to other services available in the community and followed as the control group. The center anticipated enrolling 225 families in each group (for a total of 450 families) over the course of the RPG2 grant.

The grantee encountered several challenges in implementing its evaluation design. First, it took almost a year for the Center for Children and Families to obtain IRB approval for the evaluation. As a result, the center could not begin enrolling families into the evaluation until March 2014—although program enrollment began earlier. Second, the rate of referral of eligible families into the program itself was much lower than anticipated. By September 2014, five months into the evaluation, the grantee was operating the program well below capacity and had enrolled just 10 families into its evaluation—6 in the treatment group and 4 in the control group.

Table IV.1. Characteristics of likely candidates for RPG impact study, as of September 30, 2014

Grantee	State	Target population	Project services	Proposed sample size
Randomized controlled trials (RCTs)				
Center for Children and Families	Montana	Families with children birth to age 12 who are in, or at risk of, out-of-home care due to parental substance use disorders	Family Treatment Matters (FTM) is a comprehensive outpatient family treatment project based on the Chadwick Trauma Assessment Pathway model.	450 families (225 treatment, 225 comparison)
Division of Child and Family Services	Nevada	Low-income women in a residential substance abuse treatment facility and their children birth to age 8 in, or at risk of, out-of-home placement	Project offers treatment supervision and collaborative case management monitored by the court; on-site counseling/mental health, family-strengthening, and vocational services; assessments and referrals for children; and transitional services after leaving the facility.	320 families (120 treatment, 200 comparison)
Summit County Children Services	Ohio	Families who have child welfare cases (children ages 0–5) with court involvement and a positive alcohol and other drug assessment	The Summit County Collaborative on Trauma, Alcohol, & Other Drug, & Resiliency-building Services for Children & Families (STARS) project offers a service coordinator and public health outreach worker and Strengthening Families EBP.	300 families (150 treatment, 150 comparison)
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services	Oklahoma	Families with children ages 0–17 affected by parent substance use disorders who have an out-of-home placement	Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is a "strengths-based" counseling intervention to support recovery from substance abuse.	240 cases (120 treatment, 120 comparison)
Health Federation of Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Families with parents who have substance use disorders and children ages 0–5 who have been placed outside the home	Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) is a relationship-based, trauma-specific EBP that includes weekly sessions for the caregiver/parent-child dyad and supervised visits between parents and their children who are in out-of-home placements.	500 parent-child dyads (250 treatment, 250 comparison)
Quasi-experimental designs (QEDs)				
Department of Community Based Services	Kentucky	Families with young children (age 0–5) who are new to the child welfare system in Daviess County Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) families	The START project provides in-home support and access to wraparound services. Participants receive case management and service coordination from a specially trained CPS caseworker with a limited caseload, and support from a family mentor, both of whom visit the family at home.	300 families (150 treatment, 150 comparison)
Family Recovery Project	Massachusetts	Families whose children (age 0–17) have been removed from the home or are in the home but at imminent risk of removal, and who have substance use issues but have been difficult to engage in treatment	The treatment group will receive weekly or more frequent visits from a family recovery specialist who provides the services, including EBPs; manages the case; coordinates screenings, assessments, and community-based services; works with the child welfare case manager; and helps the family transition to community-based services.	400 families (280 treatment, 120 comparison)

To address the problem, the grantee sought to increase the program referrals, using a two-pronged approach. First, the grantee expanded the number of programs from which it would seek referrals. New referral sources were Family Drug Treatment Court, Municipal Drug Court, 13th Judicial Adult Drug Court, Veteran's Court, Impaired Driving Court, and the Probation and Parole partner. Second, to address objections to random assignment, the grantee proposed to change its evaluation design from an RCT to a QED with a matched comparison group.[6] Under the new design, all eligible families would be offered an opportunity to participate in the FTM program and be part of the evaluation. If the family agreed to participate in both the program and the evaluation, and the FTM program had available slots, the family would be enrolled in the evaluation's treatment group. If the program became full, the family would be referred to other programs available in the community and enrolled in the evaluation's comparison group. As part of the design change, the grantee also revised its evaluation targets; the new design called for enrolling 110 families into each group (for a total of 220 families) in the evaluation.

Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS; Nevada). The Nevada DCFS proposed a random assignment evaluation of the Dependency Mothers Drug Court (DMDC) program, which focuses on mothers with substance use disorders who have children under 8 years old and are involved with child welfare. The program offers residential drug treatment with court supervision, a Modified Therapeutic Community, a Big Sisters peer-mentoring program, and on-site services including TF-CBT, Nurturing Skills for Families, one-on-one counseling with a focus on trauma, specialized assessments and referrals for children, and one-on-one employment readiness and job training. In addition, the women receive transitional services for 90 days after leaving the facility to help them find housing, employment, and community-based services. Women in the control group are enrolled in Healthy Families instead of RPG. Like the RPG program, Healthy Families provides residential drug treatment with court supervision (in the same residential facility as RPG), is based on the Modified Therapeutic Community, and includes the Big Sisters peer-mentoring program, as well as referral to community-based services as needed. Other services the program group receives are provided to the comparison group by referral to agencies outside the residential facility, rather than in the facility.

The grantee began random assignment on April 1, 2014, using a new, centralized intake procedure rather than the prior practice of intake at a place and time convenient for the mother. This change was made to offset the cost of conducting intake for enough applicants to form a treatment and control group. However, enrollment in the DMDC program declined, apparently because of the limited schedule and the location of intake. Therefore, the Nevada RPG team expanded the intake times and prioritized DMDC applicants in the daily intake queue, and enrollment began to increase.

On November 1, 2014, the state dramatically reduced funding for the Healthy Families program because of changes in the rules for Medicaid payment for substance abuse treatment programs. Instead of offering six months of residential treatment, the Healthy Families program now offers two months of residential treatment followed by one month of transitional living. The

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[6] According to the Center for Children and Families, the referral agencies cited the RCT design as one of the reasons for low referrals. In particular the agencies were concerned that some eligible participants would be randomly assigned to the control group and would not receive RPG services, which the agencies viewed as needed by everyone they referred to the program.

Nevada RPG team felt this program would not be acceptable to the IRB as a control group service because it was too different from the DMDC program, and the team believed that the Healthy Families program was no longer an ethical alternative to the DMDC program. They preferred to have clinicians decide which women were most likely to benefit from DMDC. Accordingly, they ended random assignment.

Summit County Children Services (Ohio). Summit County Children Services proposed a random assignment evaluation of the Summit County Collaborative on Trauma, Alcohol & Other Drug, & Resiliency-Building Services for Children & Families (STARS) program, which focuses on child welfare families with court involvement, identified substance abuse service needs, and children birth to age 17. Child welfare-involved families in which an adult has a substance use disorder identified by an in-home alcohol and other drug (AOD) assessment would be randomly assigned to receive STARS services or business as usual services from the child welfare agency and the broader community. STARS services include a coordinator who works with the family, the child welfare caseworker, and a recovery coach if the family chooses to use one (to coordinate services) and either the Strengthening Families program (if children are 3 years or older) or the Nurturing Parenting program (if children are under 3 years old). Children in both the program and control group receive trauma assessments and, if indicated, TF-CBT.

The STARS program began piloting its intake processes and services on April 1, 2013. The grantee identified weak points in the intake process and tried to address them. The weakest aspect of the intake process was that STARS eligibility hinges on a positive finding from an AOD assessment that is voluntary for most families involved with the child welfare system (those whose case records do not include suspected substance abuse). Child welfare staff have to offer the AOD assessment to families, who can refuse the assessment or, if the assessment is scheduled, often break their appointments.

The original estimates of the expected monthly caseload for STARS were optimistic, and the number of potential cases entering child welfare with most of the eligibility characteristics for STARS is high—about 90 percent of the level originally projected. Unfortunately, however, about half the families who are offered the AOD assessment refuse it or break multiple appointments and thus fail to complete the assessment. Although a large proportion of those who complete the assessment (about 80 percent) do meet threshold criteria for STARS eligibility, the total number assessed positively is too small to fill the STARS program. The grantee used several strategies to try to increase the proportion of families completing the assessment. It emphasized to child welfare staff the importance of the assessment and suggested how to discuss the topic with families. It asked child welfare staff to increase the number of times families were offered the assessment. It also discussed the STARS program and the importance of the assessment with parents' attorneys. Child welfare also agreed to co-locate the AOD assessor in the child welfare office two days per week to allow immediate assessment of those who agree to participate. Despite these efforts, the number of families identified as STARS-eligible remained at levels easily served by the program, raising ethical concerns with randomly assigning families to a control group when the program had the capacity to serve them.

C. Implications for the cross-site evaluation impact study

Due to the loss of three of the seven grantees from the impact study, sample sizes for the cross-site impact estimates will be reduced. This reduces the statistical power of the impact evaluation. Statistical power refers to the probability that the cross-site impact study will detect a statistically significant result for a given impact measure (such as child maltreatment rates), assuming that the programs are effective.

The RPG cross-site evaluation design report included statistical power calculations based on all seven participating sites combined, indicating that the analysis that pooled all grantees together would be well powered (that is, would have at least an 80 percent probability of finding a statistically significant result) if the RPG programs had actual impacts between 4 and 6 percentage points. This was based on an assumed sample size of approximately 1,600 people, including treatment and comparison groups, across the seven grantees).[7] For example, if the study participants receiving RPG services had child maltreatment rates that were 6 percentage points lower than those not receiving RPG-funded services, the cross-site evaluation would be able to detect this difference.

Without Montana, Nevada, and Ohio in the impact study, the sample size will be reduced from approximately 1,600 people to approximately 900. With this smaller sample, the cross-site analysis will now only be able to detect larger program differences—between 5 and 8 percentage points.

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[7] The sample sizes used in the power calculations assume some sample nonresponse, as well as some sample members being enrolled too late in the program to contribute outcome data before the final data collection period.

V. IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Experience during the first year of the project, emerging challenges to grantees' evaluation plans during the second year, and the amount and types of data needed for the cross-site evaluation led Mathematica and CB to consider changes to the cross-site evaluation and TA project early in 2014. After completion of the design report and as required by our contract, in fall 2013, Mathematica reviewed its budget and in January through March 2014 discussed with CB ways to adapt plans. This chapter describes why changes were needed and the changes made, identifies additional adaptations that may be needed in response to issues discussed in this report, and suggests a closer examination of evaluation challenges to benefit future grant programs. We then describe the main activities scheduled for the third year of the project.

A. The need for changes

Two factors increased costs of the project compared to original expectations laid out in the statement of work (Administration for Children and Families, 2012b) and reflected in the contract budget: (1) the cost to develop a system for obtaining cross-site evaluation data from grantees, and (2) the need for a higher than expected level of TA.

- In line with the expectations and process laid out in the statement of work, Mathematica and WRMA spent time exploring the data collection system developed for RPG1 grantees to submit performance indicator data (Strong, Ross, & Avellar, 2015). Because that system had not been designed with transferability to another contractor in mind, the exploration took more time than anticipated. Features of the system and changes in the types of data needed from grantees for the RPG2 cross-site evaluation compared to RPG1 made it inadvisable to adapt and use the existing system; therefore, Mathematica and WRMA developed a new system. Plans for the implementation evaluation required real-time data on enrollment and services that the batch-upload system needed for outcome data could not accommodate; therefore, with approval from CB, we developed a system with two components: OAISIS and the ESL. Thus, spending on the data collection system was also higher than anticipated.

- In its proposal for the RPG Cross-site Evaluation and Evaluation-Related TA project, Mathematica anticipated that the evaluability assessments, along with the design and recruitment for the impact study, would conclude in year 1 of the project. Thus, the intensive level of one-on-one interaction between grantees, the cross-site evaluation staff, and PMLs and FPOs required for these activities was expected to abate in year 2. Grantees would have their evaluation designs in place, and, through check-in calls every other month, CSLs would monitor how local evaluations progressed. The cross-site evaluation team then would provide one-on-one or group TA as needs arose. Instead, the level of interaction—mostly through conference calls—remained high in the second year. When year 2 began, many grantees either had not completed, or needed to revise, their evaluation designs, with input from the CSLs. Impact study sites could not be selected until evaluation plans were finalized. A few grantees, for reasons that were difficult to determine, had difficulty settling on their RPG program plans as well as their evaluation plans. Hence, on average, CSLs needed to continue to interact with many grantees more frequently than expected throughout the year. The model of monthly team calls with grantees and their program and evaluation liaisons and FPOs set in the first year continued to be the expectation, even when things were going smoothly. Therefore, the costs of TA and monitoring were higher than budgeted.

Late in December 2013, we completed a revised budget for the project based on the design of the cross-site evaluation and the experiences discussed above, and informed CB that additional funds for TA and development of the data collection system would be necessary. CB learned, however, that the contract type offered little or no flexibility in funding, and asked our team to consider ways to adjust future expenditures instead.

Recognizing the difficulty CB faced in providing additional resources, Mathematica identified several ways to refine data collection plans to reduce costs while retaining all components of the cross-site evaluation. We suggested conducting one round of the staff and partner surveys and site visits, rather than two. This would also lower grantee burden, especially in OY1, when the first round of the surveys and site visits were planned, along with beginning collection of enrollment, service, and outcome data from the grantees—a great deal of activity for grantees. Mathematica suggested dropping collection of information about referrals as part of the ESL, and also dropping the Household Roster from the outcome instruments for grantees to collect. Further changes were needed however, so we suggested several other changes that were within the scope of the contract. For example, ad-hoc reports and briefs could be reduced, dissemination efforts held to the minimum, and in-person meetings with CB and the evaluation team held during the annual conference to avoid additional travel costs. CB agreed to these strategies and initiated contract modifications to reduce the number of site visits and repurpose travel funds for the first round of visits to provision of TA.

B. Considering additional changes

During the first two years of RPG2, the CSLs worked one-on-one with grantees to help them flesh out their evaluation designs and plans; consider the strengths and weaknesses of alternative comparison groups, designs, or data collections; and formulate alternatives when needed. The CSLs provided information about key features of the proposed designs or plans to help grantees' FPOs understand the type and strength of evidence an evaluation could produce if well implemented, so that FPOs could approve the design of the local evaluation or ask the grantee to make changes. In many cases, these activities resulted in improved designs that could provide stronger evidence compared to initial plans; in other cases, it helped set realistic expectations for evaluations that could provide only limited (although still valuable) descriptive evidence (as is true of the cross-site outcome evaluation, which is a descriptive study). After plans were in place, CSLs and other members of the cross-site evaluation team responded to grantees' requests for assistance implementing the evaluation or to problems brought to their attention during regular calls conducted as part of ongoing TA.

Despite these efforts, as described in this report, several grantees encountered challenges that led them to change their evaluation plans in ways that reduced their rigor. This also reduced the statistical power for the planned cross-site impact study because several evaluations no longer met criteria needed for the study. As this report is being written, other grantees have encountered similar challenges. By March 2015, only one RPG2 grantee still planned to conduct an RCT, and several other grantees were struggling with low program or evaluation enrollment. We have two concerns about this situation. One is the need to reconsider the impact study; the other is the need to help CB understand the implications of these grantees' experiences with evaluation for future grant programs.

1. The impact study

In 2014, CB funded a new cohort of RPG grantees, referred to as "RPG3." One possible way to improve the statistical power of the cross-site impact evaluation is to include RPG3 grantees in the impact study. Three RPG3 grantees plan evaluation designs that would meet criteria for inclusion in the impact study and could potentially offset the losses of the RPG2 grantees. One RPG3 grantee, Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc., is planning on conducting an RCT with primary data collection from treatment and control groups. Two other grantees, Montefiore Medical Center, New York, and Volunteers of America Oregon, are planning QED studies, also with primary data collection from both groups.[8]

For these grantees to participate in the impact evaluation, we will need to assess their interest and willingness to collect the required and recommended cross-site outcome measures in both the intervention and comparison groups (these measures are a subset of the outcomes included in the "core outcomes" study). Two considerations are associated with including these grantees in the cross-site impact study:

1. **Statistical power would be improved.** Using the same assumptions presented above, we would expect that the addition of the three grantees to the evaluation would increase the final evaluation sample size (although, at this early stage, it is premature to estimate the number of participants that would be added to the sample by including additional RPG3 grantees).

2. **The impact report timeline would change.** To include as many sample members from the RPG3 grantees as possible, we would need to change the final report date from the end of the RPG2 grant period to the end of the RPG3 grant period. A benefit of extending the timeline, in addition to the larger sample size created by inclusion of the RPG3 grantees, is the potential for RPG2 grantees to submit additional data after the end of the five-year RPG2 grant period (for any grantees that receive no-cost extensions). In this way, the cross-site evaluation could obtain outcome data for participants who enrolled in services at the end of the five-year grant window. Depending on the length of the no-cost extensions, however, some RPG2 grantees and/or their evaluators might not be able to participate in reviews of the evaluation findings and report.

2. Developing lessons from the RPG2 experience

Although it can be difficult and costly to plan and implement rigorous evaluations, they can be done and are essential to build evidence on effective programs and practices. We believe it was not just unpredictable challenges or the nature of federal grant programs that affected the course to date of the RPG2 evaluations. It is not within the scope of this report to offer a diagnosis of the situation, including taking into account developments since the end of year 2; however, we believe that doing so could be helpful. We propose to use resources available under the RPG3 contract to develop feedback on this topic for CB, based on our experience with RPG and with similar projects and using input from the CSLs and other team members. We will

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[8] The fourth grantee, the University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc., is still at the formative stages of developing its impact evaluation; therefore, until its design is finalized, it is not a good candidate for inclusion in the impact evaluation.

discuss the nature and timing of the feedback with CB, and if they approve, develop a short report and briefing on this important topic.

C. Next steps: Cross-site evaluation activities in year 3

During the coming year, the cross-site evaluation will primarily collect data. We also will continue TA (although we recommend tailoring the amount of contact to the needs of each grantee, maintaining less frequent monitoring unless needed by a grantee's circumstances). In addition, we will begin reporting on implementation and outcomes using ESL and OAISIS data. CB has also funded an optional task to explore a cost analysis.

1. Collecting data

Implementation and outcome data from grantees. Grantees began submitting data to the cross-site evaluation in June of year 2, through the ESL. The first upload of standardized instruments and administrative data to OAISIS took place from October 1 through November 30, 2014; all grantees but one, which had not received IRB approval in time, submitted data. The second upload will be in April 2015; in addition, we will continue to receive ESL data.

Surveys. Mathematica will survey staff members and their supervisors who provide focal EBPs to learn more about the support they receive and their experiences. We will survey RPG grantees and their partners to learn more about the nature and quality of their collaborations, shared goals, and potential for sustainability. These surveys will be fielded from April through June 2015.

Site visits. Planning is under way for site visits to all grantees, to be conducted from September through November 2015. The site visits will include interviews of RPG project directors, selected partners, and staff from agencies implementing focal EBPs.

2. Reporting

Along with proposed feedback to CB on grantee local evaluations, during year 3 we will draft the third report to Congress. Given the timing of data collection, we expect to conduct an initial analysis of outcome and implementation data using information received from grantees through the end of April 2015 for inclusion in the report, along with information from the semiannual progress reports received in October 2014 and April 2015.

3. Exploring a cost analysis

CB has funded an optional task to explore the possibility of conducting a cost analysis of RPG programs. Mathematica will first work with CB to determine the focus and scope of a study that could provide information of interest to CB, the child welfare field, and other stakeholders. We then will develop an approach and identify the information and instrument(s) that would be needed for such a study, and explore the feasibility of pilot testing instruments or possibly conducting a study among RPG grantees, using additional funding that may become available under RPG3.

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APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT TEMPLATE AND EXHIBITS A AND B

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DATA SHARING AND LICENSED INSTRUMENT USE AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

[GRANTEE ORGANIZATION]

AND

MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH, INC.

A. Purpose. This Data Sharing and Licensed Instrument Use Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into by and between the [Grantee Organization], ("[Grantee Acronym]") and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. ("Mathematica"). Hereinafter, [Grantee Acronym] and Mathematica may be referred to singularly as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties." This Agreement stipulates the terms and conditions upon which (1) Mathematica will provide selected, licensed standardized instruments to [Grantee Acronym] to administer to participants in [Grantee Acronym's] local Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) evaluation; and (2) [Grantee Acronym] will provide information and data to Mathematica for use in Mathematica's performance of the Regional Partnership Grants (RPG) National Cross-Site Evaluation and Evaluation-Related Technical Assistance project (the "Cross-Site Evaluation").

B. Background/Introduction. When mothers, fathers, or other caregivers struggle with addiction, children can experience unresponsive, erratic, neglectful, or abusive care from those responsible for their nurture. Substance abuse is a prominent cause of family involvement in the child welfare system: research indicates that between 50 and 80 percent of child welfare cases involve a substance-abusing parent (Niccols et al. 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1999). Through the RPG program, the Children's Bureau has issued grants to develop interagency collaborations and provide services designed to increase the well-being, improve the permanency, and enhance the safety of children who are in an out-of-home placement or are at risk of being placed in out-of-home care as a result of a parent's or caretaker's substance abuse. Recipients of RPG grants ("RPG grantees") are required under the terms of their grant to conduct local evaluations using valid and reliable instruments to measure participant outcomes, and to participate in the Cross-Site Evaluation. The Children's Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has contracted with Mathematica under contract number HHSP233201250024A, to conduct the Cross-Site Evaluation.

C. Provision and Use of Licensed Instruments.

   1. Mathematica's Provision of Approved Licensed Standardized Instruments.

(a) Mathematica will obtain licenses permitting [Grantee Acronym] to administer the standardized instruments ("Licensed Instruments") shown in the attached Exhibit A to participants in [Grantee Acronym's] local RPG evaluation, not to exceed the number of administrations indicated in Exhibit A.

(b) Mathematica agrees to permit [Grantee Acronym] the precise number of administrations listed in Exhibit A.

(c) Mathematica agrees to permit [Grantee Acronym] to administer the Spanish translations that Mathematica has developed of certain standardized instruments shown in Exhibit A, hereafter referred to as "Mathematica translations."

2. Terms and Conditions of [Grantee Acronym's] Use of Licensed Instruments and Mathematica Translations.

(a) [Grantee Acronym] agrees that it shall use the Licensed Instruments and the Mathematica translations only for purposes of its local RPG evaluation and for submission to the Cross-Site Evaluation. [Grantee Acronym] agrees that it shall not sell, transfer, publish, disclose, display, reproduce, redistribute or otherwise make available the Licensed Instruments, Mathematica translations, or copies thereof, either electronically or in print to anyone other than Mathematica staff, [Grantee Acronym's] employees, [Grantee Acronym]'s third-party evaluators who have executed Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreements ("NDA") with [Grantee Acronym] in substantially the same form as attached hereto as Exhibit C, and participants completing the Licensed Instruments. [Grantee Acronym] also agrees to take appropriate action by instruction or agreement with its employees and third-party evaluators to ensure that they use the Licensed Instruments and Mathematica translations only in accordance with [Grantee Acronym's] local RPG evaluation and the Cross-Site Evaluation, and to provide Mathematica a copy of the NDA or similar agreement that [Grantee Acronym] executes with its third-party evaluators.

(b) [Grantee Acronym] agrees to take reasonable care to secure and protect the Licensed Instruments, Mathematica translations, and copies thereof in a manner that ensures that they are used only as set forth herein. [Grantee Acronym] shall protect the Licensed Instruments and Mathematica translations from unauthorized dissemination, including but not limited to: safely storing the Licensed Instruments and Mathematica translations, not delivering or sending the Licensed Instruments to any third party by U.S. mail, other delivery or courier service, except as provided in Section 2(d) herein, or by electronic mail, or by leaving the Licensed Instruments with unsupervised respondents.

(c) [Grantee Acronym] shall accurately track the number of administrations of the Licensed Instruments by language version (English or Spanish) and will provide Mathematica a true and accurate report of the number of administrations upon request. Grantee shall promptly notify Mathematica if it deems that additional administrations are necessary.

(d) When [Grantee Acronym] has completed its authorized administrations of the Licensed Instruments, but no later than August 31, 2017, [Grantee Acronym] shall return to Mathematica or securely destroy all original versions and all copies of the Licensed Instruments and Mathematica translations in its possession, certifying its performance of such return or destruction in writing to Mathematica.

(e) [Grantee Acronym] shall ensure that the administrations of the Licensed Instruments are overseen by a person with a minimum of a Master's Degree in a relevant field.

2. Scoring of data: Mathematica will provide selective guidance for scoring of data as described in Exhibit B.

3. Access to enrollment and service log data: Grantees will have access to enrollment and service log data they enter as described in Exhibit B.

D. Confidentiality Safeguards, Use, and Disposition of Data.

1. **Confidentiality Assurance.** Mathematica shall adhere to all state and federal statutes, rules and regulations governing the disclosure of information and confidentiality. Mathematica further agrees not to disclose or release in any manner information that may reveal the identity of an individual, except as allowed under this Agreement or as may be required by law. Furthermore, Mathematica hereby attests that it has internal security measures sufficient to protect the confidentiality of the data provided under this Agreement and to restrict access to the data to only those who have a valid need to access it.

2. **Use of the Data Provided.** Mathematica will use the information provided by [Grantee Acronym] as specified in this Agreement solely for purposes of the Cross-Site Evaluation. Data collected under this Agreement will be used only by members of the Cross-Site Evaluation teams: staff at Mathematica, its subcontractors, Walter R. McDonald & Associates ("WRMA") and Synergy Enterprises ("Synergy"), the Children's Bureau, and the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN).

3. **Transmission of files to NDACAN.** Under the terms of its contract with the Children's Bureau, Mathematica will work with NDACAN to coordinate the archiving of the Cross-Site Evaluation data to ensure the format supports NDACAN's mission of providing data sets to researchers on child abuse and neglect for secondary analysis. This includes developing data structure and variable naming conventions, missing code values, syntax, and a codebook that defines the variables and layout of the data files. All data and documentation will be transmitted to NDACAN from the Mathematica team electronically through Secure Socket Layer transmission protocol into a secure space on NDACAN servers. There will be no delivery of hard-copy files or documentation. The Cross-Site Evaluation team will work with NDACAN staff to ensure that the data are not identifiable. Because some data may be sensitive and data are being collected in a relatively small number of sites, NDACAN will make the data set available only to researchers who agree to meet the following requirements: (1) they hold an Institutional Review Board approval for their proposed project, and (2) they sign a data security agreement.

4. **Transfer of data to the Children's Bureau:** The data collection system and all archival data will be transferred to the Children's Bureau or another designated entity at the end of the contract period.

E. Data to be Provided and Transmission.

1. **Data to be Provided by [Grantee Acronym] to Mathematica.** In connection with [Grantee Acronym's] administration of its RPG Grant, [Grantee Acronym] agrees to provide Mathematica the information and data described in Exhibit B, incorporated herein by reference and attached hereto.
2. **Transmission of Data.** [Grantee Acronym] agrees to provide Mathematica the data specified in this Agreement by means of the RPG Data Portal Systems or other means deemed acceptable by both Parties, such as secure file transfer through a Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) web site.

E. Identifiability of data: [Grantee Acronym] shall only provide de-identified data to Mathematica

F. Points of contact. Each Party hereby designates in writing one or more individuals within its organization as its point(s) of contact responsible for managing performance of the Party's necessary functions and responsibilities under this Agreement.

1. For [Grantee Acronym]: (name, phone number, email address)

2. For Mathematica:
   Debra Strong, Senior Researcher
   Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
   600 Alexander Park, Suite 100
   Princeton, NJ 08540
   (609) 750-2001
   dstrong@mathematica-mpr.com

All notices required or permitted to be given hereunder shall be in writing and shall be deemed given when delivered by hand, sent by courier or other express mail service, postage prepaid, or transmitted by facsimile or email, read receipt requested, addressed to a party at the address identified in this Agreement.

H. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of New Jersey without reference to rules regarding conflicts of laws.

I. Term and Termination. This Agreement shall be effective as of the date last signed below and shall terminate on December 31, 2017 or the termination of the RPG program or Cross-Site Evaluation, whichever occurs first, unless extended by mutual agreement of the Parties.

J. Modification. This Agreement may be modified or amended, provided that such modification or amendment is in writing and signed by both Parties. Any amendments to laws, rules, or regulations cited herein will result in the correlative modification of this Agreement, without the necessity of executing a written amendment.

K. Complete Agreement. This Agreement, including the Exhibit incorporated herein, constitutes the Parties' entire agreement with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes any and all prior statements or agreements, both written and oral.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representatives:

[GRANTEE]   **MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH, INC.**

_____   _____
Signature and Date   Signature and Date

_____   _____
Name and Title   Julius Clark, Deputy Director of Contracts

Exhibit A. Licensed Instruments, Publisher, Number of Administrations Allowed, and Translation for [GRANTEE]

Instrument	Outcome Domain	Number of Administrations	Spanish Translation Provided	Format
Publisher: PAR Inc.				
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children (TSCYC; Briere et al. 2001)	Child Well-Being			Hardcopy only
Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF), Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Preschool (BRIEF-P; Gioia et al. 2000)	Child Well-Being			Hardcopy only
Parental Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF; Abidin 1995)	Family Functioning			Hardcopy only
Publisher: Pearson				
Infant-Toddler Sensory Profile (ITSP; Dunn 2002)	Child Well-Being			Electronic and hardcopy
Socialization Subscale, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, Second Edition, Parent-Caregiver Rating Form, (Vineland-II; Sparrow, Cicchetti and Balla 2005)	Child Well-Being			Electronic and hardcopy
Publisher: The Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA)				
Child Behavior Checklist-Preschool Form, Child Behavior Checklist-School Age Form (CBCL; Achenbach and Rescorla 2000, 2001)	Child Well-Being			Electronic and hardcopy
Publisher: Family Development Resources				
Adult-Adolescent Parenting inventory (AAPI-2; Bavolek and Keene 1999)	Family Functioning			Electronic and hardcopy
No Copyright Restrictions				
Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, 12-Item Short Form (CES-D; Radloff 1977)	Family Functioning			Electronic and hardcopy
Household Roster	Family Functioning			Electronic and hardcopy
Addiction Severity Index, Self-Report Form (ASI; (McLellan et al. 1992)	Recovery			Electronic and hardcopy
Trauma Symptoms Checklist-40 (TSC-40; Briere & Runtz 1989)	Recovery			Electronic and hardcopy

Exhibit A. Licensed Instruments, Publisher, Number of Administrations Allowed, and Translation for SAMPLE

Instrument	Outcome Domain	Number of Administrations	Spanish Translation Provided	Format
Publisher: PAR Inc.				
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children (TSCYC; Briere et al. 2001)	Child Well-Being	125	Yes	Hardcopy only
Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF), Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Preschool (BRIEF-P; Gioia et al. 2000)	Child Well-Being	100 (BRIEF); 250 (BRIEF-P)	Yes	Hardcopy only
Parental Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF; Abidin 1995)	Family Functioning	300	Yes	Hardcopy only
Publisher: Pearson				
Infant-Toddler Sensory Profile (ITSP; Dunn 2002)	Child Well-Being	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
Socialization Subscale, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, Second Edition, Parent-Caregiver Rating Form, (Vineland-II; Sparrow, Cicchetti and Balla 2005)	Child Well-Being	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
Publisher: The Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA)				
Child Behavior Checklist-Preschool Form, Child Behavior Checklist-School Age Form (CBCL; Achenbach and Rescorla 2000, 2001)	Child Well-Being	300 (Preschool); 100 (School Age)	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
Publisher: Family Development Resources				
Adult-Adolescent Parenting inventory (AAPI-2; Bavolek and Keene 1999)	Family Functioning	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
No Copyright Restrictions				
Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, 12-Item Short Form (CES-D; Radloff 1977)	Family Functioning	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
Household Roster	Family Functioning	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
Addiction Severity Index, Self-Report Form (ASI; (McLellan et al. 1992)	Recovery	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy
Trauma Symptoms Checklist-40 (TSC-40; Briere & Runtz 1989)	Recovery	300	Yes	Electronic and hardcopy

Exhibit B. Description of Data Submitted to Mathematica from [Grantee name]

The overall objective of the RPG Cross-Site Evaluation is to plan, develop, and implement a national cross-site evaluation of the RPG Grant Program, describe grantee performance, and furnish evaluation-related technical assistance to grantees to support their local evaluations and their participation in the cross-site evaluation. The cross-site evaluation will document the projects and activities conducted through the RPG program and assess the extent to which the grants have been successful in addressing the needs of families with substance abuse problems who come to the attention of the child welfare system.

Per the terms of their RPG grant, [Grantee acronym] will participate in the cross-site evaluation, including providing selected data to Mathematica for the evaluation. The data will include (1) adult and child outcome data including administrative records and data from standardized instruments and a household roster, (2) enrollment data, [and] (3) service log data for participants enrolled in [Grantee acronym's] RPG program [.,and (4) selected data on comparison group members]. These data are briefly described here but have been or will be more fully specified in memoranda, training manuals, and data dictionaries provided to grantees.

Cross-Site Evaluation Outcomes Data

The goal of the outcomes study is to describe the characteristics and outcomes in five domains: (1) child well-being; (2) family functioning and stability; (3) adult recovery; (4) child permanency; and (5) child safety, for children and families for participants that will be included in the RPG cross-site evaluation study.

[Grantee acronym] will submit outcome data from (1) [##] standardized instruments identified in Table 1; (2) a household roster developed by Mathematica Policy Research; and (3) data elements to be drawn from administrative records (Table 2).

The standardized instruments and household roster will be administered by grantees at program entry and exit for a focal child identified in each RPG case, and for the family functioning/stability adult and recovery domain adult (if necessary). The grantee shall propose a rule for selecting their focal child to their cross-site evaluation liaison for review and approval by their federal project officer prior to beginning the collection of data for the cross-site evaluation. Respondents for the child well-being, family functioning and stability, and recovery domain instruments shall be selected according to procedures recommended by Mathematica.

Table 1. Standardized instruments [Grantee acronym] will submit to Mathematica.

Instrument	Age Range of Focal Child
Child Well-Being Domain	
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children (TSCYC; Briere et al. 2001)	3 to 12 years
Behavior Rating of Executive Function (BRIEF; Gioia et al. 2000)	5 to 18 years
Behavior Rating of Executive Function-Preschool (BRIEF-P; Gioia et al. 2003)	2 to 5 years
Child Behavior Checklist-Preschool Form (CBCL; Achenbach and Rescorla 2000)	18 to 60 months
Child Behavior Checklist-School Age (CBCL; Achenbach and Rescorla 2001)	6 to 18 years
Infant-Toddler Sensory Profile (ITSP; Dunn 2002)	Birth to 36 months
Socialization Subscale, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Second Edition, Parent Caregiver Rating Form (Vineland-II; Sparrow, Cicchetti and Balla 2005)	Birth to 90 years
Family Functioning Domain	
Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2; Bavolek 1996)	6 to 18 years
Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale 12-Item Short Form (CES-D; Radloff 1977)	Birth to 18 years
Household Roster	Birth to 18 years
Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF; Abidin 1995)	Birth to 11 years
Recovery Domain	
Addiction Severity Index, Self-Report Form (ASI; McClellan et al. 1992)	-
Trauma Symptoms Checklist (TSC-40; Briere & Runtz 1989)	-

The administrative data will be collected by the grantee from the relevant reporting agency. [Data for each case will cover September 2012 through March 2017. OR Data for each case will cover 12 months prior to the beginning of RPG services for that case through 12 months after exit from those services.] Full specifications of the data requested will be provided by Mathematica but the types of records needed are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Data collected from administrative records.

Construct	Focus of Data Collection
Permanency	
Removals	Focal child
Placements	Focal child
Type of placements	Focal child
Discharge	Focal child
Safety	
Screened-in referrals	Focal child
Type of allegations	Focal child
Disposition of allegations	Focal child
Death	Focal child
Recovery	
Substance abuse services received	Recovery Domain Adult
Type of discharge	Recovery Domain Adult

Outcome data. [Grantee acronym] will upload data to the RPG data system known as OAISIS (Outcome and Impact Study Information System) from the standardized instruments, the household roster, and administrative records using instructions and file formats to be provided by Mathematica.

Scoring. For instruments that are publicly available and require no copyright, Mathematica will share scoring instructions for the instruments with the grantees. For instruments that are copyrighted, Mathematica cannot share scoring instructions per the license agreement established with the publisher. Therefore, Mathematica recommends that the grantee purchase the manual or scoring software sold by the publisher where available and conduct their own scoring under the guidance of a qualified (as defined by the publisher) team member. If the grantee prefers, Mathematica can also return the scores of the instruments to the grantees up to once each year.

Implementation Study: Enrollment and Service Log Data

[Grantee acronym] will report the enrollment date, demographic information, and information on services for all participants that will be included in the RPG cross-site evaluation study. Data will be [entered into a web-based data collection system known as ESL (Enrollment and Services Log) using instructions and tools provided by Mathematica/or describe other method].

Grantee access to enrollment and service log data. Grantees will be able to download the enrollment and service log data on an as-needed basis, without any assistance or intervention from Mathematica.

Comparison Group Design Impact Study [Only for those in the substudy]

The CGD study will include a subset of RPG grantees that are using either a randomized controlled trial (RCT) or a quasi-experimental design (QED) for their local evaluation that includes primary data collection across treatment and comparison groups. Using data provided by the local impact evaluations, the CGD study will examine the effectiveness of each grantee's intervention (a combination of one or more programs), using a similar analytic approach to estimate program impacts across grantees, and will also combine the estimates of program effectiveness across grantees to obtain an aggregated, cross-grantee estimate of program effectiveness.

In addition to collecting the data elements from the members of the treatment groups outlined in Tables 1 and 2, [Grantee acronym] will also collect the data elements listed below at baseline and at follow-up from members of comparison groups. Similarly, demographic data elements from both treatment and comparison group members will be collected at baseline and submitted through the ESL.

Specifically, [Grantee acronym] will collect and submit data from the following standardized instruments for members of their comparison groups:

Table 3. Standardized instruments [Grantee acronym] will submit for comparison group.

Instrument	Age Range of Focal Child
Child Well-Being Domain	
Child Behavior Checklist-Preschool Form (CBCL; Achenbach and Rescorla 2000)	18 to 60 months
Child Behavior Checklist-School Age (CBCL; Achenbach and Rescorla 2001)	6 to 18 years
Behavior Rating of Executive Function (BRIEF; Gioia et al. 2000)	5 to 18 years
Behavior Rating of Executive Function-Preschool (BRIEF-P; Gioia et al. 2003)	2 to 5 years
Socialization Subscale, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Second Edition, Parent Caregiver Rating Form (Vineland-II; Sparrow, Cicchetti and Balla 2005)	Birth to 90 years
Family Functioning Domain	
Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF; Abidin 1995)	Birth to 11 years
Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale 12-Item Short Form (CES-D; Radloff 1977)	Birth to 18 years
Recovery Domain	
Addiction Severity Index, Self-Report Form (ASI; McClellan et al. 1992)	-

In addition, all of the administrative data elements listed in Table 2 will be collected and submitted for the members of the comparison groups.

Outcome data management system (OAISIS). [Grantee] will enter data on the comparison group members into the data management system as described above. The submitted data records will contain an identifier to indicate whether the individual in each record is a member of the treatment or comparison group.

Enrollment and service log (ESL). [Grantee] will enter data on the comparison group members into the ESL system as described above. The submitted data records will contain an identifier to indicate whether the individual in each record is a member of the treatment or comparison group.

Research consortium. [Grantee acronym] will be invited to name members to an RPG research consortium, who will be acknowledged in the final impact report. These individuals will be given an opportunity to provide comments and feedback on the proposed cross-site analytic approach and the description of the [Grantee]'s RPG program and evaluation design in the final report. Mathematica staff will be responsible for conducting the analyses and writing the report and will be shown as the lead authors on this report.

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