

## **PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING, AND EVALUATING TRAINING PROJECTS FOR PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE AGENCY SUPERVISORS: THE APPLICATION OF LOGIC MODELS AND THEORY OF CHANGE**

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In the fall of 2005, the Children's Bureau funded six projects to develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate a training curriculum for public child welfare agency supervisors. The curricula were intended to strengthen supervision of staff providing interventions to older youth who are in foster care and/or Independent Living programs. Social workers are faced with the responsibility of assisting foster youth in making a successful transition to adulthood and achieving self-sufficiency. It is hoped that foster youth who are taught to successfully advocate for themselves and navigate multiple systems—in regard to personal housing, transportation, employment, and education—can avoid long-term dependency on the social welfare system (DHHS, 2005).

Findings from previous demonstration programs led to the development of the supervisory training projects. Five years earlier, the Children's Bureau had funded 12 projects to develop training on Independent Living services for child welfare caseworkers. One of the findings from these previous projects contributed to the development of the funding opportunity for the training of child welfare supervisors: in order for child welfare caseworkers to effectively support youth in transition, their supervisors also needed training on youth development, the service needs of youth in care, and supervision practices that would support workers providing Independent Living services (DHHS, 2005). The 2005 funding announcement identified four core principles that the supervisor training projects should incorporate: 1) Positive youth development; 2) Collaboration; 3) Cultural competence; and 4) Permanent connections.

The projects were funded through the Children's Bureau's Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (Section 430, Title IV-B, subpart 2, of the Social Security Act) (42 U.S.C. 629a). Grantees submitted applications for the discretionary grant

funds through a competitive grant application process. Six grantees were chosen and received funding for a period of three years.

This paper provides an overview of the training projects designed and implemented by the six demonstration projects in this grant cluster. In particular, the paper explores the theory of change adopted by this grant cluster (i.e., what these projects hoped to achieve and how) and presents a cluster logic model that visually articulates the theory of change that was incorporated into the grantees' general approaches to planning, implementing, and evaluating their projects. Variations among grantees in key areas of the theory of change and approach to training are also explored. The paper concludes with a review of the outcomes evaluated by the grantees and the evaluation methods employed, as they relate to testing the theoretical assumptions upon which the individual projects were designed and the overall theory of change adopted by the cluster.

### Logic Models

For nearly 30 years, logic models have been used as a tool to help organize and systematize program planning, management, and program evaluation functions (Wholey, 1979; 1983; Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 1994). Logic models exist in many different formats and there is not one "correct" design. They typically are depicted as a series of boxes representing program inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, with arrows between the boxes that reflect the direction of change. Some logic models are represented in table format. Some are reflected horizontally with the direction of change moving from left to right; others are presented vertically with the movement flowing upwards. The common feature of any logic model, however, is that the models depict graphically the underlying assumptions upon which the undertaking of one activity is expected to lead to the occurrence of another activity or event. In the context of child welfare training programs, such as the training of supervisors in Independent Living services, logic models reflect a sequence of causal chains that seek to explain how doing activity A, activity B, and so forth, will result in changes that will eventually affect supervisors or workers in a desired manner (e.g., shifts in frontline practice with youth).

There are different conceptualizations and uses of logic models that infuse the field of program evaluation. Cooksey, Gill, and Kelly (2001) characterize logic models as "flow charts" that display a sequence of logical steps in program implementation and the achievement of desired outcomes. The United Way of America (2006) describes a program logic model as a framework for depicting how a program theoretically works to achieve benefits for participants, with the "If-Then" sequence of changes that the program intends to set in motion through its inputs, activities, and outputs. A logic model also helps ensure that there is a clear understanding of what services and activities are being implemented, what goals program staff hope to achieve, how the program's success will be measured, why various data are being collected, and how the data will be used (James Bell Associates, 2007).

The Harvard Family Research Project (2000) frames a logic model as a summary of the key elements of a program that shows the cause-and-effect relationships between a program and its intended outcomes, all “on one sheet of paper.” According to Chen (1990), the goal in developing a logic model is to arrive at a model that can be used for system level process evaluations as an “ideal type” or for impact evaluations as a guide for hypothesized relationships. The logic model links theoretical ideas together to explain underlying assumptions about how program services are expected to produce expected outcomes and impacts (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Theory of change, then, becomes a driving force in the development and application of logic models.

### ***Theory of Change***

Theory of change refers to the theoretical assumptions that underlie the decisions a program makes for proposing particular approaches to address a problem. In a program evaluation, one is testing a set of assumptions about the activities, resources, and/or interventions that will bring about desired change. This set of assumptions is called a “theory of change,” which is defined as a conceptual framework that links desired ultimate outcomes to specific avenues that are believed to be necessary to achieve those outcomes (Connell & Kubisch, 1999; Weiss, 1995).

The Children’s Bureau’s child welfare training projects that focus on training supervisors in Independent Living services are based on a philosophical approach and specific theory of change that is especially relevant to improving the well being of youth. The underlying theory is that increasing knowledge and awareness among child welfare supervisors and workers through new materials and trainings will theoretically result in increased utilization and application of skills and knowledge, which should, in the long-term, result in organizational changes that support youth-focused frontline practice.

In following a “theory of change” approach, Weiss (1995) emphasizes that evaluators need to work with program designers, administrators, staff and other stakeholders to identify and explicate their expectations with respect to the avenues of change they believe are necessary to achieve the ultimate desired outcomes—i.e., their “theories of change.” Once this is done, evaluators must carefully track the progress of the initiative in accordance with the change process. Milligan, Coulton, York, & Register (1999) note: “If the initiative’s programs and activities are shown to lead to expected outcomes over time, the evaluation begins to build a case for the effectiveness of the initiative. Even without a control group to support the counterfactual, the order of occurrence of the outcomes and the resemblance of those outcomes to those predicted can support inferences about effectiveness.”

### ***Why Logic Models are Important***

Logic models serve an important purpose for program managers and provide useful benefits. They are useful to any individual attempting to plan, manage, ac-

count for, audit, evaluate, or explain the connections between what a program requests in terms of resources and what it seeks to accomplish. With an emphasis on increased accountability, program managers need to become more aware of how program activities bring about desired outcomes. It becomes critical for program managers to ask not only what the desired outcomes are, but also how they can best get there. Logic models assist in the process of articulating critical program components and their desired effects.

Logic models also help build consensus among program staff, evaluators, funding agencies, and other stakeholders regarding the evaluation. Specifically, stakeholders can reach agreement on the intended goals of the program and appropriate and meaningful program outcomes. A logic model provides an opportunity for stakeholders to jointly assess the feasibility and practicality of measuring change in selected program outcomes.

Another reason why logic models are important is that they are helpful in designing or improving programs, whereby logic models can be used to identify activities that are critical to goal attainment, are redundant, or have inconsistent or implausible linkages about the program components.

Logic models are also important for showing what intermediate results are critical to achieving ultimate goals or outcomes. They suggest corrective action when intermediate outcomes are not met. They are useful for formative evaluations that guide programs and policies as well as for summative evaluations that assess effectiveness and efficiency.

Finally, logic models are particularly useful for providing a framework for analyzing alternative strategies for achieving desired end-results. A logic model provides a roadmap for identifying alternative strategies for accomplishing results through the articulation of underlying assumptions and logic regarding connections between activities, outputs, and outcomes. In summary, logic models help guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs, including training programs such as the cluster of grants providing training for public child welfare agency supervisors in Independent Living services.

### **Project Planning and Implementation**

The six grantees represent universities, public child welfare agencies, and collaborations between the two. These six grantees are located in different regions of the country and serve diverse target populations in varied child welfare climates (See Exhibit 1). The California grantee provided training in mostly urban counties in California, where Hispanic children comprise the largest ethnic group in foster care, and in Hawaii, Guam, and American Samoa, where Asian Pacific Islanders represent the largest ethnic group in foster care. The Texas grantee tested its curriculum in three distinct regions of Texas, where African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites comprise nearly an equal share of the State's child welfare population.

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**Exhibit 1: Cluster Grantees' Target Populations and Key Program Activities**


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Grantee and Project Name	Primary Target Population	Key Program Activities
<b>San Francisco State University</b> <i>Y.O.U.T.H. Training Curriculum for Child Welfare Supervisors</i> San Francisco, CA	Child welfare supervisors and their key child welfare managers/directors in select counties in California and branch offices in Hawaii, Guam, and American Samoa whose caseworkers have already received training on IL services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct focus groups with current and former foster youth, CW supervisors, and other youth-serving organizations to inform content.</li> <li>• Conduct literature review and develop best practices.</li> <li>• Research and compile ILSP services in all 58 counties.</li> <li>• Convene and train youth curriculum development team.</li> <li>• Launch a Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project website.</li> <li>• Produce 30 digital stories by current and former foster youth to be used in trainings and posted on website.</li> <li>• Conduct SIP/PIP assessments of counties to be trained.</li> <li>• Develop, pilot test, and finalize a training curriculum for child welfare supervisors and their managers/directors.</li> <li>• Provide training to Youth Trainers (who are responsible for training CW supervisors); trainers are former foster youth from CA and Hawaii.</li> <li>• Youth Trainers will provide training in 7 key competency areas to CW supervisors and their managers/directors.</li> <li>• Dissemination.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Social Services (DSS), State of Massachusetts</b> <i>Supervisors Supporting Workers Transitioning to Adulthood</i> Boston, MA	DSS social work supervisors in all area offices (300 – 400 persons); and supervisors in community lead agencies that provide services to a large portion of DSS youth ages 16-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct needs assessment that includes in-depth interviews with youth, DSS regional and area directors, program supervisors, and central office staff; convene local focus groups (with DSS staff and with community based organizations) and regional roundtables.</li> <li>• Conduct literature review and review of best practice tools.</li> <li>• Design and field test training curriculum; finalize curriculum; develop training manual.</li> <li>• Run training sessions over 18 months with the goal of training all DSS social work supervisors and additional supervisors from community agencies.</li> <li>• Train high-level CW agency personnel in order to effect organizational change.</li> <li>• Dissemination.</li> </ul>
<b>Research Foundation, CUNY (Hunter College)</b> <i>Training CW Agency Supervisors in Effective Delivery and Management of Federal Independent Living Service for Youth in Foster Care</i> New York, NY	Public child welfare agency supervisors in New York City, Mississippi, and Oregon (about 260 persons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify best practices and review current curricula from all Federal ILS grantees and existing curricula from NY, MI, and OR.</li> <li>• Conduct focus groups to identify issues in working with older youth.</li> <li>• Develop a set of supervisory competencies to guide curriculum development and TOL guidebook.</li> <li>• Develop training curriculum.</li> <li>• Develop digital stories from youth in foster care to bring “youth voice” into the training program.</li> <li>• Create web-based supervisory TOL guidebook that mirrors training curriculum with on-the-job activities, checklists, materials, and resources to support ongoing supervision.</li> <li>• Provide training to the “Training Teams” in TOT (training for the trainers) sessions. The Training Teams go back and train their supervisors.</li> <li>• Dissemination.</li> </ul>

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Exhibit 1: Cluster Grantees' Target Populations and Key Program Activities

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<p><b>University of Louisville Research Foundation, Inc.</b> <i>Evidence-Based Supervisor-Team Independent Living Training</i> Louisville, KY</p>	<p>Supervisors in ongoing and foster care units and their workers who deal with adolescents, foster children, and any children transitioning to Independent Living in Regions with the largest number of children likely to move to Independent Living</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct evidence-based literature review; review existing curricula and practices; conduct focus groups with KY CW workers and case managers regarding the IL training needs.</li> <li>• Develop competency- and team-based training curriculum and training plan; will include a video that models effective practices with youth and workers.</li> <li>• Train teams (supervisors and their frontline workers) in Regions with highest number of youth needing IL services.</li> <li>• Evaluate effectiveness of team training; revise training curriculum/delivery methods as necessary.</li> <li>• Train existing CW trainers/instructors in State CW training system (so that the training can be integrated into the state's training system).</li> <li>• Dissemination – integrate training into state's training system through university continuing education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>University of Houston</b> <i>PAL-STEP: Preparation for Adult Living—Supervisory Training and Empowerment Program</i> Houston, TX</p>	<p>CPS supervisors who manage foster care workers in three Texas regions: Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston, and El Paso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble advisory team to offer advice and approve the curriculum development, which will include former foster youths, and University and community experts.</li> <li>• Develop web-based training curriculum to present theoretical material on adolescent development and 4 core principles.</li> <li>• Pilot test curriculum; evaluate and refine curriculum; prepare training materials for delivery to supervisors.</li> <li>• Provide one-day, face-to-face training for supervisors that completed web-based training.</li> <li>• Training delivered by training team that includes youth graduate of IL program and University faculty.</li> <li>• Provide supervisors with PAL-STEP Supervisory Tool Kit, used to transfer their knowledge to workers when they return to work.</li> <li>• Dissemination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The University of Iowa</b> <i>Improving Outcomes for Youth in Transition Through Supervisor Training</i> Iowa City, IA</p>	<p>IDHS supervisors, IDHS case managers, and transitional planning staff representing each of the state's eight service areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene statewide project advisory group.</li> <li>• Conduct focus groups with youth, supervisors, and frontline staff; conduct interviews with key informants to inform curriculum content.</li> <li>• Develop competencies specific to transitional planning-at both supervisor and worker levels; conduct curricula review.</li> <li>• Develop training curriculum for supervisors.</li> <li>• Field test supervisor curriculum with supervisors in both urban and rural areas; revise curriculum based on feedback.</li> <li>• Implement supervisor curriculum statewide, with all public CW supervisors and supervisees in the eight service areas around the state.</li> <li>• Develop curriculum for learning/teambuilding between supervisors and their workers; field test curriculum; and revise curriculum.</li> <li>• Implement learning/teambuilding curriculum statewide, where supervisors transfer knowledge to worker in a learning environment.</li> <li>• Dissemination.</li> </ul>

The Iowa grantee implemented its training statewide, which is largely rural, and includes areas with large populations of Native youth in care. The Kentucky grantee also operated its training in predominantly rural areas. The New York grantee tested its training in New York City, Mississippi, and Oregon, three areas representing both urban and rural populations and a range of racial and ethnic diversity. Like Iowa, the Massachusetts grantee implemented their program statewide, where non-Hispanic, White children comprise more than two-thirds of children in foster care. By selecting grantees that operate in different child welfare environments among diverse populations, the Children's Bureau intended to learn a great deal about the effectiveness of various approaches to supervisor Independent Living training projects among different target populations.

### ***Needs Assessment***

The first phase of program development is typically focused on identifying needs and resources, determining program goals and objectives, and identifying procedures for program implementation and evaluation (Nastasi & Berg 1999). Data collection at the outset of a program helps program developers to better understand the target population, the need for the program, the resources available to address the need, models of best practices, and stakeholder input on the program approach. For the Supervisor Training in Independent Living grantees, a needs assessment was the first step to determining the content and approach to curriculum development and training design. Information gleaned from the needs assessment was applied to the development of curriculum goals and objectives, which were then reviewed and approved by multiple stakeholders. The needs assessment also informed other aspects of program development, including evaluation tools and methods and the process of training delivery.

All six grantees collected primary data from supervisors, caseworkers, and administrators through focus groups and interviews. The purpose of these data collection efforts was to identify issues related to working with older youth and ascertain their needs regarding Independent Living services training. Some grantees also collected qualitative data from contracted service providers, youth-serving agencies in the community, local foster youth advocacy groups, and other youth-focused community based organizations to identify opportunities to work together, as well as barriers to collaboration. Focus groups with foster parents and youth—both current and former foster youth—were also conducted in order to better understand their experiences with foster care placements and Independent Living services, as well as facilitators and barriers to permanency. If programs targeted multiple populations (e.g., urban and rural or different racial and ethnic groups), research was conducted with diverse groups to gain differing perspectives and experiences. Grantees also consulted State laws and policies, as well as Child and Family Service Review outcomes and Program Improvement Plan tasks related to Independent Living services.

Grantees reviewed training curricula for both supervisors and caseworkers focused on working with older youth transitioning out of foster care and supervision. Some grantees focused their review on curricula currently implemented by their State agency or contracted service providers. Other grantees conducted a more comprehensive review of the curricula developed and implemented by multiple States, such as those developed by agencies that received prior Child Welfare Training grants from the Children's Bureau (Independent Living Section 426 grants). In addition to reviewing existing curricula, some grantees conducted a resource assessment and compiled a directory of Independent Living programs currently available in their State, with the intention of integrating this knowledge of existing services into the training.

Grantees conducted a literature review on best practices in positive youth development, promoting collaboration between youth and adults, and developing culturally competent permanent connections for youth. These findings not only informed curriculum development but also the delivery process, the evaluation design, and the process of engaging stakeholders. Grantees obtained the input of various stakeholders throughout the processes of developing, implementing, and evaluating the training curricula. Most grantees instituted an Advisory Board, which allowed projects to engage stakeholders on an ongoing and consistent basis. Advisory Board members represented the project partners, youth in foster care, academic and medical partners, experts in child and family services, legal professionals, and various community partners.

### ***Curriculum Development***

After gathering information from child welfare supervisors, youth in foster care, community partners, and stakeholders on the critical issues impacting the delivery of Independent Living services; the training needs of child welfare supervisors; and the existing Independent Living curricula, services, and resources, the grantees began the process of developing curricula. The Curricula were developed in accordance with the four core principles of youth transition planning: positive youth development, collaboration, cultural competence, and permanent connections (DHHS, 2005). The first step was to develop a set of supervisory competencies that guided curriculum development. These supervisory competencies describe the set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that guide a supervisor's work with caseworkers as they engage with youth to achieve positive outcomes in their transition to adulthood. Some grantees also developed a set of caseworker competencies related to providing Independent Living services to youth.

In addition to developing a training curriculum, most grantees developed a transfer of learning (TOL) toolkit, to help supervisors teach their workers both the theory and application of working with youth in transition. The toolkits were designed to mirror the curriculum with on-the-job activities, informational materials, checklists, and resources to support ongoing supervision.



Grantees worked with agency personnel and other stakeholders to identify the mode of curriculum delivery (e.g., online, in person, etc.), the methods of instruction (e.g., lecture, learning circles, etc.), and the overall process for delivering training to large numbers of public child welfare supervisors (e.g., selecting supervisors to participate, training trainers, etc.). Once drafts of the curriculum, TOL toolkit, and training procedures were developed, most grantees conducted a field test to assess the quality, usefulness, and presentation style of the curriculum. Evaluation tools were also piloted to assess their feasibility and validity. After the field test, the results were evaluated and the curriculum revised based on feedback from the Advisory Board and other stakeholders.

### *Training Delivery*

Grantees developed a unique approach to training that was designed to achieve the project's desired outcomes. The trainings were delivered using various formats including in-person lecture and discussion, online modules, and exercises that required trainees to develop and role play interventions with caseworkers and youth. All trainings provided materials and exercises to facilitate the TOL process.

- *New York.* This curriculum was delivered through six learning circles that focus on six core principles or competencies. During the learning circles, supervisors develop action plans to translate learning into practice, discuss the successes and challenges encountered, and assess progress made towards goals defined in previous circles. An online TOL guidebook with a series of activities, checklists, and informational resources was provided.
- *Kentucky.* This project implemented a three-day training that included learning readiness interventions to promote TOL. The initial training was followed by in-person and online refresher trainings as well as a conference of 200 state staff and community partners from across the state.
- *California.* This training project was developed and staffed entirely by former foster youth, who were involved in designing the curriculum, creating and reviewing materials, and delivering the training to supervisors.
- *Massachusetts.* This training consisted of six modules, one of which was set aside to gather participant feedback on the training to gather data on their successful practices. Each module included a presentation of theoretical underpinnings, interactive activities, participants sharing of best practices, and a facilitated panel discussion. A journal was provided to encourage self reflection. All materials were available online and in hard copy.
- *Iowa.* This grantee developed a two-phase training, where supervisors built skills at an in-person training session during the first phase. The second phase brought supervisors and their staff together in order to develop a team-building approach to working with youth in transition. The second phase also included a community oriented event.

- Texas.* This training was delivered both on-line and in-person. The training module covering theoretical constructs related to positive youth development was delivered online, which was followed by an in-person training focused on the practical application of the core principles and supervision techniques. A TOL Guidebook and curriculum manual were provided online and on CD.

**The Cluster’s Theory of Change**

The child welfare supervisor training grantees employed essentially the same theory of change across the projects: that developing, testing, implementing, and evaluating training for child welfare supervisors on Independent Living services would lead to an increase in knowledge about Independent Living services in supervisors and the caseworkers they supervise. Additionally, supervisors are expected to transfer their knowledge of Independent Living services to the caseworkers they supervise and provide support to them in the application of this knowledge. The caseworkers, in turn, are expected to utilize their knowledge in their work with youth in the foster care system, thereby improving the youth’s independent living skills and, ultimately, well being. Exhibit 2 illustrates this basic theory of change.

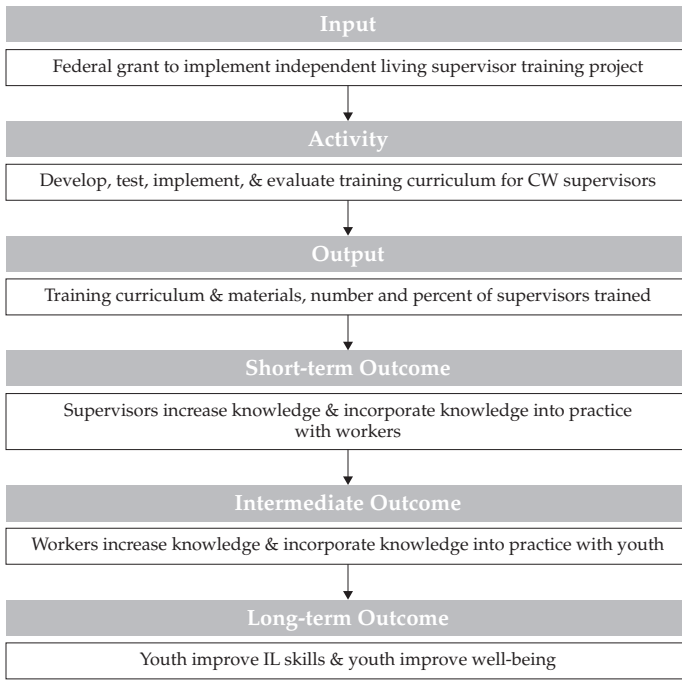


Exhibit 2: Independent Living Cluster Basic Theory of Change

While this is the basic theory of change underlying the training projects in the cluster, developing and administering a training curriculum in a way that produces the intended positive outcomes required extensive planning and a detailed theory of change, codified in a logic model. All of the projects incorporated a logic model into their grant applications as a way of demonstrating the purpose and structure of their proposed projects. In the fall of 2005, the grantees participated in a cluster kickoff meeting sponsored by the Children's Bureau, where logic modeling was a primary discussion topic. The grantees were briefed on the use of logic modeling in program planning and evaluation. Then, they participated in a group process that laid the foundation for development of a "cluster logic model," a model that reflected pathways of change that were common to the majority of grantees (i.e., the underlying theory of change that would be employed by the grantees in this cluster). The cluster logic model is presented in Exhibit 3.

Through this group discussion, the grantees identified the key components of a cluster logic model, including activities, outputs, and immediate and long-term outcomes. Most importantly, they worked to achieve consensus on the sequence through which their training efforts were expected to bring about change in child welfare supervisors' attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. This logic model was then further developed by the evaluation technical assistance provider, based on the input received during the meeting. The cluster logic model depicts the primary components of the training projects, but it is not an exhaustive representation of each project's activities and outcomes. Although there is some variation across the grantees, the basic hypotheses are essentially the same.

### ***Program Inputs***

A logic model begins with the inputs, or resources, utilized for the project. The training projects generally employed the same set of inputs: funding, including Federal, State, local, and private funding; a grantee's capacity and expertise, which can include institutional knowledge of child welfare practice, prior experience implementing Federal child welfare demonstration projects, and pre-existing infrastructure and technology for curriculum development and delivery; community partners and stakeholders; supervisor experience and prior training; and youth involvement. A logic model allows inputs to be tied directly to specific activities or to all activities. In the cluster logic model, funding, grantee experience, community partners, and supervisor experience all contribute to the three successive primary grant activities: needs assessment, curriculum development, and training delivery.

### ***Program Activities***

Grantees conducted a needs assessment in order to better understand the needs of supervisors and caseworkers regarding Independent Living services, appropriate methods and processes for delivering training, and issues impacting youth in transition. Grantees also conducted a resource assessment where existing

Independent Living services curricula were reviewed along with existing Independent Living services and best practices in the field. The information gleaned from these activities informed the development of supervisory competencies, the training curricula, and materials developed to aid with TOL from supervisors to caseworkers. The training was then piloted, evaluated, and revised based on feedback from Advisory Board members and other stakeholders. Each grantee produced training products and materials that included instructor guides, participant manuals, learning activities, and materials for supervisors to use in their work with caseworkers on Independent Living services. Materials were made available to trainees in hard copy and/or online. These materials were also developed for dissemination to the child welfare community to enable replication of the curriculum by other agencies or to be incorporated into University curricula and standard training programs offered by the grantee's public child welfare agency.

### ***Program Outcomes***

The training projects identified short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. The common primary outcomes are displayed in the cluster logic model. Short-term outcomes can be expected to occur immediately following the intervention, or in this case, the training. After attending training, it is expected that supervisors will increase their knowledge and awareness of positive youth development and other issues related to transition planning for foster youth. Supervisors also are likely to change their attitudes toward youth centered practice. This includes an improved ability to listen to, understand, and empathize with foster youth. In addition to changing supervisors' attitudes, level of knowledge, and awareness, the trainings aimed to increase supervisors' management skills of staff as they work with youth in transition.

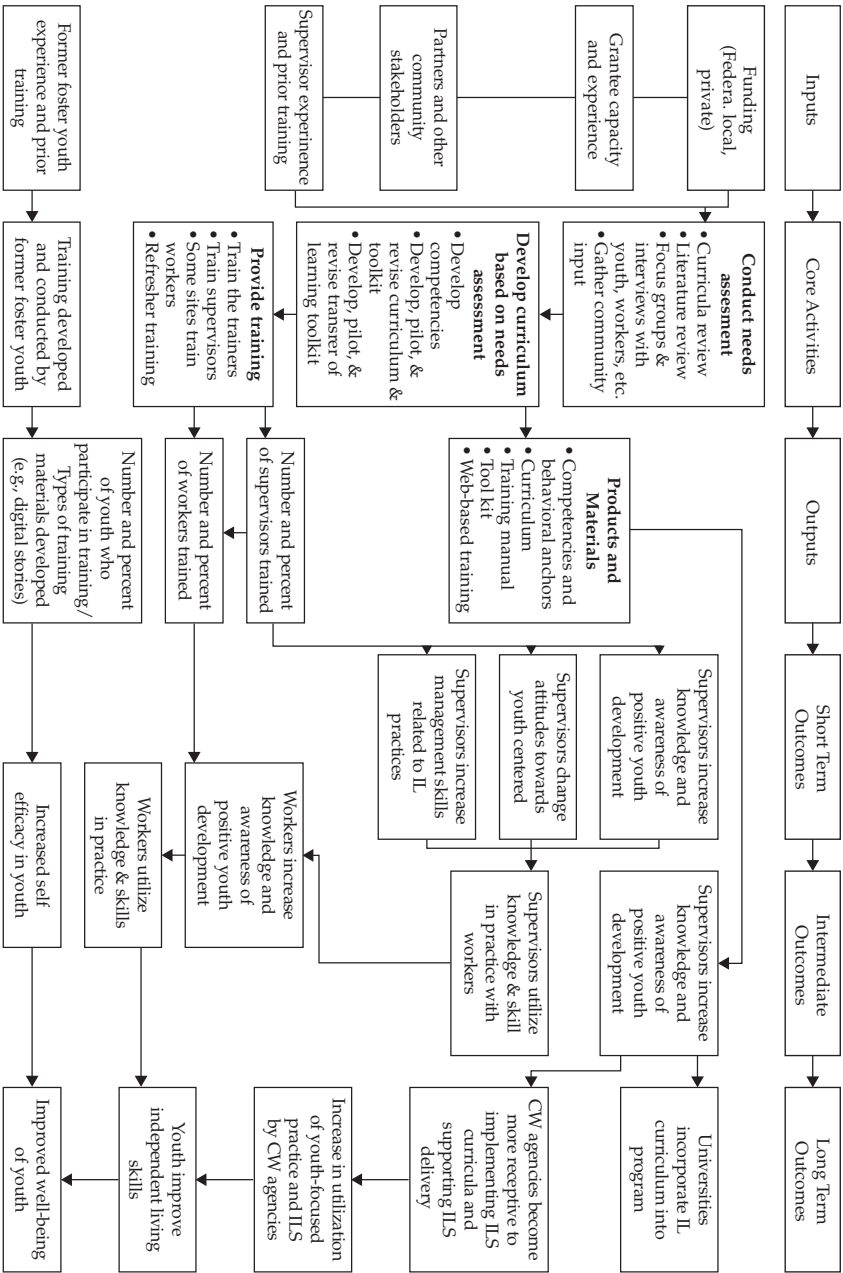


Exhibit 3: Cluster Logic Model for Child Welfare Supervisor Training in Independent Living Services Grants

The training projects identified intermediate outcomes, or changes in participants that are expected to present themselves after the intervention has occurred, or once enough time has passed for the material presented in the training to be absorbed and implemented. Supervisors are expected to utilize their new knowledge of positive youth development and management practices in their supervision of caseworkers. This outcome is reflected by supervisors showing increased levels of support for caseworkers, improved training and mentoring of workers, and a greater ability to use curriculum concepts when supervising staff.

The intention is that, through the act of a supervisor implementing curriculum concepts and supportive management practices into their supervision of caseworkers, the caseworkers will in turn increase their knowledge and awareness of positive youth development and effective ways of working with youth in transition. Through caseworkers' application of their knowledge and skills to their work with youth, long-term outcomes can be achieved. The training projects' long-term outcomes are focused on changes in youth, namely improved independent living skills and, ultimately, improved well being.

### ***Transfer of Learning***

Many of the outcomes hinge on the TOL that occurs between a supervisor and the caseworkers they supervise. There are key differences in the way this TOL happens. Four of the six projects subscribe to the program model described above, where supervisors are trained in the core principles and provided materials and activities to help facilitate a transfer of learning during their daily supervision of caseworkers. Two of the projects implemented a different program model, where caseworkers received training in addition to supervisors. The Kentucky project trained caseworkers and supervisors together because, during the needs assessment and program design phase, the grantee decided that to effectively change the practice of transition planning, supervisors and caseworkers needed to receive the same training simultaneously. The University of Iowa chose to train both supervisors and caseworkers as well, and like Kentucky designed the training to address their differing roles and responsibilities. Supervisors received a one-day training, before joining with caseworkers in a training that emphasized joint learning and teambuilding related to working with youth in transition. The California project is operating in a different context. Prior to this grant, the grantee was already operating a training project for caseworkers on Independent Living services. As such, this project is less concerned with ensuring a TOL from supervisor to worker, but this project is in the unique position to be able to test whether the additional support provided by supervisors and other managers for Independent Living services will lead to better outcomes for youth.

### ***Organizational Change***

In order to ensure that the TOL is effective, support at the administrative level

is critical. The grantees worked to gain buy-in from agency administrators for their approach to training, youth-centered practice, and transition planning. In order for these training programs to continue beyond the grant period and be integrated into the standard agency training, the grantees needed to gain and maintain support at the agency level. Projects worked to effect organizational change in various ways. Some projects included managers and administrators in their trainings. New York developed and delivered a one-day overview highlighting the main concepts of the supervisory training program and some TOL concepts for 50 administrative staff. Kentucky worked to train all existing child welfare trainers in the State's child welfare training system so that the training would be integrated into the existing state-wide training.

### ***Youth Involvement***

Youth involvement was a primary component of the training projects. Youth were engaged early on during the needs assessment phase, where foster youth provided valuable input during focus groups which helped shape the curriculum. The youth experience or "voice" was incorporated into the training either through youth trainers or digital stories. Digital stories are short videos developed by current or former youth that allow youth to share his or her experience in foster care and their transition to adulthood. Youth involvement served to bring a level of authenticity to the trainings and helped to change the training participants' attitudes toward foster youth. This component was also expected to impact the lives of those youth involved in the project. As depicted in the cluster logic model, former foster youth who participated in developing and delivering training were expected to increase their feelings of self-efficacy through the ability to share their experiences and "be heard" by the child welfare field. Additionally, youth trainers would be expected to gain new skills, greater self esteem, and—in the long-term—improved well being.

### **Evaluating Project Outcomes**

Through the child welfare supervisor training projects in Independent Living services, there is an opportunity to test the theoretical assumptions underlying the training projects funded under this grant cluster. Local evaluators conducted project-specific evaluations that examined the validity of the assumptions on which the individual grants were based. The findings of the process of testing these assumptions will determine what the impacts will be for the Children's Bureau, universities that train new and ongoing child welfare supervisors and workers, staff that work in child welfare agencies, and for the field in general.

The six grantees evaluated a range of short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes that were expected to occur in supervisors, caseworkers, youth, and the agency (see Exhibit 4). Common short-term outcomes expected for supervisors included: an increase in knowledge and skill in the key competency areas related to the curricula (i.e., youth-focused practice, Independent Living services, the four

core principles: positive youth development, collaboration, cultural competence, permanent connections); improved ability to understand and listen to foster youth; and increased skills related to coaching, mentoring, and supporting workers in their practice with youth. Changes in supervisors' knowledge, skills, and awareness were most often evaluated using pre/post tests; some grantees were able to collect follow-up data to evaluate whether changes were lasting. Grantees that trained caseworkers in concert with supervisors evaluated similar outcomes using pre- and post-tests.

The grantees primarily examined three categories of intermediate outcomes focused on behavior change and transfer of learning: supervisors' application of their improved skills, attitudes, and knowledge in their practice; the provision of increased support to caseworkers in providing youth-focused services; and increased training, mentoring, and coaching of caseworkers related to transition planning (i.e., transfer of learning to caseworkers). Through the increased support and training provided by supervisors, caseworkers were expected to increase their knowledge, skills, and awareness and apply what they learned as they worked directly with youth. The grantees employed various evaluation methods to assess these intermediate outcomes. Some grantees conducted interviews and focus groups with supervisors to determine whether supervisory practice had changed as a result of the training. Others conducted a review of case plans, looking for evidence of a change in practice at the supervisory and caseworker levels. Another strategy involved surveying or interviewing caseworkers to determine whether their supervisors were providing more support and training around working with youth in transition and if their own work with youth had changed as a result.

Three grantees (i.e., Iowa, Kentucky, and Texas) were able to use quasi-experimental evaluation designs to understand whether training supervisors in Independent Living services impacts the way caseworkers prepare foster youth for adulthood and whether youth show improved outcomes. The Iowa grantee undertook a cohort study of transition planning before and after training in order to observe changes in practice at both the supervisor and caseworker level. The Kentucky grantee utilized a treatment and comparison group, which allowed the grantee to compare data from case records of both groups and survey managers about supervisors and caseworkers from both groups. The Texas grantee assessed case plans and other documents completed before and after the training for both treatment and comparison groups.



Exhibit 4: Cluster Grantees’ Stated Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

Grantee	Stated Outcomes	Outcome Evaluation Method
<p><b>San Francisco State University</b>  <i>Y.O.U.T.H. Training Curriculum for Child Welfare Supervisors</i></p>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger skills and knowledge among supervisors in seven key competency areas.</li> <li>• Improved ability to listen to and understand foster youth among supervisors and workers.</li> <li>• Improved collaboration between public child welfare agencies, community partners, and former foster youth.</li> <li>• Increased skills and feelings of empowerment by former foster youth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors will demonstrate an integration of skills and knowledge in seven key competencies.</li> <li>• Increased level of supervisory support for frontline child welfare workers.</li> <li>• Improved supervisory training and mentoring of workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in organizational culture that integrates and applies learning.</li> <li>• Improved accountability and consistent practices throughout organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors took retrospective pre-test, post-test, and online follow-up survey at 3-5 months after training.</li> <li>• Caseworkers were surveyed 3 months after training to discern any changes in the training, direction, and support they receive from supervisors.</li> <li>• Interviews with agency administrators.</li> <li>• Comparing outcomes of offices who have received worker training on Independent Living programs and offices that have not.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Department of Social Services, State of Massachusetts</b>  <i>Supervisors Supporting Workers Transitioning to Adulthood</i></p>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased knowledge among supervisors regarding attitudes and behavior that reflect youth focused practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors provide support to social workers and program staff in “positive youth development” practice.</li> <li>• Supervisors are in place in every agency office that are qualified in specialized practice for adolescents in care.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity of agency to provide youth with lifelong connections and support and skills for successful, healthy lives after agency discharge.</li> <li>• Enhanced leadership to collaboratively build a system of services and develop a safety net for youth aging out of custody.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-/post-test measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to positive youth development.</li> <li>• Post-training telephone interviews with a sample of supervisors to identify changes in supervisory practice.</li> <li>• Post-training interviews with a sample of caseworkers whose supervisors were trained.</li> </ul>

Exhibit 4: Cluster Grantees' Stated Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

Grantee	Stated Outcomes	Outcome Evaluation Method
<p><b>Research Foundation, CUNY (Hunter College)</b> <i>Preparation for Adulthood – Supervising for Success</i></p>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased knowledge of youth-focused practice.</li> <li>• Improved attitudes toward youth focused practice.</li> <li>• Increased feelings of empowerment or “being heard” for participating youth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of curriculum concepts by supervisors when supervising staff.</li> <li>• Increased application of youth-focused practice in work with older youth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum is adopted into ongoing supervisor training.</li> <li>• Increased usage of products by agencies and individuals.</li> <li>• Increased permanent connections, enhanced preparation, and improved well being for youth in transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-/post-tests to measure changes in supervisory knowledge</li> <li>• Assessing outcomes through action plans developed by supervisors at the end of each module and their self-reported ability to carry them out at next module</li> <li>• Follow-up focus groups and interviews to discuss impact of curriculum on supervisory practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>University of Louisville Research Foundation, Inc.</b> <i>Evidence-Based Supervisor-Team Independent Living Training</i></p>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors improve skills in coaching and mentoring workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced quality of clinical support to foster care and ongoing workers.</li> <li>• Improved quality of training and mentoring with youth.</li> <li>• Enhanced quality of support to youth.</li> <li>• Creating evidence-based knowledge about program effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased youth stability.</li> <li>• Enhanced youth skills in employment, relationship management, and daily living.</li> <li>• Increased usage (statewide &amp; nationally) of evidence-based youth interventions and program strategies.</li> <li>• Fewer youth enter other systems such as health, mental health, substance abuse, and criminal justice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quasi-experimental design.</li> <li>• Pre-/post-survey of training participants with online follow-up.</li> <li>• Case file review to assess youth outcomes, TOL, and case mediators in caseloads of both treatment and comparison groups.</li> <li>• Managers in treatment and comparison groups will complete survey regarding behavior of supervisors and workers.</li> <li>• Client functioning assessment (<i>Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment</i>) with youth whose workers did and did not received training.</li> <li>• Review of State management data reports to evaluate impact of training on systemic outcomes.</li> </ul>

Exhibit 4: Cluster Grantees’ Stated Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

Grantee	Stated Outcomes	Outcome Evaluation Method
<p><b>University of Houston</b>  <i>PAL-STEP: Preparation for Adult Living—Supervisory Training and Empowerment Program</i></p>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased knowledge among supervisors about theory and application of the 4 core principles (positive youth development, collaboration, cultural competence, permanent connection).</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors transfer the knowledge gained by training CPS workers on theory and application of 4 core principles.</li> <li>• Increased application of the 4 core principles in CPS workers’ work with adolescents.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of the curriculum into State agency training for supervisors.</li> <li>• Increase in number of adolescents that successfully transition to Independent Living.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quasi-experimental design.</li> <li>• Online pre-/post-tests to measure knowledge.</li> <li>• Qualitative interviews with supervisors and workers to assess modes of and barriers to TOL from supervisors to workers.</li> <li>• Pre- and post-documentation (case plans and circle of support documents) from treatment and comparison groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The University of Iowa</b>  <i>Improving Outcomes for Youth in Transition Through Supervisor Training</i></p>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors increase knowledge of transition planning and core principles.</li> <li>• Workers increase knowledge of transition planning and core principles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors utilize knowledge and skill with workers.</li> <li>• Workers utilize knowledge and skill in practice with youth.</li> <li>• Increased self-efficacy of former foster youth.</li> <li>• Improved transition planning based on core principles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of transition planning in supervision practice.</li> <li>• Incorporation of transition planning in State training plan.</li> <li>• Integration of training content in University of Iowa child welfare course.</li> <li>• Improved outcomes for youth in transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-/post-test to measure knowledge gain for both supervisors and workers who attended training.</li> <li>• Follow-up survey with trainees.</li> <li>• Cohort study of transition planning before and after training.</li> <li>• Qualitative interviews of youth and their caseworkers.</li> </ul>

A number of grantees were able to evaluate outcomes expected in foster youth whose supervisors and/or caseworkers received the training. The Kentucky grantee assessed youth outcomes through a case record review and the administration of the *Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment* to youth whose workers received training and a comparison group of youth whose workers did not. The Iowa grantee, collected outcome data from youth in qualitative interviews and a case file review. For youth involved in the training projects, grantees evaluated the impact of participation through feedback received from youth and other staff involved.

The grantees also sought to explore outcomes at the agency level including: change in organizational culture that supports and applies learning, increased capacity of the agency to serve youth in transition, and the incorporation of the training curricula into the existing public child welfare agency training and University programs. Grantees evaluated these organizational-level outcomes by conducting focus groups and interviews with agency administrators, reviewing State management data reports, and tracking curriculum dissemination and utilization.

Evaluation is critical to determining whether a program's theory of change was veritable, i.e., whether a program's activities produced the intended outcomes. While this paper discusses evaluation methods, we are not able to discuss findings at this point, as the grantees' evaluation results will be submitted with their final reports to the Children's Bureau. The outcome evaluation findings will show whether the expected outcomes were achieved for supervisors, caseworkers, youth, and the agency. Coupled with data from the process evaluation, the evaluation findings will not only assess what was accomplished but whether the assumptions underlying the theory of change were accurate and provide needed context regarding factors that facilitated and hindered the implementation of the program and the grantee's ability to achieve the desired outcomes. The training curricula produced by the grantees as well as the forthcoming evaluation findings will undoubtedly contribute to the child welfare field and its knowledge base on working with youth in transition.

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