



Courts Fact Sheet: **Child Welfare Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Projects 2012-2014**

History and Purpose

Title IV-E funds are used to pay for costs of a child in foster care. They are not available to be used for services to prevent removal or for reunification services for a parent. A Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project can enable a state to use Title IV-E funds outside of the foster care costs restriction.

The federal Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (P.L. 112-34), which was signed into law on September 30, 2011, reauthorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to approve new Child Welfare Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Projects. The Waiver reauthorization does not provide additional funding. Instead, it allows more flexible use of federal Title IV-E funds to test new service delivery and financing approaches to improve outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system. HHS may approve up to 10 projects per year in federal fiscal years 2012 to 2014.

Approved projects must be designed to accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- **Increase permanency** for all infants, children, and youth by reducing the time in foster placements when possible and promoting a successful transition to adulthood for older youth;
- **Increase positive outcomes** for infants, children, youth, and families **in their homes** and communities, including tribal communities, and improve safety and well-being;
- **Prevent child abuse and neglect and the re-entry** of infants, children and youth into foster care.

A Resource for Innovation

Waivers allow state and tribal child welfare agencies to design and demonstrate a wide range of approaches for improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children. The reauthorizing legislation requires applicants to demonstrate that they have implemented or plan to implement two specific program improvement strategies from a list of 10 possible approaches, including at least one strategy that the agency has not implemented previously.

HHS will give priority to projects that:

- Focus on positive well-being outcomes for children, youth and their families, especially those who have experienced trauma related to maltreatment;
- Focus on the social and emotional well-being of children and youth who are available for adoption, as well as those who have been adopted;
- Are designed to yield “more than modest improvements” in the lives of children and families and contribute to the evidence about what works to improve child and family outcomes;
- Leverage the involvement of other resources and partners to make improvements concurrently through child welfare and related program areas, such as delivery of effective mental and behavioral health services and continuity of Medicaid eligibility as children move in and out of foster care.

How Courts Can Partner in the Waiver Process

Child Welfare Waivers are submitted through the state's child welfare agency. Judicial officers can be key partners in supporting the agency's application process by understanding and giving voice to systemic needs; by providing court data that would support new child welfare or court initiatives; by helping to identify ongoing funding for new initiatives; and by expressing judicial support for the application. Judicial officers may want to first reach out to the state Supreme Court or Court Improvement Program to learn about current state partnership efforts with respect to a waiver and how to join in the efforts.

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Potential Court-Based Components of a Waiver Project

Court-based Waiver project components include projects such as court facilitators who provide information on court dockets, procedures, services, etc.; court liaisons who coordinate information sharing between the agency and the court; specialty court coordinators; court mediators and court-based, family group decision-making staff. A waiver project could include funding for court analysts to coordinate data collection, analysis, and integrating with agency data. In jurisdictions where governmental budget crises have resulted in dramatic reduction of court staff, funding could support court clerks, judicial officers, and others, who contribute to timely safety, permanency, and well-being decisions.

Information on Evidence-Based Practices

Waiver demonstrations can support title IV-E agencies in their efforts to shift from a reliance on generic interventions to interventions with demonstrable improvements in outcomes. Research-based approaches include:

- Trauma screening; examples: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Trauma Version, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, and Pediatric Emotional Distress Scale
- Parenting interventions; examples: Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Triple P, Children’s Summer Treatment Program
- Functional assessments; examples: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Child Behavior Checklist, the Social Skills Rating Scale, and Emotional Quotient Inventory Youth Version

There are a number of extensive, publicly available lists and databases of evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions for improving outcomes in vulnerable children. These include, among others:

- SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices: <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Justice’s CrimeSolutions.gov: <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers/treatments-that-work>
- National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: <http://www.nectac.org/topics/evbased/evbased.asp>
- The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare: <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>

Submission of Waiver Proposals

The initial deadline for FFY 2012 waiver applications was July 9, 2012. While the Department will accept proposals after this date, review of later submissions may not be completed by the end of the federal fiscal year. Proposals received during FFY 2012 but not reviewed or approved will be carried over for consideration in FFY 2013. Please contact your child welfare agency administration to work with them on considering the development of a waiver proposal.

For More Information on Waiver Demonstration Projects

Judicial officers can obtain more information about the waiver demonstration project, including reports on states’ experience with previous waiver demonstration programs, on the Administration of Children and Families Website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/>. For questions in regard to the role judicial officers can play, please contact:

- Nancy Miller at the **National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges** at nmiller@ncjfcj.org
- Alicia Davis at the **National Center for State Courts** at adavis@ncsc.org

In addition, see the “*Frequently Asked Questions Related to Title IV-E Waivers*” document at www.NCJFCJ.org or www.NCSC.org.