FINAL REPORT

EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

SUBMITTED TO:

INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA), whose members include the 22 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), hired Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) to conduct an evaluability assessment of Family Development programs.

An evaluability assessment studies the extent to which an intervention can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion[1]. For this assessment, TPMA focused on Family Development programs' data collection and analysis processes to begin to understand the current and prospective evaluation processes that could be utilized for future evaluation studies. Based on the findings of the evaluability assessment, TPMA provided recommendations for future evaluation opportunities at the end of this report.

In order to develop an appropriate and feasibility evaluation plan for the agencies' Family Development programs, an evaluability assessment was a necessary first step. INCAA staff reported that while Family Development programs are offered across the state, INCAA staff were not clear on the data that each agency collected or reported, or the ways the program varied across the state. As such, an evaluability assessment was undertaken to better understand the data collection and reporting processes that are in place, as well as agencies' evaluation capacity.

Through this evaluability assessment INCAA sought to understand the following:

- **Program Implementation** – the extent to which the family development services are being implemented systematically and with fidelity to plans;

- **Evaluation Capacity** - each Family Development program's capacity to collect data and conduct an evaluation; and

- **Current Measurement Systems** - what data measurement systems are the programs currently using to report on their outcomes.

This assessment was intended to provide INCAA an understanding of the current data collection and reporting tools that are used, and any evaluation processes that each of the program implements. Understanding the data that programs are collecting and what issues the programs face when they are collecting it will help INCAA begin the process of developing an effective evaluation framework for the Family Development programs. Additionally, conducing an evaluation of the Family Development programs may provide INCAA with key findings that would be beneficial for future funding opportunities.

EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

To conduct the evaluability assessment, TPMA employed a data collection approach that included recruitment of program staff, reviewing existing program documentation, and interviews with Family Development Program Directors and, in some cases, agency leadership.

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[1] Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (2010). Organization for Economic and Community Development - Development Assistance Committee, p. 21, http://www.oecd.org/development/peer-reviews/2754804.pdf

Recruitment of Program Directors

To begin the assessment, TPMA received a list of 10 agencies that offer Family Development programs from staff at INCAA. This list included contact information for Family Development Program Directors and/or agency Directors. Out of 10 agencies, nine were identified as agencies that were currently implementing Family Development programs. Through collaboration with an INCAA Board Member, TPMA received referrals for four additional agencies across the state, which were then included in the recruitment efforts.

Recruitment occurred in several phases. First, agency Directors were made aware of the efforts of the evaluability assessment at the December 13, 2017 Board Meeting. Following the Board Meeting, a Board Member contacted the identified Directors to request that they share documents with TPMA for an initial review. TPMA then presented at the January 10, 2018 Board Meeting to reiterate the goals of the evaluability assessment, build buy-in for the process, and to make an additional appeal for documents to be submitted for review. After the document review was completed, TPMA contacted the Program Directors to schedule brief interviews to gather more information on data collection processes, successes, and challenges.

Document Review

To better understand the current data collection processes for Family Development programs and prepare for interviews, TPMA requested to review the existing documents, including the following:

- Original Project Proposals, including:
  - Logic models (as originally developed in the project proposal or modified);
  - Description of program goals;
  - Desired results.
- Project Reports, including:
  - Outcomes data (e.g., number of participants, number of activities provided, data on progress toward achieving goals, etc.)
- Data collection protocols (i.e., instructions to the Family Development program staff how to collect data on services they provide);
- Anything else deemed important for the purpose, goals, and aims of the program.

Program Directors provided a variety of documents to review, including notes on how they collect data, current data reports, Family Development matrices, grant narratives that articulate data collection procedures and plans, and in one instance, a program logic model. TPMA reviewed all submitted documentation and created a tracking matrix based on the information provided to create a snapshot of program goals, desired results, outcomes measured, current outcomes numbers, data protocols, or any additional relevant information.

Program Director Interviews

After completing the document review, TPMA scheduled interviews with Family Development Directors or agency Executive Directors to gain more information about data collection and evaluation processes and progress toward goals. Nine out of 14 identified Directors agreed to participate in the interviews; one program indicated they do not have family development

program currently; one program did not respond to the scheduled interview; and three programs did not respond to the request for interview.

Each interview was conducted by one or two interviewers from TPMA and lasted up to 30 minutes. The interviews all followed the same interview questions, and were focused on gathering information on current data collection and reporting processes, areas in which data collection and reporting are working well, ways in which current processes present challenges. Additionally, the interviews included discussion related to fidelity of implementation of Family Development programing to the original plans. The interviews started with a brief introduction and explaining the rationale of the evaluability assessment, and a request for a brief introduction to the program. The questions were asked in a form of a conversation rather than in order as they are listed. The interviewees' responses were noted and analyzed using inductive thematic approach[2], through which themes and patterns were identified. The responses were grouped into themes and reported in two main categories:

1. Data Collection Processes; and
2. Fidelity of Implementation.

Data collection processes focused on the current processes and systems, as well as the successes and shortcomings of those. Fidelity of implementation focused on the degree the programs are being implemented according to plans.

Table 1. Completed Interview Participants

AGENCY	INTERVIEWEE TITLE(S)
1. Brightpoint	Executive Director and Family Development Director
2. Southeastern Indiana Economic Opportunity Corporation (SIEOC)	Family Development Manager
3. Real Services	Director of Community Services
4. Tri-County Community Action Program (Tri-CAP)	Education and Volunteers Services Director
5. Northwest Indiana Community Action (NWICA)	Family Development Manager and Family Development Supervisor
6. Human Services Inc. (HSI)	Coaching For Success Coordinator
7. Interlocal Community Action Program, Inc. (ICAPCAA)	Family Development Director
8. Western Indiana Community Action Agency (WICAA)	Family Development Director
9. South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP)	Executive Director and Head Start Family Services Coordinator

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[2] See Thomas, D.R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation, 27*, 237-245.

EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Data Collection and Reporting Methods

Self-created data collection tools offer a no-cost option for data collection.

Program Directors of smaller programs or programs that have recently launched reported using MS Word and Excel documents to keep track of different clients and the services they receive. The data collection usually starts with populating the matrix in the interview and intake process with the client. The scores are then entered into a MS Excel document that keeps a record of the matrix score and is periodically reviewed for changes. In addition to the document where the scores are kept, one Program Director reported using a MS Word document for every client to keep track of every interaction, meetings, and phone calls. One Director reported that using Excel tools for data collection and tracking provides her with the flexibility needed to tweak the data fields to be collected as priorities or areas of interest shift over time.

Some programs are collecting data through existing tracking systems for other programs.

Some Directors reported that while they don't have a dedicated tracking system, the data for Family Development programing is embedded into existing systems at the CAA, including ClientTrack (HMIS) for case notes and client files, and Child Plus (Head Start). However, Directors reported that since families often come in and out of the programs so frequently, it is challenging to define entrance and exit points, and then number of goals or outcomes that clients meet, since the systems often do not talk to each other.

Family Development programs that use Captain for data tracking are pleased with the tool.

Program Directors reported that there is a group of CAAs that are using the Captain software tool for data tracking. They reported that during the development phase, the Captain tool was customized to meet the reporting needs of CAA programs, including Family Development programs. Program Directors described the tool as "fantastic" and "meeting our needs," and shared that it allows them to easily run reports, which provides the Directors with easily accessible data about the work that they are *actually* doing, rather than relying on what they *think* they are doing. Directors reported that Captain allows data from several programs at a CAA to be in the same system, so they are able to see all the services that a client has received from the CAA, even if not through Family Development. However, they noted that a recent change to using CAP 60 for EAP programs does not have the same cross-walking features with Captain, which they anticipate may result in more data needing to be entered into Captain.

Successes and Challenges with Data Collection and Reporting

When data entry is an assigned job duty, Program Directors reported less challenges with ensuring that programmatic data was up to date.

Most Program Directors shared that the frontline caseworkers were responsible for entering the data on their own clients into whatever tracking tools were used at each agency. However, those that are not using a software system, like Captain, reported that there is a designated staff member assigned to aggregating all the entered data for reporting purposes. Regardless of which

tools were used, Program Directors generally reported that data entry is not a challenge, since it part of the job duties of each frontline staff member.

Data that is collected is often necessary for both reporting purposes and programmatic use.

During the interviews, Program Directors were asked if the data that was collected for the Family Development program was useful data. All interviewed Directors reported that the data that they do collect is useful for reporting purposes, and also for ensuring that clients receive the necessary services. Rarely did Directors report that they are collecting data that they don't use. Those who use Captain reported that since the system was customized for the CAAs, all the data that is collected is useful, and there is not data collected that is unnecessary.

The Family Development Matrix is vital for the Family Development program but does not track changes in scores over time.

While most of the Program Directors reported that the matrix helpful and that they consider it to be the central tool for what information needs to be tracked to understand the client's progress, there is no database currently in place that would allow tracking the matrix scores over time. To overcome this, some agencies keep hard copies in the clients' central files. However, even those with hard copies report that it is challenging to use the matrix for longitudinal data measurement.

Likewise, some Program Directors indicated that they are using the matrix at intake, but not using it for reporting purposes. Rather, they reported, they are reporting outcomes related to o income, education, and housing, because those are of interest to local funders, even though the matrix has far more data included within it.

Some Directors struggle with collecting meaningful data on outcomes.

Some Program Directors reported that while their data collection tools allow them to track program outputs (number of clients served, staff hours spent, services offered), they struggle to collect and track data related to program outcomes. Directors who are using multiple existing reporting systems specifically reported this challenge, they noted that since the systems don't talk to each other, it is difficult to connect all the outputs across all the programs and determine meaningful outcomes that have been achieved.

Fidelity of Implementation

Family Development programs are offering services aligned to the spirit of the plans.

Program Directors reported that Family Development programs generally follow the plans and guidance offered in the training manuals. Several Directors reported that while they follow the general guidance offered, the specific services are offered based on what best fits each program's clients' needs. They reported that, for example, the frequency of home-based visits or in-person meetings, vary based on the size of their caseloads and the number of staff working in Family Development. They also reported that the Family Development programs are often supported through additional funding. As such, the priorities of the funding that supplements the program often dictates the priorities within the Family Development programming. Program Directors noted that while funding streams may change the focus areas within Family

Development, the spirit of the programs does not change, and the programs continue to serve the needs of clients.

There is not a standard measurement system that is used by all the CAAs, which limits efficiencies and collective learnings based on program data.

Several Directors reported that since there is not a standard measurement system that is utilized by all Family Development programs, there are likely data points that some programs are collecting that may be useful for others to consider collecting as well. While they noted that program is customized to meet local needs and funding obligations, the lack of centralized data collection makes it hard to understand the progress of Family Development programs across the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING IMPROVEMENTS

Consider implementing data collection software across agencies.

While using a data collection software comes with a cost, it may be beneficial for agencies with large caseloads, employing several case workers, or those that need to collect data for more than one program to consider purchasing a proprietary database. Such proprietary databases usually come with customization options that include both data collection and reporting and can be customized to meet the needs of different programs. In an effort to cut the costs of purchasing the database, one of the interviewees indicated that several community agencies opted in for using the same database to get a discounted price.

Consider developing a comprehensive reporting structure for agency use.

Program staff reported that while they collect rich data through their case notes and Family Development Matrix, they often only focus on those outcomes that are of particular interest to funders. Developing a comprehensive reporting structure would allow program staff to capture, in a report, all program outcomes, not just those that are highlighted for a particular funder. Reporting more program outcomes on a regular basis and incorporating them in pre-defined reports could strengthen the agencies' positions for further funding. A reporting structure that captures both quantifiable outputs (e.g., number of customers who gained employment) and outcomes (e.g., movement on the matrix) as well as success stories of the family development program would provide agencies with readily available data that would be beneficial for programmatic improvements, as well as current and future funding needs.

Consider aggregating data at the Association level.

If agencies across the state begin collecting like data through the use of a data collection software tool or comprehensive reporting structure, then INCAA may be able to collect like-data from all family development programs in the state and would then be able to better understand the statewide outcomes of the program. Reviewing data at the state level may also provide opportunities for more robust funding requests, particularly if agencies apply for funding as a consortium, rather than as individual entities.

Consider creating a learning community for Family Development programs.

Staff from several agencies reported that they do not currently have a forum through which to connect with other Family Development program staff across the state. While each program has been tailored to best suit the needs of local funders and communities, program staff are often working towards similar end goals, and a providing a space for program staff to share success and challenges with their peers at other agencies could provide opportunities for continuous improvement of programs and would allow program staff to troubleshoot concerns with others who may have found a solution to a similar situation, thus creating efficiencies while improving programming.

RECOMMENDED EVALUATION NEXT STEPS

Consider creating logic models for all Family Development programs.

During the Document Review phase, TPMA noted that only one Program Director submitted a logic model for review. By developing logic models for their programs, the Program Directors and CAA staff will be able to determine the connections between the program's activities and the outputs and outcomes that are anticipated. A clearer understanding of these connections will facilitate opportunities for identifying additional data collection needs. Additionally, logic models will help INCAA understand the ways in which the program is being implemented across the CAAs, which will position INCAA and the CAAs well to undertake an implementation evaluation.

Conduct an implementation evaluation of Family Development programs across the state.

At the conclusion of the evaluability assessment, TPMA recommends that INCAA considers conducting an implementation evaluation of the Family Development program across the state. Through the evaluability assessment, TPMA learned that while each program has been customized for each local community and the expectations of local funders, all Family Development programs are working towards the same goals. An implementation evaluation would allow INCAA, and the local agencies, to better understand the variations in implementation and fidelity to the model, as well as common success and challenges with the Family Development program. Through an implementation evaluation, recommendations for program improvement often arise that can strengthen programs.

TPMA recommends two approaches, outlined below, that could be scaled based on available funding. Both approaches serve a two-fold purpose: 1) to allow INCAA to gain deeper insight into the work that the Family Development programs are doing, and 2) to allow the Family Development programs to focus on the implementation of programs rather than solely on the data collection and outcomes assessment.

Option 1: Implementation Surveys

Survey Development and Administration. TPMA recommends the use of two surveys: one survey to be distributed to Family Development Program Directors, and the other survey to be distributed to Family Development Caseworkers. Both surveys will focus on the

implementation of the Family Development programs across the state and will be developed using an online survey tool. The surveys will be designed to provide INCAA with a deeper understanding of the strengths and challenges of the current implementation of Family Development programs, as well as recommendations for improvements.

Survey analysis. TPMA recommends conducting a descriptive and frequency analysis of the survey responses. The responses will be broken down by program characteristics (e.g., staff size, program age, main sources of funding, focused on family development or providing other programs as well, etc.) and geographic characteristics (e.g., urban area with one central location, rural area serving multiple locations, mobile service, etc.), as well as other factors as identified in partnership with INCAA.

Final Report. TPMA will provide a final report, including the graphics to highlight the data and relevant findings, which will expand on the understanding of Family Development program implementation in Indiana.

Option 2: Implementation and Outcomes Analysis

In a more comprehensive option, TPMA recommends conducting implementation surveys, as described in Option 1, as well as an outcomes analysis of current Family Development programs

Survey Development, Implementation, and Analysis. Both surveys will focus on family development program implementation from the Directors' and the Caseworkers' viewpoints.

Outcomes Analysis. TPMA recommends conducting an outcomes analysis of identified outcomes from the Family Development programs. TPMA will develop a tracking tool to outline the data to be collected from each of the programs. This tool will contain the data that exists in the programs' data keeping systems. TPMA also recommends including data in the analysis that may not already be collected by the agencies but are available from other sources or can be collected with minimal effort (e.g., local employment or poverty rates).

Final Report. The final report will combine the findings from both the surveys and outcomes analysis to provide a richer account of the work of Family Development programs across the state. This report will contain the graphics that can be used separately in other reports or as a resource to solicit for additional funding of Family Development programs.

APPENDIX A – FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are you currently collecting data?

2. How are you reporting outcomes?

3. Who is responsible for data collection?

4. What works well with your data collection?

5. What are some of the challenges in data collection?

6. How do you use the data to improve/change programs or the way you deliver service?

7. Are the services are being implemented according to plans?

APPENDIX B – FAMILY DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

Family Name:

Matrix Date:

Score

Dominant Life Areas	Income	
	Adult Education	
	Employment	
Basic Needs	Housing	
	Food	
	Child Care	
	Health Care	
	Transportation	
	Utilities	
Factors (Pos or Neg)	Support Systems	
	Family Interaction	
	Addictions	
	TOTAL	

Family Development Matrix
Life Areas

Income

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	+350% of OMB Poverty Level	10	
Self-Sufficient	220%-349% of OMB Poverty Level	8	
Stable	150%-219% of OMB Poverty Level	6	
Vulnerable	75%-149% of OMB Poverty Level	4	
Crisis	0%-74% of OMB Poverty Level	0	

Adult Education

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Bachelor's Degree or equivalent	10	
Self-Sufficient	Associate Degree or equivalent	8	
Stable	Diploma or GED plus some post-secondary certification or Middle Skills Certification	6	

Vulnerable	Diploma or GED	4	
Crisis	No Diploma or GED	0	

Employment

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Degreed, professional field	10	
Self-Sufficient	Full-time	8	
Stable	Full-time, underemployed	6	
Vulnerable	Part-time	4	
Crisis	Unemployed	0	

Family Development Matrix

Life Areas

Housing

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Owns	10	
Self-Sufficient	Renting-unsubsidized	8	
Stable	Renting-subsidized	6	
Vulnerable	Temporary Housing or in danger of eviction or foreclosure	4	
Crisis	Homeless	0	

Food

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Food of choice, nutrition needs are met, all utensils present	10	
Self-Sufficient	Food needs are met	8	

Stable	Food subsidies and budget meets the needs	6	
Vulnerable	Receives food subsidies, occasionally needs to use food pantries/soup kitchens	4	
Crisis	Needs food pantries/soup kitchens to meet monthly needs, lacks utensils	0	

Child Care

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Child care of choice, or no children in the household	10	
Self-Sufficient	Can pay for own, choices limited	8	
Stable	Subsidized care	6	
Vulnerable	Unsubsidized care, but irregular or inconsistent care	4	
Crisis	Unsupervised or unsafe	0	

Family Development Matrix

Life Areas

Access to Physical and Mental Health Care

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Private insurance, doctor of choice	10	
Self-Sufficient	Private insurance, choice limited	8	
Stable	Public insurance, established medical home	6	
Vulnerable	Public insurance, inconsistent care/medical home	4	
Crisis	No insurance	0	

Transportation

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Has reliable car, driver's license, adequate insurance, etc.	10	
Self-Sufficient	Access to Public Transportation or other means that meets needs	8	
Stable	Unreliable car or threat of loss, poor driving history, poor insurance coverage generally meets needs	6	

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Vulnerable	No car, uses public transportation or other means but needs aren't met	4	
Crisis	No access at all, no license, no driving skills	0	

Utilities

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Bills in household members' name and consistently paid on time. Home is efficient.	10	
Self-Sufficient	Bills in household members' name and consistently paid. Home is inefficient.	8	
Stable	No more than one month behind, bills paid to avoid disconnect	6	
Vulnerable	Due for disconnect or utilities in someone else's name	4	
Crisis	Utilities disconnected	0	

Family Development Matrix

Life Areas

Support Systems

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Family has ability to give support and actively does so (outside to the community)	10	
Self-Sufficient	Access to family, friends, and community support	8	
Stable	Case management types of support	6	
Vulnerable	Involved with CPS, DFC, or court system, no other support	4	
Crisis	Total isolation, or negative support	0	

Family Interaction

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	Full history of positive interaction, stability in both home and family	10	
Self-Sufficient	Positive interaction and stability	8	
Stable	Interaction and stability in the home or family	6	

Vulnerable	No interaction or negative interaction, no stability	4	
Crisis	Domestic abuse or neglect present in the home	0	

Addictions

Threshold	Criteria	Points	Notes
Thriving	No history of abuse	10	
Self-Sufficient	2 or more years removed from behavior/abuse	8	
Stable	12 months to 2 years removed from behavior/abuse	6	
Vulnerable	Less than 12 months removed from behavior/abuse	4	
Crisis	Current abuse	0	