



Pathways to IV-E: Data Management~ Numbers Count!

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May, 2012
Minneapolis, MN & Albuquerque, NM



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Why are we here?



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TRIBAL DATA COLLECTION



- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351), was signed into law by the President on October 7, 2008.
- The law provides federally-recognized Indian Tribes with the option to apply to operate a title IV-E program and seek Federal reimbursement of a share of allowable Tribal expenditures made pursuant to an approved title IV-E plan.



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TRIBAL DATA COLLECTION



- As specified by the law, the IV-E requirements apply to Indian Tribes in the same manner as they apply to States.... an Indian Tribe wishing to operate its own title IV-E program must adhere to the following requirements....
- Mandatory Title IV-E Requirements (8)
- Section 479 of the Act and regulations at 45 CFR 1355.40 and 1356.20(b) require title IV-E agencies to report data to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).



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AGENDA

- Why Data Collection is important
- Prioritizing data collection needs and selecting the most realistic method to document data
- Discussion of AFCARS
- Discussion of a Tribe's collection of data, implementing a system (electronic or paper) and/or selecting a vendor



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Important Data to Know...



- How Many Children are in Care Today? Last Year?
- Number of Licensed Foster Homes?
- Total Number of CA/N Reports Last Month?
- How Many Were Substantiated Last Year?
- Children with Multiple CA/N Reports?
- How Many Tribal Children are in State Custody? – ICWA Compliance?
- How Many Children were Returned Home?



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In collecting data, you would know...

- How Many Children in Care, Today? - 17
- How Many Children in Care, Last Year? - 46
- Number of Licensed Foster Homes? - 31
- Number of CA/N Reports Last Month? - 8
- How Many Were Substantiated, Last Year? - 22
- Children with Multiple CA/N Reports? - 17
- How Many Tribal Children are in State Custody? – ICWA Compliance? – 47%, No
- How Many Children were Returned Home? - 9



SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY



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WHY IS DATA COLLECTION IMPORTANT?

INFORMS PRACTICE

Reports
to Funders

Manages Work

FILLS IN GAPS



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WHY IS DATA COLLECTION IMPORTANT?

- We can validate that change is needed in policy and/or practice.

Example:

The number of open child abuse/neglect reports is increasing to the point where each worker has 35 open cases.

What change is needed?



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To make your case... what data would be needed?

The number of open child abuse/neglect reports is increasing to the point where each worker has 35 open cases.

- Abuse/neglect reports over a specified period of time (count)
- How many workers are getting assigned to those reports?
- Average time it takes to close out investigation (date investigation opens and closes)
- What is a manageable number of investigations per month?



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WHY IS DATA COLLECTION IMPORTANT?

Tracks and Monitors



- Where are the children in foster care placed?
- What types of services are being provided to their parents through the treatment plan?
- Of the currently licensed foster homes, how many are new this year? How many didn't renew their licenses? Why?
- What percentage of the children are in State custody? When is the next Permanency Hearing? Is the ICWA worker scheduled to attend?



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WHY IS DATA COLLECTION IMPORTANT?

Ability to Create Reports

Manager: “How many children in foster care need a higher level of care? Do we need to give foster parents additional training?”



Data can help answer:



TRAINING

A Discussion about AFCARS...



AFCARS stands for:

- American Foster Care and Adoption Research and Statistics
- Annual Foster Care Automated Reporting System
- Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
- Annual Federal Cost and Activity Response System



The Acronym...

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System AFCARS



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WHAT IS AFCARS?

- Don't Worry, it isn't a system, it's just a report!
- Case Level Data
 - 66 data elements on every child in foster care, and 37 data elements for every child adopted.
- Two Report Periods
 - Based on Federal Fiscal Year
 - October 1 - March 31
 - April 1 - September 30
- Submission Dates
 - No Later Than May 15
 - No Later Than November 14



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Benefits of AFCARS Data

- Builds a foundation of data that represents case management
- Child Welfare Outcomes Report
- Requests for data from outside entities
- Trend analyses

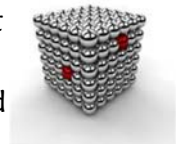


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A GROUPING OF THE ELEMENTS

- Possible groups for the foster care elements
 - Demographics Child/Caretakers (DOB, Gender, Race)
 - Removal from home information (Date of first and latest removal, manner of removal)
 - Current Placement information (placement setting, placement date)
 - Sources of support (foster care, TANF, child support)



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AFCARS Data Collection Logistics

- Data Collection
 - Does not have to be from an automated system
- Submission to ACF
 - Must be electronic
 - Must be in ASCII
 - Secure Data Transfer Protocols
 - From the IFR published in 2012, there is flexibility for the Tribes on the method of data transfer



What data collection system is best for you?



What is your data set?

- Reports
 - IV-B
 - BIA
 - Quarterly reports for executive branch.
- Justification of current staffing/resources or the need for more
- Specific area of data needed (e.g. kinship care)
- Notice a particular issue (like domestic violence) and need data to support other programs or monies

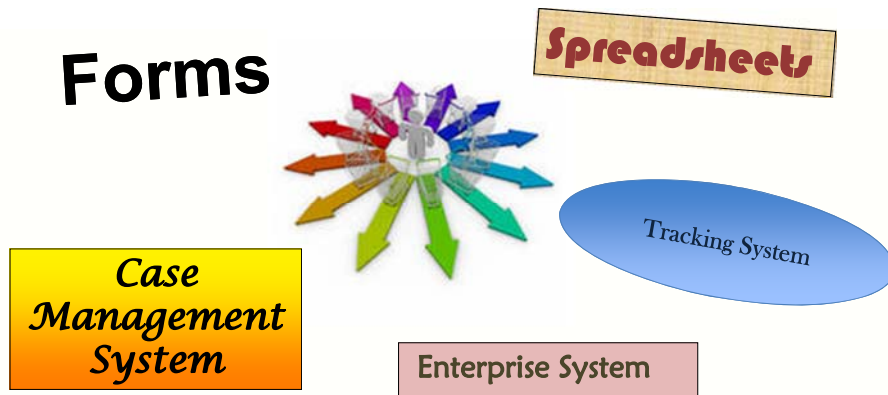


You know what data you need/want to collect, what system should you use?



Options to Document/Collect Data

Forms



Points to Consider



- Benefits
- Costs
- Political Climate
- Change Management
- Training
- Policy Development and Consistent Application of Policy
- System of Record
- Sustainability

Benefits

- Information possibilities!!
 - More, new, better, timely, and consistent.
 - Readily available to those who need it.
 - Can actually be more secure (than paper), and limited to those with a need to know.
- New Abilities!!
 - To measure/improve outcomes for children and families.
 - Ability to manage effectively by using all the information.
 - Ability to meet Federal, State, BIA, or Tribal reporting requirements.



Costs

- Initial equipment purchase
- Initial software purchase
- Software customization
- Software license and maintenance
- Training, training, and more training
- Data conversion from old system (automated or paper)
- Requirements development
- Policy development



Political Climate



- Is funding available for initial purchase, and all future maintenance needs?
- Do you have, or are you willing to develop policy that supports the business rules in the system?
- Are you willing to make decisions based on what the information in your system tells you?
- How willing are your staff to conform to using a system?



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Change Management



- “It's easiest to ride a horse in the direction it is going.” In other words, don't struggle against change; learn to use it to your advantage.
- Change management, or the lack of, is always the most overlooked aspect of system implementation.
- “Managing change” refers to *making changes in a planned and managed or systematic fashion.*



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Change Management—What's important?

- Strong team w/ support of top management
- Start small.
- Internal communication to staff and other stakeholders critical.
- Understand how new systems will affect the end users.
- Focus on business process (not the underlying technology)
- Get users involved early in the process.
- Train, train, and then retrain.
- Be realistic!!!



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Policy Development/Consistent Application

- Every system has built in “rules.” These rules generally monitor, prompt, or require a user to perform a function, enter information, or prohibit the same.
- Likewise, Agencies generally have written policy that dictates a certain “practice model.”
- In order for a “system” to work there must be developed policy (standards), and the system rules must be consistent with policy.



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System of Record

- A continuation of policy and its consistent application.
- If it isn't in the system, it didn't happen.
- Opportunity to guide, monitor, require, and enforce certain actions that reflect written policy.



Sustainability



Keeping all the Pieces Together...

Readiness vs Capacity



Does Readiness = Capacity?



- To get “ready”, the agency should:
 - Be open to change and willing to question itself
 - Be able to clearly describe the mission
 - Have key members brought in to the process
 - Have an understanding of how capacity building will further the mission
 - Commit the necessary time and resources
 - Be stable internally. An agency in crisis is generally not ready.

Is your Tribe ready?

- Is there Tribal code that will support adding a system of documentation?
- Is there policy in place?
- Does your agency have a practice model in place?
- Do you want to change?

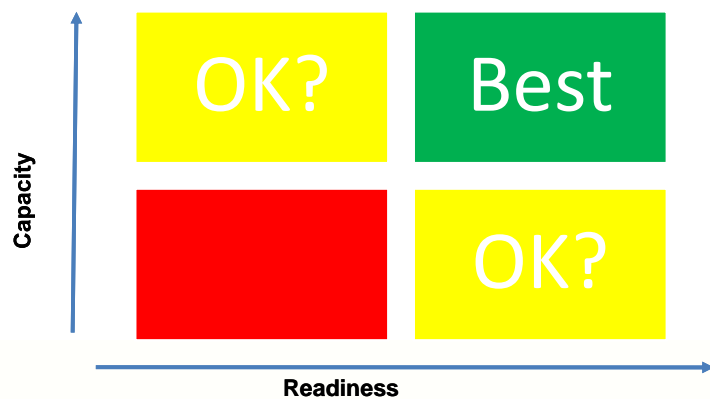


Does your Tribe have the capacity to implement a new system?

- Appropriate staffing
- Other resources that you can pull from if needed
- Monies available to put into a new system (not just for purchase and implementation but also for maintenance costs)
- Are you ready for change?



Readiness and Capacity



NRC-CWDT can help you...

- Assist in building capacity of a tribal agency looking to develop a case management system
- Enhance the use of a current case management system
- Use data for program improvement
- Adapt the Reconnect Families database tool to meet basic data reporting requirements
- Review procurement plans for an IT system



NRC-CWDT can also...



- In collaboration with NRCOI, facilitate Tribal/State partnerships
- Make presentations tailored towards regional meetings or tribal association meetings about topics to consider when building a data system.
- Provide information and networking opportunities at the Children's Bureau annual data conference



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Little children are still the symbol of the eternal marriage between love and duty. - George Eliot



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Questions?



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