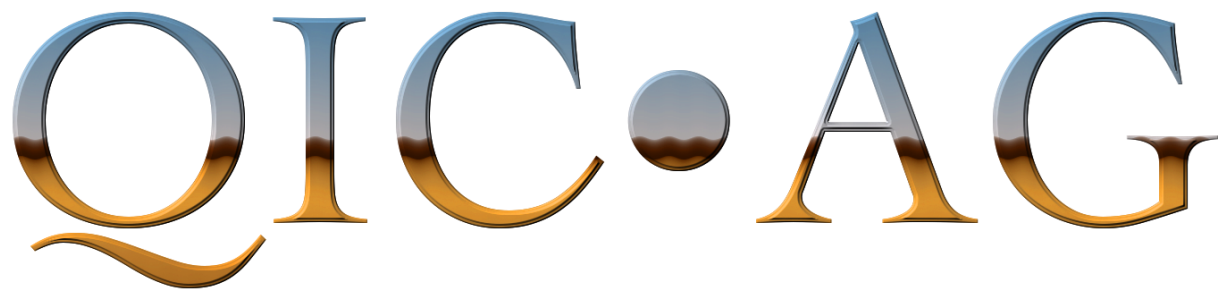


National Quality Improvement Center



Adoption & Guardianship
Support and Preservation

Site Expectations

The National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption/Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) will develop a multi-faceted system of services and interventions that support the permanency and stability of children who are moving toward or have already obtained adoption or guardianship. The QIC-AG was founded on the premise that child welfare agencies need to provide a continuum of services that will increase permanency stability, beginning when children first enter the child welfare system and continuing after adoption or guardianship has been finalized.

The primary goal of the QIC-AG is to develop evidence-based models of support and intervention that can be replicated or adapted by other child welfare systems across the country to achieve long-term, stable permanency in adoptive and guardianship homes for waiting children as well as for children and families after adoption or guardianship has been finalized.

The QIC-AG will work in partnership with 6–8 sites (state, county or tribal child welfare systems), to develop system capacity to achieve these outcomes promoting and supporting adoption and guardianship.

The expected long-term outcomes include:

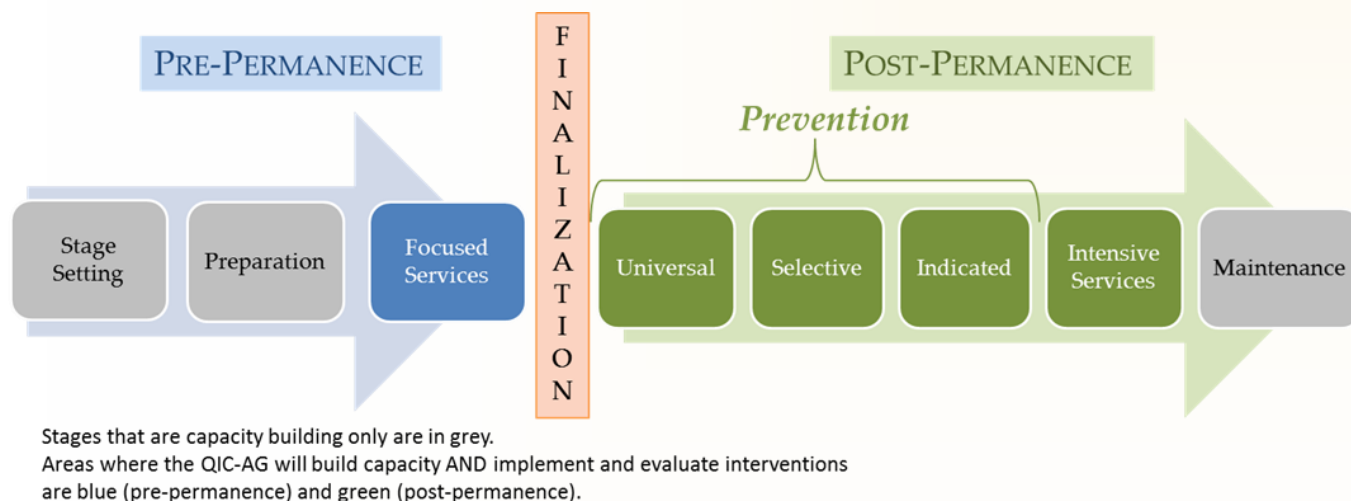
- Increased post-permanency stability
- Improved behavioral health for children
- Improved child and family well-being

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CONTINUUM of SERVICES

QIC-AG will work in partnership with 6–8 selected sites to develop the capacity of the local child welfare system to provide a continuum of services. Together, we will accomplish the following goals:

- Increase each site's capacity by creating a sustainable continuum of services that spans from pre-permanency to post-permanency;
- Conduct rigorous evaluations of interventions to determine what works, and to determine how best to replicate effective models of practice;
- Facilitate sustainable system change to promote and support adoption and guardianship; and
- Increase awareness of the benefits of creating and providing a continuum of services extending from pre-to post-permanency.



Pre-Permanency:

Services and supports offered to help prepare families for a successful, stable adoption or guardianship. The aim of these supports is to engage, prepare, and connect families to services focused on increasing resiliency, ensuring permanency, improving placement stability, and addressing emotional-behavioral health issues before an adoption or guardianship is finalized. In addition, these services are designed to provide caregivers with education and skills training that will improve their capacity to support stable permanency.

Post-Adoption or Guardianship:

Services and supports offered to increase resiliency, enhance placement stability, and expand caregiver's capacity to meet the needs of the children in their care. Services are targeted to the transitions of the household, the changing developmental needs of the children, and the emotional needs of both children and caregivers. Recognizing that services targeted to families in crisis may be too late to be effective, these services are targeted to serve families at the earliest signs of difficulty.

While working to build a continuum of services tailored to each site, QIC-AG and the site team will jointly select the intervention for implementation and evaluation at each site.

TIME LINE

2015

February and March – Sites work with QIC-AG to provide information for initial assessment

April – Announcement of sites selected for full assessment

April and May - Full assessments are conducted

June and July – Sites selected for QIC-AG and binding work agreements are finalized

July – Local site coordinators are identified and hired

August – Data sharing agreements are finalized








September – In-person, all-site meeting (9/15/2015-9/16/2015)

October through December – Roll out of implementation and evaluation plans

2016

January – Client intake begins

BENEFITS of PARTNERSHIP

-  An opportunity to enhance services already being provided to the target population.
-  Access to financial resources and expertise to enhance a site's continuum of services, including the implementation and evaluation of an intervention.
-  Peer-learning opportunity across the continuum of services, spanning from pre-permanence to post-permanence. Sites will meet quarterly via conference calls and an annual in-person meeting. In addition, a Web-based platform will enable partner sites to have continuous dynamic interaction and share their experiences.
-  Access to information, resources, training, and consultation, increasing a site's capacity to provide a continuum of services and more effectively promote and support adoption and guardianship.
-  The opportunity to gain experience in implementing a rigorous evaluation, including learning first-hand how research using a randomized controlled trial (RCT) or a quasi-experimental study design is carried out in a real-world setting.
-  An opportunity to be at the forefront of addressing the needs of children and families by providing supports in a coordinated, comprehensive fashion from pre-permanence through post-permanence, and by serving as a model for other counties and states across the nation.
-  Gain the ability to effectively use data to track children from pre-permanence through post-permanence. The project data can also be used internally by to support other programs and interventions for the target population.

SUPPORT for SITES

Assessment

QIC-AG consultants will assist sites with a comprehensive assessment of the continuum of services related to adoption and guardianship available from the site. QIC-AG consultants will identify areas in which services need to be expanded as well as those areas which are working well. The information gathered from the assessment will form the basis for the implementation plan.

Data Capacity

The QIC-AG evaluation team will work with sites to create data systems capable of tracking children and families from pre-permanence through post-permanence. After the project ends, each site will continue to have access to its own local data system—a significant benefit of project participation.

Evaluation

The evaluation will be led by members of the QIC-AG leadership team. The two-part evaluation will include one component common to all sites and a second site-specific component. Details of the site-specific evaluation will be determined in conjunction with the site team during the initial phase of the project. All sites will have access to evaluation consultation throughout the project.

Learning Community

To encourage sharing of best practices among the sites, the QIC-AG will facilitate quarterly phone meetings and yearly in-person meetings with all sites. A Web-based platform will also be available to enable site teams to have ongoing communication and to enhance learning among the sites.

Technical Assistance

A team of implementation and evaluation experts will be assigned to each site. These consultants will partner with the project team at each site to develop the implementation and evaluation plans for that site. Working collaboratively, the experts and site teams will select an intervention that will meet the identified needs of the site's target population. The consultants will then assist with all aspects of implementing the intervention, and will ensure that sustainability planning is included as part of the implementation plan. Throughout the duration of the project, sites will receive ongoing technical assistance through weekly phone calls and quarterly on-site meetings. Site teams will also have access to guidance from some of the leading national experts in child welfare.

Training

QIC-AG staff and consultants will provide each site with four trainings designed to enhance overall capacity development.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

No monetary awards will be made. However, the QIC-AG will cover expenses related to the implementation and the evaluation of the selected intervention model. Specific amounts will vary per site based on the intervention selected, but such expenses can include administrative as well as programmatic expenses. All expenditures must be approved in advance.

Expenses will either be covered by the QIC-AG in advance or approved expenses will be reimbursed with submission of required documentation.

A plan for estimated expenses will be developed each year with the sites. *Examples of allowable expenses that would be covered by QIC-AG include:*

- *Full or partial salary support for-*
 - *a local site coordinator, who is responsible for the oversight of the daily operations of this initiative;*
 - *a data liaison, who is responsible for the collection and input of data; and*
 - *additional staff needed to implement the intervention.*
- *Training resources (not IV-B or IV-E claimable) needed for the intervention. This expense could include consultation, training, or support of intervention experts such as purveyor of an evidence-based model.*
- *Costs associated with the acquisition and implementation of instruments associated with the intervention.*
- *Travel to meetings and conferences, both in state and out of state.*
- *Consultants identified by the site or the QIC-AG staff, and approved in advance.*

EXPECTATION of SITES

Sites will enter into a 4 ½ year partnership with QIC-AG. No financial matching is required. Site eligibility requirements include the following:

Staffing

A leadership team at each site will be responsible for the overall implementation of the initiative. This team will be expected maintain close communication with QIC-AG by participating in a series of regular calls and quarterly in-person meetings with QIC-AG consultants. Moreover, the site team will be responsible for ensuring that the QIC-AG initiative is kept at the forefront. Structured meetings include:

- Monthly calls with the QIC-AG team
- Quarterly in-person meetings with the QIC-AG team
- Quarterly conference calls with representatives from all sites
- Annual in-person meetings with teams from all sites

Data

After establishing data sharing agreements, sites will assist with the collection and submission of data to QIC-AG. Although public child welfare systems typically have mechanisms in place to collect data on children in foster care, few systems have mechanisms for collecting data after an adoption or guardianship is finalized (i.e., post-permanence). QIC-AG staff will work closely with site teams to set up mechanisms for collecting data and to ensure the safe, secure transfer of data. Eligible sites will provide the following types of data:

- *AFCARS and NCANDS data.* Copies of the files submitted to the federal government.
- *Subsidy population.* A list of families receiving adoption or guardianship subsidies.
- *Foster-adoption link files.* Files that link the IDs of children in foster care with their adoption or guardianship IDs.
- *Annual check-in.* The ability to ask caregivers (via postal mail or electronically) to complete a questionnaire about their experiences.
- *Site-specific data.* Specific to the new intervention.

Implementation

Sites will work closely with the QIC-AG staff to ensure the successful implementation of services and supports for the children and families served. Using the Children's Bureau's *Framework to Design, Test, Spread, and Sustain Effective Practice in Child Welfare* to guide our work, sites will assist with developing an implementation plan and will work with QIC-AG staff throughout the initiative to make certain that structures are in place to ensure successful implementation of the intervention.

EXPECTATION of SITES (continued)

Evaluation

Sites will assist with developing the evaluation plan, ensuring the evaluation structure is in place, and implementing the evaluation. Sites are required to fully participate in the evaluation, which will include use of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design.

Sustainability

Sites will also assist with developing a sustainability plan to ensure that the interventions put in place during this initiative can be continued after the initiative ends. Sustainability planning will be a key part of the implementation plan, and will be revised as needed throughout the course of the initiative.

Cross-Site Collaboration

Sites will be expected to share information throughout the life of the project by participating in regular meetings and activities. Sites will also be expected to develop collaborative products to help disseminate the lessons learned. Examples of these products include joint publications, presentations, manuals, webinars, or briefs.

Dissemination

Assist with disseminating information from the QIC-AG within the site's local jurisdiction and nationally. Sites will develop and implement a dissemination plan and deliver at least one national conference presentation on the QIC-AG initiative.

Products

Sites will prepare bi-annual reports detailing their progress with implementation and evaluation of the new intervention, and will develop presentations for the QIC-AG Advisory Board. Site teams will also work collaboratively with teams from other QIC-AG sites to produce cross-site products.



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