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## Proposed Modification of Evaluation Activities

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### Comprehensive Family Assessment Project

Ramsey County Community Human Services &  
University of Minnesota School of Social Work  
St. Paul, Minnesota

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### Planned Activities

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The evaluation plan (modified in October 2009) called for the following activities to occur in Years 4 and 5 of the grant period:

Year 4:

- Program: Incorporate feedback from Intake and Case Management into final CFA model and fully implement the final CFA model agency-wide
- Evaluation: Evaluate fidelity to the model (agency-wide), begin dissemination of findings, conduct post-tests for the school and time studies, and continue management study

Year 5:

- Program: Continue full implementation
- Evaluation: Continue School Study post-test and dissemination, conduct post-tests of cost and management studies, and complete post-test case record review

Programmatic changes (as referenced in previous semi-annual reports) at RCCHSD have necessitated a revision of the proposed evaluation plan. In particular, RCCSHD has implemented a change in Family Assessment (Differential Response) that has both structural and large-scale practice implications. In early 2011, RCCHSD moved to a “One Worker One Family” (OWOF) model of Family Assessment. It is believed that this model will be more beneficial to families than the previously utilized model (which had divided intake and case management services) as it will allow for greater continuity of service provision and more opportunities for FA workers to establish a collaborative relationship with families. This change in FA created a need to restructure the current staffing of both Traditional Investigation as well as Family Assessment cases, and resulted in changes in both worker and supervisor assignment. The changes in FA also created a need to further refine the CFA practice model to fit with the specifications of differential response (and the OWOF model) and to train new FA workers and supervisors in this practice. On the evaluation side, the timing of the post-test case record review and cases selected to be included in the case record review will be impacted as the implementation of the OWOF model is planned to occur during summer 2011. In order to include Traditional Investigation as well as FA cases, the case record has been pushed back to fall 2011.

Additionally (as previously reported), RCCHSD is continuing to implement a project, Service Quality Assurance (SQA), which seeks to develop worker job descriptions, naming conventions, and new documentation requirements. These changes are *consistent with CFA*; however, some of the original evaluation activities (e.g., the time study) overlap with new requirements of SQA. To avoid duplication of worker effort and to maintain evaluation activities that are meaningful to RCCHSD and the broader national audience, we are proposing further changes to the evaluation plan. Specifically, we propose eliminating the worker time study and the corresponding cost study and replacing those activities with an additional supervisor observation study.

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## Proposed Activities

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In light of these unforeseen changes, we are proposing the following modifications to the evaluation plan (please note that changes in the plan are italicized below and elaborated upon at the end of the modification proposal):

Year 4:

- Program: Incorporate feedback from Intake and Case Management into final CFA model and fully implement the final CFA model agency-wide (*including OWOFA cases*)
- Evaluation: Evaluate fidelity to the model (agency-wide), begin dissemination of findings, and continue management study. *The post-tests for the school study will be postponed until external (administrative educational) data becomes available in Summer 2013. The time study will be eliminated from the evaluation plan (as workers are required to log time in a different format – not comparable to the baseline time study - for SQA).*

Year 5:

- Program: Continue full implementation
- Evaluation: Continue dissemination and management study, and complete post-test case record review and focus groups. *The cost study will be eliminated from the evaluation plan, as data to calculate worker time costs cannot be collected due to the elimination of the time study. A full supervisor observation (of all seven supervisors) will be added the evaluation plan; additionally the NIRN model will be applied to the management study to assess organizational change via CFA implementation over time at RCCHSD. We will also continue to monitor fidelity to the CFA model and collect post-test school study data during this time period.*

In summary, we propose to replace the time and cost studies that were included in the original evaluation plan with 1) a full supervisor observation (to occur winter 2011) and 2) a study of organizational change that utilizes the NIRN model to understand implementation of CFA in RCCHSD.

Implementing these modifications in the evaluation will result in several benefits:

- Eliminating duplication of worker efforts and maintaining strong collaborative working relationships between evaluators and RCCHSD staff

- Gaining a better understanding of the impact and fit of CFA on supervisor roles and responsibilities as a result of full agency CFA implementation
- Ongoing assessment of fidelity to the model, which may allow for analysis of the association of components of CFA practice and outcomes
- A thorough understanding of CFA implementation, utilizing the NIRN framework
- An assessment of outcomes for both Traditional Investigation and Family Assessment Cases under the CFA practice model

We thank you for your time in considering our request. We look forward to further discussing these modifications with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Jenny Gordon

On behalf of the Program and Evaluation Teams at Ramsey County Community Human Services  
&  
University of Minnesota School of Social Work