Quality Learning Collaborative—Institutional Analysis

Selected applicants are required to participate in the **National Quality Improvement Center on Family-Centered Reunification—Quality Learning Collaborative (QLC)**. The QLC begins as soon as contracting is finalized with Local Implementation Sites (LIS) with an Institutional Analysis (IA). This analysis has been found to be extremely beneficial to child welfare agencies and is conducted in partnership with LIS at no cost.

The Institutional Analysis—a set of quantitative and qualitative diagnostic tools—helps child welfare, juvenile justice, and other public intervention agencies confront the structural contributors to poor outcomes for the children and families that they serve. Through the IA we seek to understand the full experience that families have when they encounter these systems. The IA, conducted in child welfare systems in selected jurisdictions, brings to light how policies, administrative requirements, worker experiences and job descriptions, accountability systems, linkages among agencies and institutional cultures all contribute to worse outcomes for certain children and families than others being served by the same agency. IAs have focused largely on the experiences of White, Black, and Latinx families. We work with sites to adapt elements of the IA in tribal communities together with the tribal community itself and our QIC-R partner, the Tribal Law and Policy Institute.

An IA is conducted in all jurisdictions participating in this QIC-R.

1. IAs are shaped by an agency's concern over trends in its outcome data (e.g., rates of entry into foster care, reunification patterns, foster care length of stay and/or timeliness to adoption or guardianship). In the QIC-R, IAs focus on aspects of family reunification.

2. IAs explore how workers are organized to act at specific stages of intervention. Through case processing maps, interviews, observations, case reviews, and text analyses, IAs help reveal problematic patterns, assumptions, and routines that inform case practice and shape the experiences of families.

3. The IA produces findings and conclusions supported by multiple sources of evidence. Agency leaders come away with knowledge about the roots of these challenges; how to work with families, community members, and advocacy organizations; and how to develop a more informed planning process to ensure equity in outcomes. The findings of the IA help shape the implementation plans of participating jurisdictions and provide needed guidance for areas of tailored technical assistance.

The selected sites will commit to:

1. Participate in the design of the focus of the IA based on identified areas of struggle in achieving family reunification.

2. Facilitate access to families (parents, caregivers, older youth, and foster parents) who are involved in family reunification.

3. Ensure timely and full access to complete child welfare case records.

4. Collaborate with the QIC-R to ensure a community-based accountability body exists and participates in the IA process. This body should be representative of community stakeholders, including parents and older youth with lived experience. They help shape the IA's focus and receive findings from the IA for use in implementation plans. For more detailed information on the IA process and what selected QIC-R applicants can expect, please see our pre-recorded webinar.