

Sustaining Change: A Models for Change Guidebook

by Child Welfare League of America, National Center for
Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, and Technical Assistance
Collaborative, Inc.

ModelsforChange
Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

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*As of July 1, 2010, Janet Wiig is continuing her Models for Change work at the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps.

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Models for Change

Models for Change is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice reform through targeted investments in key states, with core support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Models for Change seeks to accelerate progress toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system that holds young people accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, increases their life chances, and manages the risk they pose to themselves and to the public. The initiative is underway in Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Washington, and through action networks focusing on key issues, in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Sustaining Change: A Models for Change Guidebook

Introduction

Long-term program sustainability is perhaps one of the most challenging issues facing new and innovative juvenile justice programs today. All too often, programs receive start-up funding from time-limited federal, state, or foundation funding sources. When these grants end or seed money runs out, programs must find long-term funding sources, often from local or state governments that are faced with competing and multiple priorities and limited fiscal resources. These sustainability challenges are particularly poignant at times of economic uncertainty and budget shortfalls.

Despite the fact that “sustainability” repeatedly emerges as a major challenge for juvenile justice and human service programs, little is known about the factors that actually affect program sustainability. This dearth of research literature is the result of a number of factors, including the lack of funding for follow-up evaluations after grants and federal start-up funding has concluded. However, some factors influencing sustainability appear to be constant across those studies that have been conducted (Scheirer, 2005; Rog et al., 2004; O’Loughlin, 1998; Blasinsky et al., 2006; Steadman et al., 2002; Goodman et al., 1996). These include:

- Involvement of local stakeholders
- Diverse and broad coalition of support, including support from community leaders
- Ability to modify the program
- Congruency of the mission and/or goals of the community/organization with the new program
- Presence of a program champion
- Availability of funding
- Practical sustainability plans implemented early in the projects
- The ability to demonstrate positive client outcomes and program effectiveness

The importance of these factors to long-term sustainability was demonstrated during the post-funding evaluation of the Access to Community Care and Effective Services and Supports (ACCESS)¹ program, in which the evaluation team revisited the ACCESS sites after the conclusion of the demonstration project to assess whether the intervention had been sustained and what adaptations were required for sustainability (Steadman et al., 2002). The evaluation team found that in seventeen of the eighteen ACCESS sites, elements of the original service delivery program were continued post-funding. However, sustainability of these programs often required the sites to make modifications to the original program model. These modifications included:

- Reducing staff
- Allowing a higher client/staff ratio
- Reducing the number of clients served

1. The Access to Community Care and Effective Services and Supports (ACCESS) program is an 18-site, five-year demonstration project funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), to compare two different service conditions in their effectiveness at helping persons with mental illness avoid homelessness and improving their clinical outcomes, quality of life, and service use. The first condition is systems-level integration in conjunction with outreach and case management. The second is outreach and case management alone. There are ACCESS programs in nine states: Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

- Changing program eligibility requirements or modifying the target population
- Increasing the size of the catchment area
- Adding additional services

While not research based, efforts at identifying key factors in the sustainability of SAMHSA-supported Systems of Care sites suggest that, to achieve sustainability, sites must (Koyanagi & Feres-Merchant, 2000):

- Adapt to broader state policy initiatives;
- Tap into major entitlement funding and state resource streams; and
- Reallocate resources and generate broad community support through community organizing, social marketing, and media work.

There are undoubtedly factors, such as the availability of funding and the political and fiscal climate, that are beyond the control of juvenile justice program administrators and planning committees. However, the research clearly demonstrates that there are numerous sustainability factors that are within the control of the program, such as the availability of outcome data, the definition of the target population, the existence of a structure for program review and modification, and community awareness of and support for the program. This suggests that programs should begin thinking about sustainability early in the program planning and implementation process, as well as identifying potential sustainability barriers and options and opportunities for minimizing those barriers.

Strategies for Sustainability

Five broad strategies for sustainability were set out by Sara Mogulescu, Bennett Midland, and James Bell, W. Hayward Burns Institute, in a presentation² at the July 2009 National Resource Bank³ meeting. They defined sustainability as “long-term, durable change in practice.” The five strategies include:

1. Developing Institutional Response
2. Synthesizing Outcomes
3. Documenting Change
4. Piloting Solutions
5. Constructing Infrastructure for Ongoing Reform

The Models for Change work at the sites largely has been focused on the first four strategies to lay the foundation for sustainability. This report and the accompanying workbook further develop the concepts contained in these strategies and focus attention on the fifth strategy, constructing infrastructure for ongoing reform, recognizing that many sites have already considered this imperative.

Constructing Infrastructure for Ongoing Reform

There are several elements that can constitute the infrastructure to sustain “long-term, durable change in practice.” These elements include 1) leadership and support; 2) demonstrated outcomes; 3) administration and practice; 4) funding and budgeting; 5) marketing

2. Bell and Mogulescu, Powerpoint presentation, “Sustainability: Concepts and Strategies,” July 15, 2009.

3. The Models for Change National Resource Bank is a group of 16 leading national juvenile justice research, reform, and advocacy organizations that provide expert advice, training, and technical assistance to the Models for Change sites.

strategies; and 6) law and policy. These six elements are described below.

Leadership and support are critical to the sustainability of ongoing reform. Strong leaders who have been successful in achieving changes should be identified and supported, and a plan should be developed for the ongoing development of new leaders. In addition, mechanisms must be in place to ensure that collaborating agencies continue to support the program and actively collaborate with leadership. Oversight or governance groups are also necessary and groups that have been involved in the change that is to be sustained are likely to be the most effective. For example, in Louisiana, there exist by statute Children and Youth Planning Boards. These Boards have been instrumental in developing and carrying out the reforms that characterize Models for Change. To support change, leadership and oversight groups can establish formal review processes for the reforms by institutionalizing the preparation of periodic reports that must be delivered to them, reports that compel decision-making about any needed support, continuous quality improvement, or modifications to the reforms. If the group itself has incorporated the Models for Change reforms into its own desired outcomes (which would already be the case if the group was established solely for this purpose), it can, as part of its periodic self-assessment, evaluate its achievement of those outcomes.

Demonstrated Outcomes can be key to a program's sustainability. The ability to demonstrate that the program has a positive effect on youth and their families, the juvenile justice and other child-serving systems, as well as the community, can go a long way in making the case for sustainability. Therefore, mechanisms must be in place to capture data on key outcomes, to present those data in an understandable and accessible format, and to communicate those outcomes to stakeholders, collaborators, and potential funders. As part of their

Models for Change reform efforts, the local Models for Change sites have all identified key outcomes for their programs, and established systems to collect and report these outcome data. The sites can support their sustainability efforts by exploring ways to communicate the outcome information about their programs with policymakers, funders, and other key stakeholder groups.

Administration and practice changes, such as information and data sharing agreements, training and skill development, and re-engineering of service delivery systems are essential to the sustainability of ongoing reform. Most of the Models for Change sites are in various stages of development to complete information and data sharing agreements. The information sharing agreements are needed because so many of the reforms require the sharing of individually identifiable case information across the agencies involved in Models for Change in order to improve case planning and decision-making. The data sharing agreements are critical to assure that data is collected to drive and sustain the reforms. Data development has been a critical piece of the foundation for the Models for Change reform work. Each Models for Change site, and the reform effort as a whole, has established baselines and data elements that need to be a part of ongoing data collection to measure the improved system and client outcomes. Reliable data has to be available to achieve "long-term, durable change in practice."

One of the greatest barriers to successful implementation of change is the failure to educate personnel and equip them with the tools and skills to carry out reforms. Personnel need to be trained at all levels of the organization and a system should be put in place to assure that new personnel are oriented and educated to carry on the work. To correspond with the reforms, procedure manuals and quality assurance processes need to be updated.

The re-engineering of service delivery systems is discussed below in relation to funding and budgeting processes, but there is more to re-engineering as agencies take on reform efforts. Agencies may need to reexamine what they value, what their desired outcomes are, and what they measure. This reexamination would support the opportunity to integrate their daily practice with their Models for Change reforms.

Funding and budgeting processes are effective tools in the infrastructure to sustain reform. This is particularly relevant as Models for Change sites work to institute evidence-based practices. Sites have been challenged with securing the funds to support the delivery of evidence-based practices. Enduring change in this arena is most likely to be achieved if jurisdictions can dedicate a source of funds in their budgets rather than just securing the one-time or short term funding that is often the means of getting these programs established. This may be achieved through the wholesale re-engineering of service delivery systems, giving up those practices that do not produce the desired outcomes and using the funds saved to support evidence-based practices. Further, employing such tools as performance-based contracting and budgeting for outcomes can establish the infrastructure to sustain the reforms. If budgeting processes are truly driven by the outcomes sought from the reforms, there is a much greater likelihood of sustaining those reforms.

Marketing strategies that convey information to critical groups about the importance and effectiveness of the program can help to build stakeholder support for the program and ensure that resources continue to be directed towards the program. Therefore, program leaders should identify or develop products that easily can be disseminated and explore ways in which to use the media to raise awareness about the program. Given that marketing can be an added expense for programs, these marketing strategies should be implemented

according to a plan in which critical target audiences, and effective mechanisms for reaching those audiences, are identified. Each Models for Change state has identified a local marketing group to work with the state and local sites in developing effective and efficient marketing strategies. The Models for Change sites should consider working with these groups to help them develop a marketing plan.

Law and policy development is often regarded as a tool certain to achieve a long-term, durable change in practice. With the adoption of new law and policy, all actors in a system are mandated to do things in a prescribed manner and this is a tool that can be used to hold people accountable for their practice. To effectively use this tool for ongoing reform, it is critical to carefully identify what law and policy changes are needed to implement and sustain changes in practice. Leaders must be identified who will be champions for law and policy change and determine how these changes actually will be embedded in daily practice. This should include consideration of who needs to be involved in the development of the changes in law and policy and who needs to be engaged to see the value of the changes. This may also include the development of interagency agreements to assure that policy changes are carried out by all affected agencies and personnel.

Planning for Sustainability

It is important to distinguish between sustaining Models for Change and disseminating the changes statewide (moving “to scale”) or replicating the practice in one or more additional locations. There is some overlap, as some of the changes made in one or more Models for Change jurisdictions may require action at the state level to ensure sustainability (changes to Medicaid state plan, etc.). The guidance suggested here focuses on maintaining positive change, and as noted above,

it is to enhance the focus on the final element of the framework presented above, “constructing infrastructure for ongoing reform.”

The first relevant task is to clearly identify the one or two changes that the Models for Change experience has demonstrated to have the most impact on the Targeted Areas for Improvement. Once these have been identified, it will be useful to pursue a series of questions or prompts that should help sites identify activities that will contribute to continuation of the change. In order to discuss and plan for the sustainability of a program, there must be a clearly defined and well-structured program to sustain and a perceived need for the program in the community. In particular, the following should be in place:

- The program’s mission, goals, and objectives should be clearly articulated and specified.
- The key components and procedures of the program should be detailed in a manual.
- There should be recognition of the need for such a program in the community, as evidenced by public statements or a formal needs assessment.
- Those aspects of the program that are most important to sustain, if it is not possible to maintain the entire program, should be identified.

Once this initial task is completed, an informed and effective sustainability plan can be developed. The attached workbook provides a step-by-step comprehensive process to guide sites’ sustainability planning. The questions included in the workbook are organized around the six elements or organizing concepts as discussed above: 1) leadership and support; 2) demonstrated outcomes; 3) administration and practice; 4) funding and budgeting; 5) marketing strategies; and 6) law and policy.

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Sustainability Planning Workbook

SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING WORKBOOK*

Before you begin to work through the questions in this workbook on sustainability, please identify the programs or project components that you are most interested in sustaining based on your review of the material on planning for sustainability on pages 6 and 7.

Program/Project Component:

Program/Project Component:

Program/Project Component:

Program/Project Component:

Program/Project Component:

*This workbook was adapted from a sustainability planning workbook developed for use at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network.

Leadership and Support

Having an effective leader and the involvement of key collaborative stakeholders are critical to building the support necessary for the continuation of programs. Given the target population of youth, it is critical that there be not only strong program leadership, but also a broad base of support across multiple agencies to ensure the continuation of the program.

Leadership

- Is there effective leadership for the program?

- Is leadership committed to long-term involvement with the program? If not, can the leaders be provided incentives of some kind to remain engaged with the program?

- Is there any structure in place that can assume some of the coordination and leadership functions of the Lead Entity?

- Is there a plan for identifying and nurturing new leaders?

Key Collaborating Stakeholders

- Does the program and leadership have support from key stakeholders in the community and relevant agencies and providers?

- Are there certain organizations/individuals without whose continued involvement the programs will not likely survive? If so, is there a strategy for keeping them engaged?

- Are there formal interagency agreements in place which can be used as a building block for maintaining and expanding the program?

- Are there opportunities to integrate the program into other key program areas already in existence in other agencies?

Demonstrated Outcomes

The ability to demonstrate positive outcomes and program effectiveness have been found to be critical in the sustainability of programs.

- What data exists from the program itself or from the overall Models for Change evaluation that can help assess the effectiveness of the program?

- What other information can be used to support the need for and effectiveness of the program?

- Have findings been reported in an easy to read format?

- Have outcomes been communicated to stakeholders, collaborators, and potential funders?

Administration and Practice

In order to successfully sustain a program, changes in administration and practice must be understood, acknowledged, and a plan must be developed to maintain those changes.

Administrative Changes

- Were data collection activities supported by MacArthur funding? Were information and data sharing agreements or other mechanisms put in place to implement the changes and, if so, is there a plan for their continuation and/or updating?

- If you intend to modify the practice after the close of the grant, do you have a mechanism for documenting changes and do you have a method of assessing outcomes once you make changes?

- If the practice is a recognized evidence-based intervention, do you have a plan to ensure fidelity to the model?

- Is there a mechanism in place to ensure continuous improvement and the re-energizing of the successful innovation? If not, can one be devised?

Changes to Staff Practices

- What changes were made to routine activities of staff who delivered the services in a new way? Were the changes memorialized in updated procedure manuals?

- Are program staff required to have any special skills or competencies? If so, have job descriptions been modified to reflect those skills or competencies?

- Was special training required to initiate the change? Have provisions been made for training new staff as existing staff turn over?

Funding and Budgeting

Of course, one of the more obvious and critical factors in sustaining a program is the availability of funds.

- Has there been an analysis of the funding needed to maintain the program?

- Has there been any re-engineering of service delivery to forgo practices that do not produce desired outcomes and shift the funds to support the new programming?

- Are secure funding stream(s) in place that can help to sustain the program in the future or help expand it to other sites?

- » If not, has a plan been developed to examine alternative funding strategies and evaluate options? From what source(s)? Who will take the lead?

- Has the possibility of using other state or federal resources, such as Medicaid and IV-E, to help support the program or key aspects of the program been explored? If not, is there a plan to have this reviewed? Who will take the lead?

Marketing Strategies

It is critical that any information regarding the importance and effectiveness of a program be visible and shared with critical targeted groups.

- What products are available or could be developed that would help to disseminate information about the program (e.g. brochures, websites, media releases)?

- Has a marketing plan been developed?

- Have you identified your target audiences for any marketing efforts? What communication vehicles would be most appropriate for reaching each target audience? Are there particular “messengers” who would be most effective in reaching those audiences?

- If you were able to identify either cost savings, cost avoidance or other programmatic efficiencies, is there a mechanism in place to publicize and demonstrate those savings or efficiencies?

- » If so, what are the most promising audiences?

- » If not, what would it take to build such a plan or mechanism? Who would lead the work to build it?

Law and Policy

Changes in law and policy can often help to achieve long-term changes. Such changes, however, require both the identification of champions to advocate for those changes and planning for how those changes will be incorporated into practice.

- Were local (municipal, county/parish, or regional) policy changes enacted that need to be ratified by a parent organization or organizations at the state level? Is there a plan for building the case for ratification if needed?

- » If not, who will take the lead on developing the plan? Who are the key individuals that will need to assent for the plan to be successful? Can you identify “champions” to help seek their approval?

- Are there changes in policy or law that were not enacted but which your experience suggests should be enacted? Do you need/have a plan to pursue those changes either locally or at the state level?

- If local interagency agreements were integral to the success of the project(s), would state-level analogs to those agreements help to ensure that they persist? If yes, do you have a plan for working with state-level policymakers to implement the needed agreements?

Next Steps in Planning for Sustainability

Key Elements for Sustainability	Efforts Already Underway	Next Steps	When	Who
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Leadership and Support</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Demonstrated Outcomes</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Next Steps in Planning for Sustainability *continued*

Key Elements for Sustainability	Efforts Already Underway	Next Steps	When	Who
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Administration and Practice</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Funding and Budgeting</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Next Steps in Planning for Sustainability *continued*

Key Elements for Sustainability	Efforts Already Underway	Next Steps	When	Who
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Marketing Strategies</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>Law and Policy</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

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