

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES INITIATIVE EVALUATION SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARIES

[Excerpt from the Final Report]

Across the entire evaluation period (minus a few reporting period shifts due to staffing changes and/ or unforeseen factors), an evaluation report was submitted and an associated presentation made bi annually from 2012-2022. The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the impact of the Pascale Sykes Foundation Whole Family Approach on the well-being of families in Southern New Jersey. Each progress report provided updates from the indicated reporting period. Organizational findings drew mainly from qualitative data collected by the evaluation team during interactions with the collaboratives. Family findings incorporated some qualitative data, but were drawn primarily from the longitudinal survey administered to target and comparison families from the outset of the project to May 2022. Family findings were usually reported around the three pillars that the Pascale Sykes Foundation identified as key to families' well-being: 1) child well-being, 2) healthy relationships, and 3) financial stability.

REPORTING PERIOD: MAY 1, 2012 TO OCTOBER 30, 2012

This report was the first to be delivered by the WRI evaluation team. From the outset of the work, the evaluation was conceptualized as a large, quasi-experimental family study to determine the impact of Pascale Sykes-funded collaborative efforts on supporting low-income families in Southern New Jersey, and specifically concentrated on child well-being, financial stability, and family relationships. The goal of this report was to update the Pascale Sykes Foundation on the development and implementation of data collection protocols and communication with the collaboratives. The report also presented preliminary data from the Social Network Analysis (SNA), pilot interviews with families, pilot focus groups with collaborative staff, and observational notes from collaborative meetings.

Study Preparation

At this stage, the team had completed essential administrative tasks and project management tasks including IRB approval, staffing, training, database development, case form development, and acquisition of the survey tool MediaLab as well as the computers that would be used for data collection.

Methodology

Organizational Studies: pertaining to data describing the collaboratives' organizational activities. The Social Network Analysis (SNA) instrument was pilot-tested and finalized. The SNA examined how collaboratives worked together along lines of communication, confidence, and case management. The evaluation team also pilot-tested focus group protocols with collaborative staff and leadership ($n = 29$) and observed collaborative meetings across the four counties, Atlantic, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem.

Background Studies: pertaining to publicly available data for the counties of interest in Southern New Jersey. County profiles for Atlantic, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties were created based on US census data and other publicly available New Jersey data departments.

Family Studies: pertaining to the data that would be collected directly from participants for the target and comparison groups. Family survey and interview guides were pilot-tested and finalized. For the comparison group, the team worked on developing the criteria for comparison families and identifying non-collaborative agencies and venues through which to recruit comparison families.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Focus Groups

Collaborative (Line/Field) Staff: Reported strengths included case managers being knowledgeable about resources in their respective communities, promoting activities around information sharing, utilizing best practices, and service delivery to families, and building up informal support systems for families. Regular in-person meetings were the most common contact with families, followed by calls and texts when in-person was not possible. Identified challenges included recruiting families that meet the eligibility criteria set by the Pascale Sykes Foundation, keeping families engaged in the service programs, and disconnects between family goals and the goals of the initiative.

Leadership (Executive) Staff: Reported strengths included sharing a common vision among the lead and partner agencies, working well together, and maintaining a positive attitude when confronting strategic challenges. Identified challenges included recruiting families that meet the criteria around employment, income, and family structure set by the Pascale Sykes Foundation, and encouraging in crisis families to work on both immediate solutions as well as preventative measures.

Collaborative Observations

Five collaborative observations across the four counties were completed. Work processes were generally well-organized, relationships among lead agencies and collaboratives were amicable, and all agencies played a significant role in meetings, engaging in conversations on updates, partnerships and strategies to address goals. However, few discussions revolved around specific goals relating to financial stability, child well-being, and family relationships. Observations evidenced multiple levels of productive problem-solving, however, none of the collaboratives supplemented their problem-solving strategies with facts, statistics, and best practices to guide resolutions. Strong group cohesion was evident among collaboratives through the open sharing of ideas, engaged listening, and constructive feedback.

REPORTING PERIOD: NOVEMBER 1, 2012 TO APRIL 30, 2013

The goal of this report was to provide updates on the pilot testing of tools for the evaluation and the evolution of the collaboratives. This report also introduced a separate analysis for the collaboratives that engaged primarily in transportation services. Findings relied on preliminary data from family interviews and focus groups and observations with collaboratives.

Methodology

Organizational Studies: The evaluation team conducted three focus groups ($n = 16$) with collaboratives' staff and leadership. The evaluation team also observed seven collaborative meetings across the four counties (Atlantic, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem) along with other meetings to obtain relevant information concerning the project. Additionally, the evaluation team attended a total of eight transportation workgroup meetings for Atlantic and Cumberland Counties from December 2012 to April 2013.

Family Studies: Eleven family interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide and administered to primary and secondary caregivers and adolescents aged 11-19 years old. The evaluation team completed eleven pilot interviews with four families in both English and Spanish. The evaluation team continued recruiting comparison families through outreach to comparison agencies and presentations at community meetings and with agency families.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Focus Groups

Collaborative (Line/Field) Staff: Some participants discussed the opportunity to expand services to include the family as a whole unit as opposed to serving specifically

targeted family members. Many felt partnering with agencies that have a particular skill set or can provide a specific service was valuable. Identified challenges included barriers to families obtaining suitable and affordable housing as well as sustainable employment, especially for those who had previously been incarcerated, which staff noted was difficult to overcome.

Leadership (Executive) Staff: A number of staff believed the initial problems encountered were less evident in the second year. The participants believed shifting their thinking has proved to be an effective measure for engaging the families who fit the Pascale Sykes Foundation's scope of service. Participants also discussed opportunities for ensuring the sustainability of the collaboratives after Pascale Sykes Foundation's funding ends. Some of the challenges that were discussed include acknowledging that the additional caseload was a challenge in terms of time management.

Collaborative Observations

Seven collaborative observations across the four counties were completed. Collaboratives used meetings to discuss updates and issues and to brainstorm solutions. There was evidence of the use of soft and hard data to track family progress and to problem-solve. It was also observed that group cohesion increased throughout the collaboratives.

Transportation Workgroup Observations

Eight workgroup observations were facilitated or co-facilitated by the Pascale Sykes Foundation. Many of the collaboratives played a significant role in the discussion at meetings and held themselves accountable for completing tasks, although there were some occasions where there appeared to be miscommunication. The collaboratives utilized multiple levels of problem-solving. Collaboratives used hard data (facts and statistics) and soft data (feelings, opinions, frustrations) in their problem-solving processes.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Family Interviews

Family Relationships: An important theme that emerged throughout the eight interviews with caregivers was the strong connection between family members. Interviews demonstrated the bond between both caregivers and between caregivers and their children.

Financial Stability: Families were open about their financial challenges, such as barriers and obstacles around employment opportunities and inability to find work. Despite challenges, families were satisfied with the progress they have made and optimistic about their future.

Child Well-Being: One noteworthy theme was children's ability to communicate with their caregivers, but especially the connection they had with their mothers. Children felt that family needs were being met and talked about their future plans and goals for their lives.

Collaboratives: Family members identified with the case manager or coordinator more than the collaborative as a whole. The majority of adults felt extremely positive about the services they received from collaboratives.

Other Emerging Themes: Other themes included the impact of excessive work schedules on child well being and family relationships, challenges with employment faced by individuals with prior convictions, and family relationships between traditional and nontraditional families.

REPORTING PERIOD: MAY 1, 2013 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2013

The goal of this report was to share findings from family interviews and focus groups and observations with collaboratives, including the transportation collaboratives. Updates on the data collection and recruitment of comparison families were included.

Methodology

Organizational Studies: The Social Network Analysis (SNA) survey was pilot-tested with two collaboratives, Family Enrichment Network (FEN) and Heart of Gloucester County. The evaluation team continued holding focus groups with executive staff and line staff from collaboratives and observing collaborative meetings across the four counties (Atlantic, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem). For the transportation component, the evaluation team continued attending transportation workgroup meetings, conducting observation analyses and focus groups, and distributing the transportation survey.

Family Studies: Recruiting and screening efforts for family interviews continued for both collaborative and comparison families, resulting in 53 interviews as of the time of this report. To boost the recruitment of comparison families, the evaluation team attended matching agency events and community events, and developed materials with "Family Counts" branding.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Communication: Both collaboratives reported having a free-flowing, reciprocal communication pattern among partner agencies, but lead agencies were noted to communicate less than the partner agencies.

Confidence: A number of agencies from both collaboratives expressed confidence in their partner agencies, but this was not consistent across all agencies. Some agencies expressed confidence with specific partner agencies, and at least one expressed a lack of confidence in the lead agency meeting all referral and assistance requests.

Case Management: Both collaboratives identified one agency that processed referrals or handled the case management. This streamlined case management structure reduced service duplication and assured that family needs were met.

Focus Groups

Collaborative (Line/Direct Service) Staff: Staff from various agencies reported that the collaborative model increased opportunities to influence families and provided mechanisms for problem solving that did not exist among agencies previously. Staff also talked about the development of family plans and noted that families involved in the program were motivated to set their own goals. Staff identified family recruitment as a challenge; recruitment was a recurring problem for most collaboratives. Three major concerns staff mentioned included the need for emergency housing, transportation, and increased staffing as the collaboratives' caseloads increase.

Leadership (Executive) Staff: Executive staff from multiple collaboratives acknowledged that they had not finalized a vision or mission statement. They discussed the restructuring of collaboratives, a "complicated process" that took "a lot of polishing." One challenge in the restructuring process was identifying the "natural role" of each agency. Executive staff also discussed the viability of sustaining the collaborative and lack of best practices for sustainability.

Collaborative Observations

The team also observed five collaborative meetings across the four counties. For many collaboratives, meetings were organized and an agenda was utilized to facilitate the meeting. The goals of the monthly meetings were to strategize and problem solve the needs of the families. There was evidence of strong group cohesion in two of the collaboratives. These collaboratives continued to move forward and consistently thought about how to expand, how to become sustainable, and how to and pull in the

“right” or “appropriate” partners.

Transportation Collaboratives and Surveys

Participant Observations: Four participant observations were completed. Meetings were initially focused on communication and contribution but came to be used primarily as a clearinghouse for information, allowing members to explore common and conflicting interests. In terms of problem solving, both groups continued to work together to solve outstanding issues through discussion and coming to an agreed-upon solution.

Focus Groups: Two focus groups were conducted with the workgroups. The workgroups agreed that overall, working collaboratively was a positive experience. Both groups felt they had a common vision for their workgroup and what they wanted to accomplish. Both groups appreciated the hands-on approach and felt their ideals were aligned with the Foundation's.

Surveys (n = 82): Three quarters of riders in Cumberland County and nearly half in Atlantic County did not have access to a car. The majority of surveyed riders rode the shuttle between 3 to 4 and 5 to 6 days per week. When asked about the difficulty of getting to where they needed to go before shuttle service was implemented, 40% of riders chose neutral and 32% of riders chose extremely difficult. After shuttle service was implemented, 58% of riders chose extremely easy.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Family interviews

Primary and Secondary Caregivers: Among all interviewees, all caregivers expressed supportive and positive emotional and physical relationships with their caregiving partner, even among non-traditional caregiver figures. Caregivers not directly present in the family unit expressed a hope for increased communication and sustainable co-parenting.

Caregivers and Adolescents: In 75% of the family units, both caregivers lived with the adolescents; all caregivers indicated being significant in their adolescent's life. Most 14-19 year old teenagers were described as not being around due to volunteering, socializing, or living with extended family or friends. All caregivers felt they had open communication with their adolescents, especially about risky behaviors. All adolescents expressed having good relationships and open communication with both primary and secondary caregivers; in addition to being involved in activities outside of their home environment.

Financial: All caregivers expressed being able to meet their family's basic needs, but experienced some challenges doing so. Some families utilized local food banks or contacted local service providers and extended family members for assistance. All discussed not being able to afford family activities or gifts for special occasions. Respondents identified employment and educational goals. Adolescents stated that while they felt that their basic needs were met, they desired to earn more and have more than their parents.

Education: All adolescents were enrolled in school and attended full time, with all caregivers emphasizing the importance of education in achieving career goals. All adolescents emphasized the importance of becoming independent and self-sufficient.

Social relationships: Support networks included consistent, reliable adults such as extended family members, friends, neighbors, faith-based organizations, and social service representatives. These groups often provided support in the form of childcare, financial support, and emotional support. As a whole, social networks provided families with a sense of relief and alleviated feelings of isolation. Caregivers also indicated that adolescents had social relationships made up of extended family and friends. All stated that it was important to have positive peer groups for their adolescent's social growth and companionship.

Neighborhood Conditions: Most caregivers stated their neighborhood was safe and indicated great neighbors and local churches as part of their social network. However, some noted a lack of accessible, low-cost or free activities and expressed difficulty finding affordable, long-term housing solutions. Adolescents felt that their neighborhood was safe and suitable for raising a family and appreciated having places they could go for socializing, leisure, and sporting activities.

Views on the Collaborative: Primary caregivers tended to identify most with lead agency members and noted that the collaborative members were of great assistance for meeting family needs. However, inconsistencies in communication and the accuracy of resources were identified; caregivers expressed a need for updated resource lists, more flexible workshops, and more frequent advertising of services. According to the families, the collaboratives had been successful in helping them meet their need to participate in no-cost family activities. Families participated in community events, such as dinners, movie outings, and field trips, which allowed the families to strengthen not only their own relationships, but also their relationships with other local families. All adolescents were aware of assistance provided by the collaborative, but this awareness was secondary in nature, arising from discussions with primary caregivers.

Some expressed awareness as the result of having attended after-school programs and workshops, while three adolescents had not come into contact with anyone directly.

REPORTING PERIOD: DECEMBER 1, 2013 TO MAY 31, 2014

The goal of this report was to share findings from the family interviews, focus groups and observations with collaborative, including the transportation collaboratives. This report also includes updates on data collection for the family surveys and preliminary findings.

Methodology

Organizational Studies: The Social Network Analysis (SNA) survey was distributed online to the collaboratives members in March and April 2014. The evaluation team also facilitated two focus groups with the collaboratives and continued observing collaborative meetings across the counties. Further, the evaluation team completed two participant observation analyses for the transportation workgroup meetings in Atlantic and Cumberland Counties from December 2013 to May 2014, and conducted 89 transportation surveys with the shuttle riders in both counties from January 2014 through April 2014.

Family Studies: Eighty interviews with collaborative (target) families and six interviews with comparison families in English and Spanish were completed. Additionally, baseline surveys were conducted with 57 collaborative (target) families and 11 comparison families. Participating families were composed of two adult caregivers (“Adult/Caregiver 1” and “Adult/Caregiver 2”), along with one or more consenting adolescents aged 13-19, if applicable. Surveys were administered via netbooks using the computer assisted survey software MediaLab within 30 days of a family’s intake date with the collaborative.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

The SNA findings indicated that most of the partner agencies within their respective collaborative network had confidence in one another to complete requests for assistance or referrals. Additionally, with a few exceptions, most partner agencies within the Family Enrichment Network and the Family Strengthening Network had reciprocal and free-flowing communication with each other. Lastly, there were instances of unequally distributed resources among the partner agencies in all collaborative

networks evaluated.

Focus Groups

Collaborative (Line/Direct Service) Staff: The direct service staff believed that there was a common thread between the goals of the collaborative and the goals of their organizations. They also discussed challenges pertaining to family goal setting and the ability to meet certain family needs related to employment and housing. The issues of family engagement and retention were also discussed. The group emphasized the importance of collaborative staff's flexibility in family goal setting as well as empowerment of families through openly communicating, listening, and incorporating families' voices into the process of the service provision. To improve families' engagement, members suggested increasing the collaboration between existing and new partner agencies to expand the number of services they can provide to families.

Leadership (Executive) Staff: The executive staff focus group was conducted with new collaborative members. They discussed the challenges and achievements in initiating the new collaborative, with the largest issue being the creation and implementation of leadership and governance structures. One solution to this was increased communication between all of the members. The members also agreed that they share a common vision, but some agencies shared how being a part of the collaborative required a shift in perspective to a family focus, and this took some adjustment. The executive staff acknowledged the mutual respect and appreciation between themselves and the foundation and mentioned how their interactions with foundation staff pushed them to be creative and develop proactive solutions to better serve their families.

Collaborative Observations

Improvement in collaboratives' work process was evident in all four observations conducted. The tension and disorganization that existed in two of the collaboratives at the time of the last were replaced with organized and tension-free meetings. Further, the meetings demonstrated the partners' problem solving skills. The incorporation of a database across the three collaboratives in Gloucester County assisted in streamlining the paperwork process and easing the workload of the family advocates/case managers. There was also evidence of strong group cohesion in all of the observed collaboratives. All of the collaboratives changed phases in the collaboration process and were moving forward successfully, with two collaboratives functioning at the norming phase and the other two at the performing phase of the group process. These shifts in the process measurement highlight the collaboratives' ability to keep moving forward and developing into a single, cohesive unit.

Transportation Collaboratives and Surveys

Participant Observations: The workgroups continued to progress in each of the three evaluation areas: work process, problem-solving, and group cohesion. At this point in time members of the workgroup shared resources to complete identified goals. In terms of problem-solving, both workgroups continued to work together to solve outstanding concerns. While certain challenges continued across counties, such as marketing and sustainability, other challenges were unique to each workgroup. One workgroup exhibited comprehensive problem-solving techniques, but the second transportation workgroup did not have the same high-level problem-solving ability in place. Neither group consistently created action plans to implement identified solutions. With regard to group cohesion, one workgroup remained at the norming phase, while the other one progressed to the performing phase. Despite the difference in the classification of group processes, both workgroups showed strong group cohesion. Members from both workgroups continued to openly share ideas and listen to each other's suggestions and concerns.

Transportation Surveys (n =89): Most respondents in both Atlantic (90%) and Cumberland (88%) Counties reported that they do not have access to a car. With regard to reasons for riding the shuttle, the majority of riders (53%) reported that they used the shuttle for employment, followed by social services (28%) and education (24%). Overwhelmingly, the riders reported that the shuttle improved their access to employment (70%) and social services (68%). Half of the respondents rated getting to places as difficult or extremely difficult before the shuttle was launched. However, 75% of riders indicated that transportation was no longer a problem, given the operating shuttle. The comparison between Interval 1 and Interval 2 revealed that most riders felt that the shuttle improved their access to social services (64% vs 74% respectively) and employment (72% vs 68% respectively).

FAMILY FINDINGS

Family Interviews

Nearly all of the relationships between the primary and secondary caregivers who lived in the same household were described as supportive and encouraging. In all of the families interviewed, the adolescents lived with two caregivers, and the caregivers stated they had an integral part in the adolescent's life. All caregivers reported that they had open communication with their adolescents and felt comfortable speaking with their children about risky behaviors. The caregivers also shared that their support

networks were comprised of family members, friends, neighbors, and social service providers, who assisted with childcare, finances, information sharing, and emotional support during challenging times. Each of the caregivers indicated that they were able to meet their family's basic needs most of the time. However, some challenges were voiced, including an inability to afford family leisure activities, occasional overdue bills, and unexpected medical or other expenses.

Each of the caregivers stated that education was critical for the adolescents to achieve their future goals. Further, all of the families discussed obtaining information from the collaboratives to assist with meeting certain needs for the family, such as housing, health insurance, food, and free family activities. Similar to the last report, caregivers suggested the collaboratives continue to maintain and update their resource list. Overall, many families were pleased with the services provided and expressed gratitude for the assistance. All of the caregivers discussed having the goal of "making more money" and assisting the adolescents with opportunities for higher education. The findings from the adolescents' interviews were reflective of the information provided by the caregivers. Additionally, an overwhelming interest in the use of technology among adolescents was noted. Therefore, it was recommended that collaboratives consider incorporating technology into the services they provide to adolescents.

Family Surveys

Baseline data revealed that most (70.25%) of the adults rated their children's health to be excellent or very good. However, a significant minority (13.5%) did report being financially unable to take their children to see a doctor in the previous year. Sixty-seven percent of the adults indicated that their kids have insurance/Medicaid. This survey period included time prior to the enactment of the Affordable Care Act. The majority of adults (83.78%) also reported having an excellent or very good relationship with their children. Roughly two-thirds found the services they received to be very helpful. There were no reports of children going hungry.

REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

The goal of this report was to share findings from family interviews and focus groups and observations with collaboratives, including the transportation collaboratives. Updates on data collection for the family survey were included.

Methodology

Organizational Studies: The Social Network Analysis (SNA) was distributed to the

collaboratives via Qualtrics in December 2014. Two focus groups were conducted with the collaboratives' line/direct service staff and observed seven collaborative meetings across the counties to analyze their work process, problem solving, and group cohesion. Lastly, the evaluation team attended four transportation workgroup meetings in Atlantic, Cumberland, and Salem Counties and completed three participant observations. Transportation surveys were also distributed to shuttle riders in Atlantic and Cumberland Counties from July 2014 through December 2014, yielding 117 completed surveys.

Family Studies: As of December 2014, the evaluation team completed 102 interviews with collaborative families and 6 interviews with comparison families. Additionally, the evaluation team reached 76 baseline surveys and 28 six-month follow-up surveys with participants from collaborative and comparison families.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Agencies in the Child Connection Center (CCC) had confidence in each other to handle tasks allocated to them. With the exception of EIRC (a fiscal agency), all partners in the CCC had both incoming and outgoing relationships with one another relating to shared resources. The CCC partner agencies also appeared to have both reciprocal and free-flowing communication with each other. The First Star Collaborative and United for Family Collaborative partner agencies had both reciprocal and free-flowing relationships with one another relating to confidence, shared resources, and communication.

Focus Groups

Collaborative (Line/Direct Service) Staff: From the focus groups, it was evident that the families from the target population face not only financial but also cultural and language barriers. Challenges such as a divide between public and private life, the need for the services for undocumented Hispanic immigrants, and a lack of English proficiency among target family members were discussed. Family advocates attempted to address these issues by implementing programs such as English as a Second Language (ESL), High School Equivalency (HSE), and citizenship classes. They also engaged the community by providing free events such as movies and back-to-school nights.

Staff members communicated regularly via text, email, and phone. Despite improvements in organization around case management, they voiced several challenges, including a lack of a centralized system or database, a lack of remote

access to files, and unreliable transmission of information shared during the monthly staff meetings. Speaking generally about the collaboration, the members were optimistic about future efforts despite the hurdles of working in a new capacity with a marginalized population. All focus group participants stated that they had a good working relationship with one another and shared ideas and resources freely between the members of the collaborative. They also identified multiple strategies for recruiting families, with the most successful one being direct outreach in the form of presenting at community events and networking with various community organizations.

Collaborative Observations

Concerning the work process, each of the collaborative meetings observed were well-run; discussions were on target, and information and ideas were communicated amongst the members. At the conclusion of each meeting across the collaboratives, issues were resolved, and the members were well-prepared to continue delivering quality services to the families. Overwhelmingly, the meetings illustrated the collaboratives' problem-solving skills. All of the partners in the collaboratives learned from previous obstacles and continued to work together as a cohesive unit to create new solutions as the need arose. There was also evidence of strong group cohesion in all of the observed collaboratives.

Transportation Collaboratives and Surveys

Participant Observations: The workgroups continued to progress in all three evaluation areas: work process, problem solving, and group cohesion. In terms of problem solving, all three workgroups continued to work together to resolve outstanding concerns, with varying degrees of productivity across the workgroups. There is also evidence of positive group cohesion in the three workgroups; one workgroup maintained its function at the performing stage of the group process, while two others were at the norming and forming stages.

Surveys (n =117): The results from the transportation surveys revealed that the majority of riders (63%) use the shuttle for employment, followed by medical uses (32%) and social services uses (27%). In Atlantic County, the majority of riders reported using the shuttle for employment (53%). In Cumberland County, most riders indicated employment reasons (69%), followed by education (31%) and medical (29%). The majority reported that the shuttle improved their access to employment (65%) and social services (63%). Seventy-one percent of the riders reported that the shuttle made it extremely easy or easy to get where they needed to go, and 73% stated that transportation was no longer a problem. The comparison between Intervals 2 and 3

revealed that for both samples, the shuttle improved access to employment and social services.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Family Interviews

The relationship between the primary and secondary caregivers continued to be supportive and encouraging. The composition of the caregivers' social support networks remained similar to the last report, but adults shared that the provided services assisted with childcare, finances, and emotional support. With regard to child well-being, caregivers reported that they were able to meet their families' basic needs most of the time. Additionally, each caregiver stated that education was critical for the adolescents to achieve their future goals and that adolescents were not involved in risky behaviors. They also reported having an open line of communication with adolescents on risky behaviors.

With the exception of a few participants residing in Salem County, the majority of participants described their neighborhoods as nice, quiet, calm, and friendly, with places for their children to play. All participants continued to have positive views on the collaboratives, which mainly stemmed from the collaboratives being supportive and successful in assisting families in meeting their goals. A few recommendations included improving veteran services and expanding collaborative outreach to assist more families in need. The major differences between collaborative and comparison families were that the comparison families were seeking help from social service agencies on their own and did not have an effective way to access the social services that their families required. The findings from the adolescents' interviews were reflective of the information provided by the caregivers.

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2015 TO MAY 31, 2015

The goal of this report was to share preliminary findings from the family survey. Baseline data around financial stability, child well-being, family relationships, and social services was presented for collaborative (target) primary and secondary caregivers as well as adolescents who participated in the survey. Recruitment of the comparison families continued, although the sample was not sufficient at this time to do a comparative analysis. This report did not present data on organizational studies.

Methodology

Family studies: To draw preliminary findings, baseline data from 37 target families (69

adults and 32 youth aged 13-24) collected since July 2014 was analyzed using frequency analysis; that is, by comparing the response rate (in percentages) for each option across questions to determine the general distribution of the target group across the areas of interest. The survey contained questions on demographics, family structure and dynamics, employment and income, socioemotional supports, relationships and communication, and child's academic performance and expectations, and use of community resources and organizations.

FINDINGS FROM THE FAMILY BASELINE SURVEYS

Financial Stability

A little more than half (55%) of adults surveyed were working, while 33% were looking for employment. Approximately 6% of youth reported going hungry due to lack of money for food in the past six months. Only 58% of adults surveyed were able to pay their full amount of rent or mortgage every month, while 22% had their gas, electric, oil, or phone services interrupted in the six months prior. Across the four counties, approximately 76% of adults surveyed had a vehicle that they utilized to get to school, work, or other places.

Child Well-Being

More than two-thirds of the adults rated their child's health as excellent (41%) or very good (28%). Adults also rated their own health, and 41% rated their health as excellent (9%) or very good (32%). In terms of parental expectations, the majority (89%) of adults believed that their children were completely likely to graduate from high school. Most adults (75%) believed that their children were completely likely to attend college. Almost three-quarters (73%) believed that their children were completely likely to be successful. Of youth, 91% indicated that finishing high school was important to them and 79% reported that finishing high school was very important in order to achieve their life goals.

Family Relationships

Ninety-four percent of youth indicated that they lived with their mother most of the time, and 59% reported that they lived with their father most of the time. The majority of youth (53%) reported excellent relationships with their mothers, with only 3% reporting a poor relationship. Parents reported discussing their children's school performance and future with them on a regular basis. Youth indicated that they strongly agreed that either their parent or caregiver cared about them. Almost three-quarters of the primary caregivers (72%) reported that they always or usually (36%) got the social and

emotional support they need. More than half of secondary caregivers reported that they always (30%) or usually (24%) got the social and emotional support they needed. Primary caregivers reported that they were supported by the secondary caregiver somewhere between sometimes and often.

Social Services

Fifty-seven percent of collaborative adults reported that they utilized social or community services in the previous twelve months, while only 30% of matching family adults reported utilizing those same services. Childcare was most frequently identified as a service received from a social service agency or community organization. A little more than half (56%) of collaborative adults reported the services they received were very helpful, while 31% found the services somewhat helpful. Similarly, 56% were very satisfied with services received, and 31% reported that they were fairly satisfied.

REPORTING PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2015 TO JANUARY 28, 2016

This report presented the organizational findings describing collaboratives' structure and organization. Previous data indicated that the collaboratives shared a common vision, engaged in continuous communication, and operated under a lead agency. However, collaboratives often relied on individual agency contributions over developing coordinated activities that would enhance their overall mission and service delivery as a collaborative. There was also evidence of high communication among agencies as well as a need for more coordination to ensure the equitable participation from each agency. Below are the social service delivery highlights for each of the ten collaboratives active at the time.

Methodology

Organizational studies: The evaluation team analyzed collaboratives' processes and organization based on data collected through collaborative observations and Social Network Analysis (SNA) data collected from November to December 2015.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Child Connection Center (CCC)

CCC provided one-on-one and small group support to elementary and middle school students. Teachers received assistance in goal setting and educational consultation to ensure students' success. Families could participate in coaching, get referrals for supports, and attend specialized workshops.

Connected Families (CF)

CF provided opportunities for physical activity and academic enrichment for high school students. CF sought to improve the overall health and well-being of children through recreational sport nights, anti bullying events, and a four-week summer camp with literature and math programs.

Connecting Families to Communities (CF2C)

CF2C focused on community development to improve outcomes for families. The collaborative used each agency's resources effectively to help the community. Millville Public Library, for example, was the location for computer skills classes and resume writing workshops due to the library being a familiar place for families in crisis or individuals seeking employment.

Family Enrichment Network (FEN)

FEN provided nonprofit entities with up to \$1,000 grants to host recreational events at no cost for families. The collaborative also cross-promoted agency-specific programs, increasing the visibility of the agencies affiliated with FEN.

Family Strengthening Network (FSN)

The Family Strengthening Network used comprehensive family plans to achieve family goals. Family advocates (FA's) were assigned to families and aided them in developing a plan and achieving goals to support the successful navigation of family life. FSN held classes in financial literacy to foster financial stability, and organized community events such as Family Fun Day, Back to School Bash, Adopt-a-Block, and Spruce Up South Jersey to encourage family strengthening and civic engagement.

Heart of Gloucester County (Heart)

Heart promoted classes around parenting and mental well-being through their website and Facebook page. Heart offered access to tax services, family resources, and community events through its online presence. Families could also connect with Heart through The Heart Line, a hotline, was staffed by volunteers and was accessible via e-mail, phone, and text message. Heart also invested in supporting the veteran population through events such as Wreaths of Remembrance.

South Jersey First Star Rowan Academy

The Rowan Academy focused on providing a residential university/college experience for foster youth between 8th grade to 12th grade. They provided mentorship, assisted with the transition into college culture and daily living, and offered career development

services. Rowan Academy also provided a holistic approach that allowed them to work with families by assisting them in achieving their long-term family goals.

Stronger Families

Stronger Families focused on strengthening relationships between inmates and their families. This collaborative was in the process of organizing at the time this report was written.

The Network

The Network was a mobile service delivery provider that counted with the support of churches, community centers, and school districts. Partners agencies provided spaces for programming and group meetings and engaged in outreach about the services provided by the collaborative.

Unidos Para La Familia (UPF)

Unidos Para La Familia was a life skills driven collaborative that offered classes, community engagement programs, and workshops aimed at improving education and employment for immigrant families. UPF offered English as Second Language (ESL), High School Equivalency (HSE) courses, referrals to legal counseling, and community engagement opportunities such as contributing to the community garden.

REPORTING PERIOD: FEBRUARY 2016 TO JUNE 2016

This report updated preliminary survey data on families' relationships, financial stability, and child well-being outcomes over time. A more robust comparison group also allowed for the first analyses between groups, although there were no notable differences between groups. Instead, a thorough presentation of county health rankings at the time allowed the evaluation team to interpret the survey data within the larger regional context.

Methodology

Family studies: This preliminary analysis used data from 97 target families and 23 comparison families. Quantitative data gathered from the longitudinal survey given to target and comparison caregivers and eligible youth were analyzed using t-tests to evaluate changes within groups from baseline to the 6-month follow-up.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Financial Mobility

Signs of financial well-being included that target families were significantly less likely to move in and share housing with friends and family. Although both comparison and target families reported similar incomes at baseline, target families experienced a significant decline in income over the first 6 months of their involvement with collaboratives, but reported no other changes to their ability to pay bills, rent, or need to borrow money. Target families also showed an increase in the use of school meal-assistance programs, although it was unclear whether this was due to an increase in need or effectiveness in obtaining assistance. Both comparison and target families reported a comparable and consistent level of support from social service agencies, and target families noted receiving specific supports around financial planning, health care, job training, payment assistance, and transportation from collaboratives.

Child Well-Being

Target families and their children reported being healthier after 6 months at near significant levels. Target families also reported better health than other members of their community based on the county health rankings at the time.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The second caregiver's support towards the family tended to increase over the first 6 months.

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 2016 TO MARCH 2017

This evaluation was conducted in 2017 with data from community partners working with the Family Strengthening Network. The overarching goal of this report was to capture collaborative partners' motivation for participating in interagency collaboration initiatives by investigating and understanding the individual motivations both intrinsic (e.g., internal desire) and extrinsic (e.g., external rewards) of frontline agency and organization partners that participate in collaborative initiatives involving case management and social services. This report provided an examination of the reasons individual agencies had for engaging with other agencies and forming collaboratives.

Methodology

Organizational studies: The data was collected from a self-report questionnaire (Corbett & Noyes, 2007) given to 80 participants working for the community partners involved with at least one of ten collaboratives. Participants had a period of 32 days to complete

the questionnaire over Qualtrics. The questionnaire was developed to inquire into participants' experiences and attitudes towards the interagency family strengthening collaboration. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to determine the percentage and frequency of participant responses. Additionally, exploratory factor analysis was used to identify common aspects of participants' responses, resulting in variables such as collective purpose and self-efficacy.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Interagency Collaboration

Community partners found value in partnership-based collaboration and saw the potential for a positive impact on delivery of services through interagency partnerships. Additionally, the majority of participants found the interagency experience as collaborative and cooperative. Participants were also motivated by the benefits of interagency collaboration. Specifically, participants characterized interagency experiences as evoking collaboration (39.5%), cooperation (31.6%), communication (11.8%), coordination (6.6%), convergence (7.9%), and consolidation (1.3%).

Motivational Determinants The benefits of participation, collective purpose, reciprocity, self-efficacy, inducements, and innovation were found to be motivational determinants for interagency collaboration participation. The findings suggest that participation of collaborative partners derives from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Participants endorsed the interagency collaboration framework and felt that it brought beneficial outcomes for the community and working families.

REPORTING PERIOD: MARCH 2017 TO JUNE 2017

This report provided an examination of families' perceived success and satisfaction regarding the informal social supports they received from Pascale Sykes Foundation collaboratives.

Methodology

Family studies: Data from 47 caregivers was analyzed for this report. Caregivers were referred by interagency collaboration initiatives that were providing informal social support. Each family's primary caregiver was contacted to complete a 12-item questionnaire about their family's experience and their perceptions of the family-advocate relationship and the path toward goal attainment. Three interagency collaboration activity areas provided metrics to track for each family: Family Advocate Interactions, Event Attendance, and Goal Achievement. The evaluation team used a

multiple linear regression to determine which of these predictors were related to a family's perception of interagency collaboration.

Family Findings

Event Attendance and Goal Achievement yielded significant positive regression weights. This suggested that families who had a high rate of attendance and goal achievement were significantly more likely to perceive that interagency collaboration was effective. Although the frequency of communications with agencies was not significantly related to families' perceptions of the collaboratives' effectiveness, it was the combination of the informal social supports, provided through family advocacy, the opportunity to attend collaborative events, and having ownership over achieving their established goals that seemed to have the greatest influence on families' perceived success and interagency collaboration satisfaction.

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 2017 TO JANUARY 2018

The goal of this report was to share findings from up to two years of qualitative data collected around collaboratives' organizational processes. Additionally, this report presents preliminary findings from survey data from baseline through 18-month follow-up data around financial stability for the target primary and secondary caregivers.

Methodology

Organizational studies: Focus groups consisting of semi-structured group interviews with approximately four to eight collaborative partners were used to collect information about social service delivery. Additionally, the evaluation team attended regularly scheduled collaborative meetings. Content analysis was conducted and both thematic and analytical coding strategies based on data collected since 2016.

Family studies: Data collection via the longitudinal family surveys continued. The evaluation team continued recruiting new target and comparison families, and working on retaining families up until their 18-month follow-up survey. For this report in particular, the sample analyzed included results from families surveyed prior to early 2017. Findings are based on 236 individuals who identified as Adult 1 and 189 individuals who identified as Adult 2. A repeated-measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to examine changes within target families over time. Data were separately analyzed for Adult 1 and Adult 2 respectively.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Social Service Delivery Focus Groups

Strengths of the social service delivery process included effective family coaching that helped families establish their needs and achieve their goals, continued engagement with families, which ensured that family needs were continuously met, and the establishment of intra-collaborative supports, which allowed collaborative staff to refer families to other collaborative agencies for flexible and responsive service delivery. Challenges included difficulties in communication and collaboration between collaborative agencies, a lack of clarity around the criteria for a target family for the purposes of recruitment, and concerns about sustainability, especially regarding funding and budgeting and the relatively high turnover rate of service provider agency staff.

Collaborative Observations

Three emerging themes were identified upon analysis of collaboratives: work process, problem solving, and group cohesion. Regarding the work process, it was noted that meetings were well organized, with a clear leader who was easily identifiable. Primary goals of monthly collaborative meetings focused on addressing the needs of the families, strategizing for effective recruitment of new families, and discussing engagement and retention of currently enrolled families. Partner Problem Solving skills significantly improved since collaboratives first began (e.g. 2012-2014). In engagement group discussion, collaborative group partners often asked questions, took notes, and worked to both analyze and address problems in effective ways. In turn, future goals and action plans designed to address problems were frequently and consistently made by roughly 25% of collaboratives. Group cohesion significantly increased since the start of the initiative in 2012. Partners became more engaged and involved and learned to work effectively with one another. The atmosphere of collaborative meetings was described as informal, relaxed, friendly, and comfortable, and partners were reported to be animated, excited, and supportive of one another.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Financial situation

Educational level and household income significantly increased over the course of 18-month measurements for both target adults. For a majority of the indicators, the overall trend was toward significant improvement, though changes were not large or consistent enough to be significant at time points of 6- and 12-months follow-ups. Both adults reported a significant decrease in work hours, number of jobs, which may have

indicated an improvement in pay or employment change given the simultaneous report on increase in income. However, both adults also experienced a decline in the quality of living situation and Adult 2 reported increasing difficulties with hunger and the ability to pay rent by the 18-month follow-up.

REPORTING PERIOD: FEBRUARY TO JUNE 2018

This report provided preliminary findings from the survey data on families' relationships, financial stability, and child well-being outcomes over time. This report presented the first inferential analyses conducted to identify outcome differences between target families and comparison families, as well as collaborative breakout analyses for those collaboratives with a large enough sample size.

During preparation of the survey data for inferential analyses between the target and comparison groups, the evaluation team identified a third participant group. These families were involved with collaboratives but differed from target families in a few key aspects. Some families reported that the second adult had ceased involvement with the family or collaborative shortly after intake, which prohibited a true delivery of the whole-family intervention as intended. In some rarer cases, both adults had been unemployed for over 6 months or reported a household income that fell under the New Jersey poverty line, which would have deemed these families as financially "in crisis" and in need of additional services beyond collaboratives' interventions; thus, also beyond the scope of this evaluation as designed. The evaluation team found sufficient data for this non-target group of families to incorporate them into analyses as a third, "non-target" group, which would provide an additional form of comparison to determine the impact of the second caregiver's involvement on the target primary caregiver and children. Upon review of this data by Pascale Sykes, the Foundation requested that the evaluation team discouraged collaborative referrals of "non-target" families for the evaluation, and that the evaluation team centered their efforts rather on increasing recruitment of comparison families.

Methodology

Family Studies: The evaluation team analyzed longitudinal survey data collected from adult caregivers and adolescents in the household (if present) through the end of 2017. The total number of participants included 232 Adult 1, 188 Adult 2, and 49 adolescents between the ages of 13-17 years old. Among these participants were 86 target families, 113 non-target families, and 32 comparison families. Additionally, two collaboratives had large enough samples to conduct a collaborative breakout analysis for each: progress for 36 families from Child Connection Center (CCC) and 17 families from

Family Strengthening Network (FSN) was analyzed. For analyses, composite variables were created by grouping data from questions that fit a particular area. This process yielded more robust data for topics such as financial challenges, overall support from the second adult, and dietary behaviors. Then, repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to examine changes over time within groups (e.g. growth within target families) and between groups (differences between target, non-target, and comparison). ANOVA results produce an F-statistic (which indicates variation between the means of each group) and a p-value (the p-value is considered statistically significant if it is less than $p=.05$). Lastly, multilevel modeling (MLM) was used to analyze variables that may have changed over time for each participant (e.g. support from Adult 2). MLM results produce correlation values. Correlation analyses indicate the strength of the relationship between variables using coefficients. The strength of coefficients is dependent on its proximity to 1. Consequently, a very strong coefficient lies between ± 1.0 to ± 0.8 , a strong coefficient- ± 0.6 to ± 0.79 ; a moderate correlation ± 0.4 to ± 0.59 ; a weak correlation ± 0.2 to ± 0.39 , and a very weak correlation between ± 0.01 to 0. Notable findings are presented below.

FAMILY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

Healthy Relationships

Overall support received by the primary caregiver from the secondary caregiver increased significantly for all groups, but this change was greatest for target families with a strong, positive correlation (+.86). CCC and FSN families experienced the same increase in the collaborative breakout analyses. There was a significant decrease over time for the amount of overall support Caregiver 2 received from Caregiver 1, but this was observed across the three family groups. Target adolescents reported significant improvements in their perception of emotional support from their family ($F=4.37$, $p=.04$) and their relationships with their fathers ($F=.68$, $p=.008$). This result was not found for comparison and non target families.

Child Well-Being

Significant results were found specifically within the CCC sample. Parents of children involved with CCC reported significant positive changes in their academic performance over the course of three marking periods, with grades in language arts ($F=23.23$, $p<.001$) and math ($F=19.32$, $p<.001$) increasing over time.

Financial Well-Being

Financial challenges experienced by the primary caregiver significantly decreased over time for all three family groups ($F=249.58$, $p<00.1$) as well as in the breakout for CCC and FSN families. Within CCC and FSN collaborative groups only, the secondary caregiver experienced a similar significant decrease in financial challenges over time. It was also found that both caregivers across family groups experienced a significant decrease in income over time, which meant that target families were in the norm with other families in the area.

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 2018 TO JANUARY 2019

This report presented findings on the impact of the Whole Family Approach on target families in contrast with the comparison families, examining the effects on each caregiver (Adult 1 and Adult 2) separately. Findings touched upon the pillars of healthy relationships, child well-being, and financial stability. This report was the first to include data from the 24-month follow-up surveys. Updates on data collection methods and recruitment since the switch to Qualtrics were included.

Methodology

Family studies: The evaluation team continued collecting family data using the longitudinal survey, which had migrated to Qualtrics since February 2018. The replacement of MediaLab improved the efficiency of the data collection process, as Qualtrics allowed participants to complete the survey online. This eliminated travel and scheduling barriers that in-person data collection incurred at times. In-person surveying remained available, however, for participants who requested it. An additional survey period, at 24 months after families' intake with the collaboratives, was added as of early 2018 as well. At the time of this report, a total of 322 target families and 84 comparison families had been recruited for the evaluation.

After creating composite variables, mixed modeling quantitative analysis was used to identify significant differences in family well-being outcomes between target Adult 1 and Adult 2 and their comparison group counterparts. This approach allowed the evaluation team to remove the variance that could be attributed to random factors instead of the intervention, so that significant differences between the target and comparison families could be attributed with confidence to the Whole Family Approach rather than to chance. Analyses were performed for the entire sample of families and for the two individual collaboratives with the highest sample size- Child Connection Center (CCC) and Family Strengthening Network (FSN).

FAMILY FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

Adult 1

Three areas of analysis for Adult 1 yielded significant findings: second adult support, general health, and child's health. There was a significant difference in the support Adult 1 reported receiving from Adult 2. Comparison Adult 1 reported significantly more support than target Adult 1, although there was no change over time for either group, which means that target families started at a lower baseline than the comparison families. Taking into account other factors, Adult 1 who were not involved in a job training program reported a significant increase in Adult 2's support, and Adult 1 who spent more hours in training reported a better relationship with Adult 2.

There also were significant changes in general health for both target and comparison Adult 1 over time, although target Adult 1 had a significantly greater improvement in health since baseline compared to comparison Adult 1's reported health growth. Healthcare coverage and the ability to seek medical care were both associated with better general health. In contrast, men and those who did not have a vehicle had worse general health. Results also indicated that children's general health significantly improved over time in target Adult 1's perception. Gender and the ability to seek medical care influenced these results, with male Adult 1 and those who were able to seek medical care for their child(ren) reporting better child's general health.

Adult 2 (Adult 2)

For Adult 2, there were significant improvements in the areas of financial challenges, general health, healthy diet, second-adult relationships, and parent-child relationships. There was a significant decrease in financial challenges reported by Adult 2 in both target and matching families. Healthcare coverage, criminal convictions, and vehicle access each contributed to the changes in financial challenges. Those with healthcare coverage reported a significant decrease in financial challenges over time, while criminal conviction and lack of access to a vehicle were associated with increased financial challenges. Additionally, Adult 2 in both target and matching families reported improvements in general health over time, but the growth was significantly greater for target families. Further, both target and matching families reported a significant growth in healthy diet behaviors.

Analyses of Adult 2's relationship with and support from Adult 1 revealed a significant decrease over time for target adults, but no differences were identified between target and matching families. Both target and matching families experienced a decrease in parent-child relationships over time, yet the change was significantly smaller for target

families. A major factor contributing to this decrease was a criminal conviction among Adult 2.

Child Connection Center (CCC)

In contrast to the overall sample, there was a significant increase in Adult 1's perceived relationship and support from Adult 2 among families served by the CCC. Still, Adult 2 reported a significant decrease in perceived relationship with and support from Adult 1. Analysis of Adult 2 revealed a significant increase in a healthy diet and a significant decrease in perceived financial challenges. However, there was also a significant decrease in the parent-child relationship between Adult 2 and supported children. The results on grade data provided by the CCC revealed significant growth in both math and language arts grades among students served by the CCC.

Family Strengthening Network (FSN)

There was significant growth among both Adult 1 and Adult 2 in general health. Additionally, there was a significant increase in Adult 1's perception of children's health, while Adult 2's perception of children's health significantly decreased. In addition, there was a significant increase in the parent-child relationship for Adult 1 served by the FSN but a significant decrease in the parent-child relationship for Adult 2. Analysis for Adult 2 also included a significant decrease in financial challenges and a significant increase in healthy diet behaviors for that adult.

REPORTING PERIOD: FEBRUARY 2019 TO JUNE 2019

This progress report includes quantitative data gathered from 2013 to October 2019, and qualitative data from observations and focus groups from January 2018 to October 2019. The goal of this progress report was to identify if the interventions provided by project collaborators impacted families when compared to those who did not receive collaborative intervention, specifically in the outcomes areas of child well-being, family financial stability, and healthy family relationships. A secondary goal was to assess the changes in service provision and organizational collaboration.

Methodology

Organizational studies: Qualitative data from this report explored the ways collaboratives navigated their relationships with partners and the Pascale Sykes Foundation (PSF), their problem-solving methods and practices, and the areas they chose to focus on. Data collection and analysis was designed around four areas:

Problem-solving, which referred on the problems the collaboratives were actively encountering, steps taken to solve the problems or postponing them, and the identification of solutions during the discussion; *Progress*, which was described as efforts to advance the Whole Family Approach within their collaboratives; *Best practices*, which included activities or processes identified by the collaborative as effective either through careful deliberation or self-evaluation; and *Self-evaluation*, which focused on which collaboratives would review and alter their policies and practices through reflection. Data analysis was performed using software called ATLAS.ti which allowed researchers to place themes referred to as “codes” applied to phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and other blocks of texts. Grounded theory techniques were used to help in the development of codes, which involves open-coding data from themes without presumptions about what the researcher will find (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). The themes that emerged were recorded in a codebook, which is used to clearly define the limitations of a given theme to ensure that codes are applied accurately.

Family studies: The survey that both target and comparison families completed every six months over the course of 24 months was built on scales proven to be both reliable and valid within previous research. The evaluation team analyzed data for up to 346 target families and 131 comparison families collected since 2013, organized by the validated scales in the survey. Using mixed modeling, which considers both fixed and random effects, responses from target and comparison Adult 1 and Adult 2 were examined to determine whether there were significant differences between target and comparison families at any point and whether specific covariates had any major effect on the scales. Covariates are variables that serve as predictors to the outcome, but are not intended to contribute to final results and analyses. Similar analyses were conducted for the three collaboratives with a large enough sample to determine how their efforts may have contributed to family outcomes. Lastly, teen quantitative analyses were also performed to determine whether there were significant changes among this group. When reading results, a higher F value means that the covariate more strongly affected the scale, while p values below .05 indicate that the results were likely due to the intervention.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Community Development

There were few challenges in the area of community development across collaboratives, and there were many positive associations with few negative

associations. Collaboratives which focused on community development effectively engaged in problem-solving in this area, understood the Whole Family Approach's role in building community, and identified effective strategies for convening community members in a variety of venues. Collaboratives who discussed future initiatives in community building suggested hosting more events that strengthened families, communities, and social ties within those places.

Education

Collaboratives had positive experiences when engaging in educational initiatives. Overall, they held formal educational sessions frequently and with great success; there were no reports of low turnout or a lack of engagement in educational initiatives. Collaboratives seeking partnerships with educational institutions and agencies often found success. Education had the highest number of unresolved problems of any topic area, and nearly all of those unresolved problems related to barriers within the collaboratives' partner institutions.

Internal Processes

In areas like training, capacity, collaborations, processes and policies, and event-planning, there were several positive findings associated with internal processes. The two main areas of unresolved problem solving revolved around the use of internal databases and communications with PSF. Communications about the framework and requirements of PSF were also a main unresolved theme within the topic of internal processes; data indicated that there remained confusion around requirements in areas such as defining a target family and creation and implementation of a logic model.

Organizational Collaboration

Collaboratives frequently talked about the types of organizations they were seeking to collaborate with as well as their current partnerships; these discussions focused on topics such as community development, literacy, and education. Organizations outside of the central collaborative were eager to form partnerships to share resources and information but sometimes encountered barriers related to forming agreements to define those processes. Although feedback in most areas was positive, common barriers such as the involvement of partner agencies that were not currently fulfilling their current Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) existed. Collaboratives generally encountered issues determining whether collaborating agencies were actually providing the support and services in their MOU's, and which actions should be taken if MOU's were not fulfilled.

English Second Language

Regarding the inclusion of efforts of enculturation and/or teaching English to people for whom English is a second language, solutions have been identified or implemented for nearly all problems, indicating that collaboratives working with ESL groups are largely effective when implementing and navigating these processes. Nearly all of the codes in this category were positive, and frequently included themes related to the enculturation and support of people in ESL groups in collaboratives' communities.

Family

This area focused on areas where collaboratives either actively offered programming to develop family ties or held events in which families worked together to serve their communities or achieve a goal. Most of the unresolved issues focused on the approach the collaborative was taking towards meeting the needs of family members. Conflict generally focused on whether to offer concerted development of family within structured classes, or to provide more open-ended events in which families interact more naturally. Overall, unless there was a problem with the family development or goal setting process, family itself was rarely mentioned.

Recruitment

The recruitment topic area has the highest ratio of unresolved issues of any topic area. Most collaboratives expressed frustration about "recruitment going poorly," or "not happening." They also indicated that they were often contacted by the "wrong kinds of targeted groups," including emancipated kids, families in crisis, or families with only one caregiver. Data indicated that collaboratives had yet to adopt strategies that allowed them to reach and serve the target population.

Finances

This topic focused on the development of budgeting and financial literacy for families. Collaboratives were largely implementing programming around finances effectively. Initiatives included financial planning classes with parents, families, and youth, and workshops for school-age students on financial literacy. Topics covered included budgeting, acquiring auto and home loans, and saving money by changing purchasing habits.

Sustainability

Conversations within collaborative meetings around sustainability were usually short and unresolved. While collaboratives across the evaluation reported some success with sustainability, there continued to be challenges around where to acquire funding

and the time required to apply for and obtain funding.

Youth Development

Collaboratives actively and readily sought out opportunities to engage in youth development both formally, through classes and workshops, and informally, through athletics, informal events, or open ended conversations. This area had the highest ratio of positive results of any area. Youth development topics included financial planning courses, childcare recommendations and development activities, entrepreneurship, job training, college readiness, and more.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Financial Challenges

Responses to this questionnaire from Adult 2 showed significant differences in financial challenges between target and comparison families at baseline ($F = 51.394, p < .000$). Both target and comparison Adult 2 exhibited significant growth in financial stability overtime ($F = 4.754, p < .05$). Relationship with Adult 1 ($F = 193.007, p < .000$) and employment ($F = 12.033, p < .000$) were significant covariates in these results. Adult 2 from CCC ($F = 102.056, p < .000$); CF2C ($F = 119.238, p < .000$); and FSN ($F = 57.861, p < .000$) exhibited more financial stability over time.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Questions were focused on dietary patterns (i.e. how many fruits and vegetables a participant eats), as well as other potential factors affecting dietary behaviors. Adult 2 results exhibited significant positive change over time for both CF2C ($F = 9.257, p < .05$) and the CCC ($F = 2.807, p < .10$) collaboratives, with both groups improving then returning to baseline scores over time.

Perceived Stress

Analyses showed that for Adult 1, target families had significantly lower (better) PSS-4 scores compared to comparison families at baseline ($F = 2.794, p < .10$). Significant covariates included employment ($F = 4.425, p < .05$), earned income ($F = 6.083, p < .05$), and Adult 2's social and emotional support ($F = 29.320, p < .000$). For Adult 2, both target and comparison families had significantly lower PSS-4 scores over time ($F = 11.945, p < .05$). Significant covariates included employment ($F = 9.120, p < .000$), cigarette use ($F = 5.231, p < .05$), 2nd adult social and emotional support ($F = 33.399, p < .000$), general health ($F = 4.088, p < .05$), and comparison health ($F = 8.461, p < .05$). Results illustrated significantly lower stress over time for Adult 2 in CF2C ($F = 7.129, p$

< .10) and FSN ($F = 3.994$, $p < .05$).

General Health

Target Adult 2 reported significantly greater health at baseline than the comparison Adult 2 ($F = 4.615$, $p < .05$). Both target and comparison Adult 2 experienced a significant improvement in general health over the course of the observed period ($F = 5.571$, $p < .05$). Earned income ($F = 4.772$, $p < .05$) and healthcare both served as significant covariates in this analysis ($F = 2.999$, $p < .10$).

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

Within the Adult 1 responses, there was a significant difference in social support scores between target and comparison families at the baseline, with target families starting at a lower level of social support compared to the comparison families ($F = 5.399$, $p < .05$). Within the Adult 2 responses, both target and comparison matching families demonstrated significant growth in social support scores over time ($F = 4.148$, $p < .05$). The covariates of Adult 1 relationship quality ($F = 18.122$, $p < .000$), neighborhood ($F = 3.257$, $p < .10$), income ($F = 42.917$, $p < .000$), and Adult 1 support ($F = 1583.097$, $p < .000$) were significant. Adult 2 from FSN ($F = 4.096$, $p < .05$) and CF2C ($F = 11.739$, $p < .05$) experienced significant negative changes in social support over time.

Brief Resilience Scale

Comparison Adult 2 reported higher levels of resilience at baseline than target Adult 2 ($F = 4.382$, $p < .05$). Significant covariates included comparison health ($F = 5.615$, $p < .05$) and Adult 1 support ($F = 4.027$, $p < .05$).

National Survey of Families and Households

Responses showed that both target and comparison Adult 1 reported a significant increase in help received over the course of the observed period as a whole ($F = 4.698$, $p < .05$). Significant covariates with Adult 1 responses were transportation ($F = 26.438$, $p < .000$) and Adult 2's social and emotional support ($F = 10.254$, $p < .05$). With Adult 2, There was a significant difference in reports of help received by target Adult 2 and comparison Adult 2 ($F = 10.351$, $p < .05$). Target Adult 2 reported less help received at baseline and slower growth overall in relation to the comparison Adult 2 ($F = 9.723$, $p < .05$). Significant covariates included Adult 1 relationship ($F = 37.748$, $p < .000$) and employment status ($F = 3.920$, $p < .05$). Adult 1 and 2 results from all three collaboratives exhibited significant growth in the resilience scores across the measurement period. For Adult 1, FSN ($F = 18.791$, $p < .000$), CF2C ($F = 5.663$, $p < .05$), and CCC ($F = 37.179$, $p < .000$) exhibited a significant positive change over time.

For Adult 2, FSN ($F = 10.395$, $p < .05$), CF2C ($F = 23.834$, $p < .000$), and CCC ($F = 26.444$, $p < .000$) exhibited a significant positive change over time. These results highlight a trend towards increased positive household and family measures.

Childhood Education Scale

Comparison Adult 1 reported higher educational expectations than target Adult 1 at baseline ($F = 816.159$, $p < .000$). There was also a significant difference between target and matching families over time ($F = 5.548$, $p < .05$). Parent education was a significant covariate ($F = 6.937$, $p < .000$).

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 2019 TO JANUARY 2020

The purpose of this ongoing evaluation is to examine the impact of the Whole Family Approach on the well-being of families in Southern New Jersey. This approach focuses on working families trying to get ahead and is meant to be preventative, not crisis oriented. Target families were compared to matching families using qualitative and quantitative methods in order to determine whether a Whole Family Approach Intervention had an impact.

Methodology

Organizational studies: The qualitative data was collected from collaborative meetings and in focus groups with collaboratives from September 2018 through October 2019. Grounded-theory analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2017) was conducted on this data around policies and practices that collaboratives discussed and implemented as they used the Whole Family Approach.

Family studies: Multilevel modeling was again used to analyze survey data from up to 477 target and comparison families. Gender, income level, and marital status were specifically considered in evaluating how these demographics impacted results in each area. Data was also analyzed for collaboratives with large enough samples.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Internal Processes

Collaboratives were largely effective at negotiating internal processes. This included staffing, strategic planning, data sharing, recruitment, and training. It was found that when staffing their collaboratives, the members sought potential employees that reflected their community. The training of staff was positive across collaboratives, and a cogent system was in place which ensured that new staff were adequately prepared.

Collaboratives continued to seek ways to engage eligible families in the Whole Family Approach. They also worked to make recruitment materials accessible to potential families. All collaboratives had concerns regarding the loss of institutional and historical knowledge of policies and procedures among staff.

Education

Almost all collaboratives engaged in some form of college preparatory work with students of all ages. This included test prep, college tours, educating students about funding opportunities and guiding them to those opportunities, and supporting students' overall development. Youth-focused educational opportunities provided by collaboratives were often intertwined with the work of college readiness and helped to provide specialized opportunities for youth to get involved in specific activities that might enhance a specialized area of interest for youth. Many collaborators had a mentoring program by older students/young adults for younger students. Mentoring programs were effective when implemented and were an important part of their ability to expand and broaden their youth outreach through the Whole Family Approach. ESL education was also a main and positive focus for several collaborators. Two main areas that were found to be a challenge when providing educational opportunities were childhood trauma and collaboration with school districts. Supporting the needs of children who have experienced trauma was a continued focus for collaborators.

Community Development

Collaboratives' approaches to community development were centered on three main areas: community oriented programming, community relationships, and community resources. All the collaboratives discussed ways to form positive relationships with the community and ways to build and maintain trust. There was no negative discussion centered on community development within the data

Youth Development

This area brought overwhelmingly positive results. Data showed that collaboratives worked to create events which fostered meaningful relationships between collaborative staff and youth, and further sought to meet the needs of the youth within the community.

Organizational Collaboration

Data demonstrated that collaboratives often sought out new agreements and partnerships with groups that they believed would meet the specific needs of the communities they serve and further draw on each other's resources. A challenge that

remained was forming agreements and accountability for duties. A concern seen amongst collaborators was unfulfilled Memorandums of Understanding and how to further hold partner organizations accountable for agreed-upon engagements.

Family

Data behind the reception of family-based events was overwhelmingly positive and focused on problem solving to create high-quality family-based events. Dissonance around methods and structures of collaboratives' engagement and process of connecting families together was centered on the tension between providing structure for families or for more open-ended activities that help build community naturally.

Recruitment

This data remained mixed. Collaborators gained a better understanding of families, but this was a topic that still had the highest number of unresolved issues. More recent data indicated that collaboratives had identified and implemented strategies to identify and engage with prospective families, contrary to earlier findings which suggested that collaboratives were slow to adapt strategies.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Three collaboratives focused on this area. The positive quality of the data made reporting on this area especially important. Collaboratives working with both individuals and groups around ESL were found to be effective in implementing processes and strategies to address needs.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Financial Changes

Adult 2 in target families had significantly fewer challenges than those in comparison families. There were significant differences for Adult 2 based on income and marital status at baseline, but not over time.

Adult Health Dietary Behaviors (YRBSS)

Results indicated that men and women in the Adult 1 group had significantly different behaviors over time. This finding was replicated in the breakout analysis of FSN.

Stress (PSS)

Comparison and target families reported significantly different levels of stress at baseline when income was included as a covariate. Over time, comparison and target Adult 2 reported a significant change in stress with income as a covariate.

General Health

Adult 1 saw a difference in general health at baseline and over time when comparing married to non married couples.

Social Support

When examining results by collaborative, FSN's Adult 1 saw a significant difference in support over time when comparing married to non-married couples. CCC's Adult 2 saw a difference in support over time when comparing males and females.

Resilience

Adult 1 saw a significant difference in their resilience when compared along income levels.

Help Given and Received

Target Adult 1 saw a significant difference in support given and received at baseline and over time which indicated that target Adult 1 reported more help given and received than comparison Adult 1.

Caregiver Perceptions of Childhood Education

Target Adult 1 were significantly different from comparison Adult 1 at the baseline and had significant growth over time. While female childhood education scale scores were significantly higher than their male counterparts, growth was seen in both male and female education scores.

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021

The evaluation was conducted using a new approach to quantitative data by using trend analysis from the data collected from target and matching families from March 2013 to March 2020. The data from this report was organized into the three pillars of the Whole Family Approach: child well-being, healthy relationships, and financial well-being.

Methodology

Family studies: Data was analyzed from target and comparison families for this report. The total number of participants for the research was 310 families and 677 individuals. WRI staff used a question- focused descriptive analysis to highlight nuances within the data and significant changes over time both within and between target and matching families to determine whether there were significant differences between target and matching families, or within target or matching families separately. In this analysis, correlations between variables are considered strong if the coefficient lies between \pm

1.0 and ± 0.6 ; a moderate correlation if the coefficient lies between ± 0.59 and ± 0.4 ; and a weak correlation if the coefficient lies between ± 0.39 and 0.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Healthy Relationships

It was found that when the child had a positive relationship with the adults there would be a positive relationship between the adults in the household as well (+0.489). Further, when Adult 1 indicated a good relationship with Adult 2, their indication of a positive relationship with their children improved over time as well. The analysis found that those who report a stronger support system in addition to collaborative influence were more likely to report a specific second adult from whom they received strong social support (+0.374). There was also a slight correlation between positive social support ratings and having a full-time or part-time job for target families (+0.341). Finally there was a moderate correlation found in increased healthy relationships/social support (+0.540) and increased income over time, so that adults with higher ratings of income also had higher ratings of social support.

Financial Stability

Adults who had social support networks did not indicate the need for increased assistance with bill payments (+0.210). There was also a very strong positive correlation between having a higher likelihood of needing payment assistance and having higher bills (+0.762). The analysis also found that there was a moderate positive correlation between owning a car and being employed (+0.590), as well as a moderate positive correlation between financial challenges and family income (+0.583). It was also found that a higher household income correlated with a higher likelihood that the child's health would be rated good to excellent (+0.420) and that adults would perceive their overall health as good to excellent (+0.509).

Child Well-being

Some findings within child well-being can be tied with healthy relationships and financial stability. For example, over two-thirds of children that had the best grades in school had adults in their lives who worked a part- or full-time job, owned a home, rented, or lived with a family and/or romantic partner while contributing part of the rent or mortgage. The majority of children's health was rated positively, both when reported by adults. When compared to other children the same age, their reports stayed the same (+0.592).

Collaborative specific findings

Target families working with Families in Motion (FIM), Stronger Families, Connecting Families to Communities (CF2C), and Child Connection Center (CCC) experienced improvements in adults' ability to cope with stressful life events and social support structures over time. Adults from Families to College (FTC) also experienced an increase in social support scores, and adults from First Start indicated positive changes to their ability to cope with stress. Both adults working with Family Strengthening Network (FSN) reported that general health scores increased over time, while financial hardship scores decreased over time. Adults working with Unidos para la Familia (UPF) and FTC reported higher attendance and participation in secondary education and training programs over time. Students involved with First Star reported higher grades over time. The majority of adults from UPF reported that they thought that a high school degree and college were very important for their children to successfully reach their life goals. Similarly, adults and adolescents from FTC also expressed a desire for career advancement to achieve their life goals.

REPORTING PERIOD: MARCH 2021 TO JULY 2021

This evaluation was conducted with data from the large, quasi-experimental family data set from March 2016 to March 2020. The goal of this evaluation was to determine whether there were major differences within and between families in the areas of child well-being, healthy relationships, and financial stability within the core years of collaborative implementation prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

Family studies: Data from two caregivers in both target and comparison groups were analyzed for this report. Question-focused descriptive analyses were conducted to identify changes in all available data as well as changes in individual collaboratives. This type of analysis highlights nuance within the data and significant changes over time both within and between target and matching families to determine whether there were significant differences between target and matching families, or within target or matching families separately. In this analysis, correlations between variables are considered very strong if the coefficient lies between ± 1.0 to ± 0.8 ; a strong correlation if the coefficient lies between ± 0.6 to ± 0.79 ; a moderate correlation if the coefficient lies between ± 0.4 to ± 0.59 ; a weak correlation if the coefficient lies between ± 0.2 to ± 0.39 , and a very weak correlation if the coefficient lies between ± 0.01 to 0 . Significant and notable findings are presented below.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Healthy Relationships

When the first caregiver indicated a good relationship with the second adult their indication of a positive relationship improved with their child/ren as well. In addition, a significant portion of Adult 1 agreed that they had someone around when they were in need, which increased over the 24-month survey period. When the children had a positive relationship with the adults, there was also a moderate significant positive correlation between adults in the household as well (+.401). Transportation was also affected by relationships; there was a significant positive correlation between having healthy relationships and ability to find a ride when one was needed (+0.723). For Adult 1, there was also a significant, positive trend in the support they received from others that increased over the 24-month survey period.

Financial Stability

When adults had healthy relationships and social support networks there was a significant, negative correlation with an increased need for assistance with bill payments. There was a significant positive correlation between higher bills and needing payment assistance (+.743), and a significant positive relationship between owning a car and being employed (+0.41). Higher household income was positively correlated with positive health ratings for children. There was also a moderate positive correlation between financial challenges and family income (+0.512), meaning that higher income was associated with more financial challenges over time.

Child Well-being

Children's grade performance was significantly positively correlated with markers of financial stability in the family. Children who were reported to perform better in school were also significantly more likely to have caregivers who have steady full- or part-time employment. Adults placed emphasis on the importance of their children finishing high school, indicated that high school would help their children achieve their life goals, and reported that it was very important that their child attended college to reach their life goals.

Collaborative specific findings

Target families working with Families in Motion (FIM), Stronger Families, Connecting Families to Communities (CF2C), and First Star experienced improvements in adults' ability to cope with stressful life events and social support structures over the course of the 24-month evaluation. Adults from Child Connection Center (CCC) also experienced

an increase in social support scores. Both adults working with Family Strengthening Network (FSN) reported that general health scores increased over time, while financial hardship scores decreased over time. Adults working with Unidos para la Familia (UPF) and FTC reported higher attendance and participation in secondary education and training programs over the 24-months of the evaluation. Students involved with First Star reported higher grades over time. The majority of adults from UPF and First Star reported that they thought that a high school degree and college were very important for their children to successfully reach their life goals. Similarly, adults and adolescents from FTC also expressed a desire for career advancement to achieve their life goals.

REPORTING PERIOD: AUGUST 2021 TO JANUARY 2022

This evaluation was conducted with an analysis of quasi-experimental data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and includes data collected between March 2020 to March 2021. This report also includes findings from two focused studies around the rapport between FSN's Family Advocates and their families, and the culturally responsive implementation of the Whole Family Approach. The goal of the evaluation was to review the differences between families experiencing the Pascale Sykes Foundation Whole Family Approach and its impact on child well-being, healthy relationships, and financial stability during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

Family studies: The evaluation team measured tangible growth and progress made by 22 target families and 101 comparison matching families using data from the longitudinal survey collected between March 2020 and March 2021. A question-focused descriptive analysis was used to understand the ways in which subjective well-being, child well-being, health, financial stability, and healthy relationships changed throughout the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the analysis of participant responses descriptive statistics were collected and used to describe the characteristics of a group of observations or can be used to draw conclusions about target and matching families.

Organizational studies: The Family Strengthening Network (FSN) Family Advocacy Evaluation was designed with a mixed methods approach, using interviews with Family Advocates and survey data collected from families at baseline and six months later around their rapport with their advocate and its impact on their lives. The Whole Family Culturally Responsive Approach Evaluation was a qualitative study based on interviews with collaborative staff, leadership, and families around the barriers they

have experienced, their goals, and successes.

FAMILY FINDINGS

Financial Stability

Earning an average of \$1,700 a month, target families had at least one employed adult in the home 54.45% of the time. All participants reported that they had not received outside help when paying their bills or monthly rent, but 15% also admitted to having borrowed money from friends or family to effectively meet their needs. About half of target adults did not know the cost of their monthly electric bill or their monthly gas bill. Half of target families received free food or meals; and all of these households reported being food secure. Fifteen percent of target families could not pay their rent or mortgage in full, yet no families were evicted.

Child Well-Being and Health

Acknowledging child obesity as a chief concern, especially among economically disadvantaged families, health outcomes reported were positive. A strong majority (76.19%) of target adults rated their child's weight at the right weight and expressed little to no concern about eating habits. During the pandemic 43.48% of target families received free breakfast during the school year, and 8.7% also received free breakfast during the summer. Parental engagement with their child's life extended into education and most (90%) indicated their child was receiving grades above a B rating. All target adults agreed ascertaining a high school diploma was important to later obtaining life goals, a feeling echoed by reported perception of the child's priorities too. College was highly valued by target parents as well.

Healthy Relationships and Well-Being

Forty percent of target adults reported they could bounce back after hard times, and a fifth indicated that they struggled making it through a stressful event during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although each target participant stated they had access to health coverage, some deferred care due to cost, unless their child needed aid. In terms of safety within their community, most families indicated they felt free from crime and were in about as secure a location as other areas near them.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINDINGS

Whole Family Culturally Responsive Approach Evaluation

Interviewing 15 collaborative staff members and 21 family members from Spanish

speaking households, the Whole Family approach was analyzed with a distinctly Hispanic lens. Results indicated large difficulties regarding financial stability, healthcare access, access to education, living situations, child well-being, and family well-being. Collaboratives were aware of the important work they performed and displayed a culturally appropriate response to needs. Utilizing their strengths, such as Spanish speaking staff and cultural awareness, collaborations strengthened the community by including Hispanic families in the development process.

Family Strengthening Network (FSN) Family Advocacy Evaluation

Results indicated a significant improvement among participating families and their assigned FSN advocates. Beyond the Whole Family Approach families were more financially stable, improved their employment situation, located secure and affordable housing, and implemented successful coping mechanisms to support positive mental health. Based on the results, after six months from the intake at FSN, the majority of families indicated having high-quality relationships with their family advocates thus further solidifying the correlated relationship between the collaborator and the improving target family.