



PB&J
FAMILY SERVICES



Evaluation Plan 2020-2021

Prepared by:

Kendal Chavez, MA Candidate

Evaluation Lab Fellow

Master of Public Policy

Jonathan Wright, PhD Candidate.

Evaluation Lab Fellow

Master of Public Health

Melissa Binder, PhD

Evaluation Lab Team Lead

Associate Professor, Economics

1. I. INTRODUCTION

PB&J is dedicated to nurturing families and supportive communities through a heart-centered approach that centers families, parents, and children so that children can grow to their full potential. The organization offers a variety of programs, from therapeutic parenting to a Pre-K extended day facility, that help clients develop agency and resilience, and, ultimately, prepare them to succeed.

PB&J would like to expand its data collection capacity to include two systems. The first system would collect client success stories while they are in the program. This system would help clients and staff recognize and celebrate the small successes that can lead to meaningful changes in family dynamics and personal development.

The second system would track outcomes into the future, after clients are discharged. This system will enable PB&J to assess whether children remain safe and whether parents and children enjoy positive life trajectories.

Both systems would provide a source of stories that PB&J could share with the community, both for promotion and outreach purposes.

2. II. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Evaluation questions:

The aim of this evaluation is to provide recommendations for expanding data collection to include (1) collecting and managing clients' in-program success stories, (2) tracking clients after they are discharged in order to evaluate their long-term outcomes. As we propose an evaluation system design for PB&J, we will consider feasibility, client agency and privacy, cost to the organizations, as well as the quantity and quality of data to assure project alignment with organizational values and constraints.

Specific evaluation questions are as follows: which strategies for collecting and managing stories, both during and after receiving services, are congruent with PB&J's organizational context, values, and needs? How will these systems function? How will we measure success?

The process we will follow is to assemble best practices, devise a decision-making process, and engage in a series of conversations with PB&J leadership and staff. These conversations will begin with a discussion of needs and dreams (now completed) and proceed to hashing out operational and technical details (ongoing).

Several themes emerged from the needs and dreams conversations. PB&J would like to have a system that collects stories from many clients, and that centers the client in determining what stories are shared. Collecting stories should not be a burden on staff or clients. The system should be easy to access.

For long-term tracking, it would be ideal to know whether former client families later became involved with the Children, Families and Youth Department. Many clients enter PB&J programs through CYFD referral and avoiding further CYFD involvement is a positive measure of child safety. Another outcome of interest is how children do in school. One of PB&J's major goals is school readiness, and tracking whether PB&J children make normal grade progress, learn in regular classrooms (instead of special education), and perform well on standardized test is great interest.

Another dream is that PB&J be able to stay in touch with former clients. Some former clients stay in touch with their family specialists, and a good number attend PB&J's annual Thanksgiving lunches. It would be ideal to have a system that tracks self-reported client outcomes over time.

The UNM team developed two tools to assist with decision making. The first is a policy options matrix for in-program story collection.¹ The matrix proposes four options and evaluates them

¹ See Bardach, Eugene and Eric Patashnik. 2016. *The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving: A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, 5th Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.)

against the five criteria: cost to organization , client agency fostered, administrative feasibility, stories generated, and ensuring privacy. (See figure 1.)

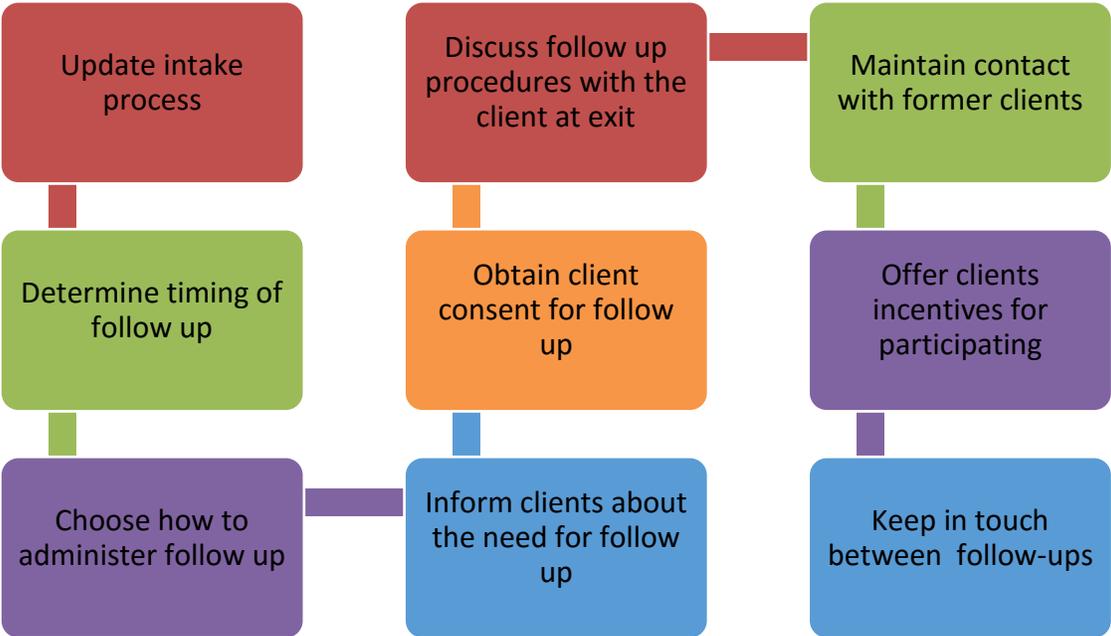
Figure 1. Options for In-Program Story Collection

Analysis: Current Client Stories and Data					
PB&J's process for collecting and sharing current clients' stories prevents the organization from fully expressing the organization's short and long-term impacts.					
	High, moderate, low fiscal impact on organization	High, moderate, low client agency	High, moderate, low administrative capacity	High, moderate, low quantity of stories generated	High, moderate, low impact on client privacy
OPTIONS	Cost to organization	Client agency fostered	Administrative feasibility	Stories generated	Ensuring privacy
Status Quo - Collecting and sharing client stories at staff meetings	Low - story collection occurring through existing organizational practices	Low - client agency not prioritized	Low capacity - not many working on project	Low - stories collected organically	Low - privacy of clients not assured due to informal process of consent
Self-nomination of personal stories of success/ inspiration	Moderate - see administrative feasibility	High - clients identify when stories should be shared and participate in self-recognition process	Moderate - would require systemization of processes, including training of staff	Moderate - would create an environment of sharing that may encourage others to collaborate, with the chance of minimizing the total number collected	High - clients have choice of what is and is not included as it is their prerogative to share
Two-tiered consent: before services begin and after critical stories have been shared	Moderate - additional staff hours may be needed to develop second layer of consent	Moderate - permission would have to be obtained, and it would be stories they help choose	Moderate - would involve more time spent actively recording stories in a sharable format	Moderate - clients may decide not to share stories at time of request for consent. While collection of stories will still be generated, the	Moderate - consent to share stories secured before and after services

				total number may decrease.	
Blanket consent for use of all client stories	Low - occurring through existing organizational practices	Low - organization identifies and frames stories, not clients	Low - would only be a signed document	High - stories made available for numerous usages for set amount of time	Low - many different uses to make client aware of

The second is a process map based on an Urban Institute report entitled, “Finding out what happens to former clients.” The map includes all the elements that go into a long-term client tracking system including consent, timing, and mode. (See figure 2.) Appendix A provides more details about each element.

Figure 2. Process Map for a Long-Term Client Tracking System



3. III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Finding hard-to-reach populations

Two important factors stand out when considering how to reach hard-to-reach populations: incentives to encourage participation and collecting multiple forms of contact information. These strategies improve the interaction between organizations and the clients that have left their program. For instance, address-based sampling identifies the addresses of U.S. households that are typically hard to reach by using the United States Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence File (Cantrell et al., 2018). Cantrell et al. (2018) found that obtaining contact information from marketing information forms also enabled greater access to hard-to-reach populations.

Updating and maintaining contacts

The maintenance and continual process of updating contact information remains one of the most successful ways to ensure sustained contact after leaving a program. This is particularly true for organizations that can retain online records or even staff personnel that are tasked with reaching out to participants or clients that have left a program. The Urban Institute (2003) produced a formative outline of how nonprofit organizations should manage former clients in order to maintain contact. In a list of actions to take, one particularly relevant action stood out: determining the time of a follow up contact (The Urban Institute, 2003). Organizations are recommended to identify whether follow up should occur immediately, within three months, six months after service, or within a year from completion of programming.

Web-based data collection social media independence

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being asserts that keeping in touch with survey participants even while they are out of the direct, in-person observation of a

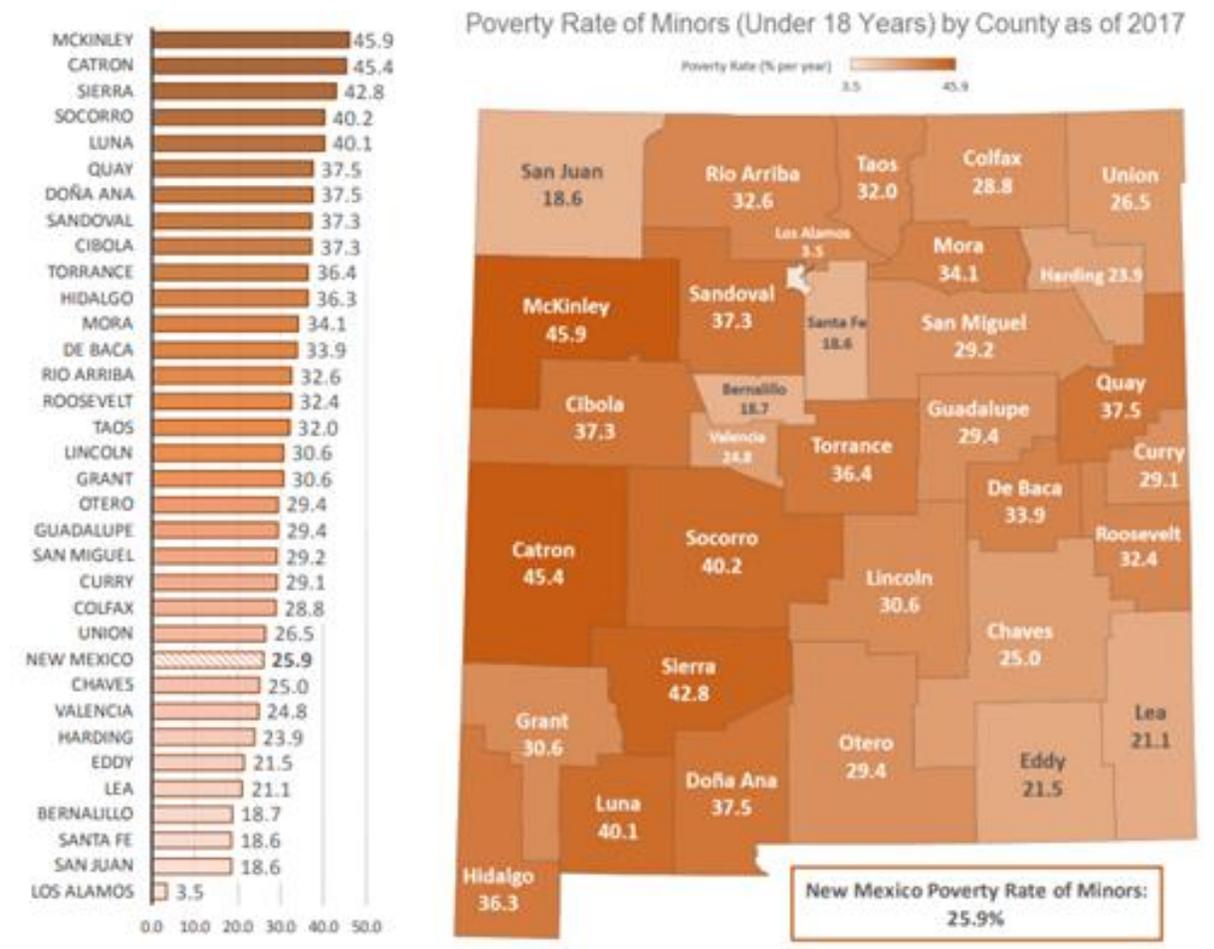
program, is beneficial for both clients and organizations (Miller, Bales & Hirsch, 2020). Miller, Bales & Hirsch (2020) go on to state that social media engagement through messaging applications on mobile phones should be considered revolutionary in terms of achieving high levels of participation and retained contact after physically leaving a program; 83% of participants living in supervised independent living settings reported to the program through a range of social media and survey formats. Added granularity on which applications work the best would further benefit this field of study and ultimately bring its relevant findings to other organizations. Using the combined communication methods of social media paired with online surveys to gather information and maintain contact with clients within a program are strategies that can and should be utilized after a program ends.

Consent and anonymity

Consent is described not just as how a client's information or persona can be used by the organization, but also how much information they wish to leave of themselves with the organization after they leave (Schumacher & Greenberg, 1999). Schumacher and Greenberg effectively outlined how caregivers who relied on childcare subsidies had not received information about this from the program they left because of the absence of a signed consent form that would enable the organization to contact them (1999). The important aspect of this is that the participants who did speak about this in the state survey did in fact desire to maintain contact with the organization. Clearer indications of how consent and anonymity is managed within organizations has an impact on contacting clients after they leave. Organizations that take steps to obtain consent for contacting clients after services have concluded are more successful in establishing sustained contact with their former clients.

4. IV. EVALUATION CONTEXT

Figure 1. Poverty rate percentage of minors (under 18 years old)



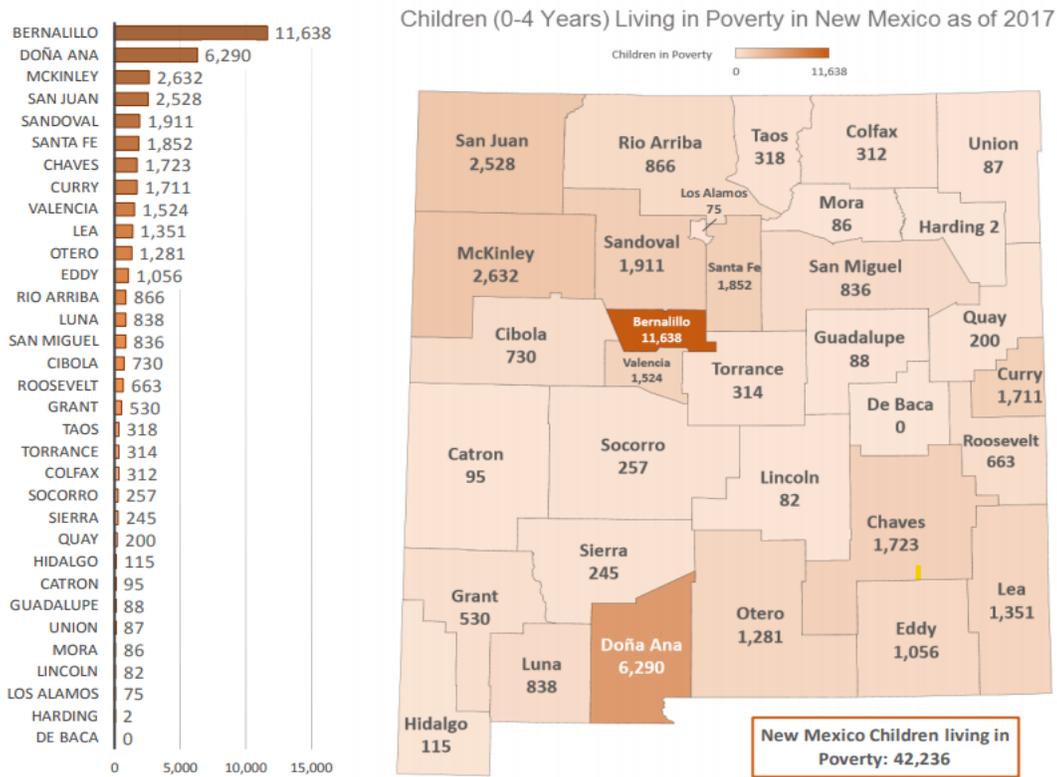
Source: U.S. Census. (2017). *Data Book for New Mexico Human Services Department*. Retrieved from

<https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/uploads/files/Public%20Information/HSD%20Data%20Book%20All%20Sections%201-20-20.pdf>

With the New Mexico youth average poverty rate of 25.9% per year, it should be considered critical to target the poorer areas of the state where there may be difficulties accessing services like PB&J. The significant gap between the geographically neighboring counties of Sandoval and Bernalillo of 18.6% higher poverty rate per year indicated the difficulty in New Mexico of non-urbanized child poverty. What this map did not indicate was the differences between the state and the national average of 18.4% which places New Mexico in the top four states for high poverty rates for minors (U.S. Census, 33). In order to establish where the hardest to reach

areas were, this map of U.S. Census data can provide a crucial insight into the areas of New Mexico that are most at risk of having minors suffering from poverty.

Figure 2. Children living in poverty between the ages of 0-4

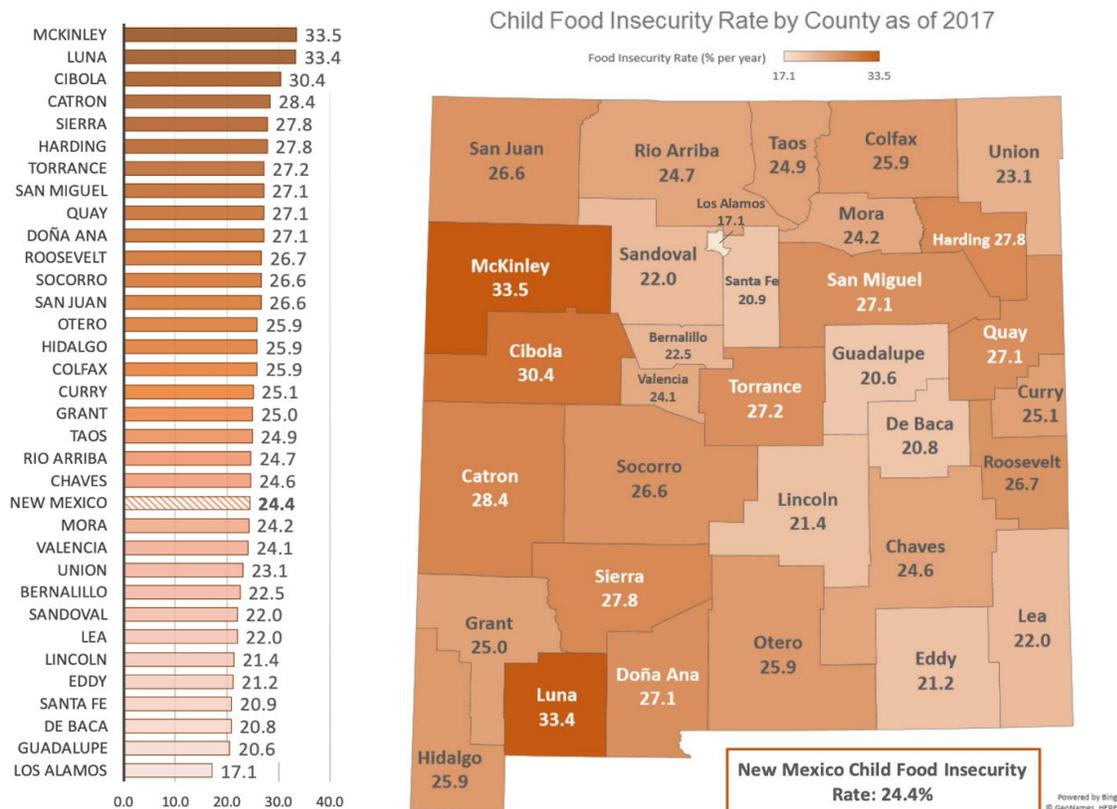


U.S. Census. (2017). *Data Book for New Mexico Human Services Department*. Retrieved from <https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/uploads/files/Public%20Information/HSD%20Data%20Book%20All%20Sections%201-20-20.pdf>

Having data for the number of children living under the national poverty line in different counties of a state enables analysis of where the highest areas of risk are for standard of living. Although these results are not per capita, adjusting for population numbers, the raw numerical data does provide a geographic indication of the areas in the state where there is the high risk. Family poverty is explicitly linked to the poverty of a child below the age of five and this is where the work of PB&J to help both parents and the children through their programs will be especially influential. Highly pertinent to the work of PB&J in locating at risk areas for child poverty, Bernalillo County stood out in the data as a significant outlier with New Mexico for children living in poverty from birth to the age of four. Of 42,236 children living in poverty in

2017, 11,638 reside in Bernalillo county. The low numbers in other counties such as Torrance with 314 were likely due to a significantly smaller size of population and the increased population in Bernalillo County from cities such as Albuquerque do make up a significant part of this high number of cases. Even cities such as neighboring Santa Fe County fall below the Bernalillo levels of children living in poverty. This did indicate that Bernalillo was a particularly at risk area for children to be exposed to poverty in the state. With only Doña Ana County coming close to 5,000 cases below Bernalillo County the city of Los Cruces in particular accounting for the high numbers, the urbanized center of Albuquerque should be considered as a central area of concern. Having a numerical number of cases for poverty below the age of five meant that a clearer picture of areas in the state where families struggle to ensure safe living conditions emerge.

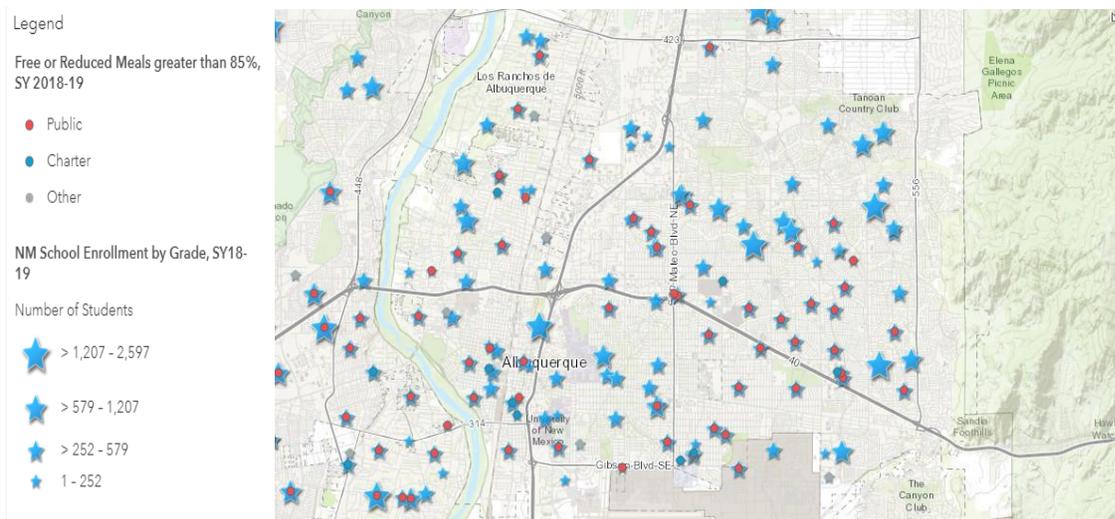
Figure 3: Child Food Insecurity Rate by County as of 2017



Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, M. Kato, A. Crumbaugh & M. Strayer. *Map the Meal Gap 2019: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2017*. Feeding America, 2019

Food insecurity, or a household’s inability to consistently access adequate food, is a major indicator of need. In 2017, the U.S. rate of food insecurity was reported at 17.7%, New Mexico’s rate in the same year was 24.4%. County food insecurity rates vary greatly across the large landmass of New Mexico: McKinley County, which includes parts of Navajo Nation, Zuni Pueblo, and other tribal nations, reports a food insecurity rate two times that of the national average. PB&J Family Services serves the greater Bernalillo County metropolitan areas as well as clients outside the region per referrals. While Bernalillo County is the most populous county in New Mexico, it reported a food insecurity rate two points below the state average. This data is helpful for current client services as well as long-term tracking services provided to clients after they leave PB&J.

Figure 4: NM School Enrollment by Grade, School Year 2018-19 and Free or Reduced Meals greater than 85%, School Year 2018-19 in ABQ



New Mexico Community Data Collaborative. (2019). *New Mexico School Indicators, 2012-2019*. Retrieved from <https://nmcdc.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=20bd603fe68e4b2abb5dc0dd139406ba>.

PB&J administers the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program to assure that healthy meals are available to clients through the organization’s programs. Free and reduced price meal data provides the organization a snapshot of the poverty indicators in the neighborhoods served in

Bernalillo County. Per the data provided to the New Mexico Community data Collaboration, the south valley, international district, and I-25 corridor are high need populations reliant on free and reduced price meals through schools and community organizations. For organizational planning purposes, this data can be leveraged to establish new and expanded service relationships for community members that are food insecure and in need of organizational resources.

Finally, we are still working on adding some additional data sets from a wish list made by PB&J. The primary item on this list is to study the impact of having an incarcerated member of the family.

5. V. EVALUATION TEAM

The 2020-2021 Evaluation lab PB&J team is as follows:

UNM Evaluation Lab team members include Melissa Binder (team lead, Director, Associate Professor of Economics), Kendal Chavez (Evaluation Lab Fellow) and Jonathan Wright (Evaluation Fellow).

And:

PB&J Services Staff include Jennifer Thompson (Associate Director of Clinical Services), Felicia Tapia-Alvidrez (Associate Director of Family Services), and Tashi Swierkosz (Development & Communications Manager).

1.

6. VI. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE

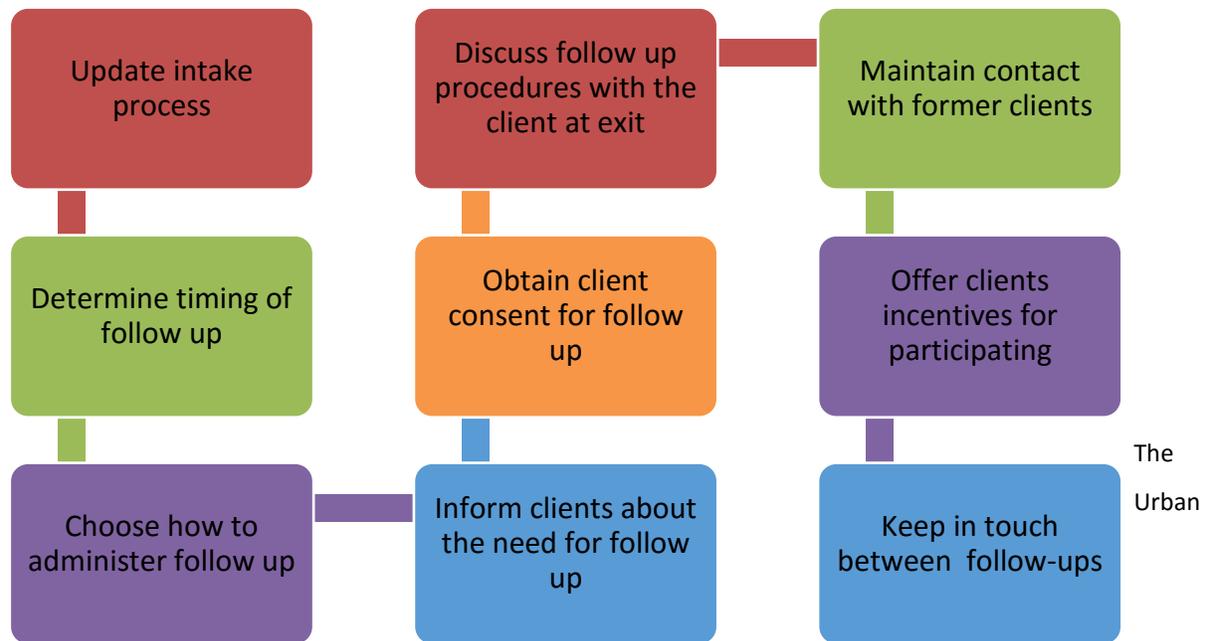
While benchmarks and goals may shift as additional planning is conducted with PB&J, an initial snapshot of the timeline is provided below.

- **October 2020**
 - Make a work plan
 - Determine timeline and deliverables
 - Begin compiling sources for Literature Review
 - Topic area: staying in touch with former clients
 - Assess client story tracking issues, opportunities, and evaluative dimensions
 - Develop options matrix for in-program stories
- **November 2020**
 - Literature Review
 - Create list of dimensions for maintaining contact with former clients
 - Develop process map for designing a long-term tracking system
 - Begin review of process map with PB&J team
 - Data compilation
 - Work with data manager to refine data pull for data-tracking project with CYFD
- **December 2020**
 - Evaluation Plan
 - Continue review of process map with PB&J Team
 - Data pull sent to CYFD
- **January 2021**
 - Continue review of process map with PB&J
 - Collect additional community data requested by PB&J
 - Determine feasibility of accessing state employment records
- **February 2021**

- Conclude review of process map with PB&J Team
- Write system recommendations report
- Suggest revisions to intake, discharge, and consent forms
- **March 2021**
 - Report on CYFD referral data
 - March 17th: deadline for data collection write up
 - Write first draft of evaluation report
- **April 2021**
 - Finalize Evaluation Report

7. APPENDIX A: TRACKING PROCESS

|



Institute. (2003). *Finding out what happens to former clients*. Washington D.C.: Series on Outcome Management for Nonprofit Organization

1. Update intake process:

Changing the form that clients would receive upon entering the program which would allow for them to provide contact information.

2. Determining timing of follow up:

Conducting more than one follow up, while ideal, requires immense staff time and financial resources. Organizations are recommended to identify whether follow up should occur immediately, within three months, six months after service, or within a year from completion of programming. The sooner clients are contacted, the easier it will be to locate and survey them.

3. Choose how to administer follow up:

A combination of efforts spanning from online surveys, mailed reminder cards, and telephone calls are ideal for follow up. Combining mail with telephone calls, for example, will increase the response rate.

4. Inform clients about the need for follow up:

Clients should regularly be informed throughout services that they will be followed up with after service is completed. The manner in which the need for follow up is framed and messaged is critical to the success of collecting information after discharge.

5. Obtain client consent for follow up:

Consent for follow up should be collected at time of service. This level of consent can be built into existing intake materials or can be collected later in service. The consent form should include vehicles for communication, including phone, email, and mailing address, as well as best times to reach out and how communication should be conducted. If incentives are to be offered, they should be referenced at time of consent.

6. Discuss follow up procedures with the client at exit:

At time of exit, the client should be offered an “appointment card” with information regarding the follow up conversation. Information regarding time, date, call-in or website access, incentives offered, and confirmation of client’s contact details should be included in the card. Include aspects of confidentiality here with the client.

7. Maintain contact with former clients:

Maintaining contact with former clients results in easier follow up efforts. Two appropriate options are referenced: strategic scheduling of after-care meetings and utilization of multiple

forms of informal check-ins to ensure maintained contact information. Appropriate confidentiality procedures should be adhered to.

8. Offer clients incentives for participating:

Incentives are key to assuring high response rates and can be provided through use of cash or non-cash items like gift cards to grocery stores or bus tickets. A best practice is to offer a wide variety of incentives so that participants have agency in selecting their item of choice.

Additional incentives may be considered for hard-to-reach populations.

9. Keep in touch between follow-ups:

Efforts would be made by the organization to reach out to the client through short and simple online messages ensuring that contact information is correct on the child/client's birthday and bi-annual online surveys checking in on their progress.

8. APPENDIX B: FULL LITERATURE REVIEW

Finding hard-to-reach populations

Three important factors stand out when considering how to reach hard-to-reach populations: address sampling, incentivizing structures that invite participation, and collecting multiple forms of contact information. These strategies improve the interaction between organizations and the clients that have left their program. Address-based sampling identifies the addresses of U.S. households that are typically hard to reach by using the United States Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence File (Cantrell et al., 2018). The Cantrell et al. (2018) study found that obtaining contact information from marketing information forms also enabled

greater access to hard-to-reach populations. Finding a client in a marketing database is a possibility that will be looked into.

An online survey process that includes clear and concise information regarding the questions, demographic information, consent and privacy, and follow-up information provides an accessible way for clients to stay in touch. If the organization used materials that included common logos and branding when reaching out to the participants, they were more effective at retaining interest and attention (Cantrell et al., 2018). Efforts to maintain contact with hard-to-reach populations should ensure that the focus should be on emphasizing how to get back in touch with the organization as there would be a greater chance of cooperation (Cantrell et al., 2018).

To reach more remote and isolated populations, active efforts must be made in order to ensure that responses are possible. Multiple forms of contact information such as phone numbers, emails, and addresses allow the program to better reach the participant over time. An additional study demonstrated how an organization improved their connectivity with clients through taking the initiative and reaching out first via multiple forms of contact, including phone, email, and address (Schumacher & Greenberg, 1999). The report observed that this could be achieved by making the organization a hub for essential information like income support and other benefits, and forwarding this information to clients through the contact information provided on exit demographic surveys strengthened the relationships between client and organization.

Taking multiple forms of contact information upon exiting the program and updating these records when possible are methods for increasing accessibility for harder to reach members of the population. This interestingly ties back to the study by Cantrell et al. (2018) that, if participants are given an incentive structure and information to maintain contact with a program, it has a higher chance of maintaining involvement. The study provided participants with toll-free numbers to call about follow up questions and provided incentives for maintaining contact through either of their contact methods such as text messaging or calling.

Clearly, the combination of access to multiple forms of contact information paired with an incentive to remain in touch ensured that participants would retain interest and attention.

Updating and maintaining contacts

The maintenance and continual process of updating contact information remains one of the most successful ways to ensure sustained contact after leaving a program. This is particularly true for organizations that can retain online records or even staff personnel that are tasked with reaching out to participants or clients that have left a program. In regard to maintaining contact, The Urban Institute (2003) produced a formative outline of how nonprofit organizations should manage former clients to attain positive outcomes. Their assessment found that tracking clients beyond services is essential to formulating valid assessments of program efficacy. In a list of actions to take, one particularly relevant action stood out: determining the time of a follow up contact (The Urban Institute, 2003). Organizations are recommended to identify whether follow up should occur immediately, within three months, six months after service, or within a year from completion of programming.

While admitting that conducting more than one follow up, while ideal, requires immense staff time and financial resources, the assessment highlighted that maintenance of contact information is more easily done sooner rather than later after the client has left the program. The sooner clients are contacted, the easier it is to locate and survey them. Two pertinent options are referenced to update contact information: strategic scheduling of after-care meetings and informal check-ins (The Urban Institute, 2003). These could embody either direct in-person meetings or, more popular now, virtual methods of checking in online on social media or through an internet service.

Additionally, Schumacher and Greenberg (1999) have worked on tracking clients' long-term outcomes and have noted that it proved difficult with only mailed surveys or telephone communication due to the increased chance of changed addresses or phone numbers. The report also went further to recommend that using multiple ways of contacting the leaving clients to improve the response rate to their surveys would also increase their knowledge about how the organization could continue to provide information for them. The report, as a whole,

called for procedures to be put in place by care programs to increase the contact information collected from leaving clients for future interviews and checkups. As a means of ensuring reliable contact information, Schumacher and Greenberg (1999) outline how planning a future date for a check-up was a necessity in staying in touch. Combining these two ideas from two different studies, the emphasis is on the organization taking an active effort to ensure that information on their leaving clients is updated which would make them contactable.

Web-based data collection social media independence

In regard to using web-based data collection and social media to keep in touch with program participants and clients, significant steps have been made to establish how the internet, and social media in particular, can be important for retaining clientele. Programs and organizations now require a social media presence if they wish to remain relevant and accessible for clients and participants. While sustained in-person contact with participants aided Miller, Bales, and Hirsch's study, a level of independence complemented by maintained contact with the organization through social media benefited the participant's growth (2020). Their recent study interestingly linked federal and state surveys of participants in the extended care programs to show how those who remained in touch with the program had a higher chance of employment and a lower chance of turning to crime and incarceration.

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being asserts that keeping in touch with survey participants even while they are out of the direct, in-person observation of a program, is beneficial for both clients and organizations (Miller, Bales & Hirsch, 2020). Miller, Bales & Hirsch (2020) go on to state that social media engagement through messaging applications on mobile phones should be considered revolutionary in terms of achieving high levels of participation and retained contact after physically leaving a program; 83% of participants living in supervised independent living settings reported to the program through a range of social media and survey formats. Added granularity on which applications work the best would further benefit this field of study and ultimately bring its relevant findings to other organizations. Using the combined communication methods of social media paired with online

surveys to gather information and maintain contact with clients within a program are strategies that can and should be utilized after a program ends.

Additional research has indicated how the internet can be a successful tool to encourage retained client interaction. Cantrell et al. (2018) formulate similar conclusions by showing how possible it is to retain correspondence with a client through the use of the internet. Web-based systems accessible on mobile and desktop platforms, specifically engineered for engaging and retaining young adults in data collection processes, demonstrated efficacy in the research design (Cantrell et al., 2018). It was a low-cost and efficient avenue for data collection because it used online survey platforms that leverage widely available internet and smartphone resources that are convenient and accessible (Cantrell et al., 2018). The study also found that organizations and clients reliably use the internet as a means of discussion. Virtual birthday cards, humorous emails, and social media interaction through personal messages or on Facebook pages increased the organization's connection to former clients (Cantrell et al., 2018). This strategy was a cheap and relatively simple method to assure more reliable contact with the client.

Consent and anonymity

Consent is described not just as how a client's information or persona can be used by the organization, but also how much information they wish to leave of themselves with the organization after they leave (Schumacher & Greenberg, 1999). Schumacher and Greenberg effectively outlined how caregivers who relied on childcare subsidies had not received information about this from the program they left because of the absence of a signed consent form that would enable the organization to contact them (1999). The important aspect of this is that the participants who did speak about this in the state survey did in fact desire to maintain contact with the organization.

Clearer indications of how consent and anonymity is managed within organizations has an impact on contacting clients after they leave. According to The Urban Institute (2003), consent was one of the critical pillars of maintaining contact. The findings also showed that organizations that take steps to obtain consent for contacting clients after services have

concluded are more successful in establishing sustained contact with their former clients (The Urban Institute, 2003). Consent can be built into existing intake materials, collected later in service, or in client intake processes so that reaching out afterwards becomes an expected and formal way of staying in touch. Vehicles for communication, including phone, email, and mailing address, as well as best times to reach out, and how communication should be conducted are also essential components of a client consent form. Anonymity was also discussed under the banner of consent because a client should have the option to consent to their information being used or not, therefore giving them agency over their identity and personal information.

9. REFERENCES

- Cantrell, K., Hair, E.C., Smith, A., Bennett, M., Rath, J.M., Thomas, R.K., Fahimi, M., J.M., & Vallone, D. (2018). Recruiting and retaining youth and young adults: challenges and opportunities in survey research for tobacco control. *Rand Knowledge Services*. (27). 147-154.
- Miller, M., Bales, D., & Hirsch, M. (2020). *Extended Foster Care in Washington State: Final Report*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Schumacher, R. and Greenberg, M., (1999). *Child Care after Leaving Welfare: Early Evidence from State Studies*. Washington D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- The Urban Institute (2003). *Finding out what happens to former clients*. Washington D.C.: Series on Outcome Management for Nonprofit Organizations.