

# Mapping Change and Implementation to CCWIS Projects



Capacity Building  
CENTER FOR STATES

Child welfare information technology (IT) systems, including Comprehensive Child Welfare Information Systems (CCWIS), are a critical support for agencies as they work toward better outcomes for children, youth, and families. With thoughtful design, development, and implementation, these systems can:

Streamline data collection and entry

Provide more real-time access to data

Facilitate data analysis and interpretation

Support data-informed decision-making

Help reinforce and support practice that centers the needs of communities served

Using a change and implementation approach can help teams sustain momentum, maintain alignment, and avoid roadblocks as they work to build more responsive data systems. This tip sheet includes questions development teams can use to spark conversations amongst themselves and with partners.



# Problem Exploration

Problem exploration is the process of identifying what needs to change, why it needs to change, and how we know that it needs to change. Teams that understand the underlying causes of problems are more likely to choose and implement a solution that will make a difference. While your child welfare program and IT team works to better understand specific challenges and digs into the underlying causes and current system limitations, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
What is your team’s current understanding of the problem and the solution? Is there a shared understanding of the problem? Is the team at risk of solving the wrong problem?	
Does the team, collectively, see this project as a major change and opportunity? Does the team understand what must stay the same?	
What program or business needs are your team and/or the agency trying to support? Who determines the program or business needs? In what ways is your team considering the values and ideas of youth, families, and communities served by your agency?	
What processes and guidelines does your agency have or need around using your CCWIS?	
What internal or external forces are influencing what your system does, measures, and reports?	
Does your team know what the child welfare data mean, where they come from, and how they relate to the child and family outcomes the agency is trying to achieve?	
Is your team aware of the populations and communities impacted by your child welfare agency? Who is represented by the data and who is missing?	
How is your team ensuring a balanced focus on identifying and solving both programmatic and technological problems?	
What types of data does your team have around the usability of the system?	

# Teaming

Teaming brings together varied expertise and skills needed to effectively guide change and implementation activities. Executive leadership, program and IT staff, Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCA), county or regional teams, people with lived experience in child welfare, and community partners are critical members of change and implementation teams. While your child welfare program and IT team brings together these individuals to guide change and implementation activities, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
<p>Do the members of the project team, including leadership, program, and IT staff, have a shared understanding of the perspectives they each bring? What is the shared understanding of why other team members are at the table? How have individual team members put their purpose into their own words?</p>	
<p>What skills does your team believe are critical to have on the team? Who are the team members that can help update business processes in line with system updates? Who are the change and implementation experts that help guide this project?</p>	
<p>How are team members chosen? What has been done to enable participation (e.g., work redistribution)?</p>	
<p>Does your team include individuals with lived experience and expertise? Does your team include diverse representation from those served by this program? What has been done to enable participation by youth and family members (e.g., later meeting times, virtual meetings and access to meeting technology, compensation)? What steps have been taken to promote meaningful engagement and ensure equal footing at the table?</p>	
<p>How are CWCA's and other external partners represented? Are they engaged early in the process?</p>	
<p>What is the existing governance structure or charter? Does everyone understand their role in governance?</p>	
<p>How does your team promote a culture of psychological safety for team members to feel secure in discussing CCWIS, IT, and program issues? Does your team have conversational agreements? Are all voices heard and respected?</p>	
<p>In what ways has your team discussed the importance of shared language and identified terms and definitions that will be essential to this project?</p>	

# Theory of Change

A theory of change serves as a valuable tool to illustrate a series of changes that must occur to address a problem or need. While your child welfare program and IT team illustrates what needs to change to get from the identified problem to a desired outcome, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
How does your team's current process help you reach the desired outcome? To reach this outcome can your team redesign the existing process or are there advantages to starting from scratch?	
Is your team forcing the system to support the agency's process? Is the system forcing the agency or team to adjust the agency's ideal process? In what ways does this impact the users and overall project?	
Who will benefit the most from your team's vision for change? Who will benefit the least? What unintended consequences might result from each step of the process? What is your team's plan to alleviate these impacts?	
How does your theory of change balance your CCWIS and program needs?	

# Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation



As child welfare agencies face decisions about how to address their needs, choosing the right solution is crucial to improving outcomes. While there is often pressure to rush to a decision, taking time to research options and think critically about fit and feasibility can prevent wasted resources. While your child welfare program and IT team identifies and defines programs, practices, and other strategies to address identified problems, meet needs, and ensure fit with agency context and the members of communities served, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
What role have individuals with lived experience and expertise and members of communities served played in system selection and design?	
Has your team researched and tested existing solutions to determine how they address and meet your agency's and staff's needs? How has your team considered how different groups will access and benefit from the selected system?	
What evidence is there that the selected system is the best fit for your agency, staff, and the communities you serve? How does it streamline data collection and entry? How does it support your agency in making more data-informed decisions?	
What emerging technologies has your team considered as options?	

## Readiness

When organizational readiness is high, effective implementation of a new program is more likely. Assessing and building readiness are essential components of a successful change and implementation process. While your child welfare program and IT team examines factors that contribute to an agency’s willingness and ability to make changes or put specific solutions in place, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
How will your agency assess project readiness, gather feedback, and communicate planning? How is your team planning to assess readiness with adequate time to address barriers to successful implementation?	
How will your team assess the readiness of individual team members to adopt, test, and use the new system? What is your team’s plan to assess readiness throughout the project life cycle?	
What is your team’s communication plan to support CCWIS development and rollout? How does the plan address the communication needs of executive leadership, program and IT staff, CWCAs, county or regional teams, and community partners? How has your team considered measuring the effectiveness of the communication plan?	
What is the timeline and how will that be communicated to external and internal teams? How often will the timeline be evaluated? If changes are necessary, how will those changes impact remaining work and be communicated to all involved?	
What internal and external resources are available to the agency to support planning, development, and implementation? Who are decision-makers to ensure resources are in place to infuse necessary supports? Is there a plan in place in the event resourcing changes? How will resources be balanced with other agency activities and responsibilities? What is the backup plan for resources?	
What implementation supports (e.g., coaching, resources, change champions, etc.) are needed to support training, testing, and system adoption?	

# Implementation Planning and Capacity Building

Thoughtful planning and capacity building lay the groundwork for new programs and practice changes. Despite the pressures to move quickly, taking time to carefully plan and intentionally build capacity can save time, avert wasted resources, and improve the likelihood of success. While your child welfare program and IT team outlines plans and action steps to get ready for implementation, build capacity, roll out a program or other intervention, and monitor implementation, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
How will information be communicated to internal and external partners as your team prepares for implementation? How will information about the system (e.g., releases and updates, training) be tailored for different audiences?	
How will change champions be identified (to serve as leaders, support, and to promote engagement with the new system)?	
How will your team identify and accommodate accessibility needs?	
Do training plans include opportunities for users to observe and practice in the system before integrating it into practice?	
How has the team tailored system implementation plans to fit your agency's policies and values?	

# Intervention Testing, Piloting, and Staging

Before an agency launches a new functionality, components or procedures should be tested. This process allows agencies to assess, adjust, and plan for needed implementation supports that meet the needs of children, youth, and families being served. While your child welfare program and IT team conducts a trial run on a small scale, makes changes, and strategically rolls out programs and practices, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
How is your team engaging frontline staff, youth and families with lived expertise, populations served, and community partners in usability testing, pilot testing, and planning for staging and scaling up?	
How can your team best address varying levels of capacity as the system is rolled out and scaled up at different sites?	
What outreach strategies are needed to address barriers to access for diverse audiences? How will the team test strategies ahead of time?	



# Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings

Monitoring progress toward goals and evaluation can support informed decision-making and guide improvements to system functionality and implementation. While your child welfare program and IT team analyzes data to guide improvements and answer questions about what’s working and what’s not, consider these questions:

Questions to Consider as You Begin	Notes
<p>How has the team defined success? How does your team’s definition align with how users define success? Has the team reviewed the CCWIS self-assessment tools provided in Technical Bulletin #7 (resources are found at the end of this document)?</p>	
<p>How will your team measure the success of this project? What key indicators will your team use?</p>	
<p>How are youth and families with lived expertise and members of communities served meaningfully involved in designing plans for monitoring and evaluation? Are they offering input during data collection, analyzing data and evidence and interpreting findings, identifying recommendations, informing how findings are shared, and/or helping to make reports relevant?</p>	
<p>How has your team collected and analyzed data to assess what’s working well, what’s not working, and for whom (e.g., system functionality, training, change management, implementation process, etc.)? How do findings guide ongoing adjustments and improvements?</p>	
<p>How has your team collected feedback on the system from users? Has the team asked users what it can do better? How does that feedback inform changes or updates to the system over time?</p>	
<p>How has your team assessed the effectiveness of the implementation process as well as the system? How have findings guided decisions to adjust and sustain the system? How will these findings inform upcoming phases of implementation?</p>	

# Moving Forward

This tip sheet offers questions designed to drive conversations throughout the life cycle of system design, development, implementation, and refinement. Teams planning for change will be at different places in their abilities to answer the questions and act on responses. Next steps will differ from team to team and will be informed by how their conversations unfold and their agencies' particular circumstances and needs. Three essential steps can help agencies maintain momentum moving forward:

- ◆ **Make a commitment** to taking a stepwise change and implementation approach and revisit this resource over time.
- ◆ **Listen and learn**, particularly from individuals with lived child welfare expertise and those most impacted by programmatic decisions informed by data collection and analysis.
- ◆ **Discuss and examine** the effects CCWIS design and implementation have on staff, community partners, families, and youth.

## For More Information

The Division of State Systems has developed 15 self-assessment tools as part of “Technical Bulletin #7: Technical Assistance, Self-Assessment Tools, and Monitoring Reviews.” The self-assessment tools assist agency staff with voluntary documentation of CCWIS project progress as the agency plans, develops, and deploys system functions. Using the self-assessment tools better enables agencies to meet regulatory requirements for a CCWIS under 45 CFR part 95, subpart F and § 1355.55.

Your team may find it beneficial to use the information gathered and methods used while compiling this *Mapping Change and Implementation to CCWIS* tool to document CCWIS compliance evidence on the self-assessment tools:

### [CCWIS Technical Bulletin #7: Technical Assistance, Self-Assessment Tools, and Monitoring Reviews](#)

[Appendix A – Adoption](#)

[Appendix B – Case Management](#)

[Appendix C – Foster Care and Service Provider Management](#)

[Appendix D – Intake](#)

[Appendix E – Investigation](#)

[Appendix F – Administration](#)

[Appendix G – Data Quality](#)

[Appendix H – Design Requirements](#)

[Appendix I – Design Scoring Sheet](#)

[Appendix J – Reporting](#)

[Appendix K – Security](#)

[Appendix L – User Experience](#)

[Appendix M – Title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance Payment Eligibility](#)

[Appendix N – CWCA](#)

[Appendix O – Financial](#)

[Appendix P – Data Exchanges](#)

Understanding and following a change and implementation process take time. The following resources can help teams build collective knowledge and skills:

[Change and Implementation in Practice: Series](#)

[Change and Implementation in Practice: Overview video](#)

[Change and Implementation at a Glance](#)

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