

Reimagining the *Early On*[®] System

BACKGROUND

In May 2009, the Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC) developed and charged a Reimagine Ad Hoc Committee with looking at the *Early On* system, synthesizing all the past efforts and information, while exploring opportunities to conduct the business of *Early On* differently during an era of declining resources and increased accountability. The Ad Hoc Committee was asked to identify opportunities for improved, sustainable efficiency while still providing the needed services to children and families. Data from the *Early On* Redesign was reviewed along with the information from the Budget Ad Hoc Committee.

The Reimagine Ad Hoc Committee met in July and September 2009 and suggested the release of competitive Request for Proposals for Intermediate School District (ISD) pilot grants. Members felt that there are great models and ideas in the field that could be replicated statewide. The pilot grants will be paid for using a portion of the second half of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

REIMAGINE IDEAS

The following are ideas generated by the Reimagine Ad Hoc Committee. Each of the pilot grant ideas listed below have an underlying theme of trying to create greater capacity to serve more children.

1. *Bill Medicaid for Part C services for children who are enrolled in Medicaid*

Background Information: A few ISDs are successfully billing Medicaid for Part C children. They are able to do this because of local decisions regarding how to pay for *Early On* staff. At one ISD, general fund dollars were used to pay for Part C staff. General fund dollars are billable to Medicaid whereas federal funds are not. Successful guidance on a billing system for Part C would involve looking at how each ISD's budget is set up and guidance on reallocating general fund dollars for Part C positions and functions, including Child Find. The RFP would be for one or more ISD to hire an evaluator/contractor to help them set up their system to bill Medicaid, using tools to be developed. The recipient(s) would present, in 2010, at conferences of their peers such as the *Early On* conference, the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE), the Michigan Association of Administrators (MASA), and the Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO.)

Benefits:

Additional funding to the Part C system is available by billing for children who are enrolled in Medicaid.

Medicaid reimbursement rates will be increasing in the future, so more money will be brought into the system.

Key Points:

- Personnel qualifications must be consistent with Medicaid provider qualifications.
- Only the children enrolled in Medicaid and *Early On* are the population being discussed for Medicaid billing.
- If Medicaid is billed and funds are recovered, the money goes back into the general fund. An additional step must be done so the funds are allocated for Part C.
- It is expected that parents will be involved in the activities of this grant, and state guidelines will be followed for reimbursement.
- Included in the RFP would be clear guidance that the money would follow ARRA guidelines, be transparent, and contain documentation of how the money will be spent.
- The RFP would be for up to the amount of \$10,000 based on an applicant's projections of costs.

2. Peer Delivered Service Approach

Background Information: The concept of a Family Navigator has been used successfully in other systems such as Juvenile Justice and Substance Abuse. The Parent Involvement Committee has discussed this idea as a way of reaching higher targets for the Family Outcomes on the Annual Performance Report (APR). Existing information will be compiled. As a result of receiving this funding, ISDs would produce materials and develop a training that could be used statewide.

Benefits:

- By having trained, paid parents as Family Navigators, it increases capacity at the local level, which would also improve timelines.
- Parents are good mentors to other parents.
- The Family Navigator position may be Medicaid billable.

Key Points:

- The Medicaid requirements will be reviewed to see if a Family Navigator position and criteria exist.
- Link with the Parent Training and Information Center, the Michigan Alliance for Families, and *Early On* Training & Technical Assistance for the ongoing training.
- It is expected that parents will be involved in the activities of this grant, and state guidelines will be followed for reimbursement.
- Included in the RFP would be clear guidance that the money would follow ARRA guidelines, be transparent, and contain documentation of how the money will be spent.
- The RFP would be for up to the amount of \$10,000 based on an applicant's projections of costs.

3. Combine ISD administrative functions (back office functions that can be shared)

Background Information: The idea is to have ISDs look at functions they could combine/consolidate with other entities or ISDs. Examples include

- Application development and submission
- Budget development and monitoring
- Personnel development
- Process training
- Communication and adherence to federal regulations and state laws
- Form development or guiding local providers on implementing state-developed forms (Consent to Evaluate, Authorization to Share, IFSP)
- Public awareness
- Program promotion
- Child Find activities
- Scheduling appointments with families
- Educating primary referral sources
- Selecting/training on evaluation tools
- Ensuring adherence to the definition of eligibility
- Ensuring adherence to parental rights/procedural guidelines and disseminating materials
- Handling parental complaints
- Support and monitoring of timelines
- Data collection/completion/training (619 and APR)
- Data entry
- Data coordination with MDE
- Maintenance of data system
- Ensuring adherence to personnel qualifications
- Coordination with partners (Special Education, Public Health, Child Welfare, Mental Health, Early Head Start, Programs for Homeless)
- Training for service coordination providers
- Maintenance of Medicaid responsibilities* (new)
- LICC functions
- CIMS activities
- Human resource activities

This would work best with multiple ISDs applying together for the pilot grants.

Benefits:

- Cost savings due to an increase in efficiency and accuracy by pooling responsibilities.
- Streamlined administrative functions.
- More cost-effective service areas, resulting in more direct services to children and families.

Key Points:

Planning grant

- ISDs engage in the process of discussing which administrative functions could be consolidated and work through the ability to implement.
- ISDs could refer to the PA 63 (Title) process and outcomes and integrate into those plans.

- It is expected that parents will be involved in the activities of this grant, and state guidelines will be followed for reimbursement.
- Included in the RFP would be clear guidance that the money would follow ARRA guidelines, be transparent, and contain documentation of how the money will be spent.
- The RFP would be for up to the amount of \$10,000 based on actual projections.

Implementation grant:

- Designed for those ISDs who have had initial conversations and are able to implement part or all of specifically-identified administrative functions.
- Expectation to identify the barriers and challenges, assess the design, determine progress toward anticipated outcomes.

4. Electronic Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Background Information: MDE will work with Interagency Information Systems to discuss the issues related to creating an electronic IFSP in which data is inputted into the IFSP form, and then automatically inserted into the MICIS data system. Once this is worked out, an RFP would be released to the field and awarded. Information through the Reimagining *Early On* questionnaire will gather data to determine if any service areas are currently using an electronic IFSP that is capable of coordinating data. Once developed, the electronic IFSP would result in an integrated system that aligns data and paperwork, and provides stronger coordination across systems.

Benefits:

- The electronic IFSP would help with duplication of effort on many levels, including *Early On* paperwork which is burdensome, and not required by partner agencies.
- Having an electronic IFSP would also mean less error in data entry and would ensure all necessary information is collected.
- The electronic IFSP could help coordinate data and meet federal requirements.
- By having this form connected to the database, we open the door to linking other forms, which could help automate and streamline even more of the day to day tasks.

Key Points:

- It is expected that parents will be involved in the activities of this grant, and state guidelines will be followed for reimbursement.
- Included in the RFP would be clear guidance that the money would follow ARRA guidelines, be transparent, and contain documentation of how the money will be spent.
- The amount of the RFP is to be determined based on information to be obtained through Interagency Information Systems.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS GENERATED

Partnerships/Collaboration: Some service areas continue to broaden early intervention service and service coordination capacity at the local level via enhanced partnerships. Home visitors in other programs have rapport with Part C-eligible families and are a viable vendor for *Early On*. 0-3 Secondary Prevention, Great Parents, Great Start, Teen Parent Counseling, Infant Mental Health, Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start, Children's Special Health Care Services, etc. are all possible providers of *Early On*. These partners may already be rendering early intervention services (i.e., special instruction to support parents, infant mental health, etc.). Using ARRA monies, Saginaw County is cross-training these staff to provide early intervention services AND to provide and document service coordination. A consultation model is being used to support the providers and ensure quality.

Early On Training and Technical Assistance (EOT&TA): There are sample Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) some service areas use to simplify paperwork, share information, and streamline family enrollment. Plus, there are a lot of innovation and best practices across the state that could be shared. EOT&TA wants to continue serving as a repository to the field, making this information available. They can also gather data about the number of providers trained to use the Help at Home Manual and see how this can be built upon.

CALL TO ACTION

In addition to the ideas generated through the *Early On* Redesign and the Reimagine Ad Hoc Committee, we are interested in hearing your innovative ideas to help us Reimagine *Early On*. We ask that Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) members complete the survey. The results will be summarized and discussed further on November 4, 2009 at the pre-day session of the *Early On* Conference. Thank you, in advance, for your hard work and exciting ideas.

Membership of the Reimagine Ad Hoc Committee includes:

Carolyn Belknap, Lindy Buch, Christy Callahan, Barbara Corbin, Reneé DeMars-Johnson, Laura Jensen Hunt (Co-Chair), Lori Irish, Jacinda Jones, Tiffany Kostelec, Julie Lagos, Teresa Marvin, Mac Miller, Lena Montgomery, Emilie Mullins, John Norton, Johanna Ostwald, Nancy Peeler, Barb Schinderle, Rich Van Tol (Co-Chair), and Vanessa Winborne