



KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

AUGUST 2, 2021

Follow-up on the Best Starts for Kids Evaluation Plan Audit

The Best Starts for Kids (BSK) evaluation team has completed all seven recommendations to ensure the evaluation plan's transparency and reliability. Since our most recent follow-up report in 2020, the evaluation team has completed training for service providers on BSK's data system, making sure that entry across the many BSK participants is reliable and consistent. In addition, the evaluation team has formalized written agreements with departmental and county leadership to allow the team final review of any reporting of evaluation results. These steps, in addition to the five recommendations already implemented, will help lead to trustworthy and accurate findings about the BSK program.

Of the seven audit recommendations:

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|  7 DONE |  0 PROGRESS |  0 OPEN |
| Fully implemented Auditor will no longer monitor. | Partially implemented Auditor will continue to monitor. | Remain unresolved Auditor will continue to monitor. |

Please see details below for the implementation status of each recommendation.

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| Recommendation 1 | On April 1, 2020 | DONE |  |
| Recommendation 2 | On December 28, 2018 | DONE |  |
| Recommendation 3 | On December 28, 2018 | DONE |  |
| Recommendation 4 | On December 28, 2018 | DONE |  |
| Recommendation 5 | | DONE |  |

The Department of Public Health – Seattle & King County and the Department of Community and Human Services should update quality control practices for the new data collection system, including service provider training, before the new system is implemented.

STATUS UPDATE: As noted in the prior status reports, the evaluation team had already developed and built automated data quality requirements into the new Client Outcomes Reporting Engine (CORE) database. Since then, it has conducted data trainings with BSK service providers. The team also incorporated information about data entry into a CORE provider manual.

The COVID-19 emergency and remote work requirements impacted BSK’s training approach. Ultimately, the evaluation team was able to train the service providers with fewer training events than originally planned because the virtual platform allowed for larger groups at each training. Additionally, it was better able to record trainings for service providers that were unavailable during the allotted times.

IMPACT: These quality control practices will help ensure that the collected data is accurate and reliable. This is important because the aggregated data accuracy relies on consistent interpretation and reporting of performance measures.

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| Recommendation 6 | On December 28, 2018 | DONE |  |
| Recommendation 7 | | DONE |  |

The Department of Public Health – Seattle & King County and the Department of Community and Human Services should put procedures in place to protect the independence of the evaluation team. These procedures should include maintaining documentation of any report changes that they or the Executive propose and setting up a process to resolve disagreements with the evaluation team.

STATUS UPDATE: As of the 2020 follow-up, the evaluation team had reached an agreement with the BSK strategic management team and departmental management to ensure that the evaluation team will have final review of all final reports. It had also developed an agreement with the Executive's Office but had not yet documented the agreement in writing. Since then, the Executive's Office has documented its agreement with the evaluation team, BSK strategic management, and department management. The agreement states that the evaluation team will have final review of annual reports involving evaluation of findings and that any disagreements will be resolved in a meeting between evaluation leads and Executive Office staff.

IMPACT: This agreement helps protect the independence of the evaluation team and the integrity of the evaluation results.

Mia Neidhardt conducted this review. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the King County Auditor's Office at KCAO@KingCounty.gov or 206-477-1033.