



Research Interest and Needs Assessment of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grantee (MIG) States

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the concept for a state-based research resource center (SBRC) to support activities under the Medicaid Infrastructure Grants (MIGs). The original vision called for establishing a resource center with voluntary participation that would be responsive to the states' research needs and available to all states. In large part, state researchers would determine the center's goals and priorities.

The MIG-Research Assistance to States (MIG-RATS) staff conducted a research needs assessment and interest inventory with two primary objectives:

1. To identify whether MIG states were interested in the creation of a resource center that would support research activities and, if so,
2. To determine priority areas of interest to set the center's initial agenda

Based on findings from a needs inventory and telephone interviews held with 29 of the 43 MIG states, the MIG-RATS staff concluded that states generally expressed sufficiently strong interest in a research resource center to proceed with its establishment. States identified several priorities for the center, including:

- Coordination of research interests across states, such as helping to connect states that are conducting research on similar topics
- Coordination of similar research activities across states, such as helping to standardize survey questions or data sources or replicate analyses
- Assistance in identifying potential sources of federal administrative data to meet project evaluation needs
- Assistance in developing or identifying research tools, such as surveys or focus groups, for use in state projects

It was also found that states vary widely in their current internal research capacity and research needs; therefore, the center should address state variations through its activities.

BACKGROUND

In April 2006, CMS announced the concept for a state-based resource center designed to support the research activities of MIG states. CMS's vision for the center, tagged the State-Based Research Resource Center (SBRC), was:

“...to organize states’ thoughts on data and develop a state-driven research agenda. [The SBRC] will conduct a needs assessment during the development of the agenda. [SBRC staff] will bring the results back to the Inter Agency Workgroup. CMS and SSA (the Social Security Administration), in the meantime, will be working on data sharing agreements to allow state access to the data.”¹

In addition to working to improve access to data, CMS wanted to develop a center that meets the research needs and interests of MIG states and provides equal access to research support regardless of the level of a state's research sophistication. CMS wanted a center that would support ongoing state research activities and state researchers, enabling the latter to make better use of additional data or information.

The SBRC represents an innovative collaboration among state researchers, Mathematica Policy Research (MPR), and CMS. Overall, the center provides a mechanism to enhance states' capacities to use quantitative information to shape programs and policies for promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities. CMS provides the financial support for the center and a federal perspective on policy issues. MPR has developed several databases related to employment of individuals with disabilities that can have direct application to research efforts in the states. And the center staff provides leadership and organization for states to identify their research needs, share ideas, and develop strategies for using available data to improve their programs.

¹ Personal communication with Carey Appold, CMS MIG Technical Director.

The center's mission is to be responsive to states' needs, with the states determining the center's primary support activities and goals. The needs assessment set out to determine the sufficiency of interest in a research resource center and, assuming a satisfactory level of interest, what states would want from such a center.

Through a subcontract, MPR hired staff to conduct a state research needs and interests assessment. If the assessment revealed sufficient interest in a research resource center, staff would then develop an initial agenda for the center based on state input and direct the continuing operation of the center. Findings from the needs assessment follow.

METHODS

The SBRC staff used two strategies to collect information from MIG state staff as input for the SBRC. The first was a short online inventory designed to collect general information about states' research needs and interests. After completion of the online inventory, SBRC staff contacted states for follow-up telephone interviews to obtain more detailed information, to clarify inventory responses, and to address some additional topics that were difficult to approach with an inventory.

The online inventory was designed to solicit MIG states' general interest in and need for an external research support center. It also asked states to provide input on several types of research support that were identified (1) as part of CMS's original vision for the center and (2) from states' initial reactions to the announcement of the center. States were invited to comment on listed supports and provide suggestions for additional supports not mentioned in the inventory. Finally, to help identify the needs of states with more and less sophisticated research capabilities, states provided an assessment of their current research and data capacities.

Invitations to complete the online inventory were sent via e-mail to 43 MIG directors during August 2006. Even though the inventory was designed for online completion, a copy was sent as a Word document attachment so that respondents could solicit input from state researchers and formulate answers before completing the inventory (see Appendix A for copies of the inventory and cover memorandum).

The follow-up telephone interviews collected information on specific topics of interest to MIG state researchers and obtained greater detail on inventory responses. The interviews also provided an opportunity to gauge interest by asking state staff directly whether they would use a research resource center during the upcoming year.

Inventory respondents were contacted during September 2006 to schedule a time to complete the follow-up telephone interview. MIG Directors that had not completed the inventory were also contacted and asked to complete the interview. An alternative version of the interview protocol was used for states that had not completed the inventory (see Appendix A for copies of the follow-up telephone interview protocols). Interviews were conducted with MIG state staff during September and October 2006.

FINDINGS

Twenty-six states completed the online needs inventory for a response rate of just over 60 percent. Ten of the responses came from states with Comprehensive Employment Opportunities (CEO) grants, while the remaining sixteen were from states with basic MIG grants. In 2006 about one-third of states had CEO grants. The proportions of inventories completed from each type of grant provided a representative balance in responses between CEO and basic MIG grantees.²

Twenty-three states completed follow-up interviews. Twenty had also completed needs inventories, with the remaining three completing only the interview. The resulting total of 29 states represents 67.4 percent of MIG states contributing to initial SBRC development.

A. SELF-ASSESSED RESEARCH AND DATA CAPACITY

To assist SBRC staff in identifying state research needs regardless of internal capacity, the inventory asked states to provide self-assessed ratings of their current capacity to conduct research and to access to data. The items used a familiar “freshman, sophomore, junior, senior” rating system with definitions of capacity at each of the four levels (see Appendix A.2 for exact wording of definitions).

As seen in Figure 1, internal research and data capacities vary widely. Although a few more states reported research or data capacities at the “junior” level, the number is not appreciably different from the numbers reported for the other three levels.

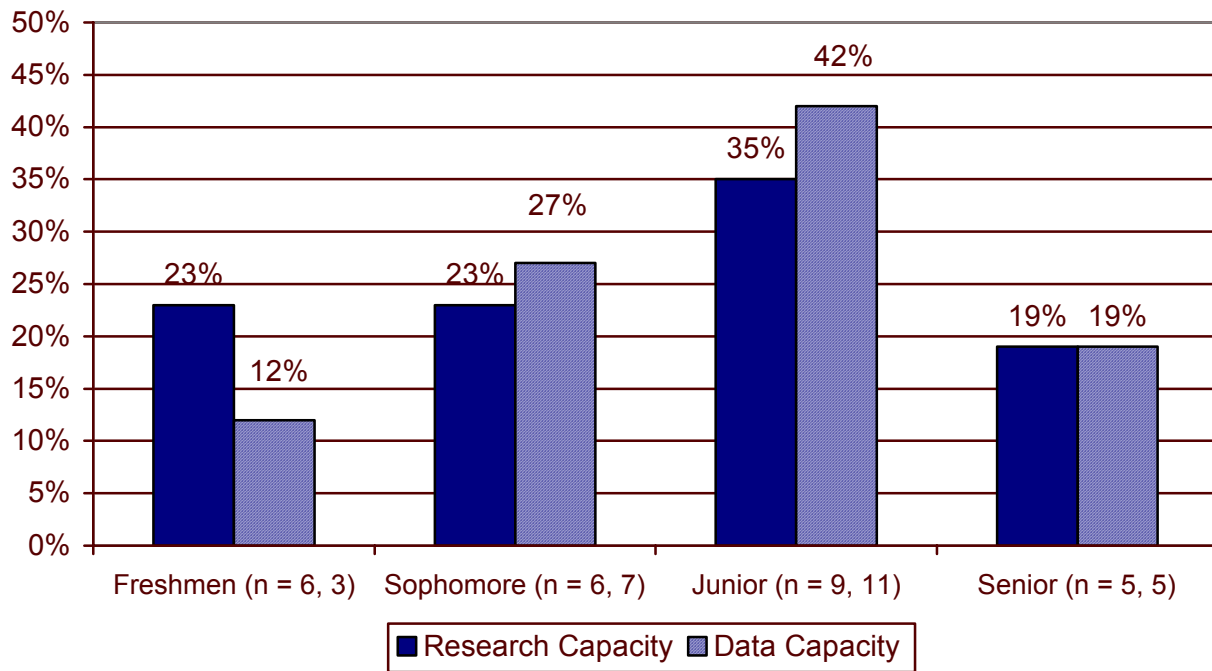
Although most, if not all, states, reported difficulties in accessing some types of data, states largely rated themselves higher on data capacity than on research capacity. This finding presents

² The 10 CEO states represented 38.5 percent of needs inventory respondents. In 2006, 37.8 percent of states were CEO grantees while the remaining 62.2 percent were basic MIG grantees.

the SBRC with an interesting challenge in that it suggests states may currently have access to data but not enough staff resources or capacity to effectively understand or utilize the data.

FIGURE 1

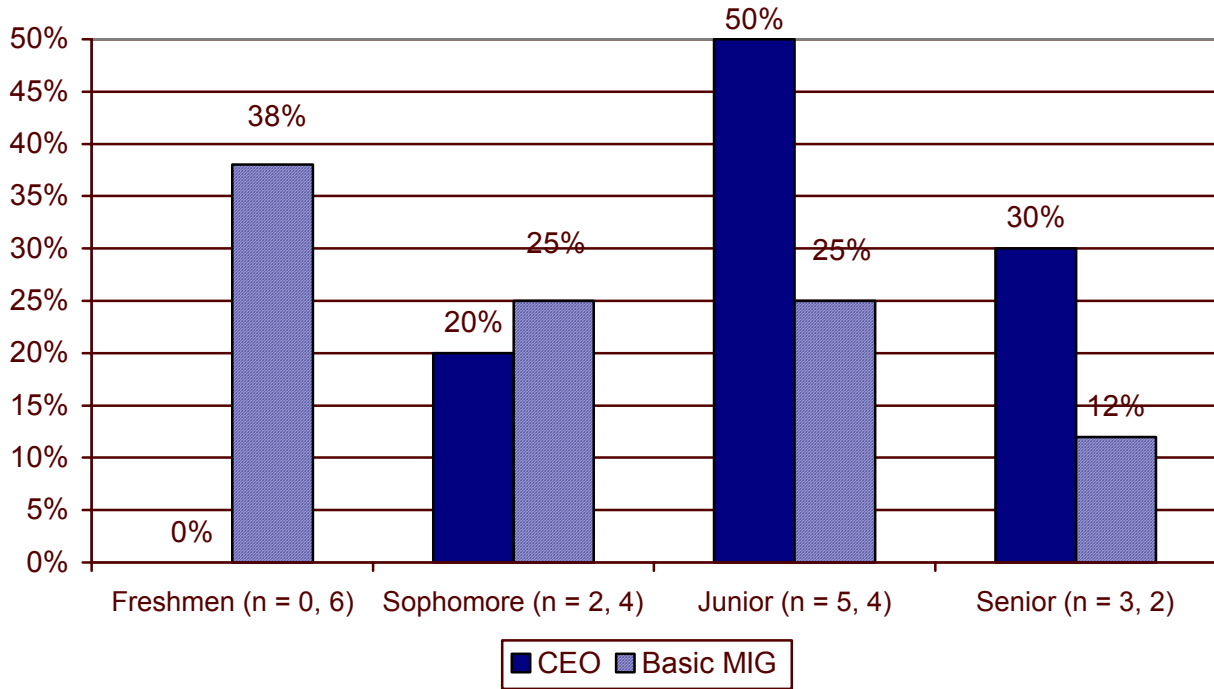
STATE RESEARCH AND DATA CAPACITIES



Not surprisingly, CEO states tended to rate themselves somewhat higher than basic MIG states on both internal research and data capacity. As shown in Figure 2, most CEO states (80%) considered themselves to be juniors or seniors with regard to research capacity while most basic MIG states (63%) viewed their research capacity at a freshman or sophomore level.

FIGURE 2

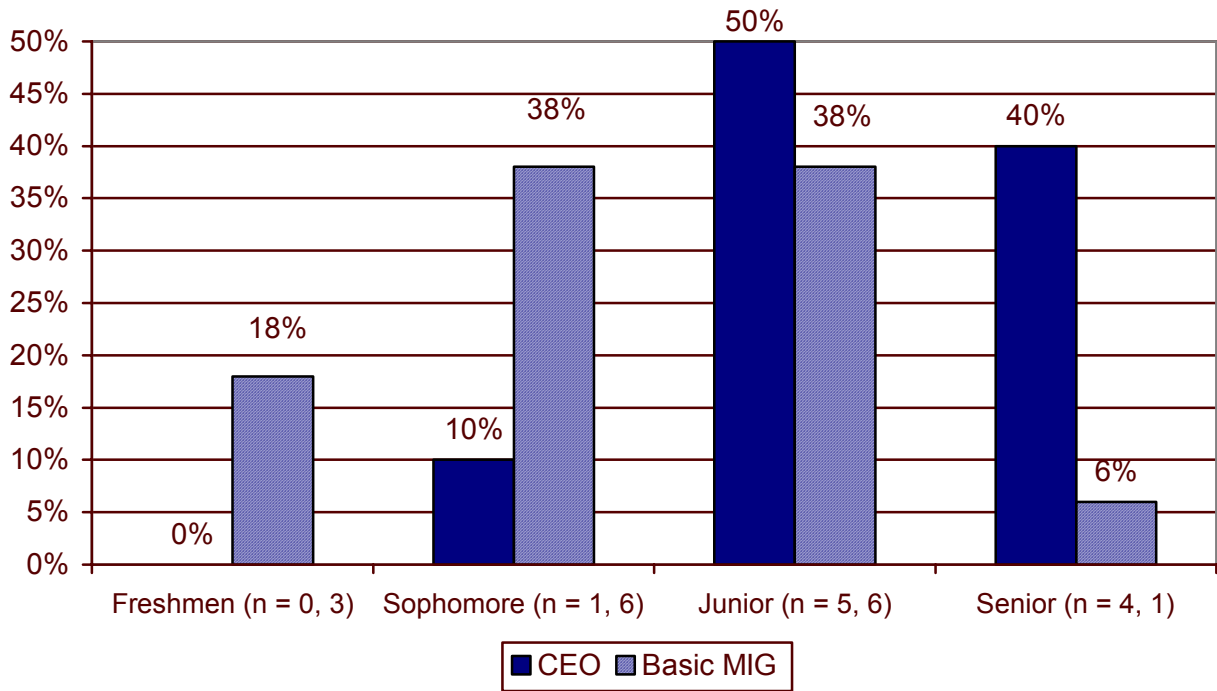
STATE RESEARCH CAPACITY BY GRANT TYPE



The differences in internal capacity between CEO and basic MIG states persisted with regard to access to data, but were less dramatic. Ninety percent of CEO states reported data capacity at a junior or senior level. Basic MIG states were more evenly split, with 56% percent reporting data capacity at a freshman or sophomore level (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

STATE DATA CAPACITY BY GRANT TYPE



B. IDEAL EXTERNAL RESEARCH SUPPORT

The inventory began with an open-ended item asking respondents the following: “In two or three sentences, please describe the ideal external research support for your MIG projects.” Responses were coded into five categories, with several responses reflecting elements of more than one category. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses by category (for verbatim responses, see Appendix B.1).

Based on narrative descriptions of ideal research support, nearly half of respondents indicated interest in some type of peer support or coordination such as facilitated communication with experienced MIG researchers for input on research projects or cross-state coordination of research efforts.

More than a third considered technical support or assistance as part of the ideal research support environment. In some cases, respondents identified specific topics or areas of needed

assistance. In others, respondents noted the need for more general support, such as “assistance as needed throughout all stages of research activities.”

TABLE 1
CATEGORIES OF IDEAL RESEARCH SUPPORT

Type of Support	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Peer Support/Coordination	12	46.2
Technical Support or Assistance	10	38.5
Research Information	7	26.9
Access to Data	6	23.1
Other	3	11.5

About one-fourth of respondents indicated that the ideal research support environment would serve as an access point to research information and/or data. Research information of interest included projects and studies conducted under the MIG as well as relevant external research studies. Requests for access to data typically referred to specific federal data sets, such as SSA or Medicare/Medicaid.

C. SPECIFIC TYPES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

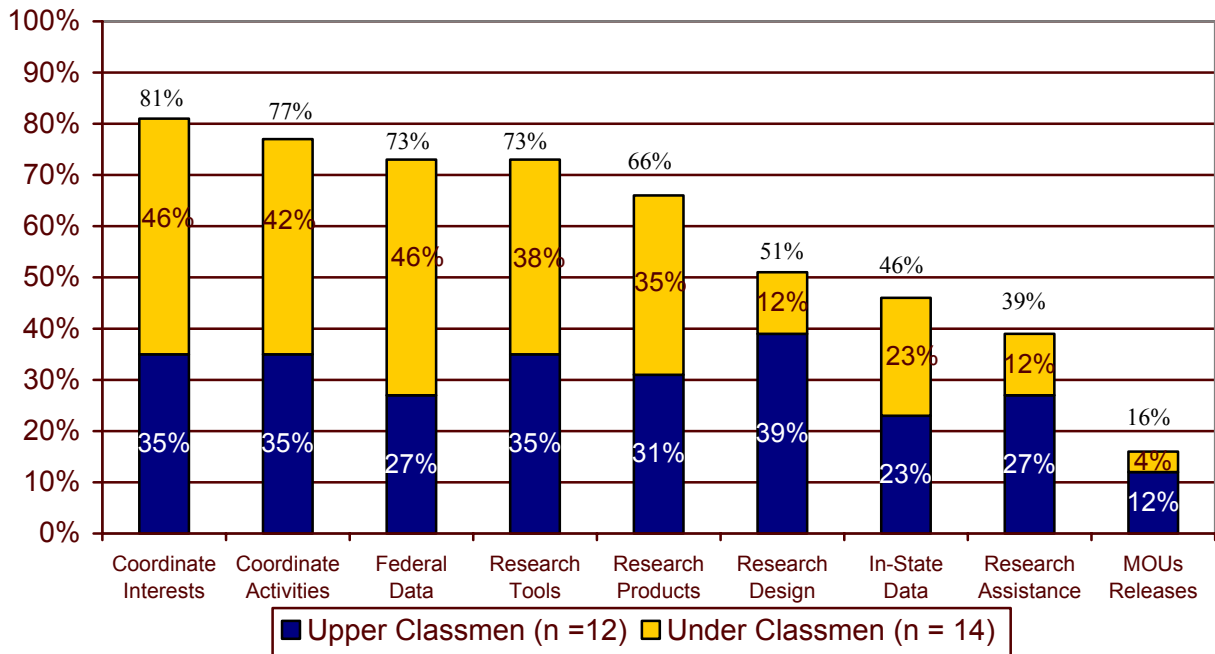
Following the narrative response on the ideal external research support, the inventory asked respondents to provide input on the perceived utility of a series of types of research support. The types of support were based on CMS’s original vision for the SBRC and on the initial feedback from states in response to the announcement of the SBRC. Responses were collected using a five point scale ranging from “Not Useful–Don’t Do This” to “Very Useful–Make It a Priority.”

Figure 4 shows the percentage of respondents rating a type of research support as “useful” or “very useful.” Each category has been divided to distinguish respondents identifying themselves

as under (freshmen, sophomores) or upper (juniors, seniors) classmen with regard to research capacity.³

FIGURE 4

USEFULNESS OF RESEARCH SUPPORTS BY RESEARCH CAPACITY



Parallel to the responses to the narrative item, respondents considered the coordination of research with MIG researcher peers as the most useful activity the SBRC could offer. Eighty-one percent of respondents indicated that “coordination of research interests across states, such as helping connect states that are conducting research on similar topics” should be a priority. In addition, 77 percent felt that “coordination of similar research activities across states, such as helping to standardize survey questions or data sources or replicate analyses” would be a useful type of research support.

³ Distributions were also examined in relation to Self-Assessed Data Capacity and Type of Grantee (MIG or CEO). Neither presented any variation to the patterns found for research capacity; given that the overall numbers are the same, the individual distributions are not shown.

The core of CMS's vision for the SBRC, facilitating access to data, was also a priority for the states. Seventy-three percent agreed that "assistance in identifying potential sources of federal administrative data to meet project evaluation needs" was a useful type of support. "Assistance in developing or identifying research tools, such as surveys or focus groups, for use in state projects" also garnered support from 73 percent of respondents.

Slightly lower in priority was "facilitation of research product development, such as policy papers or articles for publication," which 66 percent of respondents considered useful, perhaps reflecting the variety of research arrangements occurring under the MIGs. Some researchers working under contract to the MIG may place a high value on opportunities to develop research products while others who split their time between research and policy or operational activities may consider the development of research products as outside the scope of their jobs.

About half or fewer of respondents rated the remaining types of specific research support as useful. However, it is worth noting that these areas of research support are those where differences began to appear between under and upper classmen. Significantly more under classmen than upper classmen considered "assistance in developing research designs or plans to evaluate specific MIG projects" as a useful priority area ($p < .05$).⁴ "Technical assistance for selecting and performing statistical analyses" and "guidance in acquiring and protecting data, such as developing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or consent/release forms and human subjects considerations" also showed greater support among under classmen, though not significantly.

⁴ Assistance with research designs was also a significantly higher priority for under classmen with respect to data capacity as well as for basic MIG, rather than CEO, grantees.

D. ADDITIONAL TYPES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

In addition to asking respondents to rate identified types of research support, the inventory asked respondents to indicate other types of support they would like to receive from the SBRC. Few respondents offered any additional suggestions. And of those that were offered, most could be considered examples or extensions of the general types of support already identified (see Appendix B.2 for verbatim responses). However, three did offer a distinct character:

“Provide tools, guides, workshops on utilization research to influence policy. Assistance in ensuring that our data and research related materials are as effective as they can be, including ways to do analysis across states.”

“Host forums for new research by MIGs or other sources (Cornell, etc.) to facilitate on-going development of research, evaluation agenda with a focus on the impact on policy that the particular research had. (as opposed to reviewing interesting research for the sake of intellectual stimulation, there should always be a link to policy or potential policy impact.)”

“Posing research questions relevant to the national agenda on Buy-ins.”

Taken as a whole, these three types of research support suggest that the SBRC should take a leadership role in developing and disseminating Medicaid Buy-In (MBI) research with a policy impact. While it is possible to argue that the previously identified types of research support are designed to assist the states in these exact tasks, the emphasis on “providing tools, hosting forums, and posing research questions” appears to push the SBRC somewhat beyond a support function into a leadership role.

E. AREAS OF RESEARCH INTEREST

Efforts were made during the telephone follow-up interviews to learn about the MIG states’ specific research interests, although topics mentioned in open-ended inventory responses were also included in the coding of research interests. Interests are separated into three categories: topical interests, technical interests, and data interests. Topical interests include research conducted on a project with a specific emphasis, such as benefits counseling or attitudes toward

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persons with disabilities. Technical interests include the desire to learn about a certain type of data collection or analytic technique. Data interests are related to gaining access to specific types of federal data.

Topical interests offered the greatest number of responses both within states and in overall categories.⁵ Thirty-six distinct research topics were revealed, although several were mentioned by only one state. The largest number of states to report interest in any single topic was five, which is fewer than 20 percent of states reporting interests via inventory or interview. Table 2 presents topics mentioned by three or more states.

TABLE 2
TOPICS OF RESEARCH INTEREST

Area of Interest	Number	Area of Interest	Number
Benefits Counseling	5	Attitudes toward Persons with Disabilities	4
Employer-Based Research	5	Self-Employment	4
Medicare Part D	5	Barriers to Employment	3
Outreach and Marketing	5	Supported Employment	3
Personal Assistance Services	5	Wage Tracking/Earnings	3
Youth in Transition	5		

States offered a much shorter list of technical topics of interest, at only 14 overall. Enrollment estimation and survey administration topped the list, but again with only five states expressing interest in each. Table 3 lists technical interests as identified by three or more states.

States identified 12 types of data that they were interested in accessing, with far greater numbers of states reporting interest in the same types of data than had been expressed for topical or technical interests. Not surprisingly, due to difficulty in accessing complete records at the

⁵ It should be noted that, in some cases, respondents and interviewees seemed to slip away from a research perspective when identifying interests and into mentioning topics of policy interest.

state level, earnings data and SSA data topped the list. Table 4 presents data of interest by three or more states.

TABLE 3
TECHNICAL RESEARCH INTERESTS

Area of Interest	Number	Area of Interest	Number
Enrollment Estimation	5	Cost/Benefit Analysis	3
Surveys	5	Focus Groups/Interviews	3
Cost Estimation	4	Program Evaluation	3
Research Design	4		

As Table 4 shows, states' specific research interests vary widely—a situation that is not surprising given both the breadth of activities conducted under the MIGs and many states' limited research capacities. Even policy initiatives that may be common in many states may lack a corresponding research effort, suggesting that the SBRC may need to explore strategies for supporting a diverse range of activities. In addition, it is important to recognize that, with regard to research, participation by relatively small numbers of states in a given effort is to be expected.

TABLE 4
DATA INTERESTS

Area of Interest	Number	Area of Interest	Number
Earnings	14	Medicaid	4
SSA	13	BPAO/WIPA	3
Medicare	7	Employment	3
Vocational Rehabilitation/RSA	6	Housing	3

F. INTEREST IN A RESEARCH RESOURCE CENTER

Interviews with states began by asking, “. . . Considering everything with your MIG that you are dealing with right now, do you think you would be willing to participate in the Research Resource Center during the next 12 months, if it had something to offer that was of interest to you?” All 23 states that completed interviews responded “yes”; however, the degree of affirmation varied.

On the positive end, states were firmly committed to and enthusiastic about the endeavor and expressed interest in taking on leadership roles. On the negative end, states were concerned about new research “demands,” uncertain about how commitments to an other-directed center might interfere with responsibilities within the state, or concerned about where the SBRC stood in relation to well-established Technical Assistance Providers. Somewhere in between were respondents who were enthusiastic about the concept but currently lacked research staff or capacity to participate.

It should also be noted that 14 states did not participate in either the inventory or interview process and thus did not provide input into the SBRC. While some of those states have expressed interest in or demonstrated a commitment to tasks or activities, it may be that, in some cases, lack of participation indicates lack of interest.

Nonetheless, the overall response to the idea of a research resource center was positive and strong. In addition to those who volunteered researcher support, many states without current research capacity offered to “help out if they could.” Even states that were concerned about demands or roles were interested in seeing what the new center would offer.

G. EXPERIENCE WITH SURVEYS

In addition to collecting information on research needs and interests, the needs inventory provided an opportunity to begin developing some of the center’s resource capacity. As a

starting place, states were asked whether they had either administered surveys or planned to administer surveys as a part of their MIG research. For states that had conducted surveys, copies of survey questionnaires were requested, if the state was willing to make the material available.

Based on responses to the inventory, 20 of the 23 states (88.5 percent) reported that they had conducted some type of survey with MIG consumers or individuals enrolled in their Medicaid Buy-Ins. Not surprisingly, the assessment indicated a relationship between reported research capacity and a state's earlier administration of a survey. States that considered themselves freshmen with regard to research capacity were less likely to have conducted surveys ($p < .01$).⁶

In addition, 16 states (61.5 percent) planned to conduct a survey within the next 12 months, including one of the states that had not previously conducted any surveys. The findings revealed no relationship between research capacity, data capacity, or grantee type and a state's plans to conduct a survey.

Among the states that had conducted surveys, 73 percent had surveyed MIG consumers in general. Slightly more than 30 percent had conducted surveys directed to Medicaid Buy-In participants. Most of the planned surveys were to be targeted to MIG consumers, with only one state planning to conduct a survey exclusively with Buy-In participants. Table 5 summarizes information on survey administration and planning.

⁶ Experience with administration of a survey was not related to either data capacity or grantee type.

TABLE 5
CONDUCTED AND PLANNED SURVEYS

Survey Target	Completed Survey	Planned Survey
No Surveys	11.5% (3)	38.5% (10)
Yes—Medicaid Buy-In Participants	15.4 (4)	3.8 (1)
Yes—MIG Consumers	57.7 (15)	57.7 (15)
Yes—Both MBI and MIG	5.4 (4)	0 (0)

H. CENTER NAME

In keeping with the spirit of state ownership of the center, SBRC staff decided to solicit suggestions from the states for a center name. Several states provided one or more options. After narrowing the pool, states were asked to vote for their favorite from among five options. States selected MIG-Research Assistance to States, or MIG-RATS, as the new moniker for the SBRC (for a complete list of suggested center names, see Appendix B.3).

RECOMMENDATIONS

As seen from the findings, the MIG states report a wide range of research capacities, support needs, and interests. Nonetheless, the emergence of some themes offers guidance for the development of a state-based research resource center. Based on the input of the state staff and researchers as collected through the needs and interest inventory and follow-up interviews, we make the following recommendations:

1. ***Proceed with development and implementation of the State-Based Research Resource Center.*** Despite the MIG states' widely varying research capacities, all interviewees expressed interest in a research resource center. Some states with strong internal research capacity expressed interest in taking on leadership roles. Through the inventories and interviews, states identified areas in which they would like assistance and areas in which they could offer expertise. The MIG state researchers are ready to work together; implementing the SBRC will facilitate the process.
2. ***Make coordination of state research efforts a central focus of the SBRC.*** The MIG states' highest priorities, as identified through narrative responses and responses to specific types of support, center around coordination of MIG research efforts. Regardless of internal research capacity, more than 75 percent of respondents wanted coordination of research interests and activities among MIG states. Beyond the practical issues of sharing developed tools and expertise, coordinated research efforts lend credibility to research findings and make such findings more readily generalizable.
3. ***Continue efforts to extend data access to or sharing of aggregated information with states.*** Access to federal data was also a high priority among respondents. Even states with secured agreements to obtain state data have limited access to data on certain federal programs such as SSA. In addition, state data often do not meet the same completeness or quality standards as federal data or are not comparable across states. State research efforts and collaborative research projects will be improved by having more reliable data.
4. ***Develop a system for sharing information among states that are not "at the same place at the same time."*** Responses to topics of research interest showed a great breadth of activities among MIG states; however, the number of states researching any one topic was small. One state researcher cautioned that efforts to engage a large number of states simultaneously in the same research may stall because of other commitments or conflicts. But that does not mean that the states will not be interested in learning from each other when the time is right. Capturing information

and making it easily accessible when researchers are ready to use it will facilitate coordinated research efforts.

5. ***Recognize and support variation in internal research capacity.*** In considering types of support in relation to self-identified research capacity, the inventory revealed that some seemingly low-priority technical areas became important to those with less internal research capacity. Likewise, states with greater internal capacity and experience offered to take on leadership roles and share expertise. Offering supports and activities that will allow researchers to develop and expand their skills and roles will enhance states' overall research efforts.

Provided that CMS chooses to continue the development of a research resource center for MIG states, the above recommendations could underlie center efforts and activities. As a strategy for extending these recommendations into actionable efforts, we propose development of an initial agenda for the SBRC that would include activities designed to address the following four areas:

1. ***Facilitation of multi-state research efforts.*** This area would facilitate collaborative efforts and communication among state research programs. Activities could include workgroups to coordinate research activities within states or to build multi-state research projects as well as contact lists to help researchers get in touch with one another.
2. ***Facilitation of access to data not available through state sources.*** This area would help researchers have access to more information to support their research projects. Activities could include expanding the aggregated information currently available to states from the integrated data set and developing a process by which states could request analyses specific to their own research needs.
3. ***Access to research information from other states and projects.*** This area would help make state research efforts more efficient and reduce duplicate effort by providing easy access to available products and information. Activities could include development of a Web site to serve as a repository of information from MIG projects, SBRC activities, and external research products.
4. ***Guidance on research processes, strategies, and analyses.*** This area would address variation in state needs by offering targeted support. Activities could include direct assistance with research activities or analytic techniques and workshops on research processes.

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

A.1 MIG State-Based Research Resource Center Needs Inventory Memo

TO: MIG Directors

From: Anne Reither and Amy Porter

Date: August 2, 2006

Re: State-Based Research Resource Center Needs Inventory

At the April meeting in Baltimore, Carey Appold announced the launch of a new research resource center to help support the research activities states are conducting under the MIG. The broad objectives are to facilitate access to resources that can enhance state-based research and, if desired, to coordinate activities among states that have shared research interests. However, the specific objectives and priorities will be determined by the states.

To begin the process of identifying states' research interests and needs, we would like each state to complete a short inventory. The inventory will help us to determine the general types of research support states would like to have available to them through the research resource center. When completing the inventory, you should consider all research projects being conducted under your MIG – not just the activities with Medicaid Buy-In enrollees as the research population. We will follow the inventories with individual contacts to each state to help us learn about your particular research interests. The information we obtain will be used to set an initial agenda for the center, which will be announced at the MIG fall meeting in Chicago.

The inventory can be completed by going to the following web address:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=616602401710>

The password is MIG-SBRRC. You do not need to complete the inventory all at once, but you will not be able to scroll forward through the inventory without responding to the questions. Therefore, we have attached a copy of the inventory as a Word document for your convenience. Please use the attached to assist you as you develop your responses, but submit your completed survey online.

Your assistance in this process is vital. We ask that each state complete one inventory and submit it online by August 25, 2006. Please be sure to include the community of researchers involved in MIG projects within your state when completing this inventory, regardless of whether they are directly staffed under the MIG or work as consultants to you. Participation in the center will be voluntary; states may or may not utilize supports as they choose. However, now is the time when the role of the center is being determined, and your contributions will help to assure that the center will have something useful to offer you.

If you have any questions about this inventory or the stated-based research resource center, please contact Anne Reither (areither@gmail.com or 435 757-9314) or Amy Porter (amy.porter@po.state.ct.us or 860 424-4864). Thank you in advance for your response.

A.2 MIG State-Based Research Resource Center Needs Inventory

State: _____ Person completing this inventory:

I. In two or three sentences, please describe what the ideal external research support for your MIG projects would be like.

II. Several different types of research support are listed below. Please indicate how useful each of the listed supports would be for your state. Additional space is provided for comments. You may also offer other types of support that we have not included; add as many as you would like. Please provide information about how useful each of your added supports would be.

	Not Useful Don't do This	1	2	3	4	5	Moderately Useful	Very Useful Make it a Priority
A. Assistance in developing research designs or plans to evaluate specific MIG projects	1	2	3	4	5			
B. Assistance in identifying potential sources of in-state administrative data to meet project evaluation and performance-based measurement needs	1	2	3	4	5			
C. Assistance in identifying potential sources of federal administrative data to meet project evaluation needs	1	2	3	4	5			
D. Guidance in acquiring and protecting data, such as developing MOUs or consent/release forms and human subjects considerations	1	2	3	4	5			

II, *continued*

	Not Useful Don't do This		Moderately Useful		Very Useful Make it a Priority
E. Assistance in developing or identifying research tools, such as surveys or focus groups, for use in state projects	1	2	3	4	5
F. Technical assistance for selecting and performing statistical analyses	1	2	3	4	5
G. Coordination of similar research activities across states, such as helping to standardize survey questions or data sources or replicate analyses	1	2	3	4	5
H. Coordination of research interests across states, such as helping connect states that are conducting research on similar topics	1	2	3	4	5
I. Facilitation of research product development, such as policy papers or articles for publication	1	2	3	4	5
J.	1	2	3	4	5
K.	1	2	3	4	5
L.	1	2	3	4	5

III. To help us understand states' needs and interests better, we would like you to give us some indication of your within-state research and data capacities. This will help us to assure that the center can offer support to states at all levels of research activity.

A. Please mark which of the following best describes your state's research planning and analytical capacity.

Freshman. Your state is just beginning to think about research activities.

Sophomore. You have begun to do research under your MIG, but could use assistance thinking through a research agenda and maximizing your state's research efforts.

Junior. You have done a considerable amount of research work but may be interested in having support for specific types of research activities or analyses. You might also be interested in being involved in collaborative research activities and products, but you do not currently have the capacity to offer support to other states that may need assistance with their research efforts.

Senior. You have done a considerable amount of research work but may be interested in having support for specific types of research activities or analyses. You might also be interested in being involved in collaborative research activities and products, and you do have the capacity to offer support to other states that may need assistance with their research efforts.

B. Please mark which of the following best describes your state's current level of access to data.

Freshman. What's data?

Sophomore. You have begun to identify sources of administrative data and/or strategies for collecting some of the data you need.

Junior. You have identified sources of administrative data and/or strategies for collecting most of the data you need, but much of the data is not available to you yet.

Senior. You currently have access to most of the data you need to conduct your planned analyses, and may or may not be interested in exploring additional data sources to expand your analysis plans.

C. Has your state done any surveying of consumers through the MIG?

No, we haven't done any consumer surveys.

We plan to do initial surveying of consumers within the next 12 months.

Yes, we have done some surveying of Buy-In enrollees.

We plan to do more surveying of Buy-In enrollees within the next 12 months.

Yes, we have surveyed MIG consumers, who may or may not be enrolled in the Buy-In.

We plan to do more surveying of MIG consumers within the next 12 months.

IV. We would like to come up with a better name for the state-based research resource center than 'State-Based Research Resource Center' (or SBRRC – since everything seems to turn into an acronym). Please get creative and offer as many suggestions as you'd like. (A prize will be awarded for the winning name at the MIG fall meeting in Chicago.)

V. Please provide any other comments, issues, or concerns about your state's MIG activities that you think would be useful for us to have as we develop the research center's initial agenda.

VI. Please indicate who we may contact if we have questions about your responses to this inventory:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please submit this inventory online at
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=616602401710> by August 25, 2006.

Thank you!

A.3 Needs Inventory Follow-Up Interview

First, we'd like to restate that involvement with the Research Resource Center will be optional and voluntary for states. We hope the Center will be a useful resource for you, and that it will give states an opportunity to extend their research efforts. However, we also recognize that some states may not have interest or time to participate, while other states may already have the internal capacity to meet all of their own research needs. Considering everything with your MIG that you are dealing with right now, do you think you would be willing to participate in the Research Resource Center during the next 12 months, if it had something to offer that was of interest to you?

If 'yes', complete part A.

If 'no', jump to part B.

PART A – for interested states

A1. To help us better understand the context in which your MIG operates, could you tell us what are the key issues in your state that affect your MIG?

A2. Could you describe how research fits into your MIG? Do you have dedicated, in-house researchers on staff, or contract with outside researchers, such as universities or consultants? Do staff who are responsible for making policy and operational decisions also handle research activities?

A3. You indicated in the inventory that your ideal external research support would be Could you tell me more about this?

A4. *(for states who have or will conduct consumer surveys)* You mentioned that you had conducted some surveys as part of your MIG. Could you tell me about the kinds of questions you asked in your survey(s)?

A5. *(for states where we wanted clarification of other responses that had been reported)* I'd like to talk more about your response to You mentioned Could you tell me more about that?

A6. We want to start identifying some specific tasks or projects that could be addressed through the Center. From the inventories, these are some topic areas that seem to be of interest across states. I'd like your opinion on each of these. (Why is topic interesting or relevant to your state? What specific aspects of ... are interesting?)

e.g. – Impact of benefits counseling

e.g. – Employer-based research

A6b. Several states have mentioned interest in having the Center help them to negotiate access to data from federal databases. Could you tell me about what kind of data you are hoping to access in this way? How critical would accessing these data be to achieving your research goals?

A7. How many people from your state will be attending the NCSHD/CMS MIG conference in Chicago in November? Are they policy people, research people (or both for states who have shared roles)?

A8. Is the person who complete the online interest inventory the best person for us to contact about Research Center issues? *(If not the MIG Director)* Would you also like the MIG Director to receive Research Center communications?

PART B – for disinterested states

B1. Thank you for your candor. Would you mind telling me a little bit about why you are not interested in participating?

B2. Is there something different of a research or program evaluation nature that would be of more interest to you? If not, what type of external research support would better meet your needs?

I appreciate your willingness to share that information with me. As long as we are on the phone together, would you mind my asking a few more questions? This is the information we are gathering to help us develop the Resource Center agenda, and your opinions are still important to us even if you don't participate in the center.

The approach to B3 and B4 will probably need to be adjusted to take into consideration responses to B1 and B2.

B3. To help us better understand the context in which your MIG operates, could you tell us what are the key issues in your state that affect your MIG?

B4. Could you describe how research fits into your MIG? Do you have dedicated, in-house researchers on staff, or contract with outside researchers such as universities or consultants? Do staff who are responsible for making policy and operational decisions also handle research activities?

B5. *(for states who have or will conduct consumer surveys)* You mentioned that you had conducted some surveys as part of your MIG. Could you tell me more about the kinds of questions you asked in your survey(s)?

B6. *(for states where we wanted clarification of other responses that had been reported)* I'd like to talk more about your response to You mentioned Could you tell me more about that?

B7. Finally, we want to start identifying some specific tasks or projects that could be addressed through the Center. From the inventories, these are some topic areas that seem to be of interest across states. I'd like your opinion on each of these. (Why is topic interesting or relevant to your state? What specific aspects of ... are interesting?)

e.g. – Impact of benefits counseling

e.g. – Employer-based research

B8. How many people from your state will be attending the NCSHD/CMS MIG conference in Chicago in November? Are they policy people, research people (or both for states who have shared roles)?

A.4 Interview for Inventory Non-Responders

First, we'd like to restate that involvement with the Research Resource Center will be optional and voluntary for states. We hope the Center will be a useful resource for you, and that it will give states an opportunity to extend their research efforts. However, we also recognize that some states may not have interest or time to participate, while other states may already have the internal capacity to meet all of their own research needs. Considering everything with your MIG that you are dealing with right now, do you think you would be willing to participate in the Research Resource Center during the next 12 months, if it had something to offer that was of interest to you?

If 'yes', complete part A.

If 'no', jump to part B.

PART A – for interested states

A1. To help us better understand the context in which your MIG operates, could you tell us what are the key issues in your state that affect your MIG?

A2. Could you describe how research fits into your MIG? Do you have dedicated, in-house researchers on staff, or contract with outside researchers, such as universities or consultants? Do staff who are responsible for making policy and operational decisions also handle research activities?

A3. Given what you've told me about your current in-state research arrangements, what would be the ideal external research support for your MIG projects?

A4. What specific kinds of external research support would be most useful to you?

A5. Has your state done any surveying of consumers through the MIG? *(If yes)* Could you tell me about the kinds of questions you asked in your survey(s)?

Ask states for copies of their survey, and possibly information about how many people were surveyed and when the surveys were administered.

A6. We want to start identifying some specific tasks or projects that could be addressed through the Center. From the inventories we received, several states seemed interested in having the Center help to coordinate research activities and projects across states. Is that something that would be of interest to you? Do you have any suggestions for specific projects or activities that would be good for cross-state collaboration?

A6b. Several states have mentioned interest in having the Center help them to negotiate access to data from federal databases. Is this something that would be of interest to you? Could you tell me about what kind of data you are hoping to access in this way? How critical would accessing these data be to achieving your research goals?

A7. How many people from your state will be attending the NCSHD/CMS MIG conference in Chicago in November? Are they policy people, research people (or both for states who have shared roles)?

A8. Who in your state is the best person for us to contact about Research Center issues? (*If not the MIG Director*) Would you also like the MIG Director to receive Research Center communications?

PART B – for disinterested states

B1. Thank you for your candor. Would you mind telling me a little bit about why you are not interested in participating?

B2. Is there something different of a research or program evaluation nature that would be of more interest to you? If not, what type of external research support would better meet your needs?

I appreciate your willingness to share that information with me. As long as we are on the phone together, would you mind my asking a few more questions? This is the information we are gathering to help us develop the Resource Center agenda, and your opinions are still important to us even if you don't participate in the center.

The approach to B3 and B4 will probably need to be adjusted to take into consideration responses to B1 and B2.

B3. To help us better understand the context in which your MIG operates, could you tell us what are the key issues in your state that affect your MIG?

B4. Could you describe how research fits into your MIG? Do you have dedicated, in-house researchers on staff, or contract with outside researchers such as universities or consultants? Do staff who are responsible for making policy and operational decisions also handle research activities?

B5. Has your state done any surveying of consumers through the MIG? (*If yes*) Could you tell me about the kinds of questions you asked in your survey(s)?

Ask states for copies of their surveys, and possibly information about how many people were surveyed and when the surveys were administered.

A6. We want to start identifying some specific tasks or projects that could be addressed through the Center. From the inventories we received, several states seemed interested in having the Center help to coordinate research activities and projects across states. Do you think this would be a practical use of Center time?

A6b. Several states have mentioned interest in having the Center help them to negotiate access to data from federal databases. Do you think this would be a practical use of Center time?

B8. How many people from your state will be attending the NCSHD/CMS MIG conference in Chicago in November? Are they policy people, research people (or both for states who have shared roles)?

APPENDIX B

OPEN-ENDED INVENTORY RESPONSES

B.1 In two or three sentences, please describe the ideal external research support for your MIG projects.

Peer Support/Coordination

A simple process to reach a responsive review 'team' of 2 or 3 people that have been successful in conducting MIG driven research. This 'team' would be available by e-mail or perhaps conference call to discuss research ideas. This team would challenge our MIG to better define what it wishes to determine as it shapes what needs to be measured and suggest basic components that should be included.

We have very strong research resources in our contracts, but having access to others nationally who are conducting MIG research, aligning replication efforts and looking other data sources would be helpful.

Identification of states doing similar research and avenues to pool resources (monetary and otherwise) as possible.

Ideal support would involve assistance designing research projects across multiple states. If the SBRC could help select and design multi-state research projects on issues important to all MIG grantees (Buy-in, Benefits Planning, Supported Employment), that would be ideal for us.

Technical Support or Assistance

We'd like to get some help in developing a functional grouper based on either disability type or on functional losses (e.g., mobility, communication, work skills, etc.). Our MIG project could use some assistance in determining ways to evaluate the systemic processes that move individuals with disabilities into enrollment in the Medicaid Buy-In program. Lastly, we could use some consultation about how to handle the spikes in pharmaceutical expenditures per Part D when determining average medical costs (as we suspect, at least anecdotally, a negative shift in MBI enrollment might be partly attributable to Part D).

(State) would like technical assistance and detailed input regarding the process by which (state) can operationally utilize its internal staff (i.e., optimize capabilities) to form a fully-operative research entity.

Project evaluation

Ideal external research support for our MIG projects includes 1) the availability of individualized technical assistance as needed throughout all stages of research activities; and 2) technical assistance for troubleshooting during research activities.

Research Information

(State) MIG needs research to help project costs and consumer participation in the Medicaid Buy-in and PAS.

A place to receive complex data of other states' Buy-in design, implementation and results.

Access to Data

We would be interested in understanding better the service utilization and costs for health care using both Medicare and Medicaid databases as it is now available nationally. We could

construct queries for the data without having to download any data per se. We would be interested in conducting cross-state comparisons of same. We would like the ability/authority to link nationally held data for MA with our own local data sources such as our survey data.

Availability of data from sources like workforce, SSA, IRS(?) and CMS to objectively quantify things like earnings of buy in participants, hours worked. Also to look at Medicaid use by the participants in the buy-in vs. others possibly showing effects of working on health.

Other

(State) utilizes the services of our national technical assistance team, National Consortium for Health Systems Development.

Contacts with CMS at national level and CMS at state level - i.e. assistance with communicating that federal regs and state regs are not being interpreted concurrently, resulting in loss of state Medicaid eligibility upon attaining SGA, etc. regardless of medical disability qualifications/issues.

Multiple

Technical Support & Peer Coordination (State)'s needs for generalized external support is modest, though there may be limited need when novel issues are explored or extremely difficult methodological questions arise. There's greater value for (state) in knowing what is taking place in other states and within the academic research community that might facilitate our own work...We also see potential value in the facilitation of multi-state investigations, though this interest should not be taken as a suggestion that such work needs to be designed or conducted by a central entity.

Peer Coordination & Technical Support The ideal research support would involve creating a forum for both open discussions about research skills, tools, & techniques and presentation of focused research related to MIGs. The ideal research center would be available at designated times and for one on one (even face to face) support and assistance. Finally, the ideal center would have two to three core specialty areas or services, possibly research design, monitoring activities, research utilizations for policy development support.

Data, Technical Support, & Peer Coordination 1. Assist with access to Federal/national data sources, such as SSA benefits and income data. 2. Assist with program evaluation/research design and analysis. 3. Coordination of research and analysis across states.

Technical Support, Research Information, & Peer Coordination 1. Access to consulting resources that help with research planning and instrument development, that helps address research activities that are under way or completed nationally or in other states. 2. Peer collaboration and review of research plans, instruments, analysis, and reports.

Peer Coordination & Research Information The ideal research support would include: 1. Research models from states that can identify data system integration for new MIG pilot projects with the purpose to measure employment outcomes for developmental and mental health services. 2. Identification of states who have been instrumental in having ODEP Technical Assistance to build partnerships between employers and employment service providers. 3. State comparisons on percentage of MBI enrollees receiving VR services. 4. State comparisons on numbers of regular Medicaid pop not yet in MBI. 5. State comparison on states who have MBI enrollees using a Medicaid Transit Card to support employment.

Peer Coordination & Research Information PAS in other states MIG in other states Transitional Services in other states Increasing consumer involvement Work Incentives IDEA

Research Information & Peer Coordination Our MIG has not yet begun research. Our state does not have MBI. We have recently discussed our desire to survey persons with disabilities on several issues. Currently, our needs are simple - information on what other states might have done, and some coordination among us.

Data & Peer Coordination We would appreciate assistance in identifying federal data sources for our evaluation needs. Prior to conducting research, it would be helpful to be able to discuss specific strategies and outcomes with states who have similar goals.

Technical Support & Research Information We are at a 'freshman' level. We are enthusiastic consumers of research, and most interested in comparisons between states. If we do research, it would probably be focus groups, and we would welcome help.

Technical Support & Data Our support needs fall into three major areas: 1. Economic impact analyses 2. Opportunity to follow people longitudinally 3. Access to administrative data to complement survey data (Medicaid, Medicare, state agency enrollment, employment data, SSA), preferably linked data.

Data & Other Access to lots of verifiable data including Medicaid recipients' demographics, benefits received, and benefit history.

Increased or continued funding for evaluation projects.

Computer hardware/software to facilitate HIPAA compliance

B.2 What additional type of research support would you like the center to offer?

Fed Data Facilitation of access to federal data from the Social Security Administration and CMS (for Medicare), particularly for individual level data.

Research TA Providing technical assistance or access to technical assistance in areas of non-statistical analysis methods for evaluation or policy analysis.

Research TA Cost analysis research other than consumer surveys.

Research TA The organizational (optimizing internal staff as a research team) development input described in

Research TA Strategies to increase the response rates of consumer populations that are cost-effective

Provide tools, guides, workshops on utilization research to influence policy. Assistance in ensuring that our data and research related materials are as effective as they can be, including ways to do analysis across states.

Host forums for new research by MIGs or other sources (Cornell, etc.) to facilitate on-going development of research, evaluation agenda with a focus on the impact on policy that the particular research had. (as opposed to reviewing interesting research for the sake of intellectual stimulation, there should always be a link to policy or potential policy impact.)

Posing research questions relevant to the national agenda on Buy-ins.

B.3 Proposed MIG Research Center Names

1. MIG RATS (Research Assistance To States)
2. SMART State Medicaid Analysis & Research Techniques
3. Disability Research Institute (DRI)
4. Data - Generating Employment Evaluative Knowledge (DataGEEK)
5. MIG-MEC(Medicaid Infra. Grant - Monitoring and Evaluation Center)
6. Consumer Outcomes Data Analysis Center (CODAC)
7. SMARC State Medicaid Analysis & Research Center
8. State Research Institute (SRI)
9. Migs Accessing Research Resource Center States Research Resource Center
State's Center for Research and Analysis- Migs (Just kidding!) You asked for creativity!
10. MIG SWAT team (States Working on Assessment Together)
11. MIG Research Center
12. Institute for Disability Research Support (IDRS)
13. National Center for Employment Research & Resources (NCERR)
14. Medicaid Infrastructure Grant's Center for Excellence in Research & Resources
(MIGCERR)
15. State to State Center for Research & Resources on Employment of People with
Disabilities (SSCRREMPD)
16. Amy & Anne Think tank Center for Excellence in Research & Resources
17. SMIRK State Medicaid Investigative & Research Knowledge
18. Resources for Research
19. Evidence-Based MIG Research and Development Resource Center
20. State Center for Assistance, Research and Evaluation (SCARE)
21. The Woody Allen honorary 'Everything you wanted to know about data but were afraid to
ask' research center Disability and employment research center
22. SMEAR State Medicaid Evaluation & Analysis Resource
23. MIG STARS (State Technical Assistance and Research Support)
24. Medicaid Infrastructure Center for Research Options (MICRO)
25. Institute for Research Support (IRS)
26. National Enhancement of Research & Development (NERD)
27. 'S-bark'? 'S-brick'? (SBRC)
28. MIG-RC (Medicaid Infrastructure Grant - Research Center)
29. MIGs don't let MIGs do bad research
30. MIG Data Integration Group – “The MIG-DIG”