

# Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

Over 80 Years of Child Welfare  
Leadership!



## 2017-2018 Annual Report

School of Social Work

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University of Pittsburgh

**Child Welfare Education and Research Programs**  
**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Program**  
**(CWEB)**  
and the  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership Program (CWEL)**  
**July 1, 2017- June 30, 2018**

The Child Welfare Education and Research Programs are a collaborative effort of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators.



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## **Greetings**

### **From the Dean**

Leadership in public child welfare has been a hallmark of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work for a century. Beginning as early as 1917, the School of Social Work has been at the forefront of specialized education and training devoted toward the development of the child welfare profession. Our continued efforts to strengthen the public child welfare workforce through professional social work education are highlighted in each annual report of the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) and the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) programs. This edition describes the work of the seventeenth year of the CWEB program and the twenty-third year of the CWEL program. The ongoing commitment of the Department of Human Services and the University to vulnerable children, youth, families, and communities assures that Pennsylvania will remain a national leader in child welfare education, training, organizational development, and practice improvement.

The School of Social Work remains committed to best practices in child welfare through education, training and research. As always, we thank the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators for their steadfast support in assuring that children, families, and communities receive the best services possible to promote safety, stability, lifelong connections, equal opportunity, and well-being. Our work together remains critical to preparing social work professionals to meet the challenges of an ever-changing economic, social and political landscape. The School of Social Work looks forward to our continued partnership in public child welfare workforce development.

Larry E. Davis, Ph.D.

Donald M. Henderson Professor and Dean, School of Social Work

### **From the Principal Investigator**

We are proud of the achievements of the CWEB and CWEL programs and gratified by our contributions to the enhancement of the public child welfare system in Pennsylvania through workforce development and practice improvement. The past year has brought both challenges and opportunities to child welfare professionals, most notably through in the impact of federal and state legislative changes, a steady increase in the public's recognition of our shared responsibility in keeping children safe from harm, and the magnitude of the nationwide opioid epidemic. Along with these challenges, the daily practice of child welfare professionals across Pennsylvania also includes expanded opportunities for collaboration, shared vision, leadership and organizational development. A competent, well-prepared and well-supported workforce is essential for meeting the complex needs of children, families, communities and organizations.

At this time, one thousand one thousand one hundred and sixty-two (1,162) CWEB students have entered into the county agency system and one thousand three hundred and eighty-three (1,383) students have graduated from the CWEL program. During the current academic year, approximately 179 CWEB and CWEL participants are engaged in social work studies. We have established an educational ladder within the Pennsylvania child welfare system, continue to see our graduates emerge as leaders and witness their positive impact upon child welfare practice. We celebrate their accomplishments. We also extend sincere thanks to our partnering schools, county child welfare agencies, and the Office of Children, Youth and Families for their continued dedication to workforce development. Together, we continue to prepare and support exemplary child welfare professionals who perform demanding, fulfilling, and essential work.

Helen Cahalane, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW  
Principal Investigator

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## Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates

And

## Child Welfare Education for Leadership

### **Mission and Goals**

#### Our Mission

The Child Welfare Education and Research continuum includes two degree education programs, Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) and Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL). Administered by the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, the mission of these programs is to strengthen child welfare services to Title IV-E eligible children and families in Pennsylvania by increasing the number of educated professionals and equipping them to deal with the increasingly complex demands of public child welfare practice.

#### Our Goals

- Addressing the vacancy and turnover rates among public child welfare employees and the recruitment and retention problems in the Pennsylvania child welfare workforce;
- Recruiting undergraduate students throughout the widely dispersed locations in order to prepare persons for public child welfare employment;
- Assisting in the retention of public child welfare staff already serving Title IV-E eligible children and families by making graduate education with a focus on child welfare studies more readily available;
- Providing academic and curricular support for child welfare studies to university programs;
- Providing a career ladder within public child welfare and assisting in the long-term career development of child welfare professionals;
- Engaging in efforts to promote the development of knowledge and skills in evidenced-based practice for child welfare professionals;
- Conducting research and evaluation focused on evidence-based child welfare practice and the impact of social work education; and
- Advocating for practice improvement within the child welfare system through education, ongoing training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, organizational development, and support provided by competent, committed, and confident child welfare professionals.

## **Introduction**

Recruitment and retention of public child welfare personnel has been recognized as a problem not only in Pennsylvania, but nationwide for more than two decades. National studies have concluded that “insufficient training” is one of the major factors contributing to the difficulties in retaining child welfare personnel. Research findings document that professional education is one of the factors that can reduce turnover, improve services, and reduce costs.

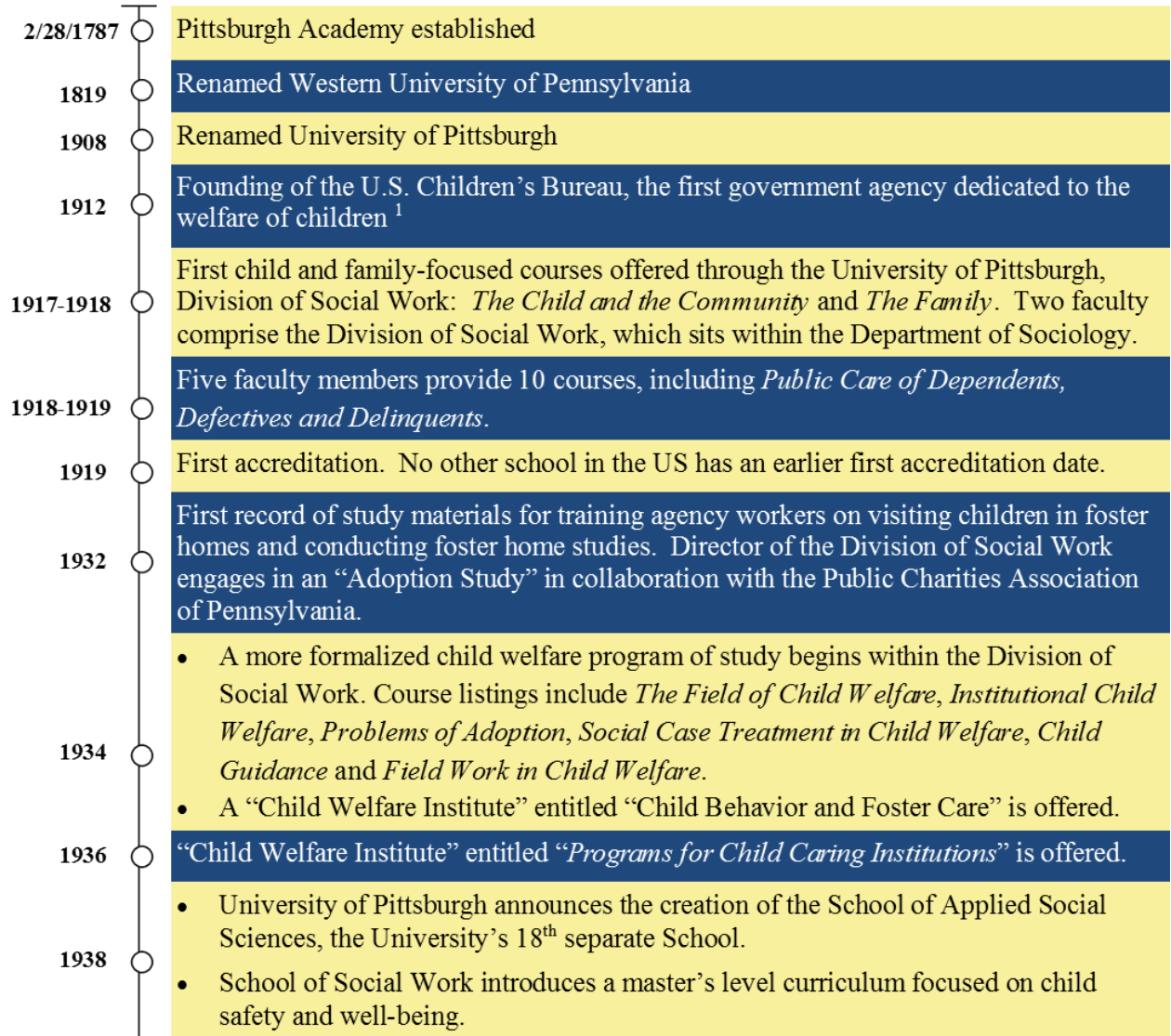
This report marks the completion of the seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) full academic year of operation for the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program and twenty-third (23<sup>rd</sup>) full academic year of operation for the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program in Pennsylvania. Both have become remarkably integrated into the fabric of public child welfare throughout the state, with 99% of counties in the Commonwealth participating in CWEB and CWEL. For the past 23 years, CWEL has been returning graduates to the roughly 4,200 caseworker, supervisor, manager, and administrator positions in Pennsylvania’s county child welfare agencies, while CWEB has been preparing graduates to enter the child welfare field over the past 17 years. At the present time, over 20% of the state’s public child welfare positions are occupied by a CWEB graduates, a CWEL graduate, or a currently enrolled CWEL student. There are many other factors to be included when addressing morale, recruitment, and retention problems, but CWEB and CWEL continue to demonstrate their effectiveness in addressing the significant issue of preparatory and advanced education for the child welfare workforce.

The need for both the baccalaureate and graduate-level child welfare education programs is described and their basic designs are included in Pennsylvania’s federally approved Title IV-B plan. Federal financial participation is based upon federal Title IV-E regulations contained in 45 CFR, Ch. II, Part 235 and Ch. XIII, Parts 1355 and 1356.



**Background**

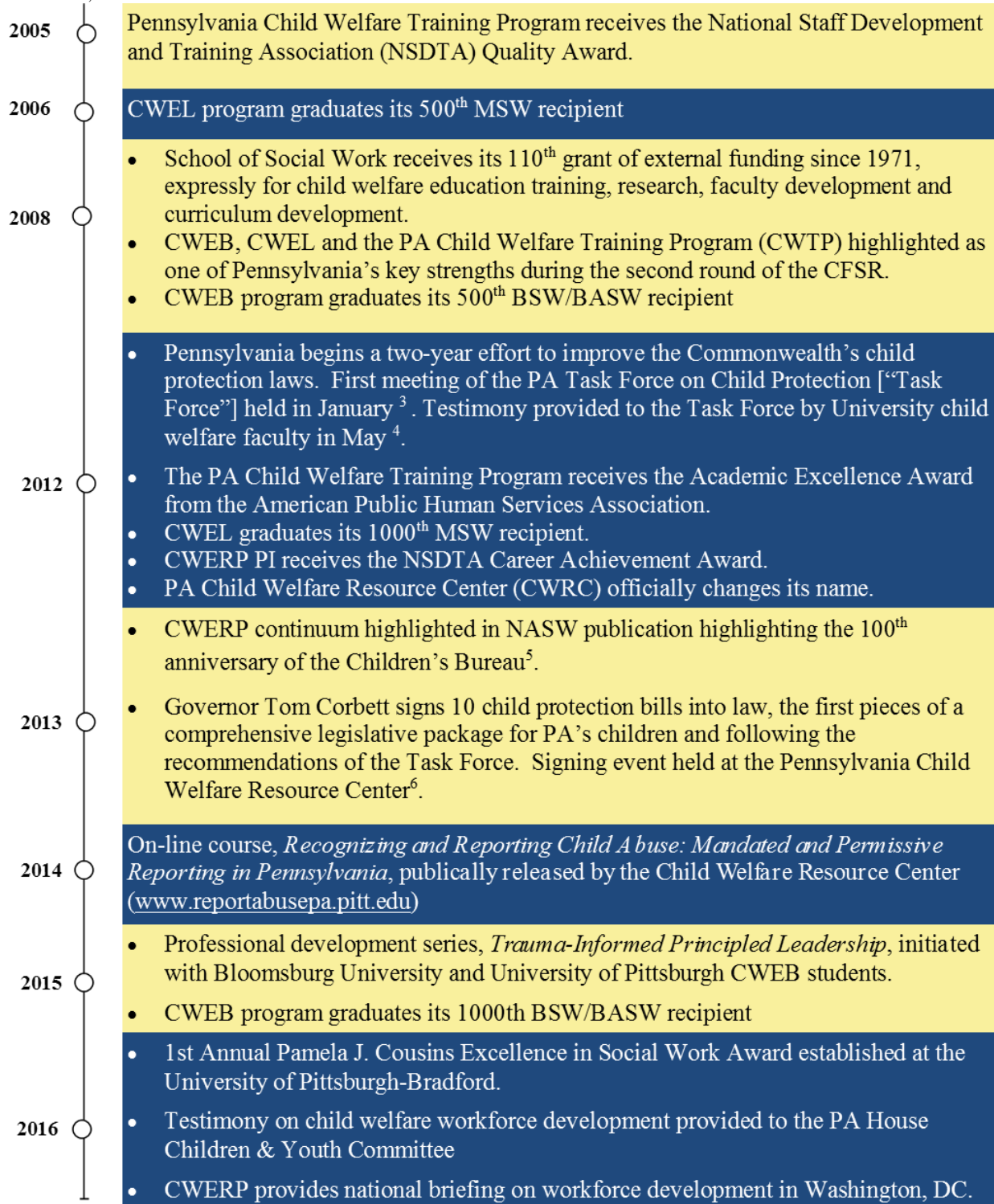
Child welfare has been a vital component for social work practice at the University of Pittsburgh since as early as 1917. The following timeline provides an historical overview of key events in the University’s legacy of child welfare education and training.



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Children’s Bureau, *The story of the Children’s Bureau* [https://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/sites/all/themes/danland/danblog/files/Story\\_of\\_CB.pdf](https://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/sites/all/themes/danland/danblog/files/Story_of_CB.pdf)

1938-1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School of Social Work continues classroom courses and field placements related to children, child welfare and child development.</li> <li>• One of the first multidisciplinary teams focused on child protection is established at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh in the late 1950s-early 1960s, with which the School of Social Work is closely affiliated</li> <li>• University of Pittsburgh becomes part of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education in 1966 <sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
1971	School of Social Work receives the first of an uninterrupted number of federal, state and foundation child welfare training grants that continues to the present.
1972	Children and Youth Concentration is introduced at the master’s level and becomes a curriculum model adopted by other schools of social work across the country.
1986	Three-year grant received from the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect to establish the Interdisciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect training program.
1991	Five-year competency-based, interdisciplinary training grant received from the United States Children’s Bureau to advance the Title IV-B interdisciplinary agenda of building a child welfare curriculum, enhancing school/agency partnerships, and providing training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Faculty members from Child Development and Child Care, Nursing, Medicine, Law, Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work participate as a team.
1992	Title IV-E pilot projects initiated with several Western PA counties to assist in developing a Title IV-E training model to address child welfare workforce issues and shape the School’s curriculum.
1995	The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program is established to provide long-term educational opportunities for public child welfare employees in PA
1998	Funding received from the United States Children’s Bureau for a two-year project designed to demonstrate the efficacy of developing a state-wide opportunity for potential child welfare employees (“persons preparing for employment” in the federal Title IV-E regulations).
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program initiated to provide child welfare education and training to persons preparing for a child welfare career.</li> <li>• School of Social Work assumes leadership and administrative responsibility for Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Training Program providing pre-service and in-service training to all public child welfare employees and many private agencies.</li> </ul>
2003	Pennsylvania’s child welfare training and education model acknowledged as being “... the most comprehensive, integrated and sophisticated program seen to date” by the Administration for Children and Families.
2004	Pennsylvania’s child welfare education and training programs described as an outstanding model for other states to emulate by the Administration for Children and Families.

<sup>2</sup> 1966, Special Sess. No. 3, July 28, P.L. 87, § 2. 24 P.S. § 2510-202, PA ST 24 P.S. § 2510-202. Current through 2015 Regular Session Acts 1 to 70



<sup>3</sup>January 26, 2012

<sup>4</sup>May 31, 2012

<sup>5</sup>Zlotnik, J.L. (2013). University-agency partnerships to advance child welfare. In K. Briar-Lawson, M. McCarthy & N. Dickinson (Eds.), *The Children’s Bureau: Shaping a century of child welfare practices, programs and policies* (pp. 275-292). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

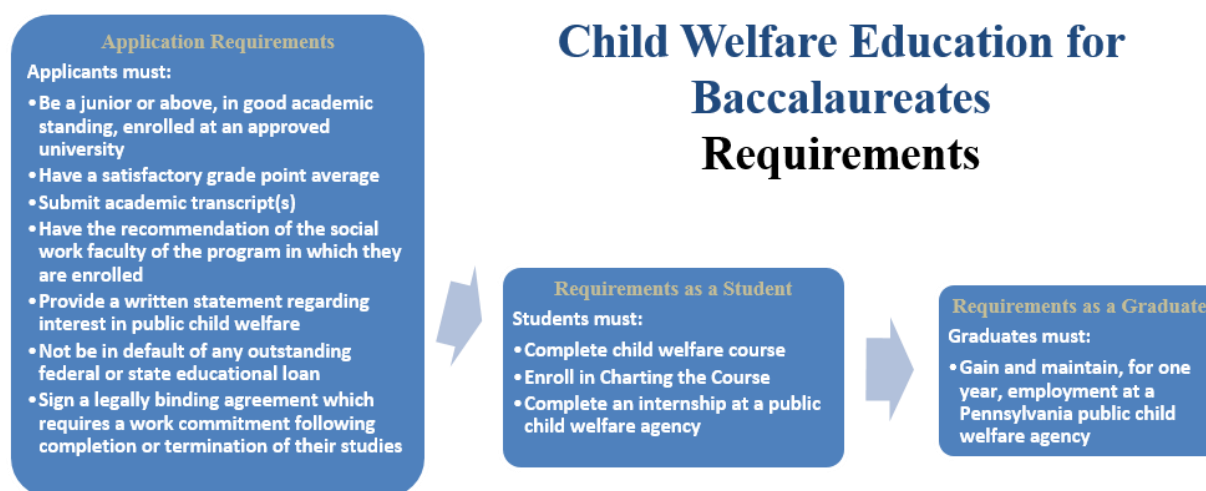
<sup>6</sup>December 18, 2013

## **Program Descriptions**

### ***Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Program***

Designed to recruit and prepare students for a career in public child welfare, the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) Program is offered to undergraduates at 15 schools throughout Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students who are official social work majors in any of the 15 approved schools are eligible to apply for the CWEB program. Figure 1 below illustrates the program requirements.

**Figure 1. Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Requirements**

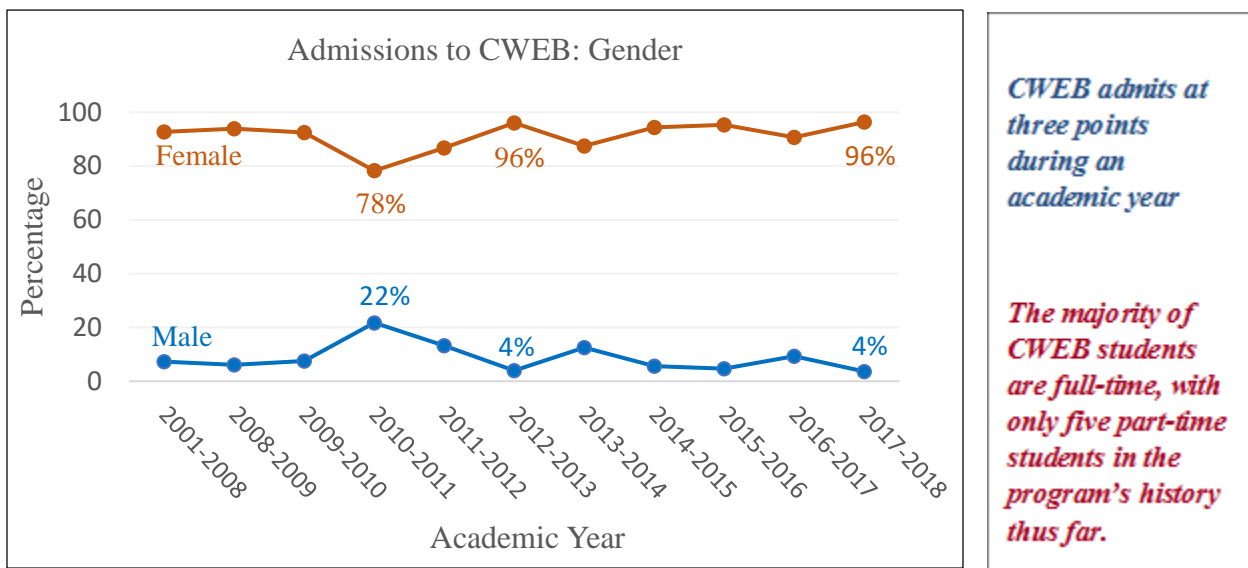


Qualified students can receive substantial financial support during their senior year in return for a commitment to work in one of Pennsylvania’s county public child welfare agencies following graduation. Students must satisfactorily complete child welfare course work and an internship at a public child welfare agency. During the course of the internship, most students are able to complete a portion of the competency-based, foundational training required for all public child welfare caseworkers. Upon graduation, students also receive assistance with their employment search.

Over 1,150 students have graduated from CWEB during the program’s first 17 years. CWEB graduates have completed internships and have been employed in 88% of Pennsylvania

counties. Once in the field, they are able to draw on a solid background of on the job experience, educational preparation, and skill-based training. County child welfare agencies benefit immensely from the program because it addresses a critical child workforce need by providing skilled, entry-level social workers who come to the field with a combination of academic knowledge and exposure to child welfare practice. Figure 2 below illustrates CWEB admissions by gender.

**Figure 2. Admissions to CWEB by Gender**

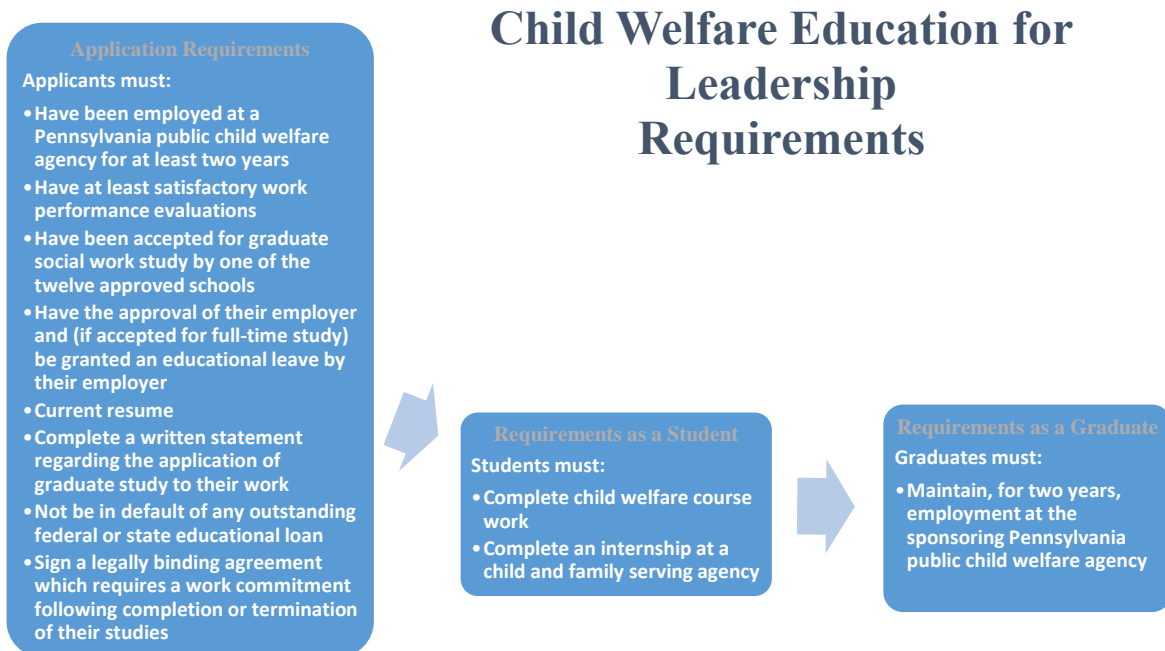


***Child Welfare Education for Leadership Program***

For current employees of public child welfare agencies, the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers or administrators of any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency are eligible to apply to participate in the CWEL program. See Figure 3 below for all program requirements. All persons enrolled meet these criteria as determined by their CWEL applications, resumes, personal statements, agency approvals, admission to one of the approved schools, and signed agreements.

CWEL has funded students from 64 counties and twelve Pennsylvania schools of social work on both a full and part-time basis. At the present time, 17% of the Pennsylvania child welfare workforce consists of a CWEL graduate or a current CWEL student. Additionally, CWEL serves as an educational and career ladder for public child welfare employees. Overall, approximately 16% of CWEB graduates have entered the CWEL program thus far. CWEB alumni made up 21% of the active CWEL student enrollment during the 2017-2018 program year.

**Figure 3. Child Welfare Education for Leadership Requirements**

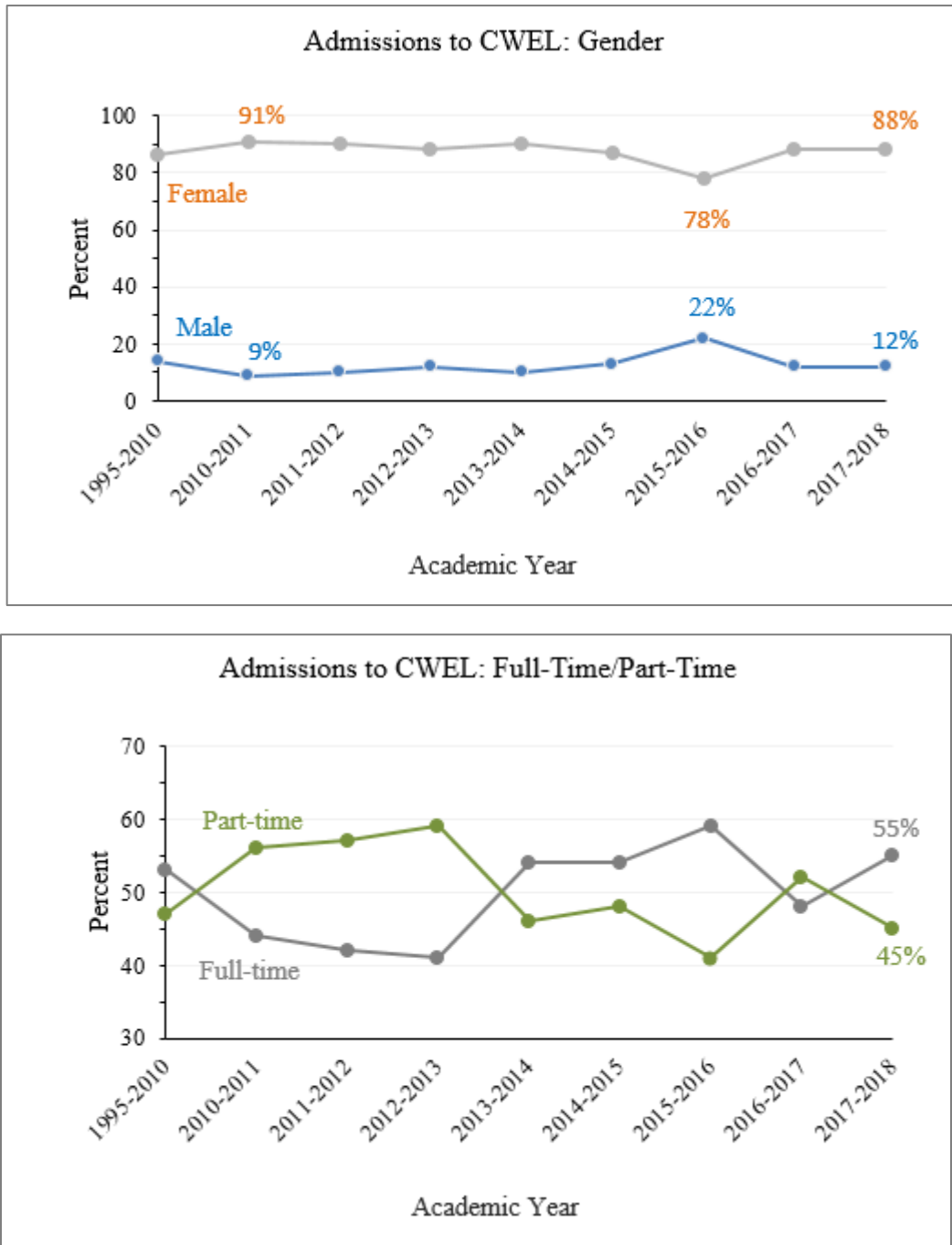


Admission trends by enrollment status are shown in Figure 4.

CWEL reimburses salary and benefits for full-time CWEL students and covers tuition, fees, and other expenses for both full and part-time students in return for a commitment to the employing child welfare agency upon graduation. During the first 23 years of the program, 1,383 child welfare professionals have earned graduate social work degrees. These individuals occupy

various positions, ranging from caseworker to administrator. The program has a remarkably successful record of retention, with annual retention rates averaging 92%.

**Figure 4. Admissions to CWEL by Status and Gender**



## **Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare and CWEB/CWEL Enrollment**

It is well known that children of color are overrepresented in the United States child welfare system<sup>7</sup>. For example, in 2017 African American children made up approximately 14% of the U.S. child population but represented 23% of the foster care population<sup>8,9</sup>. Disproportionate representation is striking across all levels of child welfare service and is particularly evident in substitute care. Pennsylvania is the sixth most populated state in the country, with approximately 12.8 million people<sup>10</sup>. According to a recent report by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, there were 25,381 Pennsylvania children living in foster care in 2017<sup>11</sup>. Approximately thirty-five percent of these children are Black or African American, yet African American children comprise approximately 13% of the state's child population<sup>9,11</sup>. Caucasian children make up 67% of the state's child population and comprise approximately 42.9% of Pennsylvania's foster care population<sup>9,11</sup>. While the causes and solutions for the disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system are complex, we recognize that it is crucial for the workforce to be reflective of the populations served. Within the CWEB and CWEL programs combined, African Americans represent 20% of participants. Figure 5 below illustrates the demographic characteristics of the Pennsylvania child population and those of CWEB/CWEL participants.

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<sup>7</sup>Wells, S.J. (2011). Disproportionality and disparity in child welfare: An overview of definitions and methods of measurement. In D.K. Green, K. Belanger, R.G. McRoy & L. Bullard (Eds.), *Challenging racial disproportionality in child welfare: Research, policy, and practice*. Washington, DC: CWLA Press.

<sup>8</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (2018). *The AFCARS Report. Preliminary estimates for FY2017 as of August 10, 2018*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb>

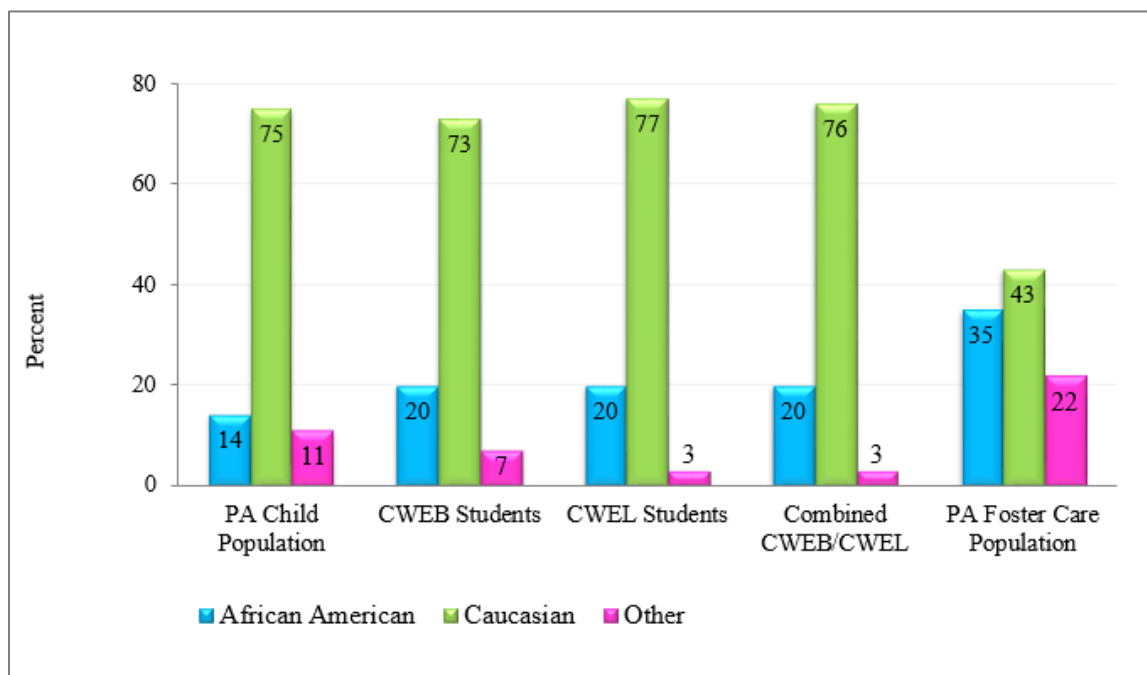
<sup>9</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation (n.d.), KIDS COUNT data center. Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/103-child-population-by-race?loc=40&loc=2#detailed/2/40/false/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/68,69,67,12,70,66,71,72/423,424>

<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania Population. (2018-12-07). Retrieved 2018-12-19, from <http://worldpopulationreview.com/states/pennsylvania>.

<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (2018). *State of Child Welfare 2018*. Harrisburg, PA: Porchlight Project: Retrieved from <https://www.papartnerships.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-SOCW-Pennsylvania-July-2018.pdf>



**Figure 5. Demographics of PA Child Population and CWEB/CWEL Participants**



**Administration**

The CWEB and CWEL programs have been administered by the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh since their inception in 2001 and 1995, respectively. Part III-A of the Project Description and Implementation provides background information. In addition to providing undergraduate and graduate level social work degree programs on both a full-time and part-time basis, the School of Social Work provides academic and curriculum support for the other 13 undergraduate universities and 11 graduate schools eligible to participate in the CWEB and CWEL programs. The total number of participating school programs is 16, with 4 schools at the undergraduate level only, 10 university programs enrolling both undergraduate and graduate students, and two programs at the graduate level only. East Stroudsburg University will join the CWEB school consortium in the 2018-2019 academic year.

The CWEB and CWEL faculty conduct annual site visits with each university program, including branch campus locations, and maintain ongoing contact to discuss academic programs,

issues, and progress. The legal agreement for each student contains a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) waiver which permits the sharing of academic information. The CWEB and CWEL faculty and staff have hundreds of contacts with faculty and students from the other fifteen schools throughout the year.

Fiscal administration includes reimbursement to county employers of full-time graduate students for salaries and benefits, reimbursement to students for books, payment of tuition and fees at all approved educational institutions and, where appropriate, travel expenditures and fellowship payments. These payments are advanced by the University as they become due. The University, in turn, invoices the Commonwealth and is reimbursed from a combination of state and federal funds.

A series of formal agreements provides the mechanism for the operation of the programs. These include the Intergovernmental Agreement between the Department of Human Services and the University of Pittsburgh; a series of agreements between the University and each of the other 15 approved institutions of higher education; and, agreements between CWEB students with the University or among CWEL students, their respective county employer and the University. These agreements provide for the students' enrollment arrangements, reimbursement for allowable expenses, and the required post-education work commitments. The CWEL employers' responsibility to maintain benefits and grant education leave to full-time students is specified in the agreement. Reimbursement to employers for CWEL student salaries and benefits is also included.

To accomplish all of these tasks, approximately nine full-time equivalent faculty and staff have been engaged. All program faculty teach regular credit courses, provide academic advising to students, and oversee internships. In addition, the CWEB and CWEL faculty are responsible for assisting in program evaluation. The faculty and staff listing is contained in [Appendix N](#).

## **Academic Program Approval and Curriculum**

All of the schools participating in the CWEB and CWEL programs are fully accredited by both the Middle States Association of College and Schools (MSACS) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The 16 approved schools and their accreditation dates are listed in [Appendix A](#), Table I. A graphic representation showing the location of the participating schools is included in [Appendix B](#).

All approved undergraduate schools are required to offer at least one child welfare course and internships in county child welfare agencies. Approved graduate programs are required to offer at least two graduate-level child welfare courses and child welfare-focused internships. The continuing availability of these courses and internships is verified by the CWEB and CWEL Academic Coordinators who consult regularly with the approved schools regarding field assignments, specific courses, student registrations, and student progress.

The graduate level offerings of the University of Pittsburgh and their enrollments are listed in [Appendix C](#), Table II. The 2017-2018 course offerings of the 14 undergraduate schools participating in CWEB and the other 11 graduate school programs participating in CWEL and shown in [Appendix D](#), Table III (CWEB) and in [Appendix E](#), Table IV (CWEL). These course listings referenced above do not include internships, for which a minimum of 400 clock hours is required at the baccalaureate level and 900 at the masters level.

At the undergraduate level (CWEB) the range of field or internship hours is from 400 to 600 with a mean of 475. However, the CWEB students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Pennsylvania State Civil Service County Social Casework Intern program in conjunction with their school and the county agency in which they are completing their placements. This option requires 975 hours of internship. The advantage of this option for the student and agency is that upon completion of the official County Social Casework Intern program and graduation, the student is eligible to begin work immediately in the agency, typically as a Caseworker II, without the requirement of a Civil Service examination. Of the 55 CWEB students who graduated during

the 2017-2018 academic year, 30 (60%) exercised the State Civil Service Social Casework Intern option. CWEB county participation is included in [Appendix F](#).

At the graduate level, nearly all placements exceed the 900 hour minimum with the average being over 1,000 hours. At the University of Pittsburgh, there are 360 hours of internship for first year students, in addition to a 15-week field seminar. Second year students are required to complete 720 hours, resulting in a grand total of 1,080 internship hours. Comparable hours and field seminars are required at the other participating graduate school programs. CWEL county participation is included in [Appendix I](#), Chart 8.

### **Trauma-Informed Principled Leadership Series**

In recognition of the steep learning curve that undergraduate students encounter when entering public child welfare agencies, a special leadership development training was initiated during the 2014-2015 academic year. Initially piloted with CWEB students from Bloomsburg University and the University of Pittsburgh, this five-module series addresses the development of leadership skills associated with race consciousness, self-care and trauma-informed practice. Students receive training on five practices of exemplary leadership identified in the literature<sup>12</sup> and participate in monthly discussions focused on core leadership skills and service delivery in the child welfare system. In the past few decades, the field of child welfare has moved toward gaining a fuller grasp of the scope of racial disproportionality in the child welfare system and the need to explicitly address the race gap in child welfare work. Furthering these efforts, this leadership series addresses how these emerging child welfare professionals reflect on their personal identity as they engage in practice. This process includes discussing historical trauma, race socialization, and an examination of disproportionality data in Pennsylvania at the state and local levels. Lastly, given the multiple and chronic adverse life experiences that child welfare clients face, an introduction to a trauma-informed framework is used to help students understand the complex behaviors and

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<sup>12</sup> Kouzes, J & Posner, B. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

relational styles that children and families may have. In addition, students explore the impact of their own trauma exposure in child welfare practice and develop self-care plans to increase their resilience. An overview of the series is included in [Appendix H](#).

### **Commitment and Recoupment of Funds**

All students enrolled in the CWEB and CWEL programs must repay the educational benefits they have received. This is accomplished in one of two ways. For CWEB graduates, the repayment by service is one calendar year of service for one academic year of support<sup>13</sup>. For CWEL graduates, the length of this service is an amount of time equal to the length of the educational leave for full-time CWEL students and equal to the proportion of the full-time length of the degree program they have completed as part-time students<sup>14</sup>. Students who received support for only a portion of their program have a pro rata work commitment proportional to the support they received. During the period of this report, 55 CWEL students completed their degree programs and graduated. All graduates returned to their counties of origin following graduation.

The full amount of the cash paid to the student or on the student's behalf must be reimbursed whenever a CWEB or CWEL graduate fails to complete his or her commitment. This provision is contained in the agreement each student signs either with the University (as in the case of CWEB students) or with the University and county of origin (as in the case of CWEL students). During the 17<sup>th</sup> program year, three CWEB students withdrew or were terminated from the program after receiving financial benefits, some after beginning their period of commitment payback. Our experience with program participants over this seventeen year period has been that those who withdraw early discover that child welfare was not what they had anticipated and not what they want to pursue as a professional career. In general, baccalaureate-level students are just beginning their professional career path and it is not uncommon for undergraduates to underestimate the rigor and reality of child welfare work. We have learned that this important

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<sup>13</sup> 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (5)

<sup>14</sup> 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (1)

discovery is to be anticipated in a certain number of instances among CWEB students and is best identified before great time, training, and costs have been expended. A graphic summary of the CWEB departures and their recoupment status appears on page 17.

In 23 years of program operation, it is notable that only 6% of the students admitted to the CWEL program have resigned or been terminated from the program. These departures are for various reasons, represent widely distributed counties, and include most schools. These situations, together with the actions being taken are summarized in Table 1. The employment (retention) of all students exiting the program will continue to be monitored as required in Section II, G, 13 of the Program Description and Implementation, and by PL 103-432 which was enacted by the United State Congress during the first CWEL program year and which applies to graduates funded after October 1, 1995.

Retention has two aspects in the CWEB and CWEL program. The first is the retention of currently enrolled students. Among both programs combined, the student loss rate is 5%. This is most reasonable considering the large number of academic, work, and personal factors that can affect the decision to withdraw from an academic program. The second aspect is the retention of graduates after they have completed their work commitment. Over the past 17 years of the CWEB program (through the summer of 2018), 1,092 CWEB students accepted employment after graduation. Within the CWEL program, only 16 individuals out of a total of 1,383 graduates have not completed their employment commitment after graduation.

**Table 1. Student and Graduate Departures from Programs and Recoupment**

School	# of Students			Reason for Departure		Recoupment Status	
	Total	CWEB	CWEL	Employment	Withdrew from School/Program	Collection Initiated	Obligation Satisfied
Bloomsburg University	11	11	0	6	5	6	5
Bryn Mawr College	4	0	4	0	4	1	3
California University	19	17	2	11	8	10	9
Edinboro University	14	13	1	7	7	6	8
Kutztown University	14	13	1	9	5	7	7
Lock Haven University	11	11	0	6	5	2	9
Mansfield University	12	12	0	11	1	6	6
Marywood University	21	1	20	3	18	6	15
Millersville University	4	3	1	1	3	2	2
University of Pennsylvania	7	0	7	0	7	3	4
University of Pittsburgh	27	9	18	10	17	9	18
Shippensburg University	11	10	1	7	4	3	8
Slippery Rock University	10	10	0	7	3	5	5
Temple University	32	13	19	13	19	13	19
West Chester University	5	5	0	5	0	2	3
Widener University	17	6	11	8	9	8	9
<b>TOTALS</b>	219	134	85	104	115	89	130

Among the CWEB graduates who have most recently satisfied their legal work commitment, 43% remain in the agencies. Overall, 55% have exceeded their commitment by over two years. Increased familiarity with the program, more focused selected criteria and stronger case management has contributed to improved outcomes. The number of CWEL graduates who have discontinued child welfare work for all reasons over the life of the program averages 8% per year. This figure includes death, retirement, total and permanent disability, transfer of spouse/partner employment out of state, and other routine changes of employment.

Despite the loss of some participants, both the CWEB and CWEL programs have a strong record of retention. Nevertheless, there are real reasons behind each of the post-commitment departures. We describe these in our previous annual reports, and have presented them at state-wide Recruitment and Retention committees, meetings of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association, and national-level professional meetings. We include additional information later in this report. Fortunately, most of the root causes of turnover can actually be remedied, though some are more difficult to address than others. We are committed to working with county agencies to focus on organizational-level solutions that can assist in workforce development, worker retention, and the enhanced capacity of child welfare systems.

### **Deliverables**

Extensive efforts to inform all interested parties about the CWEB and CWEL programs are ongoing. The entry of 1,162 CWEB students into the agency system and the return of 1,383 CWEL graduates to a total of 66 counties have been very helpful in continuing to make the value of the programs visible. Current and former students are a crucial source of recruitment, as are county agency directors and school faculty members. The volume of inquiries and applications, and involvement of nearly all the counties in the state of Pennsylvania, suggest that information about the program is reaching those eligible to participate as students or employers. However, continued efforts are required to assure that the opportunity for child welfare-focused education is widely



known across Pennsylvania counties and school programs. A long-established toll-free line is available to facilitate inquiries and calls for assistance [1 (866) ASK-CWEL/1 (866) 275-2935].

Web-based information regarding both programs is routinely updated and publically available on the School of Social Work website. Additionally, both programs can also be accessed through the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) website. The CWEB and CWEL webpages include a Student Handbook for each program as well as “Frequently Asked Questions” to clarify program information and address common concerns. An informational video regarding the CWEB program that features faculty members and program participants was distributed to each participating school and is posted on the CWEB webpage.

The CWEB/CWEL program continuum also has a Facebook page. This accessibility is helpful to both prospective and current students, and illustrates the personal connection both programs develop with participants. Program information is also readily available to county agencies and schools through electronic and personal communication. Other forms of communication, such as the use of blast texting, are used to transmit program information.

The following efforts and products were delivered by the University during 2017-2018 in accordance with the approved Project Description and Implementation plan:

- Previous annual reports were posted on the CWERP website and are available to all county administrators, DHS officials, CWEB and CWEL academic partners, and other interested state and federal officials.
- CWEB and CWEL program and application materials were posted on the CWERP website for all counties, participating schools and interested parties.
- Dr. Rauktis was awarded a Core Fulbright U. S. Scholar grant to conduct research and teach at the University of Porto, Portugal from September to December 2017.
- Dr. Bradley-King and Rachel Winters presented the CWEB Leadership Series work, *Armoring students to thrive in child welfare: Trauma informed/race conscious interventions*, at the 35<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. Atlanta, GA (March 2018)

- Dr. Winter provided consultation to the Child Welfare Resource Center on Team Based Learning.
- The child welfare faculty and staff contributed to numerous scholarly publications and conducted presentations, training, and consultations thereby spreading their wealth of knowledge to a broader audience. Their works during 2017-2018 included the following:
  - Betru, Y. (2017, November). *Race conscious trauma informed pedagogical model for professional development in child welfare*. Poster presentation at 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Chicago, IL.
  - Perry, M.A. & Rauktis, M. E. (2018). Fostering “Belonging-ness”: The role of private foster care agencies with foster parents and youth. In E. Trejos & N. Trevino (Eds.), *Handbook of Foster Youth* (pp. 427-443). Abingdon, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis
  - Perry, M. A., Rauktis, M. E., Cahalane, H., & Zhu, X. (2018, March). *Factors related to short-term outcomes of family engagement meetings in child welfare: Returning home, preventing a move, and restriction of living environment*. Poster presentation at the 31st Annual Research and Policy Conference on Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Behavioral Health. Tampa, FL.
  - Winter, E. (2018, March). *Innovations and opportunities: TBL beyond the academy*. Symposium presentation at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Team Based Learning Collaborative Meeting. San Diego, CA.
  - Perry, M. A. & Rauktis, M. E. (2018, April). *Innovations in assessing fidelity to different family engagement models*. Presentation at the Pennsylvania 2018 Conference on Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): Growing FGDM through Leadership. Hershey, PA.
  - Perry, M.A., Lundgren, P.J. & Cahalane, H. (2018, May). *Integrating simulation training and reflective supervision in child welfare: Ideas and early evaluation findings in Pennsylvania*. Presentation at the 21st Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium. Berkeley, CA.
  - Winters, R.R., Cahalane, H., & Matriccino, F. (2018, May). *Developmental and social-emotional screening in Pennsylvania’s child welfare system*. Symposium conducted at the 20<sup>th</sup> Children’s Interagency Conference. State College, PA.

- Betru, Y. & Winter, L (2018, June). *Developing workforce strategies for assessing and managing the impact of traumatic stress*. Training provided to the Regional Office Staff of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children Youth and Families.
- The CWERP faculty conducted peer and proposal reviews to enhance the field of child welfare through their service and participation in the following ways:
  - Proposal reviewer for National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium (NHSTES): Dr. Cahalane and Dr. Perry
  - Second-level reviewer for accepted papers, workshops, and posters of the Child Welfare Track, Council on Social Work Education (CSWE): Dr. Cahalane
  - Peer reviewer for Head Start National Research Conference [now the National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC)]: Dr. Perry
  - Peer reviewer: Rachel Winters
    - *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, October 2017
    - 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, July, 2018
    - *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, Special Issue on Innovative Practices for Children, Youth and Families in Portugal and Other Lusophone Countries, August 2018
- Dr. Rauktis served as Editor of the upcoming Special Issue of the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*; Practice innovations in Portuguese-speaking countries.
- CWERP faculty and staff served on boards and committees to share their expertise and recommendations. These activities included the following:
  - Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, Vice President, Board of Directors: Dr. Betru
  - Council on Social Work Education Minority Fellowship Program, Doctoral Advisory Committee: Dr. Betru
  - Council on Social Work Education Child Welfare Track: Dr. Cahalane, Chair
  - Editorial board for *Intergenerational Relationships*: Dr. Rauktis
  - Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council: Dr. Cahalane

- Office of Children and Families in the Courts, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts: Dr. Cahalane, Caseworker Retention Workgroup
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Pennsylvania State Civil Service Commission: Dr. Cahalane, Caseworker Workgroup.
- Program evaluation instruments were distributed to all participating counties, schools, current students, and a sample of graduates from both CWEB and CWEL as part of the annual program evaluation, the results of which are described later in this report.
- Faculty visits were held with participating school programs beginning in the fall of 2017 and continuing through the spring of 2018. These visits are summarized in Table 2 below and included meetings with prospective students, current students, academic faculty, and academic program administrators. Focus groups regarding professional development for public child welfare workers were held with the CWEB and CWEL students, the details of which are described in the Evaluation section of this report.
- In addition to the specific activities noted above, hundreds of telephone and e-mail inquiries were handled from potential students, agency administrators, county commissioners, other states, and other colleges and universities.

### ***Campus Meetings***

There was outstanding attendance and participation of the CWEB and CWEL students during meetings held at the various campus sites. Students discussed and asked questions related to many aspects of child welfare education and practice as well as specific issues related to the CWEB and CWEL programs. Constructive discussion were held on topics such as course availability, policy issues, academic concerns, and administrative procedures. Students spoke candidly about the benefits and challenges of being members of the PA child welfare workforce throughout the past year.

The dates of the campus meetings held during the 2017-2018 Academic Year are displayed in Table 2 below. A visit to East Stroudsburg University to discuss CWEB eligibility for the 2018-2019 academic year is included.

**Table 2. Campus Meetings with CWEB and CWEL Participants**

School Program	Date of Visit	Target Audience
Bloomsburg University	11/3/17	CWEB
Bryn Mawr College	10/31/17	CWEL
California University of Pennsylvania	3/13/17	CWEB/CWEL
East Stroudsburg University	4/6/18	CWEB
Edinboro University	9/11/17	CWEB/CWEL
Kutztown University	10/30/17	CWEB/CWEL
Lock Haven University	11/13/17	CWEB
Mansfield University	11/13/17	CWEB
Marywood University-Central PA Campus	11/3/17	CWEB/CWEL
Marywood University-Lehigh Campus	10/30/17	CWEL
Marywood University- Scranton Campus	11/2/17	CWEB/CWEL
Millersville University	4/24/18	CWEB/CWEL
Shippensburg University	4/23/18	CWEB/CWEL
Slippery Rock University	9/11/17	CWEB
Temple University- Harrisburg Campus	4/23/18	CWEL
Temple University- Main Campus	10/31/17	CWEB/CWEL
University of Pennsylvania	11/2/17	CWEL
University of Pittsburgh-Oakland	12/1/17	CWEB/CWEL
West Chester University	11/1/17	CWEB/CWEL
Widener University	11/1/17	CWEB/CWEL

Focus groups with students were structured to obtain feedback on how the students were faring in their educational settings, their internships, and how these two areas intersect to influence their current and future child welfare work. The CWEB students were overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic about their internships and the county agency staff they work with daily. Students expressed appreciation for the experiences they have had and the opportunity to learn how the child welfare system works. They have been able to apply what was learned in the classroom and gain confidence in working with children, youth, and families. Through supportive supervision

and opportunities to shadow experienced caseworkers, CWEB students have the chance to explore this area of social work and make a determination about the fit of child welfare practice as a personal long-term career choice. The students shared that unit co-workers take time to explain why decisions are made and to answer any questions they have. Some of the opportunities CWEB students have had include visits to family homes, attendance at court hearings, observing family team conferences, assisting families with obtaining supportive services, and documenting case activities. CWEB students expressed confidence that these experiences are preparing them for their work as caseworkers once they complete their bachelor's degree and obtain employment in a county child welfare agency.

When CWEB students were asked what qualities a CWEB student should have, responses included: passion and a strong interest in child welfare, eagerness to learn, understanding of the challenges of child welfare practice, hard-working, committed, open minded, willing to learn, good communication, and strong organization skills. Current students were in agreement that interpersonal skills such as flexibility, compassion and the ability to engage in difficult conversations were essential to competent casework practice.

CWEL students shared the benefits and challenges of attending graduate school through the CWEL program. One student said attending graduate school as a CWEL student is a remarkable opportunity which reminded her why she became a social worker and why she choose to work in child welfare. Another student commented that one has to be motivated as a CWEL student because the transition from worker to student can be overwhelming. Students expressed appreciation for being able to gain knowledge and enhance professional skills that are useful in child welfare practice. Several students shared they are more thoughtful and in tune with families, have a broader understanding of their child welfare work, see the value of strengths-based

approaches, and have a much deeper understanding of the trauma experiences of the individuals they serve as a result of their enhanced education. They view their role as helping to get to the root cause of family challenges and creating opportunities for change. CWEL students expressed confidence in what they offer in class due to their experience in the field. Many shared that they felt valued by the faculty and other students and were encouraged to talk about their practice experiences during class discussions. Students benefitted from courses in social theory, social welfare policy, trauma, social justice/advocacy, and chemical dependency. Additionally, students expressed that they have gained confidence and developed as leaders. The chance to network with CWEL students from other county agencies is also deeply appreciated. Internships provided experiences for students to better understand the practices of partner and provider agencies. As a result of her field placement experiences, one student said “I now understand what happens when I send someone to therapy”.

Part-time students were in agreement that it is challenging to work full-time and attend school part-time. It is difficult to find the time to complete internship hours in addition to required work responsibilities while also having to negotiate crises that are an inherent part of child welfare work. Also, some students shared that they do not feel fully supported in their educational endeavors by their supervisors or agency leadership. This creates added stress and fatigue for the students who feel pulled in multiple directions and unable to do their best work in either setting.

Students who were nearing completion of their studies and preparing to return to their agencies discussed transfer of learning: what they will do differently and take back with them as new MSW graduates. Several spoke of wanting to become supervisors to influence the next generation of caseworkers. Plans include implementing evidence based practices in their agencies, leading and positively influencing others with whom they work in a strengths-based manner,

advocating with stakeholders, modeling ethical practice and accountability, and working to extend family connections for children in placement. CWEL students suggested that future applicants should be committed to a long-term career in child welfare, open to incorporating new knowledge into their practice, and willing to work hard to lead system improvements.

Overall, the feedback and themes that emerged from the student meetings reflect several significant findings. CWEB students have an overwhelmingly positive experience in their internships and have strong, supportive supervision and environments. They feel prepared to go into child welfare work after completing their internships. CWEL students are learning and contributing to their educational settings and actively incorporate their knowledge into their work. They are also influential within their agency and many are emerging leaders who have very useful feedback for improving the workforce and the experience of other CWEL students. We encourage agencies to consider these findings and use them to inform agency policy, enhance practice, and increase the capacity of their agencies.

### **The Changing Landscape of Pennsylvania Public Child Welfare**

Recent annual reports have referenced the major shift in Pennsylvania's child welfare system operations as a result of the public exposure and subsequent legal proceedings emanating from a decades-long child abuse travesty. The impact of this high-profile series of cases continues to be of such significance that we repeat the background and context. Following a three-year investigation of sexual abuse allegations against a prominent collegiate sports coach and the response of the institution where he had been employed<sup>15</sup>, the Pennsylvania General Assembly established the Task Force on Child Protection to conduct a comprehensive review of the laws and procedures relating to the reporting of child abuse and the protection of children. Although

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<sup>15</sup> Freeh, Sporkin & Sullivan, LLP (July 12, 2012). "*Report of the Special Investigative Counsel Regarding the Actions of the Pennsylvania State University Related to the Child Sexual Abuse Committed by Gerald A. Sandusky*".



originating from tragic circumstances, the high profile cases of child abuse increased public awareness of child maltreatment and prompted a re-examination of the Commonwealth's laws designed to safeguard children. Beginning in January of 2012, the Task Force conducted 17 public hearings and working sessions throughout the state. More than 60 individuals provided written testimony. After extensive review and deliberation, a number of policy and statutory recommendations were made. The Task Force's final report was released in November of 2012<sup>16</sup>.

In response, Pennsylvania passed 23 pieces of legislation over the course of one year to assure children greater protection and to restore public confidence in the state's ability to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Amendments were made to the Crimes Code, the Domestic Relations Code, and the Judicial Code. Major changes to the Child Protective Services Law included broadening the definition of abuse, who is considered a perpetrator, failure to act, and who is a legally mandated reporter. Education for mandated and permissive reporters of abuse became required for licensed professionals and readily available to both professionals and the general public. A number of statutory changes related to definitions, timeframes and procedures impacted the practices and daily routines of child welfare professionals.

As public recognition continued to grow, referrals of suspected abuse and neglect increased as much as 200% in many jurisdictions. While many counties have made attempts to increase the size of the child welfare workforce, most continue to struggle with an increased demand for child protection investigations and the need for general protective services. Additionally, the nationwide epidemic of opioid abuse and the increased rate of substance-exposed infants coming to the attention of the child welfare system has also contributed to the increased demand. For example, in 2015 more individuals in Pennsylvania died from opioid overdoses than the number of individuals who died in car crashes.<sup>17</sup> Data in some areas of the state indicate that as many as 30%

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<sup>16</sup> *Child Protection in Pennsylvania: Proposed Recommendations, Report of the Task Force on Child Protection.*  
Full report and Executive Summary available at  
[http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/publications.cfm?JSPU\\_PUBLN\\_ID=285](http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/publications.cfm?JSPU_PUBLN_ID=285).

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.poonorecord.com/news/20160923/pennsylvania-opioid-addiction-statistics-are-staggering>

of babies delivered in a singular calendar year exhibit Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.<sup>18</sup> Opioid-related deaths in 2017 increased by 15% compared to those in 2016, a significant number of which were caused by overdoses of fentanyl<sup>19</sup>. The resulting escalation of work demands stemming from greater public recognition of suspected child abuse or neglect, an increased number of substance-exposed infants, more families dealing with severe addiction issues, and many new statutory requirements within a short period of time has continued to add to the stress of an already taxed child welfare system. Increased turnover among the child welfare workforce has been painfully experienced in both public and private agencies. At the same time, new opportunities to employ more efficient and effective modes of practice, including data-driven decision making, predictive analytics, and evidence-based interventions, are available. All of these factors have continued to influence the landscape of Pennsylvania public child welfare throughout the last several years. The recent passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act<sup>20</sup> in February of 2018 will bring additional opportunities and expectations to the child welfare workforce.

## **Evaluation**

### ***Introduction***

The CWEB and CWEL programs have several critical stakeholder groups: schools participating in the educational programs, current students and those who have recently graduated, and the county agencies that employ them or provide field placements. Because these are such important constituents, they are surveyed annually; their responses provide valuable information about the usefulness and quality of the curriculum and field experiences, as well as what areas offer opportunities for improvement. These constituents also share their perspectives about the value that CWEB and CWEL students bring to their schools and child welfare organizations. In

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<sup>18</sup> <http://triblive.com/news/westmoreland/5369146-74/drug-babies-methadone>

<sup>19</sup> <https://patch.com/pennsylvania/roxborough/pennsylvania-opioid-overdose-deaths-increased-2017-cdc>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/family-first-prevention-services-act-ffpsa.aspx>

In addition, we ask students who have graduated and been working for at least a year about the organizational culture of their work environment. This information helps us to better understand which aspects of climate are associated with positive outcomes, such as commitment to the field, job satisfaction, and personal achievement. All of this information is shared with CWEB and CWEL stakeholders including agency administrators, school faculty, and CWEB/CWEL faculty and staff to inform and help improve the quality of services, curricula and working environments.

What follows are the findings from the 2017-2018 evaluation. The first two sections summarize the results from current students and recent graduates of the CWEB and CWEL programs, respectively. The third section summarizes what long-term program graduates say about the climate of the child welfare agencies in which they work. The fourth section highlights the findings from the faculty of the schools and agency administrators who have employees currently participating in, or who have graduated from, the CWEB or CWEL programs. The final section reviews the core competencies exhibited by CWEB and CWEL program participants.

All of these surveys are web-enabled. Throughout the year, emails, letters, and instructions are sent to current students, recent graduates, long-term graduates, and CWEB/CWEL schools and counties with information on how to access their surveys located on a secure server. A standard follow-up protocol is in place to try to obtain a minimum 50% response rate for each group of respondents. Response rates are reported below. Datasets were cleaned prior to analysis. Usable surveys had to have at least 50% of the questions answered. Surveys that did not meet this threshold were dropped from the analyses.

**Table 3. Return Rates by Survey Type**

<b>Respondent Group</b>	<b>Response Rate (%)</b>
County	80% (n=47)
Current Students	72% CWEB (n=38) 79% CWEL (n=91)
Recent Graduates	60% CWEB (n=33) 70% CWEL (n=38)
Long Term Graduates	46% (n=45)
CWEB/CWEL Schools	86% (n=12)

During this 2017-2018 evaluation cycle, we continued using questions about core competencies that research has demonstrated as important for the child welfare workforce<sup>21</sup>. These questions were included in the current student, recent graduate, and long-term graduate surveys for completion by those who supervise or mentor CWEB students. We asked respondents to rate the degree to which the competencies are exhibited by CWEB students whom they supervise or mentor in their agencies.

### ***Current CWEB and CWEL Students***

#### *Survey procedures and methods*

An email with a link to the survey was sent to all CWEB and CWEL students currently enrolled in the program. Students were sent notices in February 2018 and were given until March 2018 to complete the survey. One hundred and twenty-nine students responded to the survey. The response rates were 72% (n=38) for CWEB students and 79% (n=91) for CWEL students. The survey asked the students to rate their experiences with (1) the CWEB/CWEL program and processes (e.g., website, communication, student contract, faculty and staff helpfulness); (2) their relationship with the faculty and the university that they attend, and the quality of the courses they take; (3) the agency/field interface; and (4) their beliefs about the value of their education to child welfare practice, and their commitment to the field. The statements are positively worded and the rating scale is from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher ratings suggesting a greater degree of satisfaction.

Most of the questions were common to both programs, such as “*I received good supervision in my field placement or internship placement.*” Some items were unique to the program and to the student’s status. For example, CWEB students were asked if their field site agency was familiar with the requirements of the CWEB program. The full-time CWEL students were asked about their return to the agency in the summer, and the part-time students were asked questions about

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<sup>21</sup> The R&R Project (2009). *Resources for selecting qualified applicants for child welfare work*. Chapel Hill, NC; Jordan Institute for Families at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

the ease of arranging time for field and classes. Part-time CWEL students were also asked to rate the CWEB students they supervise or mentor (if applicable) on a series of core competencies. The results of these items can be found in the Core Competency section below. If students were currently in their field placement, they were asked about the focus of their responsibilities and their agency type.

Finally, because we are interested in the career paths of child welfare professionals, the current CWEL students were asked if they had been a CWEB student, and if they were still in the agency in which they had done their CWEB work commitment. Three open-ended questions were included about the positive aspects of the program, which areas could be improved, and what qualities prospective CWEB/CWEL students should possess in order to be successful in the program. A final question asked if the students have received any awards or recognitions for their academic or field work during this survey period.

#### *Description of the survey respondents*

Thirty-eight of the usable 129 surveys were from CWEB students. The majority of the CWEB respondents were full-time (90%). Of the CWEB respondents, 95% were female; 57% were Caucasian, 34% were African-American, and 6% were multiracial. A small number of CWEB students identified as Hispanic (3%). Ninety-one of the usable surveys were from CWEL students. Of the CWEL respondents, 48% were part-time students and 52% were full-time. CWEL respondents were also primarily female (90%) and Caucasian (71%). Nearly one quarter were African-American (23%). A small number of CWEL students identified as Hispanic (8%).

Thirty-three (97%) of the CWEB respondents were completing their field placement in a public agency, primarily engaged in direct practice with abused and neglected children (77%). Smaller percentages reported in working with alcohol or substance abusers (9%), people in poverty needing linkage to community services populations (6%), and youth transitioning out of child welfare (3%). All of the CWEB students were attending classes at the main campuses of their universities.

The majority of CWEL students (84%) were currently in a field placement, and of this group, 61% were completing their field placement within their county agency. Similar to their undergraduate counterparts, most CWEL students responded that their field placement was in a public agency (70%) working in direct service (91%) positions. The primary client population was abused and neglected children and their families (49%). Other client populations included foster/kinship care, mental health prevention and intervention programs and treatment for victims of sexual violence and human trafficking (11%). Additional notable populations with whom respondents worked included youth transitioning out of child welfare (9%), individuals with alcohol and/or substance addictions (7%), and adolescents with mental health challenges (7%). Approximately 17% of the CWEL respondents were associated with a branch campus of their university, with most attending branch campuses of either Widener University or Temple University. Smaller numbers were attending branch campuses of the University of Pittsburgh.

*Is there a career pathway?*

One of our goals is to determine the extent to which a professional education and career pathway is in place for the child welfare workforce, and how recruitment at the undergraduate level can help to foster a long-term career in public child welfare. The ideal education and career pathway for a child welfare professional is shown in Figure 6 below. Participation in the CWEB and CWEL programs ensures a well-educated and explicitly trained workforce, which will elevate the quality of casework practice in the Commonwealth. In fact, 15% of CWEL students participated in the CWEB program, demonstrating the value and experiential learning these programs provide.

**Figure 6. Career Pathway for CWEB and CWEL**



The value that current students find in the CWEB and CWEL programs is illustrated in the following sample of open-ended survey responses.

*“The CWEB program is valuable to any student wanting to work in the child welfare system. By participating in the CWEB program, the students can have access to shadow each case worker out in the field and that experience will give students true knowledge of what goes on inside the child welfare agencies. This process is particularly positive for students because they can decide if this is the career choice for them. The CWEB program also gives students the understanding of how a child welfare agency functions, by taking*

*the students out of the classroom and into real life settings. By participating in the CWEB program it will take the students out of the negative world of the child welfare system.”*

*“I feel as though the CWEB program provides students with an opportunity to have a career track. Social work is such a broad field, so it is a bit challenging deciding what demographic to work with. Since it is a requirement to work with a county agency for a year after graduation, this gives students the chance to have a direction and see if working for the county is, in fact, what they want to do. In addition, the funds provided within the program give the students more of an opportunity to focus on interning and not being stressed about working.”*

*“The CWEL Program allows workers to further their education without accumulating extra student debt. It provides workers with the opportunity to obtain the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to perform their jobs more efficiently, in the field, and office. The CWEL program allows workers to receive education that changes the workers perspectives and paradigms on how they view the client and their families. It also provides a much needed break from the high stress related work environment. Workers have the chance to reboot and can return to work with a more enlightened outlook and purpose.”*

*“It is very easy to become complacent in this field and continue doing what you have been trained to do and think. This program teaches you to think broader and look at everything through many different lenses. It has taught me so much and changed my perceptions, beliefs and biases on many different levels. This program makes me want to work harder and stay in the field of child welfare. It has made me feel more confident and knowledgeable about so many things. The faculty has been wonderful and supportive and provided opportunities to learn and grow in ways that I could not think of. My hope is that this program would be open to every child welfare worker who wishes to participate in it”  
(CWEL student)*

Fourteen (15%) of the current CWEL respondents said that they received their degrees through the CWEB program. The majority of these CWEL students (93%) remain at the agency in which they did their post-CWEB work commitment. We have observed this CWEB to CWEL progression pattern over time, suggesting that the first few steps of the career pathway are in place and that the synergy of both programs supports workforce retention.

Moreover, agency directors have told us in prior evaluations how much their organizations benefit when these well-trained and seasoned caseworkers remain in their agencies. However, it is important to stress that both the agency and the worker must carefully consider whether the worker should enroll in the CWEL program. It is not suitable for everyone,



due to the necessary time commitments and the challenges with work-life balance. For instance, one agency administrator recommended an online option for the CWEL program

*“...The availability of an online MSW CWEL program for CWEB graduates would benefit the retention and training of CYS agency administrators. CWEB graduates who remain employed with the County agency past their year commitment and are promoted within the agency can sometimes find themselves in a situation where a full-time educational leave or the 2-3 hour commute to a campus for a part-time leave is not realistic given the demands of their position and changes within their personal life, such as having a family and young children.”*

The recommendation to complete the CWEL program online has been seen in previous years. However, this option has additional complications, such as scheduling time to complete online coursework and adjusting hours for synchronous learning activities. In fact, during a small pilot study conducted in the summer term, students participating in an online child welfare practice class said while they valued the extra time they had with their families by not commuting to campus for an in-person course, they missed the interaction with the other CWEL students, which they felt was a valuable part of their educational experience. Therefore, careful consideration needs to take place regarding expanding the online learning curriculum for CWEL students.

Students who work full-time while attending school report that part-time study is often challenging, in part due to high caseloads and in part due to difficulty in finding a school, life, and work balance. With almost half of CWEL students (48%) in this category, it is important for them to have candid discussions with their director and supervisor about expectations and workload while participating in the CWEL program. One CWEL student suggested that full-time

attendance should be the only option, since it can be a considerable burden to work full-time, attend school part-time, and complete field hours: *“I started out as a part-time student while continuing to work full time. This was extremely difficult and I fell short in every area because it was too difficult. My hope would be that this would only be a full time program, allowing students to fully become entrenched in this learning process.”* Consider this comment from another CWEL student as well:

*“The current practice for part-time students is next to impossible and requires working consistently seven days a week. My agency mandates that supervisors/management attend school part-time and work full-time in addition to the field placement hours. Currently, I am working full-time, attending school part-time, and have an internship which 8 hours must be during typical work hours (which is extremely difficult to make up at night or on weekends). The expectation is that the student/employee will burn out and there is nothing you can do about it except get through it. It does not feel like an effective way to make sure all the employees' responsibilities are being met at their job and can be a great disservice to their clients. It's just not practical.”*

With the above in mind, additional discussions may need to take place with the schools providing the CWEL program, county agencies and prospective students so that there is a mutual understanding of the increased time demands for part-time CWEL students. Agencies may want to reconsider enrollment options based on the CWEL participants' role in the agency.

#### *How do students perceive their program?*

When asked about the most important aspects of their CWEB or CWEL program, students responded:

*“The supervision and experience is excellent. I don't feel as though I would have been as prepared if I had simply applied for child welfare post-graduation without this internship. It has been a great way to enter into child welfare in a supportive and positive learning*

*environment and I feel confident in applying and working as a case worker within child welfare when I graduate.” (CWEB student)*

*“The aspect of the CWEB program that I found positive was the amount of knowledge I have gained since I've started this program. Between CTC (Charting the Course) and the hours I've spent in the agency speaking with other workers, gaining knowledge from them, and the experience I've gained by being in the field is something that is very valuable. I wouldn't have learned what I've learned if I didn't apply for this program. Being in this program has made me more prepared as a professional who is about to enter the field. I know what to expect, and how to handle a situation if it were to arise.”(CWEB Student)*

*“The CWEL program offers the opportunity to further education for those in the child welfare field. This is an amazing opportunity to help individuals who would not be able to further their education on their own.”(CWEL Student)*

*“The educational opportunity provided by CWEL is second to none. I would not have had this opportunity otherwise. I am able to learn new social work theories and apply them to everyday life, professionally and personally. Additionally, I am able to understand aspects of social work that I previously was unaware of such as research, data, and policy.” (CWEL Student)*

CWEB and CWEL students highly value their professional education. Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 having the lowest value and 10 the most value, respondents were asked, “What is the value of the CWEB or CWEL program to the public child welfare system?” The average score for the CWEB students was 9.03 ( $SD=1.16$ ), and the average score for the CWEL students was 9.42 ( $SD=1.17$ ). Responses to this question, as well as each survey item (rated on a 1-5 scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) can be found in Table 1, [Appendix K](#). This table displays the responses of the CWEB students, as well as both the full-time and part-time CWEL students. All three subgroups report being satisfied with the degree program, the agency and field interfaces, some of the degree processes, and aspects of the field/internships experiences. Their aggregate responses are graphically displayed below (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Current Student Satisfaction with CWEB/CWEL Programs**

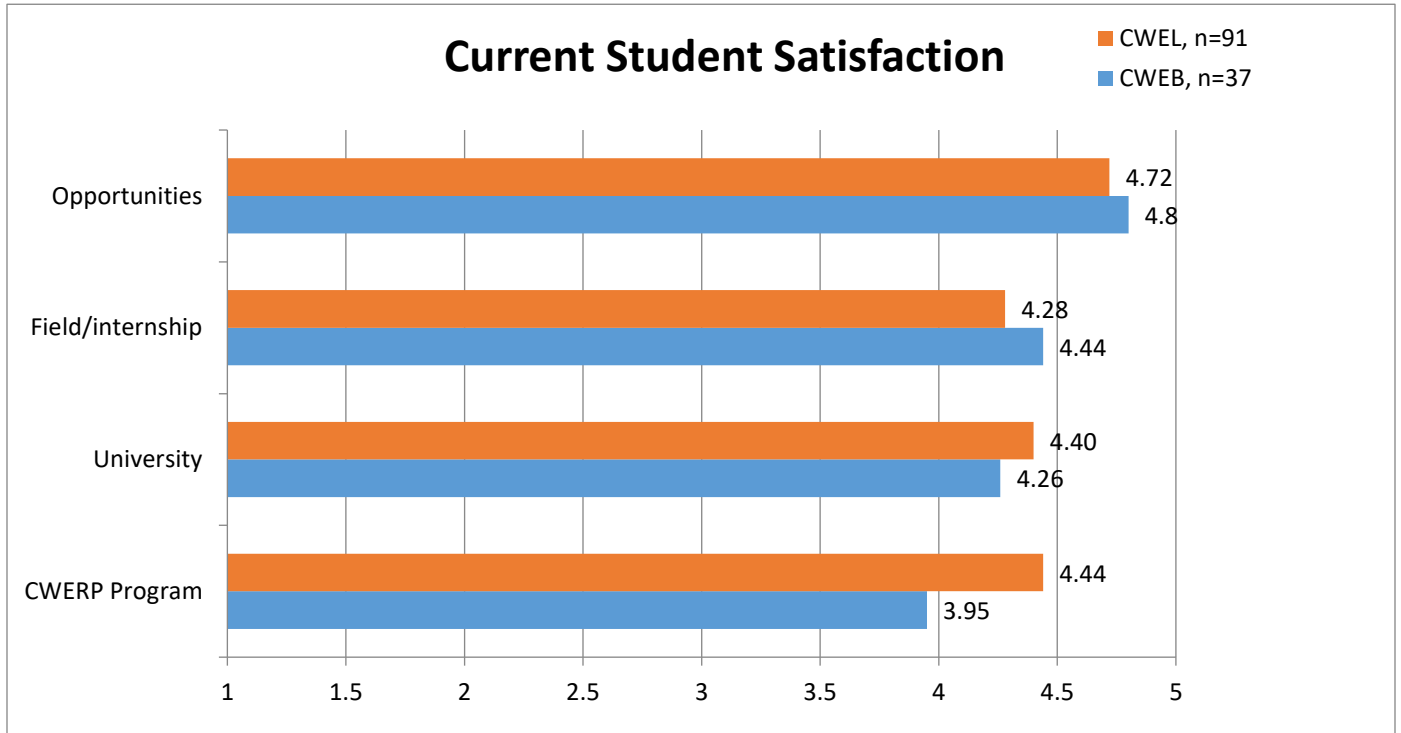
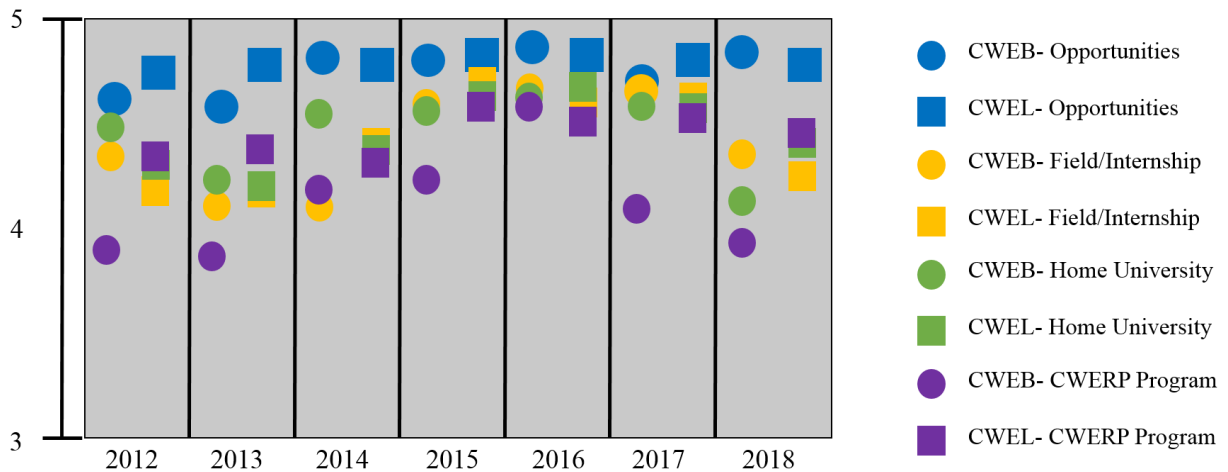


Figure 8 below demonstrates the changes in satisfaction ratings over the past six academic years. While there continue to be small changes in satisfaction ratings in the last three years, all the ratings remain clustered around the Somewhat Agree/Strongly Agree range.

**Figure 8. Comparison of Student Satisfaction Ratings Over the Last Six Academic Years**



Though there were slight decreases from last year in satisfaction ratings for CWEL students, it was most notable for Field/Internship experiences. Specifically, full-time CWEL students reported feeling neutral about receiving support in the process of arranging their field placement/internship. This sentiment was also expressed in the open-ended responses by CWEL students when discussing aspects of the program they would like to change. CWEL students wanted the flexibility to complete their field work in other areas of the child welfare field or even outside the child welfare field in order to become better-rounded in their experiences, as some were required to do their second year field placement in their agencies: *“I also did not have many options about where I could do my internship since it had to be in child welfare. I think being able to branch out into other areas would better my experience”*. This sentiment was been expressed by another CWEL student: *“CWEL should focus more on the career development arc and promote advancement opportunities within the child welfare system.”*

Current CWEL students gave several suggestions as to how the program could be improved. Many expressed the desire to have the flexibility to take more electives and the ability to take online/hybrid courses. One student stated that

## PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE:

Every March the nation celebrates social workers with Social Work Month. During this time, the CWEB/CWEL program highlights the achievements of CWEB and CWEL students and graduates on the program’s Facebook page. These posts reflect the great work that CWEB and CWEL students/graduates are doing in the field.

*A Marywood University CWEB student received two scholarships to help fund her education: The Trustee’s Scholarship from Marywood University and the Clark Scholarship. The Trustee’s Scholarship from Marywood is awarded for academic excellence. The Clark Scholarship is awarded based on scholastic ability, personal character and conduct, service to the school and community, and the promise of successful achievement in higher education.*

*A California University of Pennsylvania CWEB student received the first “Social Work Research Award in Undergraduate Social Work” at the California University of Pennsylvania. This award was created by the social work department to honor the most outstanding research conducted by an undergraduate social work student each semester. The student received the award for her grant funded literature review titled “A Critical Analysis of the Shootings of Unarmed African Americans by Police: A Social Work Perspective.” She has presented her work at several conferences and will be published in the Keystone Journal of Undergraduate Research this year.*

having a third open elective would support students who were interested in macro practice, e.g., community organizing, social action, and administration. Again, most CWEL students emphasized that the program is best when operationalized on a full-time basis since it can be a burden to work full-time, attend school part-time, and complete field hours. More clarification to the CWEL students regarding internship requirements may improve this issue surrounding appropriate field placements and hours. However, with over half of CWEL students in part-time status, the availability of electives and the time when those courses are offered is more challenging to navigate.

In order to determine if there were statistically significant differences between this year's CWEB and CWEL students, or between full and part-time CWEL students, t-tests were conducted. A negative t-value indicates that the mean for the CWEB students was lower than the mean for the CWEL students. The p-value indicates statistical significance, with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant. In this academic year, there were some areas related to program processes that differed significantly between CWEL and CWEB students. CWEL students were more likely to feel that the posted information clearly explained the program ( $t=-2.48$ ,

## PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE CONTINUED:

A current CWEL student at the University of Pittsburgh has written a pilot program to incorporate a summer camp program and the mentorship component of Caseworker III development in all of Allegheny County's regional offices. The student was part of a successful summer camp program at the Mon Valley regional office. The pilot program proposal is currently being discussed in a monthly committee meeting. Thus far the committee has redefined the role of a Caseworker III to incorporate more mentorship, created relevant interview questions for the position, and discussed how to foster support from all regional offices of the CWEL summer camp program.

$p < .05$ ), the website was easy to use ( $t = -1.97, p = .05$ ) and that the CWEB/CWEL application was clear ( $t = -2.68, p < .05$ ). CWEL students were more likely to reference the handbook ( $t = -2.34, p < .05$ ). When it came to Pitt staff and faculty, CWEL students were more likely to feel as though staff and faculty were helpful if they had problems ( $t = -2.46, p < .05$ ;  $t = -2.72, p < .01$ , staff and faculty respectively) and that they responded to calls and emails ( $t = -2.03, p < .05$ ;  $t = -2.63, p < .01$ , staff and faculty respectively).

For CWEB respondents, the standard deviations for these items were close to or greater than 1, indicating a large amount of variability across the individual responses. This is consistent with what the CWEB students shared in their open-ended responses. Some students expressed the need for better communication between CWEB staff/faculty and county supervisors. One student described that there was a lot of misunderstanding about the expectations of CWEB interns and other information regarding the placement. Other students expressed wanting to have more opportunities to ask questions and get more information about various deadlines and necessary forms. This is illustrated by the following response:

*“CWEB held an educational meeting in fall of 2017 for CWEB students but also combined this meeting with people who wanted to join the CWEB program. The meeting was more directed to the students coming into the program rather than the students already in the program. It was hard to ask questions and be informed because all the students looking to come into the program had so many questions I felt like it was hard to get my questions answered and I felt that the current CWEB students were just there to tell our experiences.”*

These are themes that have been echoed for a number of years now, and the CWEB/CWEL team is strategizing on how to best address these concerns, including using a text messaging function to remind students when deadlines are approaching. Many CWEB students suggested more meetings

where currently enrolled CWEB students can ask questions. This might help streamline communication between CWEB administrators and CWEB students so that students are able to understand required forms, be aware of approaching deadlines, share concerns regarding the CWEB program/county placements, and understanding how reimbursements work.

There were also some differences between full-time and part-time CWEL students. While not quite statistically significant, part-time CWEL students felt more supported in arranging a field placement than full-time CWEL students ( $t = -1.92, p = .059$ ). Additionally, part-time CWEL students were more likely to feel as though they had good supervision in the field than full-time CWEL students ( $t = 2.15, p < .05$ ).

The students' responses to the open-ended questions provide us with useful information about the agency, school, and CWEB/CWEL factors that assist students in their pursuit of a BSW or an MSW. Along with the financial support offered by the programs, notable themes surrounding the positive attributes of the program emerged. Last year, CWEB students commented on the program's ability to attract young professionals into the child welfare field and the ability for them to gain skills and knowledge from their field placements that will help them find and be successful in a job after graduation. This academic year, similar sentiments were echoed. Many students expressed appreciation of the experiences and opportunities they gained from field placements. They reported gaining confidence in working with clients, using skills taught in the classroom, obtaining a better understanding of how the child welfare system works, and appreciation for the job opportunity waiting for them after graduation. Additionally, CWEB students spoke about how receiving the hands-on experience and opportunities helped them build their competency as a caseworker. Consider the following comment from a CWEB student:



*I am truly enjoying my experience in the CWEB program and with my public child welfare agency. I am gaining experience and understanding many other workers have not had, which gives me a better opportunity for employment. Even for those who do not want to continue working in child welfare past the first year of employment, this program provides irreplaceable experience and opportunities. I am very pleased with being eased into the field, and having the opportunity to shadow multiple caseworkers and learn a variety of techniques and interviewing styles. I also enjoy having more supervision, from my supervisor as well as caseworkers, in the field. These individuals provide helpful feedback and information on my strengths and areas to improve on.*

CWEL students have also historically expressed the financial support as a positive aspect of the program. However, this year, CWEL students also expressed their appreciation in being able to gain applicable social work knowledge and enhanced professional skills that can be utilized in their work in the field:

*“It has broadened my perspective of my role and the role of the child welfare system, given me relevant new skills and knowledge, and enhanced my understanding of the social work field in general” (CWEL student)*

*“The CWEL Program is valuable to the public child welfare system in that it provides master's level social workers to the field of child welfare. This lends credibility to direct practice child welfare workers in their interactions with families, colleagues, and the community.” (CWEL student)*

Some CWEL students expressed that the program helped renew passion and a positive outlook in child welfare. It also allowed them to make direct connections between what they were learning in the classroom and the field, thus strengthening practice. One student described how the

CWEL program gave opportunities to learn social work theories and understand how research and policy applies to child welfare casework. Additionally, other students expressed gaining experiences that they may not have had the chance to pursue without the CWEL program. The program also offered them the ability to further their education while maintaining full time employment. CWEL students enjoyed the knowledge they gained from child welfare caseworkers from other agencies because of their participation in the program. Both CWEB and CWEL students have expressed appreciation of the support they received as program participants. CWEB students reported appreciating the encouragement they get from other students, CWEB staff and faculty, and supervisors/caseworker. This appreciation of the support from staff and faculty was echoed throughout the responses of CWEL students as well.

### *Focus group results*

Focus groups with students were structured to obtain feedback on how the students were faring in their educational settings, their internships, and how these two areas intersect to influence their current and future child welfare work. The CWEB students were overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic about their internships and the county agency staff they work with daily. Students expressed appreciation for the experiences they've had and the opportunity to learn how the child welfare system works. They have been able to apply what was learned in the classroom and gain confidence in working with children, youth, and families. Through supportive supervision and opportunities to shadow experienced caseworkers, CWEB students have the chance to explore this area of social work and make a determination about the fit of child welfare practice as a personal long-term career choice.

CWEL students shared the benefits and challenges of attending graduate school through the CWEL program. Students appreciate being able to gain knowledge and enhance professional skills that are useful in child welfare practice. Several students shared they are more thoughtful and in tune with families, have a broader understanding of their child welfare work, see the value

of strengths-based approaches, and have a much deeper understanding of the trauma experiences of the individuals they serve.

Overall, the feedback and themes that emerged from the student meetings reflect several significant findings. CWEB students have an overwhelmingly positive experience in their internships and have strong, supportive supervision and environments. They feel prepared to go into child welfare work after completing their internships. CWEL students are learning and contributing to their educational settings and actively incorporate their knowledge in their work. They are also influential within their agency and many are emerging leaders who have very useful feedback for improving the workforce and the experience of other CWEL students.

### **Recent CWEB and CWEL Graduates**

#### *Survey procedures and methods*

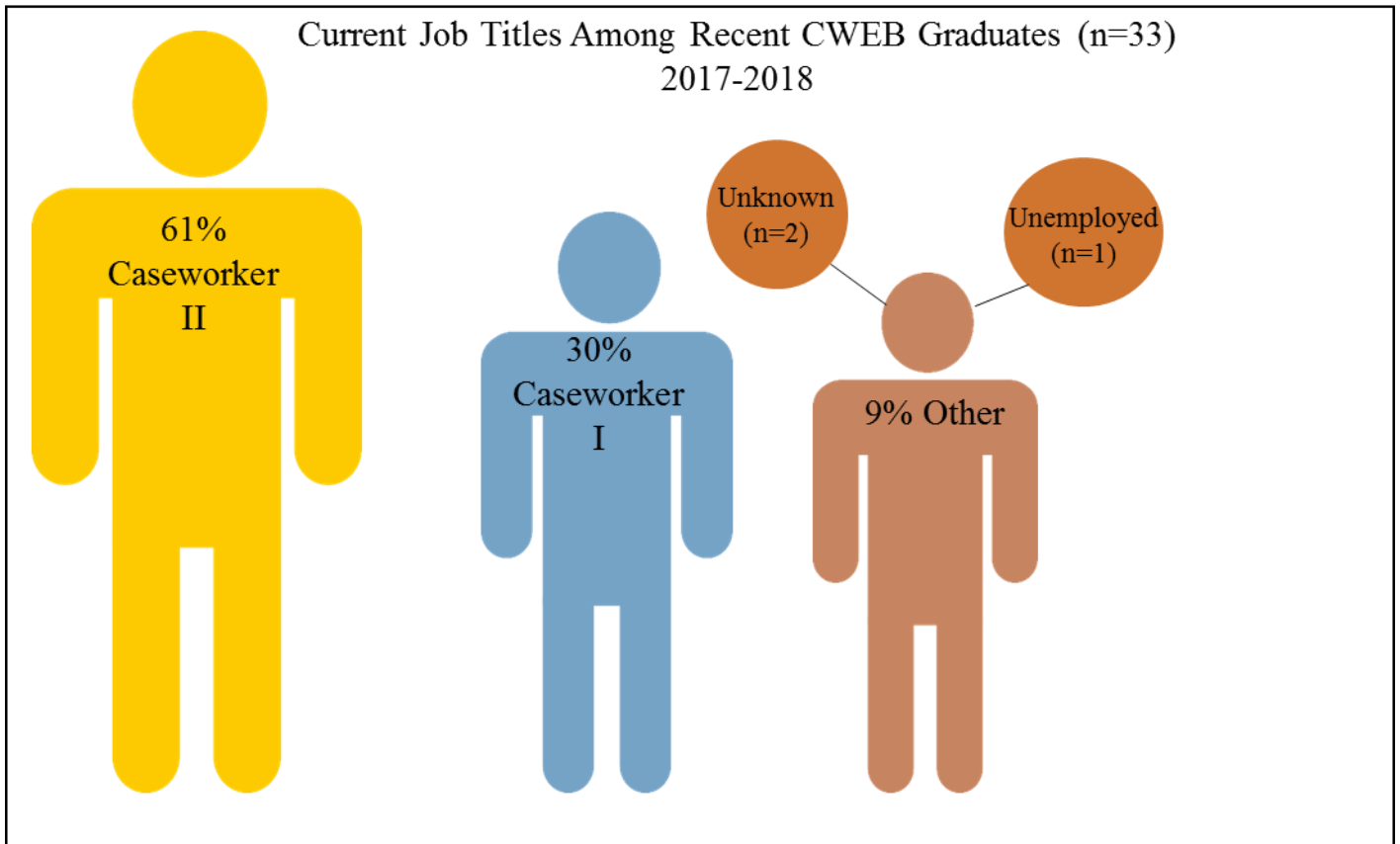
An email with a link to the survey was sent to graduating cohorts of CWEB and CWEL students in winter 2017 and the spring and summer of 2018 ( $n=77$ ). The return rate for the CWEB graduates was 60% and 70% for the CWEL graduates. The total number of usable surveys was 73. Twelve respondents graduated in winter 2017, 54 in spring 2018, and 6 in summer 2018. Forty-five percent ( $n=33$ ) were CWEB graduates and 55% ( $n=40$ ) were CWEL graduates. Additionally, 35% ( $n=14$ ) of the CWEL graduates identified themselves as former graduates of the CWEB program, and, of those, 85% ( $n=11$ ) were still working at their CWEB commitment agency at the time of graduation from the CWEL program.

#### *Description of the survey respondents*

The majority of the CWEB respondents were Caucasian (48%) and female (97%). Figure 9 below depicts the distribution of CWEB graduates' job titles. Within this cohort, there were more CWEB graduates working in intake units (52%) than in ongoing (32%). Additionally, there was an increase of CWEB graduates working in substitute care when compared to last year (13% vs. 4%). There was small group of graduates working in adoption (3%). These findings coupled with the trajectory of these percentages over the last few years showcases how counties are

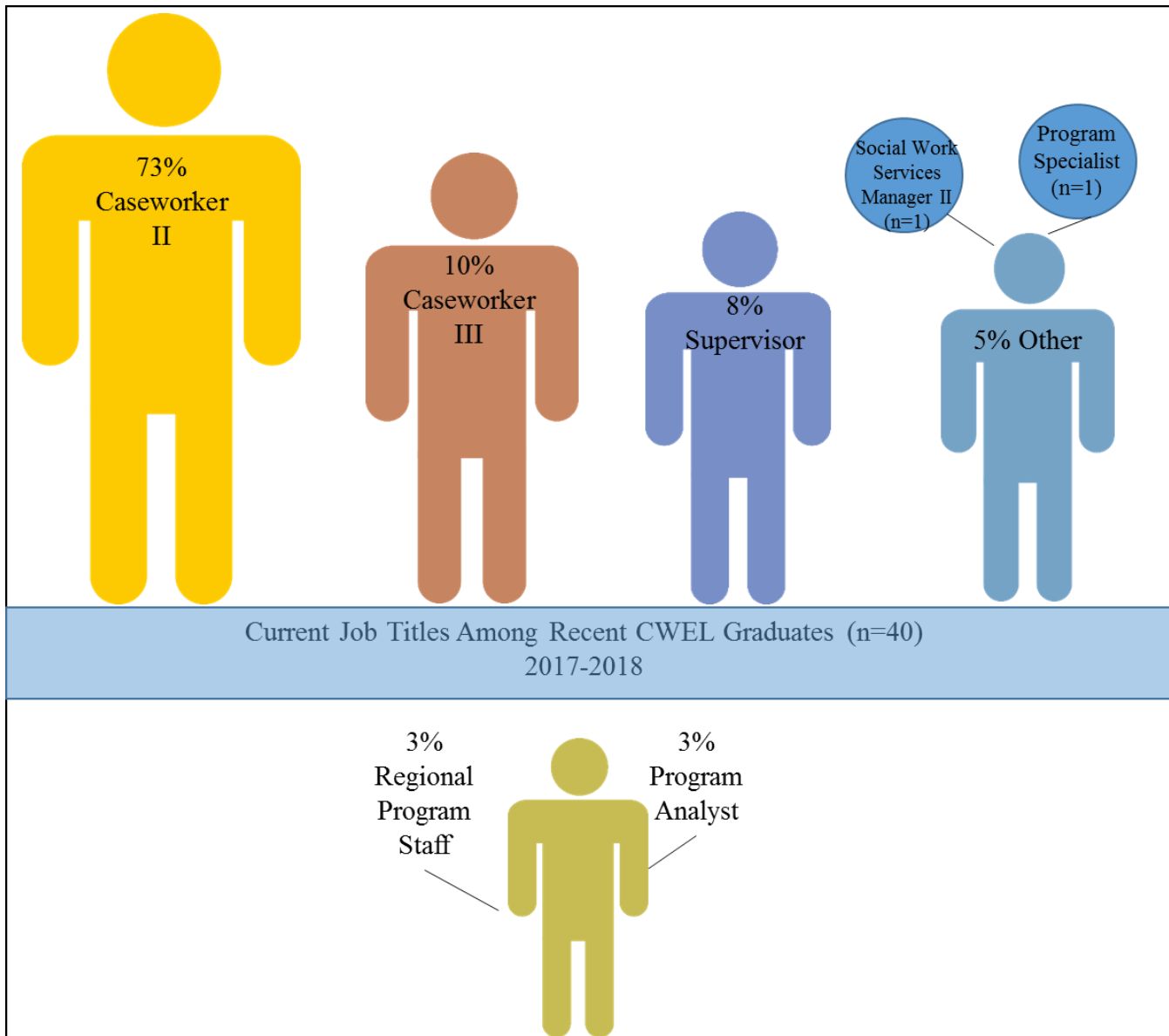
utilizing the specialized training of CWEB graduates. CWEB respondents reported managing an average caseload of 6 families or 11 children, which is also similar to last year.

**Figure 9. Current Job Titles Among CWEB Graduates**



CWEL respondents were also primarily Caucasian (72%) and female (87%). Figure 10 below depicts the job titles of recent CWEL graduates. While the majority of CWEL respondents last year reported working in ongoing services, this year many CWEL respondents were working in intake (36%). The remainder were working in ongoing (28%), substitute care (10%), adoption (8%), other direct service (8%), administration (5%), independent living (3%), and non-direct service (3%).

**Figure 10. Current Job Titles Among Recent CWEL Graduates**



The CWEL graduates were working with larger caseloads than the CWEB graduates, reporting an average of 13 families and 31 children under their responsibility, which shows a slight decrease from last year. Similar to previous years, there was a significant difference between CWEB and CWEL graduates regarding the number of children on their caseloads. However, the standard deviations for CWEL respondents are large, suggesting wide variation in the number of cases CWEL graduates manage. The increase in case load size for both CWEB and CWEL

graduates may be related to contextual factors, such as the pronounced opioid epidemic in the Commonwealth which has resulted in more children and families coming to the attention of the child welfare system.

### *How do recent graduates perceive their program?*

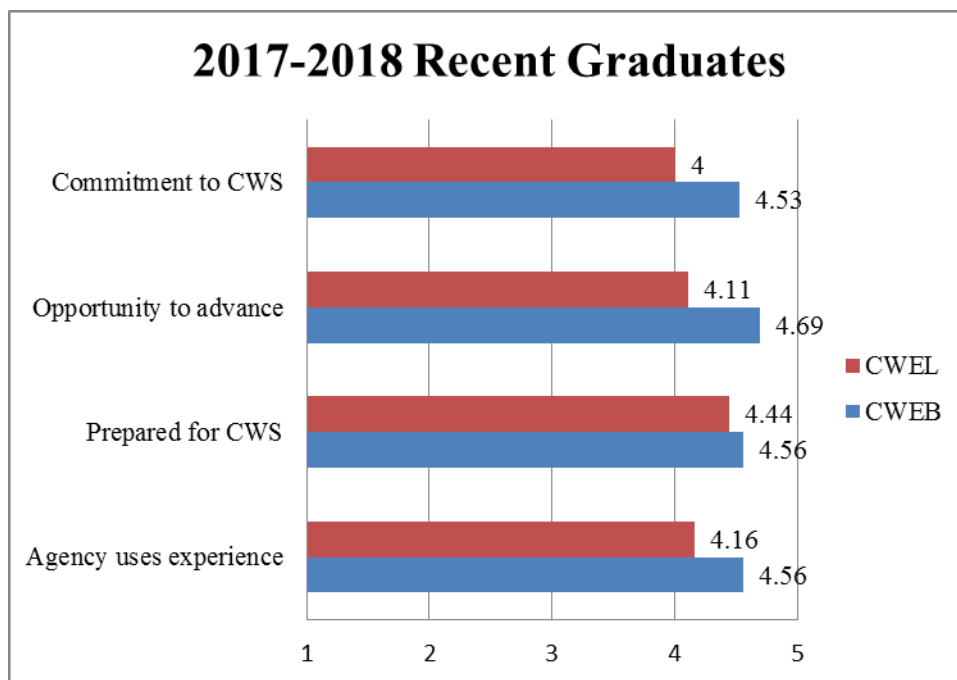
The survey includes questions about preparation, perceived skill levels, opportunities to advance within the agency, commitment to the agency and commitment to the field of child welfare. The statements are positively worded and the rating scale is from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating a greater degree of agreement. The mean responses to each of the questions by CWEB and CWEL groups can be found in Table 2 in [Appendix K](#). Few statistically significant differences were observed between the CWEB and CWEL students. When compared to CWEL graduates, CWEB recent graduates reported that the program prepared them to work in child welfare ( $t=-2.14, p=.04$ ), encouraged to practice their new skills in their position ( $t=-2.78, p=.008$ ), and would recommend their agencies to others ( $t=3.23, p=.002$ ). CWEL graduates tended to be more likely to consider leaving child welfare if they were not obligated to stay in the field ( $t=-3.00, p=.004$ ) and were less likely to stay at their agencies after their commitment ( $t=2.55, p=.013$ ). With regard to promotion and advancement, CWEL students were less likely to perceive future opportunities for advancing in their agencies ( $t=3.17; p=.002$ ) and opportunities for promotion ( $t=3.94, p=.000$ ).

One of the open-ended questions focuses on commitment to the field. A review of these responses suggests that lack of commitment to the field may be a result of a variety of factors, such as the inability to use the skills learned in the master's program, low salary, poor opportunities for advancement, and/or an unsupportive environment. CWEL graduates also stressed the importance of a low caseload to decrease turnover. Although the desire for helping children and families remains, graduates find the aforementioned factors often overshadow their work with clients.

A factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) revealed that there are four subscales captured by the recent graduate survey items. These include: (1) agency utilization of the student's

education; (2) educational preparation of CWEB and CWEL graduates; (3) career advancement; and, (4) commitment to child welfare. Alpha coefficients for these subscales ranged from .74 to .90 for this sample, indicating that the items in the subscales are measuring one trait. Average subscale ratings for recent CWEB and CWEL graduates are shown in Figure 11.

**Figure 11. Recent Graduates' Perceptions: CWEB and CWEL**



CWEL graduate ratings are lower than CWEB graduates for all four subscales, but are trending to the positive side of the scale. The two most striking differences between CWEB and CWEL graduates are on the “career advancement” and “commitment to child welfare” subscales. Combined with results from the t-test discussed above and the reviews of the open ended comments, more attention should be focused at the agency level to improve the career outlook for CWEL graduates. This is a key contributor to retention. Discussion should occur early in the process, ideally when the worker is applying to CWEL. Prospectively thinking about how to utilize new knowledge and skills may begin to widen thinking beyond “promotion”. While some agencies may not have the capability to promote CWEL graduates to supervisory positions, selecting CWEL

graduates to serve on committees or oversee special projects will enable the CWEL graduates to use the skills they obtained in their MSW programs, thus giving them a greater sense of influence, satisfaction, and pride in their work. In addition, providing CWEL graduates an opportunity to have input into how new state mandates will be implemented in the agencies will not only give the administration valuable information on how changes in protocol affect front-line staff, but will provide the CWEL graduates with a sense of empowerment and recognition that their opinion is valued and that they have a voice in the agency culture.

Graduates of both CWEB and CWEL feel that their respective programs have prepared them for working in the child welfare system. Ratings were slightly lower for CWEL graduates than for CWEB graduates on this subscale, but this may be because CWEL graduates feel they have a good grasp of the field of child welfare due to their work experience. This sample of recent CWEB graduates was more optimistic about their opportunities to advance in the field than the CWEL graduate sample, and expressed greater commitment to the child welfare system.

Recent graduates were asked a number of open-ended questions. Question content included positive aspects of the CWEB/CWEL programs, things they would change about the programs, how the CWEB/CWEL program contributed to their professional development, and recommendations that they would give prospective CWEB/CWEL students. Responses to these open-ended questions are summarized below.

Please describe the aspects of the CWEB or the CWEL program that are particularly positive.

*I found the experience and level of supervision really unmatched by other internships. We were offered much more in terms of our internship than others. I also found it very awesome that each intern was paired with a separate supervisor and their experiences were tailored to their level of comfortableness and unique attributes. (CWEB Graduate)*

*CWEL is an amazing educational opportunity that results in child protective workers who are more knowledgeable of the issues our clients face and more empathetic when working with families. I found this program to be beneficial in assisting me in obtaining communication skills in order to be more therapeutic when working with families. I am enthusiastic and energized about my job and the work I do with families because of the knowledge I have learned thank to the CWEL program. (CWEL Graduate)*



Graduates truly valued their experiences in field placements and felt that those experiences, coupled with the education they received both in and out of the classroom, helped them to enhance their social work skills. CWEL graduates, in particular, felt that their education helped to expand their understanding of the challenges faced by families involved in the child welfare systems and provided them with skills to effectively address those challenges, whereas CWEB graduates noted that the breadth of experiences during their field placements prepared them for employment as a child welfare caseworker. Both CWEB and CWEL graduates were grateful for the support they received from the universities they attended, their child welfare agencies, and the faculty and staff at the University of Pittsburgh during their respective programs. Similar to previous years, the financial advantages to these programs were also seen as a great benefit.

When asked about areas of possible improvement, CWEB graduates reported that they would like more communication between their home universities, the CWEB program staff, and the counties. This is consistent with previous years. CWEB students also desired an increased ability to communicate with other CWEB program participants, such as a Facebook group. Similar to previous years, CWEL graduates wanted more flexibility with choosing their courses and internship sites. They recommended that that previous years of employment in the child welfare workforce be considered similar to advanced placement status when entering the program.

What aspects of the field or internship placement contributed the most to your professional development as a child welfare professional?

*ALL OF IT!!! 100% invaluable!! I walked in my first day as an employee, and hit the ground running with cases!! (CWEB graduate)*

*I feel that the internship I participated in was very helpful in enhancing my professional development as a social worker. I had the opportunity to see a field of social work that I was not familiar with and it was refreshing to see a different way of interacting with individuals and families. I felt it was helpful that I had a supervisor that strived to be a great social worker and attempted to help families as much as she could. I was able to learn new skills from my supervisor when working with individuals and families. I was also required to go out of my comfort zone by running groups; this was something I had little experience with and was not comfortable with at first. (CWEL graduate)*

*Being able to work alongside knowledgeable caseworkers and having supportive supervisors who were always available to answer a question. (CWEB graduate)*

*Working closely with parents whose children were placed out of their care allowed me to build a different type of relationship with parents DHS serves. By applying new understanding and skills that I learned through course works, I was able to interact with the parents sincerely and empathically more than ever before. I was more articulately able to recognize transgenerational trauma that is often unrecognized by clients or even helping professionals, as well as clients' pain and defense. (CWEL graduate)*

Many recent CWEB graduates felt that the hands-on experience they gained via home visits and one-on-one client interactions gave them a good perspective on every facet of child welfare work. They also reported that their internships prepared them for their future roles as caseworkers, including the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for court. CWEB graduates valued their supervision and felt that it was integral to the internship experience. CWEL recent graduates felt that their internships fostered collaboration within their agencies, as well as with community providers; this allowed them to become familiar with services recommended by child welfare agencies and enabled them to work with unique populations within child welfare. Consequently, CWEL graduates were able to connect what they were learning in class to their field experience, as they were able to apply new skills in a different practice area.

What advice would you give a CWEL or CWEB student who is beginning their program?

*I would advise them to build relationships with fellow caseworkers, as most are extremely intelligent and willing to teach interns/new hires! I would also stress self-care. In entering this field, it is extremely important to be able to detach from the day/week and to maintain positive mental health for yourself. (CWEB Graduate)*

*Ask questions, try to shadow as many caseworkers as possible and really use your intern caseload as a learning experience. (CWEB Graduate)*

*Take advantage of all the knowledge that is provided during this time. To make an honest decision to use what was learned to improve the lives of the families that we service even if in a small way. This process has opened up my eyes to different aspects of social work and for that I am grateful. . (CWEL Graduate)*

*CWEL students should go above and beyond during their internships in order to make connections with veteran caseworkers and supervisors and service providers. Casework is a skill and employment setting where you must have a strong foundation of beliefs, knowledge, and skills so that you can make best-practice decisions in various situations. (CWEL Graduate)*

Both CWEB and CWEL graduates emphasized the importance of communicating with faculty at their universities, supervisors, and the CWEB/CWEL faculty and staff at the University of Pittsburgh to truly advocate for themselves. Graduates also encouraged those new in the program to have an open mind – about child welfare and about their classes and field placements – and to take advantage of every opportunity presented to them. CWEB graduates discussed the need for persistence to get questions answered, get necessary information, and to make the most out of the field experience by checking in with caseworkers within the agency to shadow different aspects of child welfare casework. Finally, graduates wrote messages of encouragement and told others to stick with the program, persevere, and not give up.

### ***Long-Term Graduates***

#### *Survey procedures and method*

Research shows that organizational culture and climate are significant factors in explaining an employee's intention to stay in or leave a workplace<sup>22,23</sup>. Graduates of the CWEB and CWEL programs are a fitting group of individuals to use as a barometer for assessing the climate of child welfare agencies across Pennsylvania. The Organizational Culture Survey<sup>24</sup> was sent to 97 individuals who graduated from the CWEB program during the period of 7/1/16 to 6/30/17 or the CWEL program between 12/1/16 and 8/31/17, regardless of their employment status in a public child welfare agency. Forty-five surveys were returned for a response rate of 46%. A total of 8 responses were removed from the data set due to having less than 50% of survey items completed, resulting in a total of 45 usable surveys. The Organizational Culture Survey includes 31 items that measure 6 dimensions of an organization's culture: Teamwork, Morale, Information Flow, Employee Involvement, Supervision, and Meetings. The respondents were asked to rate their work climate on these items on a scale from 1 (To a Very Little Extent) to 5 (To a Very Great Extent).

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<sup>22</sup> Shim, M. (2010). Factors influencing child welfare employee's turnover: Focusing on organizational culture and climate. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(6), 847-856.

<sup>23</sup> Cahalane, H., & Sites, E. (2008). The climate of child welfare employee retention. *Child Welfare*, 87(1), 91-114.

<sup>24</sup> Glaser, S.R., Zamanou, S., & Hacker, K. (1987). Measuring and interpreting organizational culture. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 1(2), 173-198.

The characteristics of the respondents by CWEB and CWEL status are detailed in the next section, followed by an overview of the graduates' ratings of their organizational culture and climate.

### *Description of survey respondents*

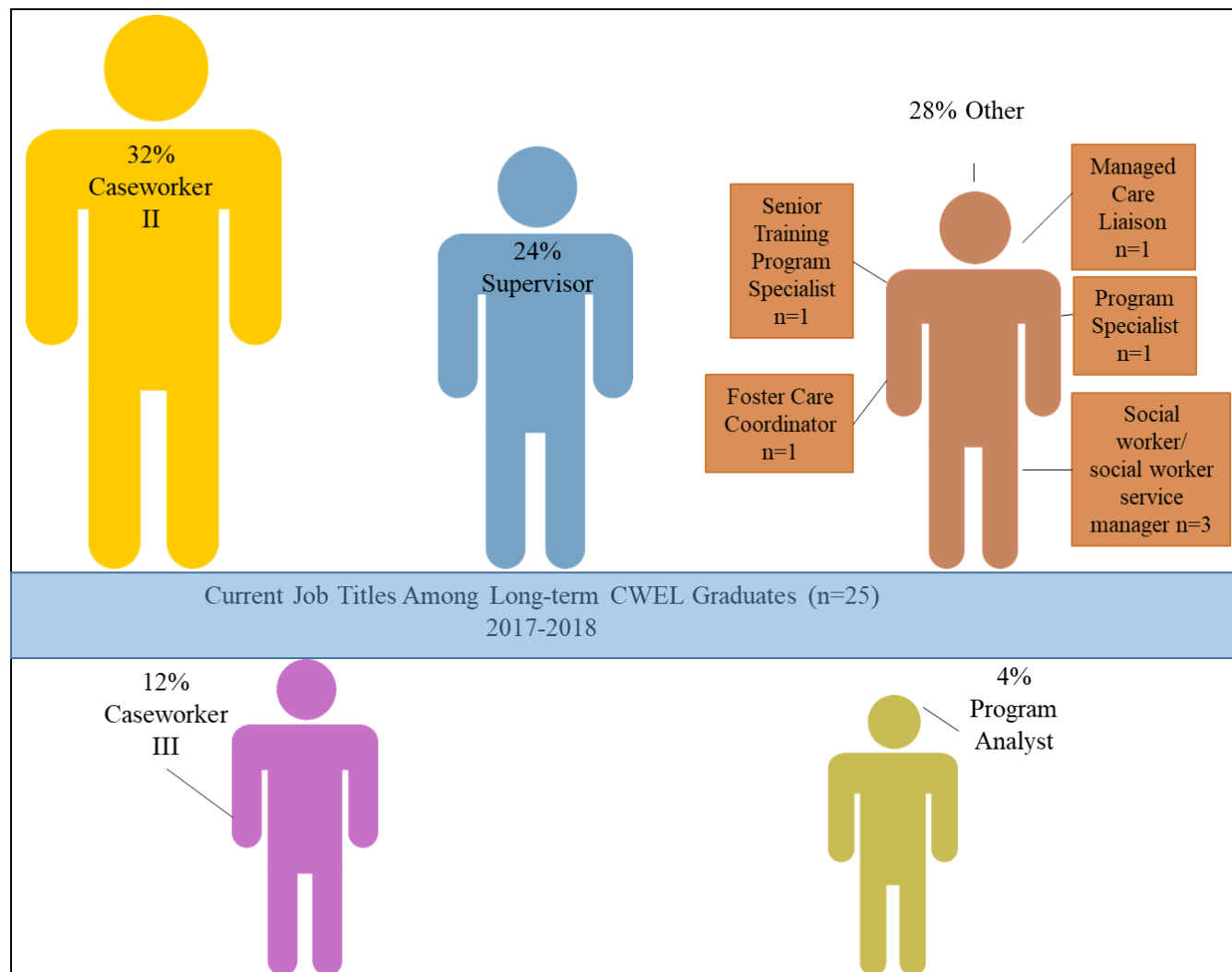
Twenty (44%) respondents were graduates of the CWEB program. Their average age was 27. The majority of respondents were Caucasian (74%), with smaller percentages of African-American (21%) and multiracial (5%). Most of the respondents were female (90%). The majority (79%) of CWEB long-term graduates who responded were still working in their commitment agency. On average, CWEB graduates had been working in their agency for a little less than one and a half years ( $M=1.44$ ,  $SD=0.48$ ). Half of the respondents worked in urban areas (50%) with around a quarter working in rural (22%) and suburban areas (28%). Respondents were located throughout Pennsylvania: 17% were in the Central region, 33% in the Northeastern region, 39% in the Southeastern region, and 11% in the Western region.

In terms of their current positions, almost all (90%) CWEB graduates were currently employed at a county children, youth, and family agency. CWEB graduates all reported working in direct services (e.g., intake, ongoing, substitute care). These work assignments also suggest that agencies are able to incorporate CWEB graduates into a variety of positions serving children and families. The majority of CWEB long-term graduates (83%) are in Caseworker II positions.

CWEL graduates were a slightly older group, with an average age of 38. They were predominately female (76%); the majority (74%) were Caucasian and 26% were African-American. CWEL long-term graduates are experienced workers, with a little over 10 years of service in child welfare ( $M=10.6$  years,  $SD=5.03$ ). The majority of CWEL graduates worked in suburban areas (40%), followed by urban areas (32%), and the remainder working in rural areas (28%). CWEL long-term graduates were located primarily in the Northeast region (42%), followed by the Western region (25%), Southeast region (21%), and the Central region (13%).

All CWEL graduates who responded to the survey still worked at a CYF agency (100%); the majority (92%) were involved in direct services, with the remainder (8%) serving in administrative roles. Close to half (44%) reported being promoted since they received their MSW degree. Figure 12 illustrates the current positions of the CWEL graduates.

**Figure 12. Current Job Titles: CWEL Long-Term Graduates**



*What do the long-term CWEB and CWEL graduates say about the climate of child welfare agencies?*

Both CWEB and CWEL graduates were predominately neutral about their work climate, with CWEB graduates feeling slightly more positive than CWEL graduates. Comparing these results to those of the 2016-2017 academic year, this year's CWEB graduates had higher scores

on every domain except for Information Flow, Employee Involvement, and Meetings, though none of these differences were statistically significant. When conducting this comparison with CWEL graduates, every domain was lower. It is interesting to note that both CWEB and CWEL graduates rated Supervision higher this year than last year. Perhaps this cohort of long-term graduates are using their supervisor as a resource to help with difficult cases and communicate the struggles of their jobs. Research suggests that having good supervision increases worker retention<sup>2526</sup>, so these high ratings for supervision are a promising indicator of increased retention in the workforce.

Table 4 below shows the average ratings on key organizational climate items by type of graduate (as well as for the total sample). The scale ranges from 1 (To a Very Little Extent) to 5 (To a Very Great Extent), with higher ratings indicating more positive work environments.

**Table 4. Average Ratings of Organizational Climate Dimensions by CWEB and CWEL Long-Term (1+ years) Graduates**

Quality	CWEB (n=20)	CWEL (n=25)	Total (n=45)
Teamwork	3.57	3.10	3.31
Morale	2.86	2.62	2.73
Information Flow	3.00	2.95	2.97
Employee Involvement	2.71	2.70	2.71
Supervision	4.11	3.50	3.77
Meetings	2.96	2.90	2.93
Overall Climate	3.30	2.98	3.12

Focusing solely on this academic year, the most positive climate scores were related to Supervision, for both CWEL graduates ( $M=4.11$ ), and CWEB graduates ( $M=3.50$ ). These scores indicate both CWEB and CWEL graduates value their supervision. The lowest ratings for CWEL ( $M=2.62$ ) were related to staff Morale, whereas for CWEB ( $M=2.71$ ) lower ratings were endorsed for Employee Involvement. This may indicate that CWEL graduates do not feel appreciated or

<sup>25</sup> Chen & Scannapieco (2010). The influence of job satisfaction on child welfare worker's desire to stay: An examination of the interaction effect of self-efficacy and supportive supervision. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32, 482-486.

<sup>26</sup> Ellet, Ellis, Westbrook, & Dews (2007). A qualitative study of 369 child welfare professionals' perspectives about factors contributing to employee retention and turnover. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29, 264-281.

valued for the work they do with the families and that CWEB graduates may not be able to provide input on policy or agency changes that affect their daily work.

Organizational climate ratings were compared according to respondents' tenure in public child welfare (five or fewer years or more than five years). Although the ratings were neutral for both groups, respondents who worked in child welfare for more than five years rated every domain (Teamwork, Morale, Information Flow, Employee Involvement, Supervision, and Meetings) lower than those who have been working in child welfare for less than five years. However, the only statistically significant difference was for the Supervision domain ( $t=2.53, p<.05$ ). These domain scores have continued a downward trend in recent years, with the exception of Supervision for those with a longer tenure in child welfare, who rated it similar or higher than in recent years. These trends should be interpreted as mentioned above.

As with last year, four specific open-ended questions were included in the long-term graduate survey in order to gauge how this cohort of students is contributing to the field by mentoring others, providing leadership, and pursuing professional development opportunities. These inquiries allowed for a deeper exploration of leadership activities and ongoing professional development among graduates.

## PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE II:

*CWEB and CWEL students and graduates have the opportunity to impact not only the children and families on their caseloads, but also the agencies in which they work and the ways in which policies and practices are implemented.*

*A 2012 University of Pittsburgh CWEL graduate has used his research and advocacy skills to make positive changes in Westmoreland County. The graduate and his colleagues were invited to speak at the American Bar Association in Washington, DC regarding a Kin-First approach to child welfare work. Westmoreland County was the only county invited to speak, and was joined in this endeavor by representatives from Tennessee, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Washington, DC, Washington, and Hawaii. The graduate used his skills with collecting and interpreting data to highlight the need of a data-driven approach to sustain change in the child welfare system. In addition, this graduate identified the need for a more "kid friendly" waiting area at the Westmoreland County Courthouse and worked with a community collaborative of individuals and organizations to help make the waiting area a more welcoming environment for children. The space now includes murals, comfortable furniture, toys and books, all of which provide an engaging and supportive setting while children await court decisions.*

Tell us about other activities you have participated in that have contributed to the field of child welfare.

Long-term graduates have participated in numerous volunteer opportunities that include: mentoring children who have an incarcerated parent; women's shelters; food banks; mentoring middle school aged student leaders, and organizing clothing and school supply drives. Long-term graduates have also participated in workgroups and county specific committees regarding sex trafficking and family finding. Long-term graduates have been instrumental in multiple initiatives to improve agency culture and/or practices. These have included recommending changes to their county information systems, family service planning techniques, combating compassion fatigue, recruiting resource families, and collaborating with other systems such as mental health. One long-term graduate was accepted to the Board of Directors for a state-run organization supporting child welfare/foster care related issues. Another graduate was involved in the creation of a new Family Treatment Court.

What professional development opportunities have you participated in since completing the program?

Long-term graduates reported having a wide variety of professional development opportunities since completing the program. Many mentioned participating in ongoing agency and county trainings, as well as trainings provided through the University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Resource Center. Graduates described attending trainings related to supervision, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), infant mental health, adult and child mental health, commercial sexual exploitation of minors, stress management, ethics, foster care, drug and alcohol, and motivational interviewing.

How have you mentored colleagues or disseminated your enhanced skills to others in your agency?

Many long term graduates expressed being appointed to train and mentor new caseworkers and interns. They also described being of assistance to other caseworkers, whether it was collaborating with them on cases, assisting with difficult situations, answering questions, or serving as an overall resource for other staff. One graduate described filling in for other



workers when they could not be at court and doing dependency and permanency review hearings on cases that were not theirs. Another graduate expressed participating in Case Review Teams to help develop plans that caseworkers can use in their work with families.

**Leadership comes in all forms. How have you led others or championed initiatives within your agency?**

Long-term graduates have led in their agencies in a variety of ways. They have taken the lead in trainings, have been part of committees, workgroups, and internal reform meetings, instituted policies, and planned events and initiatives. Some graduates have taken the lead in client and staff advocacy: *“I have advocated for clients as well as workers in topics that will help better the agency.”* A graduate expressed how, as a supervisor, she has been able to help an employee manage a high case load and increase her work performance. Another graduate has been engaging in an initiative to improve child welfare’s engagement with fathers of color.

Long-term graduates were given the opportunity to provide any additional feedback in an open-ended comment field. Their responses mirrored those of the current students and recent graduates. Some CWEB graduates said they felt their education didn’t fully prepare them for the many roles they have to take on as a child welfare caseworker. Some CWEL long-term graduates felt that their new skill sets were not being fully utilized within their agencies and felt that there was limited availability for promotion or career growth. Despite these challenges, long-term graduates from both programs praised the education they received.

*CWEB is a great program and I feel that I have learned a lot and I am looking to apply to CWEL to further my education. (CWEB Long-term Graduate)*

*I am grateful for the CWEL program as it has helped me to be more informed within the child welfare field. I feel that it has furthered my direct practice skills. (CWEL Long-term Graduate)*

In summary, CWEB and CWEL graduates work primarily in direct services in a variety of communities throughout the state of Pennsylvania. They report relatively high levels of satisfaction with the supervision they receive. Although CWEL graduates rated all aspects of work climate slightly more negatively than CWEB graduates, in general, ratings of work climate were

neutral for all long-term graduates. Graduates of both programs were less satisfied with employee involvement, suggesting that these are individuals who have an investment in their work environments, but may be frustrated by not having a stronger voice in organizational decision-making. Morale was also rated on the lower end. This can be an important issue with regard to staff retention, as low staff morale can lead to talented employees leaving the agency. To address this issue, county child welfare agencies should take a close look at their organizational culture and how they are supporting their workforce in this challenging work.

Retaining experienced and committed child welfare caseworkers is crucial given the increasing levels of complexity presented by the families involved in the child welfare system. Organizational climate ratings for the CWEB long-term graduates increased this year, which may indicate an effort by the child welfare agencies to better engage this cohort of workers and curtail worker turnover. Also, both CWEB and CWEL long-term graduates rated supervision high this year which may indicate that these workers are reaching out to their supervisors in times of need and receiving the supervision they require to successfully handle the stresses of their jobs. It may also be indicative of counties paying closer attention to supervision as an important component of a healthy organizational culture.

### ***Schools and Agencies***

#### *How do Pennsylvania schools of social work view the CWEB and CWEL programs?*

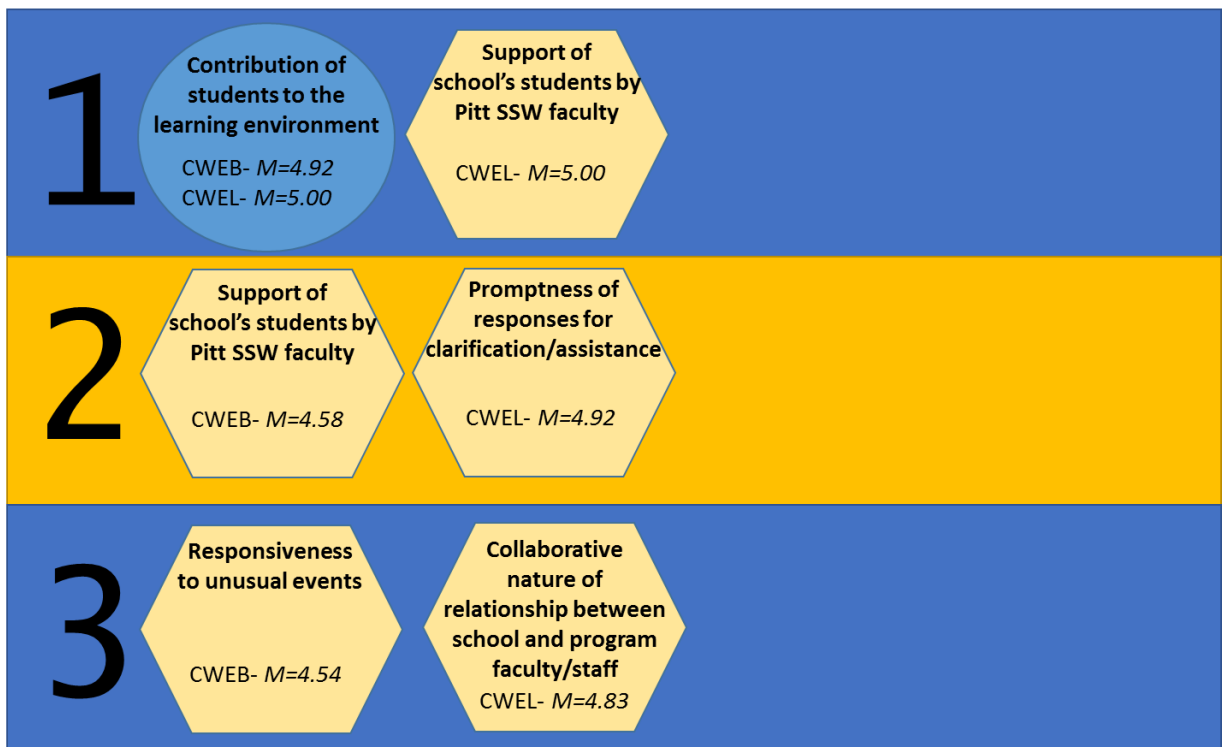
Selected individuals at the 16 participating schools of Social Work were asked to complete an annual survey regarding their involvement in the CWEB and CWEL programs. Responses were obtained from 86% of the schools, with a 62% response rate from individuals (surveys were sent to multiple respondents at each school). Of the 21 respondents, almost 33% reported that their university participates only in the CWEB program, 38% only participated in the CWEL program, and 29% reported involvement with both programs.

The first part of the survey focused on the quality of the CWEB and CWEL programs, which respondents answered through 6 quantitative and 3 qualitative questions. Quantitative

questions were rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Very Good). Questions asked about collaboration between schools and staff, faculty support of students, and students' contributions to the school's learning environment. Qualitative questions asked respondents to describe student caliber, positive elements of the CWEB/CWEL programs, and problems or suggestions for program improvement. In the second part of the survey, respondents were asked to rate how important a mixture of core competencies and traditional criteria were in order to select CWEB students. Results of these items can be found in the Core Competency section below.

Responses indicate that school administrators continue to be satisfied with the quality of the CWEB and CWEL programs. Both programs scored well, with the average hovering around 4.4 or above on each of the items. Rankings for the top three highest rated items are displayed in Figure 13.

**Figure 13. Highest Mean Values by Program for School Respondents**



These high ratings were matched by faculty's praise for the students and programs, describing students as, "*strong students with a passion for the work*", including having high grade point averages; "*...reflect a commitment to both their education and engagement with children and their families*" (CWEB); and "*...sense of social justice and an appreciation of public sector welfare services*" while contributing valuable practice information (CWEL). Of the CWEB program, one faculty member reported, "*Overall, my students demonstrate leadership skills and are a good fit for Child Welfare. My students demonstrate strong communication skills and are eager to make positive changes in their environments. They tend to be open to constructive feedback and are committed to life-long learning.*" Another program administrator added, "*I think these students tend to be more committed to the field and more knowledgeable about the realities that our clients face in the field, also the realities social workers face.*" As for the CWEL program, one respondent acknowledged that, "*I am always impressed by our CWEL students' dedication to families and children. Often they enter the program feeling burned out and at a dead end. But I notice that from the first courses on, they start to enliven when they see they can think of a problem differently, change the way they interact, and widen the options therapeutically, through use of self, and in terms of advocacy.*" Yet another faculty member reported that the CWEL program "*is key to workforce development and leadership development in Child Welfare. Our CWEL students are able to share their experiences in the child welfare system and work with our other students to help show how theory/classroom instruction transfer to multiple social service delivery systems.*"

A review of the open-ended comments revealed that partnering Schools of Social Work perceive CWEB and CWEL students to have superb academic capabilities and that they show a commitment to working with children and families. Specifically, respondents described their

CWEB students as smart, dedicated, and lifelong learners. CWEB school respondents endorsed positive program benefits, including the opportunity for hands-on learning and igniting a passion for child welfare work in undergraduates. CWEL school respondents cited the extensive practice experience CWEL students bring into the classrooms.

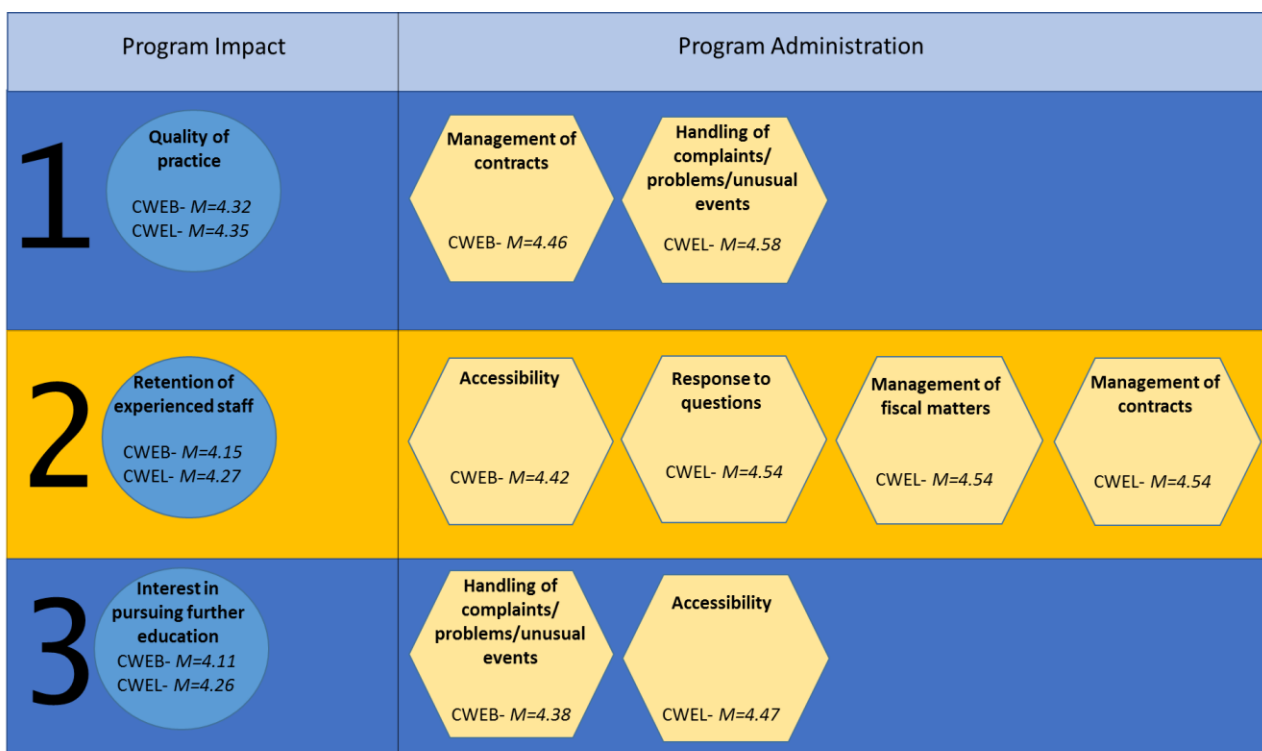
*How do child welfare agency administrators view the CWEB and CWEL programs?*

Agency directors were asked to answer questions regarding the administration of the CWEB and CWEL programs and the impact and value of these programs on their agencies; they also rated the quality of CWEB and CWEL graduates' skills and work characteristics. Additionally, administrators were asked to describe the strategies they have created to utilize CWEB and CWEL graduates' abilities and knowledge, as well as strategies they have devised to increase caseworker retention. Finally, agency directors were asked to rate CWEB and CWEL graduates on a series of core competencies. The results from these items are discussed in the Core Competency section below. Out of agencies with graduates and/or current students, 76% of individuals responded, representing 80% of participating agencies. In some cases, surveys were sent to multiple individuals in each agency, such as the county administrator and the person within the agency who is most knowledgeable about the CWEB and CWEL programs.

Respondents rated their satisfaction with the CWEB and CWEL programs and students on 22 items using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Very Good). Items were grouped into two sections: 1) the impact the CWEB/CWEL program has had on the agency and 2) the administration of the CWEB/CWEL program. In the first section, respondents rated items about employee recruitment, retention, and quality of staff. The second section included items referring to fiscal management and communication from the University of Pittsburgh regarding the program.

Directors consistently rated their satisfaction with the CWEB and CWEL programs and the impact of the programs on the organization culture (e.g., recruitment, retention, staff motivation, quality of practice, and interest in higher education) between the values of “Good” and “Very Good.” A depiction of the highest mean values for these two areas can be seen in Figure 14.

**Figure 14. Highest Mean Values for Agency Satisfaction and Impact of CWEB/CWEL**

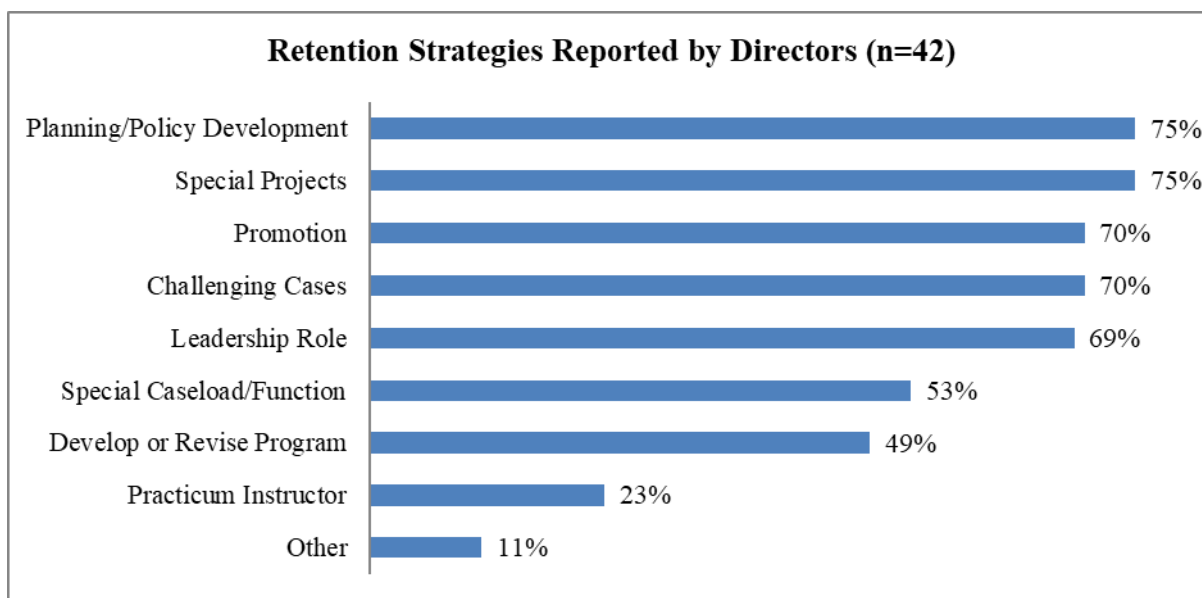


There were slight variations in the means for both the program impact and program administration domains from last year, with some items having higher means and some lower. The means for value of the CWEB and CWEL programs differed by program, with CWEB decreasing from last year and CWEL increasing ( $M=4.52$ ;  $M=4.78$ ). These variations were insignificant, suggesting that agency administrators continue to truly appreciate the opportunity

the CWEB and CWEL programs provide for their agencies by enabling them to have a skilled and highly trained workforce.

As in previous years, agency directors responded to questions asking them to describe how they have created or adapted programs and assignments that utilize the skills of recent graduates. The most commonly reported strategies were planning and policy development (75%), assigning participants to special projects (75%), promotion (70%), and allocation of more challenging cases (70%) (See Figure 15). These responses correlate with the open-ended comments that indicate that CWEB and CWEL graduates have more responsibility in their roles within the agency. Retention of skilled child welfare workers remains a concern with agency directors, especially when opportunities for advancement or promotion may not be available. In addition, job classification categories, local politics, and collective bargaining agreements all play a part in the advancement of skilled workers, as well as the ability of the workers to utilize their skills in new arenas. Until more supervisory and upper management positions begin to be granted to CWEB and CWEL graduates, agencies will have to think of innovative techniques to keep the workforce engaged and provide them ways to utilize their new skillsets to truly promote retention.

**Figure 15. Retention Strategies Reported by Directors**



Agency directors reported a variety of specific projects in which they engage their CWEB and CWEL graduates in order to utilize their new skills. These have included managing in-home providers, engaging families in family team meetings, working as agency social workers by providing parent skill-building, educating colleagues about behavioral health diagnoses and treatment, and helping families and youth to improve their coping strategies and build a natural support system. CWEB and CWEL graduates participate in continuous quality improvement teams within agencies, research new assessment tools, and develop programs to address important issues, such as truancy. This specialized group of caseworkers is also assigned cases with more complicated issues, such as incarceration, are involved in crisis and rapid response meetings, and mentor junior staff members. In addition, CWEB and CWEL graduates are vital to creating new processes and procedures and implement and monitor policies such as ESSA, ICWA, and ICPC.

### ***Core Competencies***

This year, agency and school administrators, as well as supervisors/mentors of CWEB students, were asked to rate CWEB program participants on 10 core competencies that the research literature suggests are important for a successful career in child welfare. These competencies are: (1) interpersonal skills; (2) adaptability; (3) communication skills; (4) observation skills; (5) planning and organizing work; (6) analytic thinking; (7) motivation; (8) self-awareness/confidence; (9) sense of mission, and (10) teamwork. All align with the prescribed core competencies for selecting qualified applicants for child welfare work<sup>27</sup>.

CWEB mentors/supervisors were identified from the pool of current part-time CWEL students and from recent and long-term CWEB and CWEL graduates who indicated that they supervise/mentor CWEB students in their agencies. The 10 items were rated using a 5-point scale. The anchors for the Likert scale differed based on respondent type. School administrators were asked to rate the importance of the core competencies in selecting candidates to participate in the

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<sup>27</sup> The R&R Project (2009). *Resources for selecting qualified applications for child welfare work*. Chapel Hill, NC; Jordan Institute for Families at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.



CWEB program; these items were rated from 1 (Not at All Important) to 5 (Extremely Important). Agency administrators and CWEB supervisors/mentors were asked to rate the competencies of CWEB students/graduates with whom they worked (as a group); these items were rated from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Superior).

In addition to the core competencies, school administrators were asked to rate (using the same scale) the importance of 6 more traditional criteria when selecting CWEB students – student’s GPA, writing ability, faculty recommendation, financial need, engagement in extracurricular activities, and interest in working with children and families. Agency administrators and mentors/supervisors of CWEB students were asked to rate the CWEB graduates/students in their agency on the aforementioned 10 core competencies. For these items, every respondent was prompted to rate interpersonal relations, communication skills, and self-awareness/confidence. To reduce respondent burden, 2 of the 7 remaining core competencies (adaptability; observation skills; planning and organizing work; analytic thinking; motivation; sense of mission; teamwork) were randomly selected for each participant.

Responses indicate that school administrators value the core competencies for selecting child welfare workers, but place equal value on some of the traditional markers of qualification. Table 5 illustrates these findings. The most highly rated item of the 10 core competencies was “*analytic thinking*” ( $M=4.80$ ), and the lowest rated item was “*teamwork*” ( $M=3.75$ ). Of the traditionally valued items, the most highly rated item was “*student has an interest in working with children and families*” ( $M=4.54$ ). The lowest rated items, “*student’s financial need*” ( $M=3.62$ ) and “*student’s engagement in extracurricular activities*” ( $M=3.23$ ), had significantly lower scores than any of the items included in the cores competencies. Predictably, “*student GPA*,” “*student’s writing ability*,” and “*faculty recommendation of student to the program*” all received ratings above “very important” ( $M=3.77$ ,  $M=4.08$ ,  $M=4.23$ , respectively).

**Table 5. Comparison of School Administrator's Ratings of the Importance of Core Competencies to Traditional Selection Criteria (CWEB Students)**

Core Competency	Mean	Traditional Indicators	Mean
Motivation (n=3)	4.67	Interest in Working with Children and Families (n=13)	4.54
Interpersonal Relations (n=12)	4.58	Faculty Recommendation (n=13)	4.23
Adaptability (n=5)	4.00	GPA (n=13)	3.77
Analytic Thinking (n=5)	4.80	Writing Ability (n=13)	4.08
Awareness/Confidence (n=13)	4.38	Engagement in Extracurricular Activities (n=13)	3.23
Communication Skills (n=13)	4.15	Financial Need (n=13)	3.62
Sense of Mission (n=2)	4.50		
Observation Skills (n=4)	4.75		
Planning and Organizing Work (n=3)	4.00		
Teamwork (n=4)	3.75		

Similar to the school respondents, agency administrators were asked to rate CWEB and CWEL graduates on the core competencies. Ratings for both CWEB and CWEL graduates hovered around the “Good” to “Very Good” range. See Table 6 for the ratings for all 10 competencies. Respondents rate the CWEB graduates highest in “*sense of mission*” ( $M=4.25$ ), and lowest in “*observation skills*” ( $M=3.63$ ). Respondents rated CWEL graduates high in “*observation skills*” ( $M=4.75$ ), “*analytical thinking*” ( $M=4.17$ ), and “*self-awareness/confidence*” ( $M=4.17$ ), and lowest on “*teamwork*” ( $M=3.60$ ). Developmental differences and depth of exposure to the child welfare field likely explain these differences among participants.

**Table 6. CWEB and CWEL Core Competency Ratings by Agency Administrators**

Core Competency	Mean	
	CWEB	CWEL
Interpersonal Relations	4.00 (n=23)	4.03 (n=29)
Adaptability	4.13 (n=8)	4.00 (n=7)
Communication Skills	4.00 (n=24)	4.10 (n=29)
Observation Skills	3.63 (n=8)	4.75 (n=8)
Planning and Organizing Work	4.17 (n=6)	3.80 (n=5)
Analytic Thinking	4.00 (n=4)	4.17 (n=12)
Motivation	4.00 (n=5)	4.11 (n=9)
Self-Awareness/Confidence	3.92 (n=24)	4.17 (n=29)
Sense of Mission	4.25 (n=8)	4.14 (n=7)
Teamwork	4.22 (n=9)	3.60 (n=10)

Because agency administrators may be far removed from frontline CWEB caseworkers, the core competency questions were added to the current student, recent, and long-term graduate surveys. Similar to the agency administrators, CWEB supervisor/mentor ratings of CWEB participants in their agency were in the “Good” to “Very Good” range. Table 7 shows the mean ratings on all 10 core competencies. CWEB students/graduates were rated highest on “motivation” (M=4.04), but appeared to need some improvement in “planning/organizing work” (M=3.75) and “communication skills” (M=3.88).

**Table 7. CWEB Supervisor/Mentor's Core Competency Ratings for CWEB Program Participants**

Core Competency	Mean
	CWEB
Interpersonal Relations	3.93 (n=95)
Adaptability	3.92 (n=25)
Communication Skills	3.88 (n=97)
Observation Skills	4.03 (n=29)
Planning and Organizing Work	3.75 (n=24)
Analytic Thinking	3.97 (n=33)
Motivation	4.04 (n=26)
Self-Awareness/Confidence	3.92 (n=97)
Sense of Mission	4.00 (n=24)
Teamwork	3.91 (n=33)

A series of statistical analyses was conducted to explore the following questions: 1) Did agency respondents rate CWEB and CWEL graduates differently on the 10 core competencies; 2) Were there differences between the core competencies that school respondents looked for in CWEB applicants and the core competencies the agency respondents saw in CWEB recent graduates; and 3) Were there differences in the ratings of core competencies in CWEB participants when comparing school administrators, agency administrators, and CWEB supervisors/mentors? Independent t-tests were conducted to answer the first two research questions. The third research question was addressed by using a Kruskal-Wallis Test to determine statistically significant differences between two or more groups on a series of variables rated on a Likert scale.

Looking at the first question regarding the core competencies, there was a significant difference in the agency administrators' perceptions of the presence of "*observation skills*" between CWEB and CWEL graduates ( $t=-3.68, p<.01$ ). The "*self-awareness/confidence*" competency was approaching significance ( $t=-1.72, p=.089$ ). These two observations by the county administrators reflect the wealth of experience CWEL students have in the child welfare field when compared to the entry-level CWEB students. Across respondent groups, several significant results were seen between the school respondents' ratings of the core competencies when considering CWEB applicants and the competencies that agency respondents determined that CWEB graduates possessed. School respondents rated "*interpersonal relations*" ( $t=-2.21, p<.05$ ), "*observation skills*" ( $t=-3.59, p<.01$ ), and "*self-awareness/confidence*" ( $t=-2.11, p<.05$ ) significantly higher than agency administrators. Comparing this year's analyses to last year's, "*interpersonal relations*" were once again significant. Interestingly, there was differential movement in the ratings of the core competencies for both agency directors and school administrators since last year. Overall, agency directors rated CWEB graduates more positively on a majority of competencies, whereas school administrators rated the CWEB students lower on more competencies. In some cases the school and agency administrator means were the same further indicating that these two groups are observing the same qualities in CWEB participants.

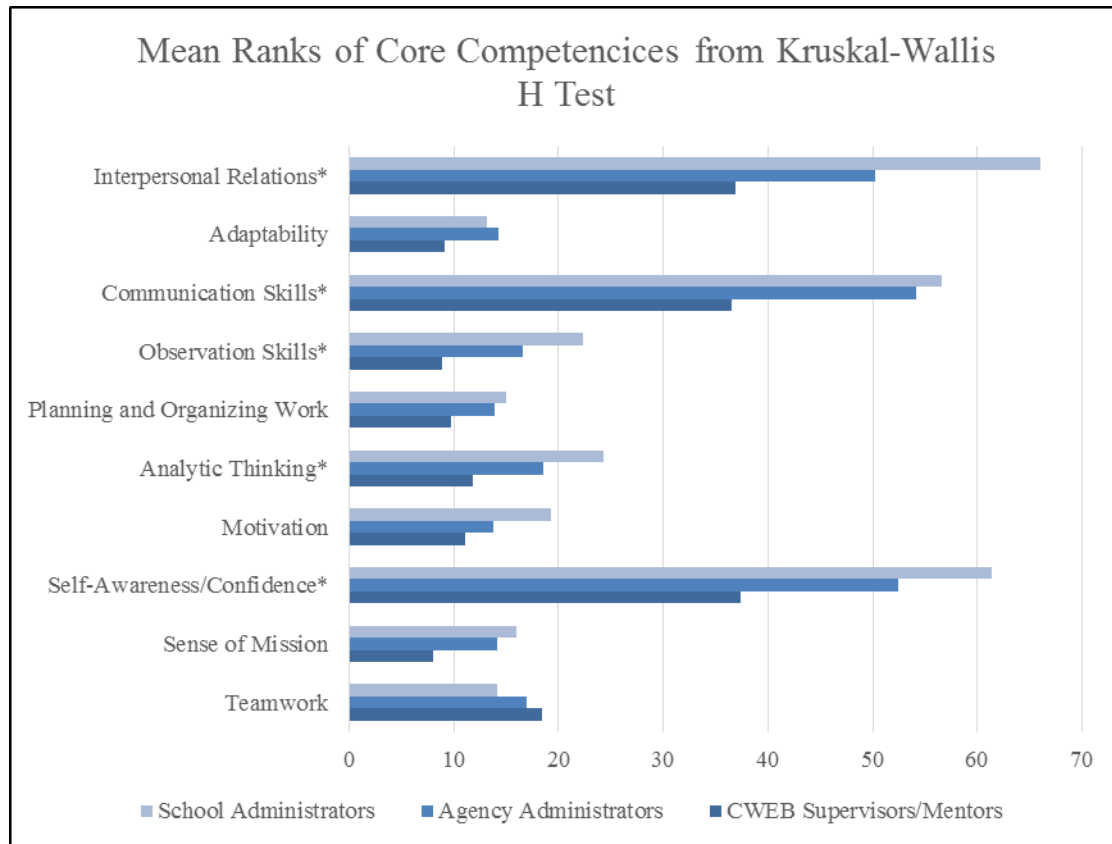
In the Kruskal-Wallis H test, mean ranks are used to determine if there are any differences between the groups (e.g., school administrators; agency administrators; CWEB supervisors/mentors). These ranks can be used to determine the effect of the role of the respondent to the CWEB student on the ratings of the core competencies. It is important to note that this statistical test will not determine where the differences between the groups lie, just that a statistically significant difference is observed.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test in these analyses showed that there were statistically significant differences between school administrators, agency administrators, and CWEB supervisors/mentors on four of the core competencies, "*interpersonal relations*", "*communication*

*skills*”, “*observation skills*”, “*analytical thinking*” and “*self-awareness/confidence.*” Respondents differed in their ratings of “*interpersonal relations,*” ( $X^2(2) = 11.517, p = .003$ ), with mean rank ratings of 36.85 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 50.23 for agency administrators, and 66.04 for school administrators. “*Communication skills*” differed significantly between respondents ( $X^2(2) = 9.527, p = .009$ ), with mean rank ratings of 36.52 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 54.11 for agency administrators, and 56.58 for school administrators. Respondents also differed with their ratings of “*observation skills*” ( $X^2(2) = 9.202, p = .010$ ), with mean rank ratings of 8.94 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 16.56 for agency administrators, and 22.38 for school administrators. With regard to “*analytical thinking,*” respondents’ ratings differed significantly as well ( $X^2(2) = 7.411, p = .025$ ), with mean rankings of 11.88 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 18.56 for agency administrators, and 24.30 for school administrators. Finally, significant differences were observed for “*self-awareness/confidence*” ( $X^2(2) = 9.365, p = .009$ ), with mean rankings of 37.37 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 52.48 for agency administrators, and 61.38 for school administrators.

These results suggest that people within the child welfare agency are viewing CWEB program participants differently on “*interpersonal relations,*” a characteristic which encompasses respect and tolerance for people, relating well to others, and empathy. These skills may be viewed differently in an academic versus professional setting. Interestingly, the CWEB supervisors/mentors rated “*observation skills*” “*communication*”, “*analytical thinking*”, and “*self-awareness/confidence*” lower than the other two respondent groups, signifying that their interactions with CWEB program participants might be a better gauge of the presence of these competencies within their agencies. Again, transfer of learning activities may need to be strengthened in order to help students take classroom knowledge and skills into their practice. The full results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test can be seen in Figure 16.

**Figure 16. Mean Ranks of Core Competencies.**



**Overall Summary**

The stakeholders of the Title IV-E education programs continue to praise the CWEB and CWEL programs and students and acknowledge the value of these programs to the Commonwealth. The CWEB and CWEL programs provide Pennsylvania’s county child welfare agencies with a mechanism for building a well-educated workforce and provide an opportunity to infuse core social work values into casework practice. CWEB and CWEL program participants are extremely grateful for the opportunity to participate in these beneficial educational opportunities and see the programs as a way to promote change in child welfare and provide strengths-based solutions to children, youth and families.

CWEB and CWEL students continue to thrive both academically and in their agencies. Close to a third of CWEB and CWEL current students, recent graduates, and long-term graduates

have received an award or recognition in the past year; over 65% of these program participants were on the dean's list, graduated with honors, or became a member of a national honor society. Almost a third of participants were recognized for accomplishments in their county agencies by receiving praise from supervisors, administrators, families on their caseloads, receiving "employee of the month" awards, promotions, or creating new initiatives within their agencies. A few program participants received special awards such as the Child Crusader of Year for Child Welfare Operations and the Albert Geffen Medal. CWEB and CWEL program participants continue to prove their commitment to the social work profession and the field of child welfare.

Since promotions, raises, and opportunities for advancement may be difficult for some counties to offer CWEL graduates, it is important for county administrators to create unique opportunities for this group of child welfare workers to utilize their newly developed skills in the agency. Counties may consider creating mentoring programs where more senior CWEB/CWEL staff can provide assistance and guidance to new caseworkers. Additionally, counties can utilize the research skills of CWEL graduates to help answer important questions regarding causes of referral to child welfare, track the number of out of home placements, or investigate services to remedy program gaps. Enrichment programs such as the Child Welfare Leadership Fellows<sup>28</sup> operationalized in Allegheny and Washington counties provide an opportunity for CWEB and CWEL graduates to engage in data-driven projects that can benefit the child welfare agency and the individuals served by the child welfare system. Agency administrators, managers and supervisors are urged to capitalize on the unique skills that CWEB and CWEL graduates have developed to create positive change in the child welfare workforce and keep graduates engaged and invested in the work.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.childwelfareleaders.org/cwl-components>





in the state-mandated competency and skills-building training, Charting the Course (CTC). CWEB students are assigned to a Regional Training Specialist at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center who assists them with enrollment in CTC and the initiation of their certification training record. This process also establishes a connection between the incoming child welfare student and the Child Welfare Resource Center that will continue when the student becomes a county child welfare employee.

Variation in the civil service status among counties continues to present a challenge for students as there is not presently an interface between these two merit-based employment systems. We work closely with students to complete the civil service process so that they have employment options in both civil service and non-civil service counties throughout the state. A statewide workgroup has been formed to address caseworker qualifications, develop a specific county child welfare caseworker position description, and refine the current county civil service process. Barriers to the timeliness of hiring CWEB graduates have been successfully resolved for the most part, and are always subject to economic and political change at the local and state level. Close follow-up by the CWEB Academic Coordinator and the CWEB/CWEL Agency Coordinator has resulted in the majority of graduates securing county agency employment within 60 days of graduation. In some instances, state and/or county budgets or civil service issues have required an extension beyond 60 days for securing county agency employment. Despite these challenges, most recent CWEB graduates are gainfully employed.

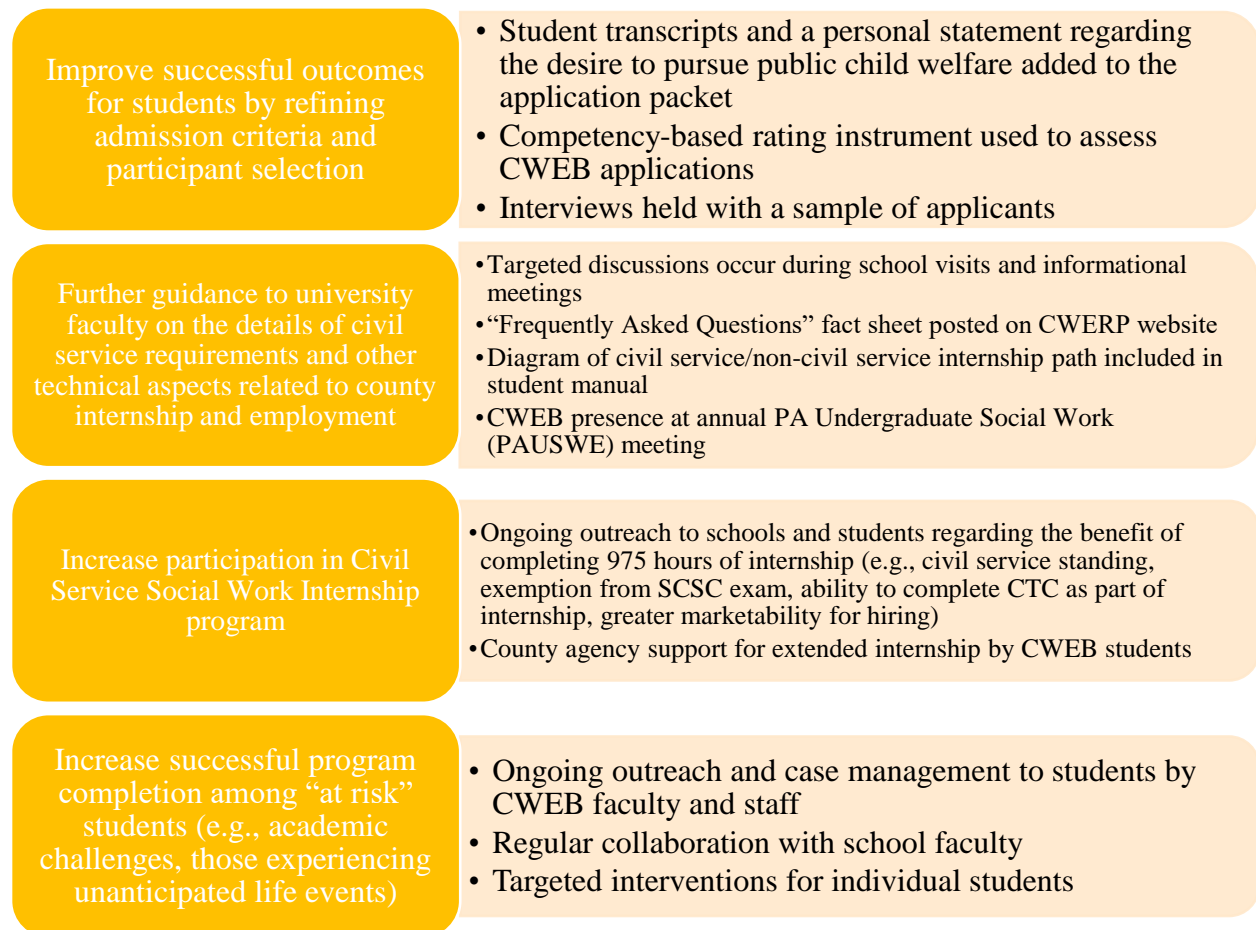
We continue to make concerted efforts to connect graduates with agencies and provide technical support for resume development and interviewing skills. Students may pursue employment in any county in the state and many are able to remain in the county where they completed their internship. However, there are some students who are reluctant to relocate and who live in areas where there are no immediate openings. When students fail to follow through on their contractual obligation, the CWERP program initiates a targeted collection procedure that can include obtaining a court judgment against the student. This is rarely necessary as nearly all

students honor their obligations, and agencies are anxious to hire CWEB graduates due to their social work education and county experience.

As has been discussed previously, a career in public child welfare is not for everyone. The process of student discovery is a normal, healthy course of action which results in decisions that benefit both students and counties. The CWEB program facilitates that process through counseling with the students and graduates and then providing a professional, business-like collection system for reimbursement when necessary. Repayment can be discontinued for those who are initially in default, but become employed in public child welfare.

Suggestions for CWEB program improvement and our action plan are summarized below. Some suggestions are new, while others are ongoing or have been addressed.

**Figure 18: CWEB Suggested Improvements and Progress**



Enhance student and school awareness of the difference between civil service and non-civil service counties and how this can impact county hiring practices

- Discussion with students and schools
- Most recent information regarding county civil service status posted on CWEB website and in CWEB student handbook
- CWEB students completing internships within non-civil service counties also to register as a county casework intern so they are eligible for jobs in civil service counties

Increase county participation in the CWEB program

- Ongoing consultation with counties
- Ongoing school-county-program collaboration in the field practicum process
- Presentations at PCYA & CCAP meetings

Improve CWEB student enrollment in mandated child welfare skill and competency based training, *Charting the Course Toward Permanency in Pennsylvania (CTC)*

- Case management system initiated to pair Regional Training Specialists from the PA Child Welfare Resource Center with each CWEB student
- Enrollment in CTC during the CWEB students' senior year and initiation of training record to document completion of modules in effect

Improve leadership and professional development skills

- Students from two universities participated in a pilot group focused on leadership and self-care
- Race consciousness built into leadership curriculum

Improve successful job placement following graduation

- Ongoing assistance by CWERP faculty in identifying county casework vacancies, facilitating referrals for interviews, and counseling graduates regarding employment
- Ongoing collaboration with SCSC
- Collaboration with non-SCSC counties

Improve dissemination of child welfare career development opportunity through CWEB and CWEL to prospective and current participants

- CWEB informational video developed, CWEL video planned
- Dissemination of realistic job preview video
- Inclusion of East Stroudsburg University in the 2018-2019 Academic Year

***CWEL***

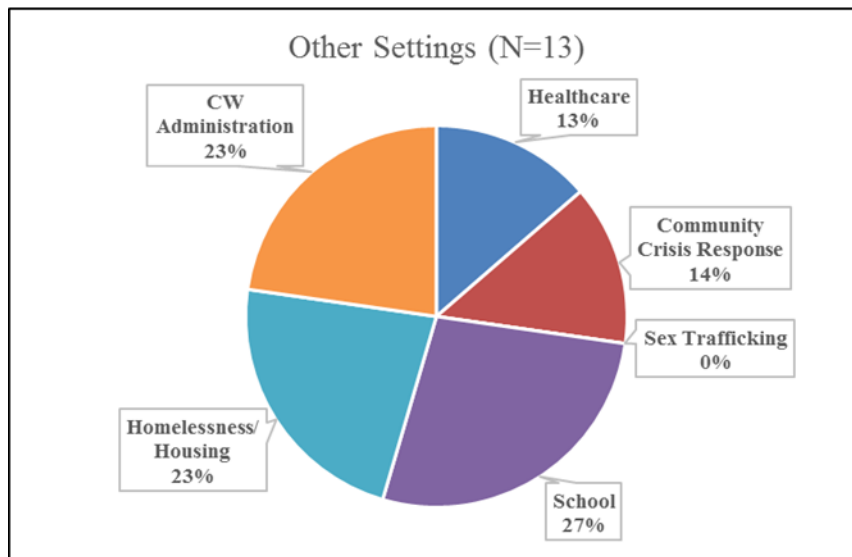
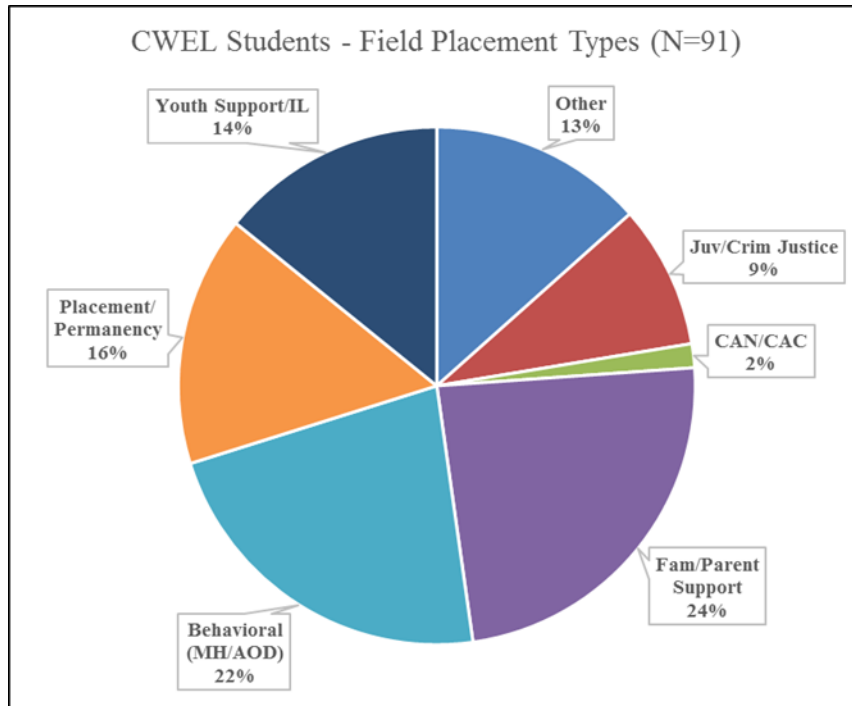
After 23 years of operation, the CWEL program has continued to reach additional students and counties while maintaining its commitment to close, collaborative working relationships with the Department of Human Services, students, county agencies, and schools of social work in Pennsylvania. The number and diversity of counties has increased over time, enrollment continues to meet projected goals, and the number of applications typically matches the number of budgeted student openings. The program is acknowledged as providing students with a valuable educational experience, which they regard as useful in their child welfare practice, and as a major asset to public child welfare in Pennsylvania. Feedback indicates that the program is well-administered and user friendly. It is credited as having a long-term impact on public child welfare practice and as a positive element in the continuing challenge of worker retention.

CWEL students contribute to human service programs in both the public and private sector during the course of their graduate studies through active engagement in field work in a variety of community-based agency settings. In turn, county agencies benefit from the expanded knowledge that CWEL students bring to the county. Figure 19 below illustrates the breadth of programs that benefit from the skill and expertise of our child welfare students.

By completing a field experience at an agency in the private sector or within another publically-funded program, students gain valuable information regarding systems, policies, service mandates, and intervention strategies. In turn, students transmit their experience and knowledge of child welfare policies and procedures to provider agencies that may have limited understanding of child welfare services. Students are encouraged to go outside their comfort zone to gain experience with a new service modality or intervention, client population, or service setting in which they may have limited knowledge. All of this learning and collaboration occurs as our students share their expertise and enrich their skills through internships with public and private provider agencies. Students then bring new knowledge and skills back to their child

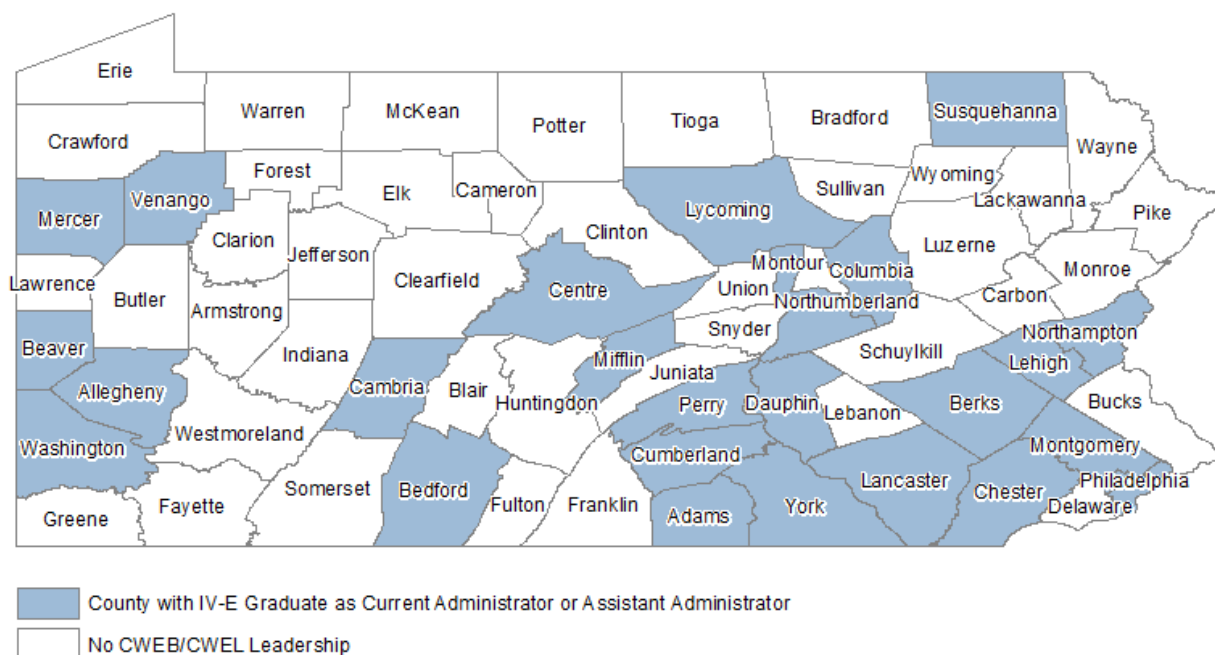
welfare agencies and are well prepared to contribute to practice initiatives such as teaming and conferencing, connection to evidence-based treatments, and the use of enhanced assessments.

**Figure 19. CWEL Field Placement Types**



A main goal of the CWEL program is the development of leadership within child welfare. We follow the career path of our participants and observe that CWEL graduates currently hold county agency management/administration positions in 37% (25/67) of Pennsylvania counties. In addition, a number of CWEL graduates and current CWEL students hold supervisory positions or roles that involve mentorship, quality assurance, and practice initiatives such as teaming and conferencing. Of note, two CWEB graduates also occupy county leadership positions. We applaud the promotion of our graduates into these key leadership roles and the new vision and energy that they bring to public child welfare. Figure 20 illustrates this impact and includes leaders among both the CWEB and the CWEL programs. Efforts continue to be directed toward gathering comprehensive data on leadership activities among our graduates.

**Figure 20. CWEB/CWEL County Leadership**



Narrative responses gathered during the program evaluation contain a number of suggestions. These responses are obtained through open-ended comments on the evaluation instruments and then verified through key informant focus group sessions. Some suggestions are impractical or impossible to implement. Others are based upon misinformation. Most of the

suggestions gleaned from the evaluation of both programs over the years, however, point to important questions and ongoing themes that bear thoughtful review. Several of these will be highlighted because they come from multiple sources, were reported in many different ways, or have become persistent themes. All of the partners ought to be thinking about strategies to address them over subsequent review periods.

One prominent and persistent theme concerns the climate, salaries, job classifications, assignments, and opportunities for career development which graduates of the CWEL program encounter upon their return to the county agencies. The following key points have been repeated by multiple respondents and noted consistently in our annual program evaluations:

- difficulty in negotiating assignments that capitalize on the returning worker's new skills, knowledge, and advanced training;
- lack of differentiation in job classifications among workers with and without graduates degrees;
- lack of salary incentives in most counties;
- hostile, skeptical, and jealous reception workers sometimes face upon return to their agency after graduation;
- scarcity of opportunities for promotion in many counties;
- lack of opportunities for leadership and/or a voice in decision making;
- the sense that advanced educational achievement is not matched with respect and growth opportunities.

In some counties, returning graduates have been embraced and invited to participate in creative and challenging assignments that are advantageous to both the worker and the agency. Participation in Quality Services Reviews (QSRs), membership in committees associated with Pennsylvania's Practice Improvement Plan, ongoing CPSL Implementation, membership in specific workgroups (i.e., Pennsylvania's implementation of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and

Strengthening Families Act, Safety Assessment and Management, Diversity Taskforce, CAST curriculum, TA Collaborative, CWIS, implementation of the newly revised Foundational Training for new caseworkers) are a few of the projects that benefit from the expertise of CWEL graduates. Many graduates are also involved in practice initiatives such as the early developmental screening of young children, family teaming and conferencing (e.g., Family Group Conferencing, Family Teaming, Family Group Decision Making), Family Finding, and enhancing the use of data-driven decision making. CWEL graduates are invited to become mentors and supervisors of CWEB students in their agencies; many assume prominent roles in leading youth and family engagement practices, and others are active in continuous quality improvements initiatives within their counties. Of the current trainers and consultants of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, nearly one-quarter (22%) are CWEL graduates. Many graduates are members of statewide committees and workgroups. Other have involved themselves in the education of future child welfare professionals by becoming adjunct instructors at schools of social work and/or supervisors to CWEB interns.

The contrast in the moods of those graduates who have enrichment opportunities and those who do not is stark. One group of graduates speaks of long-term commitment to public child welfare and the other group is beginning to think of alternative ways they can serve children at risk and their families where the opportunities may be a better fit with their skills. Graduates do not speak of defaulting on their commitments; when they do contemplate other options, such as moving to employment with private providers or other human service entities after completion of their commitments, they do so with sadness for the most part. The CWEL faculty views the comments of graduates about agency climate as representative of the key deciding element in child welfare employee retention. Our research, and that of others, strongly supports this finding. Counties and agencies that ignore these concerns should not be surprised by the loss of valuable staff. While there is extensive research evidence of the importance of non-salary factors in retention (see [Appendix M](#)), the results of this and previous reviews affirm that salary remains a



very important issue in Pennsylvania. Along with supportive agency working conditions, adequate compensation is critical to the stability of our child welfare workforce.

Well-educated and skilled professionals who serve children at risk and their families will benefit public child welfare wherever they practice and will return the investment made on their training by the taxpayers many times over. However, a major opportunity will be lost if agencies do not take full advantage of the skills, optimism, and enthusiasm of the returning workers. Retention has always been one of the goals of federal funding for child welfare training and is central to the mission of the CWEB and CWEL programs. It is well known from research conducted nearly two decades ago that workers who are skilled in the services they are asked to provide and who receive strong agency support have higher retention rates<sup>29</sup>. All indications suggest that CWEB and CWEL students have received excellent training and education. It remains for the partners in this enterprise to be creative, innovative, and energetic in following through with organizational change after the graduates return. The 12 or more months CWEB students and the 20 or more months full-time CWEL students spend in educational preparation is very modest when compared to the many years their potential child welfare careers will span following graduation.

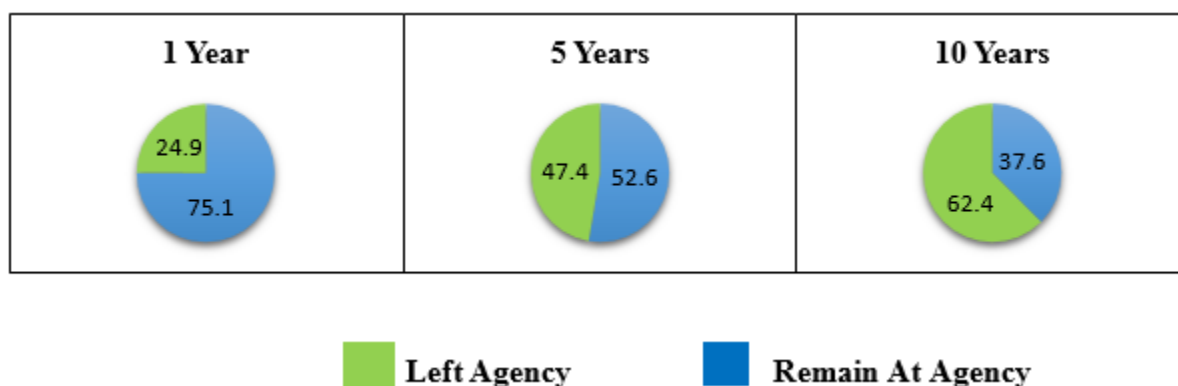
CWEL has a remarkable record of retention. Of the 1,383 graduates who have completed the program, only 16 have failed to complete their work commitment over a 22-year period. Another 765 have resigned after completing their commitments for all reasons. Again, these reasons include not only voluntary departures from child welfare employment, but also retirement, death, permanent disability, relocation of a spouse, and a variety of other unique circumstances. This represents an overall loss rate of only 8.4% a year for the life of the program. Figure 19 below illustrates retention among our graduates at one, five, and ten-year intervals post-commitment. The average commitment period is approximately 1½ years. This commitment

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<sup>29</sup> Jones, L.P. & Okamura, A. (2000). Reprofessionalizing child welfare services: An evaluation of a Title IV-E training program. *Research on Social Work Practice, 10*(2), 607-621.

calculation includes individuals who were awarded advanced standing in their academic program by virtue of having a BASW degree, those who completed a full, two-year academic program, and those who obtain CWEL funding for only a portion of their academic studies. Figure 21 shows that of those whose commitment ended over 10 years ago, almost 40% remain in their agencies nearly 12 years after graduation (1 ½ years average commitment plus 10 years post-commitment). This does not include those who continued in the child welfare field in other agency settings.

**Figure 21. Long-term Commitment of CWEL Graduates**



The research literature on long-term retention of workers with no legal work commitment clearly shows the importance of agency climate, quality of supervision, intrinsic worker fulfillment, job satisfaction from appropriate assignments, and personnel policies, along with salaries, as some of the keys to long-term retention<sup>30</sup>. Unfortunately, there is little that CWEB or CWEL alone can do about any of these important factors. It is critical for the Department of Human Services, the University, county agencies, and PCYA to work together in implementing multiple strategies to address organizational and workforce issues. Organizational effectiveness interventions provide a structure for defining, assessing, planning, implementing, and monitoring workforce development strategies<sup>31</sup>. While implementation at both the state and county levels is

<sup>30</sup> Glisson, C. and Hemmelgarn, A. (1998). The effects of organizational climate and interorganizational coordination on the quality and outcomes of children’s service systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 22(5), 401-421.

<sup>31</sup> Basso, P., Cahalane, H., Rubin, J., & Kelley, K.J. (2013). Organizational effectiveness strategies for child welfare. In H. Cahalane (Ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Child Welfare Practice* (pp. 257-288). New York: Springer.

highly political and often difficult, we believe that our longitudinal research on the retention of CWEL students and our expertise in organizational effectiveness can inform this important work. The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) has provided leadership in capacity building among middle managers and supervisors in particular, as part of an overall change strategy for the child welfare workforce (see <http://www.ncwwi.org>).

The subject of the advantages and disadvantages of full and part-time study continues to surface among the CWEL students. We have made the following points in previous annual reports and repeat them here. It is clear that full-time versus part-time enrollment is one of the areas in which county differences occur, but there is also no doubt from student evaluations and the many years of collective experience the schools have had that the educational experiences of full-time students are clearly superior. Full-time students have many more opportunities to interact with their academic advisors and other faculty outside of class, more time to network with other students, more time available for academic research, more choice of elective courses, more time to write papers and prepare other assignments, and more options for completing their internships. They can do this with less commuting, less stress from work-related responsibilities, less conflict between work schedules (e.g., court appearances) and class schedules, and less time away from their family responsibilities.

The tuition for full-time completion of a degree is also less than for part-time study. Full-time students require only half as much time or less to complete the CWEL program. This means a quicker return to full productivity in the agency. Part-time students often take as long as four years to complete, and there is a higher rate of academic disruption (and sometimes program discontinuation) among part-time students compared to full-time students. Three to four years is an extraordinary amount of time for students to be balancing the demands of child welfare work, academic studies, and the other responsibilities in their lives. Our experience over the past 23 years has shown that part-time students are at a higher risk for program discontinuation compared to full-time students.

The agencies' primary concern with full-time study for CWEL students most frequently is whether or not the agency can fill the position while the student is away for full-time study. The counties that have hired replacements have experienced no major difficulties and have been able to do so without any financial cost because of the reimbursement they receive for the salary and benefits of the trainee in school. Schools and students almost unanimously favor the full-time model. Of the withdrawals from the program prior to graduation, seventy-eight percent (78%) were part-time students. Our discussions with these students confirm that the challenges inherent with part-time study, such as stress and scheduling, were the determining factors. These are serious, costly, and unnecessary losses. Even the most conscientious caseworker and diligent student can manage only a finite number of competing demands for time, attention, and action before something gives way. For most every child welfare professional (and certainly not exclusive to those in school), the sacrifices most often are made are those that are personal, such as advanced education, self-care activities, time with family and other forms of fulfillment.

Another county agency concern with full-time study is the belief that part-time students are likely to have higher retention rates after graduation. There is absolutely no evidence for this contention. By far the greatest number of complaints and the most impassioned concerns from part-time students are that they are not permitted to engage in full-time study. These students are angry, bitter, under pressure from their families, sleepless at night because of their worries over the children in their caseloads, and some express a determination to resign as soon as their commitments are completed. We have witnessed this during the history of the CWEL program and know from our collaborative work with other IV-E programs across the country that high levels of stress among part-time students is a universal phenomenon. We believe that only authorizing part-time study is a shortsighted and counter-productive agency policy.

Part-time study while working full-time is difficult under the even most ideal circumstances. The competing responsibilities of work, home, and school are encountered by all part-time, working students. This reality is compounded for child welfare students by the demands

of the job (i.e., court dates, unanticipated emergencies, staff shortages). During the past several years, these stressors have continued to be amplified by budget crises and the overall unpredictability of the national political landscape. Additionally, the major changes in Pennsylvania's CPSL law coupled with the implementation of a statewide child welfare information system and a client population besieged by opioid addiction has overloaded the capacity of the child welfare system.

As a primarily rural state, Pennsylvania has many counties with a low population density. The size of the county agency workforce ranges from 700 in the most populated urban area to a workforce of four in one rural county. Clearly, in smaller counties a reduction of even one individual in full-time study represents a huge loss for the workforce. Full-time study may not be feasible. For part-time enrollment to be viable and more satisfying for participants, both counties and schools need to be flexible with scheduling and provide enhanced supports to assist employees/students in the balancing of multiple responsibilities. This is a necessary workforce investment.

On-line degree programs are often viewed as a solution for decreasing the stress associated with part-time study. While offering accessibility, on-line coursework of quality and merit is both rigorous and time-consuming. Students and agency administrators must be careful of the misperception that on-line course work is synonymous with no disruption to work responsibilities or to family life. Field placements are required and synchronous courses involve the same designated meeting time as in-person classes. There is often little flexibility regarding due dates and completion of required assignments. A small pilot study conducted with CWEL students enrolled in an on-line child welfare course found that although the students valued the convenience of the on-line option, they missed the interpersonal connection with their faculty and peers and would have preferred face-to-face contact.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Child Welfare Education and Research Programs (2017, November). *Ready to learn? An analysis of online education and training*. University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work.

Administratively, only full-time students may be used by the University in generating the substantial matching funds it contributes to balance the project's budget. The CWEL program began as a largely full-time program. In the 2017-2018 academic year, nearly one-half (45%) of the newly admitted students were part-time. This serves to potentially reduce the total number of students who can participate, reduces the federal contribution to the program, and increases the state matching funds required.

Another concern which all four partners must constantly struggle with is differences in policies or requirements. With personnel policies differing across county agencies, CWEB and CWEL students in the same classroom may be subject to contrasting requirements when compared to their program peers. Curricular requirements or academic calendars among the schools may differ enough that students from the same county (but not attending the same school) also have contrasting requirements.

The CWEB and CWEL faculty are keenly aware of these differences and seek to assist our partners in being aware of alternative approaches that might be helpful. But in the final analysis, uniformity is not the goal. These are not seen as fairness issues. As long as the Title IV-E regulations are being followed, the effort has been to allow for local conditions and needs to guide local decision-making. This is true for county agencies and among schools of social work. Workers in some counties are employed under union conditions. Others are not. Small counties face somewhat different personnel issues than larger ones. Some counties enjoy a relatively stable workforce with very few open positions; others are understaffed. Child welfare salaries vary across the state. Counties operate under a range of governance structures (commissioners, mayors, and county executives) that exert a strong influence on policies and procedures for the human services workforce.

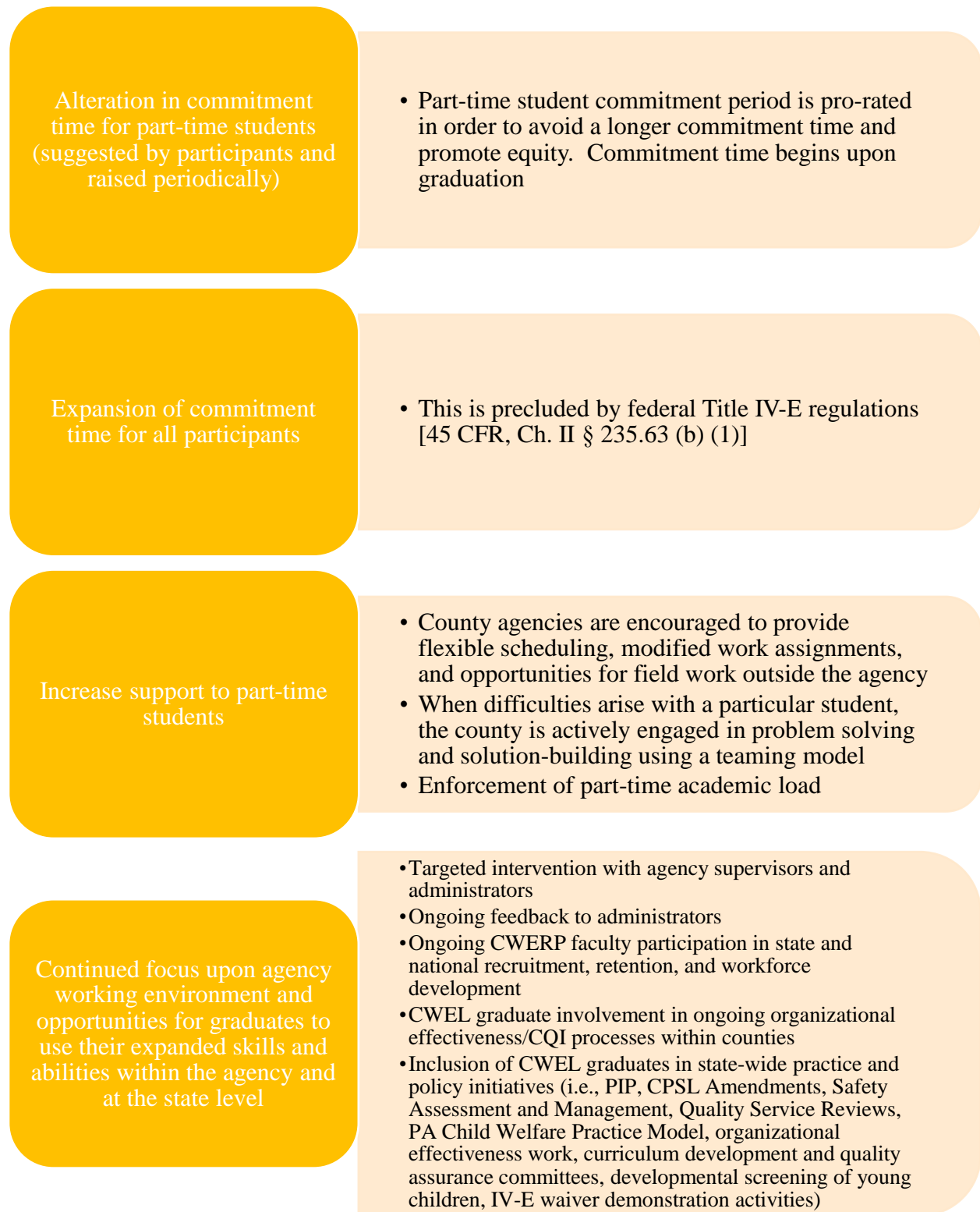
College or university calendars may control social work department or school schedules. The number of child welfare students in a given school has an effect on the number of child welfare

courses that can be offered. Minimum enrollment targets are established that determine whether a particular course can run in a given term or not. Some schools or departments of social work operate under strict operational policies that are controlled by a centralized university administration that determines which courses can be offered, in what format, and how often they can be placed on the academic calendar. Consequently, students and others who observe some differences are quite correct and refer to a diversity that is neither possible nor desirable to control centrally. It is always the goal of the CWEB and CWEL programs to provide:

1. Easy access to the programs for trainees, counties, and schools;
2. Equitable distribution of resources that assures as many schools and counties have the opportunity to participate as possible;
3. Streamlined administrative procedures and timely reimbursements;
4. Strict observation of Title IV-E regulations;
5. Full disclosure of all aspects of the program's operation among the partners and to the public;
6. As little interference as possible with selection of trainees and implementation models by counties and with schools in their selection and admissions processes;
7. Recognitions of the achievements and contributions of our students;
8. Recommendations for workforce improvement.

Suggestions for quality improvement and our action plan for the CWEL program are summarized on the following pages. Similar to the CWEB program, some suggestions are new, while others are ongoing or have been addressed. All are noted here.

## Figure 22. CWEL Suggested Improvements and Progress





Supervision and mentorship of  
CWEB program participants

- CWEL graduates are encouraged to provide supervision and mentoring to CWEB students/graduates at their county agency
- County agency directors are encouraged to utilize CWEL graduates as field instructors, task supervisors, and mentors to CWEBs

Permission for students to major  
in administration or macro  
practice

- Students in a current administrative or managerial position are permitted to pursue an administrative or macro track. Those in direct service positions must focus on direct practice. This policy is in keeping with federal expectation that trainees are being prepared for best practice in that aspect of IV-E services to which they are assigned by the agency
- Students may take administration courses as electives; those approved for macro study are encourage to take practice courses

Increase in full-time student  
enrollment

- Counties are encouraged to permit full-time enrollment and hire replacement staff using the reimbursement received for the salary and benefits of the school trainee

Inclusion of advanced level child  
welfare coursework in school  
curricula, particularly in  
evidence-informed and  
evidenced-based practices

- Ongoing curricular consultation to schools
- Provision of technical assistance
- Offering of courses targeted toward effective family engagement and teaming practices, motivational interviewing skills, enhanced assessment, and evidence based practices
- Inclusion of trauma-informed care principles in child welfare curricula
- Continued refinement of child welfare curricula

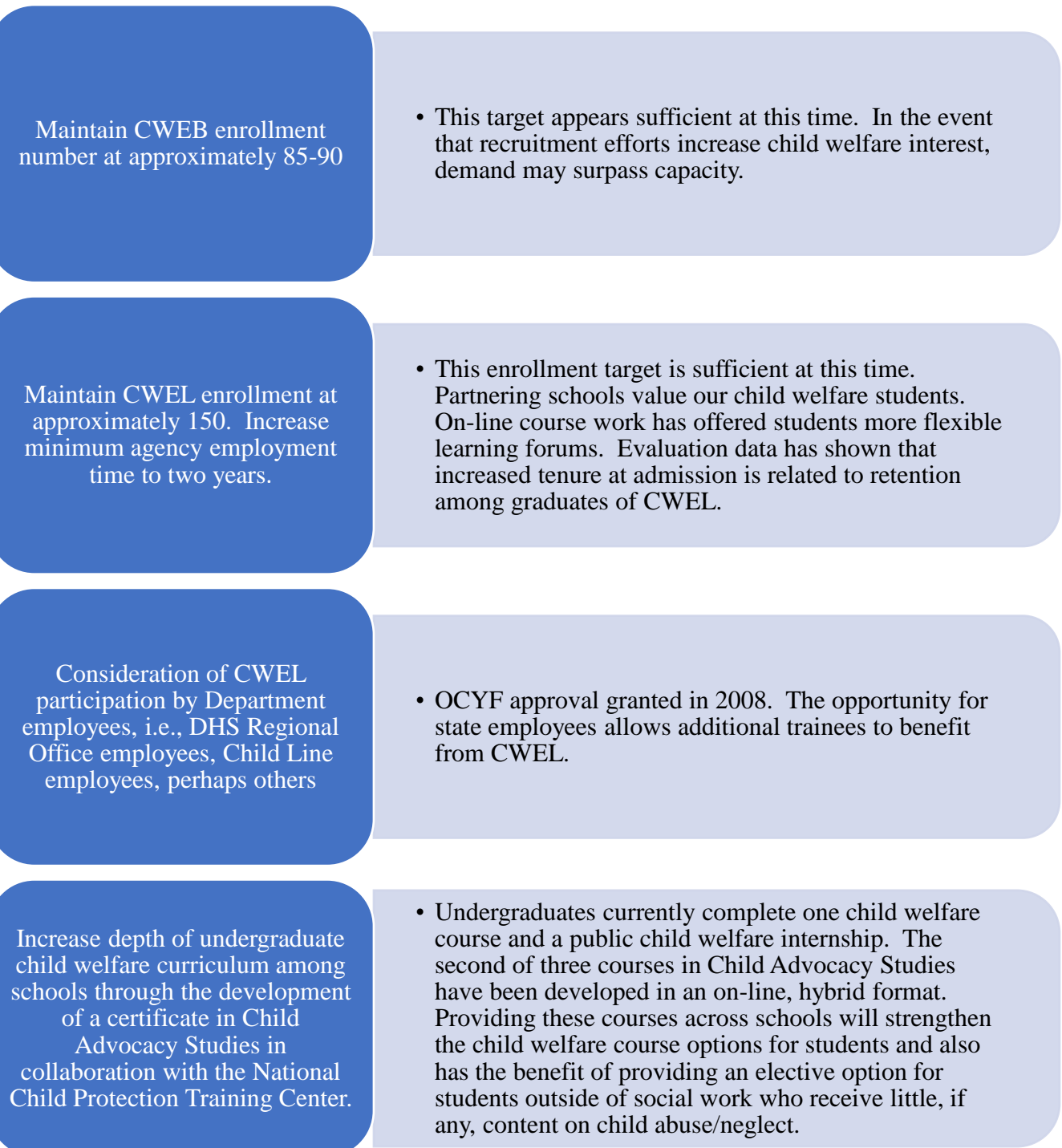
Enhance involvement of  
graduates in state-level policy  
and practice initiatives

- Efforts will continue to be directed toward linking graduates to statewide practice improvement initiatives
- PA's CWDP, legislative and practice changes to CPSL, implementation of Sex Trafficking & prudent parenting legislation, and involvement in the CFSR Round 3/PIP provide significant opportunities for graduates to become involved in high-level activities impacting the child welfare system
- Increase and sustain efforts to better integrate the CWEL and CWRC programs

## **Recommendations**

We are committed to continuous quality improvement and understand that no successful program is static. Areas for future consideration for both programs are summarized below.

### **Figure 23. Overall Recommendations and Planning**



Add an additional component to the CWEL program in order to recruit new county employees. These persons would never have worked in a county CYS before, but would be trained and would have the same length of work commitment as that currently required of CWEL students

- The provision in the federal Title IV-E regulations which permits the training of persons “preparing for [public child welfare] employment” provides this opportunity. A principal advantage is cost savings; the cost to the Department would be the non-federal match. The potential impact on the CWEB program must be carefully considered, however. It is possible that increasing the number of masters-prepared individuals might significantly limit the opportunity for bachelor-level graduates to obtain county employment. See 45 CFR, Ch. II §235.63 (a).

Consideration of including the fourteen (14) private, accredited undergraduate social work programs in the CWEB consortium.

- Many of the schools presently participating in CWEB have small enrollments. If all of the fourteen additional schools chose to participate, met the requirements, and were approved, the potential would be to approximately double enrollment.
- Although the need among counties for new bachelor-level social work graduates is high, two budgetary challenges complicate what may appear as a relatively simple solution. The cost of expanding the program to additional schools would be borne largely by the Department as the University has little with which to match federal funds in the CWEB program. Tuition and fellowship payments are not subject to indirect costs. Program expansion is an opportunity that does warrant continued discussion.

Inclusion of additional social work degree programs in Pennsylvania as they become fully accredited.

- Increasing the number of schools has allowed for greater student access, reduction in student commuting time, and a reduction in program costs. Several graduate programs have been approved for the CWEL program since its inception, including the University of Pittsburgh’s Bradford campus (2002), Kutztown University (2007), and the joint Millersville-Shippensburg program (2010). East Stroudsburg University will join the CWEB school consortium in the 2018-2019 academic year.
- Many schools have branch campuses, and an increasing number of these campuses have become options for CWEL students. Access to approved child welfare courses and academic oversight is available at these branch campuses.

Participation by CWEB/CWEL graduates in the implementation of practice changes as a result of major revisions to PA’s child abuse laws.

- CWEB and CWEL students remain in an excellent position to support and assume leadership in the judicial and practice changes resulting from amendments to PA’s Child Protective Services Law.

Development of  
CWEB/CWEL  
Advisory Network to  
provide input on  
emerging program  
issues.

- CWEB/CWEL school partners endorsed the development of an advisory network among school faculty, program graduates, county administrators, and CWERP faculty to provide guidance for the programs. Several faculty joined the Resource Steering Committee of the PA Child Welfare Resource Center.

Incorporation of  
trauma-informed  
supervision at the  
county level.

- Current students and graduates speak poignantly about needing supervisory and peer support to manage work-related stress, and of the impact of secondary trauma upon their ability to remain in the field of child welfare. We believe it is critical to address this issue. Revisions to the Supervisor Training Series developed by CWRC have placed increased emphasis on this particular workforce need.

Consideration of a  
doctoral-level child  
welfare education  
option.

- This recommendation can provide an additional evaluation arm for the Department and further our mission of establishing evidence-based child welfare practice across the state. CWERP is in an excellent position to facilitate doctoral education. A reasonable objective over time might be one (1) doctoral student in each of the five (5) schools with a doctoral program. Work commitment issues require detailed discussion among all parties.

Transition support and ongoing connection among CWEB and CWEL graduates.

- All graduates benefit from ongoing connection and support, and coaching is particularly important for CWEB graduates who are new to public child welfare. Additionally, portfolio and resume development is essential. Transition back to the county agency is a distinct issue among CWEL graduates, and is most problematic for those who have been full-time students. Increased attention has been paid to preparing these students for their return to the agency. Greater network support and participation in transition groups for returning students are helpful strategies. All graduates are encouraged to join special workforce or task groups through the PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC). Practice Improvement Specialists from CWRC are assigned to counties throughout the state and actively engage with CWEB/CWEL graduates to provide support and enlist them in practice initiatives. Graduates are able to share their expertise on a statewide level by becoming trainers and/or workgroup members through CWRC.

Reimbursement to counties for 100% of the salaries of full-time students and for fringe benefits at the same level that the Department currently reimburses counties.

- When the CWEL program was initiated, it was decided to reimburse counties for only 95% of full-time students' salaries. It was hypothesized that counties would pass the 5% reduction along to students and this amount in aggregate would be used as part of the non-federal matching funds required under IV-E regulations. However, this approach was quickly abandoned. First, it became evident that federal authorities would classify contributions as "private funds" which are prohibited except under very obtuse rules this approach could not meet. Secondly, a number of counties continued to pay the workers their full salaries even though the counties were reimbursed as only the 95% level. Adding to this is the burden of the very low salaries that so many CWEL students earn. Those students with families find the 5% salary reduction very difficult to endure, and the inability to receive overtime pay while a student also creates a financial change.

Increase the caliber of the PA child welfare workforce at the front door.

- Increase educational requirements for casework positions
- Develop specific county child welfare casework classification within the State Civil Service System
- Continue to advocate at the county, state, and federal level that salaries must be adequate to compensate for the demands and responsibility of public child welfare jobs
- Develop trauma-informed child welfare systems that create a community of support and learning for the workforce, recognizing that supervisors, middle managers and administrators are critical to the retention of front-line staff
- Infuse organizational effectiveness strategies into agencies through CWRC Regional Teams
- Maintain and expand the CWEB and CWEL programs so that advanced education and support for professional development remains a key component of PA's child welfare system.

## **Conclusions**

The faculty and staff of the CWEB and CWEL programs sincerely believe the Department and the counties can rightfully be proud of the continued achievements of our child welfare education programs. Pennsylvania is a leader in workforce development and is fortunate to have an integrated education, training, and practice improvement continuum of programs dedicated to the child welfare system. While we are gratified to be part of this remarkable venture and partnership, we sincerely acknowledge that the contributions of many others are what guide, shape, and sustain these highly acclaimed programs.

The county children and youth service administrators have been unfailingly responsive as individuals, and through their organization, the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators. The Department of Human Services has continued to strongly endorse the CWEB and CWEL programs. We especially thank Teresa Miller, Secretary of the Department of Human Services, and Cathy Utz, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, for their strong support and partnership. We also thank our OCYF Program Monitor, Desiree Weisser, for her thoughtful oversight and steadfast support of our work.

Our academic partners have made major contributions to the success of our programs and that of our students. Admissions, registrations, invoices, graduations, academic schedules, course listings, internships, and dozens of other details must be coordinated and carefully attended. The State System of Higher Education has enabled twelve state universities with accredited undergraduate social work programs to become members of the consortium. The United States Children's Bureau, and especially its Region III office in Philadelphia, has continued its strong support, not least of which is extensive funding of both the CWEB and CWEL programs.

We are proud that the CWEB and CWEL education programs have been recognized as key strengths in Pennsylvania during all three rounds of the federal Child and Family Services Review. Our graduates have assumed leadership roles in practice initiatives throughout the state and actively contribute to shaping the future of child welfare services on the local, state, and national

level. Graduates are providing direct service, serving as managers and supervisors, mentoring junior colleagues, contributing to training curricula, conducting quality improvement initiatives, participating in child fatality/near fatality reviews, and working as child welfare trainers and/or consultants. We are proud that an increasing number of our child welfare graduates have assumed teaching roles in Schools of Social Work throughout the state of Pennsylvania, many as adjunct professors, others as part-time clinical faculty, and some as Directors of Social Work programs.

Finally, no amount of contracts, agreements, budgets, reports, curricula, faculty or any other of the myriad of academic and administrative components of this project could produce a successful outcome without exceptional students. The vast majority of the CWEB and CWEL students selected to participate in these programs have been exceptional achievers academically, as well as leaders among their peers. They have distinguished themselves through their dedication to working with society's most vulnerable children and families, and in circumstances that involve daily exposure to upsetting situations and overwhelming crises. As always, we salute them with sincere admiration. The students' investments, risks, energy, vision, and contributions to the child welfare system are more responsible than anything else for the continued success of the CWEB and CWEL programs in the final analysis.

A special note of gratitude goes to the CWEB/CWEL team members who have made countless contributions to our program operations, and particularly toward the compilation and review of this annual progress report and evaluation. Your work is very much appreciated.

Edoukou Aka-Ezoua	Marlo Perry
Yodit Betru	Mary Beth Rauktis
Laura Borish	Lynda Rose
Cynthia Bradley-King	Michael Schrecengost
Joe DiPasqua	Liz Winter
Yvonne Hamm	Rachel Winters





## Appendices

- A. [Table I: Participating School Programs](#)
- B. [CWEB and CWEL School Participation Map](#)
- C. [Table II: University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Courses, 2017-2018](#)
- D. [Table III: Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEB Schools, 2017-2018](#)
- E. [Table IV: Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools, 2017-2018](#)
- F. [CWEB County Participation Map, 2001-2018](#)
- G. [CWEB Overview, 2001-2018](#)
- H. [CWEB Leadership Development Series](#)
- I. [CWEL Overview, 1995-2018](#)
- J. [CWEL Applicant Pool and Admissions: 1995-2018 Academic Years](#)
- K. [Program Evaluation Data Tables](#)
- L. [List of Supplemental CWEB and CWEL Materials Available On-Line](#)
- M. [Child Welfare Research Sampler](#)
- N. [Child Welfare Education and Research Programs, CWEB/CWEL Faculty and Staff](#)



# **Appendix A**

## Table I

### Participating School Programs

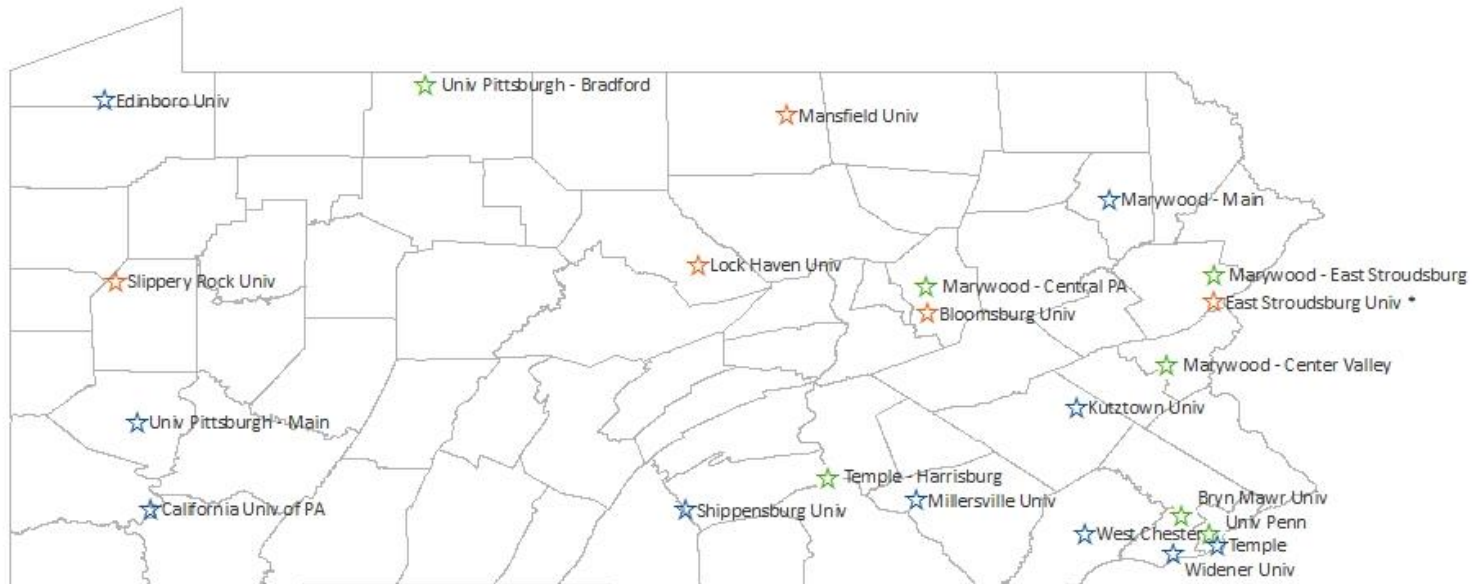
**Table I**  
**Participating School Programs**

School	MSACS	CSWE	CWEB Only	CWEB/CWEL	CWEL Only	Entry into Program
Bloomsburg University	2018-2019	BSW 6/2024	X			2001
Bryn Mawr College	2019-2020	MSW 6/2024			X	1995
California University	2019-2020	BSW 2/2025 MSW 10/2025		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2004
Edinboro University	2023-2024	BSW 10/2021 MSW 10/2018		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2006
Kutztown University	2017-2018	BSW 10/2026 MSW 10/2026		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2007
Lock Haven University	2020-2021	BSW 6/2024	X			2001
Mansfield University	2021-2022	BSW 2/2022	X			2001
Marywood University	2025-2026	BSW 10/2024 MSW 10/2024		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995
Millersville University	2019-2020	BSW 6/2019 MSW 2/2022		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2010
Shippensburg University	2018-2019	BSW 6/2026 MSW 2/2022		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2010
Slippery Rock University	2020-2021	BSW 2/2022	X			2001
Temple University	2019-2020	BSW 2/2023 MSW 2/2023		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995
University of Pennsylvania	2023-2024	MSW 6/2025			X	1995
University of Pittsburgh	2021-2022	BSW 6/2021 MSW 6/2021		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995
West Chester University	2020-2021	BSW 10/2019 MSW 10/2021		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2001
Widener University	2025-2026	BSW 2/2021 MSW 2/2021		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995

# **Appendix B**

## **CWEB and CWEL School Participation Map**

## Child Welfare Education and Research Programs Participating Schools



### School Program

★ CWEB Only    ★ CWEL Only    ★ CWEB and CWEL

Updated: 10/09/2017

\* First cohort of East Stroudsburg University CWEB students to start Fall 2018.

# Appendix C

## Table II

University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Courses  
2017-2018

**Table II**

**University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Courses**

**Fall Term 2017**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Children and Families at Risk	26
Child and Family Advocacy	10
Child and Family Policy	13
Child Welfare Services	14
Direct Practice with Children	15
Intimate Partner Violence	16
Issues in Child Maltreatment	17
Social Work with Drug & Alcohol Abuse (two sections)	42
Social Work Practice and Traumatic Stress (two section)	35

**Spring Term 2018**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Children and Families at Risk (two sections)	34
Child and Family Policy (three sections)	53
Child Welfare Services	33
Clinical Social Work With African-American Families	09
Social Work with Drug and Alcohol Abuse	25
Social Work Practice with Families	19
Social Work Practice and Traumatic Stress	25

**Summer Term 2018**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Children and Families at Risk	10
Social Work with Drug & Alcohol Abuse	09
Social Work Practice with Families	08

# Appendix D

## Table III

Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of  
Approved CWEB Schools  
2017-2018



**Table III**  
**Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings**  
**of**  
**Approved CWEB Schools for 2017-2018**

School	Course Title
Bloomsburg University	Child Welfare
California University	Child Welfare
East Stroudsburg University	Child Welfare Services
Edinboro University	Child Welfare Services
Kutztown University	Child Welfare and Social Work Practice
Lock Haven University	Child Welfare
Mansfield University	Child Welfare
Marywood University	Children's Rights and Societal Responses
Millersville University	Social Work and Child Welfare
Shippensburg University	Introduction to Child Welfare
Slippery Rock University	Introduction to Child Welfare
Temple University	Child Welfare Policy
University of Pittsburgh	Child Welfare Services <sup>33</sup>
West Chester University	Child Welfare Practice and Policy
Widener University	Families at Risk

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<sup>33</sup> In addition to the undergraduate course, *Child Welfare Services*, University of Pittsburgh undergraduate students are able to register for the graduate courses *Child and Family Advocacy*, *Child and Family Policy*, and *Children and Families at Risk* (shown in Table II, [Appendix C](#)) as electives, with the permission of the BASW Program Director and the students' academic advisor.

# Appendix E

Table IV  
Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved  
CWEL Schools  
2017-2018

**Table IV****Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools for 2017-2018****(University of Pittsburgh is shown in Table II)**

<b>School</b>	<b>Course Title</b>
<b>Bryn Mawr College, Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research</b>	Child Welfare Policy, Practice and Research
	Clinical Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents
	Clinical Social Work and Substance Abuse
	Clinical Social Work and Trauma
	Family Therapy: Theory and Practice
	Child & Family Integrative Seminar
<b>California University, Department of Social Work and Gerontology</b>	Practice with Children and Youth in Rural and Small Town Environments
	Social Work with Substance Abuse/Addictions
	Advanced Practice in Child Welfare
<b>Edinboro University, Department of Social Work</b>	Clinical Practice for Families and Children in Child Welfare
	Addictions
	Trauma Theory and Treatment
<b>Kutztown University, Department of Social Work</b>	Interventions with Substance Abusing Populations
	Maltreatment in the Family
	Child Permanence
	Practice of Family Group Decision Making
	Social Work Crisis Intervention with Families
<b>Marywood University, School of Social Work</b>	Critical Issues in Chemical Dependence
	Child Welfare Practice and Services
	Family Focused Social Work Practice
	Social Work Perspectives on Trauma
	Social Work Practice with Children
<b>Millersville/Shippensburg Universities, Department of Social Work/Department of Social Work and Gerontology</b>	Child Welfare
	Children and Youth at Risk
	Addictions
	Behavioral Healthcare

School	Course Title
<b>The University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work</b>	Under review: Mental Health Challenges in Childhood & Adolescence.
	Policies for Children and Their Families
	Practice with Families
	Practice with At-Risk Youth
	Practice with Children and Adolescents
	Substance Abuse Interventions
	Social Work Practice & Trauma
	Clinical & Macro CW Practice
	Integrative Seminar in CW
<b>Temple University, School of Social Administration</b>	Alcohol and Substance Abuse
	Assessment and the DSM-IV
	Child and Family Human Behavior in the Social Environment
	Child and Family Policy
	Emotional Disorders of Children and Adolescents
<b>West Chester University, Graduate Department of Social Work</b>	Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
	Child Welfare: A Resilience and Trauma-Informed Approach
	Substance Use Disorders
<b>Widener University, Center for Social Work Education</b>	Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
	Biographical Timeline
	Current Issues in Child Welfare Practice and Policy
	Social Work Practice with Addicted Persons and Their Families
	Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents
	Social Work with Urban Youth
	Children & Families at Risk

# **Appendix F**

CWEB County Participation Map

2001-2018



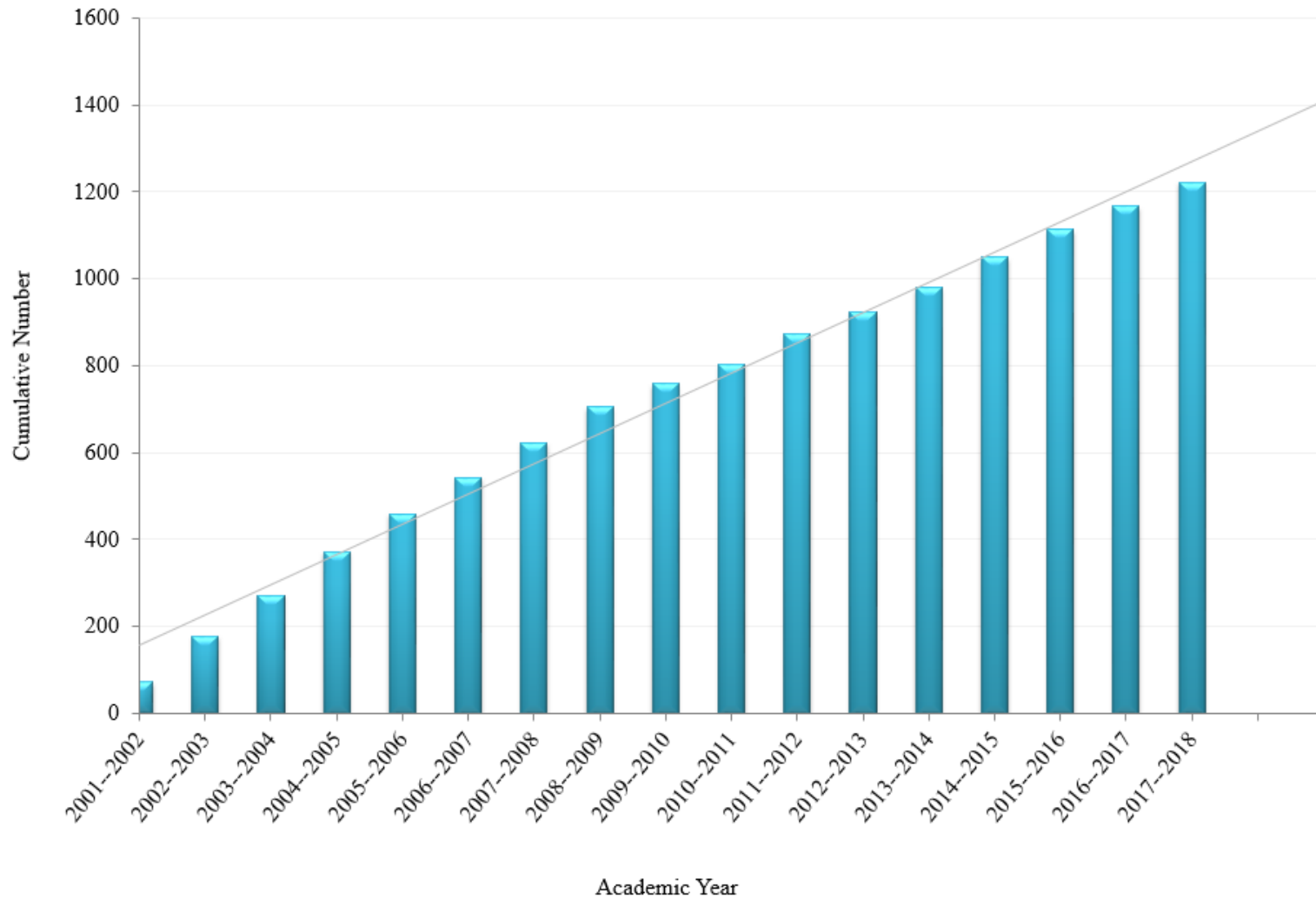
# Appendix G

CWEB Overview

2001-2018

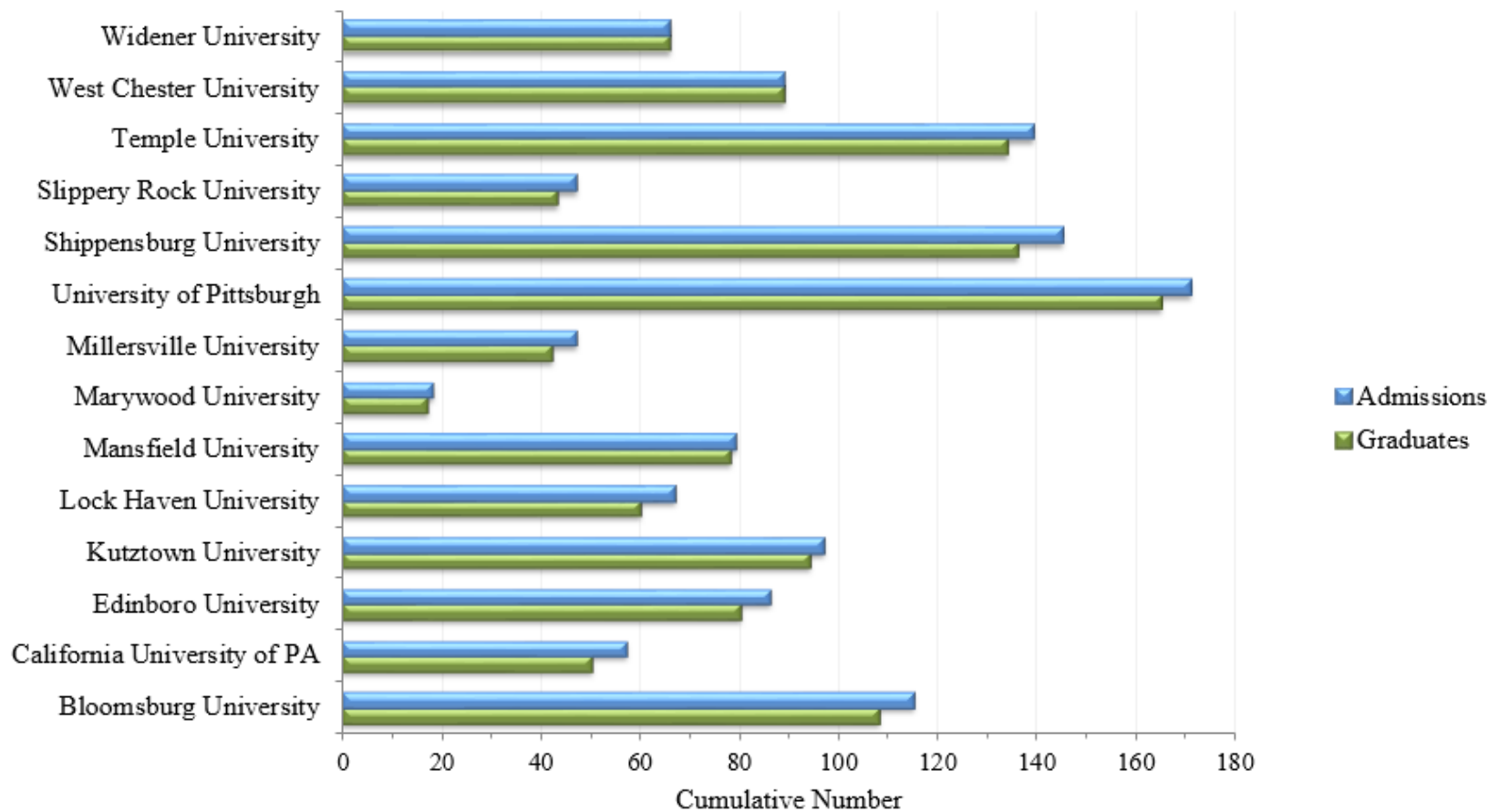
Charts 1-6

**Chart 1**  
**Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates**  
**2001-2018 New Admissions (Projected Through 2020)**

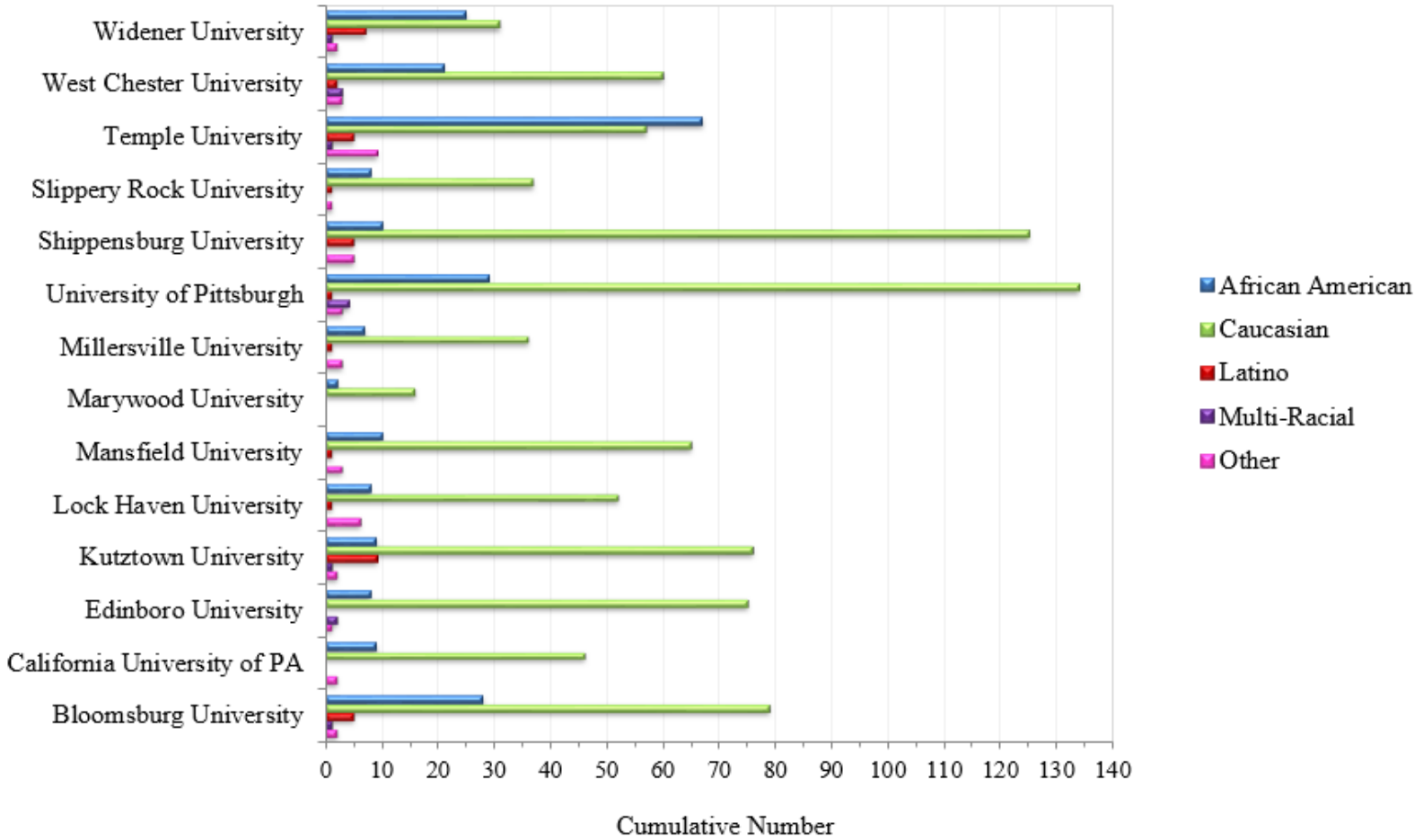




**Chart 2**  
**Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates**  
**2001-2018**  
**Student Admissions & Graduations**

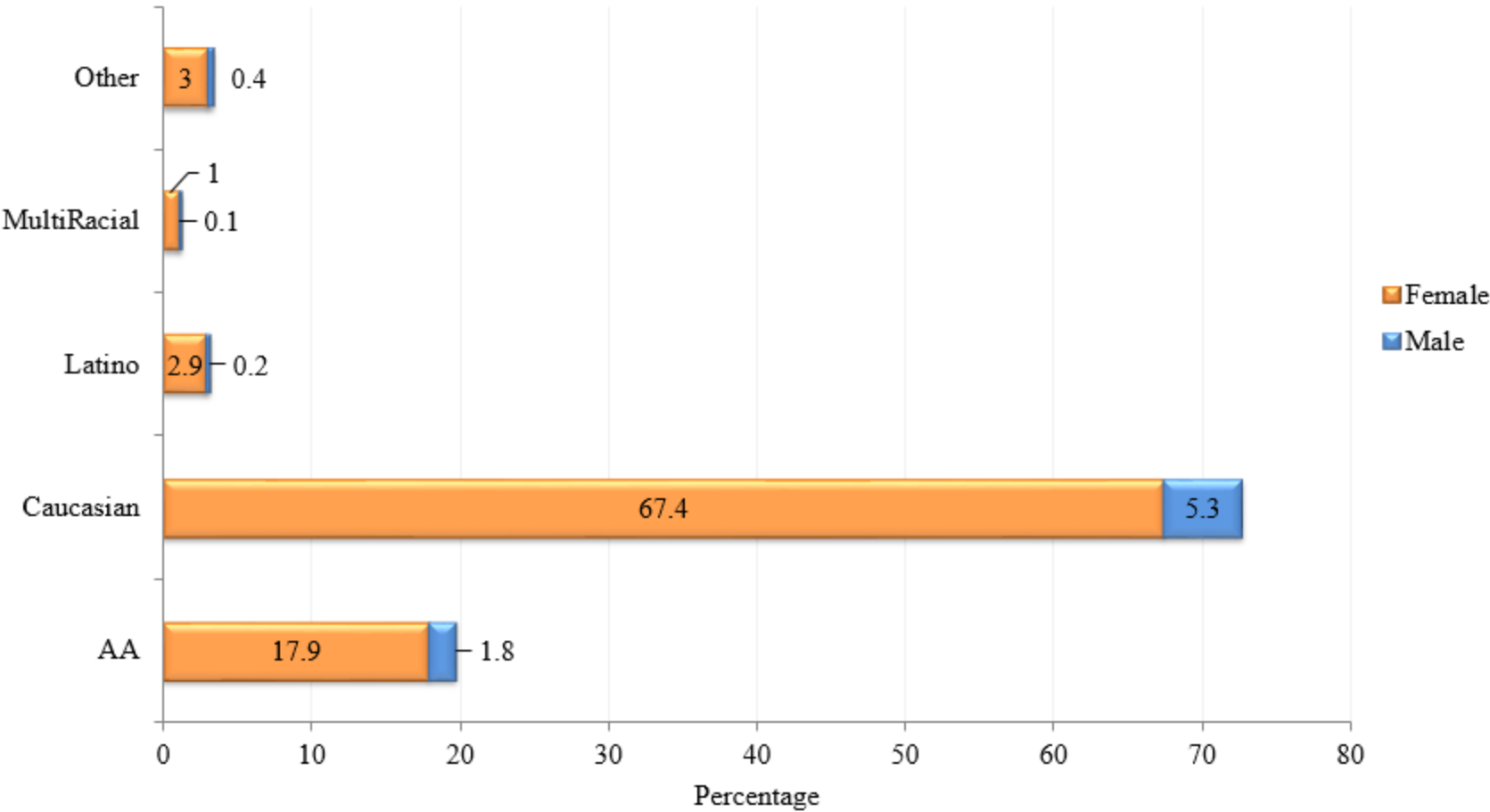


**Chart 3**  
**Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates**  
**2001-2018 Admissions by School and Ethnicity**



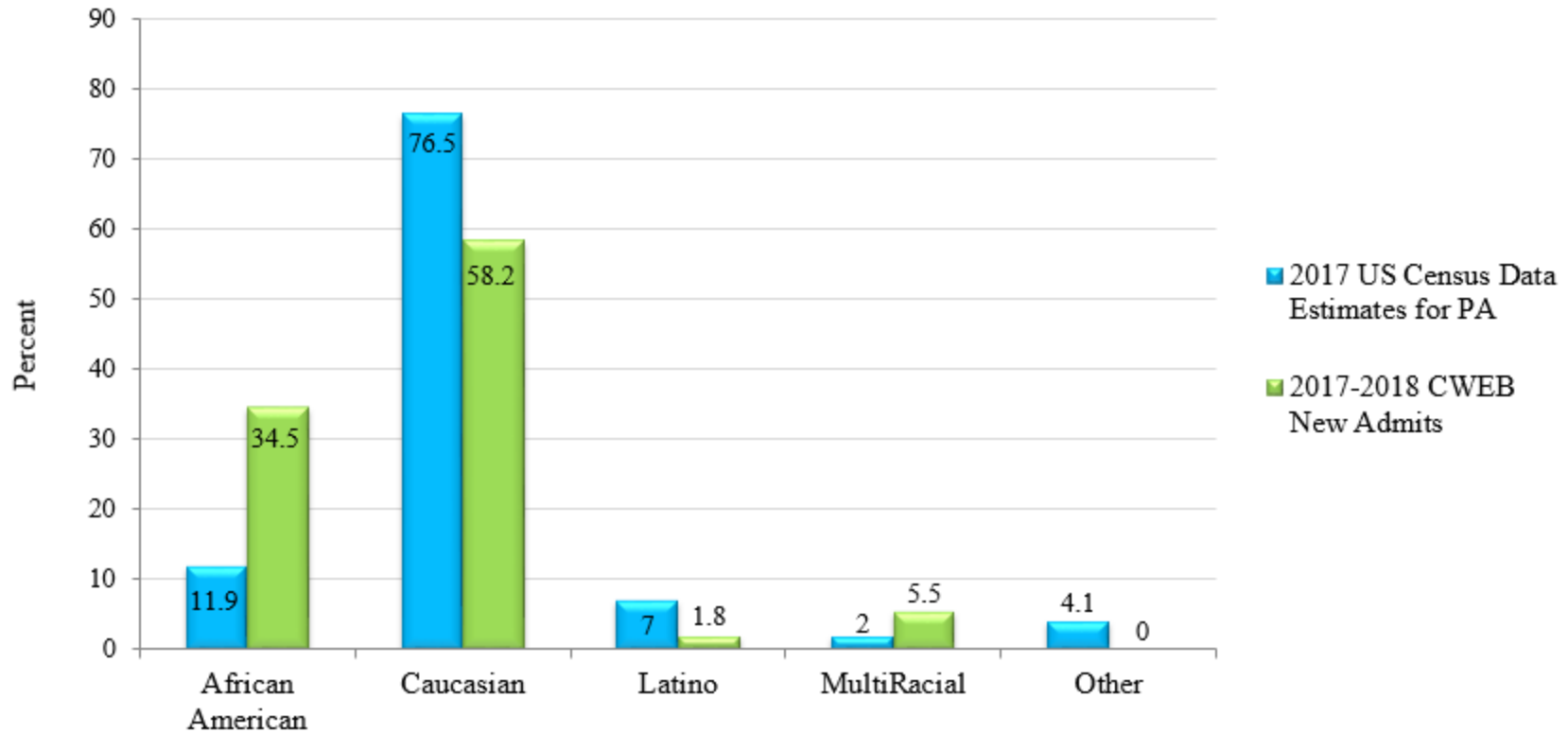
Note: Latino category includes Hispanics of any race

**Chart 4**  
**Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates**  
**2001-2018 Admission Demographics**



Note: Latino category includes Hispanics of any race

**Chart 5**  
**Ethnicity Comparison**  
**2017 US Census Data Estimates for Pennsylvania and**  
**Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates 2017-2018 New Admissions**



Note: Latino category includes Hispanics of any race.



# **Appendix H**

CWEB Leadership Development Series

**CWEB Leadership Development Series:**  
***Trauma-Informed Principled Leadership***

A series of educational modules incorporating the five practices of exemplary leadership defined by Kouzes & Posner<sup>34</sup> are combined with the application of trauma education, self-care, and cultural competence skills to provide CWEB students with a model of professional development that supplements traditional, classroom-based instruction and transfer of learning in the field. Educational modules are completed in five monthly sessions that include readings, videos, discussion blogs, experiential exercises, and discussion groups.

Module I	Introduction to Trauma-Informed Leadership: Model the Way
Module II	Inspire a Shared Vision
Module III	Challenge the Process
Module IV	Enable Others to Act: Experiential Exercise
Module V	Encourage the Heart

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<sup>34</sup> Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Wiley.  
Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (2012). *The leadership challenge workbook* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Wiley.

# **Appendix I**

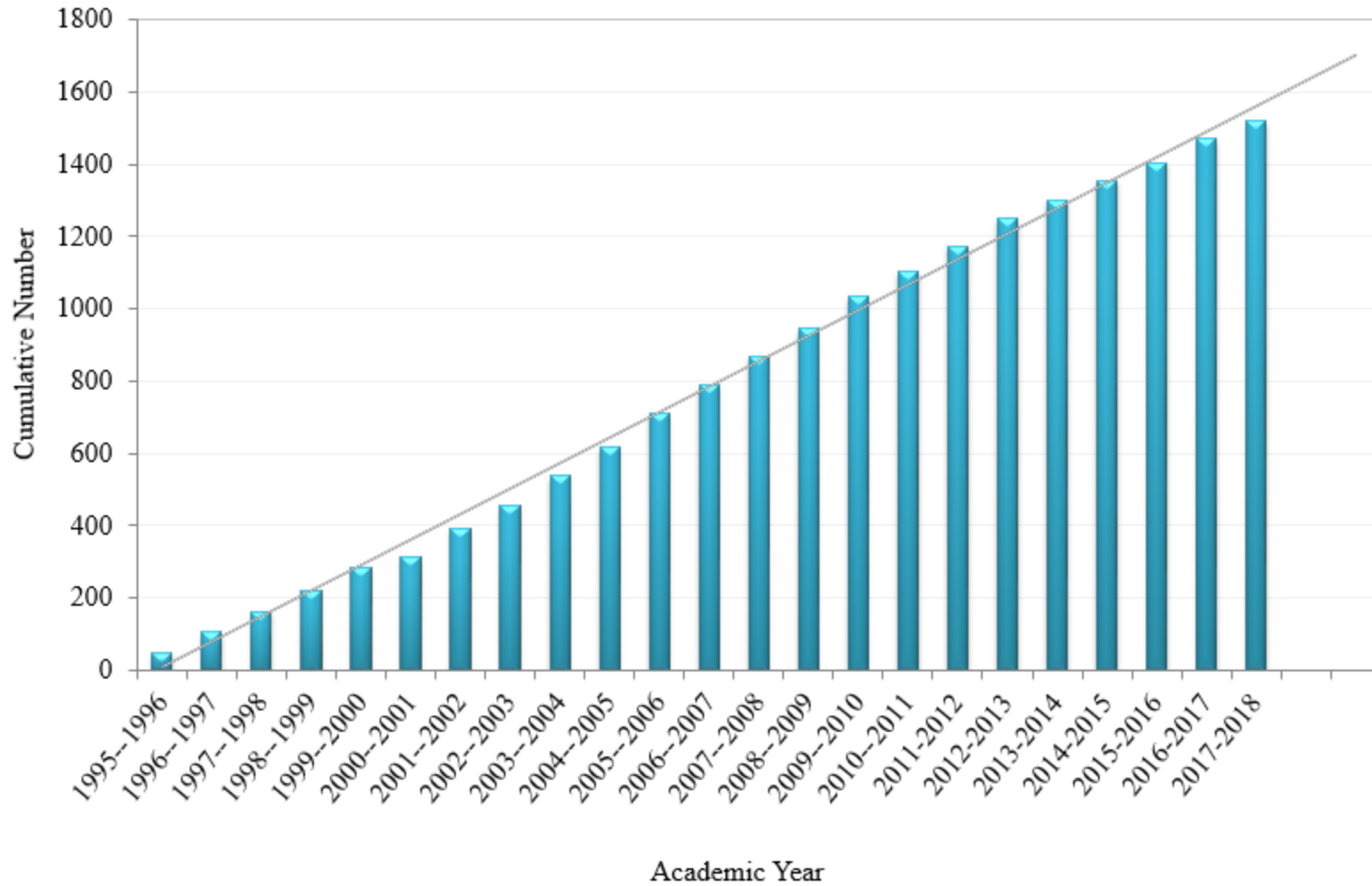
CWEL Overview

1995 - 2018

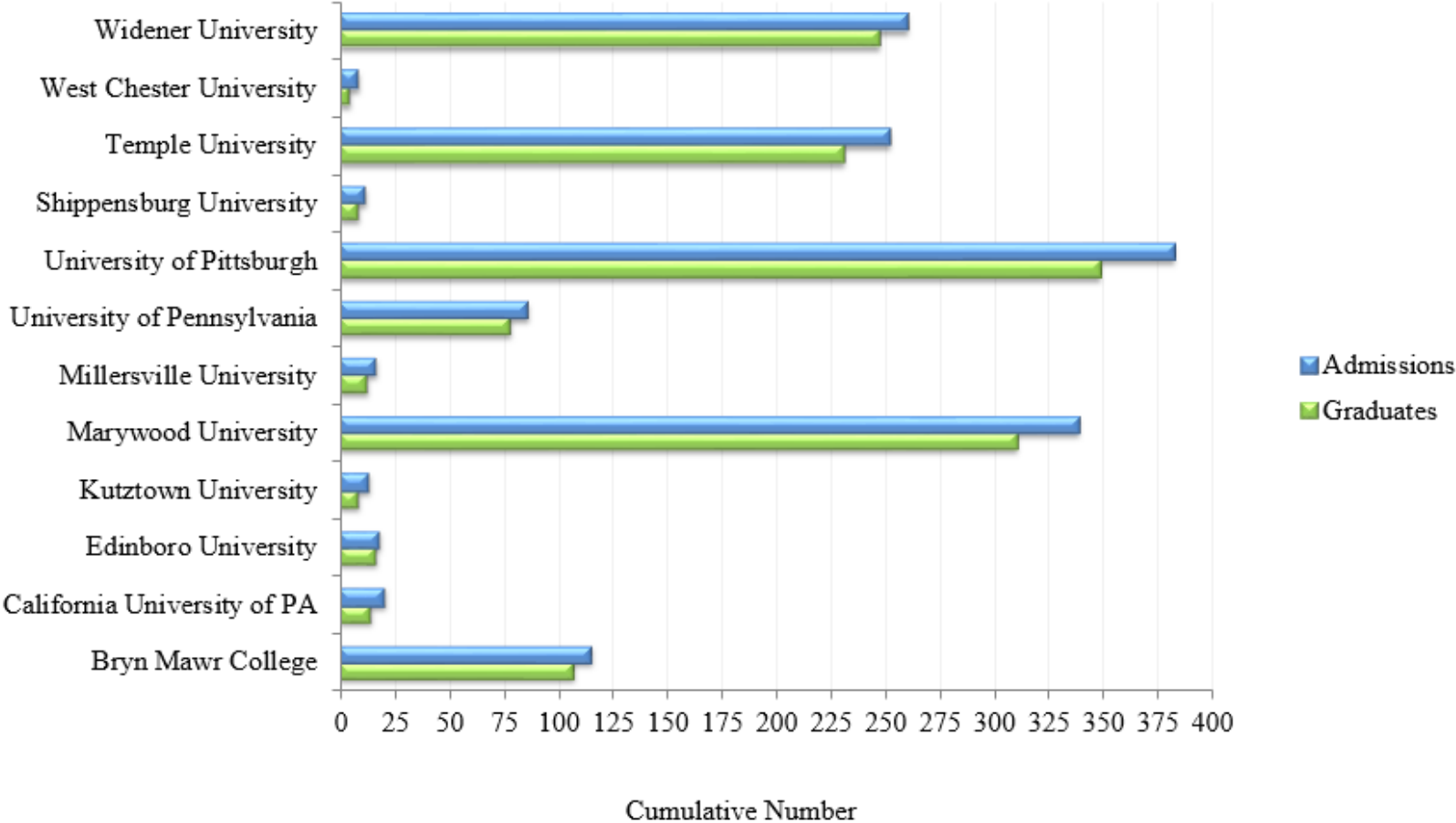
Charts 1-8



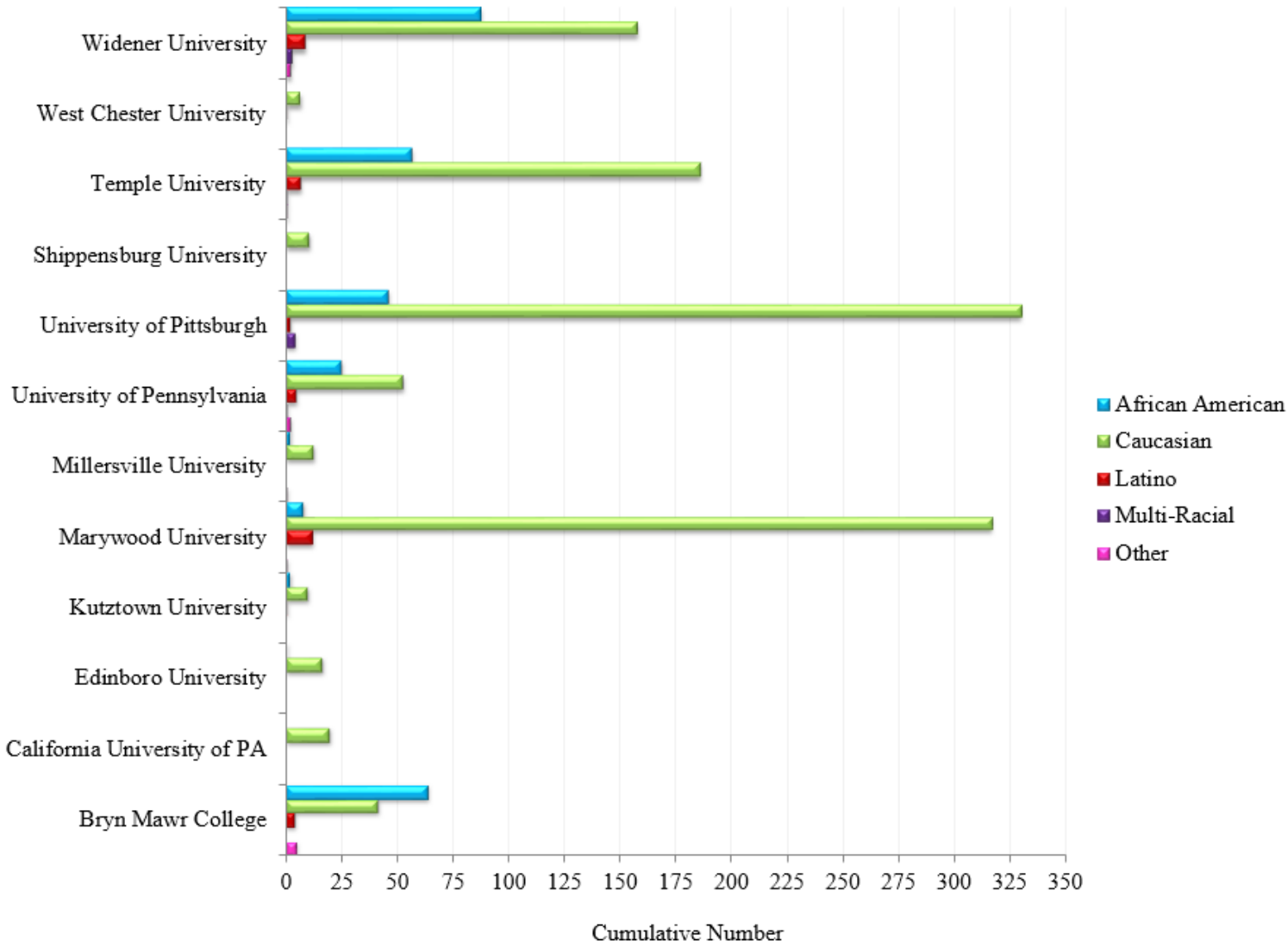
**Chart I**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995-2018 New Admissions (Projected Through 2020)**



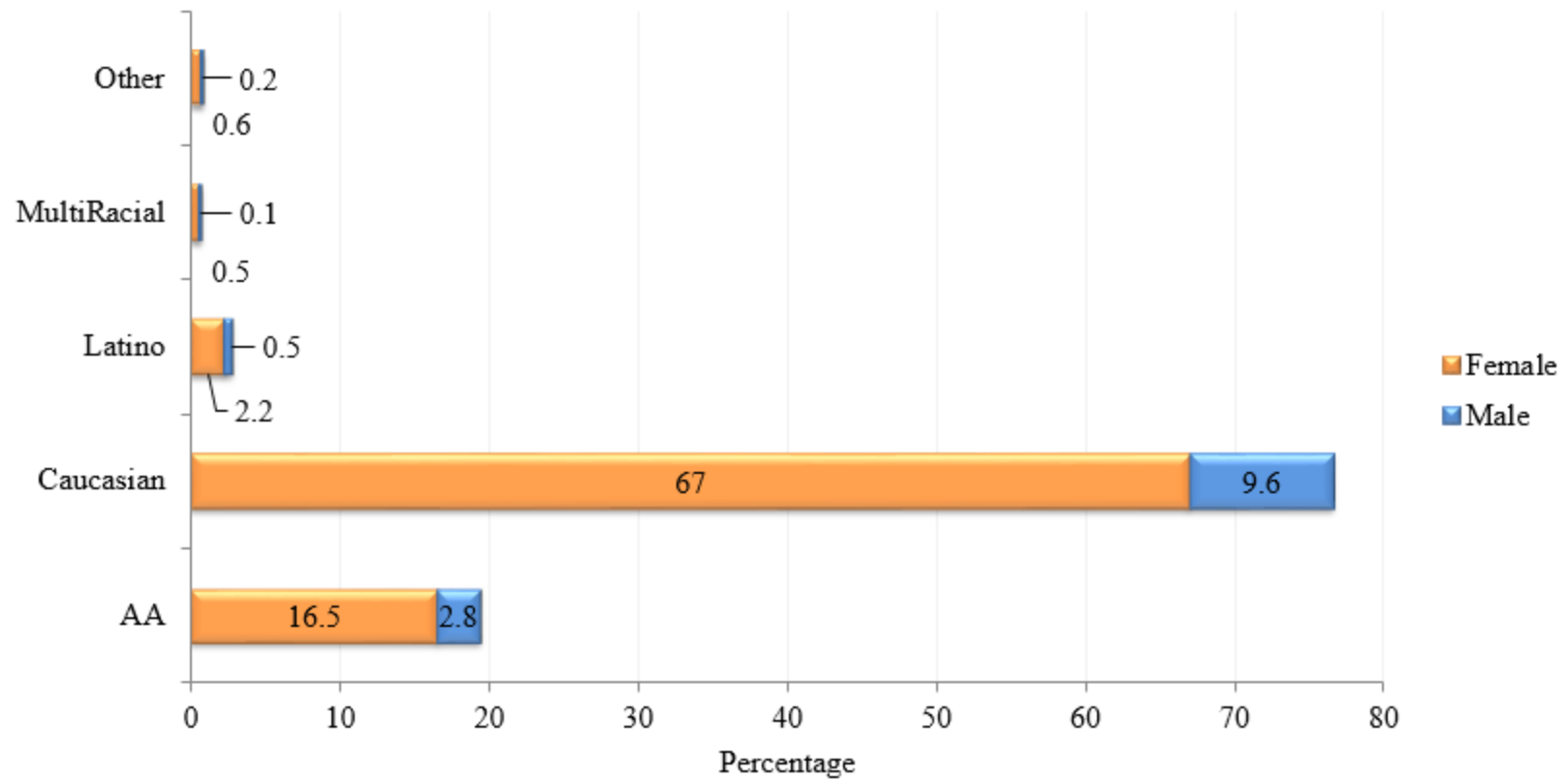
**Chart 2**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995 - 2018**  
**Student Admissions and Graduations**



**Chart 3**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995-2018 Admissions by School and Ethnicity**

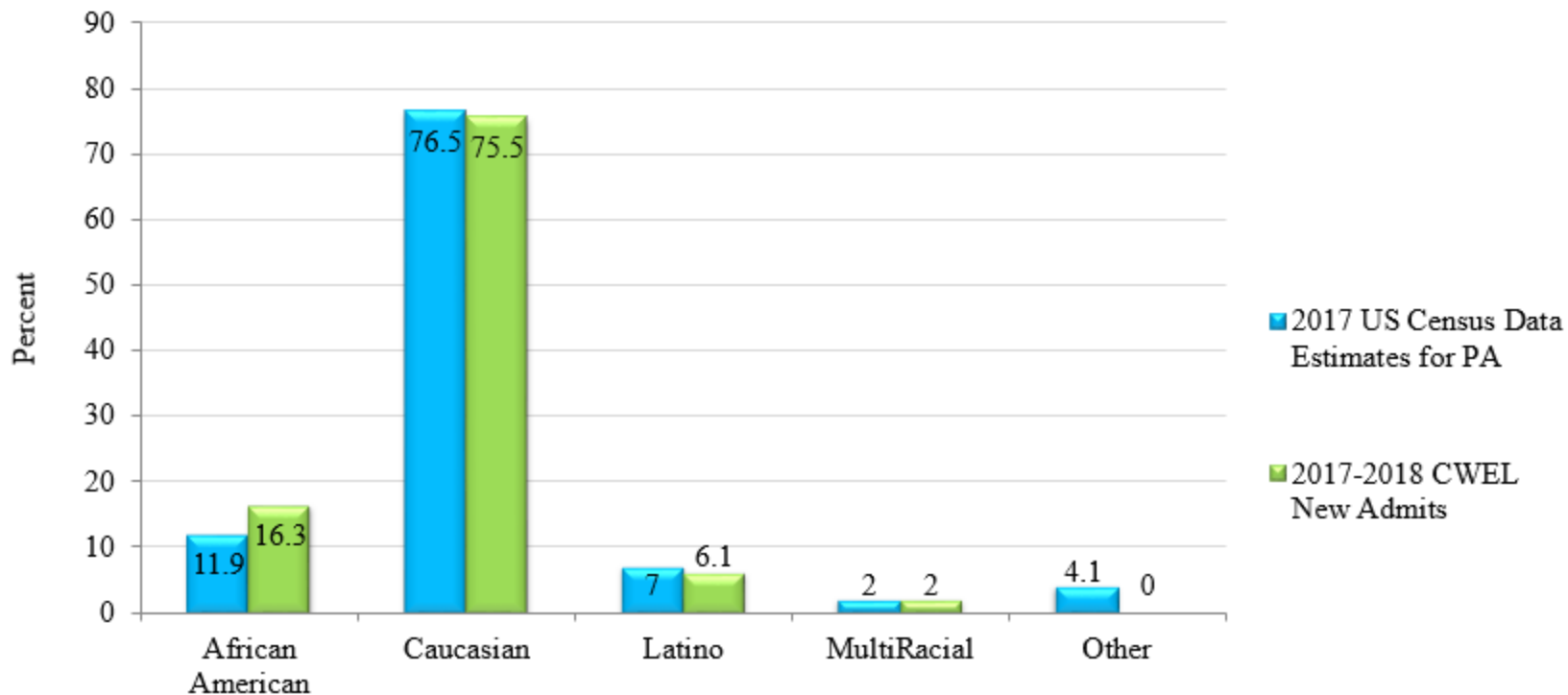


**Chart 4**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995-2018 Admission Demographics**



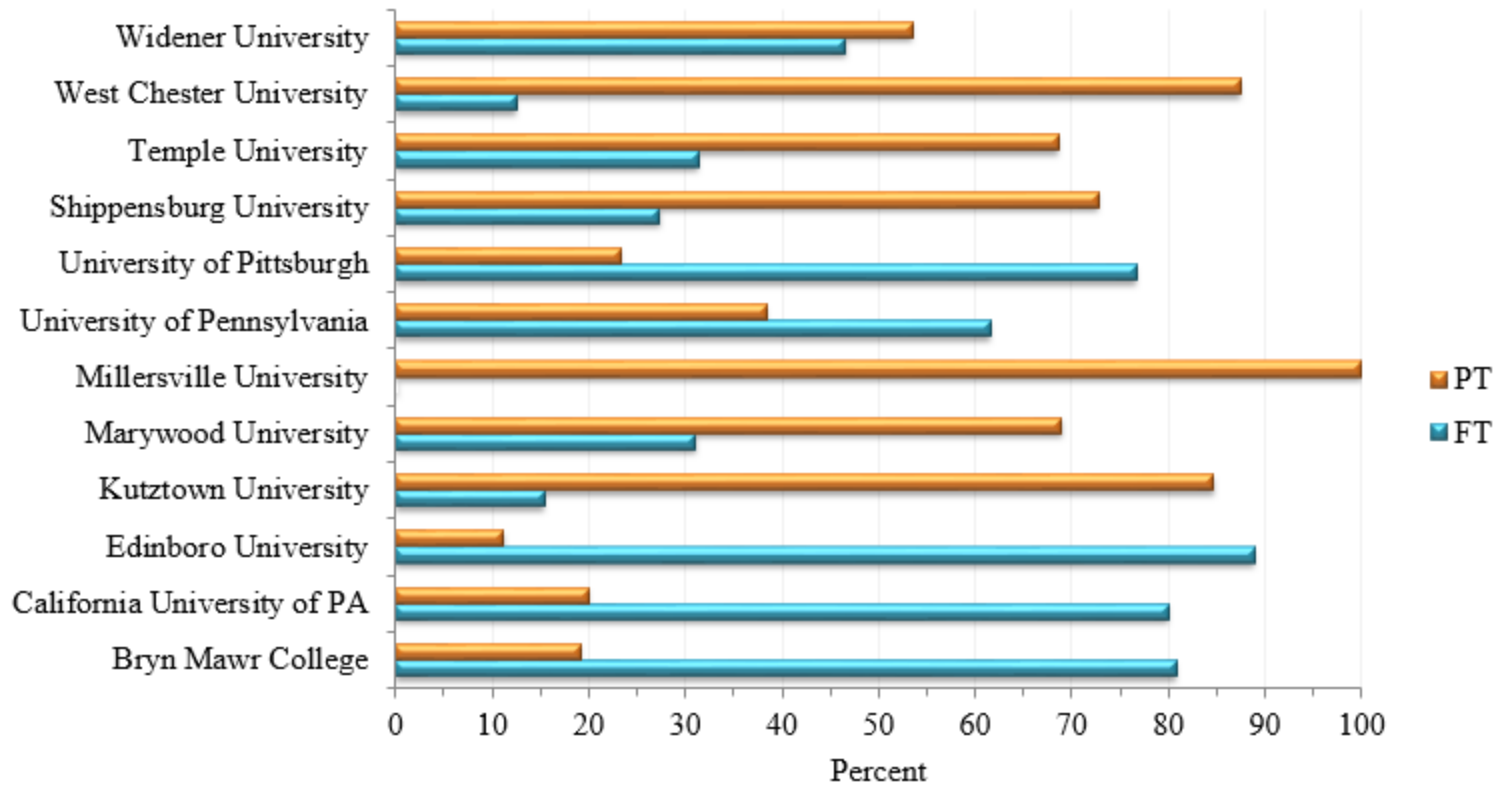
Note: Latino category includes Hispanics of any race

**Chart 5**  
**Ethnicity Comparison**  
**2017 US Census Data Estimates for Pennsylvania and**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership 2017-2018 New Admissions**

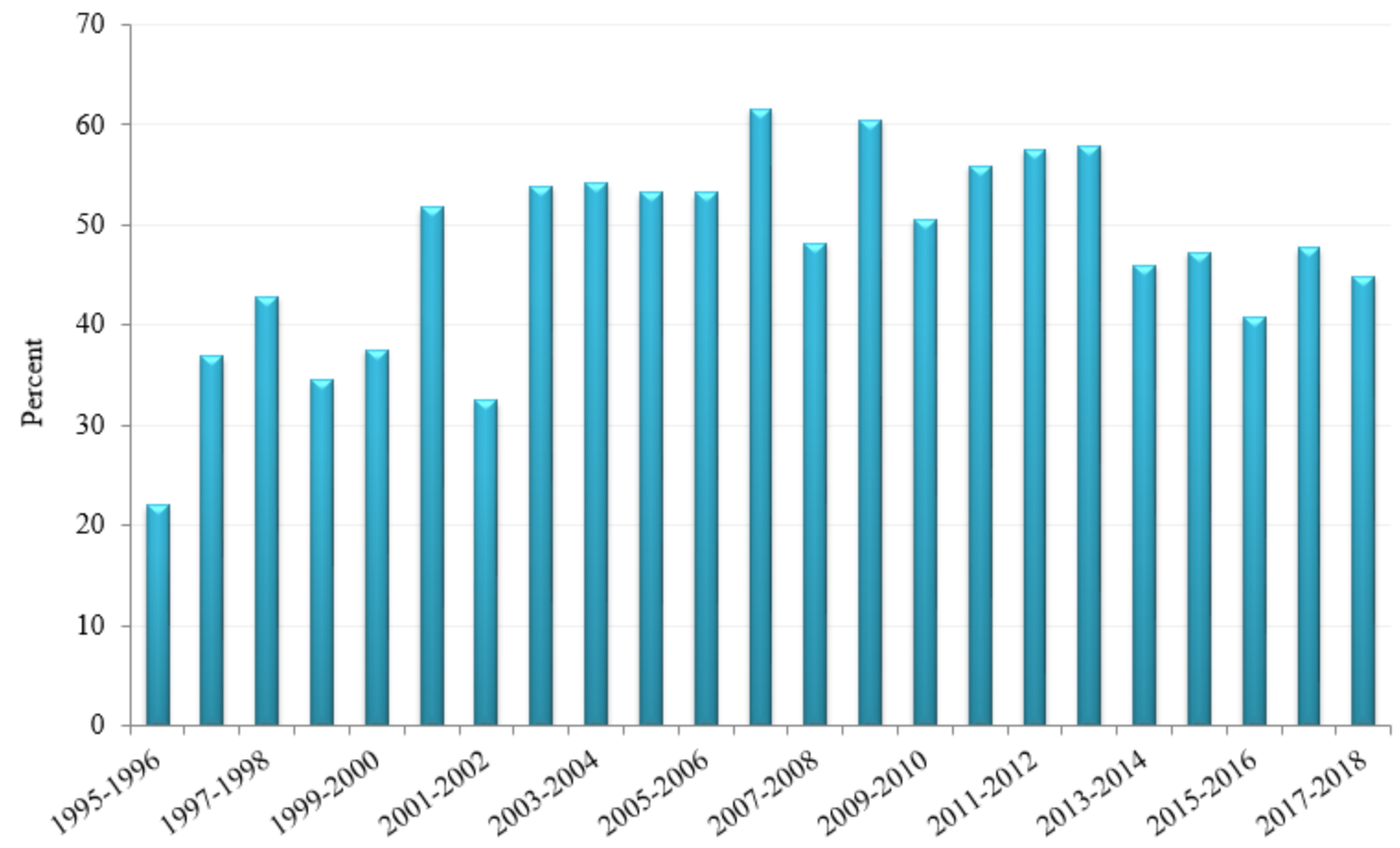


Note: Latino category includes Hispanics of any race

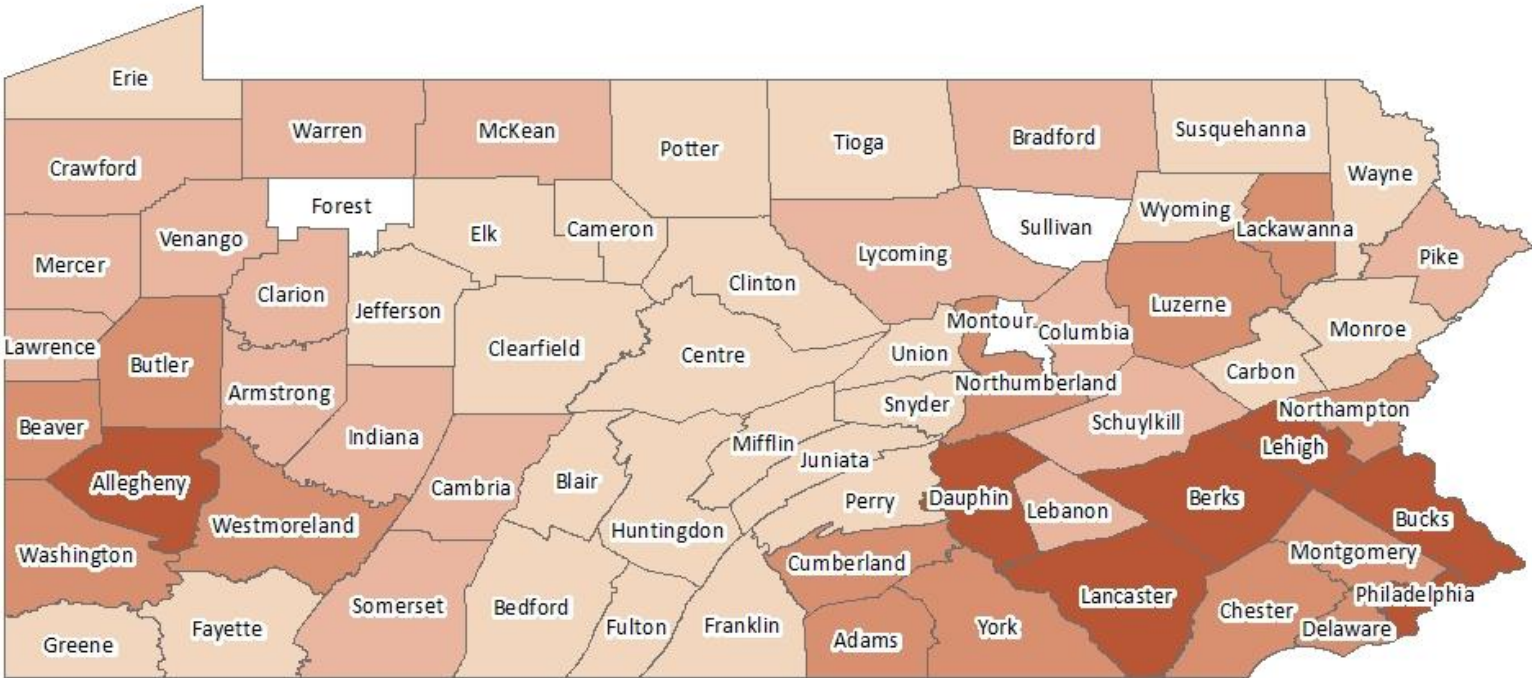
**Chart 6**  
**Child Welfare for Leadership**  
**1995-2018 Admissions**  
**by School and Full-time/Part-time Status**



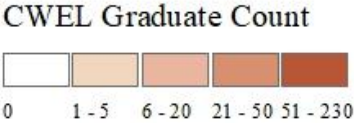
**Chart 7**  
**Child Welfare for Leadership**  
**1995-2018 Admissions**  
**Part-Time Trend**



### Chart 8 CWEL County Impact Historical Number of CWEL Graduates by County



Graduate counts from beginning of program through Summer 2018  
 Modified: 09/12/2018





# **Appendix J**

CWEL Applicant Pool and  
Admissions by Position and Years of Service  
1995-2018 Academic Years

**Table I**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995-2019 Academic Year Applicant Pool**

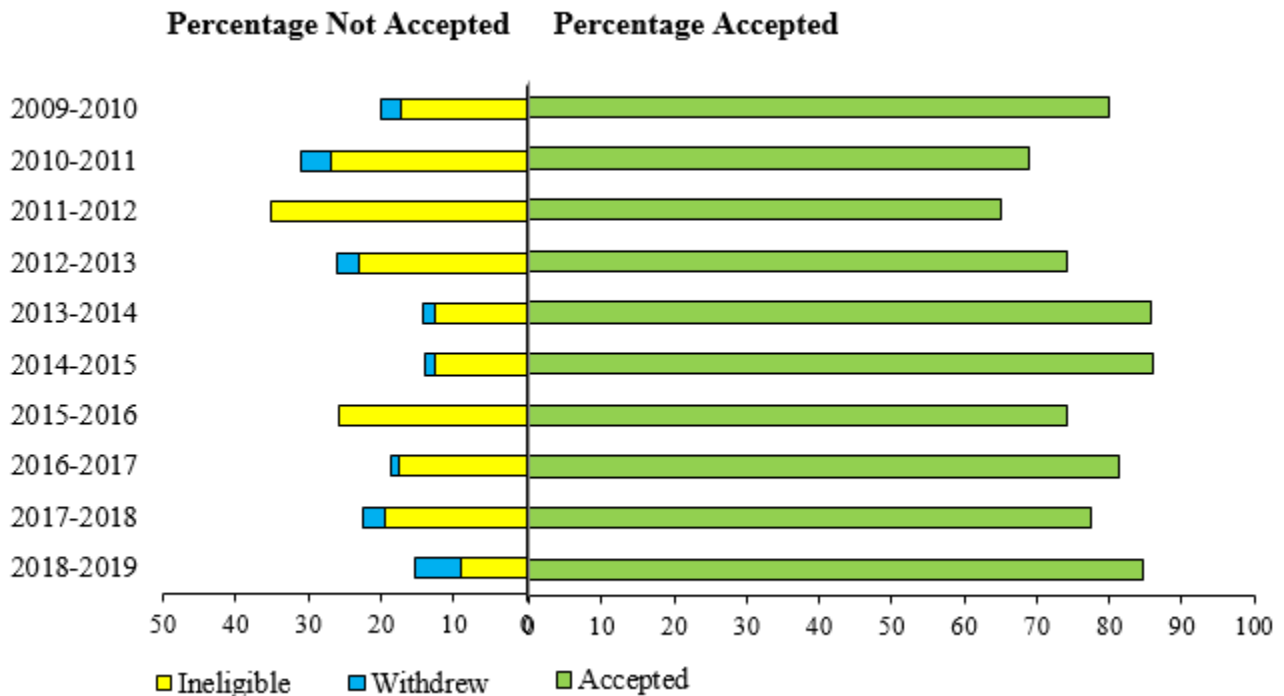
<b>Counties Represented</b>			
1995-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
65	32	24	29

<b>Students Admitted*</b>			<b>Applicants Eligible but Unfunded</b>			<b>Applicants Ineligible**</b>			<b>Applicants Withdrew</b>			<b>Spring 2019 Pending Applicants</b>	<b>Total Applications***</b>		
95-17	17-18	18-19	95-17	17-18	18-19	95-17	17-18	18-19	95-17	17-18	18-19	18-19	95-17	17-18	18-19
1493	52	66	27	0	0	538	13	7	105	2	5	2	2174	67	80

\*The category of “Students Admitted” for the 2018-2019 year includes 3 people admitted for 2018-2019 academic year who decided not to participate in CWEL immediately prior to the start of school.

\*\*The category of “Ineligible” includes those not approved by their county, school, or the CWEL Admissions Committee, those with less than two years of services, and applicants not employed by child welfare agencies. It also includes those who did not complete their application, for personal or other reasons not known to CWEL.

**Visualization of the applicant pool outcomes for the past 10 years is given below.**



**Table II**  
**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995-2019 Academic Year Admissions by Current Agency Position and Years of Service**

Position	Number				Average Years in Present Agency			
	1995-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	1995-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Caseworker	1213	58	43	56	5.0	5.5	5.3	6.3
Supervisor	132	2	7	3	9.7	8.6	10.5	6.6
Other*	73	5	2	7	10.0	9.4	8.5	13.9

\* “Other” includes Regional Representative, Program Representative, Program Analyst, Program Specialist, Foster Care Coordinator, Social Services Manager, Service Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Program Manager, Agency Director, Associate Director, Director of Social Services, Service Coordinator, Special Assistant, Caseworker Manger, Social Work Service Manager, Family Advocate Specialist, and Administrator.

Due to the county-administered nature of the child welfare system in Pennsylvania, position titles in the ‘Other’ category vary considerably across counties.

# **Appendix K**

## **Program Evaluation Data Tables**

**Table 1****Average Scores per Item by Program Type and by Status for Current Students**

(1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3=Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5=Strongly Agree)

<b>Item</b>	<b>CWEB n=39</b>	<b>CWEL, Full-Time n=47</b>	<b>CWEL, Part-Time n=44</b>
<i>CWERP Program Processes</i>	<i>Average (SD)</i>	<i>Average (SD)</i>	<i>Average (SD)</i>
The program information clearly explains the CWEB/CWEL program <sup>a</sup>	3.92 (1.29)	4.40 (1.14)	4.50 (0.90)
The application form instructions are clear <sup>a</sup>	3.89 (1.35)	4.43 (0.93)	4.64 (0.75)
I understood the contract	4.18 (1.06)	4.34 (1.09)	4.48 (0.85)
The website is easy to use <sup>a</sup>	3.95 (1.09)	4.32 (1.07)	4.35 (0.90)
I use the handbook when I have a question <sup>a</sup>	3.62 (1.40)	4.19 (1.10)	4.27 (1.11)
The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email <sup>a</sup>	4.03 (1.18)	4.60 (0.99)	4.63 (0.92)
The staff (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email <sup>a</sup>	4.09 (1.17)	4.46 (1.09)	4.60 (1.00)
The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem <sup>b</sup>	3.79 (1.34)	4.42 (1.06)	4.58 (1.00)
The staff (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem <sup>a</sup>	3.88 (1.30)	4.42 (1.07)	4.50 (1.08)
<i>Current Degree Program</i>			
My academic advisor is familiar with the CWEB/CWEL program	4.11 (1.08)	4.47 (1.04)	4.09 (1.14)
The child welfare courses that I have taken are relevant	4.39 (1.15)	4.57 (0.91)	4.27 (.99)
The faculty who teach the child welfare courses relate the content to practice	4.26 (1.29)	4.48 (1.07)	4.30 (.94)
I have been able to apply what I learn in the class to field/internship or job	4.35 (1.09)	4.45 (1.04)	4.47 (0.91)
<i>Field/Internship Experiences</i>			
I have felt supported in the process of arranging my field/internship <sup>c</sup>	4.17 (1.06)	3.78 (1.46)	4.30 (.95)
I have received good supervision in the field <sup>c</sup>	4.54 (1.09)	4.26 (1.15)	4.70 (0.68)
I was able to try new ideas or skills from class in my field	4.46 (0.98)	4.15 (1.35)	4.58 (0.71)
This field/internship has been a valuable learning experience	4.60 (1.00)	4.26 (1.22)	4.61 (.61)

<b>Item</b>	<b>CWEB n=39</b>	<b>CWEL, Full-Time n=47</b>	<b>CWEL, Part-Time n=44</b>
<i>Agency/Field Interface</i>	<i>Average (SD)</i>	<i>Average (SD)</i>	<i>Average (SD)</i>
My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the CWEB program	4.63 (0.81)	--	--
My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the State Civil Service Exam?	4.33 (1.01)	--	--
I was able to easily arrange the time needed to go to classes	--	--	4.18 (1.15)
I was able to easily arrange the time needed to do my field placement	--	--	3.88 (1.14)
My agency was able to accommodate my return in the summer	--	4.53 (1.05)	--
When I returned in the summer, I had supplies to do my work	--	4.41 (1.21)	--
<i>Value of the Degree to the Field</i>			
My degree will help me to contribute to the field	4.78 (0.42)	4.70 (0.88)	4.75 (0.72)
I will be able to use what I am learning when I am employed or return to a child welfare agency <sup>a</sup>	4.86 (0.42)	4.60 (1.04)	4.67 (0.75)
The CWEB or CWEL program gave me an educational opportunity that I would not have had otherwise	4.73 (0.69)	4.77 (0.91)	4.77 (0.61)
The CWEB or CWEL program has positively impacted my development as a social work professional	4.78 (0.53)	4.74 (0.92)	4.73 (0.59)
The CWEB and CWEL program should be made available to more students and child welfare workers	4.84 (0.44)	4.70 (0.86)	4.75 (0.75)
Using a scale from 1-10, with 1 having the least value and 10 the greatest value, what is the value of the CWEB or CWEL program to the public child welfare system?	9.03 (1.16)	9.49 (1.32)	9.34 (.99)

<sup>a</sup>= $p < .05$  CWEB compared to CWEL

<sup>b</sup>=  $p < .01$  CWEB compared to CWEL

<sup>c</sup>= $p < .05$  FT CWEL compared to PT CWEL

**Table 2****Average Scores per Item by Program Type for Recent Graduates**

(1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3=Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5=Strongly Agree)

Item	CWEB n=33	CWEL n=40
	Average (SD)	Average (SD)
My program prepared me for working in a child welfare agency <sup>b</sup>	4.64 (.55)	4.20 (1.14)
My skills were equal to better than other caseworkers not in the program	4.48 (0.67)	4.40 (1.00)
I have a better understanding of the complex problems of our families	4.65 (.55)	4.58 (0.84)
My education has helped me to find new solutions to the problems that are typical of our families	4.55 (.56)	4.55 (0.82)
I am encouraged to practice my new skills in my position <sup>c</sup>	4.69 (.54)	4.13 (1.14)
I am encouraged to share my knowledge with other workers	4.42 (.87)	4.15 (1.19)
I am given the opportunity and authority to make decisions	4.55 (.62)	4.20 (1.20)
There is current opportunity for promotion in my agency	4.30 (1.10)	3.05 (1.60)
I can see future opportunities for advancing in my agency <sup>a</sup>	4.42 (0.71)	3.53 (1.62)
I plan to remain at my agency after my commitment period is over <sup>b</sup>	4.36 (0.82)	3.73 (1.30)
My long term career plan is to work with children and families	4.47 (.84)	4.48 (0.85)
I would recommend my agency to others for employment in social work <sup>a</sup>	4.69 (0.59)	3.98 (1.23)
I would recommend public child welfare services to others looking for employment in social work <sup>a</sup>	4.69 (.54)	4.25 (.81)
I have seriously considered leaving public child welfare (lower scores=greater commitment)	2.50 (1.69)	2.98 (1.41)
If I were not contractually obligated to remain in public child welfare for my commitment, I would leave (lower scores=greater commitment) <sup>a</sup>	1.97 (1.19)	2.88 (1.38)
On a scale of 1-10, with 1 having the least value and 10 the greatest value, what is the value of the CWEB and CWEL program to the public child welfare system <sup>a</sup>	9.00 (1.08)	9.42 (1.00)

<sup>a</sup>= $p < .01$  CWEB compared to CWEL

<sup>b</sup>= $p < .05$  CWEB compared to CWEL

<sup>c</sup>= $p = .001$  CWEB compared to CWEL

# Appendix L

Supplemental CWEB and CWEL Materials Available  
Online

<http://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-education-research-programs>

- CWEB and CWEL Applications
- CWEB Frequently Asked Questions
- CWEL Frequently Asked Questions
- CWEB Student Handbook
- CWEB Expense Reimbursement Guide
- CWEB Informational Video
- Child Welfare Realistic Job Preview Video
- CWEL Student Handbook
- CWEL Expense Reimbursement Guide
- Program Evaluation Instruments



# Appendix M

Child Welfare Research Sampler:  
Training Outcomes, Recruitment, and Retention



# University of Pittsburgh

*School of Social Work*  
*Child Welfare Education and Research Programs*

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## Workforce Recruitment and Retention in Child Welfare: A Research Sampler

Every year, the University of Pittsburgh, Child Welfare Education and Research Programs releases this report\* on the Title IV-E education programs in Pennsylvania. As a part of this annual review, the evaluation team includes a research sampler pertaining to child welfare practice and workforce development. This research sampler is updated every year with at least 3 current journal articles regarding workforce retention.

\*Past Title IV-E annual reports can be found on the School of Social Work's webpage:  
<http://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-ed-research-programs/cweb-cwel-annual-report>

Research has identified three major themes when exploring the dynamics influencing workforce retention: organizational factors; personal factors; and supervisory factors. This document is organized using a similar framework; however, these themes are not mutually exclusive. For that reason, we have included a category of organizational/personal factors, which capture research studies that examined the combined effects of these interrelated influences on workforce retention. In addition, we have included supervisory factors in the overview of studies that explored organizational factors. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that an educated workforce is more likely to stay within the child welfare field. Journal articles related to this topic can be found in the university/agency partnership section. After identifying the factors contributing to workforce turnover, what can be done to retain skilled child welfare professionals? The next section focuses on retention strategies to retain our child welfare workforce. The final section incorporates research related to youth voice regarding caseworker retention and to training initiatives and transfer of learning of new skills with the child welfare workforce.

For convenience, hyperlinks to each section are provided below. The references are listed in alphabetical order along with a synopsis of the article, and hyperlinks to the full article.

[Organizational Factors](#)

[Personal Factors](#)

[Organizational/Personal Factors](#)

[University/Agency Partnership](#)

[Retention Strategies](#)

[Other](#)

## Organizational Factors

**Annie E. Casey Foundation, (The). (2003). The unsolved challenge of system reform: The condition of the frontline human service workforce. Baltimore: Author.**

**Available at:** <http://www/aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-theUnsolvedChallengeSystemReform-2003.pdf>.

This extensive report prepared by the Annie E. Casey Foundation outlines preliminary findings regarding job conditions of frontline social services workers and the problems they face. Findings show that the reasons child welfare social workers leave their jobs are heavy workload, low status, low pay, and poor supervision. Motivations to stay in their jobs are sense of mission, good fit with the job, investment in relationships, and professional standing. The report identifies eight fundamental problems that cripple all human services sectors: not finding sufficient numbers of quality staff, difficulty retaining quality staff, lower salaries to frontline workers than those in other jobs at comparable levels, limited opportunity for professional growth and advancement, poor supervision, little guidance and support, rule-bound jobs, and education and training that do not match the roles and demands actually encountered on the job.

**Ashby, C.M. (2004). Child Welfare: Improved federal oversight could assist states in overcoming key challenges. Testimony before the subcommittee on human resources, committee on ways and means, House of Representatives. Washington, DC: United States Government Accounting Office.**

**Available at:**

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=vc4RVFHxvQAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&dg=Ashby,+C.+M.,+\(2004\).+Child+welfare:+Improved+federal+oversight+could+assist+states+in+overcoming+key+challenges.+Testimony+before+the+subcommittee+on+human+resources,+committee+on+ways+and+means,+house+of+representative&ots=djFAhkmPKv&sig=rrze2NCsLpciWcgSLDKcmK9MYE#v=onepage&q=&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=vc4RVFHxvQAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&dg=Ashby,+C.+M.,+(2004).+Child+welfare:+Improved+federal+oversight+could+assist+states+in+overcoming+key+challenges.+Testimony+before+the+subcommittee+on+human+resources,+committee+on+ways+and+means,+house+of+representative&ots=djFAhkmPKv&sig=rrze2NCsLpciWcgSLDKcmK9MYE#v=onepage&q=&f=false)

This testimony, which is based on findings from three reports, finds that child welfare agencies face a number of challenges related to staffing and data management that impair their ability to protect children from abuse and neglect. Low salaries hinder agencies' ability to attract potential child welfare workers and retain those already in the profession. Additionally, high caseloads, administrative burdens, limited supervision, and insufficient training reduce the appeal of child welfare work. This report also finds that high-quality supervision and adequate on-the-job training are factors that influence caseworkers to stay in the child welfare profession.

**Auerbach, C., McGowan, B., Ausberger, A., Strolin-Goltzman, J., & Schudrich, W. (2010). Differential factors influencing public and voluntary child welfare workers' intention to leave. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(10), 1396-1402.**

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740910001684>.

This study investigated the factors that contribute to job retention and turnover in both public and voluntary child welfare agencies. Two hundred and two (202) workers from voluntary agencies and 144 workers from a public agency participated in the research study, which consisted of a survey.



and life-work balance, and growth needs regarding career development and fulfillment. With a secondary dataset of 289 caseworkers in a northeastern state, our structural equation modeling results show the dynamics between caseworkers' needs and their differential impact on turnover intention. The effect of existence needs on turnover is completely mediated by growth needs. Moreover, the variable of growth needs is found to have the strongest total effect among the three need categories. Administration and management may attenuate turnover intention by enhancing caseworkers' growth needs with respect to meaningfulness of daily practice, contingent rewards, and development of personal career goals.

**Collins-Camargo, C., Ellett, C.D., & Lester, C. (2012). Measuring organizational effectiveness to develop strategies to promote retention in public child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(1), 289-295.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth2011.10.027>

Public child welfare agencies are under pressure to improve organizational, practice, and client outcomes. Related to all of these outcomes is the retention of staff. Employee intent to remain employed may be used as a proxy for actual retention. In this study, public child welfare staff in one Midwestern state were surveyed using the Survey of Organizational Excellence (Lauderdale, 1999) and the Intent to Remain Employed (Ellett, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003) scales to assess the extent to which constructs such as perceptions of organizational culture, communication, and other areas or organizational effectiveness were associated with intent to remain employed. A number of statistically significant relationships were identified which were presented to the public agency for use in the development of strategies for organizational improvement. Data were also analyzed regionally and based on urban/suburban/rural status to enable development of targeted approaches. This case study presents an example of how ongoing measurement of organizational effectiveness can be used as a strategy for organizational improvement over time in the child welfare system.

**Eaton, M., Anderson, G., & Whalen, P. (2006). Resilient child welfare worker interviews. Michigan State University, School of Social Work.**

**Available at:** <http://www.socialwork.msu.edu/outreach/docs/ResilientCWWinterviews.pdf>

This study involved interviews with 21 child welfare supervisors and frontline workers who were identified as "resilient" by their child welfare agency director. The goal was to identify factors related to worker and supervisor resiliency. Telephone survey interviews were conducted that included 26 open-ended questions. Results suggested a number of strategies to inform child welfare training curriculum and recruitment efforts. This includes providing internship or volunteer opportunities for individuals interested in child welfare work prior to their actual application, maintaining a friendly, flexible, and positive work environment, enhancing supervisory support for new workers in their first year, and having clear job descriptions. Veteran workers also reported that lower caseloads, higher salary, training, workshops and attentiveness to prevent burnout have also contributed to their tenure in the agency.

**Farber, J., & Munson, S. (2010). Strengthening the child welfare workforce: Lessons from litigation. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 4(2), 132-157.**

**Available at:** <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/155487310037993#tabModule>

The recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of public and private agency child welfare staff working with abused and neglected children and their families are important and ongoing concerns. During the past two decades, many questions have been raised about the adequacy of the child welfare workforce and the supports provided to it. This article provides the findings from a review of efforts to strengthen the child welfare workforce in the context of class-action litigation for system reform. The lessons learned provide a useful framework for current and future efforts to improve the child welfare workforce, both within and without the context of litigation.

**Fernandes, G.M. (2016). Organizational climate and child welfare workers' degree of intent to leave the job: Evidence from New York. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 60, 80-87.**

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740915300980>

With increasingly unstable workforce in child welfare agencies, it is critical to understand what organizational factors lead to intent to leave the job based on job search behaviors. Using recent survey data collected among 359 child welfare workers from eight agencies in New York State during 2009–2011 and a Structural Equation Model (SEM) method, this study examines the relationship between employee perceptions of organizational climate and the degree of intent to leave the job (thinking, looking and taking actions related to a new job). Fifty-seven percent (n = 205) reported that they had considered looking for a new job in the past year. Bivariate analyses indicated that there were significant differences between those who looked for a job and those who did not look for a job in the past year. SEM analysis revealed that four organizational climate factors were predictive of decreasing the degree of intent to leave the job: Perceptions on organizational justice was most predictive factor for thinking of a new job followed by organizational support, work overload and job importance. The findings of this study help us understand the employee perceptions of different organizational factors that impact employee turnover especially from the time an employee thinks of leaving the job to actually taking concrete actions related to a new job.

**Glaser, S.R., Zamanou, S., & Hacker, K. (1987). Measuring and interpreting organizational culture. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 1(2), 173-198.**

**Available at:** <http://mcq.sagepub.com/content/1/2/173>

Organizational culture is a construct with varying definitions. The construct-theoretical in scope has not been properly operationalized and studied in the research literature. For the purposes of this study, six components of organizational culture were studied: teamwork-conflict, climate-morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meetings. The Organizational Culture Survey was administered to 195 governmental employees in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to surveying the 195 employees, a representative sample of 91 of the employees were chosen to participate in a 45-minute interview. The interviews were coded along the six dimensions examined in the Organizational Culture Survey. The results of the Organizational Culture Survey revealed significant differences in the perception of organizational culture between the different divisions of the governmental employees. Employees at the top of the organization were satisfied with the

organizational culture, whereas line workers, line supervisors, and clerical staff were dissatisfied on all of the components of organizational culture that was measured. Additional themes of organizational culture emerged from the qualitative interviews. These themes include: (1) the belief that top management does not listen to, or value, employees, (2) an organizational culture of confusion due to limited interactions amongst departmental divisions, (3) meetings lacking interaction, (4) employees feeling uncertain about their job roles, and (5) supervisors providing subpar supervision and not recognizing exceptional employees.

**Glisson, C., & Hemmelgarn, A. (1998). The effects of organizational climate and interorganizational coordination on the quality and outcomes of children's service systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 22(5), 401-421.**

**Available at:** [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(98\)00005-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(98)00005-2)

Human service organizations rarely analyze the impact of intra-organizational and inter-organizational variables as predictors of overall organizational effectiveness. Both constructs are rarely integrated in research, and thus human service organizations cannot compare their relative effects on outcomes. The state-sponsored AIMS pilot project was initiated in Tennessee to increase service coordination. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data over a three year period in Tennessee. Services to 250 children provided by 32 public children's service offices in 24 different state counties were examined. The study yielded four significant findings. First, significant improvements in children's psychosocial functioning were apparent for children who were serviced by offices with more positive climates. Second, improved service quality does not ensure additional positive outcomes for children. For example, removing a child from one problematic residential placement into a new residential placement does not ensure that the child will be devoid of any additional problems in a new environment. Third, organizational climate positively effects service outcomes and service quality. Lastly, this study found that increased service coordination often decreases service quality as caseworker responsibility can weaken when services are centralized.

**Johnco, C., Salloum, A., Olson, K.R., & Edwards, L.M. (2014). Child welfare workers' perspectives on contributing factors to retention and turnover: Recommendations for improvement. *Children and Youth Service Review*, 47, 397-407.**

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740914003879>

This qualitative study assessed how factors impact employee retention and turnover in focus groups with 25 employees at different stages of employment: resigned case managers, case managers employed for less than one year and more than three years, and supervisors. Two broad themes emerged for retention: supportive environment (including themes relating to children/parents, co-workers, and the organization) and opportunities within the agency (including new positions, experience and knowledge and job security). Two broad themes emerged for turnover: organizational issues (including themes about low compensation, challenging work demands, and system issues) and stress. Workers expressed a strong desire to be heard by management. A number of unique issues were identified, including workers' desire for clear communication flow through hierarchies, increased collaboration, and revisions to the way data is used/integrated.



**Mitchell, L., Walters, R., Thomas, M.L., Denniston, J., McIntosh, H., & Brodowski, M. (2012). The Children's Bureau's vision for the future of child welfare. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 6(4), 550-567.**

**Available at:**

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15548732.2012.715267#.VGyjRMt0y70>

This article sets forth a broad vision for the future of the Children's Bureau that focuses on the goals of reducing maltreatment and achieving optimal health and development of children and families. To accomplish these goals the Children Bureau charts a path to strengthen the ability of States, tribes, and communities to offer a range of universal and effective services to families within a systems of care framework; improve public policy and financing of child welfare services; build public engagement in and support for systemic child welfare changes; and develop initiatives to strengthen and support the child welfare workforce.

**Nunno, M. (2006). The effects of the ARC organizational intervention on caseworker turnover, climate, and culture in children's services systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 849-854.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.03.001>

This is a summary article of Glisson, Duke, and Green's (2006) randomized study of the Availability, Responsiveness, and Continuity (ARC) program on child welfare organizational culture, climate, and turnover of child welfare workers. The article highlights the saliency of this research in that it demonstrates one of the first strong links between organizational intervention in child welfare and child and family outcomes. The author highlights the important components of the ARC intervention, including the need to emphasize child welfare internal working capacity and the work environment over inter-organizational relationships with other community providers, which in previous research has shown to negatively influence service quality. The author encourages research to replicate Glisson's work, and to compare outcomes for organizations, children, and families when implementing different models of organizational change.

**Schweitzer, D., Chianello, T., & Kothari, B. (2013). Compensation in social work: Critical for satisfaction and a sustainable profession. *Administration in Social Work*, 37(2), 147-157.**

**Available at:** <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03643107.2012.669335#.VGykSct0y70>

Challenges with social worker satisfaction and subsequent high staff turnover rates are not new to the profession. For decades researchers have studied social worker satisfaction from several perspectives, though generally with child welfare staff. This exploratory study examined responses from a statewide survey of 838 social workers across a broad spectrum of employment settings to determine which variables had the greatest impact on satisfaction. Standard multiple regression results indicate that social workers' level of satisfaction with their jobs and employment benefits were best predicted by variables that translate into improved compensation. These findings suggest that efforts to improve social work satisfaction, and subsequently lower turnover rates, should focus on improving factors that directly or indirectly influence compensation to preserve this vital workforce. Limitations and next steps for future research are discussed.

**Shim, M. (2010). Factors influencing child welfare employee's turnover: Focusing on organizational culture and climate. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32(6), 847-856.***

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.02.004>

Organizational culture and climate elements have not been extensively considered in the social welfare literature, especially in the domain of child welfare. This article addresses this gap by systematically exploring these factors and their effects on child welfare employee turnover. This exploration uses data collected by the New York State Social Work Education Consortium in 2002 and 2003. Organizational culture is organized by factors of achievement/innovation/competence, cooperation/supportiveness/responsiveness, and emphasis on rewards (ER). Organizational climate is classified by role clarity, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion (EE), and workloads. A logistic regression model was used to analyze a worker's intent to leave his or her current job. Findings suggest that both organizational culture and climate factors, particularly ER and EE, are significantly related to a worker's intention to leave. Thus, employees emphasizing the values of organizational culture and climate have less intention to leave their current positions. This is an indication that child welfare agencies may improve organizational culture and climate by appropriately addressing elements (i.e. reinforcing ER and minimizing EE).

**Spath, R., Strand, V.C., & Bosco-Ruggiero, S. (2013). What child welfare staff say about organizational culture. *Child Welfare, 9(2), 9-31.***

**Available at:** <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23984484>

This article examines the factors that can affect job satisfaction, organizational culture and climate, and intent to leave at a public child welfare agency. Findings from focus group data collected from direct line, middle, and senior managers revealed a passive defensive culture. The authors discuss concrete organizational interventions to assist the agency in shifting to a constructive oriented culture through enhancements in communication, including supervision and shared decision making, recognition and rewards, and improvement in other areas related to working conditions.

**United States General Accounting Office. (2003). Child Welfare: HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff (GAO-03-357). Washington, DC: Author.**

**Available at:** <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-03-357>

This extensive report prepared by the GAO identifies the challenges child welfare agencies face in recruiting and retaining child welfare workers. Nearly 600 exit interview documents completed by staff who severed their employment from 17 state, 40 county, and 19 private child welfare agencies and interviews with child welfare experts and officials were primarily analyzed to get the results. The findings show that low salaries, in particular, hinder agencies' ability to attract potential child welfare workers and to retain those already in the field. Other factors affecting retention are disparities in the salaries between public and private child welfare workers, high caseloads, administrative burdens, limited supervision, and insufficient training.

**Westbrook, T.M., Ellett, A.J., & Asberg, K. (2012). Predicting public child welfare employee's intentions to remain employed with the child welfare organizational culture inventory. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(7), 1214-1221.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.02.010>

High employee turnover continues to be a serious problem in the field of public child welfare. In a statewide study of public child welfare employees in a southern state, the Child Welfare Organizational Culture Inventory was used to assess employees' perceptions of organizational culture and to examine which factors might be predictors of employee's intentions to remain on the job as measured by the Intent to Remain Employed-Child Welfare scale. Logistic regression was used to examine the relationship between organizational culture and employees' intent to remain in child welfare. These analyses provide a view into which employees might be at higher risk for leaving their positions and which organizational factors are contributing to the problems of high worker turnover.

**Westbrook, T., Ellis, J., & Ellett, A. (2006). Improving retention among public child welfare workers: What can we learn from the insights and experiences of committed survivors? *Administration in Social Work*, 30(4), 37-62.**

**Available at:** [http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v30n04\\_04](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v30n04_04)

This study examined long-term child welfare workers' reasons and motivations for their job retention. Over three focus-group interviews, a sample of 21 child welfare workers and supervisors from urban, suburban, and rural areas were interviewed. Three major themes emerged to explain the sample's continued employment in child welfare: movement, both beyond the boundaries of the agency and within it; importance of local management, including the need for professional and personal support from supervisors and local administrators; and educating novice workers, the need to adequately prepare and mentor new child welfare workers.

**Zeitlin, W., Augsberger, A., Auerbach, C., & McGowan, B. (2014). A mixed-methods study of the impact of organizational culture on workforce retention in child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 38, 36-43.**

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740914000085>

The study uses mixed methods to examine the impact of perceived organizational culture on workers' intention to remain employed. Results indicated that intention to remain employed was significantly related to organizational culture. Results from the analysis of the open ended survey questions and focus groups revealed two important dimensions of agency culture: values and agency relationships. Several respondents reported a desire for their personal and professional values to be congruent with the values of the agency. It was important to respondents that the agency mission was clear and consistent with their personal and professional goals. Respondents who intended to remain employed at their agency had a positive outlook on their work. They felt a need to serve others and believed the tasks they performed made a difference in the lives of the children, families, and communities they served. They believed they could impact positive change and felt a sense of accomplishment when they were able to see positive results of their work.

Workers whose values were more congruent with their organizations', as identified in higher scores on service orientation and satisfaction with the purpose and nature of work domains, were more likely to plan to stay at their jobs.

## **PERSONAL FACTORS**

**Augsberger, A., Schudrich, W., McGowan, B.G., & Auerbach, C. (2012). Respect in the workplace: A mixed methods study of retention and turnover in the voluntary child welfare sector. *Children and Youth Services, 34*(7), 1222-1229.**

**Available at:** [http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0190740912001041/1-s2.0S0190740912001041-main.pdf?\\_tid=40b94440-59a8-11e2-8ffd-00000aacb361&acdnat=1357659175\\_627c014d19164704e67bbdb8c51480b](http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0190740912001041/1-s2.0S0190740912001041-main.pdf?_tid=40b94440-59a8-11e2-8ffd-00000aacb361&acdnat=1357659175_627c014d19164704e67bbdb8c51480b)

Previous studies focused on child welfare worker retention identify individual and organizational factors that influence one's job satisfaction and likelihood of job turnover. This article extends this work further by examining how an employee's perception of respect in the workplace influences their decision regarding whether they retain their position or turnover the job. Child welfare workers' perceptions of respect in the workplace have largely been under-studied due to difficulties surrounding the operationalization and measurement of respect in human services. This study sampled 538 workers in 202 voluntary agencies in a northwestern city. A mixed methods design was implemented with respondents taking a survey of both open- and closed-ended questions and participating in focus groups. Qualitative analysis revealed that workers' perceptions of respect in the workplace do influence their decisions regarding whether to leave an agency of employment. The research yielded five sub-themes of respect, including: (1) organizational support; (2) fair salary and benefits; (3) fair promotion potential; (4) adequate communication; and (5) appreciation or contingent rewards. Workers who scored the lowest on the quantitative Respect Scale were significantly more likely to intend to leave their current positions. Quantitative findings also revealed that older employees were more likely to retain their positions, while employees with a social work degree were more likely to leave.

**Boyas, J., Wind, L.H., & Kang, S.Y. (2012). Exploring the relationship between employment-based social capital, job stress, burnout, and intent to leave among child protection workers: An age-based path analysis model. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(1), 50-60.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.106/j.chilyouth.2011.08.033>

Research suggests that age an organizational factors are consistently linked with job stress, burnout, and intent to leave among child protection workers. However, no study has contextualized how age matters with regards to these adverse employee outcomes. This study conducted a theory drive path analysis that identifies sources of employment-based social capital, job stress, burnout, and intent to leave among two age groups. A statewide purposive sample of 209 respondents from a public child welfare organization in a New England state was included in the study. Results suggest that the paths to job stress, burnout, and intent to leave differed by age group. Social capital dimensions were more influential in safeguarding against job stress for older workers compared to younger

workers. The results justify creating workplace interventions for younger workers that target areas of the organization where relational support could enhance the quality of social interactions within the organization. Organizations may need to establish intervention efforts aimed at younger workers by creating different structures of support that can assist them to better deal with the pressures and demands of child protection work.

**Chenot, D., Boutakidis, I., & Benton, A.D. (2014). Equity and fairness perceptions in the child welfare workforce. *Children and Youth Services Review, 44*, 400-406.**

**Available at:**

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/pitt.idm.oclc.org/science/article/pii/S0190740914002552>

The current study follows the finding from a previous study in which African American (AA) social workers were significantly less likely to report that they would remain in their CWS agencies than European American (EA) workers. Utilizing a mixed methods approach, the authors explored whether inequity from bias in CWS agencies related to ethnicity was a contributor to intentions to stay/leave. The results revealed no significant relationships between ethnicity and job satisfaction or intentions to stay in CWS agencies among EA, AA, or Hispanic/Latino (HL) workers. However, findings emerged related to worker perceptions of court duties concerning inequitable workloads and pay. Results indicated that job satisfaction and retention did not vary by worker ethnicity. Reports of bias related to ethnicity among the workforce in CWS agencies were rare. Perceptions concerning inequitable workloads were related to court work assignments.

**Mandell, D., Stalker, C., deZeeuw Wright, M., Frensch, K., & Harvey, C. (2012). Sinking, swimming and sailing: Experiences of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion in child welfare employees. *Child & Family Social Work, 18*(4), 383-393.**

**Available at:** <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2012.00857.x/pdf>

The authors conducted a mixed-method study after a previous study of child welfare employees revealed a subgroup exhibiting surprisingly high levels of emotional exhaustion (EE) and job satisfaction (JS). This subgroup included direct service workers, supervisors, and managers. As these findings appeared to conflict with previous studies, we re-reviewed the literature and undertook the current study to account for the co-existence of EE and JS. The authors explored and compared this subgroup with two others: workers who found their work satisfying without experiencing high levels of EE and those whose high levels of EE were associated with low JS. Using a survey that included several standardized measures with 226 employees and semi-structured interviews with a criteria-based subsample of 25, the authors explored the role that personality, career expectations, coping styles, stage of life, education, gender, and social networks play in outcomes for individual employees. Analyses of quantitative and qualitative data yielded a profile for each subgroup, offering insights into the subjective experiences of workers within individual, social, and organizational contexts. These findings have implications for recruitment, training, and support of child welfare workers.

**McGowan, B.G., Auerbach, C., & Strolin-Goltzman, J.S. (2009). Turnover in the child welfare workforce: A different perspective. *Journal of Social Science Research*, 35(3), 228-235.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01488370902900782>

This study explores the crisis involving increased staff turnover rates in child welfare agencies. The aim of the exploration was to determine which previously identified relevant variables (organizational, personal, and supervisory) are most related to a worker's intent to leave urban and rural child welfare settings. A survey was administered to 447 employees in 13 agencies to address organizational, personal, and supervisory factors. Data analysis included ANOVA, logistical regression, and structural equation modeling. Organizational and supervisory variables were not found to be significant when data were applied to structural equation modeling. Results did suggest that career satisfaction and satisfaction with paperwork are key factors related to a worker's intention to stay.

**Schelbe, L., Radey, M., Panisch, L. (2017). Satisfactions and stressors experienced by recently-hired frontline child welfare workers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 78, 56–63.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2017.05.007>

Recognizing experiences of newly-hired child welfare caseworkers, including satisfactions and stressors, may reflect strategies to improve their transitions in their roles as they evolve, and enhance worker retention efforts. Satisfactions are elements of the role that workers like, enjoy, and/or appreciate, whereas stressors are aspects that workers did not like and typically cause undue pressure or frustration. Both satisfactions and stressors identified in this study were aligned with those discovered in prior research. Occasionally, satisfactions and stressors coincide. Interactions with children and families generated the greatest job satisfaction. Interactions with people were connected with making a difference in their lives and promoting a safe, more functional environment. Knowing that one's decisions impacted people's lives proved rewarding to workers. Flexibility of scheduling and uniqueness of each workday, freedom and flexibility of managing cases, and variety within one's role were considered positive. By contrast, stressors associated with caseworkers' positions included: administrative requirements (rules and regulations) for required paperwork and documentation; redundancy and excessiveness of paperwork; large, demanding caseloads and consistent flow of new cases; challenges of balancing time on novel cases with demands of already-opened cases; long hours; complex family needs combined with limited community resources; problematic, unsupportive colleagues (administrators, supervisors, and coworkers) in the workplace; collaborating with hostile, unengaged parents and hurt children; and witnessing various forms of child maltreatment. Concurrently addressing satisfactions and stressors may prove effective for caseworker retention and precluding turnover. Finding methods to ensure that caseworkers see positive outcomes of their work and enjoy autonomy and variety in their positions is essential to prolonging worker satisfaction and reducing stress. Mentorship from colleagues and supervisors may promote continued productivity. Implications for future research are highlighted.

## ORGANIZATIONAL/PERSONAL FACTORS

**Anguiniga, D.M., Madden, E.E., Faulkner, M.R., & Salehin, M. (2013). Understanding intention to leave: A comparison of urban, small-town, and rural child welfare workers. *Administration in Social Work*, 37(3), 227-241.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03643107.2012.676610>

This study compared the influence of personal and organizational factors on intention to leave among 2,903 public child protection caseworkers and supervisors residing in urban, small-town, and rural counties in Texas. Although geographical location was not found to be a predictor of intention to leave, underlying factors that may influence and explain the differences between urban, small-town, and rural employee's intention to leave were identified. Social workers residing in urban areas were more likely to have a master's degree and be members of a racial/ethnic minority group, while social workers in small-town counties were older and had longer tenure in their agencies.

**Bednar, S.G. (2003). Elements of satisfying organizational climates in child welfare agencies. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 84(1), 7-12.**

**Available at:** <http://alliance1.metapress.com/content/4w164340131104v8>

This review examines research into job satisfaction in child welfare systems and on other factors that influence a worker's decision to leave a job or stay, including organizational climate factors. Studies reviewed in this article report that the most satisfying work environment is one in which staff engage in self-actualizing work with clients, are encouraged to achieve, experience feelings of accomplishment, work collaboratively with their colleagues, and enjoy trust and permission to express anger appropriately. Motivational factors such as salary and working conditions can be individualized depending on the needs of employees. Studies that focus on factors affecting the decision to stay or leave report that workers who remain in their child welfare positions despite burnout and other negative factors are those who come to the work with a sense of personal and professional mission, who have been well-matched in their positions, or who have the flexibility to move to more suitable positions as their interests and needs change, and who enjoy supportive relationships with supervisors who relate to them in a consultative manner. Supervisors, who are able to promote trust; foster good communication; encourage input into decision making, creativity, and innovation; engage staff in goal-setting; clearly define roles; improve cooperation; and maintain open systems that are capable of taking in and responding to new information have a significant and positive impact on organizational climate.

**Claiborne, N., Auerbach, C., Lawrence, C., Liu, J., McGowan, B.G., Fernandes, G., & Magnano, J. (2011). Child welfare agency climate influence on worker commitment. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(11), 2096-2102.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.06.002>

This research examines the relationship of organizational climate to commitment for child welfare workers in private, non-governmental organizations. Four hundred forty-one workers in three not-for-profit agencies under contract with the public child welfare system were asked to complete two surveys, used to determine agency investment and perception of work environment. The results

show that Autonomy, Challenge and Innovation subscales were significantly associated with agency investment. This indicates that worker perceptions of having job autonomy, feeling challenged on the job, and the organization's degree of innovation predict greater job commitment.

**Faller, K.C., Grabarek, M., & Ortega, R.M. (2010). Commitment to child welfare work: What predicts leaving and staying? *Children and Youth Services Review, 32(6), 840-846.***

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.02.003>

This study reviews results from a 5 year longitudinal study of public and private child welfare workers in one state. Data from 460 new workers were collected at four different time points (baseline, 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months) with specific topics varying among the time points. Data regarding the reasons they took their jobs and chose to work in the child welfare field, their commitment to their agencies and child welfare, and the worker's demographics were compared with whether the workers were still in their positions at two years after their hire date. Results show that public agency workers endorsed slightly higher levels of commitment on three of the four commitment variables in contrast to private workers, and their reasons for taking the job varied. Variables that predicted staying on the job were having viewed the state's Realistic Job Preview before taking the job, good supervision, and higher job satisfaction.

**Griffiths, A. & Royse, D. (2017) Unheard voices: Why former child welfare workers left their positions. *Journal of Public Child Welfare, 11(1), 73-90.***

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2016.1232210>

This mixed methods study used a snowball sample (n = 54) to capture retrospective insight from former public child welfare workers about job satisfaction and reasons they left their positions. Responses to open-ended questions suggested a theme of lack of organizational support as the primary reason they left. Former workers also reported that they wanted a voice and someone to hear their concerns, greater recognition, and opportunity to practice self-care. Quantitatively, workers in their positions 8 years or longer were the most satisfied on a 19-item global scale examining job satisfaction. Respondents were unhappy with their workloads and emotional impact of their positions.

**Hopkins, K.M., Cohen-Callow, A., Kim, H.J., & Hwang, J. (2010). Beyond intent to leave: Using multiple outcome measures for assessing turnover in child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32(10), 1380-1387.***

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740910001660>

In this article, the researchers sought to extend the understanding of child welfare worker turnover beyond workers' intent to leave, to include specific job and work withdrawal behaviors. Six hundred and twenty one child welfare workers from across one mid-Atlantic state participated in the study, which consisted of an online self-report survey. Independent variables included perceptions of organization/environment, personal and job factors, and attitudinal responses. Dependent variables included job withdrawal, work withdrawal, job search behaviors, and exit from the organization. Research results state that organizational climate, particularly work stress, most directly contributes to job and work withdrawal, job search behaviors, and organization exit.



**Madden, E.E., Scannapieco, M., & Painter, K. (2014). An examination of retention and length of employment among public child welfare workers. *Children and Youth Services Review, 41*, 37-44.**

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740914000681>

Using longitudinal data collected over a 10 year period from a statewide sample of all new public child welfare caseworkers hired between 2001 and 2010 (N=9195), this study examines personal and organizational factors that affect length of employment among child welfare workers and explores how personal and organizational factors influence caseworker length of employment. The findings of this study suggest that a mixture of personal and organizational factors influenced the length of time that child welfare workers remained with the agency. Of the variables evaluated in the models, gender, social work education, Title IV-E involvement, organizational support, and job desirability were shown to significantly influence longevity with the agency.

**Rittschof, K.R. & Fortunato, V.J. (2016). The influence of transformational leadership and job burnout on child protective services case managers' commitment and intent to quit. *Journal of Social Service Research, 42*(3), 372-385.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2015.1101047>

Job burnout is prevalent in child welfare with turnover rates estimated between 20% and 40% nationwide. Although effective leadership has been shown to facilitate positive job attitudes and low job burnout in many industries, including healthcare organizations, limited research exists examining whether transformational leadership affects job burnout and job attitudes among child protective services (CPS) case managers. Moreover, no research exists examining whether job burnout mediates the relationships between transformational leadership and job attitudes. This study was designed to examine the relationships between transformational leadership, job burnout, and job attitudes among CPS case managers and whether job burnout mediates those relationships. Bass's theory of transformational leadership and Maslach's theory of job burnout provided the theoretical frameworks for this study. In this nonexperimental study, 197 CPS case managers (83% women) participated by completing an online survey. Results indicated that transformational leadership and job burnout correlated with each other and with job attitudes as hypothesized, and job burnout partially mediated the relationships between transformational leadership and the criterion variables. Our findings suggest that child welfare organizations should hire and/or train transformational leaders to reduce job burnout and increase job attitudes among CPS case managers. Directions for future research are discussed.

**Strolin, J.S., McCarthy, M., & Caringi, J. (2006). Causes and effects of child welfare workforce turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions. *Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1*(2), 29-52.**

**Available at:** [http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J479v01n02\\_03#.VGylyMt0y70](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J479v01n02_03#.VGylyMt0y70)

The authors provide an overview of the causes and effects of workforce turnover in child welfare, which has been a persistent problem for more than four decades. Causes of workforce turnover are categorized into three areas commonly cited throughout the relevant literature: individual factors (e.g. burnout), supervisory factors (e.g. supportive supervision), and organizational factors (e.g. job

satisfaction). In comparison to the causes of workforce turnover, empirical research on the effects of such turnover in child welfare is limited. This paper explores the need for innovative empirical knowledge regarding the link between workforce turnover and outcomes in the field of child welfare. The literature concludes with consideration of the gaps and inconsistencies in previous research and related implications for the social work profession, education, and practice.

## **UNIVERSITY/AGENCY PARTNERSHIP**

**Bagdasaryan, S. (2012). Social work education and Title IV-E program participation as predictors of entry-level knowledge among public child welfare workers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(9), 1590-1597.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.04.013>

This study compared MSW trained child welfare workers and those with other educational backgrounds on objective tests of child welfare knowledge and two additional specific knowledge areas. The authors further distinguished MSW recipients by those who participated in Title IV-E stipend-based programs and those who did not participate in such programs. Results show that those workers with MSW degrees score higher on the objective knowledge tests than their colleagues with differing degrees. Furthermore, workers with MSW who participated in a Title IV-E stipend based program scored higher on the standardized tests than their counterparts who did not participate in these programs.

**Brown, J.K., Chavkin, N.F., & Peterson, V. (2002). Tracking process and outcome results of BSW students' preparation for public child welfare practice: Lessons learned. *Evaluation Research in Child Welfare: Improving Outcomes Through University-Public Agency Partnerships*, 15(3/4). 105-116.**

**Available at:**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Examination+of+racial+imbalance+for+children+in+foster+care:+Implementations+for+training&ots=B6E8sruIF7&sig=Vvju7F9pOxghLTGpn10jiteoenE#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

This study explored a Texas university/agency partnership program to prepare social work students for public child welfare. The results of the outcome study showed that more than 79% of the BSW stipend students were hired upon completion of the internship. Fifty-six percent of those who were hired stayed beyond their commitment and the length of employment ranged from one to nine years.

**Clark, S.J., Smith, R.J., & Uota, K. (2013). Professional development opportunities as retention incentives in child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(10), 1687-1697.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org.10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.07.006>

This study examined the career paths of 415 Title IV-E MSW graduates in one state retrospectively over 180 months post-graduation to discover factors that could be important in affecting retention in public child welfare agencies. The Title IV-E educational program is designed to be a retention strategy at the same time as it is a professionalization strategy. We surmised that perceived

organizational support (POS) contributes to retention by acknowledging the workers' needs for career development support. The median survival time for these child welfare social workers was 43 months for the first job and 168 months for the entire child welfare career. The initial analysis showed steep drops in retention occurred at 24-36 months post-graduation, approximately at the end of the Title IV-E work obligation. Upon further examination, Kaplan-Meier tests showed organizational factors relevant to workers' professional career development predicted retention. Having access to continuing education and agency-supported case-focused supervision for licensure were correlated with retention at the 24-36 month post-graduation mark. At 72 months post-graduation, promotion to supervisor was a significant factor found to encourage retention. Being a field instructor for MSW students and being promoted to a managerial position were not significantly related to retention.

**Coleman, D., & Clark, S. (2003). Preparing for child welfare practice: Themes, a cognitive-affective model, and implications from a qualitative study. In Briar-Lawson & Zlotnik (Eds.), *Charting the impacts of university-child welfare collaboration*. (p. 67-81). New York: The Haworth Press.**

**Available at:**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEpolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA83&dq=Preparing+for+child+welfare+practice:+Themes,+a+cognitive-affective+model,+and+implications+from+a+qualitative+study&ots=gHVAasrcg7&sig=Y3cSURfQW47fHcIWlhW37gEOw-Y#v=onepage&q=Preparing%20for%20child%20welfare%20practice%3A%20Themes%2c%20a%20cognitive-affective%20model%2C%20and%20implications%20from%20from%20a%20qualitative%20study&f=false>

This qualitative study conducted 37 focus groups over four years with approximately 550 Title IV-E MSW students. The most frequent themes centered on direct practice: students emphasized direct practice as the most frequently mentioned strength of the curriculum as well as the most frequently mentioned weakness. Anxiety and apprehension about the emotional challenge of social work emerged as a theme.

**Dickinson, N.S., & Perry, R.E. (2002). Factors influencing the retention of specially educated public child welfare workers. *Evaluation research in child welfare: Improving outcomes through university-public agency partnerships*, 15(3/4), 89-103.**

**Available at:**

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA89&dq=Factors+influencing+the+retention+of+specially+educated+public+child+welfare+workers&ots=B6E8sruPF4&sig=4aWCFvzOnwO4gtMaiW\\_u2ma28Q8#v=onepage&q=Factors%20influencing%20the%20retention%20of%20speciality%20educated%20educated%20public%20child%20welfare%20workers&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA89&dq=Factors+influencing+the+retention+of+specially+educated+public+child+welfare+workers&ots=B6E8sruPF4&sig=4aWCFvzOnwO4gtMaiW_u2ma28Q8#v=onepage&q=Factors%20influencing%20the%20retention%20of%20speciality%20educated%20educated%20public%20child%20welfare%20workers&f=false)

This study examined the factors that affect the retention of specially trained social workers in public child welfare positions. Two hundred and thirty-five Title IV-E funded MSW graduates completed

the survey instrument. The findings showed that the level of emotional exhaustion, salary, percentage of work week spent doing court related tasks, and the extent to which respondents receive support from work peers and supervisors were significant factors that influenced graduates who remained in public child welfare employment and those who left or planned to leave public child welfare jobs. Worker burnout was the number one reason for leaving child welfare jobs.

**Falk, D.S. (2015). Alumni of a BSW-level specialized title IV-E program voice their experiences in the workplace. *Journal of Social Work Education, 51*(Suppl. 2), S173-S194.**

**Available at:**

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10437797.2015.1072410#.VyOErsvoe70>

This study surveyed 289 alumni of a specialized Title IV-E program that prepares undergraduate social work students for careers in public child welfare, examining factors such as turnover rates, adherence to strengths-based practice principles, perceptions of work conditions, and intent to stay. Findings indicate that graduates of this program were less likely than other caseworkers to leave their positions. Most maintained adherence to strengths-based practice principles, reported satisfaction with the work, felt supported by colleagues, and intended to stay in the field of child welfare. Based on alumni comments, ways that agencies can retain such workers are suggested.

**Fox, S.R., Miller, V.P., & Barbee, A.P. (2003). Finding and keeping child welfare workers: effective use of training and professional development. In Briar-Lawson & Zlotnik (Eds.), *Charting the impact of university-child welfare collaboration*. (p. 67-81). New York: The Haworth Press.**

**Available at:**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ua=HgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=Finding+and+keeping+child+welfare+workers:+effective+use+of+training+and+professional+development&ots=gHVAassaj9&sig=svKJDgBy8yxZZJkYP8KcwHANK4#v=onepage&q=Finding%20and%20keeping%20child%20welfare%20workers%3A%20effective%20use%20of%20training%20and%20professional%20development&f=false>

This article describes an evaluation of the Kentucky Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP) designed to recruit excellent workers from BSW programs who are prepared to take on complex cases with normal supervision within weeks of employment and to sustain those workers over time. The results of the pilot study show that agency supervisors consider the graduates to be: better prepared to handle complex cases much sooner than other new employees including BSW graduates, less stressed and more confident, more skilled in interaction with clients, more knowledgeable of agency policy and procedures, and much more positive in their attitudes about the agency and their job.

**Gansle, K.A., & Ellett, A.J. (2002). Child welfare knowledge transmission, practitioner retention, and university-community impact: A study of Title IV-E child welfare training. *Evaluation research in child welfare: Improving outcomes through university-public agency partnerships, 15*(3/4) 69-88.**

**Available at:**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7xDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA69&dq=Child+welfare+knowledge+transmission,+practitioner+retention,+and+University+community+impact:+A+study+of+Title+IV-E+child+welfare+training&ots=B6EsrVKx2&sig=Q07yfcPXPZn8HcAvT7GljXP23qY#onpage&q=Child%20welfare%20knowledge%20transmission%2C%20practitioner%20retention%2C%20and%20University-%20community%20impact%3A%20A%20study%20of%20Title%20IV-E%20child%20welfare%20training&f=false>

This study compares child welfare knowledge of Louisiana's MSW and BSW Title IV-E stipend students with non-stipend students using a quasi-experimental design. The study found that on a test of child welfare knowledge, students in MSW and BSW programs scored higher following child welfare training.

**Jones, L. (2002). A follow-up of a Title IV-E program's graduates' retention rates in a public child welfare agency. *Evaluation research in child welfare: Improving outcomes through university-public agency partnerships*, 15(3/4), 39-51.**

**Available at:**

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA189&dq=Jones,+L.,+\(2002\).+A+follow-up+of+a+Title+IV-E+program%E2%80%99s+graduates%E2%80%99+retention+rates+in+a+public+child+welfare+agency.+Evaluation+Research+in+Child+Welfare:+Improving+Outcomes+Through+University+%2E2%80%93+Public+Agency+Partnerships,++15\(3/4\)+39-51.&ots=B6E8srVz5&sig=5NFZH\\_AeMBTZzrbU8jJxCx-scqA#v=onepage&qf=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA189&dq=Jones,+L.,+(2002).+A+follow-up+of+a+Title+IV-E+program%E2%80%99s+graduates%E2%80%99+retention+rates+in+a+public+child+welfare+agency.+Evaluation+Research+in+Child+Welfare:+Improving+Outcomes+Through+University+%2E2%80%93+Public+Agency+Partnerships,++15(3/4)+39-51.&ots=B6E8srVz5&sig=5NFZH_AeMBTZzrbU8jJxCx-scqA#v=onepage&qf=false)

This retrospective study examined the retention rates of a Title IV-E program's graduates in a public child welfare agency. The sample size used was 266. The study found that Title IV-E trained social workers were more likely to have remained employed for a longer period of time than non-IV-E trained employees. Other important predictors were Spanish speaking, having an MSW, and being rehired by the agency.

**Leung, P. & Willis, N. (2012). The impact of Title IV-E training on case outcomes for children served by CPS. *Journal of Family Strengths*, 12(1), Article 9.**

**Available at:** <http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol12/iss1/9>

This study examines administrative data from the state of Texas regarding the impact of social work education provided by Title IV-E stipend programs on better case outcomes as defined by the Child and Family Services Review, which includes recurrence of child maltreatment, reentry into foster care, stability of foster care placements, length of time to reunification, and length of time to adoption. Results did not show a significant difference between Title IV-E stipend program participants and other participants with social work degrees for the first three case outcomes. However, there was a significant difference in improved outcomes for reduction in the recurrence of maltreatment, stability of foster care placements, and reduction in time for adoption for those with a social work degree compared to those with other educational backgrounds. A significant difference

between Title IV-E stipend program participant and those with other social work degrees was seen in the length of time for reunification.

**McGuire, L.E. & Lay, K. (2007). Is social work education relevant to child welfare practice? A qualitative analysis from the adult learner perspective. *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 10(2), 16-25.**

**Available at:** <http://www.profdevjournal.org/articles.102016.pdf>

This study was conducted in conjunction with a federally mandated qualitative study to evaluate a newly developed university/agency Title IV-E education program. This paper reviews findings from a qualitative design used to ascertain Title IV-E participants' experience in the MSW programs and their opinions of the educational cohort model implemented in this partnership. Results show that Title IV-E MSW participants were able to immediately incorporate what they have learned in the classroom into their casework practice. Knowledge gained through core social work courses were beneficial to Title IV-E participants through acknowledging how these values and skills are implemented in their child welfare practice, gave them insight into how policy and political processes affect child welfare, and encouraged them to use the concepts of strengths perspective, collaborative practice, and empowerment to advocate for child welfare involved families. In addition, participants felt that the opportunity to obtain the MSW strengthened their commitment to child welfare work. Title IV-E program participants valued the cohort model of their MSW education because it allowed them to interact with other child welfare workers from different agencies and different levels of casework (e.g., supervisors and administrators). The cohort model enabled the Title IV-E participants to gain a better understanding of different aspects of casework and also provided them with a peer support network. Title IV-E participants appreciated the opportunity to showcase their transfer of learning by applying names to the skills and techniques they have been using in their casework practice. The study also detailed supports and stressors reported by the Title IV-E participants. The stressors were to be used to further enhance the Title IV-E educational program and delineate the expectations for each group of stakeholders (e.g., the university, the agency, and the Title IV-E student).

**Morazes, J.L., Benton, A.D., Clark, S.J., & Jacquet, S.E. (2010). Views of specially-trained child welfare social workers: A qualitative study of their motivations, perceptions, and retention. *Qualitative Social Work*, 9(2), 227-247.**

**Available at:** <http://qsw.sagepub.com/content.9/2/227.full.pdf+html>

University-agency partnerships are on strategy in training, and ultimately retaining, public child welfare workers in the field. California's Title IV-E MSW graduates are surveyed in this study in order to compare and contrast the experiences of students who decided to stay in the field and those who ultimately decided to leave. Surveys were mailed to the MSW graduates within six months to one year of students having completed their work obligation. Students completed the survey, indicated if they would like a follow-up interview, and mailed the surveys back to the graduate-level student researchers. The interviews were conducted over a ten year span, beginning in 1999 and ending in 2005. 791 graduates completed the survey and 386 chose to participate in an in-person or telephone interview. Of the students interviewed, 78.6% chose to stay in the field of

public child welfare while 21.2% expressed that they'd be leaving or have already left. Although both "stayers" and "leavers" expressed satisfaction with their program and a feeling of preparedness for the work, the "stayers" had greater access to buffers and experienced the benefits of working in supervision and a positive work environment. "Stayers" were also more likely than "leavers" to report promotion and entry into supervisory roles. The "leavers" reported exiting the field due to a lack of support and respect from supervisors and other staff, high levels of stress, difficulties transferring within or between counties, and other personal/familial obligations and duties. While both "stayers" and "leavers" experienced stressful working conditions, the "stayers" were more likely to discuss the buffering forces (e.g., quality supervision) that helped them alleviate the stress and persevere through challenges.

**Pierce, L. (2003). Use of Title IV-E funding in BSW programs. In Briar-Lawson & Zlotnik (Eds.), *Charting the impacts of university-child welfare collaboration*. (p. 21-33). New York: The Haworth Press.**

**Available at:**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA21&dg=Use+of+Title+IVE+funding+in+BSW+programs.+&ots=gHVAast9de&sig=nCET6jzJsgPiizXOkeJE20HkqvM#v=onepage&q=Use%20of%20Title%20IVE%20funding%20in%20BSW%20programs.&f=false>

A survey design was used to find if all BSW programs in 1998-1999 were using Title IV-E funds to provide support for students who would agree to work in public child welfare programs after graduation. Out of 464 schools that were sent a questionnaire, 282 programs returned the questionnaire. The study found that of the schools that responded, 48 received Title IV-E funding for BSW students. Program directors were asked if they included child welfare content in the curriculum. About one-fourth of the programs said they had a child welfare course as required; fifteen percent had child welfare courses as electives; only 4 percent required child welfare courses for all students; 20% had combination of the above; and the rest of the programs (34%) had no child welfare content in their courses.

**Robin, S.C., & Hollister, C.D. (2002). Career paths and contributions for four cohorts of IV-E funded MSW child welfare graduates. *Evaluation research in child welfare: Improving outcomes through university-public agency partnerships*, 15(3/4), 53-67.**

**Available at:** <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed.12705464>

This study of 73 MSW graduates from 1993-1996 and 32 survey respondents assesses the extent to which IV-E MSW graduates remain engaged in child welfare following completion of their employment obligations to the IV-E program. The study found that "the vast majority of graduates funded by IV-E dollars became employed in and stayed in child welfare services, and that these social work-educated social workers are actively involved in shaping the practice, policies and administration of child welfare services."

**Scannapieco, M., & Connell-Corrick, K. (2003). Do collaborations with social work make a difference for the field of child welfare? Practice, retention, and curriculum. In Briar-Lawson & Zlotnik (Eds.), *Charting the impacts of university-child welfare collaboration*. (p.35-51). New York: The Haworth Press.**

**Available at:**

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA35&dq=Do+collaborations+with+social+work+make+a+difference+for+the+field+of+child+welfare%3F+practice,+retention+and+curriculum&ots=gHVAastcdd&sig=FmRXC0M0YBVSGsBuriN4CJW146w#v=onepage&q=Do%20collaborations%20with%20social%20work%20make%20a%20difference%20for%20the%20field%20of%20child%20welfare%3F%20practice%2C%20retention%20and%20curriculum&f=false>

This article provides three areas of evaluation of a partnership between a school of social work and a state department of child protective services. The first study determines the impact and success of the Title IV-E program from both the students' and the larger community's perspective. The findings of surveys administered to both MSW Title IV-E students and to supervisors and administrators of Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS) showed that approximately 50% of students agreed that their Masters education had improved their skills and relationship with their employers, community, and the profession. Administrator survey results showed 47% agreed that MSW's have a better ability to use various interventions with clients than do bachelor-level employees. The second study determined the retention of Title IV-E participants in the agency. The study found that the reasons to remain employed at CPS were commitment to work, flexible schedule, and increase in professionalism. Salary was reported as the most frequent reason for leaving CPS. The third study determines the current level of child welfare content in MSW curricula. The study found that 60% of respondents stated that there should be more emphasis on child welfare content in the future. The findings of the three studies suggest that Title IV-E funding is essential to the specialized training and education needed by child welfare workers.

**Scannapieco, M., Hegar, R.L., & Connell-Corrick, K. (2012). Professionalism in public child welfare: Historical context and workplace outcomes for social workers and non-social workers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(11), 2170-2178.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2012.07.016>

In this article the history of the U.S. Children's Bureau in developing and professionalizing child welfare services is summarized along with a literature review regarding the relationships between professional preparation and outcomes in service delivery, job performance and preparedness, social work values, and retention of staff. In addition, results from an evaluation study including longitudinal data from 10,000 child welfare workers in Texas are discussed. A major finding from the evaluation is that significant differences exist between the experiences and perceptions of those with social work degrees and those workers with different educational backgrounds.



## **RETENTION STRATEGIES**

**American Public Human Services Association. (2001). Report from the Child Welfare Workforce Survey: State and county data findings. In conjunction with Alliance for Children and Families and Child Welfare League of America. Washington, DC: Author.**

**Available at:**

[http://books.google.com/books/about/Report\\_from\\_the\\_Child\\_Welfare\\_Workforce.html?id=u4kVHAAACAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Report_from_the_Child_Welfare_Workforce.html?id=u4kVHAAACAAJ)

Forty-three (43) states and 48 counties from seven states with locally administered child welfare agencies participated in this study. The study employed survey methodology. Findings from state data indicate that (1) vacancy rates are low among staff groups; (2) annual staff turnover rates are high for all groups except supervisors; (3) annual preventable turnover rates are high for all staff groups except supervisors; (4) the median percentage of all preventable turnovers in FY 2000 was very high; (5) the impact of vacancies on agencies is compounded by required pre-service training and phased-in caseload policies; (6) the dimensions and factors involved in staff recruitment are varied, complex, and widespread; (7) while states have implemented many strategies and approaches in response to recruitment problems, there are no “magic bullets” or “quick fixes;” (8) preventable staff turnover problems are complex, multi-dimensional and widespread; (9) states have implemented many strategies and approaches to deal with preventable turnover problems, but their effectiveness has been modest; (10) there is a gap between the states’ rate recruitment and retention problems and their implementation of strategies to address such problems; (11) “softer” strategies (e.g., in-service training, and educational opportunities) for addressing staff preventable turnover are important; (12) some states are successful and reported that their recruitment and/or preventable turnover situation improved in FY 2000; (13) state have many ideas about actions that should be taken by agencies to recruit and retain qualified child welfare service workers; (14) significant amounts of data are missing from some survey responses. In comparison, county responses indicate that: (1) vacancy rates are relatively low for all staff groups and are lower than state vacancy rates for all staff groups; (2) annual county staff turnover, like state staff turnover, is quite high for all staff groups except for supervisors; (3) annual county preventable turnover rates are very low for all worker groups; (4) the median percentage of all preventable turnovers in the counties are between 27% and 47% for all worker groups except supervisors; (5) counties and states responding to the survey view the factors involved in staff recruitment problems in a similar way; (6) like states, responding counties have implemented many strategies and approaches to lessen recruitment problems, but similarly have not found “magic bullets” or “quick fixes;” (7) counties rates preventable turnovers as less problematic than states did; (8) like states, counties have implemented many strategies and approaches for addressing preventable turnover problems, but their rates effectiveness is higher than states’; (9) counties also see “softer” strategies as important for addressing preventable turnover; (10) county child welfare agencies are somewhat more likely to seek additional resources from county boards as a result of the workforce crisis than states did with governors/state legislatures; and (11) the extent of change experienced by counties was somewhat more positive than states.

**Caringi, J.C., Strolin-Goltzman, J., Lawson, H.A., McCarthy, M., Briar-Lawson, K., & Claiborne, N. (2008). Child welfare design teams: An intervention to improve workforce retention and facilitate organizational development. *Research on Social Work Practice, 18*(6), 565-574.**

**Available at:** <http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/18/6/565>

Based on current research of the causes of preventable turnover and theories related to organizational change, an intervention was designed to reduce turnover in public child welfare agencies. The intervention included three components: management consultations, capacity building for supervisors, and an intra-agency design team (DT). The DT intervention was a team of agency representatives who used research and critical thinking to identify and remedy causes of turnover in a particular agency. The DT members included the agency that has members representing units such as foster care and child protective services. The members were at several levels of the agency's hierarchy, including frontline caseworker, senior caseworker, supervisor, director of services, and deputy commissioner. True buy-in and endorsement from the County commissioners was essential to giving DT the authority to collect and review data and testing creative solutions. Preliminary results from four systems in the DT intervention study indicate that from wave 1 (2002) to wave 2 (2005), the nonintervention systems showed no significant improvement of 3% on intention to leave. At wave 1, 81% of the employees identified an intention to leave, while 78% indicated intention to leave at wave 2. On the other hand, the systems that received the DT intervention improved significantly by 22% from 76% down to 54%.

**Gomez, R.J., Travis, D.J., Ayers-Lopez, S., & Schwab, A.J. (2010). In search of innovation: A national qualitative analysis of child welfare recruitment and retention efforts. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32*(5), 644-671.**

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2010.01.001>

A national qualitative study explored recruitment and retention strategies within state child welfare agencies and the perceived effectiveness of such strategies. The study explored 50 state child welfare websites and conducted interviews with 18 individuals across 13 states. Findings suggest that agencies struggle with heightened turnover rates despite continuing identification and implementation of comparable types of recruitment and retention efforts. Nationally well utilized and underutilized strategies to alleviate recruitment and retention challenges are discussed, as well as mechanisms for overcoming these obstacles and promoting innovation. Creativity, new strategies, and other innovative forces have been important factors in improving recruitment and retention in other fields (e.g., nursing).

**Radey, M. & Schelbe, L. (2017). From classroom to caseload: Transition experiences of frontline child welfare workers. *Child Welfare, 95*(2), 71-89.**

**Available at:**

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/2006753621/fulltextPDF/3A66FF9DF863421FPQ/1?accountid=14709>

High annual turnover (20–50%) reflects the challenging nature of child welfare frontline work. This article considers Lipsky's (1980) concept of street-level bureaucracy to explain workers' workplace transition. We conducted in-depth interviews with 38 newly hired, frontline workers. A thematic analysis revealed discrepancy between worker expectations and job reality. Workers felt unprepared for the job given quick transition periods and unfamiliar agency procedures. Additional field training, agency-specific training, caseload protection, and workplace supports could improve worker transition and reduce turnover.

**Strand, V.C. & Badger, L. (2005). Professionalizing child welfare: An evaluation of a clinical consultation model for supervisors. *Children and Youth Services Review, 27(8), 865-880.***

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S019074090400252X>

This study reviews a clinical consultation model that was developed and tested with child welfare supervisors in public and private agencies in a large urban municipality over a three year period. The project involved existing university-child welfare partnerships, faculty from six social work schools, and the child welfare system. Evaluation methods included pre and post self-assessment instruments, a consumer satisfaction questionnaire, and follow-up measures at the three and 15 month post-program participation points. Data demonstrated significant increases in the self-assessment scores from the pilot study (year one) to year two. Intervention fidelity remained consistent across years two and three, with statistically significant changes in self-assessment scores in each year. Findings suggest that the clinical consultation model offers a tool for professional development decision making that is transferable to comparable large cities and child welfare systems with similar staff/client numbers.

**Strolin-Goltzman, J. (2010). Improving turnover in public child welfare: Outcomes from an organizational intervention. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32(10), 1388-1395.***

**Available at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.06.007>

This article focuses on the effects of an organizational intervention on intention to leave child welfare. It is one of only two studies of its kind. A non-equivalent comparison group design was used with 12 child welfare agencies participating in either the Design and Improvement Teams (DT) intervention condition or in a comparison condition. Pre and post intervention assessments of the organizational factors and intention to leave took place. No significant interactions were noted for the organizational variables of workload, salary/benefits, and rewards. Findings do indicate significant interactions for three organizational variables (professional resources, commitment, and burnout) and intention to leave. All of these interactions showed a greater positive improvement for the DT group than the comparison group. A good model of fit demonstrated with pathways leading from the intervening organizational variables to intention to leave. Interventions at the organizational level could help child welfare agencies improve organizational shortcomings, positively affect perceptions of burnout, role clarity, and job satisfaction, decrease intentions to leave, and improve service quality.

**The Butler Institute for Families (2009, May). *The Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project Final Report*. University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work, Denver, Colorado.**

The Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project (WRRRP) addressed recruitment, selection, and retention issues in five rural and urban sites in the greater Rocky Mountain region- Colorado, Arizona, and Wyoming. Multiple training curricula and other resources were developed to attend to cross-site issues. Comprehensive organizational assessments were conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the agency, the worker, and the job. This information was used to create a strategic plan addressing the conditions that impact recruitment, selection, training, and retention. Each site interpreted the information from the organizational assessment, developed sites' specific strategic plans of needs, priorities, and training intervention strategies. Throughout the five year project, WRRRP staff provided support, technical assistance, and training. Evaluation activities were conducted throughout the project's life to assess process and outcome results and to provide on-going assessment to make mid-course corrections. A major finding of the outcome evaluation was improved retention for caseworkers, supervisors, and aides. A qualitative finding of note was the importance of good supervision in retaining workers. The authors also note that no single intervention will resolve the problems of ineffective recruitment and retention a multi-pronged approach addressing recruitment, selection, training, and retention is necessary.

**Zlotnik, J.L., DePanfilis, D., Daining, C., & Lane, M.M (2005). *Factors influencing retention of child welfare staff: A systematic review of research*. Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research.**

**Available at:** [http://ncwwi.org/files/Retention/Factors\\_influencing\\_retention\\_of\\_CW\\_staff.pdf](http://ncwwi.org/files/Retention/Factors_influencing_retention_of_CW_staff.pdf)

This is a systematic review of 25 different research studies that focus on the retention of child welfare workers. The review aimed to address the question of the primary "conditions and strategies that influence the retention of staff in public child welfare." The authors found that the most consistent characteristics related to retention were individual's level of education, supervisory support, and worker caseload. The authors highlight the value of Title IV-E educational initiatives to recruit invested workers in pursuing advanced degrees in social work, and the negative impact that role overload and burnout have on retention. Recommendations are to increase the rigor and amount of research that is conducted in this area and to create a clearinghouse to regularly disseminate information about effective strategies in retaining workers and improving services that child welfare workers provide.

## **OTHER**

**Lawrence, C., Zuckerman, M., Smith, B.D., & Liu, J. (2012). Building cultural competence in the child welfare workforce: A mixed-methods analysis. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 6(2), 225-241.**

**Available at:** <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15548732.2012.667747#preview>

This article describes findings from a mixed-methods study of specialized training in cultural competence knowledge, attitudes, and skills for experienced caseworkers in public child welfare. Training participants were recruited through local child welfare agencies; while a sample of convenience, participants reflect the state-wide child welfare workforce's educational background. One hundred and forty participants attended the training and completed pre and post-test measures of knowledge, skills, and awareness of culturally competent practice (adapted from Goode, 2003). Initial findings indicate that training can have an impact on participant's knowledge of cultural competence. Study findings also show that participants believe this new knowledge positively affects how they and their coworkers practice with families.

**Strolin-Goltzman, J., Kollar, S., & Trinkel, J. (2010). Listening to the voices of children in foster care: Youths speak out about child welfare workforce turnover and selection. *Social Work, 55*(1), 47-53.**

**Available at:** <http://sw.oxfordjournals.org/content/55/1/47.full.pdf+html>

This study examined the experiences and opinions of child welfare workforce turnover and retention of youths in the child welfare system, explored the relationship between the number of caseworkers a youth has had and the number of the youth's foster care placements, and harnessed the suggestions of youths in resolving the turnover problem. Youths in the child welfare system ( $N=25$ ) participated in focus groups and completed a small demographic survey. Findings suggest that youths experience multiple effects of workforce turnover, such as lack of stability; loss of trusting relationships; and, at times, second chances. The article concludes with suggestions for caseworkers, state trainers, local and state administrators, and social work researchers on engaging *with* youths in relationships that facilitate genuine systems change around social work practice and the child welfare workforce crisis.

**Thompson, H.M., Stevenson Wojciak, A., & Cooley, M.E. (2017). Through their lens: Case managers' experiences of the child welfare system. *Qualitative Social Work, 16*(3), 411-429.**

**Available at:** <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1473325015619667>

Case managers play a significant role in the child welfare system. Although previous studies have highlighted the multiple demands and requirements for case managers, few studies have utilized the perspective of case managers to highlight practices and areas of need within the child welfare system. The purpose of this qualitative study was to expand the understanding of issues related to child welfare by exploring the perspectives of current and former child welfare case managers. Thirty-one case managers provided their perspectives on their experiences within the child welfare system, perspectives and views of the system, relationships with other parts and persons within the system, and how they developed their knowledge of the intricate child welfare system. Themes related to the roles and responsibilities of case managers, support and collaboration, and learning and growing within the system emerged. Practice, research, and policy implications are discussed.

Wehrmann, K.C., Shin, H., & Poertner, J. (2002). *Transfer of learning: An evaluation study. Evaluation research in child welfare: Improving outcomes through university-public agency partnerships*, 15(3/4), 23-37.

**Available at:**

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA23&dq=Wehrmann,+K.+C.,+Shin,+H.,+%26+Poertner,+J.,+\(2002\).+Transfer+of+training:+An+evaluation+study.+Evaluation+Research+in+Child+Welfare:+Improving+Outcomes+Through+University+%E2%80%93+Public+Agency+Partnerships,+15\(3/4\)+23-37.&ots=B6E8srwNCa&sig=y6gdhEGZGi-eCqdvS6liGcBo-8o#v=onepage&q=&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA23&dq=Wehrmann,+K.+C.,+Shin,+H.,+%26+Poertner,+J.,+(2002).+Transfer+of+training:+An+evaluation+study.+Evaluation+Research+in+Child+Welfare:+Improving+Outcomes+Through+University+%E2%80%93+Public+Agency+Partnerships,+15(3/4)+23-37.&ots=B6E8srwNCa&sig=y6gdhEGZGi-eCqdvS6liGcBo-8o#v=onepage&q=&f=false)

This study of 129 child welfare workers at the six-month follow-up found that the opportunity to perform new tasks and post-training peer support were important factors explaining training transfer. The results of this study suggest that greater involvement by trainees in the training process may positively influence child welfare workers learning of new skills and their ability to transfer them back to the practice setting.

# Appendix N

## Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

### CWEB/CWEL Faculty and Staff

Name	Position Title	CWEB/CWEL Percent of Effort	Employment Dates
Helen Cahalane, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW	Principal Investigator	75%	1/20/97-present
Yodit Betru, DSW, LCSW	CWEB/CWEL Field Placement and Agency Coordinator	100%	11/1/12-6/30/18
Cynthia Bradley-King, Ph.D.	CWEB Academic Coordinator	100%	8/21/06-present
Joseph DiPasqua, MA	Program Administrator	85%	6/16/14-present
Yvonne Hamm, BA	Senior Program Administrator	85%	6/28/10-present
Lynda Rose, BS	Data/Systems Manager and Student Records Coordinator	90%	8/4/10-present
Marlo Perry, Ph.D.	Research Assistant Professor	35%	8/1/10-present
Mary Beth Rauktis, Ph.D.	Research Assistant Professor	40%	10/1/07-present
Michael Schrecengost, MPPM, CMA	Chief Fiscal Officer	77.5%	3/3/03-present
Elizabeth Winter, Ph.D., LSW	CWEL Academic Coordinator	100%	6/1/06-6/30/18
Rachel Winters, M.A.	Senior Evaluation Coordinator	30%	3/16/09-present







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