Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

Over 84 Years of Child Welfare Leadership!

2021-2022 Annual Report

School of Social Work

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)
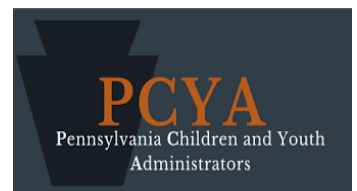
July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022

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.

Published by

**Child Welfare Education and Research Programs
School of Social Work
University of Pittsburgh
2009 Cathedral of Learning
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260**

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

1-866-275-2935

January 2023

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Greetings

From the Dean

The School of Social Work has a longstanding commitment to children, youth, and families and to the professional development of the child welfare workforce. The first child and family-focused courses were offered over 100 years ago, shortly after the formation of the U.S. Children's Bureau. Since that time, the School of Social Work has been at the forefront of child welfare studies. We recognize that the core of child welfare work involves protecting children, as well as providing support to families and communities, and that a social work education is the best preparation for the complexity of the job. Our ongoing efforts to enhance 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 twenty-first year of the CWEB program and twenty-seven years of the CWEL program. This sustained commitment by the Department of Human Services and the University assures that Pennsylvania remains a national leader in child welfare education, training, organizational development, and practice improvement.

The School of Social Work is committed to excellence in child welfare education, training, and research. We thank the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators for their steadfast support and partnership in public child welfare workforce development. Our work together remains critical to preparing social work professionals to meet the challenges of our economic, social, and political landscape.

Elizabeth M.Z. Farmer, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Social Work

From the Principal Investigator

We are proud of the achievements of the CWEB and CWEL programs and the contributions we continue to make to the public child welfare system in Pennsylvania through workforce development, best practice, and continuous quality improvement. The past year has been full of persistent challenges to the physical, psychological, economic, and social health of our nation. Long-standing issues of racial inequity, systemic racism, and oppression have garnered long overdue attention and focus. Socioeconomic disparities are painfully apparent as we continue to navigate the aftermath of the pandemic. Vulnerable children and families face yet more disadvantage related to basic needs, access to education and healthcare, affordable housing, and stable employment. Throughout these challenges, our child welfare workforce has shown resilience, perseverance, and determination. The essential work of child welfare requires a competent, well-prepared, and well-supported workforce to address the complex needs of children and families.

At this time, one thousand three hundred and thirty-nine (1,339) CWEB students have entered the county agency system and one thousand six hundred and thirteen (1,613) students have graduated from the CWEL program. During the current academic year, approximately 175 CWEB and CWEL participants are engaged in social work studies. It is to Pennsylvania's credit and the University of Pittsburgh's leadership that a pathway of professional education has been available to our public child welfare workforce for over a quarter of a century. We extend sincere thanks to our partnering schools, the 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

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 distinct 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 widely dispersed locations 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 among the factors contributing to the difficulties in retaining child welfare personnel. Research findings document that professional education is one of the strategies within a comprehensive, system-wide intervention that can reduce turnover, improve services, and reduce costs.

This report marks the completion of the twenty-first (21st) full academic year of operation for the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program and twenty-seventh (27th) 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 27 years, CWEL has been returning graduates to over 3,630 caseworker positions* in Pennsylvania's county child welfare agencies, while CWEB has been preparing graduates to enter the child welfare field over the past 21 years. At the present time, over 25% of the state's public child welfare casework positions are occupied by a CWEB graduate, a CWEL graduate, or a currently enrolled CWEL student. CWEB and CWEL graduates and current CWEL students also occupy supervisor, manager, and administrator positions across the Commonwealth. There are many factors to be included when addressing morale, recruitment, and retention problems. As a key intervention strategy, CWEB and CWEL continue to demonstrate their effectiveness in addressing the significant issue of preparatory and advanced education for the child welfare workforce. (*Figure based on SFY 20/21 workforce data.)

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.

Date	Event
2/28/1787	Pittsburgh Academy established
1819	Renamed Western University of Pennsylvania
1908	Renamed University of Pittsburgh
1912	Founding of the U.S. Children's Bureau, the first government agency dedicated to the welfare of children [1]
1917-1918	First child and family-focused courses offered through the University of Pittsburgh, Division of Social Work: *The Child and the Community* and *The Family*. Two faculty comprise the Division of Social Work, which sits within the Department of Sociology.
1918-1919	Five faculty members provide 10 courses, including *Public Care of Dependents, Defectives and Delinquents*.
1919	First accreditation. No other school in the US has an earlier first accreditation date.
1932	First record of study materials for training agency workers on visiting children in foster homes and conducting foster home studies. Director of the Division of Social Work engages in an "Adoption Study" in collaboration with the Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania.
1934	• A more formalized child welfare program of study begins within the Division of Social Work. Course listings include *The Field of Child Welfare, Institutional Child Welfare, Problems of Adoption, Social Case Treatment in Child Welfare, Child Guidance* and *Field Work in Child Welfare*. • A "Child Welfare Institute" entitled "Child Behavior and Foster Care" is offered.
1936	"Child Welfare Institute" entitled "*Programs for Child Caring Institutions*" is offered.
1938	• University of Pittsburgh announces the creation of the School of Applied Social Sciences, the University's 18th separate School. • School of Social Work introduces a master's level curriculum focused on child safety and well-being.

[1] 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

1938-1971
- The School of Social Work continues classroom courses and field placements related to children, child welfare and child development.
- 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
- University of Pittsburgh becomes part of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education in 1966 [2]

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
- The Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program initiated to provide child welfare education and training to persons preparing for a child welfare career.
- 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.

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.

[2] 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

2005 — Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program receives the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) Quality Award.

2006 — CWEL program graduates its 500th MSW recipient

2008 —
- School of Social Work receives its 110th grant of external funding since 1971, expressly for child welfare education training, research, faculty development and curriculum development.
- CWEB, CWEL and the PA Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) highlighted as one of Pennsylvania's key strengths during the second round of the CFSR.
- CWEB program graduates its 500th BSW/BASW recipient

2012 —
- Pennsylvania begins a two-year effort to improve the Commonwealth's child protection laws. First meeting of the PA Task Force on Child Protection ["Task Force"] held in January [3]. Testimony provided to the Task Force by University child welfare faculty in May [4].
- The PA Child Welfare Training Program receives the Academic Excellence Award from the American Public Human Services Association.
- CWEL graduates its 1000th MSW recipient.
- CWERP PI receives the NSDTA Career Achievement Award.
- PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) officially changes its name.

2013 —
- CWERP continuum highlighted in NASW publication highlighting the 100th anniversary of the Children's Bureau[5].
- Governor Tom Corbett signs 10 child protection bills into law, the first pieces of a comprehensive legislative package for PA's children and following the recommendations of the Task Force. Signing event held at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center[6].

2014 — On-line course, *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania*, publically released by the Child Welfare Resource Center (www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu)

2015 —
- Professional development series, *Trauma-Informed Principled Leadership*, initiated with Bloomsburg University and University of Pittsburgh CWEB students.
- CWEB program graduates its 1000th BSW/BASW recipient

2016 —
- 1st Annual Pamela J. Cousins Excellence in Social Work Award established at the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford.
- Testimony on child welfare workforce development provided to the PA House Children & Youth Committee
- CWERP provides national briefing on workforce development in Washington, DC.

[3] January 26, 2012
[4] May 31, 2012
[5] 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.
[6] December 18, 2013

2018 — Family First Prevention Services Act signed into federal law[7]. The ground breaking legislation enables states to use federal IV-E dollars on evidence-based prevention services for families involved in the child welfare system.

2019
- Governor Tom Wolf signed the "Fostering Independence Through Education Act" in to Pennsylvania law.
- Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Resource Center released new child welfare caseworker training series: Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice.
- University of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Department of Human Services awarded National Child Welfare Workforce grant, establishing the Child Welfare Workforce Excellence Fellowship.

2020 — July, 2020: CWEL celebrates its 25th anniversary.

2021
- CWEB celebrates its 20th anniversary.
- July, 2021: Consolidation approved for California University of Pennsylvania, Clarion University, and Edinboro University into Pennsylvania Western University. Bloomsburg University, Lock Haven University, and Mansfield University into Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania.

2022
- June 8, 2022, Dr. Helen Cahalane, Principal Investigator for the University of Pittsburgh's Child Welfare Education and Research Programs receives the Wilbur I. Newstetter Award from the University of Pittsburgh for lifetime achievement, support and service to the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work.
- June 8, 2022: CWEL 25th Anniversary Event at the University of Pittsburgh.
- Fall 2022: The consolidated universities of Pennsylvania Western University (California University of Pennsylvania, Clarion University, Edinboro University) and Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania (Bloomsburg University, Lock Haven University, Mansfield University) welcome their first group of students.

[7] P.L. 115-123

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

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Requirements

Application Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be a junior or above, in good academic standing, enrolled at an approved university
- Have a satisfactory grade point average
- Submit academic transcript(s)
- Have the recommendation of the social work faculty of the program in which they are enrolled
- Provide a written statement regarding interest in public child welfare
- Not be in default of any outstanding federal or state educational loan
- Sign a legally binding agreement which requires a work commitment following completion or termination of their studies
- Have a valid driver's license

Requirements as a Student

Students must:

- Complete child welfare course
- Enroll in Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice
- Complete an internship at a public child welfare agency

Requirements as a Graduate

Graduates must:

- Gain and maintain, for one year, employment at a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency

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 internship, most students complete a substantial portion of the competency-based, foundational training required for all public child welfare caseworkers (*Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice*). Upon graduation, students also receive assistance with their employment search.

To date, 1,339 students have graduated from CWEB during the program's first 21 years. CWEB graduates have completed internships and obtained employment in 93% of Pennsylvania counties. Once on the job, they can draw from their educational preparation, skill-based training, and internship experience. 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 front line child welfare practice. Figure 2 below illustrates CWEB admissions by gender binary.

Figure 2. Admissions to CWEB by Gender
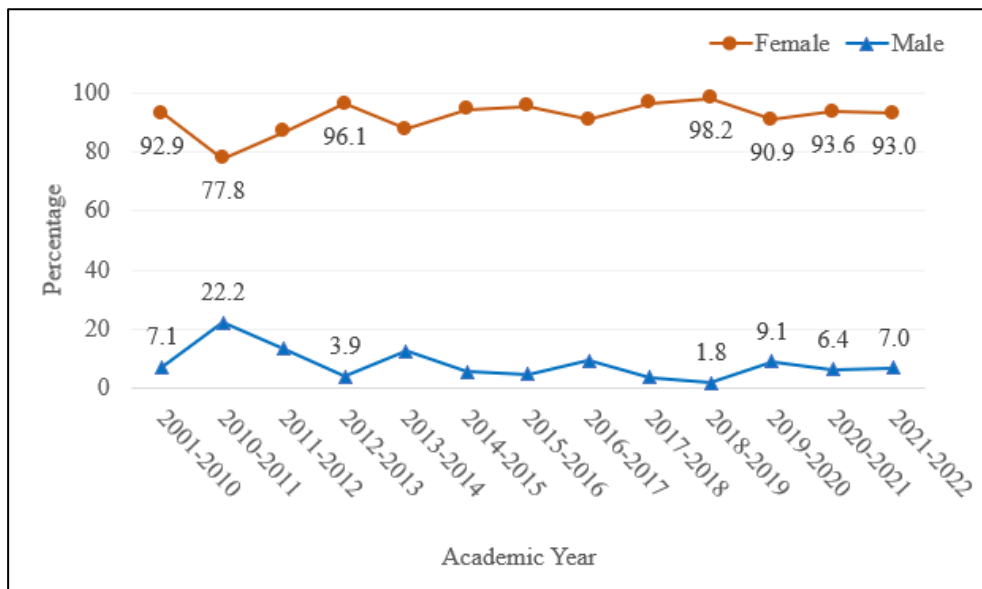
CWEB admits at three points during an academic year.

The majority of CWEB students are full-time with only seven part-time students in the program's history thus far.

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, 20% 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 17% of CWEB graduates have entered the CWEL program thus far. CWEB alumni made up 10% of the active CWEL student enrollment during the 2021-2022 program year.

Figure 3. Child Welfare Education for Leadership Requirements

Child Welfare Education for Leadership Requirements

Application Requirements

Applicants must:
- Have been employed at a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency for at least two years
- Have at least satisfactory work performance evaluations
- Have been accepted for graduate social work study by one of the twelve approved schools
- Have the approval of their employer and (if accepted for full-time study) be granted an educational leave by their employer
- Current resume
- Complete a written statement regarding the application of graduate study to their work
- Not be in default of any outstanding federal or state educational loan
- Sign a legally binding agreement which requires a work commitment following completion or termination of their studies

Requirements as a Student

Students must:
- Complete child welfare course work while maintaining satisfactory academic progress in an affiliated MSW program
- Complete an internship at a child and family serving agency

Requirements as a Graduate

Graduates must:
- Maintain, for amount of time that educational funding was received, employment at the sponsoring Pennsylvania public child welfare agency

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 27 years of the program, 1,613 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%. Admission trends by gender binary and by enrollment status are shown in Figures 4 and 5 below.

Figure 4. Admissions to CWEL by Gender
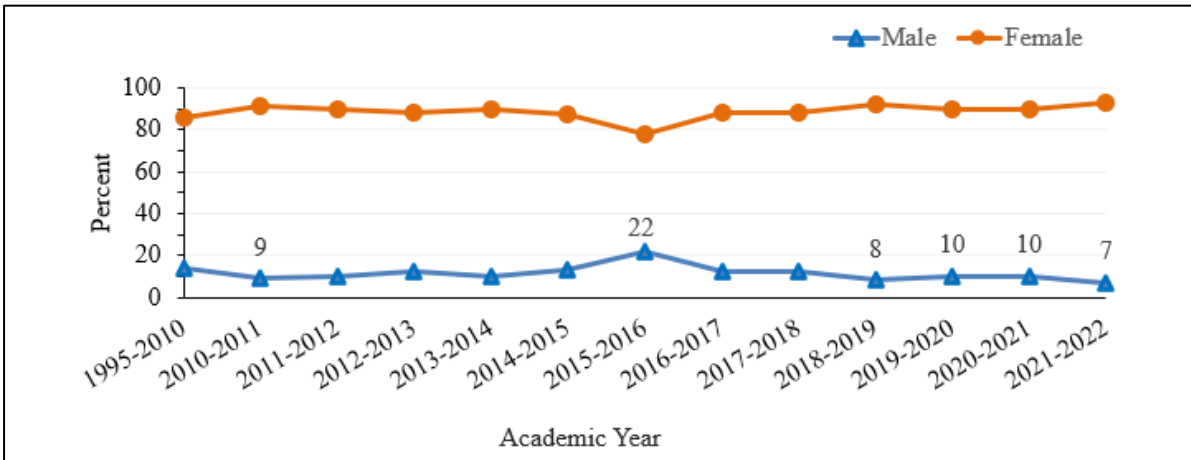
Figure 5. Admissions to CWEL by Enrollment Status
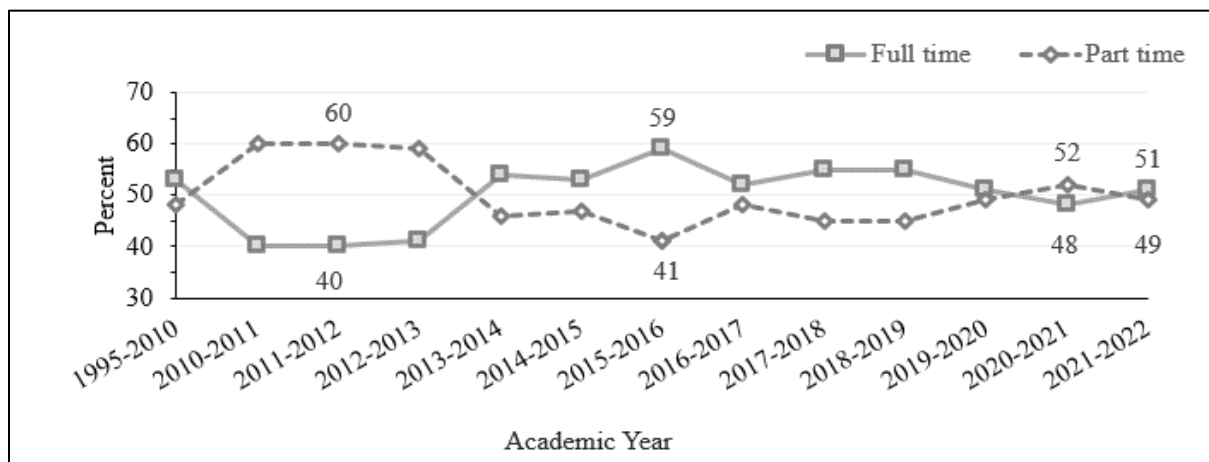
Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare and CWEB/CWEL Enrollment

We are committed to understanding and addressing issues of racial equity and social justice, especially as it relates to the child welfare system. Given the long-standing impact of racism and societal injustice in the lives of black and brown persons, in particular, it is crucial to dismantle the ways in which race is intertwined in all levels of child welfare services. Throughout child welfare and other related fields, the terminology used to define and describe concepts related to race and ethnicity may vary. Please see the terms and definitions below that are used in this report.

Disproportionality: The overrepresentation or underrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group compared with its percentage in the total population.

Racial Disparity: The unequal outcomes of one racial or ethnic group compared with outcomes for another.

Race Equity: Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives[8].

Racism: The systematic discrimination directed against minority or marginalized groups.

Cultural humility: A process of reflection and lifelong inquiry, involving self-awareness of personal and cultural biases as well as awareness and sensitivity to significant cultural issues of others.

Cultural responsiveness: The ability to adapt one's behavior to the cultural needs of others. Families/children of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds: Families or children whose race or ethnicity is other than non-Hispanic, White only (e.g., African American, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native)[9]

It is well known that children of color are overrepresented in the United States child welfare system[10]. For example, in 2021, African American children made up approximately 14% of the U.S. child population but represented 22% of the foster care population[11,12]. Disproportionate representation is striking across all levels of child welfare service and is particularly evident in

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[8] National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021, January 26). *Disproportionality and race equity in child welfare.*
[9] Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). *Child Welfare Practice to Address Racial Disproportionality and Disparity.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.
[10] Dettlaff, A. (ed) (2021). *Racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system*. Springer.
[11] US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (2020). *The AFCARS Report. Preliminary estimates for FY2021 as of June 28, 2022*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-29.pdf

[12] 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&loct=2#detailed/2/40/false/37/68,69,67,12,70,66,71,72/423,424

substitute care. Pennsylvania is the fifth most populated state in the country, with approximately 12.8 million people[13]. According to a recent report by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, there were 20,490 Pennsylvania children living in foster care in 2021 [14]. Black, Hispanic children of any race, and children of multiple races had higher than expected child welfare referrals including substantiated reports of abuse and neglect[14]. When looking at re-entry into foster care, Black children were more than 4.5 times more likely to re-enter foster care and 4 times more likely to remain in foster care when compared to White children[14]. Children of two or more races were more than 4 times more likely to be in foster care when compared to White children[14].

While the 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. Thus, engaging a diverse student body into child welfare studies and supporting that workforce in developing both practice and leadership skills is fundamental to developing and sustaining a diverse child welfare workforce that demonstrates cultural humility and cultural responsiveness. Child welfare workers who understand, appreciate and/or share in the background, culture, language, and customs of a family are better equipped to holistically understand a family's needs and appropriately provide services that will facilitate better outcomes[15] [16]. As a case in point, a recent study of practice in two county-administered child welfare systems illustrated the significance of workforce diversity in reducing racial disparity in

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[13] Pennsylvania Population. (2021). Retrieved 2020-08-26, from
https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/pennsylvania-population.

[14] Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (2022). 2022 *State of Child Welfare: A system under stress: Examining how to better support Pennsylvania's child welfare system and the children and families it serves.* Harrisburg, PA: Porchlight Project:
Retrieved from: https://www.papartnerships.org/report/report-2022-state-of-child-welfare-september-2022

[15] Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2016). Racial disproportionality and disparity in child welfare. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. Retrieved from:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/racial_disproportionality.pdf

[16] Levenson, M. (2017, May 30). *Why diversity is important in child protection.* [Blog post] Retrieved from National Council on Crime & Delinquency https://www.nccdglobal.org/blog/why-diversity-important-child-protection.

child welfare removal decisions[17]. This work built upon previous studies illustrating the potential benefit to family outcomes when caseworkers were working with clients who had similar ethnic backgrounds and highlighted the importance of considering familial and cultural norms in relation to child maltreatment and family dynamics. Additionally, the study affirmed the need for all child welfare professionals to examine their own biases and how they may contribute to racial disparity in their decision-making processes. With respect to workforce composition, the authors also noted that while workforce diversity is a first step, adequate training and skill development must follow to fully realize the benefits of a diverse staff.

Within the CWEB and CWEL programs combined, Non-Hispanic Black students represent 20% of participants. Figure 6 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the Pennsylvania child population and those of CWEB/CWEL participants.

Figure 6. Demographics of PA Child Population and CWEB/CWEL Participants

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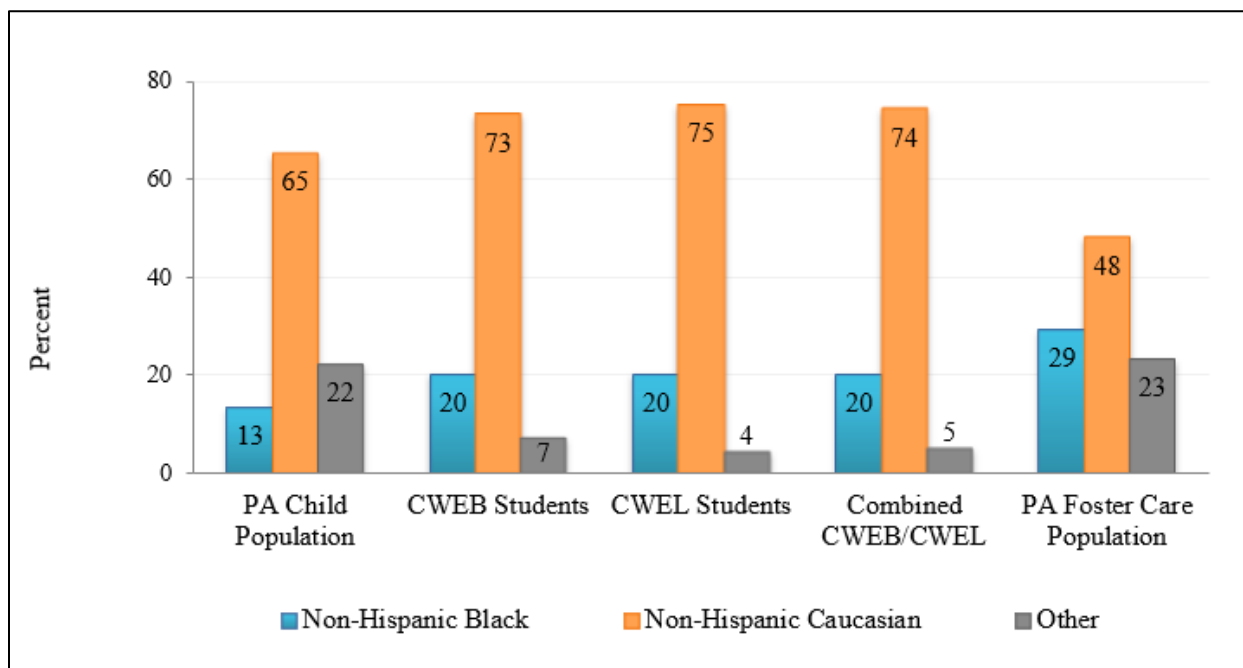
[17] Pryce, J., Lee, W., Crowe, E., Park, D., McCarthy, M., & Owens, G. (2019). A case study in public child welfare: County-level practices that address racial disparity in foster care placement. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, *13*:1, 35-59.

While CWEL students are recruited into the program through their county agencies, CWEB students are recruited from the general population of our partnering Schools of Social Work. Thus, this arrangement provides us the opportunity to work with our schools in developing and implementing strategies that will help facilitate the recruitment of diverse students into the CWEB program. When we engaged our partnering schools in recruiting more diverse students into CWEB, many of the strategies involved open information and communication about the program. This was accomplished by providing information about the CWEB program when students apply to their school, disseminating information at college fairs, and focusing outreach on junior-level students. One school described working with the Employment Opportunity Center to identify first generation college students and underserved groups. School partners recommended CWEB-sponsored social work events at their campuses and having a student mentor attend recruitment visits as a suggestion for increasing diversity in recruitment. As we move forward, it remains important to continue collaboration with our partnering Schools of Social Work and employ effective strategies to facilitate the recruitment of diverse child welfare students. We address a pending opportunity to better recruit a more diverse student body in the next section.

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 14 undergraduate universities and 11 graduate schools eligible to participate in the CWEB and CWEL programs. The total number of participating school programs is 17, with 5 schools at the undergraduate level only, 10 university programs enrolling both undergraduate and graduate students, and two programs at the graduate level only.

The most recent addition to our school consortium is East Stroudsburg University who joined the CWEB program in the 2018-2019 academic year after receiving full accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). At present, two partnering universities are in the process of establishing an accredited MSW program: Slippery Rock University and Bloomsburg University. Both programs are currently in Candidacy which is typically a three-year process involving program self-studies, site visits, and reviews by the CSWE Commission on Accreditation. We will explore inviting these MSW programs to join the CWEL consortium when each achieves its full accreditation.

A major change within the landscape of higher education in Pennsylvania warrants discussion. At the conclusion of the 2020-2021 academic year, the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) announced the plan for system redesign of its existing 14 State System universities. (See https://www.passhe.edu/SystemRedesign/Pages/redesign.aspx). Driven by interrelated issues of cost containment, decreasing enrollment, and a declining state allocation, unanimous approval was received by the PASSHE Board of Governors in July of 2021 to integrate six universities into two distinct entities. This followed the passage of Act 50 of 2020 by the PA General Assembly (signed into law in June 2020) which provided the statutory authority to restructure the State System's educational institutions. These restructured entities include California University, Clarion University, and Edinboro University in the west (now known collectively as *Pennsylvania Western University*, or *Penn West*) and Bloomsburg University, Lock Haven University, and Mansfield University in the northeast (now known collectively as *Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania*). The strategic plan for each combined entity includes a single president/leadership team, as well as a single faculty, budget, enrollment management system (including a single application process), human resources, and technology. Effective in mid-2022, full integration of curriculum is targeted for fall 2024.

Five of the six newly integrated PASSHE universities are long-standing members of the CWEB/CWEL school consortium. Their integration provides an opportunity to strengthen the

existing partnership that exists and offers advantages for recruitment, a unified geographic range, and coordination among relatively small social work programs. There is also an opportunity for recruitment of a more diverse student population at the undergraduate (CWEB/preparing for employment) level. *Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania* (Bloomsburg, Lock Haven and Mansfield) is among 15 institutions selected by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities to participate in the newly launched *Transformation Accelerator Cohort*. This initiative is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help eliminate race, ethnicity, and income as predictors of student success. The focus is specifically on parity in student outcomes among Black, Latinx, Indigenous and low-income students. The integrated Bloomsburg-Lock Haven-Mansfield program entity joins university participants representing the rural, urban, and suburban areas across the country that include seven Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs), three Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (HPIs), and three Asian America and Native American-Pacific Islander serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). The disproportionate representation of Black and Brown children in the child welfare system, along with the disproportionate representation of Black and Brown individuals in the child welfare workforce, are well-known issues that demand attention. We will explore opportunities to leverage the intersectional lens of our partners in the northeast region as they adopt best practices for closing equity gaps for underrepresented students and promote a career in public child welfare as one of the solutions for building Pennsylvania's human service workforce.

The CWEB and CWEL faculty conduct annual site visits with each approved 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 and provide instruction and academic advisement within the School of Social Work to University of Pittsburgh students.

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 16 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 educational leave to full-time students is specified in the agreement. Reimbursement to employers for CWEL student salaries and benefits is included.

To accomplish these tasks, approximately nine full-time equivalent faculty and staff have been engaged. All program faculty teach regular 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 M.

Academic Program Approval and Curriculum

All 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 17 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 2021-2022 course offerings of the 15 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 master's level.[18]

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[19]. 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, through a promotion process within the Civil Service system. Of the 39 CWEB students who graduated during the 2021-2022 academic year, 24 (62%) exercised the State Civil Service Social Casework Intern option. CWEB county participation is included in Appendix F.

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[18] Internship hours were reduced by the Council on Social Work Education in the spring of 2020 due to the disruption caused by the pandemic and remained through summer 2022 (undergrads = 340 hours minimum; graduate = 765 hours minimum).
[19] The Department of Administration within PA DHS reduced the minimum amount of internship hours for SCS County Social Casework Interns to 730 hours from spring 2020 through summer 2021 due to the pandemic.

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 H, Chart 8.

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[20]. 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[21]. 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, 72 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 2021-2022 program year, seven 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 twenty-one-year period has been that those who withdraw early discover that child welfare was not what they had anticipated and not

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[20] 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (5)
[21] 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (1)

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 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.

In 27 years of program operation, it is notable that only 5.6% 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 4.4%. 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 21 years of the CWEB program (through the summer of 2022), 1,255 CWEB students accepted employment after graduation. Within the CWEL program, only 20 individuals out of a total of 1,613 graduates have not completed their employment commitment after graduation. We believe that these consistently high retention rates across time is a strong indication of the success of our professional education programs. Child welfare work is difficult, emotionally draining, complex, and not for the faint-hearted. It does not pay well, the hours are long and often unpredictable, and clients are generally not enthused to have a child welfare worker in their lives. Along with these realities come the rewards of helping a child achieve permanency, re-engaging family members who may have

drifted apart for complicated reasons, contributing to a young person's voice being heard, and coordinating concrete resources for a family living on the margins of poverty.

Table 1. Student and Graduate Departures from Programs and Recoupment

School	Total	CWEB Total	CWEL Total	Departure Reason: Employment	Departure Reason: Withdrew from School / Program	Recoupment Status: Collection Initiated	Recoupment Status: Obligation Satisfied
Bloomsburg University	15	15	0	10	5	10	5
Bryn Mawr College	5	0	5	0	5	2	3
California University	20	18	2	12	8	10	10
Edinboro University	15	13	2	7	8	6	9
Kutztown University	17	15	2	10	7	4	13
Lock Haven University	15	15	0	8	7	3	12
Mansfield University	15	15	0	13	2	5	10
Marywood University	24	1	23	5	19	8	16
Millersville University	5	3	2	1	4	2	3
University of Pennsylvania	7	0	7	0	7	2	5
University of Pittsburgh	36	14	22	15	21	11	25
Shippensburg University	19	16	3	10	9	6	13
Slippery Rock University	10	10	0	7	3	5	5
Temple University	38	19	19	18	20	16	22
West Chester University	10	10	0	7	3	5	5
Widener University	19	6	13	8	11	9	10
TOTALS	270	170	100	131	139	104	166

Among the CWEB graduates (2019-2020) who have recently satisfied their legal work commitment, 32% remain in the agencies. Overall, 43% have exceeded their commitment by over

two years. Increased familiarity with the program, more focused selection criteria and stronger case management has contributed to improved outcomes. The number of CWEL graduates who have discontinued child welfare work for <u>all</u> reasons over the life of the program averages 8.4% 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, have presented them at state-wide convenings focusing on recruitment and retention (PCYA, AOPC, Child Welfare Council), and at national-level professional meetings (CSWE, NCWWI). We include additional information later in this report. Fortunately, many root causes of turnover can 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 selection criteria, workforce support and development, agencywide retention, and the enhanced capacity of child welfare systems.

Deliverables

The entry of 1,339 CWEB students into the child welfare workforce and the return of 1,613 CWEL graduates to 66 (98.5%) county agencies has been critical in enhancing the skill level of the workforce and strengthening child welfare practice in Pennsylvania. The CWEB and CWEL programs are embedded within the culture of public child welfare in Pennsylvania and relied on to educate and inform the development of both early career professionals and those who demonstrate emerging leadership skills. CWEB and CWEL graduates continue to lead county child welfare agencies in Pennsylvania at a growing rate. This year, three additional counties promoted CWEB and CWEL graduates into their top Administrator, Director, and Manager roles. Currently, 53% of all county child welfare agencies have a CWEB or CWEL graduate in a top leadership position. As leaders, CWEB and CWEL graduates recognize the importance of the programs and promote them within their agencies. This program year, we welcomed an increase in counties actively

recruiting CWEB students for agency internships. Additionally, management teams focused on expanding the support and flexibility they provided for CWEL students from their agencies.

CWEB recruitment efforts were robust during the 2021-22 program year. Faculty members from CWEB and our partner schools across the state of Pennsylvania recognized the benefits of virtual recruitment which was first implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CWEB Team, along with faculty members from each partner school, held 22 recruitment sessions and met virtually with nearly 250 students over the academic year. Recruitment of additional students also took place through the efforts of partner school faculty talking with students, sharing written recruitment materials, and distributing links to recorded recruitment sessions. Regional information sessions were held with counties this year to provide updated information about the CWEB program and to answer questions about the county's role in providing internships. Throughout the year, social work students and county public child welfare employees contact CWEB and CWEL faculty and staff to ask questions about the programs and to request additional information and guidance. Nearly all counties in the state of Pennsylvania have participated in the two educational programs, evidencing that recruitment efforts are working. Continued efforts are essential to ensure that the opportunity for child welfare-focused education is widely known across Pennsylvania's counties and school programs. New professionals are continuously joining the staff of public child welfare agencies, and new students enroll in our partner schools each year.

A series of detailed webpages (https://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-education-and-research-programs), a program email address (cwerp@pitt.edu) and a toll-free phone line [1 (866) ASK-CWEL/1 (866) 275-2935] are available for those interested in learning more about the CWEB and CWEL programs.   Online information is robust, routinely updated, and publicly available on the School of Social Work website. Additionally, both programs are accessible 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. A realistic caseworker job preview developed by the Office of Children, Youth and Families is located on the CWEB webpage.

The CWEB/CWEL program continuum also has a Facebook page. Student accomplishments are highlighted here to display the wonderful work of our students and graduates. This outreach builds community and illustrates the personal connection both programs develop with participants. We are exploring additional social media platforms. Program information is readily available to county agencies and schools through electronic and personal communication. Individual meetings occur throughout the year with county leadership teams to share current information about the CWEB and CWEL programs and to encourage participation and support. CWEL program information sessions are held with interested county staff to review application requirements, share program information, and encourage participation.

Bi-monthly CWEB student meetings occurred throughout the year on the first Thursday of the following months: August, October, December, February, and April. The meetings, conducted remotely via Zoom, included the CWEB faculty and staff, along with Resource Specialists from the Child Welfare Resource Center. These meetings provided information and support to CWEB students during their academic year in the program. Students learned about CWEB processes, shared experiences related to the training series for new caseworkers, *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice,* discussed the hiring process for county child welfare agencies, learned about opportunities for graduate education offered by the CWEL program, and supported each other as they built a statewide CWEB community. Approximately 20 CWEB students attended each meeting and student participants were key to the development of agenda items for upcoming meetings.

Meetings were also held with CWEL students during each academic term. Groups of approximately 30 students across school programs and county agencies came together in a learning community to dialogue with CWEL faculty and staff. During the fall 2021 student meetings,

students learned about the recently approved courses for CWEL students at their schools, received information and an opportunity to connect with other CWEL students via the Peer Directory, and contributed program improvement suggestions. The spring 2022 student meetings focused on self-care and preventing burn-out. CWEL faculty received strong positive feedback from students for the topic centered meeting framework. Plans to continue this framework for future meetings are in place.

The University delivered the following products and made these efforts during 2021-2022 in accordance with the approved Project Description and Implementation plan:

- Previous annual reports were posted on the CWERP website and made 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. Cahalane received a fourth year of funding for the Child Welfare Workforce Excellence Fellowship as part of the Workforce Excellence partnership with Allegheny County Children, Youth, and Families in the amount of $150,000. This funding from the U.S. Children's Bureau and the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute will continue annually for five years.

- Dr. Johnson received funding for one year in the amount of $10,916 from the University of Pittsburgh Momentum Funds for her study entitled *Taking off the Cape: Removing the Cloak of Invisibility to Support BIPOC Graduate Students*. This study focuses on how to best support BIPOC students to a successful completion of their MSW program.

- Dr. Perry received funding in the amount of $10,000 over two years from the Center on Race and Social Problems for her pilot study entitled *Supporting Superwomen: Emotional Labor, Gendered Racial Microaggressions, and the Superwoman Schema in Black Female Child Welfare Professionals*. This study aims to further the understanding of the environment and emotional health of Black child welfare professionals and will contribute to the development of a racially informed mindfulness intervention.

- Dr. Perry collaborated on a funded study with colleagues from the Department of Pediatrics, School of Education and School of Law entitled *Developing a Holistic Measurement Plan for Transition to Adulthood*. This study aims to evaluate the quality of care received during the transition from pediatric to adult services through an outcomes assessment strategy that reinforces the benefits of multi-systemic care.

- 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/staff visits were held with participating school programs virtually beginning in the fall of 2021 and continuing through the spring of 2022. These visits are summarized in Tables 2-5 below and included meetings with 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 below.

- In addition to the specific activities noted above, hundreds of inquiries were handled from potential students, agency administrators, county commissioners, other states, and other colleges and universities.

In 2021-2022, the CWERP faculty and staff conducted presentations and contributed to scholarly publications to share their knowledge with others. Presentations were virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their works include the following:

Presentations:

- Borish, L., Johnson, A., & Rawls, B., (2022, January 27). *Educational opportunities through the CWEB and CWEL programs.* Virtual workshop at the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network Winter Statewide Meeting.

- Cahalane, H., & Byers, M. (2021, September). *Enhancing the child welfare workforce through social work education.* Presentation at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA.

- Winter, L., Brooks, M., Dolowitz, A., McCarter, R., Moscova, M., & Wilson, C., (2022, April 13). *Create and curate for success: Designing learner-centered pre-work.* Virtual workshop at the Team Based Learning Collaborative.

Recognitions:

- Dr. Cahalane received the Wilbur I. Newstetter Award from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work on June 8th, 2022 at the 25th Anniversary Event for the CWEL Program entitled *The Power of Hope: Leading and Serving in Child Welfare.*

Publications:

- Cahalane, H. & Byers, M. (2022). *Investing in your staff.* County Commissions Association of Pennsylvania Newsletter.

Peer reviews:

- Cahalane, H. Council on Social Work Education, Child Welfare Track. Abstract reviewer for the 67th Annual Program Meeting. (February and March, 2022)

- Cahalane, H. Peer Reviewer, *Advances in Social Work.* (Spring 2022)

Board appointments and mentorship activities:

- Cahalane, H. (June, 2022) Mentorship to two students who represented the University of Pittsburgh (Child Welfare Excellence Fellows) and Allegheny County Children, Youth,

and Families at the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

- Cahalane, H. Appointment to the CCBHO Performance Management Committee.
- Cahalane, H. Membership on the PA Child Welfare Council and the Allegheny County Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Board.
- Johnson, A. (March 31, 2022) Mentorship to University of Pittsburgh CWEL student who received the Community Organizing and Social Action (COSA) Excellence in Social Work Practice Award.

Virtual Campus Meetings

All student meetings were held remotely. Students openly shared their experiences both in the classroom and in the child welfare agencies during sessions with CWEB and CWEL faculty. Topics of importance to students and their work were explored. Questions related to many aspects of child welfare education and practice, as well as specific issues related to the CWEB and CWEL programs, were discussed by the students and faculty. Constructive dialogue about topics such as course availability, balancing work and school for part-time students, policy issues, academic concerns, and administrative procedures occurred. Students spoke candidly about the benefits and challenges of being members of the PA child welfare workforce throughout the past year.

Table 2. CWEB Student Meetings

Fall 2021/Spring 2022	Number Attending
August 5, 2021	25
October 7, 2021	14
December 2, 2021	12
February 10, 2022	17
April 7, 2022	21

Table 3. CWEL Student Meetings

School Program	Date of Fall Visit	Date of Spring Visit
Bryn Mawr College	10/20/2021	3/30/2022
California University	10/18/2021	3/28/2022
Edinboro University	10/18/2021	3/28/2022
Kutztown University	10/18/2021	3/28/2022
Marywood University	10/21/2021	3/31/2022
Millersville University	10/20/2021	3/30/2022
Shippensburg University	10/20/2021	3/30/2022
Temple University	10/18/2021	3/28/2022
University of Pennsylvania	10/18/2021	3/28/2022
University of Pittsburgh	10/21/2021	3/31/2022
University of Pittsburgh-Bradford	10/18/2021	3/28/2022
West Chester University	10/20/2021	3/30/2022
Widener University	10/22/2021	4/1/2022

Table 4. Meetings with CWEB School Faculty

School Program	Date of Visit
Bloomsburg University	9/3/2021
California University	9/9/2021
East Stroudsburg University	9/16/2021
Edinboro University	9/3/2021
Kutztown University	9/16/2021
Mansfield University	9/9/2021
Marywood University	9/13/2021
Millersville University	9/13/2021
Shippensburg University	9/16/2021
Slippery Rock University	9/10/2021
Temple University	9/14/2021
West Chester University	9/14/2021
Widener University	9/16/2021

Table 5. Meetings with CWEL School Faculty

School Program	Date of Visit
Bryn Mawr College	11/17/2021
California University	2/9/2022
Edinboro University	2/23/2022
Kutztown University	2/9/2022
Marywood University	11/17/2021
Millersville University	2/17/2022
Shippensburg University	2/17/2022
Temple University	10/28/2021
University of Pennsylvania	3/2/2022
West Chester University	12/8/2021
Widener University	11/17/2021

Focus Groups

Participants responded to multiple questions during the fall CWEL student meetings to explore ways to improve the CWEL program. As one of the goals of the CWEL program is to increase the number of graduates who become Licensed Social Workers, students were asked how the CWEL Team could support them in obtaining their license upon graduation. Students shared many suggestions with the team, including paying for the state licensing application fees and for the licensing exam, sharing links for web-based preparation materials, providing preparation manuals and sessions for students and recent graduates, and hosting preparation sessions for groups of students. Other ideas were to provide a financial incentive for students who pass their licensing exam, hosting study groups, and holding a refresher course prior to graduation to review content learned in foundation classes.

Next, students were asked what additional field experiences would be beneficial for them to expand their child welfare career. Students mentioned a broad array of field opportunities they felt would be beneficial to CWEL students including field placements in forensic interviewing,

parenting support services, prisons, schools, hospitals, behavioral health, and with law enforcement. Students stressed wanting to have clinical experiences in their field placements. Other students mentioned the need to have more macro field placements to give students a broad view of systems. Part-time students shared their challenges with balancing full-time child welfare work with classes and a field placement. Several commented that their county agency could assist them by setting clear boundaries between work and field and by including required evening and weekend on-call work hours to count towards their total hours needed for the work week.

Lastly, CWEL students were asked what additional supports would help them through the CWEL program and return to their county agency. One suggestion was to allow students to begin field sooner to have more time to complete their hours. Another student offered that field hours should be included as part of the regular work week for part-time students. Generally, students wanted to have more flexibility from both their schools and their agencies and wanted their agency leadership to understand how challenging it is to be a part-time CWEL student. They felt it would be helpful to always have a clear plan in place for work and field times. Additional suggestions were to provide the *Return to Work* notices farther in advance for full-time students and to have county agencies provide information to those in their final semester about new job opportunities available to them upon graduation. Students also wanted to have classes on leadership and supervision and a shortened version of *Foundations* training to prepare them for their return to practice. Also suggested was to hold periodic meetings to engage in deeper discussions about Social Work concepts and their application to child welfare practice once they graduate and return to work.

During the November bi-monthly Zoom meeting, CWEB students responded to a series of focus group questions based on feedback from the past academic year's program evaluation surveys. These inquiries included how the CWEB Team could enhance the bi-monthly Zoom meetings to ensure students at all levels in the CWEB Program are engaged. One student said the dates and times for the meetings could be shared in classes to encourage more CWEB students to

participate. Students want to learn more about what post-graduation will look like for them once they are employed in a county agency and also want to learn more about opportunities for graduate education through the CWEL program.

We asked students how the website could be improved to make it more user friendly. One student suggested creating a video or sending a document with an easy-to-follow walk-through demonstration of how to enter classes into the student information system. Several students agreed that a checklist of all the required items needed for the CWEB program and a timeframe for submitting each item is helpful. This is available within the CWEB Student Handbook as a tool for helping students stay organized, on time, and reduce the number of emails they receive.

The final focus group question was "In what ways can the CWEB Team foster a sense of community and cohesiveness amongst CWEB students"? It was suggested that former CWEB/CWEL students could join the Zoom meetings to talk about their experience and answer questions. Another student said a buddy system would be helpful for new CWEB students to help them navigate through the program. Additional suggestions were to have a conference for all the CWEB students that would take place somewhere central in the state and to have all the CWEB students take the *Foundations* training together.

The Changing Landscape of Pennsylvania Public Child Welfare

Like many child welfare systems across the county, Pennsylvania's workforce encountered challenges during the 2021-2022 program year as our nation emerged from the confines of the pandemic and its cascading effects on family life as well as our social, political, and economic institutions. While maintaining vital operations, some child welfare agencies continued to function for a time with rotational in-office staffing while others had never implemented remote work arrangements. Coronavirus vaccinations were mandated for the workforce in some counties and not in others, resulting in employment terminations and county agency transfers for some program participants. Educational institutions offered virtual, on-campus, and hybrid class options and adopted their own vaccination requirements and testing protocols. Personal and work-related

stress heightened. A number of individuals decided to leave the human services sector across systems of care which impacted both public and private child welfare agencies.

Work demands, vacancy rates, an increased volume of CPS and GPS reports, the growing population of substance-exposed infants, more families dealing with severe addiction issues, and economic instability are among many factors that have added to the stress of an already taxed child welfare system in Pennsylvania. The pandemic and its lingering after-effects have produced new demands, new stressors, and heightened responsibility for supporting families and children during unprecedented times. An anticipated increase in suspected child abuse reports occurred in calendar year 2021 following the decline of reports observed in 2020. This is widely attributed to the reduced contact between children and mandated reporters in education, medical, and community settings.

Previous annual reports have referenced the major shift in Pennsylvania's child welfare system operations that occurred over a decade ago following the public exposure and subsequent legal proceedings that emanated from a long-standing child abuse travesty. We refer readers to the 2012 special investigation report cited here for information regarding this highly publicized case[22] and to the policy and statutory recommendations of the Task Force on Child Protection formed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly[23].

Turnover among the child welfare workforce continues to be painfully experienced in both public and private agencies. At the same time, new opportunities to employ more efficient and effective modes of practice, including the use of virtual technology, data-driven decision making, predictive analytics, and evidence-based interventions, are available. All these factors continue to

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[22] 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*".

[23] *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.

influence the landscape of Pennsylvania public child welfare. The passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act [24] in February of 2018 and the implementation of the state-level FFPSA Prevention Plan brings additional opportunities and expectations to the child welfare workforce. In addition, Pennsylvania plans to operationalize a new universal assessment tool to better identify family and child needs, strengths, risk factors, and safety considerations to guide child welfare intervention and service planning. These are welcome changes that will require the time, investment, and expertise of the 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 utility and quality of the curricula and field experiences, as well as which 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 addition, we ask students who have graduated and been working for at least one year about the organizational culture of their work environment. This information helps us to better understand which aspects of work climate are associated with positive outcomes, such as commitment to the field, job satisfaction, and personal achievement. All 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.

In response to consistent feedback from CWEB students regarding communication issues with the program, in 2019 we created a workgroup to develop strategies to address student support.

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[24] http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/family-first-prevention-services-act-ffpsa.aspx

The committee instituted a process whereby student's concerns were presented, and a plan was initiated on how to best remedy them. The CWERP program is pleased with the outcomes of the work performed by the CWEB Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) committee to translate the concerns of the CWEB students into programmatic changes including more frequent contact with program administrators. The bimonthly webinar participation by current CWEB students and CWEB graduates has continued to be robust, with participants engaging in subsequent sessions. The CWEB team also started hosting webinars for newly accepted CWEB students to answer any questions and ensure they understood the process and the program requirements. In response to these efforts, CWEB students praised the support, communication, and fellowship provided by the sessions. The CWEB CQI group instituted an additional level of support for graduates entering the field of child welfare by contracting with a former child welfare county administrator to conduct semi-structured interviews k with the CWEB graduates 90 days, 6 months, and 9 months after they begin their child welfare career. It is our hope that this additional level of support will aid in the retention of these young child welfare workers.

What follows are the findings from the 2021-2022 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 school faculty 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 surveys are web-enabled. Throughout the year, emails 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, which are 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 6. Return Rates by Survey Type

Respondent Group	Response Rate (%)
County	82% (n=55)
Current Students	68% CWEB (n=23)
	63% CWEL (n=93)
Recent Graduates	51% CWEB (n=20)
	68% CWEL (n=48)
Long Term Graduates	36% (n=32)
CWEB/CWEL Schools	82% (n=14)

During this 2021-2022 evaluation cycle, we continued using questions about core competencies that research has demonstrated as important for the child welfare workforce[25]. 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 January 2022 and were given until March 2022 to complete the survey. One hundred and twenty-six students responded to the survey (see Table 6 for response rates). The survey asked the students to rate (1) their experiences with 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

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[25] 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.

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 indicating 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 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 employed by the agency in which they had completed their CWEB work commitment. Three open-ended questions asked about positive aspects of the program, areas for improvement, and qualities that may help prospective CWEB/CWEL students succeed 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

Figure 7. Current CWEB Student Demographics

24 usable surveys, representing 71% of CWEB students

88% attending full-time
88% Female
92% Non-Hispanic

Unknown, 8%
Asian, 4%
African American, 17%
White, 71%

83% completed field in public agency working with abused/neglected children
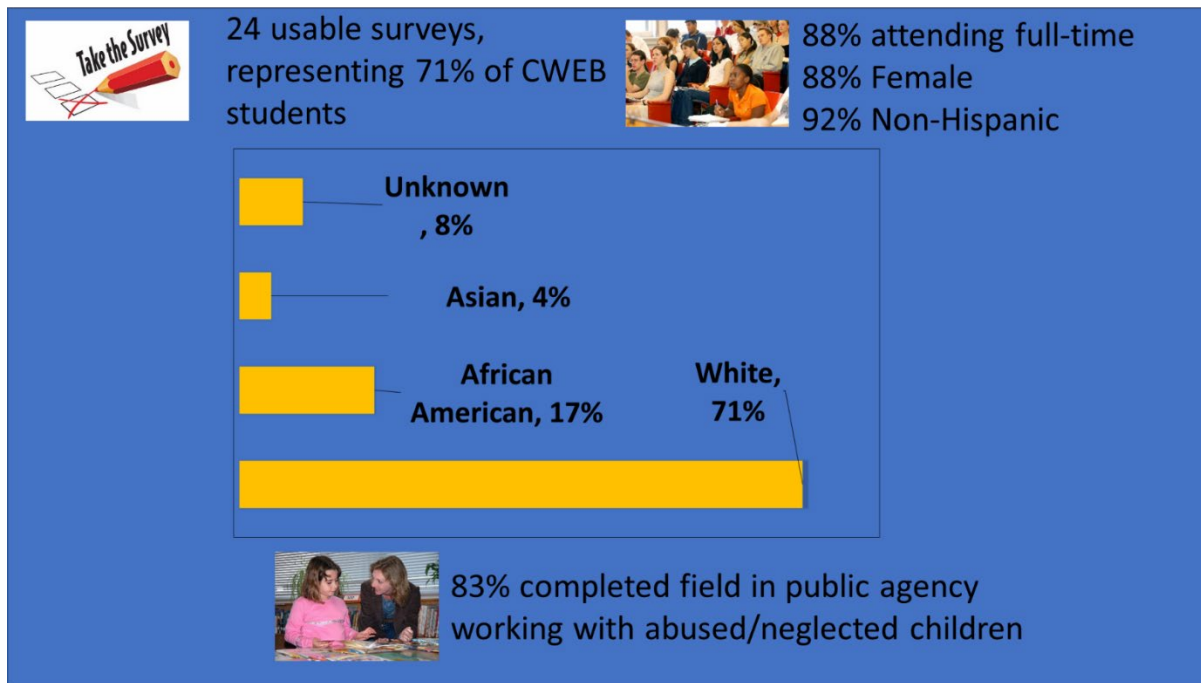
Figure 8: Current CWEL Student Demographics

96 usable surveys, representing 65% of CWEL students
88% Female
94% Non-Hispanic

48% attending full-time
52% part-time
10% attending branch campuses

Multiracial, 3%
Unknown, 5%
African American, 21%
White, 71%

Field Placement Type: public agency (74%) direct service (75%) serving:

49% abused/neglected children

17% Other human services

8% youth in special education settings

Pennsylvania

80% in field, 60% within their county child welfare agency

Figure 9. Career Pathway for CWEB and CWEL

CAREER PATHWAY

Acquire
director, assistant director, or department manager positions

Return to agency
for commitment after graduating from CWEL, assume supervisory or clinical mentoring position in agency, and participate in committees/special projects

Matriculate and graduate
from a CWEL program full or part-time

Matriculate and graduate
from a CWEB program and gain employment for commitment period and beyond

Gain employment
for commitment period and beyond

Apply
to a CWEL program post commitment period & while in agency

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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 foster a long-term career in public child welfare. The ideal education and career pathway for a child welfare professional is shown in Figure 9 above.

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, just over seven percent (7.4%) of the current CWEL respondents said that they received their

degrees through the CWEB program. The majority of these CWEL students (86%) are still

working at the agency in which they did their post-CWEB work commitment. We have observed

this CWEB to CWEL progression pattern for the last several years. In fact, 51% (36/67) of

Pennsylvania's county child welfare agencies have a CWEL graduate in a leadership position

within the agency. This information showcases that the proposed career pathway is a viable way

to support agency retention of workers.

The value that current students find in the CWEB and CWEL programs is illustrated in the

following sample of open-ended survey responses.

> *"This program motivates you to gain more experience and find work as soon as you graduate. It also helps you connect with other students which help build a professional network." (CWEB Student)*
>
> *"A positive aspect of the CWEB program is the significance of training that it provides to students and the extra experience that other students are not receiving so early in their careers." (CWEB Student)*
>
> *"Removing the barriers for workers in the child welfare system to access continued education is extremely important. I would not have been able to make the financial commitment to get my MSW without this program." (CWEL Student)*
>
> *"Currently, [The CWEL program] gives caseworkers a better foundation on how to interact with the multiple levels of systems and clients that are served. This is what translates to a better quality of service. Expanding on a knowledge base and learning additional evidence-based practices that most agencies do not teach or train caseworkers to use." (CWEL Student)*

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 for graduate education. Enrollment in school is not

suitable for everyone due to the necessary time commitments and challenges with work-life

balance. County administrators acknowledge this challenge, especially with recent increases in caseworker turnover and the desire to support the current workforce as much as possible. As an example, one agency administrator noted: *"We are discussing how we can work to help staff maintain a more regular work day. (ex: can be able to plan their personal life.)."*

The recommendation for completing graduate studies through online study has been suggested for a number of years, primarily due to lack of easy access to campus-based MSW programs in parts of the state and travel considerations. However, this option also presents several additional considerations for counties who sponsor part-time students, such as scheduling time to complete online coursework and adjusting hours for synchronous learning activities. Completely online MSW program options are now offered to CWEL participants through partnerships with Edinboro, Temple, and Widener universities. One CWEL student had this to say concerning the online MSW program "*I waited until I was able to attend online. I feel I am a better student/intern because I am not using time in travel and these hours can be utilized for class work or field hours.*"

This academic year a total of 17 CWEL students participated in the fully online MSW programs. To address this new mode of learning, the Classroom Community Scale[26] was added to the Current Student survey. The Classroom Community Scale is a 20-item inventory with a total score and two subscales (Connectedness and Learning). The scale is rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 10 items increasing positively (0=Strongly Disagree and 4= Strongly Agree) and the remaining items increasing negatively (0=Strongly Agree and 4=Strongly Disagree). Items were re-coded so that ratings were in the same direction, and a score was derived by calculating the mean for the total score and subscales. Just over three quarters (82%) of the online MSW

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[26] Rovai, A.P. (2002). Development of an instrument to measure classroom community. *Internet and Higher Education, 5(3),* 197-211.

participants completed the survey. Overall, the individuals rated the total score (M=2.84, SD= .73), Connectedness subscale (M=2.59, SD= .77), and Learning subscale (M=3.10, SD= .77) more positively, suggesting a positive online learning experience. There were some variations in scoring, especially around feeling connected to peers and feeling that their education needs were being met. Compared to the 2020-2021 online MSW respondents, the means from this past academic year increased slightly, indicating improvement over time and familiarity with the online learning platform. Since the CWEL students are surveyed multiple times throughout their academic career, it will be interesting to see if these ratings continue to increase over time. With increased participation in the online MSW programs, survey responses will increase in the coming academic years. This will provide us with information regarding how CWEL students perceive their online program experience and whether satisfaction with this mode of study is equivalent or differs from traditional in-person programming.

Students who work full-time while attending school have consistently reported that part-time study is often challenging, in part due to high caseloads and difficulty in finding a school, life, and work balance. With over half of CWEL students (52%) 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. Part-time students have been consistent over the life of the program in wishing for more flexibility from their county agencies while participating in CWEL: "*My county doesn't allow for part time work or paid while attending school. It is very difficult to manage an overloaded caseload, school life and family life without serious threat to mental and emotional health.*". Other CWEL students felt that by participating in part-time studies, they were not getting the same opportunity as full-time students who owe the same work commitment after they graduate: "*I would like there to be part time work with doing*

part time school. I feel like that would make more sense. When the full-time students don't work at all, and they are paid to do that. It is very difficult to work fulltime and do school as well as being expected to owe that time back."

With the above in mind, additional discussions may need to take place with participating CWEL schools and county agencies so that there is an accurate understanding of the time requirements for part-time CWEL students. Counties are advised to reconsider part or full-time participation options based on each participant's role in their agencies. CWEL schools could present case examples of how a full-time job and part-time education affect all aspects of a student's life: their work, their clients, their educational capabilities, and performance in their field placements.

How do students perceive their program?

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

> *"I felt supported and encouraged throughout the entire process of applying and participating in the program. I've been exceedingly happy with my placement and my supervisor. CWEB has honestly met and/or exceeded all of my expectations." (CWEB Student)*

> *"I get a whole year of experience before I am out in the real world by myself with clients. I feel like I get time to learn & practice a lot to make myself a better social worker." (CWEB Student)*

> "*The CWEL program was particularly positive offering relevant information, knowledge, and resources that can be applied to job related skills." (*CWEL Student)

> *"Continuing education is valuable in this field and it is good to learn new skills and knowledge to better help our clients, agency, and community better." (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 9.25 (*SD*=.79), and the average score for the CWEL students was 9.35

(*SD*=1.08). 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 J. Table 1 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 their field/internship experiences. Their aggregate

responses are graphically displayed below (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Current Student Satisfaction with CWEB/CWEL Programs
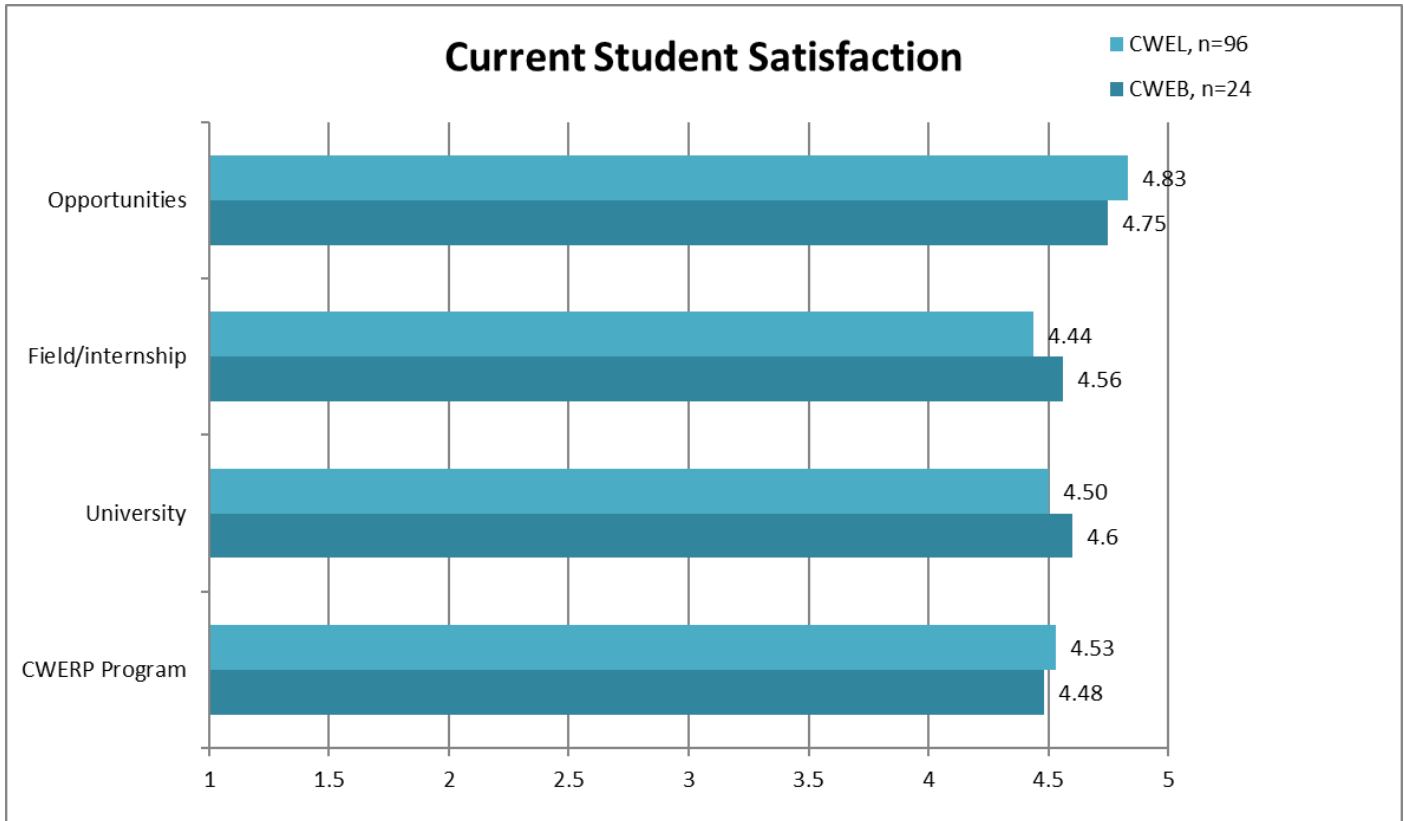
Figure 11 demonstrates the changes in satisfaction ratings over the past seven academic years.

While there continue to be small changes in satisfaction ratings in the last three years, all ratings

are still clustered around the Somewhat Agree/Strongly Agree range.

Figure 11. Comparison of Student Satisfaction Ratings Over the Last Seven Academic Years
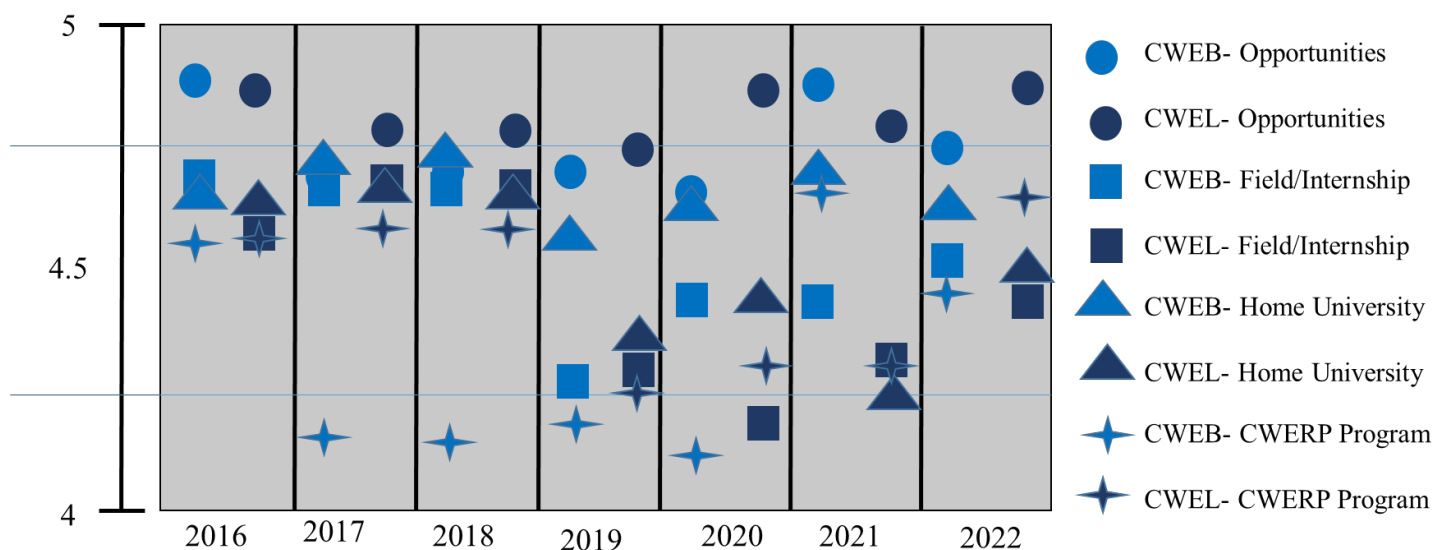
Note: with most responses clustered at the top end of the scale, the Y access starts at 4.

In general, CWEB and CWEL students' satisfaction ratings are similar to those reported last year with some slight variation. CWEB students' satisfaction score for field/internship was higher than last year, but the remaining domains were lower. CWEL students' satisfaction scores were higher than last year with the university domain reaching statistical significance (t= -2.04, p<.05). The increase in the CWEL students' satisfaction ratings may be due in part to the return to in person learning and internship experiences. The shift to online learning and virtual field opportunities during the pandemic proved to be a difficult transition for most students.

In the open-ended comments, CWEB students discussed their desire for the program point person at their university to have more knowledge about the program, a thirst for more knowledge of child welfare agencies in the Commonwealth, and also some challenges in the scheduling of Foundations training. These concerns are exemplified by the following examples:

"I believe that the advisors in the University need to be more educated on this program."

"Some of the trainings are hard to complete timing wise because they have to be held on 2 days back to back. For my internship I was only there Tuesday, Thursday so I could only go so far in foundations. Making the 2 part trainings on a Tuesday and Thursday would have been helpful."

"One thing I would suggest is a better understand of how agencies run. An explanation of the different units would have been helpful. When interviewing with the agency, it felt like I was supposed to know them coming into it."

Comments such as these will be shared with the CWEB CQI Committee to determine how to address these concerns.

Current CWEL students gave several suggestions as to how the program could be improved. Many expressed the desire to have their county child welfare agencies increase their flexibility concerning caseloads, internship hours, and class scheduling. CWEL students mentioned feeling stressed with trying to juggle full-time work and school as seen by this quote: "*I feel as though there is too much on our plates though I'm not sure what could be changed about that. I've been required to work full time while carrying an internship and it has been very difficult.*" Because of this increased stress, the majority of

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PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE I:

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.

As part of her coursework, a Marywood University CWEL student developed a proposal to promote development of leadership competencies throughout the child welfare workforce, strengthen supervision, and provide for strategic planning focused on workforce recruitment, retention, and development. The student presented her proposal to the Department of Human Services, Office of Children Youth and Families Executive Team. The proposal was approved and the draft language will be incorporated into the proposed 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3131 regulations.

A Shippensburg CWEL student received the Spotlight award at her county child welfare agency. Speaking of her nomination, the supervisor noticed "The agency has received two calls from clients in the last month about her warm, patient, and supportive demeanor while working with them. It is rare to get a compliment about our work from clients, but to get two in one month is extraordinary."

CWEL students agree that a full-time educational option is the best way to complete the program. To counteract the potential for burnout mentioned in the Fall CWEL student meetings, the CWEL program administrators discussed the differences between burnout and depression while offering actionable self-care strategies during the Spring student meeting.

Some CWEL students were concerned about the lack of elective options and wanted the opportunity to take more online courses. Meetings with school administrators continue to make connections and promote collaboration to better enhance the CWEL program. Because of these collaborations, the CWEL team is in the process of reviewing syllabi for additional elective courses at the partnering universities to approve them for CWEL inclusion. Also similar to previous years, many CWEL students expressed their interest in pursuing alternate certificates because of their extensive prior knowledge of Children, Youth, and Families through their field experience. CWEL students desire certificates in specialties that would complement the work they engage in during the course of their child welfare career such as trauma or a dual degree focused on sexuality. This option has been explored by the CWEL faculty. The University of Pennsylvania's Child Well-Being and Child Welfare Specialization certificate was approved for full-time CWEL students. Other certificates, such as Widener University's trauma certificate could not be approved due to additional courses and costs associated to meet criteria for the certificate. However, Widener University extended an offer to CWEL graduates to earn the certificate at a reduced rate up to two years after receiving their MSW degree.

One noticeable difference in CWEL responses this year is that multiple respondents indicated struggling with the return to their agencies upon graduation. Some voiced feeling unsupported in their transition back. Others shared concerns about lack of opportunities to utilize their new graduate-level knowledge and skills. Exacerbating this frustration is that some of these

new graduates are ineligible for promotions and/or salary increases due to their leave from the agency to attend school. Respondents recommended that the CWEL program administrators collaborate with county administrators to develop strategies to better utilize CWEL graduates when they return to the agency. They also strongly recommend helping agency leaders understand the advantages of full-time participation in the program.

In order to determine if there were statistically significant differences between this year's CWEB and CWEL students, between last academic year and this academic year, or between full- and part-time CWEL students, we conducted t-tests. The p-value indicates statistical significance, with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant. This academic year, there were no significant differences between CWEB and CWEL, or the part-time and full-time CWEL students. This is the first time in recent history that there have not been any significant differences between these groups. As mentioned in the 2020-2021 Annual Report, a concerted effort has been made to engage the CWEB students throughout their time in the program and during their commitment year. Perhaps this additional support and engagement can be attributing to the non-significant results between CWEB and CWEL, as many of the previous differences were related to communication challenges and program support. The CWEL program has been actively supporting and troubleshooting student issues as they arise. In fact, the CWEL program has taken student suggestions, such as providing a contact list for all CWEL students and increasing elective choices, seriously and relayed these results to students in the biannual meetings. CWEL students' perception that their concerns are being heard and acted upon may have contributed to the non-significant findings between part-time and full-time participation.

Students' responses to the open-ended questions provide us with useful information about the agency, school, and CWEB/CWEL programmatic factors that assist students in their pursuit of

a BSW or an MSW. Along with the financial support offered by the programs, notable themes about the positive attributes of the program emerge. In this evaluation period, many students expressed appreciation of the experiences and opportunities they gained from field placements and how those experiences prepared them for employment or enhanced their existing skillset. Additionally, CWEB students spoke about how the program removed the stress of finding a job after graduation. Consider these comments from CWEB students:

> *"I knew I wanted to be in child welfare after graduation. If it was not for the CWEB program and my field experience I would have felt very unprepared. I was able to gain a variety of different experiences in the field from unit to unit."*

> *"It allows students to get firsthand experience in the field of child welfare and it allows them to test the waters and see if that field is what's right for them."*

CWEL students have historically identified the financial support as a positive aspect of the program. Similar to last year, CWEL students also voiced their appreciation for gaining applicable social work knowledge and enhanced professional skills that can be utilized in their work in the field:

> *"I think field work is very helpful to see the other side of some of the providers we work with when working. I also think this degree really does help to increase skills that I can take back to my agency in not only working with clients but working with management and coworkers."*

> *"I am lucky enough to participate in the COSA {Community, Organization, and Social Action} track. I find so much benefit from what I'm learning in class that can be translated to my current job responsibilities. I am glad some people get the opportunity to study the COSA track."*

"[CWEL] gives caseworkers a better foundation on how to interact with the multiple levels of systems and clients that are served. This is what translates to a better quality of service. Expanding on a knowledge base and learning additional evidence-based practices that most agencies do not teach or train caseworkers to use."

"CWEL provides an opportunity to become aligned with the social work profession and values. Through education we are able to learn how to be more supportive of clients, coworkers, and learn how to care for ourselves."

Some CWEL students reported that the programmatic experience helped them to engage with other professionals in the field, thereby enhancing their knowledge of other services and the other professionals' knowledge of child welfare. Exposure to different departments in their child welfare agencies through field placements enhanced CWEL students' knowledge and appreciation of the mission of their agencies. Both CWEB and CWEL students expressed appreciation for the support they received in the program from both the CWEB/CWEL faculty and staff, as well as from their county child welfare agencies.

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 2021 and the spring and summer of 2022 (n=110). The response rate for CWEB and CWEL graduates can be found in Table 6. The total number of usable surveys was 69. Nine respondents graduated in winter 2021, 52 in spring 2022, and 8 in summer 2022. Thirty percent (n=21) were CWEB graduates and 70% (n=48) were CWEL graduates. Additionally, 17% (n=8) of the CWEL graduates identified themselves as former graduates of the CWEB program, and, of those, 100% (n=8) were still working at their CWEB commitment agency at the time of graduation from the CWEL program.

Figure 12: Recent CWEB Graduate Demographics
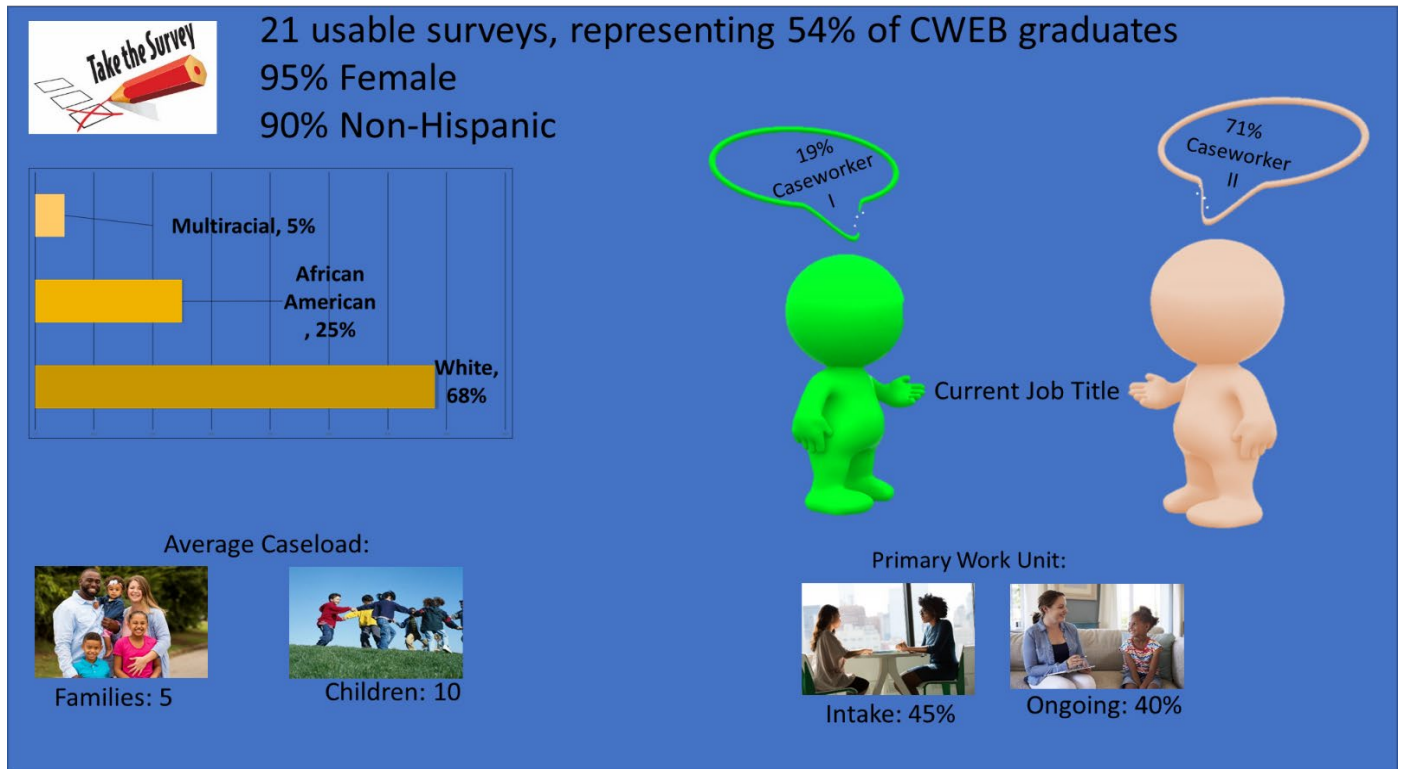
Figure 13: Recent CWEL Graduate Demographics
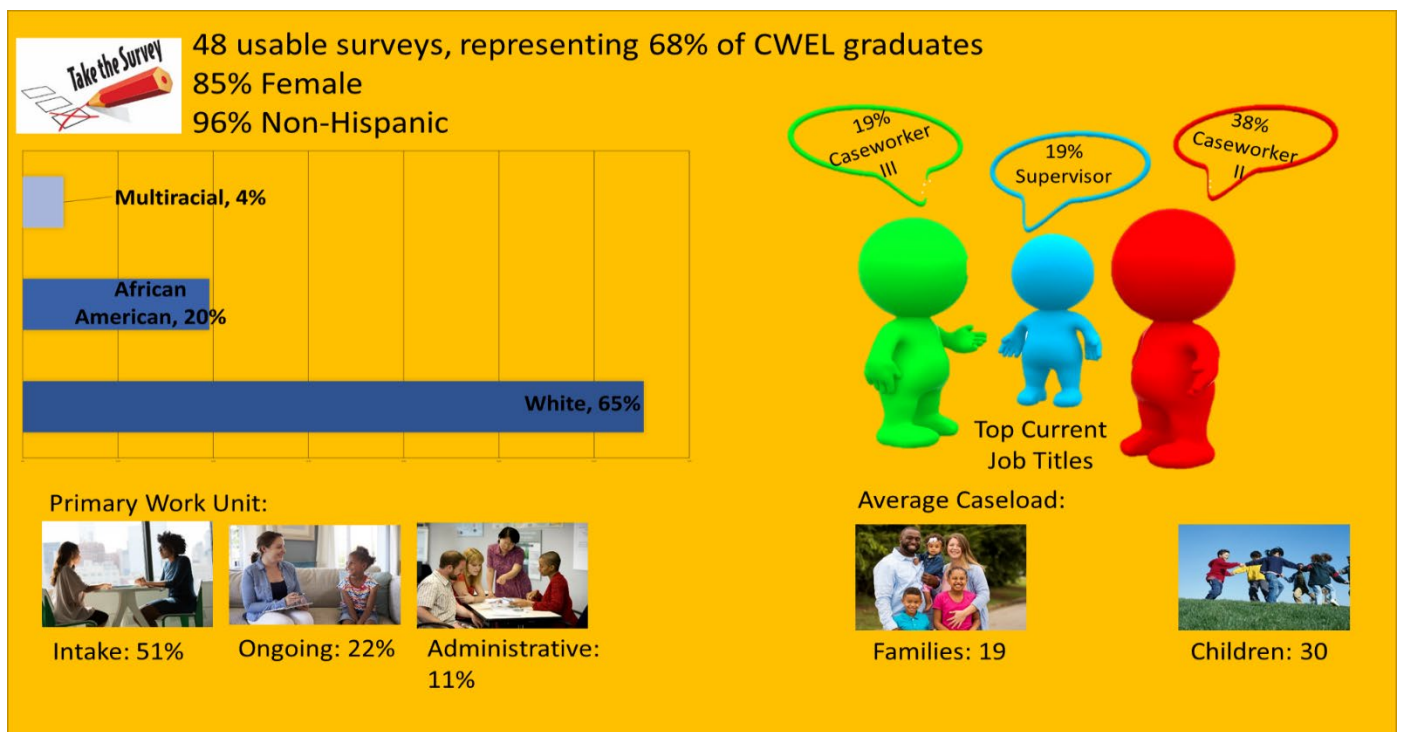
How do recent graduates perceive their program?

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 J. Statistically significant differences were observed between the CWEB and CWEL students. CWEB graduates felt more encouraged to practice new skills (t=3.42, p=.001) and more encouraged to share their knowledge (t=2.73, p=.008) than their CWEL counterparts. In addition, when compared to CWEL graduates, CWEB recent graduates showed statistically higher ratings on the following items: would recommend public child welfare to others (t=3.47, p<.001), would recommend their agencies to others (t=3.28, p=.0002), felt their agency utilized their educational expertise (t=3.13, p=.003) and felt there were opportunities for advancement (t=3.80, p<.001).

One of the open-ended questions focuses on commitment to the field. A review of these responses suggests that any lack of commitment to the field could be a result of the inability to use the skills they learned in the master's program, low salary, poor opportunities for advancement, the stresses of not being able to spend

adequate time with families on their caseloads, and/or an unsupportive environment. CWEL graduates also stressed the importance of having their voices be truly heard in decision-making processes and their expertise recognized by their county administration. Although the desire to help children and families remains, graduates find that the aforementioned challenges can overshadow their work with clients.

The recent gradaute survey is comprised of four subscales: (1) career advancement; (2) educational preparation of CWEB and CWEL graduates; (3) commitment to child welfare; and (4) agency utilization of the graduate's education. Alpha coefficients for these subscales ranged from .74 to .90, confirming the integrity of the survey. Average subscale ratings for recent CWEB and CWEL graduates are shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Recent Graduates' Perceptions: CWEB and CWEL
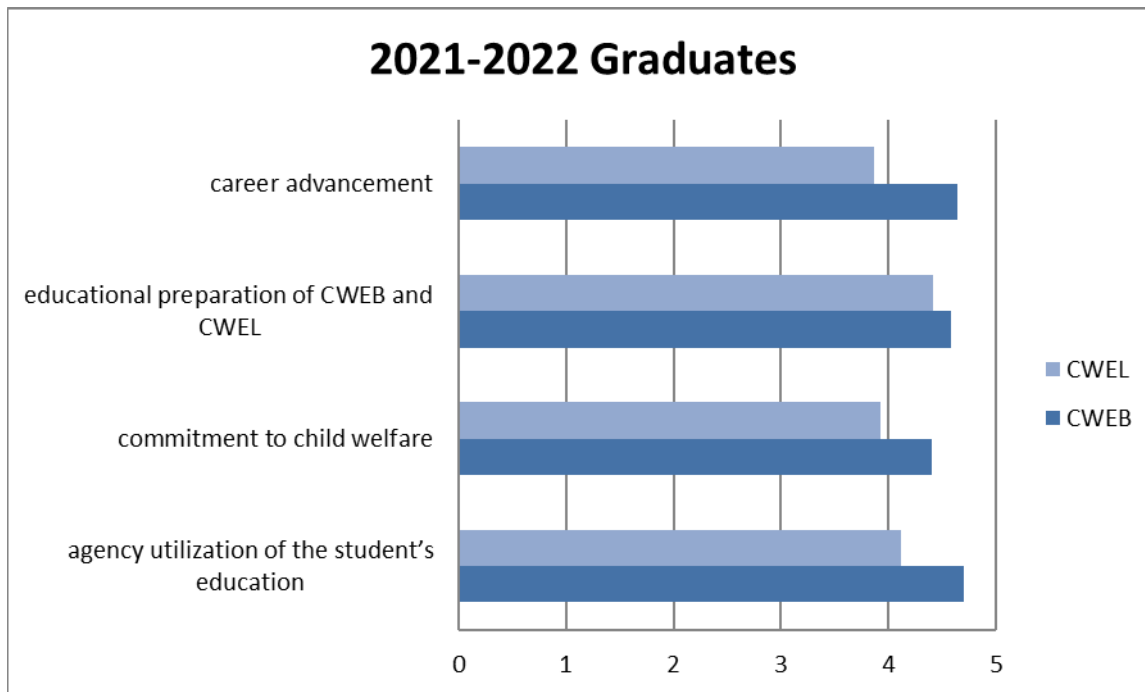
CWEL graduate ratings are lower than CWEB graduates for all subscales but are still trending to the positive side of the scale. The two most striking differences between CWEB and CWEL graduates are on the "career advancement" and "agency utilization of student's education"

subscales. Both "career advancement" and "agency utilization of student's education" were rated significantly higher by CWEB graduates ($p<.01$). Combined with results from the t-test discussed above and the reviews of the open-ended comments, these ratings suggest that 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. CWEL graduates should also be involved in agency-sponsored change initiatives. Their knowledge of the agency culture, along with their educational background, place them in an ideal position to recommend changes that can positively impact the agency. Pennsylvania's implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act provides county child welfare agencies another opportunity to utilize the skills of their CWEL graduates.

Graduates of both CWEB and CWEL feel that their respective programs have prepared them for working in the child welfare system. Ratings were slightly higher for CWEB graduates than for CWEL graduates on this subscale, which is similar to last year's finding. CWEB graduates' continued confidence in their skills as they enter the child welfare field can be attributed to the ongoing support of students throughout their program participation.

Recent graduates were asked several open-ended questions. Question content included positive aspects of the CWEB/CWEL programs, areas of possible improvement, 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.

Having extra help perfecting my craft. A lot of people tell you how hard the job is and try to prepare you with a PowerPoint or by giving advice, but CWEB gives you that guidance and training you need to know what to actually expect. (CWEB Graduate)

The experience of CWEL was the professional and personal growth I needed. The program not only challenged my professional perspectives, but it enlightened me to explore outside of my comfort zone. Personally, the program helped me to grow even more as a social worker and gather incredible resources to continue improving myself after my time at CWEL came to an end. The program is so impactful, and I am very grateful for the experiences it has given me. (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. In particular, CWEL graduates felt that their education helped to expand their understanding of the challenges faced by families involved in the child welfare system and increased their empathy and ability to build stronger connections with the families they serve. CWEB graduates felt that the breadth of experiences during their field placements and the Foundations training 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 from these programs were also recognized as a great benefit.

When asked about areas of possible improvement, CWEB graduates reported that they wished that the work commitment included any child welfare agency, not just public child welfare agencies. CWEB graduates also suggested changes to Foundations, including making the training shorter, having in-person sessions, and asking on-line instructors to be more mindful of other obligations that participants are balancing. CWEB graduates wanted different content for the bi-

monthly Zoom calls and further ways to engage the CWEB program when they could not attend the Zoom calls. CWEB graduates suggested that county supervisors complete a training on how best to engage CWEB students so they can get the most out of their internship experience. Similar to previous years, CWEL graduates wanted more flexibility with choosing their courses and internship sites. CWEL graduates also reported that that coursework was repetitive with their existing knowledge of the child welfare field. Part-time CWEL graduates voiced the desire for more support and flexibility with their child welfare agencies.

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

> *My internship placement was very impactful. I think that the things that contributed the most to my professional development was just finally getting that "in real life" field experience that I had been waiting so long for. (CWEB Graduate)*

> *Field provided me with the opportunity to explore other areas within social work and a different perspective working with clients in another form. It also has allowed me to deeply understand my own personal biases. (CWEL Graduate)*

> *I was lucky enough to have been given the reigns on a few fairly stable cases. This allowed me to dip my toe in the water of a full caseload and to take my time in understanding my role. Frequent supervision and reflection in classes was extremely helpful. (CWEB Graduate)*

> *I really enjoyed my field placement choice overall. The staff, supervision, and engagement I had were very impactful. I was able to be engaging with clients in a way I had not been able to before. I was given responsibilities that were manageable but also a bit out of my comfort zone. Leading individual sessions and group therapy was an amazing experience .... I learned a lot about myself and how to take these skills with me to my agency. (CWEL Graduate)*

CWEB graduates valued the exposure that they had to the field by shadowing experienced caseworkers. They also appreciated the ability to carry their own cases with supervision and felt that the combination of their internship experiences with their coursework training prepared them to begin their child welfare careers. CWEB graduates also appreciated how exposure to each unit in a child welfare agency during their field enabled them to decide which unit was the best fit for them for their future employment. CWEL recent graduates who had their field placements within their county child welfare agency appreciated that the experience provided them with a broader

perspective of how the different departments worked with each other and how the agency worked as a whole. Those who had internships outside their child welfare agency valued the additional knowledge that they gained about different systems; these experiences helped build additional connections to community resources.

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

Things with your internship, finishing classes, and CWEB/Foundations can definitely be stressful but remember to practice self-care. CWEB is the last step to entering the career that you have been working towards so just enjoy the internship experience and take all of the knowledge that you gain from those experience along with you into the field after graduation. It definitely goes by faster than you think. (CWEB Graduate)

Stick with it and appreciate the opportunity! Honor the program, your school, and the internship agency well. This program is the stepping stone to achieve your goals in CYS! (CWEB Graduate)

My advice to incoming CWEL students would be to take the program on with an open mind. You may go in thinking you have a game plan but it could easily turn out you discover new interests within social work you never knew you could be a part of. Never say no to going outside of your comfort zone. It is going to feel uncomfortable but you'll come out of it with such a new perspective on yourself and who you could be professionally. Finally, enjoy the time you get to spend with your classmates around you. Your fellow classmates may be the ones you are calling on one day for services, interventions, or casework advice. (CWEL Graduate)

Go into the program with an open mind and attempt to get the most out of the program through coursework and networking within your field placement. (CWEL Graduate)

Both CWEB and CWEL graduates emphasized that students should ask questions and feel comfortable creating boundaries for themselves. Graduates also encouraged those new in the program to have an open mind – about child welfare, as well as their classes and field placements – and to make the most of this opportunity. Graduates encouraged CWEB and CWEL students to contact the program administrators with any questions or for additional support. 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

An existing body of research shows that organizational culture and climate are significant factors in explaining an employee's intention to stay in or leave a workplace[27,28]. 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[29] was sent to 88 individuals who graduated from the CWEB program between Spring 2020 to Summer 2021 or the CWEL program between Fall 2020 to Summer 2021, regardless of their employment status in a public child welfare agency. Thirty-two surveys were returned for a response rate of 36%. This response rate is similar to the last two academic years. Due to the small response size the results may not be representative of all long-term graduates.

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. 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). The demographic characteristics of the respondents are illustrated in Figures 15 and 16, followed by an overview of the graduates' ratings of their organizational culture and climate.

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[27] 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.

[28] Cahalane, H., & Sites, E. (2008). The climate of child welfare employee retention. *Child Welfare, 87(1)*, 91-114.

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

Figure 15. Long-Term CWEB Graduate Demographics
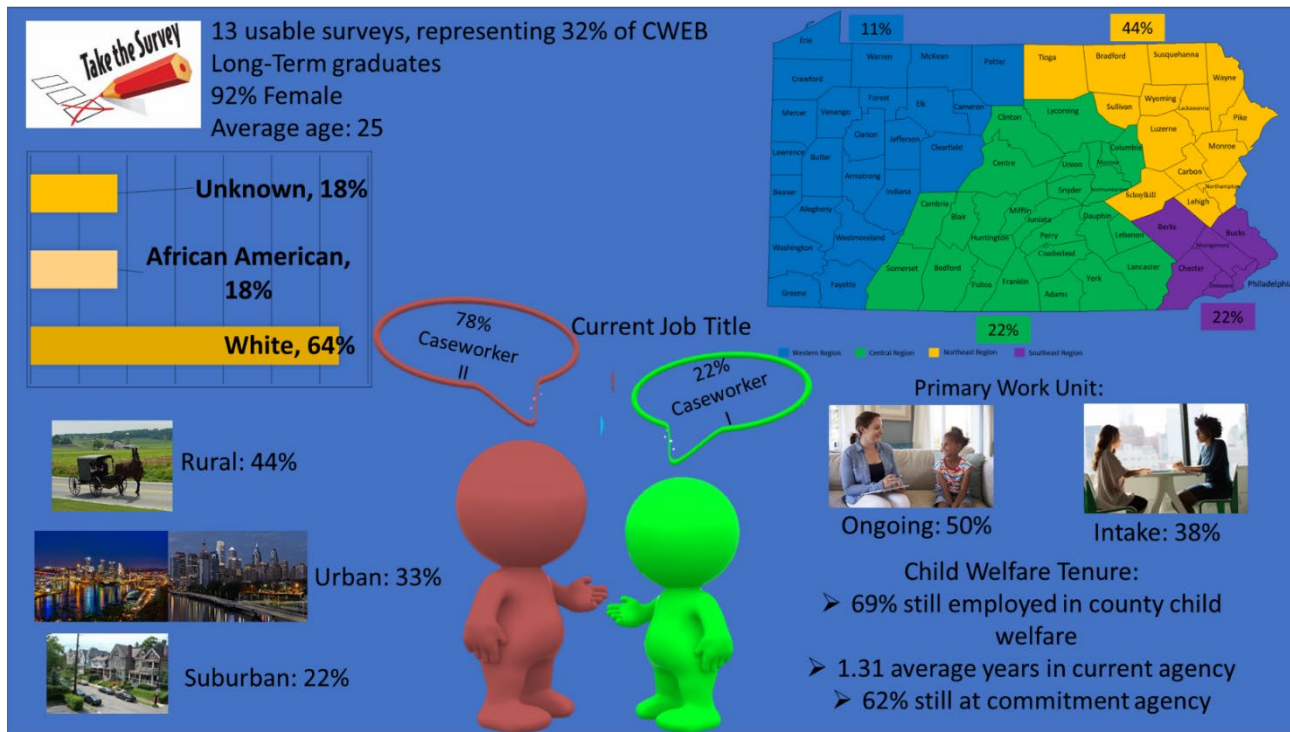
Figure 16. Long-Term CWEL Graduate Demographics
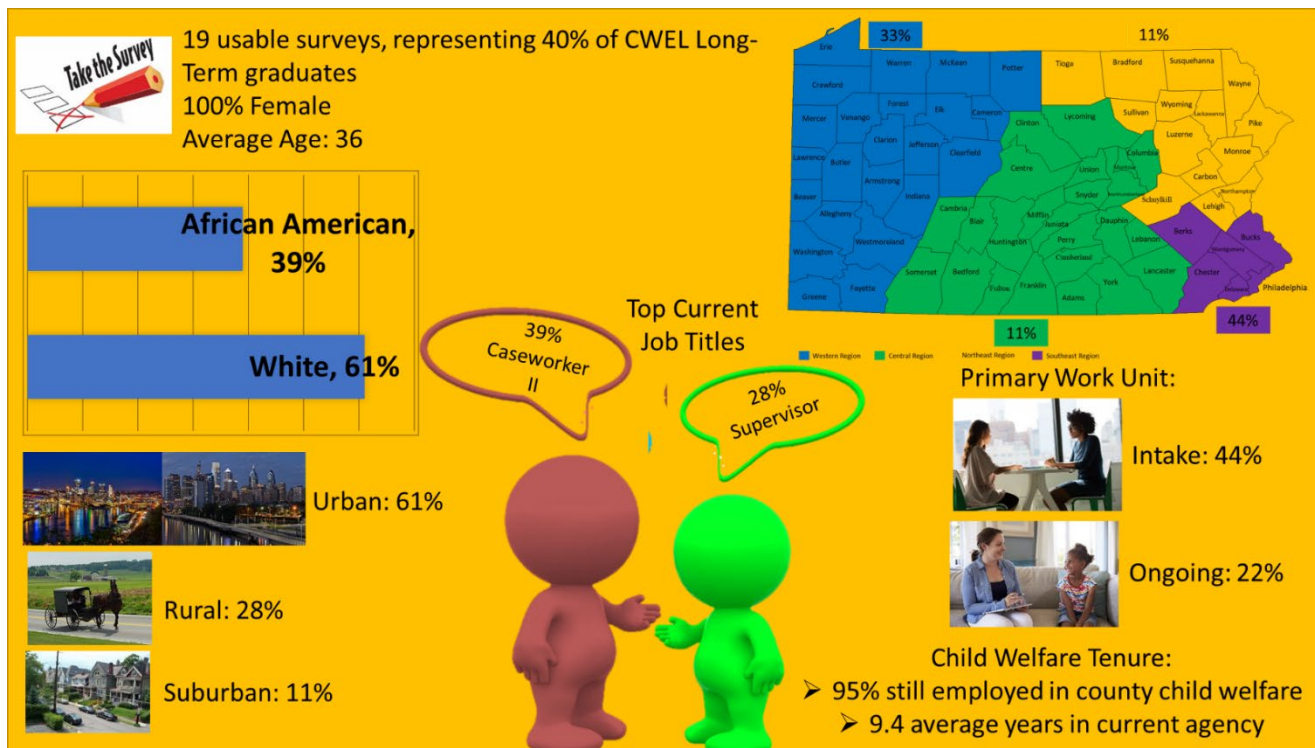
What do the long-term CWEB and CWEL graduates say about the climate of child welfare agencies?

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 long-term graduates in the 2020-2021 annual report, the current cohort of long-term CWEB respondents had higher scores on every domain. However, these differences were not statistically significant. When conducting this comparison with long-term CWEL respondents, all domains were lower than in last year's report, with Morale being statistically significant (*t=2.03, p=.05)*.

Table 7 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 7. Average Ratings of Organizational Climate Dimensions by CWEB and CWEL Long-Term (1+ years) Graduates

Quality	CWEB (n=13)	CWEL (n=19)	Total (n=32)
Teamwork	3.82	3.21	3.45
Morale	3.03	2.30	2.58
Information Flow	3.00	2.75	2.85
Employee Involvement	2.96	2.42	2.64
Supervision	3.95	3.50	3.69
Meetings	3.58	3.02	3.24
Overall Climate	3.42	2.93	3.13

For respondents this year, the most positive climate scores were related to Supervision for CWEB graduates (*M=3.95)* and for CWEL graduates (*M=3.50)* These ratings suggest that CWEB and CWEL graduates are receiving adequate supervision and value the supervision they receive in the agency. The lowest rating for CWEB graduates was related to Employee Involvement (*M=2.96)*. This may indicate that CWEB graduates do not believe that they have a voice in agency decisions or how new policies/procedures are implemented. For CWEL, the lowest rated dimension was Morale (*M=2.30)*. Historically, Morale has been rated on the low end of the scale

by CWEL graduates. However, when reviewing previous results, this academic year has the lowest score for Morale. Anecdotal evidence from the counties regarding the amount of caseworker vacancies, difficulties in hiring, and increased caseloads for remaining workers likely explain the low Morale score for CWEL long-term graduates.

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 all the domains lower than those who have been working in child welfare for less than five years. Statistically significant differences were noted for Teamwork ($t=2.80, p=.01$), Morale ($t=2.15, p=.04$), and Employee Involvement ($t=2.06, p=.05$). Most domain scores decreased from last academic year regardless of participant's tenure in child welfare. However, Teamwork, Morale, Employee Involvement, and Meetings were higher for those with a shorter tenure in child welfare. As with last year, four specific open-ended questions were included in the long-term graduate survey to gauge how this cohort of students is contributing to the field by mentoring others, providing leadership, and pursuing professional development opportunities. These inquires allowed for a deeper exploration of leadership activities and ongoing professional development among the graduates.

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

Long-term graduates have expanded their knowledge by participating in trainings, earning certificates, and improving the experience for interns at their agencies. Our graduates are utilizing their knowledge and skills to participate in workgroups such as the children and youth committee through SEIU (Service Employees International Union), LGBTQIA+, and the Opioid Workforce Expansion Program. Graduates work with varying populations to recruit resource parents, help older youth who are struggling to find permanency, and volunteering with prison abolition organizations.

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

Long-term graduates described a variety of professional development opportunities. Many mentioned participating in ongoing agency and county trainings with topic areas including substance abuse, child sexual abuse, and sexual orientation/gender identity. Some noted the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Conference. One graduate obtained a certification in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some long-term CWEB graduates are pursuing their MSW degree. Other graduates have created new units within their agencies and participated in the evaluation of evidence-based practices.

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

Many long-term graduates have trained and mentored new caseworkers and interns. Graduates share their expertise, offer advice, provide guidance, discuss social work values, and share investigative interviewing techniques. Our long-term graduates have supervised both CWEB interns and other social work interns. In addition, graduates have advocated for inclusive practices for LGBTQIA+ youth and/or mentored colleagues who had LGBTQIA+ individuals on their caseloads.

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

Long-term graduates have shown leadership in their agencies in a variety of ways. They created LGBTQIA+ resource groups and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committees. One long-term graduate helped to restructure their county's family engagement program and started new initiatives. Another graduate joined their agency choir to bring joy to co-workers and clients. A long-term graduate runs the Safeguarding Children program and communicates with the adult probation office to ensure children of detained parents avoid out-of-home placement.

Finally, long-term graduates were given the opportunity to provide any additional feedback in an open-ended comment field. Along with identifying positive impacts, some responses mirrored the frustrations identified by current students and recent graduates. For example, some

CWEL long-term graduates felt that their new skill sets were not being fully utilized within their agencies and perceived limited options for promotion or career growth. CWEB graduates felt that their agencies were not ready to support CWEB interns and desired a mentorship between CWEB graduates and CWEB interns. Overall, however, long-term graduates from both programs praised the education they received.

Schools and Agencies

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

Selected individuals at the 17 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 82% of the schools, with a 59% response rate from individuals (n=51; surveys were sent to multiple respondents at each school).

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 the importance of an array of core competencies and traditional criteria to select CWEB students. Results of these items are displayed in the Core Competency section below.

Responses indicate that school administrators continue to be satisfied with the quality of the CWEB and CWEL programs. Ratings for both programs were high, with item averages hovering around 4.5 or above. The means for each item can be seen in Figure 17.

Figure 17. Mean values by program for school respondents
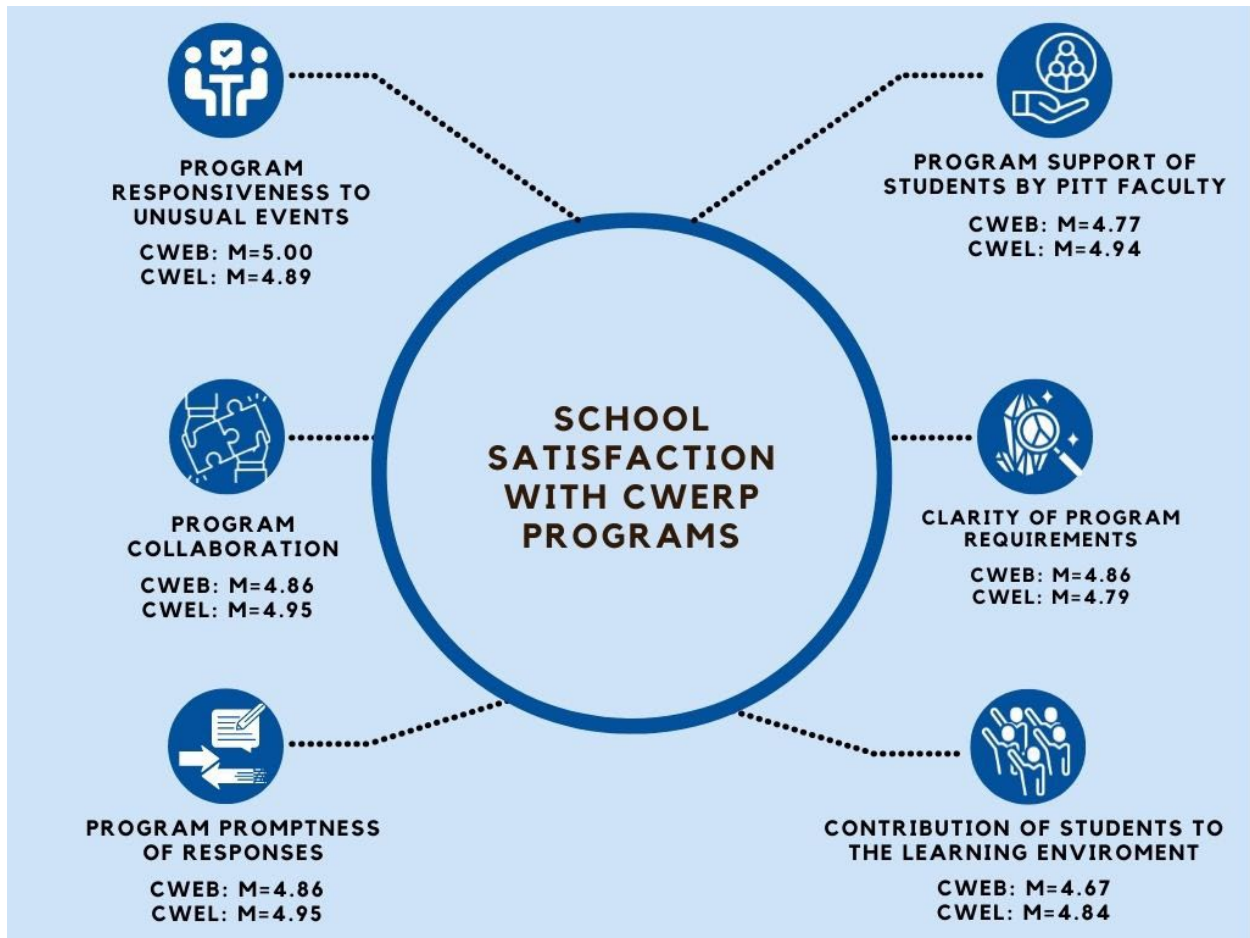
Faculty described CWEB students as, *"the top of their class. Intelligent, compassionate, and motivated students"* and *"...passionate about children and families."*

School faculty praised the CWEB program for not only providing financial benefits to their social work students, but also for the extensive training that CWEB students receive during their internships that enable them to be ready to join the workforce. Another area of strength mentioned by the school administrators was the collaboration with the CWEB program administrators and staff at the University of Pittsburgh, as noted here: "*We LOVE CWEB!!! We enjoy the comradery*

and guidance provided by all the CWEB staff. They respect our opinions and work with us to provide mentorship to the students."

School administrators were equally impressed with the quality of CWEL students entering their MSW programs, describing them as *"...of very high caliber. These students are motivated, sensitive, resourceful, responsive, and committed to their personal, academic, and professional lives.",* and *"...incredible leaders in their classrooms and contribute greatly to their learning environment"* Another CWEL school administrator commented:

> *"CWEL students are working in the field and able to utilize what they are learning in the classroom, as well as able to inform the classroom with their real-world experience. They tend to have knowledge about evidence-based services and demonstrate professionalism. Our CWEL students are very organized and hard-working. We'd love to have more of them!"*

The knowledge and first-hand experience that CWEL students bring into their MSW classes is incredibly beneficial to their peers, many of whom are new to the social work field.

Similar to CWEB school administrators, CWEL faculty discussed the financial benefits of CWEL and the flexibility and contacts that some students have with their counties to complete internship responsibilities, even offering internship options to fellow students. A considerable number of the school administrators mentioned that they notice part-time CWEL students struggling significantly more than full-time students or CWEB students; this is seen through burnout and/or an inability to achieve to their full potential while working full-time and going to school part-time. CWEL faculty also valued the collaboration and support from the CWEL program administrators and staff at the University of Pittsburgh.

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 motivation. Additionally, they were asked to describe the strategies they have created to utilize CWEB and CWEL graduates' abilities and knowledge, as well as strategies they have implemented 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 the agencies with graduates and/or current students, 81% of individuals responded, representing 82% of county child welfare 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.

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 18.

Figure 18. Highest mean values for agency satisfaction and impact of CWEB/CWEL programs

PROGRAM IMPACT:
QUALITY OF PRACTICE
CWEB: M=4.20
CWEL: M=4.36

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:
RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
CWEB: M=4.57
CWEL: M=4.67

HIGHEST AGENCY SATISFACTION IN

PROGRAM IMPACT
&
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

PROGRAM IMPACT:
FURTHER EDUCATION
CWEB: M=4.31
CWEL: M=4.31

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:
MANAGEMENT OF FISCAL MATTERS
CWEB: M=4.86
CWEL: M=4.80

PROGRAM IMPACT:
MOTIVATION
CWEB: M=4.08
CWEL: M=4.13

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:
HANDLING OF ISSUES
CWEB: M=4.83
CWEL: M=4.91

There were slight variations in the means for both the program impact and program administration domains from last year. Program administration items all increased. The means for value of the CWEB program increased slightly again this year (*M*=4.78 vs. *M*=4.77), while the values of CWEL decreased very slightly (*M*=4.72 vs. *M*=4.74). However minimal the variations, these high averages suggest that administrators continue to appreciate the opportunity the CWEB

and CWEL programs provide for their agencies by enabling them to have a skilled, 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 (70.5%), assigning
a leadership role (70.5%), and special projects (69.8%) (see Figure 19). 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 are available, agencies need to think of innovative techniques to keep the workforce

Figure 19. Retention Strategies Reported by Directors

Retention Strategies Reported by Directors (n=44)

Strategy	Percentage
Planning/Policy Development	70.5%
Special Projects	69.8%
Leadership Role	70.5%
Special Caseload/Function	68.2%
Promotion	56.8%
Challenging Cases	60.5%
Develop or Revise Program	45.5%
Practicum Instructor	11.6%
Other	7.1%
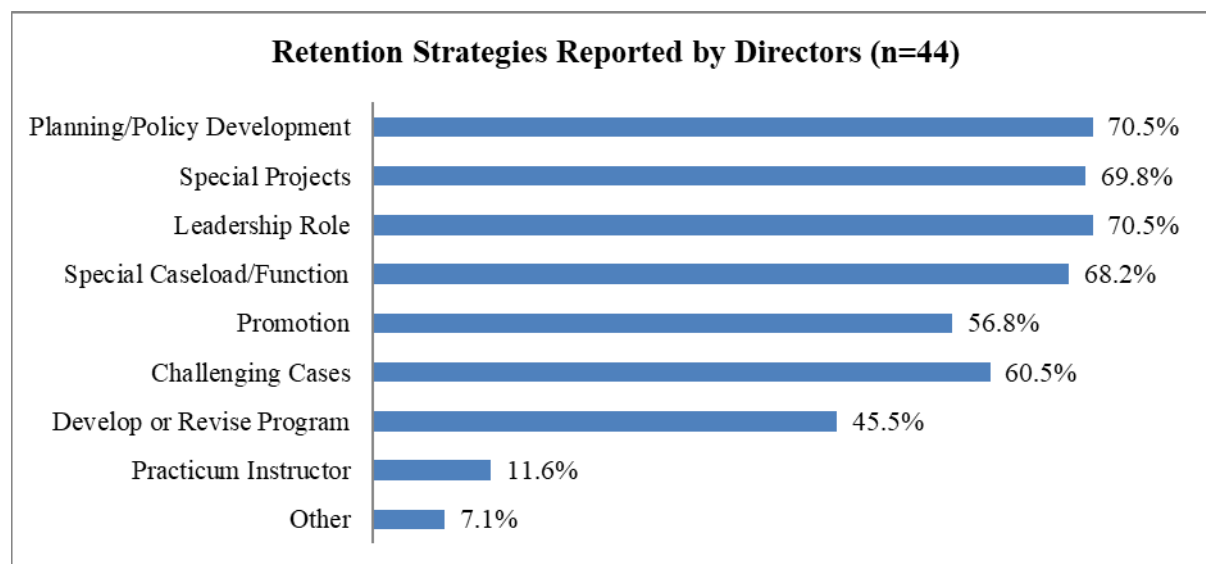
engaged and provide them with ways to utilize their new skillsets to promote retention.

Agency directors reported a variety of specific projects in which they engage their CWEB and CWEL graduates to utilize their new skills. These have included human trafficking assessments, implementing programming surrounding incarcerated parents and child visitation, and working on policy proposals and organizational change. CWEB and CWEL graduates have been integral in engaging with county child welfare agencies to address systematic racism and providing families with resources regarding county housing programs. This specialized group of caseworkers have also been assigned cases with more complicated issues, such as adoption, independent living, substance-exposed newborns, and high-profile situations involving complex trauma. In addition, CWEB and CWEL graduates have been vital to creating new processes and procedures to improve the child welfare agency, including the implementation of a diversion program to decrease the number of families entering child welfare, initiatives to boost staff morale and increase retention, and working on Plans of Safe Care.

Core Competencies

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[30].

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.

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[30] 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.

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 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 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 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 traditional markers of qualification. Tables 8 and 9 illustrate these findings. The most highly rated item of the 10 core competencies was *"interpersonal relations"* (*M*=4.79), and the lowest rated item was *"planning/organizing work"* (*M*=4.33). Of the traditionally valued items, the most highly rated item was *"student has an interest in working with children and families"* (*M*=4.71). The lowest rated items, *"student's financial need"* (*M*=3.21) and *"student's engagement in extracurricular activities"* (*M*=2.79), had significantly lower scores than any of the items included in the core competencies. Predictably, *"student GPA,"* and *"student's writing ability,"* all received ratings above "very important" (*M*=3.93, *M*=4.00 respectively).

Table 8. School Administrator's Ratings of Core Competencies

Core Competency	Mean
Motivation (n=4)	4.50
Interpersonal Relations (n=14)	4.79
Adaptability (n=4)	4.75
Analytic Thinking (n=6)	4.67
Awareness/Confidence (n=14)	4.43
Communication Skills (n=14)	4.57
Sense of Mission (n=3)	4.67
Observation Skills (n=5)	4.40
Planning and Organizing Work (n=3)	4.33
Teamwork (n=3)	4.67

Table 9. School Administrator's Ratings of Traditional Selection Criteria

Traditional Indicators	Mean
Interest in Working with Children and Families (n=14)	4.71
Faculty Recommendation (n=14)	4.43
GPA (n=14)	3.93
Writing Ability (n=14)	4.00
Engagement in Extracurricular Activities (n=14)	2.79
Financial Need (n=14)	3.21

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 10 for the ratings for all 10 competencies. Respondents rated the CWEB graduates highest in *"motivation"* (*M*=4.38), and lowest in "*observation skills*" (*M*=3.60). Respondents rated CWEL graduates highest in *"sense of mission"* (*M*=4.50) and lowest on "*observation skills*" (*M*=4.09) and *"analytical thinking"* (*M*=4.09). Developmental differences and tenure in the child welfare field likely explain these differences among CWEB and CWEL participants.

Table 10. CWEB and CWEL Core Competency Ratings by Agency Administrators

Core Competency	CWEB Mean	CWEL Mean
Interpersonal Relations	3.88 (n=25)	4.31 (n=39)
Adaptability	3.86 (n=7)	4.27 (n=11)
Communication Skills	3.88 (n=25)	4.28 (n=39)
Observation Skills	3.60 (n=5)	4.09 (n=11)
Planning and Organizing Work	3.88 (n=8)	4.45 (n=11)
Analytic Thinking	3.71 (n=7)	4.09 (n=11)
Motivation	4.38 (n=8)	4.42 (n=12)
Self-Awareness/Confidence	3.88 (n=25)	4.18 (n=39)
Sense of Mission	4.14 (n=7)	4.50 (n=10)
Teamwork	4.00 (n=8)	4.25 (n=12)

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" range. Table 11 shows the mean ratings on all 10 core competencies. CWEB students/graduates were rated highest on "*teamwork*" (*M*=4.00) but appeared to need some improvement in "*sense of mission*" (*M*=3.17). Again, developmental issues and exposure to the field may help to explain this finding.

Table 11. CWEB Supervisor/Mentor's Core Competency Ratings for CWEB Program Participants

Core Competency	CWEB Mean
Interpersonal Relations	3.78 (n=23)
Adaptability	3.86 (n=7)
Communication Skills	3.61 (n=23)
Observation Skills	3.67 (n=6)
Planning and Organizing Work	3.80 (n=5)
Analytic Thinking	3.38 (n=8)
Motivation	3.67 (n=6)
Self-Awareness/Confidence	3.61 (n=23)
Sense of Mission	3.17 (n=6)
Teamwork	4.00 (n=8)

A series of statistical analyses were conducted to explore the following: 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, significant differences were seen in *"communication skills"* (t=-2.23, p=.03) and *"planning and organizing work"* (t=-2.12, p=.04). Agency administrators rated CWEL graduates higher on every competency, showcasing their enhanced skills and education that results from advanced study and years in the field. Several significant results were observed between the school respondents' ratings of the core competencies when considering CWEB applicants and the competencies that agency respondents felt that CWEB graduates possessed. School respondents rated *"interpersonal relations"* (t=-3.84, p<.001), *"communication skills"* (t=-3.40, p=.002), *"analytic thinking"* (t=-2.67, p=.02) and "*sense of mission"* (t=-1.28, p=.006) significantly higher than agency administrators. Overall, school administrators rated CWEB competencies as important in selecting students, but county administrators rated the CWEB students lower the same competencies. We hypothesize that county administrators employ a different lens in assessing the caliber of child welfare workers, particularly those who are new to the field.

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 was 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 six of the core competencies, *"interpersonal relations"*, *"communication skills"*, "*analytic thinking"*, *"motivation"*, *"self-awareness/confidence"*, and *"sense of mission."* Respondents differed in their ratings of *"interpersonal relations,"* $(X^2 (2) =17.46, p<.001)$ with mean rank ratings of 37.54 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 51.09 for agency administrators, and 76.32 for school administrators. *"Communication skills"* differed significantly between respondents $(X^2 (2) =14.24, p<.001)$, with mean rank ratings of 35.39 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 53.31 for agency administrators, and 69.57 for school administrators.

Respondents also differed with their ratings of *"analytical thinking"* $(X^2 (2) =9.07, p=.011)$ with mean rank ratings of 10.94 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 16.87 for agency administrators, and 25.50 for school administrators. "*Motivation"* differed significantly between respondents $(X^2 (2) =6.29, p=.04)$, with mean rank ratings of 8.33 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 17.10 for agency administrators, and 18.25 for school administrators. Another statistical difference was noted for "*self awareness/confidence"* $(X^2 (2) =10.59, p=.005)$, with mean rank ratings of 37.37 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 53.27 for agency administrators, and 66.50 for school administrators. Finally, significant differences were observed for *"sense of mission"* $(X^2 (2) =9.06, p=.011)$, with mean rankings of 6.17 for CWEB supervisors/mentors, 15.78 for agency administrators, and 19.00 for school administrators. The full results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test can be seen in Figure 20.

Figure 20. Mean Ranks of Core Competencies.
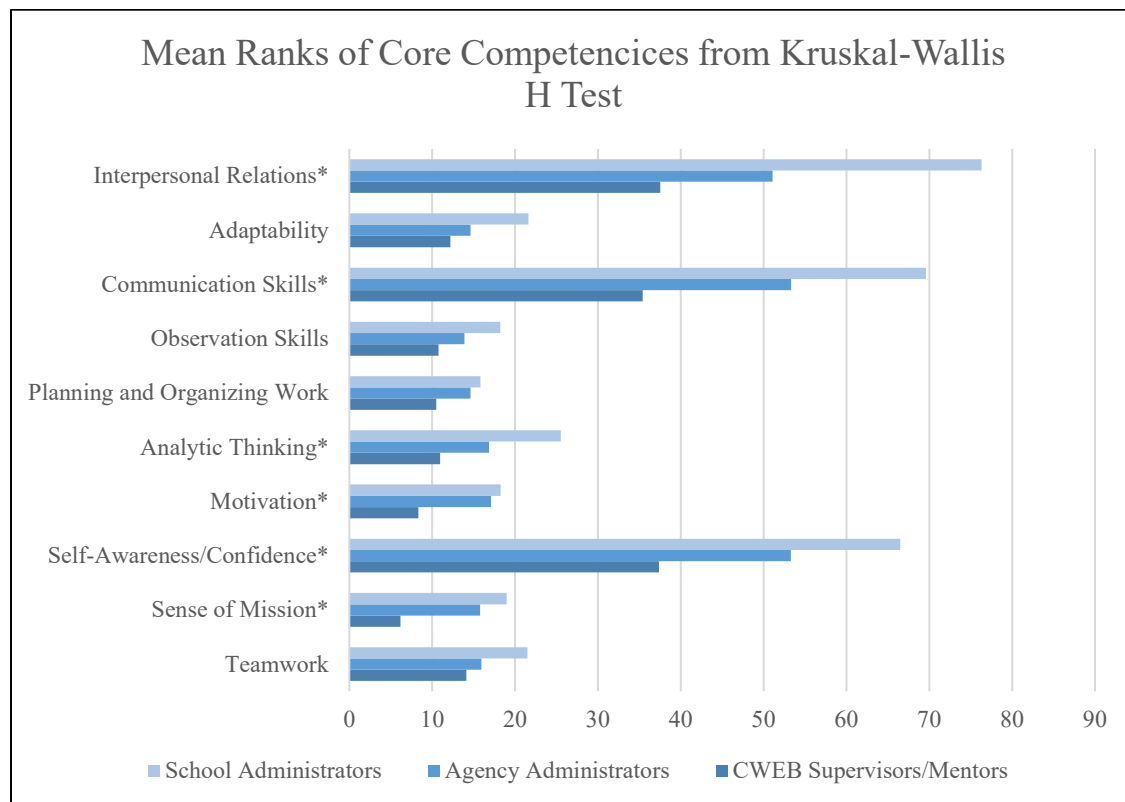
These results suggest that people within the child welfare agency are viewing CWEB program participants differently on *"interpersonal relations,"* a characteristic which encompasses respect and tolerance for people, relating well to others, and empathy. Another unique result is that school administrators are recruiting for *"sense of mission,"* which deals with child welfare knowledge/experience, beliefs about protection children and preserving families, and a desire to make things better for others. These skills may be viewed differently in an academic versus professional setting.

Interestingly, the CWEB supervisors/mentors rated every core competency lower than the other two respondent groups, suggesting that their interactions with CWEB program participants might be a more accurate gauge of the presence of these competencies within their agencies. Transfer of learning activities may need to be strengthened in order to help students utilize classroom knowledge and skills in their practice. However, for the majority of the competencies,

these gaps are smaller between the CWEB supervisors/mentors and the county agency administrators suggesting that the agency administrators are more attuned to the competencies of CWEB graduates than in previous years.

Overall Summary

County child welfare caseworker vacancies always pose challenges for Pennsylvania's child welfare agencies. However, as in many other fields across the nation in the last year, county child welfare agencies are struggling to retain their workforce. Because of the increase in turnover, CWEB and CWEL graduates have higher caseloads and difficulty utilizing their new skills as witnessed by this comment *"...I was scheduled to leave my department to begin my new position to learn my new job responsibilities when I was informed, I would not be able to move due to staff shortages. My child welfare agency has experienced high turnover rates which has impacted my ability to transition to my new position..."* CWEB and CWEL graduates are in a unique position to help with recruitment by sharing their experiences with their educational programs and the value they have received by graduating with social work degrees. County agencies are strongly advised to include CWEB and CWEL graduates into recruitment and retention efforts.

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. County administrators are enthusiastic to hire CWEB graduates and want more of their staff to take advantage of the CWEL program. 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 be agents of change in child welfare and provide strengths-based solutions to youth and families. CWEB and CWEL graduates are also actively participating in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within their agencies to promote best practices for marginalized and disproportionately represented groups.

CWEB and CWEL students continue to thrive both academically and professionally. More than 30% of CWEB and CWEL current students, recent graduates, and long-term graduates have received an award or recognition in the past year. Slightly over 20% were on the dean's list, graduated with honors, or became a member of a national honor society. Many participants were recognized for accomplishments in their county agencies by receiving praise from supervisors, administrators, families on their caseloads, receiving Child Advocacy Center awards, promotions, or creating new initiatives within their agencies. A CWEL graduate received the Dr. Ruth Smalley Award in International Social Welfare for his research on environmental pollution in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Another CWEL graduate was awarded the Rosa Wessel award for her innovative activities in her field practicum. A CWEL student received the Excellence in Social Work Practice Award for COSA students for her work at her field placement. These are just a few illustrations of the recognition our graduates have received. Our experience over the years suggests that there are many more ways in which our graduates are leaders and changemakers within their agencies and within their communities.

Since promotions, raises, and opportunities for advancement may be difficult for some counties to offer to CWEL graduates, it is important for county administrators to create meaningful 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. Another option is to generate peer connections among CWEB/CWEL graduates and those starting the programs as an additional level of support for new CWEB/CWEL students. Counties can also find other ways to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of their CWEB and CWEL employees such as internal awards or recognition. These types of recognition can boost the morale of our graduates and let them know they are valued by their agencies. With the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, counties can utilize their CWEB and CWEL workers to help spearhead the continuous quality improvement requirements of selected evidence-based practices. CWEB and CWEL graduates

have unique skills that enable them to create positive change in the child welfare workforce. To keep these graduates engaged and interested in the work requires support and creative thinking on the part of supervisors and county administrators but provides the county with measurable benefits.

Discussion

CWEB

After twenty-one years of operation, the CWEB program has made a remarkable impact. Fifteen universities, 62 counties (offering internship and/or post-graduation employment), and 1,339 graduates have made major investments in its operational success. Strong collaboration has enabled the program to prepare individuals for work in public child welfare and county agencies report actively recruiting CWEB graduates. Figure 21 shows the impact of the CWEB program on the county child welfare workforce.

Figure 21. CWEB Post-Graduation Hire Participation

Employment history from beginning of CWEB program through Summer 2022
Modified: 08/28/2022

History of Hiring CWEB Graduate
No Hiring History

As a result of their internship experiences, CWEB graduates have had exposure to child maltreatment investigations, the court process, multidisciplinary team meetings, and family team conferencing. They have had opportunities to shadow experienced caseworkers, observe family visitations, participate in unit and agency-wide meetings, and attend community engagement activities. Many have had exposure to forensic interviews, the intersection of child welfare and health care, substance abuse interventions, and the pathway toward permanency. Overall, CWEB graduates have obtained a well-rounded, beginning experience in the complex, multifaceted field of public child welfare practice.

As shown in Figure 21 above, CWEB graduates have entered the child welfare workforce in 91% of the counties in Pennsylvania. This is evidence of the strong impact that our undergraduate education program continues to have on child welfare services across the state. Evaluations over the past 21 years have been helpful in suggesting program improvements, as we continually analyze the data and use lessons learned to make program improvements. We have refined our admission criteria and review process. The CWERP team collaborated with county child welfare field liaisons to create an internship guidance tool for the county agencies, ensuring CWEB students experience the varying tasks of a child welfare professional prior to starting their professional career. This internship guidance tool will be implemented in academic year 2023/2024. The CWEB program instituted a more intensive case management process to ensure successful outcomes for CWEB students. One of the benefits of the case management component is an increased enrollment of CWEB students in the state-mandated competency and skills-building training, *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice*. CWEB students are assigned to a Resource Specialist at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center who assists them with enrollment in Foundations 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.

In addition, CWEB students are invited to participate in supportive bi-monthly Zoom calls with CWEB program administrators from the University of Pittsburgh where discussion takes place on topics such as Foundations training, submission of necessary paperwork, the hiring process, and their education and internship experiences. Targeted topics regarding different aspects of child welfare practice are placed on the agenda. In this reporting period, six Zoom meetings were held with participation averaging about 15 CWEB students per session. Many of the CWEB students who participated in an initial meeting also participated in follow-up meetings, indicating that this support is appreciated and welcomed.

Navigating the county hiring process continues to present challenges for students. Pennsylvania counties fall into one of two categories: Civil Service and Merit Hire. Currently, over 60% of counties follow the standardized processes of the Pennsylvania State Civil Service Commission when hiring new employees[31]. The remaining counties have been granted permission to create their own Merit Hiring processes which can be distinct to each county. CWEB faculty work closely with students to help them understand and navigate both Civil Service and Merit Hire employment processes so that they have employment options in counties throughout the state.

Delays in hiring CWEB graduates observed during the pandemic have been mostly resolved. Close follow-up by the CWEB Academic Coordinator and the CWEB/CWEL Agency Coordinator has resulted in most graduates securing county agency employment within 60 days of graduation. Some counties instituted COVID-19 vaccination mandates as a condition of hire. The CWEB/CWEL Agency Coordinator works with graduates who do not choose to be vaccinated to gain employment in neighboring counties when necessary.

We continue to make concerted efforts to connect graduates with agencies and provide technical support for portfolio development and interviewing skills. Students may pursue employment in any county in the state, however, most elect to remain in the county where they

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[31]See https://www.scsc.pa.gov/About-Us/Pages/Commission-Mission-Statement.aspx

completed their internship. Occasionally, a student is ambivalent about accepting a job in a county public child welfare agency and decides not to follow through with securing employment. When students fail to fulfill 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 child welfare experience.

As discussed previously, and well-known to all who work in the child protection system, 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/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 subsequently become employed in public child welfare.

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

CWEL

After 27 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 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.

We have responded to concerns regarding school program availability in certain areas of the state by including the fully online MSW programs of several schools in our consortium. Students have the option of considering three fully online programs in addition to campus-based programs. Most programs have returned to in-person coursework, while offering flexibility as needed for those who may be required to socially distance. Students report being thrilled to return to the classroom and engage in-person with their fellow students, professors, and school staff persons. Some students report missing the convenience that the remote learning environment provided, but also acknowledge that direct child welfare work requires an in-person presence.

CWEL students contribute to human service programs in both the public and private sector during 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 22 below illustrates the breadth of programs that benefit from the skill and expertise of our child welfare students. We also take note again of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on internship experiences during the 2021-2022 Academic Year. Many agencies were operating remotely for a period of time and there were reduced opportunities to work directly with clients. CSWE reduced the amount of internship hours for both undergraduate and graduate students through the spring of 2022 considering the pronounced challenges in field education. Work-based field options were expanded, online learning modules were permitted as partial fulfillment of field work hours, and allowances were given to complete both course and field requirements.

Figure 22. CWEL Field Placement Types
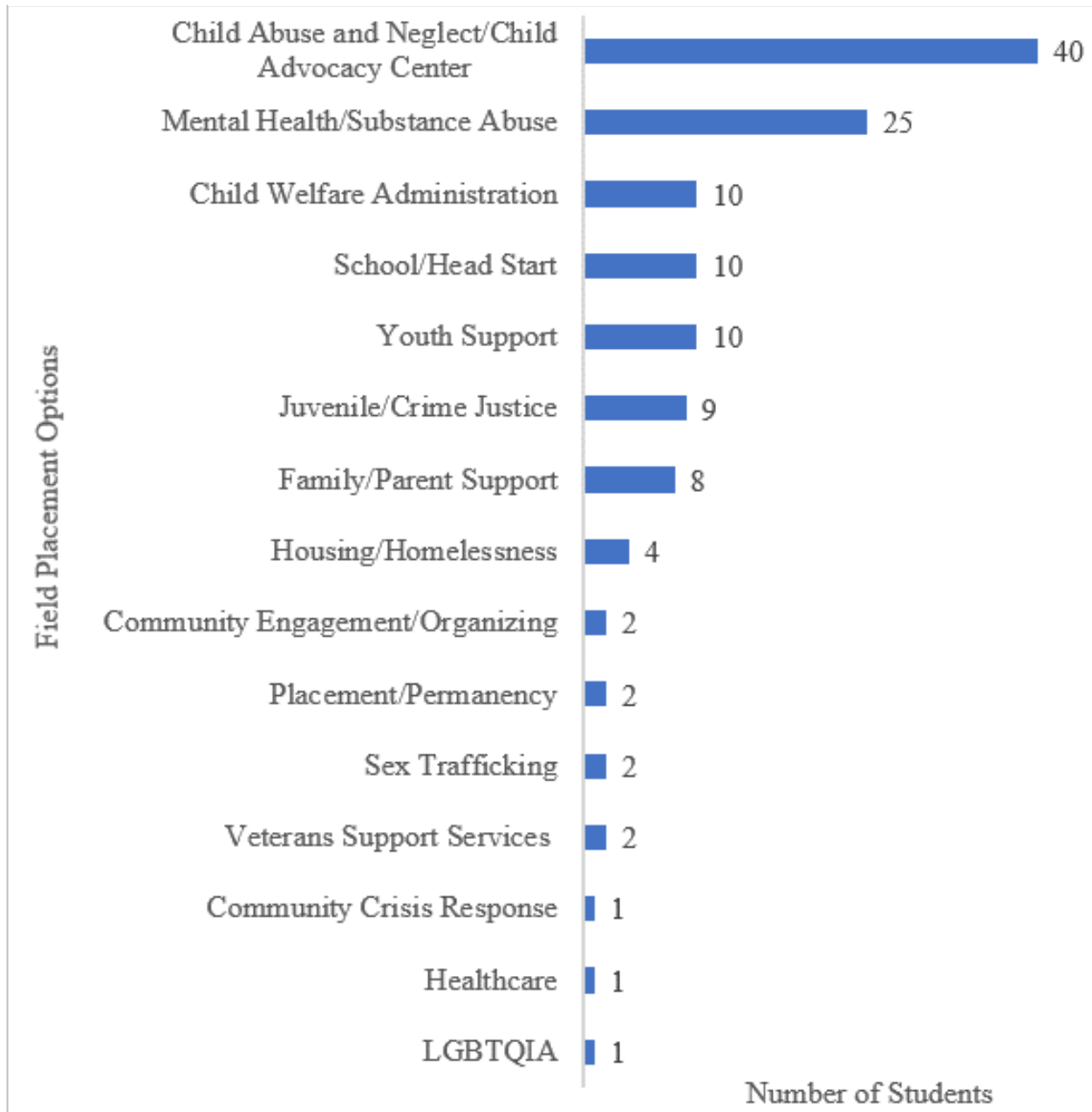
By completing a field experience at an agency in the private sector or within another publicly funded program, students gain valuable information regarding systems, policies, service mandates, and intervention strategies. In turn, students transmit their experience and knowledge

of child welfare policies and procedures to provider agencies that may have limited understanding of child welfare services. We encourage our students 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.

New learning and collaboration occur as our students share their expertise and enrich their skills through internships with public and private provider agencies. Many students remark on the powerful benefit they receive from better understanding the provider side of child welfare services. Their experience in provider organizations enables the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the child welfare agency and better prepares students to contribute to practice initiatives such as teaming and conferencing, connection to evidence-based treatments, and the use of enhanced assessments.

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 51% (34/67) of Pennsylvania counties. Of note within that group, six of our CWEL leaders were also previous CWEB graduates. In addition, many 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, five CWEB only graduates also occupy high-level 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 23 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 as we believe that the data shown below is an underestimate of the actual leadership being displayed by our program graduates.

Figure 23. CWEB/CWEL County Leadership

Map Updated: 08/28/2022

Narrative responses gathered during the program evaluation contain several 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 have come from multiple sources, are reported in different ways, and have become persistent themes. All 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 graduate 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, membership in specific workgroups (i.e., Family First Prevention Services Act implementation, universal assessment, Diversity Taskforce, CAST curriculum, TA Collaborative, CWIS, implementation of the revised Supervisor Training for new supervisors) 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. Efforts to achieve race equity and inclusion within the child welfare system and the use of evidence-based treatments to prevent higher levels of care and out-of-home placement are important areas where CWEL graduates can be agency champions and leaders. 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. Many current trainers and consultants of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center are CWEL graduates. Graduates are also members of statewide committees and workgroups. Others 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 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 after completion of their commitments, such as moving to employment with private providers or other human service entities, 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 L), the results of this and previous reviews affirm that salary remains a particularly 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 over 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[32]. 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 1,613 graduates who have completed the program, only 20 have failed to complete their work commitment over a 27-year period. Another 1,003 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 24 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 calculation includes individuals who were awarded advanced standing in their academic program by virtue of having a BSW/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 24 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.

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[32] 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.

Figure 24. Long-term Commitment of CWEL Graduates
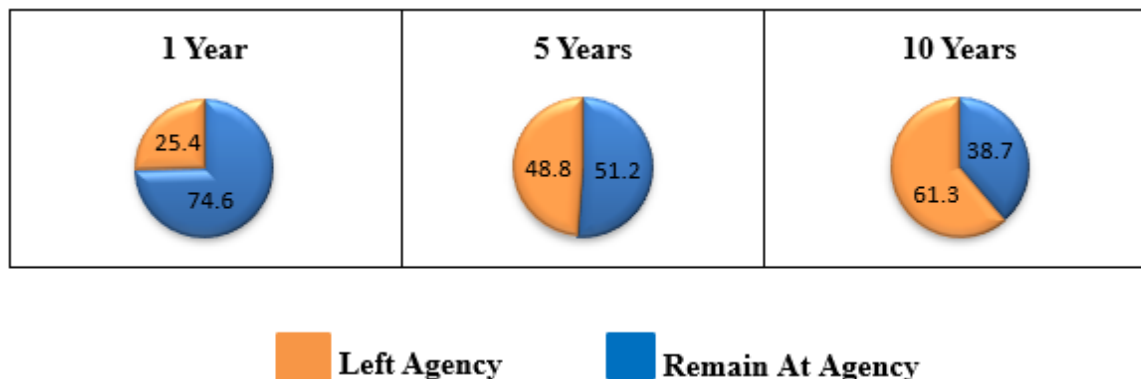
The research literature on long-term retention of workers with no legal work commitment clearly shows the importance of agency climate, quality of supervision, intrinsic worker fulfillment, job satisfaction from appropriate assignments, and personnel policies, along with salaries, as some of the keys to long-term retention[33,34,35]. 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[36]. While implementation at both the state and county levels is 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

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[33] de Guzman, A., Carver-Roberts, T., Leake, R., & Rienks, S. (2020). Retention of child welfare workers: Staying strategies and supports. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, *14*(1), 60-79.

[34] Glisson, C. and Green, P. (2011). Organizational climate, services, and outcomes in child welfare systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 35(8),* 582-591.

[35] 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.

[36] 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.

building among middle managers and supervisors, 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. Clearly, full-time versus part-time enrollment is one of the areas in which county differences occur. We acknowledge that workforce size and capacity is one of the primary factors driving county-level decision making about approval for an employee to attend school. We also understand that collective bargaining agreements may influence permissions and the selection process. We recognize the authority of County Commissioners to enter into contractual agreements regarding their county agency staff. We also note that there is no doubt from student evaluations and the many years of collective wisdom among our partnering schools 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 sessions, more time to network with other students, more time available for academic research and study groups, 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 27

years has shown that part-time students are at a substantially higher risk for program discontinuation compared to full-time students.

A frequent agency concern with full-time study for CWEL students is whether 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 <u>not</u> exclusive to those in school), the sacrifices most often 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, increased incidents of racial injustice, and an overall unpredictability of the national political landscape. Additionally, the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the resulting economic and personal losses along with a client population besieged by opioid addiction, has overloaded the capacity of the child welfare system. These issues are not unique to Pennsylvania.

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. Our small pilot study conducted with CWEL students enrolled in an on-line child welfare course several years ago 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.[37] The validity of these preliminary findings were reinforced during the last program year when most universities were operating remotely. Convenience aside, most students and faculty prefer in-person learning and find it more conducive to knowledge and skill development when safety measures are maintained.

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 2021-2022 academic year, roughly one-half (49%) 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 chronically understaffed. Child welfare

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[37] 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.

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 control social work department or school schedules. The number of child welfare students in each school influences 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 can 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.

Recommendations

We are committed to continuous quality improvement and understand that no successful program is static. Areas for ongoing focus in both programs and the action steps completed or in progress are summarized below.

CWEB

1. **Improve successful outcomes for students by refining admission criteria and participant selection**

- Student transcripts and a personal statement regarding the desire to pursue public child welfare added to the application packet (completed)

- Competency-based rating instrument used to assess CWEB applications (completed)

- Periodic review of interrater reliability (ongoing)

- Interviews held with a sample of applicants (ongoing)

2. **Further guidance to university faculty on the details of civil service requirements and other technical aspects related to county internship and employment**

- Targeted discussions during informational meetings with schools and students (ongoing)

- Discussions to include that CWEB students completing internships within non-civil service counties can also register as a county casework intern, so they are eligible for jobs in civil service counties (ongoing)

- "Frequently Asked Questions" posted on CWERP website (completed; updated as needed)

- Diagram of civil service/merit hire internship pathway included in student manual (completed; updated as needed)

- CWEB presence at annual PA Association of Social Work Education (PASWE) meetings held in conjunction with PA-NASW (ongoing)

3. **Increase participation in Civil Service Social Work Internship program**

- Outreach to schools and students regarding the benefit of completing 975 hours of internship (e.g., civil service standing, ability to complete foundation training as part of internship, greater marketability for hiring, transition into Caseworker II position) (ongoing)

- County agency support for extended internship by CWEB students (ongoing)

4. **Increase successful program completion among "at risk" students (e.g., academic challenges, those experiencing unanticipated life events, foster care alumni)**

- Ongoing outreach and case management to students by CWEB faculty and staff (ongoing)

- Regular collaboration with school faculty (ongoing)

- Targeted interventions for individual students (ongoing)

5. **Increase county participation in the CWEB program**

- Collaboration with counties through CWEB information sessions that include CWEB program faculty and staff, as well as Practice Improvement Specialists and Resource Specialists from the PA Child Welfare Resource Center (ongoing)

- School-county-program collaboration in the field practicum process (ongoing)

- Presentations at PCYA & CCAP meetings (ongoing)

- Informational sessions and CWEB Internship Guidance document (new/ongoing)

6. *Improve CWEB student enrollment in mandated child welfare skill and competency-based training, Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice ("Foundations")*

- Case management system pairing CWRC Resource Specialist with each CWEB student (in place and ongoing)

- Enrollment in *Foundations* during the CWEB students' senior year and initiation of training record to document completion of modules in effect (ongoing)

7. **Improve leadership and professional development skills**

- Students encouraged to develop leadership and self-care skills during their academic/field experience (ongoing)

- Recent passage of bachelor-level licensure in PA (Act 179 of 2014; candidates can apply to take the qualifying exam at https://www.pals.pa.gov/#/page/default)

- Plan for enrollment in CWEL program (ongoing)

8. **Improve successful job placement following graduation**

- Assistance by CWEB/CWEL Agency Coordinator in identifying county casework vacancies, facilitating referrals for interviews, and counseling regarding employment (ongoing)

- Collaboration with SCSC and merit hire counties (ongoing)

- Follow-up protocol with CWEB grads (ongoing)

9. **Address issues that arise in the transition to employment**
- Follow-up protocol for new graduates (ongoing)

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

- Dissemination of realistic job preview video (completed)

- Informational sessions at participating schools (ongoing)

- Informational sessions with county agencies (ongoing)

- Collaboration with CWRC Practice Improvement Specialists/Regional Teams

CWEL

1. **Alteration in commitment time for part-time students**

- We note this issue for clarification: <u>There is no option for an alteration in the legal commitment period for part-time students</u>. The part-time student commitment period is pro-rated to avoid a longer commitment time and to promote equity. The commitment time for all participants begins upon graduation and is not subject to delay.

2. **Expansion of commitment time for all participants**

- This is precluded by federal Title IV-E regulations [45 CFR, Ch. II § 235.63 (b) (1)]

3. **Increase county agency support for part-time students**

- County agencies are encouraged to provide flexible scheduling, modified work assignments, and opportunities for field work outside the agency (ongoing)

- When difficulties arise involving a particular student, the county is actively engaged in problem solving and solution-building using a teaming model (ongoing)

- The CWEL program actively enforces a part-time academic load for part-time students. Part-time students may not assume full-time study, regardless of the source of tuition/fee payment, while participating in the CWEL program to complete school sooner (ongoing)

4. **Continued focus upon agency working environment and opportunities for graduates to use their expanded skills and abilities within the agency and at the state level**

- Targeted intervention with agency supervisors and administrators; collaboration with CWRC Practice Improvement Specialists/Regional Teams (ongoing)

- Feedback to administrators (ongoing)

- CWERP faculty participation in state and national recruitment, retention, and workforce development initiatives (ongoing)

- CWEL graduate involvement in ongoing organizational effectiveness/CQI processes within counties (ongoing)

- Inclusion of CWEL graduates in state-wide practice and policy initiatives (i.e., PIP, FFPSA, Universal Assessment subcommittee(s), Quality Service Reviews, organizational effectiveness work, curriculum development and quality assurance committees, CWIS) (ongoing)

5. **Supervision and mentorship of CWEB program participants**

- CWEL graduates are encouraged to provide supervision and mentoring to CWEB students/graduates at their county agency (ongoing)

- County agency directors are encouraged to utilize CWEL graduates as field instructors, task supervisors, and mentors to CWEBs (ongoing)

6. **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 (ongoing)

- Students may take administration courses as electives; those approved for macro study are encouraged to take practice courses (ongoing)

- Continued exploration of cross-over option between direct practice/clinical and macro practice specializations among school programs (ongoing)

7. **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 (ongoing)

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

- Curricular consultation and technical assistance to schools (ongoing)

- Offering of courses targeted toward effective family engagement and teaming practices, motivational interviewing skills, enhanced assessment, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based practices (ongoing)

- Continued review of potential child welfare course offerings (ongoing)

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

- Link graduates to statewide practice improvement initiatives (ongoing)

- PA's implementation of FFPSA services, Sex Trafficking & prudent parenting legislation, involvement in CFSR/QSR reviews, and Universal Assessment work provide significant opportunities for graduates to become involved in high-level activities impacting the child welfare system (ongoing)

- Increase and sustain efforts to better integrate the CWEL and CWRC programs (ongoing)

10. **Gather more detailed information regarding the career trajectory of CWEL graduates**

- Efforts to develop a comprehensive workforce database for the public child welfare agencies in PA are in process. We intend to provide a dashboard for each county, region, and the state at large (ongoing)

- CWEL graduates will be incorporated into the follow-up study protocol.

Overall Recommendations: CWEB and CWEL Programs

1. **Increase CWEB enrollment**

- A target of 50 participants is aspirational.

- Enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities has decreased an estimated 3.5% according to fall 2021 figures, totaling a two-year decline of 7.8% since 2019. This represented a loss of nearly 500,000 undergraduate students in the 2021-2022 Academic Year alone, continuing a historic trend that began with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although enrollment in both undergraduate and graduate programs has been trending downward over the past decade, the pandemic "turbocharged" the decline at the undergraduate level. This drop has been worse at community colleges and public, four-year institutions. Community colleges, which traditionally enroll more low-income students and students of color, have seen decreased enrollments by nearly 15% since 2019.[38] Additional data confirms that more Americans are forgoing higher education, with an estimated decline of 9.6% nationwide since 2010. A decrease of 17% has been observed in Pennsylvania since this time. [39]

- We will continue active recruitment efforts to increase child welfare interest among undergraduate social work majors.

2. **Maintain CWEL enrollment at approximately 150.**

- This enrollment target may need to be adjusted based on high enrollment in the 2021-2022 academic year. Partnering schools value our child welfare students. On-line course work

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[38] See https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaeltnietzel/2021/11/18/updated-figures-show-college-enrollment-falling-further-behind-last-year/?sh=67cff30a447d; https://www.npr.org/2021/10/26/1048955023/college-enrollment-down-pandemic-economy; https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/10/26/college-enrollment-down/; https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2021-10-26/college-enrollment-on-track-for-largest-two-year-drop-on-record

[39] See https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics

has offered students more flexible learning forums. Evaluation data has shown that increased tenure at admission is related to retention among graduates of CWEL, serving as reinforcement of the decision several years ago to increase the minimum amount of agency tenure to two years before CWEL eligibility.

- In 2008, OCYF granted approval for regional office staff to participate in CWEL. The opportunity for state employees allows additional trainees to benefit from CWEL.

3. **Increase depth of undergraduate child welfare curriculum among schools through the development of a certificate in Child Advocacy Studies in collaboration with the National Child Protection Training Center.**

- Undergraduates currently complete one child welfare course and a public child welfare internship. The second of three courses in Child Advocacy Studies have been developed in an on-line, hybrid format. Providing these courses across schools will strengthen the child welfare course options for students and has the benefit of providing an elective option for students outside of social work who receive little, if any, content on child abuse/neglect.

4. **Add another component to the CWEL program 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).

- This option is currently available to University of Pittsburgh MSW students through a workforce excellence award from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI). The University of Pittsburgh/Child Welfare Education and Research Programs is one of seven sites across the country selected for this 5-year award. Specific to partnership with Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families, current MSW students complete coursework leading to the certificate in Children, Youth and Families, complete an advanced-level internship at Allegheny County CYF, and have a contractual obligation for employment with Allegheny County following graduation.

  (See: https://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-programs/child-welfare-workforce-excellence-fellows-program for information.)

5. **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. The potential for increased participation exists if additional schools meet requirements and are approved.

- 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. As previously noted, there has been a marked decline in undergraduate student enrollment across the country and Pennsylvania is no exception. A major driver in the consolidation of the six universities in the PASSHE network is decreased enrollment. It remains to be seen whether this consolidation may have positive benefits for CWEB enrollment. One advantage is a single Director of Field Education across each integrated university group. We remain

optimistic that this model may enhance referrals to CWEB as there is a single point of contact. Our integrated university programs are now operationalizing their revised structures. Program expansion is an opportunity that does warrant continued discussion and consideration.

6. **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. East Stroudsburg University joined the CWEB school consortium in the 2018-2019 academic year. 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). Online programs at three MSW schools are approved.

- As noted earlier, MSW programs at Slippery Rock University and Bloomsburg University are in the process of obtaining full CSWE accreditation. We will explore partnership with these programs when they obtain full accreditation.

7. **Participation by CWEB/CWEL graduates in the implementation of practice changes following new legislation.**

- CWEB and CWEL students remain in an excellent position to support and assume leadership in practice changes and system reform. Local, regional, and statewide opportunities exist for participation in efforts addressing race equity in the child welfare system. Additional opportunities for larger system involvement include work related to the implementation of FFPSA, movement toward adopting a statewide universal assessment tool, enhancement of family engagement practices, implementation and monitoring of legislation regarding human trafficking, operationalization of Plans of Safe

Care, trauma-informed practice, and continuous quality improvement initiatives to list a few.

8. **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 workforce need.

9. **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.

10. **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 are essential. We have seen great success with the implementation of a voluntary post-hire contact with a child welfare consultant at three months, six months, and nine months post-hire.

- 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. Many graduates share their expertise on a statewide level by becoming trainers and/or workgroup members through CWRC.

11. 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, several 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.

12. 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 racially equitable, race conscious, trauma-informed child welfare systems that create a community of inclusion, support, and learning for the workforce, recognizing that supervisors, middle managers, and administrators are critical to retention and that a diverse workforce better reflects the population served by child welfare agencies

- 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 remain key components 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 program continuum dedicated to the child welfare system. We are gratified to be part of this remarkable venture and partnership, and 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 thank Meg Snead, Acting Secretary of the Department of Human Services. A special thank you to Jon Rubin, former Deputy Secretary of the state Office of Children, Youth, and Families, for his dedicated support and partnership. We look forward to continuing our

relationship with Natalie Bates, now Acting Deputy Secretary. We also express gratitude to our OCYF Program Monitors, Carrie Keiser and Diane Michel, for their 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 eleven 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 programs, leading race equity 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 number 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 note of gratitude goes to the CWERP team members who make countless contributions to our program operations. Your work is very appreciated. A special thank you to Rachel Winters for her oversight of our annual report process and her commitment to providing transition support to our CWEB and CWEL graduates. We also acknowledge the tireless work of Lynda Rose who thoughtfully continued her contributions to this report beyond her end date of employment.

Appendices

Appendix A

Table I

Participating School Programs

Table I

Participating School Programs

School	MSACS	CSWE	CWEB Only	CWEB/ CWEL	CWEL Only	Entry into Program
Bryn Mawr College	2027-2028	MSS 6/2024			X	1995
Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania (Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, Mansfield)	2024-2025	BSW 6/2025	X			CWEB 2001
East Stroudsburg University	2025-2026	BSW 6/2027	X			2018
Kutztown University	2025-2026	BSW 10/2026 MSW 10/2026		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2007
Marywood University	2025-2026	BSW 10/2024 MSW 10/2024		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995
Millersville University	2027-2028	BSW 6/2027 MSW 2/2030		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2010
Pennsylvania Western University (California, Edinboro)	2024-2025	BSW 6/2025 MSW 10/2025		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2004 (California), CWEL 2006 (Edinboro)
Shippensburg University	2026-2027	BSW 6/2026 MSW 2/2030		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2010
Slippery Rock University	2028-2029	BSW 2/2030	X			2001
Temple University	2027-2028	BSW 6/2023 MSW 6/2023		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995
University of Pennsylvania	2023-2024	MSW 6/2025			X	1995
University of Pittsburgh	2029-2030	BASW 6/2028 MSW6/2028		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995
West Chester University	2028-2029	BSW 10/2027 MSW 2/2023		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 2001
Widener University	2025-2026	BSW 2/2029 MSW 2/2029		X		CWEB 2001 CWEL 1995

Appendix B

CWEB and CWEL

School Participation Map

Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

Participating Schools

Map of Pennsylvania showing participating schools:

- Edinboro — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Pitt-Bradford — CWEL Only (blue)
- Mansfield — CWEB Only (black)
- Marywood — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Lock Haven — CWEB Only (black)
- Slippery Rock — CWEB Only (black)
- Bloomsburg — CWEB Only (black)
- East Stroudsburg — CWEB Only (black)
- Marywood- East Center Valley — CWEL Only (blue)
- Kutztown — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Pitt — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- CalU — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Bryn Mawr — CWEL Only (blue)
- Shippensburg — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Millersville — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Temple — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- West Chester — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Widener — CWEB and CWEL (red)
- Unv. Penn / Philadelphia — CWEL Only (blue)

Legend:
- CWEB Only (black)
- CWEB and CWEL (red)
- CWEL Only (blue)

Appendix C

Table II

University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Courses

2021-2022

Table II

University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Courses

Fall Term 2021

Course Title	Enrollment
Children and Families at Risk	14
Child and Family Advocacy (two sections)	13
Child and Family Policy	14
Child Welfare Services	13
Direct Practice with Children	24
Intimate Partner Violence	13
Issues in Child Maltreatment	12
Social Work with Drug & Alcohol Abuse (two sections)	31
Social Work Practice and Traumatic Stress (three sections)	52

Spring Term 2022

Course Title	Enrollment
Children and Families at Risk (two sections)	33
Child and Family Policy (three sections)	40
Child Welfare Services	29
Intimate Partner Violence	15
Social Work with Substance Abuse	26
Social Work Practice with Families	09
Social Work Practice and Traumatic Stress (two sections)	38

Summer Term 2022

Course Title	Enrollment
Direct Practice with Children	10
Social Work with Substance Abuse (two sections)	19
Social Work Practice with Families	10
Social Work Practice and Traumatic Stress (two sections)	19

Appendix D

Table III

Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEB Schools

2021-2022

Table III

Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings

of

Approved CWEB Schools for 2021-2022

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[40]
West Chester University	Child Welfare Practice and Policy
Widener University	Families at Risk

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[40] In addition to the undergraduate course, *Child Welfare Services*, University of Pittsburgh undergraduate students can 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

2021-2022

Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools for 2021-2022

(University of Pittsburgh is shown in Table II)

Bryn Mawr College, Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research

Child Welfare Policy, Practice and Research
Clinical Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents
Social Work with Substance Use Disorders
Trauma Informed Social Work with Children and Adolescents
Family Therapy: Theory and Practice
Child & Family Well Being Integrative Seminar
The Queering of SW for Practice with LGBTQIA + People (And Everyone)

California University (PennWest University), Social Work Department

Practice with Children and Youth in Rural and Small-Town Environments
Practice in Substance Abuse/Addictions in Rural and Small-Town Environments
Advanced Practice in Child Welfare

Edinboro University (PennWest University), College of Science and Health Professions

Child Welfare (if available)
Addiction
Trauma Theory and Treatment

Kutztown University, Department of Social Work

Social Work Interventions with Substance Abusing Populations
Maltreatment in the Family
Child Permanence and the Family-In-Environment
Practice of Family Group Decision Making
Social Work Crisis Intervention with Families
Assessment Methods for Social Workers: Children and Adolescents
The Fundamentals of Trauma-Informed Care
Clinical Approaches to Trauma-Informed Practice
Trauma-Informed Practice with Systems
Motivational Interviewing Strategies: Implications for Gender and Addiction
Family Mediation in Advanced Social Work Practice

Marywood University, School of Social Work

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
Principles and Practices of Trauma Informed Care
Women's Issues and the Practice of Social Work
Mindfulness Skills for Social Work Practice
Human Sexuality

Millersville/Shippensburg Universities, School of Social Work/Department of Social Work and Gerontology

Child Welfare
Children and Youth at Risk
Addictions in the Field of Social Work
Behavioral Health
Social Work Administration and Supervision

The University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice

Policies for Children and Their Families
Practice with Families
Practice with Youth who are Marginalized
Practice with Children and Adolescents
Substance Abuse Interventions
Social Work Practice & Trauma
Clinical & Macro Child Welfare Practice
Integrative Seminar in Child Welfare

Temple University, School of Social Work

Alcohol and Substance Abuse
Assessment and the DSM-IV
Policy on Families and Children
Emotional Disorders of Children and Adolescents
Trauma Informed Social Work
Human Trafficking

West Chester University, College of Education and Social Work

Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
Child Welfare: A Resilience and Trauma-Informed Approach
Substance Use Disorders
Motivational Interviewing in Social Work
Seminar in Social Work: Family Violence
The Theory and Practice of Self-Care
Supervision and Leadership
Child Welfare Systems
Trauma Informed Social Work

Widener University, Center for Social Work Education

Advanced Social Work Practice with Families (if available)
Biographical Timeline
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
Social Work in Prisons and Community Reintegration
A Grief and Loss Across the Life Cycle

Appendix F

CWEB County Participation Map

2001-2022

Counties Providing Student Internships and /or Employment for

Graduates of the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Program

2001-2022
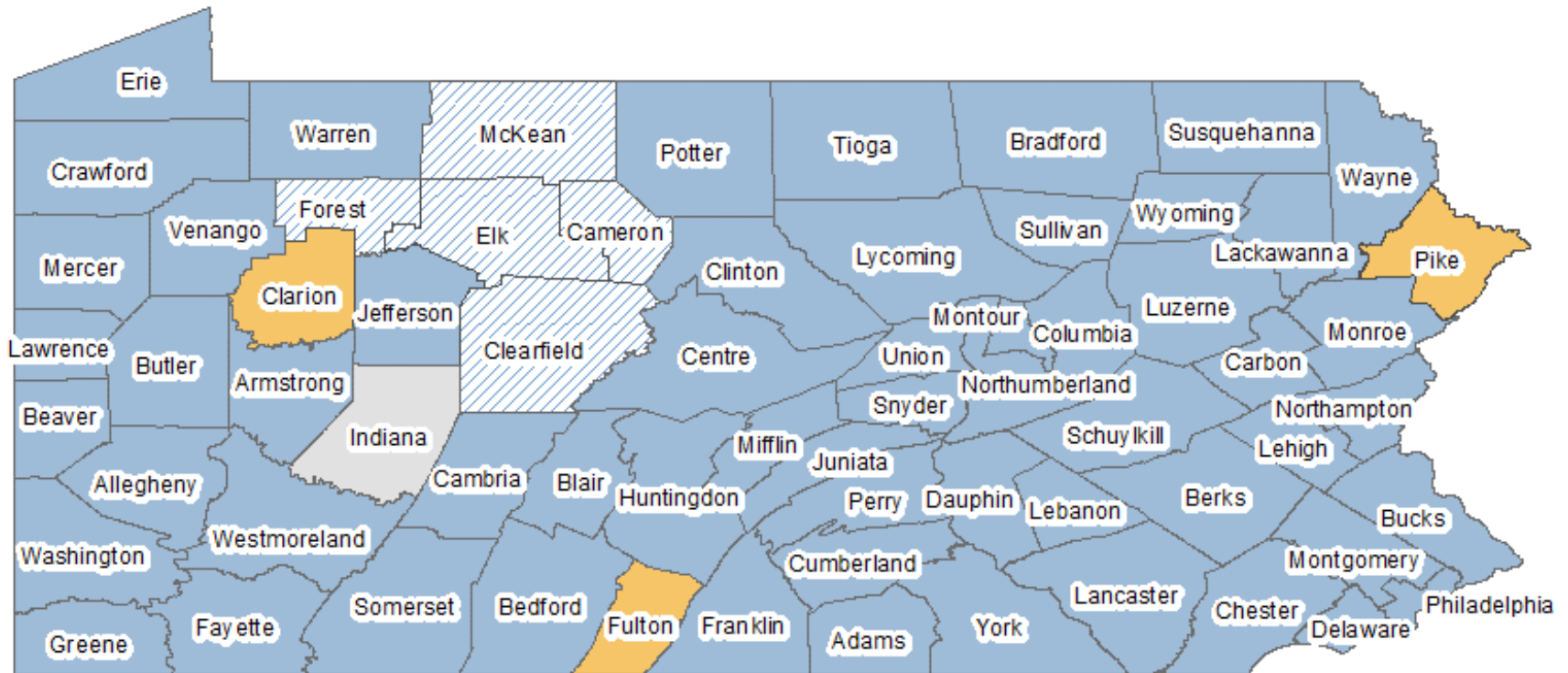
Includes history from beginning of CWEB program through Summer 2022

Modified: 08/28/2022

Legend:
- No CWEB Internship or Post-Grad Employment History
- CWEB Internship History
- CWEB Post-Grad Employment History
- CWEB Internship and Post-Grad Employment History

Appendix G

CWEB Overview

2001-2022

Charts 1-6

Chart 1

Child Welfare for Baccalaureates

2001-2022 Cumulative Admissions (Projected Through 2024)
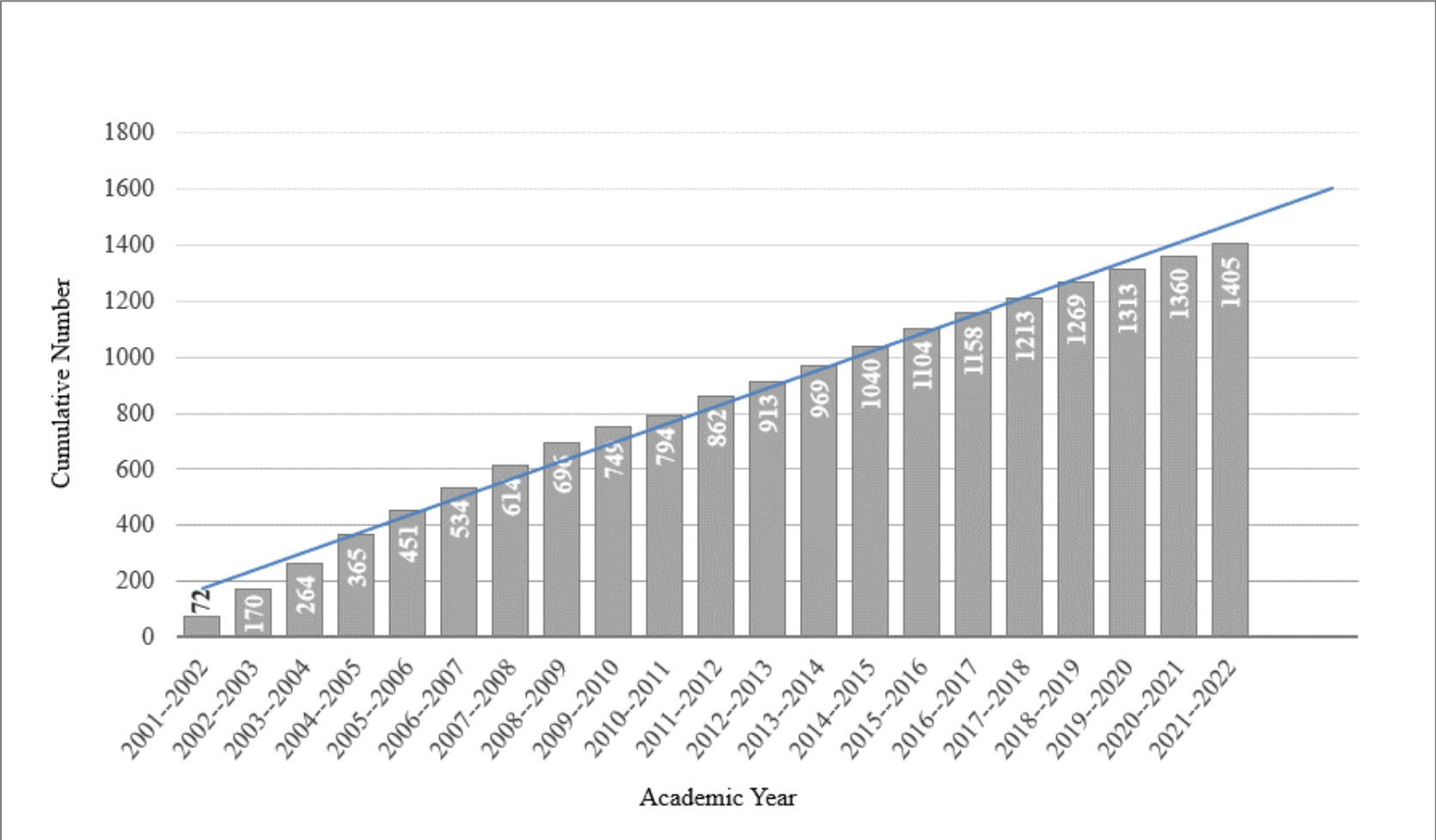
Chart 2

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates

2001-2022

Student Admissions & Graduations

University	Admissions	Graduates
WIDENER UNIVERSITY	71	71
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY	110	107
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	155	149
SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY	55	52
SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY	163	153
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH	206	199
MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY	49	47
MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY	22	20
MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY	85	83
LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY	78	69
KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY	113	108
EDINBORO UNIVERSITY	96	90
EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY	6	6
CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PA	59	53
BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY	138	132

Cumulative Number

Chart 3

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates

2001-2022 Admissions by School and Ethnicity/Race

Horizontal stacked bar chart showing cumulative admissions by school and ethnicity/race. Legend: Black, Non-Hispanic; Caucasian, Non-Hispanic; Hispanic, Any Ethnicity; Multi-Racial, Non-Hispanic; Other, Non-Hispanic.

- WIDENER UNIVERSITY: 29, 31, 8
- WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY: 28, 71, 4, 3
- TEMPLE UNIVERSITY: 70, 66, 9, 3
- SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY: 9, 44
- SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY: 15, 138, 6, 2
- PITTSBURGH, UNIVERSITY OF: 34, 156, 3, 8
- MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY: 7, 39
- MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY: 2, 18
- MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY: 10, 71
- LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY: 12, 59, 3
- KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY: 10, 84, 15, 2
- EDINBORO UNIVERSITY: 10, 83, 2
- EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY
- CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PA: 9, 49
- BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY: 34, 92, 8, 2

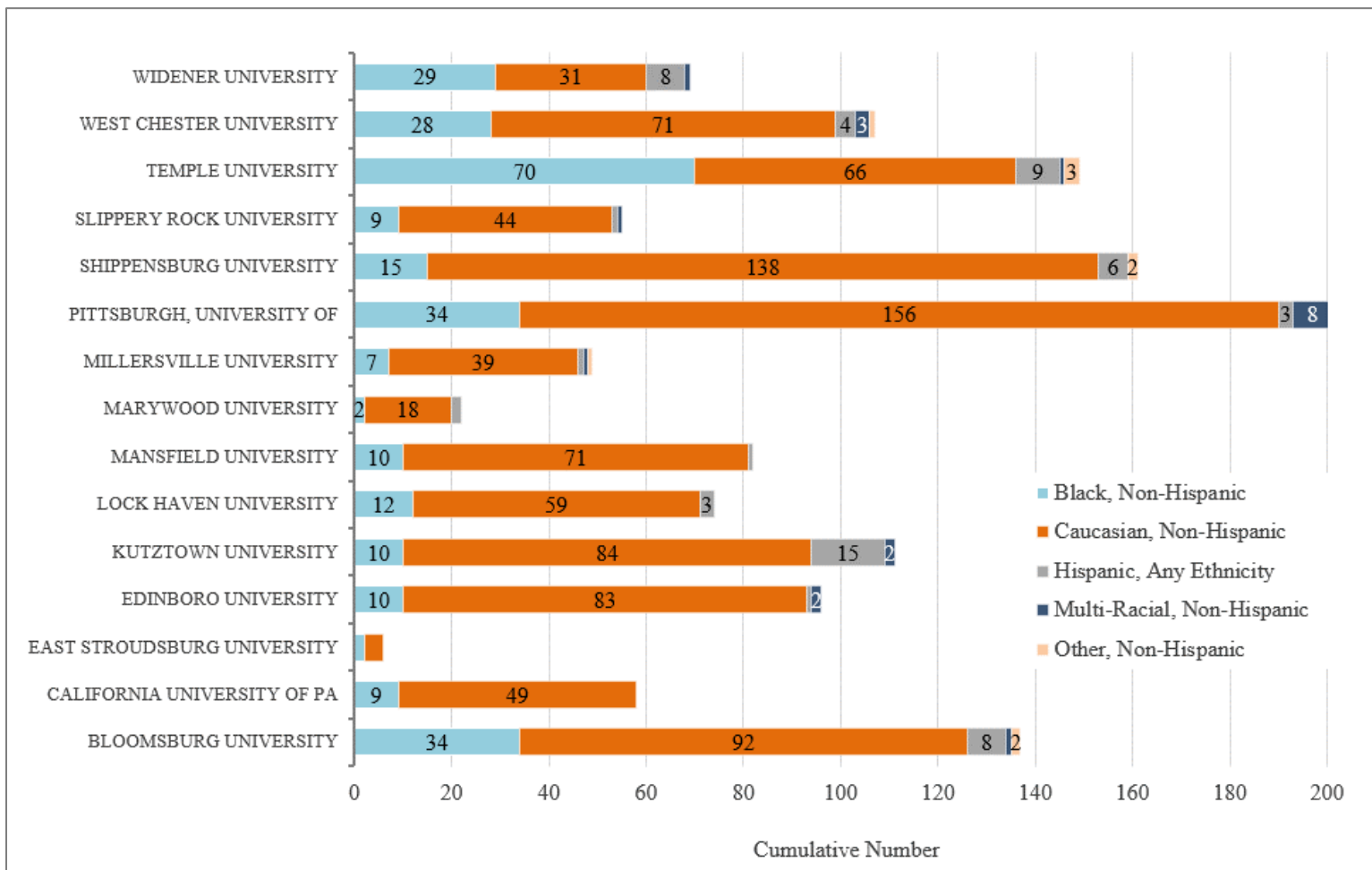X-axis: Cumulative Number (0 to 200)

Chart 4

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates
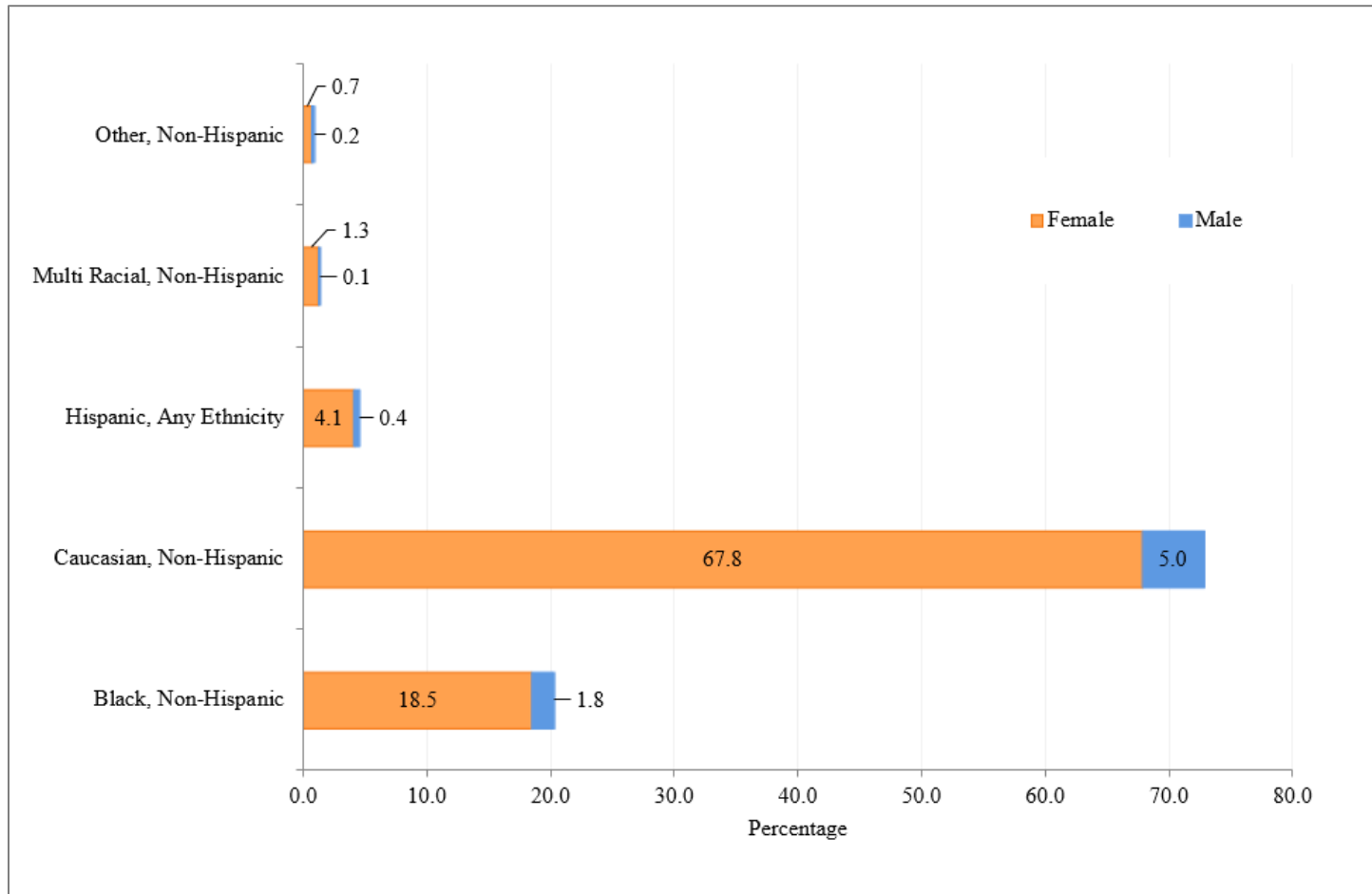
2001-2022 Admission Demographics

Chart 5

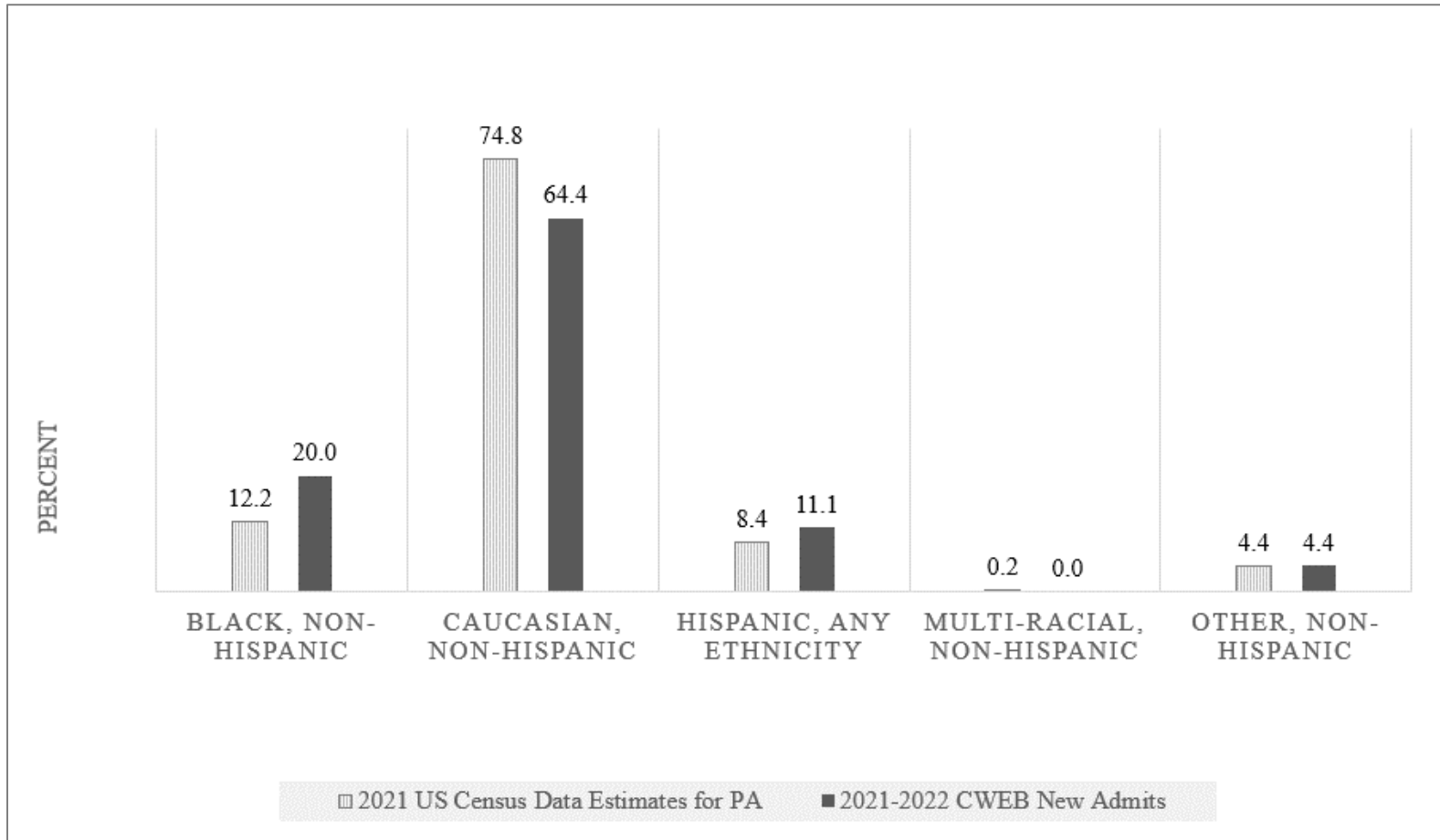**Ethnicity Comparison**

2021 US Census Data Estimates for Pennsylvania and

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates 2021-2022 New Admissions

Chart 6
CWEB Post-Grad County Employment
Hiring County for Graduates- Fall 2018 thru Summer 2022

Modified: 08/28/2022

No Recent Hire History   Recent CWEB Grad Hired

Appendix H

CWEL Overview

1995 - 2022

Charts 1-8

Chart 1

Child Welfare Education for Leadership
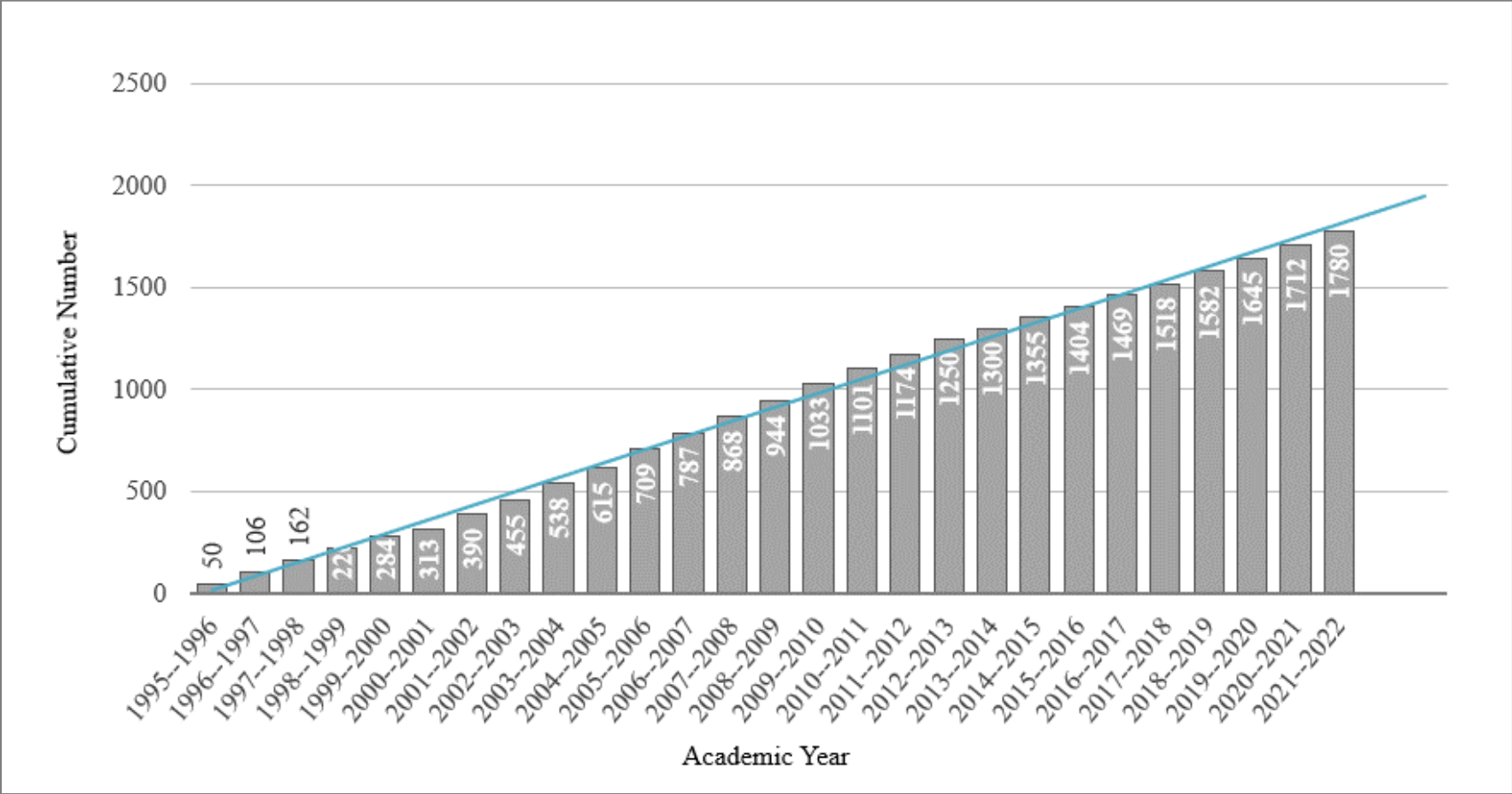
1995-2022 Cumulative Admissions (Projected Through 2024)

Bar chart titled with Y-axis "Cumulative Number" (0 to 2500) and X-axis "Academic Year" showing cumulative admissions:

Academic Year	Cumulative Number
1995–1996	50
1996–1997	106
1997–1998	162
1998–1999	22
1999–2000	284
2000–2001	313
2001–2002	390
2002–2003	455
2003–2004	538
2004–2005	615
2005–2006	709
2006–2007	787
2007–2008	868
2008–2009	944
2009–2010	1033
2010–2011	1101
2011–2012	1174
2012–2013	1250
2013–2014	1300
2014–2015	1355
2015–2016	1404
2016–2017	1469
2017–2018	1518
2018–2019	1582
2019–2020	1645
2020–2021	1712
2021–2022	1780

Chart 2

Child Welfare Education for Leadership

2021-2022

Student Admissions & Graduations

Chart 3

Child Welfare Education for Leadership
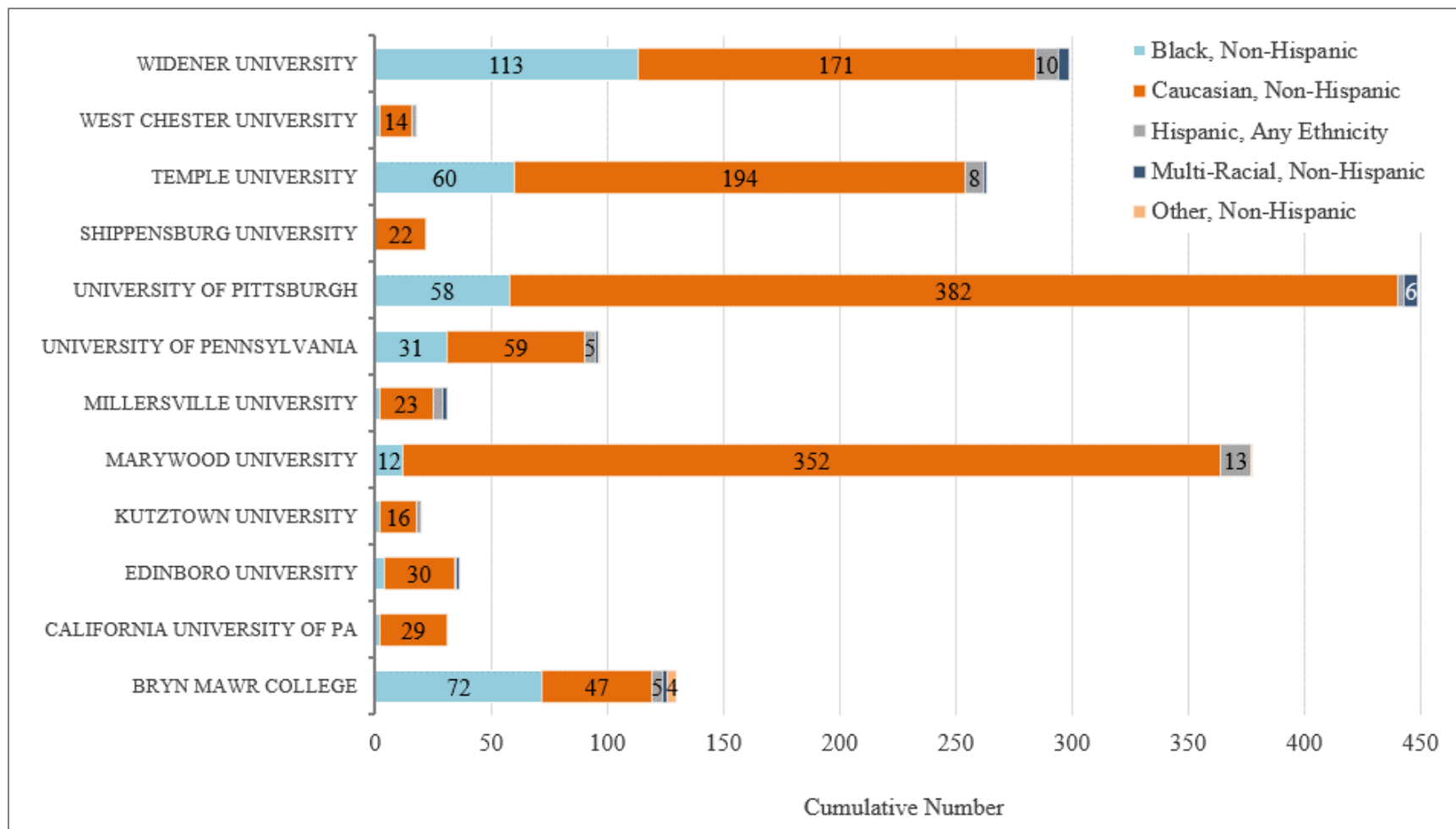
1995-2022 Admissions by School and Ethnicity/Race

Legend:
- Black, Non-Hispanic
- Caucasian, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic, Any Ethnicity
- Multi-Racial, Non-Hispanic
- Other, Non-Hispanic

School	Black, Non-Hispanic	Caucasian, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic, Any Ethnicity	Multi-Racial, Non-Hispanic
WIDENER UNIVERSITY	113	171		10
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY		14		
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY	60	194	8	
SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY		22		
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH	58	382		6
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	31	59	5	
MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY	23			
MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY	12	352	13	
KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY		16		
EDINBORO UNIVERSITY		30		
CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PA		29		
BRYN MAWR COLLEGE	72	47	5	4

Cumulative Number

Chart 4

Child Welfare Education for Leadership

1995-2022 Admission Demographics

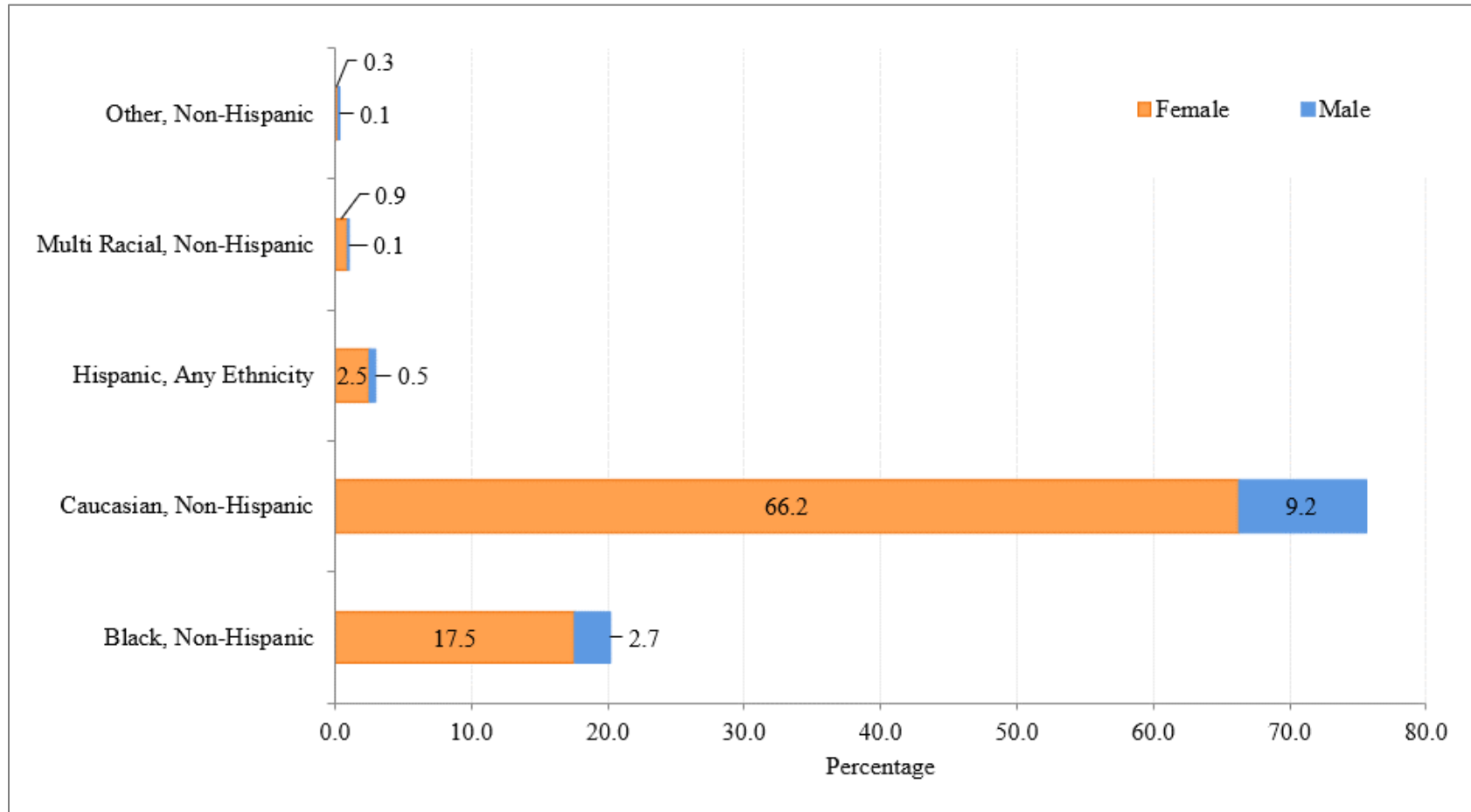|	Female	Male
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.3	0.1
Multi Racial, Non-Hispanic	0.9	0.1
Hispanic, Any Ethnicity	2.5	0.5
Caucasian, Non-Hispanic	66.2	9.2
Black, Non-Hispanic	17.5	2.7

Percentage

Chart 5

Ethnicity Comparison

2021 US Census Data Estimates for Pennsylvania and
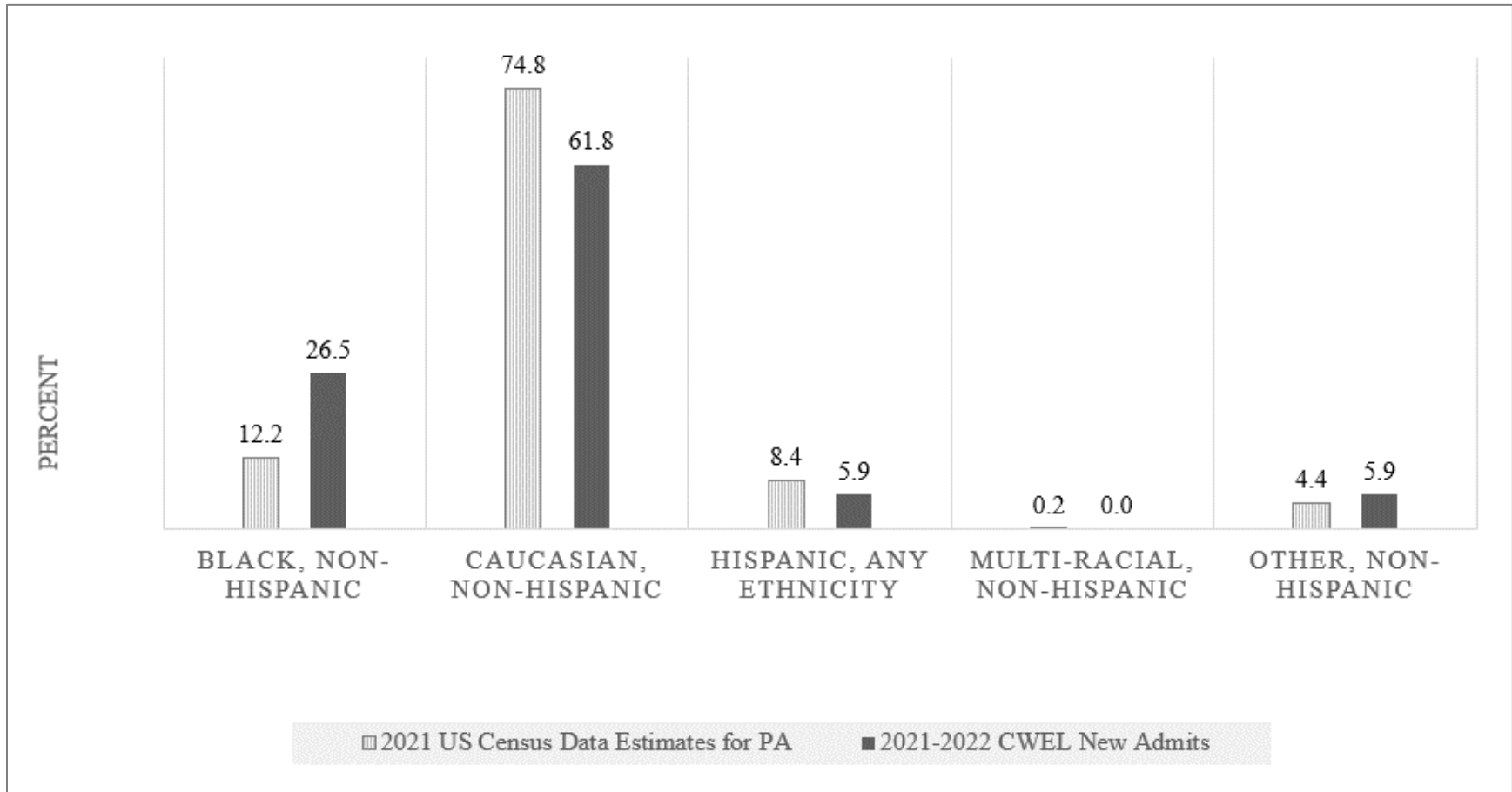
Child Welfare Education for Leadership 2021-2022 New Admissions

Bar chart comparing ethnicity percentages between 2021 US Census Data Estimates for PA and 2021-2022 CWEL New Admits.

- BLACK, NON-HISPANIC: 12.2 / 26.5
- CAUCASIAN, NON-HISPANIC: 74.8 / 61.8
- HISPANIC, ANY ETHNICITY: 8.4 / 5.9
- MULTI-RACIAL, NON-HISPANIC: 0.2 / 0.0
- OTHER, NON-HISPANIC: 4.4 / 5.9

Legend: ▦ 2021 US Census Data Estimates for PA ▪ 2021-2022 CWEL New Admits

Y-axis: PERCENT

Chart 6

Child Welfare for Education for Leadership

1995-2022 Admissions

by School and Full-time/Part-time Status
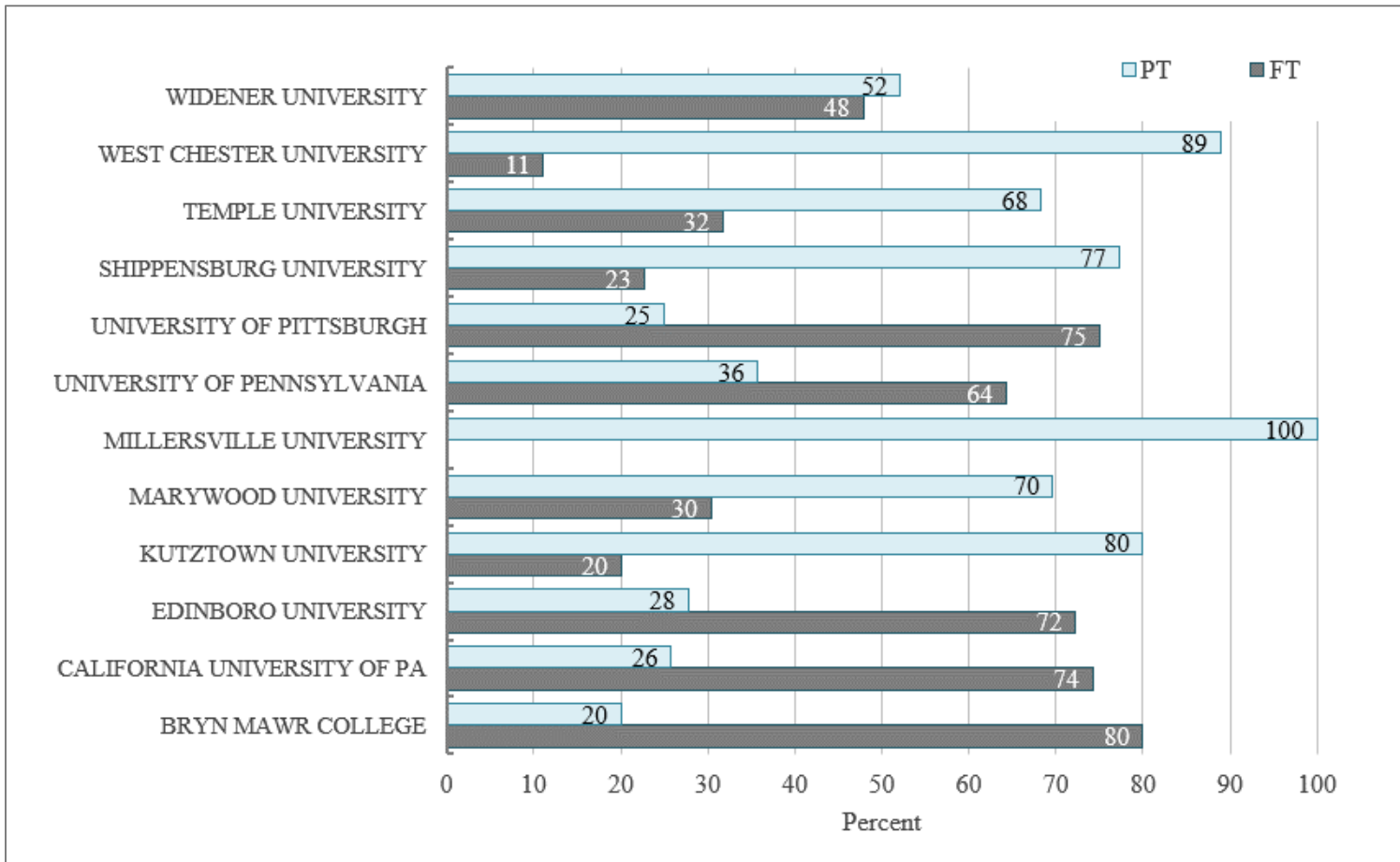
Chart 7

Child Welfare for Education for Leadership

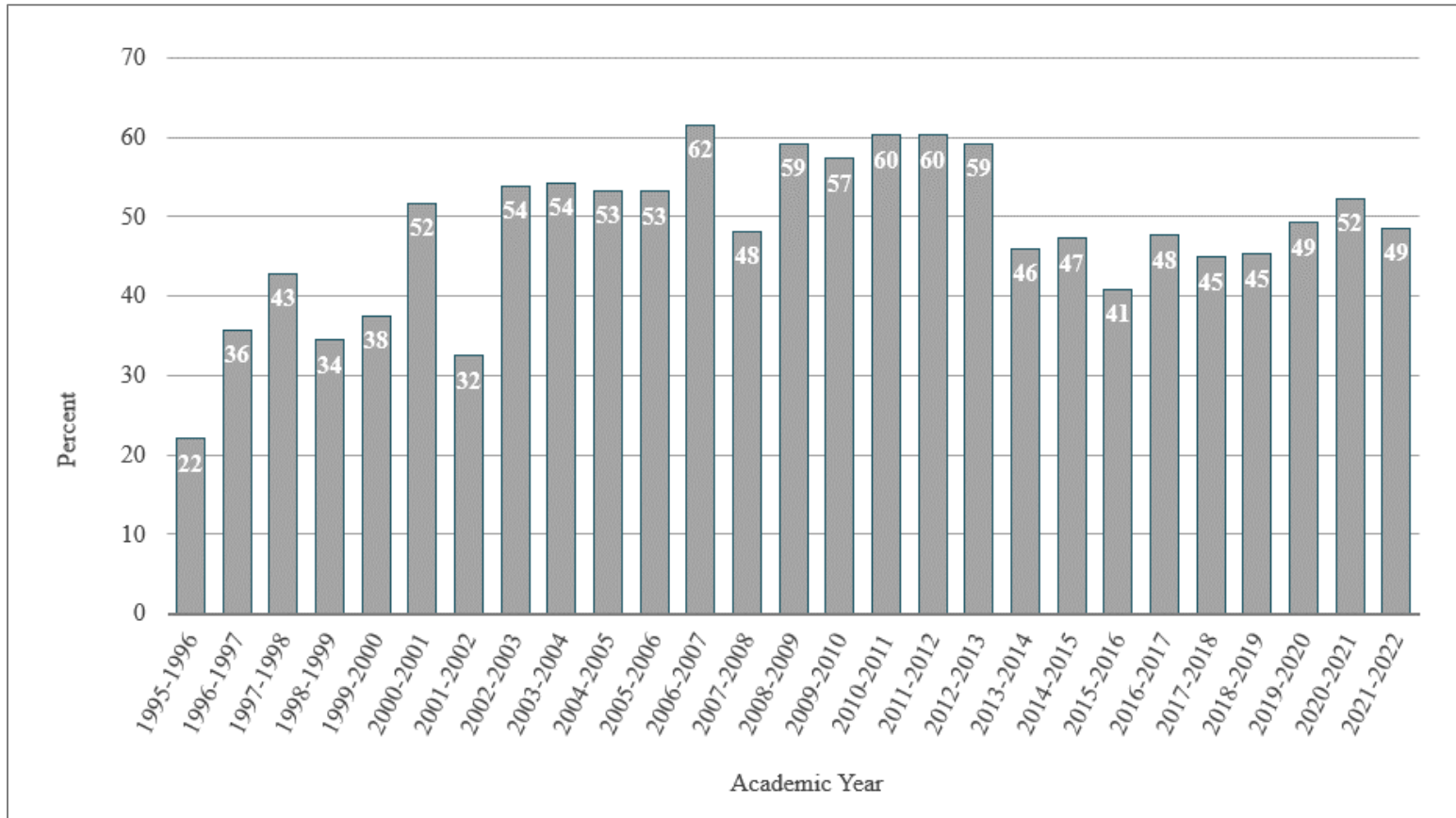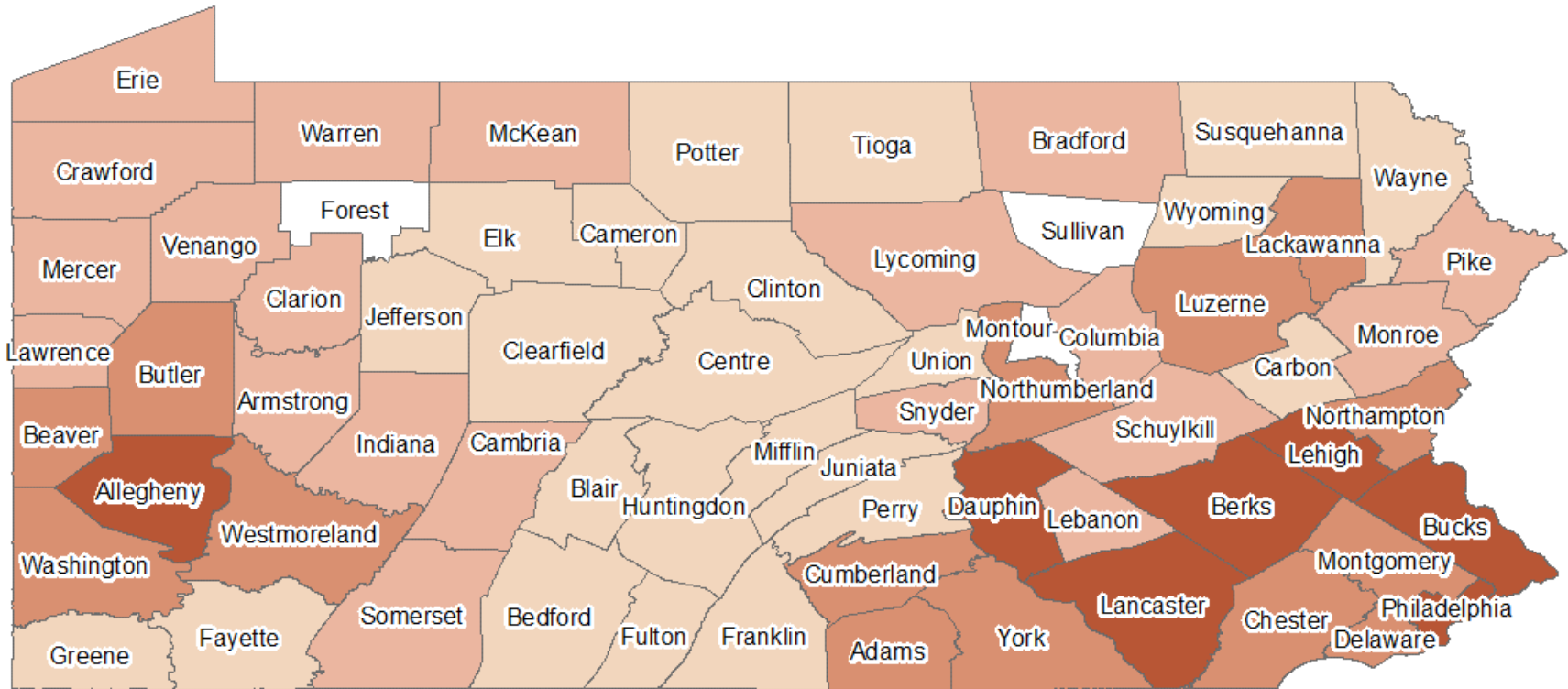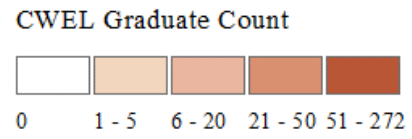**1995-2022 Admissions**

Part-Time Trend

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

Graduate counts from beginning of program through Summer 2022

Modified: 08/27/2022

CWEL Graduate Count

| 0 | 1 - 5 | 6 - 20 | 21 - 50 | 51 - 272 |

Appendix I

CWEL Applicant Pool and

Admissions by Position and Years of Service

1995-2023 Academic Years

Table I

Child Welfare Education for Leadership

1995-2023 Academic Year Applicant Pool

Counties Represented in Historical Applicant Data

Time Frame	County Count
1995-2020	65
2021-2022	24
2022-2023	24

Total Applications

Time Frame	Total Applications***
1995-2021	2471
2021-2022	81
2022-2023	78

Admitted Applicants*

*The category of "Students Admitted" includes applicants who withdrew post-acceptance.

Time Frame	Admit Count
1995-2021	1745
2021-2022	71
2022-2023	67

Eligible Applicants but Unfunded

Time Frame	Unfunded Count
1995-2021	27
2021-2022	0
2022-2023	0

Applicant Withdrew

Time Frame	Withdrew Count
1995-2021	113
2021-2022	0
2022-2023	1

Ineligible Applicants**

**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.

Time Frame	Unfunded Count
1995-2021	575
2021-2022	10
2022-2023	9

There are 0 pending applications for 2022-2023

Visualizations of the applicant pool outcomes for the past 10 years is given below.
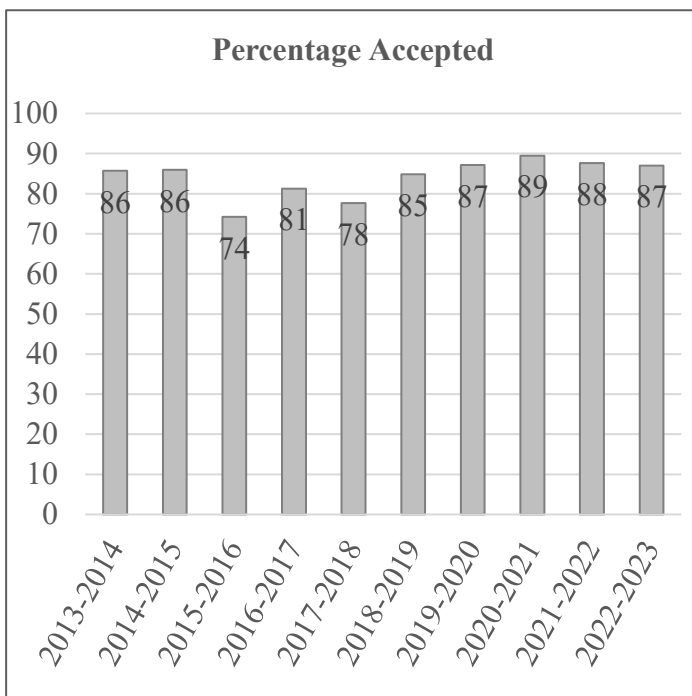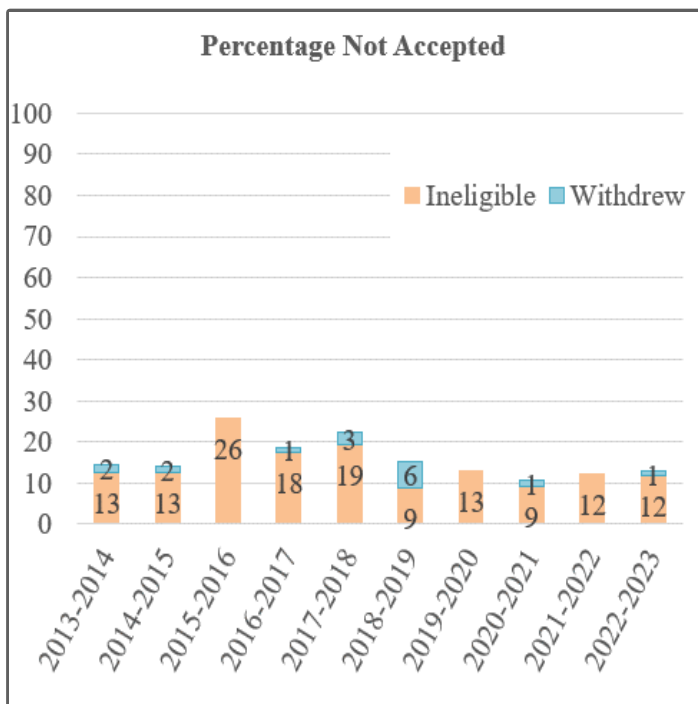
Table II

Child Welfare Education for Leadership
1995-2023 Academic Year Admissions by Current Agency Position and Years of Service

Admissions Counts by Position and Year

Position	1995-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Caseworker	1422	53	55	45
Supervisor	149	06	07	07
Other*	97	09	09	15

Average Years in Present Agency at Admission by Position and Year

Position	1995-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Caseworker	5.1	4.8	4.8	6.3
Supervisor	9.8	10.6	7.2	10.5
Other*	10.1	11.7	7.7	9.6

* "Other" includes Administrator, Agency Director, Associate Director, Case Aide, Caseworker Manger, Client Interaction Specialist, Clinical Manager, Contract Monitor Specialist, Director of Social Services, Family Advocate Specialist, Family Finding Coordinator, Foster Care Coordinator/Specialist, HSPS, Independent Living Coordinator, Peer Coach Specialist, Program Analyst, Program Coordinator, Program Manager, Program Representative, Program Specialist, Regional Program Staff, Regional Representative, Safety/Permanency/Best Practice Specialist, Service Coordinator, Service Coordinator, Special Assistant, Social Services Manager, and Social Work Service Manager.

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

Appendix J

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)

Item	CWEB n=24	CWEL, Full-Time n=46	CWEL, Part-Time n=50
CWERP Program Processes	*Average (SD)*	*Average (SD)*	*Average (SD)*
The program information clearly explains the CWEB/CWEL program	4.46 (0.93)	4.60 (0.75)	4.34 (0.98)
The application form instructions are clear	4.54 (0.88)	4.69 (0.70)	4.62 (0.78)
I understood the contract	4.50 (1.06)	4.67 (0.74)	4.30 (1.15)
The website is easy to use	4.04 (1.30)	4.40 (0.99)	4.35 (0.88)
I use the handbook when I have a question	3.92 (1.25)	4.27 (0.84)	4.24 (1.03)
The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email	4.74 (0.86)	4.68 (0.80)	4.73 (0.76)
The staff (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email	4.70 (0.88)	4.74 (0.73)	4.67 (0.78)
The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem	4.74 (0.86)	4.51 (1.03)	4.60 (0.98)
The staff (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem	4.70 (0.88)	4.56 (0.98)	4.62 (0.96)
Current Degree Program			
My academic advisor is familiar with the CWEB/CWEL program	4.25 (1.23)	4.18 (1.15)	4.17 (1.23)
The child welfare courses that I have taken are relevant	4.75 (0.85)	4.60 (0.80)	4.57 (0.85)
The faculty who teach the child welfare courses relate the content to practice	4.71 (0.86)	4.38 (0.99)	4.60 (0.85)
I have been able to apply what I learn in the class to field/internship or job	4.74 (0.86)	4.64 (0.71)	4.69 (0.75)
Field/Internship Experiences			
I have felt supported in the process of arranging my field/internship	4.33 (1.13)	4.07 (1.34)	3.83 (1.23)
I have received good supervision in the field	4.55 (1.06)	4.56 (1.01)	4.66 (0.87)
I was able to try new ideas or skills from class in my field	4.68 (0.89)	4.58 (0.79)	4.60 (0.88)
This field/internship has been a valuable learning experience	4.73 (0.88)	4.68 (0.74)	4.49 (0.98)

Item	CWEB n=24	CWEL, Full-Time n=46	CWEL, Part-Time n=50
Agency/Field Interface	*Average (SD)*	*Average (SD)*	*Average (SD)*
My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the CWEB program	4.61 (0.89)	--	--
My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the State Civil Service Exam	4.61 (0.89)	--	--
I was able to easily arrange the time needed to go to classes	--	--	4.40 (1.05)
I was able to easily arrange the time needed to do my field placement	--	--	3.83 (1.47)
My agency was able to accommodate my return in the summer	--	4.63 (0.84)	--
When I returned in the summer, I had supplies to do my work	--	4.58 (.90)	--
Value of the Degree to the Field			
My degree will help me to contribute to the field	4.83 (0.82)	4.84 (0.65)	4.79 (0.62)
I will be able to use what I am learning when I am employed or return to a child welfare agency	4.79 (0.83)	4.84 (0.65)	4.81 (0.49)
The CWEB or CWEL program gave me an educational opportunity that I would not have had otherwise	4.63 (0.88)	4.86 (0.63)	4.67 (0.93)
The CWEB or CWEL program has positively impacted my development as a social work professional	4.79 (0.83)	4.86 (0.64)	4.88 (0.39)
The CWEB and CWEL program should be made available to more students and child welfare workers	4.71 (0.91)	4.86 (0.68)	4.85 (0.46)
Using a scale from 1-10, with 1 having the least value and 10 the greatest value, what is the value of the CWEB of CWEL program to the public child welfare system?	9.25 (0.79)	9.67 (0.64)	9.06 (1.30)

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=21 Average (SD)	CWEL n=48 Average (SD)
My program prepared me for working in a child welfare agency	4.62 (0.59)	4.48 (0.80)
My skills were equal to better than other caseworkers not in the program	4.62 (0.59)	4.29 (0.97)
I have a better understanding of the complex problems of our families	4.76 (0.44)	4.49 (0.91)
My education has helped me to find new solutions to the problems that are typical of our families	4.76 (0.54)	4.54 (0.82)
I am encouraged to practice my new skills in my position[a]	4.81 (0.40)	4.19 (1.10)
I am encouraged to share my knowledge with other workers[a]	4.71 (0.64)	4.10 (1.21)
I am given the opportunity and authority to make decisions	4.57 (0.87)	4.06 (1.21)
There is current opportunity for promotion in my agency	3.86 (1.20)	3.42 (1.51)
I can see future opportunities for advancing in my agency	4.33 (0.97)	3.77 (1.46)
I plan to remain at my agency after my commitment period is over	4.14 (1.11)	3.81 (1.30)
My long-term career plan is to work with children and families	4.14 (1.20)	4.29 (1.05)
I would recommend my agency to others for employment in social work [a]	4.62 (0.81)	3.74 (1.38)
I would recommend public child welfare services to others looking for employment in social work[a]	4.67 (0.48)	4.00 (1.10)
I have seriously considered leaving public child welfare (lower scores=greater commitment)[b]	2.33 (1.39)	3.23 (1.42)
If I were not contractually obligated to remain in public child welfare for my commitment, I would leave (lower scores=greater commitment)	2.33 (1.43)	2.87 (1.26)
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	9.15 (1.09)	9.15 (1.59)

[a]=*p<.01 CWEB compared to CWEL*
[b]=*p<.05 CWEB compared to CWEL*

Appendix K

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
- CWEB FAQs Video
- Child Welfare Realistic Job Preview Video
- CWEL Student Handbook
- CWEL Expense Reimbursement Guide
- Program Evaluation Instruments

Appendix L

Child Welfare Research Sampler:

University of Pittsburgh

School of Social Work
Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

2329 Cathedral of Learning
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-6310
Fax: 412-624-1159

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). <u>The unsolved challenge of system reform: The condition of the frontline human service workforce.</u> Baltimore: Author.

Available at: http://www/aecf/org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-theUunsolvedChallengeSystemReform-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 enough 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 encountered on the job.

Ashby, C.M. (2004). Child Welfare: Improved federal oversight could assist states in overcoming key challenges. <u>Testimony before the subcommittee on human resources, committee on ways and means, House of Representatives.</u> 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

This testimony, which is based on findings from three reports, finds that child welfare agencies face several 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.

Results from the study suggest that public agency workers are more content with their promotional opportunities, benefits, and the nature of work when compared to voluntary agency workers. Conversely, volunteer agency workers expressed greater satisfaction with their co-workers and a higher commitment to child welfare work than public agency workers.

Boraggina-Ballard, L., Sobeck, J., & Honing, D., (2021). What motivates highly trained child welfare professionals to stay or leave? *Children and Youth Services Review, 124(2021)*

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.105958>.

This mixed-methods study investigates the positive and negative aspects regarding transitioning from student intern to professional for recent MSW graduates from Title IV-E programs. In addition, the authors investigate the motivational factors that influence Title IV-E graduates to stay or leave child welfare after completing their one-year mandate. The sample includes 24 former MSW students from the Title IV-E program at Wayne State University in Michigan. All 24 participants completed surveys, and 13 agreed to be interviewed. The negative themes regarding moving from intern to employee were the transition being overwhelming and confusing, a lack of supervisor mentorship being jarring, lack of preparation and training, and fear that accompanies difficult situations like legal threats. The positive themes included co-worker support, positive internship experiences, and learning from other co-worker's stories. For recent graduates who had finished their post-graduation requirement and stayed in child welfare discussed commitment to the field, rewarding interactions with youth and families, continuing education opportunities, supportive supervisors, and a feeling of accomplishment in the field. Those child welfare workers who left after their requirement talked about mandatory overtime, concerns for safety, lack of support from supervisors, and burn out. Additionally, this study included a regression analysis exploring qualitative themes found in the interviews with quantitative data from surveys to predict retention in child welfare as an intrinsic motivation. Through this analysis, researchers found that individuals with greater intrinsic motivation derived from "loving your job" have a lower chance of remaining in child welfare. While the majority of those who stayed in child welfare also said that their love for the job was a main motivator, the findings suggest that those who are the most intrinsically motivated are exiting the field.

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

Available at:
http://media.proquest.com/media/pq/classic/doc/1534440261/fmt/pi/rep/NONE?hl=&cit%3Aauth=Cahalane%2C+Helen%3BSites%2C+Edward+W&cit%3Atitle=The+Climate+of+Child+Welfare+Employee+Retention&cit%3Apub=Child+Welfare&cit%3Avol=87&cit%3Aiss=1&cit%3Apg=91&cit%3Adate=2008&ic=true&cit%3Aprod=ProQuest+Psychology+Journals&_a=ChgyMDE2MDMxNzE0NDQwMTM5MDo1NzU1MTASBTk1NTQzGgpPTkVfU0VBUkNIIg4xMzYuMTQyLjIxMy41MioFNDA4NTMyCTIxMzgwNDMwMToNRG9jdW1lbnRJbWFnZUIBMFIGT25saW5lWgJGVGIDUEZUagoyMDA4LzAxLzAxcgoyMDA4LzAyLzI4egCCASlQLTEwMDcxMDYtMTQ3MDktQ1VTVE9NRVItMTAwMDAxNjAtMTE2NTI1NZIBBk9ubGluZcoBPU1vemlsbGEvNS4wIChXaW5kb3dzIE5UIDYuMTsgVHJpZGVudC83LjA7IHJ2OjExLjApIGxpa2UgR2Vja2%2FSARJTY2hvbGFybHkgSm91cm5hbHOaAgdQcmVQYWWlkqgIoT1M6RU1TLVBkZkRvY1ZpZXdCYXNl

This study explored differences in perceptions of the child welfare agency work environment among Title IV-E education individuals who remained employed within public child welfare and those who sought employment elsewhere after fulfilling a legal work commitment. Job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and personal accomplishment were predictive of staying versus leaving. The evidence suggests that efforts to retain highly skilled and educated workers should focus upon creating positive organizational climates within agencies, including innovative ways to use the increased skills and abilities of MSW graduates.

Chen, Y.Y., Park. J., & Park, A. (2012). Existence, relatedness, or growth? Examining turnover intention of public child welfare caseworkers from a human needs approach. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(10), 2088-2093.

Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.07.002

Research suggests that pay and benefits alone are ineffective to sustain a stable workforce in public child welfare. It is important to know what other mechanisms would motivate caseworkers to stay at the job. However, the relation of factors contributing to the prevalent problem of turnover in public child welfare remains unclear in part due to a lack of theoretical base in research. This study, therefore, develops a conceptual framework based on the human needs theory of Alderfer (1969, 1972) to examine what motivates caseworkers' turnover intention. The three categories of needs are existence needs regarding pay and benefits, relatedness needs regarding at-work relationships 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 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. Several 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 several 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 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 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

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. Several unique issues were identified, including workers' desire for clear communication flow through hierarchies, increased collaboration, and revisions to the way data is used/integrated.

Lizano, E. L., He, A. S., & Leake, R., (2021). Caring for our child welfare workforce: A holistic framework of worker well-being. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership, & Governance, 45(4),* 281-292

Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2021.1932658

Lizano et. al put together a comprehensive framework / best-practices guide based on evidence-based research on the dimensions of well-being for Child Welfare workers. This guide covers research and definitions for dimensions of well-being. The three major well-being dimensions include: Physical; Psychological; Social. The Physical domain deals with general physical health, workplace safety, and secondary traumatic stress. The Psychological dimension is comprised of job satisfaction, psychological safety, work engagement/job burnout, and inclusion/equity. Finally, the social dimension houses peer relationships, supervisory relationships, and work-life effectiveness. The authors argue that child welfare agencies should incorporate this framework as a mechanism to combat worker turnover and create a supportive and equitable organizational culture for their child welfare workforce. The authors also challenge child welfare agencies to conduct ongoing assessments and data collection to gauge the well-being of their workers. Historically, turnover has been combated by an increase in recruiting and stress management of employees. Only by addressing organizational climate and individual factors can the child welfare workforce have a well-rounded answer to increase worker retention.

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.

Park, T., & Pierce, B. (2019). Impacts of transformational leadership on turnover intention of child welfare workers. *Children and Youth Services Review, 108*, 1-10.

Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104624

The high turnover rate of child welfare workers is a well-known and recognizable topic within research. Workers from child welfare agencies (N=214) participated in this study so that researchers could determine the relationship between transformational leadership style and the intention of employee turnover through mediating effects of organizational culture, climate, and commitment. Twenty items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999) were used to measure the four dimensions of transformational leadership. One of the key findings was that local office directors' transformational leadership styles had direct and negative effects on workers' turnover plans/intentions. This study indicated that "distant leaders," such as local office directors, can have an impact on worker turnover

intentions; in this regard, these directors can have a role in dissuading workers' intentions to leave the child welfare agency.

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 c 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). <u>Child Welfare: HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff</u> **(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

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

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.childyouth.2011.08.033

Research suggests that age and 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.

Rao Hermon, S. & Chahla, R. (2018). A longitudinal study of stress and satisfaction among child welfare workers. *Journal of Social Work, 19(2),* 192-215.

Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1468017318757557

This article goes beyond looking at retention of Title IV-E graduates in public child welfare but delves into how stressors affect worker satisfaction in a longitudinal design. A total of 160 Title IV-E graduates from California were included in this study. Graduates completed surveys at three and five years after completing their work commitment in public child welfare. Only graduates who had both survey time points completed and were still employed in the public child welfare agency where they completed their work obligation were included. Paired t-tests showed that workload stress increased from year 3 to 5, but child-related stress was reduced. Regarding the satisfaction items, both client relationships and work life flexibility decreased from year 3 to year 5. In a regression analysis, workload stress at year 3 significantly predicted satisfaction with client relationships and work-life flexibility at year 5. In addition, women in this sample reported higher visit-related stress and African American graduates were more satisfied with their client relationships than their Asian American counterparts. The authors argue that workload stress is within agency control and can improve the worker's satisfaction in their positions. Retention is not

the only outcome to consider when discussing caseworker longevity, since those who remain employed but are overcome with workload stress may affect the quality of their work with clients.

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.childyouth.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 related to 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 can 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., Fernendes, 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:

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:

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:

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

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

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+traning&ots=B6EsrvKx2&sig=Q07yfcpPXZn8HcAvT7GljXP23qY#onepage&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%E%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=B6E8srvMz5&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 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 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 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 master's 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.childyouth.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). <u>Report from the Child Welfare Workforce Survey: State and county data findings.</u> 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=u4kVH AAACAAJ

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.childyouth.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.

**Radey M. & Wilke, D. J., (2021). The importance of job demands and supports: Promoting retention among child welfare workers. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal.*
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-021-00762-z**

Available at: The Importance of Job Demands and Supports: Promoting Retention Among Child Welfare Workers | SpringerLink

This study examines protective factors for workforce retention using the Job Demands-Resources Model with recently hired child welfare workers. Using data from a four-year longitudinal study of Florida child welfare professionals, the researchers used primary Likert scales to determine the

combination of Job Demands, Job Resources and Personal Resources to create profiles that can predict retention. Five profiles were created using a three step Latent Profile analysis with logistic regression. The largest profile contained 35% of the sample and was described as "surviving through support" meaning that they scored just below or above the average for role compatibility and balance (opposites of role conflict and overload), but above average for organizational, supervisory, and co-worker support resources. Those labeled "surviving through supervision" had mostly negative experiences across all the scales but had above average scores for support of their supervisor. Additionally, "surviving through role" profile members scored above average on role compatibility and role balance but had less support from their supervisors. The last wo profiles were "floundering" and "thriving", which reported either overwhelmingly negative experiences with role conflict and role overload, or overwhelmingly positive experiences with role compatibility and role balance. The researchers found that personal resources were consistently higher among those in the thriving profile, there were few differences between each of the other profiles in personal resources. Regarding agency retention, just over half of the respondents continued working at their agency a year later. The most notable numbers of remaining workers from each profile group were that only 31% of the "floundering" category were still working at their agency a year late, while 73% of the "thriving" category were. Those who were surviving through supervision had significantly lower odds of staying relative to those who were surviving through role- 43%. This data showed that manageable demands and more resources were correlated with higher odds of retention based on the responses over all of the profiles. Additionally, these effects seemed to have an additive effect, where increased resources and lowered demands correlated with lower odds of departure. Neither resources nor demands were found to be more important than the other in terms of a worker's choice to leave or not. "Thriving" category workers seemed to have both manageable demands and supportive workplaces, which also lead to workers in this category having the highest retention percentage of any other profile.

Russ, E., Lonne, B., & Lynch, D. Increasing child protection workforce retention through promoting a relational-reflective framework for resilience. (2020). *Child Abuse & Neglect, 110(3), 1-12 .*

Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104245

A great deal of research literature has been devoted to turnover and burnout regarding child protection workers. This qualitative, longitudinal study examines resilience among these workers regarding workforce retention. The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews to interview 24 direct service child protection workers in Queensland, Australia. Several factors were examined including issues of adversity faced by the workers and how workers developed and maintained resilience within the field. The study suggested that resilient workers are committed and have enthusiasm for the work regarding achieving positive outcomes for children and families. Relationship-based and reflective practice were recognized as being significant to resilience in child protection workers. A relational-reflective framework for resilience was created based on the study's results which captured several factors (CPW resilience, reflective processes, relationships, and organization) and how they related to one another regarding resilience. In the authors' view,

adding resilience to organizational culture can positively impact children and families' outcomes as well as direct service workers.

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 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

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

Curry, A. (2019). "If you can't be with this client for some years, don't do it": Exploring the emotional and relational effects of turnover on youth in the child welfare system. *Children and Youth Services Review, 99,* **374-385.**

Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.01.026

Turnover among child welfare workers is a serious and well-documented problem. One of the reasons it is particularly troubling is that it disrupts relationships between young people in care and their child welfare professionals. These relationships have the potential to provide support to and enhance outcomes for youth who arguably already have a considerable history of relationship loss. To date, scholarship has focused primarily on the causes and remedies of turnover, instead of the effects. This study explores the lived experience of turnover from the child's perspective, adding an important and underrepresented voice in the literature. The findings presented in this article originate from a two-year, multi-perspective, multi-method qualitative study exploring relationships between young people in care and their child welfare professionals. Youth narratives reveal that turnover: happens frequently; is often abrupt and poorly processed; occurs with all their child

welfare professionals; and is a relationship loss. These losses were found to impact the emotional and relational well-being of youth in a variety of complex ways. Practitioners, supervisors, administrators, researchers, and policy makers alike will find the child-centered and relationship-based approach to turnover discussed in this article, important and timely.

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

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 M

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	69%	1/20/97-present
Laura Borish, MSW, LSW	CWEB/CWEL Field Placement and Agency Coordinator	90%	7/1/18-present
Joseph DiPasqua, MA	Program Administrator	85%	6/16/14-present
Yvonne Hamm, BA	Senior Program Administrator	85%	6/28/10-present
Alicia, Johnson, Ph.D., LSW	CWEL Academic Coordinator	100%	7/1/20-present
Marlo Perry, Ph.D.	Research Associate Professor	20%	8/1/10-present
Brooke Rawls, Ph.D., LCSW	CWEB Academic Coordinator	100%	7/19/21-present
Lynda Rose, MSIS	Data/Systems Manager and Student Records Coordinator	90%	8/4/10-8/31/22
Michael Schrecengost, MPPM, CMA	Chief Fiscal Officer	80%	3/3/03-present
Elizabeth Winter, Ph.D., LSW	Program Consultant	10%	6/1/06-4/30/22
Rachel Winters, M.A.	Senior Evaluation Coordinator	35%	3/16/09-present

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