# Child Welfare Education and Research Programs



Over 85 Years of Child Welfare Leadership!

# 2022-2023 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, 2022- June 30, 2023

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.
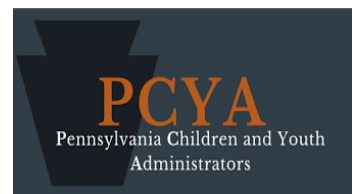


Published by

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

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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. 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-second year of the CWEB program and twenty-eight 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.

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.

Betsy 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 recognition that require collective action. Socioeconomic disparities are painfully apparent as we continue to navigate the aftermath of the pandemic. Vulnerable children and families face yet more disadvantages 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 present, one thousand three hundred and seventy-one (1,371) CWEB students have entered the county agency system and one thousand six hundred and seventy-three (1,673) students have graduated from the CWEL program. During the current academic year, approximately 181 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 and sustained 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. We are first responders in every sense.

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 set of interventions that can reduce turnover, improve services, enhance staff morale, and reduce costs.

This report marks the completion of the twenty-second (22nd) full academic year of operation for the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program and twenty-eighth (28th) 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. CWEB and CWEL continue to demonstrate their effectiveness in addressing the significant issue of preparatory and advanced education for the child welfare workforce by providing CWEB graduates and returning CWEL graduates to over 3,752 caseworker positions in Pennsylvania's county child welfare agencies. Currently, CWEB/CWEL graduates or currently enrolled CWEL students occupy over 23% of the state's public child welfare casework positions. CWEB and CWEL graduates and current CWEL students also are in leadership positions across the Commonwealth.

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*.<br>• 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.<br>• 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.

[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

**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.

**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
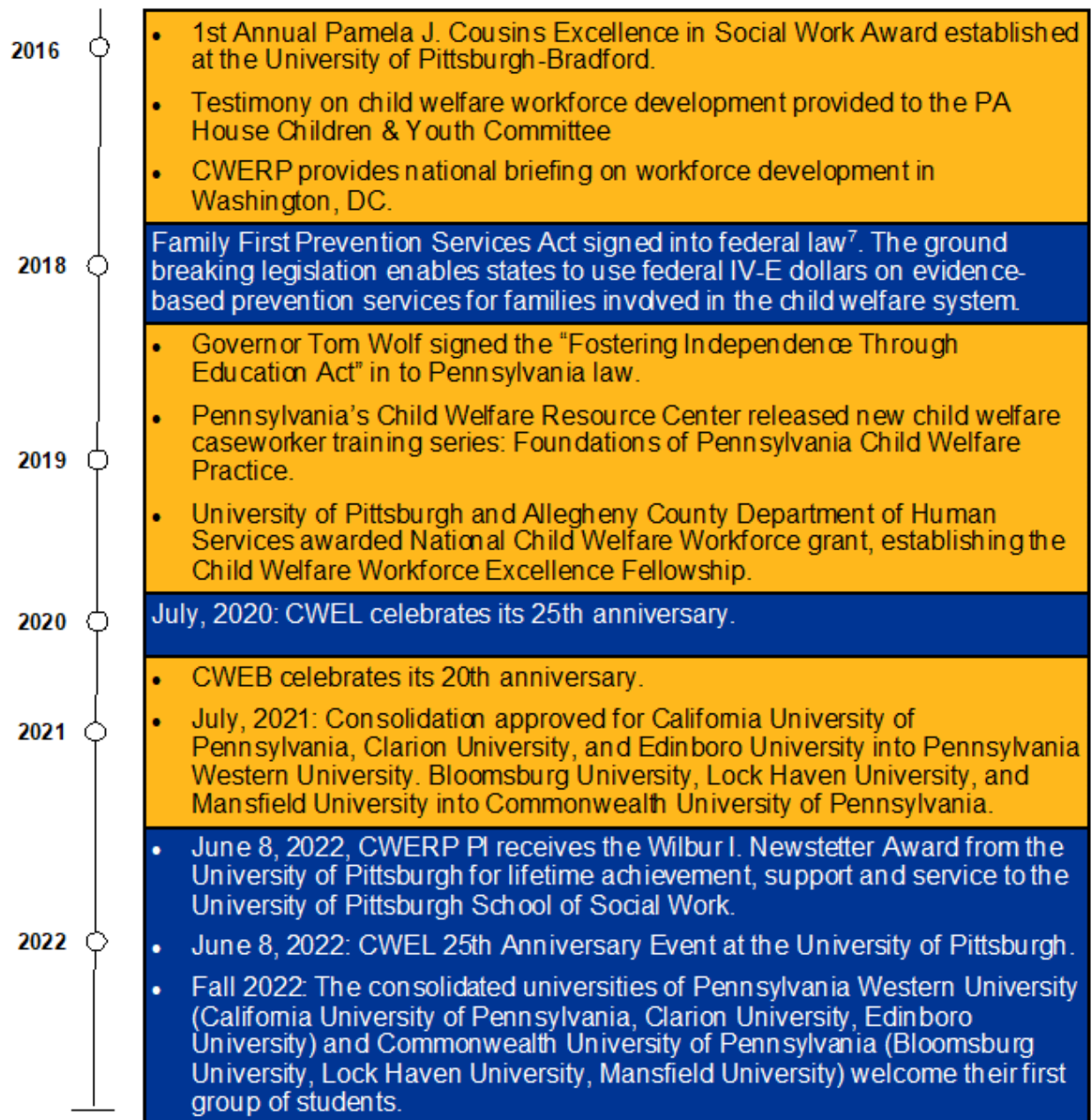
**2008**
- School of Social Work receives its 110th grant of external funding since 1971, expressly for child welfare education training, research, faculty development and curriculum development.
- CWEB, CWEL and the PA Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) highlighted as one of Pennsylvania's key strengths 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*, publicly 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

[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

**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.

**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, CWERP PI 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
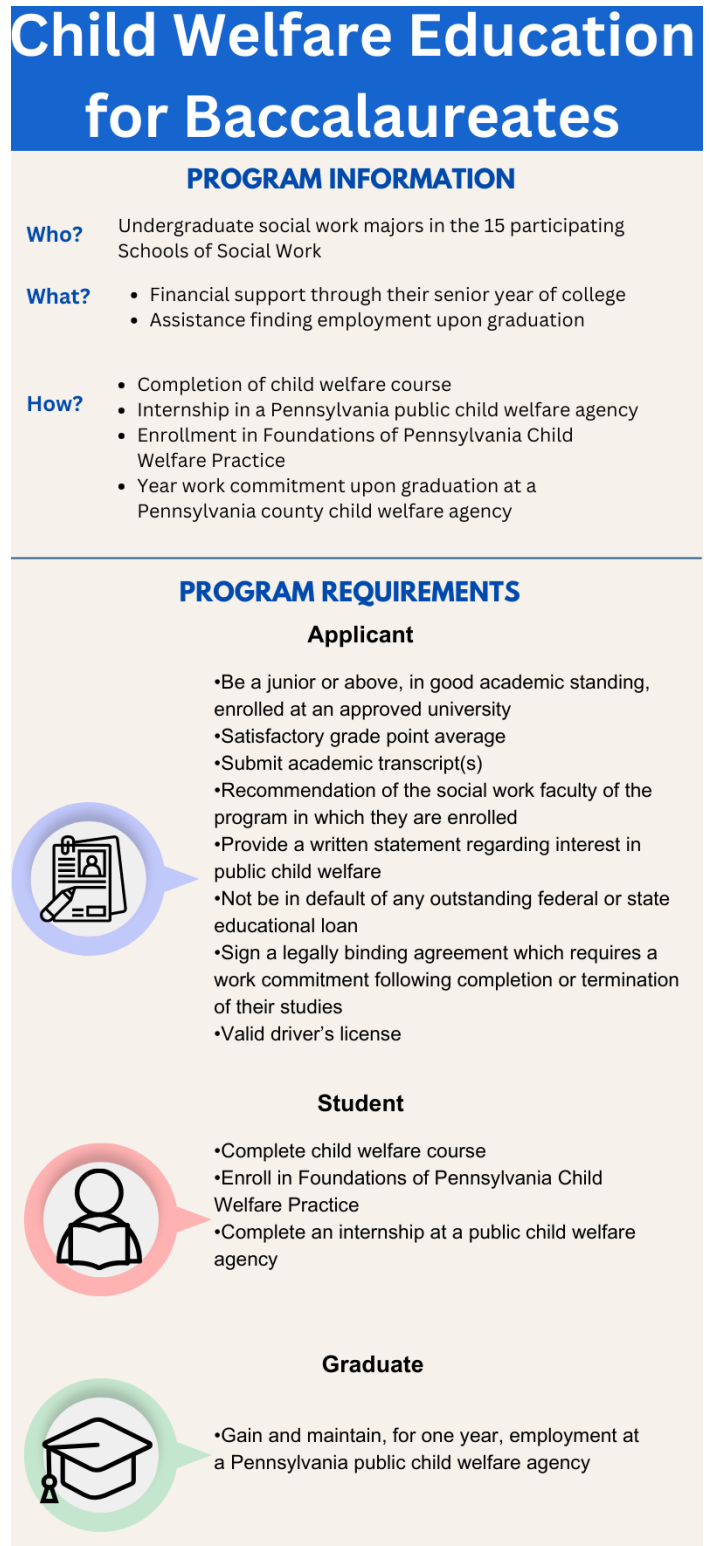
**Program Descriptions**

***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. Figure 1 illustrates the program requirements.

CWEB admissions, in general, have been comprised of white, female students. Male students in the CWEB program range between 7 and 13% and are predominately white.

To date, 1,371 students have graduated from CWEB; graduates have completed internships and obtained employment in 96% of Pennsylvania counties. Students nearing graduation receive assistance with their employment search. County child welfare agencies benefit immensely from the program because it addresses a critical child welfare workforce need by providing skilled, entry-level social workers who come to the field with academic

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



# Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

**Who?** Undergraduate social work majors in the 15 participating Schools of Social Work

**What?**
- Financial support through their senior year of college
- Assistance finding employment upon graduation

**How?**
- Completion of child welfare course
- Internship in a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency
- Enrollment in Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice
- Year work commitment upon graduation at a Pennsylvania county child welfare agency

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

**Applicant**

- Be a junior or above, in good academic standing, enrolled at an approved university
- Satisfactory grade point average
- Submit academic transcript(s)
- 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
- Valid driver's license

**Student**

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

**Graduate**

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

knowledge and exposure to front line child welfare practice gained through their internship experiences and *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice* training.

**Child Welfare Education for Leadership Program**

The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education. Any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency employee is eligible to apply to participate in the CWEL program. See Figure 2 for CWEL program requirements.

CWEL has funded students from 64 counties and twelve Pennsylvania schools on both a full and part-time basis. CWEL admissions consist primarily of white females. Male CWEL admissions range from 7-15% and are also predominately white. Figure 3 displays the trend of part-time and full-time admissions.

Currently, 19% of the Pennsylvania child welfare workforce consists of a CWEL graduate or a current CWEL student.

**Figure 2. Child Welfare Education for Leadership Requirements**

## Child Welfare Education for Leadership

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

**Who?** Caseworkers, supervisors, managers or administrators of any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency

**What?**
- Salary and benefits for full-time CWEL students
- Tuition, fees, and other expenses for both full and part-time students

**How?**
- CWEL applications
- Resumes
- Personal statements
- Agency approvals
- Admission to one of the approved schools
- Signed agreements

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

**Applicant**

- Employed at a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency for at least two years
- Satisfactory work performance evaluations
- Accepted for graduate social work study by one of the twelve approved schools
- Approval of their employer and (if accepted for full-time study) be granted an educational leave by their employer
- Current resume
- Written statement regarding the application of graduate study to their work
- Not in default of any outstanding federal or state educational loan
- Sign a legally binding agreement requiring a work commitment following completion or termination of their studies

**Student**

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

**Graduate**

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

Highlighting the career ladder for public child welfare employees, approximately 17% of

8

CWEB graduates have entered the CWEL program thus far. CWEB alumni made up 6% of the CWEL student enrollment during the 2022-2023 program year.

Since CWEL's inception, 1,673 child welfare professionals have earned graduate social work degrees. The program has annual retention rates averaging 92%.

**Figure 3. Admissions to CWEL by Enrollment Status**
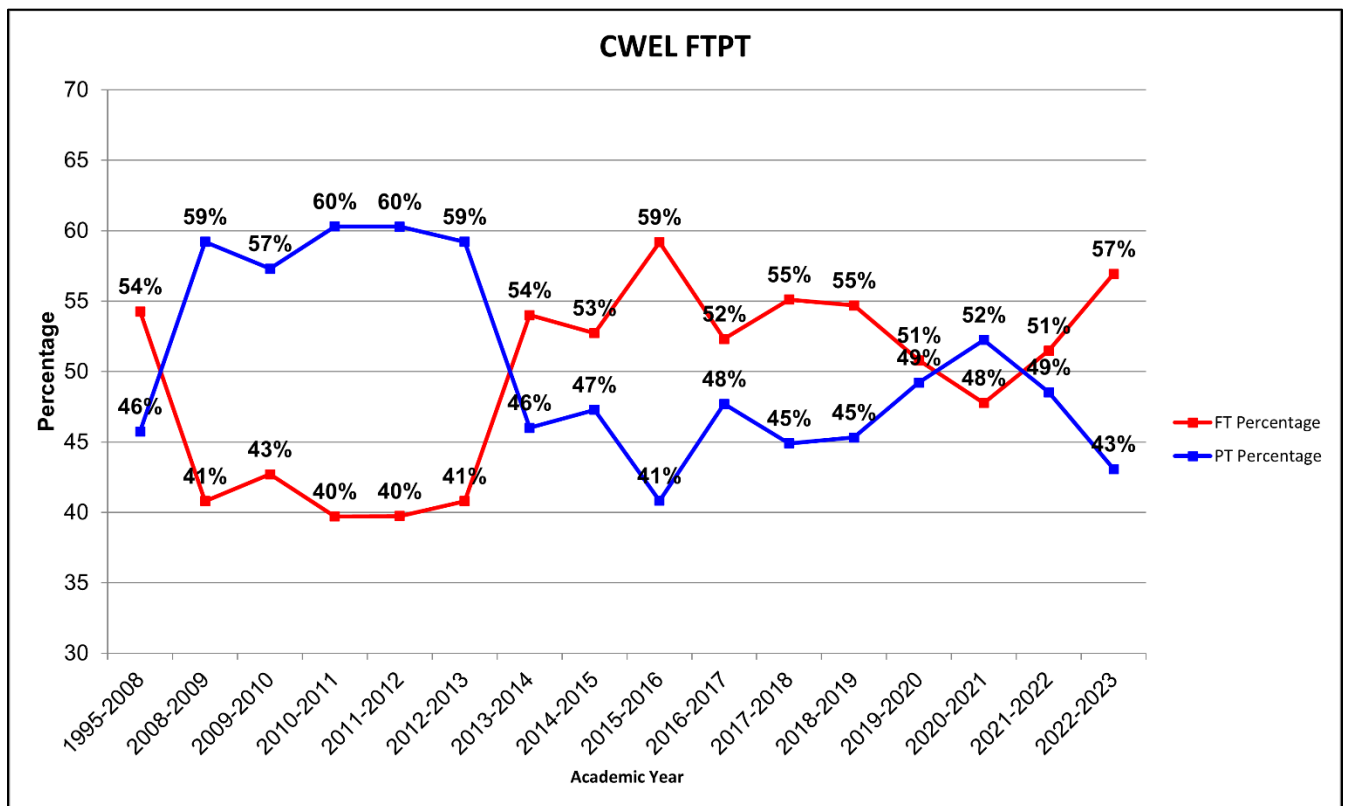


### Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare and CWEB/CWEL Enrollment

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 it is crucial to dismantle the ways in which race is intertwined in all levels of child welfare services.  We also acknowledge the societal context of racism and white privilege that is part of the foundational history of the United States child welfare system.

It is well known that children of color are overrepresented in the United States child welfare system[8]. In 2022, African American children made up approximately 14% of the U.S. child population but represented 22% of the foster care population[9,10]. Disproportionate representation is striking across all levels of child welfare services and is particularly evident in substitute care. According to a 2023 report by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, there were 19,287 Pennsylvania children living in foster care in 2022 [11]. 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[11]. When looking at foster care, Black children were more than 6 times more likely to re-enter foster care and 3.5 times more likely to exit and remain in foster care when compared to White children[11]. Children of multiple races were more likely to be placed in pre-adoptive homes than White children[11].

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. Supporting the workforce in developing practice and leadership skills is fundamental to developing and sustaining a diverse child welfare workforce. Child welfare workers who understand, appreciate and/or share in the background, culture, language, and customs of a family are better equipped to

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[8] Dettlaff, A. (ed) (2021). *Racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system*. Springer.

[9] 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

[10] 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

[11] Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (2023). 2023 *State of Child Welfare: Strengthening the child welfare system for children, youth and families.* Harrisburg, PA: Porchlight Project. Retrieved from https://online.flippingbook.com/view/329394404/

holistically understand a family's needs, appropriately provide services, and facilitate

better outcomes[12] [13].

Within the CWEB and CWEL programs combined, Non-Hispanic Black students

represent 20% of participants. Figure 4 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the

Pennsylvania child population and those of CWEB/CWEL participants.

**Figure 4. Demographics of PA Child Population and CWEB/CWEL Participants**
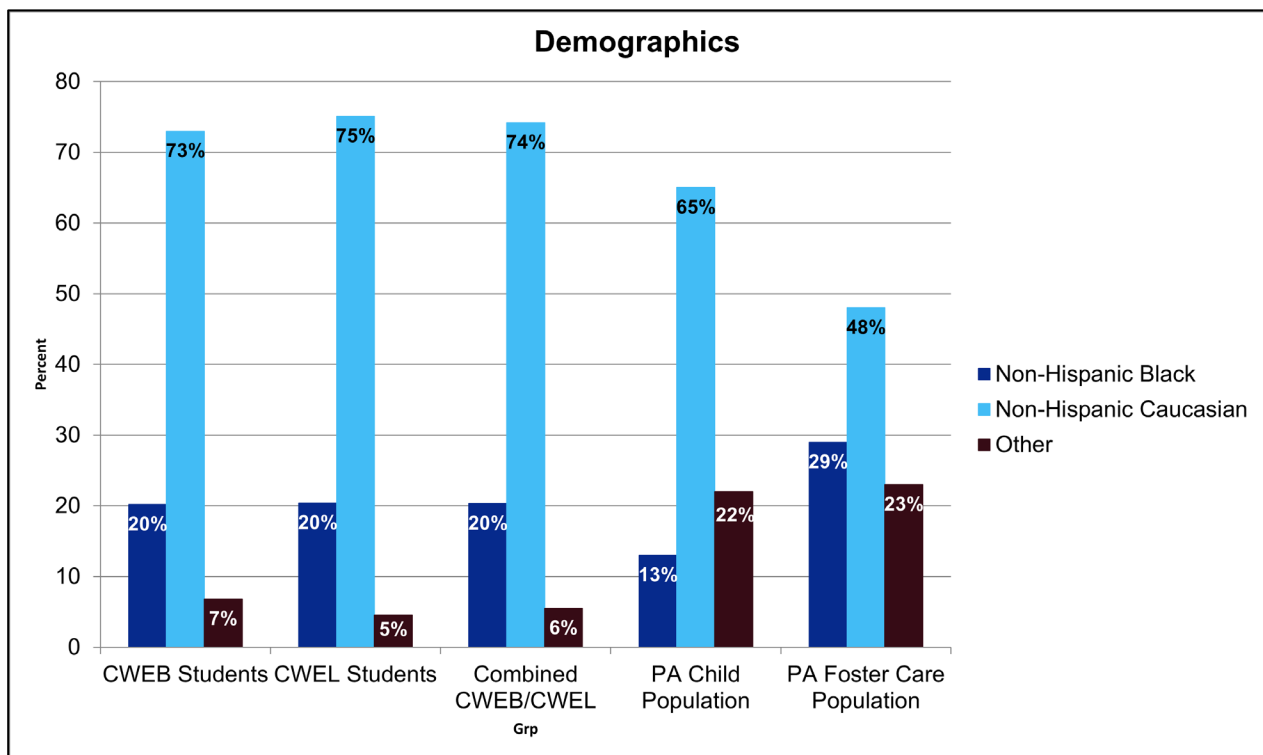


CWEB students are recruited from the general population of our partnering

Schools of Social Work. This arrangement provides us the opportunity to work with our

school partners in developing and implementing strategies that help facilitate the

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[12] 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

[13] 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.

recruitment of diverse students into the CWEB program. Partnering schools are recruiting more diverse students into CWEB by providing open information and communication about the program. Information about the CWEB program was shared with potential students during college fairs and during outreach with high school students. One school described faculty with experience in child welfare mentoring students in their social work program, another school hosted a "social work summer camp" to provide information about the social work profession to high school students. Moving forward, we will continue collaboration with our partnering Schools of Social Work and employ effective strategies to recruit diverse child welfare students.

## 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 final 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 invite 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/system-redesign/index.html). 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 *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. (See http://tinyurl.com/44kfzkn7). The integrated Bloomsburg-Lock Haven-Mansfield program entity joins university participants representing the rural, urban, and suburban areas across the country. 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 meetings 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 J.

**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.  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 2022-2023 course offerings of the 15 undergraduate schools participating in CWEB and the 11 graduate school programs participating in CWEL and shown in Appendix C (CWEB) and in Appendix D (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.[14]

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[15]. 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

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[14] 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).

[15] 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.

process within the Civil Service system. Of the 32 CWEB students who graduated during the 2022-2023 academic year, 15 (47%) exercised the State Civil Service Social Casework Intern option. CWEB county participation is included in Appendix E.

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 G, Chart 2.

**Commitment and Recoupment of Funds**

All students enrolled in the CWEB and CWEL programs must repay the educational benefits by completing a work commitment in public child welfare. For CWEB graduates, the commitment is one calendar year of service for one academic year of support[16]. For CWEL graduates, the commitment is the 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[17]. 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, all 32 CWEB graduates obtained employment in a county child welfare agency and 60 CWEL students completed their degree programs, returning to their counties of origin.

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

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[16] 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (5)
[17] 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (1)

commitment. This provision is contained in the agreement each student signs either with the University (CWEB students) or with the University and county of origin (CWEL students). During the 2022-2023 program year, two CWEB students withdrew or were terminated from the program after receiving financial benefits, some after beginning their period of commitment payback. 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.  This discernment process for undergraduate students may lead them to discover that child welfare is not a fit for their professional goals. Ideally these decisions should be made before great time, training, and costs have been expended.

We track retention in two ways: number of students not completing the program and number of graduates not completing a work commitment. Among both programs combined, the student loss rate is 4.4%. The CWEB program has had 112 individuals out of a total of 1,317 graduates (8.5%) not complete the work commitment whereas the CWEL program, has had 20 individuals out of a total of 1,613 graduates (1.2%) not complete their work commitment. These situations, together with the actions being taken are summarized in Table 1.

Among the CWEB graduates (2021-2022) who have recently satisfied their legal work commitment, 38% remain in the agencies. Overall, 39% 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 all reasons over the life of the program averages 8.4% per year. We believe that these consistently high retention rates across time is a strong indication of the success of our professional education programs.

The employment (retention) of all students exiting the program will continue to be monitored as required in Section II, G, 14 of the Program Description and Implementation, and by PL 103-432 which was enacted by the United States Congress during the first CWEL program year and which applies to graduates funded after October 1, 1995.

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 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 the recruitment and retention of qualified child welfare workers.

## 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 | Recoup-ment Status: Collection Initiated | Recoup-ment 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 | 9 | 11 |
| Edinboro University | 15 | 13 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 9 |
| Kutztown University | 17 | 15 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 14 |
| Lock Haven University | 15 | 15 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 12 |
| Mansfield University | 15 | 15 | 0 | 13 | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| Marywood University | 27 | 2 | 25 | 5 | 22 | 9 | 18 |
| Millersville University | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| University of Pennsylvania | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| University of Pittsburgh | 37 | 15 | 22 | 16 | 21 | 10 | 27 |
| 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 | 12 | 10 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Widener University | 20 | 6 | 14 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| TOTALS | 277 | 172 | 105 | 132 | 145 | 104 | 173 |

**Deliverables**

The CWEB and CWEL programs continue to be invaluable resources to county child welfare agencies by both preparing new social workers to enter the field of child welfare and educating the next generation of leaders working in child welfare. To date, 1,371 CWEB graduates have entered the child welfare workforce and 1,673 child welfare professionals have graduated from the CWEL program with their MSW/MSS degrees. CWEB and CWEL graduates continue to lead county child welfare agencies in Pennsylvania. This year, one additional county promoted a CWEL graduate into one of their top administrative positions. Currently, 49% of all county child welfare agencies have a CWEB or CWEL graduate in a senior leadership position.

Across the Commonwealth, child welfare agency administrators recognize the skills social work graduates bring to their workforce. Leaders regularly reach out to the CWEB and CWEL programs offering to provide internships/job positions to CWEB students and recommending staff for the CWEL program. 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.

Robust CWEB recruitment efforts continued during the 2022-23 program year. The CWEB team, along with faculty members from each partner school, held 30 recruitment sessions and met both in person and virtually with over 200 students throughout 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. Continued engagement efforts with our county and school partners to enhance the CWEB student internship experience resulted in the collaborative development of an internship

guidance tool for county agencies. This document lists activities, tasks, and experiences that CWEB students can take part in during their internship to expand their knowledge and develop their practice skills. It also incorporates the CSWE competencies to provide examples for use in the development of the students' field learning plan.

A series of detailed webpages (https://tinyurl.com/ytr4vke3), 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. Additionally, both programs are accessible through the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) website (https://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/). 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 to build community among our workforce and to highlight the accomplishments of our students and graduates.

Bi-monthly CWEB student Zoom meetings occurred throughout the school year. Students met with CWEB faculty and staff, along with Resource Specialists from the Child Welfare Resource Center, to learn current information, receive support, and connect with their CWEB peers. New students received an overview of the training series for caseworkers, *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice* and topics ranged from learning about the court process, an overview of the CWEL program, and a CWEB graduate's individual experiences as a student and new caseworker.

CWEL faculty and staff held meetings in both the fall and spring with students to provide program updates, share information on a topic of interest to the students, and get their feedback via focus group questions. Groups of students met in the fall of 2022

to learn about Social Work licensing and in the spring of 2023, we explored the opportunities and challenges of returning to their agencies after graduation.

The University delivered the following products and made these efforts during 2022-2023 program year 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 to access.

- 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 2022 and continuing through the spring of 2023. These visits are summarized in Tables 2-5 below and included meetings with current students, academic faculty, and academic program administrators. Focus groups were held with CWEB and CWEL students in the fall, the details of which are described below.

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

In the 2022-2023 program year, the CWERP faculty and staff conducted presentations and contributed to scholarly publications to share their knowledge with others. Their works include the following:

Presentations:

- Borish L, Johnson, A. & Rawls, B., (2023, June). *Educational Opportunities through the CWEB and CWEL Programs*. Workshop (3.0 hour) presented virtually at the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network Summer Statewide Meeting.

Peer reviews:

Helen Cahalane: Council on Social Work Education Child Welfare Awards (spring 2023)

Alicia Johnson: *Social Work in Mental Health* (spring 2023)

Certifications:

Alicia Johnson: Mental Health Champions Certificate

Rachel Winters: Qualtrics Essential Certification: April 2023; Qualtrics Core XM Expert Certification: June 2023

Board appointments and mentorship activities:

- Borish, L. (March 2023) Mentorship to a student who received the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work Excellence in Direct Practice Award.

- Borish, L. Appointment to the Blueprints Head Start & Early Head Start Programs Policy Council.

**Table 2. CWEB Student Meetings**

| Fall 2022/Spring 2023 | Number Attending |
|---|---|
| September 15, 2022 | 14 |
| November 17, 2022 | 7 |
| January 19, 2023 | 6 |
| March 16, 2023 | 6 |
| May 18, 2023 | 5 |

**Table 3. CWEL Student Meetings**

| School Program | Date of Fall Visit | Date of Spring Visit |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bryn Mawr College | 10/26/2022 | 3/29/2023 |
| California University | 10/24/2022 | 3/27/2023 |
| Edinboro University | 10/24/2022 | 3/27/2023 |
| Kutztown University | 10/24/2022 | 3/27/2023 |
| Marywood University | 10/27/2022 | 3/30/2023 |
| Millersville University | 10/26/2022 | 3/29/2023 |
| Shippensburg University | 10/26/2022 | 3/29/2023 |
| Temple University | 10/24/2022 | 3/27/2023 |
| University of Pennsylvania | 10/24/2022 | 3/27/2023 |
| University of Pittsburgh | 10/26/2022 | 3/29/2023 |
| University of Pittsburgh-Bradford | 10/24/2022 | 3/29/2023 |
| West Chester University | 10/26/2022 | 3/29/2023 |
| Widener University | 10/28/2022 | 3/31/2023 |

**Table 4. Meetings with CWEB School Faculty**

| School Program | Date of Visit |
| --- | --- |
| California University | 9/19/2022 |
| East Stroudsburg University | 9/8/2022 |
| Edinboro University | 9/19/2022 |
| Kutztown University | 9/15/2022 |
| Millersville University | 9/8/2022 |
| Temple University | 9/14/2022 |
| West Chester University | 9/12/2022 |
| Widener University | 9/16/2022 |

**Table 5. Meetings with CWEL School Faculty**

| School Program | Date of Visit |
|---|---|
| Bryn Mawr College | 1/5/2023 |
| California University | 1/9/2023 |
| Edinboro University | 1/9/2023 |
| Kutztown University | 2/22/2023 |
| Marywood University | 3/23/2023 |
| Millersville University | 4/5/2023 |
| Shippensburg University | 2/23/2023 |
| Temple University | 1/5/2023 |
| University of Pennsylvania | 1/25/2023 |
| West Chester University | 1/30/2023 |
| Widener University | 1/25/2023 |

***Focus Groups***
CWEB

CWEB students were asked a series of questions about their experiences in the program and their suggestions for future cohorts. To provide support for CWEB students entering the challenging field of child welfare, students suggested that informative videos be placed on the website showing the breadth of what child welfare work entails. Students also felt that it would be helpful for their field instructors to discuss coping mechanisms with them, have patience with their learning, and provide constructive feedback along the way. In terms of future student meetings, CWEB students wanted the opportunity to share about their challenges, their improvements, and their victories.

Students reported that they do not receive clear, comprehensive information about the CWEB program from their schools, resulting in confusion about the CWEB program, its benefits, and how to apply. One student expressed frustration that they had to rush to

gather necessary information to submit their application on time. To overcome this barrier, students suggested presenting information about the CWEB program in the child welfare course at every partner school.

Students expressed frustration with the database, in that they found it outdated, difficult to navigate, and confusing to use. Initial amounts of paperwork were overwhelming and hard to keep track of, however, students appreciated quick responses to calls and emails by the CWEB team.

Some students had an opportunity to job shadow at their school, however, others did not. All thought it was a promising idea for all CWEB applicants to have this opportunity in an area of interest in child welfare. They also suggested that child welfare professionals from local agencies speak to their classes.

## CWEL

CWEL students were asked how the CWEL team could support them during their time as students. Responses included connecting new students with an experienced CWEL student to serve as a mentor, hosting monthly question and answer sessions, providing sessions on writing skills, and allowing all students to take Winter and Summer courses.

Students indicated that they would like to have financial support to take their licensing exam. There was also a resounding request to repeat licensing for the Spring 2024 CWEL student meeting topic, which was very well received during the Fall session.

CWEL students strongly feel that they are developing and enhancing their skills through their field placements. For example, many noted that they have learned how to be more strengths-based in their practice. They shared examples of how their field learning has impacted them including gaining greater insight into maternal health,

understanding the issues adoptive parents face once they finalized the adoption, and empathizing with parents in treatment for addiction who have lost custody of their children. Students have learned the inner workings of provider agencies and have an improved understanding of the interventions used with children, youth, and families. They see how involvement with the child welfare system impacts parents, older youth, and younger children as individuals. Skills in conflict resolution, therapeutic interviewing, and cultural humility have been enhanced.

## The Changing Landscape of Pennsylvania Public Child Welfare

Like many child welfare systems across the country, Pennsylvania's workforce encountered challenges during the 2022-2023 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. The pandemic and its lingering after-effects contributed to a growing demand for concrete supports for families and children. Although the immediate impact of the pandemic faded, the longer-term effects on the workforce became noticeable in 2022-2023.  While maintaining vital operations, some child welfare agencies experienced a dramatic decline in their staff complement. The same held true among provider agencies, drastically decreasing the availability of services for children and adults alike.  Many individuals decided to leave the human services sector across systems of care which has 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. An increase in suspected child abuse reports as well as those meeting criteria for general protective services occurred in calendar years 2021 and 2022. These rises were anticipated due

to the increased contact between children and mandated reporters in education, medical, and community settings following the re-opening of our communities. The total reports for suspected child abuse in calendar year 2022 remains lower, however, than in the year prior to the pandemic.

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[18] and to the policy and statutory recommendations of the Task Force on Child Protection formed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly[19].

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 influence the landscape of Pennsylvania public child welfare. The passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act [20] 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

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[18] 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*"

[19] *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.

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

guide child welfare intervention and service planning. These are welcome changes that will require the time, investment, and expertise of the workforce.

## Evaluation
### *Introduction*

Each year online surveys are sent to schools participating in the CWEB and CWEL educational programs, current students, graduates, and the county agencies providing employment or field placements. These surveys gauge utility and quality of the curricula and field experiences, opportunities for improvement, and the organizational culture of their work environment. This information is shared with CWEB and CWEL partners, including agency administrators, school faculty, and CWEB/CWEL faculty and staff to inform and help improve the quality of services, curricula, and working environments.

All surveys are web-enabled. Throughout the year, emails are sent to students, graduates, and CWEB/CWEL schools and counties with a link to 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. What follows are the findings from the 2022-2023 evaluation.

**Table 6. Return Rates by Survey Type**

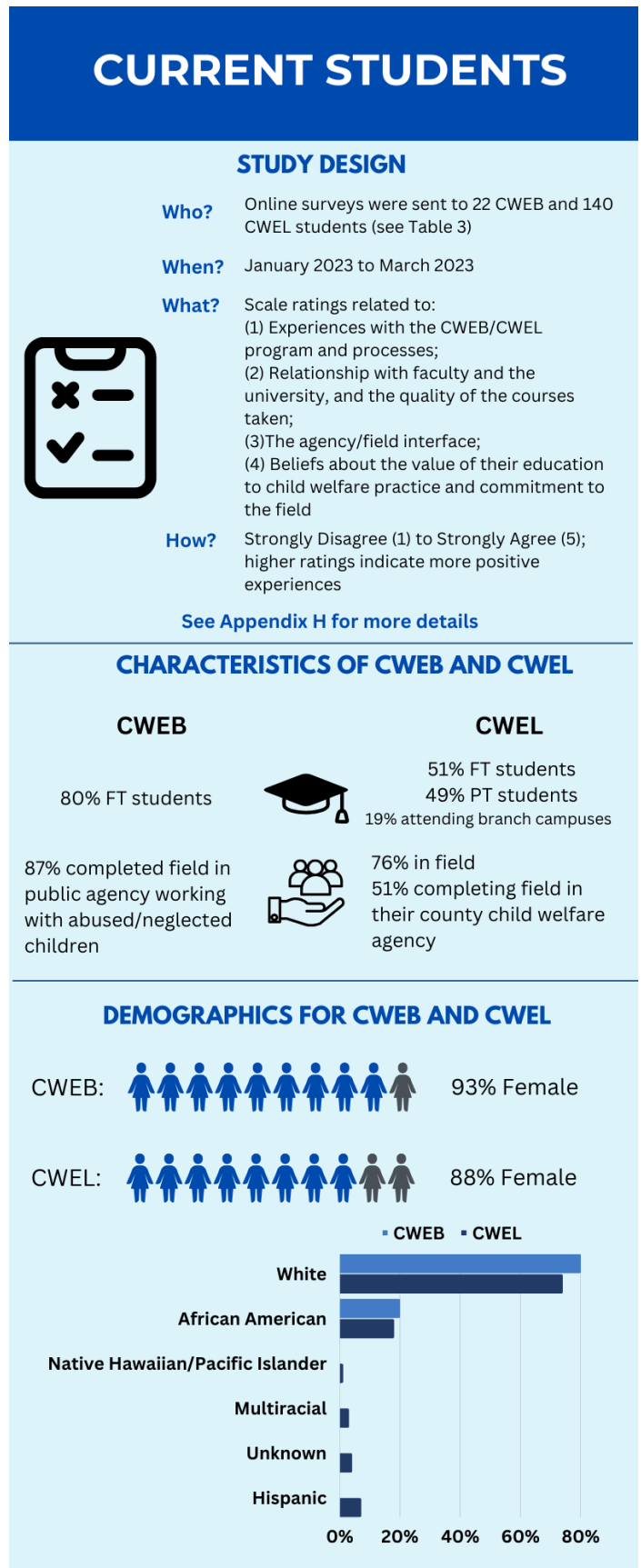| Respondent Group | Number Surveys Sent | Number of Usable Surveys | Response Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| County | 69 | 59 | 85% (n=59) |
| Current Students | 162 | 112 | 68% CWEB (n=15) 69% CWEL (n=97) |
| Recent Graduates | 89 | 53 | 60% CWEB (n=19) 50% CWEL (n=34) |
| Long Term Graduates | 111 | 40 | 33% (n=40) |
| CWEB/CWEL Schools | 48 | 28 | 75% (n=12) |

### Current CWEB and CWEL Students

#### Survey procedures and methods

Details about the study design and demographics of the respondents can be found in Figure 5. In addition to the scaled items, 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.

#### Online CWEL participation

The recommendation to have the ability to complete the CWEL program online has been suggested in previous years, due to lack of easy access to MSW programs in parts of the state. This option has additional complications, such as scheduling time to complete online coursework and adjusting working hours for synchronous learning activities. In response to this need, however, CWERP is now offering a completely online MSW program through partnerships with PennWest, Temple, and Widener Universities. Details of the additional survey for online MSW students can be found in Figure 6.

**Figure 5. Study Design and Description of Current Student Respondents**



CURRENT STUDENTS

**STUDY DESIGN**

**Who?** Online surveys were sent to 22 CWEB and 140 CWEL students (see Table 3)

**When?** January 2023 to March 2023

**What?** Scale ratings related to:
(1) Experiences with the CWEB/CWEL program and processes;
(2) Relationship with faculty and the university, and the quality of the courses taken;
(3)The agency/field interface;
(4) Beliefs about the value of their education to child welfare practice and commitment to the field

**How?** Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5); higher ratings indicate more positive experiences

**See Appendix H for more details**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CWEB AND CWEL**

**CWEB**

80% FT students

87% completed field in public agency working with abused/neglected children

**CWEL**

51% FT students
49% PT students
19% attending branch campuses

76% in field
51% completing field in their county child welfare agency

**DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CWEB AND CWEL**

CWEB: 93% Female

CWEL: 88% Female

White
African American
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
Multiracial
Unknown
Hispanic

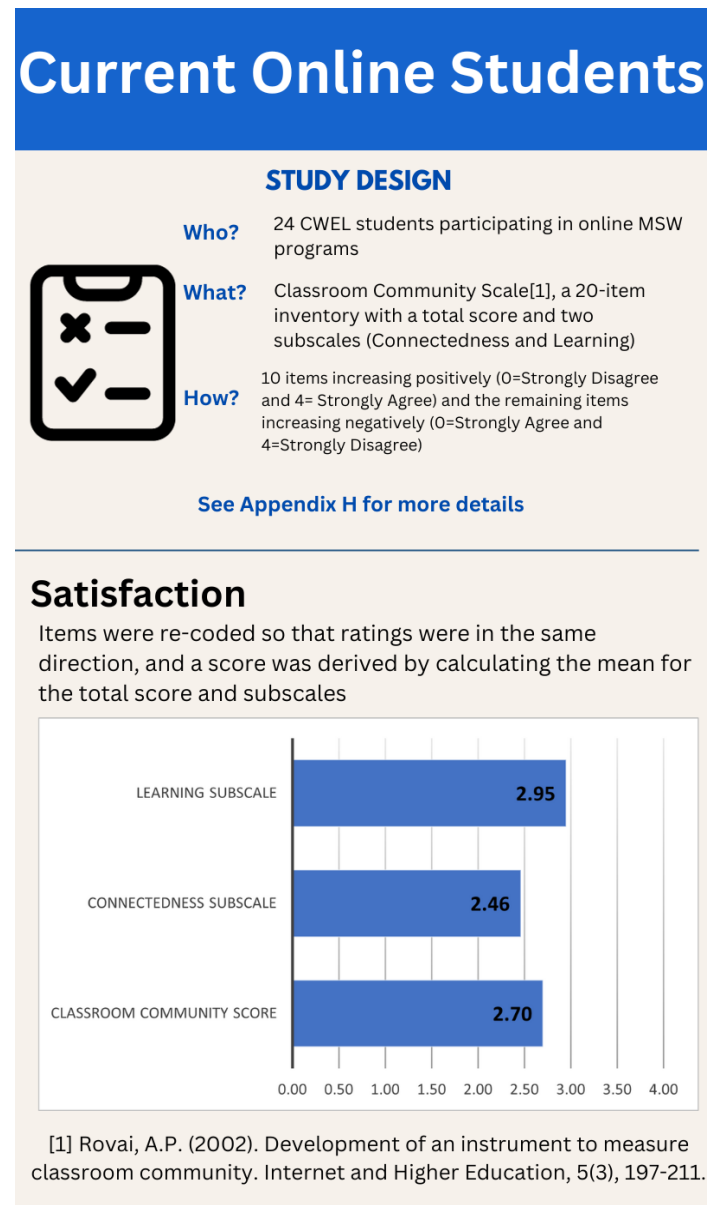0%  20%  40%  60%  80%

■ CWEB  ■ CWEL

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Individuals rated their overall Satisfaction, Connectedness subscale, and Learning subscale positively, suggesting a sound online learning experience. Since the CWEL students are surveyed multiple times throughout their academic career, it will be interesting to find whether these ratings change over time and in which direction. With the MSW program for the newly merged PennWest schools (Edinboro and California University) being strictly online, more CWEL students are likely to participate in this learning format.

## How do students perceive their program?

CWEB and CWEL students highly value their professional education. Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 having the lowest merit and 10 the most merit, 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 9.27 (*SD*=1.16), and the average score for the CWEL students was 9.34 (*SD*=1.22). Responses to this question, as well as each survey item, can be found in Table 1, Appendix H for CWEB students, as well as both the full-time and part-time CWEL students. All three subgroups report being satisfied with the degree

**Figure 6. Online Student Description and Results**

# Current Online Students

### STUDY DESIGN

**Who?** 24 CWEL students participating in online MSW programs

**What?** Classroom Community Scale[1], a 20-item inventory with a total score and two subscales (Connectedness and Learning)

**How?** 10 items increasing positively (0=Strongly Disagree and 4= Strongly Agree) and the remaining items increasing negatively (0=Strongly Agree and 4=Strongly Disagree)

**See Appendix H for more details**

## Satisfaction

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



| Subscale | Score |
|---|---|
| LEARNING SUBSCALE | 2.95 |
| CONNECTEDNESS SUBSCALE | 2.46 |
| CLASSROOM COMMUNITY SCORE | 2.70 |

[1] Rovai, A.P. (2002). Development of an instrument to measure classroom community. Internet and Higher Education, 5(3), 197-211.
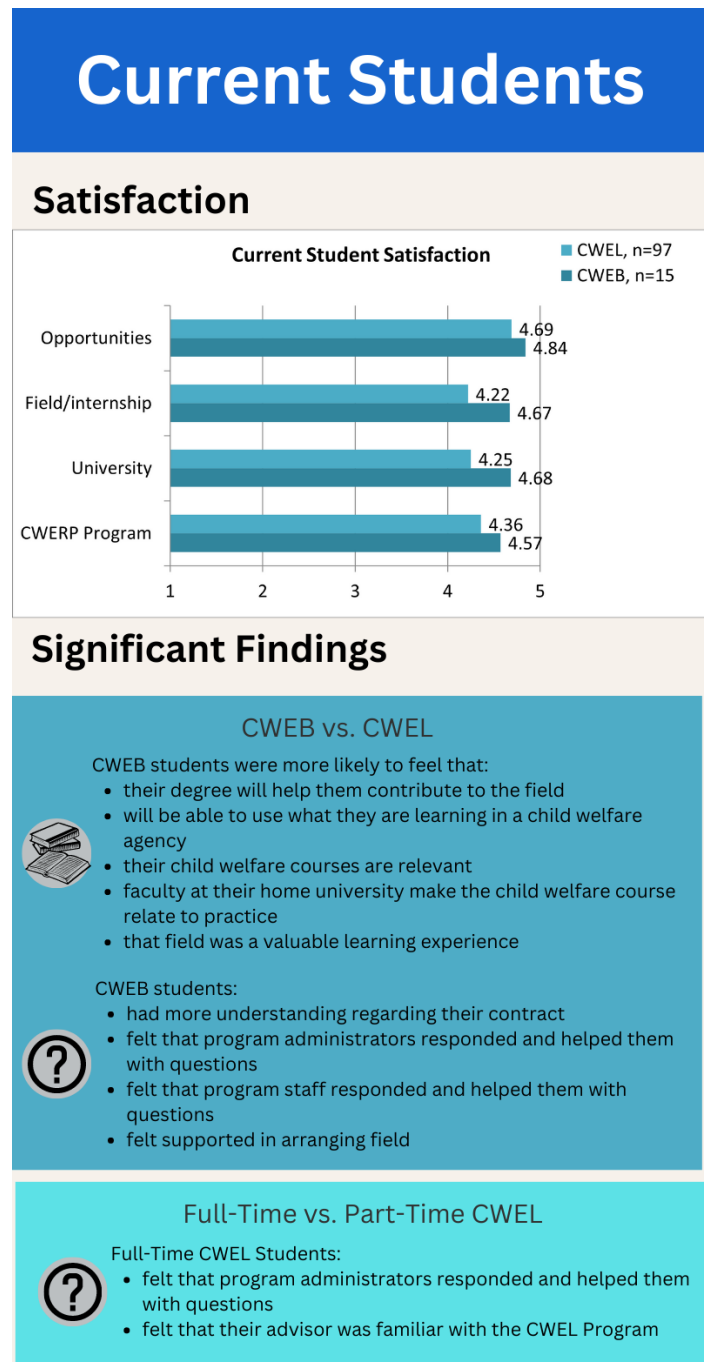
program, the agency and field interfaces, some of the degree processes, and aspects of their field/internship experiences. Satisfaction ratings and statistically significant findings are shown in Figure 7. One of the major findings in this academic year is that CWEB students rated aspects related to their preparation to work in child welfare higher than CWEL students. Since CWEB students are new to the field of child welfare and just starting their social work careers, their coursework and field opportunities are viewed as increasing their knowledge and skills. CWEL students, however, have at least two years on the job in a child welfare agency and are more accustomed to the work and how well they can impact that work with their advanced skills.

CWEB students also reported higher levels of understanding with their contracts and support from CWEB faculty and staff compared to CWEL students. It should be noted that the CWEL students have rated these items consistently for the last four academic years. The change in significance for this review period was due to the increase in CWEB student's ratings, which may be

**Figure 7. Current Student Results**



# Current Students

## Satisfaction

Current Student Satisfaction
- CWEL, n=97
- CWEB, n=15

| | CWEL | CWEB |
|---|---|---|
| Opportunities | 4.69 | 4.84 |
| Field/internship | 4.22 | 4.67 |
| University | 4.25 | 4.68 |
| CWERP Program | 4.36 | 4.57 |

## Significant Findings

### CWEB vs. CWEL

CWEB students were more likely to feel that:
- their degree will help them contribute to the field
- will be able to use what they are learning in a child welfare agency
- their child welfare courses are relevant
- faculty at their home university make the child welfare course relate to practice
- that field was a valuable learning experience

CWEB students:
- had more understanding regarding their contract
- felt that program administrators responded and helped them with questions
- felt that program staff responded and helped them with questions
- felt supported in arranging field

### Full-Time vs. Part-Time CWEL

Full-Time CWEL Students:
- felt that program administrators responded and helped them with questions
- felt that their advisor was familiar with the CWEL Program

due to the more concerted efforts by CWEB faculty and staff to support and be available for this group of students.

## Open-ended responses

CWEB and CWEL students were asked three open-ended questions to obtain more in-depth information regarding their opinions on their educational programs. The main findings are discussed below.

When asked about the positive aspects of CWEB, students discussed the program preparing them for a career in child welfare as well as the financial advantages of the program. CWEB students felt that they benefitted from starting the Foundations training before starting their career and emphasized the amount they are learning in their child welfare internships. For example, one student shared, "*The CWEB program has provided an incredible learning opportunity for me to get in-depth experience with the child welfare field. The foundations trainings help me to feel prepared, and the support of my agency has been amazing. I am excited to join my agency after graduation as a full-time caseworker.*" Similarly, CWEL students appreciated the opportunity to participate in the program, citing the financial benefits as the only way they would have been able to complete a master's degree in social work. CWEL students also discussed how learning new skills and interacting with other CWEL students from different child welfare agencies helped them to bring new ideas back to their own agencies. An example of this learning was shared by a CWEL student: "*We learn how to engage clients in meaningful ways with a trauma-focused lens to be able to collaborate and see better success with their treatment.*"

Students were also asked in what areas the CWEB and CWEL programs can be improved. CWEB suggestions included wanting in-person interactions with their fellow CWEB students across universities and for the CWEB program staff to further educate the professionals at their home universities about the program. CWEB students also

mentioned that signing up for Foundations training was confusing as was the on-boarding process. CWEL students once again mentioned the burden of participating in the program part-time. Most students felt that part-time study was not conducive to learning and that more is expected from a part-time student, as seen in this quote: "*Working 40 hours, field 16 hours, and 2 classes... it's a recipe for burn out!!!!!*" CWEL students also talked about wanting more flexibility with classes and elective choices.
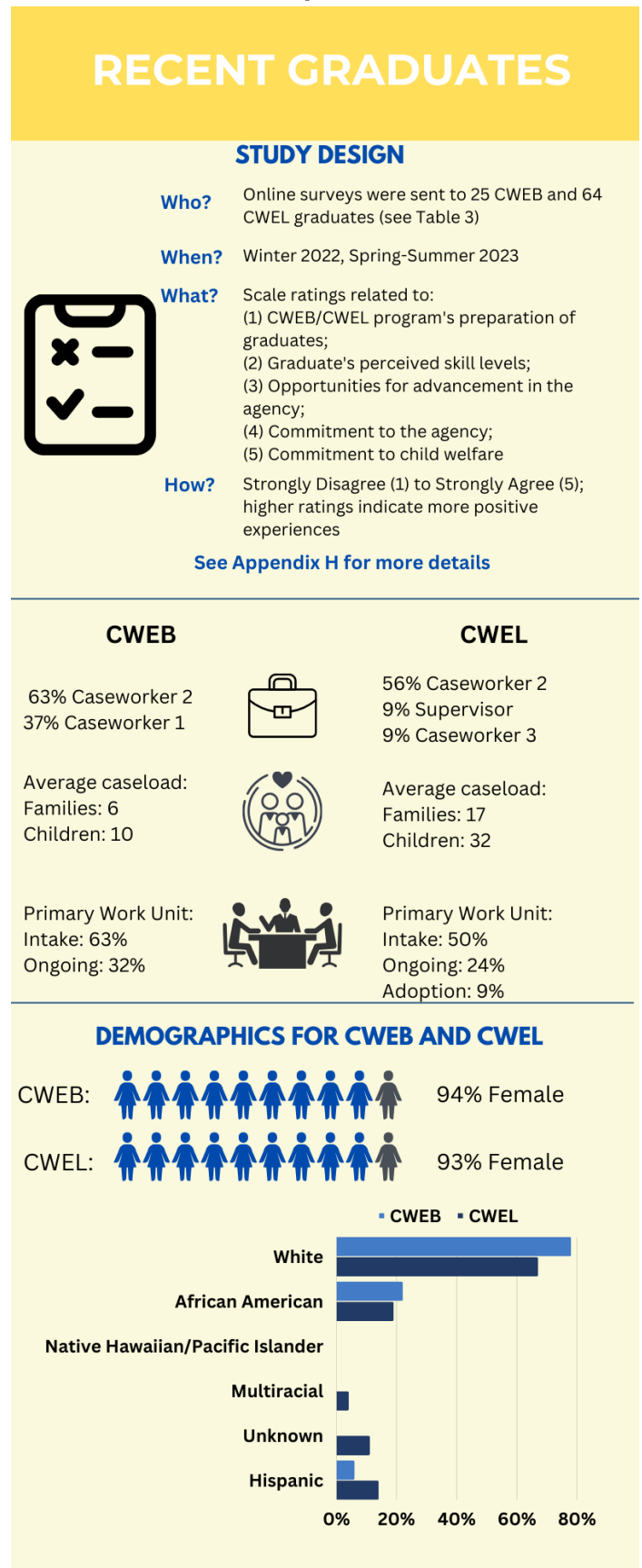
### Recent CWEB and CWEL Graduates
Survey procedures and methods

The study design and demographics of the respondents can be found in Figure 8. In addition to scaled items, four open-ended questions ask about the positive aspects of the program, the contribution of their field placement on their professional development, advice for future students, and areas of program improvement.

How do recent graduates perceive their program?

CWEB and CWEL graduates highly value their professional education. Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 having the lowest

**Figure 8. Study Design and Description of Recent Graduate Respondents**



RECENT GRADUATES

**STUDY DESIGN**

Who? Online surveys were sent to 25 CWEB and 64 CWEL graduates (see Table 3)

When? Winter 2022, Spring-Summer 2023

What? Scale ratings related to:
(1) CWEB/CWEL program's preparation of graduates;
(2) Graduate's perceived skill levels;
(3) Opportunities for advancement in the agency;
(4) Commitment to the agency;
(5) Commitment to child welfare

How? Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5); higher ratings indicate more positive experiences

**See Appendix H for more details**

**CWEB**

63% Caseworker 2
37% Caseworker 1

Average caseload:
Families: 6
Children: 10

Primary Work Unit:
Intake: 63%
Ongoing: 32%

**CWEL**

56% Caseworker 2
9% Supervisor
9% Caseworker 3

Average caseload:
Families: 17
Children: 32

Primary Work Unit:
Intake: 50%
Ongoing: 24%
Adoption: 9%

**DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CWEB AND CWEL**

CWEB: 94% Female

CWEL: 93% Female

CWEB ■ CWEL

White
African American
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
Multiracial
Unknown
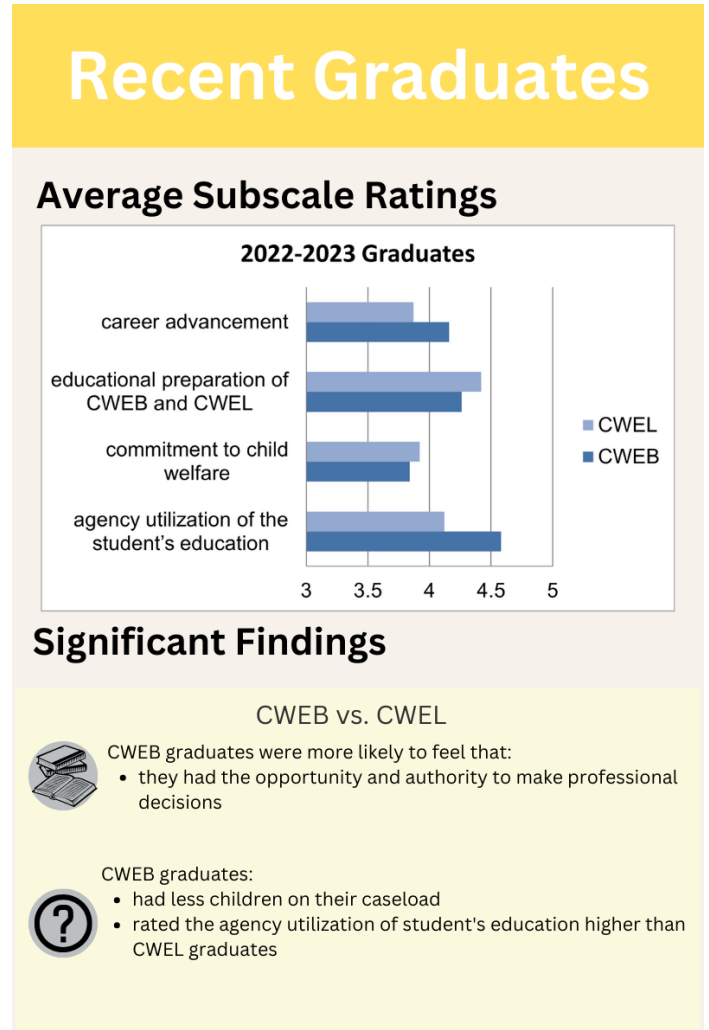Hispanic

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

value and 10 the highest 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 graduates was 9.00 (*SD*=1.02), and the average score for the CWEL graduates was 9.32 (*SD*=1.11). Responses to this question, as well as each survey item can be found in Table 2, Appendix H. 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. Subscale ratings and statistically significant findings are shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9. Recent Graduate Results**



Graduates of both CWEB and CWEL felt that their respective programs prepared them for working in the child welfare system. Ratings were slightly higher for CWEL graduates than for CWEB graduates on this subscale, which is different than last year's finding.  CWEB graduates' lower rating on this subscale may imply that the graduates need more exposure to the child welfare field, a theme that was addressed in the open-ended comments.

The two most striking differences between CWEB and CWEL graduates are on the "career advancement" and "agency utilization of student's education" subscales, with CWEL graduates rating them markedly lower than CWEB graduates. These lower ratings suggest that more attention should be focused at the agency level to improve

the career outlook for CWEL graduates, as 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 provide alternate options to traditional promotion.  Involving CWEL graduates in agency-level initiatives such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, and trauma informed care will give CWEL graduates the opportunity to apply their enhanced skillset to benefit the agency and the families they serve.

## Open-ended responses

Graduates expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the CWEB/CWEL programs and discussed the support from program faculty and staff along with the financial benefits as positive aspects of the programs.  CWEB and CWEL graduates emphasized how the education programs helped them in their child welfare careers. CWEB graduates talked about the Foundations training and the field experience as fully preparing them to work in a county child welfare agency: "*There are so many different opportunities I have had with CWEB that have made me realize that this is really what I want to do. The educational level has really expanded my understanding and has helped prepare me for what needs to be done while working with children and families*."  CWEL graduates, on the other hand, reported that their educational program helped them acquire new skills and see the families on their caseload in a new way: "*It is an amazing opportunity to advance your education that enables people to have a different perspective on families…*"

Both CWEB and CWEL graduates found great value in their field experiences. CWEB graduates spoke about their time in the field increasing their confidence and exposing them to different methods of child welfare casework: "*Everyone at the agency was really helpful and wanting to best teach us all the different skills in the office.*

*Everything to screener calls to getting our own cases and seeking them out. They really pushed my boundaries for the better and have shaped me into becoming more comfortable and confident in my journey.*"  CWEL graduates interning in their own agency appreciated the opportunity to experience work in different units and see how all the units in their agency work towards a common goal: "*Being in the field in general is helpful in developing skills. The ability to intern in different areas of the agency gives a better understanding of how the agency operates as a whole and how each unit, despite being different, rely on each other to function in some capacity.*"  CWEL graduates interning outside their agency talked about the ability to learn about the various services available in their counties and how their clients experience those services.  The CWEL graduates also talked about being able to network with other professionals within their county.

When asked about areas of possible improvement, CWEB graduates wanted an increase in the monthly stipend and a reduction of the internship hours.  CWEB graduates also suggested that those interested in child welfare shadow a caseworker prior to applying to CWEB so that they have a full understanding of what the job entails.  CWEL graduates requested reimbursement for the social work license exam. As seen in previous years, CWEL graduates also wanted more options for electives and those attending the program part-time wanted a shorter work commitment upon graduation.

CWEB graduates suggested that those interested in the CWEB program should make sure that they want to work in child welfare: "*Look into all aspects of the job and do not take the opportunity just because of the money and incentive. It will be a long year and stressful experience, although very interesting and rewarding. Make sure it is what you are interested in and passionate about otherwise it may be hard!*  Graduates emphasized keeping the materials from Foundations training to reference later and to be open-minded and not afraid to ask questions. CWEB graduates also recommended

that CWEB students set boundaries with their supervisors. CWEL graduates encouraged those entering the program to ask questions, continue with their self-care and rely on their supports. CWEL graduates also wanted new students to "soak it all in" and to enjoy the experience.
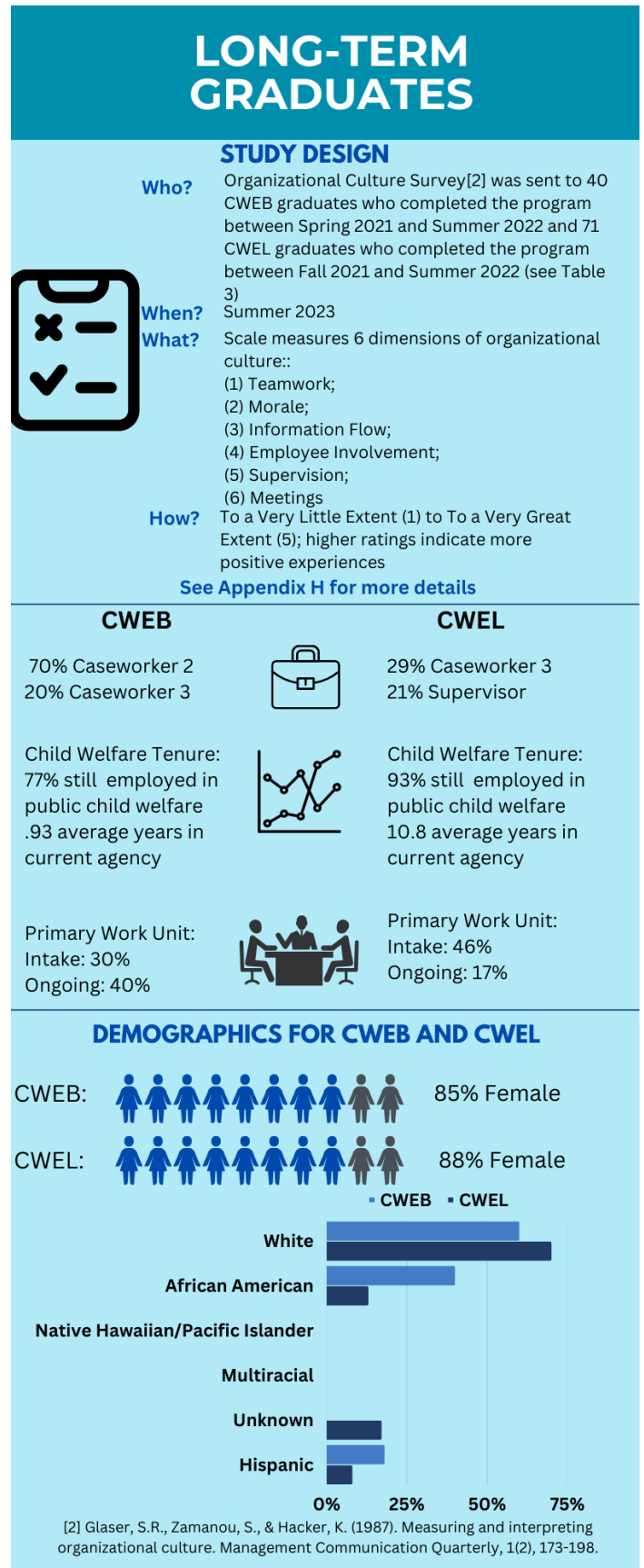
### *Long-Term CWEB and CWEL Graduates*
Survey procedures and methods

Details about the study design and demographics of the respondents can be found in Figure 10. In addition to scaled items, four open-ended questions ask long-term graduates about their other activities that contribute to the field of child welfare, their professional development opportunities, mentoring colleagues, and their ability to lead new initiatives in their agencies.

### 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. For respondents this year, the most positive climate scores were related to Supervision
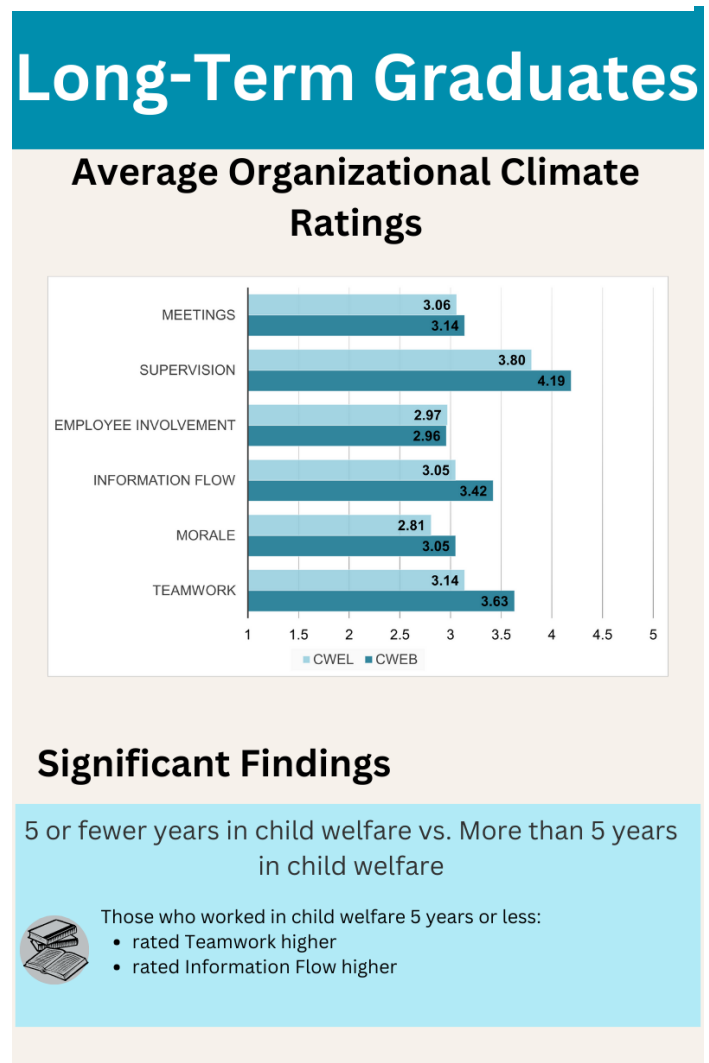
**Figure 10. Survey Design and Description of Long-Term Graduate Respondents**



## LONG-TERM GRADUATES

### STUDY DESIGN

**Who?** Organizational Culture Survey[2] was sent to 40 CWEB graduates who completed the program between Spring 2021 and Summer 2022 and 71 CWEL graduates who completed the program between Fall 2021 and Summer 2022 (see Table 3)

**When?** Summer 2023

**What?** Scale measures 6 dimensions of organizational culture::
(1) Teamwork;
(2) Morale;
(3) Information Flow;
(4) Employee Involvement;
(5) Supervision;
(6) Meetings

**How?** To a Very Little Extent (1) to To a Very Great Extent (5); higher ratings indicate more positive experiences

**See Appendix H for more details**

| CWEB | CWEL |
|---|---|
| 70% Caseworker 2<br>20% Caseworker 3 | 29% Caseworker 3<br>21% Supervisor |
| Child Welfare Tenure:<br>77% still employed in public child welfare<br>.93 average years in current agency | Child Welfare Tenure:<br>93% still employed in public child welfare<br>10.8 average years in current agency |
| Primary Work Unit:<br>Intake: 30%<br>Ongoing: 40% | Primary Work Unit:<br>Intake: 46%<br>Ongoing: 17% |

### DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CWEB AND CWEL

CWEB: 85% Female

CWEL: 88% Female

CWEB · CWEL

White
African American
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
Multiracial
Unknown
Hispanic

0%   25%   50%   75%

39

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

for CWEB graduates (*M=4.19)* and for CWEL graduates (*M*=3.80). These ratings suggest that CWEB and CWEL graduates are receiving suitable supervision and value the guidance 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 feel they have a voice in agency decisions or how new policies/procedures are implemented.  For CWEL, the lowest rated item was Morale (*M=2.81)*. Given the high vacancy rates across Pennsylvania's county child welfare agencies, the CWEL graduates' low rating on morale is not surprising. Subscale ratings and statistically significant findings are shown in Figure 11. Total scores for the Organizational Culture Survey can be found in Appendix H, Table 3.

**Figure 11. Long-Term Graduate Results**



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.  This may indicate fatigue among longer-term employees who are not engaged in agency change efforts or new modes of practice.

Open-ended responses

Long-term graduates have completed trainings, provided mentorship and supervision to new workers, interns, and CWEL students. One long-term graduate received a certificate in trauma informed care and mental health first aid. Long-term graduates reported participating in work groups to enhance the onboarding processes for new hires, enhancing the multidisciplinary teams in their counties, and planning retreats for their departments.

Long-term graduates described a variety of professional development opportunities. Many mentioned participating in ongoing agency and county trainings with topic areas including child trafficking, trauma informed care, caseworker safety, life after incarceration simulation, and tech savvy crimes. Long-term graduates are also working toward social work licensure or have obtained licensure. A few long-term graduates attended their county's Leadership Academy. One long-term graduate completed the Darkness to Light curriculum for facilitators and the Pennsylvania Certified Recovery Specialist/Certified Family Recovery Specialist training series.

Many long-term graduates have trained and mentored new caseworkers and interns. Graduates can share their expertise, offer advice, provide guidance, and feedback on work related tasks such as court testimony. Long-term graduates have supervised both CWEB interns and other CWEL interns. In addition, graduates reported sharing their tips on how to complete paperwork and being a resource for interns and new hires.

Long-term graduates have shown leadership in their agencies in a variety of ways. They instituted new initiatives in their county agencies, participated in groups such as continuous improvement and wellness, took charge to ensure interns had shadowing opportunities, and collaborated with the school districts to educate the staff on the functions of the child welfare agency. One long-term graduate opened a family

support center for Plans of Safe Care and worked with the YWCA to start a women's

group in the county. Regarding leadership, a long-term graduate stated: *"....leadership*

*is not about position. It really is a position of influence and service*."
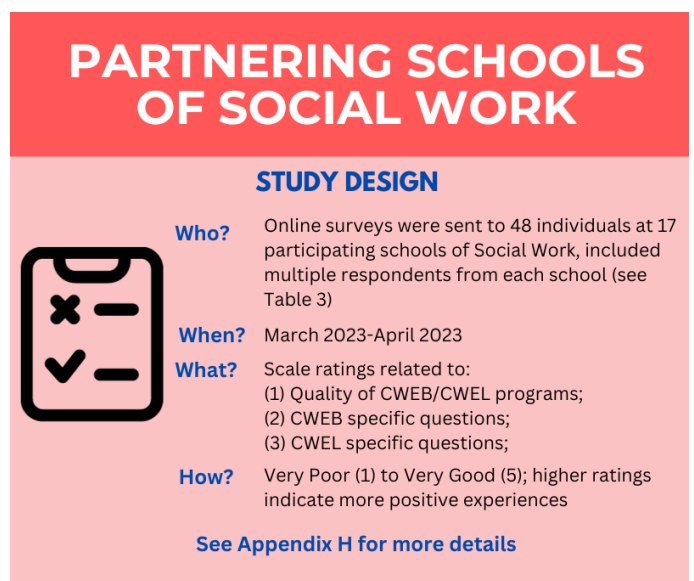
***Partnering Schools of Social Work***

Survey procedures and methods

The study design can be found in Figure 12. In addition to the scaled questions,

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 for
selecting CWEB students.  Results of these
items can be found in the Core Competency
section below.

**Figure 12. Survey Design for Partnering Schools of Social Work**



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

Responses indicate that school administrators continue to be satisfied with the

quality of the CWEB and CWEL programs, as seen in Figure 13. Ratings for both

programs were high, with item averages hovering around 4.5 or above. Of particular

note this academic year, almost all the original items concerning CWEL program

satisfaction had mean ratings of 5.00, which is the highest scale point. School

administrators recognized the contributions of CWEB/CWEL students to the learning

environment by rating that item highly for both programs. Historically, CWEL students

are rated highly and as contributing to the learning environment due to their years of

experience in the field of child welfare. The last few academic years school
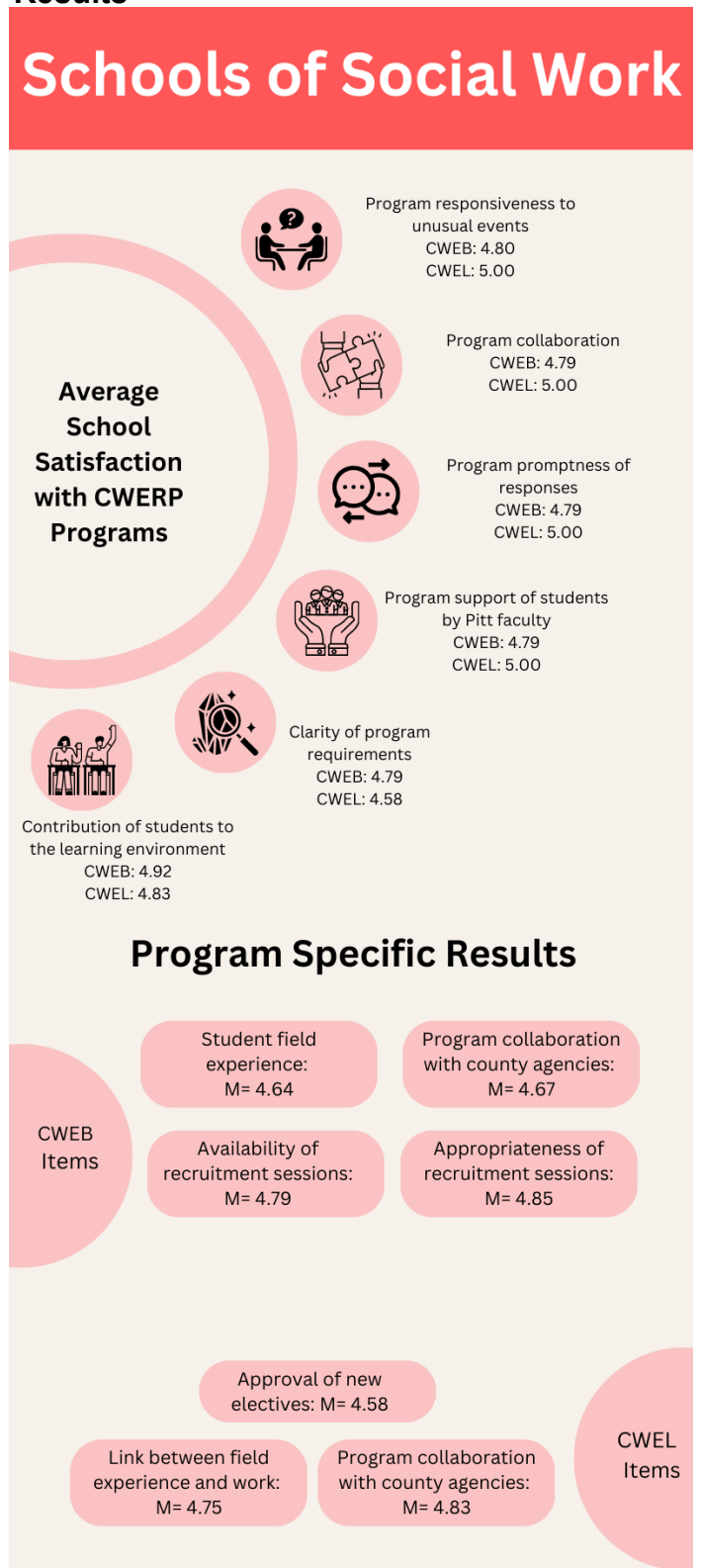
administrators' ratings for CWEB students on contributing to the learning environment hovered around 4.7.  This year that rating has increased to 4.92, rising back to pre-pandemic levels. Possibly, the CWEB students' return to in-person field and in-person classroom learning has contributed to this shift in their ability to contribute to the learning environment.

### Open-ended responses

School administrators described CWEB and CWEL students as high-caliber students and leaders in the classroom.  CWEL students are valued for their classroom contributions, as illustrated by one respondent, "*Our CWEL students are well prepared and faculty speak very highly of their contributions in the classroom*."  CWEB students were praised for their strong communication/interpersonal skills, evidenced by one administrator, "O*ur current students are strong in the classroom and also demonstrate strong leadership and communication skills among their peers*."  School administrators did note that part-time CWEL students seem to struggle with their

**Figure 13. Partnering Schools of Social Work Results**



Schools of Social Work

**Average School Satisfaction with CWERP Programs**

Program responsiveness to unusual events
CWEB: 4.80
CWEL: 5.00

Program collaboration
CWEB: 4.79
CWEL: 5.00

Program promptness of responses
CWEB: 4.79
CWEL: 5.00

Program support of students by Pitt faculty
CWEB: 4.79
CWEL: 5.00

Clarity of program requirements
CWEB: 4.79
CWEL: 4.58

Contribution of students to the learning environment
CWEB: 4.92
CWEL: 4.83

**Program Specific Results**

CWEB Items

Student field experience:
M= 4.64

Program collaboration with county agencies:
M= 4.67

Availability of recruitment sessions:
M= 4.79

Appropriateness of recruitment sessions:
M= 4.85

Approval of new electives: M= 4.58

Link between field experience and work:
M= 4.75

Program collaboration with county agencies:
M= 4.83

CWEL Items

multiple commitments: "*The full-time CWEL students have been high caliber. Some part-time students need more resources and time to complete quality coursework.*" When discussing the positive aspects of the CWEB program, school administrators noted the financial incentives and the ability for CWEB students to find a secure job throughout the Commonwealth upon graduation. CWEL school administrators talked about the collaborative relationship they had with CWEL program administrators, the support CWEL students received, and the overall opportunity the CWEL program provides for county child welfare workers.

**Figure 14. Survey Design for County Child Welfare Administrators**



### *County Child Welfare Agency Administrators*

Survey procedures and methods

Details about the study design can be found in Figure 14. A new set of questions were added this year regarding how well CWEB graduates are prepared for child welfare work. Additionally, 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.

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

County administrators acknowledge the value of CWEB/CWEL for their agencies by rating these programs on the higher end of the scale (CWEB: M=4.68; CWEL: M=4.72). Administrators consistently rated their satisfaction with the CWEB and CWEL programs between "moderately well" and "very well" as seen in Figure 15. CWEB graduates were rated lower than CWEL students in terms of retention, their ability to
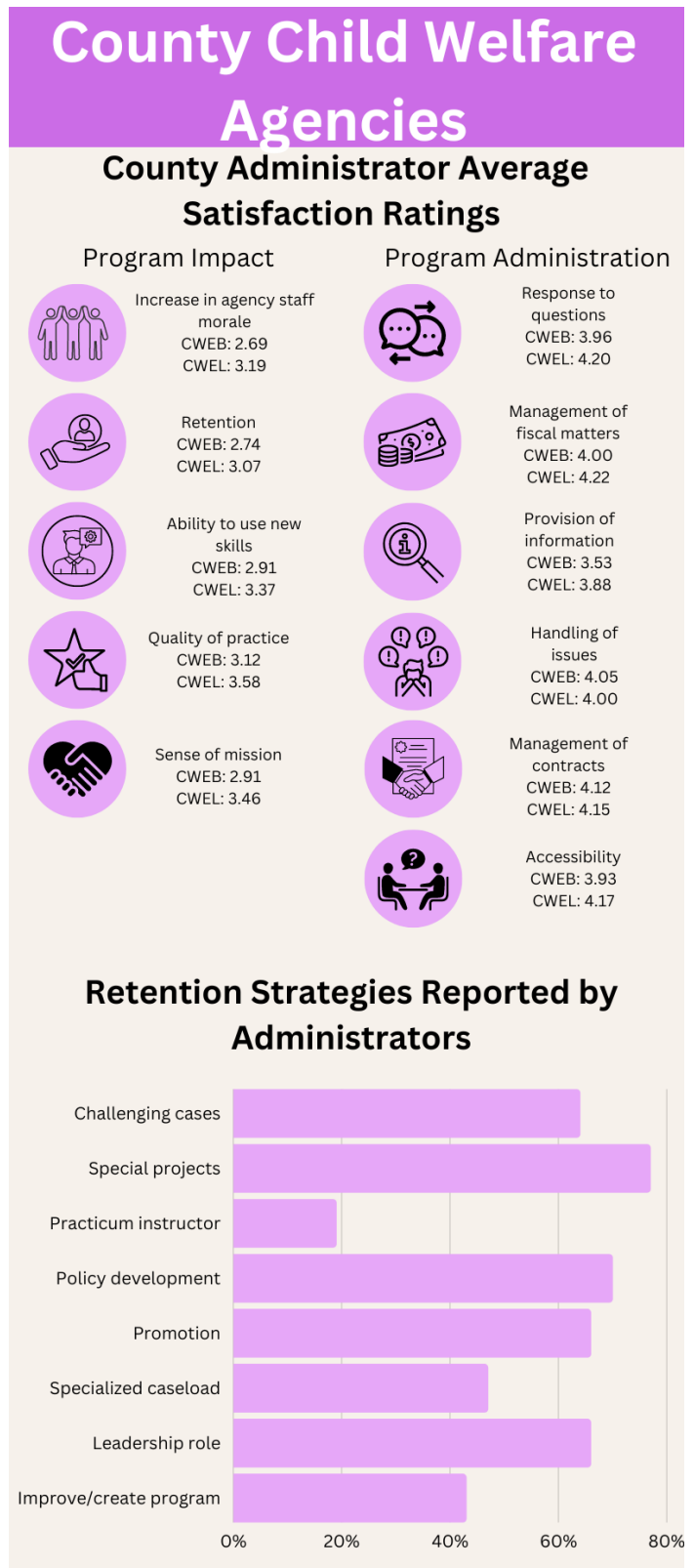
increase agency morale, and their ability to use new skills. CWEL graduates were rated "moderately well" on these items.

County administrators were neutral in regard to CWEB graduates being more prepared for child welfare casework than other new hires.  However, two items were rated slightly higher: CWEB graduates being more prepared to carry a caseload (M= 3.84) and CWEB graduates having a better understanding of child welfare laws and policies (M= 3.74). Additional survey item responses to this question can be found in Table 4, Appendix H.

Graduates of the CWEB and CWEL programs are seen as valuable assets to the county child welfare workforce.  County administrators utilize the skills of these well-educated workers for special projects, challenging cases, and policy development. County administrators were presented with a list of potential initiatives that may be occurring in their agencies and were asked to rate their CWEB/CWEL graduates' involvement in these initiatives.  Graduates were involved in almost all the items listed.

**Figure 15. County Child Welfare Administrator Results**



County Child Welfare Agencies

County Administrator Average Satisfaction Ratings

Program Impact

Increase in agency staff morale
CWEB: 2.69
CWEL: 3.19

Retention
CWEB: 2.74
CWEL: 3.07

Ability to use new skills
CWEB: 2.91
CWEL: 3.37

Quality of practice
CWEB: 3.12
CWEL: 3.58

Sense of mission
CWEB: 2.91
CWEL: 3.46

Program Administration

Response to questions
CWEB: 3.96
CWEL: 4.20

Management of fiscal matters
CWEB: 4.00
CWEL: 4.22

Provision of information
CWEB: 3.53
CWEL: 3.88

Handling of issues
CWEB: 4.05
CWEL: 4.00

Management of contracts
CWEB: 4.12
CWEL: 4.15

Accessibility
CWEB: 3.93
CWEL: 4.17

Retention Strategies Reported by Administrators

Challenging cases
Special projects
Practicum instructor
Policy development
Promotion
Specialized caseload
Leadership role
Improve/create program
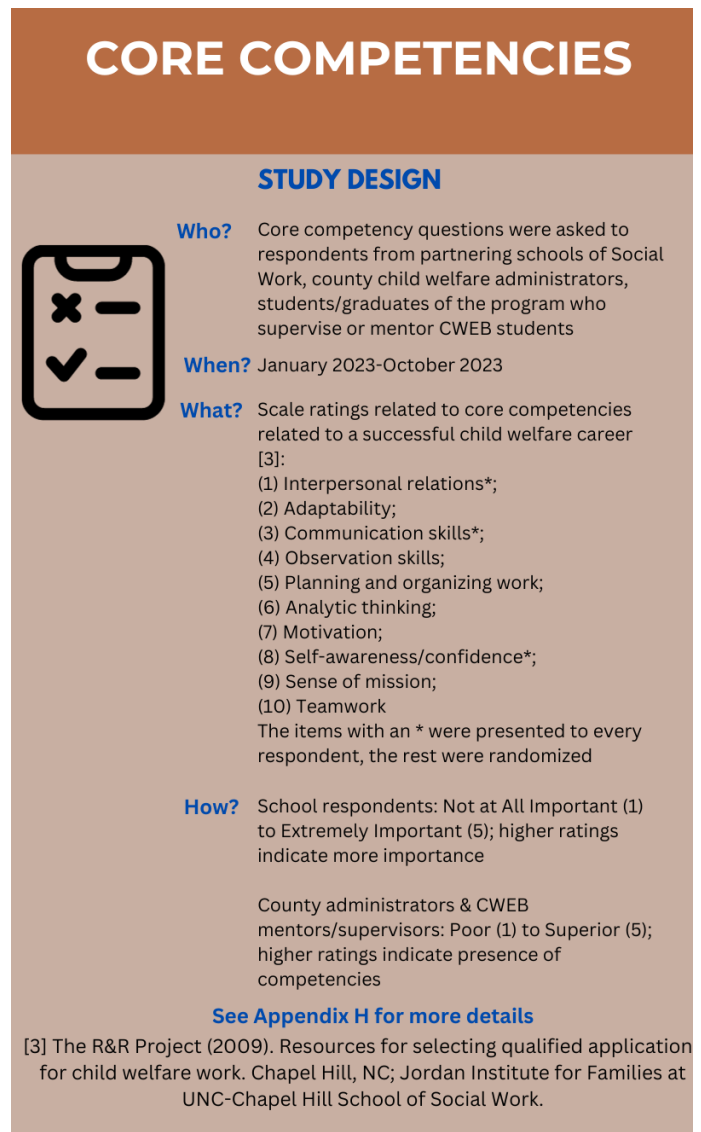
0%    20%    40%    60%    80%

45

County administrators also mentioned CWEB/CWEL graduates being involved in working with incarcerated parents, father engagement, and "daily office practice for policy and feedback."  The full list of these initiatives along with the ratings can be found in Table 5, Appendix H.

### *Core Competencies*

Survey procedures and methods

Details about the study design can be found in Figure 16. In addition to the core competencies, school administrators were asked to rate the importance of six 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.  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 mentor/supervise CWEB students in their agencies.

**Figure 16. Survey Design for Core Competencies**



**CORE COMPETENCIES**

**STUDY DESIGN**

**Who?** Core competency questions were asked to respondents from partnering schools of Social Work, county child welfare administrators, students/graduates of the program who supervise or mentor CWEB students

**When?** January 2023-October 2023

**What?** Scale ratings related to core competencies related to a successful child welfare career [3]:
(1) Interpersonal relations*;
(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;
(10) Teamwork
The items with an * were presented to every respondent, the rest were randomized

**How?** School respondents: Not at All Important (1) to Extremely Important (5); higher ratings indicate more importance

County administrators & CWEB mentors/supervisors: Poor (1) to Superior (5); higher ratings indicate presence of competencies

**See Appendix H for more details**

[3] The R&R Project (2009). Resources for selecting qualified application for child welfare work. Chapel Hill, NC; Jordan Institute for Families at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

How do county/school administrators and CWEB mentors/supervisors rank CWEB program participants on the core competencies?

Responses indicate that school administrators value the core competencies for selecting child welfare workers but place equal value on some of the traditional markers of qualification.  Similarly, county administrators and CWEB mentors/supervisors rated CWEB graduates around the "Very Good" to "Superior" range on the core competencies.  The full list of the core competencies along with the ratings can be found in Tables 6-9, Appendix H.

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 mentors/supervisors?  The statistical results are summarized in Figure 17.

Agency administrators rated CWEL graduates higher on most of the competencies, showcasing their enhanced skills and education that results from

**Figure 17. Core Competency Results**



**Core Competencies**

**Statistical Results**

Significant differences in core competencies of CWEB graduates between CWEB mentors/supervisors and county administrators

County Administrators rated CWEB graduates higher on:
- Communication skills
- Self-awareness/confidence
- Observation Skills

Significant differences in core competencies used to select CWEB students by school administrators versus core competencies present in CWEB graduates as rated by county administrators

School administrators considered:
- Good interpersonal relations
- Good communication skills
- High self-awareness/confidence
- Good analytical thinking

Significant differences in core competencies comparing school administrators, county administrators, and CWEB mentors/supervisors

Differences between groups on:
- Interpersonal relations
- Communication skills
- Motivation
- Self awareness/confidence

advanced study and years in the field.  However, agency administrators rated CWEB graduates higher on "*observation skills*" (M=4.00) and "*teamwork*" (M=3.67).  This finding may suggest that CWEB graduates' positions as new employees in a county child welfare agency with a new degree from a social work program allow them to be open to a team environment and observe various aspects of the families on their caseloads.  Overall, school administrators felt that they considered every competency highly when looking for potential CWEB students, whereas county administrators rated the CWEB students lower on the actual presence of core competencies except for "*observation skills*" (M=4.00).  Domains where statistically significant differences were found can be seen in Figure 17.  These results suggest that even though schools rated core competencies highly regarding selecting students to participate in the CWEB program, county administrators are not necessarily seeing these skills in graduates as they enter the workforce.  This disconnect may pertain to a difference in the definition of the competency in a student versus that of a professional child welfare worker.

Further results suggest that people within the child welfare agency are viewing CWEB program participants differently on *"interpersonal relations,"* (M=3.62) a characteristic which encompasses respect and tolerance for people, relating well to others, and empathy.  Another unique result is that school administrators are seeing more *"sense of mission,"* (M=4.75) among CWEB participants, which relates to child welfare knowledge/experience, beliefs about protecting 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 mentors/supervisors rated every core competency lower than the other two respondent groups; given that they have more day-to-day interaction with CWEB program participants, their ratings may more accurately reflect the competency levels of these new graduates.

***Overall Summary***

Is there a career pathway?

One of the goals of the evaluation 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 18.  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.   Just over seven percent (7.2%) 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. In fact, 51% (34/67) of Pennsylvania's county child welfare agencies have a CWEL graduate in a leadership position within the agency.  These data illustrate that the proposed career pathway is a viable way to support agency retention of workers.

County child welfare caseworker vacancies will always pose challenges for Pennsylvania's child welfare agencies.  County child welfare agencies are struggling to retain and replenish their workforce. Recent high-profile cases and negative news stories regarding the nature of child welfare work may be contributing to this reduction in new hires.  Because of the increase in turnover and difficulties hiring new staff, CWEB and CWEL graduates have higher caseloads and difficulty utilizing their new skills, as evidenced by this comment, *"The counties need to do better at retaining the staff that have been through the program. People need to feel like what they learned is being utilized."*  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 may want to

consider including CWEB and CWEL graduates into recruitment and retention efforts.

The partners of these Title IV-E education programs continue to praise the CWEB and CWEL programs and acknowledge the value of these programs to the Commonwealth. County administrators are eager 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

**Figure 18. Career Pathway**
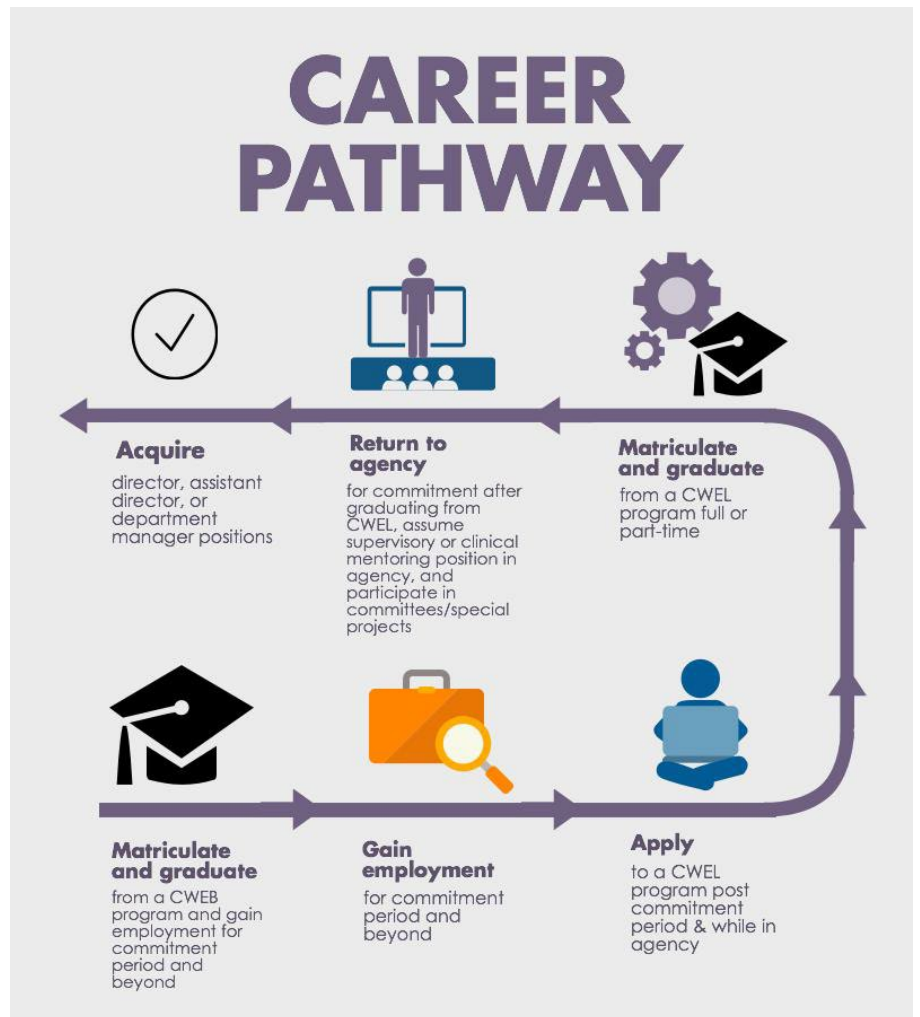


welfare agencies with a mechanism for building a well-educated workforce and provide an opportunity to infuse core social work values into casework practice.  CWEB graduates are seen as more knowledgeable about child welfare laws and policies and more prepared to carry a caseload upon hire than other new hires.  These attributes of CWEB graduates make them an asset to county child welfare agencies, who can assign a caseload to a new CWEB graduate, thus reducing the burden on existing caseworkers in the agency.  CWEB and CWEL program participants are extremely grateful for the

**Figure 19. Profiles in Excellence**

opportunity to participate in these beneficial educational opportunities and see the programs as a way to become an agent of change in child welfare and provide strengths-based and trauma informed solutions to youth and families.  County agency administrators are involving CWEB and CWEL graduates in family engagement initiatives, trauma informed care, and in implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act, which gives graduates important opportunities to utilize their skills.

CWEB and CWEL students continue to thrive both academically and professionally.  More than 20% of CWEB and CWEL current students, recent graduates, and long-term graduates have received an award or recognition in the past year (Figure 19), and close to 60% 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 student received the Georgia Hernandez Award for her work with children and families during the COVID pandemic.  Another

## Profiles in Excellence

A Pitt CWEL student received the Grady H Roberts Jr. Endowed Student Resource Fund for Outstanding Performance in Field for her work at Wesley Family Services (WFS) during her internship. While interning at WFS, the student has committed herself to all aspects of child permanency.

In 2021 a Pitt CWEL student received the Georgia Hernandez Award for Excellence in Child Welfare Practice. This award is presented annually to one Allegheny caseworker who exemplifies excellence in case practice; a commitment to the DHS vision and values; and consistently demonstrates CYF core competencies.

A Pitt CWEL student is the 2023 recipient of Pitt's Graduate and Professional Student Government's Leadership and Service Award. This award recognizes current University of Pittsburgh graduate and professional students for their service and leadership to the university, community, and world at large.

A Bloomsburg CWEB Graduate received the Outstanding Competence in Fieldwork Award for her internship at Juniata County Children and Youth Services. This award is given to a student who exhibits exemplary achievement in their field placement. Other areas that are considered for this award include contributions to political action and social justice as well as evidence of sensitivity and excellence in cross-cultural practice.

A Long-Term Shippensburg CWEL Graduate was nominated by her peers for the 2021 Franklin County Government Values award for Continuous Improvement. She was presented with the award March 4, 2022.

A Long-Term Pitt CWEL Graduate received the 2021 Washington County "One Kid At A Time" Community Award presented by the Academy for Adolescent Health.The graduate receive this award through fostering community partnerships to increase child abuse prevention. The graduate says of her award: "I was grateful to be presented with this award and continue to support the work of the Academy for Adolescent Health of educating, advocating, inspiring and empowering one kid at a time!"

CWEL graduate received the Values Award for Continuous Improvement after being nominated by her peers.  A CWEL graduate received the Washington County Community Partner Award for increasing efforts of child abuse prevention in her county.

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 help and guide new caseworkers.  Another option could be to generate peer connections among CWEB/CWEL graduates and those starting the CWEB/CWEL programs, providing an additional level of support for these new 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 show that they are valued by their agencies.  With the implementation of the Family First Services Prevention Act, counties should consider utilizing their CWEB and CWEL workers to help spearhead the continuous quality improvement requirements of selected evidence-based practices.  CWEB and CWEL graduates also have the skills to impact change through diversity initiatives within their counties, particularly those involving issues of race and gender identity/expression.  CWEB and CWEL graduates have unique skills that enable them to create positive change in the child welfare workforce – to keep them engaged and interested in the work will take support, time and energy, and creative thinking on the part of supervisors and county administrators.  In the end, however, the county will receive numerous returns on their investment by cultivating an energized, creative, and engaged workforce.

**Discussion**

*CWEB*

After twenty-two years of operation, the CWEB program has made a remarkable impact: fifteen universities, 62 counties (offering internship and/or post-graduation employment), and 1,371 graduates. Strong collaboration has enabled the program to prepare individuals for work in public child welfare and increased county agencies recruiting of CWEB graduates. Figure 20 shows the impact of the CWEB program on the county child welfare workforce.

**Figure 20. CWEB Post-Graduation Hire Participation**
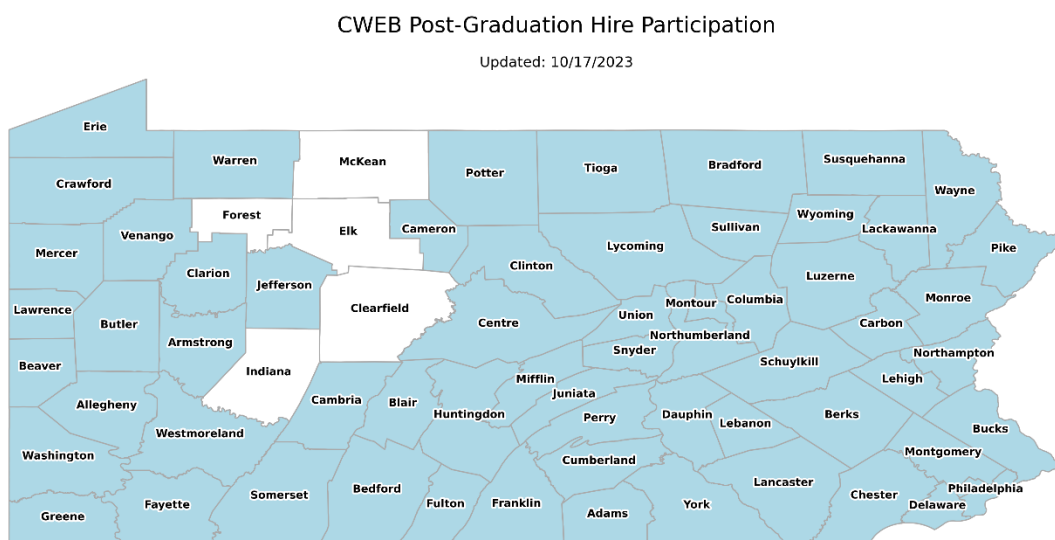


As a result of their internship experiences, CWEB graduates have exposure to the various aspects of child welfare casework with some carrying a small caseload while interning. This fully prepares them for entry-level work in the field of child welfare. CWEB graduates have entered the child welfare workforce in 93% of the counties in Pennsylvania, demonstrating the strong impact our undergraduate education program has on child welfare services across the state.

The analysis of evaluation data over the past 22 years has been key to identifying areas for program improvement.  We refined our admission criteria and review processes to include interviews for some applicants to better gauge their interest and fit in child welfare practice. The internship guidance tool for county agencies will be made widely available in academic year 2023-2024, ensuring CWEB students experience the varied tasks of a child welfare professional prior to starting their professional career. The CWEB program provides intensive case management that has increased enrollment of students in the state-mandated competency and skills-building training, *Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice*. CWEB students are assigned to a Training Liaison at their internship county and 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.

CWEB students are invited to participate in supportive bi-monthly Zoom calls with CWEB program administrators from the University of Pittsburgh.  In this reporting period, six Zoom meetings were held with participation averaging about 6 CWEB students per session. Close to one third of CWEB students who participated in an initial meeting also participated in follow-up meetings.  CWEB students did convey that the day of the week for the scheduled Zoom meetings conflicted with their day in the field. Because of this feedback, Zoom meetings for the next academic year were divided between Thursday and Friday timeslots and recorded. New topics of discussion were created for Zoom meetings during the 2023-2024 academic year to address the interests and concerns of CWEB students.

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[21]. 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.

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. We continue to make concerted efforts to connect graduates with agencies and provide technical support for portfolio development and interviewing skills.

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. 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 when necessary. The CWEB program facilitates this process through counseling with the students/graduates and then providing a professional, business-like collection system for reimbursement. 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.

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

### CWEL

After 28 years of operation, the CWEL program continues to recruit students and counties while maintaining 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. To attract a more diverse applicant pool, CWEL offers virtual information sessions. These sessions provide more flexibility for potential CWEL students to receive program information by utilizing a virtual platform. Further, 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. Feedback indicates that the program is well-administered, user friendly, and is credited as having a long-term impact on public child welfare practice as an incentive to improve worker retention.

CWEL students contribute to human service programs in both the public and private sector through active engagement in field work in a variety of community-based agency settings. Field experiences serve dual purposes for CWEL students by providing skills and knowledge of various systems to share with their colleagues upon graduation and enabling the experience and insight of the child welfare system to the field agencies. CWEL graduates continue to speak highly of their field experiences and the knowledge gained in different community and state-level agencies. Figure 21 below illustrates the breadth of programs that benefit from the skill and expertise of our child welfare students.

**Figure 21. CWEL Field Placement Types**
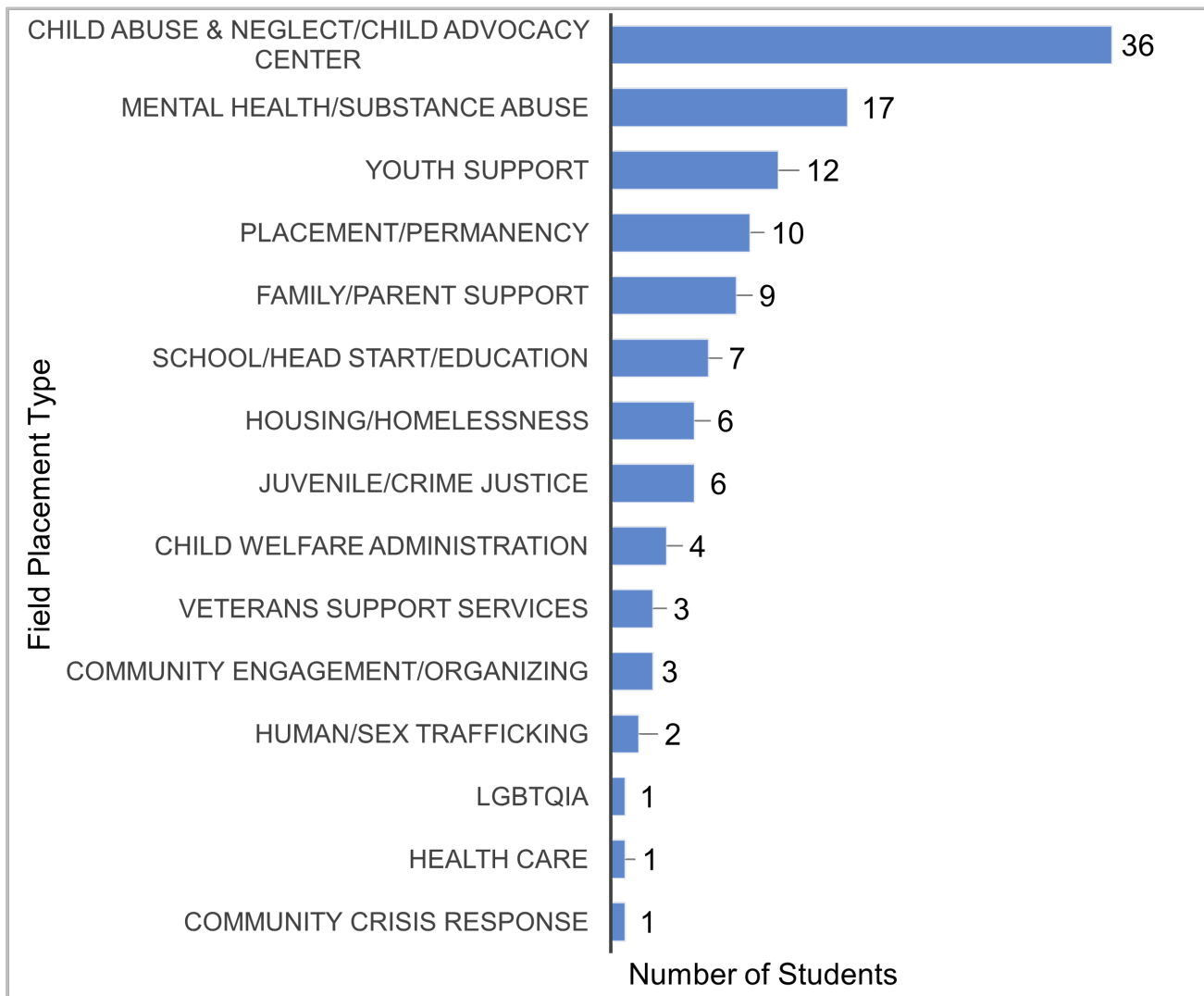


Comments from the 2022-2023 program evaluation surveys suggest that CWEL participants want the CWERP program to provide funding for social work licensure. This suggestion was taken into consideration and will be implemented in the 2023-2024 academic year, with eligible CWEL graduates receiving some monetary compensation for the social work licensure exam. We will also extend this opportunity to CWEB graduates given the availability of the LBSW credential in Pennsylvania.

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 46% (31/67) of Pennsylvania counties. Of note within that group, seven 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 22 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 22. CWEB/CWEL County Leadership**



Current Administrator or Assistant Administrator

Updated: 11/15/2023

Legend: CWEB Only Leadership | CWEL Only Leadership | CWEB and CWEL Leadership | No CWEB/CWEL Leadership

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 or fall outside of Title IV-E funding parameters. 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 represent 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, refinement of 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

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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 or minimize 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, 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[22]. 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

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[22] 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.

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 1,673 graduates who have completed the program, only 20 have failed to complete their work commitment over a 28-year period. Another 1,071 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 23 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 23 shows that of those whose commitment ended over 10 years ago, almost 40% remain in their agencies nearly 12 years after graduation (1 ½ years average commitment plus 10 years post-commitment). This does not include those who continued in the child welfare field in other agency settings.

**Figure 23. Long-term Commitment of CWEL Graduates**
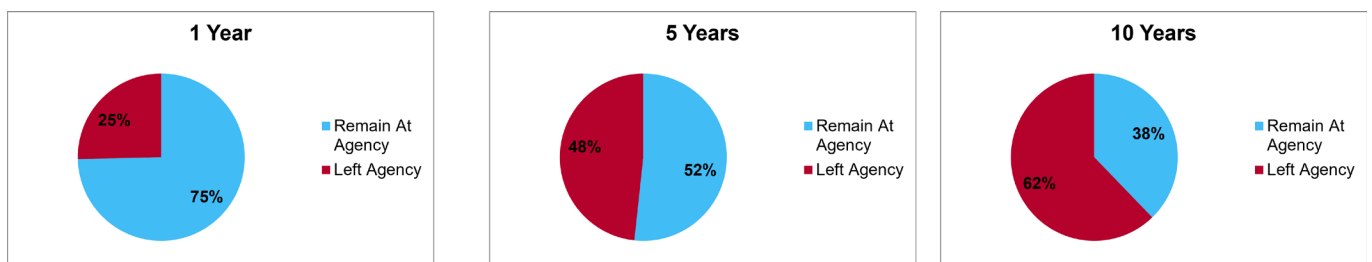
The research literature on long-term retention of workers with no legal work commitment clearly shows the importance of agency climate, quality of supervision, intrinsic worker fulfillment, job satisfaction from appropriate assignments, and personnel policies, along with salaries, as some of the keys to long-term retention[23,24,25]. 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[26].  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 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

[23] 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.

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

[25] 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.

[26] 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.

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 engage in 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 balance the demands of child welfare work, academic studies, and the other responsibilities in their lives.  Our experience over the past 28 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-six percent (76%) 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 even under the 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.

Online degree programs are often viewed as a solution for decreasing the stress associated with part-time study. While offering accessibility, online coursework of quality and merit is both rigorous and time-consuming. Students and agency administrators must be careful of the misperception that online 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 online option, they missed the interpersonal connection with their

faculty and peers and would have preferred face-to-face contact.[27] The validity of these preliminary findings were reinforced during the last several years when most universities were operating remotely for a time. 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 2022-2023 academic year, less than one-half (43%) 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. These differences include variation in internship policies, such as expectations for employment-based field placements, who can be appointed as a field instructor, and the amount of hours required in the concentration and/or foundation year(s).

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

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[27] 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.

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 is 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 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 and 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. **Maintain 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)

- Flexibility among county agencies to also support the host school's requirement for internship hours, which is often between 400-600 hours.  Extended internship requirements can be a deterrent to CWEB applicants (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, including the use of the CWEB Internship Guidance tool that was jointly developed between county agency staff and CWEB program staff (ongoing)

- Presentations at PCYA & CCAP meetings (ongoing)

- Informational sessions and reference to CWEB Internship Guidance tool (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)

- Collaboration with county Training Liaisons (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; adopted August 2020). 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 Regional Teams (ongoing)

*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 continue. 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.[28] Additional

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[28] 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

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. [29]

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

- To this end, we have requested budget approval for a pilot expansion of the CWEB program to include up to an additional seven PA schools of social work. Preliminary discussions with the faculty of these schools have received enthusiastic endorsement. If granted, this expansion can go into effect in the 2024-2025 academic year.

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

- This target may need to be adjusted based on high enrollment in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years. Partnering schools value our child welfare students. Online course work 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.

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

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).

•   For the past five years, this option was available to University of Pittsburgh MSW students through a workforce excellence award from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI).  It concluded with the last cohort of graduates in August of 2023.  The University of Pittsburgh/Child Welfare Education and

Research Programs was one of seven sites across the country selected for this award. Specific to partnership with Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families, fifteen MSW students completed coursework leading to the certificate in Children, Youth and Families, completed an advanced-level internship at the county, and entered into 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.

- As previously noted, there has been a marked decline in undergraduate student enrollment across the country and Pennsylvania is no exception. It remains to be seen whether the consolidation of six universities in the PASSHE network may have positive benefits for CWEB enrollment. As with most major transitions, it may take several years until new norms are established within PennWest and Commonwealth universities.

- Program expansion is an opportunity that has warranted continued discussion and consideration. As noted in point number 1 above, we await approval for a pilot expansion of the CWEB program to an additional seven undergraduate social work programs in PA.

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 final stage of obtaining full CSWE accreditation. We anticipate both programs joining the CWEL consortium in the 2024-2025 academic year.

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 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 Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Secretary of the Department of Human Services.  A special thank you to Laval Miller-Wilson, Deputy Secretary of the state Office of Children, Youth, and Families, for his support and partnership. We appreciate our ongoing connection with Natalie Bates, Chief of Staff.  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 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 throughout each year. Your work is very appreciated and touches the lives of our students, their colleagues, and the community.

# **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 10/2025 | 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 6/2025 | | 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 | | | CWEB 2001 |
| Temple University | 2027-2028 | BSW 10/2023 MSW 10/2023 | | 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 2/2024 | | 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

Child Welfare Education and Research Programs
Participating Schools

Updated: 11/15/2023

Penn West - Edinboro

Univ Pittsburgh - Bradford

Mansfield Univ

Marywood - Main

Slippery Rock Univ

Lock Haven Univ

East Stroudsburg Univ

Bloomsburg Univ

Marywood - Lehigh Valley

Univ Pittsburgh - Main

Kutztown Univ

Penn West - California

Shippensburg Univ

Millersville Univ

Bryn Mawr College

West Chester

Univ Pennsylvania

Widener Univ

Temple - Main

Legend:
- ● CWEB Only
- ● CWEL Only
- ● CWEB and CWEL

University of Pittsburgh

# Appendix C

Table II

Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEB Schools

2022-2023

**Table III**

**Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings**

**of**

**Approved CWEB Schools for 2022-2023**

| 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[30] |
| West Chester University | Child Welfare Practice and Policy |
| Widener University | Families at Risk |

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[30] 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 D

Table III

Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools

2022-2023

# Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings: Approved CWEL Schools
# 2022-2023

**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 |

**California University (PennWest University), Social Work Department**

| |
|---|
| Social Work Practice with Children and Youth |
| Practice in Substance Use |
| Trauma Theory and Interventions |

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

| |
|---|
| Social Work Practice with Children and Youth |
| Practice in Substance Use |
| Trauma Theory and Interventions |

**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/Family |
| 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 |
| Children and Families in the Social Environment |
| Human Trafficking |
| Loss & Grief |

**University of Pittsburgh**

| |
|---|
| Children and Families at Risk |
| Child and Family Policy |
| Social Work Practice with African American Families |
| Direct Practice with Children and Adolescents |
| Intimate Partner Violence |
| Child Maltreatment |
| Social Work with Substance Use and Other Addictive Disorders |
| Social Work Practice and Traumatic Stress |
| Social Work Practice with Families |

**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 Services and Policies |
| 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 |
| Grief and Loss Across the Life Cycle |

# Appendix E

CWEB County Participation Map

2001-2023

# Counties Providing Student Internships and/or Employment for Graduates of the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Program

Updated: 11/15/2023
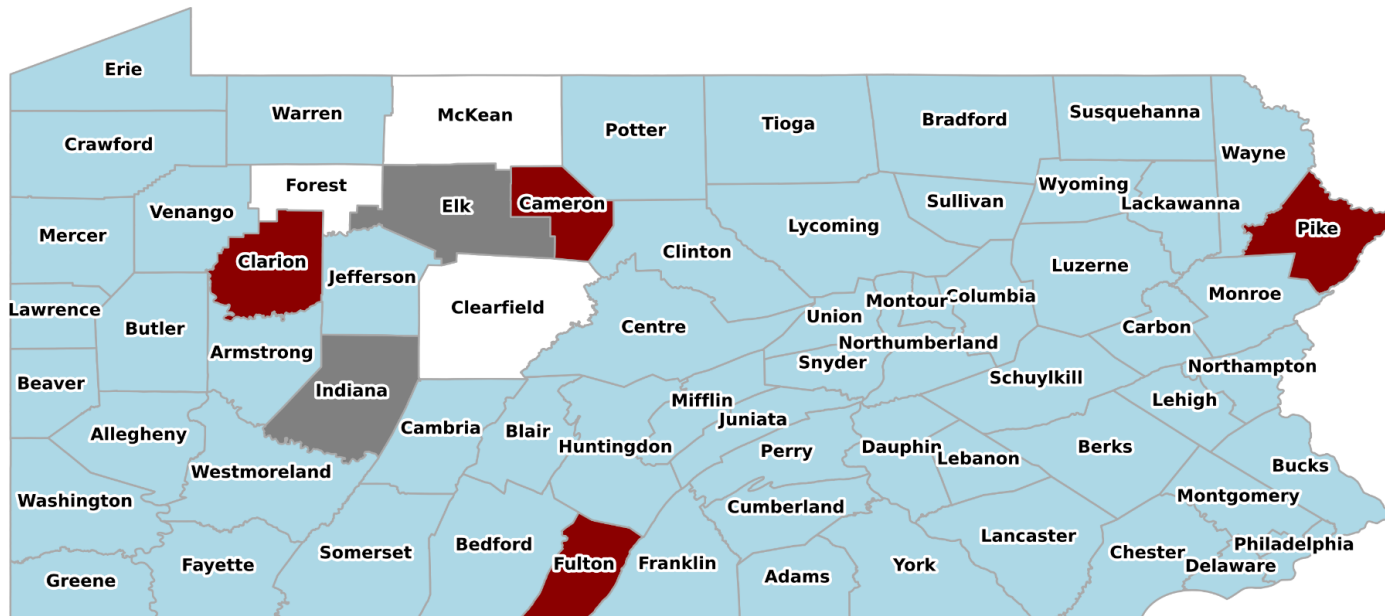


| | No CWEB Internship or Post-Grad Employment History | | CWEB Internship History | | CWEB Post-Grad Employment History | | CWEB Internship and Post-Grad Employment History |

University of Pittsburgh

# Appendix F

CWEB Overview

2001-2023

Charts 1-2

**Chart 1**

**Child Welfare for Baccalaureates**

**2001-2023 Cumulative Admissions (Projected Through 2024)**

## CWEB Cumulative Admissions

| Academic Year | Cumulative Count |
|---|---|
| 2001–2002 | 72 |
| 2002–2003 | 170 |
| 2003–2004 | 264 |
| 2004–2005 | 365 |
| 2005–2006 | 452 |
| 2006–2007 | 535 |
| 2007–2008 | 615 |
| 2008–2009 | 697 |
| 2009–2010 | 750 |
| 2010–2011 | 795 |
| 2011–2012 | 863 |
| 2012–2013 | 914 |
| 2013–2014 | 970 |
| 2014–2015 | 1041 |
| 2015–2016 | 1105 |
| 2016–2017 | 1159 |
| 2017–2018 | 1214 |
| 2018–2019 | 1270 |
| 2019–2020 | 1314 |
| 2020–2021 | 1361 |
| 2021–2022 | 1406 |
| 2022–2023 | 1432 |

# Chart 2
# CWEB Post-Grad County Employment
# Hiring County for Graduates- Fall 2018 thru Summer 2023

CWEB Post-Graduation County Employment
Hiring County for Graduates: Fall 2018 through Summer 2023

Updated: 11/15/2023



| | Recent CWEB Grad Hired | | No Recent Hire History |

University of PITTSBURGH

# Appendix G




CWEL Overview

1995 - 2023

Charts 1-2

**Chart 1**

**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**

**1995-2023 Cumulative Admissions (Projected Through 2024)**



CWEL Cumulative Admissions

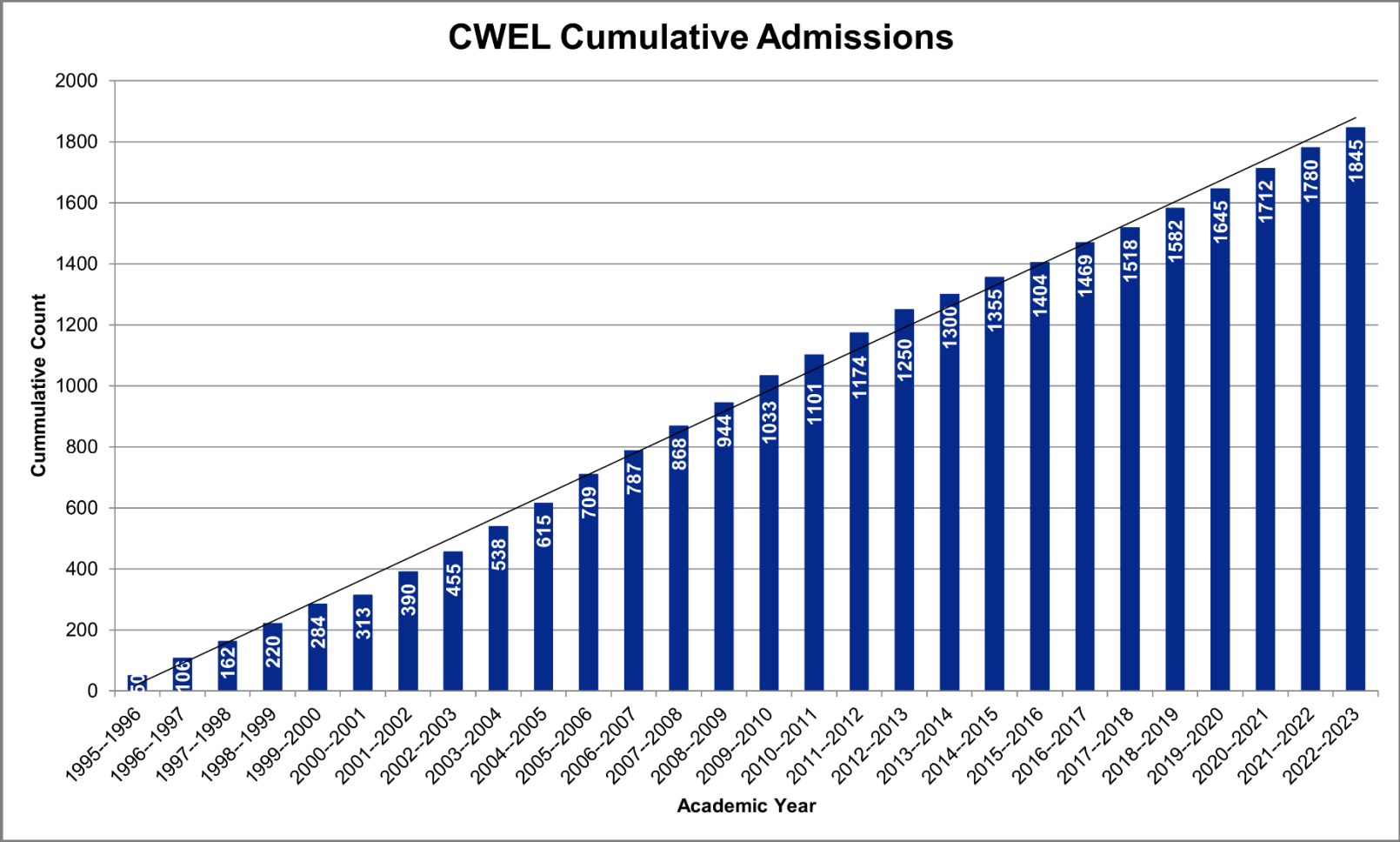| Academic Year | Cumulative Count |
|---|---|
| 1995~1996 | 50 |
| 1996~1997 | 106 |
| 1997~1998 | 162 |
| 1998~1999 | 220 |
| 1999~2000 | 284 |
| 2000~2001 | 313 |
| 2001~2002 | 390 |
| 2002~2003 | 455 |
| 2003~2004 | 538 |
| 2004~2005 | 615 |
| 2005~2006 | 709 |
| 2006~2007 | 787 |
| 2007~2008 | 868 |
| 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 |
| 2022~2023 | 1845 |

# Chart 2
## CWEL County Impact
## Historical Number of CWEL Graduates by County

CWEL County Impact
Historical Number of CWEL Graduates by County

Updated: 11/15/2023



University of Pittsburgh
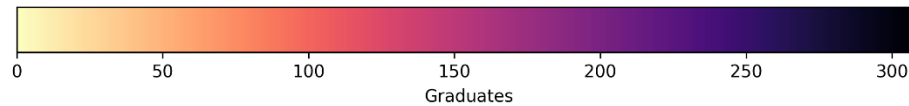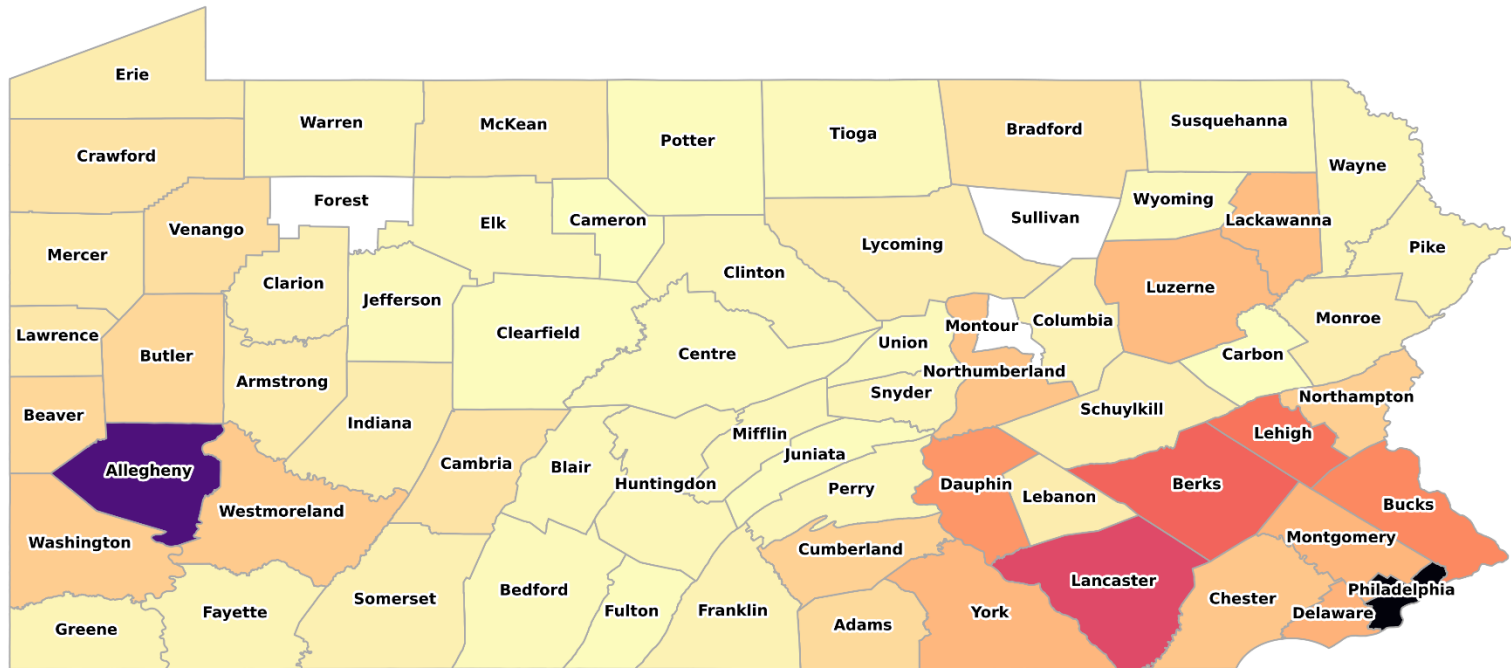
# Appendix H


# 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=15 | CWEL, Full-Time n=49 | CWEL, Part-Time n=48 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *CWERP Program Processes* | Average (SD) | Average (SD) | Average (SD) |
| The program information clearly explains the CWEB/CWEL program | 4.27 (1.10) | 4.41 (1.14) | 4.315 (0.99) |
| The application form instructions are clear | 4.73 (0.80) | 4.49 (0.82) | 4.27 (0.98) |
| I understood the contract | 4.87 (0.35) | 4.47 (0.96) | 4.23 (0.93) |
| The website is easy to use | 3.93 (1.16) | 4.08 (0.91) | 3.81 (1.14) |
| I use the handbook when I have a question | 3.87 (0.99) | 4.02 (1.07) | 3.77 (1.13) |
| The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email | 4.93 (0.26) | 4.70 (0.70) | 4.57 (0.86) |
| The staff (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email | 5.00 (0.00) | 4.85 (0.42) | 4.52 (0.90) |
| The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem | 4.86 (0.54) | 4.51 (0.99) | 4.60 (0.98) |
| The staff (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem | 4.86 (0.54) | 4.56 (0.98) | 4.47 (0.88) |
| *Current Degree Program* | | | |
| My academic advisor is familiar with the CWEB/CWEL program | 4.27 (1.10) | 4.41 (0.81) | 3.66 (1.31) |
| The child welfare courses that I have taken are relevant | 4.80 (0.56) | 4.39 (1.06) | 4.27 (1.04) |
| The faculty who teach the child welfare courses relate the content to practice | 4.86 (0.54) | 4.38 (1.03) | 4.07 (0.90) |
| I have been able to apply what I learn in the class to field/internship or job | 4.73 (0.59) | 4.51 (0.94) | 4.38 (0.87) |
| *Field/Internship Experiences* | | | |
| I have felt supported in the process of arranging my field/internship | 4.80 (0.56) | 3.83 (1.45) | 3.34 (1.34) |
| I have received good supervision in the field | 4.60 (0.74) | 4.36 (1.19) | 4.28 (0.96) |
| I was able to try new ideas or skills from class in my field | 4.40 (0.83) | 4.49 (0.86) | 4.32 (0.98) |
| This field/internship has been a valuable learning experience | 4.87 (0.52) | 4.47 (0.98) | 4.35 (0.92) |

| Item | CWEB n=15 | CWEL, Full-Time n=49 | CWEL, Part-Time n=48 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Agency/Field Interface* | *Average (SD)* | *Average (SD)* | *Average (SD)* |
| My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the CWEB program | 4.47 (0.92) | -- | -- |
| My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the State Civil Service Exam | 4.50 (0.80) | -- | -- |
| I was able to easily arrange the time needed to go to classes | -- | -- | 3.95 (1.32) |
| I was able to easily arrange the time needed to do my field placement | -- | -- | 3.74 (1.46) |
| My agency was able to accommodate my return in the summer | -- | 4.52 (0.77) | -- |
| When I returned in the summer, I had supplies to do my work | -- | 4.30 (1.10) | -- |
| *Value of the Degree to the Field* | | | |
| My degree will help me to contribute to the field | 5.00 (0.00) | 4.82 (0.49) | 4.65 (0.76) |
| I will be able to use what I am learning when I am employed or return to a child welfare agency | 5.00 (0.00) | 4.65 (0.75) | 4.65 (0.76) |
| The CWEB or CWEL program gave me an educational opportunity that I would not have had otherwise | 4.57 (0.76) | 4.80 (0.68) | 4.54 (0.97) |
| The CWEB or CWEL program has positively impacted my development as a social work professional | 4.80 (0.41) | 4.76 (0.72) | 4.58 (0.82) |
| The CWEB and CWEL program should be made available to more students and child welfare workers | 4.87 (0.35) | 4.76 (0.66) | 4.69 (0.95) |
| 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? | 9.27 (1.16) | 9.37 (1.27) | 9.31 (1.17) |

**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=19 Average (SD) | CWEL n=34 Average (SD) |
|---|---|---|
| My program prepared me for working in a child welfare agency | 4.68 (0.75) | 4.44 (0.75) |
| My skills were equal to better than other caseworkers not in the program | 4.11 (0.99) | 4.53 (0.93) |
| I have a better understanding of the complex problems of our families | 4.26 (0.81) | 4.53 (0.90) |
| My education has helped me to find new solutions to the problems that are typical of our families | 4.58 (0.51) | 4.62 (0.65) |
| I am encouraged to practice my new skills in my position | 4.74 (0.45) | 4.38 (0.99) |
| I am encouraged to share my knowledge with other workers | 4.47 (0.70) | 4.29 (0.97) |
| I am given the opportunity and authority to make decisions | 4.53 (0.70) | 3.82 (1.45) |
| There is current opportunity for promotion in my agency | 4.16 (1.34) | 3.65 (1.61) |
| I can see future opportunities for advancing in my agency | 4.16 (0.96) | 3.79 (1.48) |
| I plan to remain at my agency after my commitment period is over | 3.53 (1.22) | 3.79 (1.27) |
| My long-term career plan is to work with children and families | 3.68 (1.06) | 4.32 (1.27) |
| I would recommend my agency to others for employment in social work | 4.21 (0.86) | 3.88 (1.43) |
| I would recommend public child welfare services to others looking for employment in social work | 4.16 (0.96) | 4.27 (0.94) |
| I have seriously considered leaving public child welfare (lower scores=greater commitment) | 2.68 (1.25) | 3.45 (1.39) |
| If I were not contractually obligated to remain in public child welfare for my commitment, I would leave (lower scores=greater commitment) | 2.79 (1.27) | 2.91 (1.38) |
| On a scale of 1-10, with 1 having the least value and 10 the greatest value, what is the value of the CWEB and CWEL program to the public child welfare system | 9.00 (1.03) | 9.32 (1.11) |

**Table 3**
**Average Ratings of Organizational Climate Dimensions by CWEB and CWEL Long-Term (1+ years) Graduates**
(1=To a Very Little Extent; 2=To a Little Extent; 3=To Some Extent; 4=To a Great Extent; 5=To a Very Great Extent)

| Quality | CWEB (n=13) | CWEL (n=27) | Total (n=40) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teamwork | 3.63 | 3.14 | 3.30 |
| Morale | 3.05 | 2.81 | 2.88 |
| Information Flow | 3.42 | 3.05 | 3.17 |
| Employee Involvement | 2.96 | 2.42 | 2.97 |
| Supervision | 4.19 | 2.97 | 3.92 |
| Meetings | 3.14 | 3.06 | 3.09 |
| Overall Climate | 3.58 | 3.18 | 3.31 |

**Table 4**
**Average Scores per Item for County Child Welfare Administrators: CWEB Graduate Preparedness**
(1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3=Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5=Strongly Agree)

| Item | Average (SD) |
|---|---|
| When compared to other new caseworkers, CWEB graduates are more prepared to carry a child welfare caseload | 3.84 (0.38) |
| When compared to other new caseworkers, CWEB graduates need less support in completing the tasks of a child welfare caseworker. | 3.45 (0.69) |
| When compared to other new caseworkers, CWEB graduates can better cope with the emotional aspects of child welfare casework. | 3.40 (0.87) |
| When compared to other new caseworkers, CWEB graduates have a better understanding of the laws and policies governing county child welfare agencies. | 3.74 (0.69) |

**Table 5**
**Average Scores per Item for County Child Welfare Administrators: Graduate Involvement in County Initiatives**
(1=Never Involved; 2=Sometimes Involved; 3=Involved Half the Time; 4=Involved Most of the Time; 5=Always Involved)

| Item | Average (SD) |
|---|---|
| Racial diversity, equity, and inclusion | 3.11 (1.30) |
| Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE) | 3.03 (1.25) |
| Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) | 3.38 (1.44) |
| Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) | 3.43 (1.32) |
| Quality Service Review/ Children and Family Services Review (QSR/CFSR) | 3.03 (1.40) |
| Trauma-Informed Care | 3.84 (1.26) |
| Family Group Decision Making/Conferencing and Teaming/Family Engagement | 3.58 (1.20) |
| Organizational Effectiveness Initiatives | 3.35 (1.32) |
| Recruitment and Retention | 3.16 (1.37) |
| Family Finding | 3.27 (1.35) |

**Table 6. School Administrator's Ratings of Core Competencies**

| Core Competency | Mean |
|---|---|
| Interpersonal Relations (n=14) | 4.57 |
| Adaptability (n=3) | 4.33 |
| Communication Skills (n=14) | 4.43 |
| Observation Skills (n=5) | 3.80 |
| Planning and Organizing Work (n=3) | 4.00 |
| Analytic Thinking (n=4) | 4.00 |
| Motivation (n=4) | 4.50 |
| Self-Awareness/Confidence (n=14) | 4.36 |
| Sense of Mission (n=4) | 4.75 |
| Teamwork (n=5) | 4.20 |

**Table 7. School Administrator's Ratings of Traditional Selection Criteria**

| Traditional Indicators | Mean |
|---|---|
| Interest in Working with Children and Families (n=14) | 4.29 |
| Faculty Recommendation (n=14) | 4.21 |
| GPA (n=14) | 3.64 |
| Writing Ability (n=14) | 3.93 |
| Engagement in Extracurricular Activities (n=14) | 2.57 |
| Financial Need (n=14) | 3.21 |

**Table *8*. CWEB and CWEL Core Competency Ratings by Agency Administrators**

| Core Competency | CWEB Mean | CWEL Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Interpersonal Relations | 3.73 (n=26) | 3.84 (n=37) |
| Adaptability | 3.50 (n=6) | 3.92 (n=12) |
| Communication Skills | 3.88 (n=26) | 3.89 (n=37) |
| Observation Skills | 4.00 (n=6) | 3.82 (n=11) |
| Planning and Organizing Work | 3.50 (n=8) | 3.88 (n=8) |
| Analytic Thinking | 3.38 (n=8) | 3.83 (n=12) |
| Motivation | 3.71 (n=7) | 3.82 (n=11) |
| Self-Awareness/Confidence | 3.58 (n=26) | 3.89 (n=37) |
| Sense of Mission | 4.00 (n=8) | 3.90 (n=10) |
| Teamwork | 4.00 (n=9) | 3.50 (n=10) |

**Table 9. CWEB Mentors/Supervisor's Core Competency Ratings for CWEB Program Participants**

| Core Competency | CWEB Mean |
|---|---|
| Interpersonal Relations | 3.62 (n=21) |
| Adaptability | 3.00 (n=5) |
| Communication Skills | 3.05 (n=21) |
| Observation Skills | 3.13 (n=8) |
| Planning and Organizing Work | 3.75 (n=4) |
| Analytic Thinking | 3.00 (n=7) |
| Motivation | 3.00 (n=5) |
| Self-Awareness/Confidence | 2.90 (n=21) |
| Sense of Mission | 3.57 (n=7) |
| Teamwork | 3.33 (n=6) |

**Statistical Testing and Results**

*Current Students*

Significant differences between CWEB and CWEL, Part-Time and Full-Time CWEL were determined by conducting t-tests with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant.

**Table 10**

**Statistically Significant Results Comparing CWEB to CWEL**

| Item | t value | p value |
|------|---------|---------|
| My degree will help me to contribute to the field | 4.14 | <.001 |
| I will be able to use what I am learning when I am employed or return to a child welfare agency | 4.60 | <.001 |
| The child welfare courses that I have taken are relevant | 2.57 | .02 |
| The faculty who teach the child welfare courses relate the content to practice | 3.59 | .001 |
| I understood the contract | 3.90 | <.001 |
| The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email | 2.88 | .005 |
| The staff (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email | 4.14 | <.001 |
| The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem | 2.07 | .05 |
| The staff (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem | 2.06 | .05 |
| I have felt supported in the process of arranging my field/internship | 5.40 | <.001 |
| This field/internship has been a valuable learning experience | 2.59 | .01 |

**Table 11**

**Statistically Significant Results Comparing Full-Time to Part-Time CWEL**

| Item | t value | p value |
|------|---------|---------|
| My academic advisor is familiar with the CWEB/CWEL program | 3.36 | .001 |
| The staff (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email | 2.18 | .03 |

*Recent Graduates*

Significant differences between CWEB and CWEL was determined by conducting t-tests with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant.

**Table 12**

**Statistically Significant Results Comparing CWEB to CWEL**

| Item | t value | p value |
|------|---------|---------|
| I am given the opportunity and authority to make decisions | 2.38 | .021 |
| I have seriously considered leaving public child welfare (lower scores=greater commitment) | -1.99 | .05 |
| In a typical month, how many children do you see? | -2.95 | .005 |
| Subscale: Agency uses educational expertise | 2.02 | .05 |

*Long-Term Graduates*
Significant differences between CWEB and CWEL and those employed 5 years and under to those employed 6 years and over were determined by conducting t-tests with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant.

**Table 13**

**Statistically Significant Results Comparing 5 Years of Employment and Under to 6 Years of Employment and Over**

| Item | t value | p value |
|---|---|---|
| Teamwork | 2.42 | .02 |
| Information Flow | 2.07 | .05 |

*Core Competencies*
Significant differences between CWEB Mentors/Supervisors and County Administrators on the ratings of core competencies for CWEB graduates were determined by conducting t-tests with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant.

**Table 14**

**Statistically Significant Results Comparing Core Competencies of CWEB Graduates as Rated by CWEB Mentors/Supervisors Versus County Administrators**

| Item | t value | p value |
|---|---|---|
| Communication Skills | -3.40 | .001 |
| Observation Skills | -2.14 | .05 |
| Self-Awareness/Confidence | -3.01 | .004 |

Significant differences between School Administrators and County Administrators on the ratings of core competencies for CWEB graduates were determined by conducting t-tests with anything less than .05 considered statistically significant.

**Table 15**

**Statistically Significant Results Comparing Core Competencies of CWEB Graduates as Rated by School Administrators Versus County Administrators**

| Item | t value | p value |
|---|---|---|
| Interpersonal Relations | -3.82 | <.001 |
| Communication Skills | -2.13 | .04 |
| Analytic Thinking | -3.42 | .01 |
| Self-Awareness/Confidence | -3.81 | <.001 |

To establish if there are any significant differences between CWEB Mentors/Supervisors, County Administrators, and School Administrator, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was performed. 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. Anything less than a .05 is considered statistically significant.

**Table 16**

**Statistically Significant Results of Kruskal-Wallis H Test Comparing Core Competencies of CWEB Graduates as Rated by, School Administrators, CWEB Mentors/Supervisors, and County Administrators**

| Item | Mean Ranking | H value | p value |
|------|-------------|---------|---------|
| Interpersonal Relations | CWEB Mentor/Supervisor: 41.71<br>County Administrator: 46.67<br>School Administrator: 72.04 | 12.29 | .002 |
| Communication Skills | CWEB Mentor/Supervisor: 28.40<br>County Administrator: 51.80<br>School Administrator: 68.69 | 21.40 | <.001 |
| Motivation | CWEB Mentor/Supervisor: 8.50<br>County Administrator: 14.08<br>School Administrator: 20.50 | 5.84 | .05 |
| Sefl-Awareness/Confidence | CWEB Mentor/Supervisor: 26.67<br>County Administrator: 51.79<br>School Administrator: 71.58 | 24.73 | <.001 |

# Appendix I

Supplemental CWEB and CWEL Materials Available Online
[http://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-education-research-programs](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
- CWEB Internship Guidance
- CWEB Flyer
- Child Welfare Realistic Job Preview Video
- CWEL Student Handbook
- CWEL Expense Reimbursement Guide
- CWEL Flyer
- Program Evaluation Instruments

# Appendix J
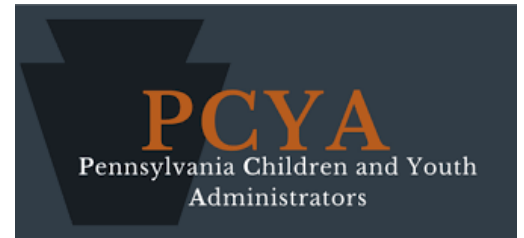
## Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

## CWEB/CWEL Faculty and Staff

| Name | Position Title | CWEB/CWEL Percent of Effort | Employment Dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Helen Cahalane, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW | Principal Investigator | 52% | 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 | 78% | 6/16/14-present |
| Yvonne Hamm, BA | Senior Program Administrator | 98% | 6/28/10-present |
| Alicia Johnson, Ph.D., LSW | CWEL Academic Coordinator | 97% | 7/1/20-present |
| Marlo Perry, Ph.D. | Research Associate Professor | 25% | 8/1/10-present |
| Brooke Rawls, Ph.D., LCSW | CWEB Academic Coordinator | 100% | 7/19/21-present |
| Michael Schrecengost, MPPM, CMA | Chief Fiscal Officer | 63% | 3/3/03-present |
| Robert Winners, BS | Student Records Data Manager | 100% | 1/1/23-present |
| Rachel Winters, MA | Senior Evaluation Coordinator | 48% | 3/16/09-present |

Published by

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


**www.socialwork.pitt.edu/research/child-welfare/index.php
1-866-275-2935**