Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

Over 81 Years of Child Welfare Leadership!

2018-2019 Executive Summary

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

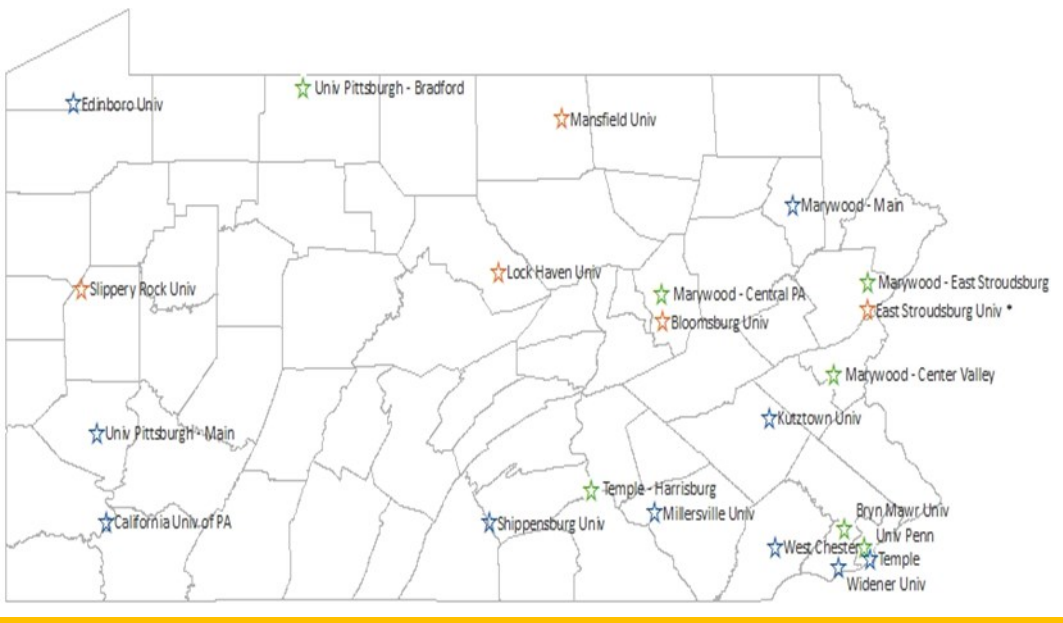# Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

Mission: strengthen child welfare services to 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.

Degree programs: Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB)
Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL)

Administered by:
University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work

University of Pittsburgh · pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES · PCYA Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators

Participating Schools:

EDINBORO UNIVERSITY
SlipperyRock University of Pennsylvania
MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY
MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY
Penn UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
Widener University
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
University of Pittsburgh
ESU
LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
West Chester University
MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY
KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA CALU
SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY
BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY
BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

CWEB:
- 18th Academic Year
- 1,217 Graduates
- Employed in 88% of Pennsylvania counties

CWEL:
- 24th Academic year
- 1,435 graduates
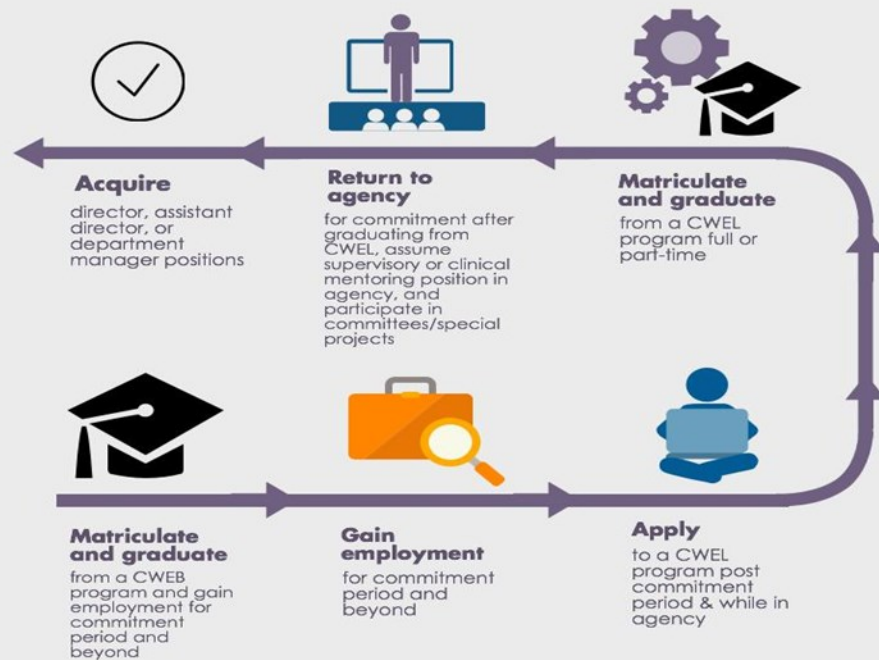- 18% of Pennsylvania child welfare workforce

Pennsylvania

99% county participation in CWEB/CWEL programs

40% of counties benefit from CWEL leadership

Many current child welfare trainers/consultants are CWEL graduates

Two counties have a CWEB graduate in an agency leadership position

Program Evaluation:
- Annual review of administrative and survey data to evaluate how students/graduates perceive their preparation for child welfare work
- Response rates:
  - County Administrators: 91%
  - School Administrators: 81%
  - Current Students: 81%
  - Graduates: 50%

CAREER PATHWAY

Acquire — director, assistant director, or department manager positions

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

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

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

Gain employment — for commitment period and beyond

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

- 11% of CWEL students participated in the CWEB program
- 100% of CWEL students remain in the agency where they completed their post-CWEB commitment
- 69% of CWEB graduates and 97% of CWEL graduates remain employed in child welfare services one-two years post graduation

"The CWEB program allowed me the opportunity to live two days a week in the life of an actual child welfare social worker. It also allowed me the opportunity to work closely with clients and see the ways of the world and life through their perspective." (CWEB Graduate)

"The program isn't so much about learning new material as it is about learning a new way of thinking." (CWEL Student)

"I think out (CWEB) students are enthusiastic about their future work in the field and that helps the students focus and bring more energy into the classroom" (School administrator)

"The CWEB program is a tremendous recruitment tool for our workforce. The CWEL program provides a wonderful opportunity for our agency staff– and helps with the retention of staff/ We are seeing an increase interest among candidates across our many program offices to apply and seek agency approval." (County Administrator)


Percent

	African American	Caucasian	Other
PA Child Population	13	66	21
CWEB Students	20	72	8
CWEL Students	19	77	4
Combined CWEB/CWEL	19	75	6
PA Foster Care Population	22	44	34

■ African American ■ Caucasian ■ Other

Racial disproportionality in child welfare:
- In 2018, African American children made up approximately 13% of the U.S. child population, but represented 22% of the foster care population[1,2]
- Pennsylvania's foster care population is compromised of 34% Black of African American children, even though they are only 13% of the state's population[1,3]
- The CWEB and CWEL programs work to ensure that the workforce is reflective of the population served with 19% of program participants identifying as African American.

[1]US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (2018). *The AFCARS Report. Preliminary estimates for FY2017 as of August 10, 2018*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport25.pdf

[2]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

[3]Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (2019). *State of Child Welfare 2019.* Harrisburg, PA: Porchlight Project: Retrieved from https://www.papartnerships.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-State-of-Child-Welfare-PA.pdf
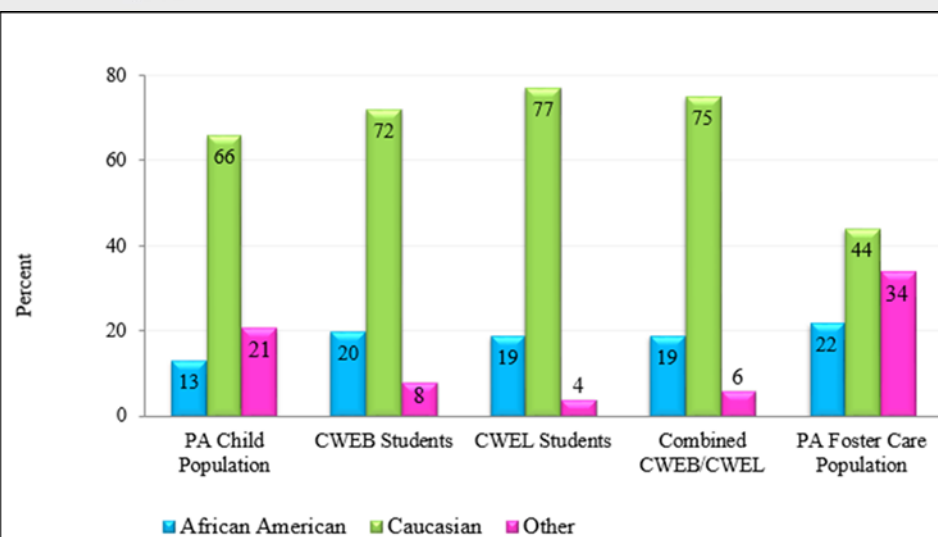
CWEL Student: Found stable housing for two families in her county's motel program that was running out of funds and would close completely.
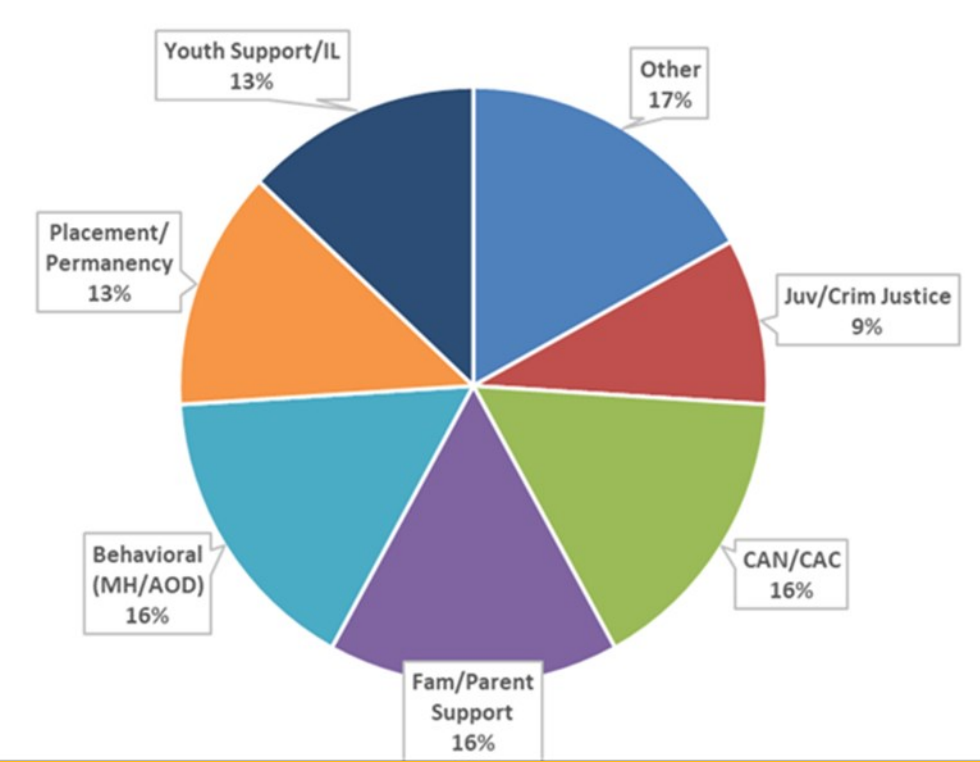
CWEB Student: Received Presidential Scholar Award from a pool of 1,500 juniors at her university and has maintained a 4.0, appearing on the dean's list every semester.

CWEB Graduate: Received "One Good Apple" award for creating a positive work environment, utilizing agency support staff, and working naturally with special needs children.

CWEB Student: Recipient of the first cohort of the Panthers forward program which provides recipients money to pay down student loan debt, also invited to participate in school's honor convocation.

CWEL Graduate: Received the Geffen Medal for Outstanding Performance in Practicum Education by working with mothers who were not making progress with their children in out of home placements.

CWEL Students - Field Placement Types (N=100)

- Youth Support/IL 13%
- Other 17%
- Juv/Crim Justice 9%
- CAN/CAC 16%
- Fam/Parent Support 16%
- Behavioral (MH/AOD) 16%
- Placement/Permanency 13%

CWEL Students:
- Gain valuable information about systems, policies, service mandates, and intervention strategies
- Transmit their experiences and knowledge of child welfare policies and procedures within provider agencies that may have limited to no understanding of child welfare services
- Encouraged to:
  - Gain experience with new service modalities or interventions
  - Work with different client populations
  - Gain knowledge of other service settings
- Mentor CWEB students and colleagues

CWEL Part-time students are close to half the CWEL population.
Part time students:
- Face challenges in managing work/life/school balance
- May have limited field placement options and less freedom in course selection
- May be at a greater risk to drop out
However, full-time students may have difficulty transitioning back to full-time work.

Online coursework has been presented as a solution to this issue, but has its own set of considerations:
- Little flexibility in due dates and completion of require assignments
- Synchronous courses involve designated meeting times
- Community-based field requirements are required

Changing Landscape of Child Welfare Services:

- Legislative/statue changes, increases in substance exposed infants/addicted parents, and turnover tax the system

- However, new modes of practice (data driven decision making, predictive predictive analytics, evidence-based interventions) and new funding legislation bring new opportunities

- Despite these challenges, graduates' ratings of organizational climate has not changed

  - Supervision is still highly valued, but morale and employee involvement are areas of improvement

  - Work load and opportunities for advancement continue to be challenges

Child Welfare for Leadership
1995-2019 Admissions
Part-Time Trend
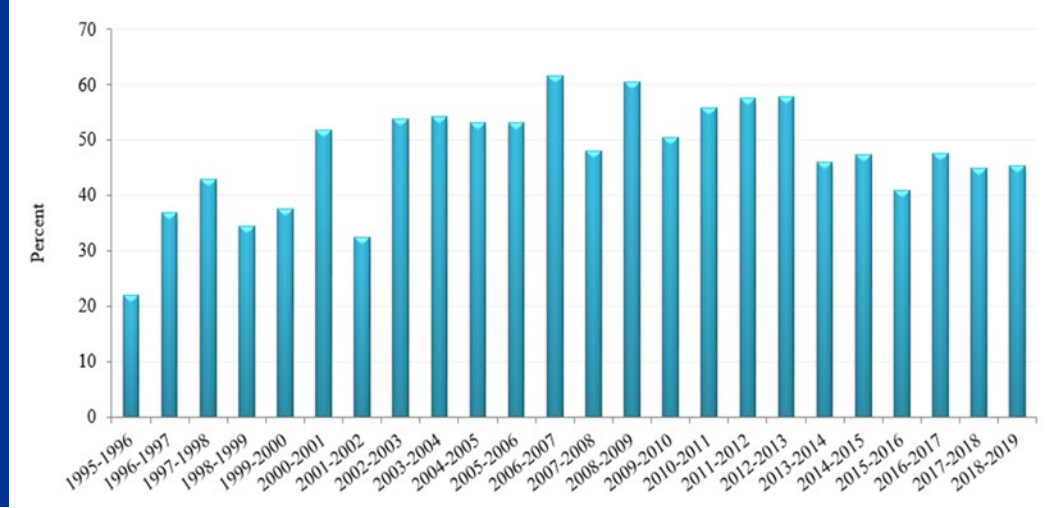
Overall Recommendations:

Increase availability of accredited social work programs and depth of undergraduate child welfare curriculum:
- Development of Child Advocacy Studies: students complete one child welfare course and a public child welfare internship. Additional courses in Child Advocacy Studies is available in an on-line hybrid form.

Include additional accredited schools of social work:
- Increasing schools would allow for greater student access, reduce student commuting time, and decrease program costs
- Include branch campuses of schools to increase options for CWEL students

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

Development of CWEB/CWEL advisory network to provide input on emerging program issues.

Program Specific Recommendations:

CWEB:

- Provide additional guidance to students and program administrators on civil service exam requirements
  - Detailed diagram illustrated various civil service and non-civil service scenarios in CWEB handbook and on CWERP web page
  - Discussions around civil service occur during annual school visits
  - Enhance student and school awareness of difference between civil service and non-civil service counties and how this impacts county hiring practices
- Increase county participation in CWEB program
- Improve successful job placement following graduation:
  - Ongoing assistance from CWERP faculty in identifying vacancies, facilitating referrals for interviews, and counseling graduates regarding employment
  - Collaboration with state civil service counties and merit hire counties
- Improve dissemination of child welfare career development opportunity through CWEB and CWEL to prospective and current participants

CWEL:

- Focus on agency work environment and additional opportunities for graduates to use advanced skills:
  - Participate in state wide workgroups on implementation of new legislation
  - Involvement in ongoing organizational effectiveness/CQI processes within counties
- Increase support to part-time students:
  - Encourage county agencies to provide flexible scheduling, modified work assignments, field work outside the agency
  - Counties are actively involved when issues arise with a student
  - Enforcement of part-time academic load
- Inclusion of advance level child welfare coursework in school curricula, particularly in evidence-informed and evidence-based practices
  - Offer courses targeted toward effective family engagement and teaming practices, motivational interviewing skills, enhanced assessments, and evidence-based practices
  - Inclusion of trauma-informed care principles in child welfare curricula

Website: https://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-education-and-research-programs

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Pennsylvanias-Child-Welfare-Education-and-Research-Programs-248773981860868/?ref=bookmarks