

Child Welfare Education and Research Programs

Over 82 Years of
Child Welfare Leadership!



**2019-2020 Executive Summary
School of Social Work
University of Pittsburgh**



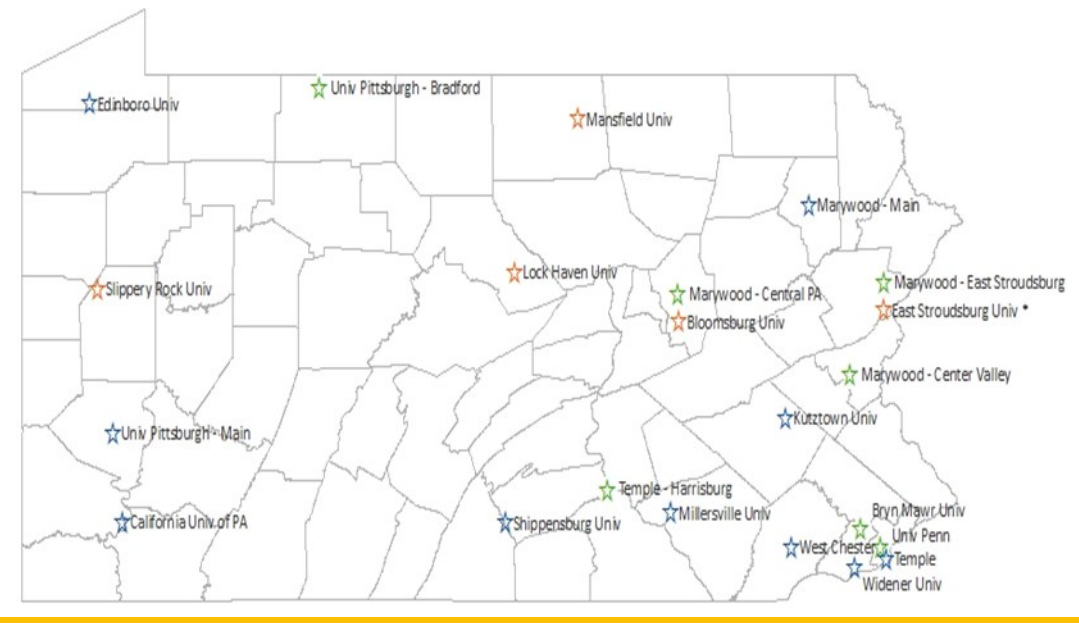
Child Welfare Education and Research Programs
 Mission: strengthen child welfare services to children and families in Pennsylvania by increasing the number of educated professionals and equipping them to deal with the increasingly complex demands of public child welfare practice.

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

Administered by:
 University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work



Participating Schools:



CWEB:

- 19th Academic Year
- 1,251 Graduates
- Employed in 91% of Pennsylvania counties



CWEL:

- 25th Academic year
- 1,494 graduates
- 20% of Pennsylvania child welfare workforce



99% county participation in CWEB/CWEL programs
 39% of counties benefit from CWEL leadership
 Many current child welfare trainers/consultants are CWEL graduates
 Seven CWEB graduates occupy high-level agency leadership positions



Program Evaluation:

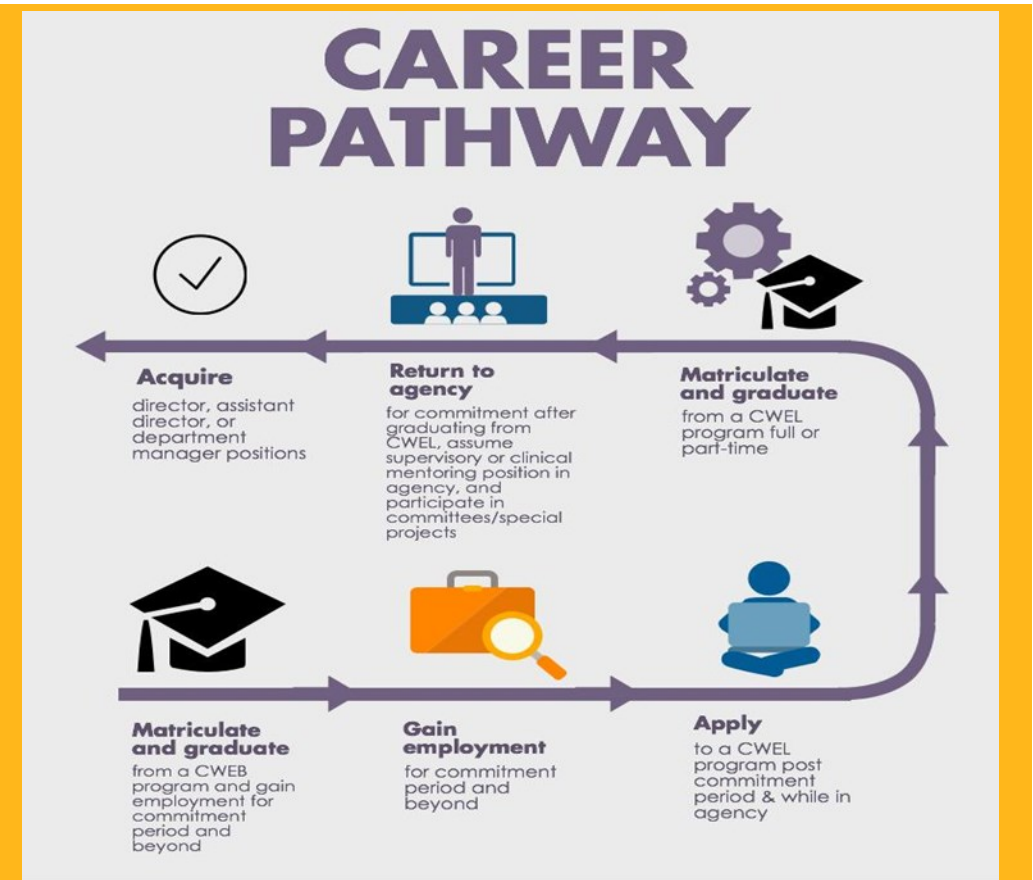
- Annual review of administrative and survey data to evaluate how students/graduates perceive their preparation for child welfare work
- Response rates:
 - County Administrators: 87%
 - School Administrators: 94%
 - Current Students: 76%
 - Graduates: 45%

“My supervisor and caseworker 3 were amazing, and I feel so much more prepared to start work, especially during these times where we’re not having in person trainings. I don’t know what I would do if I hadn’t had my internship.” (CWEB Graduate)

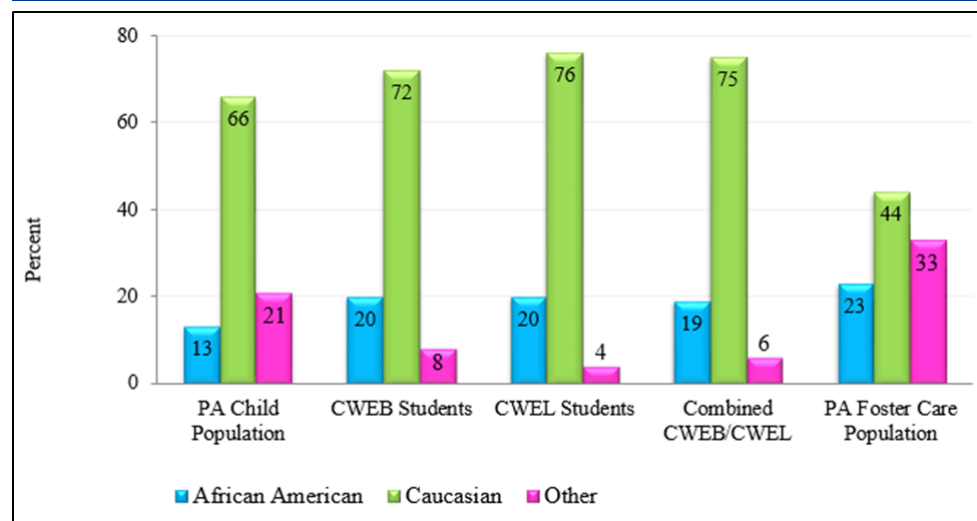
“This is an opportunity that many social workers would not be able to attain without access to the program. It supports and educates social workers, especially regarding trauma informed services, care, and organizations. It places great emphasis on self-care, resiliency, and solution/strength focused care which is critical in working with high risk populations. This program has been incredibly valuable to me and my career, which will positively impact my agency upon my return.” (CWEL Student)

“The CWEB students I have the opportunity to work with are committed to becoming great social workers in child welfare. They are willing to step into uncomfortable situations and grow in their ability to engage with families reflective of their social work education.” (School administrator)

“These programs have supported our agency's mission statement, help us focus and strive for best practice standards and elevate our staff's professionalism and skill set.” (County Administrator)



- 12% of CWEL students participated in the CWEB program
- 100% of CWEL students remain in the agency where they completed their post-CWEB commitment
- Of those who completed a survey, 100% of CWEB graduates and 84% of CWEL graduates remain employed in child welfare services one-two years post graduation



Racial disproportionality in child welfare:

- In 2019, African American children made up approximately 14% of the U.S. child population, but represented 23% of the foster care population^{1,2}
- Pennsylvania’s foster care population is comprised of 33% Black or 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 20% of program participants identifying as African American.

¹US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau (2019). *The AFCARS Report. Preliminary estimates for FY2019 as of June 23, 2020*. Washington, DC: Children’s Bureau.
²The 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>
³Pennsylvania Population. (2020). Retrieved 2020-08-26, from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/pennsylvania-population>.

CWEB Graduate: Created a "Cabinetry Room" in Philadelphia County to provide personal hygiene essentials to families. A "Reading Room" was established, which provided over 2,000 books to the residents of Philadelphia.

CWEL Student: Awarded the Excellence in Social Work Practice Award by showcasing exemplary commitment to social work and displaying outstanding potential as a social work professional in both scholarship and field work.

CWEL Student: received the Children's Champion award from the Children's Resource Center in Harrisburg. This award is given to individuals who demonstrate excellence in service delivery in the field of child protection in the Central Pennsylvania region.

CWEL Student: co-facilitates the PAN placement group helping parents feel a sense of belonging, make connections between their pasts and their current behavior and plan for protective factors to prevent abuse and neglect. Parents in this group felt hopeful and anticipated the weekly group.

CWEL Student: proposed the Bridge Over Newborn Detachment (BOND) Act of 2019 that enables first time mothers with substance abuse be placed with their newborn in a licensed foster care home allowing mothers and newborns to bond while the mother participates in substance abuse treatment.



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:

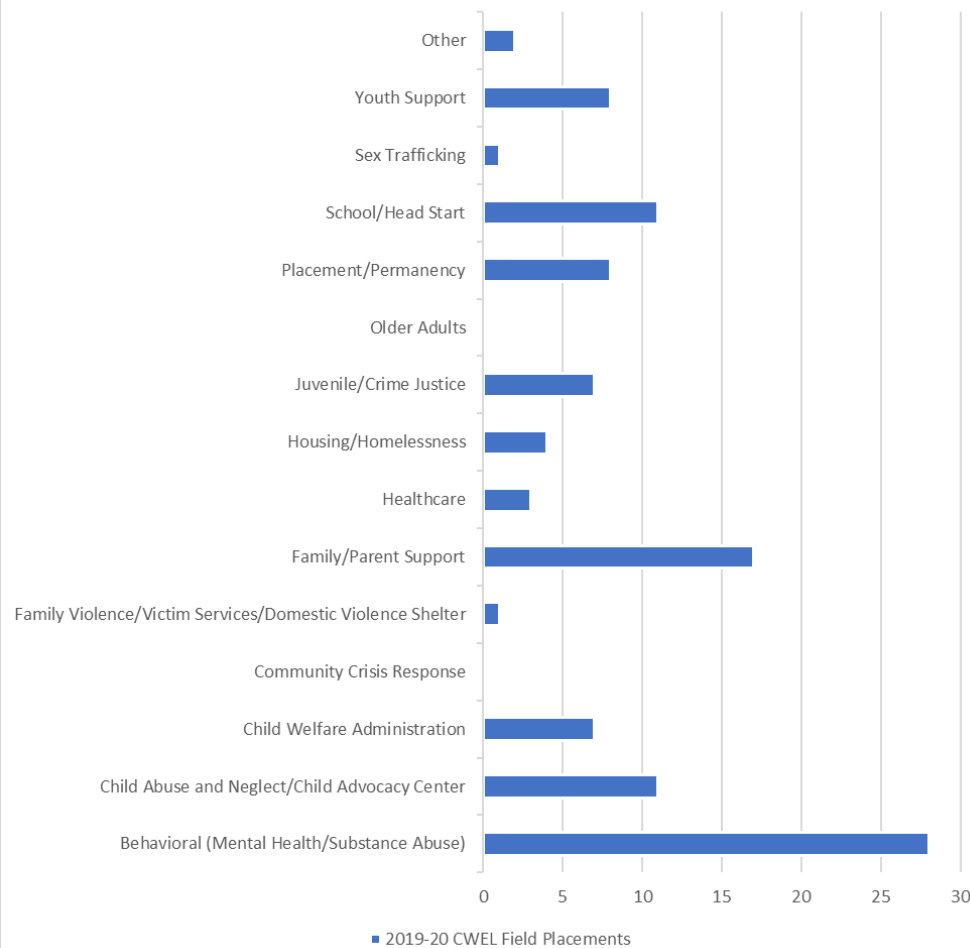
- Face challenges in managing work/life/school balance
- May have limited field placement options and less freedom in course selection
- May be at a greater risk to drop out

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

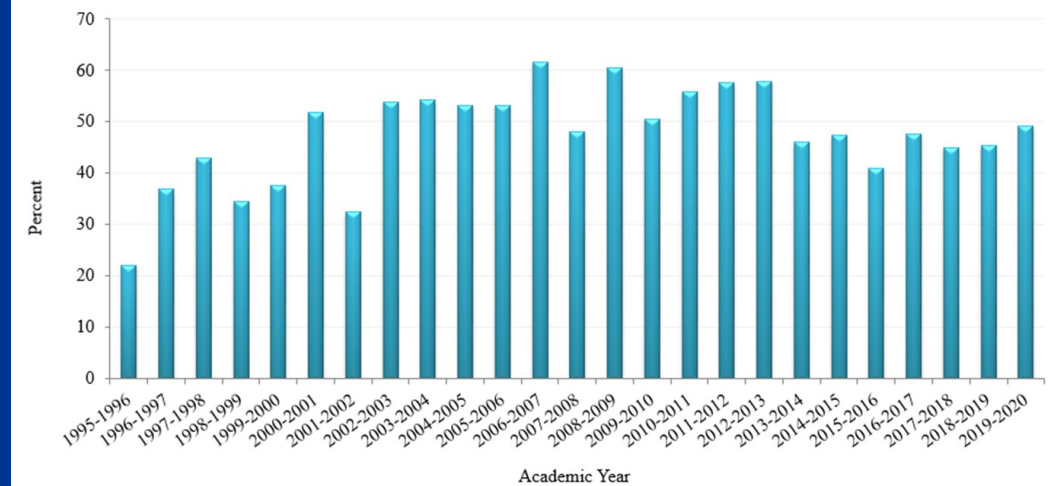
2019-20 CWEL Field Placements



Changing Landscape of Child Welfare Services:

- Legislative/statue changes, increases in substance exposed infants/addicted parents, and turnover tax the system
- Pandemic has resulted in new demands, new stressors, and an increased responsibility for supporting families and children in unprecedented times
- However, new modes of practice (data driven decision making, predictive analytics, evidence-based interventions) and new funding legislation bring new opportunities
- Passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act in February of 2018 and the implementation of state-level FFSPA Prevention Plans brings additional opportunities and expectations to the child welfare workforce
- Despite these challenges, graduates' ratings of organizational climate has not changed
- Supervision is still highly valued, but morale and information flow are areas of improvement
- Work load and opportunities for advancement continue to be challenges

Chart 7
Child Welfare for Leadership
1995-2020 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.

Incorporation of trauma-informed supervision at the county level.

Program Specific Recommendations:

CWEB:

- Further guidance to university faculty on the details of civil service requirements and other technical aspects related to county internship and employment
 - Targeted discussions occur during school visits and informational meetings
 - “Frequently Asked Questions” fact sheet posted on CWERP website
 - Diagram of civil service/non-civil service internship path included in student manual
 - CWEB presence at annual PA Undergraduate Social Work Education (PAUSWE) meetings held in conjunction with PA-NASW
- 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 state-wide practice and policy initiatives
- 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>