

***2017 State Roundtable Report  
Caseworker Retention Workgroup***

## Caseworker Retention Workgroup

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## History

In May 2015, following concerns raised throughout all Leadership Roundtables, the State Roundtable convened the Caseworker Retention Workgroup to examine its impact on the dependency system. An impressive 38 professionals representing dependency court, child welfare, county and state entities, met over the following year. Professional representation included:

- Judges
- County Commissioners
- Department of Human Services
- Child Welfare Administrators
- Child Welfare Professionals
- Dependency Attorneys
- Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association
- University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
- University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Resource Center
- Juvenile Court Judges Commission
- Statewide Adoption Network
- Court Appointed Special Advocates
- County Service Providers

Over the course of the first year, the Workgroup examined the following:

- I. Statewide and National Perspectives
- II. Impact to Pennsylvania's Dependency System
- III. Statewide efforts aimed at reducing turnover

Pennsylvania studies, through the University of Pittsburgh, have shown key factors such as job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment impacting retention. Studies further showed that for every 4.4 year increase in seniority, the likelihood of leaving the agency is reduced by 26%. National studies revealed that less than 1/3 of child welfare staff have a formal social work education, but that those with social work education were less likely to leave their employment. While average caseload sizes statewide and nationally can be between 24-30, the Child Welfare League of America recommends 12-15 cases per caseworker. Furthermore, another study showed that 80% of casework time is spent in court, arranging for services and supports, searching for relatives, completing paperwork, meeting with supervisors and planning transportation. In support of concern for this statistic, one New York study found that those in low turnover systems spent more time per week in direct services. Finally, both statewide and national studies showed that organizational and personal factors impact retention.

Initially thought to be an issue primarily affecting child welfare, the Workgroup soon learned that caseworker retention affects multiple partners throughout the state. The

Workgroup members spent several months divided into professional groupings (i.e. court, agency, county and state) to discuss/examine how their respective professions were impacted by caseworker retention. Information, from those discussions, was provided to the 2016 State Roundtable.

### Impact to the Court

- ❖ New Caseworkers are not skilled at testifying
- ❖ Increased continuances because new caseworker does not have the information needed or is away at mandatory training
- ❖ Less creative solutions
- ❖ New caseworkers overreacting or underreacting to safety issues
- ❖ Increase in early reviews because Judge feels they need to monitor more closely

### Impact to the Child Welfare Agency

- ❖ Cost of training a new caseworker
- ❖ Less experienced caseworker responsible for safety of a child
- ❖ Increase in paperwork
- ❖ Caseworker supervisors having to spend more time with a new caseworker, leaving other caseworkers without support
- ❖ Increase in liability

### Impact to the County Commissioners and State

- ❖ Cost of training a new employee
- ❖ Paying a salary for months without productivity
- ❖ Increase in complaints to the Commissioners
- ❖ Decrease in federal dollars if no reasonable efforts made by the court

### Impact to the Children and Families

- ❖ Having to retell their story over and over again, which causes additional trauma
- ❖ Delays in reunification
- ❖ Delays in case progression
- ❖ New caseworker needing time to familiarize themselves with the case
- ❖ Families having to learn the rules of a new caseworker

The Workgroup also heard from caseworkers and a former foster youth. What was learned through these discussions was that for caseworkers, it is the volume of work being unmanageable, the stress consuming them during work hours and at home, the effectiveness and support of a direct supervisor and flexibility that make a caseworker want to stay at their job. We also learned that for youth, multiple caseworkers delay permanency, delay opportunities and sets the youth back in their ability to know expectations of the agency. As one youth stated, “It takes teenagers time to trust. When I got a new caseworker, I had to learn their rules, tell my story again and learn to trust they would help me.”

While many counties are making individual efforts to retain staff by things such as caseworker appreciation days, reducing caseloads, enhancing supervisory skills, offering flexible schedules, using interns and offering “quiet-time” for caseworkers to complete paperwork, the Workgroup examined two specific strategies:

- Stay Interviews: Tioga County
- Onboarding: Chester County

Tioga County decided to take the approach of administering “Stay Interviews” to learn more about why caseworkers were staying at the job. The Workgroup revised the Tioga Stay Interview tool to gather additional information and administered the survey throughout Pennsylvania. A blank copy of the Stay Interview Survey can be found at the end of the 2016 State Roundtable Report. We received 1,359 responses. Due to the high volume of responses, the Workgroup needed additional time to analyze the results. The findings will be shared in the next section of this report, “update to the 2016 State Roundtable report.”

Chester County takes a very unique approach to staff retention through a process called “Onboarding.” This approach is not about cases, it is not about supervision, but rather helping a new caseworker adjust to the agency. Since the implementation of Onboarding 18 months ago, Chester County has experienced a 95% retention rate. Prior to Onboarding, the retention rate was 75%. Onboarding begins *before* a caseworker enters the agency. It starts with preparation to let a caseworker know that you have been waiting for them to arrive and are glad they are coming. When the caseworker arrives for their first day of work, they have a desk, a phone and someone to greet them.

There are 4 levels of Onboarding:

1. Self Confidence
2. Role Clarity
3. Social Integration
4. Knowledge of and fit within the organizational culture

Onboarding describes 4 emotional phases that stretch out over 6 months, these include:

1. Uniformed Certainty
2. Informed Doubt (about 2-3 months into employment when reality of the work hits)
3. Realistic Concern (caseworker thinks they can do the job, but not sure)

#### 4. Informed Certainty (caseworker starts taking ownership of the agency)

Additional things that take place with Onboarding, includes periodic check-in meetings, tours of important locations (courthouse, facilities, service providers, etc.), meet and greets with Judges/Hearing Officer and mentoring by other staff. The goal of Onboarding is for the new caseworker to feel like they are a critical part of the agency from day one and enable them to become an integral part of the agency team throughout their weeks, months, and years following.

**The following recommendations, to the 2016 Pennsylvania State Roundtable, were approved:**

- 1. Develop strategies to enhance knowledge, understanding and respect for the profession of child welfare caseworker;**
- 2. Calculate cost associated with Pennsylvania Caseworker turnover;**
- 3. Identify specific evidence based strategies as well as promising practices aimed at reducing caseworker turnover and provide a list of such to the 2017 State Roundtable;**
- 4. Participate, as requested by the Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrator's Association, on the analysis of data to determine an appropriate caseload size and present recommendations to the 2017 State Roundtable;**
- 5. Collaborate with the University of Pittsburgh in analyzing quantitative and qualitative data from the Stay Interview and present outcomes to the 2017 State Roundtable;**
- 6. Collaborate with the Trauma Workgroup to develop strategies around reducing courtroom stress experienced by caseworkers;**
- 7. Assess documentation requirements to develop reduction strategies and recommendations to eliminate unnecessary duplication of documentation;**
- 8. Provide information and findings from the Workgroup, if given the opportunity, to key stakeholders;**
- 9. Collaborate with the Child Welfare Resource Center to develop supervisory trainings specific to the findings of the Workgroup; and**
- 10. Request caseworker retention be a priority topic at the 2017 Children's Summit.**

### **Progress and Update on approved 2016 State Roundtable Recommendations**

- 1. Develop strategies to enhance knowledge, understanding and respect for the profession of child welfare caseworker.**

Over the past year, two members of the Workgroup, Errone Cody and Jessica Laspino, examined this charge and reported back to the larger group. Both met during and outside of regular Workgroup meeting times. The purpose of this charge is to help the public gain a

better understanding and professional respect for the work of caseworkers. Caseworkers express feeling undervalued as professionals, in comparison to other helping professions. The Workgroup acknowledges that this lack of understanding by the public can often be attributed to the confidential nature of the work and a caseworker's inability to share information or "their side of the story" when cases makes the news. Ms. Cody and Ms. Laspino explored current and potential efforts to bring more awareness and respect to the caseworker profession, which include the following:

- Family Support Alliance Blue Ribbon Recognition Award April 5, 2017
- Pam Cousins "Champion for Children" Award Press Release (acknowledging individual success stories) on June 29, 2017
- Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association (PCYA) initiated a House Resolution for a "Child Welfare Caseworker Appreciation Day in Pennsylvania" to occur on June 1, 2017 (currently pending)
- Potential strategy to hold a statewide day media blast recognizing the positive impact of caseworkers

In addition, the subcommittee began comparing similar helping professions such as police officers, nurses and emergency medical respondents to that of caseworkers. Specifically, comparing requirements for the job, stress and critical nature of the work, education, hours worked and salaries.

In summary, there are efforts underway to raise awareness to the profession, but these efforts are in early stages. As such, the Workgroup is asking for additional time to fully complete this charge.

## 2. Calculate cost associated with Pennsylvania Caseworker Turnover.

The Workgroup spent the large part of this year working on ways to calculate a cost associated with Pennsylvania turnover. What the Workgroup came to realize is that there are many direct and non-direct costs that are associated with this calculation. With guidance from the Child Protective Services (CPS) Human Resource Services "The Turnover Tool Kit: A Guide to Understanding and Reducing Employee Turnover, 2006," the Workgroup identified direct costs thought to be readily accessible and easily calculated by most counties. These cost included:

Calculation	Comment/Example
Pre-employment screening	Cost of staff collecting, screening and arranging for interviews
Interview panel time	Cost of staff interviewing, including benefits
Screening applicants	Cost of staff screening applications
Reference checks	Cost of staff time doing reference checks
Training	Travel, meals, overnight, etc
Salary being paid before a caseworker can be assigned a case	When can a caseworker receive a case, how long are they receiving a salary without it

	benefiting the workforce by taking cases
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A letter from Workgroup Co-chairperson, Shara Saveikis, Administrator, Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau, was sent to fellow Pennsylvania Child Welfare Administrators in December 2016 with instructions and a request for counties to calculate their turnover cost for the past five years, using these categories. A deadline date was set for January 13, 2017. While the Workgroup hoped to gather information from all 67 counties, it became apparent that this would not be possible. Indeed, the 67 PA counties have 67 different ways of both tracking this information and calculating it into dollars. Some counties sent all information requested, while others sent what information they had and left gaps where they could not provide information. As a result, the Workgroup decided to look at a few example counties in each of the Leadership Roundtables, during the most recent FY 2015-2016 to provide an example of turnover cost. In order to ensure accuracy, each of the identified counties was contacted directly with the following information identified:

<b>County</b>	<b>LRT</b>	<b>2015-2016 Starting Salary</b>	<b>2015-2016 Lost investment with turnover of one caseworker</b>	<b>2015-2016 Number of caseworkers who left the agency</b>	<b>2015-2016 Total Turnover Cost for 2015-2016</b>
<b>Bucks</b>	1	\$44,791.00	33,760.98	12	405,132.00
<b>Westmoreland</b>	2	\$38,863.50	\$10,469.22	7	\$73,284.54
<b>Northampton</b>	3	\$39,466.00	\$14,944.40	19	\$283,943.60
<b>Erie</b>	4	\$33,910.00	\$14,734.77	9	\$132,612.93
<b>Lycoming</b>	5/6	\$36,296.00	\$18,568.26	2	\$37,136.52
<b>Greene</b>	7	\$34,216.00	\$7,323.86	15	109,857.90
<b>Tioga</b>	8	\$30,160.00	\$6,513.57	12	\$78,162.79

Cost of turnover varies by county for a variety of reasons including:

- Salary differences
- Geographical distance to training sites (may require a day trip or hotel cost for overnight)
- Agency policies regarding when a new caseworker receives their first case
- Level of personnel conducting hiring process (i.e. personnel with higher salaries (such as administrators versus supervisors will result in higher turnover cost)

While this Pennsylvania analysis looked specifically at things like hiring processes, training and salary/benefits, it did not calculate “other associated turnover costs” such as overtime of caseworkers assuming the additional cases after an employee leaves or the continuation of services and placements due to a lag with a new caseworker being assigned the case and determining progress towards permanency. These additional non-direct costs would likely increase the cost of turnover. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) estimates the cost of turnover to be 1/3 of an employee’s annual salary. The calculation chart above supports the

DOL estimated cost of 1/3 an employee's annual salary, with some counties showing higher percentages.

The Workgroup believes that this charge has been exhausted and recommends that counties use the identified calculation process to examine their individual county turnover costs.

**3. Identify specific evidence based strategies as well as promising practices aimed at reducing caseworker turnover and provide a list of such to the 2017 State Roundtable.**

At the beginning of the year, a subcommittee of the Workgroup including Dr. Helen Cahalane, Mike Byers, Luann Hartman and Trudi Krick formed to examine this charge more closely. The subcommittee met both during and outside of the Workgroup meeting times. Updates were provided to the larger Workgroup.

In the 2016 State Roundtable report, the Workgroup provided an evidence based strategy (Onboarding) and a promising practice (Stay Interview) aimed at reducing caseworker turnover. The Workgroup asked for additional time to examine further strategies and practices. The subcommittee provided a report on their work and progress for this report as follows:

***Subcommittee Report to the Caseworker Retention Workgroup:***

As our subcommittee began researching various evidence-based approaches to addressing retention issues, we continued to see the need for additional state and county level data. While there are common drivers of turnover, it is essential to fully understand the landscape in Pennsylvania. What drives turnover in one county may not drive turnover in another. There remain basic questions we can't answer yet, such as;

- What is the statewide turnover rate?
- What is the statewide vacancy rate?
- Has turnover increased in recent years?

This lead us to our first recommendation: Develop and implement a plan to gather additional state and local data. Potential measures should look at:

- Multi-year review of
  - turnover rates,
  - separation reasons
  - vacancy rates
  - demographics (education, years of service, caseload size)
  - cost analysis (including impact on children and families)

A powerful example of the value of collecting and using this type of information can be seen in New Jersey. As a result of a lawsuit filed by Children's Rights and resulting modified settlement agreement, New Jersey has had to collect and report on significant workforce

data for over 10 years. Below is an excerpt from their most recent monitoring report (Munson, S. NJ DCF workforce report).

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

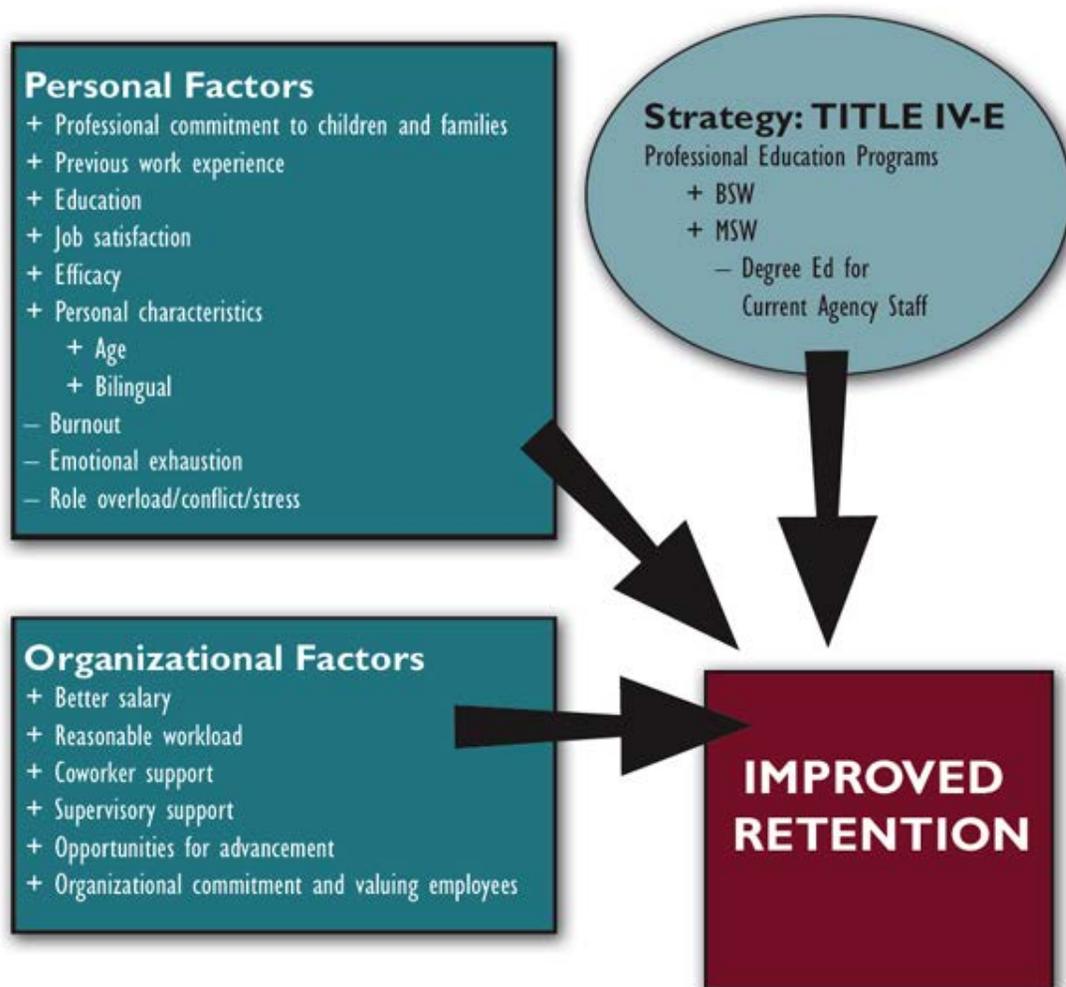
### KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015-2016

From 2015 to 2016, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJ DCF) has continued its substantial workforce and leadership investments to maintain and advance a high level of professional and organizational functioning. As a result, the current NJ DCF workforce can be described as...

KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2015-2016		
Descriptor	Performance Indicator(s)	Achievements
<b>Qualified</b>	<i>Position requirements include Bachelor's Degree and relevant child welfare or social work experience</i>	NJ DCF requires applicants have a BA and child welfare or social work experience, and gives preference for BSW/MSW
<b>Competent</b>	<i>Specialized child welfare competencies and degree programs</i>	NJ DCF supports specialized child welfare Bachelor's and Master's Degrees (MCWEP/BCWEP)
<b>Stable &amp; Consistent</b>	<i>Low vacancy rate</i> <i>Turnover rate below national average (30%)</i>	NJ DCF achieved a 2.31% vacancy rate NJ DCF achieved a 6.97% turnover rate
<b>Diverse &amp; Reflective of Children Served</b>	<i>Staff race/ethnicity reflects trends of children receiving services</i> <i>Mixed gender and age range, with majority of workforce in prime working age span of 25-54 years</i>	NJ DCF staff are 44% Black, 20% Hispanic, 34% White, and 2% Asian/American Indian/Alaska Native/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian 11% of NJ DCF staff are 20-29yr; 47% are 30-39yr; 24% are 40-49yr; 18% are 50+yr NJ DCF staff are 83% female, 17% male
<b>Committed</b>	<i>Long length of tenure at the agency</i>	71% have been with agency 6-30+ years
<b>Adequately Compensated</b>	<i>Starting salaries on par with other NJ human and protective service professions</i>	Caseworkers: \$49,000 - \$59,000 Supervisors: \$65,000 - \$70,000
<b>Well-supported</b>	<i>Caseloads for intake, adoption, and permanency reflect national standards and Sustainability &amp; Exit Plan benchmarks</i>	93% of Intake staff, 94% of Adoption staff, and 100% of Permanency staff have caseloads that meet these standards
<b>Well-supervised</b>	<i>Low supervisor-staff ratio</i>	NJ DCF's average supervisory ratio is 1 supervisor for 4.7 caseworkers
<b>Well-trained</b>	<i>Caseload-carrying staff and supervisors receive at least 40 hours of annual in-service training</i>	NJ DCF delivered 237,341 hours of training annually, with 100% receiving at least 40 hours per year and 74 hours provided on average
<b>Led with Vision &amp; Heart</b>	<i>Leadership team implements strong plan of investment in workforce development</i>	All 10 NCWWI workforce development framework components are addressed

Collecting meaningful data is an important first step toward developing a comprehensive and targeted approach to retention in Pennsylvania.

As we pursue additional data, we do want to provide a framework and guide that can be used within each organization to inform retention strategies. The following is a helpful visual to categorize the factors that influence retention.



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Personal and Organizational factors both impact recruitment and retention. Each organization should assess how each one of these factors might be a positive or negative

influence on retention. We wanted to highlight a few factors that significantly impact retention:

- Reasonable workload
- Worker support
  - Burnout prevention
  - Stress reduction
- Supervisors
  - Supportive, responsive
- Self care
  - Healthy work – life balance
- Organizational culture and climate
  - Commitment/valuing staff and supervisors
  - Public recognition
  - Trauma informed approach
- Advancement opportunities for seasoned caseworkers
- Advanced hiring
- Behavioral based interviews
- Degree incentive
- Competitive pay
- Mentoring / Training
- Job flexibility

In Pennsylvania, there are many existing resources that can be used to support and strengthen many factors that impact retention such as:

- Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) and Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) programs
- Intensive onboarding program
- Enhanced training and transfer of learning supports
- Technical assistance to enhance organizational culture and climate
- Realistic job preview videos

We recommend building upon these existing resources, as we work to continue to strengthen and stabilize Pennsylvania’s child welfare workforce.

Finally, we identified a useful listing of potential strategies that tie to specific factors and is included as an addendum. This tool was part of “The Turnover Tool Kit: A Guide to understanding and reducing employee turnover”, a report from the CPS Human Resources Services ([www.cpsshr.us](http://www.cpsshr.us)). This can be used as a guide to select strategies designed to address specific challenges. Please see addendum for full list of potential strategies (*APPENDIX I: Targeted Solutions for Reducing Turnover*).

4. **Participate, as requested by the Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrator’s Association, on the analysis of data to determine an appropriate caseload size and present recommendations to the 2017 State Roundtable.**

The Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrator's Association (PCYA) began partnering with Penn State University last year to conduct a statewide study to inform an appropriate and manageable caseload size for county caseworkers. On November 14, 2016, a representative from Penn State attended a Caseworker Retention Workgroup meeting to share information on the caseload size study and solicit feedback from the Workgroup. To date, 16 counties have been identified to participate in the study. An algorithm has been built and data use agreements with the 16 counties have been executed. Once all signed agreements have been returned, Penn State will begin collecting data. Consideration will be given to weighting cases, calculating work burdens, travel time, paperwork, state/federal legislative mandates and requirements for court, to name a few. At this time, there is nothing further for the Workgroup to contribute to this charge.

**5. Collaborate with the University of Pittsburgh in analyzing quantitative and qualitative data from the Stay Interview and present outcomes to the 2017 State Roundtable.**

The University of Pittsburgh, led by Dr. Helen Cahalane, Mike Byers and their team, worked throughout the past year analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from the 1359 responses from the Stay Interview administered last year. Information obtained from this analysis will better inform counties regarding why caseworkers stay and what causes them to want to leave their jobs. Summary findings from the analysis included the following:

- ❖ The years of experience was well rounded by those who took the survey
- ❖ The majority of the responses were from caseworkers; however, there were a few supervisors who responded. Caseworker and supervisor responses were separated in the analysis to show the difference in responses.
- ❖ There is a difference in what was important to retaining staff in the first few years of employment versus 5 years and beyond
- ❖ The ability to make an impact on the lives of children and families, direct supervisor, colleagues and flexibility were all listed as important factors to retaining caseworkers
- ❖ Stress, feeling overwhelmed, excessive paperwork, lack of supervisory support and salary were all factors listed that cause caseworkers to want to leave
- ❖ Testifying, cross examination and preparation were listed as the most stressful contributing factors for court
- ❖ Caseworkers noted their direct supervisor to be either important or extremely important to whether they stay at their job

The University of Pittsburgh's Executive Summary (*APPENDIX 2: Stay Interview Executive Summary*) and Stay Interview analysis summary (*APPENDIX 3: Stay Interview*) can be found at the end of this report.

## **6. Collaborate with the Trauma Workgroup to develop strategies around reducing courtroom stress experienced by caseworkers.**

Two Caseworkers were added to the Workgroup this year in order to provide a caseworker voice to the work and help guide our charges. One such charge that needed guidance was understanding the courtroom stress experienced by caseworkers. The Workgroup believed it was important to address this issue since it was listed as a contributing factor to retention on the Stay Interview analysis summary. There were three recurring themes as we explored this issue:

1. The need for training on the language and training differences between the legal and child welfare professions
2. Caseworkers needing more time to prepare and be prepared for hearings
3. Caseworkers feeling more comfortable and competent in the courtroom

From November until April, the Workgroup dedicated time during its meetings to break into groups, specific to each represented profession (Judge/Hearing Officer, Solicitor, Parent Attorney, Guardian ad Litem, Caseworker and Supervisor) to gather information on how each professional role could contribute to a less stressful courtroom experience for caseworkers. Work was also done outside of meetings to formulate solutions to each of the identified contributing factors to caseworker stress in the courtroom. It was determined that a professional guide would best support stress reduction strategies. Once created, the guide was sent to the Trauma Workgroup for feedback. The feedback was then incorporated into a final guide. The guide can be found at the end of this report under ***APPENDIX 4: Reducing Caseworker Stress in the Courtroom.***

Finally, PCYA has initiated a series of module trainings for solicitors. The Workgroup requested that one of the modules focus on preparing the caseworker for court. This request has been incorporated into module 7 of the training series and titled “Having an agency for a client: What Works, What Doesn't, Pitfalls and Ethical Issues for Child Welfare.” The solicitor plays a critical role in reducing courtroom stress for caseworkers.

## **7. Assess documentation requirements to develop reduction strategies and recommendations to eliminate unnecessary duplication of documentation.**

A small subcommittee formed early in the year to examine the paperwork requirements of two different size counties. Brian Bornman, Esquire, Executive Director for PCYA, along with Shara Saveikis, Administrator, Westmoreland County and Gina D'Auria, Administrator, Fayette County, reviewed both requirements of the Department of Human Services and internal requirements created to either meet the departments mandates, prepare for court, or streamline other internal paperwork. Areas to further assess for reduction strategies include:

- Streamlining Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment requirements
- Paperwork that is created to make it easier for audits conducted by Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families Regional Representatives

- Internally created documents
- Condensing forms (paperwork gets added onto other pieces of paperwork without elimination or condensing)
- Examining the possibility to add requirements to a form that already exists instead of having an additional form created
- Court Preparation

Due to the considerable time that it took to do the paperwork reviews in each of these two counties, the Workgroup will be recommending additional time to further explore this charge. In addition, the Workgroup would like to collaborate with key stakeholders (OCYF, PCYA, Regional Representatives, Attorneys, etc), in the upcoming year, to identify required documentation.

**8. Provide information and findings from the Workgroup, if given the opportunity, to key stakeholders.**

On March 27, 2017, Workgroup members were honored to present the impact of Caseworker Retention at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) spring conference at the Hilton Harrisburg. Presentations were provided at both the plenary session and a breakout session. For the plenary session, faculty included the following:

**Honorable Max Baer**, *Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice*

**Honorable Linda R. Cordaro**, *Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County*

**Cathy A. Utz**, *Deputy Secretary, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Department of Human Services*

With over 200 in attendance, the purpose of the plenary session was to set the tone as to why Caseworker Retention was an important topic to the court and how it impacts the counties. The Plenary session provided county commissioners with a brief primer as to the importance of this topic to the court, to the county budget and to children/families. To demonstrate the fiscal impact, data from four counties was provided as follows:

County	2015-2016 Starting Salary	2015-2016 Lost investment with turnover of one caseworker	2015-2016 Number of caseworkers who left the agency	2015-2016 Total Turnover Cost for 2015-2016
<b>Westmoreland (LRT 2)</b>	\$38,863.50	\$10,469.22	7	\$73,284.54
<b>Greene (LRT 7)</b>	\$34,216.00	\$7,323.86	15	\$109,857.90
<b>Erie (LRT 4)</b>	\$33,910.00	\$14,734.77	9	\$132,612.93
<b>Bucks (LRT 1)</b>	\$44,791.00	\$33,760.98	12	\$405,132.00

The plenary session was extremely successful. With more than 60 attendees, the breakout session quickly became standing room only. In fact, it was the largest breakout session held at a CCAP conference, according to the CCAP Executive Director.

During the breakout session, Office of Children and Families in the Courts Judicial Analyst Christy Stanek shared findings from the Stay Interview analysis, showed turnover comparisons in two like-size counties and how turnover impacted permanency. It was important to show the Commissioners that in addition to the dollar cost of hiring and losing employees, there was a definite cost related to children staying in care longer and services continuing longer than necessary. Workgroup member, Bucks County Commissioner Diane Ellis Marseglia provided an overview of things that Commissioners can do to reduce caseworker turnover that cost nothing, things that have minimal cost, and things that cost much with little positive results. Finally, a panel discussion, moderated by Sandra Moore, Office of Children and Families in the Courts Director, concluded the breakout session. Faculty for the panel discussion included the following:

**Honorable Max Baer**, *Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice*

**Honorable Linda R. Cordaro**, *Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County*

**Cathy A. Utz**, *Deputy Secretary, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Department of Human Services*

**Diane Ellis Marseglia**, *Commissioner, Bucks County*

**Shara B. Saveikis**, *Administrator, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau*

Documents used during the spring CCAP conference were sent to all LRT and SRT members following the session. These can be found at the end of this report under ***APPENDIX 5: Plenary Power Point; APPENDIX 6: Breakout Session Power Point; and APPENDIX 7: Evaluation Results.***

**9. Collaborate with the Child Welfare Resource Center to develop supervisory trainings specific to the findings of the Workgroup.**

The Workgroup decided that it would like to complete the remaining charges, in order to incorporate the work into a new curriculum, prior to the development of a supervisory training. As such, this charge will continue as a recommendation for the 2017 State Roundtable.

**10. Request Caseworker Retention be a priority topic at the 2017 Children's Summit.**

Caseworker Retention was selected as a priority topic for the 2017 Children's Summit. The Workgroup's presentation occurred on April 26, 2017. Workgroup Co-chairpersons, Honorable Linda R. Cordaro, Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County and Shara B. Saveikis, Administrator of Westmoreland County Children's Bureau, provided an opening presentation on the impact of Caseworker Retention. A copy of this power point can be found at the end of this report under ***APPENDIX 8: Summit Power Point.*** Next, Christy Stanek, Office of Children and Families in the Courts Judicial Analyst moderated a panel of professionals sharing how they and their clients have been impacted by caseworker turnover, along with some ways they have overcome this obstacle. The panel consisted of the following faculty:

**Catherine Volponi**, *Esquire, Parent Attorney Director, Allegheny County Bar Foundation*

**Kerith Strano Taylor**, *Esquire, Guardian ad Litem, Jefferson County*

**John P. Pietrovito**, *Esquire, Solicitor, Lycoming County*

**Shiloh Hagerty**, *Caseworker, Cumberland County Children and Youth*

Finally, Shara Saveikis provided a brief overview of the Stay Interview findings, sharing what caseworkers across Pennsylvania have said keeps them at their job and what would cause them to leave their job. Evaluation results from this session will be provided to the Pennsylvania State Roundtable.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Workgroup looks forward to counties using the information contained within this report as well as the opportunity to provide further information in the upcoming year that will help positively impact Caseworker Retention in Pennsylvania.

**The Workgroup respectfully submits to the Pennsylvania State Roundtable the following recommendations:**

1. Approve the distribution of the Stay Interview data analysis;
2. Approve the distribution of the guide: Reducing Caseworker Stress in the Courtroom;
3. Approve the distribution of recommended targeted solutions for reducing turnover;
4. Continue to develop strategies to enhance knowledge, understanding and respect for the profession of child welfare caseworker;
5. Continue to assess evidence based strategies and promising practices aimed at reducing caseworker turnover and provide a comprehensive list to the 2018 SRT;
6. Develop and implement a plan to gather additional statewide and local data to better assess Pennsylvania's turnover and vacancy rate;
7. Collaborate with key stakeholders, including Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association to assess documentation requirements and provide strategies, to streamline documentation at both the state and local level, to the 2018 State Roundtable;
8. Continue to collaborate with the Child Welfare Resource Center to refine and enhance supervisory trainings specific to the findings of the Workgroup; and
9. Consideration, by the Office of Children and Families in the Courts, to develop and convene a training specific to Solicitors and Child Welfare Supervisors on their role in preparing and supporting the Caseworker throughout the court process.

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## Tool 4 – Targeted Solutions for Reducing Turnover

### This Tool Includes

- The definition of each solution.
- General descriptions of how each solution works and what may limit its success.
- Why each solution works in basic terms.
- The relative cost and impact of each solution.
- Challenges and considerations in implementing each solution.

Just as there is no single cause of turnover, there is no single solution. The causes of turnover in your agency and the specific situation you are facing will determine which solutions you choose to implement. In addition, exactly because each agency is unique, the impact any given solution may have on that agency is difficult to predict.

### Cost and Impact Definitions

We have provided our “best assessment” of the **Cost** and **Impact** of each of the Targeted Solutions using the following three-level key:

#### Cost

- \$ Virtually no new costs to the agency. Can be done with existing staff and resources.
- \$\$ Moderate cost to the agency, but less than 1 percent of payroll.
- \$\$\$ Considerable cost to the agency, in excess of 1 percent of payroll.

#### Impact

- \* May impact the turnover decisions of only a few individuals.
- \*\* Expected to have moderated impact on the overall turnover rate, reducing it by up to 10 percent (e.g., from 40 percent to 36 percent)
- \*\*\* Expected to have a significant impact on the overall turnover rate, reducing it by more than 10 percent.

Our assessment is intended to serve only as a general guideline. The Cost/Impact assessments are based on our experience and research. Costs and Impact may vary considerably depending on the specifics of implementation. Also, many of the “high cost” Targeted Solutions are expected to have a disproportionately small impact on turnover. However, in most instances, there are other good reasons to implement the solution. For example, reducing paperwork and providing safer working conditions have significant benefits beyond reducing turnover.

## Targeted Solutions

Table 1 (page 37-8) identifies the possible solutions that, if designed and implemented correctly, should help reduce turnover in your agency. Each solution is “cross-walked” to the turnover problem it’s designed to correct. There are multiple possible Solutions for most of the Reasons for Turnover. Likewise, any one Solution may impact multiple “Reasons for Turnover.”

The remainder of this Tool is intended to help you think through the implementation of any given Solution. It does not provide a specific recipe that will guarantee a reduction in turnover at your agency. It is intended instead to get you thinking creatively about which solutions might work in your agency.

Cost: \$\$\$ *Advance Hiring*

Impact: \*\*\*

**What It Is** Advance Hiring is a recruitment and selection process that is based on hiring new employees in anticipation of vacancies expected to occur in the future. The intent is to have a pool of “hired and trained” new employees that can be assigned to a vacancy as soon as it occurs.

**How It Works** Management uses historical vacancy and turnover data to project the number and location of vacancies expected to occur several weeks into the future. Employees are hired based on those projections and sent to new-worker training. Upon completion of training, the new workers are assigned to vacancies that have arisen while they were in training. If there are fewer vacancies than newly trained workers, they are assigned to temporarily “fill behind” employees on leave of absence or used as “extra help” until permanent vacancies arise. The program can be funded by diverting dollars from funded unfilled vacancies into an advanced hiring pool account.

**Why It Works** Advance Hiring primarily impacts turnover resulting from high workloads and worker burnout by speeding up the hiring process. Slow hiring processes and unfilled vacancies drive up workloads for everyone. When jobs can be filled quickly with “already-trained” new hires, workers are relieved of the stress of covering vacant caseloads while attempting to manage their own workloads.

**Challenges and Considerations** To benefit from Advance Hiring, an agency must be large enough to have somewhat predictable turnover. The model also is geared to agencies that provide formal classroom training to groups of new hires before they are assigned the responsibility of carrying a caseload.

## Causes of Employee Turnover

Solutions to Employee Turnover	Admin./ Paper Work	Burn- out	Career Growth	Client Rescs.	Suppt. from Comnty.	Court Issues	Hours Conflict	Job Fit	Org. Culture	Pay Issues	Profess. Devel.	Profes- slsm.	Safety Concerns	Super- vision	Inadeq. Training	Unmet Job Expects.	Work. Conds.	Work- load
Adv. Hiring		x						x								x		x
Behav. Intervs.																		
Career Lad./Tier			x							x	x	x						
Caseload Reduc.		x							x			x			x			x
Competitive Pay										x								
Degree Incentive			x							x								
Diversity Progs.									x									
Flex Time/Job Share		x					x		x									x
Good Place to Work		x		x		x			x					x				
Improve Phys. Environ.		x							x								x	
Job Restruct.	x	x				x		x				x				x		
Job Rotation		x	x			x	x				x							
Just Ask		x	x				x		x		x			x		x		
Mentor		x	x			x		x	x		x			x				
Paperwrk Reduc.	x	x						x								x		x
Perform.-Based Pay									x	x								
Perform. Mgmt.			x						x		x			x				
Realistic Job Prev.	x	x						x								x		
Safety Support													x					
2nd Lang. Incent.										x								
Super. Develmt.											x		x	x				
Telecommute		x					x										x	x
In-Serv. Training	x	x		x		x			x		x				x			
Tuition Assis.		x	x							x	x				x			
Univ. Partners.								x			x					x		

Possible Causes of Turnover among Children's Services Worker - Defined

Cause	Definition
<b>Administrative/Paper Work</b>	Caseworkers, who want to do "real social work," become frustrated with administrative duties such as paperwork, transporting clients, meetings, etc.
<b>Benefits</b>	Inadequate benefits to meet employee's basic needs, primarily in the areas of health care, retirement and vacation.
<b>Burnout</b>	Caseworkers find themselves emotionally unable to work productively and may find it difficult to continue working. Burn out may be caused by high levels of stress resulting from heavy workloads, erratic hours, poor supervision, the emotionally draining nature of the work, or simply because the employee is a "poor fit" for the job.
<b>Career Growth</b>	Employee feels that there are few promotional opportunities to "grow" as a caseworker either professionally or financially.
<b>Client Resources</b>	Caseworker becomes frustrated with the agency's inability to meet some of the basic needs of children and families. May also be frustrated with lack of other community resources.
<b>Community Support</b>	Caseworkers do not feel that their profession and/or agency is respected in the community. Negative media coverage.
<b>Court Issues</b>	Caseworker may be uncomfortable in court room situations, feel disrespected by attorneys and judges, and placed on the defensive. May feel court is another administrative burden that detracts from social work role.
<b>Hours Conflict</b>	Caseworker may be required to work long hours to stay "caught up." Some jobs require working overtime or being "on call" during evenings and weekends, thus interfering with personal and family life.
<b>Job Fit</b>	There is a poor match between the requirements of the job and the employee's skills, values, and/or personality.
<b>Organization Culture</b>	The atmosphere of the agency is not one that employees regard as being supportive, positive, or one where they feel valued by supervision and upper management.
<b>Pay Issues</b>	Pay is insufficient to meet basic needs or expectations. Pay may not be competitive within the community. Agency's internal pay practices may be regarded as being unfair.
<b>Professional Development</b>	Agency does not provide training or other developmental opportunities to improve professional skills or to prepare for promotional opportunities or career advancement.
<b>Professionalism</b>	Caseworkers believe that the child welfare job has become so structured and regulated by policy that their opportunity to function as a professional has been eroded.
<b>Safety Concerns</b>	Workers have concerns about their physical safety.
<b>Supervision</b>	Poor quality supervisors do not provide the leadership skills necessary to support and develop their staff.
<b>Training Adequacy</b>	Basic skill training is inadequate to provide new employees the basic skills necessary to do the job. Skill training for experienced employees is inadequate or the employee does not have the time to attend because of other work priorities.
<b>Unmet Job Expectation</b>	New employees find the job to be very different than they thought it would be when they accepted it.
<b>Working Conditions</b>	Poor physical surroundings – inadequate office space and equipment, buildings in bad repair or bad location, inferior technological equipment and support.
<b>Workload</b>	High caseloads, and otherwise heavy workloads, create stress and anxiety.

Cost: \$\$  
Impact: \*\*\* Behavioral Interviews

**What It Is** Behavioral Interviewing is a technique that focuses on an applicant's past experiences and behaviors in order to determine how they would behave in similar situations in the future. This interviewing technique is based on the premise that past behavior is predictive of future behavior.

**How It Works** Agencies identify the "competencies" (knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and other characteristics that are associated with or predictive of superior job performance) that are most important for the child welfare position. In order to demonstrate how well an applicant's skills align with these competencies, interviewers ask applicants questions about how they have handled certain situations in the past. For example, a question for the "decision making" job competency might be, "Can you tell me about a specific situation where you had to make a very difficult work-related decision?" The interviewer would continue to ask probing, follow-up questions such as, "What made it such a difficult decision for you?" "What alternatives did you consider?" "Why did you choose that particular alternative?" "How did the situation turn out?" Behavior-based interviews generally result in better selection decisions than more traditional interviews.

**Why It Works** Employees who are a "good fit" for the job are less likely to leave. The behavioral interview provides the opportunity to obtain the depth of information necessary to make good selection decisions. Since the competencies identified for the position are the ones critical to successful performance, selecting applicants able to describe examples of how they have performed successfully in these areas will go a long way in helping determine if they are a good fit for the job.

**Challenges and Considerations** Organizations should identify the competencies that are associated with successful job performance and design behavioral interview questions related to those competencies. Conducting good behavioral interviews requires that interviewers be trained in the techniques of behavioral interviewing, asking probing follow-up questions, and scoring/evaluating the applicants.

Cost: \$\$ Career Ladder/Tier System  
Impact: \*\*

**What It Is** A Career Ladder/Tier System (we use these terms synonymously although some agencies may define them differently) for child welfare workers is designed to allow employees to advance through classification levels and/or pay grades while continuing to provide direct client service.

**How It Works** Typically the agency will establish two or three additional classification levels (in successively higher pay grades) that employees can advance through as they gain experience, academic credentials and/or licensure. For example, for a four-level system:

- Level 1 could require a BA degree with a human service major.
- Level 2 could be a BA degree with five years of child welfare experience or a MSW degree with three years experience.
- Level 3 could be a MSW with five years of child welfare experience.
- Level 4 could require a MSW, five years of child welfare experience and state licensure.

Depending on the system's design, more complex cases and greater latitude in judgment would be required as an employee advanced from one level to another.

**Why It Works** Career Ladders and Tier Systems provide an opportunity for career growth and increased pay in a profession notorious for low pay and the absence of career mobility. The system can be designed to provide professional development opportunities and allow workers to function in a more professional capacity as they move up the Ladder/Tiers.

**Challenges and Considerations** A well-designed Career Ladder or Tier System has greatest potential for reducing turnover among more highly motivated employees. Less motivated employees may not be as interested in earning an advanced degree and/or licensure. In order to avoid paying different pay rates to employees doing the same work, some agencies assign the most complex cases and difficult workloads to those in the higher tiers.

Cost: \$\$\$

Impact: \*\*\*

#### *Caseload Reduction*

**What It Is** A Caseload Reduction occurs when enough additional workers are introduced into the system to make a meaningful difference in workload. The Child Welfare League of America recommends caseloads of between 12 and 15 children per worker, and the Council for Accreditation for Children and Family Services suggests that caseloads not exceed 18 children per worker.

**How It Works** Caseloads can only be reduced by increasing the number of workers or reducing the number of cases. Although good "prevention" programs can potentially reduce the number of Protective Services and/or Foster Care cases, measurable caseload reductions normally occur as a result of adding child welfare workers. Some agencies have successfully convinced their appropriations authority (i.e., legislature, board of commissioners, executive board, etc.) to fund

additional positions. Others have diverted their human resources within the agency from lesser priority programs.

**Why It Works** Lower caseloads provide workload relief, and reduce the incidence of stress and burnout. Lower caseloads also should permit workers more time to attend training (without feeling overwhelmed by work when they return), allowing them to feel more competent and less frustrated. As workers have more time to spend with children and families, they will also very likely believe they are providing better service to their clients.

**Challenges and Considerations** For a caseload reduction to have a meaningful impact on turnover, the reduction must be great enough for child welfare workers to feel a significant impact on workload.

Cost: \$\$\$  
Impact: \*\*\*  
*Competitive Pay*

**What It Is** Assuring Competitive Pay may require a market rate adjustment. Ultimately, agencies may have to implement a market rate adjustment in order to close the gap in pay.

**How It Works** A significant market rate adjustment is made to the entry and maximum rates of the pay range and current incumbents are given an equivalent pay rate adjustment.

**Why It Works** Child welfare workers are among the lowest paid of any professionals having the equivalent credentials and qualifications.

**Challenges and Considerations** If pay fails to meet the employee's basic needs, or is regarded as being simply unfair, it becomes what's called a "dissatisfier." Once employees feel they are being paid fairly, pay won't keep those who are unhappy with their workload, their supervisor, or who are just a "bad fit" for the job. In other words, insufficient pay can be a huge dissatisfier, however once pay is competitive for the market, it won't keep people who are otherwise unhappy in your agency.

Cost: \$\$  
Impact: \*\*  
*Degree Incentive*

**What It Is** A Degree Incentive provides those who obtain a Masters Degree additional pay.

**How It Works** Agencies pay a higher pay rate to those who possess a Masters Degree in the required discipline, even though their duties and responsibilities may be identical to those employees with Bachelor's Degrees. Some agencies require a MSW, others a Masters in a human services field; others may also include degrees such as a Masters in Public Administration or a law degree.

**Why It Works** Providing extra pay for those with a Masters Degree may be effective in addressing the issue of low pay, and may also provide an incentive for current employees to obtain an advanced degree.

**Challenges and Considerations** Degree Incentives may be a more effective recruitment device than a turnover solution. Some employees may resent the fact that those with an advanced degree, and perhaps less experience, can earn more money for doing the same work. Agencies may either want to assign the more difficult cases to those with the Master's degree, and/or clearly articulate the rationale for the degree incentive when it is introduced.

Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Impact: \* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Diversity Programs*

**What It Is** Diversity Programs are organizational efforts to implement policies, practices and procedures to insure that the workforce is inclusive of employees from a wide variety of backgrounds including race, age, gender, ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status.

**How It Works** Agencies that value diversity create programs to recruit and hire a diverse workforce and require inclusivity in all aspects of organizational life. Specific examples of Diversity Programs would include diversity training, diversity awareness weeks (where the agency and its employees

sponsor activities to promote the understanding and value of diversity), and specialized recruitment strategies.

**Why It Works** Agencies that value diversity are very likely ones that consistently place value on the workforce and are supportive and reaffirming of employees in general.

**Challenges and Considerations** Diversity programs will have a greater impact on overall turnover when combined with other organizational practices that promote a healthy work environment.

Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Impact: \*\* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Flex Time/Job Sharing*

**What It Is** Flex Time and Job Sharing are work scheduling systems that allow employees to work hours that are more convenient to their personal and family needs.

**How It Works** *Flex Time* schedules typically permit employees to work more hours on certain days of the week in order to work fewer hours (or perhaps no hours) during other traditional work days. For example, rather than work the traditional eight-hour, five-day work week, an employee may be allowed to work 40 hours in four 10-hour days or in four 9-hour days along with one 4-hour day.

Another Flex Time variation might permit employees to work the traditional five 8-hour days, but modify their start, quit, and lunch times as long as they work certain “core hours.”

*Job Sharing* allows two employees to share one job – and perhaps even one caseload. Job sharing is similar to half-time work, but in many job-share situations the burden is on the employee to find another willing half-time worker. Some agencies even require the job-share employee to work full time if the job-share leaves the work arrangement.

**Why It Works** Non-traditional work scheduling systems give employees a greater degree of control in balancing work with their family life. Working fewer hours (as with job sharing and part-time work) may also reduce the workload stress and burnout associated with full-time work. Employees who place a high value on such scheduling options may remain with the agency because they are unable to find other employers willing to provide similar scheduling options.

**Challenges and Considerations** Some managers believe that permitting flexible work schedules makes it more difficult to provide optimal office coverage (particularly on Mondays and Fridays), schedule all-staff meetings, and track time and attendance.

Cost: \$

Impact: \*\*\*

### Becoming a “Good Place to Work”

**What It Is** A Good Place to Work is an agency that aligns its beliefs, values and practices specifically toward meeting this objective.

**How It Works** Agencies that want to be regarded by their employees as a good place to work generally place an emphasis on making employees feel valued and supported. Because of the very significant impact that the frontline supervisor has on employee satisfaction, many agencies provide extensive training to supervisors and hold them accountable for their leadership and team-building skills. Effective Human Resources departments are designed to provide supervisors and managers with the tools they need to support, develop and reward employees.

**Why It Works** Employees want to be treated as valued contributors to the agencies for which they work. When an agency realigns its beliefs, values and practices to support employees, it can expect job satisfaction to increase and turnover to decline.

**Challenges and Considerations** Even though agency leaders may want to change the organizational culture to become more supportive of employees, many organizations

still have frontline supervisors and middle managers who are authoritarian, “burned out,” or simply lack good supervisory skills. Turning around a negative organizational culture can be challenging.

Cost: \$\$\$

Impact: \*\*

### *Improving the Physical Work Environment*

**What It Is** Improving the Work Environment includes taking steps to make the physical work space more pleasant.

**How It Works** Improving physical surroundings can range from relocating office space to better buildings in safer neighborhoods to making physical plant improvements (e.g., heating, ventilation, security, office equipment, and interior design) in the current space.

**Why It Works** A dreary office coupled with equipment that does not work contributes to overall burnout. Correcting these problems makes it possible for employees to remain on a job they otherwise find satisfying.

**Challenges and Considerations** Like low pay, poor physical surroundings are a dissatisfier. Employees who do not believe their basic needs for working in a reasonably safe and healthy environment are being met are likely to leave. However, beautiful offices with fine furnishing will not prevent

employees from leaving if they are not valued by the agency or their workload is oppressive.

Cost: \$

Impact: \*

### *Job Restructuring*

**What It Is** Job Restructuring requires making significant changes in the way employees perform their work in order to make the job more satisfying. Tasks and functions can be added, changed or eliminated, depending on the desired outcome.

**How It Works** The agency must first identify those parts of the job that child welfare workers find most satisfying and dissatisfying. There may be some parts of the job that are almost universally disliked (e.g., paperwork and record keeping), but some parts of the job are satisfying to some and distasteful to others. Some workers find doing investigations, appearing in court, and providing case management oversight to be highly satisfying while others do not.

Redesigning one job into two separate jobs may result in the ability to assign employees to that part of the original job that they found most satisfying. For example, some agencies structure the Children’s Protective Services job so that the same employee does the initial investigation of abuse and neglect and continues to carry the ongoing case. In other agencies, the investigations and case management functions

are divided into two different jobs. Or, case aides may perform the more routine aspects of the job allowing the child welfare worker to spend more time on the more professional elements of the job.

**Why It Works** Abundant evidence exists showing that increased employee loyalty and reduced turnover is associated with providing employees with the opportunity to do what they do best and find most satisfying.

**Challenges and Considerations** Job restructuring is likely to have a greater impact in agencies where pay and benefits are adequate and workloads are manageable. The real challenge to restructuring jobs requires organizations to engage in some “out of the box” thinking about how work can be done differently.

Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Job Rotation*  
Impact: \*

**What It Is** Job Rotation involves transferring employees between different jobs within the agency for a temporary period of time.

**How It Works** In agencies where child welfare workers are assigned to various specialized programs, rotating them between programs gives them an opportunity to take a break from the highly stressful assignments and also provides an

opportunity to learn new skills. Although there may be classification implications (although probably not insurmountable), employees could rotate between child welfare jobs and the jobs of policy writers, trainers and program analysts.

**Why It Works** Providing a respite for employees who are “burning out” due to the nature of the job may provide the temporary relief needed in order to reenergize them when returning to their former job or another “high stress” position. That person may have otherwise left the agency entirely. The temporary assignment may also be welcomed as an opportunity to gain the additional experience that could better prepare individuals for promotional opportunities.

**Challenges and Considerations** Job rotations can be disruptive for the families served by workers who rotate to different assignments. Also, there can be relatively few “respite positions” compared to the stressful positions in most agencies. Some employees may resist rotating back to high-stress positions. Rather than have a formal job rotation program, an agency may prefer transferring long-term employees in more demanding assignments to less stressful jobs on a permanent basis. Although this strategy may not reduce turnover in the stressful assignments, it may reduce overall agency turnover.

Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Just Ask*

Impact: \*\*

**What It Is** A Just Ask program encourages (or requires) each supervisor to ask each of his/her staff members a series of questions designed to gather information about what would keep them with the agency.

**How It Works** Each supervisor is expected to periodically ask (perhaps during the performance evaluation conference) each of their direct reports a series of questions, such as:

- What will keep you here?
- What might cause you to leave?
- What is most satisfying about your work?
- Are we fully utilizing your talents?
- What is inhibiting your success?
- What can I do differently to best assist you? (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, p. 7).

Supervisors are then expected to periodically follow up with each staff member in providing whatever way they can to meet the employees needs.

**Why It Works** Simply asking a series of questions similar to those above makes the employee feel valued. Simply asking such questions increases employee loyalty and retention. This strategy also recognizes that each employee is an individual, having their own sets of needs and expectations. To the extent that their individual needs can be met, their satisfaction and loyalty also increases.

**Challenges and Considerations** In agencies with great “dissatisfiers” such as low pay and impossible workloads, this strategy may have minimal impact.

Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Mentoring*

Impact: \*\*

**What It Is** Mentoring programs provide opportunities for less-experienced employees to be paired with more-experienced staff.

**How It Works** There are a variety of approaches to developing mentoring programs. They can be formal programs where the agency uses a structured process to match the mentoring pairs, or they can be quite informal where the new employee is given the option of being paired with a volunteer mentor. In some situations, the mentoring is very “job specific” and resembles on-the-job training. In most situations, however, the mentor helps the new employee “learn the organization” or have access to a “listening ear.” Some

programs pair experienced child welfare workers with higher-level supervisors and managers as a professional development experience to help prepare the child welfare worker for promotional opportunities.

Many child welfare agencies experience very high turnover among newly-hired workers who find the job to be quite different than they expected it to be. Providing additional support can help the new employee make it through this difficult early period.

**Why It Works** There is a wealth of research that shows that an important factor in employee loyalty and retention is the employees' belief that someone in the agency takes a personal interest in them and encourages their development.

**Challenges and Considerations** Mentoring programs can be particularly effective in helping new employees transition into their new jobs. However, in organizations where the workload is very high, experienced employees may resist serving as mentors to new employees because they simply lack the time. Organizations using a career ladder or tier system may assign mentoring responsibilities to the higher classified employees as part of the requirements of the position.

Cost: \$\$\$

Impact: \*\*

### *Paperwork Reduction*

**What It Is** Paperwork Reduction programs are job reengineering initiatives designed to eliminate unnecessary paperwork to permit the child welfare worker to have more time to spend on direct client services.

**How It Works** Agencies can reduce paperwork by eliminating unnecessary forms and documentation, reassigning paperwork duties to case aides or clerical staff, and/or designing computer systems that assist with case management responsibilities.

**Why It Works** Most child welfare workers are frustrated by the amount of paperwork required in their jobs and would prefer to spend more time providing direct client services. To the extent that increased job satisfaction leads to job retention, reducing the frustration caused by excessive paperwork should lead to reduced turnover.

**Challenges and Considerations** Introducing technological innovation into the work place can be expensive and disruptive. Automated systems intended to reduce paperwork sometimes create more administrative burdens for the worker, particularly in the short run.

Cost: \$\$

Impact: \*\* *Performance-Based Pay*

**What It Is** Performance-based pay systems provide employee compensation based on individual performance rather than step increases.

**How It Works** There are a variety of approaches to compensating employees based on their performance contributions. Some agencies continue to use traditional pay steps within the pay range to gradually increase the rate of compensation as employees gain experience, but provide additional compensation to better performing employees through the use of periodic bonuses (usually annual) or lump-sum payments. In other agencies, movement from the minimum to the maximum of the pay range is determined exclusively by performance, and base-rate increases are provided based exclusively on merit. Or, an agency may use a combination of merit-driven, base-rate increases and periodic bonus payments.

**Why It Works** For agencies experiencing turnover as a result of low pay, performance-based pay systems may improve retention rates because agencies can use their limited salary budgets more effectively by providing greater monetary rewards to better performers. A three percent increase, for example, under a traditional system provides everyone with

the same increase. Under a performance-based system, the better performers could be given more than three percent if the weaker performers are given less than three percent. Turnover among the better performers should decline not only because their pay becomes more competitive, but also because the recognition makes them feel more valued by the agency.

**Challenges and Considerations** Performance-based pay has the potential of being very effective in reducing turnover among better performers in agencies with limited salary budgets wishing to use their scarce salary dollars more effectively.

Cost: \$

Impact: \*\* *Performance Management*

**What It Is** Performance Management is the process of maintaining or improving job performance by constructively evaluating and assessing employee performance.

**How It Works** Most well-designed performance management systems have three components:

- Objectives.
- Behaviors or competencies.
- Employee development plans.

At the beginning of each evaluation period, managers and/or employees identify specific work objectives as well as the behaviors/competencies believed to be critical for successful performance. Employees and supervisors may also agree on a development plan designed to improve performance or achieve long-range career objectives. These three components form the basis for the employee's evaluation.

**Why It Works** Employee loyalty and retention are enhanced when employees clearly understand what is expected of them and receive constructive feedback on how they are doing. When used properly, the development plan component provides the employee with the insights and tools necessary to become a better worker and to prepare for future advancement within the agency.

**Challenges and Considerations** Supervisors sometimes resist performance management systems because evaluating employee performance requires a major investment in time, and forces the supervisor to confront performance problems, and forces them to be accountable for staff performance. In addition, when supervisory workloads are particularly heavy, supervisors may not have time to do thorough performance reviews.

Cost: \$\$

Impact: \*\*\* *Realistic Job Preview*

**What It Is** A *Realistic Job Preview (RJP)* is a recruiting approach that is designed to communicate both the desirable and undesirable aspects of the job before an applicant has accepted a job offer.

**How It Works** Although a RJP can be presented in a variety of formats, such as verbal presentations, job tours and written brochures, a number of human services agencies have used a video portraying the job of a child welfare worker. The videos usually feature child welfare workers describing both the positive and negative aspects of the job, and shows footage of them engaging in a variety of work activities. Agencies that have produced such videos normally require all job applicants to watch the video before being interviewed for the job.

**Why It Works** Much of the turnover in child welfare jobs occurs within the first several months of employment because job applicants accept job offers without having a good understanding of the demands of the job. Worse yet, many applicants have certain expectations and/or perceptions about the job which are inaccurate. After viewing the RJP, those job applicants who conclude that they are not well suited for the demands of the job simply withdraw from the application process. Well produced videos focus on those issues believed

to have an impact on job retention, emphasizing how workers feel about the job rather than just focusing on the mechanics of the job.

A well designed RJP can be expected to significantly reduce turnover of child welfare workers, particularly the turnover that occurs within the first several months of employment when many new workers realize that they made a bad career choice. Research studies have also shown that employees who accept employment offers after seeing RJPs are not only more likely to stay on the job longer, but also show greater job satisfaction and are better able to cope with the demands of the job.

**Challenges and Considerations** Some agencies, particularly those facing serious recruiting difficulties, fear that showing a Realistic Job Preview will further reduce their ability to attract new employees. Others believe that they lack the “know how” to produce an effective video.

Cost: \$\$                      Safety Support

Impact: \*\*

**What It Is** Agencies can provide Safety Support by taking steps to make employees feel reasonably safe in a job that has inherent risks.

**How It Works** Since many child welfare workers feel at greatest risk when working in the field, some agencies have provided a wide array of solutions, including:

- Safety awareness training.
- Authorizing staff to travel in pairs when making potentially dangerous home calls.
- Use of cell phones and two-way radios.
- Equipping agency vehicles with keyless entry and alarms.
- Requiring staff to prepare detailed field itineraries.
- Requiring field staff to call the office at regular intervals.
- Forging cooperative relationships with local police agencies.
- Conducting risk assessments on families prior to making home calls (by doing on-line criminal history checks).
- Discussing safety related topics at staff meetings.

**Why It Works** Some employees leave the child welfare job because of safety concerns. If employees feel safer, they may be less likely to leave.

**Challenges and Considerations** Perhaps the greatest challenges to addressing “field safety” are in agencies that

have never faced a serious safety crisis and therefore may have become complacent. Despite the concerns of field employees, upper management may fail to take the steps necessary to address employee concerns.

Cost: \$\$

Impact: \* *Second Language Incentive*

**What It Is** Some agencies pay a Second Language Incentive to child welfare workers who speak a second language.

**How It Works** Agencies that provide an incentive to employees who speak a second language usually pay a premium (either cents per hour or a fixed percentage) above the normal hourly pay rate for all hours worked. Some agencies require that employees pass a language proficiency exam before becoming eligible for the premium. Some agencies also require those employees receiving the premium to serve as a translator on an as needed basis.

**Why It Works** The pay premium not only provides a higher pay rate than the employee would have otherwise received, but also recognizes the additional skill and service provided.

**Challenges and Considerations** Although a relatively small group of people will receive the pay incentive, this solution may have a significant impact on reducing the turnover of employees with a special, and often critical, skill.

Cost: \$\$

Impact: \*\*\* *Supervisory Development*

**What It Is** Supervisory Development is the process of providing professional development to supervisors and managers to enhance their effectiveness with their staff.

**How It Works** Agencies provide supervisors and managers with training and other developmental opportunities to improve their leadership skills. Good supervisors must know how to clearly set performance expectations, provide ongoing feedback, provide opportunities for their staff's development and growth, and build relationships based on trust. They must be good coaches, communicators and team builders.

**Why It Works** The quality of frontline supervision has a tremendous impact on employee satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

**Challenges and Considerations** Many organizations, particularly small ones, believe they lack the resources to provide good supervisory training and developmental opportunities. Even organizations with good supervisory training and development programs sometimes find it difficult to "change the ways" of some experienced supervisors who have developed poor supervisory skills over many years.

Cost: \$\$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Telecommuting*  
 Impact: \*\*\*

**What It Is** A Telecommuting program allows employees to work from their home rather than commute to the agency's offices to do their regular work.

**How It Works** Experienced child welfare workers work from home, using telephones, computers, fax machines, and possibly other remote capabilities. Participating child welfare workers are able to tap into their agency's computer network from home so that all case-related information is as available at home as it would be in an office setting. Depending on the model, the employees may also have considerable flexibility in determining which hours they will work during the work day. Some agencies may require that the employee be available during core hours to take phone calls, participate in telephone meetings and so on. The employee is also usually expected to arrange field visits at times more convenient to clients, rather than being confined by the more traditional office hours. In some situations, the employee may be scheduled for some hours in the office to be available for meetings, training, etc. Some believe that child welfare worker positions are particularly well suited for telecommuting because of the inherent amount of field work required, the relative ease of monitoring work results, and the flexible scheduling resulting in more convenience to clients.

**Why It Works** Working from home offers employees the advantage of being able to save the time and financial expense of daily commuting to the office setting. Employees may also have considerable flexibility over their working hours within the workday. Employees with young children may be able to reduce or eliminate their day care expenses. Permitting employees such degree of control over their work lives may also help reduce burnout.

**Challenges and Considerations** A telecommuting model requires supervisors to monitor employee performance in an entirely new way – one that some supervisors will have trouble adapting to. Since employees will spend less time in the office setting, the collegial dynamics of casework may also change. The “start up” costs of a telecommuting model may be expensive initially, if the agency chooses to equip home offices with computers, fax machines and dedicated phone lines. These costs may be offset in the long run as a result of reduced office space and equipment.

Cost: \$\$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Training (In-Service)*

Impact: \*\*\*

**What It Is** In-Service Training consists of the formal classroom training and on-the-job training that is provided to employees after they have been hired by an agency.

**How It Works** Agencies that believe they can reduce turnover by improving in-service training begin providing thorough and intensive training to new child welfare workers immediately upon hire or within the first few weeks. They also recognize that job-specific training and more general professional-development training opportunities must continue throughout the child welfare worker's career.

**Why It Works** A career in child welfare is very demanding, relies on the exercise of good judgment and requires thorough training on broad social work principles and often-complex agency policy. Employees, and most particularly new employees, who feel inadequately prepared to cope with the job often end up leaving. Providing the skills employees believe they need to do the job well is critical to job retention.

One-hundred percent of the administrators responding to APHSA's survey stated that they believed that increased or improved in-service training was at least somewhat effective as a strategy for reducing turnover (APHSA 2005).

**Challenges and Considerations** One of the biggest obstacles to classroom training is relieving employees of their work duties in order to be able to attend training. Experienced employees sometimes resist going to training because they face an accumulated backlog of work upon their return. In the case of newly hired employees, sending them to training

immediately after hire prolongs the length of time other staff must cover vacant caseloads.

**Cost:** \$\$ *Tuition Assistance*  
**Impact:** \*\*

**What It Is** Tuition Assistance programs provide financial assistance to child welfare workers pursuing work-related education and/or advanced degrees.

**How It Works** Typically agencies that offer tuition assistance programs provide financial reimbursement for some portion of the tuition and fees to employees who take job-related classes or obtain advanced degrees. Although the policies differ from one agency to another, reimbursement is usually made only after the employee successfully passes the class, may range from 50 to 100 percent reimbursement, and may allow a specified number of hours of paid time off to take the class. Some agencies have a plan that makes use of enhanced Federal funding to reimburse the tuition of employees pursuing a MSW degree. Often, employees are required to agree to work for the agency for a specified period of time in exchange for the tuition reimbursement.

**Why It Works** Tuition assistance programs provide a significant financial benefit and provide professional development opportunities. Child welfare workers may gain confidence in their ability to do the job and believe that they

are enhancing their qualifications for future career opportunities.

**Challenges and Considerations** Tuition assistance can be a very effective retention tool for those employees the agency may most want to keep (i.e., those interested in furthering their own professional development).

Cost: \$ to \$\$\$

#### *University Partnerships*

Impact: \* to \*\*\*

**What It Is** Many agencies have formed partnerships with colleges and universities in their state primarily for the purpose of better preparing social work students for jobs in the state's public child welfare agencies.

**How It Works** Although there are a variety of unique programs, most are directed at better preparing students for jobs in public child welfare agencies. In some states, the agency and universities work together on curriculum design. In some instances the university curriculum is so closely aligned to the agency's child welfare policies that students hired by the agency do not need to participate in new-worker training. In other instances, the states have contracted with the universities to design and deliver the agency's training programs.

Some agencies have programs where the agency selects students for employment during their junior year in college, and pays their tuition (and perhaps a stipend) in exchange for a work commitment. In other instances, current child welfare staff enroll in the MSW program, and receive tuition reimbursement in exchange for a work commitment. Sometimes field placements can be arranged so that they occur within the agency, but in a different kind of work assignment.

Many other agencies partner with their universities on various work-study and intern programs. It is very common for students to do their field placements in both public and private agencies in the state.

**Why It Works** Many of the university partnership programs provide social work students with considerable exposure to child welfare agencies and their programs before the employment relationship is formed. Based on that early exposure, students may realize that either the agency or a child welfare job will be a bad fit for them.

**Challenges and Considerations** Although partnerships between the University Schools of Social Work and child welfare agencies hold tremendous potential, there are some minor pitfalls to be aware of. Some agencies have provided funding for stipends to social work students in exchange for work commitments, only to find that budget shortfalls and

hiring freezes prevented them from being able to hire the students after graduation. With regard to internship programs, some supervisors have invested a great deal of time supervising a student placement only to have the student take a job elsewhere after graduation.

## References

American Public Human Services Association. (2005). *Report from the 2004 Child Welfare Workforce Survey: State Agency Findings*. Washington, DC: February.

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## Appendix 2

# Stay Survey: Executive Summary



University of Pittsburgh

*School of Social Work*

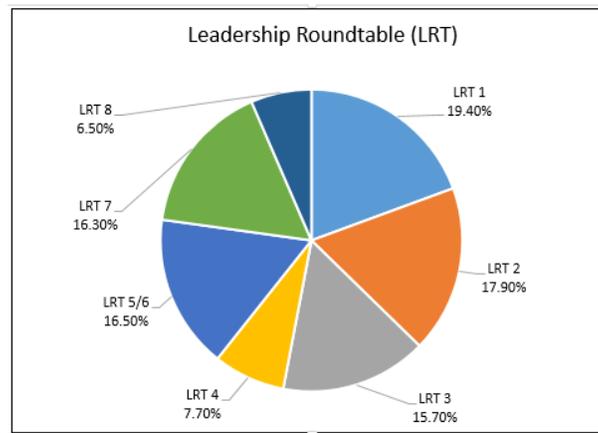
*Child Welfare Education and Research Programs*

*The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center*

Caseworker retention has been identified as a challenge in Pennsylvania’s child welfare system. To better understand factors that may help retain county caseworkers, the AOPC Caseworker Retention Workgroup created and administered a brief, web-enabled survey. The survey was sent via email to all County Child Welfare Administrators on March 23, 2016. Administrators were asked to forward the survey to caseworkers. The survey remained open for approximately 4 months, and 1359 responses were received with representation from all Leadership Roundtables. Findings from this survey provide an important snapshot of public county child welfare caseworker and supervisor perspectives on what may help or hinder their longevity in the field. However, it should be noted that due to the distribution methodology, it is unknown how many caseworkers and/or supervisors received the survey and how representative the respondents are of caseworkers within each LRT or across the state. Given these limitations, the findings described in this report should be interpreted with some caution.

As shown below in Figure 1, although almost 20% of respondents were from LRT 1, we are unable to determine how many workers within LRT 1 received the survey, nor can we determine the county breakdown of responses within that LRT.

Figure 1. Distribution of responses by Leadership Roundtable (LRT).



The majority of respondents (87%) were caseworkers (see Figure 2), but some supervisors (5.4%) and “Other” staff (6%) also responded. Years of service among respondents ranged from less than one year to more than fifteen years (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Distribution of respondent job classifications.

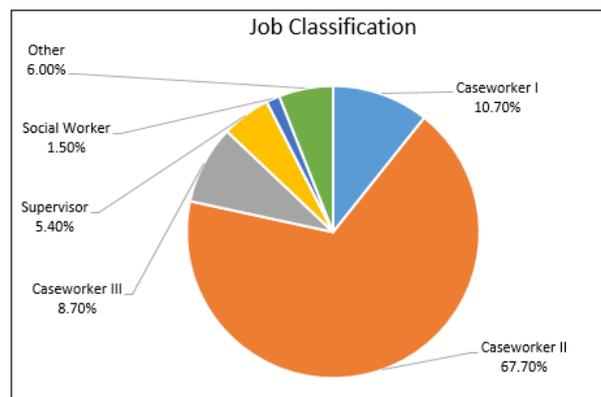
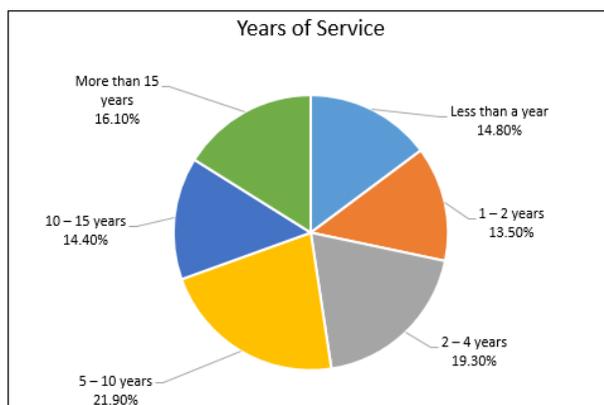


Figure 3. Distribution of respondent years of service



In addition to the demographic information shown above, the survey asked 11 closed-ended and 4 open-ended questions exploring factors that may impact caseworker retention. Questions asked about the following: factors related to staying at the job; factors related to leaving the job; specialized training needs; perceptions of supervisor; stress related to court; technology needs; family life impact; self-care plan utilization; and, what constitutes a good or bad day on the job. A copy of the survey (see Appendix I) and the survey results (see Appendix II) are included with this summary. Additionally, illustrative quotes are included throughout this summary to provide examples of the themes that emerged from a qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions. Data were analyzed across categories grouping years of service to determine whether length of time in the field impacted the respondents' response to each question.

A good day at work:  
*“When you can lay your head down at night and know that the children you saw at work today are safe.”*

The following themes emerged regarding what caseworkers and supervisors like about their job that would make them want to stay.

- The ability to make an impact on children and families was most frequently selected by caseworkers and supervisors across all years of service.
- Colleagues were also cited as a reason caseworkers and supervisors across all years of service would want to stay at their jobs.
- Flexibility was identified as a stay factor for caseworkers and supervisors with five years of service or more.
- Supervisors were identified as a stay factor for caseworkers with four years of service or less.

Supervisors are frequently involved in the day-to-day work of caseworkers and were most often identified as important or extremely important for caseworkers to stay at their jobs. The characteristics that respondents reported valuing in a supervisor tended to vary by the workers' level of experience.

- Caseworkers with less experience valued supervisors who provided concrete guidance and direct assistance to help workers understand and carry out their work.
- Caseworkers with more experience and supervisors overall valued experienced and knowledgeable supervisors who respect, trust, and support the workers to carry out their duties.

A good supervisor:  
*“Someone you can trust, is supportive and can help you make hard decisions, and appreciates the hard work that we do.”*

Specialized training is one factor that could help caseworkers and supervisors feel more comfortable in their jobs and could promote retention.

- Drug and alcohol, mental health, and trauma are topics for specialized trainings that both caseworkers and supervisors identified would help them feel more comfortable in their jobs. While training on the topics of drug and alcohol and mental health were cited frequently across all years of service for caseworkers and supervisors, trauma was identified most frequently as a training topic among caseworkers and supervisors with two years of service or more.
- Caseworkers and supervisors also identified that a reason to stay at their job is the opportunity they have to gain good experience and knowledge. Training is one avenue to gain new knowledge and skills.

Caseworkers and supervisors were asked to identify factors that would make them want to leave their jobs. Caseworkers and supervisors identified salary/benefits as a factor that would make them want to leave, but stress was the negative factor most frequently cited by both. All of the following were cited as unmanageable and certainly contribute to the stress workers feel.

- Caseload
- Timelines
- Paperwork

*“The average caseload is impossible to manage efficiently and there is a lot of pressure and stress involved in trying to meet all responsibilities.”*

*“I enjoy working with children, but at times I am frustrated and overwhelmed.”*

Some additional factors that would make caseworkers want to leave their job varied by years of service. Caseworkers with less than two years of service identified being on-call and work hours as additional factors that would make them want to leave, while caseworkers with two years of service or more identified leadership/management of the agency as an additional factor that would make them want to leave.

While court was not frequently reported as a reason for respondents to leave their jobs, participating in court and the stress associated with it were further explored in the survey. The factors that made court stressful differed between newer and more seasoned caseworkers and supervisors.

- Testifying in court was identified as the top stressor related to court for newer caseworkers, while newer supervisors identified cross examination as most stressful (four years of service or less).

*“We don’t always know if we will testify, we don’t always know what will be asked of us.”*

- Amount of time spent at the courthouse was identified as the top stressor related to court for more seasoned caseworkers and supervisors (five years of service or more).

In summary, the following should be considered while reviewing this report:

- Although the survey was sent to all County Administrators, it is unknown if all county caseworkers received the survey and had the opportunity to respond.
- Survey respondents were asked to identify their Leadership Roundtable, rather than the county in which they work. The number of counties within each Leadership Roundtable ranged from 5 to 21; therefore, it is unclear which counties are represented by the survey responses.
- Respondents were asked several questions that allowed for a wide range of responses (i.e., “check all that apply”), which inhibited the identification of conclusive findings. However, allowing for multiple responses was helpful in developing a comprehensive list of responses.

While not necessarily representative of all caseworkers in the state, findings from this survey help us to better understand factors that may contribute to caseworker retention in Pennsylvania. Supportive supervisors and specialized training were identified as important components to staying in the field, while high levels of stress (including that associated with participating in court), deadlines, and paperwork were cited as factors that may lead to leaving casework. Further inquiry into these factors may help us determine how to build upon facilitators to longevity in the field, while minimizing barriers.

A special thanks to our University of Pittsburgh Team

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## Stay Interview Survey

1.

### STAY INTERVIEW SURVEY - INSTRUCTIONS

This survey asks about aspects of your job that make you want to stay in child welfare. The goal of this survey is to both determine why some caseworkers stay in their jobs and to provide information that ultimately helps reduce caseworker turnover. The information from your survey responses will be used to help the Caseworker Retention Workgroup formulate recommendations to the 2016 Pennsylvania State Roundtable, co-chaired by Supreme Court Justice Max Baer, Department of Human Services Deputy Secretary Cathy Utz, and Office of Children & Families in the Courts Administrator Sandy Moore, in regards to what would better help retain casework staff.

- This survey will close April 6, 2016.
- Completion of the survey should take approximately 5 minutes.
- The survey does not ask for your name and your responses will be kept completely anonymous.
- Your responses will not be seen by your Judge, Administrator, Supervisor or any other professional working directly with you.
- When the data is presented to the 2016 State Roundtable, it will be provided by Leadership Roundtables, not county specific.
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- The survey is voluntary.
- It is understood that your responses may be used to identify statewide strategies for retaining caseworkers in child welfare.
- Please respond honestly.

Thank you for your participation!

## Stay Interview Survey

2.

**\* 1. Leadership Roundtable:**

- LRT 1 (Philadelphia, Allegheny, Montgomery, Bucks, Delaware)
- LRT 2 (Lancaster, Chester, York, Berks, Westmoreland)
- LRT 3 (Luzerne, Lehigh, Lackawanna, Northampton, Dauphin)
- LRT 4 (Cumberland, Erie, Washington, Beaver, Butler)
- LRT 5/6 (Cambria, Schuylkill, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Monroe, Centre, Blair, Lebanon, Lycoming, Northumberland, Adams)
- LRT 7 (Indiana, Clearfield, Armstrong, Jefferson, Clarion, Venango, Warren, Forest, McKean, Elk, Cameron, Somerset, Bedford, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, Perry, Greene, Mercer, Lawrence, Crawford)
- LRT 8 (Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Clinton, Union, Snyder, Montour, Columbia, Wayne, Pike, Susquehanna, Carbon, Sullivan, Wyoming)

**\* 2. Job Classification:**

- Caseworker I
- Caseworker II
- Caseworker III
- Other (please specify)

**\* 3. Years of Service:**

- Less than a year
- 1-2 years
- 2-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- More than 15 years

**Stay Interview Survey**

**3.**

**\* 4. What do you like about your job that makes you want to stay? (check all that apply)**

- Leadership/Management of the agency
- My Supervisor
- My Colleagues
- Ability to make an impact on children and families
- Work Environment
- Salary/Benefits
- Flexibility
- Other (please specify)

**\* 5. What do you not like about your job that would make you leave? (check all that apply)**

- There is nothing at this time that would make me want to leave
- Leadership/Management of the agency
- My Supervisor
- My Colleagues
- Inability to make an impact on children and families
- Work Environment
- Salary/Benefits
- Work hours
- On-call
- Court
- Stress
- Other (please specify)

**\* 6. Do you feel appreciated and valued in your job?**

- Yes
- No

**Stay Interview Survey**

4.

\* 7. What specialized training would help you feel more comfortable in your job? (check all that apply)

- Drug and Alcohol
- Mental Health
- Sexual Abuse
- Investigative Skills
- Court related training (i.e. testimony, preparation for court, laws)
- Working with Older Youth
- Family Engagement strategies
- Trauma
- Technology
- Other (please specify)

## Stay Interview Survey

5.

\* 8. How important is your direct supervisor to whether or not you stay at this job?

- Not at all
- Important
- Extremely important

\* 9. In one word or one sentence, what makes a really good supervisor?

10. In one word or one sentence, what makes a really bad supervisor?

## Stay Interview Survey

6.

\* 11. How stressful is going to Court?

- Not stressful
- Sometimes stressful
- Always stressful

12. If stressful, what causes most stress?

- Testifying in court
- Preparation for court
- Cross Examination
- Interacting with the families after you have provided testimony
- Amount of time spent at the courthouse
- Other (please specify)

## Stay Interview Survey

7.

**\* 13. What technology do you have that is helpful? (check all that apply)**

- County cell phone
- Laptop or Tablet that can be taken into the field
- Dragon recording for automatic transcribing
- Other (please specify)

**\* 14. What technology would be helpful for you to have? (check all that apply)**

- County cell phone
- Laptop or Tablet that can be taken into the field
- Dragon recording for automatic transcribing
- Other (please specify)

**Stay Interview Survey**

8.

**\* 15. Is your own family life affected by your job?**

- Never
- Rarely
- Frequently
- Always

**\* 16. Do you have a self-care plan that helps you to reduce stress?**

- Yes
- No

\* 17. In one word or one sentence, what makes a really good day at your job?

\* 18. In one word or one sentence, what makes a really bad day at your job?



## Stay Survey Preliminary Survey Results

January 2017

*Helen Cahalane, Ph.D, ACSW, LCSW*

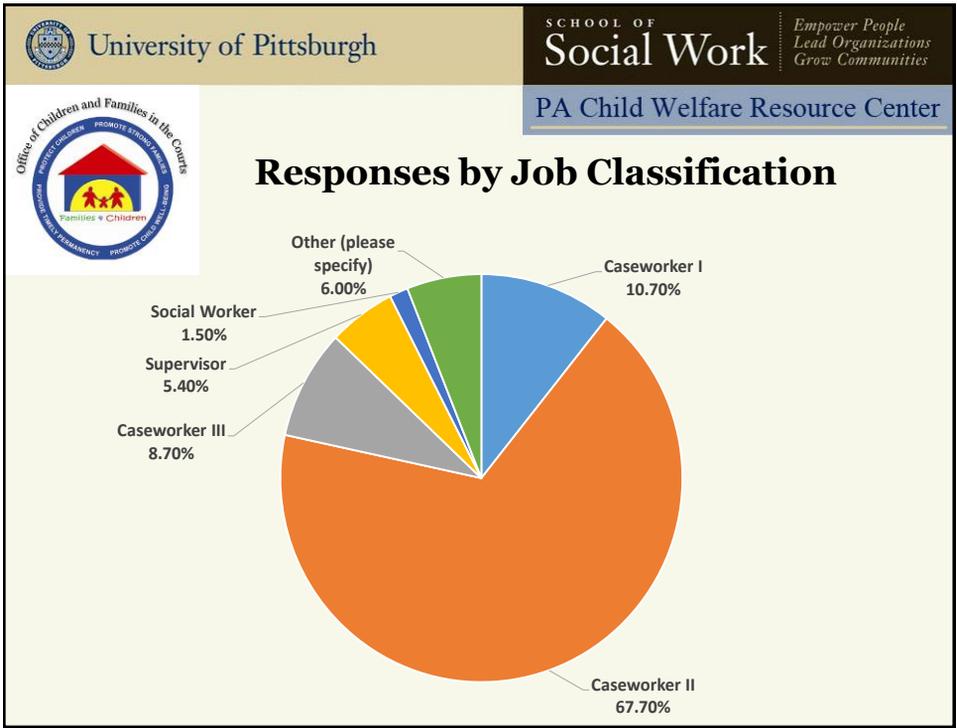
*Mike Byers, MSW*

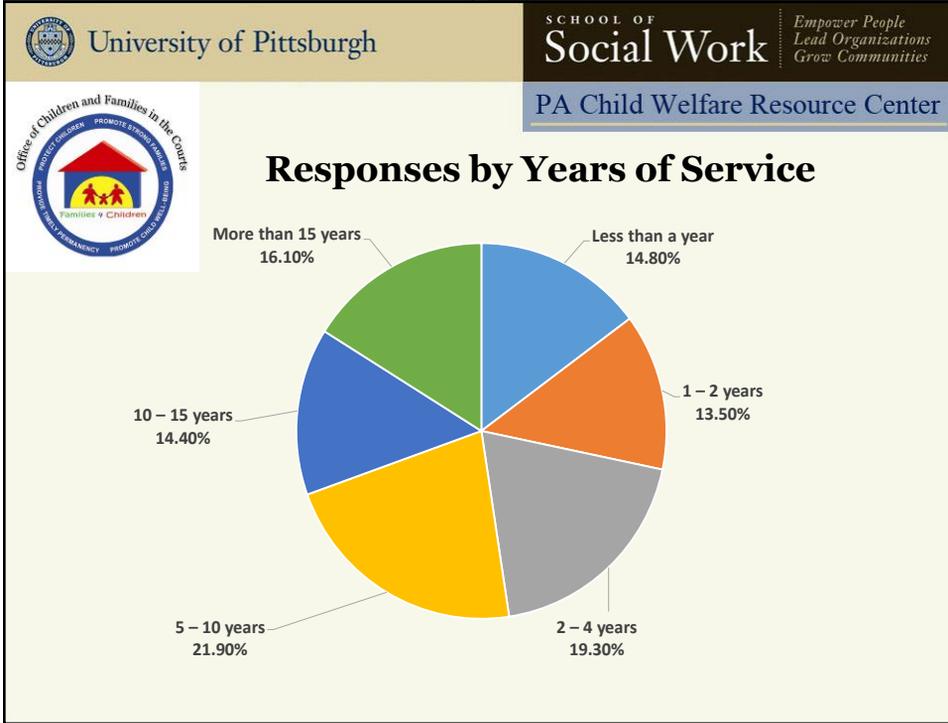
Thursday, March 30, 2017



## Responses by Leadership Roundtable

LRT	Counties	n	%
1	Philadelphia, Allegheny, Montgomery, Bucks, Delaware	263	19.4%
2	Lancaster, Chester, York, Berks, Westmoreland	243	17.9%
3	Luzerne, Lehigh, Lackawanna, Northampton, Dauphin	213	15.7%
4	Cumberland, Erie, Washington, Beaver, Butler	105	7.7%
5/6	Cambria, Schuylkill, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Monroe, Centre, Blair, Lebanon, Lycoming, Northumberland, Adams	224	16.5%
7	Indiana, Clearfield, Armstrong, Jefferson, Clarion, Venango, Warren, Forest, McKean, Elk, Cameron, Somerset, Bedford, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, Perry, Greene, Mercer, Lawrence, Crawford	222	16.3%
8	Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Clinton, Union, Snyder, Montour, Columbia, Wayne, Pike, Susquehanna, Carbon, Sullivan, Wyoming	89	6.5%





**Caseworkers: What do you like about your job that makes you want to stay?**

	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+ 15 Years (n = 145)
Leadership/Management of the agency	22.5%	16.8%	13.1%	9.1%	5.9%	11.0%
My Supervisor	59.9%	57.8%	51.0%	51.7%	40.2%	42.8%
My Colleagues	69.8%	65.3%	61.8%	57.8%	49.7%	56.6%
Ability to Make an Impact on Children and Families	77.5%	68.8%	68.9%	65.4%	63.9%	66.9%
Work Environment	32.4%	19.7%	16.7%	11.4%	14.8%	15.9%
Salary/Benefits	34.6%	35.3%	24.3%	27.8%	28.4%	28.3%
Flexibility	42.9%	48.0%	46.2%	55.5%	59.8%	62.1%
Other (please specify)	5.5%	7.5%	6.4%	13.3%	16.0%	11.0%
Benefits (not salary)	0.5%	2.3%	2.4%	5.3%	7.1%	4.1%



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PA Child Welfare Resource Center

Office of Children and Families in the Courts

### Caseworkers: What do you like about your job that makes you want to stay?

73 "other" responses

< 1 yr. (n=9)	1-2 yrs. (n=9)	2-4 yrs. (n=10)	5-10 yrs. (n=21)	10-15 yrs. (n=14)	+ 15yrs. (n=10)
Close to my home	Good experience, learning a lot	Job security	Working with children and families	Variety	Working with families
"I have been traveling out of state for a few years, and this is the only job that was hiring closer to home."	"I like that we are given a wealth of knowledge and experience in the areas of mental health."	"Job stability/security"	"I enjoy working with children, I love FGDM!"	"I don't sit at a desk all day. It's always different from day to day."	"I love working with the children and families."

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Office of Children and Families in the Courts

### Supervisors: What do you like about your job that makes you want to stay?

	Percentage (%) (n = 73)
Leadership/Management of the agency	11%
My Supervisor	24.7%
My Colleagues	53.4%
Ability to Make an Impact on Children and Families	69.9%
Work Environment	19.2%
Salary/Benefits	38.4%
Flexibility	53.4%
Other (please specify)	5.5%
Benefits (not salary)	1.4%

*Highlights of "Other" Responses*

- Close to retirement
- Years of service





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## Caseworkers: What do you NOT like about your job that makes you want to leave?

	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+15 Years (n = 145)
There is nothing at this time that would make me want to leave.	12.1%	6.4%	4.0%	2.7%	1.8%	9.0%
Leadership/Management of the Agency	17.0%	30.1%	40.2%	49.4%	43.2%	43.4%
My Supervisor	12.1%	14.5%	12.7%	10.3%	13.0%	8.3%
My Colleagues	3.8%	5.8%	5.2%	8.0%	5.9%	6.2%
Inability to make an impact on children and families	10.4%	9.2%	15.5%	23.6%	13.6%	13.1%
Work Environment	12.6%	26.6%	29.9%	38.8%	31.4%	27.6%
Salary/Benefits	41.8%	48.0%	53.0%	45.6%	46.7%	38.6%
Work Hours	22.5%	31.8%	29.5%	25.1%	16.0%	13.1%
On-Call	22.0%	34.7%	32.3%	31.2%	24.9%	17.9%
Court	16.5%	20.2%	22.3%	22.1%	23.7%	23.4%
Stress	65.4%	72.3%	75.7%	66.5%	69.8%	57.2%
Other (please specify)	23.1%	26.0%	28.3%	24.7%	33.1%	26.2%



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## Caseworkers: What do you NOT like about your job that makes you want to leave?

### 258 “other” responses

< 1 yr. (n=33)	1-2 yrs. (n=42)	2-4 yrs. (n=53)	5-10 yrs. (n=66)	10-15 yrs. (n=34)	+ 15yrs. (n=30)
Overwhelming workload	Unrealistic expectations of caseworkers	Too much work, too little pay	Too much work (paperwork) too little pay	Paperwork required/deadlines	Agency/organization
<i>"There are not enough hours in the day to complete day to day tasks."</i>	<i>"The expectations of timelines for paperwork that needs to be done is nearly impossible due to the high caseloads that we are expected to carry at this time."</i>	<i>"Salary is so low given the amount of work that is required"</i>	<i>"We make minimal income and we spend more time completing paperwork than working with families."</i>	<i>"Not enough time to meet state requirements, paperwork, and demands take away from engaging clients/quality of home visits"</i>	<i>"The politics, work is not distributed equally and that lowers morale"</i>





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Office of Children and Families in the Courts

## Supervisors: What do you NOT like about your job that makes you want to leave?

	Percentage (%) (n = 73)
There is nothing at this time that would make me want to leave.	5.5%
Leadership/Management of the Agency	41.1%
My Supervisor	13.7%
My Colleagues	5.5%
Inability to make an impact on children and families	16.4%
Work Environment	30.1%
Salary/Benefits	32.9%
Work Hours	23.3%
On-Call	26.0%
Court	26.0%
Stress	72.6%
Other (please specify)	35.6%

*Highlights of "Other" Responses*

- Cumbersome processes
- Excessive amount of time spent on paperwork, rather than with families
- Colleagues resistant to change



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## Caseworkers: What specialized training would help you feel more comfortable in your job?

	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+ 15 Years (n = 145)
Drug and Alcohol	61.0%	49.1%	47.4%	39.9%	31.4%	30.3%
Mental Health	57.7%	44.5%	43.8%	35.0%	30.8%	30.3%
Sexual Abuse	60.4%	43.9%	33.5%	28.1%	20.7%	12.4%
Investigative Skills	55.5%	50.3%	43.4%	33.5%	23.7%	12.4%
Court Related Training (i.e. testimony, preparation for court, laws)	54.9%	44.5%	29.9%	23.6%	18.3%	11.7%
Working with Older Youth	24.7%	23.1%	25.5%	23.6%	20.7%	13.8%
Family Engagement Strategies	44.5%	32.4%	24.3%	22.8%	18.9%	10.3%
Trauma	50.5%	41.0%	47.0%	39.2%	40.8%	29.0%
Technology	12.1%	10.4%	13.5%	21.7%	17.8%	26.2%
Other (please specify)	10.4%	6.9%	9.6%	14.8%	7.7%	11.7%



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### Caseworkers: Specialized Training

#### 124 "other" responses

< 1 yr. (n=19)	1-2 yrs. (n=12)	2-4 yrs. (n=24)	5-10 yrs. (n=39)	10-15 yrs. (n=13)	+ 15yrs. (n=17)
County specific training	Training relative to job practices	Dealing with intense situations	Higher quality training	Personal safety training	Cross systems training
"County specific training on the forms used here, many counties in PA operate in different manners."	"Training that is relative to the job duties, do you realize how much could be fixed if the training was relative to the job?"	"Caseworkers need more intense training, such as, taking the children from the home, how to talk with the children, when the children are seeing their caregivers taken out of the home in handcuffs."	"The training that is available seems only to emphasize one aspect of what is required in this job. The ability to integrate skills and prioritize efforts is needed."	"Safety training for ourselves"	"Working as a team, cross systems training"

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### Supervisors: What specialized training would help you feel more comfortable in your job?

	Percentage (%) (n = 73)
Drug and Alcohol	34.2%
Mental Health	23.3%
Sexual Abuse	15.1%
Investigative Skills	23.3%
Court Related Training (i.e. testimony, preparation for court, laws)	12.3%
Working with Older Youth	9.6%
Family Engagement Strategies	16.4%
Trauma	47.9%
Technology	23.3%
Other (please specify)	9.6%

*Highlights of "Other" Responses*

- State regulations
- Stress management
- Empathetic administration





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## LRT: What specialized training would help you feel more comfortable in your job?

	LRT 1 (n = 263)	LRT 2 (n = 243)	LRT 3 (n = 213)	LRT 4 (n = 105)	LRT 5/6 (n = 224)	LRT 7 (n = 222)	LRT 8 (n = 89)
<b>Drug and Alcohol</b>	38.4%	41.2%	38.5%	45.7%	47.3%	41.4%	49.4%
<b>Mental Health</b>	39.5%	39.1%	31.9%	34.3%	43.3%	39.6%	44.9%
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	27.0%	33.7%	30.0%	39.0%	27.7%	37.4%	32.6%
<b>Investigative Skills</b>	32.3%	33.3%	35.2%	37.1%	36.2%	40.5%	39.3%
<b>Court Related Training (i.e. testimony, preparation for court, laws)</b>	34.6%	31.3%	24.4%	22.9%	21.9%	34.2%	34.8%
<b>Working with Older Youth</b>	18.3%	20.6%	19.2%	19.0%	26.8%	22.1%	28.1%
<b>Family Engagement Strategies</b>	26.2%	26.3%	23.0%	17.1%	28.6%	25.7%	27.0%
<b>Trauma</b>	42.2%	44.4%	35.2%	40.0%	45.5%	41.9%	44.9%
<b>Technology</b>	17.9%	15.2%	19.7%	15.2%	21.4%	17.6%	12.4%
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	11.4%	11.1%	10.3%	7.6%	8.5%	12.2%	7.9%



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## How important is your direct supervisor to whether or not you stay at this job?

### Caseworkers



Importance	< 1 yr. (n=178)	1-2 yrs. (n=165)	2-4 yrs. (n=239)	5-10 yrs. (n=249)	10-15 yrs. (n=160)	over 15 yrs (n=136)
Not at all	~6%	~8%	~8%	~10%	~14%	~12%
Important	~50%	~45%	~48%	~44%	~42%	~46%
Extremely important	~44%	~45%	~44%	~45%	~43%	~41%



**Caseworkers: In one word or sentence, what makes a really good supervisor?**  
*1,126 responses*

< 1 yr. (n=178)	1-2 yrs. (n=165)	2-4 yrs. (n=239)	5-10 yrs. (n=249)	10-15 yrs. (n=160)	+ 15yrs. (n=135)
Help (with the work)	Encouraging	Knowledgeable	Supportive	Supportive	Supports the worker
"One that will answer my questions, help me prioritize, help me understand the work"	"Compliments their workers on their strengths in written words and in spoken words"	"Experience and knowledge"	"Someone that listens to what you have to say, helps you to understand, and treats you with respect"	"Always has my back!"	"Trusts the worker to make decisions, provides structure, opportunity for growth"



## Supervisors: In one word or sentence, what makes a really good supervisor?

68 responses

- Supportive
- Leads by example
- Encouraging



## Caseworkers: In one word or sentence, what makes a really bad supervisor?

1,075 responses

< 1 yr. (n=163)	1-2 yrs. (n=158)	2-4 yrs. (n=229)	5-10 yrs. (n=242)	10-15 yrs. (n=153)	+ 15yrs. (n=130)
Unwilling to help	Overwhelms caseworker	Does not "pitch in" and help	No support, no direction	Lack of experience	Lack of support/leadership
"One that is unwilling to help out when a caseworker is struggling"	"Someone who doesn't bother to train you, then faults you for not knowing what to do"	"Someone who doesn't do anything to assist the caseworker"	"Someone that speaks over you, doesn't listen or provide direction, and treats you as though you are lower than them"	"One who does not know the job and is a 'boss' not a team player"	"Lack of control, lack of leadership, lack of structure"



**Supervisors: In one word or sentence, what makes a really bad supervisor?**  
*65 responses*

- Lack of support
- Lack of direction
- Micromanages



**Caseworkers: If (court) is stressful, what causes the most stress?**

	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+ 15 Years (n = 145)
Testifying in Court	52.2%	46.2%	38.2%	36.1%	30.2%	35.2%
Preparation for Court	50.0%	38.2%	34.3%	27.8%	33.7%	20.7%
Cross Examination	49.5%	44.5%	37.5%	37.6%	27.8%	33.1%
Interacting with the families after you have provided testimony	24.2%	24.3%	25.9%	25.1%	18.3%	14.5%
Amount of time spent at the courthouse	23.6%	32.4%	36.3%	43.7%	37.9%	44.8%
Other (please specify)	4.9%	13.9%	17.1%	20.2%	19.5%	21.4%





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**Caseworkers: If (court) is stressful, what causes the most stress? 192 "other" responses**

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< 1 yr. (n=9)	1-2 yrs. (n=24)	2-4 yrs. (n=42)	5-10 yrs. (n=53)	10-15 yrs. (n=33)	+ 15yrs. (n=31)
Judges' attitude toward caseworkers	Judges' unrealistic expectations of caseworkers	Judges demeaning caseworkers	Judges not listening to caseworkers	Attorneys not prepared, lack of knowledge	Lack of respect from judges
"A Judge or Master intentionally expressing anger at the caseworker"	"Judges unrealistic expectations of CYF Caseworkers (time lines, transportation, placements for children on probation who are acting out, researching family who we already know is not an appropriate fit), especially when parents are not doing their part"	"Getting screamed at by the Judge"	"Having the Judge not listen to the CW, instead the Judge teams up with the Parent Advocate"	"Lack of preparation for court with solicitors, when they forget what your case is about or say things in court that are not true"	"The judge does not trust CYS and does not view us as professionals. Sometimes clients are able to perceive that the court feels CYS is wrong which makes for an even more difficult working relationship."



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**Supervisors: If (court) is stressful, what causes the most stress?**

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	Percentage (%) (n = 73)
Testifying in Court	21.9%
Preparation for Court	19.2%
Cross Examination	24.7%
Interacting with the families after you have provided testimony	6.8%
Amount of time spent at the courthouse	45.2%
Other (please specify)	34.2%

Highlights of "Other" Responses

- The judge
- Not being heard



## Caseworkers: In one word or sentence, what makes a really good day at your job?

1,114 responses

< 1 yr. (n=177)	1-2 yrs. (n=164)	2-4 yrs. (n=237)	5-10 yrs. (n=246)	10-15 yrs. (n=156)	+ 15yrs. (n=134)
Able to get required work done	Helping families	Helping families	Helping families	Accomplishing goals	Accomplishing goals
"Accomplishing all I need to do in order of priority"	"Making progress with families"	"A day where you were able to help a family"	"Helping a family through a hard time"	Goal completion"	"Accomplishing the goals I set for myself"



## Supervisors: In one word or sentence, what makes a really good day at your job?

66 responses

- Making an impact
- Being productive
- Good social work





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### Caseworkers: In one word or sentence, what makes a really bad day at your job?

**1,033 responses**

< 1 yr. (n=99)	1-2 yrs. (n=164)	2-4 yrs. (n=237)	5-10 yrs. (n=246)	10-15 yrs. (n=155)	+ 15yrs. (n=132)
Too many cases	Getting assigned more cases	Too much work, not enough time	Too much work, not enough time	Not enough time to get the work done	Too much responsibility- "carrying other caseworkers' caseloads"
<i>"When you get referral after referral and no time to work on stuff that you already had planned"</i>	<i>"When I get 5 cases on top of my 25 cases, and I don't get home until 11pm"</i>	<i>"Emergencies, inability to be effective, too much work and not enough time"</i>	<i>"Emergency that bleeds into after-hours"</i>	<i>"When I don't get a thing accomplished on my 'to do' list"</i>	<i>"Taking on other workers' work because they are incompetent and coddled"</i>



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### Supervisors: In one word or sentence, what makes a really bad day at your job?

**66 responses**

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Lack of support
- Not enough time

## REDUCING CASEWORKER STRESS IN THE COURTROOM

### Judge and Hearing Officer

- ◆ Model and set expectations for professionalism in the courtroom
- ◆ Become familiar with caseworker job responsibilities and limitations
- ◆ Address concerns about agency policies, services, etc. with agency administration
- ◆ Discuss caseworker trauma in the courtroom during a local children's roundtable meeting
- ◆ Ask if there is anything else you should know to render your decision

### Caseworker and Supervisor

- ◆ Know the Dependency Benchbook
- ◆ Block time to prepare your case and discuss with your supervisor and solicitor
- ◆ Testify to facts, avoid characterizing efforts and engaging in speculation
- ◆ Share agency recommendations with the family and all other parties prior to the hearing
- ◆ Anticipate stressful situations that may occur and develop strategies to depersonalize what is not within your control

### Respectful Communication

- Promotes cooperation
- Reduces defensiveness
- Keeps everything family focused

- ◆ Provide shadowing opportunities
- ◆ Attend hearings and provide support to your caseworker as needed

### Solicitor

- ◆ Meet with the caseworker, obtain relevant case information, and discuss non-negotiables of the agency recommendations
- ◆ Review and practice questions with caseworkers; yours and those anticipated by other parties
- ◆ Debrief caseworker about court findings, rulings, and expectations and discuss strategies for moving forward
- ◆ If additional training or support would benefit the caseworker, consider discussing the same with them and their supervisor
- ◆ Help caseworkers appreciate that contrary rulings do not automatically equate with judicial disregard of the caseworker's expertise or efforts

### Guardian ad Litem,

### Child Attorney, Parent Attorney

- ◆ Speak with the caseworker prior to the hearing
- ◆ Work out stipulations and disposition agreements when possible
- ◆ Keep your questions professional in tone and form
- ◆ Do not engage in inappropriate non-verbal communication (i.e. eye rolling, pounding the table, etc.)
- ◆ Focus on presenting facts to support your client's position and best interest

In 2015 the Caseworker Retention Workgroup was created, by the Pennsylvania State Roundtable, and asked to examine the impact Caseworker Retention has on children and families in the dependency system. The Workgroup includes Judges, County Commissioners, Juvenile Court Hearing Officers, Attorneys, Child Welfare Administrators, Supervisors, Caseworkers, Department of Human Services, University of Pittsburgh, Child Welfare Resource Center, Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association, Juvenile Justice and other key partners within the dependency system.

To better understand what made caseworkers stay and leave their jobs, the Workgroup administered a statewide “Stay Interview,” which received an impressive 1359 responses. Caseworkers identified stress as the number one reason they would leave their job. One specific stressor identified surrounded their court experience, specifically preparation for court, testifying in court and cross examination by attorneys. In response to this stressor, the Workgroup created this guide. The guide’s intended use it to spur local examination of the issue and, if needed, change. While some of the included strategies are grounded in research, others were created through the collective expertise and knowledge of Workgroup members. In addition, the guide was reviewed by the State Roundtable Trauma Workgroup, Benchbook Committee and former Legal Representation Workgroup Attorneys.

# Child Welfare Caseworker Retention

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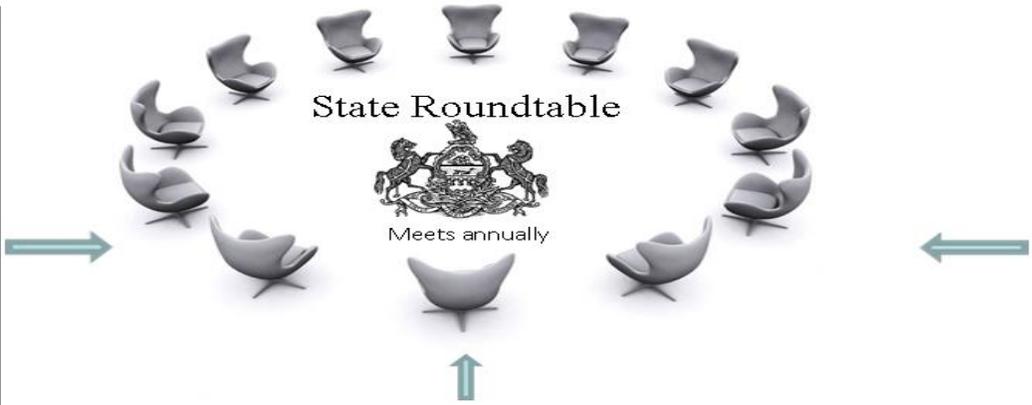
*Honorable Max Baer, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*

*Honorable Linda Cordaro, Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County*

*Cathy Utz, Deputy Secretary of Office of Children,  
Youth and Families, Department of Human Services*

**Pennsylvania Children's Roundtable Structure**

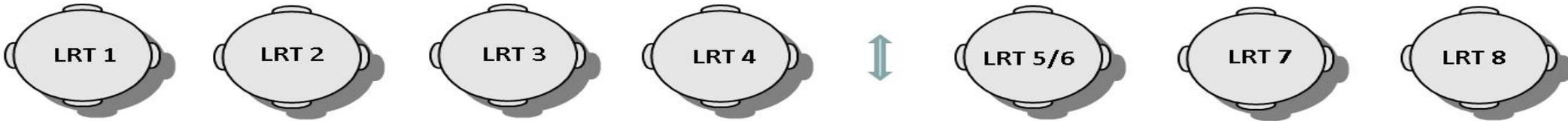
- Attendees**
- State Supreme Court Justice
  - Administrator, Office of Children & Families in the Courts
  - Secretary Department of Human Services
  - Secretary of Education
  - Secretary of Drug & Alcohol Programs
  - Deputy Secretary, DHS, Office of Children, Youth & Families
  - Deputy Secretary, PDE, Office of Elem. & Sec. Education
  - Leadership Roundtable and Workgroup Co-Chairs
  - Guardians ad Litem, Parent Attorneys, Solicitors
  - Pennsylvania Legislators (invited)
  - Pennsylvania County Commissioner
  - American Bar Association



- State Roundtable Workgroups**
- Permanency Practice Initiative
  - Dependency Bench Book & Judicial Education
  - Dependent Children of Incarcerated Parents
  - Truancy & Educational Success
  - Hearing Officer Education
  - Legal Representation
  - Children's Summit
  - Transitional Youth
  - Drug & Alcohol
  - Trauma
  - CW Workforce Retention

**1 Dependency Judge and 1 Children & Youth Administrator (co-chair) advance to the State Roundtable and act as representatives for each LRT (additional representation for selected Leadership Roundtables).**

**Leadership Roundtables (LRT) comprised of like size counties grouped together**



Meets semi-annually

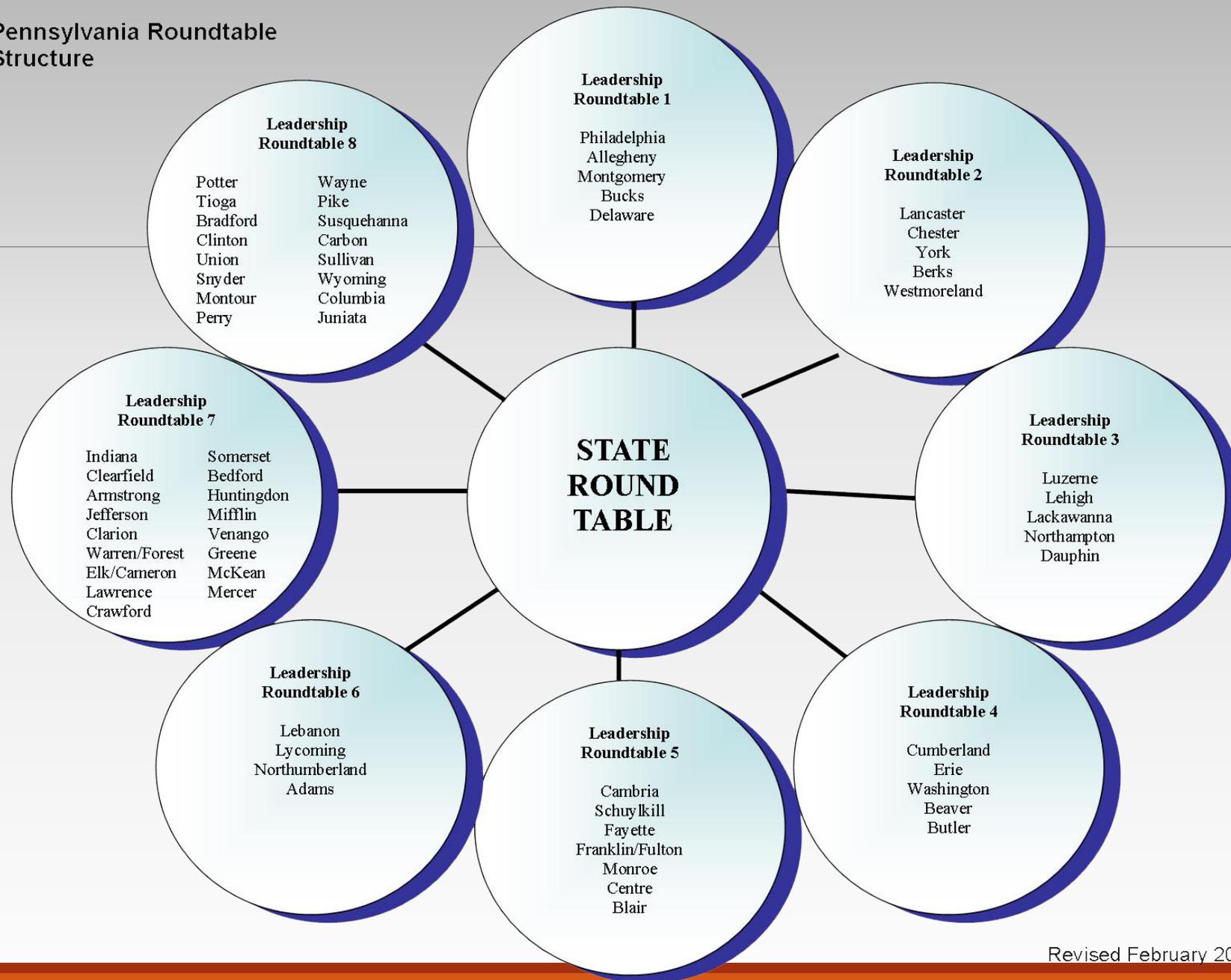
**Dependency Judge, Children & Youth Administrator plus one additional Local Children's Roundtable members advance to the Leadership Roundtable and act as representatives for the county (additional representation in some LRTs).**

- Parents/Former Foster Youth
- Hearing Officers/Masters
- County Children & Youth
- Juvenile Probation
- County Agencies
- Service Providers
- Law Enforcement
- Local Prisons



- County Commissioners
- Solicitors
- Guardians ad Litem
- Parent Attorneys
- School Districts/Educators
- Other Community Stakeholders
- Office of Children & Families in the Courts

Meets monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly



# State Roundtable concern...

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- ❖ Testimony provided by new caseworkers lacks thoroughness, needed detail
- ❖ Service provision described by new caseworkers lacks creativity and comprehensive knowledge of available services
- ❖ Children and parents have to tell very personal information repeatedly as caseworkers change...more trauma and delay
- ❖ All of the above directly impacts findings and orders that judges are legally required to make...safe, timely permanency for children.

# Caseworker Retention in Child Welfare: Why is it Important to the Court?

---

- Judicial findings and orders are made exclusively on the evidence presented during hearings – experienced workers tend to provide more comprehensive information
- More children in placement, more time to safe permanency, larger court dockets, more county costs.

# Child Welfare Caseworker Retention: State Roundtable Workgroup

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## **Co-Chairs:**

Honorable Linda R. Cordaro, Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County

Shara Saveikis, Administrator, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau

## **Commissioner Members:**

Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia, Bucks County

Commissioner Larry Maggi, Washington County

Commissioner George Hartwick, Dauphin County

# Caseworker Retention directly impacts child safety and funding

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- **Child Safety:** Research shows correlation between frequency of contact with a child and their safety *(National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006)*
- **Impacts service delivery** *(American Public Human Services Association, 2005) – required reasonable efforts findings of court which can directly impact federal funding*

# Caseworker Retention directly impacts child permanency

## Impact on Permanency Outcomes

*Milwaukee study: (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005)*

Number of Caseworkers	Likelihood of Achieving Permanency
1	74.5%
2	17.5%
3 or more	5.2% - 1%

# Caseworker Retention in Child Welfare: Average Cost of Placement

---

- Child Placement has a range of costs depending on the level of care needed:
  - ❖ Shelter Center (\$150-\$700/day)
  - ❖ County foster care (\$20-\$30/day)
  - ❖ Provider/purchased foster care (\$50-\$150/day)
  - ❖ Residential care (\$128-\$300/day)
- A child in care one day longer than needed is costly to the child's well-being and the County budget

# The Cost of Turnover

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) estimates the cost of turnover to be 1/3 of an employee's annual salary (cashing out benefits, training cost, recruitment cost, and other related cost).

Turnover cost in 4 counties within the current PA study (Westmoreland, Greene, Erie, Bucks)

	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016
County	Starting Salary	Lost investment with turnover of one Caseworker	Number of Caseworkers who left the agency	Total Turnover Cost For 2015-16
Westmoreland	\$38,863.50	\$10,469.22	7	\$73,284.54
Greene	\$34,216	\$7,323.86	15	\$109,857.90
Erie	\$33,910	\$14,734.77	9	\$132,612.93
Bucks	\$44,791	\$33,760.98	12	\$405,132.00

# Knowledge Needed...

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- Does my county have a child welfare caseworker turnover problem? What is our rate of caseworker turnover?
  
- What does caseworker turnover cost us?
  
- What are we currently doing to address the problem? Is it working?
  
- What else can we do? How can we measure if it works?

# Come to the Breakout Session...We know...

---

## Why Pennsylvania caseworkers stay and why they leave...

- What works with no additional cost...

- What works with minimal additional cost...

- What does not work but costs a lot...

# The Impact of Child Welfare Turnover

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*Honorable Max Baer, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*

*Honorable Linda Cordaro, Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County*

*Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia, Bucks County*

*Shara Saveikis, Executive Director, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau*

*Christy Stanek, Judicial Analyst, Office of Children & Families in the Courts*

*Cathy Utz, Deputy Secretary, Office of Children, Youth and Families*

*Moderator: Sandy Moore, Director, Office of Children & Families in the Court*

# The Impact of Child Welfare Turnover

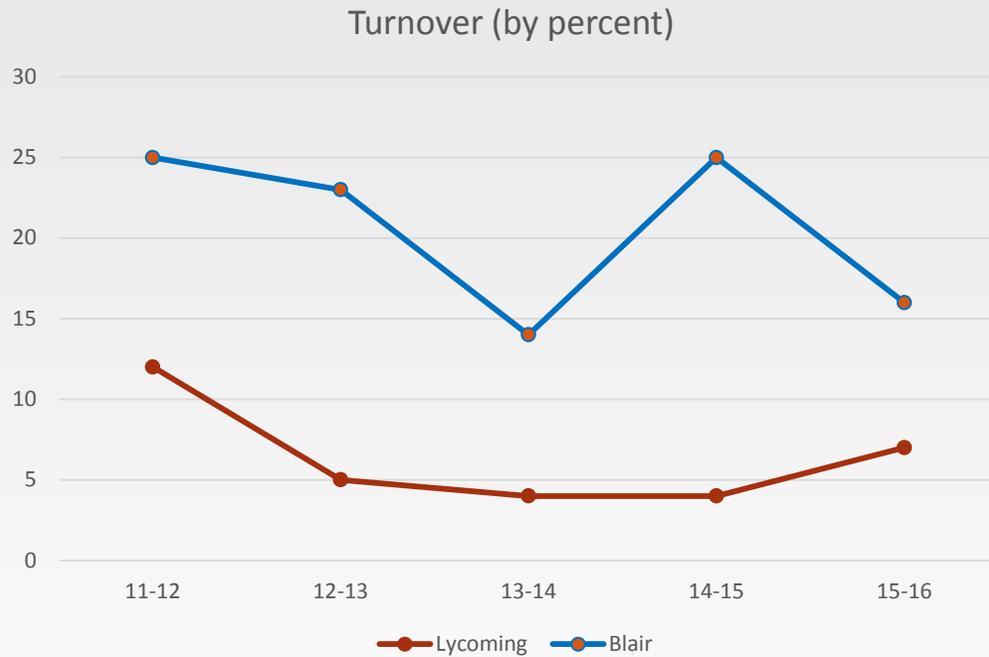
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## **Correlation between Turnover and Placement**

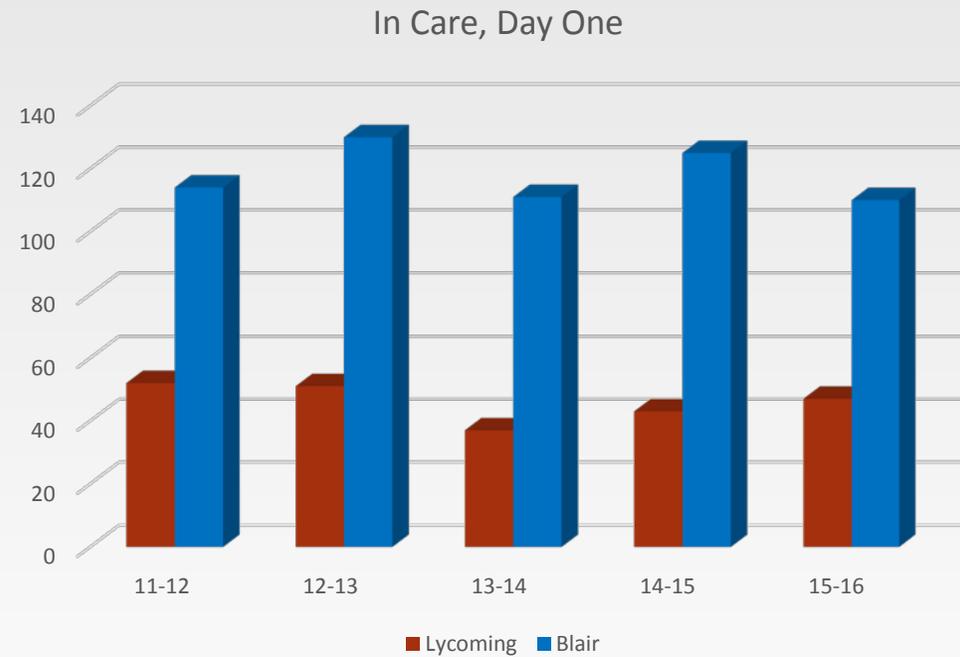
# Like-Size County Comparison

High Turnover = Higher Placements  
Lower Turnover = Lower Placements

### TURNOVER COMPARISON



### ENTRIES INTO PLACEMENT COMPARISON

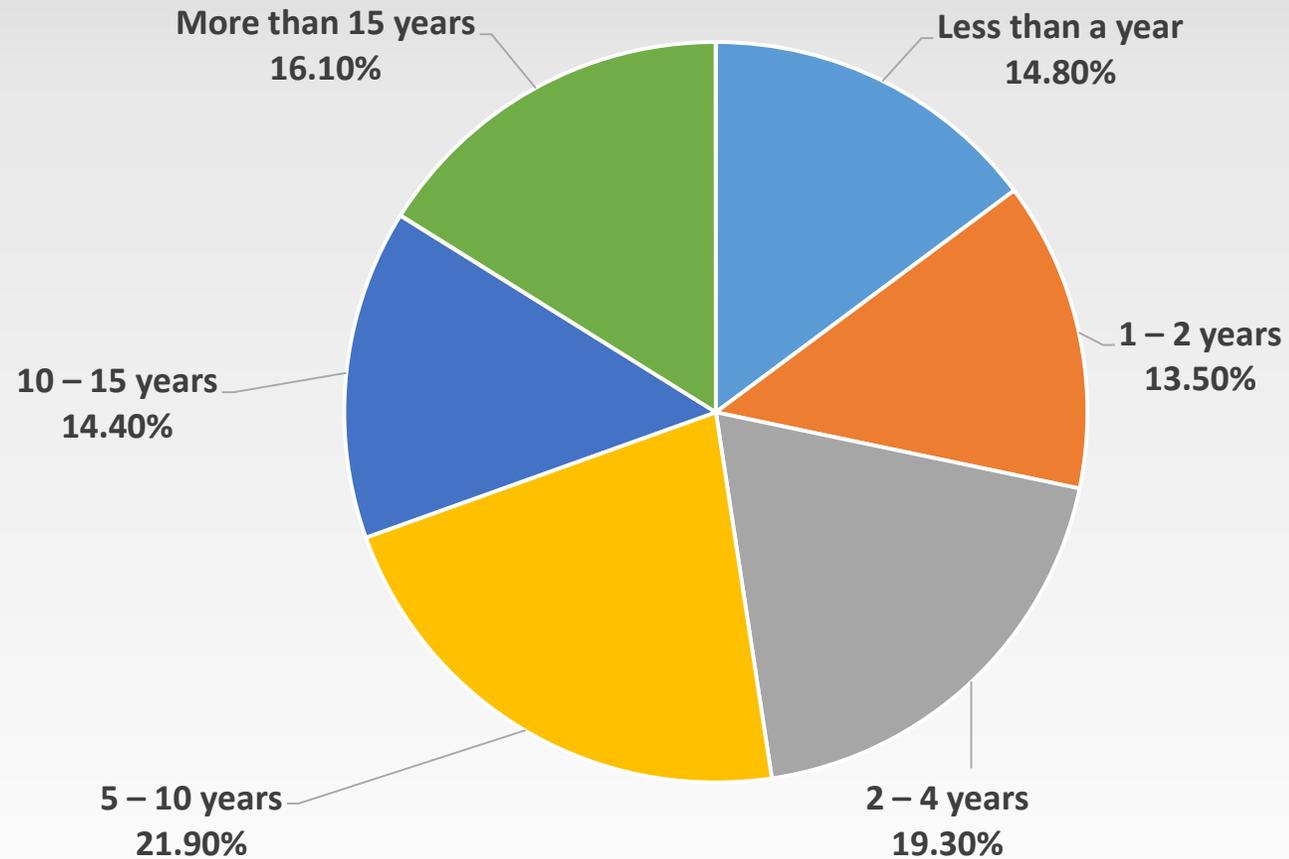


# Responses by Leadership Roundtable

<b>LRT</b>	<b>Counties</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	Philadelphia, Allegheny, Montgomery, Bucks, Delaware	263	19.4%
<b>2</b>	Lancaster, Chester, York, Berks, Westmoreland	243	17.9%
<b>3</b>	Luzerne, Lehigh, Lackawanna, Northampton, Dauphin	213	15.7%
<b>4</b>	Cumberland, Erie, Washington, Beaver, Butler	105	7.7%
<b>5/6</b>	Cambria, Schuylkill, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Monroe, Centre, Blair, Lebanon, Lycoming, Northumberland, Adams	224	16.5%
<b>7</b>	Indiana, Clearfield, Armstrong, Jefferson, Clarion, Venango, Warren, Forest, McKean, Elk, Cameron, Somerset, Bedford, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, Perry, Greene, Mercer, Lawrence, Crawford	222	16.3%
<b>8</b>	Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Clinton, Union, Snyder, Montour, Columbia, Wayne, Pike, Susquehanna, Carbon, Sullivan, Wyoming	89	6.5%

# Responses by Years of Service

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# Caseworkers: What do you like about your job that makes you want to stay?

	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+ 15 Years (n = 145)
Leadership/Management of the agency	22.5%	16.8%	13.1%	9.1%	5.9%	11.0%
My Supervisor	59.9%	57.8%	51.0%	51.7%	40.2%	42.8%
My Colleagues	69.8%	65.3%	61.8%	57.8%	49.7%	56.6%
Ability to Make an Impact on Children and Families	77.5%	68.8%	68.9%	65.4%	63.9%	66.9%
Work Environment	32.4%	19.7%	16.7%	11.4%	14.8%	15.9%
Salary/Benefits	34.6%	35.3%	24.3%	27.8%	28.4%	28.3%
Flexibility	42.9%	48.0%	46.2%	55.5%	59.8%	62.1%
Other (please specify)	5.5%	7.5%	6.4%	13.3%	16.0%	11.0%
Benefits (not salary)	0.5%	2.3%	2.4%	5.3%	7.1%	4.1%

# Caseworkers: What do you like about your job that makes you want to stay?

73 "other" responses

<b>&lt; 1 yr.</b> <b>(n=9)</b>	<b>1-2 yrs.</b> <b>(n=9)</b>	<b>2-4 yrs.</b> <b>(n=10)</b>	<b>5-10 yrs.</b> <b>(n=21)</b>	<b>10-15 yrs.</b> <b>(n=14)</b>	<b>+ 15yrs.</b> <b>(n=10)</b>
Close to my home	Good experience, learning a lot	Job security	Working with children and families	Variety	Working with families
<i>"I have been traveling out of state for a few years, and this is the only job that was hiring closer to home."</i>	<i>"I like that we are given a wealth of knowledge and experience in the areas of mental health."</i>	<i>"Job stability/security"</i>	<i>"I enjoy working with children, I love FGDM!"</i>	<i>"I don't sit at a desk all day. It's always different from day to day."</i>	<i>"I love working with the children and families."</i>

# Caseworkers: What do you NOT like about your job that makes you want to leave?

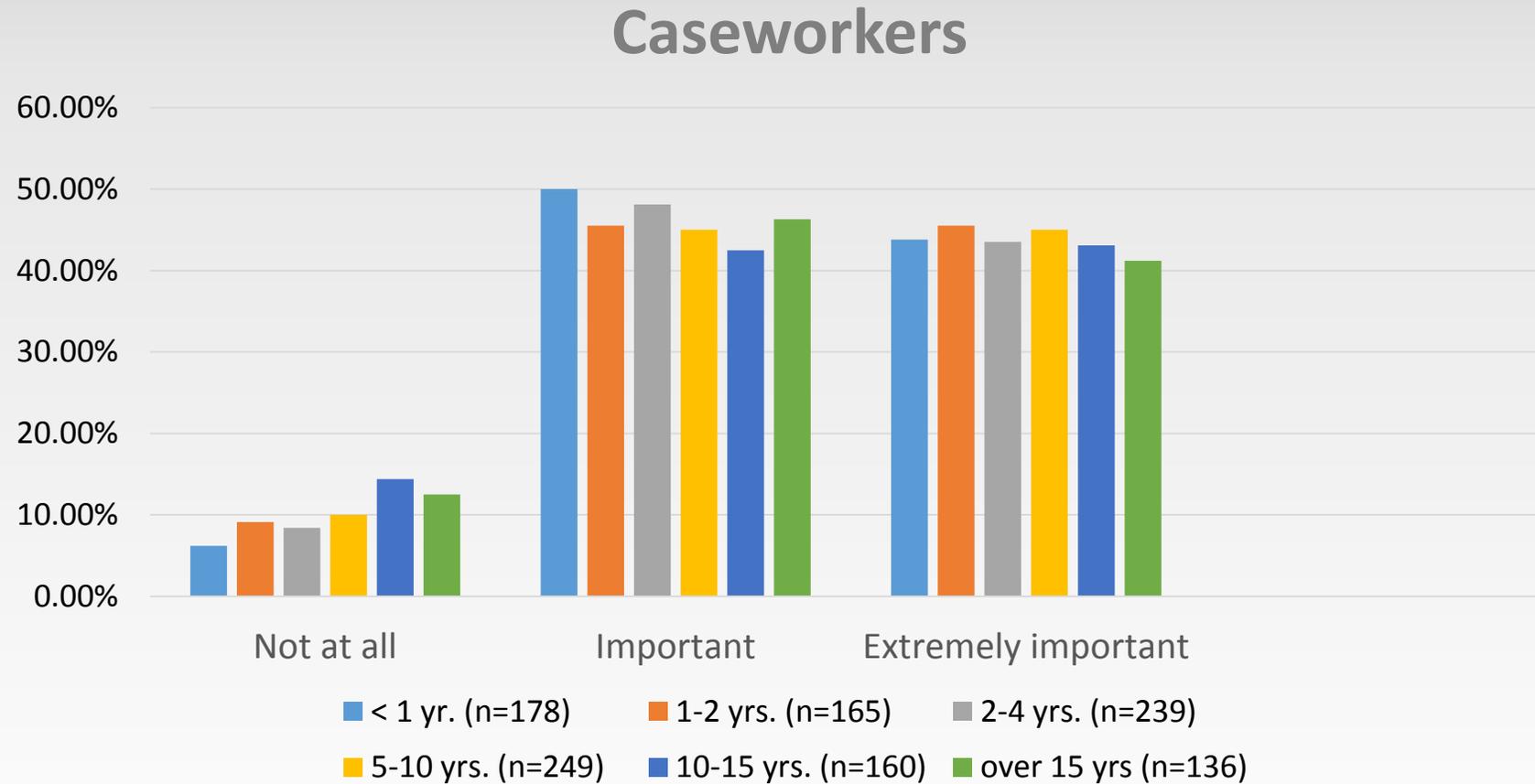
	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+15 Years (n = 145)
There is nothing at this time that would make me want to leave.	12.1%	6.4%	4.0%	2.7%	1.8%	9.0%
Leadership/Management of the Agency	17.0%	30.1%	40.2%	49.4%	43.2%	43.4%
My Supervisor	12.1%	14.5%	12.7%	10.3%	13.0%	8.3%
My Colleagues	3.8%	5.8%	5.2%	8.0%	5.9%	6.2%
Inability to make an impact on children and families	10.4%	9.2%	15.5%	23.6%	13.6%	13.1%
Work Environment	12.6%	26.6%	29.9%	38.8%	31.4%	27.6%
Salary/Benefits	41.8%	48.0%	53.0%	45.6%	46.7%	38.6%
Work Hours	22.5%	31.8%	29.5%	25.1%	16.0%	13.1%
On-Call	22.0%	34.7%	32.3%	31.2%	24.9%	17.9%
Court	16.5%	20.2%	22.3%	22.1%	23.7%	23.4%
Stress	65.4%	72.3%	75.7%	66.5%	69.8%	57.2%
Other (please specify)	23.1%	26.0%	28.3%	24.7%	33.1%	26.2%

# Caseworkers: What do you NOT like about your job that makes you want to leave?

*258 "other" responses*

<b>&lt; 1 yr. (n=33)</b>	<b>1-2 yrs. (n=42)</b>	<b>2-4 yrs. (n=53)</b>	<b>5-10 yrs. (n=66)</b>	<b>10-15 yrs. (n=34)</b>	<b>+ 15yrs. (n=30)</b>
Overwhelming workload	Unrealistic expectations of caseworkers	Too much work, too little pay	Too much work (paperwork) too little pay	Paperwork required/deadlines	Agency/organization
<i>"There are not enough hours in the day to complete day to day tasks."</i>	<i>"The expectations of timelines for paperwork that needs to be done is nearly impossible due to the high caseloads that we are expected to carry at this time."</i>	<i>"Salary is so low given the amount of work that is required"</i>	<i>"We make minimal income and we spend more time completing paperwork than working with families."</i>	<i>"Not enough time to meet state requirements, paperwork, and demands take away from engaging clients/quality of home visits"</i>	<i>"The politics, work is not distributed equally and that lowers morale"</i>

How important is your direct supervisor to whether or not you stay at this job?



## Caseworkers: If (court) is stressful, what causes the most stress?

	< 1 Year (n = 182)	1 – 2 Years (n = 173)	2 – 4 Years (n = 251)	5 – 10 Years (n = 263)	10 – 15 Years (n = 169)	+ 15 Years (n = 145)
<b>Testifying in Court</b>	52.2%	46.2%	38.2%	36.1%	30.2%	35.2%
<b>Preparation for Court</b>	50.0%	38.2%	34.3%	27.8%	33.7%	20.7%
<b>Cross Examination</b>	49.5%	44.5%	37.5%	37.6%	27.8%	33.1%
<b>Interacting with the families after you have provided testimony</b>	24.2%	24.3%	25.9%	25.1%	18.3%	14.5%
<b>Amount of time spent at the courthouse</b>	23.6%	32.4%	36.3%	43.7%	37.9%	44.8%
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	4.9%	13.9%	17.1%	20.2%	19.5%	21.4%

Caseworkers: In one word or sentence, what makes a really good day at your job?

*1,114 responses*

<b>&lt; 1 yr.</b> <b>(n=177)</b>	<b>1-2 yrs.</b> <b>(n=164)</b>	<b>2-4 yrs.</b> <b>(n=237)</b>	<b>5-10 yrs.</b> <b>(n=246)</b>	<b>10-15 yrs.</b> <b>(n=156)</b>	<b>+ 15yrs.</b> <b>(n=134)</b>
Able to get required work done	Helping families	Helping families	Helping families	Accomplishing goals	Accomplishing goals
<i>"Accomplishing all I need to do in order of priority"</i>	<i>"Making progress with families"</i>	<i>"A day where you were able to help a family"</i>	<i>"Helping a family through a hard time"</i>	<i>Goal completion"</i>	<i>"Accomplishing the goals I set for myself"</i>

Caseworkers: In one word or sentence, what makes a really bad day at your job?

*1,033 responses*

<b>&lt; 1 yr.</b> <b>(n=99)</b>	<b>1-2 yrs.</b> <b>(n=164)</b>	<b>2-4 yrs.</b> <b>(n=237)</b>	<b>5-10 yrs.</b> <b>(n=246)</b>	<b>10-15 yrs.</b> <b>(n=155)</b>	<b>+ 15yrs.</b> <b>(n=132)</b>
Too many cases	Getting assigned more cases	Too much work, not enough time	Too much work, not enough time	Not enough time to get the work done	Too much responsibility- "carrying other caseworkers' caseloads"
<i>"When you get referral after referral and no time to work on stuff that you already had planned"</i>	<i>"When I get 5 cases on top of my 25 cases, and I don't get home until 11pm"</i>	<i>"Emergencies, inability to be effective, too much work and not enough time"</i>	<i>"Emergency that bleeds into after-hours"</i>	<i>"When I don't get a thing accomplished on my 'to do' list"</i>	<i>"Taking on other workers' work because they are incompetent and coddled"</i>

# What can be done that costs nothing...

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- Know what your Caseworker Turnover looks like (% & cost)
- Know what is being done and how effective it is
- Examine areas that impact turnover: this changes with length of employment years
- Set expectations that foster a strong, competent, supportive management and supervisory staff
- Set expectations that foster a supportive agency culture and positive peer interaction

# What can be done that costs nothing...

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- “STAY” interviews
- “Onboarding”
- Flexible Hours
- Dedicated on-call positions
- Paperwork reduction/paperwork days
- Examine practices used...and stress points
- Talk to your court/judges

# What can be done that costs a little...

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- Keep workload manageable i.e. fill your compliment of caseworkers, add support staff, examine practice
- Ensure Caseworker Salary is comparable to neighboring counties and is sufficient to make a living
- Ensure effective management/supervisor development
- Co-locate court space within or near agency

# What costs a lot and does little...

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Status quo – if you have a turnover problem

Pay raises with no other change

Doing the same thing and expecting a different result

# Caseworker instability = a ticking time bomb

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It consumes your tax base

It jeopardizes community confidence

It jeopardizes lives

## APPENDIX 7

### County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania Evaluation Results (CCAP Spring Conference)

What is your overall evaluation of the training?	4.5
How relevant was the information presented?	4.7
<b>On a scale of 1 being poor to 5 being excellent</b>	
<b>Prior to this session</b> , what was your understanding of Caseworker Retention impact to the County?	3.8
<b>After this session</b> , what is your understanding of Caseworker Retention impact to the County?	4.6

#### Have you examined Caseworker Retention in your County?

- 88% said yes
- 12% said no

#### Do you know the average caseload size of your child welfare caseworkers?

- 68% said yes
- 32% said no

#### Do you know your caseworker retention rate?

- 44% said yes
- 56% said no

#### What is one thing you will take back to your county, from this session, and examine further?

- Caseload size
- Work from home to lessen time spent on travel
- Culture of support and leadership

#### If applicable, have you done anything unique in your county to enhance Caseworker Retention?

- Creation of a staff newsletter
- Leased space at the courthouse so that caseworkers can work while they wait for their hearing time
- Periodically walk through the agency and talk with caseworkers to see how they are doing and regular meetings with the agency director

# Caseworker Retention: How Does It Impact The Dependency System?

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## **Caseworker Retention Workgroup Co-Chairs:**

Honorable Linda R. Cordaro, *Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County*

Shara B. Saveikis, Administrator, *Westmoreland County Children's Bureau*

# State Roundtable concern: Not just an Agency issue

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- ❖ Testimony provided by new caseworkers lacks necessary thoroughness
- ❖ Service provision described by new caseworkers lacks creativity and comprehensive knowledge of available services
- ❖ Children and parents have to tell very personal information repeatedly as caseworkers change...more trauma and delay
- ❖ All of the above directly impacts findings and orders that judges are legally required to make...safe, timely permanency for children.

# Child Welfare Caseworker Retention: A State Roundtable Focus

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In 2015, the Pennsylvania State Roundtable convened the Caseworker Retention Workgroup

- Statewide Concern expressed through Leadership Roundtables
- Examine local, statewide and national research
- Impacts Court, County Agency, State, Children and Families
- Workgroup Membership includes 20 counties, who collectively oversee 70% of Pennsylvania's children in out of home care

# Caseworker Retention in Child Welfare: Why is it Important to the Court?

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- Judicial findings and orders are made exclusively on the evidence presented during hearings – experienced workers tend to provide more comprehensive information
- Frustration with lack of “new” information/Judge feeling they know the case better than the caseworker

# Caseworker Retention in Child Welfare: Why is it Important to the Court?

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- Increased continuances because a newer worker is at mandatory training or not yet familiar enough with the case to testify
- Less creative solutions to family problems resulting in longer services or services not best suited for the family
- More children in placement, more time to safe permanency, larger court dockets, more county costs.

# Caseworker Retention directly impacts child permanency

## Impact on Permanency Outcomes

*Milwaukee study: (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005)*

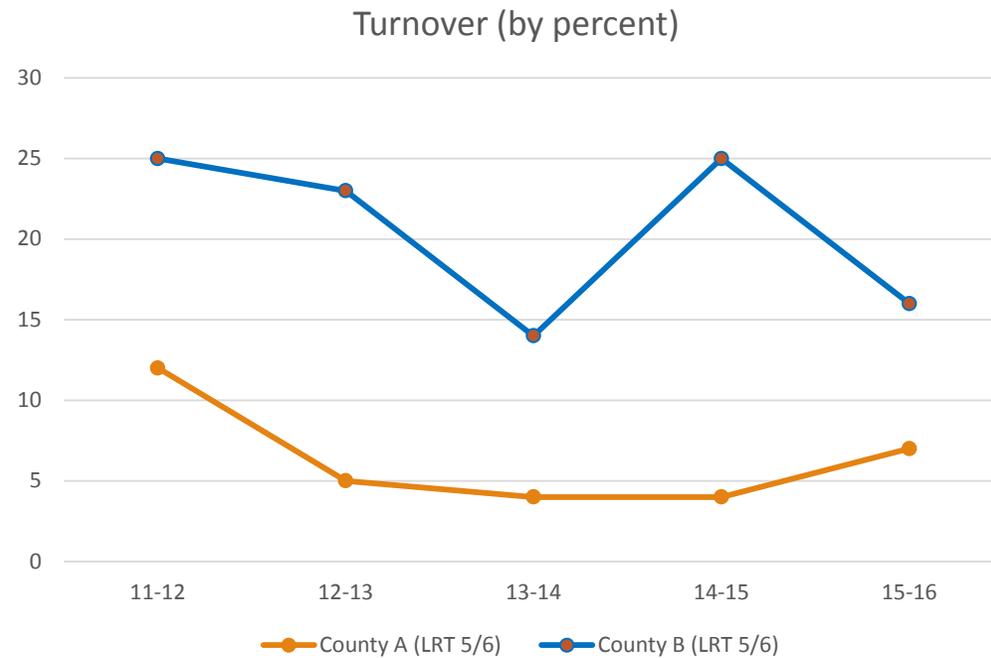
Number of Caseworkers	Likelihood of Achieving Permanency
1	74.5%
2	17.5%
3 or more	5.2% - 1%

# Like-Size County Comparison

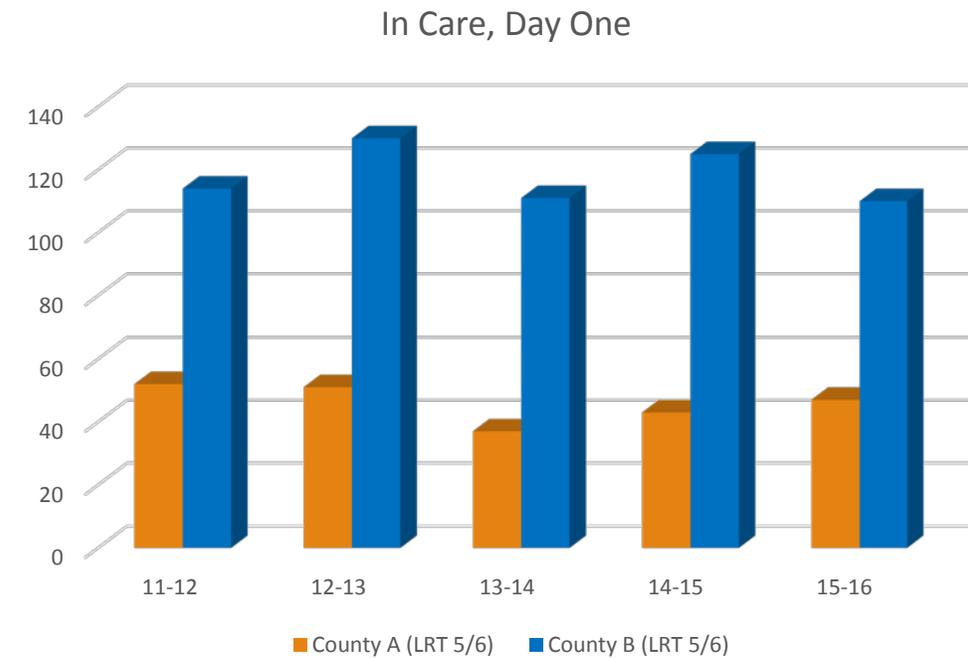
## High Turnover = Higher Placements

## Lower Turnover = Lower Placements

### TURNOVER COMPARISON



### ENTRIES INTO PLACEMENT COMPARISON



# Caseworker Retention directly impacts child permanency

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“The *timeline train* ----- it goes regardless of what isn't working with the system or where the causes for the delay are coming from”

~~Parent formerly in the system

# Caseworker Retention in Child Welfare: Why is it Important to the Agency?

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- Safety
- Permanency
- Well-Being
- Stability of Workforce and Budget

# Caseworker Retention directly impacts child safety

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- A highly-skilled child welfare workforce is necessary to meet the complex and critical needs of the children and families it serves
- Child Safety: Research shows correlation between frequency of contact with a child and their safety *(National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006)*
- Have a less experienced worker responsible for the safety of a child
- May result in a delay in reacting or overreacting

# Caseworker Retention directly impacts child well-being

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- Identifying the best suitable placement initially and preserving stability throughout
- **Impacts service delivery** *(American Public Human Services Association, 2005) – required reasonable efforts findings of court which can directly impact federal funding*
- Details may leave when the caseworker leaves
- A child and family has to develop new relationships and build trust with each new caseworker

# Caseworker Retention in Child Welfare: Average Cost of Placement

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- Child Placement has a range of costs depending on the level of care needed:
  - ❖ Shelter Center (\$150-\$700/day)
  - ❖ County foster care (\$20-\$50/day)
  - ❖ Provider/purchased foster care (\$50-\$150/day)
  - ❖ Residential care (\$128-\$300/day)
- A child in care one day longer than needed is costly to the child's well-being and the County budget

# The Cost of Turnover

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) estimates the cost of turnover to be 1/3 of an employee's annual salary (cashing out benefits, training cost, recruitment cost, and other related cost).

Turnover cost in 4 counties within the current PA study (Westmoreland, Greene, Erie, Bucks)

	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016
County	Starting Salary	Lost investment with turnover of one Caseworker	Number of Caseworkers who left the agency	Total Turnover Cost For 2015-16
Westmoreland	\$38,863.50	\$10,469.22	7	\$73,284.54
Greene	\$34,216	\$7,323.86	15	\$109,857.90
Erie	\$33,910	\$14,734.77	9	\$132,612.93
Bucks	\$44,791	\$33,760.98	12	\$405,132.00

# Knowledge Needed...

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- Does my county have a child welfare caseworker turnover problem? What is our rate of caseworker turnover? Is there an obvious trend?
  
- What does caseworker turnover cost us?
  
- What are we currently doing to address the problem? Is it working?
  
- What else can we do? How can we measure if it works?

Caseworkers stay in their jobs when they feel like they are able to make an impact on the lives of children and families ~ Stay Interview 2016

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Caseworker  
Retention  
matters to  
Dependency.....



....and to the  
children in your  
County