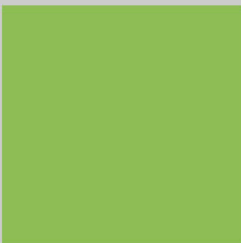
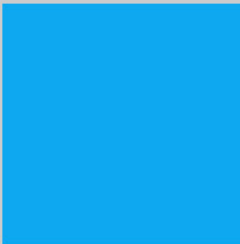
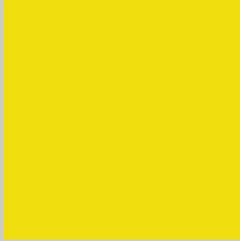




University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work  
Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center



2016-2017  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



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## Note from the Director

With the support of our partners and guidance from our Steering Committee, the Resource Center continued to support Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce through implementation support, training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, evaluation, and project management. Below are a few highlights from the year.


The Resource Center delivered over 1,400 trainings across the Commonwealth to meet the needs of our stakeholders. The certification series for new caseworkers (CTC) represented 46% of this volume. Caseworker Safety, a simulation-based training, continued to be delivered across the Commonwealth, through our partnership with Service Access Management, Inc. Also, many transfer of learning support sessions were delivered to aid in the application of new knowledge and skill. Finally, onsite, often county-specific, technical assistance was provided to many counties with focus areas including, but not limited to: organizational effectiveness, older youth related, and Quality Service Reviews.

The Resource Center continued to advance research and evaluation activities to support and inform our work and that of the larger child welfare system. The Title IV-E Demonstration Project has passed the mid-point of the five year project and evaluation efforts continue to further inform systems-level change efforts. We continue to evaluate training, from measuring participant satisfaction, to assessments that measure knowledge and skill development as well as the extent to which learning transfers to the field. The Resource Center also provided substantial support to the Commonwealth's implementation of the third round of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

Our youth and family engagement efforts continued and highlights include support of the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board, with over 300 youth participating in statewide and regional meetings advocating for improved practices and better informed youth. Efforts included the creation of several products addressing developmentally appropriate freedoms. We held the Older Youth Retreat at Pitt-Johnstown in August of 2016. It was another successful year with youth making strong connections with their peers and experiencing life on a college campus.

Finally, the Resource Center continued to offer a free online 3 hour course, Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. Over 268,000 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with almost 90% reporting they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course.

On behalf of our team, I thank you for your collaboration, support, and commitment to Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families.



Michael Byers, Director





## Resource Center Overview

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (Resource Center) is a collaborative effort of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators. The Resource Center is centrally managed and regionally administered by the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work.

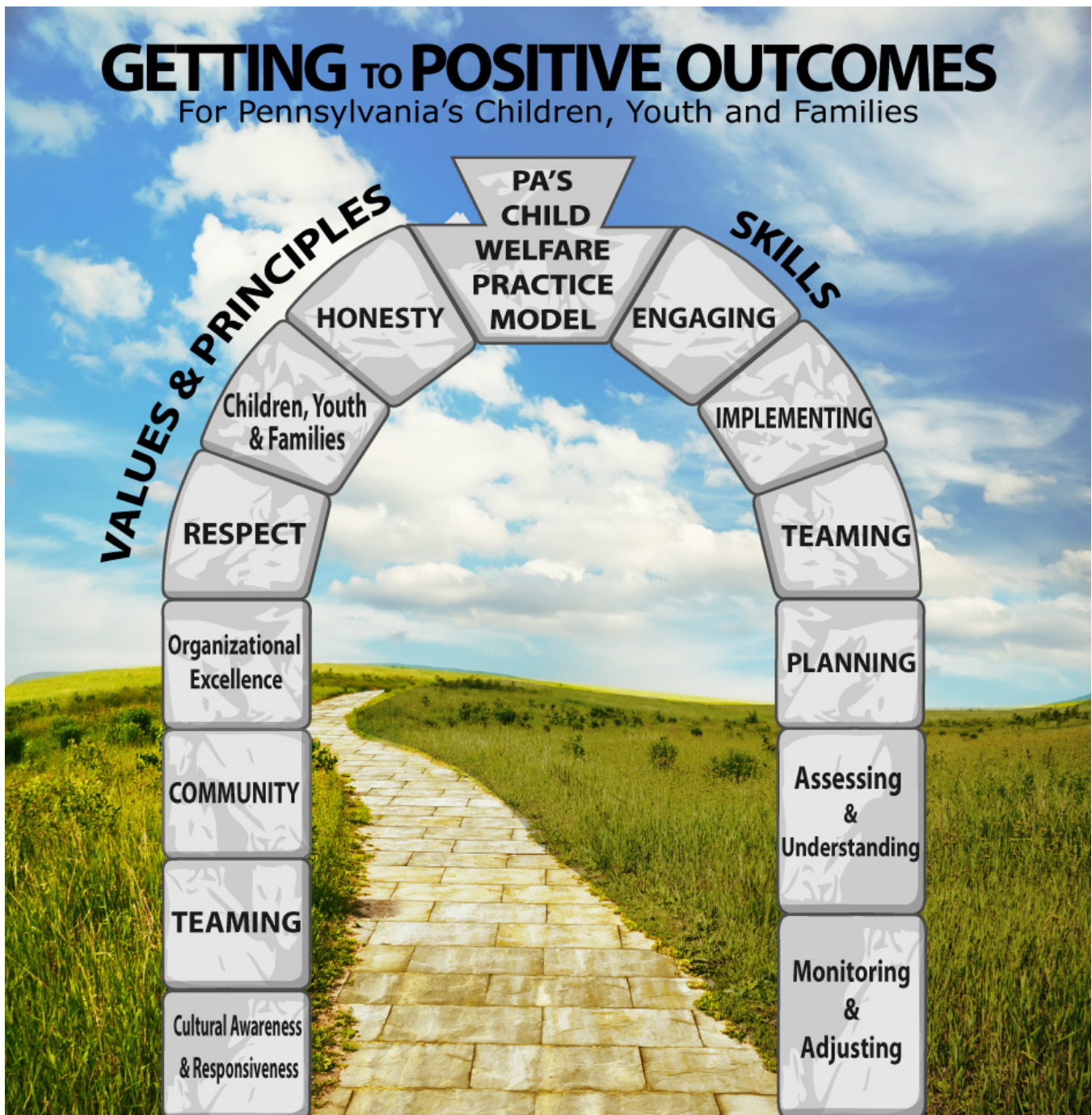
## Vision

Every child, youth, and family experiences a life rich with positive opportunities, nurturing relationships, and supportive communities.

## Mission

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center is a national leader in advocating for an enhanced quality of life for Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families. In partnership with families, communities, and public and private agencies, we prepare and support exceptional child welfare professionals and systems through education, research, and a commitment to best practice.

# Pennsylvania's Practice Model



This practice model reflects the values, principles, and skills that Pennsylvania's child welfare system holds as critical to achieving positive outcomes for children, youth, and families. The Resource Center works to ensure all products and services are grounded in the practice model. For more information on Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model, go to the Resource Center's [Practice Model webpage](#).





The Resource Center provides a continuum of services designed to facilitate and sustain positive change in the child welfare system. Our services include: training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, research and evaluation, project management, and organizational development. Our primary strategies include:

- Conducting research and evaluation
- Providing consultation and support
- Developing and revising tools, materials, and curricula
- Training child welfare professionals
- Integrating youth and family engagement
- Advocating for policy and practice improvements
- Developing and implementing a quality improvement process
- Organizing and sponsoring events
- Providing resource coordination

The Resource Center is comprised of the following departments:

- Administrative
- Curriculum and Trainer Development
- Fiscal and Human Resources
- Organizational Effectiveness/Regional Teams
- Statewide Quality Improvement
- Technology Development

Following is a summary of work completed within each key strategy.

## Conduct Research and Evaluation

The Resource Center has undertaken the strategy of conducting research and evaluation to promote national leadership in child welfare research and implementation to practice. The Resource Center intends that research and evaluation efforts will improve the quality of practice and system functioning in the Commonwealth. During this fiscal year, the Resource Center advanced several major research and evaluation efforts described below.

### **Evaluation of Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Demonstration Project**

The Resource Center is the independent evaluator for Pennsylvania's Title IV-E Waiver Child Welfare Demonstration Project. The Child Welfare Demonstration Project is testing the flexible use of Title IV-E funds to develop a new case practice model focused on family engagement, assessment, and the expanded use of evidence-based programs/practices (EBP) driven by local needs. It is the intent that these activities will lead to improved placement decisions and child and family functioning, and will ultimately result in improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families involved in the state's child welfare system. Beginning July 2013 through June 2018, the Child Welfare Demonstration Project Evaluation Team is implementing an evaluation to investigate the processes, outcomes, and costs associated with the project. The process and outcome evaluations continue to focus on assessment, family engagement and evidence-based practices in addition to collecting and synthesizing fiscal and outcome data. In FY 2016-2017, the Evaluation Team continued to assess staff knowledge and awareness relative to evidence-based practices as well as readiness to continue efforts toward successful EBP implementation. Additionally, the Evaluation Team is collecting general referral and dosage information for evidence-based practices as well as working directly with service providers in an effort to collect outcome data related to two specific evidence-based programs. More information about the Demonstration Project and the evaluation can be found at the [Demonstration Project's webpage](#).

### **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Evaluation**

The Resource Center received surveys from more than 900 Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) conferences that were held across the state. Some counties and providers do not participate in the Resource Center's evaluation and other counties who had participated in this evaluation in past years are currently participating in the Demonstration Project; therefore, it is likely that the number of conferences held across the state is higher. The FGDM Evaluation measures fidelity to the Family Group Decision Making model by asking each conference participant to complete a survey that contains various questions measuring cultural safety, community partnerships, and family leadership. Consistent with results from previous years, the conference surveys continue to show that families and professionals alike view the conferences positively and find them to be beneficial. Beginning FY 2016/2017, the FGDM Evaluation also began reporting general conference information, including focus child characteristics, conference purpose, referring agency, living situation, conference length and other areas of interest.

During FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center continued to develop technology to improve the process for submitting data and increase counties' access to data. County and statewide results

for FY 2016/2017 data will be available through an online dashboard versus being distributed via a PDF document. Ultimately, the dashboard will present evaluation data in real-time and will allow counties to view and filter data to address their specific interests and needs. The dashboard will be released in October 2017. In addition to the online dashboard, the Resource Center is also developing online versions of the FGDM evaluation forms for release in September 2017. The online forms will simplify data collection processes, as well as improve data quality. The FY 2016/2017 Survey and Baseline results, information about the online dashboard and electronic forms, and other FGDM evaluation resources can be found at the [FGDM webpage](#).

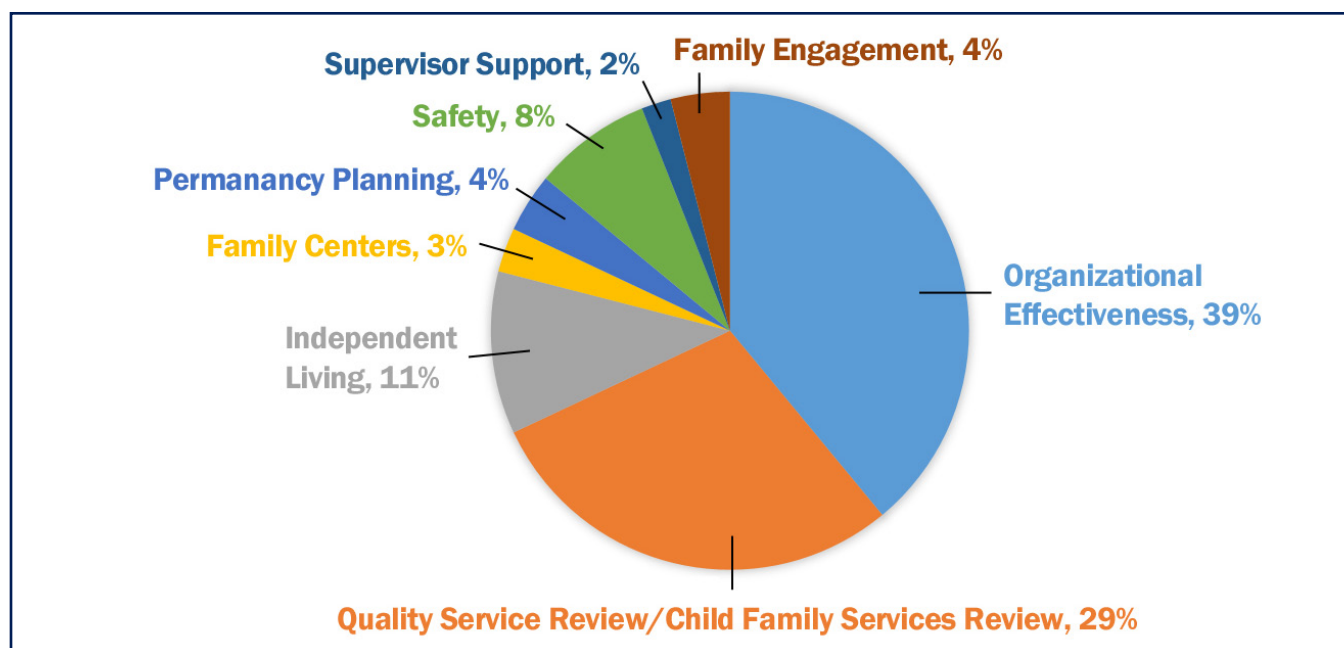
### Evaluation of Training

The Resource Center is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of training and using data to improve Resource Center products. During FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center began work to review and redesign Charting the Course and the Supervisor Training Series with the intention of including evaluation throughout each series. In addition to measuring participant satisfaction with training, assessments will measure knowledge and skill development as well as the extent to which learning transfers to the field. The Resource Center is also exploring electronic means of data collection to promote efficiency, improve data quality and allow for greater and timelier access to data for evaluation and continuous improvement purposes.

## Provide Consultation and Support

Technical assistance is provided to counties and statewide groups in partnership with OCYF Regional Office staff, other technical assistance partners, and local stakeholders. The chart below shows the percentage of time spent in some of the core practice areas provided by Organizational Effectiveness (OE) staff at CWRC.

### Technical Assistance Provided, July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017





Technical assistance services provided by the OE Department continue to expand. There was a significant increase in QSR/CFSR support (up 11% from FY 2015-16), due to support for four QSRs and seven CFSRs. OE staff conduct case reviews, participate as site leads, provide quality assurance reviews, and make logistical arrangements for QSR/CFSR efforts.

There was also an increase (from 5% in 2016 to 8% in 2017) in safety and risk assessment support services as practice issues were identified by the county or the Regional Offices of OCYF. In addition to providing training, CWRC staff also provide support sessions where caseworkers and supervisors apply core concepts to complete the risk and/or safety assessment process on actual cases. These sessions are co-facilitated by OCYF Regional Office Representatives and CWRC.

Independent Living (IL) assistance data indicate a decrease (from 21% to 11%). While site visits and technical assistance related to independent living services continued, counties requested other technical assistance related to organizational effectiveness and quality assurance.

Family Center (FC) services include site visits, facilitation of the Peer Review process, attendance at community meetings, and regional and statewide project management support. FC services, except the Time Limited Family Reunification grant, will transition to the Office of Child Development on July 1, 2017. Transition meetings with OCYF, OCDEL, FC Directors, and CWRC were held monthly over the past year.

Organizational Effectiveness services continue to be the main technical assistance provided by OE staff. These services include organizational assessments, formation of sponsor teams and continuous improvement teams, development of processes and procedures, and continuous improvement plan implementation and monitoring. Support is also provided to strengthen leadership teams including meetings with supervisors, managers, and administrators.

The impact of technical assistance is evaluated in a variety of different methods. Goal Attainment Scaling is used in some jurisdictions to help establish goals and measure progress. There is an increased emphasis on using county data to establish baselines and monitor efforts and results. Sometimes the effort is to refine processes and procedures to ensure the data is accurate and timely. Customer satisfaction, assessment of services, and perceived results are captured in an online survey.

It is anticipated that technical assistance efforts will continue to focus on the same areas in 2018 and that additional efforts will include expanded supervisory support and assistance with the program improvement plan development, implementation, and monitoring.

Here is what some of our customers had to say about our services:

*“Prior to this work ... the agency was divided into multiple specialty units [for example] foster care, placement, reunification, and families could have 3 or more separate caseworkers working with them at one time. The new director at the time felt that both time and information was lost with this format, so we changed into a two-unit format; intake and on-going”.*

*“We all had a say in the process. The participants need to feel it is their recommendations and their solutions to make the necessary changes. Now our staff is bought into the process. They have volunteered for the next phase of the OE process, and continue to be a part of the CI (continuous improvement) team. I think our momentum is maintained by the staff being a part of it, and not so much management saying this is going to be how this is going to be”.*

*“CWRC has a lot of resources at their disposal: surveys, worksheets, exercises, they have a lot of knowledge. It really expands your world and the resources available”.*

Source: OE Evaluation

## Develop and Revise Tools, Materials, and Curricula

### **Primary Purpose: Elevate Child Welfare Practice in Pennsylvania**

The primary purpose of developing and revising tools, materials, and curricula is to support the elevation of child welfare practice by promoting the long-term career development of public child welfare professionals.

This purpose is accomplished through the development and delivery of tools, materials, and curricula that are aligned with and support the Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Practice Model and improvement initiatives such as the Child Family Services Review, the Continuous Quality Improvement project, and established evidenced- based best practices.

Tools, materials, and curricula are developed for specific classifications of child welfare professionals including direct service workers, supervisors, and administrators.

Tools, materials, and curricula are competency-based with an emphasis on the knowledge (information), skills (observable competence), and ability (observable behavior) necessary for child welfare professionals to competently perform job tasks to ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of Pennsylvania’s children and youth. Competencies are currently under revision to ensure that they are aligned with Pennsylvania’s recently updated Child Welfare Practice Model.

In FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center completed the development of twenty-eight new curricula and revisions to twelve existing curricula.

28 new curricula developed  
12 curricula revised

This year, the Resource Center continued its expansion of online training opportunities through its Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) series. Part two of this series, which focuses on risk factors, now includes topics such as Psychotropic Medication and childhood trauma and two modules on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The Resource Center consulted with several subject matter experts from organizations such as Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Futures without Violence, and Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh in the development of the IPV curriculum. Additional online training includes modules on the topics of policies and procedures related to Independent Living Services and adolescent issues related risk and resiliency. A significant online accomplishment includes the completion and launch of a Spanish translation of the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. For resource parents, we added two courses including Trauma and Medication: Your Role as Resource Parents and Taking Care of Yourself: Managing Your Exposure to Traumatic Stress.

The Resource Center continued its delivery of simulation-based training sessions on caseworker's personal safety in the field through its partnership with Service Access Management, Inc. The simulation sessions are limited to 12 participants and consist of three different scenarios which incorporate substance use, mental health, and physical safety hazards. Participants respond to these scenarios as they would in the field, calling upon practice model skills and values to engage the role players and assess the situation. These simulation training sessions include an innovative component of incorporating supervisors in the simulation sessions for which they received credit. After each simulation, supervisors provide feedback to caseworkers on their employment of practice model skills while managing personal safety. In addition, safety experts provide caseworkers with feedback, confirming what they did well regarding personal safety risks for themselves and others, and offer suggestions on what to do differently. Finally, at the end of the session the caseworkers, supervisors, and safety experts participate in a large group debrief. In addition, online pre-work sessions were created to prepare caseworkers and supervisors prior to attending the simulation session. These online sessions served to optimize the participants' time in the simulation session by minimizing classroom lecture. This course was extremely well received by counties.

In the development and revision of tools, materials, and curricula that will achieve the professional development needs of the child welfare professionals, assigned curriculum and instructional specialists engage in multiple activities and strategies including but not limited to:

- Partnering with Resource Center's key stakeholders, the Department of Human Services, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators in the identification of tools, materials, and curricula to be developed or revised.
- Collaborating with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania's Court to support both the improved functioning of the child welfare system and dependency courts.
- Convening and conducting quality assurance committees consisting of subject matter experts and multidisciplinary professionals who have expertise in topics related to the development of the tools, materials, and curricula.
- Consulting with subject matter experts and established advisory committees such as the Diversity Task Force and Supervisor Advisory Workgroup.
- Incorporating empirically-based literature and best practices.
- Incorporating the role and voice of youth and parent consumers.
- Analyzing Child and Family Services Review and Quality Service Review data



to identify knowledge and skill gaps and strengthening those concepts in the development of tools, materials, and curricula.

- Participating in Quality Service Reviews and Child and Family Services Reviews to facilitate understanding of practice improvement initiatives and the front-line experience.
- Intentionally incorporating and reinforcing values and themes from the practice model in the curricula.
- Developing transfer of learning components and activities to support the curricula.
- Using the Analysis-Design-Development-Implementation-Evaluation (ADDIE) Model to clearly determine the learning objectives, the audience, and the scope of the tools, materials, and curricula to be developed.
- Employing decision guides to support the determination of the format of the tools, materials and curricula to be developed, such as in-classroom, online, or blended.
- Developing online curriculum directly into an online authoring software tool, Lectora.
- Using stories to engage E-Learners by enhancing skills in scenario development.

The selection of tools, materials, and curricula to be developed or revised is based upon an established criteria which prioritizes statutory enactments and amendments, the availability of existing resources that will meet identified professional development needs, how extensive or widespread the professional development need, and the time frame in which the professional development need must be met.

With a few exceptions, due to copyright restrictions, all Resource Center curricula are located at the [Resource Center's Curriculum webpage](#).

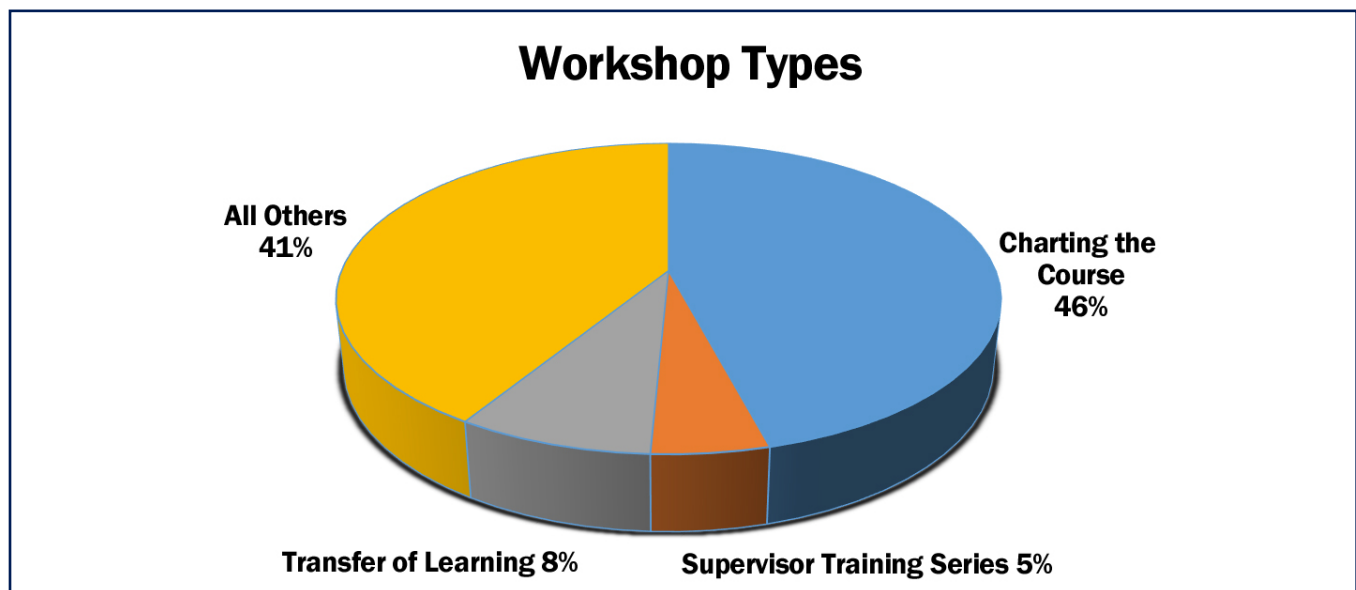


# Train Child Welfare Professionals

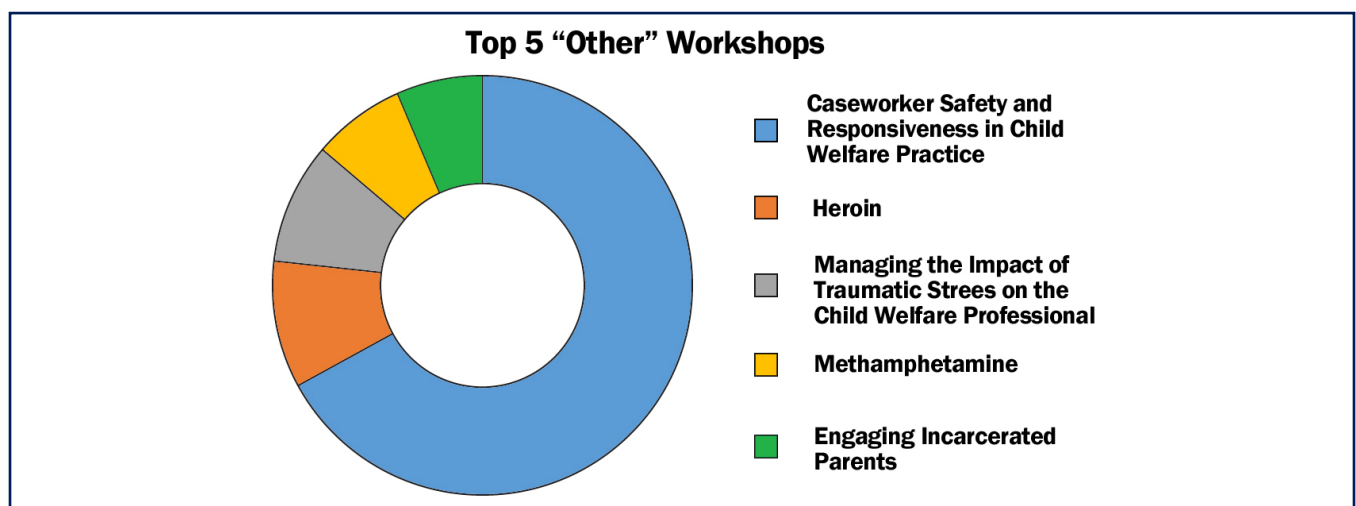
Child welfare professionals from 392 agencies across Pennsylvania attended over 1,400 workshops delivered by the Resource Center in FY 2016/2017.

1,445 workshops delivered

The following chart identifies the percentage of training sessions by workshop type. Fifty one percent of all offerings represent one of the certification series for caseworkers and supervisors. Nine hundred and twenty eight (928) caseworkers and one hundred thirty two (132) supervisors complete their respective certification series.



To breakdown the “other” category in more detail, the following chart identifies the top five training/transfer of learning sessions delivered outside of the certification areas.



The Resource Center’s roll-out of the caseworker safety simulation-based training sessions, described above, was particularly noteworthy requiring meticulous coordination with county agencies within a very short timeframe. During FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center, in partnership with SAM, Inc. provided 26 counties with 140 simulation training sessions. Over 1,900 participants, both caseworkers and supervisors, participated in these sessions.

In addition, the Resource Center has continued to expand the number of online training options available to Pennsylvania’s child welfare professionals. There are now 44 online courses available.

**44 online course options**  
**6,188 participants completed one or more online course**

Finally, the Resource Center continued to offer a free online 3 hour course, Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. Over 268,000 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Of that number, over 135,000 trainee records were processed and sent to the Department of State for licensure renewal. Additionally, 11% (or 29,132) of trainees who completed the course indicated they had previously made a report of child abuse. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with over 89% reporting they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course.

To support continuous quality improvement and the consistent and competent delivery of training sessions and workshops, the Resource Center engages in multiple activities and strategies in its recruitment, selection, and development of its trainers including but not limited to:

- Conducting an extensive trainer/consultant selection process consisting of an application, reference check, and panel interview.
- Prioritizing the selection of experienced child welfare professionals who have worked in Pennsylvania’s child welfare system and with training experience.
- Recruiting youth and parent consumers as co-trainers.
- Providing selected trainers/consultants with a foundational course on training, platform, and facilitation skills.
- Requiring trainer/consultants to deliver a practice training session which includes critical feedback from peers and Resource Center staff.
- Supporting trainer/consultant participation in quality service reviews.
- Training or mentoring trainers/consultants on curriculum content prior to approving them to train the curriculum.
- Observing trainers/consultants the first time they deliver a curriculum and on a periodic basis and providing them critical feedback on their training, platform, and facilitation skills.
- Providing trainers/consultants technical assistance.
- Requiring trainers/consultants to obtain a minimum of six professional development hours annually.
- Providing professional development opportunities for trainers/consultants through training sessions, a quarterly newsletter, and a trainer/consultant handbook.



- Convening monthly consultant/trainer advisory group conference call meetings.
- Conducting level one evaluations of all training sessions.
- Requesting trainers/consultants to provide feedback after every time they train a curriculum.
- Developing a trainer utilization process to ensure the equitable assignment of trainers to deliver curriculum.

## Youth and Family Engagement and Integration

The Resource Center has undertaken the key strategy of Youth and Family Engagement and Integration to support the increased engagement of consumers at the individual, community, and systems level toward improved service and outcomes. There are a variety of means by which the Resource Center supports youth and family engagement, including training and technical assistance. The following sections will highlight significant youth and family engagement work by the Resource Center.

### **Family Engagement**

The Resource Center remains committed to leading efforts across the Commonwealth to help counties engage family members in their planning and service delivery. Supported family engagement practices include:

- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)
- Family Finding
- Father Engagement
- Engagement of Incarcerated Parents

The Resource Center employs a Family Engagement Project Manager who supports family engagement practice at the county, regional and statewide levels. Ongoing support is provided to Regional Family Engagement Network Meetings and FGDM Leadership Team and Statewide Meetings.

### **Youth Engagement**

In FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center continued to employ two Youth Quality Improvement Specialists to assist in the delivery of trainings and technical assistance, as well as to provide oversight to the Older Youth Retreat and PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB) regional and statewide efforts. These positions are filled by former constituents of the child welfare system. The role these former youth consumers play represents the highest level of youth engagement in our continuum of employment opportunities at the Resource Center.

The Resource Center's second level of opportunity for engagement of youth is a paid internship position for youth who are currently in, or have previously been in, out-of-home care and are enrolled in a post-secondary educational program. These positions are titled Youth Ambassadors and during this fiscal year the Resource Center employed two individuals in these positions. Youth Ambassadors lead youth engagement training and technical assistance efforts across Pennsylvania, often in collaboration with our Youth Quality Improvement Specialists and our

Practice Improvement Specialists working in the counties. Youth Ambassadors continue to support the Youth Advisory Board, Older Youth Retreat, and Know Your Rights trainings. Additionally, Youth Ambassadors and the Youth Quality Improvement Specialists continue to support internal Resource Center operations, including reviewing curriculum, and participating on workgroups. The Youth Quality Improvement Specialists co-trained 18 trainings of Module 9 of Charting the Course throughout the year.

In FY 2016/2017, the Statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB) focused on restructuring its priorities by updating the YAB bylaws and creating group guidelines. In November 2016, the YAB held their first annual Statewide YAB Open House. Youth from across Pennsylvania were invited to attend and learn about the benefits of YAB membership. There was also a training on LGBTQ issues following the Open House.

In November 2016, a group of youth leaders were elected by their peers to form the YAB Core. YAB Core members are representative of each region, and are responsible for planning and facilitating the YAB Statewide meetings. They participate in up to five conference calls prior to each event and provide insight into the agenda, handouts, activities and priorities. They then facilitate each discussion, training or activity. This role within the Statewide YAB helps them develop leadership and facilitation skills, and provides them with opportunities for professional development.

The Statewide YAB continued its' focus on Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms this year by distributing two flyers and implementing a social media campaign. These materials summarized the [Normalcy Provisions and Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard](#) of PA Act 75: The Activities and Experiences of Children in Out-of-Home Placement. The flyers on Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard were distributed in print and electronic formats. Regional Know Your Rights trainings were coordinated so that the new information could be distributed to youth involved with the system. Four youth trainings were held in the Southwest, Northwest, North Central and Northeast regions of Pennsylvania.

Supporting and recruiting resource parents for older youth in the system is one of the current priority areas for the PA Youth Advisory Board. A training was developed for youth to help inform resource parents about older youth and recruit homes for this population. "Fostering Older Youth: A Teenage Experience" was piloted at the six 2016 SWAN Fall Quarterlies by CWRC staff. A second pilot occurred at the 2017 SWAN Summer Permanency Conference, which was facilitated by four YAB members with the support of CWRC staff.

The YAB has continued to strengthen its efforts with advocating, educating, and forming partnerships to create positive changes in child welfare. There has been a bigger push for leadership within the regional structure of the YAB. The YAB has over 300 youth members participating in statewide and regional meetings, speaking engagements, community service projects, Know Your Rights trainings, Strategic Sharing workshops, peer mentoring, and consultation with child welfare professionals. To support regional YAB members, four YAB Supporters calls were held during the year to support professionals who are dedicated to sustaining YABs in their counties or regions. Youth Advisory Board Supporters include IL Coordinators, former and current foster youth, and private provider staff.

## Over 300 youth actively participate on the YABs

The YAB Leadership Summit held at the Resource Center in June 2017 hosted over 36 youth leaders and 18 staff supporters from across the state. The 2017 YAB Leadership Summit featured an exciting new structure. Youth Advisory Board members and subject matter experts were invited to work collaboratively on three priority areas for older youth:

- Healthy relationships between youth and their caregivers
- LGBTQ/SOGIE Issues (or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning/Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression)
- Transitions to adulthood.

Teams were led by Summit Steering Committee members and subject matter experts in the identified priority areas. At the end of two days, teams were invited to present their work to various stakeholders from throughout Pennsylvania. Ideas developed by youth to improve these service areas included a mobile app to help older youth gain access to resources around them. They also developed the framework for a LGBTQ/SOGIE Toolkit. The toolkit would provide input and recommendations to counties and agencies about how to serve youth in these populations. They developed a poster about healthy relationships with resource parents, and this presentation has been included in the YAB's training *Fostering Older Youth: A Teenage Experience*.

The Resource Center continued its support of increasing youth engagement with the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by purchasing items with the youth-developed NYTD logo on them to be passed out at YAB and Older Youth Retreat events. This is an ongoing effort to help youth recognize the importance of their participation in the survey.

The Resource Center continues to provide fee waivers for both the SAT Reasoning test and the SAT Subject test. These waivers are available for current high school students who cannot afford to pay the test fees. The Resource Center also continues to update the Financial Aid Guide, which is used across the state to assist older youth in care in finding ways to finance post-secondary education.

In addition to supporting the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board, the Resource Center continues its partnership with current and former foster care youth and Independent Living Professionals in planning and facilitating the annual Older Youth Retreat. The retreat is co-sponsored by the Office of Children, Youth and Families at the Department of Human Services and the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center. A committee comprised of youth, county and provider staff, Resource Center staff and other statewide partners plan and implement the week's activities, which include youth led peer group sessions, activity sessions, and other special events. Youth retreat participants from across the state also participated in focus groups related to the implementation of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard and normalcy laws.

The purpose of the retreat is to afford current and former foster care youth educational, practical and social experiences for a week while living on a college campus. This year, the retreat was held the week of August 7-11, 2017, on the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown campus. Participants included 91 youth, ranging in age from 16-20 years of age, and 49 staff representing 33 counties



across the state. For more detailed information regarding the 2017 Older Youth Retreat, please visit the Youth Advisory Board website <http://www.independentlivingpa.org/ILRetreat.htm>.

## 91 Youth from 33 counties attended the Older Youth Retreat

The Resource Center remains committed to leading efforts across the Commonwealth to help counties engage youth and family members in their planning, service delivery, management, and evaluation processes. Success will be achieved when youth, alumni, and family voices are not only heard, but when their voices are the ones leading the process.

## Advocate for Policy and Practice Improvements

### **Child and Family Services Review**

The Child and Family Services Reviews are a federal-state collaborative effort designed to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families through state child welfare systems. The Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has administered the reviews since 2000. These reviews examine state child welfare programs and practice to identify strengths and challenges in state programs and systems, focusing on outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being. The reviews work in tandem with other state and federal frameworks for system planning, reform and effective implementation, such as the Child and Family Services Plan and a well-functioning continuous quality improvement system.

Since the announcement of Round III in 2014, CWRC has been working with OCYF and key system partners to strategize and plan for the 2017 review. In particular, much time and energy was devoted to exploration of the new opportunity afforded to states in Round III to conduct a state directed review in lieu of the traditional case review process. In the spring of 2016, a letter of intent was submitted to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau (CB) Regional Office indicating PA's intent to pursue the state conducted option for the CFSR case review process. In December of 2016, ACF approved PA's proposed case review process.

Planning for the successful implementation of PA's state-conducted case review process continued in collaboration with OCYF, the seven identified CFSR counties and other key stakeholders supporting the review process. Key elements of the plan included: the development of both online and classroom trainings for CFSR reviewers and quality assurance staff; recruitment of CFSR reviewers and quality assurance staff; development of a PA-specific CFSR Procedures Manual; training and onboarding of the seven counties in which the case reviews were to be conducted; training and support to the site coordinators from the four OCYF Regional Offices that would be supporting the counties in their implementation of the state-conducted CFSR case reviews; and case sampling and case exclusions.

## CFSR Trainings

3 CFSR trainings were developed for CFSR staff supporting the CFSR  
5 CFSR Reviewer trainings were offered – 120 CFSR reviewers were trained  
3 CFSR Quality Assurance trainings were offered – 21 QA staff were trained

## CWRC Staff who were CFSR Reviewers and Quality Assurance Staff

24 of the 120 (20%) CFSR reviewers were CWRC staff  
35 of 130 (27%) CFSR reviewer positions were CWRC staff  
16 of the 21 (76%) of the Quality Assurance CFSR positions were CWRC staff

In addition to the preparations for the case reviews, CWRC also worked to support the submission of the Statewide Assessment that was submitted to ACF in February of 2017. The statewide assessment provides an opportunity for states to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data and information in order to evaluate their child welfare programs and practice, considering their programmatic goals and the desired outcomes for the children and families they serve. CWRC also supported the coordination and implementation of 21 key stakeholder interviews that were conducted at various times during the months of April and May 2017.

Pennsylvania continues to await ACF's final report that outlines their assessment of PA's performance based on seven outcomes and seven systemic factors that are evaluated as part of this review process. Upon receipt of the final report, PA will have ninety days to submit a Program Improvement Plan outlining the strategies and key action steps that PA will implement in an attempt to improve those areas identified as needing improvement. PA has continued to engage stakeholders in the review and analysis of data collected as part of the federal review in preparation of the development of continuous quality improvement efforts that will be implemented and monitored in the hopes of sustaining positive improvements to our system and the outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being.

### **PCYA Leadership Academy**

The Leadership Academy is designed to provide PA child welfare leaders with the practical knowledge and skills needed to build competence, confidence, and commitment required of high quality leaders within their agency, community, and the child welfare field. Efforts to achieve these goals include training, transfer of learning and technical assistance designed to support leaders to enhance their personal and professional skills to achieve agency goals of safety, permanency and well-being for children and families. Resource Center staff facilitate the Leadership Academy Workgroup to develop and deliver training sessions (for PCYA quarterly meetings and regionally), review and provide certification for new administrators, maintain leadership resources, and conduct practice sessions to support best practice. More information is available on the Resource Center website at: <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/LeadershipAcademy.htm>.

### **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act provides federal funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities, and also provides grants to public agencies and non-profits, for demonstration programs and projects. The Resource Center provides support to Department of Human Services for two specific activities related to CAPTA. The first activity is to support CAPTA compliance by fulfilling the requirements related to Citizen Review Panels and the second area is providing project management support as it relates to the application and administration of the Children's Justice Act Grant activities.

### **Citizen Review Panels (CRP)**

Pennsylvania is mandated to maintain three CRPs consisting of volunteer citizens that examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local agencies. Members serving on the panels are charged with developing an annual report, which is then sent to and reviewed by the Department of Human Services. Contained in the report are recommendations aimed at improving Pennsylvania's child protective services. These reports cover the calendar year but are published, along with the state's responses, in April or May of each year, and can be viewed online by clicking on the following link: [2016 Citizen Review Panel Report](#).

While these panels are independent entities, a project manager for CAPTA within the Resource Center provides support for their work in a variety of ways, including supporting their bi-monthly regional and bi-annual state meetings, data collection, and communication to key stakeholders. Each year the CRPs, along with the project manager and staff from the Department of Human Services, attend a National Citizen Review Panel Conference. Following the conference, lessons learned and best practices are discussed and incorporated into Pennsylvania's CRP process. Upon returning from this year's conference, emphasis was placed on collaboration to create a recruitment plan to increase membership in the two existing panels and to explore creation of a third panel. In the upcoming year, the focus will shift to implementation of the agreed upon plan.

### **Children's Justice Act (CJA)**

The Resource Center supports the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services in the compliant and effective use of Pennsylvania's Children's Justice Act grant funds. The CWRC project manager engages in activities designed to promote collaboration and communication in the use of CJA funds, increase knowledge and resources gained through the Annual CJA Grantee Meeting and supports Department of Human Services in identifying opportunities regarding the use of CJA funds to address goal areas in the Annual Progress and Service Report.

Activities this year included partnering with Department of Human Services to create, disseminate and review Pennsylvania's CJA Three Year Assessment and assisting in the recruitment of members for the CJA Taskforce. The taskforce held its first meeting in June 2017 and as a result of that meeting, the Resource Center is providing support to the taskforce so that they can meet the goals set for FY 2017/2018. These goals include increasing membership to include all federally required disciplines by early Fall 2017, revising Pennsylvania's Model Standards for Multidisciplinary Investigative Teams (MDIT) and supporting the development of MDIT online trainings to further strengthen these teams across Pennsylvania.

In recent years, CJA funds have been used to support the strengthening of multi-disciplinary teams across the state, as well as supporting an online mandated reporter training following the changes in the Child Protective Services Law and the creation of an online Spanish version of this training.



## **Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board**

The Resource Center continues to provide support to the PA Youth Advisory Board. One of the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board's main objectives is developing youth leaders so that they can effectively use their personal experiences to advocate for changes in the child welfare system. Youth are given resources and trainings on how to strategically and safely share their stories in an effort to impact system change and practice. The topics they address range from education to normalcy to permanency. Know Your Rights trainings are available to youth in Pennsylvania so that they can learn how to advocate for themselves.

The Resource Center's Older Youth Project partners with the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) to bridge and connect SWAN permanency services with older youth's transition to adulthood. During FY 2016/2017 several trainings were provided that were trained from various points of view. Youth members of YAB trained participants on how to support older youth in resource parent homes. Alumni of the system participated on a panel about how their experiences in foster care have affected them as adults, and this presentation provided a wealth of resources for youth transitioning out of care.

The Child Welfare Resource Center has been utilizing the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board Facebook page and "The BLAST" as an outlet for sending timely information and resources to older youth and professionals, and highlighting youth accomplishments.

## **Diversity Task Force**

The Diversity Task Force (DTF) is comprised of child welfare professionals and community members who are committed to issues of human diversity in child welfare.

The Diversity Taskforce will host their annual event in November 2017 to address the dynamics of working with families in kinship care. This topic was a need identified through workshopping with county and state representatives on the Diversity Task Force. The training will help participants identify how their personal values impact decision-making, as well as identify core elements of implementing a value-based kinship care program within casework.

The Diversity Task Force continues to collaborate with the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board on work related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth. The work will focus on expanding statewide efforts to enhance practice with young people who identify as LGBTQ and to provide recommendations and resources.



## Develop and Implement a Quality Improvement Process

Implementing change at the local level is critical to the achievement of positive child, youth and family outcomes, particularly in a state-supervised and county-administered state. Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approach continues to be an effort focused on reshaping the system at the local and state level to support the achievement of positive outcomes for our children, youth, and families. The Resource Center has remained a key stakeholder and partner in the strategies of implementing and monitoring Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement effort.

### **Family Centers**

The Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) supported the 43 state-funded family centers across the commonwealth. Organizational effectiveness staff assisted family center directors and staff through site visits, community meetings, and peer reviews. This collaboration continued to focus on the dedication of Pennsylvania's Family Centers (FC) to collaborate with others within their communities to creatively meet the needs of children, youth, and families. Both the CWRC staff and the statewide FC directors continue to bridge the connection between the prevention work done by the centers and the social work conducted by the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF). Providing this connection leads to more families receiving the right services at the right time and decreasing the number of families coming into formalized care. Project management support also continued for the Family Center Leadership and Steering Committee. These efforts included assistance for newsletters, the annual event in the spring, and meetings. Collaborative meetings were held with OCYF, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC), FC Directors, and CWRC throughout FY 2016/2017 to transition technical assistance services for FC to the OCDEL starting July 1, 2017.

### **Older Youth**

The Resource Center continues to provide project management for work with counties around independent living and older and transitioning youth. The Resource Center works closely with older youth, county and provider staff, and stakeholders through a variety of venues. This year staff from the Older Youth Unit and Practice Improvement Specialists teamed together in their work with Lehigh and Northampton counties. The counties came together and identified the need for more placement resources for older youth. As a result, the Lehigh Valley Permanency Project was formed. This is an advocacy group that is working toward increasing permanency for older youth.

The Resource Center continues to facilitate the county independent living site visits, and generates an annual report for each county following those visits. The Resource Center Independent Living Project Manager reviews all site visit reports, and gathers statewide themes in areas of strengths and challenges from the data collected, and provides that information to the Department of Human Services. Over the past year, the Resource Center has been working with stakeholders and county and provider staff to identify gaps in services for older youth transitioning to adulthood. The collaboration has been an asset to the Independent Living Project and has allowed CWRC to better identify the needs of older youth across the state. Also, over the past year, the Resource Center has made extensive revisions to the independent living training modules.

In FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center began working collaboratively with counties and other agencies to produce the [Older Youth Collaborative Webinar Series](#). These sessions offer counties and practitioners a forum to share their work and promising practices happening across the state. The first webinar in the series highlighted mentoring programs for youth in the foster care system from Adams and Bucks counties. The second webinar highlighted Lackawanna County's Independent Living Collaborative.

### Continuous Quality Improvement

The Quality Service Review (QSR) process continues to be one critical component of the CQI effort, which is used to evaluate safety, permanency and well-being outcomes as well as practice performance. The QSR uses a combination of record reviews, interviews, observations, and deductions made from fact patterns gathered and interpreted by trained cross-systems reviewers regarding children, youth and families receiving services. Pennsylvania's QSR Protocol, developed in collaboration with Human Systems and Outcomes (HSO), outlines a specific set of 23 indicators that are then used to examine the status of the child/youth and parent/caregiver and analyzing the responsiveness and effectiveness of core practice functions. Indicators are divided into two distinct domains: Child, Youth and Family Status and Practice Performance.

The following information includes the summary findings based on the sixth round of state-supported Quality Service Reviews (QSR) which were conducted between January 2016 and December 2016. During the sixth round, QSRs were held in seven counties and 71 cases were in the sample with 29 out-of-home cases and 42 in-home cases.

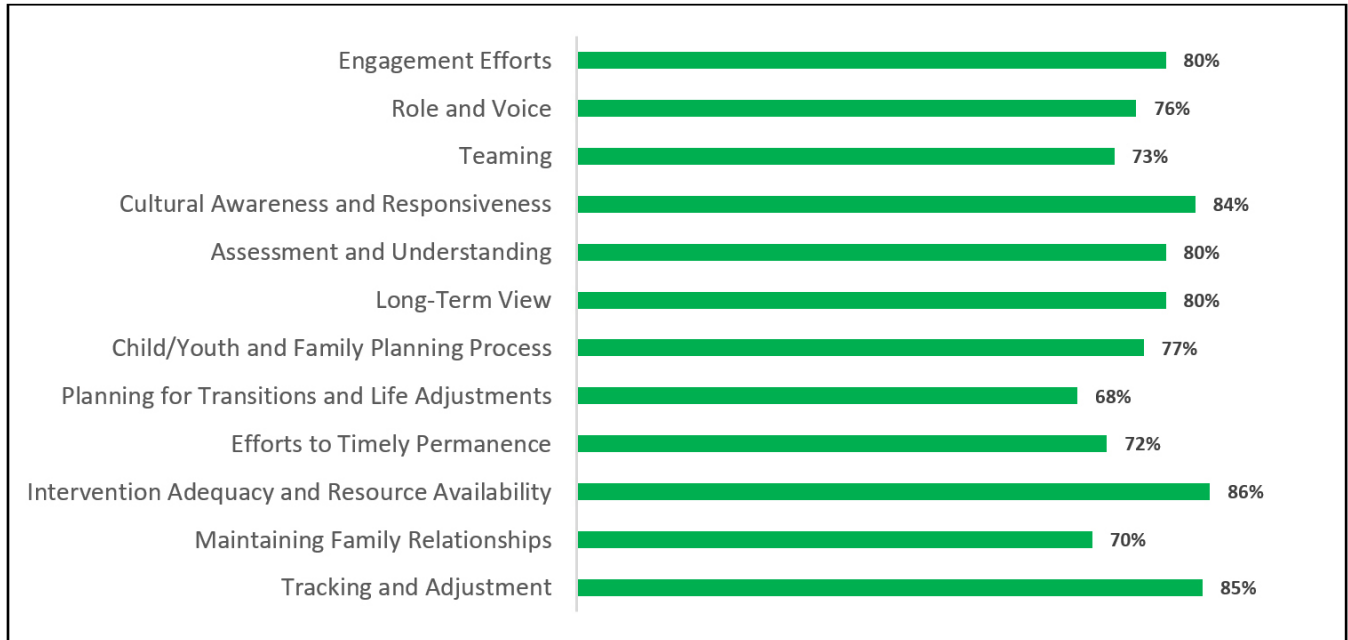
The Child/Youth and Family Status Indicators examine the safety, permanence, and well-being of the child/youth, as well as the capacity of the child/youth's caregivers (both familial and substitute) to provide support to that child/youth. Eleven indicators are utilized with the indicators generally focusing on the 30 days immediately prior to the onsite review.





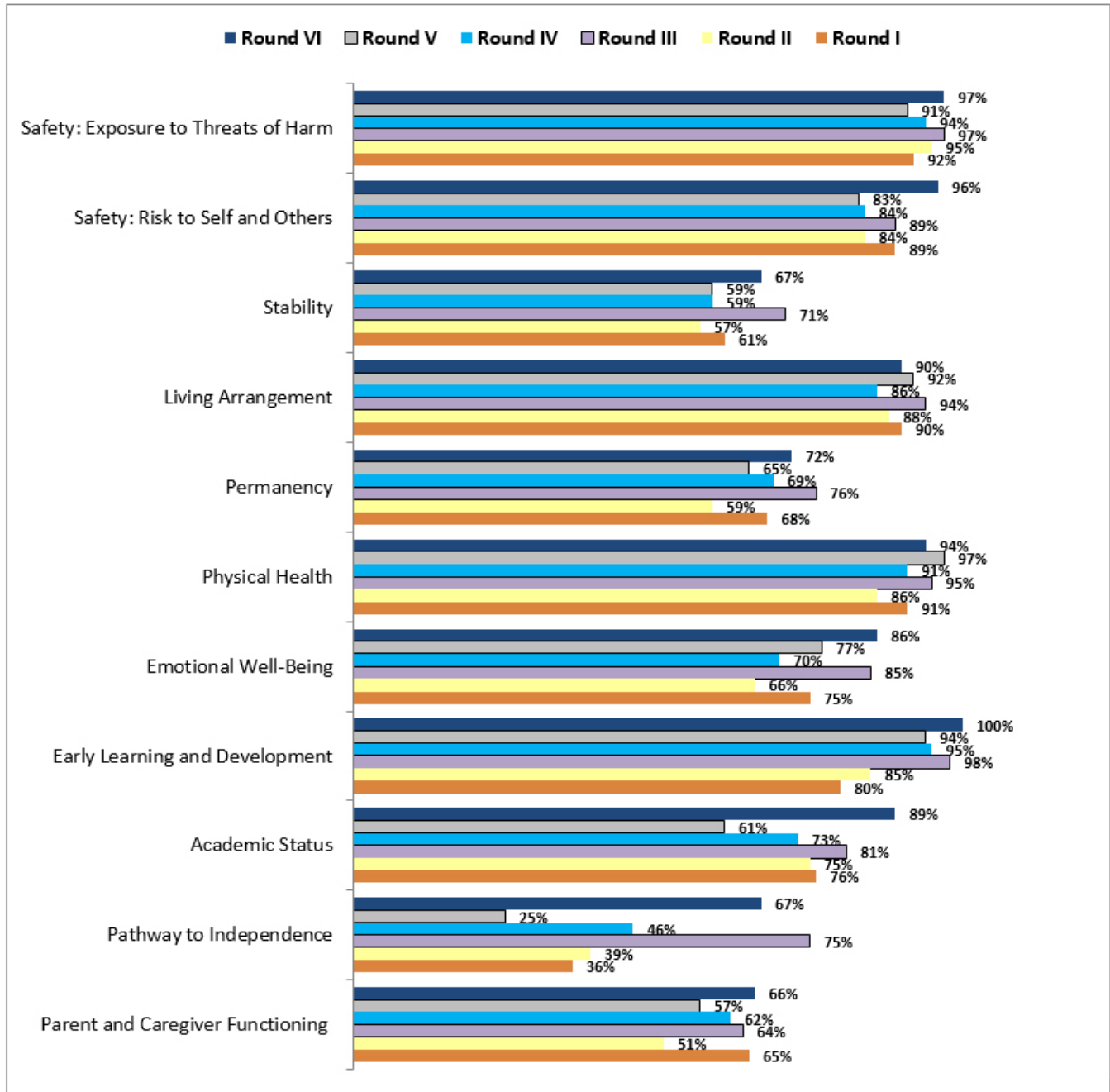
## Round VI “Child/Youth & Family Domain” Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings

The Practice Performance Indicators examine the twelve indicators used to assess the status of core practice functions. These indicators generally focus on the past 90 days from the date of the onsite review, unless otherwise indicated.

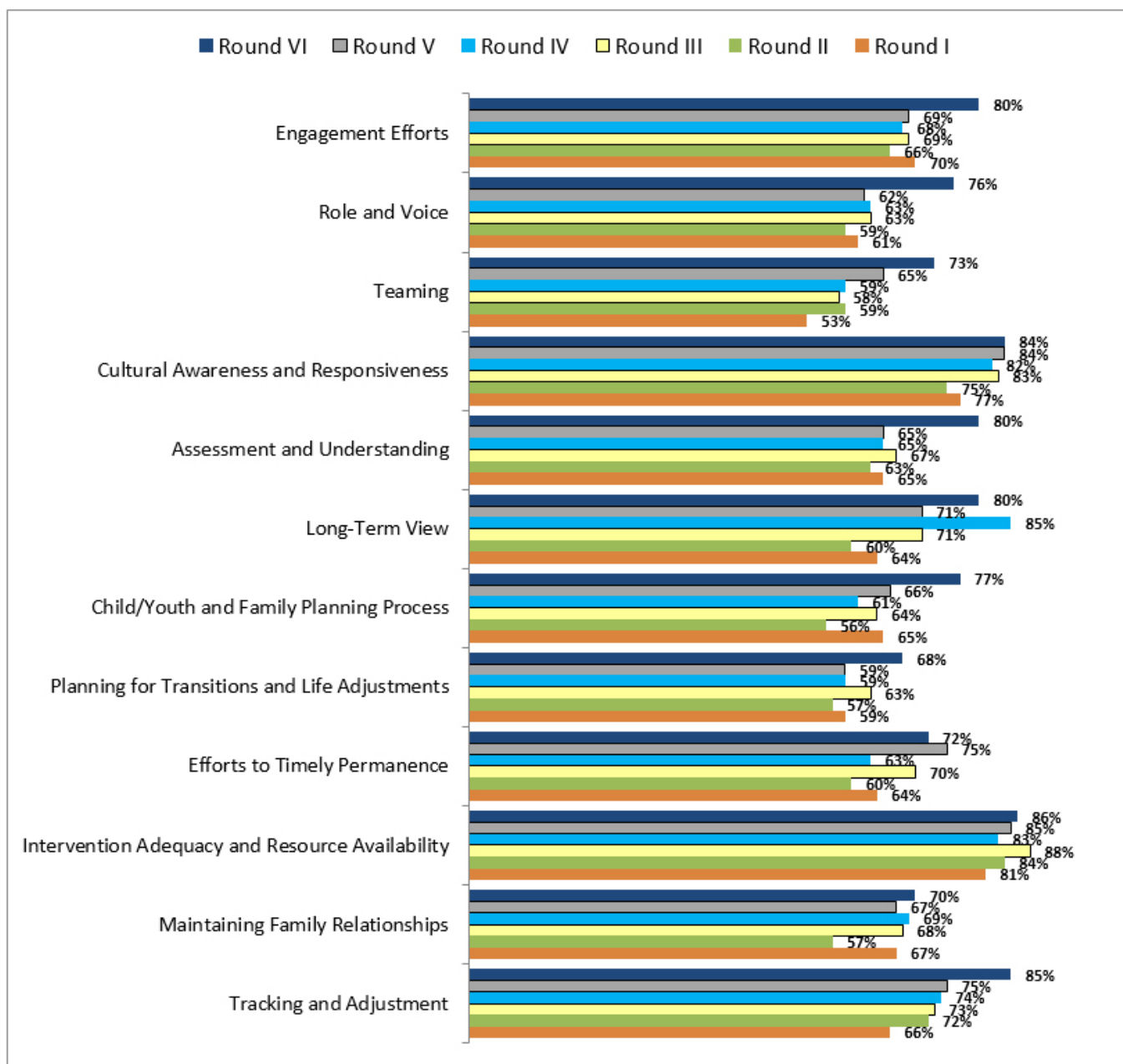


## Round VI “Practice Performance Domain” Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings

Over the course of the six rounds that Pennsylvania has been conducting Quality Service Reviews, we have gathered information regarding the overall child/youth/family status domain indicators as well as the overall practice performance domain indicators to address case and county-specific findings, as well as to determine the trends over the course of time that the reviews have been conducted. The following two charts show the percentage of acceptable ratings for each indicator during each round of Quality Service Reviews from Round I in 2011 to Round VI in 2016.



## “Child/Youth & Family Domain” Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings Round I – VI



### **“Practice Performance Domain” Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings Rounds I - VI**

Gathering data is only one step in the CQI process. In addition to supporting the Quality Service Reviews conducted in the counties, Resource Center staff and other technical assistance providers also work diligently to support the individualized county specific improvement efforts, as well as statewide assessment of performance across all counties involved in the statewide CQI effort. Much of the focus of the county-specific improvement efforts have centered around enhancements to practice efforts focused on engagement (particularly with fathers), teaming within the public child welfare organization and with community partners, assessment of child/youth and family service needs (particularly for older youth), as well as a focus on a greater understanding of overarching child welfare laws and regulations, internal communication amongst staff and targeted efforts to improve stability in living situations and efforts to achieve timely permanence.

Resource Center staff members and key stakeholders will continue to support the improvement efforts by facilitating local and statewide analysis of the data collected from QSRs and other data sources to inform strategic decision making, promote Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model, and support continuous improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring.

## Organize and Sponsor Events

The Resource Center organizes and sponsors many events each year with the intention of enhancing child welfare practice and integrating our key stakeholders, consumers, families and youth into our work. The events help to enhance collaboration and increase engagement with the hopes that strengthening these areas will lead to an improved quality of practice.

### **Continuing Education Credits**

The Resource Center continued to offer continuing education credit hours in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work Continuing Education Department.

### **Training Partnerships**

The Resource Center provided leadership within identified task areas for partner committees and provided support with identifying training and curriculum needs. The Resource Center also collaborated with the below partners to support events and meetings. These partners included:

- Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators and the Leadership Academy Workgroup
- Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)
- Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA)
- Family Group Decision Making Statewide and Leadership Teams
- Fiscal Quality Assurance Committee (QUAC)
- Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)
- Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)
- American Bar Association (ABA)
- National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA)

Finally, the Resource Center produced and distributed the monthly newsletter, County Connection, to county children and youth agency training liaisons and administrators and the Palette that is distributed to the trainers and consultants. Please click [here](#) to access these newsletters.





## Resource Coordination

The Resource Center continued to expand and refine efforts in the delivery of products and services using a variety of methods to meet the needs of our consumers and stakeholders. During FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center undertook several resource coordination efforts, including those listed below.

### **Identify County Specific and Statewide Consultation and Training Needs**

One of the ways the Resource Center coordinates and prioritizes work is through the assessment of training needs. In FY 2016/2017, Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNAs) were distributed to 21 counties in January 2017. By August 2017, the Resource Center had received completed ITNAs from 16 counties. The following is a list of the five content areas most frequently identified as a high need:

#### High Need Areas

Social Work Ethics  
Sexual Abuse  
Alcohol Abuse  
Hostile Clients  
Work-Related Stress

### **Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB)**

Designed to recruit and prepare students for a career in the public child welfare field, the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) Program is offered at 14 schools of social work throughout Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students who are official Social Work majors in any of the 14 approved, participating undergraduate schools are eligible to apply for the CWEB program. Qualified students receive substantial financial support during their senior year in return for a legal commitment to work in one of Pennsylvania's county public child welfare agencies following graduation. Students must satisfactorily complete child welfare course work and an internship at a public child welfare agency. During the course of the internship, most students are able to complete some or the entire Charting the Course training required for public child welfare caseworkers. Upon graduation, students also receive assistance with their employment search.

Requirements as a student:

- Complete child welfare course work
- Enroll in Charting the Course;
- Complete an internship at a public child welfare agency

Requirements as a graduate:

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

### **Child Welfare Education for Leadership Program (CWEL)**

The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education for current employees of public child welfare agencies. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and administrators of any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency are eligible to apply to participate in the CWEL program. All persons enrolled meet participation criteria as determined by their CWEL applications, résumés, personal statements, agency approvals, notifications of admission from one of the approved schools, and signed agreements. The CWEL program has funded students from 66 counties and 12 Pennsylvania Schools of Social Work on both a full- and part-time basis. The CWEL program reimburses salary and benefits for full-time CWEL students and covers tuition, fees, and other expenses for both full- and part-time students in return for a legal work commitment to the employing county child welfare agency upon graduation.

Requirements:

- Complete child welfare course work.
- Complete an internship at a public or private child and family agency serving IV-E eligible clientele.
- Maintain, for two years, employment at a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency.

For more information concerning the CWEL/CWEB programs ([Click Here](#))

### **Develop, Support and Maintain Websites and Databases**

The Resource Center hosts a variety of websites and software applications designed to provide the most up-to-date information and resources on all Resource Center activities, as well as, resources for independent living youth and all child welfare professionals and their affiliates. In collaboration with our internal and external systems, comprehensive evaluation strategies are developed and supported to increase accountability and provide evidence of the effectiveness of specific approaches. The design and content for each website and application is informed by the respective advisory boards and committees assigned to the sites, as well as by input from other avenues. During FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center either deployed, maintained or made major enhancements to the following websites and applications.

- Websites
  - Families and Communities United
  - PACWRC
  - Being Well
  - Citizen Review Panel
  - Youth Advisory Board
- Databases and Software Applications
  - PILOTS
  - Encompass
  - Screening (Developmental Screening Database)
  - E-Learn (online course site)
  - Meeting Planner (PACWRC's room reservation software)
  - PACWRC HUB (Agency SharePoint site)

- FGDM Databases and Teleform software
- Evaluation Databases for the Demonstration Project (CANS, FAST, and Developmental Screening Database6)
- TA Tracker (a web application designed to track technical assistance provided to counties and OCYF by the Resource Centers OE staff)
- Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania online training

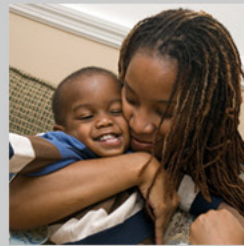
### **Information Technology Support**

During FY 2016/2017, the Technology Development Department continued its efforts to offer technology support to Resource Center staff, University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work staff/faculty as well as external state and county stakeholders by:

- Developed and maintained computer applications and software used to support the initiatives of the Resource Center and its affiliates,
- Developed and maintained reports, dashboards, and other data driven visuals from multiple applications and databases for the Resource Center, county children and youth agencies, DHS-OCYF, and private providers.
- Provided technical assistance and support through the provision of a helpdesk to over 268,000 trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania online training.
- Provided daily data uploads to the PA Department of State for Act 31 licensure and license renewal processing for over 135,000 licensed (and applying for license) trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania online training;
- Developed and maintained technology training resources, media development and duplication.
- Provided technology related equipment, setup and support for over 800 function arrangements.
- Resolved over 700 internal helpdesk tickets.
- Developed and maintained multiple websites, updated regularly to ensure accuracy.
- Developed and maintained online courses, videos and technology-based tools used to enhance the delivery of curriculum, transfer of learning, and other initiatives.
- Worked with the University of Pittsburgh Computing Services and Systems Development staff to ensure staff and faculty connectivity to network resources whether onsite or offsite.
- Developed brochures and media for publications and events.
- Deployed new hardware and software for staff.
- Maintained inventory and tracking of all computer related equipment.

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul  
than the way in which it treats its children.”

– Nelson Mandela



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