Table of Contents

Note from the Director ..................................................................................................................... 3
Resource Center Overview ............................................................................................................4-6
Conduct Research and Evaluation ...............................................................................................7-9
Provide Consultation and Support ........................................................................................... 9-10
Develop and Revise Tools, Materials, and Curricula ........................................................... 11-13
Train Child Welfare Professionals .......................................................................................... 14-16
Youth and Family Engagement and Integration .................................................................. 16-18
 Advocate for Policy and Practice Improvements ................................................................. 19-22
Develop and Implement a Quality Improvement Process ..................................................... 23-28
Organize and Sponsor Events ................................................................................................. 28-29
Resource Coordination ........................................................................................................... 29-32
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. Pennsylvania’s workforce continued to manage a significant increase in the volume of child abuse and neglect referrals, as well as continued implementation of the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS). We worked diligently to support the workforce through these challenges and below are a few highlights from the year.

The Resource Center delivered over 1,300 workshops across the Commonwealth to meet the needs of our stakeholders. In addition to the certification series for new caseworkers (CTC) and supervisors (STS), a significant roll-out of a simulation-based training on safety in the field accounted for the majority of our offerings. 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, coaching for supervisors, 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 entered the mid-point of the five year project and included an Interim Evaluation report, which presented findings from the first two years of the project. Efforts also continued to further evaluate our trainings, including an enhancement to the participant feedback process and form.

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. 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 325,000 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with over 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
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.
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.
Our Approach and Focus

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 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. While continuing to focus on the process and outcome evaluations of assessment and family engagement and on collecting and synthesizing baseline fiscal and outcome data, the evaluation has also broadened to include evidence-based practices (EBPs). The Evaluation Team has assessed staff knowledge and awareness relative to evidence-based practices as well as readiness to foster successful EBP implementation. Additionally, the Evaluation Team has begun collecting general referral and dosage information for evidence-based practices as well as outcome data related to two specific evidence-based programs.

In February 2016 the Interim Evaluation Report was submitted to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). This report marks the midway point of the Child Welfare Demonstration Project and includes details related to the process, outcome, and fiscal evaluations. In particular, the report provides insight into the scaling up and implementation of assessment, family engagement, and EBPs as well as an examination of outcome data from the last eight years. Preliminary analysis of expenditure patterns for out-of-home care and for the ratio of out-of-home spending relative to spending for prevention and preservation is also presented. 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 1,235 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.

During 2015/2016, the Resource Center began utilizing technology to improve the process for submitting data and increase counties’ access to data. County and statewide results for FY 2015/2016 data are now 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 review their data in multiple ways. In addition to the online dashboard, the Resource Center is also developing electronic versions of the FGDM evaluation forms for release in FY 2016/2017. The electronic forms will simplify data collection processes, as well as improve data quality. The 2015/2016 Survey 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 continues efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their training. During 2015/2016, the Resource Center began pilot testing evaluation activities in two Charting the Course Modules focusing on identifying abuse (Charting the Course, Module 2) and key concepts related to Out-of-Home Placement and Permanency Planning (Charting the Course, Module 9). Preliminary analyses indicate that the activities are assessing participants’ knowledge as intended. Pilot testing of both evaluation activities will continue in FY 2016/2017 and processes will be developed to ensure the use of the data to improve trainings before the activities are fully implemented.

The Resource Center is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of training and using data to improve training program products and the coming fiscal year will provide a tremendous opportunity to further this goal. In FY 2016/2017, the Resource Center is beginning work to review and redesign Charting the Course and the Supervisor Training Series. The vision for this work includes incorporating assessments throughout each series and developing processes for ensuring that data are used for evaluation and continuous improvement.

**Organizational Effectiveness (OE)**

Since 2012, the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Resource Center and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) have jointly sponsored an evaluation of Organizational Effectiveness practice. The first phase looked at the identifying the essential elements that connected to the achievement of organizational outcomes. The results were positive and have been shared in numerous national and statewide presentations and are being used for continuous improvement efforts. Information is available on the OE webpage.
The second phase, conducted from 2013-2015, included an in-depth case study of two Pennsylvania counties’ OE work and their ability to reach organizational and practice goals identified in their continuous improvement plans. Analysis of Goal Attainment Scaling data indicated that both counties experienced success. Information from this report is not available online but has been shared with the counties and is being used for continuous quality improvements.

This is positive news regarding Organizational Effectiveness in Pennsylvania and across the nation. Please contact the Resource Center for more information using the following link to the webpage (OE contacts).

Provide Consultation and Support

The Resource Center provides consultation and support services across Pennsylvania with the goal of facilitating positive, strategic, organizational change, and the implementation of best practice to improve family serving systems.

The chart below shows the percentage of time spent in some of the core practice areas provided by Organizational Effectiveness staff.

![2015/2016 Consultation Highlights Chart]
During 2015-2016, the state budget impasse and related travel restrictions impacted onsite technical assistance services. While QSR support continued, much of the work was placed on hold and OE staff were reassigned for approximately five months. Coupled with two additional counties participating in QSRs this year, there was a significant increase in QSR related support during 2015-2016 (from 18% to 29%). We anticipate that this trend will continue in 2017 with 14 counties tentatively scheduled for QSRs and the Child and Family Services Review occurring. Many of the other technical assistance areas remained the same or saw a decrease in support due to the travel restrictions.

Organizational effectiveness continues to be a practice area as well as the model used to facilitate change. Some of the OE efforts include developing continuous improvement structures (sponsor teams and continuous improvement team comprised of all level of staff), conducting organizational assessments, supporting the implementation of new policies and procedures, implementing communication plans, and supporting leadership teams. During 2015, the OE Department developed and implemented a supervisory coaching series aimed at strengthening supervisors to support caseworkers and positive outcomes for children, youth, and families. Additional supervisory support was provided at regional practice sessions where supervisors come together to share their resources and ideas for successful implementation of key areas such as orientation, quality assurance, and best practice.

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

“Our consultant was able to take unorganized thoughts and (using our own words) put them down on paper. He allowed staff to “go off subject” but related it back to our overall goals and objectives and how that statement fit in. Everyone’s input was valued and respected. We were all clear about where we were going and what needed to be done to get there. He did a great job facilitating and not “take over”, but guided our Agency through the process, by using our own words and helping us think it through and process everything”.

“Consultant is wonderful, knowledgeable, passionate, and a great mentor. Listens and helps us understand to learn skills. (Helped us achieve) better teamwork, more communication, continuous quality improvement, strategic planning, and prepare for QSR.

“Our consultant is a good match for the county and has been instrumental in supporting us moving forward. She has a lot of experience and knowledge”.
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 is aligned with and supports the Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Practice Model and improvement initiatives such as the Child Family Service 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 2015/2016, the Resource Center completed the development of twenty-six new curricula and revisions to nineteen existing curricula.

26 new curricula developed
19 curricula revised

This year the Resource Center provided invaluable and timely support for the implementation of The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Pub. Law No. 113-183, 2014) and related Pennsylvania legislation. With the support of the multi-disciplinary members of H.R. 4980 Implementation Workgroup convened by the Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth, and Families, the Resource Center developed two online courses to prepare child welfare professionals and other providers to timely implement this federal law.

The online course “Overview of Reasonable and Prudent Parenting and Public Law 113-183” outlines the important components of this federal law as well as Pennsylvania’s Act 75 of 2015 and focuses on the normalization of the lives of children in out-of-home placement. “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Module 1: An Overview Federal and State Laws and Victimology/Trauma-Informed Care” online course presents the federal and
state laws related to the prevention of and response to sex trafficking of children in the foster care system.

The Resource Center quickly responded to county administrators’ request for county supervisors to be trained on the leadership course, “Coaching for Staff Retention.” The Resource Center developed an in-person supervisor version of this course, delivered by Deborah Reed, a national expert and project manager for the Leadership Academy for Middle Managers. A recording of this session provides both county administrators and supervisors an opportunity to view the presentation at their convenience.

Finally, the Resource Center also responded promptly to county agencies’ request for training and technical assistance regarding case workers’ personal safety in the field. By partnering with Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM, Inc.), the Resource Center provided simulation based training sessions to caseworkers and their supervisors with the courses: “Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice” and “Providing Feedback to Support Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice”. The Resource Center incorporated a structured format and the Pennsylvania Practice Model skills, including engagement, assessment, and cultural competence into SAM, Inc.’s preexisting scenario based curriculum. The simulation sessions are limited to 12 participants and consists 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. Participant comments include:

“...the safety training yesterday, was hands down the BEST training I have ever taken and the most useful!!...I took so much away from this training and situations/safety tips I will never forget. I just can’t say enough about this training and how important I feel it is for all employees.”

“...my staff LOVED this training. My supervisors said they were “super impressed” with it and want all their workers to go through this training.”
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 development 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 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 Service 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 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.

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 Page.
Child welfare professionals from 392 agencies across Pennsylvania attended over 1,300 workshops delivered by the Resource Center in FY 2015/2016.

The following chart identifies the percentage of training sessions by workshop type. Fifty two percent of all offerings represent one of the certification series for caseworkers and supervisors. Six hundred and seventy six (676) caseworkers and 123 supervisors completed 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Types</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charting the Course</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Training Series</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5 “Other” Trainings</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caseworker Safety in Child Welfare Practice</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Feedback to Support Caseworker Safety and Responsiveness in Child Welfare Practice</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Home Safety Assessment: A Closer Look at the Fourteen Safety Threats Booster Shot</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Planning</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Assessment Support Session: A Collaborative and Strength-Based Approach (TOL)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 time-frame. Between March 1, 2016 and June 30, 2016, the Resource Center, in partnership with SAM, Inc. provided twenty-six counties fifty-one simulation training sessions. Over 750 participants, both caseworkers and supervisors participated in these sessions. Sixty-four additional trainings sessions were scheduled for July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016; providing all remaining counties an opportunity to participate in this very well received and unique training opportunity.

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 36 online courses available.

36 Online course options
4,719 participants completed one or more online courses

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 325,000 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with over 90% 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 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 Meeting (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 2015/2016, the Resource Center continued to employ 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.
This professional position 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 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, Know Your Rights trainings, as well as providing keynote presentations at multiple conferences and events. Additionally, Youth Ambassadors and the Youth Quality Improvement Specialists continue to support internal Resource Center operations including reviewing curriculum, participating on workgroups, and the interviewing and selection of new staff.

Fiscal Year 2015-2016 was a big year for Pennsylvania’s Youth Advisory Board. Youth Advisory Board members focused on a project aimed at bringing attention to the inconsistency of rules and policies regarding developmentally appropriate freedoms and normalcy for youth in care. The outcome of the project resulted in the development of the Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms and Normalcy Recommendations (DAF) and Advocacy Toolkit that supports practice efforts to help youth in care have more opportunities to feel normal and stable. The recommendations were a timely resource to the passage and implementation of H.R. 4980 /PL113-183 “Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act.” in Pennsylvania. Four out of their eight recommendations are now required under the new legislation. As Pennsylvania moves forward with implementing PL113-183, YAB members have been at the table providing feedback and recommendations on policies and practice. The YAB members have also participated in focus groups sharing their stories and providing feedback around the topic of permanency planning and APPLA.

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.

Over 300 youth actively participate on the YABs

The YAB Leadership Summit held at the Resource Center in June 2016 hosted over 36 youth leaders and 18 staff supporters from across the state. “Know Your Rights” training was provided to youth leaders so that they have the skills needed to advocate for changes in their personal lives and systemically. All workshops were facilitated and led by youth leaders and alumni supporters.
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 SAT Waivers to youth across the Commonwealth. The Resource Center also continues to update the YAB 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 supports and challenges youth experience as they transition to adulthood. This information will be shared with the Office of Children, Youth and Families as part of their CFSR efforts.

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 8-12, 2016, on the University of Pittsburgh’s Johnstown campus. Participants included 97 youth, ranging in age from 16-21 years of age, and 42 staff representing 33 counties across the state. For more detailed information regarding the 2016 Older Youth Retreat, please visit the Youth Advisory Board website http://www.independentlivingpa.org/ILRetreat.htm.

89 Youth from 32 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. For more information, please visit the Older Youth website. Success will be achieved when youth, alumni, and family voices are not only heard, but when their voices are the ones leading the process.
The Resource Center has undertaken the strategy of advocating for policy and practice improvements in order to influence public policy decisions related to children, youth, and families. Our intent is to help customers and partners enhance collaboration with their partners and increase engagement of youth and families in their practice and policy decisions. Strategies in this area include support of Pennsylvania’s Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts and supporting activities related to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

In 2016, the Pennsylvania House Children & Youth Committee held a series of Hearings to learn more about the challenges facing Pennsylvania’s child welfare workforce and system. On May 16th, the Resource Center hosted the second Hearing, which focused on training and academic career paths for caseworkers. The Committee also heard testimony from Dr. Helen Cahalane, Principal Investigator of the Research and Education programs. Dr. Cahalane spoke to the value of a specialized Social Work education at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Resource Center’s Director, Mike Byers, provided an overview of services, products, and change management philosophy.

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.

Pennsylvania is scheduled to participate in Round 3 of the CFSRs in 2017. Since the announcement of Round 3 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 3 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.

PA’s proposal for the CFSR was developed with a desire to strengthen alignment and integration of the CFSR with PA’s ongoing implementation of our continuous quality improvement (CQI) effort, which directly connects to the statewide effort to advocate for policy and practice improvements. PA identified this alignment specifically as an objective in our 2015-2019 CFSP
to support our broader goal of statewide implementation of a well-functioning CQI system. To this end, the CQI Sponsor Team and Sustaining Change Workgroup, led and supported by CWRC staff, played an integral role in providing recommendations regarding the development of a state process for conducting the CFSR. The CQI Sponsor Team and Sustaining Change Workgroup will continue to serve as a forum for the monitoring and adjustment of PA’s CFSR process and ensure the CFSR is an integral part of PA CQI activities. Resource Center staff will continue to be resources to support the successful implementation of the CFSR and any policy and practice improvement efforts identified to improve outcomes for children, youth and families served by PA’s child welfare system.

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 a leadership Manual, 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)

CAPTA 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 project. The Resource Center provides support to DHS 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.

Citizens 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, within Pennsylvania’s Annual Child Abuse Report. These reports are typically published every April and also include a list of the activities completed by the panel members each year. The complete report can be viewed online by clicking on the following link: 2015 Annual Child Protective Services 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 but not limited to, 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 Office of Children, Youth and Families, attend a National Citizen Review Panel Conference. This year, the Resource Center also supported the panels as two members from the Northeast Panel presented at this national conference. The focus of their presentation was on the strong collaboration between Pennsylvania’s CRPs and the Department of Human Services for continuous quality improvement efforts.

**Children’s Justice Act (CJA)**

The Resource Center supports the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) in the compliant and effective use of Pennsylvania’s Children’s Justice Act grant funds. The Resource Center 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 support OCYF in identifying opportunities regarding the use of CJA funds to address goal areas in the Annual Progress and Service Report.

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 Child Welfare Resource Center’s Older Youth Project partners with the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) to raise awareness about older youth receiving permanency services. During 2015-2016 several trainings were provided that were trained from various points of view. Youth members of YAB trained participants on how to start a YAB and had information on how to engage youth. Alumni of the system participated on a panel about how their experiences in foster care have affected them as adults. The Youth Quality Improvement Specialist shared information on how developmentally appropriate freedoms and normalcy can impact the well-being of youth in the system.
Since technology is important to the work that we do, The Child Welfare Resource Center has been utilizing the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board Facebook page as an outlet for sending timely information and resources to youth and professionals.

**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 hosted their annual event on June 21, 2016, to address personal caseworker safety. This topic was a need identified through workshopping with county and state representatives on the Diversity Task Force. The training focused on predicting and managing violence with an emphasis on increasing child welfare professionals’ knowledge of safety practice and offering some practical adeptness to managing personal safety. The training also addresses de-escalation skills and cultural awareness as it relates to engaging families.

Moving forward, the Diversity Task Force will be doing work occurring 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 to help youth experience socially and appropriate developmental activities and to take risks in supportive environments. The Diversity Task Force will be working in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board, Allegheny County DHS, and Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and their Recognize. Engage. Affirm. Love (Get R.E.A.L.) system reform efforts.
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) has supported the 43 state-funded family centers across the commonwealth. Practice Improvement Specialist assist family center directors in developing opportunities to work with their local community on issues that affect families. In addition, Practice Improvement Specialists support FCs in their continuous quality improvement efforts from how to best describe the FC impact to how to engage families struggling with addictions and poverty. Staff work with the programs to collaboratively plan and network through the peer review process which assist center teams in not only show casing their successes but learning skills from the peers. 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 Child Youth and Families. 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.

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. In coordinating the county Independent Living site visits, the Resource Center is able to review all site visit reports, attend and participate in these meetings, and pull statewide themes in areas of strengths and challenges from the data collected. Given the many legislative changes related to older youth in care, the Resource Center was able to participate in the statewide workgroup formed to help implement the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act which directly impacts older youth age 14-21. This allowed for relevant information to be shared with the PA Youth Advisory Board as well as obtain youth feedback for the workgroup. As a result, flyers were developed to inform youth of the changes, and regional Know Your Rights Trainings were coordinated in six regions across the state. Work with the statewide NYTD implementation team has allowed for CWRC to support the provision of promotional and informative material related to NYTD to youth in a variety of venues including the Older Youth Retreat, focus groups, and other older youth events.
Continuous Quality Improvement

The Quality Services 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 fifth round of state-supported Quality Service Reviews (QSR) which were conducted between December 2014 and November 2015. During the fifth round, QSRs were held in six counties and 62 cases were in the sample with 25 out-of-home cases and 37 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety: Exposure to...</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety: Risk to Self and...</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Arrangement</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanency</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Well-Being</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Learning and...</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Status</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway to Independence</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent and Caregiver...</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“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.
Over the course of the five rounds that Pennsylvania has been conducting Quality Service Reviews, we have gathered information regarding the overall family status domain indicators as well as the overall practice performance 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.
“Child/Youth & Family Domain” Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings Round I – V
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)

The Resource Center utilizes leased training rooms both in our home office building in Mechanicsburg, as well as in locations across the state for trainings, meetings and various events. There are currently 188 agencies on the approved list. Of those, 57 agencies currently schedule meetings/trainings on a regular basis.
Finally, the department produced and distributed the monthly newsletter, County Connection, to county children and youth agency training liaisons and administrators. 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 2015/2016, 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 2015/2016, Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNAs) were distributed to 22 counties in January 2016. By August 2016, the Resource Center had received completed ITNAs from 18 counties. The following is list of the five content areas most frequently identified as a high need:

- Sexual Abuse
- Ethics
- Hostile Clients
- Alcohol Abuse
- Family Violence

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 fourteen 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 competency based 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; and
- 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 2015/2016, 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 (Ages and Stages)
  - 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 Ages and Stages)

Information Technology Support

During FY 2015/2016, 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:

- Maintaining computer applications used to support the initiatives of the Resource Center and its affiliates;
- Developing and maintaining reports from multiple applications and databases for the Resource Center, county children and youth agencies, DHS-OCYF, and private providers;
- Providing technical assistance and support to the Resource Center and affiliates through the operation of multiple help desks, including the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training, which provided support and TA to over 327,000 users who completed the course in FY 2015/2016;
• Development and maintenance of technology training resources, media development and duplication, function arrangements, network support, and hardware/software installation and maintenance;
• Producing videos and technology-based tools used to enhance the delivery of curriculum, transfer of learning, and other initiatives;
• Developing and maintaining multiple websites, updated regularly to ensure accuracy;
• Developing and maintaining web-based courses and workshops.
• Providing daily Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training data uploads to the PA Department of State for Act 31 licensure and license renewal processing.
• Collaborating with the Curriculum/Trainer Development Department in the creation and deployment of online courses, as well as, developing videos to pair with existing classroom curriculum and events;
• Collaborating with the Organizational Effectiveness, Statewide Quality Improvement, Administrative and Fiscal and Human Resources Departments to ensure connectivity to business-critical databases
• Providing computers and related hardware peripherals/remote meeting setup and audio/visual support;
• Working with the University of Pittsburgh Computing Services and Systems Development staff to ensure staff and faculty connectivity to network resources whether onsite or offsite;
• Creating new applications and enhancing existing software and applications to meet the needs of the Resource Center and affiliates;
• Developing brochures and media for publications and events;
• Deploying new hardware and software for staff and,
• Maintaining 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