



University of  
Pittsburgh

School of  
Social Work

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center



2019-2020  
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. The last few months of this fiscal year were dominated by the pandemic and the long-standing fight for race equity in our country. The acute strain of the pandemic began to cause tremendous strain on many Pennsylvania children and families and the child welfare workforce. Despite these enormous challenges, child welfare professionals across the Commonwealth continued to fulfil their vital responsibilities.

The Resource Center also had to adapt to meet the challenge of providing our services during a pandemic. Within a few weeks of shuttering in-person activities, we launched a remote version of the initial modules of the certification series for new child welfare professionals. Over the following months, we worked to enhance and build out the entire series, including use of Team-Based Learning and simulation. There were benefits to this approach, besides protecting the health of the workers, instructors, and staff, including having caseworkers from across the Commonwealth be together in the same virtual classroom. This resulted in more diverse classrooms and richer learning opportunities.

The Resource Center and the entire University of Pittsburgh has made a commitment to become an anti-racist organization. This means we will be actively working to center racial equity in our services and products and incorporate antiracist policies and practices in who we are and what we do. We intend to be advocates and contributors for systemic change in the child welfare system to address long-standing issues of racial disproportionality and disparities in intervention and service outcomes for black and brown children. We believe this is essential to achieving our shared goals of safety, permanency, and well-being for all of Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families. We look forward to partnering with you on this important work.

My sincere gratitude to all of our system's first responders. On behalf of the entire team, it truly is our continued privilege to serve you.

*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.

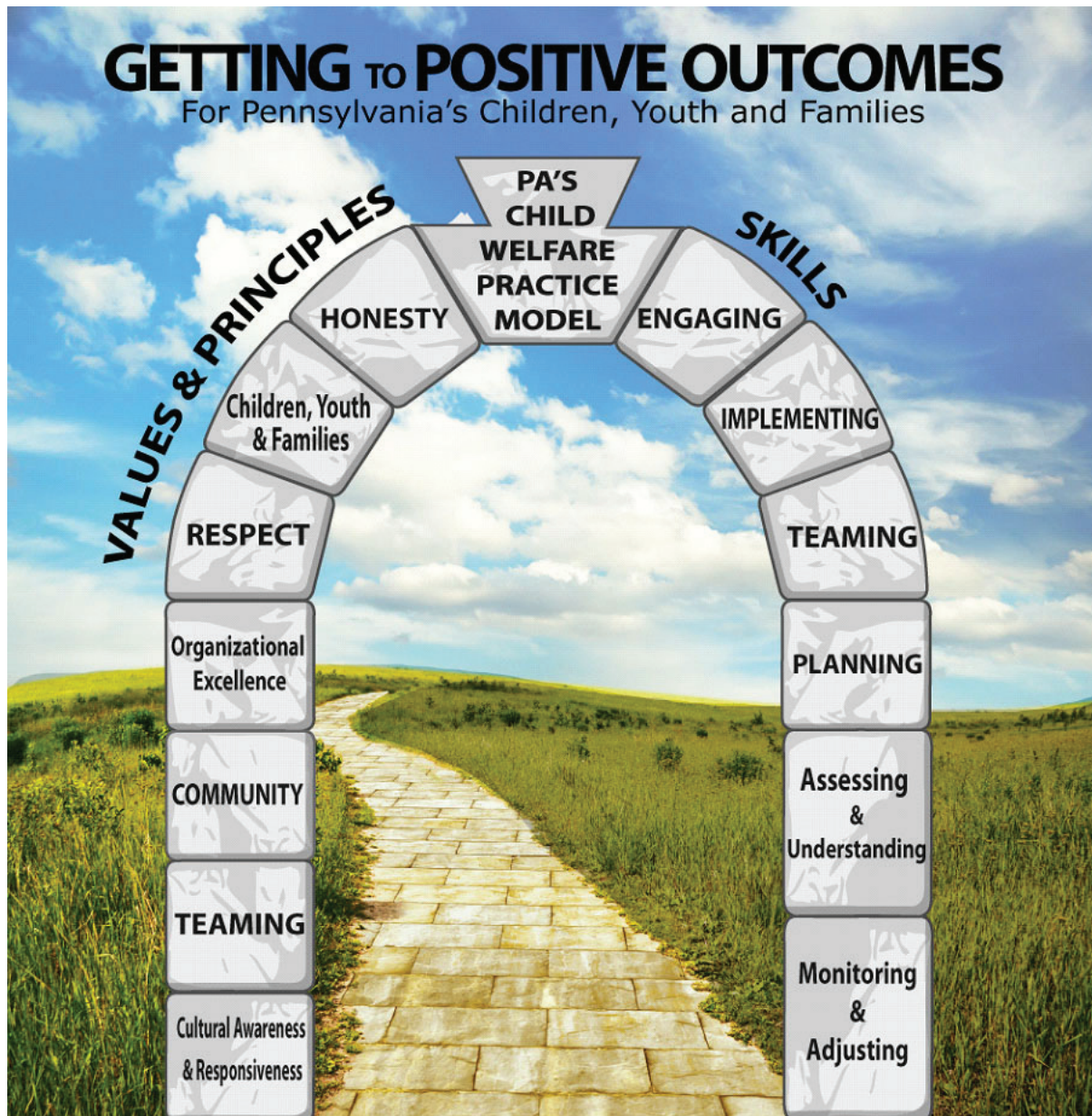
## Mission

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.





# 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](#).



## 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**
- **Research and Evaluation**
- **Statewide Quality Improvement**
- **Technology Development**

The following is a summary of work completed within each key strategy.



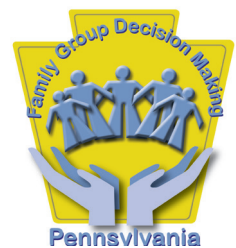


## Conduct Research and Evaluation

The Child Welfare 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.

### Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Evaluation

The Resource Center supports the ongoing statewide evaluation of Family Group Decision Making. During FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center received surveys from more than 1,100 Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) conferences that were held in up to 40 counties across the state with over 9,500 participating family members and professionals. Some counties and providers use FGDM, but do not participate in the Resource Center's evaluation; therefore, the actual number of conferences held statewide is likely higher. The FGDM Evaluation measures fidelity to the FGDM 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 FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center continued to encourage counties and stakeholders to access their evaluation data through the FGDM Dashboards to monitor and identify areas to improve their practice. In addition, the Resource Center developed a report for the FGDM Evaluation Committee to review overall participation in the evaluation by quarter, including an examination of overall county participation, form submission, and conference participation by natural and professional supports and focus children. Reporting changes in participation from one quarter to the next allows the FGDM Evaluation Committee to engage in more meaningful monitoring of participation.

The Resource Center continued to promote electronic data submission via the FGDM Statewide Evaluation Portal. Electronic data submission recently expanded to include online surveys for conference participants to complete as an alternative to paper surveys. Over the course of the year, at least half of the counties participating in the evaluation used the online process to submit evaluation forms and eight counties submitted forms online exclusively. In general, submitting forms online cuts processing time in half, resulting in counties having access to aggregate data via the FGDM Dashboards much more quickly.

The Resource Center developed a survey at the request of the PA FGDM Leadership Team to further understanding of the family engagement/teaming meeting models being used statewide. The goal of the survey is to learn more about the family engagement practices and related policies implemented in each county and by any private providers with whom the counties team. A draft of the survey was piloted with four counties in May 2020 and revised based on feedback from the pilot counties before being distributed statewide in August 2020.

Evaluation data and resources, including the Dashboards and online forms, can be found at the [FGDM webpage](#).

## **Evaluation of Training**

The Resource Center is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of training, using data to improve training program products, and contributing to the field of child welfare. During FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center fully launched Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion (Foundations). The Foundations series incorporates electronic data collection to capture participant feedback after each in-person workshop, simulation observations and ratings, and participants' perceptions of supports and barriers to the transfer of learning, in addition to knowledge check responses captured in the online portion of the training. Software specifically used to capture participants' responses to Team-Based Learning™ activities was also implemented. The data collected via this software provides instructors immediate access to information to assist them in identifying gaps in knowledge or areas of confusion before moving ahead in the course. These data collection strategies are being incorporated throughout other curricula. Altogether, the data will allow the Resource Center to assess the performance of items, enhance the curriculum, and ultimately, the effectiveness of training.

Preliminary analyses show promising results for the Foundations training. For example, Participant Feedback ratings are generally positive, with participants indicating that they feel engaged with and appropriately challenged by the training content. Additionally, participants report feeling more confident in their skills upon completion of the training modules. Simulation ratings indicate that participants are demonstrating the appropriate level of skill during the simulation sessions. Self-ratings are comparable to peer ratings, as well as those by standardized clients, suggesting strong inter-rater reliability of these behavioral indicators. Finally, Rasch analysis was employed to assess the quality of the online knowledge checks created for Module 2: Introduction to Engagement. Analyses showed strong construct validity for these items, meaning that they are accurately assessing participant learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic required the transition from in-person training to remote delivery. As modules moved to remote delivery, we continued the same data collection processes, which will allow us to assess and monitor any changes in participant feedback and/or learning that may occur as a function of this transition.

## **Family First Prevention Services Act**

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide research and evaluation support to a variety of internal and external projects and initiatives, the Resource Center has worked closely with OCYF to provide information to county children and youth agencies and other stakeholders about the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Throughout FY 2019/2020, representatives from the Resource Center provided information about key aspects of FFPSA, including the definition of an evidence-based



program (EBP) in the context of the Family First Prevention Services Act, where EBPs fit into child welfare practice, the meaning of model fidelity, why it matters, and how it can be monitored, and how specific aspects of child welfare practice can be supported with evidence to inform overall continuous quality improvement efforts. The Resource Center shared information with a variety of stakeholders through informational summaries and through presentations at three regional convenings for stakeholders organized by Casey Family Programs, at state-led meetings with stakeholders, and in planning meetings with the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF).

In addition, the Resource Center has continuously engaged with OCYF to support the development of the FFPSA Title IV-E Prevention Plan (Prevention Plan) as well as their decision-making regarding how critical components of FFPSA will be implemented in the Commonwealth. The Research and Evaluation Department gathered a variety of data to develop infographics about EBPs in Pennsylvania. The infographics described multiple facets of each EBP including, the number of counties in which each EBP was present, the target population, outcomes, and fiscal allocations and expenditures associated with each EBP. OCYF continues to use this information to help identify the EBPs to include in the Prevention Plan. The Resource Center further supports the development of the Prevention Plan through regular meetings with OCYF and by drafting a plan for the evaluation of FFPSA, outlining how the Resource Center will support the workforce to implement FFPSA through training and technical assistance, and assisting in the conceptualization of how the state and counties will make use of FFPSA data to engage in continuous quality improvement for the child welfare system.

## **Workforce Data**

The Resource Center is committed to supporting the use of workforce data to inform county and statewide planning and workforce development efforts. The Research and Evaluation staff used Needs-Based Plan and Budget files (SFY 17/18 and 18/19) to create county-specific and statewide infographics about Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce. The infographics provided details about a variety of workforce related data including the turnover rate, the reasons caseworkers left the agency, the tenure of caseworkers who left and those who stayed with the agency, as well as movement within positions in the agency. Research and Evaluation staff presented the infographics and shared county-specific infographics with counties at the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators conference in January and subsequently via email with additional discussion opportunities via one or more webinars. In an effort to make the workforce data even more robust and reliable, the Resource Center outlined suggested additions and changes to the Needs-Based Plan and Budget guidance, which were incorporated into 2020 NBPB bulletin.

During FY 2019/2020, the Research and Evaluation Department also developed a report to assist OCYF in the fiscal analysis they were conducting to determine the number of additional staff (case-carrying caseworkers and supervisors) needed beyond the current number of state-allocated positions to meet various ratios in each county, as well as statewide. The Research and Evaluation Department developed a tool to collect and calculate the data necessary to support this analysis.



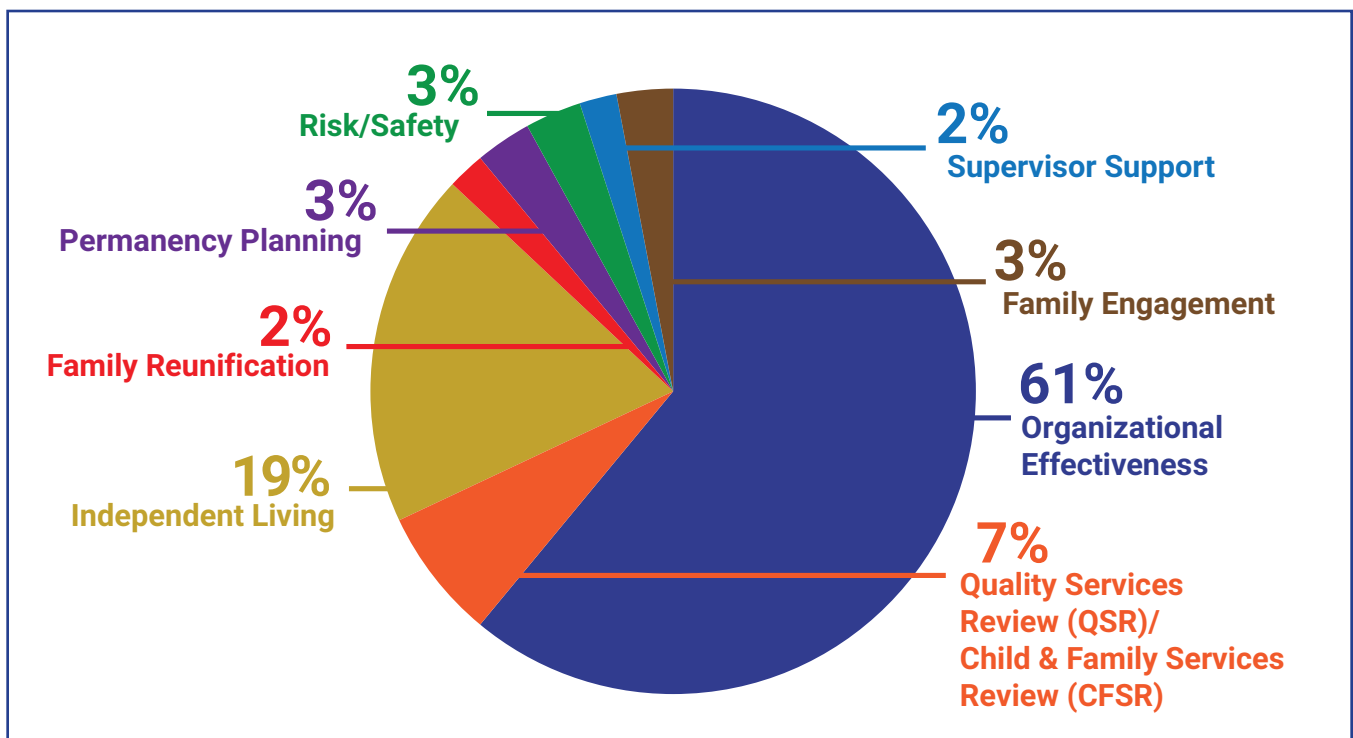


## Provide Consultation and Support

The Organizational Effectiveness/Regional Team Department at the Child Welfare Resource Center helps to support organizational change and the implementation of best practice across Pennsylvania. In partnership with county children and youth agencies and technical assistance partners, we engage in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts to make systems change and support agency mission, vision, and values. Beginning in April of 2020, Organization Effectiveness (OE) services transitioned to virtual delivery. We appreciate everyone's partnership and support to continue the important work to strengthen services outcomes for children and families.

The chart below shows the percentage of time spent in some of the core practice areas provided by OE staff at the Resource Center.

### Technical Assistance Provided July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020





OE services cover several broad areas, including supporting:

- continuous quality improvement structures
- needs assessments and the use of data to link needs to interventions and measure progress
- transfer of learning to apply new knowledge and skills from trainings
- best practice implementation of bulletins and regulations
- leadership development

During FY 2019/2020, some of the requests for consultation and support services were:

- workforce strategies including hiring, onboarding, supporting a remote workforce, and retention of staff
- leadership development
- supervision and accountability enhancements
- policy and procedures review
- safety and risk assessment follow up trainings and support sessions (almost 40 sessions held)
- onsite and virtual agency retreats.

Additionally, every county participated in the IL site visit process to strengthen services for older youth. IL networking sessions were also held in every region throughout the year to bring together older youth staff to participate in trainings, share resources and ideas with each other, and hear program updates from CWRC and OCYF. Practice Improvement staff also supported SWAN trainings and visits with counties and attended Permanency Roundtable meetings.

The thirteen Family Reunification (FR) Programs received a site visit during the FY. Like many of the counties, FR programs went to great lengths to meet the needs of families, many of whom were facing increased homelessness, economic struggles, and the negative impacts of Covid-19, and racial injustices.

In early 2019, the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work in partnership with Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) was selected as a project site for the National Child Welfare Workforce Initiative (NCWWI). This national project supports jurisdiction in assessing their organization, creating educational stipend programs to strengthen the child welfare workforce, and using evidence-informed strategies to build leadership skills. The goal of the project is for systemic change and improved outcomes for children and families. Organizational Effectiveness staff are members of the Implementation Team and facilitators of two Action Teams focused on enhancing supervision at Allegheny County DHS. Additionally, CWRC attended leadership and coaching training at part of the project and has two staff assigned to provide one-to-one coaching to members of Allegheny County's leadership team. The School of Social Work also has child welfare workforce fellows enrolled in the MSW program on main campus, participating in seminars, and placed in Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families regional offices. For more information, please refer to the NCWWI website at: <https://www.ncwwi.org/index.php/about/workforce-excellence-sites>.

SFY 2020-2021 will continue some of the traditional technical assistance and expand to include support for the implementation of the Family First Prevention and Services Act, efforts toward racial equity and inclusion, and increasing the use of data to measuring impact of services.

The Resource Center continues to work with OCYF and counties to prioritize technical assistance requests and ensure that the services provided are moving practice forward. For more information about OE services go to: <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/OE-Department.htm>.



## Develop and Revise Tools, Materials, and Curricula

The Child Welfare Resource Center strives to prepare and support exceptional child welfare professionals and systems through education, research, and a commitment to best practice. In the development and revision of tools, materials, and curricula that will achieve the professional development needs of the child welfare professionals, the Resource Center partners with key stakeholders, conducts curriculum needs assessment, and consults with subject matter experts. The Resource Center uses the Analysis-Design-Development-Implementation-Evaluation (ADDIE) model and Incorporates Team-Based Learning™ and simulation-based training into curriculum design.

On July 1, 2019, the Resource Center launched its new certification series for direct services workers, Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion (Foundations). Foundations, which was developed to align with Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model and Competencies, centers on the core issues of safety, permanency, and well-being. The series is comprised of 40 hours of online course work, 72 hours of in-person trainings, and 12 hours of field assignments, Foundations is 124 hours of study and skills practice. Ten primary modules are made up of online, in-person, and field work components.

- **Module 1: Introduction to Child Welfare Practice**
- **Module 2: Introduction to Engagement**
- **Module 3: CPS and GPS**
- **Module 4: Safety Assessment**
- **Module 5: Risk Assessment**
- **Module 6: Permanency and Concurrent Planning**
- **Module 7: Dependency Court Practice**
- **Module 8: Family Service Planning**
- **Module 9: Achieving Permanency**
- **Module 10: Professional Development**

The series includes additional online courses that can be taken in any order. Topics range from educational advocacy to child development to personal safety and self-care. Foundations enhances the partnership between the Child Welfare Resource Center and county children and youth agencies. Learners work through the series with a designated advisor, someone from their county agency who provides support and feedback and certifies completion of field assignments.



Foundations includes the use of innovative training methods including Team-Based Learning™ (TBL™) and simulation-based training. During in-class TBL™ modules, learners first work individually and then in diverse teams, engaging in critical thinking along the way. Ultimately, those teams go on to solve realistic problems related to child welfare practice later in the training day. Simulation with standardized clients/standardized attorneys gives learners the opportunity for skills practice in realistic scenarios and settings. To support the delivery of simulation-based training sessions, the Resource Center created multiple simulation labs located across the Commonwealth that resemble an apartment or a courtroom. Standardized clients and standardized attorneys enhance the simulation experience by portraying realistic roles during simulation-based trainings.

To learn more about Foundations, Team-Based Learning™, simulation, and more, visit the Foundations landing page on the Resource Center Website at [www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Foundations](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Foundations). A video depicting the use of Team-Based Learning™ and simulation sessions can be viewed here: [www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Videos/TBLSimVideo2018.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Videos/TBLSimVideo2018.mp4). Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies are also located on the Resource Center Website at: [www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/pcwc/Competencies.htm](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/pcwc/Competencies.htm).



**Team-Based Learning Video**

In March 2020, the Resource Center dramatically shifted its delivery of Foundations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by quickly developing a plan to deliver Foundations remotely. The Resource Center accomplished this shift in delivery by modifying curriculum materials, training instructors and standardized clients to deliver the training session remotely through the video conferencing platform Zoom, and by providing moderators for every remotely delivered session to support the instructor and learners throughout the training session. Throughout this time, the Resource Center engaged in continuous formal and informal communication with county agencies to involve them in decision making and keep them apprised about the status of the training delivery for Foundations and other courses. Within two weeks of the quarantine, the Resource Center commenced offering the first four modules of Foundations remotely. By June 2020, the entire Foundations series was available to Pennsylvania child welfare professionals who required certification.

Overall, the Resource Center's new development and revision of its other curriculum has consisted of an increase in content being delivered in an online format to support the learners in gaining factual knowledge at their own pace, at their convenience, and at their home office. Due to the quarantine restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the volume of new curriculum being developed is significantly reduced from previous years.

In FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center completed the development of 5 new curricula, made revisions to 23 existing curricula and updated 48 curricula to include the new Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies. In addition, due to quarantine restrictions, the Resource Center revised 22 curricula, including the Foundations and Supervisor Training certification series, and several booster shot and support sessions for remote delivery.

With a few exceptions all Resource Center curricula are located at the Resource Center's [Curriculum Page](#).

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**5**  
**new curricula  
developed**

**93**  
**curricula  
revised**

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## Train Child Welfare Professionals

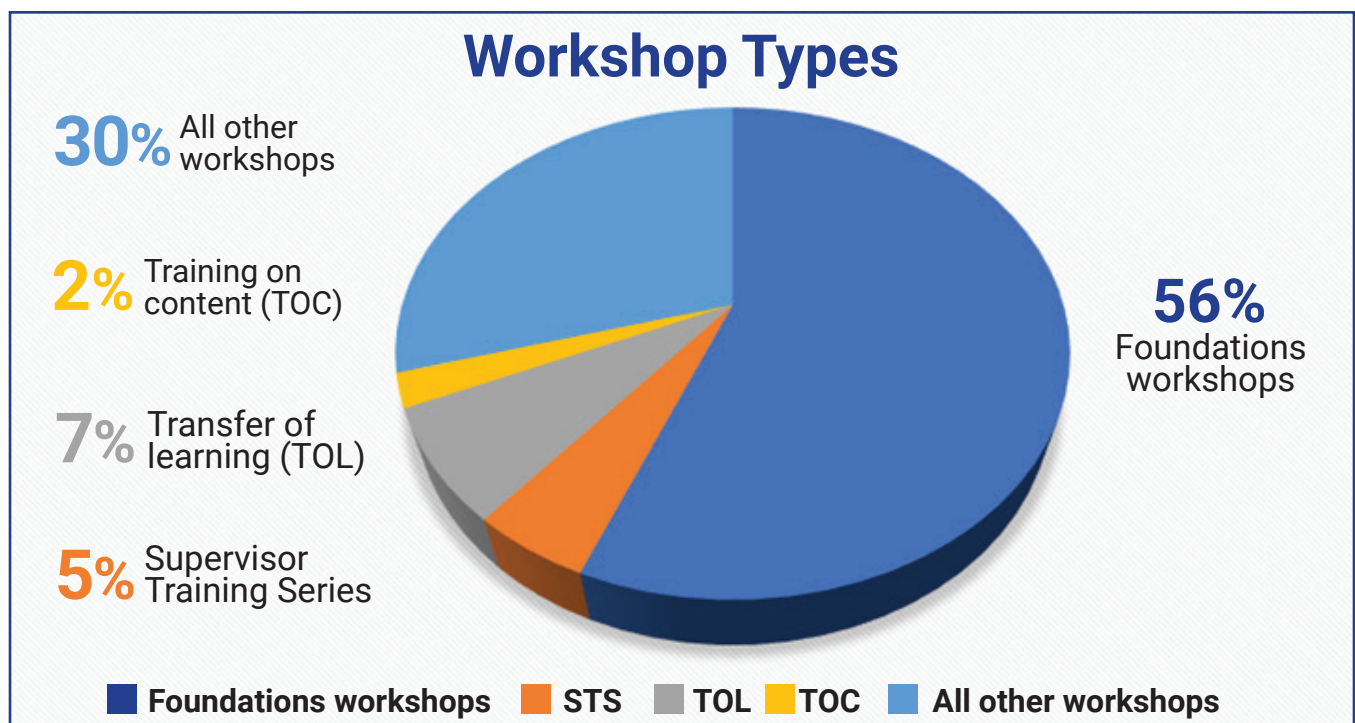
The Child Welfare Resource Center supports the delivery of training to Child Welfare Professionals across the state in a variety of ways: The Resource Center contracts with over a hundred instructors (many of whom are current child welfare practitioners) to provide in-person workshops. The Resource Center also provides online and hybrid trainings and supports training offered by our Partners and Stakeholders.

Child welfare professionals from 271 agencies across Pennsylvania attended over 1,000 workshops delivered by the Resource Center in FY 2019/2020.

1,072

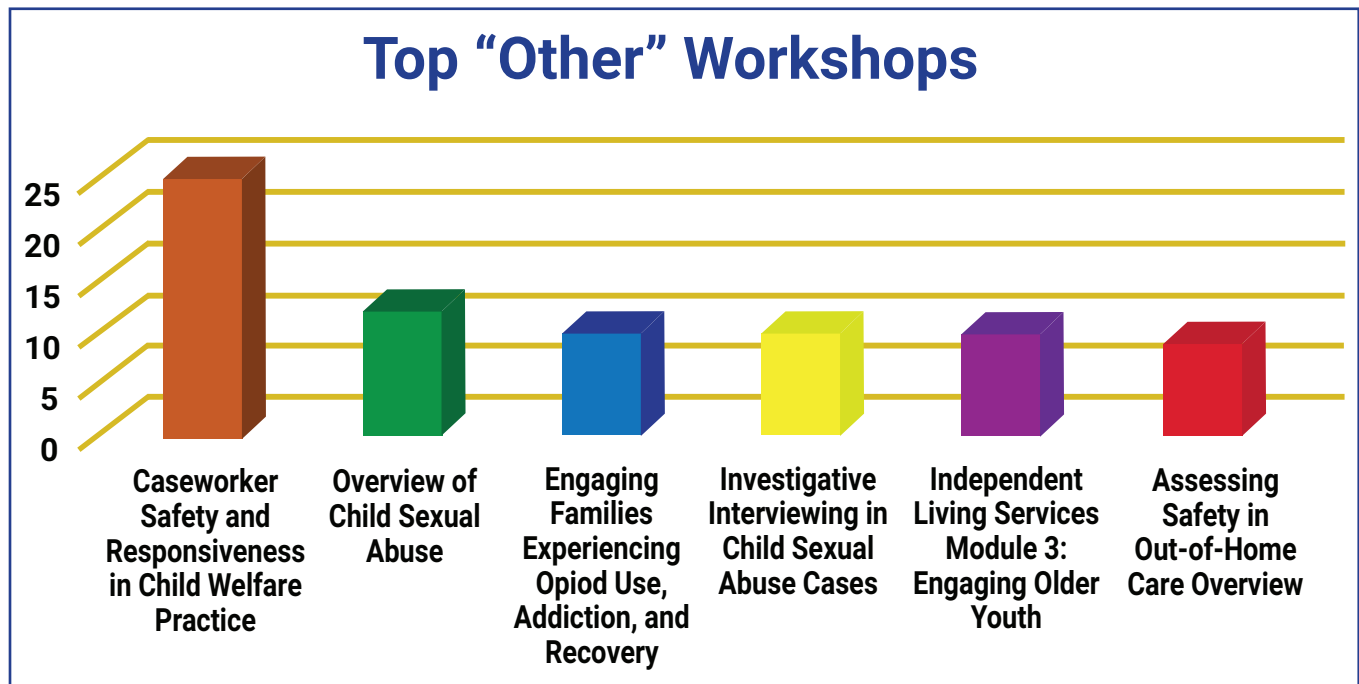
workshops delivered

The following chart identifies the percentage of training sessions by workshop type. 61 percent of all offerings represent one of the certification series for caseworkers and supervisors. 565 child welfare caseworkers and 57 supervisors completed their respective certification series. The chart below depicts the breakdown of workshop types delivered in FY 2019/2020.





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



During FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center, in partnership with SAM, Inc., provided 25 simulation training sessions focused on personal safety. Over 252 participants, both caseworkers and supervisors, participated in these sessions. Due to the quarantine restrictions brought about due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the volume of courses and participants are significantly reduced from previous years.

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 95 online courses available.

Finally, the Resource Center continued to offer an online 3-hour free course: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. Over 267,000 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Of that number, over 108,000 trainee records were processed and sent to the Department of State for licensure renewal. Additionally, 14% (or 37,891) of trainees who completed the course indicated they had previously made a report of child abuse. 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 the unique and powerful curriculum revisions and redesign discussed above and continuous quality improvement of training delivery, the Resource Center has undertaken extensive efforts to retrain its contracted instructors. New instructor competencies and a new Instructor Competency Training (ICT) have been delivered several times this fiscal year. The ICT offers both online and in-person sessions, where the contracted instructors learn and practice Team-Based Learning™ techniques within a team-based format. To promote the contracted instructors’ professional development, new tools, such as observation forms, and additional training opportunities are in development. To support the delivery of remote training sessions, instructors were provided additional training sessions on how to facilitate the Foundations and Supervisor Training Series and several other courses remotely.

Standardized clients (SC) are part-time employees who have been recruited and retained to support the delivery of simulation-based training sessions. They have been trained to provide a realistic portrayal of a client in a variety of scenarios such as interviewing, conducting safety assessments, and full disclosure interviews. They also provided meaningful behaviorally-based feedback to the learner at the conclusion of each learners' simulation. Standardized attorneys (SA), attorneys who have practiced in dependency court, conduct direct and cross examinations of the learners during a simulated dependency court hearing. At the conclusion of the learners' practice testimony, these attorneys also provide behaviorally-based feedback.



**Standardized Client (SC)**

**Standardized Attorney (SA)**



Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Resource Center quickly developed additional resources and professional development opportunities to support its instructors and standardized clients to deliver training sessions remotely. In addition to modifying and creating new materials, the Resource Center thoroughly prepared instructors and standardized clients to deliver training sessions in an online format by offering in-depth training on the use of the video conferencing platform Zoom for remote training delivery, breakout room guidance to support the teamwork component of TBL™ and simulation-based sessions, and resources to assess wellbeing needs of the learners throughout 6-hour, multi-day sessions. The Resource Center also provided a “moderator” to support the instructor and the learners throughout every remote training session by starting and managing the Zoom meeting; alerting the instructor to learners' questions; troubleshooting technical issues; and contacting the technology department when assistance is needed. Multiple training sessions and resource materials were developed to support staff, instructors, and standardized clients in moderating remotely delivered training sessions.



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 following partners to support events and meetings:

- **Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) 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**
- **Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)**
- **Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)**
- **American Bar Association (ABA)**
- **National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA)**
- **Team-Based Learning™ Collaborative**

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.

Finally, the Resource Center 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.





## **Youth/Family Engagement and System Improvement**

The Resource Center remains committed to supporting child welfare professionals in their efforts to effectively establish and maintain relationships with children, youth, families, and all other team members to ensure families' active participation in shaping decisions that affect their family. Understanding that family engagement at the practice, policy, and systems levels is necessary for positive change in the child welfare system, the Resource Center employs a full-time Parent Ambassador who is a former constituent of the child welfare system. The Parent Ambassador supports integration of the parent perspective across the Resource Center's family engagement products and services.

Some of the regional and county specific needs that were addressed this year included engaging kin from a parent's perspective, teaming with mothers to engage fathers, use of family engagement and teaming strategies in developing Plans of Safe Care, and using Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to support immediate needs and building of lifelong networks for families during the substance abuse recovery process. The Family Engagement project manager and the Parent Ambassador also support enhancing engagement efforts statewide through close collaboration with external stakeholders.

The focus of FY 2019/2020 continued to include supporting the expansion, implementation, and continuous quality improvement of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and Family Finding. Efforts included the ongoing support to PA's FGDM Leadership Team, as well as their four subcommittees. This included hosting the second part of a two-part series focusing on Managing Safety Before, During, and After an FGDM Conference.

In addition to the FGDM statewide events, the Resource Center, in collaboration with state partners, hosted collaborative meetings with each of the statewide entities that provide family engagement technical assistance to counties. This collaborative then hosted a statewide webinar for counties and their respective private providers. The webinar included defining family finding in Pennsylvania, exploring ways leadership can enhance family finding and understanding how systemic strategies connect and support families being served in achieving their goals.

As a result of social distancing and the need to support family engagement practitioners bridging the gap of communication and collaboration for children and families, the Resource Center worked with the family finding technical statewide partners to develop and distribute a Family Innovation



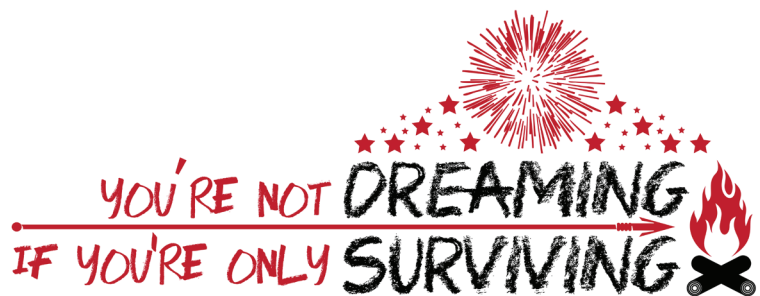
Survey. The survey gathered information about the different engagement approaches and platforms being used during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as gathered information about the successes and challenges workers were experiencing. Eighty-two responses were received from counties and private providers. The Resource Center, in collaboration with its parent program, the Child Welfare Education and Research Programs at the University of Pittsburgh, then analyzed the results and they were used for content development of a webinar for Pennsylvania's child welfare leadership and family engagement practitioners. The interactive webinar provided a platform for sharing information, virtual tools, and innovative practices being used across the state, and identifying which strategies could be used ongoing (beyond the COVID-19 pandemic) to support families and strengthen their connections.

## Youth Engagement

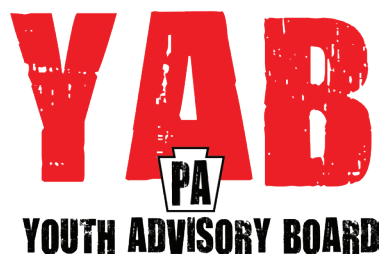
In FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center continued to employ Youth Quality Improvement Specialists to assist in the delivery of training and technical assistance, as well as to provide support to the Older Youth Retreat and PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB) regional and statewide efforts. These positions are held 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 the Youth Ambassador position. The Youth Ambassador helps lead youth engagement training and technical assistance efforts across Pennsylvania, often in collaboration with our Youth Quality Improvement Specialists, Older Youth Project Manager, and Practice Improvement Specialists working in the counties. Eligible candidates have experienced out-of-home placement through the child welfare system. This year, the Resource Center consolidated several part-time Youth Ambassador positions into a full-time Youth Ambassador position, allowing CWRC to target a larger pool of candidates to fill this position. The existing full-time Youth Ambassador filled this position November 2019.

In addition to employing former constituents of the foster care system, the Resource Center partners with youth currently or formerly in foster care and independent living professionals to plan and facilitate the annual Older Youth Retreat, which is held in August each year. A committee comprised of youth, county staff, stakeholders, and statewide partners planned and implemented the week's activities, which included youth-led peer group sessions, activity sessions, and other special events. Youth also participated in focus groups related to PA's priorities for older youth. This allowed youth to share their experiences in foster care and discuss concerns they wanted to see addressed over the next five years. This year's retreat, held at the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown campus, included 91 youth, and 48 staff representing 36 counties across the state. For more detailed information regarding the 2019 Older Youth Retreat, please visit the Youth Advisory Board website at <http://www.payab.pitt.edu/ILRetreat.htm>



Over the past year, the Resource Center provided over 68 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 share financial aid information to assist older youth in care in finding ways to finance post-secondary education via webinars and resource sharing through the IL Listserv.



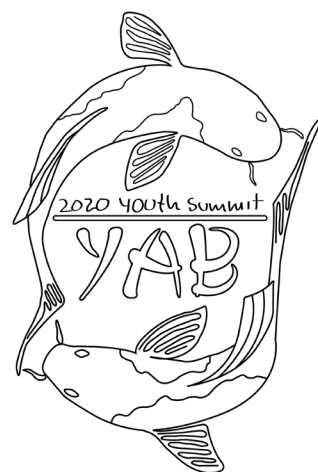
### **Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board**

The Resource Center continues to provide support to the PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Over 300 youth participate in statewide, regional, and local YABs. One of the main objectives of the YAB is developing youth leaders to effectively use their personal experiences to advocate for changes in the child welfare system. Youth are given resources and training on how to strategically and safely share their stories to impact system change and practice. The topics youth address range from education to normalcy to permanency. Know Your Rights training is available to youth in Pennsylvania so that they can learn how to advocate for themselves.

As the YAB began discussing ideas for its 2020 annual project, youth acknowledged they were not familiar with the permanency goals and their hierarchy. Youth were most familiar with Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) and Independent Living (IL) (which is not a permanency goal). As a result of this issue, the Statewide YAB wanted to develop a youth-friendly resource intended to teach youth about permanency goals. The Permanency Game gives youth a hands-on experience about the challenges and benefits on the road to permanency. The game is intended to help stakeholders educate youth about permanency goals in a youth-friendly and engaging manner. The game board used for The Permanency Game was previously used as part of CWRC's former foundational training series, Charting the Course, addressing out of home placement and permanency.

The end of the fiscal year was a challenge for PA's older youth in foster care. With the onslaught of COVID-19 and racial unrest across the country, older youth in care had to alter their plans and make further adjustments in addition to the existing issues often faced as youth involved in the foster system. The Resource Center provided support and guidance to the Statewide YAB Leadership as they adjusted to accommodate this new "normal". YAB members helped facilitate regional Zoom sessions with peers to address the challenges youth were and are currently experiencing. The Statewide YAB transitioned to virtual meetings for May.

The Resource Center continued to support the annual YAB Leadership Summit, which was held virtually in June 2020. Sixty participants included thirty youth in attendance, representing each of the six YAB Regions. The virtual venue allowed for a slight increase in youth participation because youth did not have to travel to attend the meetings. Participants received a welcome from the State, and a keynote from Evan Thornburg, Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs for the Kenny Administration in Philadelphia. Ms. Thornburg and the youth had an open, candid discussion about race, implicit bias, and her experiences growing up as a bi-racial youth. Following the keynote, youth participants continued their discussion about the challenges they were experiencing as a result of COVID-19 as well as the racial unrest and climate surrounding the "Black Lives Matter" movement. As a way of transitioning from such heavy topics, the youth also took time to play a friendly game of Jeopardy.





Youth participated in multiple regional and local community service projects in FY 2019/2020, The Statewide YAB continues in their role as one of four Citizen Review Panels (CRP) for PA. Youth also have representation on the CWRC Diversity Task Force group, and the PA Juvenile Justice Task Force. A youth was also appointed to the Governor's Council on reform, representing the youth voice to impact change for older youth.

## Older Youth

The Resource Center provides project management and support to counties and their Independent Living programs and services for transitioning youth. CWRC works closely with older youth, county and provider staff, and stakeholders through a variety of venues, including workgroups, event planning, and resource development. Our partnership with the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) is essential in making connections between SWAN permanency services and services for older youth, including independent living. These collaborative efforts help support older youth's successful transition to adulthood.

In April 2020, CWRC partnered with OCYF to host an all-county statewide call to address the impact of COVID-19 on services for older youth. The purpose of the call was to provide a forum to support counties and share resources as they work with older youth during this challenging time. Participants were also able to get direct feedback from youth about some of the challenges they were facing because of COVID-19. Regional calls were also scheduled to further address the needs of counties and stakeholders working locally with older youth.

Every county received an IL site visit during this fiscal year. Site visits include invitations to all key stakeholders, a required pre-site visit questionnaire, an onsite meeting, youth interviews, OCYF review and approval of the final report, and follow up contact to analyze the report findings and identify next steps.



The Resource Center successfully transitioned in March to virtual IL Site visits. Participation and attendance by county staff and stakeholders increased because of visits being held virtually. Counties were also able to engage and obtain youth feedback with the support of the Resource Center's Youth Ambassador. As a result of these site visits, program enhancements were implemented to strengthen services for older youth. Reports from the site visits continue to be used to gather statewide themes in areas of strengths and challenges. The data collected helps identify statewide systemic issues to address gaps in services for older youth. The information is also used to inform county training needs and support the State's review of the counties' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

Over the past year, the Resource Center focused on implementing the recommendations (permanency, knowledge management, and housing for older youth) outlined in the IL Needs Assessment conducted in 2018. The Resource Center is developing additional opportunities to provide stakeholders with professional development focused on older youth.

The Resource Center continues its partnership with the SWAN and other system partners hosting webinars and youth panel presentations to help address goals identified in the IL Needs Assessment. Additionally, the Resource Center developed a resource on the YAB website <http://www.payab.pitt.edu/StaffTraining.htm> that showcases all available training and resources related to older youth, including webinars and online training, making them more easily accessible to stakeholders.

Lastly, the Resource Center continues its Older Youth Webinar Series working collaboratively with counties and system partners. The webinars offer counties and practitioners a forum to share resources and promising practices related to their work with older youth with other professionals across the state. Over the past year, the Resource Center has partnered with several stakeholders. Webinars have included the Juvenile Law Center, focusing on educating counties about a Federal program that provides housing vouchers for transitioning older youth; Community Legal Services addressing supplemental Security Income (SSI); and OCYF and PHEAA for a Fostering Independence Waiver Program presentation. All webinars can also be viewed at <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Webinars.htm>.







## Supporting System Improvement

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.

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

The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) 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 (ACF), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has administered the reviews since 2000. These periodic 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 completed the Round 3 onsite CFSR case reviews during the months of April – July 2017. Pennsylvania's CFSR Final Report outlines the findings from the onsite CFSR. Based upon review of the findings from the onsite CFSR, available data and root cause analysis, key themes emerged. As a result of the analysis, recommendations were developed by the four PA Child Welfare Council subcommittees and these recommendations came to serve as the basis for the overarching goals to be addressed in Pennsylvania's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The four key areas that drove the development of Pennsylvania's PIP include workforce, engagement, assessment, and planning/monitoring.

As part of PIP monitoring, and as a way to monitor outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being, Pennsylvania conducted PIP monitoring case reviews from April–July of 2019. Results from CFSR PIP monitoring case reviews provided data about whether Pennsylvania showed progress in the following areas for which the state is required to show improvement:

- **Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment**
- **Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care**
- **Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management**
- **Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement**
- **Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child**
- **Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement**
- **Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents**
- **Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning**
- **Item 14: Caseworker Visits with Child**
- **Item 15: Caseworker Visits with Parents**

In March 2020, the Administration for Children and Families confirmed that PA met measurement criteria and achieved PIP measurement goals for Items 1 and 2 during Measurement Period 1 (April–July 2019).

The Resource Center staff had been preparing for Measurement Period 2 and the implementation of the 2020 CFSR case reviews, which were to occur from April–August 2020, but implementation of in-person training and case reviews was disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of the health and safety concerns and in an attempt to align with federal, state, and local guidance, Resource Center staff initiated efforts to adapt the in-person CFSR trainings and case reviews to a virtual platform with the intention that PIP monitoring case reviews would resume in 2021.

### **Continuous Quality Improvement**

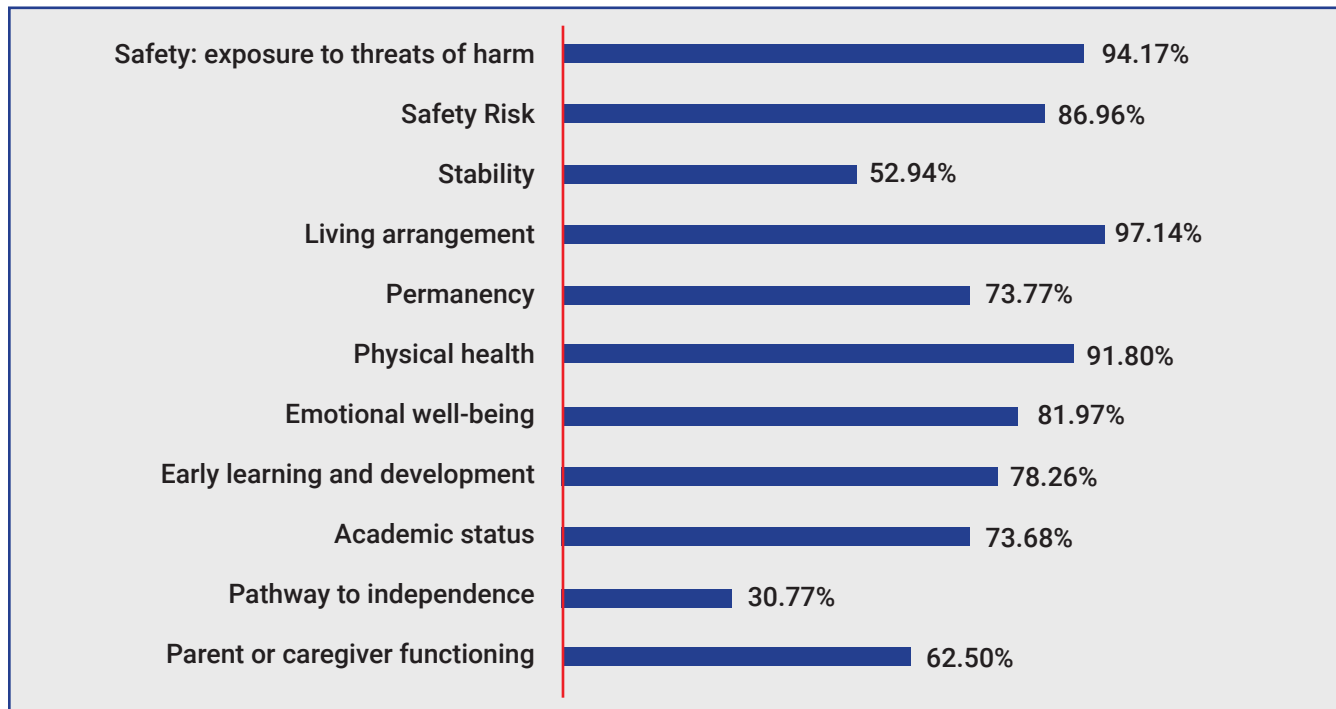
The Quality Services Review (QSR) process continues to be one critical component of the CQI effort, which is used to evaluate safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes as well as practice performance. The QSR uses a combination of record reviews, interviews, observations, and deductions made from fact 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 ninth round of state-supported Quality Service Reviews (QSR), which were conducted between January 2019 and December 2019. During the ninth round, QSRs were held in five counties and 61 cases were in the sample with 24 out-of-home cases and 37 in-home cases.



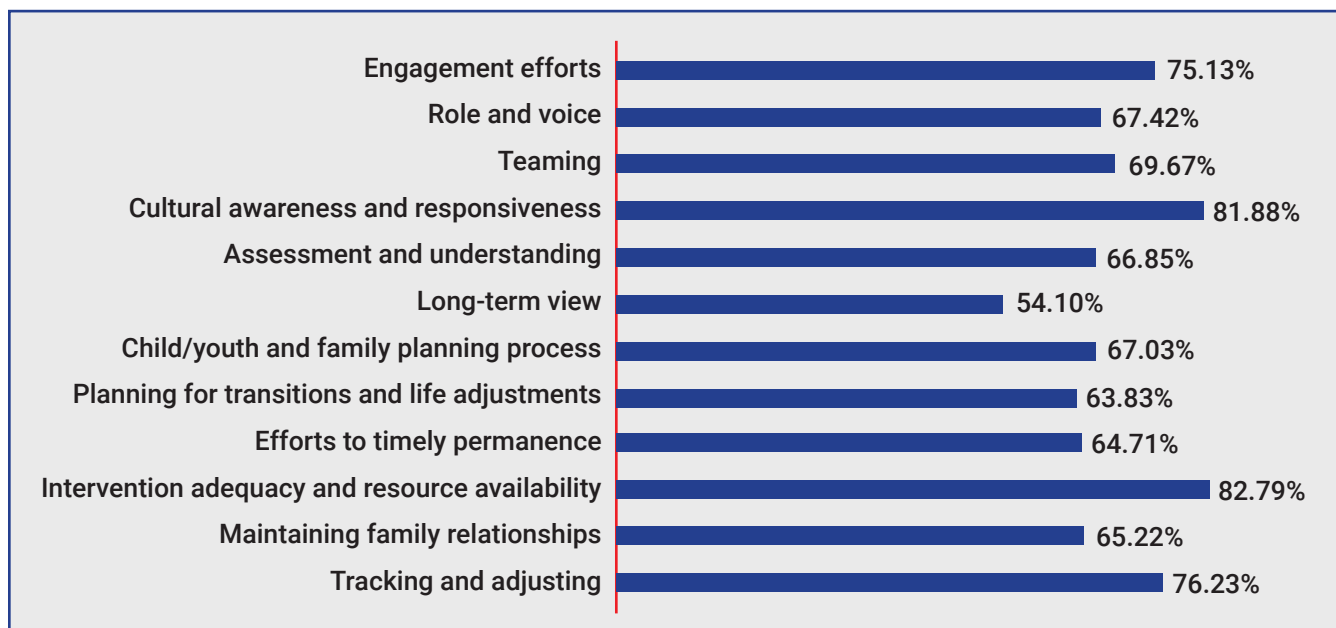
The Child/Youth and Family Status Indicators examine the safety, permanence, and well-being of the child/youth, as well as the capacity of the child/youth's caregivers (both familial and substitute) to provide support to that child/youth. Eleven indicators are utilized with the indicators generally focusing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

### Round 9 "Child/Youth & Family Domain" Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings



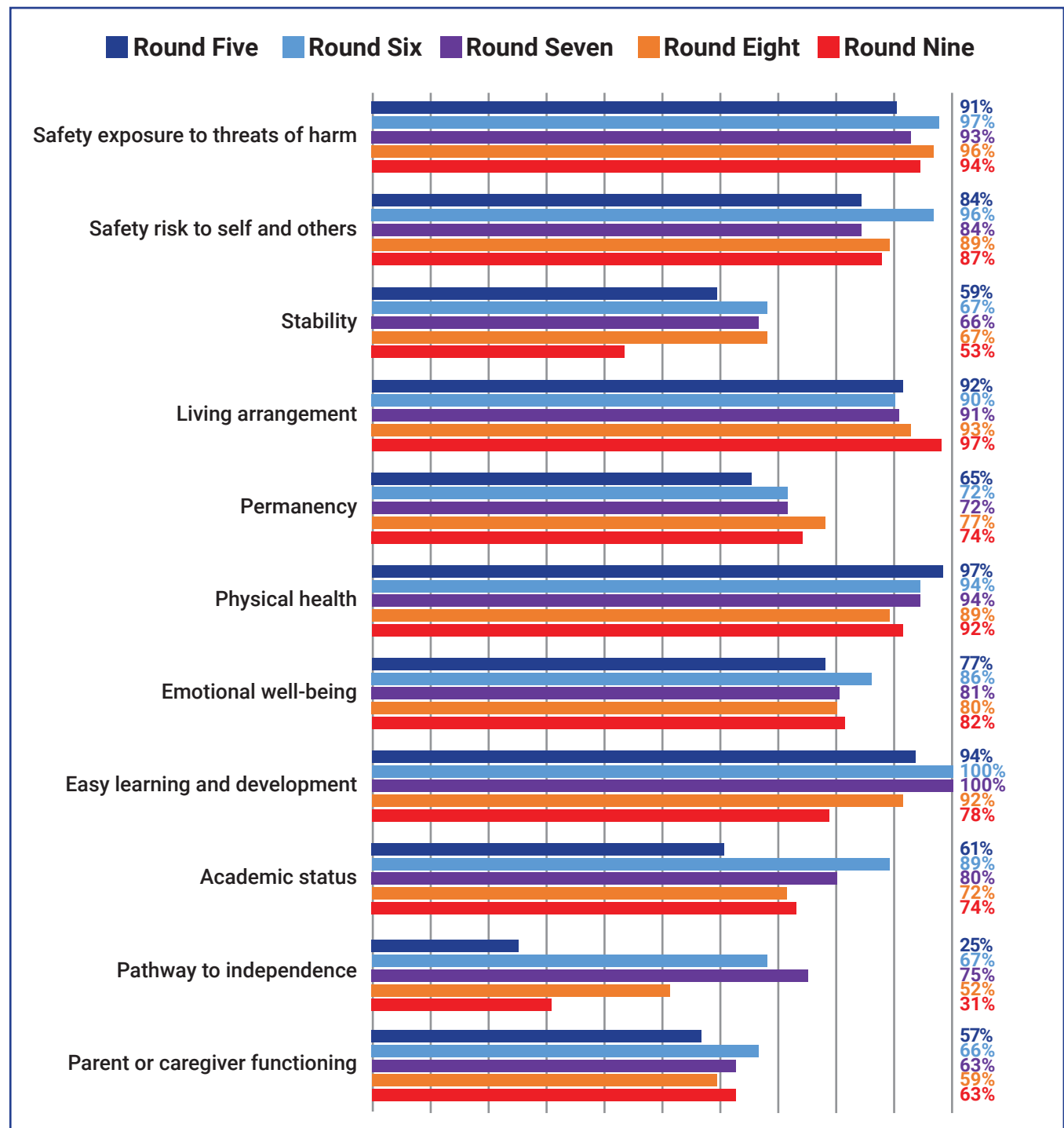
The Practice Performance Indicators examine the twelve indicators used to assess the status of core practice functions. These indicators generally focus on the past 90 days from the date of the onsite review, unless otherwise indicated.

### Round 9 "Practice Performance Domain" Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings



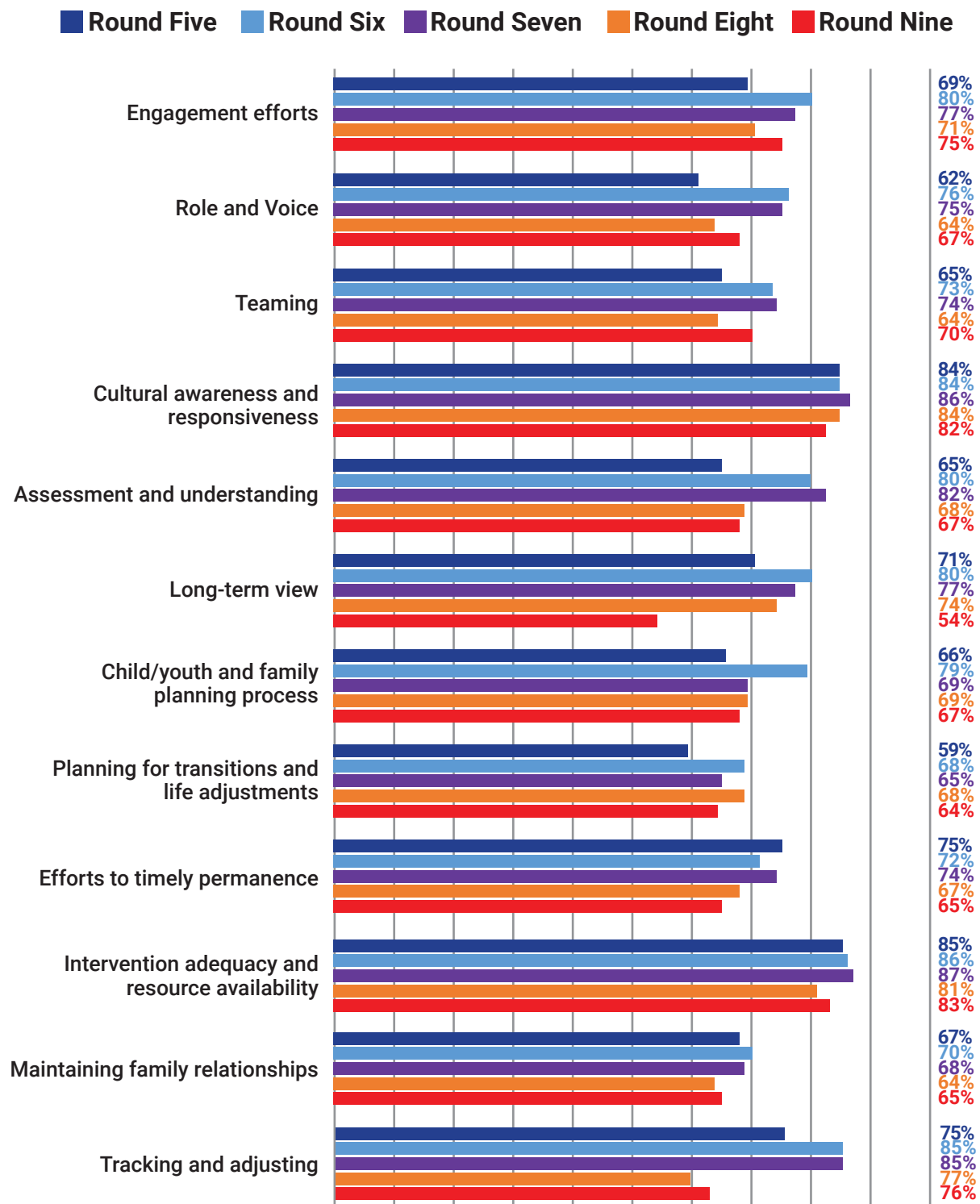
Over the course of the nine rounds of Quality Service Reviews that Pennsylvania has been conducting, we have gathered information regarding the overall child/youth/family status domain indicators, as well as the overall practice performance domain indicators, to address case and county-specific findings, 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 V in 2015 to Round IX in 2019.

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





## “Practice Performance Domain” Overall Percentage of Acceptable Ratings Rounds V - IX



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 and ensuring key case participants have a role and voice (particularly with fathers and non-custodial parents);
- Maintaining family relationships and promoting lifelong connections;
- Teaming within the public child welfare organization and with community partners throughout the life of the case;
- Quality assessment of child/youth and family service needs (particularly for older youth) and the link to planning for service provision; and
- Planning for transitions and adjustments.

County specific improvement efforts also focused on internal functioning such as 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.

### **PCYA Leadership Academy**

The Leadership Academy provides PA Child Welfare leaders with the practical knowledge and skills needed to build the competence, confidence, and commitment required of high-quality leaders within their agency, community, and the child welfare field. Efforts to achieve these goals include high quality management and leadership training, transfer of learning, and technical assistance designed 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, which develops and delivers training sessions (for PCYA quarterly meetings and regionally), reviews and provides certification for new administrators, maintains leadership resources, and conducts program and practice sessions to support best practice.

During this past year, quarterly sessions occurred in October 2019 and January 2020, with attendance at both exceeding 75 participants comprised of Administrators, Assistant Administrators, Mid-Level Managers, Fiscal Officers, Solicitors, and Supervisors from counties across the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the March 2020 and June 2020 sessions were cancelled. Despite the challenges the pandemic created, many individuals completed the Foundations of Leadership Training, enabling them to receive Leadership Certificates once they complete the required number of quarterly sessions. In addition, CWRC staff began making modifications to offer additional topics virtually, making it possible for Leadership Academy attendees to continue their progress toward obtaining their certificate.

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 (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 projects. The Resource Center provides support to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for two specific activities related to CAPTA. The first area is providing project management support as it relates to the application and administration of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) grant activities. The second is to support CAPTA compliance by fulfilling the requirements related to Citizen Review Panels (CRP).

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

The Resource Center employs a project manager for CAPTA-related work to support DHS and the Pennsylvania CJA Task Force in the compliant and effective use of Pennsylvania's CJA grant funds.

While the CJA Task Force is an independent group that makes funding recommendations to DHS, the Resource Center's project manager provides support for their work in a variety of ways, including supporting their quarterly meetings, data collection, and communication to key stakeholders. Each year, the CJA Task Force monitors the current CJA funded activities and recommends project funding to DHS. During FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center supported DHS and the CJA Task Force in the development and submission of Pennsylvania's 2020 CJA 3-Year Assessment.

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

The Resource Center provides support to four Citizen Review Panels (CRP). CRPs meet quarterly and examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child welfare agencies. Members serving on the panels are charged with developing an annual report, which is then sent to and reviewed by DHS. Contained in the report are recommendations aimed at improving PA's child protective services. These reports cover the calendar year but are published, along with the state's responses, in May or June of each year and can be viewed online by clicking the following link: [Pennsylvania Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports](#).

Three of these panels are located regionally and comprised of adult volunteers. 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 quarterly 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 DHS, attend a National CRP Conference. Following the conference, lessons learned and best practices are discussed and incorporated into Pennsylvania's CRP process.





Due to the volunteer nature of the CRPs, recruitment of membership is necessary to ensure their continued success. In FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center worked collaboratively with DHS to recruit and approve an additional 15 new members to the regional CRPs; many of which were from counties not previously represented. To learn more about the regional panel members or to apply to become a member, click the following link: [Pennsylvania CRP Members](#).

The fourth panel is a statewide panel and is commonly referred to as the Pennsylvania Statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB). The YAB is comprised of current and former substitute care youth ages 16 to 21. Youth leaders on the YAB educate, advocate, and form partnerships to create positive change in the substitute care system. More information about the YAB can be found on page 19 of this report.



### **Diversity Task Force**

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

FY 2019/2020 has been an upheaval for the DTF, and our nation as a whole, with the death of George Floyd and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The killing of George Floyd sparked racial unrest across the country, creating a movement focused more than ever on racial equality and social justice for black and brown people. The movement was timely and aligned with the work the DTF began to embark on around children of color being overrepresented in the child welfare system. The DTF

is currently monitoring and revising their strategic plan to reflect the work and efforts being made to address racial justice and equality in the PA child welfare system. The DTF will also collaborate with the CWRC in our work with the Center for Study of Social Policy to become an anti-racist organization.

The 2019 Diversity Task Force Fall event addressed Racial Disparity, Implicit Bias, and White Privilege. This training focused on the overrepresentation of children of color involved in the child welfare system and how that involvement also impacts their outcomes in education, healthcare, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and other prison systems. The event also addressed racial disparities in children's populations in care and the professionals who work with them. The presenters provided an overview of racial discrimination's historical and structural causes to help participants contextualize the root causes of these disparities. Additionally, the workshop allowed for a robust discussion that helped participants to recognize and develop a deeper understanding of their role as professionals and how they impact families and children of color. The event was offered at the Resource Center training sites located across the state to accommodate an increased number of participants.

The Diversity Task Force is planning its 2020 Fall event, addressing race and being "color brave." Participants will have an opportunity to have candid conversations to understand each other's perspectives and experiences better. Gaining this information is at the heart of our ability to build authentic relationships and attain cultural dexterity. The event will also feature a keynote presentation from James Huguley, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's, School of Social Work, Center on Race and Social Problems. The event will be offered virtually due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## Family Reunification

The Resource Center continued to support the fourteen programs offering services through the Family Reunification (FR) grants in FY 2019/2020. This was the first full SFY of implementation since the grant was adjusted in October 2018 as part of the Family First Prevention and Services Act that removed the time limits for services to families and children.

Each of the FR programs work with families to address issues to reunite children and youth safely with their birth families when possible. An executive summary of each program's grant application was developed to assist OCYF and CWRC staff in gaining a high-level overview of the FR programs, including scope of services, populations served, and partnerships within the community and county. The programs participate in a pre-site visit questionnaire and onsite visit annually. This process aims to capture families being served, program achievements, barriers faced in achieving goals, changes to programs or services, and the need for training and technical assistance. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visits shifted to virtual meetings from March–June 2020. Services to families were changed as well during this time, resulting in virtual visits for families. Most, if not all, interactions had to be done in a virtual format, whether online or by phone. This was a challenging time for programs to provide the structure and engagement families were accustomed to, but they adjusted as needed to maintain safety for the families as well as their staff.

The CWRC and OCYF Project Managers, along with a committee of CWRC staff and directors from several programs, worked to plan a networking and educational event. Lead by the directors on the committee, subject matter was identified specific to the FR providers. Sessions with presenters were created and the event was scheduled for June 2020 to coincide with National Family Reunification Month. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event had to be shifted to a virtual platform. This was the third year for the event and despite going virtual, it was well received and attended







## 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 2019/2020, 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. The CWRC began the work to revise the Individual Needs assessment to include an expansion of services offered beyond training to TOL and Technical assistance. The new format will be easier to use and provide immediate feedback to the county staff person and their supervisor. The current Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) was disseminated among 21 counties in FY 2019/2020, and from those counties, over 900 participants completed the online assessment. The following is a list of the five content areas most frequently identified as a high need:

### High Need Area

Sexual Abuse  
Specialized Interviewing  
Adult Psychopathology  
Challenging 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 15 schools of social work throughout Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students who are official social work majors in any of the 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, Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion 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 Foundations of Pennsylvania Social Work Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion; 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, DHS Office of Children, Youth, and Families, 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



### PACWRC BRIDGE

During FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center continued work on the development of “Bridge”, the system designed to replace Encompass as the application to track trainings and online registration. Bridge is being developed to better support our external partners

as a much more self-service application where trainees can access their training certificates and certification information, register for trainings online, complete training assessments, and access a variety of reports. Bridge is currently in the final stages of testing and will be released the beginning of 2021.

The Resource Center hosts a variety of websites, databases, and web applications designed to provide our internal staff and external partners with the most up-to-date information and resources available. Comprehensive evaluation strategies are developed to support and increase accountability and provide evidence of the effectiveness of specific approaches and influence data-driven decision making. The design and content for each website and application is informed by advisory boards and respective committees and workgroups. Web forms are developed and implemented to replace older, manual data collection processes to ensure clean, accurate, and real-time data. Dashboards and views are also developed and maintained to support research and evaluation measures as well as providing a predictive analytics component to our products and services. During FY 2019/2020, the Resource Center either deployed, maintained, or made enhancements to the following websites, databases, and software applications.

- **Websites**
  - PACWRC
  - Being Well
  - Citizen Review Panel
  - Youth Advisory Board
- **Databases and Software Applications**
  - Encompass
  - Screening (Developmental Screening Database)
  - E-Learn (online course site)
  - Meeting Planner (PACWRC’s room reservation software)
  - FGDM Statewide Evaluation Databases and Dashboards
  - TA Tracker (a web application designed to track technical assistance provided to counties and OCYF by the Resource Center’s OE staff)
  - Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training
  - Multiple online forms used to collect participant data in workshops and events



## Information Technology Support

During FY 2019/2020, 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:

- Providing technological support to the Resource Center via the dissemination and maintenance of hardware and software.
- Providing network and infrastructure administration through implementation and monitoring of firewalls to protect sensitive data, daily backups, connectivity, and availability.
- Providing technical assistance and support through the provision of a helpdesk to over 267,000 trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training in FY 2019/2020.
- Providing daily data uploads to the PA Department of State for Act 31 licensure and license renewal processing for over 108,000 licensed (and applying for license) trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training.
- Provide data uploads to the PA Department of Education for Act 48 credit for educator trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training that are not affiliated with a PA district.
- Resolving 810 formal internal helpdesk tickets.
- Providing technology-related equipment, setup, and support for over 800 function arrangements.
- Developing and maintaining reports, dashboards, and other data-driven visuals from multiple applications and databases.
- Developing and maintaining tools and workflows utilizing Office 365 to streamline and replace old paper processes.
- Developing and maintaining online courses, videos, and technology-based tools used to enhance the delivery of curriculum, transfer of learning, and other initiatives.
- Creating and maintaining Office 365 Groups/SharePoint sites for departments, workgroups, and committees to ensure enhanced collaboration and providing content management tools allowing for anytime, anywhere, any-device access.
- Developing and maintaining computer applications and software used to support the initiatives of the Resource Center and its affiliates.
- Developing and maintaining multiple websites, updated regularly, to ensure accuracy and the most up-to-date information.
- Provide support and maintenance to internal and external training rooms, including simulation labs.
- Developing brochures and media for publications and events.





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

**– Nelson Mandela**

