University of Pittsburgh

PENNSYLVANIA CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

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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 Child Welfare Professionals continued to stabilize families and protect children during the global pandemic. Our mission at the Resource Center was to find innovative methods to continue to meet the critical needs of the workforce.

We continued to deliver virtual Instructor-led trainings to ensure new Child Welfare Professionals received the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be certified as Direct Service Workers. We launched the new certification series for Supervisors (Foundations of Supervision), which builds off the learning approaches we incorporated in Foundations. Online events continued to reach new heights for attendance, from Family Engagement efforts to other statewide initiatives. We are committed to maintaining these innovative approaches as part of our service delivery long term.

The Resource Center worked closely with OCYF to support the development and finalization of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Title IV-E Prevention Plan (Prevention Plan). The Prevention Plan outlines how Pennsylvania will fulfill the federal requirements associated with FFPSA and utilize prevention programs and services to keep children in their homes whenever safe and possible. The Prevention Plan also details how the Resource Center will support the workforce to implement FFPSA through training and technical assistance and includes a plan for the evaluation of FFPSA.

Finally, The Resource Center continued our journey toward becoming an anti-racist organization. Through difficult conversations, intensive learning opportunities, and a steadfast commitment, we have started to build the foundation necessary to ground our work moving forward. Over the course of the coming years, we will further this journey by incorporating a race equity lens into our services and products and establishing policies that support this endeavor. We continue to 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.
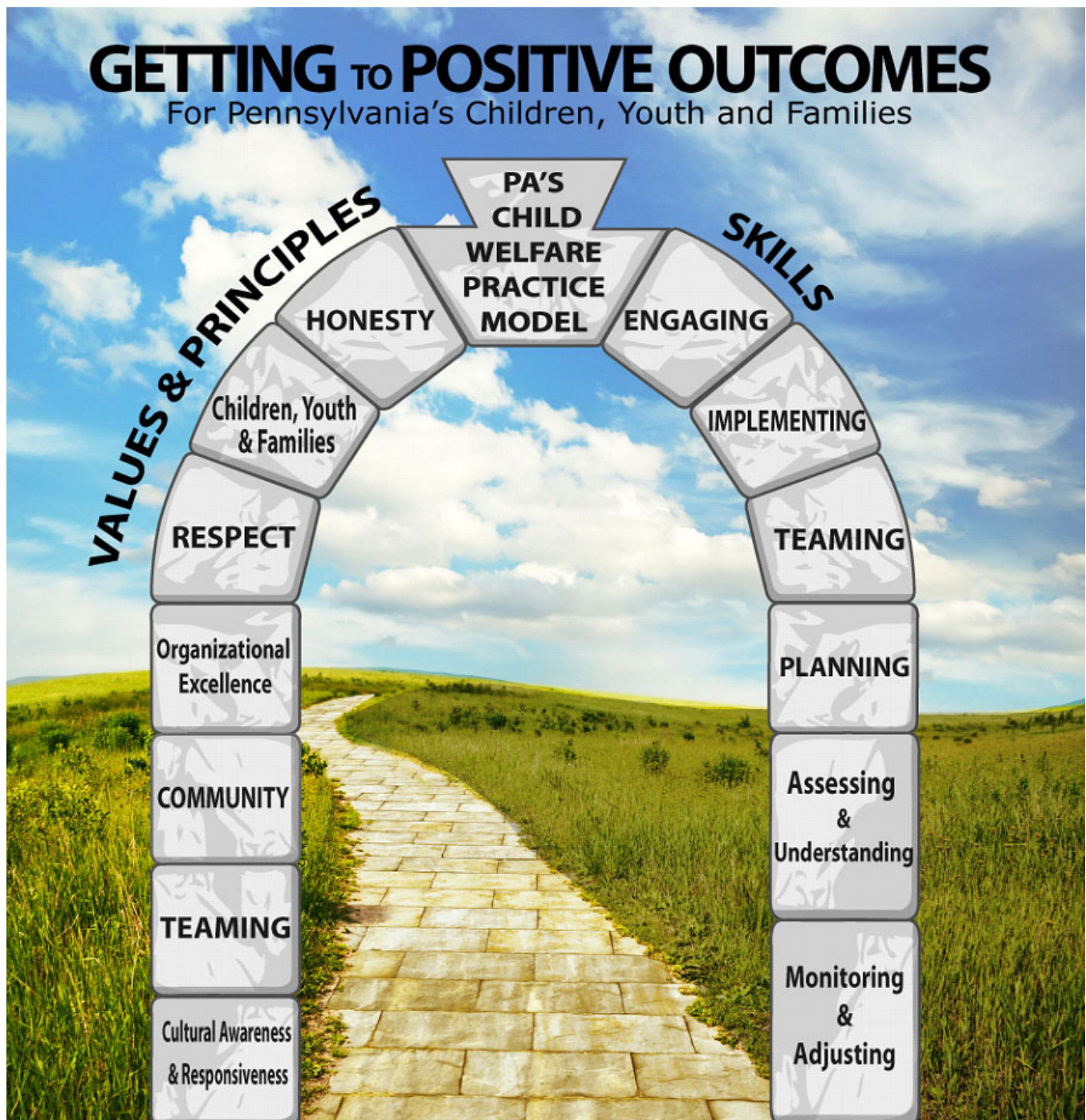
MISSION

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.

GETTING TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES
For Pennsylvania's Children, Youth and Families

VALUES & PRINCIPLES — SKILLS

PA'S CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL

HONESTY
Children, Youth & Families
RESPECT
Organizational Excellence
COMMUNITY
TEAMING
Cultural Awareness & Responsiveness

ENGAGING
IMPLEMENTING
TEAMING
PLANNING
Assessing & Understanding
Monitoring & Adjusting

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.

The Organizational Readiness for Change© (ORC)

The Organizational Readiness for Change© (ORC) assessment was developed by Texas Christian University's Institute for Behavioral Research. The tool examines four organizational components or domains: motivation for change, resources, staff attributes, and organizational climate. Results from the ORC can help identify challenges and focus resources on successful implementation of desired changes.

During FY 2020/2021, two counties requested technical assistance from the Resource Center, and it was recommended that the ORC be distributed to all staff. Lehigh County hoped to gain insight and inform continuous quality improvement efforts, and Elk County intended to use the results to better understand the general climate of the agency and enhance the stability of the workforce.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Evaluation

The Resource Center supports the ongoing statewide evaluation of Family Group Decision Making. During FY 2020/2021, the Resource Center received 2,456 surveys from 1,063 Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) conferences that were held in 39 counties across the state with 8,982 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.

The Resource Center continued to promote electronic data submission via the FGDM Statewide Evaluation Portal. Over the course of the year, 23 (59%) of the counties participating in the evaluation used the online process to submit evaluation forms and eight (21%) of the 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 understand the family engagement/ teaming meeting models being used statewide. The goal of the survey was 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. The family engagement survey was electronically distributed to all 67 counties in August 2020. Sixty-two counties completed the survey, resulting in a high response rate of 93%. The majority of participating counties (n=58 or 94%) reported using FGDM. Compared to other family engagement models, FGDM was the model most frequently reported being used. As more in-depth analysis continues, the Resource Center will continue to add appendices to the report, which will provide increasingly more detailed information about family engagement practices in Pennsylvania.

FGDM evaluation data and resources, including the Dashboards, online forms, and results of the family engagement survey 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 2020/2021, the Resource Center conducted multiple pilots of Foundations of Supervision (FOS). This series, designed for new Supervisors, 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 piloted. The data collected via this software provide 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.

Continued monitoring of Foundations training has shown promising results. For example, Participant Feedback ratings remain generally positive, with participants indicating that they feel engaged with and appropriately challenged by the training content. Additionally, participants reported feeling more confident in their skills upon completion of the training modules. Simulation ratings indicated that participants are demonstrating the appropriate level of skill during the simulation sessions. Self-ratings were comparable to peer ratings, as well as those by standardized clients, suggesting strong inter-rater reliability of these behavioral indicators.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required the continuation of remote delivery of training. Nevertheless, data collection processes have remained consistent, and have continued to show similar levels of satisfaction and skill demonstration as they did when training was provided in-person. We continue to monitor this data for any changes or concerns that may arise.

In addition to the evaluation efforts underway as a part of *Foundations and Foundations of Supervision*, the Resource Center also incorporated an assessment of transfer of learning into the Support Sessions provided by the Organizational Effectiveness Department. The Application Potential of Professional Learning Inventory (APPLĪ 33; Curry, Lawler, Donnenwirth, & Bergeron, 2011) is a 33-item scale designed to predict subsequent transfer of learning by human services workers after a learning event. By asking questions about likelihood of transfer, organizational and supervisor supports, and motivation to transfer, the tool provides information beyond a typical training satisfaction survey. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), with higher ratings indicating a higher likelihood of transfer.

The Resource Center began utilizing the tool in July 2019; however, statewide implementation was slow and was then impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, completion of the survey is voluntary and although all participants are invited and encouraged to complete the tool, not all of them choose to. Between July 2019 and April 2021, 356 APPLĪ 33 tools were submitted, with an overall mean rating of 4.22, which suggests a relatively high likelihood of transfer. The majority of the completed tools were from Support Sessions related to Pennsylvania's Risk Assessment (n=171) and Pennsylvania's Safety Assessment (n=95).

The Resource Center continues to implement this tool in Support Sessions across the state. A next step for the Research and Evaluation department will be to conduct factor analyses with the data in order to see if subscales emerge as they did in the original sample (for example, Relevance & Applicability, Pre-Training Motivation, or Supervisor Support for Training/Transfer; Curry, 1997). Such subscales may provide direction for the Organizational Effectiveness Department in terms of next steps in helping counties support their workforce in the implementation of knowledge and skills. Additionally, the Resource Center is determining other training and learning opportunities where it would be beneficial to collect these data.

Curry, D.H. (1997). *Factors affecting the perceived transfer of learning of child protection social workers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.
Curry, D., Lawler, M., Donnenwirth, J., & Bergeron, M. (2011). Application Potential of Professional Learning Inventory -- APPLĪ 33. *Training and Development in Human Services: The Journal of the National Staff Development and Training Association*, 6, 129-139.

Family First Prevention Services Act

Throughout FY 2020/2021, the Resource Center worked closely with OCYF to support the development and finalization of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Title IV-E Prevention Plan (Prevention Plan). The Prevention Plan outlines how Pennsylvania will fulfill the federal requirements associated with FFPSA and utilize prevention programs and services to keep children in their homes whenever safe and possible. The Prevention Plan also details how the Resource Center will support the workforce to implement FFPSA through training and technical assistance and includes a plan for the evaluation of FFPSA.

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 will serve as the evaluators of FFPSA in Pennsylvania. The evaluation, which includes a process evaluation, outcomes evaluation, and treatment group-only outcomes evaluation, will contribute to the research base of promising evidence-based programs (EBPs) included in Pennsylvania's Prevention Plan (Incredible Years, Triple P). In addition, evaluation findings will inform the state's ongoing development of continuous quality improvement efforts, promote a stronger focus on prevention, improve practice, and support decision-making regarding the adoption and implementation of EBPs.

Resource Center representatives also worked closely with OCYF and other key stakeholders to further define and operationalize how Pennsylvania will carry out key components of the Prevention Plan including how the state will monitor the implementation and outcomes associated with EBPs and how this information will be used to improve child welfare practice. The Resource Center also collaborated with OCYF and other stakeholders to develop resources for engaging with counties to review key components of FFPSA and guidance provided by OCYF and develop a plan for implementation of FFPSA. Resources include an online course called "Building a Foundation for Program Monitoring" to provide foundational knowledge about the four components of program monitoring: matching needs to services, model fidelity, monitoring outcomes, and continuous quality improvement.
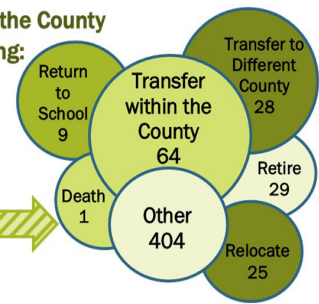
Workforce Data

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 19/20) 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. The Resource Center is exploring alternative methods to disseminate this information including the development of a statewide dashboard that would allow counties to access these data electronically. Please see the statewide infographic on the right.

Statewide Workforce Snapshot SFY 2019-2020

Of the 560 People Who Left the County Agencies, Reasons for Leaving:

- Return to School 9
- Transfer within the County 64
- Transfer to Different County 28
- Retire 29
- Death 1
- Other 404
- Relocate 25

560
Caseworkers left during SFY

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2,899 + 671 = 3,570

- 2,899 — Caseworkers at beginning of SFY
- 671 — Caseworkers hired during SFY
- 3,570 — Unique caseworkers employed during SFY

=

15.7% Turnover

Of the 3,570...

3,419	Held only caseworker (1 & 2/3) positions
64	Caseworker → Supervisor/Manager
45	Caseworker → NON-Caseworker/ NON-Supervisor/ NON-Case Manager
45	Non-Caseworker → Caseworker

Caseworker County Agency Tenure (in months)
Median = 29.03
Average = 57.05
(Range: <1 to 489.21)

Those who Stayed at the County Agency
Median = 32.03
Average = 59.71

Those who Left the County Agency
Median = 17.99
Average = 42.26

3,796 Caseworker Positions

Caseworker Position Vacancies

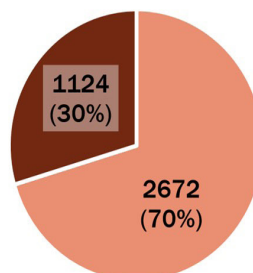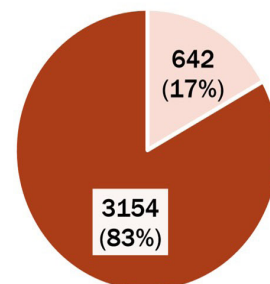|	
2,635	Caseworker positions were filled the entire SFY
287	Caseworker positions were vacant the entire SFY
874	Caseworker positions were vacant at some point during the SFY

Pie chart 1:
- 1124 (30%) — Non Case-Carrying Positions
- 2672 (70%) — Case-Carrying Caseworker Positions

Pie chart 2:
- 642 (17%) — Caseworker 1 Positions
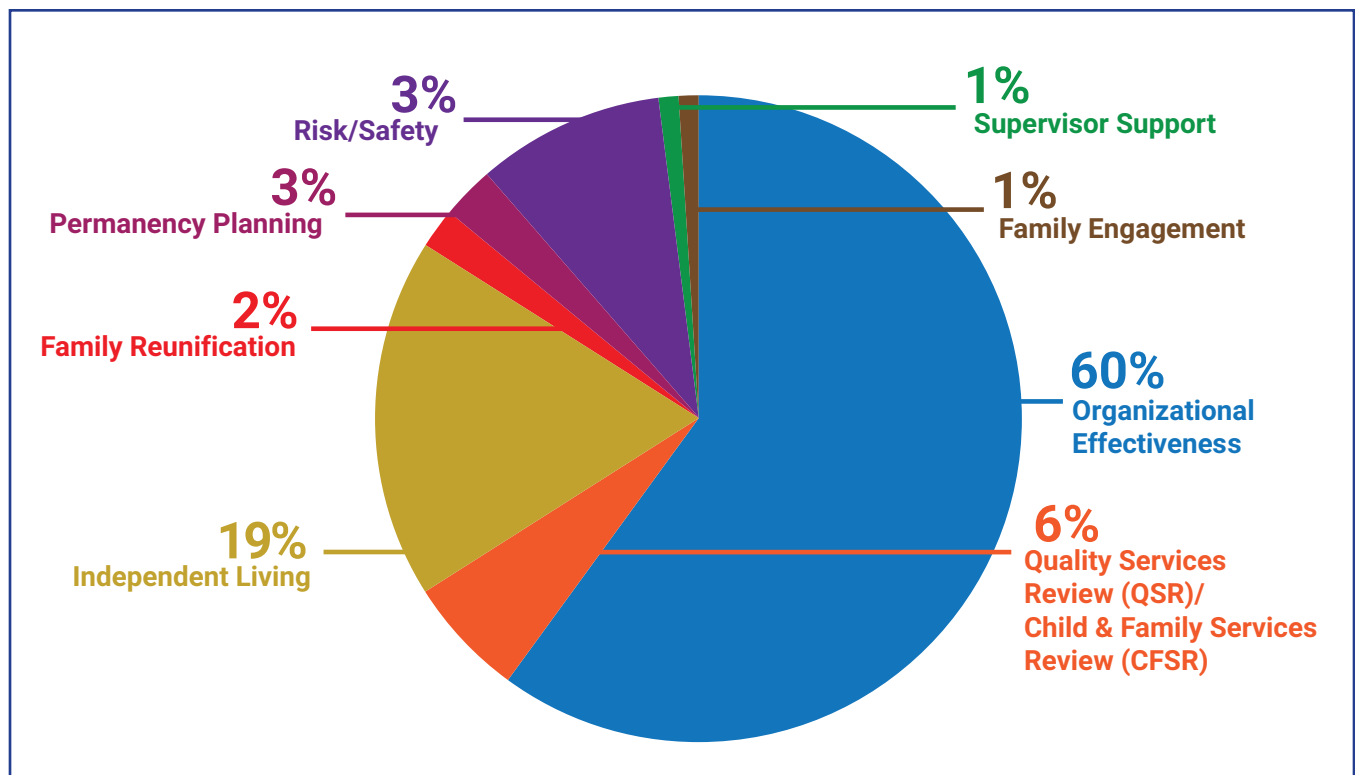- 3154 (83%) — Caseworker 2/3 Positions
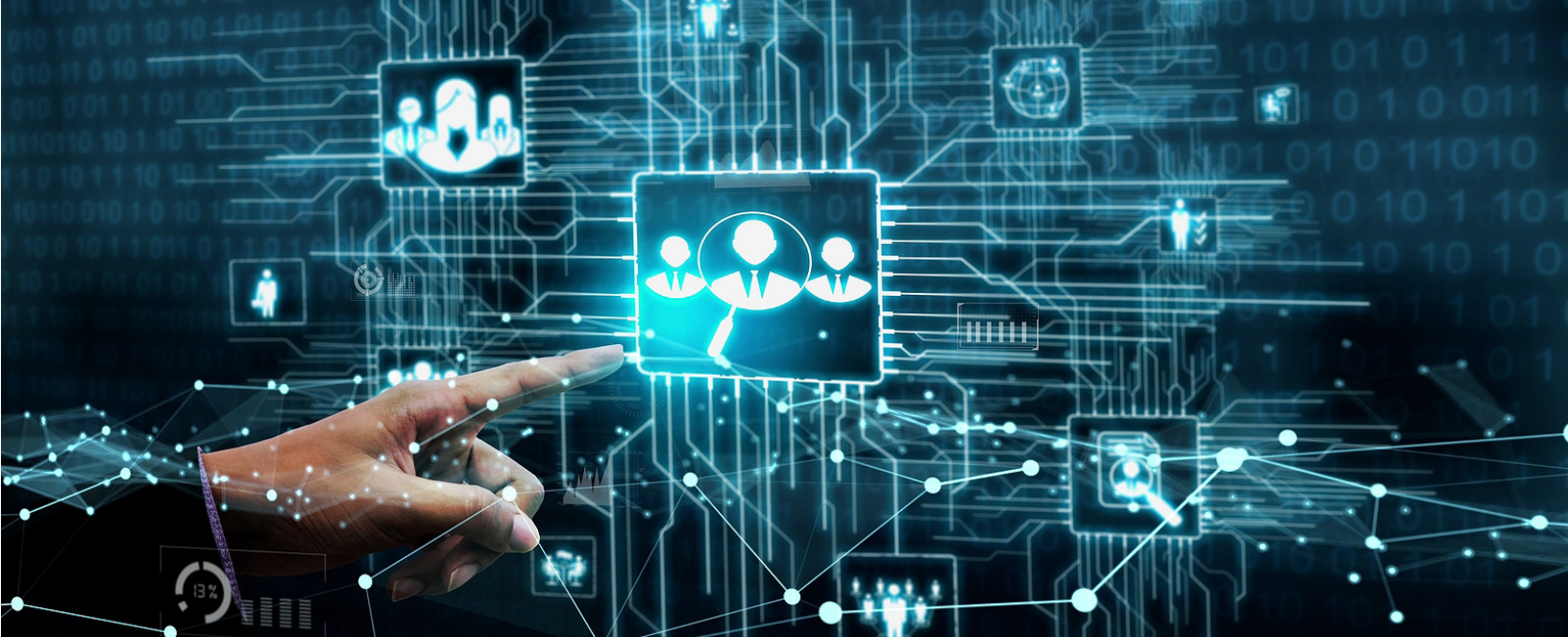
PROVIDE CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT

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.

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

Technical Assistance Provided July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

- 3% Risk/Safety
- 3% Permanency Planning
- 2% Family Reunification
- 19% Independent Living
- 1% Supervisor Support
- 1% Family Engagement
- 60% Organizational Effectiveness
- 6% Quality Services Review (QSR)/ Child & Family Services Review (CFSR)

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
- development of comprehensive continuous improvement plans,
- best practice implementation of bulletins and regulations,
- leadership development, and
- monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting continuous improvement goals.

During FY 2020/2021, some of the requests for consultation and support services were:
- workforce strategies including hiring, onboarding, remote work, and retention of staff;
- leadership development;
- safety and risk assessment follow-up trainings and support sessions (Risk Assessment Support Sessions were held 42 times in 14 different counties and Safety Assessment Support Sessions were held 47 times in 10 different counties);
- supervision and accountability enhancements;
- policy and procedures review; and
- communication, collaboration, and team building activities.

Additionally, every county participated in the virtual 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 attended Permanency Roundtable meetings.

The thirteen Family Reunification (FR) Programs received a virtual 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 homeless, 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). 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 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 2021-2022 will continue some of the traditional technical assistance and expand to include support for the implementation of the Family First Prevention and Services Act, racial equity and inclusion, and increasing the use of data to measuring the impact of services.

The Resource Center continues to collaborate 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.

In FY 20/21 the Resource Center significantly revised and redesigned its supervisory certification training series for newly hired or promoted supervisors. Foundations of Supervision (FOS) was piloted remotely via video platform, Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, first in September 2020 through December 2020 and again in January 2021 through April 2021. FOS was designed to provide new child welfare supervisors with the fundamental attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to supervise services that are delivered to children and their families.

The FOS series incorporates the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model and Competencies. The series consists of 65 hours of study delivered through the Team Based Learning™ delivery method. The series consists of 11 hours of online preparation work; 48 hours of instructor-led training that includes application activities, and simulation scenarios where the learners interact with standardized clients portraying supervisees; and six hours of field work activities, which are required to be completed prior to corresponding instructor-led modules. The eight-module series includes:

- Module 1: Introduction to Foundations of Supervision (online only)
- Module 2: Supervisory Roles and Professional Boundaries (online, field work, and instructor-led with simulation)
- Module 3: Agency Infrastructure and Ecosystem (online, field work, and instructor-led)

- Module 4: Using Child Welfare Data (online, field work, and instructor-led)
- Module 5: Workforce Development (online, field work, and instructor-led)
- Module 6: Coaching and Performance Management (online, field work, and instructor-led with simulation)
- Module 7: Supervising in a Dynamic Environment (online, field work, and instructor-led)
- Module 8: Professional Development (online only)

This series focuses on the administrative, supportive, educational, and clinical supervisory dimensions, emotional intelligence, trauma-informed care, self-care, and addressing racial inequities.

The overall pilot feedback was positive with learners and instructors participating in After Action Reviews and providing very informative feedback that guided the revisions to support the finalization of the curriculum. Each module includes different forms of assessments. The online sessions include knowledge-check questions to assess the learner's comprehension of the material. The instructor-led modules include readiness assessment tests that identify if the learner and teams retained knowledge from the online course work to support their meaningful participation in application activities. The ongoing delivery of the FOS series will be continuously monitored, and data gleaned from assessments and activities will be used to modify and improve the curriculum and its delivery.

The Resource Center continued to deliver the recently revised and redesigned 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.

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.

The Resource Center continued to deliver a modified version of the Foundations series remotely through the video conferencing platform Zoom in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To support the ongoing remote delivery of the Foundations series, the Resource Center continued to provide moderators for most remotely-delivered sessions to support both the instructors and the learners. 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.

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. A video depicting the use of Team-Based Learning™ and simulation sessions can be viewed here: http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Videos/TBLSimVideo2018.mp4 Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competencies are also located on the Resource Center Website at: http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/pcwc/Competencies.htm.

In FY 2020/2021, the Resource Center completed the development of 16 new curricula and made revisions to or updated 23 existing curricula, 15 of which were to support the remote delivery of training sessions. Included in its catalogue of new courses launched during this fiscal year were 9000: CAST II: Module 9 Preventing Suicide Deaths in Child Welfare Practice, 400: Ethics in Child Welfare Practice, and 400: Ethics in Technology in Child Welfare Practice. These courses meet the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors continuing education (CE) licensing requirements.

16 new curricula developed
23 curricula revised

Advanced level instructor-led curricula are located at the Resource Center's Curriculum Page. Online courses can be found via E-learn - https://www.e-learn.pitt.edu/. All Team-Based Learning™ and simulation courses, including Foundations and Foundations of Supervision certification series materials, are not public facing due to fidelity of the training models. Inquiries about these courses can be made by contacting rmi6@pitt.edu.
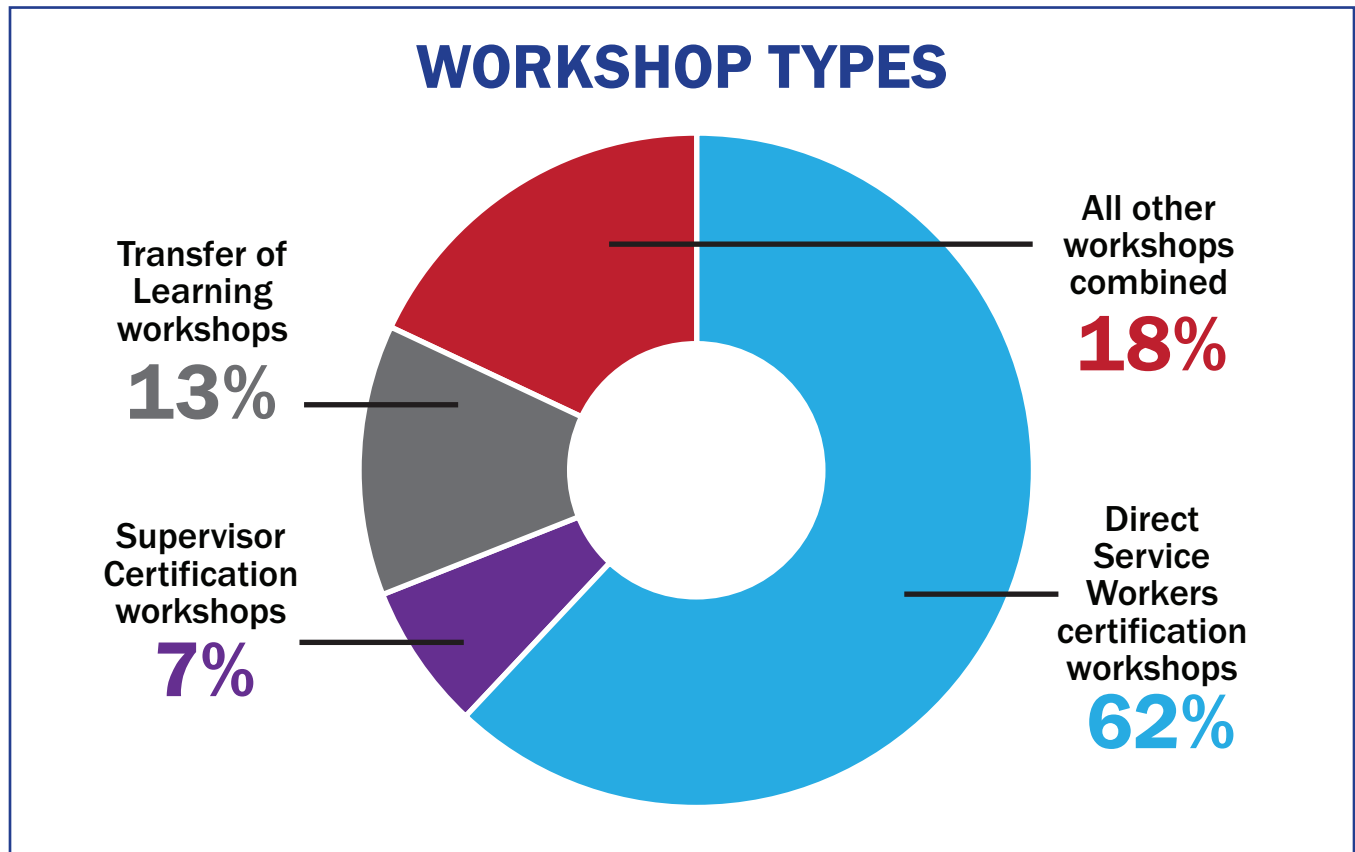
TRAIN CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS

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 100 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 233 agencies across Pennsylvania attended over 1,200 workshops delivered by the Resource Center in FY 2020/2021.
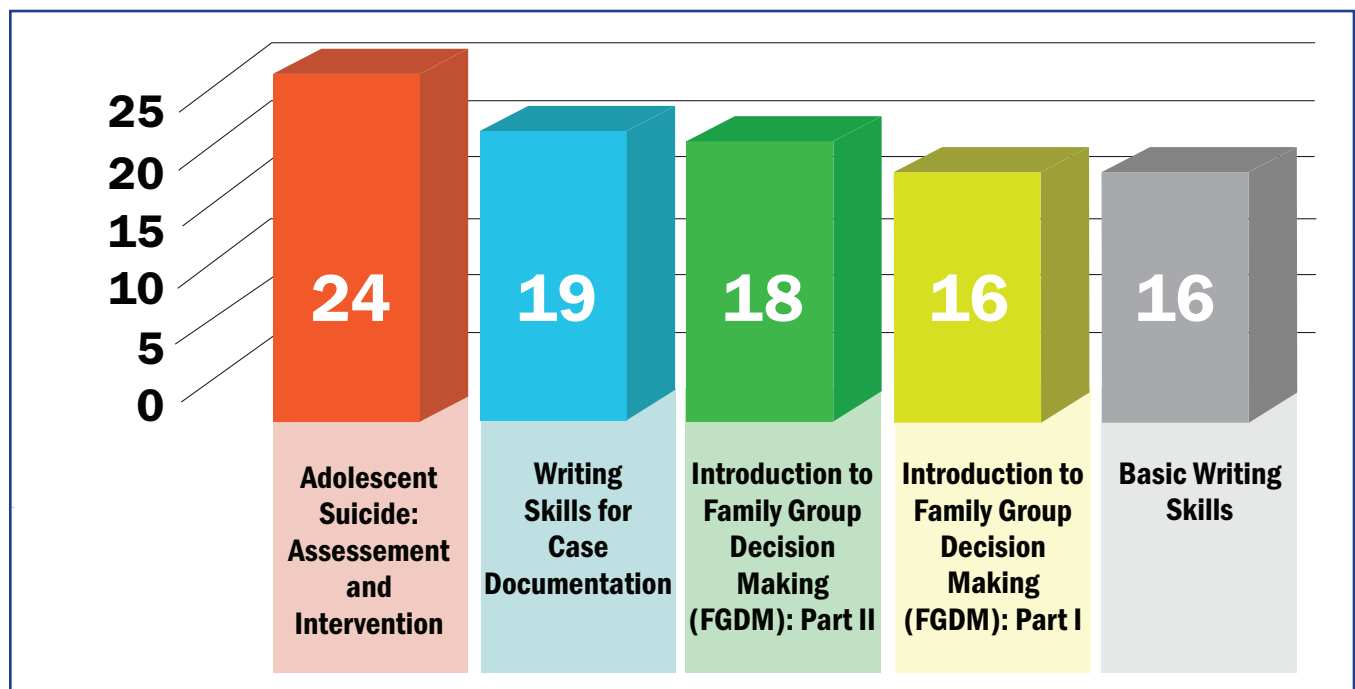
1,217 workshops delivered

The following chart identifies the percentage of training sessions by workshop type. 62% of all offerings represent one of the certification series for caseworkers and supervisors. 726 child welfare caseworkers and 184 supervisors completed their respective certification series. The chart below depicts the breakdown of workshop types delivered in FY 2020/2021.

WORKSHOP TYPES

Transfer of Learning workshops
13%

Supervisor Certification workshops
7%

All other workshops combined
18%

Direct Service Workers certification workshops
62%

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

Adolescent Suicide: Assessement and Intervention	Writing Skills for Case Documentation	Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): Part II	Introduction to Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): Part I	Basic Writing Skills
24	19	18	16	16

The Resource Center continued to offer a free, 3-hour online course: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. 288,660 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Of that number, over 155,276 trainee records were processed and sent to the Department of State for licensure renewal. Additionally, 14% (or 41,338) of trainees who completed the course indicated they had previously made a report of child abuse. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive with over 91% reporting they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course.
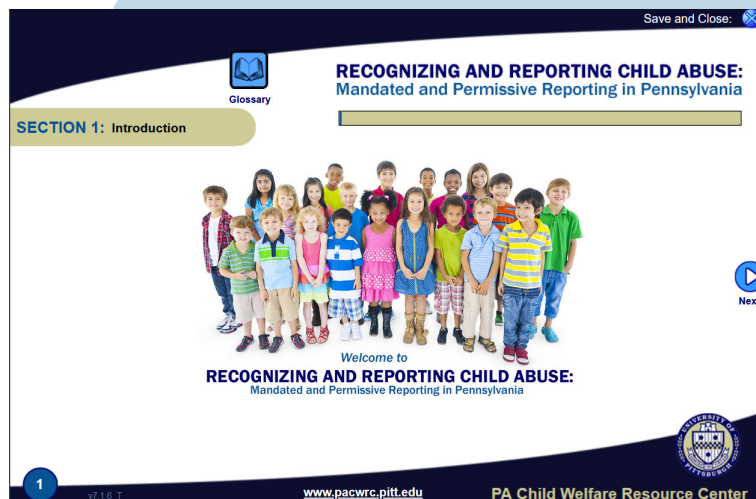
To support the unique and powerful curriculum revisions and redesign discussed above and continuous quality improvement of training delivery, the Resource Center has undertaken extensive efforts to retrain its contracted instructors. All instructors with Team-Based Learning™ course assignments completed the required Instructor Competency Training (ICT), as we made the necessary revisions to offer the series remotely during this fiscal year. The ICT is a two-part series that includes both asynchronous and synchronous components, where the contracted instructors learn and practice Team-Based Learning™ techniques within a team-based format. To promote the contracted instructors' professional development, the Resource Center offered a continuum of learning opportunities, such as monthly lunch and learn sessions and topic-focused 3-hour remote events. The events offered covered a wide range of topic areas, including (but not limited to): Team-Based Learning™ facilitation, managing multiple technology platforms, remote delivery techniques, the Readiness Assurance Process, simulation facilitation, and participant engagement. Advanced planning and timely communication of events aided in the instructors' ability to plan and participate in many of the sessions offered. Additionally, instructors gained access to free webinars and sponsored conference opportunities as the Resource Center identified additional training opportunities to enhance their skills. The Instructor Hub featured within the Resource Center website continues to grow and expand community-wide resource sharing for all instructors and consultants.

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. To support the education of supervisors, SC are featured as caseworkers during the Foundations of Supervision (FOS) series, providing an opportunity to develop skills in establishing roles and boundaries with caseworkers and engage in performance management. 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.

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 in the hopes that strengthening these areas will lead to an improved quality of practice.

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.

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. Three requests for co-sponsorships were made during FY 20/21.

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 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.

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.

Family Engagement

In FY 2020/2021, the Resource Center continued to employ both a Family Engagement Project Manager and a Parent Ambassador. The Parent Ambassador position is held by a former constituent of the child welfare system and plays an integral role to ensure the parent perspective is considered when developing and delivering family engagement products. Together, these two positions team with other departments within the agency and with external stakeholders to support activities to enhance a wide variety of family engagement practices in Pennsylvania.

Regional and County Support of Family Engagement

Identification and support of county needs is largely driven by regional county networking groups with the support from both the Family Engagement Project Manager and Parent Ambassador and in collaboration with Practice Improvement Specialists, Curriculum Design Specialist and Research Analysts when needed. Support provided by the project manager includes participating in the regional meetings, assistance in meeting planning, and providing resources relevant to the needs and topics being discussed, as well as communicating needs to larger statewide groups and entities.

The Western, Eastern, and Central regional family engagement networks continued virtually in response to COVID-19. The first two quarterly meetings of all networks had the same focus area. The focus was best practice support for transitioning family engagement meetings to virtual platforms, which included developing guidelines for coordinating and facilitating through virtual platforms. The second quarterly meeting in each region focused on using multiple virtual platforms to engage and team with natural supports and other team members remotely.

For the second half of the year, needs varied by region but included discussing and addressing the impact of Family First Prevention Services Act, program management and supervision of engagement services, and continuing discussions related to engaging natural supports. An emphasis was placed on engaging these natural supports to prevent the placement of older youth when possible.

Statewide Support

The focus of FY 2020/2021 was similar to the previous year in that the Resource Center supported the expansion, implementation, and continuous quality improvement efforts of two family engagement models; Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and family finding. These efforts were made in collaboration with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN), and counties and private providers. Through this collaboration, the Resource Center supported a variety of statewide events.

Three statewide events were delivered virtually that focused on supporting FGDM practice. Two were dedicated to using FGDM to decrease the use of congregate care and occurred in the first quarter of the year. The first session focused on using FGDM to prevent placement. The second session focused on using FGDM to assist in successfully transitioning youth from a congregate care to less restrictive settings in a timely manner. The third event occurred in April 2021 and was titled Engaging Families in Recovery: Using FGDM in the Recovery Process. All sessions had over 200 county children and youth agency and private provider participants. The recorded sessions are available on the Resource Center's website. They can be accessed by using the following link: FGDM Webinars.

In addition to the statewide events that focused on specific practice areas, the Resource Center also provided a webinar in September of 2020 to assist counties in the understanding and use of statewide and county-specific FGDM data to inform continuous quality improvement efforts. Nearly 100 county children and youth and private providers attended the session. The session, Informing Practice Delivery Statewide by Using Pennsylvania and County-Specific Data, is available on the Resource Center's website and can be accessed by using the following link: FGDM Webinars.

Youth Engagement

In FY 2020/2021, 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.

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Eligible candidates have experienced out-of-home placement through the child welfare system. The changes made by the Resource Center to consolidate several part-time Youth Ambassador positions into a full-time Youth Ambassador position, along with the flexibility of remote work, allowed CWRC to target a larger pool of candidates. As a result of these changes, CWRC was able to fill the Youth Quality Improvement Specialist and Youth Ambassador positions.

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 and private provider staff, stakeholders, and statewide partners planned and implemented the week's activities, which were all virtual this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event included many of the onsite favorites, including activity sessions and keynote speaker presentations. The virtual retreat included 124 youth and 49 staff participants, representing 29 counties across the state. For more detailed information regarding the 2020 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 26 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. CWRC has also partnered with OCYF to provide information regarding the Fostering Youth to Independence Tuition Waiver to both youth and staff through webinars, IL networking meetings, and Youth Advisory Board meetings and events.

Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board

The Resource Center continues to provide support to the PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB). 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 ranges 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.
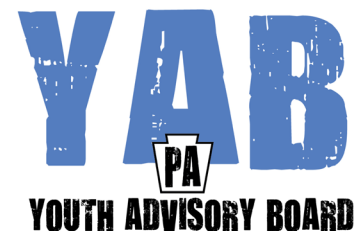
This year has been challenging for older youth involved in the child welfare system. With the racial unrest and COVID-19, CWRC and YAB leadership collaborated to provide a space for youth to address their concerns. Youth Voice Amplified, a facilitated conversation, was created for youth to speak directly to racial inequity. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic created changes and limitations to how the YAB Leadership interacted with youth. The YAB was restricted from meeting in person, and youth quickly became fatigued and "zoomed out" of virtual events. Despite these challenges, Statewide YAB meetings continued to be held virtually with interactive activities and guest speakers to better engage the youth. The Resource Center continued to support the YAB as they forged ahead, brainstorming ideas for their annual project while advocating for older youth. As a direct

response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the needs of older youth and alumni, the Consolidated Appropriations Act was signed into law. To spread the word about the Consolidated Appropriations Act and services for eligible youth, the YAB embarked on a social media campaign targeting alumni no longer connected to foster care. Information and resources about the Consolidated Appropriations Act were shared via YAB social media platforms, including Facebook, The Blast newsletter, and the YAB website. YAB Leadership also shared the information on their personal media platforms.

The YAB's 2021 annual project focused on a wellness kit that included a mask, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and crisis prevention hotline numbers for youth in need of support. YAB wanted to ensure that youth had access to COVID-19 prevention items that were not easily accessible or available in stores. Youth were also concerned about the stress and isolation their peers were experiencing due to the pandemic. Additionally, the YAB held its first virtual college fair in March. Several colleges from across the state participated in the four-day event, sharing information about their services and support for foster care youth.

The Resource Center also supported the annual YAB Leadership Summit held virtually in June 2021. Thirty participants, including youth and staff, were in attendance, representing each of the six YAB Regions. Participants received a welcome from Teresa Musser, the DHS Acting Director for the Statewide and Permanency Network who spoke about the Consolidated Appropriation Act. Youth also participated in workshops to help address some of the barriers and challenges they faced because of the pandemic. Due to the funding youth would receive from the Consolidated Appropriation Act, the Director of Community Outreach for Erie Federal Credit Union was invited to lead a money management session focused on the importance of securing personal data. A Time Management training was also held to teach youth how to structure their day and avoid procrastinating. Following the training, youth participated in a conversation about COVID-19 and how they were navigating through the pandemic. Youth also discussed ways to practice self-care and mindfulness. The day's events concluded with youth participating in a virtual mystery escape challenge and a virtual concert.

The Statewide YAB continues as one of four Citizen Review Panels (CRP) for PA. The YAB Leadership also has representation in the CWRC Diversity Task Force group. They continue to be strong advocates for older youth, sharing their feedback with stakeholders, including meeting with Acting Secretary Meg Snead for National Foster Care month and Deputy Secretary Jon Rubin to help inform The Family First Initiatives.

Older Youth

The Resource Center provides project management and support to counties and their Independent Living Programs with a focus on services for older youth transitioning out of foster care. CWRC works closely with older youth, county and provider staff, and stakeholders through a variety of venues, including workgroups, event planning, and resource development to ensure youth voice is incorporated in all aspects of our work. 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 those youth involved with independent living. These collaborative efforts help support older youth's successful transition to adulthood. This past year, SWAN and the Resource Center partnered to offer two permanency-related webinars including Unpacking the No and The SWAN Permanency Toolkit. This partnership was also highlighted during the opening session of the SWAN Fall Quarterlies in a joint presentation called Ensuring Youth Voice in Recruitment. During this session, the Youth Ambassador and Older Youth Project Manager presented and highlighted YAB efforts related to permanency for older youth.

Over the past year CWRC has partnered with OCYF to support counties and older youth impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This topic was addressed regularly at IL networking sessions and feedback from counties was provided to OCYF.

Every county received a virtual IL site visit during this fiscal year. These visits included invitations to all key stakeholders, completion of a required pre-site visit questionnaire, a virtual meeting, youth interviews, OCYF review and approval of the final report, and follow-up contact to analyze the report findings and identify next steps through a 90-day follow-up visit. Participation and attendance by county staff and stakeholders remained high because of visits being held virtually. 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 continued to focus on implementing the recommendations from the Older Youth Needs Assessment conducted in 2018. The current focus is on the development of an Adolescent Certification series for child welfare workers and stakeholders supporting older youth's transition to adulthood. The certification series is intended to provide stakeholders with the knowledge, skills, techniques, and confidence to engage and empower youth involved in the child welfare system. Additionally, CWRC is addressing the housing recommendation, recognizing the continued lack of safe and affordable private and public housing, often resulting in homelessness for 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 that showcases all available training and resources related to older youth, including webinars and online training, making them more easily accessible to stakeholders. The Resource Center, along with OCYF, presented during two Capacity Building Center Peer-to-Peer Calls, discussing our success with moving youth events to virtual platforms and the variety of ways IL workers continued to engage youth creatively during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 including SWAN, PCG, JLC, and OCYF. The Resource Center also participated in several webinars related to the Consolidated Appropriations Act Implementation. 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 levels 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.

From April – September 2021, the Resource Center supported the successful implementation of virtual PIP Monitoring case reviews. The implementation of a virtual case review included record reviews and interviews with key case participants. A total of sixty-five cases were reviewed in the seven counties actively involved in PA's PIP monitoring – Butler, Mercer, Centre, Lycoming, Lehigh, Northampton, and Philadelphia counties. A total of 371 interviews were conducted as part of the case reviews. Interviews were conducted with children, biological parents, paramours/stepparents, kinship providers, resource parents, caseworkers, and supervisors.

Of the 154 unique CFSR staff positions that were to be filled during the 2021 CFSR case reviews, 116 individuals (75%) of all positions filled were filled by Resource Center staff.

CFSR POSITIONS - 2021

- 13% CYA
- 2% OCYF
- 2% Retired
- 7% Provider Agency
- 1% SWAN
- 75% CWRC
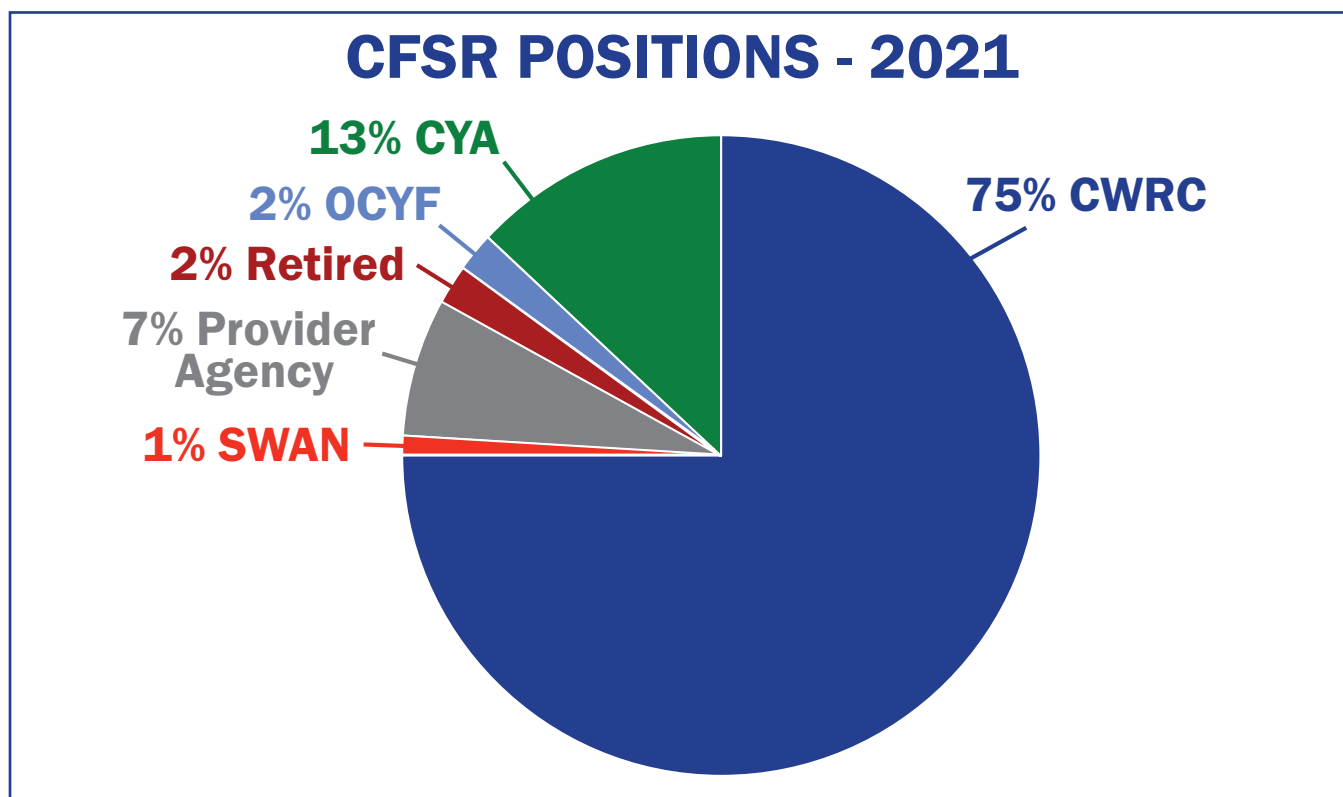
The Administration for Children and Families has not yet confirmed that PA has met the PIP goals for CFSR Items 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, and 15, but preliminary results reveal that PA may indeed have met the PIP goal measurement for each of these items. PA was also very close to passing Item 14 (Caseworker Visits with Children), but preliminary analysis reveals that the PIP goal for Item 14 has not yet been achieved, meaning that PA can conduct case reviews in 2022 in the hopes of improving performance on Item 14 during PA's third and final measurement period. The Resource Center staff will continue to support the implementation of virtual case reviews in 2022 and support both counties and the state in their ongoing improvement efforts.

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. Quality Service Reviews (QSRs) were not conducted in 2020 due to safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as QSR case reviews have historically been conducted in-person by reviewers who interview 6-12 key case participants (including children, family

members, providers, and case workers) in the field. During 2020, efforts were made to critically think through how to successfully implement QSRs in a virtual format. A virtual QSR pilot was conducted in March 2021. Since that time, the Resource Center has been conducting capacity planning efforts focused on the intention to resume the implementation of QSR case reviews in 2022.

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 2020, March 2021, and June 2021, with attendance at all three exceeding 100 participants comprised of Administrators, Assistant Administrators, Mid-Level Managers, Fiscal Officers, Solicitors, and Supervisors from counties across the Commonwealth. The topics for these sessions included Managing Complex Change, Application of the Family Medical Leave Act in Child Welfare, and Legal Issues to Consider in Making Hiring Decisions. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all sessions were held virtually. The CWRC continued to offer Foundations of Leadership virtually and make modifications to other Leadership Academy sessions 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.

Following the submission of the CJA 2020 Three-Year Assessment and grant application in May 2020, DHS, with the support of the Resource Center's project manager, developed a strategic plan for the four meetings scheduled in FY 2020/2021. Each agenda included dedicated time to review, monitor, and adjust the recommendations contained in the 2020 Three-Year Assessment. The strategic plan also included the scheduling of key stakeholder presentations and use of topic-specific tracking documents to support the Task Force discussions. All goals within the strategic plan were accomplished.

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 2020/2021, the Resource Center worked collaboratively with DHS to recruit and approve an additional 9 new members to the regional CRPs, many of which were from counties not previously represented. DHS is currently working with the Resource Center to explore possible rotation of regional panels to ensure representation to all regions of the state over time. As this plan continues to be developed, DHS and the Resource Center will provide updates to stakeholders. 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 22 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 human diversity in child welfare.

The DTF continues to make strides in efforts to educate stakeholders about the disparities that black and brown families face in the PA Child Welfare System through DTF annual events and collaboration with the CWRC in their work with The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and efforts to become an antiracist organization.

The 2020 Diversity Task Force fall event featured a keynote presentation from James Huguley, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems. Dr. Huguley's presentation focused on the history of systemic racism in American. Following the keynote, stakeholders participated in a training that addressed being "color brave" and how it can be used in the field of child welfare, in addition to exploring and reflecting on how the concept of color bravery can impact their interactions with the children and families they serve. Participants also learned about the dimensions of cultural humility and identified ways they could incorporate it into their practice. Additionally, the training raised awareness about the overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system and how that involvement also impacts their outcomes in education, healthcare, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and other systems. It offered participants an opportunity to have candid conversations to understand each other's perspectives and experiences better. The training encouraged participants to be reflective and thoughtful about how they manage race relations in their professional and personal lives to equip them with tools they can use to better understand and serve the families they encounter.

The DTF also offered networking session as a follow up to the annual event, providing participants a space to share and discuss the policies and barriers they face around racism within their organization. Stakeholders were eager to continue this dialogue in two DTF networking sessions. Due to COVID-19, the event and networking sessions were held virtually.

The 2021 Diversity Task Force fall event presented by the CSSP will focus on the History of Racism in Child Welfare. The event will provide an opportunity for participants to explore the history of racism in the current child welfare system, how the system was created, and the laws and practices that have shaped its existence. Small breakout sessions will allow for a robust discussion that helps participants recognize and develop a deeper understanding of their role as professionals and how they impact families and children of color.

Family Reunification

The Resource Center continued to support the fourteen programs offering services through the Family Reunification (FR) grants in FY 2020/2021. Family Reunification programs continued to successfully

transition families when reunification occurred. Programs also continued to use specific criteria to identify ways to support families post-reunification, including progress meetings at ninety days and six months (when families continue with services) to determine continued need. Families can opt out of continued services as well once reunification occurs, giving them some control over their circumstances. For most of the programs, however, this was not a significant challenge since many programs had connections to post-reunification support services prior to the change in language allowing post-reunification services.

Family Reunification Programs also continued to use creative ways to engage families during part of FY 2020/2021 when restrictions existed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Programs continued to use the virtual platforms as necessary until they could return safely to in-person services. For some programs, this was a seamless transition; however, others in more densely populated areas continued to struggle at times throughout the FY.

Transportation and housing are two of the biggest barriers for families. Programs across the state discussed the challenges in meeting these needs during a pandemic and continue to work on creative ways to assist families in need in general. Unfortunately, with the pandemic, programs that had lined up volunteers to provide transportation were unable to use them because of fear of exposure. Affordable housing continues to be an area of concern. During the pandemic, a rent moratorium was offered, which helped those in housing, but once those protections were lifted, many folks could not recover fast enough to maintain their housing, resulting in many more housing issues. Community connections have been a challenge as agencies are hesitant to offer support in-person, which for many families is what they need. Transportation, housing, and community collaboration are continued areas of focus.

Tracking quarterly outcomes continued to be submitted using the online system. Data provided allowed for identification of services being provided to families, unduplicated numbers of families and children served, and trends in service provision. During FY 2020/2021, approximately 430 families and 639 children were served through the Family Reunification programs with reunification occurring for 23% of the children. Of those families and children being reunified, 71% received post-reunification services.

The Annual Family Reunification Statewide Event was held during FY 2020/2021. Again, because of the pandemic, the event was offered through an online platform for virtual learning and connection. This year's attendance was double the attendance of previous years, in part because of not having to travel. This year, the event focused on strategies for using family reunification with unhoused and incarcerated parents and the challenges that these populations face. There were two panel discussions: one was staff sharing their strategies for positive engagement, and the other was a birth mom and foster mom sharing their stories of reunification. Feedback offered by attendees expressed how amazing the presentations were, and that they always appreciate real stories from those with lived experience. The evaluations from participants indicated that for next year they do want a hybrid event so that more people can attend. Plans are in the works for the event to be held June 29, 2022.

Planned activities for FY 2021/2022 include continued movement back to in-person services, ways to use virtual or hybrid platforms to meet the needs of the families and encourage engagement, the annual statewide event, continued building of community connections to enhance service provisions, and exploring housing and transportation options for families.

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 2020/2021, 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 Resource Center is currently revising the Individual Needs Assessments for Direct Service Workers (DSW) and those who supervise DSW with the goal of piloting in the spring of 2022. The new format will be completed in Bridge and offer more streamlined feedback and recommendations for staff, supervisors, and child welfare agencies. The current Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) was disseminated among 24 counties in FY 2020/2021, and from those counties, over 500 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
Adult Psychopathology
Work-Related Stress
Specialized Interviewing
Hostile Clients

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 coursework and an internship at a public child welfare agency. During 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 coursework;
- 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 coursework.
- 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 released "Bridge" in January 2021 as the replacement for the old legacy "Encompass" system. Bridge was designed to empower its end users by allowing seamless registration for events and workshops, entire series and certification tracks, and providing access to training history and certificates. The tracking of certification completion is now automated and provides alerts and online approvals, cutting down on time exponentially. The system uses text and email alerts for event cancellations, connects seamlessly to E-Learn (the Resource Center LMS which houses all of our online course offerings) via single sign on, and provides an advanced reporting architecture.

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 2020/2021, 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**
  - Bridge (launched in FY 2020/2021)
  - Screening [Developmental Screening Database (ASQ)]
  - E-Learn (online course site – Over 41,000 Course Completions for FY 2020/2021)
  - Meeting Planner (PACWRC's room reservation software)
  - FGDM Evaluation Portal (Statewide Evaluation Forms, 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)
  - Activity Tracker (a web application designed to track the Effort Allocation of the Resource Center's staff) Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training
  - Multiple online forms used to collect participant information in workshops and events

Information Technology Support

During FY 2020/2021, 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 245,839 trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training in FY 2020/2021.
- Providing daily data uploads to the PA Department of State for Act 31 licensure and license renewal processing for over 110,100 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 1,452 formal internal helpdesk tickets.
- Providing technology-related equipment, setup, and support for over 1,025 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, 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.
- Provide support and maintenance to internal and external training rooms, including simulation labs.
- Developing brochures and media for publications and events.

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

– Nelson Mandela

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

PCYA
Pennsylvania Children and
Youth Administrators