University of **Pittsburgh** | School of Social Work

THE **PENNSYLVANIA CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER**

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022

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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.

We delivered our continuum of services in a hybrid manner (virtual and in-person) based on stakeholder feedback. Much of our work continued to center on stabilizing and strengthening the workforce. We advanced efforts to provide evidence informed education and resources to child welfare leaders and other key stakeholders. We provided county-specific infographics to lay a foundation for key metrics, such as turnover and vacancy. We provided county-specific technical assistance to address organizational challenges and improve workforce well-being. Almost 700 new child welfare professionals completed the certification series, Foundations, and almost 100 new supervisors completed the certification series, Foundations of Supervision.

The Resource Center continued to support numerous statewide initiatives, including Round 3 of the CFSR. Sixty-five in-depth qualitative reviews occurred in 7 counties across the Commonwealth. Efforts to ensure youth and parents with lived experience are heard and inform decision-making continued through a variety of approaches, including the Youth Advisory Board, parent-led technical assistance, and the bi-annual FGDM conference.

Finally, The Resource Center continued our journey toward becoming an anti-racist organization. We held a Diversity Taskforce event focused on the history of racism in the child welfare system. As we continue to build our internal foundation, we will offer stakeholder focused opportunities for grow and development. We look forward to partnering with you on this important work.

My sincere gratitude to all 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.
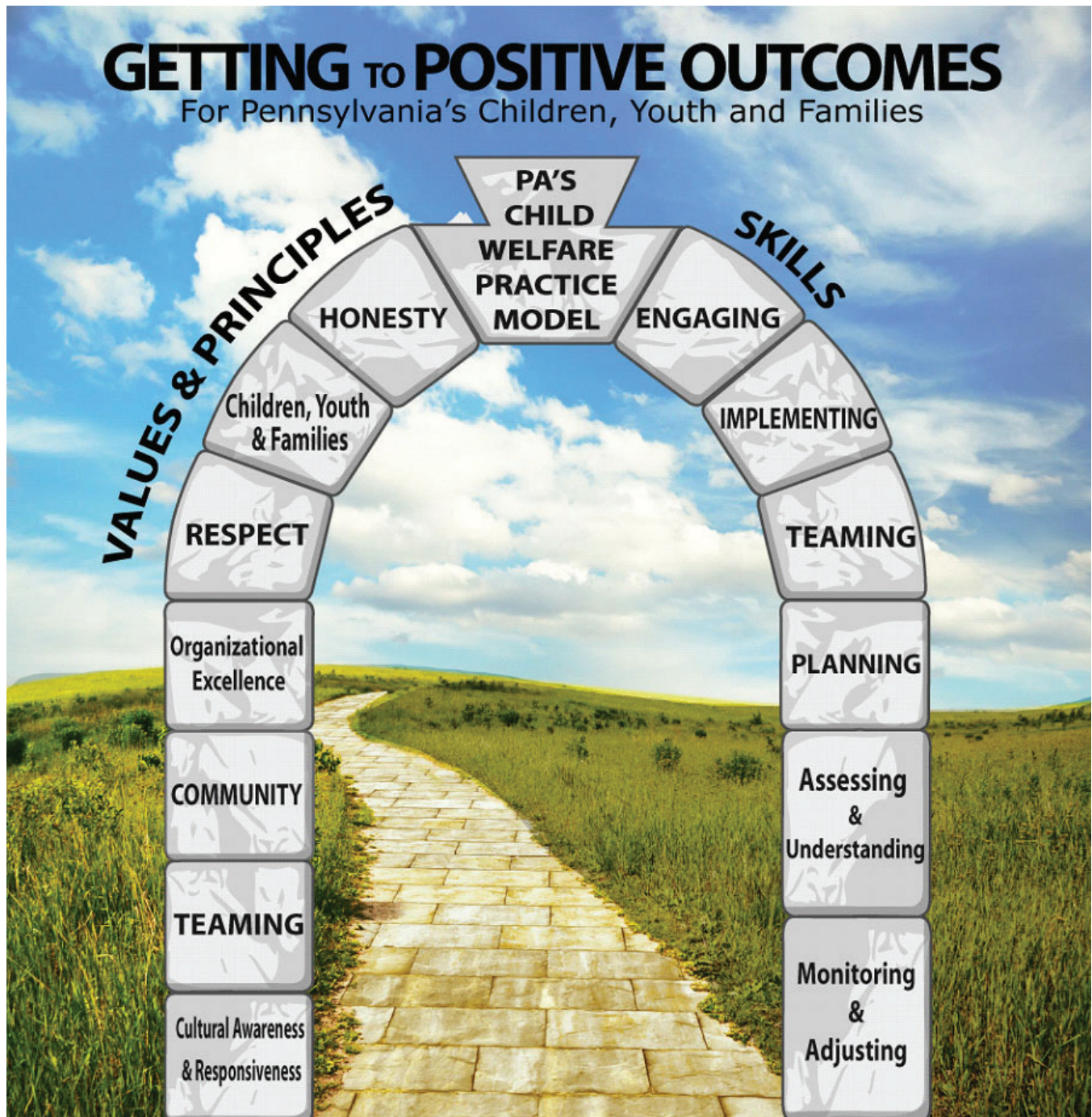
VISION

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

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

PA'S CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL

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

SKILLS
- 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:

- Conduct research and evaluation
- Provide consultation and support
- Develop and revise tools, materials, and curricula
- Train child welfare professionals
- Youth/Family engagement and system improvement
- Support system improvement
- 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 Resource Center has been very intentional about centering race in our work and looking at all forms of racism; interpersonal, institutional, internalized, and structural. We are committed to better understanding racism and why it is important in the work we do, transferring our learning to the field and internalizing how racism ultimately effects children and families. We have been formally building our capacity, working towards these goals since 2019. Some of our accomplishments during that time are bulleted out below.

- The utilization and sharing of race equity resources internally and externally
- The creation of a "Desired Future State" and charters to guide our race equity work
- Contract with the Center for the Study of Social Policy to inform and assist our efforts
- Held a Diversity Taskforce Event on the history of racism in child welfare
- Internal professional development on areas such as: implicit bias, race terminology, color blindness, stereotyping, and being color brave
- Monthly 1-hour professional development sessions during staff meetings
- Collaboration with our partners at PITT main, the state and counties
- The development of five distinct groups that assisted to shape our race equity efforts (Sponsor team, Internal Race Equity Charter workgroup, External Race Equity Charter workgroup, Race Equity Affinity group, Instructor Race Equity workgroup)

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.

Workforce Support

During this fiscal year, Dr. Marlo Perry initiated a pilot study focused on emotional well-being in Black female child welfare professionals (CWPs). In addition to the routine emotional labor that is inherent in child welfare work, Black female CWPs are also faced with gendered racial microaggressions in their daily work. In response to these stressors, Black female CWPs may rely on coping mechanisms consistent with the Superwoman Schema, which is characterized by fortitude, caretaking, and self-sacrifice (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). While rooted in resilience, the Superwoman Schema contributes to poor health and mental health outcomes (Allen et al., 2019; Nuru-Jeter et al., 2018; Woods-Giscombé et al., 2019). Emotional intelligence competencies, such as emotion regulation skills and mindful awareness, can serve as protective factors against emotional stressors; additionally, a positive racial identity can help mitigate the traumatic stress of racism in Black CWPs. Funded through the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems, this study builds on Dr. Perry's earlier work on emotional intelligence competencies in child welfare professionals and seeks to better understand how these elements of emotional health manifest in a sample of Black CWPs, as well as how they relate to daily experiences of gendered racial microaggressions. Findings from both projects will contribute to the development of trauma- and racially informed mindfulness interventions to help support the emotional well-being of CWPs across Pennsylvania.

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 20/21, five counties requested technical assistance from the Resource Center and distributed the ORC to all staff: Huntingdon County, Lebanon County, Wayne County, Tioga County, and Philadelphia County. With 208 participants across the counties, all had extremely high rates of participation ranging from 78.9% to 100%. All the participating counties hoped to strengthen their practice with the results. More specifically, Lebanon and Huntingdon requested the ORC as part of ongoing organizational evaluation efforts. Wayne County wanted to use the ORC to support their Needs-Based Plan and Budget submission to the State. Tioga County wanted an updated perspective on the organization's well-being and to get a sense of where to start making improvements. In Philadelphia, the assessment was conducted with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services University, the training arm of Philadelphia Department of Human Services. The results are currently being used as part of their organizational evaluation.

There was variation in the ORC results, with some counties having higher scores indicating a solid foundation for change. Others had scores that may reflect some domains of vulnerability to be addressed. All five counties had their highest scores in the domain of Staff Attributes (see Figures A & B). Within this domain, counties showed varying levels of strength in the areas of Efficacy, Adaptability, Satisfaction, Influence, and Growth. Although rankings varied, staff in each county gave their highest rankings to areas that reflected individual skill and competence levels. Their lower ratings within this domain were in areas associated with the culture of support and active engagement by their workplace environments.

Counties' lowest scores were in the Organizational Climate (three counties) and Motivation to Change (two counties) domains. Overall findings indicate that, across counties, staff struggle most in the areas related to organizational support for the personal agency and growth of staff relevant to high demand roles.
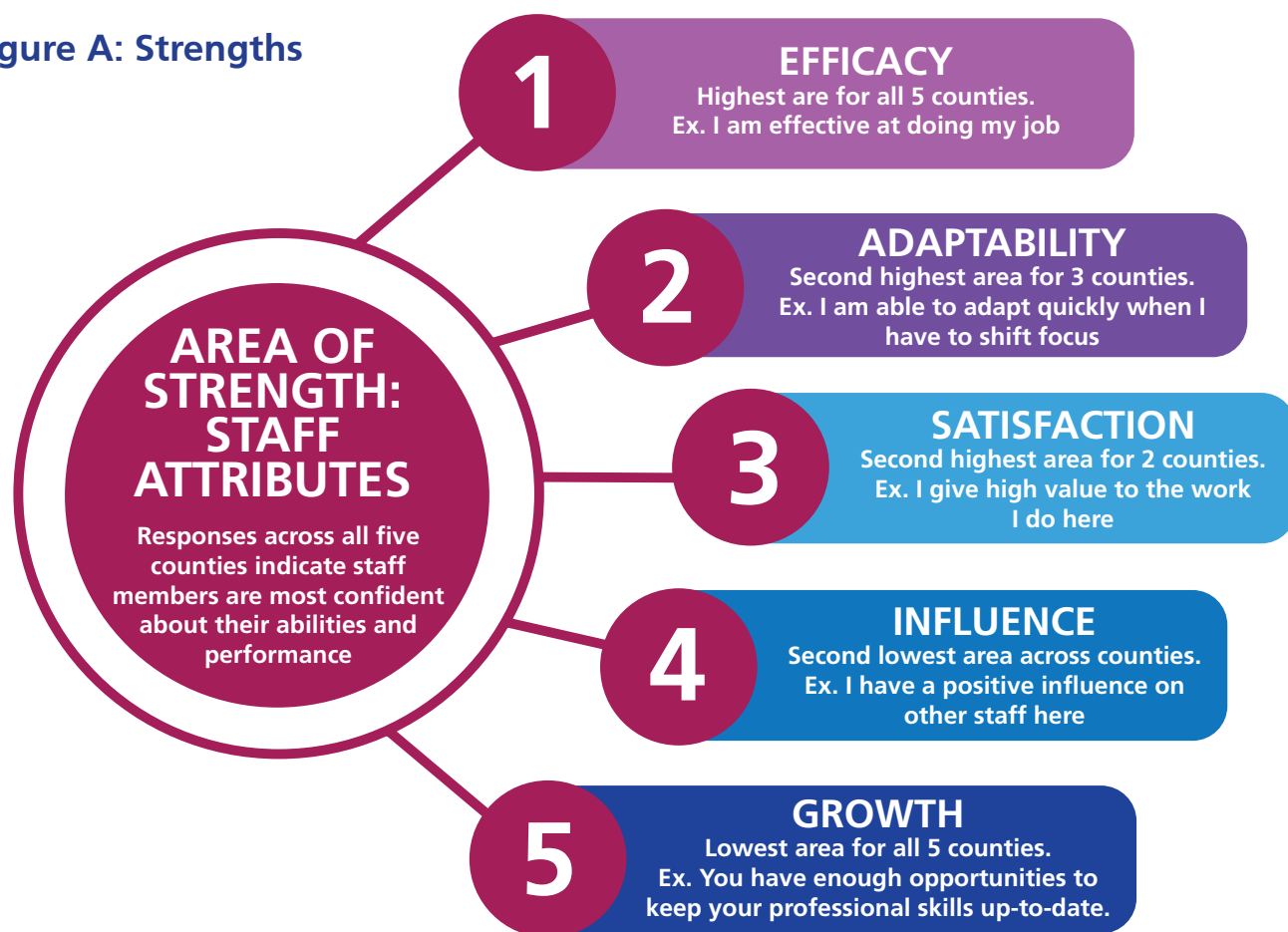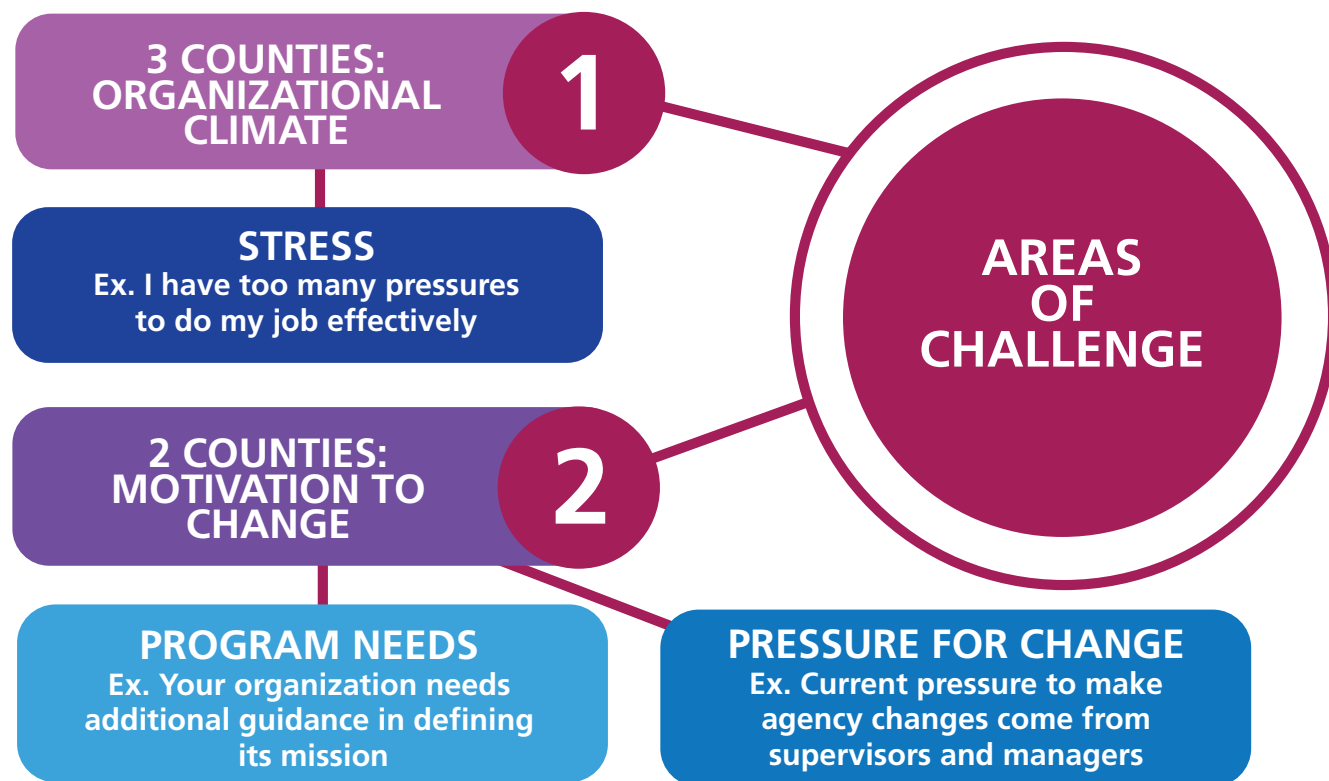
Figure A: Strengths

AREA OF STRENGTH: STAFF ATTRIBUTES

Responses across all five counties indicate staff members are most confident about their abilities and performance

1 EFFICACY
Highest are for all 5 counties.
Ex. I am effective at doing my job

2 ADAPTABILITY
Second highest area for 3 counties.
Ex. I am able to adapt quickly when I have to shift focus

3 SATISFACTION
Second highest area for 2 counties.
Ex. I give high value to the work I do here

4 INFLUENCE
Second lowest area across counties.
Ex. I have a positive influence on other staff here

5 GROWTH
Lowest area for all 5 counties.
Ex. You have enough opportunities to keep your professional skills up-to-date.

Figure B: Challenges

AREAS OF CHALLENGE

1 3 COUNTIES: ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

STRESS
Ex. I have too many pressures to do my job effectively

2 2 COUNTIES: MOTIVATION TO CHANGE

PROGRAM NEEDS
Ex. Your organization needs additional guidance in defining its mission

PRESSURE FOR CHANGE
Ex. Current pressure to make agency changes come from supervisors and managers

The goal is for counties to use their ORC finding to inform their continuous improvement efforts. In 2022, counties set CQI structures including sponsor teams and continuous improvement team. Many of the counties also developed and started to implement continuous improvement plans. Plans are frequently facilitated by a Practice Improvement Specialist using the DAPIM™ process to create a desired future state, identify strengths and gaps, uncover root causes, and document action items connected to the priority findings from the ORC assessment.
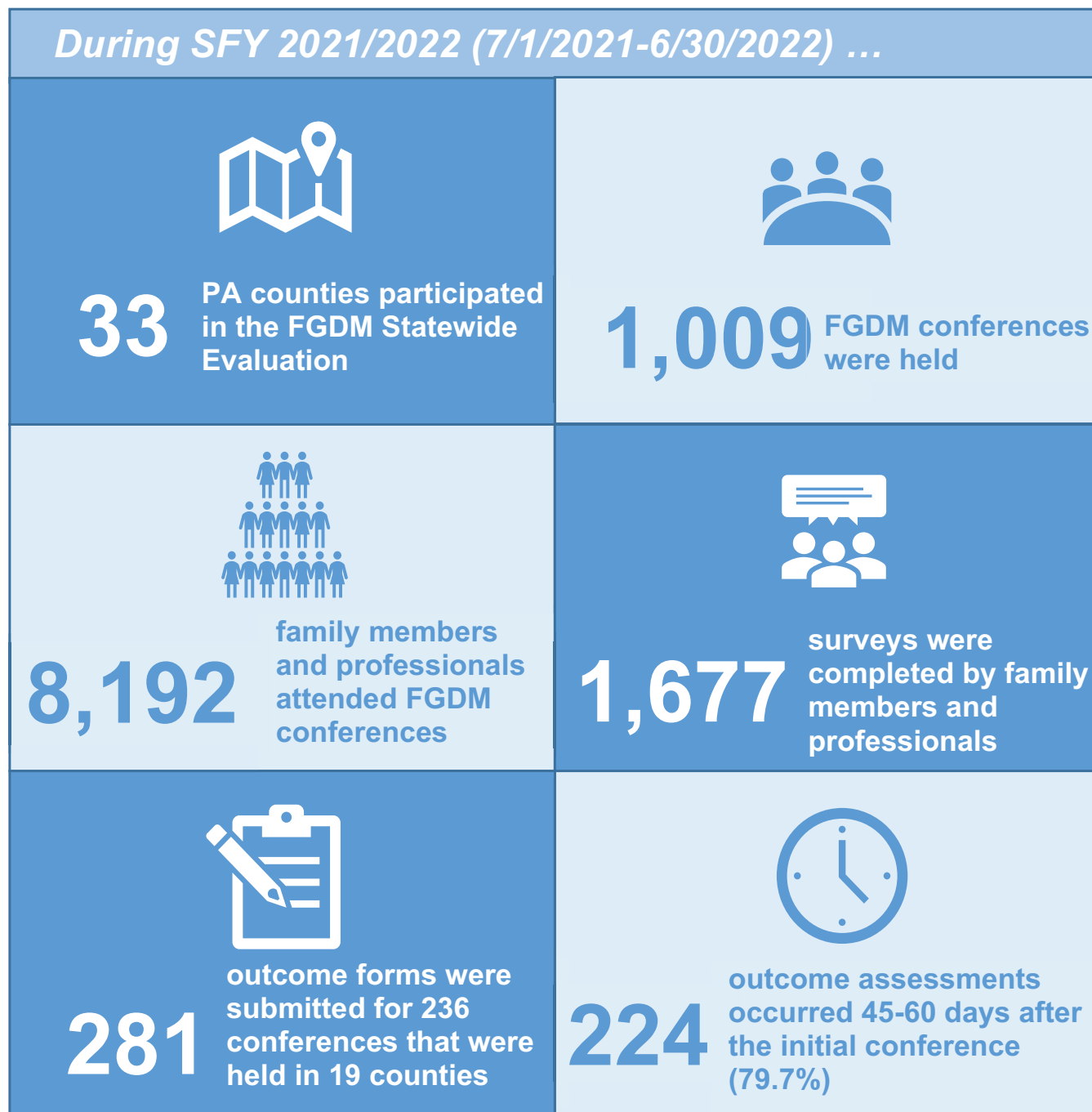
Institute of Behavioral Research. (2003). TCU Organizational Readiness for Change: Social Agency Staff Version (TCU ORC-SA). Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, Institute of Behavioral Research. Available at ibr.tcu.edu

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Evaluation

The Resource Center supports the ongoing statewide evaluation of Family Group Decision Making. Figure C presents county participation, conferences held, conference attendance, and survey and outcome form submissions for SFY 2021/2022. 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 asks about 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.

Figure C. FGDM Statewide Evaluation: County Participation, Conference Information, and Form Submissions for SFY 2021/2022

During SFY 2021/2022 (7/1/2021-6/30/2022) …

33 PA counties participated in the FGDM Statewide Evaluation

1,009 FGDM conferences were held

8,192 family members and professionals attended FGDM conferences

1,677 surveys were completed by family members and professionals

281 outcome forms were submitted for 236 conferences that were held in 19 counties

224 outcome assessments occurred 45-60 days after the initial conference (79.7%)
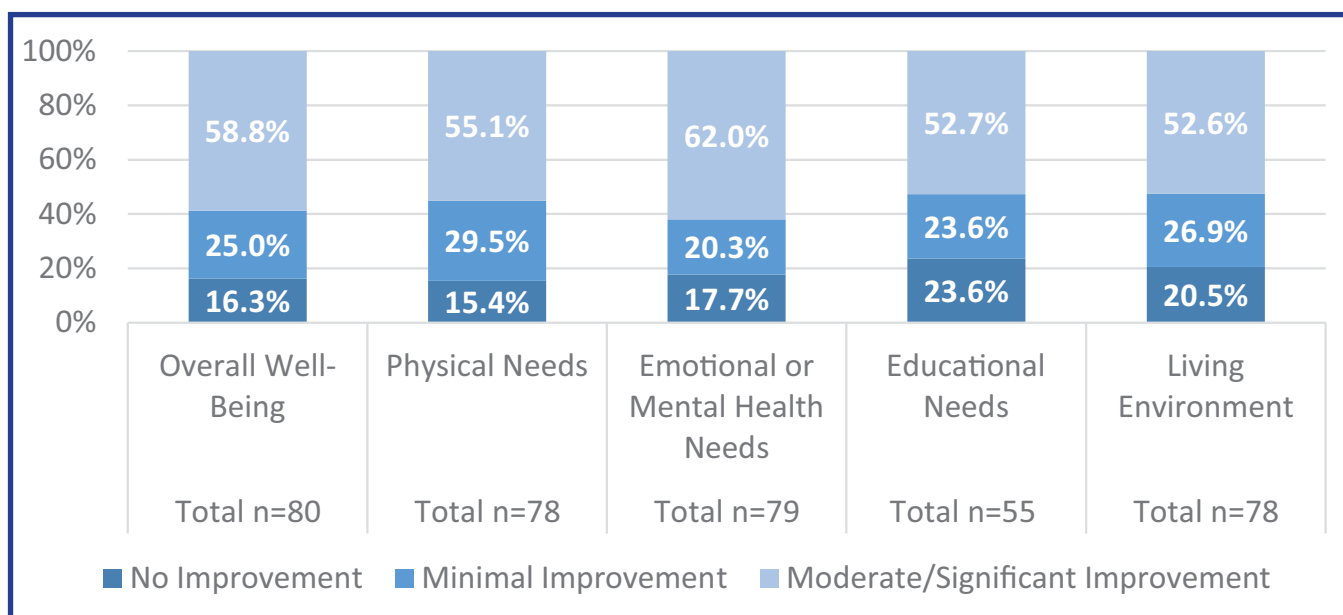
Note: These data are based on FGDM conferences that occurred during SFY 21/22. Due to delays in the submission of some forms, this data may not include all conferences that occurred during the FY.

Counties also could provide information about the focus child/youth's safety, permanency, stability, and well-being after the FGDM conference. Among 45–60-day follow-up assessments (most outcome forms submitted), the largest percentage of conferences were primarily held to keep the focus child/youth in their home (37.5%, n=81 among 216 conferences that have a purpose reported). The family's plan was effective or strongly effective in meeting the conference purpose for over half of these focus children/youth at 45-60 days post-conference (55.6%, n=45). Additionally at this time, most of them did not have any substantiated/founded or indicated reports of child abuse/neglect since the initial conference (97.5%, n=79), they did not move out of their home (73.8%, n=59), and their daily living arrangements were stable or somewhat stable (95.1%, n=77). As indicated in Figure D, among over half of these focus children/youth, their family's plan moderately or significantly improved their overall well-being, various needs, and their living environment at 45-60 days after the conference. Because these results are based on a small number of outcome forms submitted by counties participating in the evaluation, they may not represent all focus children/youth in Pennsylvania who had a conference to remain in their home.

FGDM evaluation data and resources, including dashboards and online forms can be found on the FGDM webpage.

Figure D

	Overall Well-Being	Physical Needs	Emotional or Mental Health Needs	Educational Needs	Living Environment
Moderate/Significant Improvement	58.8%	55.1%	62.0%	52.7%	52.6%
Minimal Improvement	25.0%	29.5%	20.3%	23.6%	26.9%
No Improvement	16.3%	15.4%	17.7%	23.6%	20.5%
	Total n=80	Total n=78	Total n=79	Total n=55	Total n=78

■ No Improvement   ■ Minimal Improvement   ■ Moderate/Significant Improvement
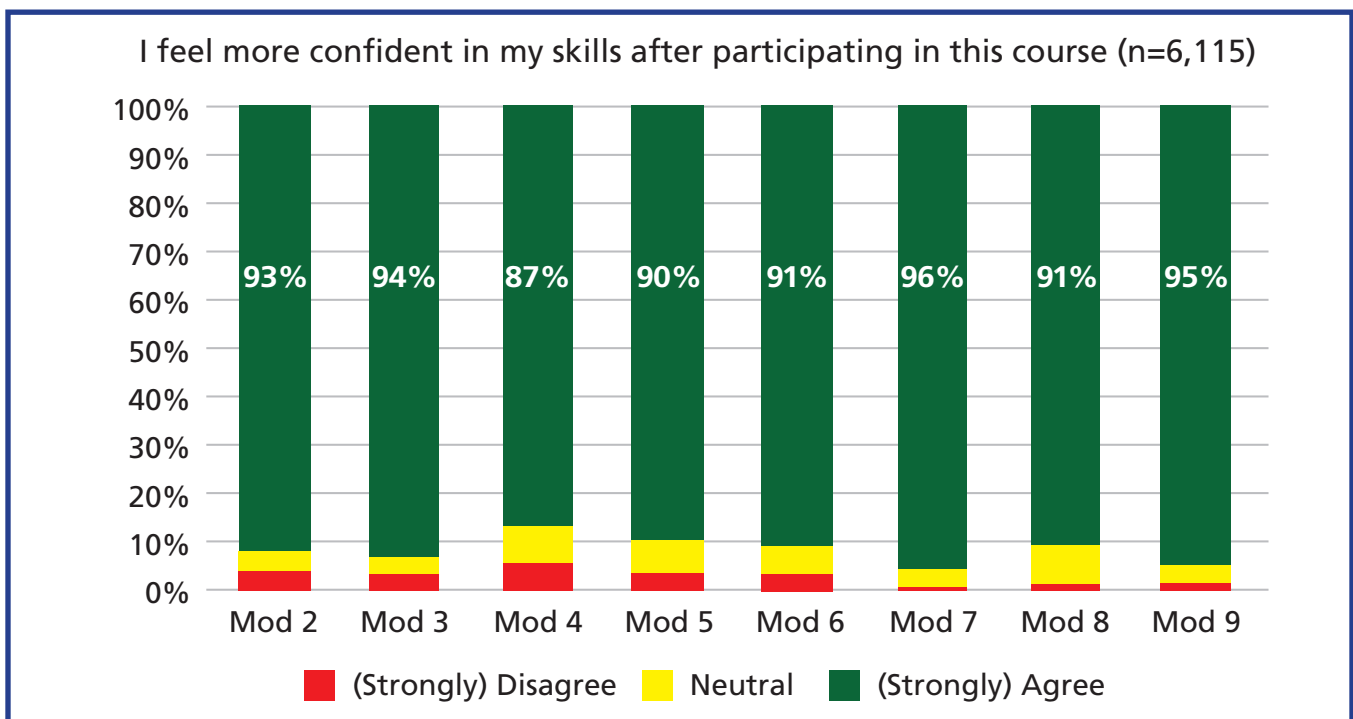
Note: Results pertain to focus children/youth who had a conference to remain in their home (N=81). The total number of children/youth for each outcome domain varies, as some evaluation forms did not include a response to every question. Educational needs were only reported for school-aged children/youth.

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. The Resource Center captures 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. Specific software is also used to capture participants' responses to Team Based Learning™ activities. The data collected via this software provides instructors with 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 incorporated in Foundations of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice: Building Competence, Confidence, and Compassion (Foundations) and Foundations of Supervision as well as other curricula. Altogether, the data will allow the Resource Center to assess the performance of items, enhance the curriculum, and determine the effectiveness of training.

Continued monitoring of Foundations training has shown promising results. For example, one of the goals of Foundations training is to increase participants' confidence in their skills. According to data gathered through the Participant Feedback form after each online or in-person instructor-led workshop, Foundations learners overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident in their skills after participating in each module.

Figure E. Summary of Skills Confidence Following Foundations Series Modules

I feel more confident in my skills after participating in this course (n=6,115)

Module	(Strongly) Agree
Mod 2	93%
Mod 3	94%
Mod 4	87%
Mod 5	90%
Mod 6	91%
Mod 7	96%
Mod 8	91%
Mod 9	95%

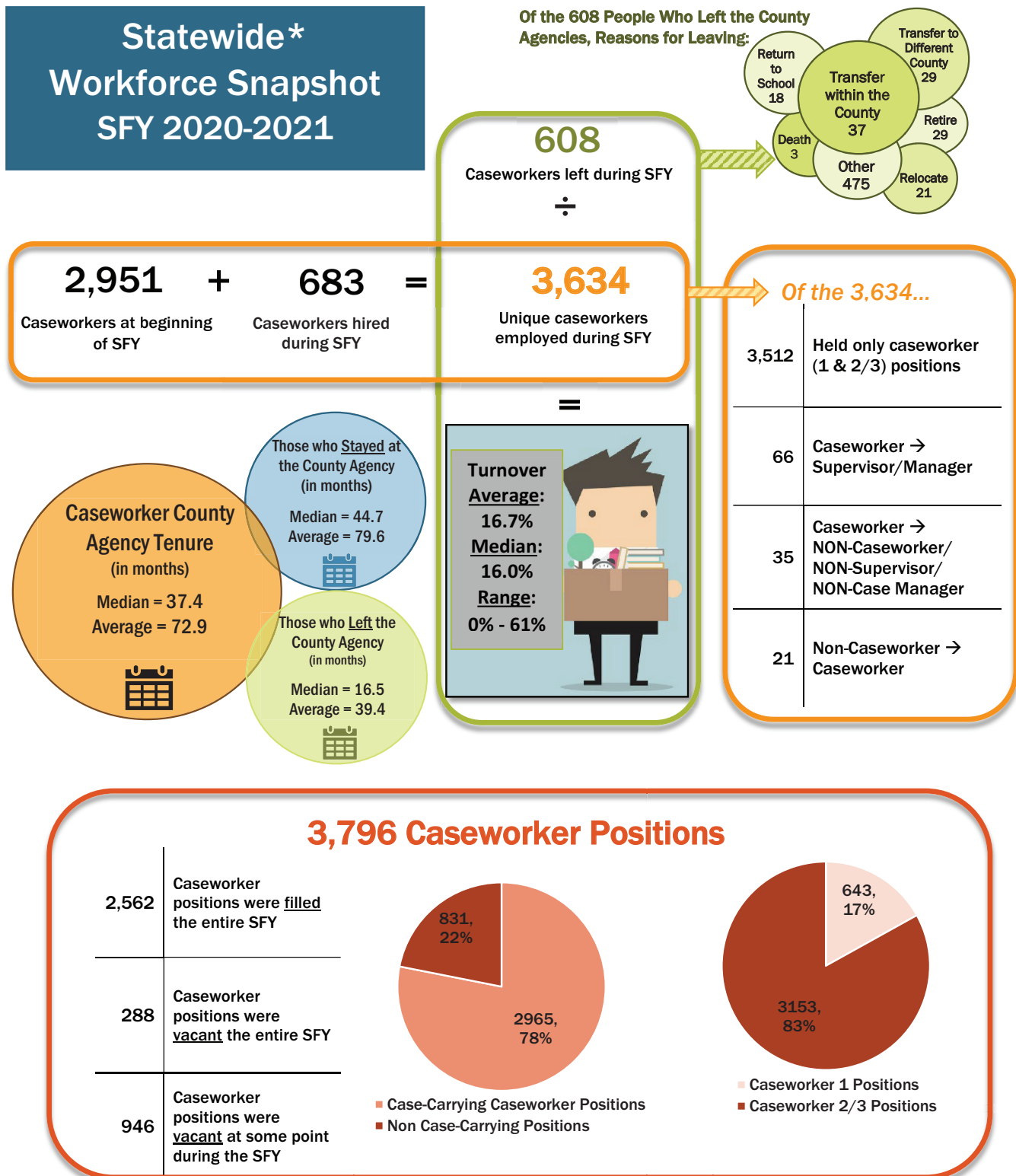Legend: (Strongly) Disagree ■ Neutral ■ (Strongly) Agree ■

Workforce

The Resource Center is committed to supporting the use of workforce data to inform county and statewide planning and workforce development efforts. Continuing the work conducted in the previous three years, the Research and Evaluation staff used Needs-Based Plan and Budget files (SFY 20-21) to create county-specific and statewide infographics about Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce (see Figure F). Each county's infographic provides details about a variety of workforce data, exploring metrics about the people and the positions that serve Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families. Data points include turnover rate, reasons for worker departure, worker tenure with the employer, types of positions in the agency, and position vacancy. New to the analysis this year was the addition of trend data, showing changes over the last four years (example in Figure E). Trend analysis can highlight workforce elements that require long-term strategizing (rather than crisis responses), or it can guide decision-makers to appropriate goal thresholds in key performance indicators.

Research and Evaluation staff presented the infographics and shared the county-specific analyses at the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators conference in March. Research and Evaluation staff are currently partnering with the Center's Technology staff to design and implement an interactive dashboard of workforce data. Similarly built on the Needs-Based Plan and Budget data, this dashboard will provide counties with the ability to filter and explore their own data in diverse ways that will strengthen their use of data in decision-making. In addition, Research and Evaluation created a brief technical assistance video with the goal of increasing accuracy in county data submissions. The video is focused on the data submitted regarding each county's workforce, and improvements in the accuracy of that data will allow the Center to conduct more data analysis to further build an understanding of Pennsylvania's workforce.
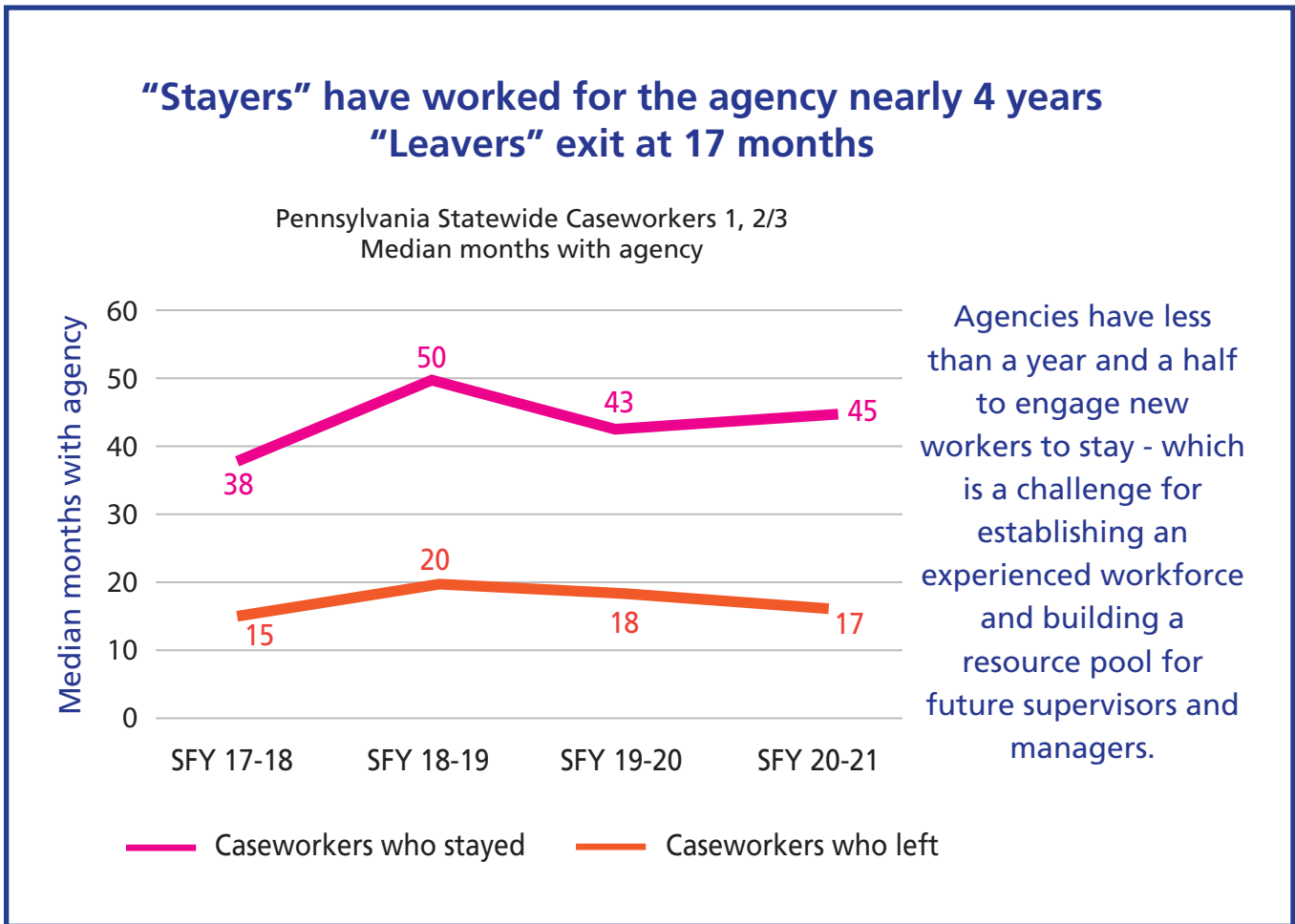
Figure F

Statewide* Workforce Snapshot SFY 2020-2021

Of the 608 People Who Left the County Agencies, Reasons for Leaving:

- Return to School 18
- Transfer within the County 37
- Transfer to Different County 29
- Death 3
- Retire 29
- Other 475
- Relocate 21

608 Caseworkers left during SFY

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2,951	+	683	=	3,634
Caseworkers at beginning of SFY		Caseworkers hired during SFY		Unique caseworkers employed during SFY

=

Turnover
Average: 16.7%
Median: 16.0%
Range: 0% - 61%

Caseworker County Agency Tenure (in months)
Median = 37.4
Average = 72.9

Those who Stayed at the County Agency (in months)
Median = 44.7
Average = 79.6

Those who Left the County Agency (in months)
Median = 16.5
Average = 39.4

Of the 3,634...

3,512	Held only caseworker (1 & 2/3) positions
66	Caseworker → Supervisor/Manager
35	Caseworker → NON-Caseworker/ NON-Supervisor/ NON-Case Manager
21	Non-Caseworker → Caseworker

3,796 Caseworker Positions

2,562	Caseworker positions were filled the entire SFY
288	Caseworker positions were vacant the entire SFY
946	Caseworker positions were vacant at some point during the SFY

Pie chart 1:
- 2965, 78% Case-Carrying Caseworker Positions
- 831, 22% Non Case-Carrying Positions

Pie chart 2:
- 643, 17% Caseworker 1 Positions
- 3153, 83% Caseworker 2/3 Positions

*One county not represented throughout infographic. Previous years' data suggests this county contributes approximately 31 caseworkers and 49 positions to the statewide totals.

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Figure G

"Stayers" have worked for the agency nearly 4 years "Leavers" exit at 17 months

Pennsylvania Statewide Caseworkers 1, 2/3
Median months with agency

Agencies have less than a year and a half to engage new workers to stay - which is a challenge for establishing an experienced workforce and building a resource pool for future supervisors and managers.

Median months with agency

60			
50	50		
40	38	43	45
30			
20	20		
10	15	18	17
0			
SFY 17-18	SFY 18-19	SFY 19-20	SFY 20-21

— Caseworkers who stayed   — Caseworkers who left

Considering the workforce challenges many counties are facing, the Resource Center is developing a Workforce Intervention Project to help stabilize and strengthen Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce. The objectives of this project are to:

- Understand factors that have the most influence on retention among child welfare professionals
- Identify means to regularly assess and monitor these factors in Pennsylvania's child welfare workforce
- Identify/develop strategies/interventions to address these factors
- Use the DAPIM™ framework to implement strategies/interventions
- Measure the impact of strategies/interventions on retention
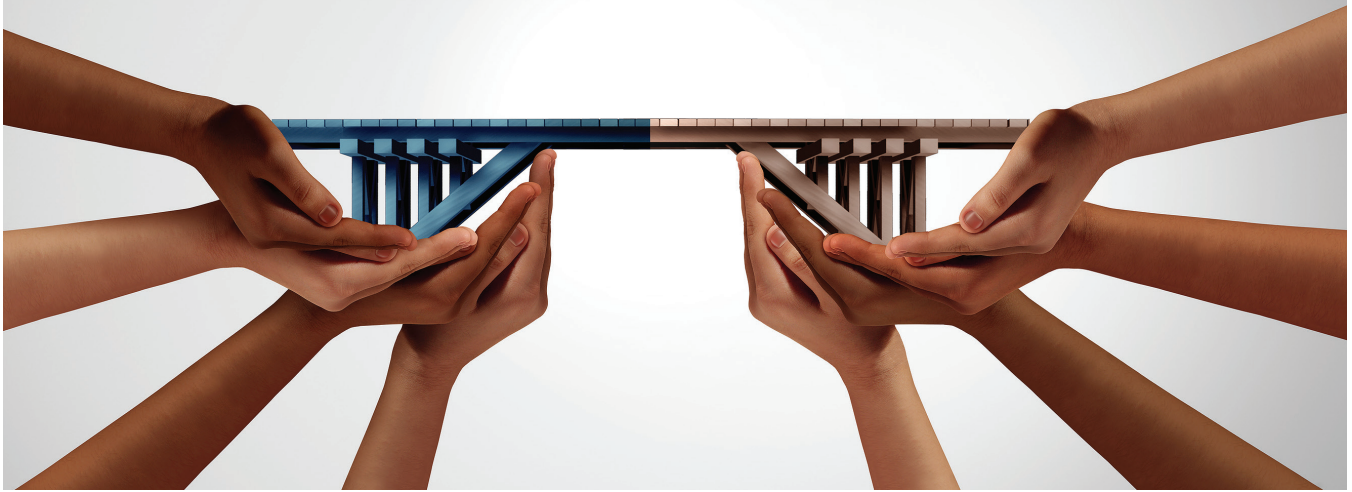
PROVIDE CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT

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.

Figure H

Technical Assistance Provided July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022

- 4% Risk/Safety
- 3% Permanency Planning
- 2% Family Reunification
- 17% Independent Living
- 4% QSR/CFSR
- 2% Supervisor Support
- 5% Prevention
- 1% Family Engagement
- 61% Organizational Effectiveness
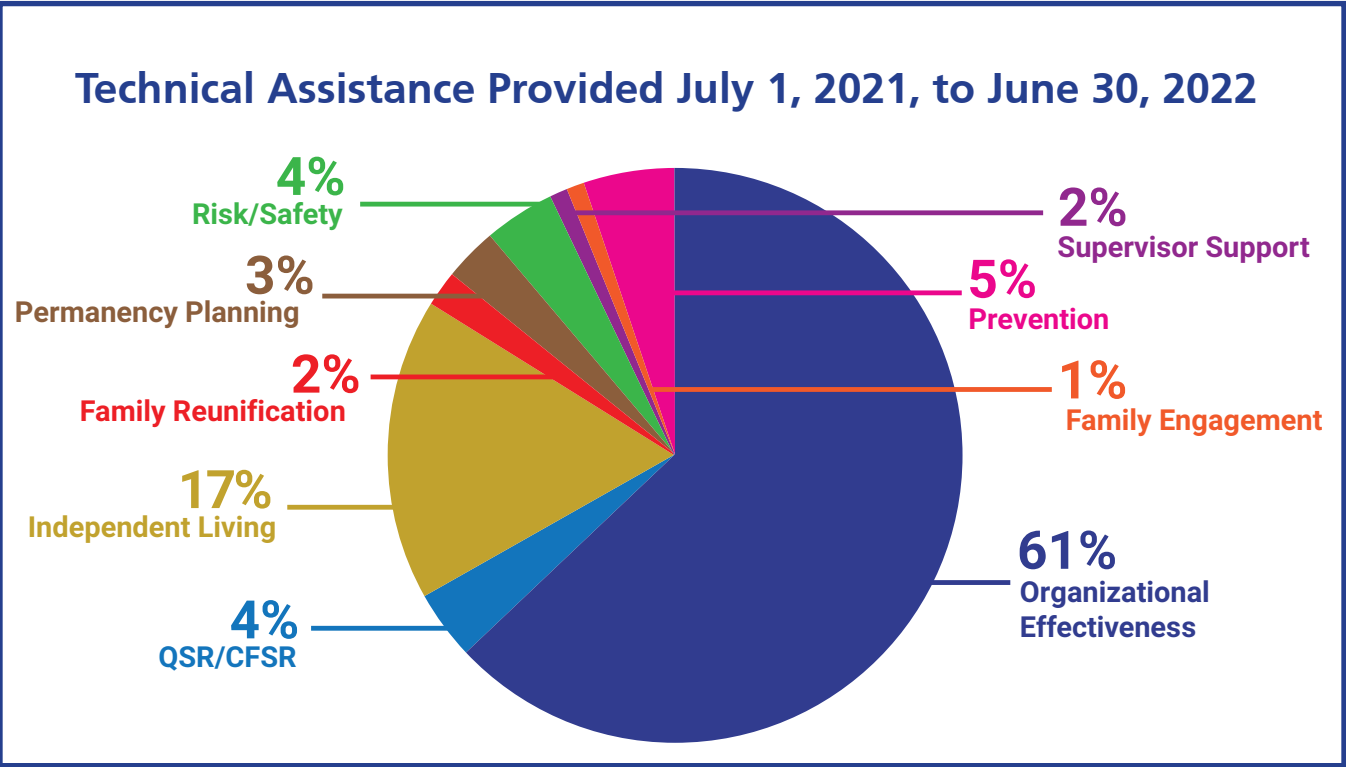
OE services cover several broad areas, including supporting:

- 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
- monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting continuous improvement goals

During FY 2021/2022, some of the requests for consultation and support services were:

- Organizational Readiness for Change assessments
- 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 16 times in 9 different counties and Safety Assessment Support Sessions were held 22 times in 10 different counties)
- increased requests for Family Service Planning Transfer of Learning sessions to connect assessments to planning (13 sessions were held in 7 different counties)
- supervision and accountability enhancements
- policy and procedures review
- FFPSA support (tracked as Prevention Services above)
- communication, collaboration, and team building activities

This year, an exciting new way to partner arose between OE and the Research and Evaluation Departments. A Pennsylvania county interested in making some wide-sweeping changes to their workforce and case management structure requested resources for tracking the changes they wished to make. Research and Evaluation collaborated with OE to create a plan and process so that the county could monitor their progress and demonstrate success. After several meetings and discussions, Research and Evaluation presented the county with a Logic model and evaluation plan to serve as a roadmap to reach their desired future state. Meant to be living documents to be edited with their changing strategies, these materials serve as a grounding reminder of their goals and a recipe for measuring accomplishments. The county has continued to work with their

assigned Practice Improvement Specialist (PI) as they continue to implement these changes and monitor its progress. This is done via monthly meetings with their leadership team and their continuous improvement team. The OE and Research and Evaluation Departments also collaborated on several occasions to support counties' use of data:

- developed a plan to reformat a western region county's data file of services annually or semi-annually so that it is more meaningful and usable
- consultation occurred with a northeast county to support their use of data in their NBPB (Needs-Based Plan and Budget) submission

In partnership with Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS), consultation efforts continued 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 Action Teams focused on enhancing supervision at Allegheny County DHS.

Additionally, Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) staff attended leadership and coaching training as part of the project and has staff assigned to provide one-to-one coaching to members of Allegheny County's 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: Workforce Sites – National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (ncwwi.org).

Additionally, every county participated in the Independent Living (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 training, share resources and ideas with each other, and hear program updates from CWRC and OCYF. Practice Improvement staff also supported SWAN training and attended Permanency Roundtable meetings.

The thirteen Family Reunification (FR) Programs received a final site visit during the FY, as this process will become part of the Needs-Based Plan and Budget in future years. 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.

Pennsylvania counties often share their appreciation of OE services and their Practice Improvement Specialist. For example, Juniata County has been actively engaged in OE work both at the Sponsor and Continuous Improvement (CI) Team levels as well as having participated in several agency-specific training and transfer of learning sessions. They are committed to continuous quality improvement and have worked in partnership with CWRC to make positive changes within their organization.

In the words of the county, "We have greatly appreciated the OE work with CWRC!! It has been such a huge help with so much. Mackenzie has been a wonderful facilitator and is able to keep all staff involved on track and focused on the issues at hand. We have developed so many important new policies and procedures to make our agency run smoother and more effectively with OE work. Thank you for offering this to us. I hope all counties take advantage of this service."

SFY 2022-2023 will continue some of the traditional technical assistance and expand to include support for the implementation of the Universal Assessment, racial equity, and inclusion, and increasing the use of data to measuring the impact of services. Additionally, one Practice Improvement Specialist per region will be focusing on older youth technical assistance to improve services and outcomes across Pennsylvania.

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 2021/2022 the Resource Center launched Foundations of Supervision (FOS), the redesigned supervisory certification training series for newly hired or promoted supervisors. FOS is 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.

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.
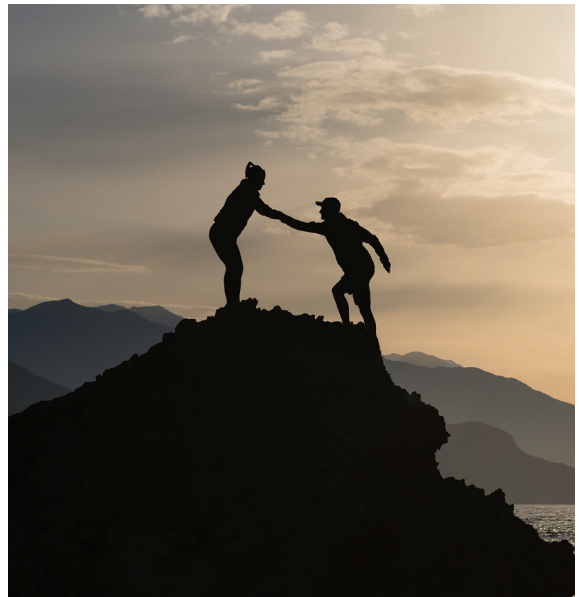
Prior to launching FOS, the series was piloted remotely via Zoom two times. Feedback gleaned from the pilot participants was incorporated into the series prior to launch. The decision was made to launch and continue delivering FOS remotely via Zoom based on the success of the virtual pilots and to meet the current needs of the workforce. Although the FOS series continues to be delivered via Zoom at this time, the Resource Center is conducting an in-person FOS pilot beginning in November 2022 to inform the future delivery of FOS.

The Resource Center continued to deliver the certification series for direct service 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 training, 12 hours of field assignments, Foundations is 124 hours of study and skills practice.

Foundations enhance 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. 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 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. In collaboration with counties, the Resource Center began the shift back to in-person Foundations delivery in July 2022.

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 FY2021/2022, the Resource Center completed the development of 22 new curricula, including the eight modules in the FOS series, and revised or updated 15 existing curricula. Included in its catalogue of new courses launched during this fiscal year is the online course, Raising Trauma Awareness in Child Welfare Practice. This course introduces a model of care that seeks to prevent trauma for children, youth, families, caregivers, and communities. Participants of this course will gain an awareness of trauma, its prevalence, and its impact on children, youth, families, and child welfare professionals. This course is also the first in a series designed to transition Pennsylvania's Child Welfare organizations to be trauma-informed and healing-centered. The new and revised courses completed this fiscal year meet the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors continuing education (CE) licensing requirements.

22 **new curricula developed**
15 **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 jem275@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 and remotely delivered workshops. The Resource Center also provides online, and hybrid trainings and support trainings offered by our Partners and Stakeholders.

The following figures illustrate the number workshops delivered by the Resource Center in FY 2021/2022, the percentage of training sessions held by workshop type, and the number of training session held for the top "other" workshops delivered outside of the certification areas. Over half of training sessions were held for caseworker and supervisor certification.

Figure I. Workshops Delivered in FY 2021/2022 & Training Sessions by Workshop Type.

1,206
Workshops were delivered

3,574
Child welfare professionals from 160 agencies attended the workshops

689   **94**
Child welfare caseworkers & supervisors completed their respective certification series

Training Sessions by Workshop Type

- Supervisor Certification 8%
- Transfer of Learning 8%
- Other 26%
- Direct Service Worker Certification 58%
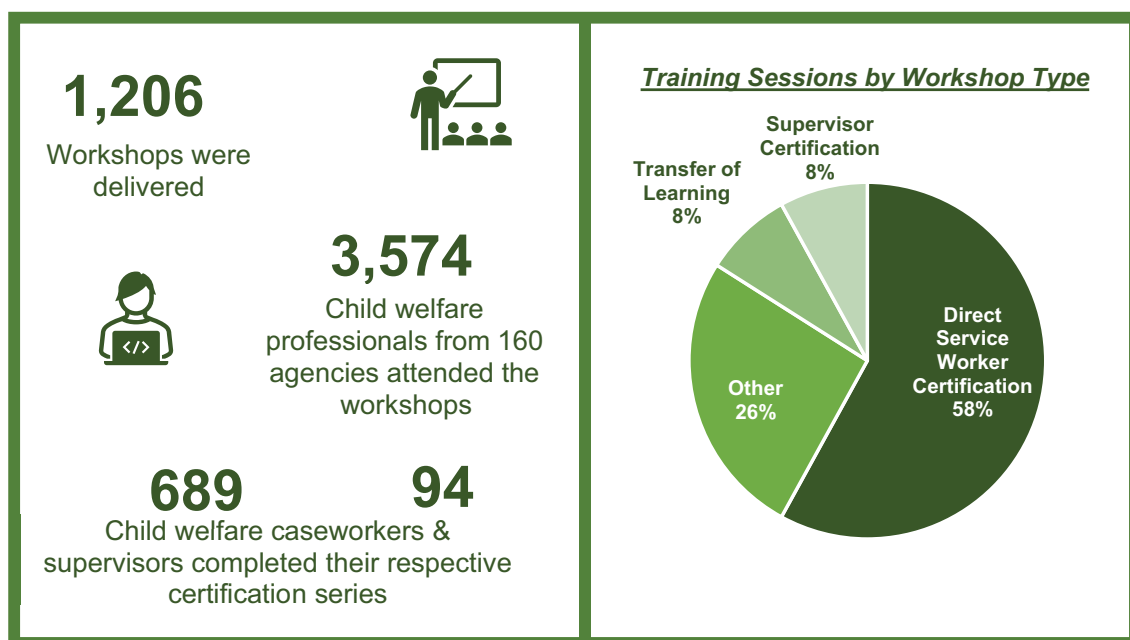
Figure J. Top "Other" Workshops
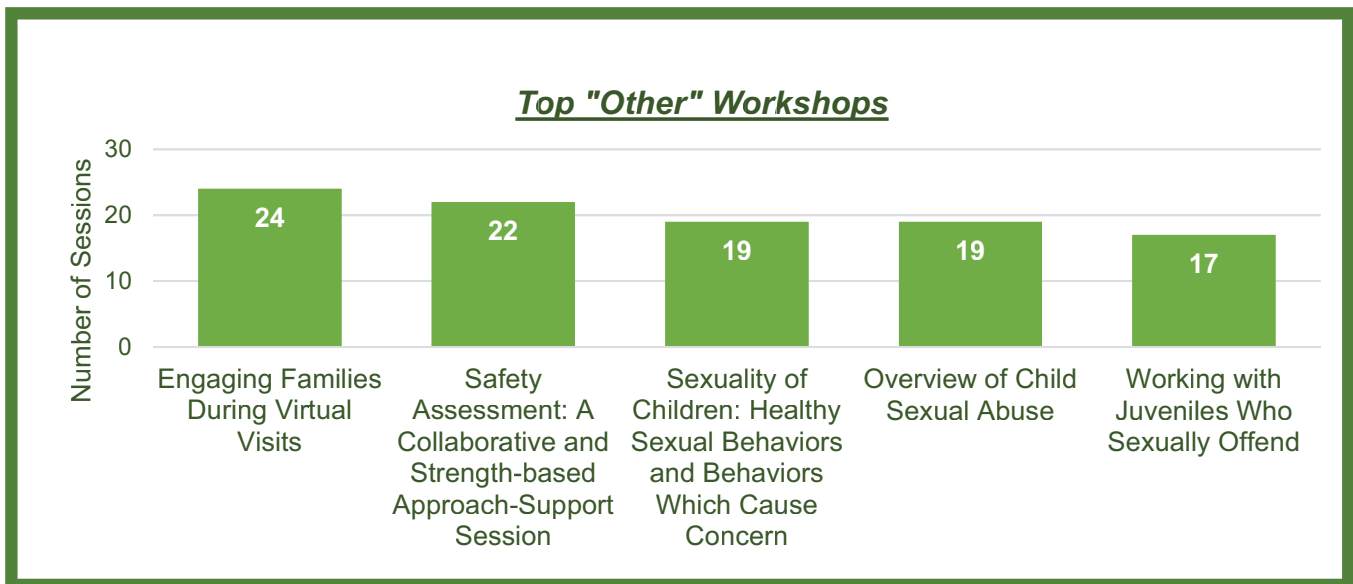
The Resource Center continued to offer a free, 3-hour online course: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. 272,289 participants completed the course during this fiscal year. Of that number, over 123,693 trainee records were processed and sent to the Department of State for licensure renewal. Additionally, 13% (or 36,102) 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 and training delivery methods discussed above and the continuous quality improvement of training delivery, the Resource Center continues ongoing efforts to train and support its contracted instructors. All new instructors with Team-Based Learning™ course assignments complete the required Instructor Competency Training (ICT). 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 lunch and learning 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, bringing application activities to closure, providing consistent learning experiences for training participants, instructor presence in Zoom breakout rooms, finding the instructor voice, and facilitating race equity application activities. 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.

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. Four requests for co-sponsorship were made during FY 2021/2022.
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 Praed Foundation
- Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS)

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.

Family Engagement

In FY 2021/2022, the Resource Center continued to employ both a Family Engagement Project Manager and a Parent Ambassador. 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.

The Parent Ambassador position is held by a former constituent of the child welfare system and plays an integral role to support quality improvement efforts toward meaningful parent engagement and advocating for parent informed policy and practice.

In addition to providing a critical role in the Resource Center's efforts to ensure the parent perspective is considered when developing and delivering family engagement products, the Parent Ambassador also partnered with state level child welfare professionals throughout the year. The positive impact of engaging someone with lived experience was seen in various areas, including but not limited to drafting of a new definition of meaningful parent engagement for Pennsylvania's child welfare professionals; design of a collaborative, online and interactive toolkit devoted to improving the practice of meaningful engagement;

and providing guidance on the development and revisions of materials to better engage parents in Plans of Safe Care.

The Parent Ambassador also allows the Resource Center to provide a unique service to individual county children and youth agencies as they look to strengthen the family engagement skills of caseworkers and to elevate the parent voice at the decision-making table within their own agencies. Like state level efforts, county level support varied based on county need. This year, the Parent Ambassador had the opportunity to provide support to county Continuous Improvement Family Engagement Teams, speak to county caseworkers regarding resiliency and well-being of families, and provided input to increase birth parents' understanding of the local court process.

Support at the county level also went beyond children and youth agencies and included supporting several private provider agencies in training their resource families. Most notably, the Resource Center's Parent Ambassador supported and co-presented with a local birth parent at a private provider agency. In addition to sharing their stories, the time was used to encourage resource families to support connections between parents and their children.

Regardless of the activity, the Parent Ambassador has worked to build relationships with other parents with lived experience. Efforts to continue to identify and engage parents will be a focus of the upcoming year with the goal of having a platform for parents to advocate and communicate their experiences, needs, and recommendations to inform policies and improve services for Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families involved in the child welfare system.

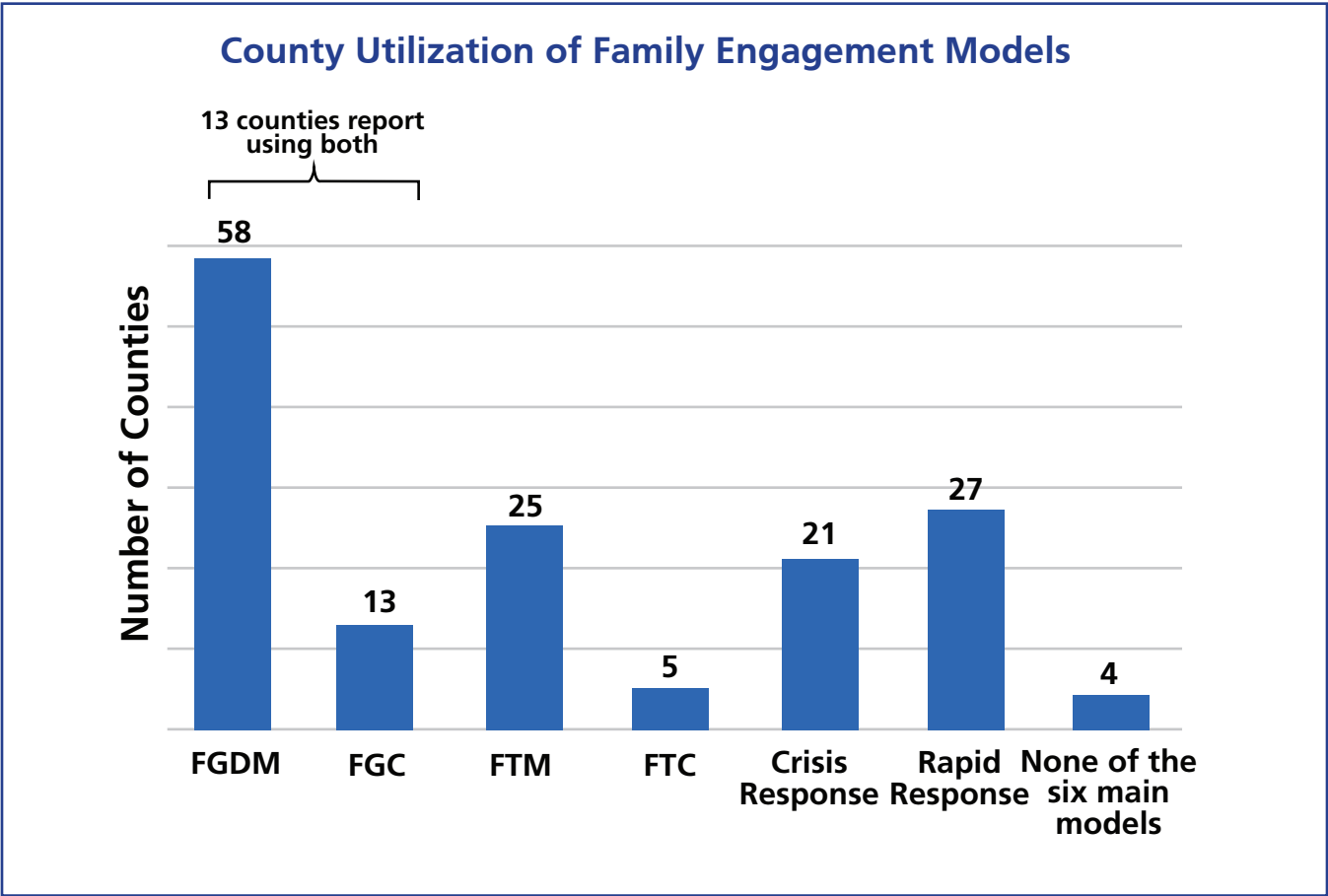## Regional and County Support of Family Engagement

Identification and support of county needs is driven by regional county networking groups with 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 to meet virtually this year. While regions discussed different topics throughout the year, the

Resource Center supported conversations about maintaining high quality services amidst staffing concerns, making connections/aligning engagement services with Family First Prevention Services Act, and use of a trauma informed approach to critically think through the needs of all individuals and adapting practice where needed to accommodate family needs.

Most often, portions of networking meetings were also spent discussing fidelity to the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) model as well as exploring what other models counties were using and identifying if any regional or statewide support may be needed to strengthen practice or support fidelity. The most frequently discussed models were Crisis Rapid Response, expedited FGDM, Family Team Meetings, Blended Perspective Meetings, and Family Finding. Figure K illustrates the other models used across counties based on a survey conducted by CWRC. Sixty-two counties responded to this item and the most frequently reported model was FGDM.

Figure K

County Utilization of Family Engagement Models

(Bar chart showing Number of Counties by model)
- 13 counties report using both (bracket over FGDM and FGC)
- FGDM: 58
- FGC: 13
- FTM: 25
- FTC: 5
- Crisis Response: 21
- Rapid Response: 27
- None of the six main models: 4

Statewide Support

The focus of FY 2021/2022 was like the previous year in that the Resource Center supported the expansion, implementation, and continuous quality improvement efforts of FGDM. 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 the state's FGDM Biennial Conference and an FGDM Statewide event.

The Resource Center's support of the FGDM Biennial Conference included providing technical assistance, hosting, and moderation of the event. The conference was held virtually, with 325 participants on day one and 289 participants on day two. The theme was *"Adjusting Our Lens: Gaining Perspective by Challenging Perceptions,"* which focused on the critical role leaders have in examining how to better engage, communicate and identify FGDM opportunities for children and families served by the child welfare and dependency systems.

A data brief was developed for distribution and discussion at the FGDM Biennial Conference. The brief illustrated a comparison of FGDM practice from pre-COVID-19 (July 2018 – February 2020) to COVID-19 (March 2020 – June 2021). Coordination time, engagement of parents and support, and participants' experiences were examined for 39 counties that remained active in the FGDM Statewide Evaluation during both time periods.

Some highlights from the brief include:

- During COVID-19, there was a decrease in median coordination times for all points in the service pathway except for assessment/investigation/intake and aftercare.
- During COVID-19, there was a slight increase in the percentage of both parents attending the conference for children/youth living in kinship care, foster care, and congregate care.
- Among all age groups, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of neither parent attending the conference during COVID-19.
- Among all age groups, there was a slight increase in the percentage of professional supporters participating in the conference during COVID-19.
- All focus children/youth agreed or strongly agreed that the conference was held in a place that "felt right" during COVID-19.

The entire brief can be found here:
http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Organizational%20Effectiveness/FGDM%20Evaluation%20PDFs/FGDM-COVIDBrief.pdf

Recognizing the need for FGDM leaders and practitioners to collaboratively develop an understanding of how FGDM practice can support race equity in Pennsylvania, the focus of the FGDM statewide event was dedicated to "Exploring Race Equity in the FGDM process"; which included the review of Pennsylvania FGDM data regarding race. Race and ethnicity data of *focus children* who participated in FGDM conferences that occurred statewide from *July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2021*, is shown below and indicates that children who identify as or who were identified as Non-Hispanic White (65.3%) make up the largest group of focus children. Children who identify as or who were identified as Non-Hispanic Black make up the next largest group of focus children making up (16%). Counties are encouraged to consider how they are engaging families of all races and ethnicities with FGDM. The entire Data Brief can be found at: http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Organizational%20Effectiveness/FGDM%20Evaluation%20PDFs/RaceAndEthnicityOfFocusChildren.pdf

Figure L
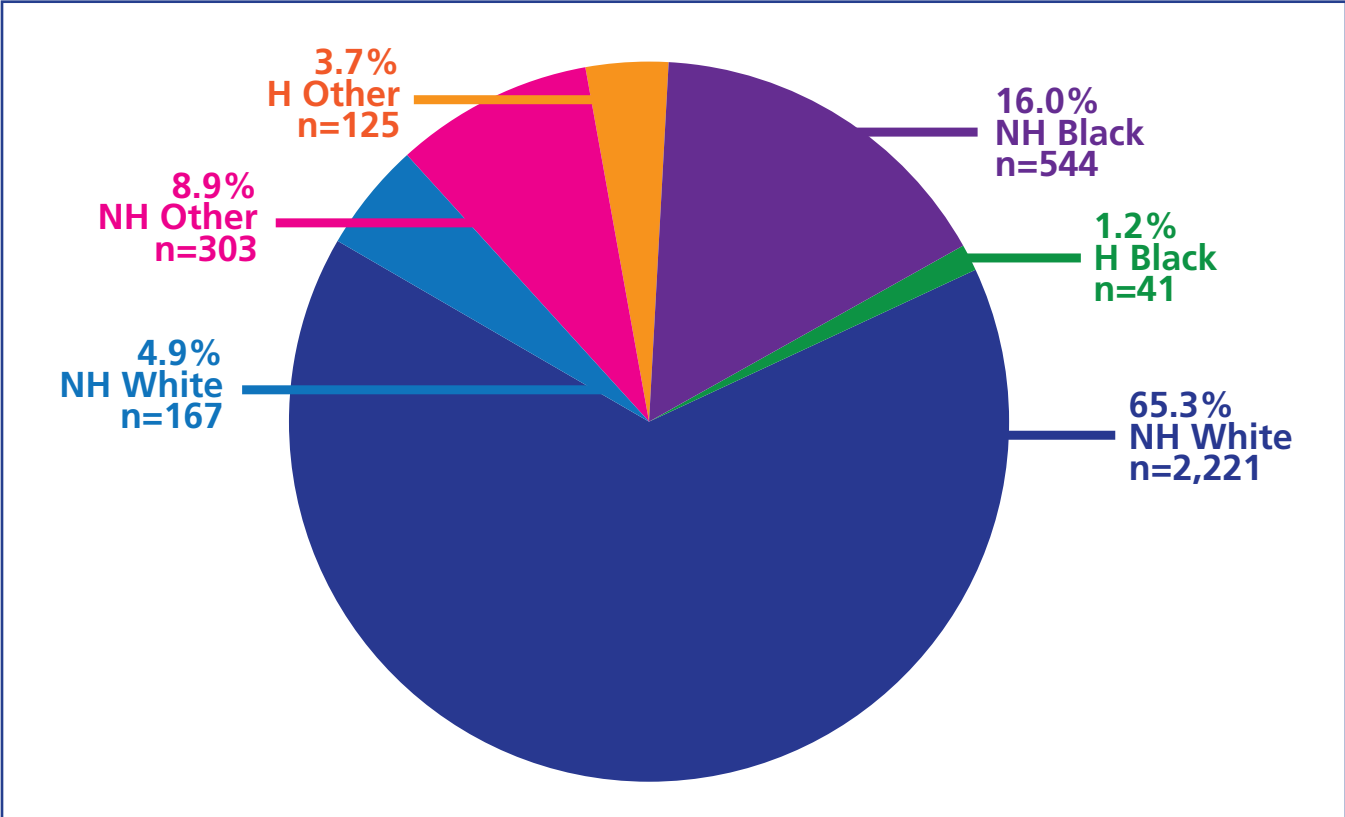
In addition to exploring the role cultural awareness and responsiveness plays in FGDM practice, systemic racism and disproportionality in the child welfare system was also explored. The latter half of the session was dedicated to facilitated discussions with leaders and practitioners on how FGDM could be used to address racial inequities and influence change to improve outcomes for children and families of color.

Youth Engagement

The Resource Center continued to employ a Youth Quality Improvement Specialist to assist in the delivery of training and technical assistance, as well as to provide support to the Older Youth Retreat and Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB) regional and statewide efforts. This position is held by a former constituent of the child welfare system. The role this former youth consumer plays 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 are the Youth Ambassador positions. The Resource Center employs one full-time and one part-time Youth Ambassador. The Youth Ambassadors help 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. Over the past year, CWRC filled both positions with the part-time Youth Ambassador transitioning as the job has a two-year term limit. Despite the changes to the position (flexibility of remote work), maintaining candidates in the full-time Youth Ambassador position has been challenging. CWRC is currently in the recruitment process for both positions.

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 again virtual in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual retreat included 124 youth and 49 staff participants, representing 29 counties across the state. For more detailed information regarding the 2021 Older Youth Retreat, please visit the Youth Advisory Board website at http://www.payab.pitt.edu/ILRetreat.htm

The Resource Center continues to issue Subject SAT Fee Waivers and Reasoning SAT Fee Waivers to eligible youth who are unable to pay the test fees. The Resource Center also shares 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 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 Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB). One of the main objectives of the YAB is developing youth leaders to effectively use their firsthand 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. The YAB serves as a Citizen Review Panel for Pennsylvania, giving them the opportunity to provide recommendations to influence and improve services to older youth in Pennsylvania.
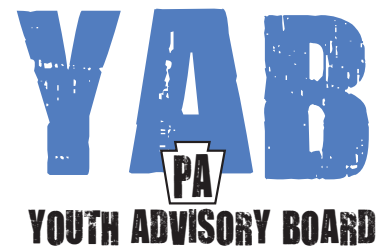
This year has been one of refocusing and growth for the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Despite the lingering impact that COVID has had on older youth connections and in-person restrictions, the YAB was able to host its first hybrid Statewide meeting in November, allowing youth to reconnect in person. Consistent with the previous year's interests, youth expressed concern about the declining mental well-being experienced by themselves and their peers. The YAB focused on mental health projects that would help support older youth and alumni as they navigated through the many challenges they faced because of the pandemic. The YAB created mental health wellness kits which include resources to support youth in improving their mental health. The YAB also launched a media campaign raising awareness to reduce mental health stigma. The YAB also met with counties to share feedback on ways to re-engage youth after providing virtual services for over two years.

This year, the YAB revamped the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) products to better engage youth and increase their participation in the NYTD survey. The YAB recognized the importance of getting youth feedback to help improve independent living services and outcomes for youth in care. A media campaign that included NYTD videos and brochures was added to multiple YAB media platforms.

The Resource Center supported the annual YAB Leadership Summit, held in person at the CWRC in June 2022. This 2-day event hosted 65 youth, staff, and stakeholder participants representing each of the six YAB Regions. The focus of this event was aligned with the YAB's focus of mental health, with workshops and a keynote speaker addressing mental health and well-being. Youth also learned about the Chaffee Education and Training Grant and the Fostering Youth to Education Tuition Waiver Program available to older youth in care. Youth also participated in workshops such as How to Conduct Yourself in Court, Apartment 101, and Landing Your Dream Job. Youth also received a presentation from the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) about the benefits and services they provide to older youth. Youth were given the opportunity to share their feedback regarding a document intended to help youth understand the difference between adoption and Permanent Legal Custodianship.

The YAB continues its advocacy efforts through collaborative partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, participating in committees and workgroups and attending regional and national conferences. The YAB has representation on the CWRC Diversity Task Force and the Building Strong Communities and Healthy Families – Family First Initiatives workgroup. They were also participants at the 2022 National Citizens Review Panel conference in California as YAB continues to serve as the fourth CRP for Pennsylvania.

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 permanency-related training via the SWAN: Post Adoption Contact Agreements Webinar for Older Youth and providing staff training on SWAN units of service during the Older Youth Retreat.

The Resource Center and SWAN have also engaged in more purposeful collaboration related to older youth permanency. This work has included looking at the collaboration between SWAN and IL staff when youth are receiving SWAN units of services and identifying barriers to collaboration. IL staff were surveyed to gauge their knowledge of SWAN units of services, their role when youth are receiving SWAN services, and barriers and successes for youth receiving their services. Based on the survey, there was a need for ongoing SWAN training and additional resources for young people and staff. CWRC and SWAN are engaging staff working with older youth at IL networking sessions and providing support to address these gaps.

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. CWRC also participated in national webinars related to pandemic relief, technical assistance efforts related to Division X and to support youth with the transportation money afforded through Division X dollars. Additionally, the resource Center increased collaboration with PCG related to NYTD, including youth engagement efforts and preparation for Pennsylvania's upcoming federal NYTD review. Through these efforts, the Resources Center has taken a more significant role in supporting counties in completing the NYTD survey and assisting them in accessing technical assistance from PCG. This partnership has improved the lines of communication between county/provider staff, OCYF, and PCG helping PA meet federal requirements for youth completion of NYTD surveys.

Every county received an 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 or 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 through a 90-day follow-up visit. Participation and attendance by county staff and stakeholders continued to remain high because of the virtual option. 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.

The information collected during IL site visits is integral in informing the work of the Youth Advisory Board and the Older Youth Continuous Improvement Team. The Resource Center continued to focus on implementing the recommendations from the Older Youth Needs Assessment conducted in 2018. One of the focuses of this work was developing a certification series for staff working with older youth. However, due to significant needs of older youth during the pandemic, much of the work the group did was focused on the Consolidated Appropriations Act and supporting counties in implementation, gathering feedback from youth and staff, and providing a feedback loop to the State.

CWRC also partnered with IL programs to highlight promising practices at the PCCYFS Conference. The youth and staff panel addressed support offered to youth during the pandemic, the variety of services available to youth, and keeping youth educated about relevant issues including racial equity and social justice.

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 and with other professionals across the state. Over the past year, the Resource Center has partnered with SWAN, PCG, 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,
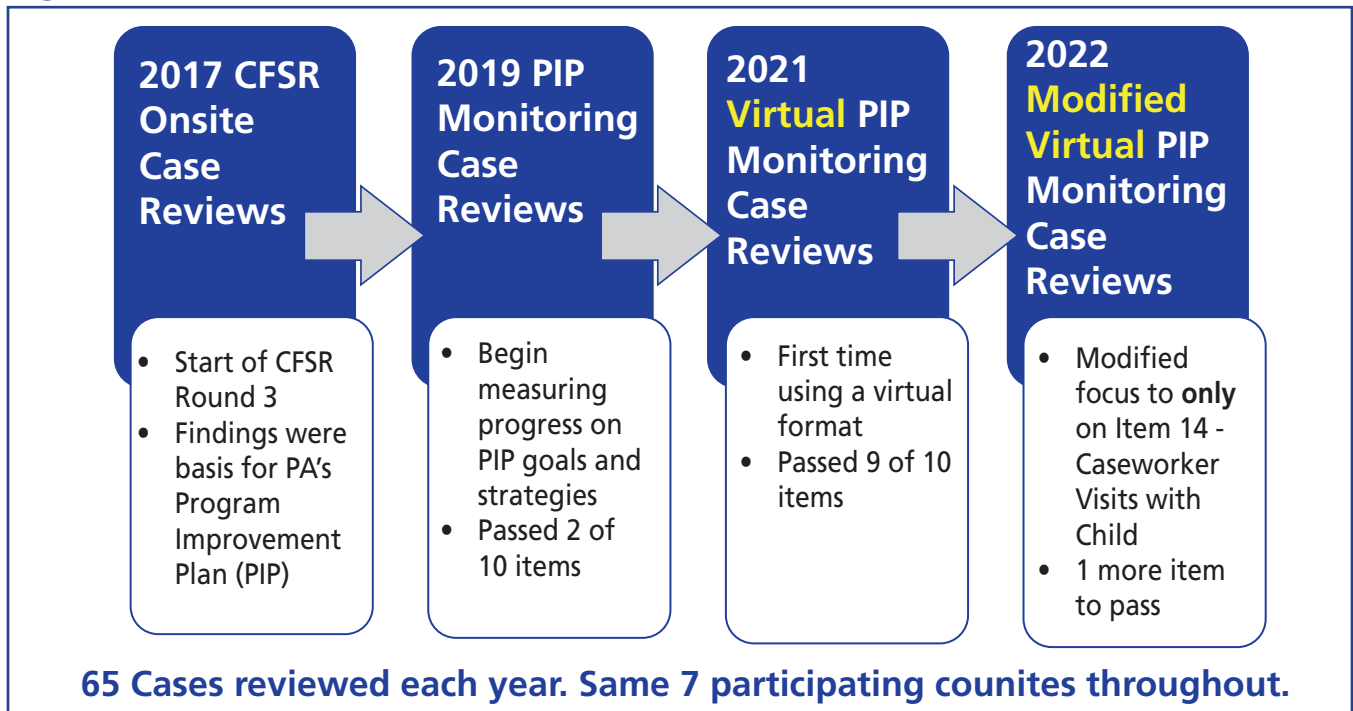
key themes emerged. As a result of the analysis, recommendations were developed by the four PA Child Welfare Council subcommittees and these recommendations came to serve as the basis for the overarching goals to be addressed in [Pennsylvania's Program Improvement Plan (PIP)](). The four key areas that drove the development of Pennsylvania's PIP include workforce, engagement, assessment, and planning/monitoring.

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

As part of PIP monitoring, and to monitor outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being, Pennsylvania conducted PIP monitoring case reviews in 2019. The Administration for Children and Families confirmed that Pennsylvania met measurement criteria and achieved PIP measurement goals for Items 1 and 2 during Measurement Period 1 (April – July 2019). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PIP monitoring case reviews were paused in 2020 and a virtual CFSR case review process was designed and implemented in 2021. During Measurement Period 2 (April – September 2021), Pennsylvania passed items 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13 and 15. There was one outstanding item, Item 14 (Caseworker Visits with Child), for which Pennsylvania had not yet met their goal.

Figure M

2017 CFSR Onsite Case Reviews	2019 PIP Monitoring Case Reviews	2021 **Virtual** PIP Monitoring Case Reviews	2022 **Modified Virtual** PIP Monitoring Case Reviews
• Start of CFSR Round 3 • Findings were basis for PA's Program Improvement Plan (PIP)	• Begin measuring progress on PIP goals and strategies • Passed 2 of 10 items	• First time using a virtual format • Passed 9 of 10 items	• Modified focus to **only** on Item 14 - Caseworker Visits with Child • 1 more item to pass

65 Cases reviewed each year. Same 7 participating counites throughout.

From April – August 2022, the Resource Center supported the successful implementation of virtual PIP Monitoring case reviews focused on Item 14. The implementation of a virtual case review included a review of the record and interviews with key case participants on a total of sixty-five cases. A total of 364 interviews were conducted as part of the case reviews. Interviews were conducted with children, biological parents, kin, and extended family, foster parents, caseworkers, and supervisors.
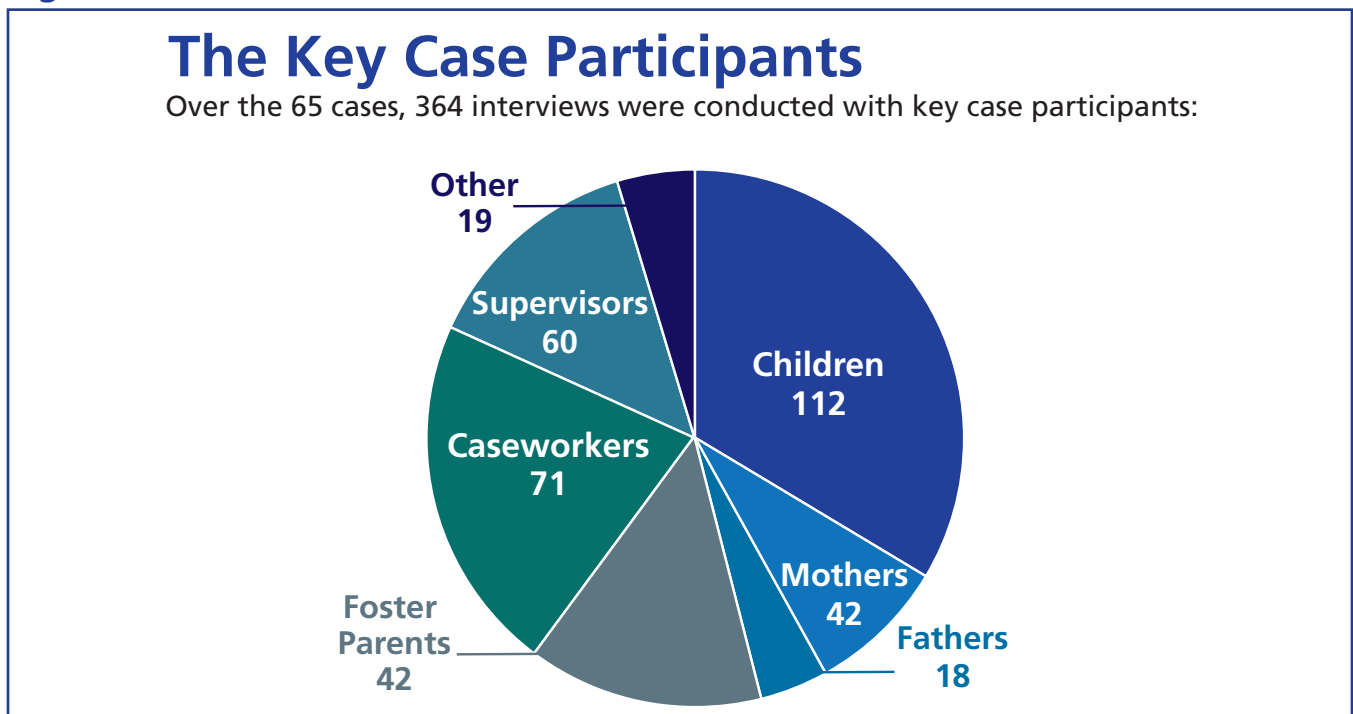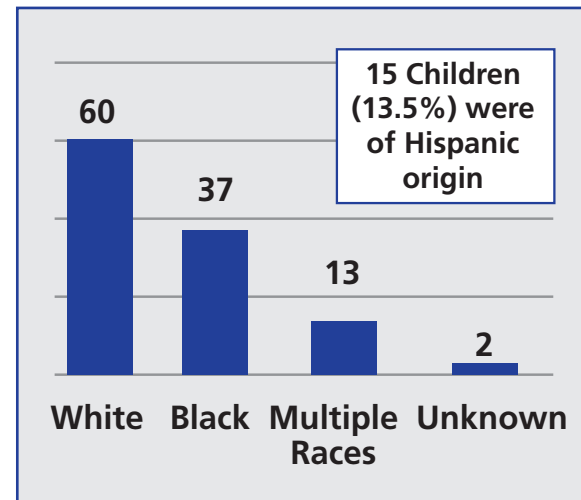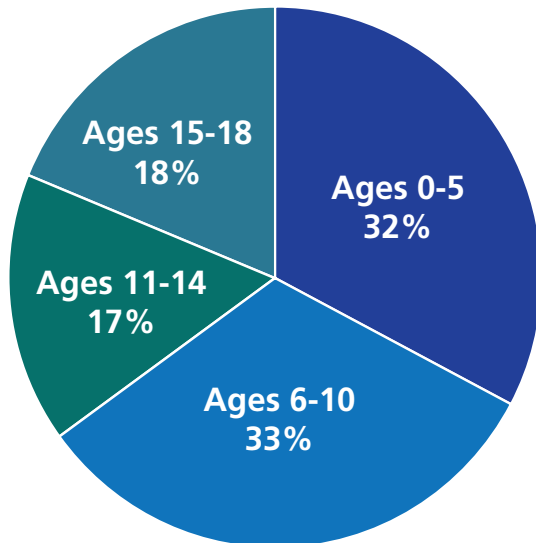
Figure N

The Key Case Participants

Over the 65 cases, 364 interviews were conducted with key case participants:

- Other 19
- Supervisors 60
- Caseworkers 71
- Foster Parents 42
- Children 112
- Mothers 42
- Fathers 18

Figure O

The Children

112 children were evaluated across 65 cases.
- 56 males
- 56 females

Ages 15-18 18%
Ages 0-5 32%
Ages 11-14 17%
Ages 6-10 33%

60 White
37 Black
13 Multiple Races
2 Unknown

15 Children (13.5%) were of Hispanic origin

Volunteers from across the state, who were previously trained and experienced in CFSR case reviews, filled the roles of 65 Reviewers and 65 Quality Assurance (QA) Specialists in 2022.

Participating CFSR staff represented stakeholders including:

- Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC);
- County children and youth agencies (CCYAs);
- Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF);
- PA Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA);
- PA Child Welfare Resource Center (PACWRC);
- Private providers;
- Retired child welfare professionals; and
- Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Prime Contract

Figure P

2022 CFSR Staff		
CWRC	32	59%
SWAN Prime Contract	7	13%
CCYA	7	13%
OCYF	2	4%
Other (PCYA, AOPC, retired)	6	11%
Total:	54	100%

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 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 2021, January 2022, March 2022, and June 2022, with attendance generally 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 Legal Issues to Consider in Making Firing Decisions, Ethics and Technology, Strategies to Support Effective Retention and Recruitment, and Succession Planning. The Resource Center 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. Despite the challenges of operating during a pandemic, in June 2022, ten people received their Leadership Academy certificates.

More information is available on the Resource Center website at:
 http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/administrator-resources.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 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 four specific activities related to CAPTA. Project management support is provided for the application and administration of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) grant activities, maintaining CAPTA compliance by fulfilling the requirements related to Citizen Review Panels (CRP), engaging in activities to fulfill legislative requirements and state process expectations relative to PA's Plans of Safe Care, and supporting the state's second level child fatality/near fatality review process by redacting of certified reports.

Children's Justice Act (CJA)

While the CJA Task Force is an independent group that makes funding recommendations to DHS, the Resource Center provides support for their work in a variety of ways, including supporting their quarterly meetings, data collection, and communication to key stakeholders.

Following the submission of the CJA grant application in May 2021, the Resource Center worked with DHS to develop a strategic plan for FY 2021/2022. The plan enabled the Task Force to dedicate time to review, monitor, and adjust the recommendations contained in the 2020 Three-Year Assessment, as well as currently funded projects. 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)

Citizen Review Panels (CRP) meet quarterly and examine the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child welfare agencies. The Resource Center provides support to the members serving on the panels in their charge to develop an annual report containing recommendations for improving PA's child protective services. The 2021 report can be viewed online by clicking the following link: Pennsylvania Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports.

Due to the volunteer nature of the Citizen Review Panels, recruitment of membership is necessary to ensure their continued success. In FY 2021/2022, the Resource Center worked collaboratively with DHS to recruit and approve an additional nine new members to the regional Citizen Review Panels, many of which were from counties not previously represented.

During FY 2021/2022 many of the Resource Center activities were focused on planning for establishing a new panel in the Southeast Region and developing a plan to rotate panels to new regions of the Commonwealth to ensure representation of all regions over time. Recruitment for the Southeast panel began in April 2022. Members will attend orientation in the Fall of 2022 and begin their work in January 2023.

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.

Plans of Safe Care

Plans of Safe Care is a new area of work for the Resource Center in FY 2021/2022. The Resource Center provided support to DHS and county children and youth agencies in their use of grant monies to strengthen Plans of Safe Care at the local level. Support to counties included providing technical assistance to individual counties related to the grant process as well as supporting events and platforms for counties to share their experiences and learn about best practice relating to Plans of Safe Care.

Through this first year, the Resource Center developed a county monitoring process to include county outcome reports, identifying statewide themes, and creating reports to inform state level workgroup and committee activities.

Child Fatality and Near Fatality Reviews

Another new area of work for the Resource Center is support of Child Fatality and Near Fatality Reviews. The Resource Center provides support for principal tasks relating to

meeting legislative requirements to PA's child fatality and near fatality reviews. This includes supporting DHS in oversite efforts in the administration of activities designed to effectively perform processes established by Act 33 of 2008. The primary activity supported during the latter half of FY 2021/22 was redacting reports for state's second-level child fatality/near fatality review process.

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 and efforts to become an antiracist organization.

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 2021/2022.   This is the final year of the grant, as program funding is moving to the Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB). As a result, there will be no need for project management for this moving forward.

Family Reunification programs continued to successfully transition families when reunification occurred. Programs also continued to use specific criteria to identify ways

to support family transitions 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. Most families take advantage of the additional support as they ease into fresh territory after overcoming the obstacles they had to face.

Family Reunification Programs were able to transition back to many in-person services during FY 2021/2022, using established protocols, like masks and sanitizer, to keep everyone safe. Programs continued to use the virtual platforms as necessary when threats of illness prevented in-person services. This allowed services to continue for families, despite not being in-person, allowing for seamless service provision.

Transportation and housing continue to be the biggest barriers for families. Programs across the state discussed the challenges in meeting these needs while still struggling with a pandemic and continued to work on creative ways to assist families in need. Affordable housing continues to be an area of concern. After rent moratoriums were lifted, property owners raised rents so significantly, they are completely out of reach for many families. Programs have limited funding and years-long waiting lists. These are areas that programs prioritize and continually work to resolve.

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 2021/2022, approximately 409 families and 622 children were served through the Family Reunification programs with reunification occurring for 26% of the children. Of those families and children being reunified, 94% received post-reunification services.

The Annual Family Reunification Statewide Event was held on June 29, 2022. It was offered in a hybrid format with some people choosing to be in-person, while others were on a virtual platform. The event focused on building bridges toward family reunification and explored engaging fathers and family services as well as a presentation by a national speaker on the intersectionality of identities we are defined by, identifying practical tools that can be used to improve policies, and practices in societal systems. It was noted that should another event be offered, it should all be one way or another, as engagement between both in-person and virtual groups was a challenge. Overall, evaluations from the event were positive, they appreciate the family perspective and were grateful to the fathers who came to share their experiences.

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 2021/2022, 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 fall 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 2021/2022, and from those counties, over 260 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
Adult Psychopathy
Child Sexual Abuse
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 can 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
- 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 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, including the University's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy ensuring ADA compliance. 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 2021/2022, 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
  - Screening [Developmental Screening Database (ASQ)]
  - E-Learn (online course site – Over 41,000 Course Completions for FY 2021/2022)
  - Meeting Planner (PACWRC's room reservation software)
  - FGDM (Family Group Decision Making) 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 (Organizational Effectiveness) 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 2021/2022, 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 272,289 trainees who completed the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training in FY 2021/2022.
- Providing daily data uploads to the PA Department of State for Act 31 licensure and license renewal processing for over 122,833 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 3,909 formal helpdesk tickets.
- Providing technology-related equipment, setup, and support for over 1,000 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 meeting/training facilities and simulation labs, including ADA compliant hardware and software.
- 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

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