

INVENTORY OF INNOVATIONS: Workforce Development



Child welfare professionals play a critical role in keeping vulnerable children safe and supporting their families. Today, throughout most states and jurisdictions, there is a significant demand for child welfare workers and the services they provide, since child welfare outcomes depend largely on the stability and competence of the child welfare workforce (Caringi et al., 2007). Child welfare work is complex—it involves knowledge and skills in the areas of child safety, domestic violence prevention, mental illness, poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and other complex problems (Ellett, Ellis, Wesbrook, & Dews, 2007).

Dealing with these challenges requires a trained and dedicated child welfare workforce that is committed to improving the lives of children and families. Child welfare workers face numerous job-related challenges that have been linked with job stress and burnout and continue to impact recruitment and retention (Boyas & Wind, 2010). Research estimates that “as many as 50 percent of child welfare workers report compassion fatigue and burnout” (Boyas & Wind, 2010, p. 380). Additional reasons for high child welfare worker turnover include:

- ▶ Poor supervision
- ▶ Job complexity
- ▶ Negative portrayal of child welfare services and workers in the media
- ▶ Lack of organizational support
- ▶ Poor job preparation
- ▶ Burnout and secondary trauma

To address workforce-related challenges, states and jurisdictions have begun implementing innovative programs that focus on improving workforce recruitment, job satisfaction, and retention. Innovation can be defined as the creation and/or adoption of new ideas and practices to improve organizational outcomes (Borins, 2006). Innovative approaches to addressing these issues are surfacing from within child welfare and from aligned providers in the public and private sectors. The discussion below outlines recent research on child welfare workforce management, recommendations for recruitment and retention of workers, and innovative examples.



Child Welfare Worker Recruitment

Building a committed and competent workforce starts with educating the public about child welfare, attracting qualified recruits, and presenting a realistic portrayal of child welfare work to those interested in entering the field. One recent study of national child welfare recruitment and retention efforts investigated state-specific strategies to help improve recruitment and retention efforts. Qualitative data were collected through a review of 50 state child welfare websites and interviews conducted with 18 child welfare employees in 13 states (Gomez, Travis, Ayers-Lopez, & Schwab, 2010). Recruitment strategies identified include (Gomez et al., 2010):

- ▶ Educational loan forgiveness or repayment
- ▶ Hiring bonus
- ▶ Realistic job preview
- ▶ Paid time off to pursue education
- ▶ Tuition reimbursement
- ▶ Education stipend programs

Additional research has confirmed that several factors play an especially important role in effective child welfare worker recruitment, including providing realistic job previews, using evidence-based employee selection tools, and working to change the negative views of child welfare agencies and staff in the media. These strategies are examined in more detail below.

Realistic Job Previews

Realistic job previews (RJPs) have been used as a recruitment tool in a number of industries over the last 40 years. The purpose of an RJP is to give a job applicant an accurate picture of the nature of child welfare work. In child welfare, RJPs are typically short videos, often found on a state's or jurisdiction's child welfare agency recruitment landing page (Coulborn-Faller et al., 2009). Since child welfare work is complex and can include many different job responsibilities within foster care, adoption, and child protective services, the challenge of developing an RJP video can lie in accurately portraying the full range of the work. Coulborn-Faller et al. (2009) also note that many RJPs portray a typical day for a child welfare worker, describe the complexity of child abuse and neglect, and contain information on engaging with children and families, performing court responsibilities, and collaborating with community partners. RJPs also often describe workload, documentation, supervision, training, and the fact that many times child welfare professionals work outside normal business hours (Coulborn-Faller et al. 2009; Smith, Prichard, & Boltz, 2016).

Though there are little hard data available, most agencies report that RJPs function as an effective tool for improving child welfare worker retention because they are an effective way to help child welfare job applicants decide whether the job is a good fit for them. The limited state agency data that are available strongly support this idea. For example, in 2003, before Maine began using an RJP video with child welfare job applicants, worker turnover rates were 2.34 percent after 6 months on the job and 1.5 percent after 1 year. Between 2005 and 2009, the rates were reduced to 0.88 percent and 1 percent, respectively (Coulborn-Faller et al., 2009).

Several studies emphasize that in order to be effective, RJPs as a recruitment strategy should take into account the following considerations:

- ▶ An RJP should be used as part of a comprehensive recruiting, selection, and retention plan that also includes an employee selection protocol (discussed in more detail below). It is not enough to give applicants information about the job through the RJP video and let them self-screen. Recruiters must also actively determine, through tests and interviews, whether an applicant has the right skills and temperament for child welfare work (Coulborn-Faller et al., 2009).



- ▶ As a best practice, child welfare agencies collaborating with the video production team should make every effort to portray the role of a child welfare professional as honestly as possible. Many new child welfare workers believe that they will be working mostly with children, but accurate job portrayals should emphasize that child welfare workers engage the entire family. Accurate reflections of the work serve as better screening tools for recruitment and may help with retention efforts by reinforcing the idea of organizational honesty among child welfare workers (Smith et al., 2016).

Employee Selection Protocol and Defining Worker Competencies

Another way in which several states and jurisdictions are addressing recruitment issues is using an Employee Selection Protocol (ESP). An ESP is the use of a consistent system or series of tools for recruiting and selecting employees. ESPs are useful in helping child welfare agencies find the best match between potential employees' skills, beliefs, and expectations; the demands of child welfare work; and the competencies needed to meet these demands (Ellett, Ellett, Ellis, & Lerner, 2009). In addition, use of an ESP allows child welfare job applicants to self-select out of the job application process before formally applying for a position. This significantly increases efficiency and the quality of applicants who do go on to apply for child welfare positions (Ellett et al., 2009).

Initial findings confirm that the ESP: (1) consumes less time than earlier hiring practices (since time is not wasted interviewing unsuitable candidates); (2) streamlines decision-making by establishing a common assessment framework for hiring; and (3) strengthens retention rates for title IV-E graduates when compared to other new hires (Ellett et al., 2009). Some agencies, such as the Missouri Department of Social Services, have implemented some features of an ESP in its hiring process, notably an RJP video and a web-based self-assessment, both of which are available online (<https://apps.dss.mo.gov/CDSurvey/>).

A number of states and jurisdictions have also begun using a competency-based approach to worker recruitment in order to identify whether job applicants for child welfare jobs possess the necessary skills for the best chance at future success as a child welfare professional. More information about child welfare competency models and their use by states and jurisdictions can be found at <http://ncwwi.org/index.php/child-welfare-competency-model>.

Child Welfare Worker Retention

Retaining a qualified child welfare workforce is one of the most important concerns for all state and jurisdiction child welfare systems. Child welfare worker turnover is costly to agencies, both financially and for the negative effect on outcomes for children and families. Historically, research on child welfare workforce retention largely focused on the reasons why a child welfare worker chose to leave an agency or the profession. However, more recent research has begun to identify the reasons why child welfare workers choose to remain at their jobs despite difficult conditions. Such research points the way to effective interventions that increase child welfare workers' motivation to stay. Four strategies have been identified in recent research as being particularly important for child welfare worker retention: the quality of supervision and supervisory support; worker resilience; worker education; and media portrayal of child welfare. They are explored in more detail below.

The Importance of Supervisors and the Quality of Supervision

The quality of supervision received by child welfare workers is one of the most important factors in child welfare workforce retention. In fact, "the quality of the direct services provided to children and families, the positive outcomes of service delivery, the successful recruitment and retention of workers, and the ability of child welfare agencies to function in times of change and stress" depend on the work of supervisors as crucial organizational supports (Social Work Policy Institute, 2011, p. 1). Recent research shows that supervisors are key to helping child welfare workers develop knowledge and skills that they use on the job, as well as providing organizational support for their work (Boyas



& Wind, 2010; Ellett et al., 2007; Landsman, 2007). Studies also suggest that “the supervisory support function sustains morale and encourages employee professional sense of worth” (Boyas & Wind, 2010, p. 385). In one study that looked at the job satisfaction of both urban and nonurban child welfare workers, receiving at least 2 hours of one-on-one supervision per week was correlated with greater job satisfaction and a higher probability of retention (Barth, Lloyd, Christ, Chapman, & Dickinson, 2008). In addition, caseworkers reported that coaching was particularly helpful when they were “stuck” or frustrated in their efforts to engage families in change (Snyder, Lawrence, Weatherholt, & Nagy, 2012).

Child welfare supervisors also have a multitude of other important roles. These include (Social Work Policy Institute, 2011):

- ▶ Acting as keepers and transmitters of organizational culture
- ▶ Leading and supporting frontline practice
- ▶ Managing staff workload
- ▶ Imparting the agency and program’s vision and values to workers
- ▶ Acting as the link between frontline staff and senior management and leadership
- ▶ Creating the climate for frontline staff practice and engagement with children and families

In increased recognition of the importance of effective supervision in child welfare, states and jurisdictions, as well as national organizations, are more actively assessing the quality of child welfare supervision and implementing ongoing approaches to support supervisors. The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) has created curricula to help build the skills of child welfare supervisors and middle managers. The Leadership Academy for Supervisors is a free web-based training program for building leadership skills. It is based on the latest research presented by national experts, and provides 21 contact hours of self-directed online learning. The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers is a national, in-person leadership development academy for middle managers in public, tribal, and privatized child welfare systems. It is also based on the NCWWI Leadership Model (<http://ncwwi.org/index.php/leadership-academy-for-supervisors>). Though these programs aren’t new, increased awareness of the importance of supervisor training to child welfare worker retention highlights the need for more supervisors and middle managers to be able to access them in the future.

At the state level, several agencies have begun to implement strategies to enhance the quality of child welfare supervision. For example, in response to the results of their second-round Child and Family Services Review in 2008, between 2010 and 2014 the Alaska Office of Children’s Services implemented its Child Protection Supervision Strategic Plan to work on developing and enhancing child welfare supervisors’ skills (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 2011). The Plan defines good supervision and establishes a new Supervisor Practice Model that focuses on five areas of supervisory development (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 2011):

- ▶ Child protection supervisor recruitment, training, and professional development
- ▶ Supervision support
- ▶ Casework supervision
- ▶ Administration/management
- ▶ Acting as the link between frontline staff and senior management and leadership
- ▶ Supervisors’ role and responsibilities in the community and the agency

The Plan uses the five areas of the Supervisor Practice Model to chart goals and best practices for supervisors, detail action steps and necessary tasks to achieve the goals, describe intended effects and assessment, identify the staff responsible for each step, and identify the intended completion date.

Access to training also contributes to supervisors’ own professional and career development, as well as increases overall job satisfaction. For example, in response to research that illuminated the impact of organizational factors—particularly quality supervision—on workforce retention in child welfare, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Children’s Bureau funded eight 5-year projects that developed collaborations

between schools of social work and public child welfare agencies around the country. These collaborations were initiated in an effort “to develop effective models of training to improve recruitment and retention in public child welfare” (Landsman, 2007, p. 107).

The findings from this project included (Landsman, 2007):

- ▶ A confirmation of the importance of supervisory support for child welfare workforce retention
- ▶ The importance of listening to and working with child welfare agency supervisors in diagnosing problems, increasing awareness of local issues, and ensuring the success of any training
- ▶ The need for time for peer-to-peer interaction in child welfare supervisor training to build relationships and learn from one another

Though not completely new, these findings reinforce the importance of supervisor training for effective supervisory support, as well as the significance of a collaborative approach to supervisor training for the most effective results. They also highlight ways in which states are continuously working to improve supervisor training programs, for example by building in more opportunities for coaching and collaboration and increasing evaluation of the efficacy of such approaches.

Worker Resilience

Another important aspect of effective workforce retention is creating an environment to support child welfare worker resilience. Child welfare workers are particularly vulnerable to developing stress related to secondary trauma, which refers to workers’ experience of being exposed to others’ traumatic stories as part of their jobs and, as a result, developing their own traumatic symptoms and reactions. This is a result of the complex and unpredictable nature of child welfare work, the vulnerability of child welfare clients, and the stressful bureaucratic and physical conditions under which child welfare staff often work (ACS-NYU Children’s Trauma Institute, 2011; Wong, 2017). Child welfare agencies are beginning to realize the importance of cultivating a resilient workforce culture that helps child welfare staff manage stressful situations and recover after larger crises. This requires deliberate action from agency leadership to promote staff empowerment and pay attention to staff well-being (Pittman, 2016).



A 2017 study confirmed the importance of organizational support for the mental health and resilience of child welfare workers. Using a sample of 2,302 caseworkers from three states, the researchers examined the causes and consequences of burnout in their sample population. They discovered that, while client-related burnout certainly existed, it was work-related burnout—defined as burnout related to organizational factors—that played the biggest role in causing child welfare worker burnout (Leake, Rienks, & Oberman, 2017). According to the study’s authors, organizational solutions include creating and maintaining healthy work conditions for staff by instituting reasonable limits to caseload sizes, limiting administrative tasks and paperwork, working with staff to make sure they have the necessary resources to effectively do their jobs, and “fostering an agency climate of professional sharing and operational support” (Leake et al., 2017).

Some state agencies are now recognizing the importance of child welfare worker resilience. For example, Georgia’s Division of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) is partnering with Georgia State University to train child welfare caseworkers and their supervisors on how to prevent depression, anxiety, burnout, and turnover due to secondary traumatic stress (STS). A scale to measure STS was developed by Georgia State University’s School of Social Work, whose staff also designed the curriculum. The program, projected to run for a year and a half, is funded with a Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act grant from DFCS. It will occur in DFCS offices and training sites across the state, eventually moving online with webinars for use by future employees (<http://news.gsu.edu/2017/05/11/georgia-state-university-secures-200000-training-combat-stress-child-welfare-workers/>).

Worker Education

Another crucial aspect of effective child welfare workforce retention is the availability of quality social worker education programs, as well as the ability of child welfare workers to access the necessary education for job effectiveness. Research shows child welfare workers with a B.S.W. or M.S.W. are far less likely to experience burnout (Boyas & Wind, 2010), are more likely to remain on the job even in challenging conditions (Ellett et al., 2007), and feel more prepared for the work they do (Barth et al., 2008). Research also indicates that education incentives—such as tuition reimbursement, stipend programs, and state access to title IV-E funds to subsidize child welfare worker education programs—are commonly utilized as effective recruitment strategies for child welfare workers (Gomez et al., 2010).



In recognition of the powerful role education plays in recruitment and retention of child welfare workers, some states are focusing their workforce reform efforts in this area. For example, the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) worked together with its county-administered child welfare agencies and state universities to address the critical need for child welfare workers in the state (Trujillo, 2017). The state's state-supervised, county-administered system (one of nine in the country) reflects the dramatic cultural and structural differences between the urban and rural counties, with some rural counties lacking any staff trained in social work at all (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/services/>). To address these challenges, the state took several steps.

According to Trujillo (2017), Colorado DHS partnered with state universities to create fully online programs for B.S.W. and M.S.W. students. The state also began requiring that students in B.S.W. and M.S.W. programs do a field internship with a county agency in order to better understand the nature of child welfare work if they wished to enter the field (Trujillo, 2017). In addition, because before 2013 most training for child welfare workers was only offered in the Denver area, most rural workers lacked access due to geographic distance. Trujillo (2017) also observes that in 2013, the Colorado Division of Child Welfare restructured the Colorado Child Welfare Training System and opened four regional training centers, three of them outside the Denver metro area. Together, the availability of online degree-granting social work programs, the field internship requirement, and the opening of the regional training centers significantly increased access and quality of training and education for Colorado's social workers (Trujillo, 2017). In addition, using title IV-E funds, the state began offering stipends to students with academic promise and a commitment to child welfare work. Students who receive a stipend agree to work in a Colorado child welfare county agency for 12 months for each academic year the stipend is received. They are also required to accept an internship in a county and be certified as a child welfare worker in Colorado (Trujillo, 2017).

As described above (Gomez et al., 2010), additional strategies for improving child welfare worker retention include:

- ▶ Educational loan forgiveness
- ▶ Paid ongoing worker training
- ▶ Time off to pursue higher education
- ▶ Tuition reimbursement

Media Coverage

Finally, it is clear that negative media coverage of the child welfare field and child welfare workers can damage the recruitment of qualified workers for child welfare agencies, as well as retention of existing workers. A number of child fatalities have been reported and sometimes sensationalized in the media (Ayre, 2001; Briar-Lawson, Martinson, Briar-Bonpane, & Zox, 2011; Cooper, 2005), which has created "a work environment of public mistrust and negative views of child welfare staff and of public agencies" (Ellett et al., 2007, p. 265).

Because the general public's view of the child welfare system and its workforce is significantly influenced by news stories, which often focus on the relatively small number of tragic cases (Chenot, 2010), public opinion of the child welfare system is often negative. Negative perceptions can adversely impact qualified child welfare worker recruitment, as well as child welfare practice, and can contribute to work-related stress, secondary trauma, and staff turnover (Chenot, 2010; National Association of Social Workers, 2004). Furthermore, when tragic cases are automatically portrayed as resulting from systemic failure, negative perceptions of child welfare professionals are reinforced, which can impact families' trust and willingness to engage with workers (Schreiber, Fuller, & Pacey, 2013).

As a result, some states are choosing to proactively champion the positive impact that child welfare professionals have on children and families by structuring internal systems to support job satisfaction and commitment, as well as working to engage the public in a deeper and more positive understanding of the child welfare system. By publicly portraying the work of child welfare professionals in a positive light, states can help to attract and retain more qualified professionals in the child welfare field. Some additional strategies for mitigating the effects of negative media portrayal include:

- ▶ Developing a strategic communication plan to establish effective, two-way communication between the agency and media representatives, as well as the agency and its stakeholders (American Public Health Services Association, 2012)
- ▶ Responding to any media reports with an educational press release (Cooper, 2005)
- ▶ Providing a forthright, public explanation regarding the scope and limitations of the agency's work (Cooper, 2005)
- ▶ Organizing a meeting between media representatives and agency administrators to increase the level of public understanding of the agency's work and the challenges inherent to the field (Cooper, 2005)
- ▶ Finding ways to engage proactively with the media, such as sharing weekly positive news stories with local outlets and holding press conferences or distributing press releases about new child welfare initiatives (Briar-Lawson et al., 2011)

Organizational Culture

A healthy organizational culture is crucial to maintaining child welfare worker job satisfaction. Organizational culture encompasses many aspects, including norms, beliefs, values, and attitudes that influence behavior—for example, shared vision, goals, morale and motivation, attitudes, openness, and buy-in for new programs and practices (Capacity Building Center for States, 2016). In child welfare agencies, organizational culture certainly includes the quality of supervision, supervisory support, peer support, and access to education and training, all described above. It also encompasses the availability of social capital, defined as “multidimensional resources reflecting the moral fiber of social relations within an organization” (Boyas & Wind, 2010, p. 381). Social capital involves cultural components like trust, the quality of social relationships within an organization, organizational commitment, effective communication, having influence or autonomy over some of one's work, and organizational fairness. While the correlation of some of these factors with child welfare worker stress and job satisfaction is not direct, a recent study points to the importance of social capital on workers' overall degree of job satisfaction or job stress/burnout. For example, research shows that perception of lack of internal advancement opportunities and lack of work-related recognition are major causes of job dissatisfaction among child welfare workers (Barth et al., 2008).

Work-Life Balance and Flexible Scheduling

Work-life balance is a crucial component of agency culture for child welfare worker engagement and retention. Recent findings show that employees who have greater control over their time are more easily able to balance work and family responsibilities and are able to take advantage of educational opportunities and career development, as well as volunteer activities, that support their effectiveness. Thus, it is a useful strategy for child welfare worker retention. In addition, “staff who telecommute report greater productivity,” and the ability to telecommute is a powerful recruitment tool for child welfare agencies (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2013, slide 30).

Peer Support

Peer mentoring and access to help are very important in helping child welfare workers cope with work-related stress and develop resiliency. For example, in New Jersey, the State Department of Children and Families partnered with Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care to establish the Worker2Worker program, a confidential peer counseling and support hotline for employees of the Department's Division of Child Protection and Permanency (Rutgers School of Social Work, 2016). The hotline is staffed by former child welfare workers and supervisors and operates 7 days a week. Hotline operators offer peer support, telephone assessment, and referral services. The program also provides onsite debriefing for child protection staff in the event of any traumatic event in the local office (e.g., a child or parent death, assault of a staff person, etc.), as well as statewide and local resiliency events to give staff opportunities to have a day to participate in activities that support self-care (L. Von Pier, personal communication, November 1, 2017). Since its inception in 2014, the Worker2Worker hotline has helped more than 11,000 child welfare workers (<http://ncwwi.org/index.php/link/305-mind-the-gap-10-peer-mentoring-crisis-response-resilience-building-nj-dcf-s-worker2worker>; Rutgers School of Social Work, 2016).

Design Team Approach

Recent literature strongly emphasizes the value of a cooperative team approach when trying to find solutions to pressing child welfare agency challenges like worker recruitment and retention. There is a recognition that “the turnover problem is a multisystemic one, necessitating complex, comprehensive interventions to address the... individual, supervisors, and organizational factors” of the problem (Caringi et al., 2007, p. 2). To address this challenge, a recent study evaluated a child welfare system that implemented the design team intervention. According to Caringi et al. (2007), this intervention involves creating a team of representatives from all levels of the agency who then use research and critical thinking to identify causes of turnover and propose solutions. A social worker from outside the agency acts as a team facilitator and mediator, as necessary. It is especially important that the design team represents the agency “in miniature,” by including representatives from all constituent units. The team needs to be “owned” by all agency members in order to promote buy-in of the team's findings, as well as to encourage the beneficial “social contagion effects” whereby the team's learning, problem solving, and innovation development ripple throughout the agency as a whole. Design teams (Caringi et al., 2007) should:

- ▶ Strive to understand the antecedents, correlations, and causes of both worker turnover and retention, and then collect and evaluate data to design problem-solving approaches for their particular agency
- ▶ Emphasize social work solution-focused and strengths-based principles rather than ones from outside the field
- ▶ Function as both learning and training systems, as they are structured to facilitate individual, organizational, and group learning
- ▶ Deal with team conflict by returning to the data for impartial, factual information
- ▶ Serve as incubators for data-driven innovation, including new policies, practice models, rules and regulations, and intersystem protocols—the design team prioritizes immediately “actionable items” and builds new solutions upon preexisting improvement strategies in order to minimize conflict within the agency

Within agencies that have used this approach, design teams have generated useful information about worker turnover and retention and actionable priorities to improve agency performance in this area. Caringi et al. (2007) note that these included clearer and more detailed job descriptions, worker safety training, training and interventions for STS among workers, and better interdepartmental and interagency relations. Design teams have also been able to implement many of these solutions fairly quickly, though progress and achievements have not been uniform among all agencies that have tried this approach (Caringi et al., 2007). Working with an organizational assessment tool such as the Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment, developed through a grant funded by the Children's Bureau, can also help support agency analysis and organizational planning by changing and measuring the results of targeted interventions like the ones implemented by design teams (Potter, Leake, Longworth-Reed, Atlschul, & Rienks, 2016).

Considerations for Developing and Implementing Workforce Development Innovations

A number of considerations exist when it comes to developing and implementing workforce management innovations in child welfare agencies. These include challenges related to supervisor training, work-life balance for child welfare workers, access to social work education and child welfare-specific training, and worker resilience. Below are some things to consider when deciding on a workforce management innovation:

- ▶ Before implementing a workforce innovation, it is critical for agency leadership to obtain input from all staff regarding what they see as priorities for their work. Workforce innovations should then be chosen, developed, and implemented with representation from all affected (in some cases, all) agency workers. Child welfare workers are far more likely to embrace institutional change or additional training if it is aligned with their priorities and they have been able to contribute to its development.
- ▶ States should consider partnering with state universities and other local educational institutions to develop B.S.W. and M.S.W. programs and increase access to degree-granting and training programs throughout the state. The creation of online, degree-granting B.S.W. and M.S.W. programs is particularly useful in this regard. If possible, states should also look for funding opportunities for stipend programs for promising and dedicated state child welfare workers. Having a B.S.W. or M.S.W. has been shown to significantly improve worker retention at public child welfare agencies.
- ▶ A healthy organizational culture—including supervisor support, worker autonomy, organizational fairness, and open communication—is an important part of an effective child welfare worker retention strategy. Agencies should periodically evaluate their culture through employee feedback and adjust as necessary through the revision or creation of appropriate policies, procedures, and training.
- ▶ Staying current with new developments in workforce management (e.g., flextime, remote work, etc.) can be useful in recruiting and retaining qualified child welfare workers. Agencies should invest in developing innovations, piloting promising programs, listening to their frontline and other workers, and developing systems to reward innovation as a way to improve recruitment and retention.

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