The Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project
Final Report

Submitted by:
Butler Institute for Families
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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Executive Summary

Recruitment and retention issues are at the heart of child welfare efforts to improve outcomes for children and families. By recruiting the most qualified and dedicated workers and then maintaining a positive and satisfying work environment so that those workers stay and provide consistent and skillful services to clients, the agency will more likely see improved results. Otherwise, child welfare agencies exist in a constant state of flux as new workers arrive, are trained, work with clients, and then leave taking with them their initial enthusiasm and truncated client relationships. It is a vicious cycle that affects everyone in the system, the child welfare agency, the workers, and children and families. The negative consequences of ineffective recruitment and retention have become increasingly clear over the last decade. Five years ago, the Children’s Bureau funded eight demonstration projects to address these vexing issues.

The Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project (WRRRP) addressed recruitment, selection, and retention issues in five rural and urban sites in the greater Rocky Mountain region – specifically in Colorado, Arizona, and Wyoming. Multiple training curricula and other resources were developed to attend to cross-site issues. The Butler Institute used a calculated approach to focus recruitment and retention issues that considered the unique needs of each site using research-based and customized interventions. Comprehensive organizational assessments were conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the agency, the worker, and the job. This information guided a formal strategic planning process to consider the conditions that affect recruitment, selection, training, and retention. Each site interpreted the information from the organizational assessment, developed site-specific strategic plans of needs, priorities, and training intervention strategies. Throughout the five-year project, WRRRP staff provided support, technical assistance and training as requested by the agencies.

Major findings of the project include:

- Both Burnout and Job Satisfaction were significant predictors of Intent to Stay in both 2004 and 2006 data.
- Factors that significantly predicted Burnout in 2006 included: Child Welfare Stress: Time (Increases Burnout); Motivation (Decreases Burnout); Supervisory Support (Decreases Burnout); Promotional Opportunities (Decreases Burnout).
- Factors that significantly predicted job satisfaction were: Motivation; Promotional Opportunities; and Supervisory Support.
- Positive changes were found in work environment across the two years in several important scales measuring areas that were the focus of site planning and intervention. Focus group discussions reinforce these findings.

Evaluation activities were conducted throughout the project’s life to assess process and outcome results and provide on-going assessment to make mid-course corrections as well as celebrate successes. Process evaluation efforts examined ongoing implementation of project activities. Training workshops and institutes were evaluated by assessing trainee satisfaction, self-reported learning, and transfer of learning. Additionally, the Realistic Job Preview videos developed as an intervention strategy for the project were evaluated to assess their effectiveness for educating potential applicants about the realities of child welfare work and preventing misinformed hiring. The outcome evaluation focused on whether the project improved recruitment practices and retention rates. Data were collected from each site semi-annually on recruitment and selection practices as well as turnover statistics such as number of positions and number of terminations. The project showed positive results in the number of
recruitment practices used. Agencies added an average of 2.2 recruitment techniques since baseline and reported using an average of 6.4 of 10 recruitment practices at the end of the grant period. In addition, retention rates increased over the grant period; 3% increase for supervisors, 9% for caseworkers and 21% for Case Aide positions, suggesting a positive overall impact of grant activities on retention.

Significant accomplishments for our sites include:

**Colorado, Mesa County and Jefferson County:** In each of these sites, the focus was on creating a positive working environment, improving consistency in supervision, and addressing secondary trauma. Accomplishments include: a flexible hours policy, a reward and recognition plan, formalized on-the-job training, a streamlined hiring process, and improved and more consistent supervision. Colorado’s Realistic Job Preview video is now in use throughout the state.

**Arizona, Talavi and Casa Grande:** The Arizona sites concentrated on recruitment and selection. A realistic job preview video was created for use throughout the state. Also, these sites prioritized increasing cohesion and communication. Major achievements include a realistic job preview video, use of an interview protocol, agency-wide newsletter, and a staff-driven social committee.

**Wyoming, Rock Springs:** Rock Springs focused on multiple aspects of recruitment and retention to address agency culture, recruitment of qualified candidates, on-target training, improved supervision, and better cohesion amongst staff. Project achievements benefiting this site and Wyoming as a whole included new supervisory core training, a comprehensive recruitment plan, consistent supervision, and improved cohesion.

Multiple training curricula were developed and training provided:

- Putting the Pieces Together, Supervisor Core Curriculum
- Making the Most of Supervision Curriculum for Workers
- Secondary Trauma Training for Caseworkers
- Advanced Secondary Trauma Curriculum for Supervisors
- Interviewing Skills

Training evaluations were overwhelming positive with all mean scores above 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Additionally, 100% of participants self-reported increased knowledge and skills on the training competencies. Trainees also reported that they were able to transfer learning to the job but to some extent were inhibited by support from the agency.

Two institutes on recruitment and retention issues were provided over the five year project. Additionally, a training system symposium was convened for 21 states.

Other products developed for the project include:

- Realistic Job Preview videos for Arizona and Colorado
- Annotated Bibliography
- SMARRT Manual (Strategies Matrix Approach to Recruitment & Retention Techniques)

This evaluation report details the project activities and results.
Introduction

Background Information

The purpose of the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project (WRRRP) was to develop, field test, revise, implement, evaluate, and disseminate effective and comprehensive training models for recruiting and retaining a competent work force in public child welfare agencies in four states in the Rocky Mountain Region. Ultimately, the project served five sites in three states representing both urban and rural locations.

In our grant proposal in 2003, the problem of recruitment and retention was clearly articulated:

Public child welfare agencies are experiencing a severe workforce crisis manifested in high staff turnover, difficulty recruiting qualified workers, staff shortages, and large caseloads. A study conducted by Alliance for Children and Families (Alliance), the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) (2001) involving 43 states showed that an average of 20% of workers and 8% of supervisors left state agencies during the course of one year. The study also showed that the average vacancy rate for direct service workers was 10% in September 2000. High staff turnover has many negative consequences for clients, workers, and agencies. Clients experience inconsistency, instability and decreased quality of services. There are far reaching economic and organizational ramifications to staff turnover, including costs to repeatedly hire and train worker, low staff morale, and stigmatization of the profession.

According to the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (Bernotavicz, n.d.), recruitment and retention issues fall into three major categories: 1) the characteristics of the workers themselves (e.g., hiring the wrong people, inappropriate job expectations), 2) the work itself (e.g., the client population, public perceptions), and 3) the agency (e.g., organizational climate). Agency issues are the most documented, with organizational factors reported as a major source of dissatisfaction for workers. The Annie E. Casey Foundation study (Nittoli, 2003) and the 2003 GAO report cited limited opportunities for professional growth, poor supervision, inadequate guidance, and insufficient education and training.

According to Graef and Hill (2000), the per vacancy average cost of CPS turnover in an undisclosed state was $10,000. Included in their cost analysis was separation (administrative functions resulting from resignation, replacement (costs of advertising and interviewing) and training. The impact of employee turnover can be grouped into four major categories: 1) Costs due to a person leaving (e.g., exit interview, training costs, loss of skills and contacts, cost of person filling in, administrative/HR costs); 2) hiring costs (e.g., advertising, interviewing, pre-employment background checks, administrative/HR); 3) training costs; and 4) lost productivity costs (e.g., time for new hire to be at full capacity) (Bliss, 2001). Research by PriceWaterhouseCoopers shows smart organizations also consider costs that cannot be quantified such as: increased stress for those who must cover the departing staffer’s work, errors made by new or temporary employees, and impact on customers who lost a trusted contact (Employee Retention Strategies, n.d.). When CPS workers leave, skills and energy are drained from the agency, inexperienced workers replace them, and clients lose continuity of service.
In 2003, the need to address recruitment and retention issues was evident and has not diminished over time. In fact, as more research has focused on workforce issues, evidence has mounted pointing to a growing crisis for child welfare agencies across the county. During the five year WRRRP funding cycle, studies began to reveal the negative impact staff turnover played in child welfare agencies’ achieving positive outcomes. Research indicates that staff turnover has a significant effect on the achievement of client outcomes. An analysis of twelve California counties found the “highest functioning” cluster of counties had both lowest turnover rates (9%) and the lowest rates of recurrence of maltreatment (6 – 15%), but also best compliance with recognized practice standards. The lowest functioning cluster of agencies (with the highest levels of turnover, 23%) had twice as many recurrences of abuse/neglect (15 – 23%) (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006). In another study, children entering care with only one worker assigned to their case achieved permanency in 74.5 % of the cases. As the number of case managers increased, the percentage of children achieving permanency substantially dropped, ranging from 17.5% of children with two case managers to a low of 0.1% of those children with six or seven case managers (Flower, McDonald & Sumski, 2005, Ryan et al, 2006). In 2009, the issues of recruitment and retention have been captured more broadly into workforce issues and continue to plague child welfare, making the research findings and lessons learned from the 2003 Recruitment & Retention grantees that much more meaningful to the larger child welfare field. The balance of this report summarizes the findings from the Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project to better inform future efforts to improve the child welfare workforce.

**Program Model**

Our plan in 2003 was to amplify agencies’ existing strengths, and provide strategies and techniques to improve on weaker areas. Additionally, we decided that the unique, as well as the shared, characteristics of individual agencies must be taken into consideration when designing individual training. Thus, our approach was to conduct a multi-phased project, starting with organizational assessments to understand each agency more thoroughly and to develop strategic plans that addressed each agency’s strengths and challenges. During the next phase, we implemented those plans by developing curriculum, conducting training, providing technical assistance, and offering resources to our project sites. Along the way, we also hosted two Recruitment and Retention Institutes to showcase best practices and bring site representatives and national experts together to think about these critical issues. During the project’s final phase, we consolidated the knowledge gained and focused on dissemination of the products produced by the project.

In the original grant proposal, we presented a schematic of the proposed project:
The following steps were proposed:

Step 1: Launch the project by convening the Advisory Committee. (Objective 1.a)

Step 2: Create communication channels. (Objective 1.b)

Step 3: Research existing literature background material.

Step 4: Develop the SMARRT manual. (Objectives 2.a, 2.b, 2.e)

Step 5: Conduct Assessment of Organizational Health and Recruitment and Retention Issues. (Objective 1.d)

Step 6: Determine the most appropriate combination of strategies for the individual training sites and develop a strategic plan specific for that site detailing the combination of strategies and training best-suited for the project site. (Objectives 2.a, 2.c)

Step 7: Develop and deliver the training. (Objectives 2.b, 2.d, 3.b, 3.c)

Step 8: Evaluate training. (Objectives 4.a-f)

Step 9: Disseminate project products. (Objectives 5.a-g)

All steps were completed over the course of the project. Although, it should be noted that this listing of steps dramatically simplifies the complexity and effort expended during the life of the project.

**Project Goals and Objectives**

Our overall project outcomes were:

1) The WRRRP will improve the quality and quantity of applicants in child welfare systems at line and supervisory levels in Colorado, Arizona, Idaho, and Wyoming.

2) The WRRRP will increase the retention rate of qualified workers and supervisors in Colorado, Arizona, Idaho, and Wyoming.

3) The WRRRP will disseminate the project products including training curricula, web-based modules and resource publications.

Overall project outcomes will be discussed after the process goals and objectives. Each project goal and corresponding objectives with discussion on the achievement of those goals and objectives are presented next.

**Process Evaluation**

*Goal 1. Develop recruitment and retention strategies based upon specific conditions and develop accompanying training curricula based on those strategies.*

a. Form an interdisciplinary WRRRP Advisory Committee consisting of human resource professionals, public relations/media consultant, organizational management specialists, child welfare professionals, project site participants, and project site administrators to provide specialized expertise and guidance for the project.

The Advisory Committee was convened during the first year and on an on-going basis for the entire five year project. Typically, we held one in-person meeting and one teleconference each year. Over the project period, the members of the Advisory Committee did change due to personnel shifts, the project
needs, or other reasons. Advisory Committee members included project site managers, national experts in the areas of recruitment and retention, and other agency leaders known for their commitment to recruitment and retention. Please see Appendix A for the list of the Advisory Committee members during the project’s last year. Advisory Committee meetings provided an opportunity to update members on project activities, solicit feedback on the project, gather innovative ideas on recruitment and retention, and problem solve the barriers encountered during the project. Additionally, we offered special presentations by experts related to project interventions. For example, Joan Levy Zlotnik provided a national overview of R&R challenges and promising interventions and Jefferson County Project Consultant Kristine Schneider presented on the organizational cultural change effort completed at the site. On occasion, the advisory committee meetings also provided opportunities for a cross-site exchange of information and ideas. Lastly, the Advisory Committee members were solicited for ideas regarding both dissemination opportunities and project sustainability. Please see Appendix A for a listing of Advisory Committee members.

b. Establish online communication tools (website and listserv) to facilitate communication and idea dissemination among project sites, project participants, and Advisory Committee.

An intranet site was established for the project sites and the Advisory Committee. It encouraged communication by providing the opportunity for threaded discussions, posting of announcements, etc. Documents such as curriculum, reports, and other resources were also housed on the intranet site. In order to facilitate communication among the other evaluators for the seven R & R grantees, a similar site was set up just for the R & R evaluation group. Every effort was made to encourage use of these sites, with frequent reminders about the availability of documents and the posing of questions to the group. Despite these efforts, the intranets received little traffic and were shut down in year 4 due to lack of interest. We speculate that at least part of the reluctance for using them was the necessity of a user sign-in that was password protected. Our lesson learned was that communication vehicles must be simple and effortless for participants. While no longer active, the website addresses were: WRRRP: http://wrrrp.intranets.com, and RREvaluators: http://rrevaluators.intranets.com.

c. Conduct a thorough literature review to gather information on recruitment and retention strategies appropriate for various settings and situations.

During the first year, an extensive literature review was completed, resulting in a 130 item reference bibliography focused on recruitment and retention both in and outside the field of child welfare. Each reference was identified as being relevant to recruitment, selection, retention or some combination of the three and categorized as such. The bibliography was posted on both the WRRRP and Federal grantees evaluator websites. Additionally, an annotated version of the bibliography was completed that contained a brief abstract and designated the article’s relevance to each recruitment and retention category, as well as the type of document (e.g., editorial, research findings). Please see Appendix A for the final version of the bibliography and annotated bibliography.

d. With guidance of the Advisory Committee, conduct organizational health assessments for project sites focusing on issues affecting recruitment and retention.

i. Select organizational health assessment questionnaires.

Project staff, with the assistance of Advisory Committee members, developed and finalized a 147 item employee assessment survey. The survey included existing, validated subscales from subject matter experts, including Dr. Brenda Smith, Dr. Laura Bronstein, Dr. Hal Lawson, and Dr. Mary McCarthy, State University of New York at Albany; Drs. Alberta and Chad Ellett, University of Georgia, School of Social
In economy, different performance of comprehensive Institute, counties, dropped elsewhere. The project model focused on assessment of the three domains: the staff, the work, and the agency to determine the level of job satisfaction and burnout in order to predict the retention outcome of intent to stay. Twenty subscales measured these three domains. Please see the Appendix B for a copy of the 2004 survey.

In 2006, the organizational assessment was revised slightly to collect information related to the systems of care principles that were the focus for another project. The 2006 Organizational Assessment can also be found in the Appendix B. This second organizational assessment examined progress and compared performance on these domains over a two year period.

ii. **Distribute organizational health questionnaires to personnel at project sites.**

In 2004, WRRRP staff conducted organizational health assessments at each of the six sites. Survey administration and field work was conducted over a three month time period. A combined 178 survey responses were received from workers, supervisors, and administrators across sites.

In 2006, the second organizational assessment was conducted to determine progress towards goals and provide information for a mid-project correction. A total of 186 workers, supervisors and administrators from five sites completed the survey.

iii. **Facilitate focus groups with employees at various levels to collect information.**

In 2004, a total of 29 focus groups and interviews were conducted across the six sites, with 180 focus group participants. Project site staff visited Peoria and Casa Grande, Arizona; Jefferson and Mesa Counties, Colorado; and Rock Springs and Rawlins, Wyoming to conduct focus groups with staff at different levels and units. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the focus group protocol that was approved by the University of Denver Institutional Review Board.

In 2006, 169 staff members participated in 26 focus groups and interviews at five sites. The Rawlins site dropped out of the project in 2005. Using the same format, staff conducted focus groups with participants at different organizational levels and from a variety of units to fully sample the agency.

iv. **Analyze information from the organizational assessment.**

WRRRP analyzed information from the survey and focus groups and detailed these findings in comprehensive reports. Reports included community information such as demographics, state of the economy, etc. to provide contextual information for understanding the report findings. First, descriptive statistics were explored to assess performance on the various scales and provided key demographic information about the survey participants (e.g., position, education, age). Next, statistical tests of significance were conducted to assess those scales that predicted project outcomes such as burnout and intent to stay. Results are described later in this report.

v. **Assemble a report and present to the Advisory Committee and project sites.**

Each report was presented to the individual sites and to our Advisory Committee. The Organizational Assessment reports served as the starting point for the strategic planning process and offered important information about the agency’s organizational environment in order to customize intervention plans. Recruitment and Retention (R & R) teams consisting of staff from all levels of the child welfare agency were presented the Organizational Assessment. Project staff used a strategic planning process to help them determine the most salient issues from the reports, prioritize those issues, and then develop a strategic plan for addressing them. The strategic plan included trainings to be developed by the Butler Institute, as well as activities that could be accomplished by the R & R team. This purposeful process of
reciprocal responsibilities by both WRRRP staff and site team staff helped to create buy-in for the activities and allowed sustainability activities to immediately begin. Subsequent technical assistance meetings reviewed progress towards the strategic plan, addressed barriers, and adapted the strategic plan accordingly. After the second Organizational Assessment, a second strategic plan was created. In January of the project’s final year, the entire plan was again revisited and revised based upon new realities. Each report contains the following sections:

Introduction
Methods
Community and Agency Context
Structure
Community/Agency Characteristics
Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
Department and Division Initiatives
Baseline Data Summary
Methods
Recruitment
Selection/Review
Retention
Summary Findings
Recruitment
Selection
Training
Retention
Work Force Survey Summary Analysis
Introduction
Survey Results
Survey Comments
Focus Group Summary Analysis
Recruitment
Selection
Training
Retention
Next Steps
Appendices
Appendix A: Survey
Appendix B: Survey Results
Appendix C: Focus Group Format & Questions
Appendix D: Strategic Planning Process

**Cross-Site Summary for 2004 Organizational Health Assessment**

Analysis of the survey data cross sites by our Principle Investigator (six sites, 178 workers, supervisors and administrators) found:

- Significant predictors of burnout included:
  - Promotional opportunities
  - Child welfare stress (time)
  - Child welfare stress (worry)
• Significant predictors of job satisfaction included:
  o Promotional opportunities
  o Child welfare stress (time)
  o Child welfare stress (worry)
  o Self-efficacy
  o Motivation
  o Preparation for work
  o Clarity and coherence (within the organization)
• Significant predictors of Intent to Stay
  o Promotional opportunities
  o Motivation
• Conclusions drawn from the analysis:
  o Interventions aimed at increasing job satisfaction may be best targeted to:
    ▪ Workload and advancement opportunities
    ▪ Preparation for work
    ▪ Selection and supervision focused on motivation, self-efficacy, and client-focused concern.
    ▪ Clarity and coherence of mission and practice in the agency.
  o Ultimately, intent to stay is primarily driven by:
    ▪ Opportunities for advancement.
    ▪ Motivation for the work.

Findings cross-site were fairly consistent with other data and research regarding what impacts organizations’ capacity to recruit, select, train, and keep quality staff. Common issues that emerged included the need for:

• Creative, consistent recruitment that includes a realistic understanding of the work.
• A selection process that is structured and produces candidates that are qualified, capable and a good fit for the organization.
• Training that is relevant, timely, available and used in day-to-day work experiences.
• Opportunities for professional and career development.
• Supervision that is consistent, supportive, and competent.
• An organizational culture that is trusting and supportive.
• Clarity and coherence across all levels of staff, including a common understanding of the organization mission and vision.

Copies of all Organizational Assessment reports for 2004 and 2006 from each site can be found in Appendix B.

**Cross-Site Summary for 2006 Organizational Health Assessment**

In analyzing the 2006 data overall, our Principal Investigator found that job satisfaction is a powerful predictor of intent to stay. Predictors of burnout included child welfare stress – time, motivation, supervisory support and promotional opportunities. Significant predictors of job satisfaction included motivation, promotional opportunity and supervisory support. Significant predictors of intent to stay included promotional opportunity, supervisory support, clarity and coherence, supervisory competence, child welfare stress-time, motivation and community support.

Supervisory and administrative positions were compared to direct service staff. The only significant difference was in the area of child welfare stress – worry, which was experienced significantly less by
supervisory and administrative staff. Scales were also compared by length of service. When those employed “less than one year” were compared to “more than one year,” differences were found:

- Those with more than one year service have significantly HIGHER scores on child welfare stress – time.
- Those with more than one year service have significantly HIGHER scores on self-efficacy.

When comparing “less than two years” to “more than two years,” it was found:

- Those with greater than two years of service have significantly HIGHER self-efficacy scores.
- Those with greater than two years of service perceive significantly HIGHER community support.

It was found that both of these sets of findings hold true, whether the “time in current position” or “time in child welfare” variables were used.

From the survey, the following conclusions were made:

- The three retention outcomes (burnout, job satisfaction and intent to stay) are significantly related. Job satisfaction is the more powerful predictor of intent to stay.
- As in 2004, child welfare stress – time and lack of perceived promotional opportunities are predictors of burnout.
- Unlike 2004, supervisor support, supervisor competence, and motivation are predictors of burnout.
- Like 2004, promotional opportunities and motivation are predictors of job satisfaction.
- Unlike 2004, supervisor support is an important predictor of job satisfaction.
- Several predictors from 2004 are no longer significant predictors.
- Like 2004, promotional opportunities and motivation are significant predictors of intent to stay.
- Unlike 2004, there are several new predictors:
  - Supervisory support
  - Supervisory competence
  - Clarity and coherence
  - Community support
  - Child welfare stress – time
- Supervisor performance has increased in prominence in understanding retention outcomes in 2006.
- Child welfare stress – time and promotional opportunities remain important drivers of retention outcomes.
- Supervisors and administrators have significantly less child welfare stress related to worry.
- Workers with less than one year of experience feel that they were better prepared for the job than those with more experience.
- These workers report significantly less self-efficacy, but
- They also report less stress related to time, possibly because they are protected in their first year from a full workload.
- If the line is drawn at two years of service, it is evident that those with a greater length of service continue to have higher self efficacy scores, and
- They perceive strong community support, possibly because of stronger community relationships.
The themes from the 2006 Focus Groups were:

- Supervision was a significant strength, though a small minority of staff in each site had a less positive experience. Supervision was generally experienced as “on-demand” as opposed to regularly scheduled.
- Peer and team relationships were a strength.
- Workload, lack of resources, and system process issues were consistently identified as challenges.
- Participants at all sites identified that “family-friendly” or “flexible” environments were significant.
- In four or five sites, perception of working environments as being “family-friendly” or “flexible” improved from the 2004 assessment.

By combining the quantitative results with the focus groups, the following conclusions emerge:

- Positive changes have resulted over the past two years based on:
  - some positive shifts in scales
  - focus group data
- Highly rated scales are still high and lower rated scales are still low:
  - Organizational change and development is a slow, steady process.
- Supervision is a critical element to organizational support and change:
  - Pay attention to the minority of workers who are asking for more structure and better supervision.
  - Even good supervisors need to attend to how to serve those whose learning styles are different from their own.
  - Even though supervisors and administrators have “been there,” they do not experience the same level of stress related to worry in their current positions as do line staff.
- Most sites have not tackled proactive selection processes, though many have focused on the realistic job preview.
- Motivation comes with the worker, while self-efficacy develops over time.

**Comparison of 2004 and 2006 Data**

When 2004 and 2006 data were compared, findings regarding the lowest scales (2.5 on a 4 point scale) were the same: Community Support and Distributive Justice. Scales that were above the mean (3.0) were also consistent in both assessments. These included: Supervisory Support, Supervisory Competence, Child Welfare Stress – Time, Self-efficacy, Motivation, and Professional Sharing and Support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant changes in scales from 2004 to 2006 included:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>2004 Mean</td>
<td>2006 Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Welfare Stress-Time</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout/Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: all of these predictors are listed in descending order of significance.)
Goal 2. **Field test the Strategies Matrix Approach for Recruitment and Retention Training (SMARRT) Manual.**

a. Work with Advisory Committee to develop training strategies tailored to project sites based on organizational health assessment and best practices seen both inside and outside the field of child welfare.

In 2004 and 2006, the Organizational Assessment guided the strategic planning process for each site. The SMARRT Manual was used as a resource during the strategic planning sessions to inspire ideas and provide resources. Each site identified and prioritized goals and strategies to impact recruitment, selection, and retention. Site planning teams had regular conference calls/meetings with project staff to assess progress, accomplishments and barriers to implementation.

b. **Convene initial WRRRP Training Institute I.**

   i. Present training workshops on core knowledge and skills (e.g., university recruiting, entrance/exit interviews, fostering a mission-driven organization).

The Inaugural Institute, *Sights on the Summit*, was held January 26-27, 2005, in Denver. Speakers representing multiple perspectives, including academia, the child welfare system, government, and the corporate sector presented. The Institute included an evening session during which Arizona Governor Napolitano’s staff detailed Arizona’s plan for child welfare system reform. Sixty-two participants attended the Institute, with another twenty-five joining them in attendance at the evening session. Please see Appendix D for the conference brochure and schedule.

All Institute participants were asked to complete a training satisfaction survey for the overall conference and the individual workshops. The means of all ratings were over 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The plenary session was perceived as especially positive, with mean ratings over 3.8. The breakout sessions were also rated highly, with the highest rankings designated for the presenters (3.6 and above) and slightly lower rankings for the content being at the right level of difficulty (3.45). Comments included:

- Great facility, organization and overall presentation
- Overall, very good
- All great
- Super! Great conference!

Please see Appendix E for a summary of the Institute evaluation.

c. **Develop web-based modules on core knowledge-based content.**

This objective was deemed unfeasible due to the high cost of developing web-based training.

d. **Compile recruitment and retention strategies in a SMARRT Manual.**

   i. Assemble information and write rough draft.

The 134 page SMARRT manual includes research-based findings, as well as a wide range of experiential information and practical “how-to” information from published literature and internet sites both within the field of child welfare and beyond. Information collected in this review was intentionally interdisciplinary and drew from a wide range of professions to provide fresh, innovative thinking about the challenges of recruitment and retention in child welfare. The SMARRT Manual’s purpose was to give child welfare professionals practical hands-on tools and information, new ideas, and sufficient background information on complex topics to ask informed questions, to know where to turn for
additional resources, and to begin the process of implementing these strategies in their own agencies. The SMARRT Manual is organized into four domains: recruitment, selection, training, and retention. Within each domain, conditions or factors that affect that domain are presented, along with strategies for addressing that condition. The information is presented as a solution-focused guide so that agencies and organizations can begin addressing the issues that may inhibit recruitment, selection, training, and retention. The manual can be used in its entirety or by checking the table of contents for the particular condition affecting the agency and then going to that place in the manual to review the strategies that could impact that condition. It provides research and how-to information related to the strategy so readers can realistically implement an idea or know where to go to gather additional resources. Strategies within the SMARRT manual offer differing levels of empirical bases. Some are founded on rigorous academic research and are highly likely to be viable within the child welfare field. Other strategies come from research projects that are descriptive in nature rather than outcome-oriented. Another category of strategies includes those that are based upon real-life experiences or opinions and have not been tested in any kind of methodical fashion. An icon system indicating anecdotal, descriptive, or experimental research alerts the reader about the research rigor of a particular strategy to help make informed decisions about whether to employ the strategy. See Appendix A for a copy of the SMARRT manual.

**ii. Distribute to Advisory Committee and project sites for comment.**

The SMARRT manual was offered to project sites and the Advisory Committee for comment during the development process.

**iii. Finalize and distribute SMARRT Manual to project sites.**

All project sites received a hard copy and electronic version of the SMARRT manual. Further, it was distributed at grantee meetings, the States and Courts meetings, state conferences, and placed on the Child Welfare Information Gateway. The Children’s Bureau reported on the SMARRT Manual and included a link to download the full publication. Additionally, throughout the life of the project, we received requests for the manual from multiple states and agencies, including Alaska, Texas, Maine, and Florida. It is our understanding that Florida now provides the SMARRT manual on their website for easy reference and downloading.

**Goal 3. Implement training plans with project sites.**

**a. Convene quarterly videoconferences with Advisory Committee.**

Given that participation by the Advisory Committee was a voluntary activity, we chose to use their time more judiciously and held meetings twice per year rather than quarterly.

**b. Operationalize training plans at project sites.**

Upon completion of the strategic plans, project staff worked diligently with our sites to help in planning and implementation. We provided customized technical assistance and coaching for all sites to implement not just training, but all proposed interventions. Primary contact was through the bi-monthly R & R site team meetings, plus project staff were available for additional consultation.

We also developed and delivered customized training to meet our sites’ needs. All training projects are described later in this report.

**c. Convene second WRRRP Training Institute II.**
The *Scaling the Summit* Institute, held in Denver August 5-6, 2008, was a resounding success, with attendance by 165 people from throughout the U.S. Participants came from as far away as Alaska, Florida, Maine, and California and everywhere in-between. The *Scaling the Summit* Institute disseminated not just findings and products from our project, but also our fellow 2003 Recruitment and Retention grantees, and other researchers and practitioners from around the country. The Institute offered attendees one keynote address, 19 workshop break-out sessions for 10.5 hours of workshop break-out time, and facilitated action planning for teams, to help participants apply the knowledge and skills gathered at the Institute into a workable plan for implementing back at their agencies.

Findings from the *Scaling the Summit* Institute are presented here. Please see Appendix E for the full summary. Only a third of the total number of participants completed the overall conference evaluation. Of the 52 participants who completed the form, 98% rated the overall conference quality as good or excellent. More than 92% rated the overall variety of the session content as good or excellent. Participants were also asked about the specific categories related to the Institute. All mean ratings were over 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, with the items related to the Institute staff, Institute organization, and the registration process rated the highest, and items related to the on-campus lodging and the pre-Institute celebration rated the lowest. The highest rated items reflect the excellent job done by the Butler Institute staff in presenting the *Scaling the Summit* Institute.

A total of 49 participants completed the item on the evaluation rating their level of understanding/knowledge about the topics presented after participating in the institute. 59.2% reported that they had learned a good deal or learned a lot and had a much deeper understanding of the topics covered. 38.8% reported that they had learned a little more about the topics covered and 2.0% reported that they were already familiar with the topics covered.

A total of 44 participants completed the evaluation item rating the Action Planning sessions (labeled R.A.P.—*Research to Action to Practice* Sessions). Of those responding to the item, 13 attended the R.A.P. session. In rating the value of the R.A.P. session, 53.8% reported that the session was somewhat valuable, 30.8% reported the session as valuable and 15.4% reported it was highly valuable. A total of 12 of 13 participants reported that they created an action plan as a result of the R.A.P. session.

i. **Convene Advisory Committee at Training Institute.**

Because this was the last quarter of the WRRRP, it was decided to not convene the advisory committee at the *Scaling the Summit* Institute. We had received the Advisory Committee’s input during the Institute’s planning process and had also widely disseminated findings to them. All Advisory Committee members were invited to the conference and those who attended participated in sessions detailing the WRRRP projects and results.

ii. **Provide training workshops as indicated from strategic plan.**

Multiple curricula and corresponding classroom trainings were developed for the WRRRP as indicated by the strategic plans. Each training curriculum is described below.

*Putting the Pieces Together, Supervisor Core Curriculum.* Effective supervision spans three main areas (Administrative, Educational, and Supportive Supervision) that, while related, are also distinct. Each is an important component or piece of the bigger picture puzzle of child welfare supervision. All modules are competency-based, highly interactive and accommodate a variety of learning styles to maximize the learning experience. Each 3-day unit emphasizes self-reflection and application to the unique circumstances of each supervisor. This training was presented twice for the State of Wyoming and trained all Wyoming supervisors and managers. Later, it was made available to all sites. Additionally, the National Resource Center for
Organizational Improvement sponsored the Butler Institute to make this curriculum generic for all States. It was subsequently made available on the NRCOI website and has been widely disseminated to other venues. The curriculum package includes handouts, PowerPoint, and other electronic files.

**Making the Most of Supervision, Curriculum for Workers.** This workshop shows participants how to make the most out of the supervisory process through practical suggestions and strategies for supervision so the potential of supervision can be realized, thus improving outcomes to families, strengthening families, and ameliorating stress.

**Secondary Trauma Curriculum for Caseworkers.** Secondary trauma is inherent to child welfare work. This training, provided by national expert David Conrad, provided caseworkers with important information on secondary trauma, its impact, and strategies for addressing secondary trauma back at their own agencies.

**Advanced Secondary Trauma Curriculum** for supervisors. Child welfare work is emotional, stressful, and often draining leading to secondary trauma for child welfare professionals. This training helped supervisors learn skills to help their workers cope with the emotional toll of child welfare work. Using video vignettes with real supervisors and caseworkers describing situations resulting in secondary trauma, training participants strategized about ways to help workers cope with those situations.

**Interviewing Skills Curriculum** to educate a team of agency managers, supervisors and HR professionals on how to implement a competency-based approach to recruitment and selection of candidates. Note, this curriculum was written but never piloted due to the fundamental systems change required for the approach.

All curriculum and associated electronic files can be found in Appendix C.

Additionally, WRRRP staff provided customized training (non-curriculum based), specifically a video conference on the individual training needs assessment for Rock Springs supervisors and a cross-site teleconference on mentoring programs. Butler Institute staff scanned the child welfare environment to determine how other child welfare agencies structure their mentoring programs and then provided an information session on how to develop and implement their own mentoring programs.

During the project implementation phase, we interpreted this objective more broadly to include not just formal, classroom training, but any number of interventions designated in the strategic plan to address the issues brought forth by the organizational assessments. These interventions are described later in this report.

### iii. Conduct brainstorming sessions to further build upon SMARRT Manual.

WRRRP used a problem-solving approach to address issues brought forth in the organizational assessments that built upon strategies presented in the SMARRT Manual during the site strategic planning sessions. The strategic plan was revisited and revised during each bi-monthly phone call or in-person meeting. They served as road maps for WRRRP staff and the R & R team participants to guide the tasks and activities that ultimately led to the achievement of the strategic plan goals.

**Goal 4. Evaluate recruitment and retention training and effectiveness of strategies.**

a. Collect and assess recruitment and retention baseline data from project sites for project outcome measures and evaluation and to develop site-specific trainings.
Twice yearly, project site staff provided information to the WRRRP on recruitment and retention practices and quantitative information related to recruitment and retention. This objective informed the collection of outcome data which will be discussed in the Outcome Evaluation section. A copy of the semi-annual data gathering instrument can be found in Appendix A.

b. **Conduct formative evaluations of web-based training, Institute training workshops, and customized training workshops.**

All training curricula was reviewed by experts prior to delivery and analyzed for content, learning methodologies, and transfer potential. Modifications were made based upon this feedback as well as after the pilot training.

c. **Conduct training satisfaction surveys on all web-based training, Institute workshops, and customized training offered during the project period.**

Training delivery was evaluated for both trainee satisfaction and increase in awareness/knowledge/skill via participant self-assessment before/after participation. Additionally, transfer of learning evaluations were also conducted two-three months after the training to assess how much of the knowledge and skills learned at the training they were able to apply. All trainings received outstanding scores with all trainer-related questions scoring above 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and 100% of participants self assessing that their knowledge and skills had increased in the competency areas. A sampling of training evaluations that represent all workshops offered is presented next. Over the project period, all training evaluations were submitted in the semi-annual reports. Summary reports for the training evaluations can be found in Appendix E.

**Trainee Satisfaction Evaluation**

**Secondary Trauma Training**

For the Arizona Secondary Trauma training held January 30-31, 2007, mean response regarding trainer knowledge, preparation and relating to the group was 3.8 out of 4.00. Trainees also showed a knowledge gain in each of five identified competencies. 78% of participants in the three trainings reported learning as a result of the training.

As evidenced by the training evaluation form, participants were quite pleased with the secondary trauma training presented by David Conrad. In both Talavi and Casa Grande, questions about the trainer were rated between 3.67 and 3.9 on a 4.0 scale, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with the trainer and the content. Trainees, however were not optimistic that the agency would support the trainee or that the content was compatible with the agency philosophies as these items received scores ranging from 2.5 to 3.2.
Participants self-reported their knowledge/skill level before the training and then after using a 1–5 scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Talavi Before Rating Mean</th>
<th>Talavi After Rating Mean</th>
<th>Casa Grande Before Rating Mean</th>
<th>Casa Grande After Rating Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understands the difference between PTSD, burnout, vicarious trauma, and secondary trauma.</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Understands the role of resiliency and social support play in protecting ourselves from secondary trauma.</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Knows the unique risk factors for child protection professionals.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understands secondary trauma and the impact on the child welfare worker.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Knows appropriate personal and professional strategies to protect oneself from secondary trauma.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All competencies were scored higher after the training than before, indicating that participants believed they learned knowledge and skills at the training.

Participants’ satisfaction with the training was evidenced by a sampling of comments:

- “One of the best trainings I have had in years. The trainer was fabulous and has a tremendous amount of knowledge.”
- “Good training essential for retention issues.”
- “This was a very helpful training. It is so important for supervisors to be educated on how to help workers deal with trauma and everyday issues due to the fact that we as workers rely heavily on support from supervisors.”

**Evaluation for Supervisor Core Training**

*Putting the Pieces Together, Administrative Supervision Training (Module 1)*

*May 27, 2005 and August 18, 2005*

Overall, participants agreed that the biggest strengths of the training were that the trainer knew the subject area (mean 3.7) and that the trainer was well prepared and organized (mean 3.8). The statement that received the lowest score was “My agency will support me in using this training on the job.” However, all of the statements received an average score between agree (3) and strongly agree (4), indicating that participants were pleased with the trainer and the content of the training.

Participants also self-rated their knowledge related to ten competencies both before and after the training on a scale of 1–5 (1=weak, 5= strong). For every competency, participants reported that they learned a significant amount at the training. These results indicate that the training was effective. The
competency that had the greatest difference in the mean score before and after the training was “Develop self-awareness of one's own attitudes, needs, and behavior and its effect on relationships within the agency. They may be similar and different than the organization’s.” The competency that had the least difference in the mean score before and after the training was, “Able to creatively and effectively advocate for clients and staff within and outside the agency.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Before Mean</th>
<th>After Mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Communicate agency mission, vision, and philosophy.</td>
<td>3.5769</td>
<td>4.1346</td>
<td>.5577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop self-awareness of one's own attitudes, needs, and behavior and its effect on relationships within the agency. They may be similar or different than the organization's.</td>
<td>3.3725</td>
<td>4.1569</td>
<td>.7844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Able to apply organizational and management approaches and philosophies to self and the agency for maximum management effectiveness.</td>
<td>3.3137</td>
<td>4.0196</td>
<td>.7059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understand how to successfully transition from peer and worker to supervisor.</td>
<td>3.4400</td>
<td>4.1373</td>
<td>.6973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Able to creatively and effectively advocated for clients and staff within and outside the agency.</td>
<td>3.8000</td>
<td>4.2000</td>
<td>.4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has an awareness of and is able to utilize strategies that can facilitate the introduction and management of changes in the workplace.</td>
<td>3.2353</td>
<td>4.0588</td>
<td>.8235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Able to apply a system for ensuring accountability to stakeholders for agency performance.</td>
<td>3.0800</td>
<td>3.6600</td>
<td>.5800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Able to appropriately use data for decision-making and planning to ensure the appropriate focus on outcomes.</td>
<td>3.4314</td>
<td>4.0588</td>
<td>.6274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Able to participate in the recruitment, selection, and transition process.</td>
<td>3.4706</td>
<td>4.2745</td>
<td>.8039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Develop self-awareness of one's own attitudes, needs, and behavior and its effect on relationships within the agency. They may be similar and different than the organization's.</td>
<td>3.3529</td>
<td>4.1765</td>
<td>.8236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 87.8% (n=49) of the participants reported that they learned new knowledge and skills as a result of this training.

Educational Supervision Training (Module 2)
June 16, 2005 and September 29, 2005

Overall, participants agreed that the biggest strengths of the training were that the trainer knew the subject area (mean 3.7), was well prepared and organized (mean 3.74), and that the trainer related well to the group, and responded to concerns. The statement that received the lowest score was, “Subject
matter was at the right level” (mean 3.13) However, all of the statements received an average score between agree (3) and strongly agree (4), indicating that participants were pleased with the trainer and the content of the training.

**Competencies**

Participants also self-rated their knowledge related to ten competencies both before and after the training on a scale of 1-5 (1=weak, 5= strong). For every competency, participants reported that they learned a significant amount at the training. These results indicate that the training was effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Before Mean</th>
<th>After Mean</th>
<th>Percent of Participants who reported learning as a result of the training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understands and values diversity and different styles of perceiving, learning, communicating, and operating.</td>
<td>2.9592</td>
<td>4.2143</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Understands the value of a developmental approach to supervision and can adapt supervision style to worker's stage of development.</td>
<td>2.8980</td>
<td>4.2653</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Understands how to administer an Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) with workers.</td>
<td>1.8750</td>
<td>4.1250</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> This competency was added for the 9/29/05 training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Knows how to improve the transfer of learning from the classroom to the field.</td>
<td>2.8400</td>
<td>4.2400</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Understands the value and components of a mentoring program.</td>
<td>3.0980</td>
<td>4.2353</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Knows, can model, and teach necessary elements of statutes, rules, policies, assessment, decision making, case planning, and case process to staff to facilitate the best possible case outcomes.</td>
<td>3.3200</td>
<td>4.2353</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Able to provide constructive feedback.</td>
<td>3.2745</td>
<td>4.4510</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Able to apply coaching techniques to supervision situations.</td>
<td>3.1765</td>
<td>4.2941</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Knows and can recognize when a worker’s emotional responses and/or judgment interfere with the casework process and can empower the worker to identify and examine these issues.</td>
<td>3.2800</td>
<td>4.2200</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Knows the value and components of proactive, structured supervision.</td>
<td>2.9216</td>
<td>3.9412</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, 97.9% (n=48) of the participants in the training reported that they learned new knowledge and skills as a result of the training.

Supportive Supervision Training (Module 3)
July 22, 2005 and November 4, 2005

Overall, participants agreed that the biggest strengths of the training were that the trainer knew the subject area (mean 3.7) and that the trainer was well prepared and organized (mean 3.80). The two statements that received the lowest scores were, “Subject matter was at the right level,” (mean 3.3) and, “My agency will support me in using this training on the job” (mean 3.27). However, all of the statements received an average score between agree and strongly agree, indicating that participants were pleased with the trainer and the content of the training.

Competencies
Participants also self-rated their knowledge related to ten competencies both before and after the training on a scale of 1-5 (1=weak, 5= strong). For every competency, participants reported that they learned a significant amount at the training. These results indicate that the training was effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Before Mean</th>
<th>After Mean</th>
<th>% of Participants who reported learning as a result of the training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knows the value of supportive supervision.</td>
<td>3.2000</td>
<td>4.4875</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Knows how to motivate staff.</td>
<td>2.9625</td>
<td>4.2500</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Able to recognize secondary trauma in self and others and implements strategies to address it.</td>
<td>2.5000</td>
<td>4.2125</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Able to recognize burnout and recommend intervention to address it.</td>
<td>2.7750</td>
<td>4.1875</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Able to assess and improve team functioning.</td>
<td>2.7750</td>
<td>4.2875</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Able to identify and facilitate successful resolution of conflict.</td>
<td>2.6500</td>
<td>4.1250</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Able to apply strategies to increase the job satisfaction of workers and improve retention.</td>
<td>2.8500</td>
<td>4.3500</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 100% (n=41) of the participants in the training reported that they learned new knowledge and skills as a result of the training.

Advanced Secondary Trauma for Supervisors

The pilot training for the Advanced Secondary Trauma training for Supervisors was held June 28, 2006 in Grand Junction, Colorado with 13 participants. Trainees were asked to complete a satisfaction evaluation at the training’s conclusion. All responses regarding the trainer and the trainer content were positive (on a 4 point Likert scale) with mean scores ranging from 3.0 (trainer modeled cultural sensitivity) to 3.666 (trainer related well to the group). For the lowest rated items, ‘modeled cultural
sensitivity,” several other people indicated that this did not apply. The questions directed to the trainer’s ability were overall, slightly higher than the content related questions. Most importantly, participants reported a gain in knowledge and skills on the competencies taught to during the training:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Before Rating Mean</th>
<th>After Rating Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The supervisor will understand the components of secondary trauma and</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>its affect on their workers and themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The supervisor will know strategies to better manage secondary trauma.</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most comments were also quite positive, with the only negative ones related to insufficient time for the activities. One participant summed up the positive regard for the training, “This was a great training. I really feel I can use these techniques with my workers.”

**Making the Most of Supervision**

The pilot training of *Making the Most of Supervision* took place on July 18, 2006 in Rock Springs, Wyoming with 13 participants. Overall, trainees were quite satisfied with the trainer and content of the training. Trainer ratings ranged from 3.1 to 3.7 on a 4.0 Likert scale and ratings related to the content ranged from 3.2 to 3.6. Trainees especially thought the trainer knew the subject areas and related well to the group. Trainees were less certain that the training would help them do their job better (mean rating 3.16). Most importantly, trainees self-reported a knowledge/skills gain on the training’s competency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Before Rating Mean</th>
<th>After Rating Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The worker will know how to obtain effective supervision.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All comments on the evaluation were positive. For example, “I know more about effective supervision, I have not ever had a training in this area before.”

**Transfer Evaluation**

**Secondary Trauma Training**

We conducted a three-month follow-up to assess for transfer of learning (TOL). In the Wyoming Secondary Trauma training provided, 50% of participants responded to the TOL follow-up survey. While the overall response rate was a bit disappointing, the good news was that 100% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they were using knowledge and skills learned in the training on the job.

**Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors**

For the training, *Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors*, held in Grand Junction, Colorado, 12 invitations were sent and 8 people responded to the survey. Most participants were satisfied with the training overall but one person disagreed and was not satisfied. Five individuals (62.5%) have used the knowledge and skills from the training. Two persons (25%) were neutral and one person disagreed.
with the statement. Most individuals thought the training has had a positive impact, with 75% saying that the training has had a positive impact on how they manage secondary trauma. One person was neutral and the other person disagreed. Participants were less agreeable about whether it has had a positive impact on their activities. Only 3 persons (37.5%) agreed that it has had a positive impact, while 3 others were neutral and 2 persons (25%) disagreed with this statement. The agency has seemed to support efforts to apply knowledge and skills to the job, with 75% agreeing, one person (12.5%) strongly agreeing, and the remaining person neutral. For the training’s competencies, all participants thought they had applied the skills/knowledge to the job with the majority saying they had applied at least some of the knowledge/skills to the job.

Wyoming Supervisor Core Training Putting the Pieces Together

For the TOL follow-up survey, trainees were surveyed once about their transfer experience. Thus, TOL results were received from a total of 28 trainees for a TOL follow-up response rate of 47%. This explanation is necessary as the total number of trainees is substantially greater than the number of trainees who responded for the TOL follow-up survey. For the Wyoming Supervisor Core TOL follow-up survey, 75% of respondents agreed they were using skills and knowledge learned in the workplace; 18.8% were neutral and one person (6.2%) disagreed with the statement.

Making the Most of Supervision

For the training Making the Most of Supervision, held in Rock Springs, Wyoming, eleven invitations were sent to participate in the transfer survey but only 5 individuals responded to the survey for a response rate of 45%. For those that did respond, 100% agreed that they have used the knowledge and skills learned at the training. Three persons (50%) said that they can more effectively use supervision while two persons (40%) were neutral on this opinion. All persons said they have at least applied some of the skills (40% a great deal, 60% some) from the training to the job. Participants were less positive about the agency’s efforts to support them in applying the knowledge and skills. Only one person agreed that the agency supported him/her, while two persons (40%) were neutral and the other two persons disagreed with this statement.

Trainee System Symposium

All training system symposium participants were asked to respond to a follow-up transfer evaluation approximately four months following the symposium. Twenty-six responses were completed. The transfer evaluation results indicated a continued high regard for the symposium. Almost all participants (96.2%) were either very satisfied or quite satisfied overall with the symposium. Most importantly, 92.3% said they would use the knowledge and skills from the symposium. At least two-thirds of participants have either met with colleagues or in some other way communicated with their colleagues about the material learned at the symposium. Given the short time span since the symposium, participants have not noticed much of a difference in their training systems. But, 80% are confident their training systems will improve. Participants also indicated that they had applied the knowledge and skills learned at the symposium to the job either a great or deal or some (between 88% and 96%).

Final comments reflected the continuing regard participants had for the symposium:

- “Great job – really appreciated the opportunity to come together with key agency partners allowing us to hear information at the same time and develop a common language.
- “This was an EXCELLENT symposium, and the idea of having the university partner and upper management personnel was an excellent – created understanding in a way that would not have happened otherwise. Also really appreciated the networking with others. Thanks!
d. **Compare effectiveness of recruitment/retention strategies across project sites and against baseline data collected.**

Each site chose different interventions based upon their organizational assessment results and the unique characteristics of their agencies. Customized interventions were the hallmark of the WRRRP though there certainly were similarities in their intervention strategies. For example, multiple sites developed social committees to build morale. Also, multiple sites selected the opportunity to hold the secondary trauma trainings to address burnout issues. Because of their differences and the limited data, cross-site comparisons of intervention strategies would not have resulted in meaningful information and so were not conducted.

e. **Develop strategies for overcoming barriers interfering with implementation.**

Barriers to implementation were discussed at the bi-monthly R & R team meetings at each project site.

f. **Conduct on-going evaluation of training projects.**

All trainings were evaluated at the conclusion of the workshop and in a follow-up survey to assess transfer of learning (see above for these results).

**Goal 5. Disseminate products from the WRRRP.**

During the last half of the project, concerted efforts were made to disseminate products from the project. Our dissemination strategies were much broader than proposed in the grant and included a number of venues. These additional dissemination activities will be discussed after the planned goals and objectives.

a. **Revise and finalize the SMARRT Manual.**

The SMARRT manual was completed in 2005. See Appendix A.

b. **Publish the SMARRT Manual.**

Electronic versions of the SMARRT Manual have been made available on various websites including the Child Welfare Information Gateway and the Butler Institute for Families website. After a feature in Children’s Bureau Express, several states requested copies, including Texas, Alaska, Maine, and Florida. Also, whenever staff of the WRRRP made presentations, participants were informed of the availability of documents and resources from the project.

c. **Assemble a final evaluation report compiling the project processes and results.**

Submission of this report fulfills this objective.

d. **Publish the final report.**

The final report will be made available electronically on the Butler Institute for Families website.

e. **Convene the third WRRRP Training Institute III.**

Due to the level of effort and expense, the WRRRP held two institutes and one symposium for invited participants.
f. Publish and distribute training curricula resulting from project.

Since completion, all training curricula have been widely distributed. Dissemination occurred through presentations, direct requests, and via websites such as the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. The Supervisor Core Training, *Putting the Pieces Together*, developed as a result of this project, continues to be looked at as a model for supervision training. It has been widely distributed and many states could be using it in its entirety or pieces of it, but we have not made aware of this. We do know definitely that Colorado, Wyoming, Indiana, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Alaska are using this curriculum for their supervisor core training. Butler Institute also received requests to provide the curriculum to Nebraska, Rhode Island, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, Nevada, and the Institute for Human Services. To what extent these states are using the curriculum, we are not aware. We also recently became aware that parts of this training were also provided to Russia. Also, the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement made all curriculum-related files available on their website in September 2007 for anyone to download.

g. Publicize availability of web-based modules, SMARRT Manual, and training curricula.

Our resources and documents were broadly publicized and promoted at various events, conferences, and training workshops. Additionally, all documents resulting from the WRRRP were provided to the Child Welfare Information Gateway for dissemination to the broader child welfare community. All products were publicized during the many conference presentations made by WRRRP staff (see below).

Other Dissemination Efforts

Concerted efforts were made to widely disseminate the products produced as a result of the project. Project staff operated from a philosophy of sharing resources and an avoidance of ‘reinventing the wheel.’ Thus, project staff proactively and generously supplied project products to many state agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations. These disseminations efforts are described next.

- The organizational assessment tool was requested by staff from the Child Welfare League of America for use on a project and also to disseminate the tool to approximately 10 other organizations or agencies. Per Dr. English, “it is an excellent tool and I can see why others would want to use it.”
- A feature article in the Fall 2006 issue of the Children’s Bureau Express resulted in interest from the states of New York, Washington and Massachusetts about the products produced by the project. Items sent included assessment tools, the Arizona RJP video information and website, and the SMARRT manual.
- In Colorado, we provided project information and resources to the Latino Task Force and local county agencies.
- The WRRRP began working with the Colorado Administrative Review Division (ARD) in 2006 to develop and implement a caseworker reward and recognition program. As a part of their review work in the counties, ARD staff identify caseworkers who exemplify best practice. Monthly awards are given. Seven of the 12 awardees have been selected and honored for outstanding efforts by receiving scholarships to the Colorado statewide child welfare conference in June. Their directors and supervisors have been notified of the award and they will be publicly recognized at the conference. This program was a direct result of a workshop provided at the conference a year ago and is an example of the energy and enthusiasm that results when people begin to consider the power of reward and recognition as a retention tool.
The efforts started at the Training System Symposium by the state teams continue to be sustained. The symposium’s purpose was to move training from a marginalized position to a central place in the agency by focusing on the four domains from the Training System Assessment Guide developed by NRCOI. Region 5 brought together all of their states (whether they attended the symposium or not) for a special meeting in Chicago in October to focus on training systems. It is our understanding that project teams continue to work together to complete their action plans. The symposium opened up new relationships, partnerships, and venues for continuing to support and sustain training systems.

The Children’s Bureau asked the Butler Institute and the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement to facilitate the development of a keynote address by all the federal Recruitment & Retention grantees to be presented at the annual 2007 States and Courts Meeting in Washington D.C. The Butler Institute hosted a series of meetings to develop a keynote address highlighting the work of all eight federal grantees. We also collected brief summaries of each project and pulled them together in one handout that was disseminated to all 500 meeting participants. Dr. Cathryn Potter and Freda Bernotavicz presented this keynote address with a variety of multi-media clips to more vividly capture the grantees’ projects. Additionally, the Butler Institute presented at two breakout sessions on a more in-depth presentation of our project methodology and findings. Mary Berg, Jefferson County Child Welfare Division Director and a representative from one of our project sites, also participated in the breakout sessions. Approximately, 610 people attended these sessions and learned about challenges and intervention strategies regarding staff recruitment and retention.

The Scaling the Summit Institute highlighted the WRRRP and provided additional dissemination opportunities. Two workshops at the Institute showcased the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project. Charmaine Brittain from the Butler Institute and Mary Berg from Jefferson County Department of Human Services presented “The WRRRP Trek: Research Findings & Practical Strategies” which highlighted overall project findings and the implications for practice at our project site in Jefferson County, Colorado. Another workshop was presented by project site staff Christy Doak, Rock Springs Office, Department of Family Services, Ashleigh Sedbrooke, Jefferson County, Department of Human Services, and Jennifer B. White, Talavi Office, Arizona Department of Economic Security. Their workshop entitled, “Small Strategies for Big Results” focused on the WRRRP strategies implemented by them at their local sites that made a significant difference at their agencies in terms of improving the organizational climate.

Project approaches and products were disseminated throughout Colorado via the Scaling the Summit Institute. In an example of blended funding, for the Scaling the Summit Institute the Colorado Department of Human Services sponsored scholarships including expenses for over 40 Colorado child welfare agency staff. These participants could not have other otherwise attended this event. Butler Institute staff managed the reimbursements for the expenses related to the conference.

In 2008, Wyoming state management also decided to take the lessons learned from the Rock Springs site and apply them statewide. Top-level management of the Department of Family Services invited WRRRP staff to a planning meeting in January to determine how the process and information learned at the Rock Springs site could be adapted for state-wide implementation. WRRRP staff presented on our process and findings from the project. Butler Institute staff members Charmaine Brittain and Nancy McDaniel facilitated a day and a half retreat in Saratoga Springs, Wyoming, to bring the lessons of the WRRRP project and educate all Wyoming supervisors, managers, and administrators on recruitment and retention issues. Prior
to the meeting, supervisors were asked to assess their own units and offices in regards to these issues. They brought these issues to the retreat and then developed strategies to address them in a formal action plan. The retreat served multiple purposes, including facilitating staff cohesion, educating staff on recruitment and retention issues, turning a spotlight on actionable strategies to address these fundamental issues, and propelling our initiative at one Wyoming site into a statewide initiative.

- Findings from the WRRRP project highlighted the importance of supervisors for improved recruitment and retention but it was found in the course of conducting the project that there was a lack of resources and books specifically on child welfare supervision. This inspired the Principle Investigator, Dr. Cathryn Potter and Project Manager, Charmaine Brittain to propose a book project to Oxford University Press on child welfare supervision. They assembled an esteemed group of authors to explore the multiple dimensions of child welfare supervision in an edited book that was published by Oxford University Press in 2009 and is now available to child welfare agencies and universities as a resource for child welfare supervision. The book was written outside the auspices of this project but certainly inspired by the project findings and learnings. The full citation for this book is: Potter, C. & Brittain, C. (Eds.) (2009). Child welfare supervision. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Multiple conference presentations were made by WRRRP staff throughout the five year project and highlighted a variety of project activities including the Realistic Job Preview Video, organizational findings, supervisory training, and retention strategies. Twenty conference presentations were made:

1. Sights on the Summit Institute, Denver, CO 1/26-27/05
3. Arizona DES Leadership Conference, Phoenix, AZ 6/2/06
4. Arizona DES Leadership Conference, Phoenix, AZ 8/3/06
5. Kansas Statewide Supervisor Conference, Topeka, KS 4/12/07
6. 16th National Child Abuse & Neglect conference, Portland, OR 4/18/07
7. 16th National Child Abuse & Neglect Conference, Portland, OR 4/19/07
8. 16th National Child Abuse & Neglect Conference Portland, OR 4/19/07
10. Arizona Leadership Conference, Phoenix, AZ 7/8/07
15. Wyoming Manager/Supervisor Meeting, Saratoga Springs, WY 4/27-28/08
17. Scaling the Summit Institute, Denver, CO 8/4-5/08
18. NSDTA Conference, Atlanta, GA 9/23/08
Other Project Activities

We interpreted the training interventions broadly and also produced products deemed necessary by the project sites to achieve their recruitment and retention goals.

RJP Video

With the assistance of expert consultant, Dr. Michelle Graef, the WRRRP developed a process to customize the RJP video for each state while building statewide commitment and obtaining customized information to be presented in the video. The steps were:

1. Obtain support from state child welfare agency.
2. Convene Advisory Committee with wide geographic representation.
3. Conduct regional focus groups to collect information on topics that should be covered in the RJP.
4. Analyze focus group information to determine themes and present to Advisory Committee.
5. Develop a questionnaire with the information from the focus groups and Advisory Committee.
6. Invite all child welfare agency staff to participate in a survey to prioritize topics to be covered and information that should be transmitted in the video.
7. Analyze survey information and present to Advisory Committee for them to provide guidance to the script writer.
8. Develop script, or rather a loose outline of topics and themes to be covered in the RJP.
9. Present script to Advisory Committee and solicit approval.
10. Recruit potential cast from the Advisory Committee and child welfare agencies within the state.
11. Film video using current caseworkers and supervisors.
12. Produce rough cut.
13. Screen video with Advisory Committee and solicit feedback.
14. Pilot video and solicit feedback from various consumers (State staff, state and local committees and community groups).
15. Finalize video.
16. Disseminate video in multiple ways (for example, DVDs, website).
17. Develop an ongoing evaluation mechanism to assess video’s impact.

Full videos are saved to file folders in Appendix A.

Arizona piloted the process first and completed their Realistic Job Preview Video in May 2006 as a required part of Arizona’s child welfare job application process. The video received overwhelming endorsement from numerous individuals throughout Arizona government, including the Governor’s cabinet. It has received stellar reviews and is seen as an important tool for informing potential job applicants of the “reality” of child protection work. Arizona has also developed and implemented a
follow-up questionnaire to assess the video’s impact on the applicant’s decision to apply for the position. Arizona plans to compile and analyze the data on an ongoing basis. Their data is housed on the Arizona DES website and is not accessible to WRRRP staff for reporting purposes. Arizona’s video is available on the web at: http://www.azdes.gov/dcyf/cmdps/cps/cpsvideo.asp. Many people outside the state of Arizona have also viewed the video and offered overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Colorado completed and implemented its own RJP video during the 2007-2008 time period. Colorado used federal funds from PL 109-288 to support the development of the video beyond the support provided by the WRRRP, which was not sufficient to cover the expense. A professional audio-visual company was hired to write the script and film the video. Colorado used the process above and convened an advisory committee with wide geographic representation, held four focus groups across the state, conducted a survey with Colorado counties to gather information on what should be included in the video (n= 174), developed a script, and recruited workers to be interviewed in the video. WRRRP staff “premiered” the video at the annual Colorado Child Welfare conference in Keystone, Colorado in May 2008. A copy of the 2008 RJP video can be found in the final report package and the final 2009 version can be accessed online by going to: http://209.200.114.219/childwelfare/finalprogram768.html. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about the video both in Colorado and beyond. Multiple requests for copies of the video have also been received from outside the state, including Maine, Massachusetts, Wyoming, and Kansas.

CO RJP Evaluation Results

Butler Institute hosted the third party website that collected evaluation data regarding Colorado’s RJP and thus, can report on evaluation results for this video in this report. Potential applicants access the RJP via a number of venues: 1) the state CDHS website, 2) county websites, and 3) hard copy DVDs of the RJP. When applicants view the RJP through the websites, at the video’s conclusion, viewers are invited to participate in a brief survey about their reaction to the RJP and their opinions about a career in child welfare. After receiving approval from the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board, the Butler Institute began collecting data in December 2008. In the intervening 5 months, 558 people viewed the RJP and completed the survey. Highlights of the results are presented next.

Participants were asked about their knowledge of child welfare services before viewing the video. Respondents indicated a high level of knowledge, with 42% saying they were very knowledgeable and another 54% indicating they were somewhat knowledgeable. Only 4% said they were not knowledgeable. Participants were asked their opinion about whether it presented a realistic overview of child welfare work and 87% said yes and another 13% said somewhat. In regards to the question on whether the caseworker position was different than expected, 80% said no, 17% said somewhat and another 3% said yes. It is important to remember that while these percentages are low in terms of the number of people who said it was different, they represent more fully informed people who may now decide to proceed with, or halt, the application process. When even one person is dissuaded from continuing the application process that could result in a “bad” hire, the agency saves anywhere from $10,000–$35,000 in misguided hiring and training costs that would otherwise occur when the funds are spent on hiring and then that person quits within the first year. Some of the comments related to why the position seems different than originally perceived included:

- I was unaware that there would be more collaboration between service providers and less time with families.
- Just brought to light the amount of emotion involved with all parties in this position.
- Less time working with clients then I expected.
• Would be a very intense position. Would need an open and loving heart and nerves of steel at the same time.

Most significantly, participants were asked if they intended to apply for the caseworker position before watching the video. Seventy-eight percent said yes, they were intending to apply and 6% said no, while the balance of 16% said they were undecided. Next, participants were asked if they still intended to apply for the caseworker position after watching the video. Interestingly enough, the results were different than would be expected, as more people said they would apply, 84%, and less people were undecided, (11%) while only 5% said no they would no longer apply. When asked why they changed their intentions, comments included:

• I didn't have a high opinion of people who worked for child welfare. My opinion has been uplifted by the people interviewed in the video.
• The description of the role of caseworker was described in a straightforward manner, dually noted were the unpleasant and rewarding aspects of the position.
• The video kept saying it wasn’t a 9-5 job and how hard it was...making me wonder if it was much worse than they had portrayed on the video. I value my commitment to a job and to children and need some more information before I can make the decision to apply.
• I had an idea as to what the job entailed however, not to the extent that the video described. I think that the video went into depth and made me feel better about applying for the position.
• I don’t think this position is for me.
• I wasn’t aware that the job involved so much interaction with families in the field. I am grateful for having seen this video as I do not think I have the grit to make it through those tough in-home scenarios without completely breaking down. This video has saved me from wasting the county’s valuable time by applying and has given me great respect for existing caseworkers.

Speculation about why more applicants will apply rather than drop out of the application process include that the RJP actually provides information so applicants can make informed, positive decision to continue the application process and that some people who were a “no” before viewing the video changed their mind and are now a “yes”, or vice versa. So, while the movement may not be potent, it still has made a positive impact by informing potential applicants about the nature of child welfare work. Additionally, the RJP has been used as a public relations tool and shown to county commissioners and at community events such as job fairs.

Training System Symposium

With the Children’s Bureau approval, the WRRRP and the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement, Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine joined forces to deliver a Training System Symposium at the University of Denver August 22-25, 2006. This event grew out of an idea to bring states together to improve their supervisor training systems. During discussion with project staff and the NRCOI, it quickly became evident that supervisor training was no panacea for all that ails most training systems. Thus, the idea morphed into the opportunity to deliver a symposium focused on training systems. Sponsored by the Children’s Bureau, this event assisted states who were looking to improve their performance on the training systemic factor during the next round of Children and Family Service Reviews (CFSR). The symposium offered a perfect opportunity to disseminate grant products and most importantly, elevate the caliber of child welfare training in multiple states that will in turn, ultimately improve recruitment and retention.

Each state sent three representatives: an agency executive with fiscal responsibility for the state’s child welfare training program; the state’s training manager; and a representative from a University partner.
Four other states that represented components of a model training system, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Utah, and Colorado, were also invited to discuss the successes and challenges of their own state systems. All states from the Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project, Colorado, Wyoming, and Arizona, attended the event. Other states that attended the event were:

- California
- District of Columbia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Iowa
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- New Jersey
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- Rhode Island
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Washington
- Wisconsin

The goal of this symposium was to bring together leaders in child welfare training and provide opportunities for them to confer about quality training systems with peers from other states and facilitators with years of experience both in child welfare and in training. The symposium was designed to be an interactive, working event; participants were frequently asked to reflect on how the information presented applied to their own system. Throughout this symposium, speakers and participants shared strategies, tools, practical examples and approaches proven to help child welfare agencies ensure that their training system supports their agency’s mission and articulated practice model.

Major topic areas covered during the symposium included:

- The state’s role in the CFSR process
- Major components of the training system
- Assessment of the state’s training system using the Training System Assessment Guide
- Strategies for overcoming barriers
- Training evaluation
- Effective curriculum
- Transfer of learning
- Action Planning for training system improvement

Material related to training and training systems was distributed during the event including the Supervisor Core Series, *Putting the Pieces Together* (a product of the Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project).

Qualitative and quantitative feedback from participants indicated that they found the symposium very helpful, energizing and informative-- a valuable learning experience which included positive networking, resource sharing and opportunities to engage in very useful discussions and brainstorming on successful ways to implement an efficient training system. Participants commented that having the training managers, executive decision makers, and university partners together, instead of just the training managers, will facilitate needed changes and improvements in their training system and will enhance coordination with other administrative systems. Participants also reported an increased awareness of the centrality of training to helping an agency achieve its mission, as well as the need to proactively align training with practice by continually asking... ‘what is the practice model (we’re training to...)?’
Process Outcomes for WRRRP Training

Project site personnel from the management, supervisory, and line staff levels were trained during the project period. In the original grant proposal, we projected the number of staff to be trained over the five year project. The proposed number of trainees and the actual numbers are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Project</th>
<th>Proposed Number of Staff Trained</th>
<th>Actual Number of Staff Trained</th>
<th>Number of hours Trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRRRP Training Institutes</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based Training Modules</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized Training</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Coaching/ Technical Assistance</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>640 people</td>
<td>1788 people</td>
<td>749 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the actual number of staff trained as a result of the project is nearly three times what was projected in the grant proposal. Though, it should be mentioned that the actual number of people trained does include duplications (for example, technical assistance may have been provided multiple times to the same team members).

Project Site Achievements

Over the course of the five year Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project, our project sites achieved many accomplishments above and beyond the intervention strategies proposed in the original grant proposal. Early on, we recognized that training interventions were not sufficient and expanded the project’s scope using the organizational assessments as the launching pad for understanding the unique aspects of our individual sites. Project site R & R teams then developed their strategic plans to address those issues deemed relevant to them that included both training interventions and other strategies. Individual project site accomplishments are impressive and are presented here as summary of all those myriad activities accomplished by our project sites with the assistance of WRRRP staff.

Casa Grande Office, Arizona

- Full organizational assessments were conducted in 2004 and 2006 and detail issues related to recruitment, selection, training, and retention.
- Multiple strategic planning sessions were held with the WRRRP committee representing all levels in the agency, from case aide to administrator. The sessions planned for strategies related to recruitment and retention, then monitored implementation over the course of the project.
- The office participated in the production and implementation of the statewide Realistic Job Preview video, which is now being used to recruit staff.
• Strides have been made to start a mentoring program. Staff participated in a mentoring teleconference and they now engage in mentoring of new workers.
• Staff were trained by secondary trauma expert David Conrad to address secondary trauma issues in the trainings Secondary Trauma for Caseworkers and Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors. Technical assistance around secondary trauma was also provided. The university will continue to contract with David Conrad.
• A social committee was formed and was in operation to facilitate staff connections and cohesion. This group has sponsored potlucks, contests, and other social activities.
• The Casa Grande office was provided with interview questions from another site to improve their interviewing process. They will also be participating in statewide new interview protocol.
• There has been increased attention to the importance of supervision and the “little things” that can be done to retain people.
• The office has developed a new worker orientation plan for each individual unit specific to the Casa Grande office.
• Supervisory circles are used to help facilitate better supervision.
• Line staff now participate in the interviewing process.
• Casa Grande staff participated in the two institutes held by the Butler Institute in Denver.
• Some local recruitment activities were conducted, including attendance and presentations at job fairs and community colleges. Also, the office now advertises in rural newspapers to increase the recruiting pool.
• The project has dovetailed with the current collaboration with Cornerstone for Kids to address recruitment & retention efforts on a statewide basis. This effort addresses workforce issues more broadly.

Jefferson County, Colorado

• Full organizational assessments were conducted in 2004 and 2006 and detail workplace concerns in the four target areas: recruitment, selection, training, and retention.
• Multiple strategic planning sessions were held with the WRRRP committee, representing all levels in the agency from case aide to division director. Additional representation from Human Resources and the Department of Human Services joined these efforts. Over time, committee participants moved in and out of participation so there was a fuller cross-section of members. The sessions planned for strategies related to recruitment and retention, then monitored implementation over the course of the project.
• The 2004 organization assessment uncovered serious organizational fear-based culture issues that threatened the overall implementation of the project. These issues were addressed through an additional effort that blended county funds with the project to hire an organizational consultant. Jefferson County managers and supervisors participated in multiple organizational development sessions to address these deeply-held beliefs and change the overall organizational culture from a compliance-based agency to one that promotes best practice.
• Out of the organizational assessment work a Division-wide strategic plan was developed to clarify the agency mission, vision, values and strategic direction that continues to be implemented and updated regularly.
• Jefferson County staff fully participated in the development of Colorado’s Realistic Job Preview video. Their staff served on the advisory committee, participated in focus groups, completed the online survey, and then hosted the filming of the video. Jefferson County provided the facilities
A schematic of the recruiting process was developed to understand the steps and amount of each time required for each step in the process. This helped to determine where time savers could be made to expedite the hiring process.

A local recruitment plan was developed to increase the applicant pool and includes specific targets for recruitment of diverse staff, e.g., advertising in Hispanic newspapers and radio stations.

Pre-vacancy positions are used to reduce vacancy time that contributes to an increase in workload by distributing cases to existing caseworkers. Several positions are assigned to specific units and when positions become open, the persons in these positions are ready to assume job responsibilities. These positions are also used to transition staff who maybe retiring or temporarily out on FMLA.

The interview process was assessed and a more structured and consistent approach was developed, with specific interview questions and corresponding suggested responses. This document has also been widely disseminated to other project sites. New questions were added to complement the video.

A more formalized approach to on-the-job training is now offered regularly at Jefferson County with a standardized curriculum, learning contract, and evaluation process.

All Jefferson County Human Services Department staff are now required to complete 16 hours of continuing education every year, exceeding state requirements.

Efforts were made to address work-life balance and customer service through formalized Human Services policies on flexible working hours (e.g., working 4 days for 10 hours each day) and offering part-time positions for some employees. Additionally, a tele-working policy was developed so that employees, when appropriate, could work from home. A committee met for several months to develop the policies and procedures that were later adopted Department-wide.

A communication plan was developed to facilitate communication in the Division of 185 employees. It details multiple ways of communicating various items and the responsibility for each.

Committee members developed a reward and recognition program with multiple strategies to address providing more recognition to staff as a tool to assist with retention. A separate committee met over several months to develop a detailed plan drawing upon a variety of mechanisms and strategies. This plan continues to be implemented.

Staff were trained by secondary trauma expert David Conrad to address secondary trauma issues in the trainings Secondary Trauma for Caseworkers and Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors. Technical assistance around secondary trauma was also provided. It should also be noted that six Jefferson County staff volunteered to “tell their stories” on camera and these video vignettes are now used in the Advanced training.

Components of the Making the Most of Supervision have been integrated into the Jeffco On-the-Job training.

The first ever all Supervisor Retreat was developed to provide an opportunity for a more consistent approach to supervision as well as to build cohesion. This has now become an annual
event. Additionally, supervisors have created their own weekly meeting to continue these efforts.

- Supervisors have adopted a philosophy of supervisory practice to build a more consistent approach to supervision across the agency. The managers followed suit and developed a consistent management and leadership philosophy for the Division.
- Efforts were made to focus on caseworker safety, looking at a variety of strategies in a separate committee and with administration. A collaboration between the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department and CYF was established in order to provide safety training for all CYF staff. This training is now being offered through the department in all divisions.
- Workload issues were studied to understand the root causes of workload stress. Jefferson County contracted with another agency to conduct a formal workload study that then informed interventions and changes in agency structure. Technology (laptops and digital pens) has been implemented to provide tools to reduce the time and duplication of documentation and paperwork and in order to increase caseworker time spent with families.
- A more formalized student internship program with the local MSW and BSW programs is now in place to facilitate student internships and has grown in capacity.
- Staff from the Jefferson County office attended the two institutes on recruitment and retention issues held by Butler Institute in Denver in 2005 and 2008. Two staff members also presented Jefferson County’s approaches to conference attendees at two conference sessions.
- Jefferson County participated in the project site grant application meetings in Washington D.C. and assisted in presentations.
- Lead caseworker positions were added under each unit supervisor to provide promotional opportunities for staff.
- The Training and Volunteer Coordinator positions that started from the Systems of Care grant have been hired as full-time ongoing positions in CYF to continue their role to support the Division.

Mesa County, Colorado

- Full organizational assessments were conducted in 2004 and 2006 and detail workplace concerns in the four target areas: recruitment, selection, training, and retention.
- Multiple strategic planning sessions were held with the WRRRP committee representing all levels in the agency, from case aide to division director. Additional representation from Human Resources joined these efforts. Over time, committee participants moved in and out of participation so there was a fuller cross-section of members. The sessions planned for strategies related to recruitment and retention, then monitored implementation over the course of the project.
- Out of the organizational assessment work a Division-wide strategic plan was developed to clarify the agency mission, vision, values and strategic direction that continues to be implemented and updated regularly.
- Fill-ahead positions were reinstituted after being put on hold due to budgetary limitations. Fill-ahead positions are used to reduce vacancy time, which contributes to an increase in workload by distributing cases to existing caseworkers. These positions are also used to transition staff who may be retiring or temporarily out on FMLA.
A more formalized approach to on-the-job training (OJT) is now offered regularly at Mesa County with a standardized curriculum and process. The WRRRP project was able to provide Wyoming’s OJT manual and this helped Mesa County develop their own manual.

Staff were trained by secondary trauma expert David Conrad to address secondary trauma issues in the trainings *Secondary Trauma for Caseworkers* and *Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors*. Technical assistance around secondary trauma was also provided.

Efforts have been made to develop a more consistent approach to practice and supervision. Supervisors held a retreat and have initiated other activities such as more regular meetings to address these issues.

Workload issues were designated as a major contributor to work-life stress. The WRRRP committee sought to understand the reasons behind this through information-gathering at the unit level and then devised solutions. All units were asked to respond to open-ended questions about the reasons for workload stress and then suggest potential solutions. This is an ongoing issue that will continue to be addressed.

The Division now has a more collaborative relationship with Human Resources. Representatives from Human Resources participated on the WRRRP committee.

The Division is now more actively participating in the County’s wellness program to address work stress issues.

“Lunch and Learn” events were reinstated to provide continuous learning opportunities for staff.

Mesa County benefitted from various resources provided by WRRRP project staff over the years, such as the provision of Wyoming’s OJT manual, interview questions, structured decision-making models, flex-time and tele-working policies, National Resource Center information, and documents related to change management.

Mesa County is fully utilizing the Realistic Job Preview video as a recruiting tool.

The FUN bunch, a social committee, was formed to boost morale and organize social activities such as potlucks and holiday parties.

Staff from the Mesa County office attended the two institutes on recruitment and retention issues held by Butler Institute in Denver in 2005 and 2008. Two staff members also presented Mesa County approaches to conference attendees at two conference sessions.

**Rock Springs, Wyoming**

- Full organizational assessments were conducted in 2004 and 2006 and detail issues related to recruitment, selection, training, and retention.
- Multiple strategic planning sessions were held with the WRRRP committee representing all levels in the agency, from case aide to manager. The sessions planned for strategies related to recruitment and retention, then monitored implementation over the course of the project.
- A local recruitment plan was developed to supplement central office recruitment. Whenever an opening becomes available, staff use the plan to disseminate information.
- The office has adopted a more structured approach to interviewing using the materials provided by the WRRRP.
- A “realistic” recruitment brochure was developed for the Rock Springs office to disseminate and contains both the pros and cons of working in Sweetwater County.
- Efforts were made to start a mentoring program. Staff participated in a mentoring teleconference.
• Staff were trained by secondary trauma expert David Conrad to address secondary trauma issues in the trainings Secondary Trauma for Caseworkers and Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors. Technical assistance around secondary trauma was also provided.
• Staff participating in the training, Making the Most of Supervision.
• Staff were trained on the use of individual training needs assessments and are now implementing them to assess ongoing training needs.
• Rock Springs managers and supervisors participated in the customized Supervisor Core training, Putting the Pieces Together. This series was offered twice and all Wyoming supervisors and managers were trained. The curriculum has been adopted by the state for future supervisor core training.
• Supervisors now meet daily to discuss cases, case assignment, and workload with the goal of providing a more consistent supervisory experience for all workers.
• The social committee, the Happy Campers, facilitates staff connections and cohesion and has done much to improve morale at the agency. Happy Campers has sponsored events such as a Super Bowl pool, potlucks, bingo games, and food drives.
• Workload issues were studied to understand the root causes of workload stress. Staff were surveyed and then these issues were explored in subsequent strategy sessions.
• A connection was established between the social work program at the University of Wyoming and the Rock Springs office to facilitate student internships.
• When workers do leave, exit interviews are now conducted to determine the reasons for the departure. Supervisors will also start conducting ‘stay’ interviews to determine why workers stay at the Rock Springs office despite other, more lucrative opportunities.
• Staff continue to work on a more formalized On-the-Job training program. Progress has been made and staff will continue to work on this program. As part of this effort, a mock case file was developed to provide a model for new workers.
• Staff from the Rock Springs office attended the two institutes on recruitment and retention issues held by Butler Institute in Denver in 2005 and 2008.
• The Rock Springs office has not had a caseworker vacancy since summer 2007 (as of September 2008).
• Rock Springs supervisor and manager participated in the supervisor core training, Putting the Pieces Together.
• The state central office has made recruitment and retention a central issue for the state. The Butler Institute facilitated a meeting with all central administration staff, supervisors, and managers throughout the state to specifically address recruitment and retention issues. Action plans were developed for each local site.

Talavi Office, Phoenix, Arizona

• Full organizational assessments were conducted in 2004 and 2006 and detail issues related to recruitment, selection, training, and retention.
• Multiple strategic planning sessions were held with the WRRRP committee representing all levels in the agency from case aide to administrator. The sessions planned for strategies related to recruitment and retention then monitored implementation over the course of the project.
• The Talavi office participated in the production and implementation of statewide Realistic Job Preview Video. This video is used as a screening tool to inform applicants about a position in
child welfare and has prevented persons from taking positions that they are ultimately not suited for, thus saving the agency money and effort.

- Efforts were made to start a mentoring program. Staff participated in a mentoring teleconference. Mentoring and job shadowing continue to be a priority.
- Staff were trained by secondary trauma expert David Conrad to address secondary trauma issues in the training Advanced Secondary Trauma Training for Supervisors. Technical assistance around secondary trauma was also provided.
- A social committee formed and is now in operation to facilitate staff connections and cohesion. A contest was held and the winning name for the committee is the “SCREAM TEAM” (Social Committee to Raise Employee Attitude and Morale). The Team has sponsored potlucks, contests, and other social activities. The group also sponsors “Coffee Talk” on the last Friday of every month to bring staff together.
- To help combat secondary trauma and foster good physical and mental health, the office now sponsors ‘massage days’ when a masseuse offers chair massages for a nominal amount.
- The office is planning a retreat day for staff as a result of the project and this is now supported by the District Office.
- Talavi Talk, the office newsletter, was developed to facilitate communication both in and outside the agency. The monthly newsletter contains practice information, policy updates, and news about staff members. Other offices throughout the state will be replicating this newsletter.
- Staff have instigated various methods for improving recognition, including staff “shout-outs” inside the agency as well as in the newsletter.
- Improved connections between the Talavi office and the central administration office have occurred. Talavi now has a central office directory that delineates persons and roles.
- The project has dovetailed with the current collaboration with Cornerstone for Kids to address recruitment and retention efforts on a statewide basis. This effort addresses workforce issues more broadly and will continue into the future.
- Talavi office staff attended the two Recruitment & Retention institutes held by the Butler Institute for Families in Denver in 2005 and 2008.

After reviewing these many accomplishments, it is clear that many of these interventions were initiated and fulfilled by the project site R & R team members. WRRRP staff provided support as needed for these interventions, but the project sites assumed the main responsibility for implementing these interventions as designated in their strategic plans. Our approach was purposeful, that was to empower the project sites to take ownership of their recruitment and retention strategies, thus increasing the chances that efforts would be sustained beyond the project period.

**Outcome Evaluation**

Over the course of the five year project, data was collected from each site and detailed recruitment and retention practices used and provided quantitative information on recruitment efforts and agency turnover. The next section aggregates these data to assess the overall project outcomes.

**Quantitative Information from Site Data Collection**

**Recruitment, Selection and Retention Data Findings**

To address the goal to increase retention among qualified workers and supervisors in Colorado, Arizona, Idaho, and Wyoming, data were gathered by sites and sent to Butler Institute for review every six
months beginning in summer 2004. Initially, the sites’ methods of gathering information pertaining to recruitment, selection and retention were inconsistent. Data tracking improved greatly over time however, suggesting positive outcomes related to improved data tracking of positions. Data were available for all except one site at the final measurement. Data from the previous time period was used for the missing final data for the one site. Please see Appendix A for the data-gathering instrument used.

**Recruitment**

Agencies added an average of 2.2 recruitment techniques since baseline and reported using an **average of 6.4 out of 10 recruitment practices** at the end of the grant period. Among the techniques added over time were newspaper ads, citywide job fairs, Website ads on agency sites, trade journals, other newsletters, and realistic job previews. At baseline, no sites used realistic job previews, but by the end of the grant, three of the five sites had adopted this strategy. **Four out of five agencies reported having a partnership with a university social work program** at the final measurement. One partnership was newly established since baseline. Agencies reported having an average of 3.6 out of 5 staff recruitment processes in place for social work programs at the most recent survey (e.g., processes like internships and field placements). At the final measurement, two of the five sites provide staff with paid work time to attend classes, internships, and to attend to coursework.

**Selection**

In general, numbers of supervisor, caseworker and case aide applications for employment decreased from baseline to the most recent measurement. It is unclear whether this is due to a lack of interest or knowledge of open positions or the lack of vacant positions. Correspondingly, the number of interviews across positions decreased by virtue of having/requiring fewer applicants. These numbers did vary quite a bit across the survey points, however. Supervisor positions were vacant on average between 1 to 2 months, but were typically not vacant often over the measurement periods. Caseworker positions tended to be vacant longer at later measurements compared to baseline. These positions were open for an average of two months. Vacancy rates for case aide position were low and the average length of vacancies was about a month and a half. In general, hiring, across positions, did not increase over time either for internally or externally offered jobs.

Agencies used an average of 2.8 out of 8 potential selection techniques, favoring group interviews and pre-selected interview questions over assessment and testing. Use increased by less than one technique over time. Agencies tended to use all of the background check types available to them (average of 7.4). One agency added a background check technique from baseline to the most recent measure. Agencies used an average of 3.2 out of 4 orientation techniques and had an average increase of one technique over time.

**Retention**

The number and fill rates of existing positions were fairly consistent over time. Retention among Case Aide positions varied the most. Agencies supported an average of 8 supervisor, 43 caseworker, and 5 case aide positions, however this ranged a great deal across agencies. Across the grant period, supervisor positions were, on average, filled 94% of the time, caseworker positions were 86% filled and case aide positions were filled 76% of the time. These figures increased slightly when averaging only the three time points of the grant. Rates of involuntary terminations were low on average, and they decreased in number over time for all agencies. Agencies did not typically have a required exit interview procedure in place. At the end of the grant period, two of the five agencies had formalized the use of an exit interview.
As intended, retention rates increased over the grant period: **3% increase for supervisors, 9% for caseworkers and 21% for Case Aide positions**, suggesting a positive impact of grant activities on retention. The chart below shows the retention rate at each time point for supervisor, caseworker, and case aide positions over time.

**Retention Rates among Supervisors, Caseworkers and Case Aides**

![Retention Rates Chart]

**Qualitative Information from Stakeholder Interviews**

As part of the outcome evaluation in the winter of 2009, Butler Institute evaluation staff conducted interviews with many of the key stakeholders to provide important contextual information and feedback from the people who were most involved in the WRRRP. These stakeholders were from each of the different sites of the project: Jefferson County, Colorado, Mesa County, Colorado, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Talavi, Arizona, and Casa Grande, Arizona. Interviews were also held with the state contacts for the project from Colorado, Wyoming, and Arizona. A total of 11 interviews were held, the majority over the phone, though two of the interviews were done by email. These stakeholders were chosen to be interviewed because they each played a key role in the effectiveness and implementation of the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project in their area. Eight questions were asked to the interviewees to ascertain their views of the overall success of the project. The interview questions were:

1. What were the major successes of the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project?
2. What were the major challenges of the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project?
3. What have been some of the confounding issues that have had an impact on implementation of the project?
4. What lessons were learned as a result of the project?
5. What did the Butler Institute do well? What could the Butler Institute have done differently to support you better?
6. How could the overall project be improved to provide better technical assistance and consultation?
7. What else could we have done to have increased commitment to the project?
What has been the most influential factor affecting the retention rate?

A summary of the stakeholder answers to these questions follows below.

**Major successes of the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project**

Stakeholder answers to this question ranged from very site-specific to addressing the project overall, yet through each of the interviews some common themes emerged. In both the answers from each of the Colorado and Arizona stakeholders, the creation of the Realistic Job Preview video was mentioned as a key success of the project. Five interviewees mentioned the improved retention rate of child welfare workers in their region as one of the major successes of the project. Several also mentioned that their interviewing practices had improved as a result of the project, highlighting the impact of WRRRP not only on retention, but on recruitment practices as well. Another success that several of the stakeholders highlighted was the improvement in staff morale as a result of the project. Better connections were made between staff members, and cohesion of the staff improved through changes in organizational culture. Another success that was consistently mentioned was the training that was provided for supervisors and workers as a result of the project. As is seen through these top answers, the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project saw success in each of its key areas: recruitment, selection, training, and retention. Other successes of the project that were mentioned were:

- Better dissemination of ideas throughout the state,
- Development of pre-vacancy positions,
- Resources that were made available,
- New clarity of mission and vision,
- Learning to identify the needs of workers within the office,
- Improvement in leadership,
- Sustaining the project over time, and
- The Scaling the Summit Conference.

Importantly, several stakeholders also mentioned that the project has worked as a stepping stone for them to address other issues within their agencies, and that they have been able to carry on the work of the project even though it is now over.

**Major challenges of the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project**

Overwhelmingly, the most common response to this question was that the project was hard to sustain over such a long period of time. Most stakeholders thought that it was important for the project to run for a long time, but that it was a challenge to keep up the momentum, because day-to-day work gets in the way, along with the workloads of busy staff and high turnover rates within the project. Also, one interviewee mentioned that the length of the project meant that many steps in the project seemed to get put on the backburner, as they were merely supposed to be completed before the end of the five years. Another major challenge of the project mentioned by several of the respondents was the issue of leadership. It was noted that if the right people are not at the table, or if they are not fully committed to the project, it takes much longer to implement any real kind of change. The need for greater support from management was seen as an important factor in the success of the grant. Some respondents also noted that it was a challenge to get buy-in from their agencies for long-term change. It was hard to develop support for projects that would not immediately impact the workers. Communication was also mentioned by a couple of interviewees as a challenge, as trying to communicate change across the state was sometimes inefficient or ineffective. Along this same vein, it was noted that it was difficult to try to disseminate the ideas and products of the WRRRP across the state, which was ultimately desired. Distance was also cited as a challenge, as one stakeholder noted that it would have been nice to have
more in-person visits, rather than just phone calls. Another found it a challenge to be able to directly link the data collected in her county to a measurable impact on retention. Other challenges mentioned included: relating effectively to diverse county needs, financial issues, and making sure that state attention was not diverted away from the project.

Confounding issues that have had an impact on implementation of the project

Implementing a project as large as the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project is bound to have some issues which impact its progress. For the key stakeholder respondents, the main issue discussed as impacting the implementation of the project was communication. Because of the many different partners in this project, communication between them was an important component. Not only did respondents find that communication between stakeholders in individual agencies play a role, but the need for adequate communication between state and agency levels also had an impact. Another factor that respondents found to be difficult was that many found it hard to get buy-in for the project from people in their agencies. Not only was it hard to get people involved in the project, it was sometimes difficult to even get people to respond to surveys. Respondents also struggled with the fact that there were not enough people involved in the project to get everything done, and had to work hard to maintain commitment when change did not happen as quickly as it was desired or needed. Differing levels of commitment to the project among the committee members themselves also presented real challenges to implementation, as not all members voluntarily committed to the project, but rather were assigned to it after leadership changes. These were critical factors to the success of the project, and ones which the stakeholders worked very hard to overcome. Turnover rates also impacted the project, especially turnover within the committee itself, and in leadership positions at the agency and state levels as well. With turnover, stakeholders found it difficult to maintain links and commitment to the project, especially in the midst of changing policies and structures at the state level. Other issues that were mentioned as impacting implementation included differing understanding of what change is needed, lack of worker accountability for their own learning, and time.

Lessons learned as a result of the project

Many significant lessons were learned by the respondents as a result of the project. The one lesson that was mentioned the most often was learning that leadership does not always have the right answers, so it is really important to hear from line staff, instead of assuming that you know what it is that they need. Hearing from people in all areas of the spectrum is key to recruiting, developing, and retaining a competent child welfare workforce. It was also mentioned several times, however, that leadership within an organization is key to its success and leadership’s commitment to recruitment and retention is very important. Many respondents also mentioned that they learned that supervisors are truly the most important factor in retention. Though you can’t always control the big things, supervisors can make a difference in small ways and have a big impact, through building staff morale and making sure that their workers feel supported. Others mentioned learning the importance of addressing issues of organizational culture, and trying to focus on best practice rather than merely compliance, and the impact that learning to operate in a proactive mode rather than a reactive one can make a big difference. One respondent mentioned learning the importance of paying attention to all four areas: recruitment, selection, training, and retention, because it is really the balance of all of these together that keeps workers in their jobs, even though it is easy to focus on one or the other. Another interviewee shared that she learned that there are a lot of things that can be done at a local level that impact recruitment and retention, and that these are a good place to start when sweeping organizational change is not possible. Another important lesson that was mentioned was that WRRRP made it clear that when the right tools and opportunities are there, county departments really are
interested in doing a better job with recruitment and retention; having the resources available and at their disposal makes a big difference.

Effectiveness of the Butler Institute

When asked what the Butler Institute did well, the majority of responders mentioned that Butler did a great job of keeping the focus of the project throughout the five years. This meant getting the project off to a good start, keeping it alive through phone calls, meetings, and site visits, and keeping the project organized and on target by making sure that things got done even when busy work schedules got in the way. Also mentioned many times was the fact that they felt supported in the project by the Butler Institute. Several interviewees mentioned how much they appreciated that Butler was able to offer many good suggestions, but at the same time listen to the needs of the counties and then work toward providing for their practical needs. The ability to work through challenges, encourage positive change, and respond to what was actually needed even if it was outside the original parameters of the project, was another strength noted. The provision of resources and information by the Butler Institute was another thing that was done well. Stakeholders appreciated not only the availability of information and topics that interested them, but also the development of strategic plans, and the use of surveys and assessments, which provided the counties with invaluable information on their own strengths and weaknesses. The creation of the Realistic Job Preview videos in both Colorado and Arizona were valuable resources that came about as a result of the project. Also mentioned as successes were the Scaling the Summit Conference and the secondary trauma training that was provided. Most agreed that given the parameters of the project, the Butler Institute did a great job of working to facilitate success.

When asked to consider what Butler could have done differently to better support the project, a couple of items were mentioned several times. The first one was communication. While many thought that the many phone conferences between the Butler Institute and the sites were good, it would have been beneficial to have more in-person communication with the sites. Also, some respondents mentioned that communication between Butler and the agency seemed to go through one person within the agency, and that it would have been nice if communication had been more evenly distributed throughout the stakeholders. This was especially important because communication can really break down when/if the single point of communication leaves or is unavailable. Another interviewee mentioned that it would be helpful if Butler played a larger role in facilitating and maintaining communication between the state and the counties. On the county level, it was also felt that it would be nice if Butler could help to facilitate more buy-in and support from the district level. Several felt that concrete, in-person communication was what made the most difference, so more in-person communication and implementation would have been appreciated, if budget constraints had allowed for it. Along this same vein, several respondents mentioned that more training would have been appreciated as well, as this hands-on type of interaction made the most difference to their everyday experience. Respondents also mentioned that they would appreciate more help in linking their data to outcomes, creating clearer explanations of roles, and facilitating greater coherence between the individual sites, as making connections between them was difficult.

Suggestions for overall project improvement to provide better technical assistance and consultation

Overall, the stakeholders felt that the project did a great job of providing technical assistance and consultation. Respondents appreciated the information and resources that were made available to them, and the way that the project included all different levels of staff, from caseworkers to supervisors to managers, and including state office representation as well. Also, respondents mentioned that it was appreciated that Butler was always available by phone, email, and meetings, and that the project
worked well in helping the site to get started and to keep them focused and structured. However, there were a few things that were mentioned that could be improved. The issue of communication was mentioned, as some felt that the funnel of communication could have been expanded. Another interviewee mentioned that guidance in making the products of the project continue to work even after the project is over would be helpful. Lastly, a respondent noted that reducing the length of the project would have been good, as the results achieved could actually have been done in a shorter period of time than what was committed to.

Ways to increase commitment to the project

The answers to this question varied widely, though most agreed that for the most part a lot was done to create buy-in and commitment to the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project. Yet, as one interviewee noted, no matter how successful the project, you can always do more. Answers to how to increase commitment ranged from more time and resources needed, to more efforts to engage individual counties. One respondent noted that the Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project was a project they believed in and wanted to be a part of, but the day-to-day work and limited resources got in the way. While it was suggested that further efforts to engage more counties who were initially less involved would be a good way to increase commitment, the stakeholder also realized that this was not really possible because of the limited resources associated with the project. One way to do this, however, would have been to keep individual counties informed through statewide email blurbs and news flashes about the progress of the project. It was also noted that a good way to increase commitment to the project would be to work harder to engage more supervisors in the project (possibly through more individual meetings with supervisors), because once you obtain their buy-in, more people would follow, as people tend to follow their supervisors. However, one respondent also indicated that it does not help to force people to participate, because that only lengthens the time that it takes to complete a project. Along the same lines, several respondents indicated that greater commitment to the project, through action towards change, from the top state levels would have created a greater sense of buy-in and commitment further down in individual counties.

The most influential factors affecting the retention rate

When asked what the most influential factor affecting the retention rate of child welfare workers is, the interviewees overwhelmingly responded with supervisors. Almost every respondent mentioned the impact and importance of supervisors in some capacity. Key aspects of supervision that were mentioned included making sure that supervision is effective, the role of the supervisor in providing support to their workers, the positive atmosphere that good supervision creates, and the innovation and flexibility of supervisors in working with their front line workers to meet their needs in the workplace. Other factors that were mentioned several times included workers not having adequate time to do effective casework with their clients, the importance of staff recognition, not only through their supervisors, but through compensation and efforts to create a more positive work-life balance for workers. Positive staff morale, including supportive leadership at the top levels, and an emphasis on teamwork within the division, was also mentioned as a significant factor. Bringing the right people in to the job in the first place was also mentioned as significant by several of the stakeholders. They discussed the importance of not only making sure that the new hires are a good fit for the agency, but also that the workers are properly educated about what their job will entail. New tools such as the realistic job preview video, brochures, and the development of more targeted interview questions have all had a successful impact on this issue. Overall, stakeholders felt that bringing the issue of retention to the forefront of people’s attention has made a big difference, because they have been able to be more aware of the issues that surround retention, and can consciously implement thinking about retention into the day-to-day aspects of life in a child welfare agency.
Problems/Barriers Encountered and Corresponding Solutions/Changes

The next section discusses problems and barriers encountered over the project’s life.

Two significant site changes were made during the project’s life. First, when we received notification of the award in September 2003 and presented the news to Idaho but the state determined that the project would be too time-intensive given their competing demands and they dropped out of the project. In lieu of Idaho, we requested permission from the Children’s Bureau to designate Jefferson County, Colorado as a site. We have made one change in the structure of the grant, based on conversations and input from our smallest site, Rawlins, Wyoming. Project and site staff mutually agreed that the rigorous strategic planning, development, implementation, and monitoring process would not be realistic for their small office of five people. The project focus shifted to a statewide approach for some training interventions and continued to work with the other Wyoming site in Rock Springs. Rawlins staff, however, participated in relevant interventions that the project developed and implemented statewide or for the Rock Springs site. This was seen as a win-win situation for all. Other problems or barriers included:

- Initially, some slippage in activity completion from Year I to Year II as we jumpstarted the project. Also, there was a delay in receiving authorization to use carry forward funds from Year I and we stalled while approval was sought.
- In our initial proposal, we had intended to try to develop and/or convert our training curricula to a web-based format. Subsequent research determined that the cost related to web-based development was prohibitive and not possible within the confines of the budget.
- Another ongoing challenge for this project was trying to encourage sites to continue an active commitment to recruitment and retention activities, in light of more urgent demands and competing needs. While the sites were well-intended, timelines were sometimes not met due to other priorities.
- Turnover of staff impacted the site planning teams. A number of our sites have experienced staff, leadership, and re-organizational change that required realignment of workload, reassessment of timelines, and recruitment of new team members.
- It was necessary to revise our plan regarding providing a training to project sites on the selection and interviewing process. As project staff worked with a subject matter expert to develop a training in this area, it became clear that improving employee selection must involve a comprehensive approach that includes a collaborative partnership between human resources and agency staff based on a foundation of thorough job analysis, with resulting core competencies. The subject matter expert could only endorse this kind of comprehensive approach to interviewing. As discussion and curriculum development continued, a number of realities emerged. First, it was evident that at the time, while project site staff had relatively good working relationships with their human resource colleagues, none of the project sites had the commitment or capacity to take on a comprehensive overhaul of their selection and interviewing process. The most appropriate audience for the curriculum would have been a team of individuals who had the capacity to change the system and were representative of those who should be involved in the hiring process. This was not the audience that currently existed at the sites. Rather than deliver the “right” training, to the “wrong” audience, the
decision was made to cancel the pilot. The curricula was finalized and is provided in the Appendix but it has never been piloted.

**WRRRP Lessons Learned**

WRRRP staff and project site staff learned many significant lessons during the project period that can ultimately lead to improved workforce practices. The journey experienced both lows from project barriers and highs from successful goal attainment. The lessons learned explored next are worthy of note in that they may well inform future workforce projects.

- Sustained recruitment and retention efforts require a thorough approach that considers the agency’s organizational context through a comprehensive assessment.
- Child welfare organizations do not typically explore how their vision, mission, policies, practices and systems impact recruitment and retention of staff.
- No single intervention will resolve the problems of ineffective recruitment and retention. A multi-pronged approach addressing recruitment, selection, training, and retention is necessary.
- While there are common themes regarding challenges in recruitment and retention of child welfare staff, organizations’ specific data are a powerful tool in developing their awareness of, and commitment to, recruitment and retention, and the targeting of specific interventions. A targeted intervention plan should address the individual strengths and challenges of an agency using proven, research-based methods.
- An external consultant can be helpful as a neutral fact-finder and a consistent driving force for the effort, otherwise recruitment and retention efforts can get lost in the press of other tasks and initiatives. The external consultant helps keep the local team on task, on time, and accountable.
- The designated team to address recruitment and retention issues should consist of diverse staff at multiple levels of the organization and possess decision-making capacity to own and drive the efforts.
- Leadership support is critical and changing leadership is a reality. Be prepared to bring on board the next generation of leaders.
- Tying recruitment and retention efforts to organizational outcomes can increase sustainability of recruitment and retention efforts. Building evaluation and feedback loops that connect the two is necessary.
- Recruitment and retention efforts are not typically seen as a priority, especially in light of more urgent, competing demands (why the above-listed bullet is so important).
- Staff selection is an important part of overall recruitment and retention work. A strong and productive working relationship with human resources is necessary for implementation and ongoing assessment of selection outcomes and effectiveness.
- Significant attention should be paid to the supervisory tier of staff. While turnover is not as significant within the supervisory ranks, the quality and effectiveness of supervision significantly impacts worker turnover.
- Sustained recruitment and retention focus requires embedding the effort within the organizational climate, e.g. “this is an organization that cares about and actively works to recruit, select and retain the best staff.”
- Organizational development is a slow, steady process that requires ongoing management attention.
• WRRRP findings of motivation as a predictor of intent to stay would warrant organizational attention being paid to review and implementation of a selection process that addresses assessment of applicant motivation (in addition to knowledge, skills and abilities).
• Frequent communication with multiple project site team members is preferred.
• Teleconferences are efficient but are no substitute for occasional in-person meetings for garnering support and building relationships.
• To improve data reliability, develop early on a common definition of turnover and data elements that will be collected and train the site persons who provide this information to the evaluator.

Conclusion
Our original goal for the project was to develop, field test, revise, implement, evaluate, and disseminate effective and comprehensive training models for recruiting and retaining a competent work force in public child welfare agencies in four states in the Rocky Mountain Region. This report has detailed a far greater scope of intervention strategies and impact than proposed in our original grant proposal. Project staff successfully implemented not just the proposed training models, but also a variety of interventions such as a training system symposium, Realistic Job Preview Videos, and customized strategic plans that have had a far-ranging impact on both the project sites and their states. Most importantly, it has made a difference in terms of retention—one person at a time. As one project site team member told a WRRRP staff person, “I was thinking about leaving, but then we started implementing all of these interventions that brought me and my team together. I could never leave my team now. With WRRRP, we’ve done a lot of things differently and it has been a successful project. It’s given us a lot of ideas.”
List of Appendices

**Appendix A: Misc Documents and Products**
1) Advisory Committee Final Membership Roster
2) Bibliography
3) Annotated Bibliography
4) SMARRT Manual
5) Semi-annual Data Gathering Instrument
6) CO RJP
7) AZ RJP

**Appendix B: Organizational Assessments**
1) Organizational Assessment Reports 2004
   a. Jefferson County
   b. Mesa
   c. Talavi (Peoria)
   d. Casa Grande
   e. Rock Springs
   f. Rawlins
2) Organizational Assessment Reports 2006
   a. Jefferson County
   b. Mesa
   c. Talavi
   d. Casa Grande
   e. Rock Springs
3) Focus Group Protocol
4) 2004 Master Survey
5) 2006 Master Survey

**Appendix C: Curriculum**
1) Putting the Pieces Together Supervisor Curriculum
2) Secondary Trauma Curriculum for Caseworkers
3) Adv Supervisor Secondary Trauma Training
4) Making the Most of Supervision
5) Interviewing Skills Training

**Appendix D: Institutes**
1) Brochure Institute 2005
2) Conference Booklet 2005 Institute
3) Brochure Scaling the Summit 2008
4) Conference Booklet 2008
5) Training System Symposium Agendas
Appendix E: Training Evaluation Reports

1. Wyoming Supervisor Core Training Evaluation Report
2. Institute 2005 General Evaluation
3. Jefferson County Supervisor Forum Evaluation
4. Scaling the Summit TOL Evaluation
5. Secondary Trauma Training 9.22.05
6. Secondary Trauma Training 1.31.06
7. Secondary Trauma Training 2.1.06
8. Secondary Trauma Training 2.2.06