

Cornerstones for Kids

The RJP Tool Kit: A How-To Guide for Developing a Realistic Job Preview

September 10, 2007

Submitted by:



CPS Human Resource Services

www.cpsshr.us

Connie Chamnoise
Principal Consultant

Table of Contents

Overview.....	1
Key Phases	3
Phase I - Preparedness.....	4
Phase II – Planning	6
Phase III - Production	13
Phase IV - Implementation	15
Phase V - Evaluation	16
RJP Case Study: Michigan Department of Human Services.....	19

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Research Findings.....	27
Appendix B: Sample RJP Video Treatment.....	31
Appendix C: Sample RJP Video Script.....	35
Appendix D: RJP Viewer Questionnaire	63
Appendix E: Sample RJP Viewer Certificate	67
Appendix F: Phone Survey of RJP No>Returns.....	69
Appendix G: Sample Applicant Letter.....	72
Appendix H: RJP Evaluation – Michigan DHS	74

Overview

The *Realistic Job Preview Tool Kit* is designed for public-sector and non-profit child welfare administrators and Human Resources Management professionals looking for ways to address the problem of early turnover. Although we focus on child welfare agencies and child welfare workers, the *RJP Tool Kit* can be used by other human services agencies experiencing high turnover of newly hired employees.

What is a Realistic Job Preview?

- A Realistic Job Preview (RJP) is a recruiting tool designed to reduce early turnover. (We define early turnover as job departures within the first year after hire.) A RJP communicates to applicants the desirable and undesirable aspects of a job *before* they accept a job offer.
- The purpose of the RJP is to encourage the uncertain applicants to self-select out of the process without “scaring off” those who would develop into excellent, long-term workers.
- RJPs can come in many formats, including oral presentations, opportunities for applicants to “job shadow,” and pamphlets or brochures.
- We believe a video is the most effective medium for the RJP because it delivers a consistent message, has a powerful impact, is easy to use, and can be produced at a reasonable cost.
- The *RJP Tool Kit* focuses on producing RJPs in the video format; however you can adapt many of the principles to other formats.

Why Produce a Realistic Job Preview?

- A Realistic Job Preview can reduce the incidence of high turnover among newly hired employees.
- Many child welfare agencies invest tremendous effort and expense in recruiting and hiring the best child welfare workers only to find that many of them quit within the first year. Not surprisingly, researchers have found that the primary reason for early turnover is that job applicants often know very little about the jobs for which they apply and accept or – worse yet – have a total misconception of what the job is really like.
- A major reason for employees quitting a job within the first several months is that the employee came to the conclusion that he/she made a bad career choice. Evidence shows that for certain kinds of jobs, providing applicants with a well-designed RJP at the right time in the application process can significantly reduce this type of early turnover.
- In addition to reducing early turnover, research suggests that RJPs have an impact on post-employment job satisfaction. Employees exposed to RJPs prior to employment are more likely to be able to cope with the problems and pressures they encounter on the job. Job satisfaction is also influenced by the new employees’ perceptions that the employer has been more honest and forthright in the recruitment process. (See Appendix A, page 27, for a more detailed review of the research findings on the effectiveness of RJPs.)

What is the RJP Tool Kit?

- The *RJP Tool Kit* provides you with information to design a Realistic Job Preview video – a tool to help reduce early turnover among your agency’s child welfare workers.
- The *RJP Tool Kit* also includes information on the issues and causes of early turnover among child welfare workers.
- The *RJP Tool Kit* includes a case study as a real-world example of an agency that produced a RJP video.
- We conducted a preliminary assessment of the impact the RJP video had in the agency in our case study. The *RJP Tool Kit* includes the results of this research.

Key Phases

Checklist of Steps to Producing a Realistic Job Preview Video

Phase I – Preparedness
<input type="checkbox"/> Get buy-in from top management <input type="checkbox"/> Establish partnership between Human Resources and Human Services Management
Phase II – Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a planning group with key stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a budget <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Content <input type="checkbox"/> Identify Format
Phase III – Production
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop script <input type="checkbox"/> Develop narrative <input type="checkbox"/> Video tape <input type="checkbox"/> Editing <input type="checkbox"/> Final Screening
Phase IV – Implementation
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre Application <input type="checkbox"/> Pre Interview
Phase V – Evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop metrics to determine candidate self-selection out of process <input type="checkbox"/> Identify costs of turnover <input type="checkbox"/> Contrast costs of pre self-selection to turnover in first year of RJP implementation

Phase I - Preparedness

Organizational Readiness

Ensuring that your agency is prepared to effectively use a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) *before* producing one is critical to its success.

Get Buy-in from Top Management

Obtaining the support of the top management team before producing a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) is critical. Because RJPs vividly expose the negative aspects of the child welfare job, some members of the management team may resist using it. It is far better to iron out these issues before investing the time and expense in producing a RJP.

The RJP will become a very public representation of child welfare jobs in your agency. Not only will the video be seen by virtually all applicants for child welfare positions, it will very likely be seen by many other members of the community. When done well, the video will paint a very real picture of the child welfare job and help the public understand the tremendous challenges faced by this often under-appreciated workforce.

Forming a Strategic Partnership with Human Resources

The best way to ensure success of your RJP is for Human Resources (HR) to form a strategic partnership with Operations. Human Resources can take the lead in developing a RJP for the agency. They will determine where in the recruitment process to use the RJP and can be tasked with tracking the effectiveness of the tool in reducing turnover.

Checklist: Gaining Support for Producing a RJP

Before producing your RJP, gather information and determine to the greatest extent possible the benefits of a RJP for your agency.

- RJP Goals and Objectives:** Communicate clearly what the RJP is designed to do and why your agency should produce one. A well-designed RJP will not 'scare off' desirable job applicants. Keep in mind that the RJP should present a balanced representation of the job; it should accurately portray both the positive and negative aspects of the job.
- Time Savings:** Whether you produce a RJP in-house or hire a video-production vendor, developing a RJP will take some time. As an example, one agency spent between 400 and 500 hours over a 15-week period to produce a 30-minute RJP DVD using their in-house staff.

Your initial time investment, however, will save many hours of "wasted" new-worker training. Consider the number of hours saved for every applicant who views the RJP and decides against pursuing a child welfare job who would otherwise have taken the job and quit soon afterward.

- Cost:** Determine, if possible, the costs of early turnover to your agency. (For help in calculating the cost of turnover to your agency, see Cornerstones For Kids', [Turnover Tool Kit](#).)
- Cost Effectiveness:** Compare costs of turnover to the cost of producing a RJP. For example, one agency spent \$27,000 to produce a child welfare RJP DVD using their own staff. The majority of the costs were the wages and benefits for the employees already on the payroll who produced the RJP. This same agency estimated that the direct and indirect turnover costs of one children's services worker leaving were over \$50,000.
- Effectiveness:** RJP's are an effective tool for reducing turnover in occupations where the job duties are complex and difficult, and where applicants often have a poor understanding of what the job really entails. In one study, almost 7 percent of applicants concluded that a child welfare job wasn't right for them, based on reviewing a RJP (see *RJP Case Study: Michigan Department of Human Services*).
- Ability:** If after reviewing the **RJP Tool Kit**, you believe your agency lacks the capacity to produce its own RJP in house, consider partnering with a local college or university, or contracting with a private video-production vendor.

Phase II – Planning

Establish a Planning Group

- Organize a RJP Planning Group of key stakeholders.
- The Planning Group will be made up primarily of job experts – the people who understand the mechanics of the job you are covering and the everyday frustrations and rewards of child welfare work.

Planning Group Members

Organizers and Chair: We recommend that your agency’s **Human Resources department** assemble and chair the Planning Group.

Job Experts: In most agencies, frontline supervisors will provide this expertise. They understand the duties and responsibilities of the child welfare job. The Planning Group job experts should also understand the reasons why some workers leave the job within the first several months. These job experts can identify employees to be featured in the video, and can provide on-site assistance to the video producer.

Training Expert: An experienced **new-worker trainer** can be a valuable addition to the Planning Group. These trainers are often the first agency representatives with whom new workers develop a relationship. They are able to observe new employees’ reactions as they learn about the child welfare job, and are in the unique position to receive feedback directly from the new employees about how the actual job differs from what was expected.

Policy and Field Operations Managers: Since support from the External Affairs office is critical, a representative should be involved from the beginning. Because the video will become a very public representation of the child welfare job, the agency will want to take great care to ensure that the content communicates a message the agency is comfortable with.

Producer: Whether you produce the RJP in-house or through an outside vendor, we recommend that the **video producer** (the person who will videotape and edit the footage) be a member of the Planning Group. The producer can provide technical advice, and will help ensure that the RJP accurately reflects the group’s vision and objectives.

Develop a Budget

In our sample budget (see Table 1, page 7), an agency budgeted approximately \$27,000 for the production of its RJP video for a child welfare position. The majority of the \$27,000 is the wages and benefits to employees who were on the payroll already and would have been engaged in other activities.

Table 1: Sample RJP Budget*

Budget Item	Cost
Ten-Member Planning Group (4 Meetings – 4 Hours each ¹ , including time for travel)	\$5,400
Travel expenses for committee meetings	\$1,000
Staff time for appearing in video (10 staff – 3 hours each ²)	\$900
Video Producer and Assistant (450 hours – meetings, planning, travel, videotaping, editing)	\$16,000
Narrator	\$600
Closed Captioning	\$572
Travel Costs for Taping	\$130
Blank Tapes for Taping	\$378
DVD & VHS Production	\$2,145
DVD Sleeves	\$51
Total	\$27,176

* The sample RJP is a 35-minute DVD; the video producer is a media production specialist from the agency's professional development office.

¹ Includes the cost of wages and fringe benefits

² Does not include hours performing regularly assigned work as part of the videotaping process.

Develop the Content

- Identify those aspects of the job that surprise new workers once they begin work.
- Focus on those things about the job that might have prevented applicants from accepting it if they had really understood what the job was all about.
- Balance the RJP content, covering both the challenges and rewards of the job.

Which Jobs to Cover

The specific job you elect to cover will determine the content of your RJP – in the *RJP Tool Kit* we focus on child welfare workers. In determining which job/s to cover, you may want to focus your RJP on the jobs in your agency that experience the highest levels of new-worker turnover. Or it may make sense to focus on the jobs where your agency places the majority of new hires.

What Information to Include

- **A general description of the nature of the job or jobs covered in the RJP.** Keep in mind that many of your job applicants are just looking for employment and have absolutely no idea what a child welfare worker does. Providing a brief overview of the job is important.
- **Information about the skills and personality attributes needed for the job.** The education and experience requirements for your job are readily available elsewhere. It is important to convey the “soft skills,” personality characteristics and competencies associated with successful performance. Some of these include organizational skills, flexibility, a desire to serve, communication skills and resiliency.
- **Information about the level of service child welfare workers provide.** In many public sector agencies, the child welfare worker functions as a “case manager” and provides little in the way of direct treatment. In this case, it is important for job applicants to understand that they will not be providing direct counseling and social-work treatment services directly to children, but will coordinate and oversee the services provided by others.
- **The challenges presented in the job.** Applicants for the position need to understand that they will need to do things they won’t necessarily enjoy – like dealing with volumes of paperwork, managing large and demanding workloads, having constant disruptions, and visiting families in unsafe neighborhoods.
- **The emotional toll that the job may take on the child welfare workers.** An important purpose of the RJP is to have the job applicants do a self-assessment of their ability to cope with some of the emotional challenges of the job. They need enough information to decide if they are capable of working with children in heartbreaking situations, entering filthy homes, and dealing with sometimes angry and hostile people.
- **The kind of support available.** Job applicants should understand that they will receive support from the agency, their supervisor and coworkers. Your RJP should provide information about new-worker training, supervisory support, and the camaraderie typical in most child welfare agencies.
- **The rewards of working in child welfare.** Reminding the job applicant of the many rewards that result from a career in child welfare should be interspersed throughout the DVD, and emphasized at the end.
- **An explicit request that applicants seriously consider their personal “fit” for a child welfare position.** We recommend that at the beginning of the RJP you tell the viewers why you produced the video so that applicants watch the video in that context. In addition, near the end of the video you should remind viewers to carefully weigh the pros

and cons of the position and to make a thoughtful determination of whether the job is a good fit for them.

Checklist: Key Issues to Cover

Job Rewards

- The satisfaction derived from knowing that the worker has helped children and families.
- The support and camaraderie from work colleagues.
- Agency support through training and development opportunities.
- The variety of experiences offered every day.
- Sense of achievement.
- The opportunity for personal growth.
- Community recognition for doing important work.

Job Challenges

- The emotional impact of seeing children who have been severely abused or neglected.
- The requirement to travel into unsafe neighborhoods, sometimes late at night. The feelings of isolation when making home calls in rural and remote areas
- The fact that evening and weekend hours may be required on a routine and/or "on call" basis.
- The amount of paperwork required that some workers perceive as limiting the amount of time they can spend with children and families.
- The involvement with the courts and legal system, sometimes resulting in making the workers feel like they are the ones "on trial."
- The tension created by dealing with parents and other family members who may be angry, intimidating or even threatening.
- The need to be able to juggle multiple priorities with tight deadlines.

Who Should Appear in the RJP

Child welfare workers. The videos produced by child welfare agencies have relied primarily on footage of child welfare workers as they perform their routine duties.

- Feature your agency's workers in the video; research has shown that the effectiveness and credibility of the video will be enhanced if job applicants believe they are receiving the message directly from those who actually do the job.
- In most the videos we reviewed, the workers provided an air of sincerity and credibility that would have been difficult to capture with professional actors.
- Include a diverse group of employees in your video, with regard to age, race and gender.
- If your agency serves both urban and rural populations, you may want to include workers representing those variations.
- Work with employees who have a balanced view of their job and are able to articulate both the challenges and rewards they find in child welfare work.
- Identify individuals who feel comfortable talking about their job and spontaneously answering questions while being filmed.

Frontline supervisors can describe the qualities necessary for successful job performance or discuss their observations about staff turnover.

Clients in your RJP can provide job applicants with accurate representations of the people with whom they'll work. Clients should sign a release about appearing in the video. Alternatively, you can hire **professional actors** to portray agency clients or have other agency personnel act out the part of clients.

A narrator can help bring continuity to the RJP by tying together the various segments of the video. You can also hire a **professional actor** to serve as the narrator.

The agency director can fulfill the role of narrator and spokesperson in the video. He or she can provide an air of sincerity and authority; however the video may become outdated if the director leaves the agency.

Covering Sensitive Issues

- Identifying how you will cover sensitive issues before you produce the RJP is critical. Although the RJP can always be edited, it is far easier and less expensive to resolve these issues before production.
- You will need to decide how to present graphic images and verbal

RJP Snapshot: Delaware DSCYF

Agency: [Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families](#) (DSCYF)

RJP Title: A Day in the Life of a Caseworker

When Implemented: 1998

Position Covered: Caseworker

Media: Videotape

Length: 22 minutes

Content Format: The characters in the video were Department workers, a police officer and a former Department client who agreed to reenact an event in a protective services investigation in which she had been involved some years earlier. No professional actors were used.

Production: The Department hired a local video production company to produce the video. The footage was shot within one week, and final editing was completed within the next few weeks. Overall, the length of time to produce the video, from the initial suggestion to the finished product, was only a few months.

Implementation: All job applicants are required to watch the video, normally when they come for the job interview.

descriptions of abused children, filthy homes and hostile and menacing adults whom workers sometimes encounter.

- Showing some of the worst situations a worker may have to face may sensationalize conditions that do not occur routinely. However, some employees may leave the job after only a short time because they are unable to cope with such conditions. Had they known of these conditions before they accepted the job offer, they never would have taken the job. Your agency will have to determine where the balance lies.
- The Planning Group must also ensure that the depiction of children and families in the video does not unfairly perpetuate the stereotype of the population served by the agency.

The Format

Length

We recommend a running time of between 20 and 35 minutes.

Presentation Style

Videotaping child welfare workers actually performing their jobs and describing what they like and dislike about them will have a much greater impact than videotaping workers describing *how* they do their jobs. The RJP videos produced by child welfare agencies have relied primarily on “documentary style” footage, including:

- **On-the-Job Footage** Filming child welfare workers as they perform their routine duties:
 - Driving to home calls.
 - Approaching run down homes in poor neighborhoods.
 - Interacting with clients during a home call or office visit.
 - Participating in training.
 - Appearing in court.
 - Meeting with community groups and client groups.

The agency will need to obtain approval and a written release from clients, employees of the courts, and any other members of the public before being videotaped.

You can film the workers describing what they are doing as they do it: the purpose of the home call; their apprehension about being cross-examined; the need to be alert and aware of their surroundings when making home visits. In other instances, audio voiceovers are used to describe what is happening or how the worker feels about what is happening in the video.

- **Role Plays:** Reenacting scenes between workers and clients, workers and supervisors, workers and attorneys, etc. Role-plays can provide a very realistic representation of what the typical day of a child welfare worker can be like, presented in an interesting, story-like fashion. One of the downsides of the format is that the scenario can appear to be artificial or “staged”. Using voiceovers in many of the role-played scenes provides an opportunity to cover all the important information represented, and usually appears more natural.

- **Talking Heads:** Child welfare workers and frontline supervisors speak directly to the camera, responding to questions or prompts from the video producer. Allowing the participants to use their own words when responding to questions rather than having the responses read or memorized from a script will make the video appear more authentic to the viewer.
- **Reality Footage:** This includes both video footage and photographs showing dirty homes and bruised and battered children (with their faces partially hidden to protect confidentiality). Audio voiceover consists of workers describing their related experiences and the emotional impact it has had on them.
- **Scripted Narration:** This is useful for making a direct appeal to the job applicant to give careful thought to the rewards and challenges of the job before following through with the application process or accepting a job offer. The narrative can also serve to tie together the components of the RJP into a cohesive production.

Phase III - Production

Treatment

- Based on the discussions and decisions of the Planning Group, the video producer prepares a “treatment” – a written document broadly describing how the RJP content will be covered in the video.
- The treatment should demonstrate to the Planning Group that the producer accurately understands their overall direction.
- The Planning Group approves the treatment before filming begins.
- The treatment also includes a proposed timeline. (See Appendix B, page 31, for a sample treatment.)

Videotaping

- To select the workers who will be featured in your RJP, you may want to conduct a short videotaping session with some of your agency’s child welfare workers to help determine those who are most comfortable being videotaped.
- Supervisors and the video producer should meet with the child welfare workers who will be featured in the video to explain the reasons for producing the RJP and what the workers’ roles will be.
- For on-the-job footage, the producer can select a variety of activities to videotape, rather than just following one worker through the course of a day’s activities. Workers should feel comfortable conducting their normal business while being videotaped.
- Child welfare workers can be videotaped as they describe the purpose of the work they are doing on film.
- In addition to client/field work, the producer can videotape workers in their offices interacting with their supervisor, other fellow workers, attending training and participating in meetings.

RJP Snapshot: Illinois DCFS

Agency: [Illinois Department of Children and Family Services](#) (DCFS) with Governor’s State University

RJP Title: Untitled

When Implemented: TBD

Position Covered: Child Protection worker

Media: Videotape

Length: 30 minutes

Content Format: Featured Child Protection workers performing their regular duties and interacting with clients (who consented ahead of time to be in the video). The RJP also included filmed interviews with the workers answering questions about their jobs.

Production: Department gathered video footage by following six Child Protection workers for two days each while they performed their regular duties. Hour-long interviews were also conducted with each of them in their offices. They videotaped approximately 16 hours of footage. None of the video was scripted, and no professional actors were used.

Narration and Editing

- The video producer should develop a “script” for the RJP (see Appendix C, page 35, for a sample script). The script is the text version of the video that is constructed by choosing excerpts from the recorded video footage. The producer may transcribe the videotaped interviews and use these to organize the script, rather than working from the actual video.
- The Planning Group, an HR representative or the producer will prepare the first draft of a narrator’s comments.
- The Planning Group will review the script and narration and finalize content.
- The Planning Group will want to ensure that the narrator’s comments communicate the appropriate message to the viewer. The narrator should explain at the beginning of the video why the video was produced, and remind viewers near the end of the video to give serious thought to whether the child welfare job is a “good fit” for them or not.
- During the editing process, the video producer can use workers’ descriptions of what they are doing on film and their interview responses as “voiceovers” for the on-the-job footage. The producer can also add background music, graphics and other supplementary material.

Approval and Screening

- Once the Planning Group approves the script and the producer videotapes the narrator’s remarks, the producer will put together the first draft of the RJP video.
- The Planning Group will view the first draft of the video. At this point, the Planning Group has an opportunity to suggest changes.
- You can also use focus groups to test viewer reactions to the RJP before duplicating a final version. University students interested in social work careers, and students in MSW or BSW programs are good focus group candidates.
- Administering questionnaires to students before and after they’ve viewed the RJP can determine the impact the video had on their perceptions of and interest in pursuing a child welfare position. (See Appendix D, page 63, for a sample questionnaire.)

RJP Snapshot: Nebraska HHS

Agency: [Nebraska Health and Human Services System](#) (HHS) with the University of Nebraska, Center on Children, Families and the Law

RJP Title: Preview of the Protection and Safety Worker Position.

When Implemented: 1998

Position Covered: Child Welfare worker

Media: Videotape

Length: 28 minutes

Content Format: Agency workers and supervisors featured in a documentary interview style; professional actors in various scenes depicting situations encountered in children’s services work.

Production: Nebraska Health and Human Services System (which includes the agency that provides child welfare services in Nebraska) partnered with the University of Nebraska’s Center on Children, Families, and the Law in 1998

Implementation: Job applicants were required to view the RJP prior to being interviewed. The videotape was available at the state’s colleges of social work, libraries, employment offices and human service agency offices. Nebraska HHS is no longer using the 1998 version of their RJP and are in the process of producing a new one.

Phase IV - Implementation

Long before you finish the production of your Realistic Job Preview, you will want to begin planning exactly how you intend to use it. Our basic recommendations are:

1. Require that all child welfare job applicants view the RJP.
 2. Have job applicants view the RJP as early in the application process as possible.
 3. Make the RJP available to a wide range of possible applicants.
 4. Identify what metrics you will use to evaluate the success of your RJP – these will in part determine how you will implement your RJP.
-
- Make your RJP available early in the career planning process by partnering with the Schools of Social Work from which you recruit. Showing the RJP in one of the required social work classes for the BSW program may result in some students changing their course of study.
 - Provide convenient opportunities for potential applicants to see the RJP by making it available through a wide variety of methods and locations, including:
 - Providing copies to all your agency's locations.
 - Supplying your state's public employment or job agencies.
 - Providing copies to public libraries.
 - Streaming the RJP over the Internet.
 - Screening it at job fairs.
 - Mailing copies to applicants
 - Showing the RJP to applicants at job interviews
 - You can require applicants to submit a certification with their job application that they have viewed the RJP.

Phase V - Evaluation

The primary purpose of evaluating your RJP is to determine if it is:

- Cost effective.
- Contributing to the desired outcome.

Cost Effectiveness

Since most of the cost associated with using a RJP is in its production, agencies considering using a RJP should evaluate the potential cost effectiveness before beginning production. To measure the return on your RJP investment, compare the costs of production (see sample budget, page 7) against your agency's turnover costs (see Checklist: Gaining Support for Producing a RJP, page 5).

For most agencies, not hiring the one or two job applicants who would have left the job within the first several months will more than cover the production costs of the RJP.

The [Turnover Tool Kit](#) is a good resource for helping you determine your turnover costs.

Contribution to Desired Outcomes

In addition to reducing turnover, the RJP may affect other factors. We believe that it is beneficial to measure the impact of the RJP on the following interrelated outcomes:

1. Turnover rates.
2. Applicant decisions to continue with the selection process.
3. Job satisfaction.

1. Turnover Rates

Although the RJP can be expected to reduce an agency's overall turnover rate, the most significant impact should be on reducing the turnover rate for employees during their first year of employment.

Turnover rates can be affected by a number of factors and sometimes it can be difficult to isolate the impact of a specific intervention. Factors internal to an agency, such as dramatic changes in workloads or work procedures, attempts to change an organization's culture, and a change in leadership can all affect the turnover rate. External factors such as the unemployment rate in your community will almost certainly have an affect on your agency's turnover.

Some agencies have the capacity to analyze turnover by demographic groupings, and other variables such as length of service, college degree, etc. If your agency doesn't have this

capacity, it is still possible to track turnover data manually, particularly when focusing on one aspect of turnover – such as turnover occurring during the first year of employment. (See the [Turnover Tool Kit](#) for helpful tips for designing and analyzing reports to help track turnover.)

2. *Impact on Applicant Decisions to Continue with the Selection Process*

The ability to assess the impact the RJP has on applicant decision-making depends on how you choose to implement the RJP in the selection process:

- If you decide to make your RJP publicly available, it is very difficult to evaluate the impact the RJP has on applicant decision-making because the potential applicants are largely unidentifiable.
- You can require all applicants to watch the RJP when they appear for the job interview, and then ask them if they wish to continue with the application process, recording the results. However, research suggests that applicants may be so invested in the application process by the time of the interview that they may not discontinue the process, even if they have significant reservations about the job.
- You can provide the RJP to qualified applicants who have submitted a job application, require the applicant to certify their continuing interest in the job after viewing the RJP, and then conduct a survey of those who don't continue with the application process to determine if it is attributable to the RJP.

3. *Job Satisfaction*

Using an effective RJP can be expected to improve post-employment job satisfaction because employees have fewer surprises after they begin the job. Research findings suggest that:

- Employees who view a RJP are better able to cope with problems on the job about which they have been forewarned.
- When a new employee's job expectations are not met, the employee may exhibit their disappointment through higher absenteeism, lower productivity and job termination.
- Employees who have viewed a RJP have a higher level of job satisfaction because they believe the employer has been honest and forthright with them during the selection process.

See Appendix A (page 27) for a more detailed summary of the research findings.

Agencies can measure job satisfaction by conducting employee attitude surveys and focus groups and by monitoring absenteeism in positions experiencing high turnover.

Minimizing External Variables

The desired outcomes can all be affected by a number of factors and sometimes it can be difficult to isolate the impact of a RJP. One of the best ways to minimize the impact of other variables in evaluating your RJP is to do your “before and after” comparisons immediately before and after you introduce the RJP into the selection process. The objective is to make the comparison where the conditions affecting the “before” group (the control group) are as similar as possible to the “after” group (the experimental group).

Once you begin to use the RJP in your selection process, you may continue to hire applicants already in the “selection pipeline” who have not seen the RJP. It then becomes important to include information in your applicant tracking system that will identify which new hires have seen the RJP. Also, if your RJP is publicly available, it may be necessary for you to ask the applicant during the interview or at the time of hire whether they have seen the RJP.

RJP Case Study: Michigan Department of Human Services

We chose to use the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) as a case study for producing a Realistic Job Preview (RJP). Michigan's video, entitled *Is this Job for Me?* was produced recently, and CPS acted as technical advisor during its production. The Annie E. Casey Foundation funded the development and production of the RJP under their Human Services Workforce Initiative.

Background

DHS had long been aware of the retention problem of newly hired Children's Protective Services Workers and Foster Care Workers. It wasn't unusual for these newly hired staff to quit before they finished their eight-week, new-worker training program. Although the Department did not have good turnover statistics available at the time, everyone knew that turnover among these new workers was a problem that needed to be fixed.

During the spring of 2000, the Department's HR Director became aware of Nebraska's RJP, obtained a copy and shared it with members of DHS' Executive Committee. The Department decided to move forward with producing its own version.

In 2003, the Annie E. Casey Foundation identified DHS as a best practice site under the Human Services Workforce Initiative. As part of the Foundation's grant to the Department, support was provided for DHS to produce the RJP.

RJP Snapshot: Michigan DHS

Agency: [Michigan Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#)*

RJP Title: Is This Job for Me?

When Implemented: 2005

Position Covered: Children's Protective Services and Foster Care Workers

Media: DVD

Length: 36 minutes

Content Format: Features Children's Protective Services Workers and Foster Care Workers in the routine performance of their jobs. Excerpts are taken from interviews with workers and frontline supervisors describing the nature of the work, its challenges and rewards. Although clients do not play a major role in the video, those shown in background interactions gave their consent to be included.

Production: The in-house producer spent three days in each of the offices he visited, shooting approximately 25 total hours of videotape. He conducted videotaped interviews with the workers featured in the RJP, and videotaped them in a variety of common work situations. Workers' interviews were used as "voiceovers" during footage showing the workers performing their jobs.

Implementation: DHS mails the RJP DVDs to all applicants who meet the minimum requirements for the job. To be considered, applicants must watch the DVD and return a statement certifying that they have done so and remain interested in the position.

* DHS was re-named the Family Independence Agency (FIA) in 2004.

Phase I – Preparedness

Once DHS decided to produce a RJP, the agency readied itself for production and implementation by:

- Researching RJPs that other human services agencies had produced.
- Assessing their ability to produce a RJP – DHS determined that they were able to handle planning and production.
- Designating Human Resources as the leader and champion of the project, from planning through implementation and evaluation.
- Conducting best practice research on how best to implement and use the RJP.

Phase II – Planning

The Planning Group

DHS invited several frontline supervisors to serve on a work group to help design the video. They joined staff from the human resources, operations, training, and policy offices to determine the content and design of the RJP.

Michigan simplified the process significantly by asking the supervisors on their Planning Group to identify individuals from their own offices who would be featured in the video. By having a first-hand understanding of the purpose and objectives for producing the RJP, those supervisors were able to identify four to six employees from their office to be featured in the video. They were also able to provide on-site assistance to the video producer.

Although an overview of the Children’s Protective Services and Foster Care jobs is described in the video, the workgroup decided that the primary focus of the video should be on the challenges and rewards of the job.

The video producer, a media production specialist from the agency’s professional development office, was a member of the Planning Group and was fully involved in all phases of the planning process.

Based on the discussions and decisions of the Planning Group, the video producer prepared a “treatment” – a written document broadly describing how the material would be covered in the video. The purpose of the treatment was to demonstrate to the Planning Group that the producer had accurately understood their overall direction, and to obtain the group’s approval before any filming began. The treatment also included a proposed timeline. (See Appendix B, page 31, for a copy of the treatment.)

The Budget

Michigan DHS budgeted and spent approximately \$27,000 on the production of its RJP video for their Services Specialists. The bulk of that cost, however, was the wages and benefits to employees in the video.

Table 2: Michigan DHS RJP Budget

Budget Item	Cost
Ten-Member Planning Group (4 Meetings – 4 Hours each ¹ , including travel time)	\$5,400
Travel expenses for committee meetings	\$1,000
Staff time for appearing in video (10 staff – 3 hours each ²)	\$900
Video Producer and Assistant (450 hours – meetings, planning, travel, videotaping, editing)	\$16,000
Narrator	\$600
Closed Captioning	\$572
Travel Costs for Taping	\$130
Blank Tapes for Taping	\$378
DVD & VHS Production	\$2,145
DVD Sleeves	\$51
Total	\$27,176

* The sample RJP is a 35-minute DVD; the video producer is a media production specialist from the agency's professional development office.

¹ Includes the cost of wages and fringe benefits

² Does not include hours performing regularly assigned work as part of the videotaping process.

Phase III – Production

Videotaping

During the initial meeting with the employees in each office who were being videotaped, the video producer explained the reasons for producing the RJP and what their roles would be. (Their supervisors had also prepared them prior to his visit to the office.) He then conducted videotaped interviews with each of them. Rather than follow one worker for a full day, he asked them about their scheduled activities for the upcoming two days and decided whom he would accompany, depending on their schedules, while they conducted their job duties.

The child welfare workers featured in the RJP sought approval and a written release from their clients, employees of the courts, and any other members of the public before being videotaped. The workers then continued with their normal business. None of the interactions were “set up” or role-played.

The child welfare workers were also videotaped as they described the purpose of what they were doing while driving to the home call, approaching the front door of the client’s home, the child’s school or hospital. They were also videotaped in their offices interacting with their supervisor, other fellow workers, attending training and participating in meetings. During the editing process, responses to the questions were interwoven into the video as “voiceovers” while the camera captures the workers as they performed their work.

Narration and Editing

The video producer spent three days in each of the offices he visited, shooting approximately 25 hours of videotape, then transcribing the interviews so that the producer could organize the first draft of the “script” from the transcribed text rather than the actual video. See Appendix C, page 35, for a copy of the final draft of the script.

The producer also prepared a first draft of the narrator’s comments that would be used to tie the various parts of the video together. He then shared this version of the draft, including the narrator’s comments, with the Planning Group prior to the meeting where the first draft of the script was discussed. In discussion the Planning Group deleted some material, moved other material, and asked the producer to look through the transcripts to see if he could find anything that better fit with the overall tone desired in the video.

Because the narrator’s comments would be critical, the Planning Group spent considerable time discussing them to ensure that they would communicate the appropriate message to the viewer. The Planning Committee believed that it was important for the narrator to explain at the beginning of the video why the video was produced. They also believed that near the end of the video, the narrator should remind the viewers to give serious thought to whether the child welfare job is a “good fit” for them or not. The narrated messages are:

Early in video:

This program was produced to help you gain some understanding of just what's involved with being a member of the Children's Protective Services and Foster Care staff. Like many other children's services agencies across the country, DHS has found that turnover among new hires is much higher than it should be because many new hires find the job to be much different than they expected it to be. So as you learn more about these jobs, we'd like you to look into yourself and ask "Is this job for me?"

Near the end of the video:

".....Are these the kinds of jobs that can motivate you? That's for you to decide. Remember – high turnover among new hires is disruptive to the positive outcomes we all seek for these children and their families. I urge you to give careful thought to these positions before accepting one."

Michigan's Planning Group considered asking the Department Director to serve as narrator, but feared that the video would become dated if the Director left the Department, so a professional actress was hired to serve as the narrator.

Approval and Screening

Once the script had been approved and the narrator's remarks videotaped, the first draft of the video was shown to the Planning Group. The Planning Group was very pleased with the video, overall, but believed that it ended on too negative a note. The group decided to delete one scene completely and to move some of the comments about the "rewards of the job" closer to the end. Since the Michigan video uses background music, the Planning Group recommended that more "uplifting" music be used for the final few minutes of the video.

A few members of the Planning Group still worried that the video might overly discourage potentially good applicants. To resolve that concern, the Group decided that the video should be shown to potential applicants to test their reaction.

CPS developed a questionnaire (see Appendix D, page 63) to be administered to two classes of MSW students, one classroom of BSW students, and a group of college students interested in social work careers, but not necessarily majoring in social work. We designed the questionnaire to ask some of the same questions both before and after the students watched the video in order to determine the impact the video had on their perceptions of and interest in pursuing a child welfare position. The results satisfied the Planning Group that the video was appropriately balanced, yet still effective in discouraging uncertain candidates from following through with the application process.

Phase IV – Implementation

Michigan DHS decided to duplicate their Realistic Job Preview on DVDs and mail them to all applicants who meet the minimum requirements for the job.

DHS informs applicants that to be considered further they must watch and return the DVD within 30 days. Applicants must also return a statement certifying that they have watched the DVD and remain interested in the position. (See Appendix E, page 67, for a copy of the certification form).

Although DHS asks the applicants to return the DVD even if they are not interested in the position, many do not. However, the DVDs are inexpensive enough (about \$1.00 each) that Michigan does not consider this a problem. Copies of the RJP are also available in VHS format. DHS also provides the RJP to the state's Schools of Social Work.

Phase V - Evaluation

CPS is partnering with Michigan DHS to evaluate the impact of their RJP on employee turnover. See Appendix H, page 74, for the results of our preliminary evaluation of the impact of their RJP. We began working with DHS on how to evaluate the RJP very early in their planning process – well before the RJP was produced. CPS worked with DHS to develop a short survey to assess the reactions of applicants who viewed the RJP but did not return the DVD and certification (see Appendix F, page 69).

Michigan DHS introduced the RJP into their hiring process in July 2005. Beginning in September 2005, DHS began hiring individuals who had viewed the *Is this Job for Me?* RJP during the application process.

We have also identified a “control group” – those workers hired after September 2004 but who haven't viewed the RJP. We used Michigan's automated Human Resources Management System (HMRS) to identify and track data over time on both the “control group” and those newly hired workers who viewed the RJP. As more workers are hired, each of these groups will grow in size, resulting in more robust data. CPS and DHS assessed the impact of the RJP on turnover by comparing the data on these two groups.

Cost Effectiveness

Michigan DHS estimated the cost of the turnover of one children's services worker to be over \$50,000, including both the direct and indirect costs of turnover. The direct costs alone (the costs associated with processing the separation, hiring the replacement, and training the new employee) were estimated in 2004 to be over \$20,000. The types of indirect costs DHS examined included:

- The productivity differential between the departing employee and the replacement.
- Errors due to inexperience.
- Lowered morale and productivity of other employees.

Michigan budgeted and spent approximately \$27,000 on the production of its RJP video for child welfare workers. The bulk of that cost, however, was the wage and benefit costs to employees who were on the payroll already and would have been engaged in other activities.

Given these figures, avoiding one “wrong hire” would more than cover Michigan’s production costs of the video, with the savings in direct costs alone nearly covering the full cost of producing their RJP video.

The ongoing costs associated with using the RJP are negligible. The cost of each DVD is about \$1.00 and applicants return approximately 80 percent of them, which are used again. The postage costs (applicants are provided with a postage-paid return envelope) and administrative costs represent a negligible increase.

Impact on Applicant Decisions to Continue with the Selection Process

In July 2005, DHS began mailing a RJP DVD to all qualified applicants and asking them to indicate whether they wanted to continue with the application process. (See Appendices E and G, pages 67 and 72, for the certification form and letter). When the applicant returns the required materials, the Department records the information in their applicant tracking system. DHS also tracks those who do not respond within the required time (30 days).

Between July 1st and November 15, 2005, DHS mailed DVDs that were received by 443 applicants. Seventy-seven (17.4 percent) of the applicants did not return the DVD and certification. We were able to follow up with nearly 70 percent of these non-responders. Of these, about nine didn’t follow through with the application process because of the RJP.

Michigan’s data reveals that about 31 applicants (6.9 percent) concluded that a child welfare job wasn’t right for them, based on reviewing the RJP. As one of these applicants said, “I had a general idea about the job, but the DVD portrayed the pros and cons so clearly that it just really made it clear that I wouldn’t have stayed in the job.”

Turnover Rates

We are in the process of tracking both the DHS “control group” of employees who did not view the RJP and their newly hired workers who did. By tracking the departures of employees in these groups over time, CPS and DHS will be able to assess the effect the RJP has had on turnover rates. We will begin analyzing the data in the last quarter of 2006. (See Appendix H, page 74, for the results of our evaluation of the impact of the RJP on turnover.)

Job Satisfaction

In order to evaluate the RJP’s impact on job satisfaction we designed several questions that are being administered to all employees hired after September 2004 (See below for the questions designed to measure job satisfaction). Employees who have not seen the RJP

serve as the control group. The survey questions are administered six months after the employees have completed new-worker training.

Because employees who have seen the RJP have only been hired recently, the survey has only been administered to employees who have not seen the RJP. Based on the results from the 56 employees who have participated in the survey at “six-months-after-training,” 27 percent of them “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” with the statement, “Based on what I’ve learned so far, this job is pretty much as I expected it to be.” Twenty-one percent of the respondents Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement, “I never would have taken this job if I’d had a better understanding of what it was going to be like.”

For both studies, we will be able to conduct an analysis of the data by the end of 2006. If Michigan’s RJP has the desired effect, we expect these percentages to be significantly lower among the survey respondents who will have seen the RJP. (See Appendix H, page 74, for the results of our evaluation of the impact of the RJP on job satisfaction.)

Job-satisfaction Survey Statements

- Based on what I've learned so far, this job is pretty much as I expected it to be.
- I never would have taken this job if I'd had a better understanding of what it was going to be like.
- Learning what I did about this job during the application and selection process has helped me cope with some of the job pressures I'm experiencing.
- Now that I have a better understanding of what this job is all about, I believe it's going to be harder than I thought.
- DHS' honesty during the recruitment process makes me feel more loyal to the Department.
- I believe I am going to be able to cope with the stress and pressure of this job.

DHS child welfare workers taking the survey rank each statement using the following scale:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Appendix A: Summary of Research Findings

A significant amount of research has been conducted over the past three decades on the impact that RJPs have on job applicants' and employees' career decisions. The research can be divided into three distinct, but highly interrelated, areas:

- Impact on Turnover
- Impact on Job Acceptance and
- Impact on Post-Employment Job Satisfaction.

The relationship between applicants' job acceptance, turnover and post-employment job satisfaction is obvious. All are associated with the individual's perception of how his/her needs will be met on the job. The research suggests that RJPs have an impact on the decision of job seekers to accept or reject job offers based on their belief that the offered jobs will meet their needs. If those research findings are valid, one would expect turnover to be lower among those exposed to RJPs because the borderline uncertain candidates have weeded themselves out. Research also suggests that a residual benefit of exposure to a RJP is greater job satisfaction resulting from fewer "surprises" on the job, and perceptions of employer honesty in the recruitment process.

Impact on Turnover

The primary reason why employers use realistic job previews is because it is assumed that the RJP will result in employees having greater job satisfaction, and consequently lower turnover. In attempting to explain why RJPs have an impact on employee satisfaction and turnover, James A. Breugh theorizes that there are four distinct, yet interrelated, basic psychological processes that influence the effectiveness of RJPs. He characterizes them as met expectations, ability to cope, air of honesty and self-selection (Breugh 1983).

With regard to met expectations, Breugh believes that exposure to an RJP may give the prospective employees a more realistic picture of the job. When their experience on the job matches their expectations, they are more likely to be satisfied and less likely to leave voluntarily.

Another way in which RJPs may influence satisfaction and turnover is by improving the new employee's ability to cope with the demands of the new job. The assumption is that employees who are made aware of the problems to be faced on the job are better able to cope with them when they arise, and thus, less likely to leave.

A third explanation for the impact of RJPs is that they communicate an "air of honesty" to applicants. New employees are likely to feel more committed to their decision to accept a job because they made the decision based on perceived honest representations. Conversely, those feeling misled by recruiting strategies designed to "sell the organization" do not feel committed to their decision to accept a job and are more likely to leave.

Finally, with regard to self-selection, Breugh points out it is assumed that jobs that are realistically portrayed will not be perceived by all applicants as meeting their needs. Those who realize that their needs will not be met will presumably withdraw from the application process while others, perceiving that their need will be met, will accept a job offer.

A major finding in a 1985 meta-analysis of 21 RJP studies supports Breugh's theories that the RJP lowers the new employee's initial job expectations (Premack and Wanous 1985). Although this finding in itself may not seem particularly significant, a major purpose of an RJP is to lower the expectation so that the new employee doesn't become dissatisfied when the overly inflated expectations are not met. Because RJPs bring about a greater alignment between expectations and reality, they can have a significant impact on the reduction of early turnover and can lead to substantial employee-replacement cost savings (Wanous 1989).

In his most recent review of published RJP studies to date, Wanous found that job survival increased in 11 of the 13 private sector experiments he reviewed. When comparing the survival rate for the RJP group to the control group in the 13 experiments, he found that the RJP resulted in an average gain in job survival of 12 percent. The survival rate ranged from no gain to an increase of 48 percent (Wanous 1992).

In one of the most recent research studies, A. D. Martin conducted research on the impact of the RJP on turnover frequency, turnover functionality, and cost effectiveness. Her work involved the study of newly recruited real estate agents, a job with very high turnover within the first six to twelve months. The job is often misunderstood by the applicant, and is characterized by low pay, weekend and evening hours, and a number of other undesirable characteristics. In Martin's experiment, turnover within the first year was 15 percent for the RJP group and 35 percent for the control group (a group of similarly situated real estate job applicants who were not given the RJP). Furthermore, her work suggests that the RJP had a positive effect on turnover functionality, meaning that the turnover which did occur was more frequently with the poorer performers. She also showed the RJP to be cost effective, with an estimated return on investment ratio of approximately 5:1 (Martin 1996).

Another finding from the above-mentioned meta-analysis is that the value of the RJP increases as the severity of the turnover increases (Premack and Wanous 1985). In other words, the impact of using a RJP will be greater in those occupations or organizations where turnover is high than in those where turnover is relatively low.

An additional review of the literature suggests that RJPs are most effective where the job being recruited for is: a) complex or difficult; b) experiencing high rates of early turnover; or c) has important aspects that are unknown or misunderstood by the applicant (Martin 1996). Based on these findings, the Child Welfare position seems to be ideally suited to the use of the RJP because it is certainly a complex and difficult job: it experiences a high rate of early turnover, and applicants often have a total misunderstanding of what the job is really like.

Impact on Job Acceptance

One would expect that a well designed RJP would have the desired effect of causing some job applicants to reconsider their career choices and withdraw from the application process. PETsMART, the Phoenix-based chain of over 300 pet supply stores has successfully used the RJP in its selection process. They show job applicants a 10 minute RJP video, which they believe screens out about 15 percent of those applicants who are most likely to leave within the first three months (Lifson 1996). Martin's research also provides empirical evidence that more job candidates in the RJP group declined the job offer (36.1 percent) compared to the control group (9.2 percent) (Martin 1996).

Breaugh suggests that one significant variable in determining the impact of the RJP on job acceptance is whether the applicants have opportunities for alternative employment. In order for the RJP to be effective, the applicant must feel free to turn down a job that is perceived as not meeting his or her needs (Breaugh 1983). One critical variable might be the local rate of unemployment. Applicants may accept a job, knowing that it will not be a good fit, simply because any job is better than no job. A second important variable is the perceived freedom of choice faced by the applicant who has spent considerable time and energy preparing for a specific career (e.g., teaching, nursing or social work). Even upon learning about the negative aspects of the job through the RJP, applicants may not yet be emotionally capable of accepting the fact that they have prepared for the wrong career. Wanous' 1989 finding that energy expenditure increases commitment supports this theory.

Impact on Post-Employment Job Satisfaction

Several studies show that the use of the RJP does affect the ability of the new employee to cope with the stresses found on the new job:

- Breaugh suggests that employees are better able to cope with problems about which they have been forewarned, perhaps because they have developed methods for handling them (Breaugh 1983).
- Pitt and Ramaseshan (1995) suggest that the RJP helps new employees cope with the demands of the new job by better preparing them for what to expect. The underlying theory is that employees who are aware of the negative aspects of the position before accepting it have perhaps subconsciously decided how to handle the stresses and internalized that into their decision to accept the job or not. Those who are caught by surprise after accepting the job are often incapable of adapting.
- Meglino, DeNisi et al. (1988) show that job satisfaction is increased when the new employee believes that the employer has been honest and forthright in its recruitment efforts. As stated above, job satisfaction may be associated with, but necessarily predictive of, turnover. Dissatisfied employees remain on the job because they lack other opportunities and satisfied employees must leave jobs for a variety of unrelated reasons.
- Baker (1985) shows that when a new employee's job expectations are not met, the employee may exhibit their disappointment through higher absenteeism, lower productivity and job termination. Related research on the effects of "met expectations" (though not specifically related to RJPs) supports the notion that having accurate expectations leads to increased job satisfaction, greater organizational commitment, a

stronger intent to remain in the organization, and slightly improved job performance (Wanous 1992).

References

- Baker, H.G. 1985. "The Unwritten Contract: Job Perceptions." *Personnel Journal*. 6 (7): 37-41.
- Breaugh, J.A. 1983. "Realistic Job Previews: A Critical Appraisal and Future Research Directions." *The Academy of Management Review*. October, 8 (4): 612-619.
- Lifson, K. 1996. "Turn Down Turnover to Turn Up Profits." *Chain Store Age*. November, 72:64.
- Martin, A.D. 1996. *Exploring the Upper Limits of Realistic Job Preview Effectiveness for Increasing Job Stability and Performance of New Employees*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Wayne State University.
- Meglino, B.M., A.S. DeNisi, S.A. Youngblood, and K.J. Williams. 1988. "Effects of Realistic Job Previews: A Comparison Using an Enhancement and a Reduction Preview." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 73 (2): 259-266.
- Pitt, L.F. and B. Ramaseshan. 1995. "Realistic Job Information and Sales Force Turnover: An Investigative Study." *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. 10 (5): 29.
- Premack, S.L. and J.P. Wanous. 1985. "A Meta-Analysis of Realistic Job Preview Experiments." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 70 (4): 706-719.
- Wanous, J.P. 1989. "Installing a Realistic Job Preview: Ten Tough Choices." *Personnel Psychology*. Spring, 42:117-134.
- Wanous, J.P. 1992. *Organizational Entry: Recruitment, Selection and Socialization of Newcomers*. 2nd ed. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Appendix B: Sample RJP Video Treatment

Situation/Problem:

Some candidates for Children's Protective Services and Foster Care positions with the Family Independence Agency seem to have an inaccurate concept regarding the work they will be performing in these Child Welfare jobs. This video will be reviewed by candidates for employment to give them a realistic snapshot of what a job in CPS or Foster Care is like. They will then have the option of leaving the application process before moving too far through the process.

Objective/Purpose:

1. To give candidates an accurate picture of the job of being a Child Protective Services and Foster Care worker.
2. Reduce candidate pool to those who have true idea of what the job includes both good and bad.

Audience:

Primary: Candidates who apply for the Services Specialist position, both men and women, age range 22 – 28, college graduates, plus various other groups (FIS,ES, Dept of Corrections, Private Agency)

Secondary: College classes, job fairs and community outreach.

Content Expert(s)/Agency Representatives:**FIA OHR:**

Michael Downer 517/373-8874

Judy Sieffert 517/373-7667

Karen Wildrom 517/ 335-3545

Davida Lewis 517/241-1874

Field:

LuJana Warren - Jackson County – 517/780-7613

Mary Lou Mahony - CFS, Wayne County – 313/852-1988

Mike Milks - FC, Genesee County – 810/760-2321

Kathy Miller, Van Buren County – 269/621-2932

Shelly Marner, Midland County – 989/839-1103

Sandra Deeghan, Eaton County – 517/543-4681

Writer/Producer:

Steve Barosko, Media Production Specialist
Family Independence Agency
Office of Training & Staff Development
235 South Grand Avenue, Suite 715
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Voice: 517/334-6981
FAX: 517/241-7777
E-Mail: baroskos@michigan.gov

Consulting Services

Mike Masternak
CPS Human Resource Services
2923 Marketplace Drive.
Madison, WI 53719
Voice: 608/442-5000
FAX: 608/442-5007
E-Mail: MJM579@cs.com

Treatment:

A Realistic View: CPS and Foster Care at the FIA
(Working Title)

The video will be based on the testimonials of staff currently working as Children's Protective Services workers, Foster Care workers, and their Supervisor's at the FIA. We will follow along as these workers do their job – out in the field visiting with families, testifying in court and working in the office. A Host will help lead us through this content and highlight the items we want to emphasize with the viewing audience. He or she will appear on camera to open the different segments and to emphasize certain points along the way. The Host will also review the content at the end of each segment. The Host segments will be videotaped last, after all the interviews are completed and the script is finalized.

The first segment will be a brief *introduction* to FIA and how CPS and FC fit in organizationally as well as explaining some of the basic differences between CPS and Foster Care. It will also highlight why this tape was produced and introduce some of the other information to be covered during the tape.

The next segment will consist of talking about the *skills* that make for a successful CPS and FC worker. We'll hear from staff and supervisors how being organized, having flexibility, good written and verbal communications skills, the ability to keep calm and

having a great deal of common sense will make someone successful in this type of job. We'll learn about these characteristics by hearing from staff currently working in the field as CPS and FC workers. We'll also explore some of the training that new CPS and FC workers will be expected to go through.

Next we'll hear about some of the *challenges* that come with working in this field. Challenges like; the large amount of paperwork, being on-call, seeing and walking into disturbing situations, safety issues and having your work looked over again and again. We'll find out that the jobs aren't the same all over Michigan. They look a little different depending on wherever you live in an urban or rural setting. We'll also hear how this type of job can effect those around you; your spouse, children and extended family members.

The fourth segment will touch on the *rewards* of the job or just why do people want to do this job. We will hear from staff as they talk about the satisfaction they receive from helping out Michigan's children and families. These rewards might be different between FC and CPS. We'll hear how no 2 cases are ever alike and that the job is never boring or done. They'll be working with a diverse group of people: law enforcement, the courts, health care, various community resources and other social workers. We'll also hear what the job isn't. It's not hands on counseling, it's more of a case manager, bringing community resources together to help the individuals and families move out of our system.

The final segment will be a high level recap of the previous segments and some final words for the applicant to think about. The Host will talk about next steps they need to take in the application process and to wish them good luck.

I feel the tape will run about 18 – 21 minutes.

I suggest we have both VHS videotapes prepared and DVD discs replicated for distribution.

Rough Schedule:

Treatment Approval:	February 2 nd , 2004
Interviews	Months of April and May 2004
1st Draft of Script:	June 11 th , 2004
2nd Draft of Script:	June 25 th , 2004
Final Draft of Script:	July 6 th , 2004
Video Production:	Completed July 23, 2004
Video Editing/Post-Production:	Completed by August 6, 2004
Testing for Valadation:	Completed by August 16 th , 2004
Program Ready for Distribution:	August 27 th , 2004

Appendix C: Sample RJP Video Script

B-roll images of PS and
FC works in field and
office.

Music up full – strong, motivating theme, then under
voices.

MICHELE HEARN-JONES

FC WAYNE CO.

We just wear so many hats as a foster care worker. I mean
you have therapy, where we're not really doing therapy,
but you find yourself doing therapy. You find yourself being
an attorney. You find yourself being a babysitter.

JENNIFER SCZYKUTOWICZ

FC JACKSON CO.

Parenting classes, substance abuse evaluations,
psychological evaluations, counseling. Anywhere from
visit, parenting time with visitation. They may have to work
with like an Early On program or something with the
schools.

ANNA KETCHUM

FC VAN BUREN CO.

A majority of your time is working with parents trying to
figure do the whole assessing, trying to figure out what
needs to be done and helping them reach their goals,
whether it be transportation, doing random drug screens
on them. And so a lot of it is not the children. A lot of it is
with the parents. And that was a huge misconception on
my part. You're not, you don't have the time and part of the
job is not taking these kids out for ice cream, you know, on
a nice sunny afternoon.

JASON COX

PS VAN BUREN CO.

Honestly when I started in Protective Services I had no idea what Protective Services was. Never heard of it before. He told me a little background, it was investigating child abuse and neglect and thought it sounded interesting and figured how much can there be, how bad can it be. Then I started working and found out how much there really is and how it really can be.

LORETTA LOHEISER

PS JACKSON CO.

You've got to be a very honest person, you've got to be extremely thorough and if you don't like thoroughness and if you don't like dealing with bad situations, unhappy situations, sad stories – if you don't like dealing with sad stories, a lot of the time, this isn't the place for you. Because a lot of what we deal with are real sad stories. But what's wonderful about it is that when you can provide some services to a family who really want the help and you see that they've made some progress, not a lot – the progress is very minor, but their attitudes can be changed and how people approach their children can be changed to a certain degree.

LUJUANA WARREN

PS SUPERVISOR JACKSON CO.

You know they talk about variety is the spice of life. PS is variety. Everyday you get a different case. Maybe you don't get one every day but you get a different case. It's not the same neglect. It's not the same abuse. It's not the same dirty house. There are different degrees. So and you have to love spontaneity – that it doesn't upset you.

Doesn't upset you that you have to work an hour over or get in an hour earlier to make yourself available for your customer.

LINDA BLACKMER

PS VAN BUREN CO.

I think I might have been 15 years into the job and I thought I'd at least seen one of everything when probably a month later I saw something I'd never seen before, so there's always something new that you didn't think could happen.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host outside, walking down street. Older neighborhood. WS

Everyday, staff from Michigan's Family Independence Agency (the Michigan Department of Human Services) work to protect and support children and their families who are involved with the States' child welfare system.

This program was produced to help you gain some understanding of just what's involved with being a member of the Children's Protective Service and Foster Care staff. Like many other children's service agencies across the country, FIA (DHS) has found that turnover of new employees is much higher than it should be because many new hires find the job to be very different than what they expected it to be.

HOST

VOICE OVER

Transition to quick shots of 6 or 8 of the PS and FC

Today, we're going to be meeting some of the staff who

staff we're going to be seeing.

work in Children's Protective Services and Foster Care. We'll hear what challenges they encounter doing these essential jobs and we'll hear what rewards they get serving this important segment of Michigan's population.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host still outside. MS
Lower third CG: Is This Job for Me?

So as you learn more about these jobs, we'd like you to look into yourself and ask "Is this job of me?" because everyone loses if you accept a job that's not right for you. A job that's a bad fit may cause unnecessary stress and anxiety and side track you from your career goals and cost the State thousands of dollars in wasted training expenses. More importantly, the children and families lose because of a lack of stability in their service plan. To get started, let's get a better understanding of what types of things Protective Services and Foster Care staff do.

ANNA KETCHUM

FC VAN BUREN CO.

Lower third CG:
Anna Ketchum, Foster Care, Van Buren Co.

We see b-roll of Anna working in office, meeting with supervisor, etc.

I don't really consider myself a social worker. I consider myself a case manager for this job and that is what we are. / it's informal counseling, if you will, and coaching, certainly we attempt to hands-on. But I believe in the foster care role, your job is case manager. You assess the families and determine what needs they have. You try to hands-on as much as you can, like for parenting during parenting time – and that's something we're responsible for – when children are removed, parents are it's mandated that they be able to visit their child or children at least once a week.

And so, I'll try to set guidelines / let him or her know what I'm looking for. So that type of hands-on or creating household charts, I call it meat and potatoes of the foster care case / But we also have service providers. We have parenting classes. We have substance abuse classes. We have the mental health piece. But I actually consider us case managers because that's what we do. We assess, we refer the clients out and then we collaborate with the service providers in order to determine what progress has been made and then with that information we make our recommendations to the court.

KERRIE GEORGE

FC VAN BUREN CO.

Lower third CG:

Kerrie George, Foster
Care, Van Buren Co

We see b-roll of Kerrie
working in office, meeting
with clients, etc..

When we get a case from PS, usually the children are in foster care or relative placement, we work with the placement by doing home calls, to make sure that the placement is doing okay. If the foster parents or relatives need like respite care for example, then we make referrals to set that up as a way to help the placement work. As far as the parents go, as far as services, we make referrals, lets say a parent has a substance abuse problem, we make referrals to the health department then they get the one-on-one with the health department to address their needs that way. It's not a direct care per say it's more of a, the case manager makes the referral to the appropriate service and then the parents go to that service and then we check in with the service provider and find out how their progress is doing. Then we report that to court and then after a year's time, we look at a permanency planning goal for the child whether it be adoption, whether it be

return home, whether it be maybe guardianship or long term foster care. Those are all considerations that we take, depending on the parent's progress with their service providers.

JASON COX

PS VAN BUREN CO.

Lower third CG:
Jason Cox, Protective
Services, Van Buren Co.

We see b-roll of Jason
working in office, meeting
with clients, etc..

In protective services we get referrals from outside sources obviously some come from within but most of them are either neighbors, family, or teachers, doctors. We have both mandated reporters by law they have to report or people are around a situation and they want to report. We also take anonymous calls as well which can be very frustrating. / So the complaint comes in and the supervisor makes the decision whether it meets the criteria for investigation and then it is handed to one of the investigators which is where I come in. We got basically 24 hours to begin the investigation and depending on the urgency of the case up to 72 hours to make face to face contact. Most of the cases we handle in our county we try make the 24 hour face to face contact. Then from the referral we actually have 30 days to complete the investigation. At the end of 30 days the decision is made as whether there is evidence to support the allegations that were made or not enough evidence. If there is enough evidence we actually will open the case.

LINDA BLACKMER

PS VAN BUREN CO.

Lower third CG:
Linda Blackmer, Protective

The ongoing worker would monitor the family, refer them to services, monitor the services, provide transportation, maybe to an appointment, counseling from the caseworker

Services, Van Buren Co. themselves, matching them up with the next services, maybe when they've finished one issues. Ongoing work is what I'm doing at this time.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host outside. Older neighborhood.

So now we know a little bit about what Protective Services and Foster Care staff do. Foster Care staff work as case managers referring children and families to services and reporting their progress to the court. For PS it's investigating reports of abuse and neglect and working with families to refer them to services to help them resolve the issues that brought them into the system.

That's a very high level overview though, let's move on and hear about what types of skills are needed, so you'll have a realistic idea about what goes into doing these important jobs every day.

KELLIE DENNIS

FC JACKSON CO.

Lower third CG:
Kellie Dennis, Foster Care, Jackson Co.

We see b-roll of Kellie working in office, etc..

You have to be able to work well with people, even people who are going to get very angry with you. I really try not to get into an argument, I don't try to go back at them, I just kind of let them vent, I feel it just makes them more angry, / You have to be able to work well with children and understand that a lot of times they're going to be acting out because of the problems they're experiencing – being away from their families. Compassionate – I think you just you do need to feel compassion for these families, even though they may get angry with you, they still have feelings that are resolved – things that have happened in

their past usually too.

MICHELE HEARN-JONES

FC WAYNE CO.

Lower third CG:

Michele Hearn-Jones,
Foster Care, Wayne Co.

We see b-roll of Michele
working in office, etc..

I think my number one skill is I am very open minded. I don't see myself to be bias person even when I do notice that somebody is bias, I don't let other people know, I don't reflect it on them. I still keep an open mind. I think that's like my best skill that I have in regards to this job, because you have so many dynamics. And I always try to see people for where they are at. Where they trying to go? Not what I want them to be or what is ideal for them. So I think that's one of the best skills that I have.

CHRISTINE ANDERZAK

FC WAYNE CO.

Lower third CG:

Christine Anderzak, Foster
Care, Wayne Co.

We see b-roll of Christine
working in office, etc..

You have to be very self-motivated and have to be able to independently, as well as with a team because basically you're kind of a cheerleader for a whole group trying to get the birth parents to what they need and follow through with their services. Make sure the foster parents or the relative have the support that they need for the kids. Checking in with the school and making sure that the kids are going to school and doing what they need and if they have any special education or anything that going on you have to help facilitate and coordinate all of that. So you getting all of these pieces together and checking back with everybody so you can report to court.

JENNIFER SCZYKUTOWICZ

FC JACKSON CO.

Lower third CG:

Definitely need to be organized. There is a lot of policy

Jennifer Sczykutowicz,
Foster Care, Jackson Co.

We see b-roll of Jennifer
working in office, meeting
with clients, etc..

requirements, paperwork, all of that. Month-to-month basis, that I think you really needs to be organized and stay on top of it. Multi-tasking, I think is very important to be able to you know to sit down and remember what you need to do per case, whether it is for court, whether it's for one-on-one with individuals.

MARY LOU MAHONEY

PS SUPERVISOR WAYNE CO.

Lower third CG:

Mary Lou Mahoney, Social
Service Supervisor,
Wayne Co.

The ability to move from one task to another task. The organizational skills, organization is very important. The ability to do multi-task. A lot of time the worker is going to be on the phone and typing out a report at the same time. Organization and multi-tasking is a big part of this.

KATHY MILLER

SUPERVISOR VAN BUREN CO.

Lower third CG:

Kathy Miller, Social
Service Supervisor, Van
Buren Co.

We see b-roll of Kathy
working in with her staff in
office, etc.

One you have to be structured enough with your time and with yourself to be able to accomplish everything you have to in one day or in one week. You have to be structured enough to know what those things are and how you're going to fit it in your schedule. On the same hand, you can't be so concrete that you can't let that go when an emergency comes up. And I think that gets difficult for some people, but the workers are the ones that make it are the ones that are able to find that balance and not get thrown off when they know what they have to get done, they have a deadline to meet an emergency comes up, they have to deal with the emergency, still come back and meet their deadline without having it have an emotional toll on them. And I think that's a very important aspect. The workers who are grounded enough with themselves and

know themselves well enough and have dealt with whatever issues they may have, know why they are doing this work are able to handle the emotional side of it. And not let it take a personal toll on them.

LINDA BLACKMER

PS VAN BUREN CO.

We see b-roll of Linda working in office, meeting with supervisor, etc.

I think you have to be a good listener and you have to be a good communicator. Sometimes it means reading behind someone else's words but when you're talking back to them it's being very clear. I know whenever I have trained someone for the job, I have always initially encouraged them to knock on someone's door and treat them the way they'd want to be treated if they were knocking on your door. You know, so even though parts of the job require you to be confrontive, I think you can do that in a nice way.

JANICE RIVARD

PS JACKSON CO.

Lower third CG:
Janice Rivard, Protective Services, Jackson Co.

We see b-roll of Janice working in office, meeting with co-workers, etc.

You need to have a sense of humor. If you take everything so serious and so rigid I don't think you will survive. You have to be able to laugh at yourself. You need to be able to manage your time. By that I mean your work load. You need to be able to prioritize things. You need to be able to / handle confrontation. It is a big part of the job. You have to be people proficient. Not just book smart but people smart because a lot of the job when you're out there it's not about books it's about body language, it's about eye contact, it's about tone of voice, all that means keeping yourself safe when you are working with individuals.

TYANA HENDERSON**PS WAYNE CO.**

Lower third CG:
Tyana Henderson,
Protective Services,
Wayne Co.

We see b-roll of Tyana
working in office, meeting
with supervisor, in field,
etc.

You definitely have to be a people person. You have to have patience. You have to have some time management skills. Some organizational skills. To be able to juggle things. I believe if you are a strict, rigid person that everything has to be this, this, this, the job will be very difficult for you. I think that you have to be a flexible person because you could plan your day but when you get in here it can totally be disruptive by something else. So you have to be definitely flexible in this job and a people person. I think this job also requires you, even though the family is in crisis, and you may not like the situation that you see, but you still have to treat that person like a human being. You have to treat that person with respect, regardless.

DEMETRUS STARLING**PS WAYNE CO.**

Lower third CG:
Demetrus Starling,
Protective Services,
Wayne Co.

You definitely need to be organized. There is a lot of things that are thrown at you on a daily basis, that you really need to keep organized. A lot of different people that you have to contact. A lot of different family members, people in the court systems, you know co-workers that you use for resources. You definitely need to keep organized.

JASON COX**PS VAN BUREN CO.**

We see b-roll of Jason
working in office & field,
meeting with supervisor,
etc.

To be a successful PS worker you definitely need to have social skills. I mean, kind of almost above and beyond most people. You really face a lot of difficult situations and you need to almost portray a comfort when you're

speaking with the families. Because I think, especially upon initiating you need to kind of calm the situation because most of them are going to be very emotional. Angry, upset and you need to be able to react to a wide range of responses. Some people don't care at all and some people get quite angry. I think you need to have or a person would need to have problem solving skills, and actually pretty quick ones. There's a lot of times when you have to make on-the-fly responses when you're there. Some that are difficult, you can refer to coworkers or your supervisor, but a lot of times, you're on the scene and something needs to be decided. Especially in an on-call or emergency situation.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host outside, walking down street. Older neighborhood.

As we just heard, being flexible, organized, open minded, compassionate, patient, having great people and decision making skills, are necessary ingredients for successful foster care and protective services staff.

B-roll: CWI classroom shots. Students at computers, small groups.
Lower third: Child Welfare Institute

Most of these skills or behaviors are part of your personality and are difficult to learn through training. However, it's important to know that the State will provide 8 weeks of training through the Child Welfare Institute before a caseload is assigned to you. After you start the job, you'll receive additional on the job training, as well as support from your coworkers.

But despite the training and other support you receive, jobs like these have to come with some drawbacks, right? Let's move on and hear about some of the challenges of being a protective services or foster care worker.

JANICE RIVARD**PS JACKSON CO.**

We see b-roll of Janice working in office, meeting with supervisor, in field, etc.

I would really emphasis that they really need to think about the stress levels of the job and the realities of the job. Not just the book part of it and not just what your taught through CWI but the real realities that you will be removing peoples children. That's a fact that you will be dealing with people that are going to call you names. That's a fact. You will be dealing with families that won't follow through. You will be dealing with families that don't really care about their children anymore because they have given up on themselves and if you can't handle that and can't let that type of stress go and be able to handle that you won't survive very well in this job. The reality is that our job is to protect children and sometimes it involves not so nice things such as removing them literally from peoples arms or removing them out of the situation where the home is messy and it's really hard not to impose your own standards on individuals but you need to really look at what reality is.

ANNA KETCHUM**FC VAN BUREN CO.**

We see b-roll of Anna working in office, meeting with supervisor, etc.

The amount of paperwork is just literally astronomical. It does get to be difficult. I remember, in fact, when I interviewed they had asked me what happens if you have a report due but you have a home call scheduled. During the interview I said oh people will come first unless it's an emergency it doesn't happen. / But I was so naïve when I first interviewed.

KELLIE DENNIS**FC JACKSON CO.**

We see b-roll of Kellie working in office, meeting with supervisor, etc.

I really think the new workers need to realize that it is a lot of paperwork and you're not going to get that one-on-one time that you probably hoping to save the world and it's just not – you just don't have the opportunity to do that. As much as you would like to be out with the kids all day long and working one-on-one with them, you just don't have that time to do that. It's unfortunate but it's also – you've got deadlines that you have meet and a lot of paperwork. And I really think that – I don't know if people coming in to this profession really realize that sometimes. I know I didn't. I didn't realize there was this much paperwork involved.

JENNIFER SCZYKUTOWICZ**FC JACKSON CO.**

We see b-roll of Jennifer working in office, meeting with supervisor, in field, etc.

I think one of the challenges is that a lot of these parents feel that they're children should have not been removed. And you can work with them for months and months trying to explain. Let's try taking substance abuse for an example. This is a reason kids are removed and its very challenging to I guess see it from where they're coming from and they just don't think it's that bad or it was a one time deal and you know it will never happen again and the court just doesn't really look at it that way. And they need to maintain sobriety and you know we'll have them submit urine analysis screens. You know it's just not one time and if it's clean we move on from there. They really, I think it's a really challenge to work with trying to get them to see the whole picture on what is going on.

LUJUANA WARREN**PS SUPERVISOR JACKSON CO.**

Lower third CG:

LuJuana Warren, Social
Service Supervisor,
Jackson Co.

We see b-roll of LuJuana
working in office, etc.

You have to make decisions and you have to be good at making decisions. Because when you're in that home, you have to make the decision rather to leave that child in that home or get a police assistance, remove that child out of the home. And sometimes work it one way or another when saying to the parents, well this is a difficult situation, maybe we can work together. Is there some place the child can go tonight that will be safe? You try to work with the parents where it's not a difficult situation all the time, but you have to do your job. So you have to sometimes make a decision and you can't get any backup on that. In other words, you can't call a supervisor, you can't get a supervisor.

KATHY MILLER**PS SUPERVISOR VAN BUREN CO.**

We see b-roll of Kathy
working in office, meeting
with staff, etc.

You have to have a good support system at home, you have to know yourself, you have to know what you can deal with, if you can manage to witness the kind of abuse and neglect that kids go through, the sadness in families, the situations that effect generations of people that we deal with and how that's going to personally effect you as a worker and as a person and how you're going to go home then to your family. I think it can effect you in a positive way, and I think it has for many people that we work with. You value your family, you value what you do when you are hopefully making, helping to make a difference for other families. But if you're not grounded in that, if you don't know yourself, if you haven't taken the

time to examine why you are going into this business, I think it could be devastating. I have seen it be devastating.

KERRIE GEORGE

FC VAN BUREN CO.

We see b-roll of Kerrie working in office, meeting with supervisor, in field, etc.

The court can be real frustrating to work with sometimes and attorneys. We testify quite a bit and sometimes attorneys aren't the most pleasant to deal with sometimes, especially if a case goes to termination. You kind of get grilled up on the stand about efforts that you've made with the family. That can be real challenging. Sometimes you make a recommendation to have the kids go home for example and then the court doesn't support that so that can be real frustrating real challenging too to work towards a goal that you had in your mind but the court doesn't support that goal.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host outside in older neighborhood.

Let's recap some of the challenges we heard about from staff: too much paperwork, frustrating clients who fail to cooperate with their service plan, failure of the courts to back your decisions, making split second decisions, lack of community resources, and having to deal with disturbing situations over and over. These are all things to consider when weighing the pros and cons of taking one of these positions.

In addition to the challenges we just talked about many new staff members are not ready for the emotional toll that comes with seeing children and families in devastating situations.

LORETTA LOHEISER**PS JACKSON CO.**

Lower third CG:

Loretta Loheiser,
Protective Services,
Jackson Co.

We see b-roll of Loretta
working in office, working
in field, etc.

I'll take a break and go in the car and you just sob and you come back and think ok on to the next situation, on to the next case. But we're real people too, and I think that's why, I know that's why I'm in this field because I care about people and I care about children. And you really want things to be better in a family. That's our hope is that you won't ever have to remove these children, that parents will see the light and that they'll be somehow inspired and motivated to make those changes in their lives that will make their families healthier and happier. But there are those times when it's not going to happen and that's the reality.

TYANA HENDERSON**PS WAYNE CO.**

We see b-roll of Tyana
working in office, working
in field, etc.

One case that we had that we went in to see the child. The child had been whooped with an extension cord to the point to where she was bleeding. See couldn't sit. It literally tore me apart that when she left we all broke down and cried. My co-worker, some of the other people that were involved, we just bawled because it was heart wrenching. She was a young girl, a little girl and it was that bad. I think that is the worst I've had to deal with as far as the physical abuse. It can be emotional for you and sometimes you do take it home. That's the worst it's been for me.

JASON COX**PS VAN BUREN CO.**

We see video of Jason on a home call, exterior of trailer, talking with landlord.

Still photo's of "dirty homes" as he describes.

I came from a place where a dirty home would be a little bit of clutter, maybe some laundry laying around and I thought my room was probably filthy when I was growing up. I started in a county where it was somewhat, or I guess urbanesque. / it entailed a moderate sized city / The homes that I walked into were utter filth. There was rotten food, dishes with mold and just like chicken bones lying on the floor with mold growing off of them, animal feces, lots of animal feces on the floor. Cat boxes, litter boxes that hadn't been changed for months or if ever, or if there was one. Bugs, lots of bugs, roaches, spiders, flies, maggots, opening refrigerators and seeing the most disgusting sight of my life and smells that would actually make me, that have made me gag. I've been in homes that, especially homes that are heated very warm in the winter, to go into it and it's about 90 degrees and it just smells like raw sewerage. The smell hits you and it's overwhelming and causes you're gag reflex to go. / I was called out on a home once that they actually condemned as we walked out. Nailed the door shut, but I got there and the, I was with the city manager, animal control and a member of the health department and the first thing they did was hand me a pair of rubber gloves and a can of Vicks. They said you're going to want to put this under your nose, so and even with the overwhelming smell of Vicks under my nose, it was almost more than I could take. There were actually dead animals in this home. Had to climb over clothes, piles of feces and when we got there, there were kids sitting on the couch getting ready to eat, and so I had to stop that, escort them out of the house and after we got it taken care of I took them out to eat. And it just, it was sad that that is

what they were used to living in. And never did I ever think that I would see things like that. Dirt floors, no beds or no linens, a mattress that I wouldn't touch let alone sleep on. And it's very difficult and just when I thought I saw it all, there's another one that will top it. That's one thing that I have definitely found in this job, you've never seen it smelled it or dealt with it all because there's always something else.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host outside in older neighborhood.

After hearing about the emotional toll and some of the situations you'll be dealing with as a member of the Protective Services and Foster Care staff, you're probably asking, why do these people continue to do this? There are some very special rewards that come along with these jobs.

MICHELE HEARN-JONES

FC WAYNE CO.

We see b-roll of Michele working in office, etc.

You have foster parents. You have relatives. You have parents. You have schools. You have so many people and all of them are looking at you. So its going to be stressful, but it is very rewarding because when you do have a parent that is willing to work and your willing to help them and they get their kids back and they have benefited from the services, then yes, you do pat yourself on the back, like yes, I helped them. I had this from the beginning and now this kids go home and this case is closed. We're not terminating rights and all that kind of stuff. So yes it is some rewards to it. And I think that's what keeps me

going. It is a lot of rewards.

ANNA KETCHUM

FC VAN BUREN CO.

We see b-roll of Anna working in office, etc.

It's the self-gratification. You will get the thank yous from your clients but just seeing the difference. And even if the cases don't work out you see that the children can be placed and can be and can have an adoptive home. You know, look to the future and they can be safe. You've got to look for it. You know, it 's not something that's going to jump right in front of you. You've got to look for those self-gratification's.

TYANA HENDERSON

PS WAYNE CO.

We see b-roll of Tyana working in office, working in field, etc.

Prime example today. I had a wonderful morning. What we did was file a guardianship for a child to remain in the home with a non-relative. I felt strongly after conducting my investigation that this was the best place for this child because of what the child had previously went through and that this child was emotionally bond to this woman. It worked out that she got the guardianship. That was extremely rewarding. I was just so happy and the child was happy. Those are the type of thing that makes you feel good. When you that you really helped out a family. No matter how big or small it is that is just rewarding. That is the best part.

LORETTA LOHEISER

PS JACKSON CO.

We see b-roll of Loretta

I absolutely love working in the Child Welfare field. I love

working in office, working in field, etc.

helping people that have problems. I actually, I love children, I like helping parents work through problems with their kids. There has to be a real commitment and a real passion for the job. I've always been the kind of person who has been extremely compassionate to people in need, to vulnerable people. And I think part of that arises out of the home environment that I was raised in.

DEMETRUS STARLING

PS WAYNE CO.

We see b-roll of Demetrus working in office, working in field, etc.

When you a client call you, let's say 3 months later saying, Mr. Starling, thank you for helping me get into these parenting classes, for helping me getting into the substance abuse classes, for helping me keep my family together. That's rewarding, that's the rewarding part of the job. When you first encounter a family and you see that they are at their lowest point and you are able to help them bring them back up and keep the family together and make sure the kids are back in school and the kids are getting good grades and you know they are healthy and the parents have kicked the drug habits, whatever. And then you know you get these different phone calls, letters and things like that. You know you have accomplished your job, that's the rewarding part of this job.

CANDACE COBURN

PS JACKSON CO.

Lower third CG:
Candace Coburn,
Protective Services,
Jackson Co.

I find a lot of rewards even if they are subtle. If I see any success whatsoever or if the reward I get personally is being able to at least state to the people that the choices that they can make in order to improve. I try to empower them as the people that are going to make the changes

We see b-roll of Candace working in office, etc.

not me telling them what to do. It's rewarding to see that they are at least willing to try. Lot of people you would imagine might not want a stranger sitting in their room, you have to change this or that but if you do it in a way that empowers them then you will see more results and I love that because their really doing it for themselves not for me / or anybody else./ That's a reward for all of us.

HOST

ON CAMERA

Host outside in older neighborhood.

The satisfaction someone receives from doing a job vary with the person, their job, and where they are in their career. All the employees we've met here today have something in common: they truly want to help provide protection, safety and stability for Michigan's children and families. Are these the types of jobs that can motivate you? That's for you to decide.

Remember, high turnover among new hires is disruptive to the positive outcomes we all seek for these children and their families. I urge you to give careful thought to the pro's and con's of these jobs before accepting one.

Whatever your decision, we'd like to thank you for your interest in a career with the State of Michigan. Now, let's hear a few final thoughts from some of Michigan's child welfare staff.

CHRISTINE ANDERZAK

FC WAYNE CO.

We see b-roll of all the PS and FC staff we've met during this program.

The best piece of advice is to remember that it's a difficult job, it can be thankless at times, and you have to want to be there to do it. You are going to working with a lot of

Similar to opening.

difficult people. Pretty much everybody likes to hear how well of a job they are doing. With caseloads getting higher that doesn't always happen. You don't hear the appreciation often and if you have to hear "Oh, you're doing a good job" every time you do something you're going to get disappointed.

LUJUANA WARREN

PS SUPERVISOR JACKSON CO.

Being eager to learn, being eager to help and being eager to put that time in and if your not, PS is not for you. Because it is one of those kind of jobs that's very flexible but then some days you have to work late, some you might want to come in early.

KATHY MILLER

PS SUPERVISOR VAN BUREN CO.

Know yourself and know what you are doing. This job is seriously too important to take it as a well I'll see if I like it kind of job. People's lives depend on it and we're given an incredible experience to be so intimately involved with other people and I'm afraid that can be taken for granted and it shouldn't be the kind of job where you want to see if maybe it's for you. You better be sure this is what you want to do because it will take a toll on you and you will be involved in taking a toll on other people's lives.

LINDA BLACKMER

PS VAN BUREN CO.

In some ways it's like police work because you're solving

mysteries. I've had a family pull a comb out of the trash that they threw away because one kid hit another kid with it and they suspected that that's where the marks were from and I held the comb to the child's scalp and sure enough it was curved and the teeth of the comb were the exact same width apart as the marks on the child's head. So, you know, kind of solving a mystery.

TYANA HENDERSON

PS WAYNE CO.

It's not a cake job by no means. It's an emotional job. It's a stressful job. You need patience, definitely, you need patience. It so if you don't have those things I think you are going to be constantly beating your head up against the wall try to fight the system.

KERRIE GEORGE

FC VAN BUREN CO.

I would tell that they would be in court a lot, that they would be, have that they would be doing a lot of paperwork. I'd be telling them that they would have a lot of involvement with families, that it can be very stressful. Very, very stressful job because you are trying to balance and you're trying to prioritize and sometimes you just, there are some days where you just don't know what to do first. That's a very realistic view of foster care and trying to balance everything out. There's a lot of times when we work extra hours because it just can't get done in an 8 hour day and you have foster parents that work during the day and you have kids that are in school during the day, so you might have to be expected to work sometimes after 5:00 at night it's not like it's an 8 to 5 job you can

sometimes work later that that.

JASON COX

PS VAN BUREN CO.

Be prepared for what they may see. It is very difficult. A lot more difficult than I thought it would be. It is highly stressful, highly emotional. I have found myself on several occasions especially after dealing with a child death. Breaking down and actually questioning myself as what did I do, what could I have done differently. I would say be prepared for what challenges you will face because there diffidently are challenges. I could say you get more experienced over time but I wouldn't say it gets easier because like I said it is ever changing and you know it is some the work load the situation we are in now the economy goes down the work load goes up and so does the difficulty of the challenges we face. Services go away. The resources we have go away and the work does not. Be prepared.

DEMETRUS STARLING

PS WAYNE CO.

I like my job, I really do. I would say that if your not a strong willed person, you will probably will have a little bit more problems with it. If you don't have a strong stomach you might have a little bit more problems with it. But if you enjoy working in the community, you enjoy working with families, if you're a people person, if you enjoy the whole Human Services field, I would say yes, go for it, definitely go for it.

CANDACE COBURN**PS JACKSON CO.**

I just love it. I love dealing with people. It's a job that allows you have some flexibility, you get out, you don't have to do the same thing day in and day out. It's something new everyday even though you may be doing the same work or the same type of investigation there is always something new to it and so it's not boring to me and that's what I like.

LORETTA LOHEISER**PS JACKSON CO.**

I think that it is an absolutely incredible learning experience, you will never be the same again. I think I have learned so much in this job. I've learned a lot about myself as a person. I think I have grown emotionally, I think intellectually I've grown a lot through my experiences on the job. But I find that if you do not have a commitment, if your not mature enough, maturity is another thing too, you have to got to be willing to just give everything up during your 8 – 5 and really focus on being a helper to people. If you don't have the kind of personality where you really like helping people work through problems, you're probably not going to last in this job.

Close Credits

Appendix D: RJP Viewer Questionnaire

Michigan FIA RJP Student Questionnaire

Survey Number _____

Pre-screening Questions:

<i>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:</i>		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I plan to pursue a career as a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I could see myself working as a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker for at least a few years to get the experience necessary for my long term career goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I believe that I have a pretty good understanding of what the job of a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker entails.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I believe that I have a pretty good understanding of the emotional challenges and rewards from a position as a children’s services caseworker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	If offered a position, I would probably accept a Foster Care or Protective Services Worker position with Michigan’s public human services agency (the Family Independence Agency), assuming that the pay, benefits, and work location met my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	If offered a position, I would probably accept a children’s services caseworker position with one of Michigan’s private (or not-for-profit) human services agencies, assuming that the pay, benefits, and work location met my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Michigan FIA RJP Student Questionnaire

Survey Number _____

Post-screening Questions:

<i>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:</i>		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
7	I plan to pursue a career as a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I could see myself working as a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker for at least a few years to get the experience necessary for my long term career goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I believe that I have a pretty good understanding of what the job of a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker entails.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I believe that I have a pretty good understanding of the emotional challenges and rewards from a career in child welfare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If offered a position, I would probably accept a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker position with Michigan’s public human services agency (the Family Independence Agency), assuming that the pay, benefits, and work location met my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	If offered a position, I would probably accept a children’s services caseworker position with one of Michigan’s private (or not-for-profit) human services agencies, assuming that the pay, benefits, and work location met my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	If I were required to watch the “Is this Job for Me” video before being scheduled for an interview for a Foster Care or Protective Services Worker job, I would still go through with the interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	If I were required to watch the “Is this Job for Me” video before being scheduled for an interview for a caseworker job, I would interview for the job, and accept it if offered.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Michigan FIA RJP Student Questionnaire

Survey Number _____

Post-screening Questions:

<i>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:</i>		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
15	If I were required to watch the “Is this Job for Me” video before being scheduled for an interview for a Foster Care or Protective Services Worker job, I believe I could make a better-informed decision about taking the job or not.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Overall, the video presented information about a Foster Care or Protective Services Worker job that I was previously unaware of.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I believe the video provided a balanced perspective of the rewards and challenges of the children’s services caseworker job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	I believe that if I accepted a job offer after having seen the video, I would be better prepared to cope with the challenges of a children’s Foster Care or Protective Services Worker position.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Based on the video, it appears that the job is more stressful than I thought it would be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Based on the video, it appears that there is more paperwork in this job than I thought there would be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Based on the video, it appears that a Foster Care or Protective Services Worker functions more as a case manager than a counselor or therapist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	I found the length of the video to be about right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Michigan FIA RJP Student Questionnaire

Demographic Questions:

Survey Number _____

23	Are you...	<input type="checkbox"/>	An Undergraduate Student		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	A Graduate Student		
24	What is your major?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Work		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Criminal Justice		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Sociology		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please indicate)		
25	What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Male		
26	What is your ethnicity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	African American / Black		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian / Pacific Islander		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Caucasian / White		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Hispanic		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Native American / Eskimo		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Other		
27	In what age group do you fall?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	46 - 50
		<input type="checkbox"/>	25 - 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	51 - 55
		<input type="checkbox"/>	31 - 35	<input type="checkbox"/>	56 - 60
		<input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 60
		<input type="checkbox"/>	41 - 45		
28	Have you had prior experience as a children's services caseworker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	No		

Appendix E: Sample RJP Viewer Certificate



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

March 29, 2007

Disclosure of Interest Statement

Please check one of the following:

I have viewed the DVD *“Is This Job For Me?”* and wish to continue with the hiring process.

I have viewed the DVD *“Is This Job For Me?”* and decline to continue with the hiring process.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING WHEN APPLYING FOR VACANCIES:

Your application for any position does not guarantee that you will be contacted by the department for further consideration.

Please sign and return this statement along with the DVD in the brown envelope (provided) addressed to Personnel Services STE 708.

Signature

Date

Appendix F: Phone Survey of RJP No>Returns

**RJP Phone Survey of No>Returns
Draft #2**

Hello. May I speak to _____ ? My name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of the Department of Human Services in regard to the application you recently filed for a position as a Services Specialist.

You may recall that as part of the application process, you were sent a DVD entitled "Is this Job for Me?" and asked to watch it and then return it along with an expression of your interest in continuing with the application process.

The purpose of this call is part of a research project to attempt to determine the impact the DVD had on applicants' decisions to follow through with the application process. Your participation in this brief survey is strictly voluntary and confidential. Whether you participate or not will have no bearing on this or any future applications for employment with DHS. This survey should take no more than three minutes to complete. Are you willing to participate?

- Yes
 No

1. DHS records indicate that you did not follow through with the application process after having been mailed the DVD. Do you agree that the DHS records are accurate in this regard? *(Depending on the person's response, we may want to reassure them that the purpose of the call is not to get them to return the DVD. We may say "The purpose of this call is not a "follow-up" attempt to get you to return the DVD. We understand that there are many reasons why the DVD may not have been returned and our intent is not to be critical or judgmental.*

- Yes *(Continue with survey)*
 No *(Find out when DVD was returned & refer to DHS for follow-up)*
 Comments:

2. Did you watch the DVD entitled "Is This Job For Me?"

- Yes *(go to question 3)*
 No *(go to question 5)*
 Comments:

3. Did watching the DVD have any impact on your decision not to follow through with the application process?

- Yes *(go to question 4)*
 No *(go to question 6)*
 Comments:

4. Several aspects of the Foster Care and Children’s Protective Services jobs were described in the video. On the whole, which of the following aspects had a bearing on your decision to withdraw from the application process? (I will first read through the list of six aspects of the job portrayed in the video. I will then go through them again and ask you which of the aspects had a bearing on your decision not to continue with the application process. You can choose as many as applicable.)

- There is too much paperwork
- The job seems hazardous or dangerous
- The job seems to be too stressful
- The job functions more as a case manager than a counselor or therapist
- I wouldn’t like dealing with attorneys and the courts so much
- The job seems like it would just be a “bad fit” for me.
- Other:

Which one of these aspects had the greatest bearing on your decision to withdraw from the application process:

That completes our survey. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Thank you very much for your participation.

5. From the list of possible reasons for not watching the DVD that I will read to you, please indicate which – if any of them – apply. I will read through them first, and then ask you to indicate your primary reason for not watching the DVD.

- I didn’t have access to equipment to watch the DVD
- I didn’t have the time to watch the DVD
- I had planned to watch it, but just didn’t get around to it.
- I wasn’t really that interested in the job when I initially applied for it.
- Other:

That completes our survey. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Thank you very much for your participation.

6. Which of the following reasons influenced your decision not to follow through on the application process for the Services Specialist position?
- I had intended to continue with the application process, but just never got around to it.
 - I wasn’t really that interested in the job when I initially applied for it.
 - Other:

That completes our survey. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix G: Sample Applicant Letter



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

March 29, 2007

«Title»«FullName»
«Address1»
«Address2»

Dear «Title»«LastName»:

Thank you, for your interest in the Services Specialist position with the Department of Human Services.

We have recently received your application for the Central Hiring Pool. Your application has successfully passed the initial screening process. The final phase of the screening process is to review the enclosed DVD "Is This Job For Me?", which explains the roles and responsibilities of a Services Specialist. In order to complete the final screening process, please watch the DVD and then return it to us, within 30 days, along with the disclosure of interest statement in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

After completion of the final screening process, your application will stay on file for one year.

You will also find enclosed a survey from the Equal Employment Office. Completion of this form is voluntary; if completed it must be returned in the enclosed self-addressed envelope labeled Suite 1412.

If you have any further questions in the hiring process, please contact Leanne Parker 517-241-8907.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael P. Downer".

Michael P. Downer, Director
Personnel Services

Appendix H: RJP Evaluation – Michigan DHS

Executive Summary

In 2005, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) began using a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) video for children’s services caseworker applicants to view prior to their employment interview. Of the 88 newly-hired employees we tracked during their first year of employment, 56 percent had viewed the RJP and 44 percent had not.

The employees who saw the RJP had a first-year turnover rate of 6.2 percent, compared to a first-year turnover rate of 21.6 percent of those who did not. In terms of retention, 93.8 percent of the RJP group and 78.4 percent of the non-RJP group remained in the job for at least one year.

To measure the impact of the RJP on job satisfaction, we reviewed responses to nine questions included in a survey that newly hired caseworkers take approximately eight months after they’re hired. Although the findings are based on a rather small sample of employees, the survey results suggest that:

- A greater percentage of the RJP group was satisfied with their jobs than of the control group.
- The percentage of employees dissatisfied with their job is generally lower for the RJP group than for the control group, suggesting that the RJP has caused those who would be a poor fit to “self-select” out of the hiring process.
- A greater percentage of the RJP group felt that they were better able to cope with the pressures of the job than the control group.
- A greater percentage of the RJP group felt that DHS had been more honest with them during the recruitment process.

Background

With the support of a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) produced a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) to show to all applicants for children’s services caseworker positions.¹ All involved in the project agreed that evaluating the effectiveness of the RJP was an important component of the project.

CPS Human Resource Services conducted the evaluation of the impact of Michigan’s RJP from several different perspectives:

- Cost Effectiveness.
- Impact on Applicant Decisions to Continue with the Selection Process
- Impact on Turnover.

¹ Children’s services caseworkers at DHS are classified as Services Specialists; this classification includes caseworkers performing adult services work. This study only tracks the Services Specialists working as children’s services caseworkers.

- Impact on Job Satisfaction.

Beginning in July 2005, DHS began mailing Realistic Job Preview DVDs to applicants for children's services caseworker positions who meet the minimum qualifications for the job. Applicants must watch and return the DVD with an acknowledgment of their continuing interest in the position in order to have their application receive further consideration in the screening process.

RJP Impact on Turnover

Methodology

Because DHS recruits, screens and interviews children's services caseworkers in anticipation of future vacancies occurring in its hundred-plus worksites across the state, they had a pool of well-qualified candidates available for job offers. Consequently, for a period of several months after they introduced the RJP, many of the newly hired caseworkers had not seen the RJP. Over time, an increasingly greater share of new hires had seen the RJP.

We included in our turnover study all children's services caseworkers hired by DHS between November 24, 2005 (the start date of the first caseworkers who saw the RJP) and June 19, 2006. DHS hired 128 caseworkers during that period.

One year after the hire date of the most recently hired employees, we reviewed the personnel records for each of these 128 employees to verify their hire date, if they had prior DHS experience, whether they were still working as a caseworker and, if not, the termination date and reason.

Since we wanted the "pre-employment understanding" of the DHS caseworker job to come from the RJP, we removed from the study those with prior experience in the Department as a caseworker or those promoted to the caseworker job from positions in DHS offices where they would have become familiar with the job. This reduced the size of the study group from 128 to 88. Of the 88 employees who had been hired from outside DHS, 50 had viewed the RJP and 38 had not.

Because the purpose of the RJP was to reduce **voluntary** turnover, we removed from the study group anyone who had been involuntarily removed (discharged) from their position. That reduced the study group to 85 employees, 48 who saw the RJP and 37 who did not.

We reviewed personnel records and were able to track the employment history of each employee for their first full year after hire. In order to use a common yardstick, we looked at job retention – and turnover – during the first year of employment for both the RJP and non-RJP groups.

Findings

The Realistic Job Preview should have had the greatest impact on early turnover – turnover occurring within the first six to twelve months of employment. The underlying premise is that

employees who do not have a good understanding about the nature of difficult and stressful jobs will leave as soon as feasible after gaining an understanding about the job's demands.

Of the newly hired caseworkers who saw the RJP, 93.8 percent (45 of the 48 employees) of them stayed at least one year. Of those who did not see the RJP, only 78.4 percent (29 of the 37 employees) stayed at least one year. Or, turnover during the first year for those new-hires who saw the RJP was 6.2 percent and the first-year turnover rate for those who did not see the RJP was 21.6 percent.

Of those who resigned, the caseworkers who saw the RJP stayed a bit longer, on average 160 days compared to 138 days for those who did not. Table 3 shows the number of days each newly hired employee worked before resigning.

Table 3: Days on payroll before resigning

Worker	Days on payroll before resigning	
	Saw RJP	Didn't see RJP
A		8
B		71
C		72
D	76	
E		86
F		103
G	183	
H	223	
I		244
J		244
K		281
Average	160	138

Five of the employees who did not see the RJP resigned within the first 100 days compared to only one employee from the RJP group who resigned within the same frame. Although it can be misleading to draw conclusions on such small numbers, the data certainly supports the notion that the RJP had an impact on early turnover.

Given the difficulty of isolating the impact the RJP had on turnover, we took into account the impact other external and internal variables may have had.

Since the employees included in our study who had seen the RJP were being hired over the same time period as those who had not, external labor market forces (e.g., unemployment rate, housing availability, hiring competition with private child welfare agencies, etc.) were virtually identical.

The impact of internal variables – such as changes in organization leadership, changes in workload, changes in policies and procedures – was also minimal because employees in both the RJP and non-RJP groups were hired during the same time period. In addition, most of the employees in both groups were hired to work in the same metropolitan counties (Genesee, Ingham, Kent, Muskegon, Oakland and Wayne). Oakland County is the location from which all three RJP employees resigned and from which half of the eight non-RJP employees resigned (see Table 4).

Table 4: Placement County of Employees Included in Study – RJP Group vs. Non-RJP Group

County	RJP Group		Non-RJP Group		Total
	Worked at least one year	Resigned during first year	Worked at least one year	Resigned during first year	
Allegan			1		1
Barry			1		1
Berrien			1		1
Eaton			1	1	2
Genesee	6		4	1	11
Gratiot	2				2
Ingham	4		2		6
Jackson			1		1
Kent	2		3		5
Macomb	3		1	2	6
Mecosta	1				1
Monroe	1				1
Muskegon	2		3		5
Oakland	16	3	8	4	31
Ottawa	1				1
Saginaw	1		2		3
St. Joseph	1				1
Wayne	5		1		6
Total	45	3	29	8	85

Oakland County has experienced very high turnover in recent years, which is reflected in the very large number of hires (31) when compared to counties of similar size (Kent, Genesee and Macomb), or to Wayne County (Detroit) which is much larger. It is noteworthy that fewer than 20 percent of the RJP group resigned from Oakland County during the first year compared to half of the non-RJP group.

Overall, it appears that the RJP has had a positive impact on caseworker retention.

Although not the focus of our review, it is also noteworthy that of the 40 employees promoted internally within the Department who had the opportunity to observe the demands of the caseworker job before applying for it, none of them voluntarily terminated their employment within the first year. They essentially received their RJP through the opportunity to observe their colleagues on the job on a day-to-day basis.

RJP Impact on Job Satisfaction

Methodology

Based on our review of the literature we hypothesized that the employees who had the opportunity to view the RJP video prior to accepting a job offer would have a higher level of job satisfaction than those who did not. In order to test that hypothesis, we worked with the University of Michigan's School of Social Work to design questions to include in their longitudinal study of child welfare caseworkers.²

Child welfare caseworkers hired after September 2004 are asked to complete a longitudinal survey. First, employees complete a baseline survey on-site after finishing the formal eight-week new-worker training program. At this point, the new worker has received classroom training and participated in on-the-job shadowing experiences, but has not yet been assigned any cases. Then, employees receive a follow-up survey six months after the baseline survey. This is approximately eight months after the date-of-hire for most employees. The follow-up surveys are sent to the employee's home address.

The response rate for the follow-up survey is approximately 73 percent. For purposes of this study, we have included only those caseworkers who were hired as new employees by DHS after September 2004. DHS employees who were promoted, transferred or reinstated were not included in our analysis. Because DHS began using the RJP rather recently, the number of employees who have been employed long enough to complete the six-month follow-up survey is rather small (see Table 5).³

² With the support of USDHHS Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Training Grant Award #90CT115, the University of Michigan is conducting a longitudinal study of child welfare caseworkers hired by DHS and other Michigan private child welfare agencies. The University intends to conduct the longitudinal study over the course of the five-year grant period. In order to minimize intrusiveness on DHS staff time, the University, with the concurrence of DHS, agreed to include several questions we designed in their longitudinal surveys.

³ There are only 151 responses to the six-month follow-up survey because some of the employees completing the baseline survey had not been employed long enough at the time the data were run to have completed the follow-up survey.

Table 5: Baseline and Follow-up Survey Respondents

Respondent Category	Saw RJP	Non-RJP	Total
Baseline Respondents	113	187	300
Six-month follow-up	38	113	151

At the baseline, 83 percent of the respondents were females and 17 percent were male. By race/ethnicity, 57.5 percent were White, 29.6 were African American, 1.6 were Hispanic, 7.2 percent reported being multiple races, and 4.1 percent were other race/ethnicity.

Findings

The relationship between employee job satisfaction and turnover is intuitively obvious, but the actual correlation may be a bit less direct. Some people stay in unsatisfying jobs because they have may have few reasonable options, and others leave highly satisfying jobs for any number of reasons. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that large numbers of employees in certain occupations leave the job early in their careers because the job did not meet their expectations.

Research finding suggest that aside from reducing turnover, RJPs provide the additional benefit of increasing job satisfaction among those who have been exposed to the RJP because there are fewer “surprises” once the employee starts the job. Research findings also show that satisfaction levels are improved because the new employees who have been exposed to the RJP are better prepared to cope with the pressures of the job and are more satisfied because they perceive the employer as having been honest and forthright in the recruitment process.

Of the 151 child welfare caseworkers new to DHS who completed the six-month follow-up survey, only 38 had been exposed to the RJP. Although this is a small group and the results should be used with caution, the findings from all nine of the questions dealing with job satisfaction are in the expected direction.

General Job Satisfaction

Two survey questions deal directly with the general issue of job satisfaction:

1. How satisfied would you say you are with your job?
2. If a friend of yours told you s/he was interested in working for DHS in child welfare, what would you tell that person?

In response to the first question above, 76.4 percent of employees in the RJP group are at least somewhat satisfied with their jobs as compared to 62.8 percent in the control group (see Table 6). Even more pronounced are the differences in the two groups’ responses of

“Not at all satisfied.” (2.9 percent for the RJP group compared to 15.5 percent for the control group.)

We expected the satisfaction levels of those who saw the RJP to be higher than those who did not. We also expected the RJP to have its greatest impact on borderline applicants, some of whom will withdraw from the application process after watching the DVD. If the RJP had the expected effect, applicants dissatisfied with the job would have self-selected out of the hiring process. Table 6 illustrates that the results are consistent with these expectations.⁴

Table 6: Survey Question - How satisfied would you say you are with your job?

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ15 How satisfied would you say you are with your job?	Very Satisfied	Count	6	17	23
		% within Saw Video	17.6%	15.5%	16.0%
	Somewhat Satisfied	Count	20	52	72
		% within Saw Video	58.8%	47.3%	50.0%
	Not Too Satisfied	Count	7	24	31
		% within Saw Video	20.6%	21.8%	21.5%
	Not at all Satisfied	Count	1	17	18
		% within Saw Video	2.9%	15.5%	12.5%
Total	Count	34	110	144	
	% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

For the second question dealing with overall job satisfaction (outlined in Table 7 below), only 7.9 percent of the RJP group answered “Advise against it” while nearly twice as many (15.3 percent) of the control group responded “Advise against it.” This also suggests that the RJP has weeded out some applicants who would have been dissatisfied with the job. By the same token, 52.6 percent of the RJP group would strongly recommend the job, compared with 44.1 percent of the control group.

⁴ In Tables 6 through 14, the total number of responses may be less than the total number of respondents shown in Table 5 because some respondents did not answer all of the survey questions

Table 7: Survey Question – If a friend of yours told you s/he was interested in working for DHS in child welfare, what would you tell that person?

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ17 If a friend of yours told you s/he was interested in working for DHS in child welfare, what would you tell that person?	Strongly recommend it	Count	20	49	69
		% within Saw Video	52.6%	44.1%	46.3%
	Have doubts about recommending it	Count	15	45	60
		% within Saw Video	39.5%	40.5%	40.3%
	Advise against it	Count	3	17	20
		% within Saw Video	7.9%	15.3%	13.4%
Total	Count	38	111	149	
	% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Job Expectations

Four questions included in the six-month follow-up survey help determine the extent to which the RJP may have had a bearing on job expectations:

1. Knowing what you know now, if you had to decide all over again whether to work in DHS in child welfare, what would you decide?
2. I never would have taken this job if I'd had a better understanding what it was going to be like. (Agree/Disagree)
3. Based on what I've learned so far, this job is pretty much as I expected it to be. (Agree/Disagree)
4. Now that I have a better understanding of what this job is all about, I believe it's going to be harder than I thought. (Agree/Disagree)

In response to the first question above, virtually the same percentage of the RJP group and the control group would “Decide without hesitation to do the same” (see Table 8 below). However, only 5.3 percent of the RJP group would “decide definitely not to work for DHS,” while 18.9 percent of the control group would decide not to work for the agency. The responses to this question suggest that the RJP may have a stronger effect on weeding out borderline applicants than increasing the satisfaction of those who take the job.

Table 8: Survey Question – Knowing what you know now, if you had to decide all over again whether to work in DHS in child welfare, what would you decide?

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ16 Knowing what you know now, if you had to decide all over again whether to work in DHS in child welfare, what would you decide?	Decide without hesitation to do the same	Count	16	46	62
		% within Saw Video	42.1%	41.4%	41.6%
	Have second thoughts	Count	20	44	64
		% within Saw Video	52.6%	39.6%	43.0%
	Decide definitely not to work for DHS	Count	2	21	23
		% within Saw Video	5.3%	18.9%	15.4%
Total		Count	38	111	149
		% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In response to the survey statement highlighted in Table 9, only 2.6 percent of the RJP group strongly agreed with the statement. Alternatively, 20.5 percent of the control group strongly agreed with the statement. Again, the data suggests that the RJP was effective in dissuading those who would have been a poor fit for the job from taking it.

Table 9: Survey Statement – I never would have taken this job if I'd had a better understanding of what it was going to be like.

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ3m I never would have taken this job if I'd had a better understanding of what it was going to be like.	Strongly Agree	Count	1	23	24
		% within Saw Video	2.6%	20.5%	16.0%
	Agree	Count	3	11	14
		% within Saw Video	7.9%	9.8%	9.3%
	Neither Agree or Disagree	Count	9	20	29
		% within Saw Video	23.7%	17.9%	19.3%
	Disagree	Count	17	37	54
		% within Saw Video	44.7%	33.0%	36.0%
	Strongly Disagree	Count	8	21	29
		% within Saw Video	21.1%	18.8%	19.3%
Total		Count	38	112	150
		% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10 illustrates the effect of the RJP in helping form realistic job expectations. Employees who saw the RJP were only about half as likely as the control group to be surprised by what they learned about the job after they started it. Only 33.4 percent of the RJP group disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement shown in Table 10, compared to 43.7 percent of the control group.

Table 10: Survey Statement – Based on what I've learned so far, this job is pretty much as I expected it to be.

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ3I Based on what I've learned so far, this job is pretty much as I expected it to be.	Strongly Agree	Count	0	5	5
		% within Saw Video	.0%	4.5%	3.4%
	Agree	Count	17	45	62
		% within Saw Video	47.2%	40.2%	41.9%
	Neither Agree or Disagree	Count	7	13	20
		% within Saw Video	19.4%	11.6%	13.5%
	Disagree	Count	11	39	50
		% within Saw Video	30.6%	34.8%	33.8%
	Strongly Disagree	Count	1	10	11
		% within Saw Video	2.8%	8.9%	7.4%
Total		Count	36	112	148
		% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In response to the statement highlighted in Table 11, only 2.6 percent of the RJP group strongly agreed with the statement as compared to 17.0 percent of the control group. Based on these percentages, we can assume that the RJP provided a realistic enough portrayal of the job to prevent newly hired employees from being totally surprised by what they found after starting the job.

Table 11: Survey Statement – Now that I have a better understanding of what this job is all about, I believe it's going to be harder than I thought.

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ3o Now that I have a better understanding of what this job is all about, I believe it's going to be harder than I thought.	Strongly Agree	Count	1	19	20
		% within Saw Video	2.6%	17.0%	13.3%
	Agree	Count	17	37	54
		% within Saw Video	44.7%	33.0%	36.0%
	Neither Agree or Disagree	Count	10	25	35
		% within Saw Video	26.3%	22.3%	23.3%
	Disagree	Count	8	27	35
		% within Saw Video	21.1%	24.1%	23.3%
	Strongly Disagree	Count	2	4	6
		% within Saw Video	5.3%	3.6%	4.0%
Total		Count	38	112	150
		% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Ability to Cope

Two questions in the six-month follow-up survey shed some light on the effectiveness of the RJP in helping prepare new employees to cope with the pressures of the job:

1. I believe I am going to be able to cope with the stress and pressure of this job.
2. Learning what I did about this job during the application and selection process has helped me cope with some of the job pressures I'm experiencing.

The data support the proposition that the RJP has been an effective tool in helping prepare new employees cope with the pressures of the job.

In response to the first statement above, 76.3 percent of the RJP group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement as compared to 59.8 percent for the control group (see Table 12).

Table 12: Survey Statement – I believe I am going to be able to cope with the stress and pressure of this job.

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ3q I believe I am going to be able to cope with the stress and pressure of this job.	Strongly Agree	Count	3	9	12
		% within Saw Video	7.9%	8.0%	8.0%
	Agree	Count	26	58	84
		% within Saw Video	68.4%	51.8%	56.0%
	Neither Agree or Disagree	Count	4	26	30
		% within Saw Video	10.5%	23.2%	20.0%
	Disagree	Count	4	9	13
		% within Saw Video	10.5%	8.0%	8.7%
	Strongly Disagree	Count	1	10	11
		% within Saw Video	2.6%	8.9%	7.3%
Total	Count	38	112	150	
	% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

In response to the statement highlighted in Table 13, 28.9 percent of the RJP group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement as compared to 18.8 percent of the control group.

Table 13: Survey Statement – Learning what I did about this job...has helped me cope with some of the job pressures I'm experiencing.

			Saw Video		Total
			Yes	No	
6mQ3n Learning what I did about this job during the application and selection process has helped me cope with some of the job pressures I'm experiencing.	Strongly Agree	Count	0	4	4
		% within Saw Video	.0%	3.6%	2.7%
	Agree	Count	11	17	28
		% within Saw Video	28.9%	15.2%	18.7%
	Neither Agree or Disagree	Count	12	23	35
		% within Saw Video	31.6%	20.5%	23.3%
	Disagree	Count	15	47	62
		% within Saw Video	39.5%	42.0%	41.3%
	Strongly Disagree	Count	0	21	21
		% within Saw Video	.0%	18.8%	14.0%
Total		Count	38	112	150
		% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Perceptions of Honesty during the Recruitment Process

Based on our research of the literature, we expected that employees exposed to the RJP would have a higher level of job satisfaction because of their belief that the Department had been honest and forthright during the recruitment and selection process. Table 14 summarizes the responses to the statement, "DHS' honesty during the recruitment process makes me feel more loyal to the Department." 28.9 percent of the RJP group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement in contrast to only 15.2 percent of the control group.

Table 14: Survey Statement – DHS' honesty during the recruitment process makes me feel more loyal to the Department.

		Saw Video		Total	
		Yes	No		
6mQ3p DHS' honesty during the recruitment process makes me feel more loyal to the Department.	Strongly Agree	Count	1	0	1
		% within Saw Video	2.6%	.0%	.7%
	Agree	Count	10	17	27
		% within Saw Video	26.3%	15.2%	18.0%
	Neither Agree or Disagree	Count	20	52	72
		% within Saw Video	52.6%	46.4%	48.0%
	Disagree	Count	7	25	32
		% within Saw Video	18.4%	22.3%	21.3%
	Strongly Disagree	Count	0	18	18
		% within Saw Video	.0%	16.1%	12.0%
	Total	Count	38	112	150
		% within Saw Video	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Conclusions

Our review of the effectiveness of the Realistic Job Preview used by the Michigan DHS is based on a rather small sample of employees and our findings should be considered preliminary. Nonetheless, all of the findings are consistent with a larger body of research that demonstrates the effectiveness of the RJP in improving job retention and job satisfaction in occupations that are often not well understood by job applicants. It is noteworthy that both the turnover data and all of the survey questions support the proposition that the RJP has reduced early turnover and increased job satisfaction among newly hired caseworkers. We found that:

- 93.8 percent of the newly hired caseworkers who had viewed the RJP stayed with DHS at least one year, compared to 78.4 percent of the caseworkers who did not see the RJP.
- Based on the findings from nine survey questions asked of caseworkers approximately eight months after being hired, the data are consistent with our expectations for the effectiveness of the RJP.
- A greater percentage of the RJP group was satisfied with their jobs than of the control group.
- The percentage of employees dissatisfied with their job is generally lower for the RJP group than for the control group, suggesting that the RJP has caused those who would be a poor fit to “self-select” out of the hiring process.
- A greater percentage of the RJP group felt that they were better able to cope with the pressures of the job than the control group.
- A greater percentage of the RJP group felt that DHS had been more honest with them during the recruitment process.