The Turnover Tool Kit:  
A Guide to Understanding and Reducing Employee Turnover

Submitted by:

CPS Human Resource Services
www.cpshr.us
Connie Champnoise
Principal Consultant
The **RJP Tool Kit** was funded by Cornerstones for Kids. We thank them for their support and acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s) alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Cornerstones for Kids.
Table of Contents

Overview .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 1

Tool 1 – Calculating the Cost of Employee Turnover .............................................................................................................................. 8

Tool 2 – Designing and Analyzing Turnover Data Reports .................................................................................................................... 14

Tool 3 – Exit Interviews and Exit Surveys .............................................................................................................................................. 22

Tool 4 – Targeted Solutions for Reducing Turnover .............................................................................................................................. 35

Appendix

Appendix A – Research Findings and Further Reading........................................................................................................................... 56
Overview

The Turnover Tool Kit is designed for public-sector and non-profit child welfare administrators and Human Resources Management professionals who are trying to understand the causes of staff turnover and looking for retention tools.

What is the Turnover Tool Kit?

- The Turnover Tool Kit provides you with tools to help you determine if you have a turnover problem in your agency and why.
- The tools include strategies and tactics to address problems with turnover.
- Although we designed the Tool Kit for child welfare agencies, these tools can easily be adapted for any type of human services organization.

The Turnover Tool Kit includes:

**Tool 1 – Calculating the Cost of Turnover** offers guidelines on how to determine the cost of turnover to your agency. Knowing the cost of turnover to your agency will allow you to evaluate the cost effectiveness of any turnover-reduction strategies you consider implementing.

**Tool 2 – Designing and Analyzing Turnover Data Reports** provides practical examples for designing turnover reports that can help you identify the magnitude of your turnover problem, give you some further insights about why the problem exists, and allow you to track the success of any strategies you implement to address the problem.

### Defining Turnover

- **Turnover:** The number of workers leaving an agency or category during a given time period.
- **Turnover Rate:** The number of workers leaving an agency or category during a given time period divided by the average number of workers employed by that agency/category during the same time period.

**Preventable Turnover:** Turnover caused by factors an agency can control, i.e., salaries, caseload sizes, training, work schedules.

**Non-preventable Turnover:** Turnover over which an agency has no control, i.e., employee relocating, retiring, returning to school, etc.
Tool 3 – Exit Interviews and Exit Surveys describes how you can use exit interviews and surveys to identify some of the root causes of turnover in your agency. We include samples of each.

Tool 4 – Targeted Strategies and Solutions links strategies and solutions to specific causes of turnover, and provides an overview of each targeted solution.

Appendix A – Research and Further Reading discusses in-depth the causes and consequences of turnover for human services agencies, and includes a bibliography of the literature and websites.

Is all Turnover Bad?

Every organization experiences some turnover, and in our view, some turnover is healthy for an organization. Some degree of turnover provides an opportunity for the infusion of new ideas and renewed energy. The turnover of weak performers provides an opportunity to hire more capable employees. Turnover rates as low as five percent in non-child welfare organizations are not uncommon, and are considered by those organizations to be reasonable and appropriate.

Steps to Addressing Turnover

Table 1 below outlines the phases and basic steps you’ll need to take in addressing turnover in your agency.
Table 1: Phases and Steps to Addressing Turnover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I – Understanding the Costs and Impacts of Turnover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Calculate the costs of turnover to your agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Identify adverse impacts turnover has on your agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Understand the causes of turnover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase II – Find Out Why You Have a Turnover Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Collect turnover data, including basic demographic data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Collect employee feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exit interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employee focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Supervisory focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attitude surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Objectively assess agency’s performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Analyze information and data to determine the causes of preventable turnover in your agency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase III – Develop Retention Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Identify how Human Resources and program staff will work together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Organizational readiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase IV – Implement Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Implement solutions appropriate for the causes of turnover in your agency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase I – Understanding Turnover

Understanding the causes, consequences and amount of turnover in your agency is a prerequisite to identifying possible solutions for reducing turnover.

Consequences

High turnover among child welfare workers can lead to:

- Adverse impacts on children and families.
- Failure to attain federal child welfare outcomes.
- Cost to the agency in lost time, personnel and money

Workforce instability and high turnover result in child welfare workers having less time to conduct frequent and meaningful home visits; establish relationships with children and families; and make thoughtful and well-supported decisions regarding safe and stable permanent placements.

Causes

The causes of turnover among child welfare workers are as varied as the agencies in which they work. Although there are some common causes such as low pay and heavy workloads, the reasons for turnover in your agency may be very different. Turnover among child welfare workers can be caused by a number of factors, including:

- Low salaries.
- High caseloads.
- Paperwork and other administrative burdens which detract from professional social work activities.
- Lack of supervisory support.
- Unavailability of training and/or insufficient time to participate in training.
- Requirement for working evening and weekend hours.
- Lack of resources for children and families.
- Low morale.
- Risk of violence.

See Appendix A for a detailed discussion of the research on the causes and consequences of turnover among child welfare workers.

Phase II – Identifying the Reasons for Turnover in Your Agency

The first step in addressing turnover in your agency is to figure out why it’s happening. As with most serious problems, getting at the root causes of turnover may not be as simple as you might think. Gathering different types of information from multiple sources will give you a broader perspective crucial to helping you develop the most effective solutions.
There are three basic levels of inquiry required to get the types of information you'll need to accurately identify the causes of turnover in your agency:

1. **Collect Employee Data**

   By developing and analyzing detailed turnover reports, you will gain valuable insight into the reasons for turnover.

   Although many child welfare agencies track turnover at the “macro level,” our research suggests that relatively few agencies track and analyze turnover by work unit, length of service, college major/degree, race, gender, and other demographic characteristics. Developing turnover reports that generate such detailed information will provide useful information about the possible causes of turnover and may help answer such questions as:

   - If your agency has multiple work locations, are there differences in turnover among them?
   - If child welfare workers in your agency specialize in specific programs (Protective Services, Foster Care, Adoption, etc.) do turnover rates differ between them?
   - Is there a relationship between college degree/major and tenure?
   - What is the relationship between length of service and turnover?

   Your agency may not have the capacity to develop detailed turnover reports for multiple variables. However, any turnover data you have will be helpful – start with the data you have and build more sophisticated reports over time.

2. **Ask Employees**

   Many organizations routinely use exit interviews and/or exit surveys (EIS) to gather information about why employees leave. If done properly, the EIS can provide valuable and reliable information. Some organizations also use staff focus groups and staff surveys to gather information about workforce issues such as employee satisfaction, retention and turnover intention.

   Exit interviews/surveys and focus groups each offer a valuable perspective. The EIS is geared to elicit information from employees who have made the decision to leave your agency. Focus groups elicit information from employees who are still working for the agency. Both perspectives are important, and we encourage using both sources of information.

   Your supervisors are also a good source of information about why employees leave. They are close enough to the front line to observe what their employees find satisfying and what they find dissatisfying about their jobs. Asking supervisors what keeps – and what drives away – their best performers should provide useful and insightful information. Better yet, encourage your supervisors to ask their employees – individually – those very questions. Each employee is unique, and what keeps one employee may not work for another. Also, simply asking these questions – letting employees know that you care about them staying and value their contributions – is a good retention strategy.
3. **Objectively Assess Performance**

Before analyzing the information you’ve gathered, step back and take an objective look at your agency and its climate. Try to identify your agency’s strengths and weakness. Examples of questions to ask about your agency include:

- Are your wages fair and competitive?
- Are your caseloads higher than nationally recommended standards?
- Are caseloads higher than those of other child welfare agencies in your community?
- Are there meaningful training and professional development opportunities for staff?
- How do these opportunities compare with those at other agencies?
- What steps has your agency taken to enhance worker safety?
- Are employees considered a valuable asset of your agency?
- Where are the workers who are leaving going?

By taking the time to ask for employee feedback, collect formal data, and objectively assess your agency’s performance, you’ll be better able to accurately identify the real reasons for turnover in your agency.

---

**Phase III – Develop Retention Strategy**

**Organizational Readiness**

Preparing your organization *before* you begin implementing solutions to turnover is critical to the success of those solutions. Answering these questions will help ensure that your agency is ready to begin addressing the problem of turnover:

- **Resources** – Does your agency have the financial, technical and personnel resources required to implement the solution?
- **Buy-in** – Will your agency’s administration, management and staff “buy into” and support the solution?
- **Timing** – Is it the right time for your agency to be thinking about implementing change?

**Forming a Strategic Partnership with Human Resources**

Developing a strategy to reduce employee turnover is hard work. Using the suggestions in the Turnover Tool Kit will help, but the tools alone won’t do the job. You are going to have to decide which tactics to use – and how you’re going to use them. In addition, using these tools and using them cost effectively will require effort and commitment from many parts of your agency. A coordinated effort will be required from the folks in IT, the budget and finance office, and those who write policy. To ensure success, however, a
strategic relationship must be forged between Human Resources (HR) and Operations.

Identifying the causes of turnover in your agency is a critical first step in beginning to address the problem. Most of the data you will need to determine these underlying causes either resides in HR, or will require HR’s involvement to develop. Virtually all of the strategies and tactics we identify focus on workforce issues that require HR’s leadership to successfully implement.

In order to maximize HR’s contribution to the agency’s effort to reduce turnover, HR must be fully integrated into the strategic planning and overall operations of the agency. HR will need to fully understand the business of child welfare. They must truly serve as a “business partner” with operations, and gear their programs to support the long-run strategic goals of the agency.

Phase IV – Implement Tactics

Just as there is no single cause of turnover, there is no single solution. Your agency’s unique situation will determine which tactics you choose to implement. In addition, exactly because each organization is unique, the impact any given solution may have on that organization is difficult to predict.

Choosing the Right Solution

If the overall turnover rate in your agency is 20 percent, but the turnover rate of employees with less than one year of experience is 40 percent, a possible explanation is that the new hires are finding that they are a “poor fit” for the job.

Raising salaries and reducing caseloads will likely have little impact on reducing turnover of those new employees coming to the realization that they are not well suited to child welfare. Alternatively, changing your recruitment strategy to better inform job applicants of the “realities” of the job may have a significant impact on reducing turnover.

Reducing turnover is a complex issue that will take some time to resolve. In fact, no matter how effective your approach, you probably won’t be able to measure your success for at least several months.
Tool 1 – Calculating the Cost of Employee Turnover

This Tool Includes

- Guidelines on what to factor in when calculating the costs of turnover.
- A turnover calculator.
- Guidelines on how to use calculators to estimate the cost of turnover in your agency.

Guidelines

Knowing how much turnover costs your agency is important. Many agencies simply accept high turnover as an organizational reality and give little thought to the very real economic costs of continually replacing experienced staff. Too few agencies have worked through the process of determining how dollars spent on continuously recruiting and training new staff could be better diverted to turnover-reduction strategies.

Most of us are dependent on others to authorize our budgets and staffing levels. You may work with an appropriations committee of the legislature, a board of commissioners, or an executive board, each of which need to understand the cost of turnover in real dollar terms. In all likelihood, you will be required to explain how money spent on turnover reduction strategies will result in real savings to the agency. The most valid methodology for calculating the cost of turnover will be:

- **Based on Facts** – Your estimates should be based on the actual costs of advertising vacancies, interviewing applicants, providing training, etc. You should be able to explain how you calculated these and other costs.
- **Easy to Understand** – Your methodology should be straightforward, and you should be prepared to answer questions about how you arrived at your numbers.
- **Logical and Reasonable** – Certain elements in your cost estimate, such as the costs of recruiting, interviewing and training new employees are obvious. Other elements, such as the cost of the productivity differential between the experienced departing employee and the replacement, are not only less obvious but much more difficult to estimate. Basing your estimate on a reasoned analysis is critical to its acceptance.

Direct and Indirect Costs of Turnover

Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet. Estimating the cost of turnover will take some time and effort. Your estimate should include both the direct costs and the indirect costs of turnover. Direct costs are the specific measurable expenditures
associated with processing the departing employee’s separation and the new employee’s hiring and training. **Direct costs** might include:

- Processing departing employees’ paperwork.
- Pay out of any vacation pay, sick pay, and severance pay.
- Unemployment compensation payments.
- Recruitment activities, including costs of advertising, job fairs and search firms.
- Interviews, reference checks and other background checks.
- Hiring bonuses or referral bonuses.
- Training, including both formal classroom training and on-the-job training provided by supervisors, coworkers and mentors.

Rather than measuring expenditures, indirect costs include the value of the lost productivity, reduced service, and impact on children and families. **Indirect costs** might include the value of:

- The productivity differential between the departing employee and the replacement.
- Errors due to inexperience.
- Lowered morale and productivity of other employees.
- The financial consequences of slower service resulting in longer placements in out-of-home care.
- The emotional consequences for children and families due to lack of continuity and delays.

As a general rule, direct costs are easier to measure than indirect costs, but even some direct costs can be difficult to establish. Recruitment activities such as advertising and attending job fairs must be converted to a “per-hire” cost.

### How Could You Use $323,532?

**The Facts:**

- An Agency has 100 Children’s Protective Services Workers
- Average salary is about $35,553*, not including benefits
- Annual turnover averages 26%
- Each turnover costs $24,887 (70% of average annual salary*)
- Annual turnover costs are $647,064
- Worker caseloads average 24 children
- New employees earn $30,000, not including benefits

Cutting turnover in half would result in:

- Reducing annual turnover costs to $323,532
- Enough dollars to hire 11 new child welfare workers (not including benefits)
- Reducing caseloads to 22 children per worker

*Based on the American Public Human Services Association, 2005.
Training costs should include the expenditures for facilities, materials, and the trainer’s time for development, preparation, and presentation.

Aside from being more difficult to measure, the indirect costs may also be much higher than direct costs. Estimating the productivity difference between an experienced and an inexperienced employee will require some effort, but it is intuitively obvious that an inexperienced employee, while earning a full salary, will not be able to carry a full caseload, perhaps for several months. Because the indirect costs are usually more subjective, they may be more closely scrutinized by legislative bodies.

Although the cost of turnover may differ from one profession to another and from one organization to another, "...multiple studies suggest that the cost of replacing key people runs between 70 and 200 percent of the person’s annual salary.” (Graef and Hill 2000) Using the most conservative estimate of 70 percent, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) calculated the cost of each turnover of a Children’s Protective Services worker to be $24,887. This was based on their finding that the average Children’s Protective Services worker salary was $35,553 effective April 1, 2004.

### Turnover Calculator

The Annie E. Casey Foundation sponsored the development of a Turnover Calculator to calculate both the direct and indirect costs of turnover in a human services agency. In the following example from a public agency, the overall turnover cost of one person was estimated at 115 percent of the average annual salary, and the direct costs alone were 45 percent of average salary. See page 12 for the web pages showing the Casey Turnover Calculator.

#### The Casey Calculator

**Example:**

1. One Public Human Services Agency
2. Cost of turnover for one person where the average Children’s Services Worker salary = $44,803:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation Costs</td>
<td>$4,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement Costs</td>
<td>$1,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Costs</td>
<td>$14,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Productivity</td>
<td>$49,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Savings (deducted)</td>
<td>$18,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Turnover Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>$51,511</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some organizations believe it is appropriate to deduct the salary savings of the departed employee when calculating the cost of turnover; others do not. The different perspectives are based on what one is trying to measure. We believe that using savings from turnover to, for example, balance budgets is short-sighted. Ultimately, turnover increases caseloads which, in turn, can lead to even greater turnover rates.

If your agency believes it appropriate to deduct salary savings, the Casey cost calculator does that for you, otherwise simply leave this out of the formula.

References


Welcome to the Annie E. Casey HR Turnover Calculator. This calculator will help HR Professionals calculate the cost of involuntary turnover of frontline workers in human service organizations.

In order to use the Turnover Calculator, please click on the link above, "How to Use the Calculator," and print and read the instructions. Each section of the Calculator requires detailed information, and reading the instructions will help you to gather everything you need to input data and calculate the segmented costs.

Once you're ready to start calculating costs, click on "Calculate Costs" links below for each cost segment associated with Turnover.

Or if you have already calculated costs for any segment (such as "Separation Costs"), enter the numbers on the appropriate line below. Once you have the numbers for all segments click the “Calculate Cost Per Turnover” button. Sometimes alternative methods are available to you. Once you choose a method you must enter data in all available numbered fields in order for the program to complete your calculation.

**PLEASE NOTE** that the calculator **WILL NOT SAVE ANY OF YOUR WORK** if you close your browser window. This is needed to maintain confidentiality if your work is interrupted. You must print each Preview Page in order to have a record of your work if you plan to come back later to finish separate calculations or to determine HR Turnover cost. When you return to the calculator you can input your previous results into the segments shown below on this page.

The cost of each turnover falls into the five segments shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enter Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Separation Costs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and other costs associated with exit interviews and other steps required to terminate the leaving employee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **B. Replacement Costs** |
Administrative and other costs required to recruit and select a replacement.

C. Training Costs

The costs, including the wages paid the new employee, of training.

D. Lost Productivity Costs

The costs associated with the difference in productivity between the leaving employee and the new hire, as well as the costs incurred until the position is filled.

E. Less Salary Savings

The difference in salaries paid to leaving versus arriving employee, as well as the salary saved when the post is not filled.

Total Cost Per Turnover = $
Tool 2 – Designing and Analyzing Turnover Data Reports

This Tool Includes

- Explanations on how turnover data reports can assist you in reducing employee turnover.
- Guidelines for designing turnover reports.
- Sample turnover data reports.

How Turnover Reports Can Help

Having good turnover data at your disposal is an invaluable planning tool. So often the reports we rely on just don’t tell us what we need to know in a simple, straightforward manner. Worse yet, in many human services agencies, turnover reports don’t exist at all.

Turnover reports can provide very important information about what’s going on in your agency. Having good turnover data can help you:

- Understand the magnitude of your turnover problem – or whether you even have one.
- Analyze the causes of turnover in your agency.
- Determine the impact of any steps you take to address turnover and retention issues.
- Provide responses to inquiries from various constituencies including legislators, commissioners, boards of directors and the media.

The sample reports we show will not provide you with all the answers as to why your agency has high turnover rates, but they can help you frame the questions.

We understand that the reports outlined in this Tool are sophisticated and that your agency may not have the capacity to obtain the data and develop similar reports. However, any turnover data you have is useful.

Start with the basic demographic data you have and build more sophisticated reports over time. For example, you might begin by selecting one position where you have the most concerns about turnover and tracking that position for a year.

Defining Turnover

We define turnover here as the number of people leaving an agency or category during a specific time period (usually one year) divided by the average number of employees in that agency or category during the same time period.
Turnover can be measured at many levels. You can measure the number of employees leaving an agency, a department or division, a classification, or a single position. Regardless at what level you apply the definition, the basic calculation remains the same.

Sample Reports and Guidelines

Each of the following sample report formats includes a brief description of what it measures and how it might be used. All of the sample reports are designed:

- To measure departure data from one pay period to another, cumulating the data for “year-to-date” reporting.
- For a hypothetical large, statewide human services agency providing child welfare services in multiple locations.
- To track turnover within the hypothetical Children’s Services Specialist (CSS) classification, (the classification for all child welfare workers) and major groupings of similar, specialized jobs within the classification (such as Protective Services [PS], Foster Care and Adoption).

As a series of reports, which when analyzed together, provide a complete picture of an agency’s turnover.
### Turnover Report by Reason for Departure within Program

#### Protective Services Program, Protective Services Workers

**Date:** January 7, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Departure</th>
<th>Resigned</th>
<th>Moved to New Department</th>
<th>Retirement</th>
<th>Layoff (R.I.F. or Seasonal)</th>
<th>Medical Layoff</th>
<th>Discharge</th>
<th>Expired Appointment</th>
<th>Death</th>
<th>W.R.L.O.A.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Separations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period 26</td>
<td>3 50.0%</td>
<td>1 16.6%</td>
<td>1 16.6%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1 16.6%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>6 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>169 73.4%</td>
<td>15 6.5%</td>
<td>23 10.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>11 4.7%</td>
<td>7 3.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1 0.4%</td>
<td>4 1.7%</td>
<td>230 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left Classification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period 26</td>
<td>1 50.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1 50.0%</td>
<td>2 100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>11 57.9%</td>
<td>2 10.5%</td>
<td>6 31.5%</td>
<td>19 100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period 26</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1 100.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1 100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>27 45.7%</td>
<td>13 22.0%</td>
<td>19 32.2%</td>
<td>59 100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report tracks departures from a specialized job (Protective Services Worker) within the larger Children’s Services Specialist (CSS) classification.

In this Department, there are three basic “Reasons for Departure” from the Protective Services Worker job:
- Separation from the Department.
- Leaving the CSS classification, although staying in the Department.
- Leaving the Protective Services Worker, although staying in the CSS classification.

The specific reasons for “Separation” are identified here as “Resigned,” “Moved to New Department,” “Retirement,” etc. Reasons for separations in your agency may be different. “Moved to New Department” is a “Separation” reason in this report because it is designed from the departmental perspective.

The specific reasons for “Left Classification” are identified as “Lateral Transfer to a Different Classification,” “Promotion” and “Demotion.”

The reasons for “Left Program” identify the specific programs – or specialized jobs – to which a PS Worker could transfer such as Foster Care, Adoption or Juvenile Justice. This section of the report tracks the number of CSSs who left the Protective Services Program (or the PS Worker Job) and became a Foster Care Worker, Adoption Worker or a Juvenile Justice Worker. (Employees transferring to another office but remaining a PS Worker are not counted in this report.)

This report provides sufficient detail to allow you to monitor in each pay period how many of your PS Workers left the agency due to resignation, retirement, transfer to another state agency, etc. You can also determine how many were promoted or demoted or laterally transferred.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/7/03-12/20/03</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>6.04%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>9.06%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>18.12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/21/03-1/3/04</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>10.66%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>17.56%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.58%</td>
<td>18.59%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>19.62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/7/03-12/20/03</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>18.13%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
<td>21.76%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.39%</td>
<td>36.26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/21/03-1/3/04</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>16.38%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>18.20%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>27.17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
<td>32.72%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
<td>34.66%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
<td>42.88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/7/03-12/20/03</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
<td>28.26%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
<td>28.26%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
<td>28.26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/21/03-1/3/04</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>14.17%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>14.17%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>14.17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>6.44%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/7/03-12/20/03</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/21/03-1/3/04</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1/4/04-1/17/04</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>8.61%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9.22%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9.22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Children's Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/7/03-12/20/03</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>10.96%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>13.71%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>23.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/21/03-1/3/04</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>11.03%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.74%</td>
<td>19.31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>24.32%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
<td>26.76%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.89%</td>
<td>30.52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report displays data for the agency’s four specialized jobs within the Children’s Services Specialist (CSS) classification. Turnover data is summarized at the bottom of the report for everyone in the classification. The report reflects separations – those employees who left the classification or left the program – for each program, and a total turnover calculation for the agency per pay period. The report shows data from pay periods 1 and 2, and then skips to pay period 26, to illustrate the year-to-date totals.

Based on tracking turnover for 26 pay periods, we find that:

- The turnover rate for all of children’s services is 24.32%, if you define turnover as the number of CSSs who left the agency as a percentage of the average number of CSSs who were on the payroll during the 26 pay periods.
- If, instead, you define the turnover rate as the number of CSSs who left their job, the rate is 26.76%. This definition truly reflects the replacement rate, combining those who left the agency with those staying but taking a promotion, demotion, or another job at the same classification level.
- If you add the number of employees who moved from one program to another, the turnover rate jumps up to 30.5%.
- The turnover rate of Protective Services workers leaving the agency is twice as high (42.86%) as for Foster Care workers (19.62%) and more than four times the rate for Adoption (7.69%) and Juvenile Justice workers (9.22%).

Data from this report will help you frame the questions to determine the underlying causes of the turnover rates: What are the issues? Is it the nature of the job? The stress of the workload? The quality of the supervision? The volume of the paperwork?
### Employee Turnover Report
by Length of Service within Program

**Protective Services Program, Protective Services Worker**

**Date:** January 7, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>0 - 6 months</th>
<th>6 months - 1 year</th>
<th>1 - 2 years</th>
<th>2 - 3 years</th>
<th>3 - 5 years</th>
<th>5 - 7 years</th>
<th>7 - 10 years</th>
<th>10 + years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Separations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left Classification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Departures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees on Payroll</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this report is to help determine the relationship between turnover and length of service. As with the previous reports, this report also allows you to analyze turnover based on departures from the agency, departures from the classification and departures from the Protective Services worker job.

- For “Total Departures,” turnover within the first year of employment accounts for almost 40% of the turnover that occurred in the past year (18.2% plus 21.4%).
- More than half (52.3%) of all employees with less than six months of service leave the job.
- Another 52.4% of the employees with between six and twelve months of service also leave.
- For employees with one year or less of service, almost all of them leave the agency.
- As length of service increases, employees are more likely to remain with the agency, but move to different classification or transfer to a different specialty within the CSS classification.

A high percentage of employees leaving during the first year suggests several questions: Are new employees really a good fit for the job? Do the new hires accept the job offer without really understanding what the job is all about? Are the new employees receiving the supervisor support they need to help them through their first several months on the job?
## Employee Turnover Report by Degree within Program

### Protective Services Program, Protective Services Worker

**Date:** January 7, 2005

### Separations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>23 10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td>33 14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>99 43.0%</td>
<td>22 9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other M.A.</td>
<td>27 11.7%</td>
<td>120 48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>230 100.0%</td>
<td>120 48.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Left Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>5 26.3%</td>
<td>1 5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other M.A.</td>
<td>19 100.0%</td>
<td>12 10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19 100.0%</td>
<td>12 10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Left Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>40 67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>2 3.4%</td>
<td>1 5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other M.A.</td>
<td>59 100.0%</td>
<td>12 10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61 50.8%</td>
<td>12 10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Departed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>28 9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>23 7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td>38 12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>143 46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>29 9.4%</td>
<td>30 9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other M.A.</td>
<td>308 100.0%</td>
<td>238 20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>308 100.0%</td>
<td>238 20.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Employees on Payroll

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>97 13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>107 14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>40 5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td>55 7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>165 29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>206 28.6%</td>
<td>50 6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other M.A.</td>
<td>720 100.0%</td>
<td>614 20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>720 100.0%</td>
<td>614 20.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent

|          | 17.5% | 26.2% | 57.5% | 69.1% | 86.7% | 14.1% | 60.0% |

The purpose of this report is to help determine the relationship between turnover and employees' level and type of education.

- "Total Departed" shows the number and percentage of employees who departed the Protective Services job within the past year by degree type.
- Notice the very high proportion of overall turnover by employees in the "Other BA" category -- over 46% of all turnover is among employees in that category.
- The percentage of overall turnover by employees with a BSW (5.5%) or MSW (9.4%) is relatively low.

From this, we can't really tell if the turnover of employees who majored in social work is lower than for employees with other degrees, or if they represent such a small portion of the workforce that their turnover rate appears low. Looking further at the report, we find:

- Of all the employees working in Protective Services during the past year (average of 720), 97 had a BSW (13.5%), and 206 had a MSW (28.6%).
- The lowest turnover rates are among employees with BSWs (17.5 percent) and MSWs (14.1 percent). Compare this to the 86.7% turnover rate among employees in the “Other BA” degree category.
- The turnover rate among Sociology and Psychology majors is also very high, but relatively low for employees with a Criminal Justice degree.

This data suggests several questions: Do the BSW and MSW employees have significantly lower turnover rates because they were more committed to the field of child welfare before taking the job? Has their education better prepared them to cope with the demands of the job? Did the employees with the “Other BA” degrees really know what to expect when they accepted the job offer to work in child welfare?

The highest percentage of employees who “Left Classification” are those with MSWs. Since employees can leave the classification through promotion, demotion or lateral transfer, it would be worthwhile to drill down into the data to determine how many of the MSW employees leaving the classification were actually promoted.
## Employee Turnover Report
by Race, Sex within Program

**Date:** January 7, 2005

### Demographic Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Total White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Total Black</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Total Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-M</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>W-F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Separations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Total White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Total Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-M</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>W-F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Left Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Total White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Total Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-M</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>W-F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Departed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Total White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Total Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-M</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>W-F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Employees on Payroll

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
<th>Year-to-Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Total White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Total Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-M</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>W-F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report shows turnover by race and sex. The purpose of this type of report is to monitor the turnover of different demographic groups and to determine if any relationships appear to exist between turnover and gender and/or race/ethnicity.

- For “Total Departure,” most of the departures (40.3%) are among white females. This is not surprising since they comprise 36.4% of the Protective Services (PS) workforce (see “Employees on Payroll” row).
- The most interesting data is contained in the bottom line of the report. Males have a much higher turnover rate (58.3%) than females (39.7%). White males (70.1%) and Hispanic males (71.4%) have particularly high turnover rates.
- In terms of race and ethnicity, Blacks/African Americans have the lowest turnover (29.8%) while Caucasians/Whites (51%) and Hispanics (51.4%) have the highest turnover. Black females comprise a large percentage of the PS workforce (33.1%) and have a very low turnover rate of 26.6%. White females, on the other hand, comprise 36.4% of the PS workforce and have a turnover rate of 47.3%.
# Employee Turnover Report

## County Summary

**Children's Services Specialist Classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Pay Period Dates</th>
<th>Payroll</th>
<th>Separations</th>
<th>Percent Separated</th>
<th>Left Class</th>
<th>Percent Left Class</th>
<th>Separations + Left Class</th>
<th>Percent Left Class</th>
<th>Left County</th>
<th>Percent Left County</th>
<th>Separated + Left Class</th>
<th>% Separated + Left County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County A</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County B</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County C</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td></td>
<td>217</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County D</td>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Children's Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Period Dates</th>
<th>Payroll</th>
<th>Separations</th>
<th>Percent Separated</th>
<th>Left Class</th>
<th>Percent Left Class</th>
<th>Separations + Left Class</th>
<th>Percent Left Class</th>
<th>Left County</th>
<th>Percent Left County</th>
<th>Separated + Left Class</th>
<th>% Separated + Left County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/12/04-12/25/04</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-to-Date</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report is intended to be monitored centrally to track turnover in the county offices of a statewide organization. It could also be used by a large county, city or private agency with multiple district or branch locations.

The primary purpose of this report is to help determine if turnover rates differ significantly from one county to another. This report does not track transfers from one program to another within the classification.

This report tracks turnover by three different departure definitions:

1. Separations from the agency.
2. Departures the classification (promotion, demotion or lateral transfer to a different classification within the agency).
3. Transfer from one county to another, although remaining in the Children’s Services Specialist (CSS) classification.

- For the four counties used in the example, the overall turnover rate ranges from 16.4% in County A to 45.2% in County D.
- Both Counties B and D have a high percentage of employees leaving the agency (30.8% and 34.9%) as well as a relatively large percentage of employees transferring to CSS positions in other counties (7.5% and 8.6%).

The fact that turnover rates in Counties B and D are roughly double those of Counties A and C suggests several questions: Are there problems with the supervisory and management style in offices B and D? Are there some things about the nature of the communities that make the job more difficult – or perhaps a less desirable place for employees to live? Are many of the new hires in Counties B and D residents of neighboring counties where hiring opportunities are more limited?
Tool 3 – Exit Interviews and Exit Surveys

This Tool Includes

- Descriptions of exit interviews and surveys (EIS).
- Guidelines on how to use EIS most effectively.
- Descriptions of the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Sample exit surveys and interview questions.

What Are Exit Interviews and Surveys?

Exit interviews and exit surveys are two tools organizations often use to gather information about why employees make the decision to leave. As the name implies, exit interviews involve a one-on-one discussion with the departing employee, either in person or by telephone. Exit surveys, on the other hand, consist of asking the departing employee to fill out either an online or paper questionnaire.

Each tool has its specific advantages and disadvantages, but both are practical techniques that are relatively easy and inexpensive to use. They can provide you with concrete data to help you design your turnover-reduction strategy. Since the similarities of the tools are greater than their differences, we will refer to them as the EIS (exit interview/survey) process when we talk about them together.

Guidelines

Candid Feedback

EIS data is useful as a management tool only if the responses provided by departing employees accurately and truthfully reflect the real reasons why they are leaving the agency.

Employees are more likely to give candid feedback when:

- They are provided with assurances that their reasons for leaving are kept confidential and aggregated in summary reports.
- They are offered specific assurances that they will be protected from supervisory retaliation, such as negative references and poor treatment of coworkers who stay behind.
- They believe that the agency has fixed past problems systematically identified in the EIS process.
When Employees Leave

“Indeed, many companies have found little relationship between what employees – particularly departing employees – say motivates their behavior and what actually does. Although the position an employee is leaving for very often does pay better, better pay may or not be the primary reason for moving on. Often, employees say they’re leaving for a higher salary because they think it’s an acceptable reason to give. If they point instead to the way the company is run, they risk antagonizing people whom they may one day need for a reference or a job. A thoughtful employer will want to know not only why the employee took the particular job he did but also which aspects of his current position made him receptive to outside opportunities in the first place.”


- They believe the reasons for leaving the agency can be provided in a non-confrontational way (i.e., some employees are unwilling to tell a management representative what they disliked about the agency, but would be willing to provide that information in an anonymous survey, to a neutral third party paid by the agency, or to a human resources department representative).

- Some employees need time to sort out the reasons that brought them to the decision to leave an agency. Sometimes the real reasons may not surface until several weeks after departure. To address that problem, some agencies conduct an additional exit interview by telephone with a random sample of their former employees.

Organizational Policies

- Agencies should have a formal EIS policy that is uniformly applied. The EIS should be an integral part of the formal “outprocessing” that is expected by all departing employees. Just as employees expect to turn in their keys, identification cards, and laptop, they should understand that the agency values their feedback in the EIS process.

- All employees should understand how important the EIS process is to the agency’s desire to become a better employer. If they understand that their feedback will be taken seriously and see evidence that the agency has made changes based on employee input, they will more likely take the EIS process seriously.

- A properly conducted EIS can provide very valuable information about the reasons why employees leave. However, many agencies simply collect the data and fail to analyze and use it. EIS data should be shared with senior management for use as an organizational self-assessment and in overall strategic and workforce planning.
Employees participating in the EIS process must be assured of the confidentiality of their responses, particularly if exit interviews are conducted. Many employees are concerned about “burning their bridges,” knowing that they might seek reemployment in the future. They are also concerned about receiving negative job references, and possible reprisal against friends who still work for the agency.

Although the EIS process is primarily designed to find out why employees are leaving, it is also an opportune time to learn more about what the employee found satisfying. Many employees leave with totally positive feelings, and agencies need to know what they are doing right so they can keep doing it.

Keep your perspective. Feedback during the interview and written comments on the survey form can be scathing. Although the comments can signal the alarm for further investigation into mismanagement, supervisory wrongdoing, ethical issues, and the like, it is important not to jump to conclusions. It is also critical that you handle all information consistent with any assurances of confidentiality you provided.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Exit Interviews – Advantages

- Exit interviews are much more personal than the exit survey and provide a setting where the agency can thank departing employees for their contributions and wish them well in their future endeavors.
- The response rate for exit interviews is typically much higher than for the exit survey. Departing employees will usually participate in a face-to-face interview, but put off responding to the survey, and often never return it.
- Exit interviews provide an opportunity to obtain much richer data than the exit survey. An experienced interviewer can ask probing questions and perhaps uncover underlying reasons for the departure that may not surface in a survey.
- The exit interview can provide a therapeutic experience for the departing employee and end the employment relationship on a positive note.

Exit Interviews – Disadvantages

- Exit interviews are relatively expensive to administer. The greatest expense is the salary cost of the person conducting the interview, which includes the cost of
preparing for and conducting the interview and codifying the results in a way that facilitates aggregating the information into usable reports.

- It is difficult to objectively quantify data, particularly when several interviewers are conducting interviews at different locations. Each may place their own interpretation on what they are told, fail to record the data while it is fresh in their mind, and otherwise unintentionally misrepresent the results.

- Even when assurances of anonymity and confidentiality are provided, some departing employees have very little trust in anyone in the agency, including staff from the human resources area. Even when the trust is there, some people simply have a hard time verbalizing their dissatisfaction and prefer to maintain a passive demeanor.

- The exit interview process poses an additional challenge for large agencies with multiple locations. A departing employee may not believe that an interviewer from within their office will be neutral and unbiased; however, sending someone from a central location may be cost prohibitive. Although conducting an exit interview by telephone is an alternative, this will limit the rapport an interviewer may have using a face-to-face interview, thereby defeating one of the primary advantages of the exit interview strategy.

### Exit Interviews – Additional Tips

- Someone other than the immediate supervisor or second-level manager should conduct the exit interview. Often the interviewer is from the human resources department, but only if they are regarded as neutral, unbiased and trusted. Although a rather costly alternative, sometimes organizations hire outside consultants to conduct exit interviews.

- Interviewers should be skillful, well trained and good listeners. The interviewer(s) should use a standard format for the interview, but be flexible enough to ask probing questions. Some employees may initially give a superficial reason for leaving (e.g., more advancement opportunities or better pay) and only disclose the more important underlying reasons when probed. The interviewer should set a positive and relaxed tone for the meeting and use active listening skills. When dealing with a negative or critical employee, it is important to avoid the temptation to defend the agency or justify its actions.

- When using the exit interview process, particularly when several interviewers are used in different locations, it is critically important to document the results of the interview in a standard format so that the results can be aggregated into useful reports.
Exit Surveys – Advantages

- Exit surveys are usually less costly to administer than interviews. Once an agency develops the survey instrument, the cost of using it is negligible, including costs of distributing the survey and recording the results. Although the developmental costs may be greater than for a paper-based system, the use of web-based surveys essentially eliminate the cost of survey distribution and recording the results.
- The survey data is easier to objectively quantify than with interviews. The data can be tracked more easily over time, and comparing results across positions, offices, departments, etc. is easier than with exit interviews.
- Exit surveys provide a perception of greater confidentiality and anonymity than exit interviews. Employees may be more candid when they are not sitting across the table from the interviewer.

Exit Surveys – Disadvantages

- Some employees tend to respond to a survey rather superficially, failing to take the time to giving serious thought to their responses. A good interviewer, on the other hand, can probe for responses that cause the employee to reflect more deeply on their answers.
- Typically the response rates for exit surveys is rather low, often well below 50 percent.

Exit Surveys – Additional Tips

- Since the response rate from exit surveys is usually quite low, several techniques can be used to encourage the employee to respond.
  - Your agency can schedule time for the departing employee to meet with an agency representative (perhaps someone from human resources) to turn in keys, ID cards, etc. and also fill out the exit survey. The survey can be completed anonymously and sealed in an envelope to be opened only by the person who compiles results.
  - If the employee takes the survey to be completed at a later time, provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
If the survey is completed online, typically the employee is given a password that provides access to the survey document. Permitting the employee to access the site from home for up to 30 days after departure may be helpful. In that time, you can use email reminders.

- The survey document should have adequate space for written comments, and the instructions should encourage the employee to provide them.

### The Best of Both Worlds

Knowing that both exit surveys and exit interviews have their unique advantages and disadvantages, some agencies capitalize on their strengths by using both processes. All employees are given the exit survey at the time of their departure. About three to six months after departure, the agency contacts a random sample of the employees to participate in a telephone survey. Given that many departing employees need to be away from the employment setting for some time before they can determine exactly why they left, this method has the potential of providing very useful data.

### Samples

Below are two exit survey examples and some possible exit interview questions taken from the American Public Human Services Association, *Workforce Data Collection Field Guide for Human Services Agencies.*

### References


SAMPLE SURVEY  Exit Interview Questionnaire

NAME (optional): ____________________________

UNIT: ____________________________ POSITION (classification or working title): ____________________________

SUPERVISOR (optional): ____________________________ LENGTH OF TIME WITH THE AGENCY (optional): ____________________________

1. Will your next job be in a related field? [ ] Yes  [ ] No

What is your next job?

Who is your next employer?

| Please rate your satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Low 5 = High) |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Training                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Quality of supervision       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Utilization of my skills     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Recognition of my achievements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Cooperative, friendly work environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Organizational support       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Overall level of communication | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Communication with co-workers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Communication with supervisor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Salary                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Benefits                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. Why are you leaving the agency?
   a. Other employment ____________________________ b. Medical reasons ____________________________
   c. Relocation ____________________________ d. Return to school ____________________________
   e. Retirement ____________________________ f. Personal ____________________________

Comments: ____________________________

14. Please check each factor that influenced your decision to leave the agency:
   a. Salary ____________________________ b. Upper management ____________________________
   c. Benefits ____________________________ d. Lack of organizational support ____________________________
   e. Advancement opportunities ____________________________ f. Lack of organizational appreciation ____________________________
   g. Retirement ____________________________ h. Illness ____________________________
   i. Moving ____________________________ j. Work-related stress/burnout ____________________________
   k. Hours worked ____________________________ l. Performance appraisals ____________________________
   m. Workload ____________________________ n. Client ____________________________
   o. Safety factors ____________________________ p. Paperwork ____________________________
   q. Training ____________________________ r. Complexity of regulations & policy ____________________________
   s. Supervision ____________________________ t. Court-related issues ____________________________
Comments: 

15. Of the reasons you checked in number 14, please select your top three (by letter):
   Reason 1: 
   Reason 2: 
   Reason 3: 

16. What would have encouraged you to remain with the agency?

17. What part of your job did you enjoy most?

18. What part of your job did you enjoy least?

19. Would you recommend the agency as a potential employer to a friend? □ Yes □ No
   Comments: 

   Additional comments: 

Signature of Exiting Employee (optional): __________________________ Date: (optional) ____________

Thank you for your feedback. Please return your completed form to Human Resources. Your comments are kept confidential and aggregated with other responses in summary reports.
XYZ AGENCY
CHILD WELFARE WORKER
EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (Confidential):

County Name:

What was the working title of your position?
(Confirm all that apply and assign an approximate percentage of time.)

- Foster Care Worker
- Children’s Protective Services Worker
- Delinquency/Juvenile Justice Worker
- Adoption Worker
- Prevention Worker
- Adult Services Worker
- Other (Please Specify)

1. How long did you work in this position? How long did you work for the agency?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1 years</td>
<td>0-1 years</td>
<td>0-1 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>3-4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ years</td>
<td>4+ years</td>
<td>4+ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Did you leave to take another job? Yes_____ No_____ (check one)

If yes, what is your new position? ________________________________

What is the name of your new employer? ____________________________
3. Please check each factor below that influenced your decision to leave your former position:

a. ______ Court (judges, investigators, administrators, referees)
b. ______ Attorneys
c. ______ Collateral support personnel (psychologists, psychiatrists, medical, counselors)
d. ______ Bureaucracy (paperwork and/or record keeping)
e. ______ Red Tape (complex rules and policy)
f. ______ Clients/Custumers (Parents, Foster Parents, Youth, Children & other Adults)
g. ______ Caseload size
h. ______ Hours worked
i. ______ Other agencies (cooperation, contact, etc.)
j. ______ Supervision
k. ______ Safety factors
l. ______ Salary
m. ______ Advancement
n. ______ Training
o. ______ Performance appraisals
p. ______ Benefits (insurance, pension, 401(k), etc.)
q. ______ Work-related injury
r. ______ Work-related illness
s. ______ Work-related stress
t. ______ Retirement
u. ______ Moving
v. ______ Other (please explain)

4. Of the factors you checked in question 3, please select your top three choices (a, b, c, etc.):

1. ______
2. ______
3. ______

Please explain how these factors influenced your decision to leave your position.
5. What improvements could be made to your former position to make it more satisfactory or more meaningful?

6. Please select the top three factors, if any, that would have kept you in your former position:

   a. _____ Better pay
   b. _____ Better benefits
   c. _____ Smaller caseload
   d. _____ More clerical support
   e. _____ Better treatment by superiors
   f. _____ More knowledge of the job and better support from supervision
   g. _____ Better environmental working conditions
   h. _____ Safer working environment
   i. _____ Other

   Desired hourly rate: ______________________

7. Why did you want to work at the agency in the first place and how did your decision to leave relate to how the Agency met your expectations?

Please provide an explanation for those items selected.

Additional Comments:

Upon completion, please place this survey in the sealed envelope that is provided and return it to your office’s Administrative Manager or designee. The survey will be forwarded to the Child and Family Services Administration for confidential tabulation.
Possible Questions for a Staff Exit Interview

In addition to the standard set of questions agencies have regarding compensation, benefits, and working conditions, here are some possibilities from which to select those that work for you:

- What did you enjoy most about working with us?
- What frustrations did you feel in your position? Why?
- What will you miss most about working here?
- What could we do to make your replacement’s tenure with us more satisfying?
- What are the three (or more) most important changes you would recommend for your department/this organization to make it better?
- Would you recommend our agency to friends or relatives looking for a job? Why or why not?
- The extent to which supervision:
  - Provided recognition on the job
  - Developed cooperation and teamwork
  - Encouraged and listened to suggestions
  - Resolved complaints and problems
  - Followed policies and practices
  - Met my needs for coaching and mentoring
  - Provided helpful feedback and performance evaluations

Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, authors of the best selling book *First Break All the Rules (What the World’s Greatest Managers Do Differently)*, identify 12 questions that best measure the strength of any workplace. They measure the core elements needed to attract, focus, and keep the most talented employees. Adaptations of some of these questions could be helpful to ask departing employees in order to assess where core elements can improve.

1. Did you know what was expected of you at work?
2. Did you have the materials and equipment to do what you did best every day?
3. At work, did you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?
4. In a typical week, did you receive recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Did your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?
6. Was there someone at work who encouraged your development?
7. At work, did your opinions seem to count?
8. Did the mission/purpose of your agency make you feel your job was important?
9. Were your co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Did you have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
12. This last year, have you had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

Source: Cyphers, page 21.
Tool 4 – Targeted Solutions for Reducing Turnover

This Tool Includes

- The definition of each solution.
- General descriptions of how each solution works and what may limit its success.
- Why each solution works in basic terms.
- The relative cost and impact of each solution.
- Challenges and considerations in implementing each solution.

Just as there is no single cause of turnover, there is no single solution. The causes of turnover in your agency and the specific situation you are facing will determine which solutions you choose to implement. In addition, exactly because each agency is unique, the impact any given solution may have on that agency is difficult to predict.

Cost and Impact Definitions

We have provided our “best assessment” of the Cost and Impact of each of the Targeted Solutions using the following three-level key:

Cost

$ Virtually no new costs to the agency. Can be done with existing staff and resources.
$$ Moderate cost to the agency, but less than 1 percent of payroll.
$$$ Considerable cost to the agency, in excess of 1 percent of payroll.

Impact

★ May impact the turnover decisions of only a few individuals.
★★ Expected to have moderated impact on the overall turnover rate, reducing it by up to 10 percent (e.g., from 40 percent to 36 percent)
★★★ Expected to have a significant impact on the overall turnover rate, reducing it by more than 10 percent.

Our assessment is intended to serve only as a general guideline. The Cost/Impact assessments are based on our experience and research. Costs and Impact may vary considerably depending on the specifics of implementation. Also, many of the “high cost” Targeted Solutions are expected to have a disproportionately small impact on turnover. However, in most instances, there are other good reasons to implement the solution. For example, reducing paperwork and providing safer working conditions have significant benefits beyond reducing turnover.
Targeted Solutions

Table 1 (page 37-8) identifies the possible solutions that, if designed and implemented correctly, should help reduce turnover in your agency. Each solution is “cross-walked” to the turnover problem it’s designed to correct. There are multiple possible Solutions for most of the Reasons for Turnover. Likewise, any one Solution may impact multiple “Reasons for Turnover.”

The remainder of this Tool is intended to help you think through the implementation of any given Solution. It does not provide a specific recipe that will guarantee a reduction in turnover at your agency. It is intended instead to get you thinking creatively about which solutions might work in your agency.

---

**Cost:** $$$  
**Impact:** ★★★

**Advance Hiring**

**What It Is** Advance Hiring is a recruitment and selection process that is based on hiring new employees in anticipation of vacancies expected to occur in the future. The intent is to have a pool of “hired and trained” new employees that can be assigned to a vacancy as soon as it occurs.

**How It Works** Management uses historical vacancy and turnover data to project the number and location of vacancies expected to occur several weeks into the future. Employees are hired based on those projections and sent to new-worker training. Upon completion of training, the new workers are assigned to vacancies that have arisen while they were in training. If there are fewer vacancies than newly trained workers, they are assigned to temporarily “fill behind” employees on leave of absence or used as “extra help” until permanent vacancies arise. The program can be funded by diverting dollars from funded unfilled vacancies into an advanced hiring pool account.

**Why It Works** Advance Hiring primarily impacts turnover resulting from high workloads and worker burnout by speeding up the hiring process. Slow hiring processes and unfilled vacancies drive up workloads for everyone. When jobs can be filled quickly with “already-trained” new hires, workers are relieved of the stress of covering vacant caseloads while attempting to manage their own workloads.

**Challenges and Considerations** To benefit from Advance Hiring, an agency must be large enough to have somewhat predictable turnover. The model also is geared to agencies that provide formal classroom training to groups of new hires before they are assigned the responsibility of carrying a caseload.
## Causes of Employee Turnover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adv. Hiring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behav. Intervs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Lad./Tier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload Reduc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Incentive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Progs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flex Time/Job Share</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Place to Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Phys. Environ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Restruct.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Ask</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwrk Reduc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform.-Based Pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform. Mgmt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Job Prev.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Lang. Incent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super. Develmt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Serv. Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Assis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. Partners.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CPS Human Resource Services
## Possible Causes of Turnover among Children's Services Worker - Defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Paper Work</td>
<td>Caseworkers, who want to do &quot;real social work,&quot; become frustrated with administrative duties such as paperwork, transporting clients, meetings, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Inadequate benefits to meet employee's basic needs, primarily in the areas of health care, retirement and vacation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>Caseworkers find themselves emotionally unable to work productively and may find it difficult to continue working. Burn out may be caused by high levels of stress resulting from heavy workloads, erratic hours, poor supervision, the emotionally draining nature of the work, or simply because the employee is a &quot;poor fit&quot; for the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth</td>
<td>Employee feels that there are few promotional opportunities to &quot;grow&quot; as a caseworker either professionally or financially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Resources</td>
<td>Caseworker becomes frustrated with the agency's inability to meet some of the basic needs of children and families. May also be frustrated with lack of other community resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support</td>
<td>Caseworkers do not feel that their profession and/or agency is respected in the community. Negative media coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Issues</td>
<td>Caseworker may be uncomfortable in court room situations, feel disrespected by attorneys and judges, and placed on the defensive. May feel court is another administrative burden that detracts from social work role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Conflict</td>
<td>Caseworker may be required to work long hours to stay &quot;caught up.&quot; Some jobs require working overtime or being &quot;on call&quot; during evenings and weekends, thus interfering with personal and family life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Fit</td>
<td>There is a poor match between the requirements of the job and the employee's skills, values, and/or personality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Culture</td>
<td>The atmosphere of the agency is not one that employees regard as being supportive, positive, or one where they feel valued by supervision and upper management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Issues</td>
<td>Pay is insufficient to meet basic needs or expectations. Pay may not be competitive within the community. Agency's internal pay practices may be regarded as being unfair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Agency does not provide training or other developmental opportunities to improve professional skills or to prepare for promotional opportunities or career advancement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Caseworkers believe that the child welfare job has become so structured and regulated by policy that their opportunity to function as a professional has been eroded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Concerns</td>
<td>Workers have concerns about their physical safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Poor quality supervisors do not provide the leadership skills necessary to support and develop their staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Adequacy</td>
<td>Basic skill training is inadequate to provide new employees the basic skills necessary to do the job. Skill training for experienced employees is inadequate or the employee does not have the time to attend because of other work priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet Job Expectation</td>
<td>New employees find the job to be very different than they thought it would be when they accepted it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Conditions</td>
<td>Poor physical surroundings -- inadequate office space and equipment, buildings in bad repair or bad location, inferior technological equipment and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>High caseloads, and otherwise heavy workloads, create stress and anxiety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behavioral Interviews

What It Is Behavioral Interviewing is a technique that focuses on an applicant’s past experiences and behaviors in order to determine how they would behave in similar situations in the future. This interviewing technique is based on the premise that past behavior is predictive of future behavior.

How It Works Agencies identify the “competencies” (knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and other characteristics that are associated with or predictive of superior job performance) that are most important for the child welfare position. In order to demonstrate how well an applicant’s skills align with these competencies, interviewers ask applicants questions about how they have handled certain situations in the past. For example, a question for the “decision making” job competency might be, “Can you tell me about a specific situation where you had to make a very difficult work-related decision?” The interviewer would continue to ask probing, follow-up questions such as, “What made it such a difficult decision for you?” “What alternatives did you consider?” “Why did you choose that particular alternative?” “How did the situation turn out?” Behavior-based interviews generally result in better selection decisions than more traditional interviews.

Why It Works Employees who are a “good fit” for the job are less likely to leave. The behavioral interview provides the opportunity to obtain the depth of information necessary to make good selection decisions. Since the competencies identified for the position are the ones critical to successful performance, selecting applicants able to describe examples of how they have performed successfully in these areas will go a long way in helping determine if they are a good fit for the job.

Challenges and Considerations Organizations should identify the competencies that are associated with successful job performance and design behavioral interview questions related to those competencies. Conducting good behavioral interviews requires that interviewers be trained in the techniques of behavioral interviewing, asking probing follow-up questions, and scoring/evaluating the applicants.

Career Ladder/Tier System

What It Is A Career Ladder/Tier System (we use these terms synonymously although some agencies may define them differently) for child welfare workers is designed to allow employees to advance through classification levels and/or pay grades while continuing to provide direct client service.
How It Works  Typically the agency will establish two or three additional classification levels (in successively higher pay grades) that employees can advance through as they gain experience, academic credentials and/or licensure. For example, for a four-level system:

- Level 1 could require a BA degree with a human service major.
- Level 2 could be a BA degree with five years of child welfare experience or a MSW degree with three years experience.
- Level 3 could be a MSW with five years of child welfare experience.
- Level 4 could require a MSW, five years of child welfare experience and state licensure.

Depending on the system’s design, more complex cases and greater latitude in judgment would be required as an employee advanced from one level to another.

Why It Works  Career Ladders and Tier Systems provide an opportunity for career growth and increased pay in a profession notorious for low pay and the absence of career mobility. The system can be designed to provide professional development opportunities and allow workers to function in a more professional capacity as they move up the Ladder/Tiers.

Challenges and Considerations  A well-designed Career Ladder or Tier System has greatest potential for reducing turnover among more highly motivated employees. Less motivated employees may not be as interested in earning an advanced degree and/or licensure. In order to avoid paying different pay rates to employees doing the same work, some agencies assign the most complex cases and difficult workloads to those in the higher tiers.

Cost: $$$  Impact: ***  Caseload Reduction

What It Is  A Caseload Reduction occurs when enough additional workers are introduced into the system to make a meaningful difference in workload. The Child Welfare League of America recommends caseloads of between 12 and 15 children per worker, and the Council for Accreditation for Children and Family Services suggests that caseloads not exceed 18 children per worker.

How It Works  Caseloads can only be reduced by increasing the number of workers or reducing the number of cases. Although good “prevention” programs can potentially reduce the number of Protective Services and/or Foster Care cases, measurable caseload reductions normally occur as a result of adding child welfare workers. Some agencies have successfully convinced their appropriations authority (i.e., legislature, board of commissioners, executive board, etc.) to fund
additional positions. Others have diverted their human resources within the agency from lesser priority programs.

**Why It Works** Lower caseloads provide workload relief, and reduce the incidence of stress and burnout. Lower caseloads also should permit workers more time to attend training (without feeling overwhelmed by work when they return), allowing them to feel more competent and less frustrated. As workers have more time to spend with children and families, they will also very likely believe they are providing better service to their clients.

**Challenges and Considerations** For a caseload reduction to have a meaningful impact on turnover, the reduction must be great enough for child welfare workers to feel a significant impact on workload.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost: $$$$</th>
<th>Impact: ★★★</th>
<th>Competitive Pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What It Is** Assuring Competitive Pay may require a market rate adjustment. Ultimately, agencies may have to implement a market rate adjustment in order to close the gap in pay.

**How It Works** A significant market rate adjustment is made to the entry and maximum rates of the pay range and current incumbents are given an equivalent pay rate adjustment.

**Why It Works** Child welfare workers are among the lowest paid of any professionals having the equivalent credentials and qualifications.

**Challenges and Considerations** If pay fails to meet the employee’s basic needs, or is regarded as being simply unfair, it becomes what’s called a “dissatisfier.” Once employees feel they are being paid fairly, pay won’t keep those who are unhappy with their workload, their supervisor, or who are just a “bad fit” for the job. In other words, insufficient pay can be a huge dissatisfier, however once pay is competitive for the market, it won’t keep people who are otherwise unhappy in your agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost: $$</th>
<th>Impact: ★ ★</th>
<th>Degree Incentive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What It Is** A Degree Incentive provides those who obtain a Masters Degree additional pay.

**How It Works** Agencies pay a higher pay rate to those who possess a Masters Degree in the required discipline, even though their duties and responsibilities may be identical to those employees with Bachelor’s Degrees. Some agencies require a MSW, others a Masters in a human services field; others may also include degrees such as a Masters in Public Administration or a law degree.
**Why It Works** Providing extra pay for those with a Masters Degree may be effective in addressing the issue of low pay, and may also provide an incentive for current employees to obtain an advanced degree.

**Challenges and Considerations** Degree Incentives may be a more effective recruitment device than a turnover solution. Some employees may resent the fact that those with an advanced degree, and perhaps less experience, can earn more money for doing the same work. Agencies may either want to assign the more difficult cases to those with the Master’s degree, and/or clearly articulate the rationale for the degree incentive when it is introduced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost: $</th>
<th>Impact: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Diversity Programs**

**What It Is** Diversity Programs are organizational efforts to implement policies, practices and procedures to insure that the workforce is inclusive of employees from a wide variety of backgrounds including race, age, gender, ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status.

**How It Works** Agencies that value diversity create programs to recruit and hire a diverse workforce and require inclusivity in all aspects of organizational life. Specific examples of Diversity Programs would include diversity training, diversity awareness weeks (where the agency and its employees sponsor activities to promote the understanding and value of diversity), and specialized recruitment strategies.

**Why It Works** Agencies that value diversity are very likely ones that consistently place value on the workforce and are supportive and reaffirming of employees in general.

**Challenges and Considerations** Diversity programs will have a greater impact on overall turnover when combined with other organizational practices that promote a healthy work environment.

| Cost: $ | Impact: ** |

**Flex Time/Job Sharing**

**What It Is** Flex Time and Job Sharing are work scheduling systems that allow employees to work hours that are more convenient to their personal and family needs.

**How It Works** Flex Time schedules typically permit employees to work more hours on certain days of the week in order to work fewer hours (or perhaps no hours) during other traditional work days. For example, rather than work the traditional eight-hour, five-day work week, an employees may be allowed to work 40 hours in four 10-hour days or in four 9-hour days along with one 4-hour day.
Another Flex Time variation might permit employees to work the traditional five 8-hour days, but modify their start, quit, and lunch times as long as they work certain "core hours."

*Job Sharing* allows two employees to share one job – and perhaps even one caseload. Job sharing is similar to half-time work, but in many job-share situations the burden is on the employee to find another willing half-time worker. Some agencies even require the job-share employee to work full time if the job-share leaves the work arrangement.

**Why It Works** Non-traditional work scheduling systems give employees a greater degree of control in balancing work with their family life. Working fewer hours (as with job sharing and part-time work) may also reduce the workload stress and burnout associated with full-time work. Employees who place a high value on such scheduling options may remain with the agency because they are unable to find other employers willing to provide similar scheduling options.

**Challenges and Considerations** Some managers believe that permitting flexible work schedules makes it more difficult to provide optimal office coverage (particularly on Mondays and Fridays), schedule all-staff meetings, and track time and attendance.

---

**Cost:** $  
**Impact:** ★★★  
*Becoming a “Good Place to Work”*

**What It Is** A Good Place to Work is an agency that aligns its beliefs, values and practices specifically toward meeting this objective.

**How It Works** Agencies that want to be regarded by their employees as a good place to work generally place an emphasis on making employees feel valued and supported. Because of the very significant impact that the frontline supervisor has on employee satisfaction, many agencies provide extensive training to supervisors and hold them accountable for their leadership and team-building skills. Effective Human Resources departments are designed to provide supervisors and managers with the tools they need to support, develop and reward employees.

**Why It Works** Employees want to be treated as valued contributors to the agencies for which they work. When an agency realigns its beliefs, values and practices to support employees, it can expect job satisfaction to increase and turnover to decline.

**Challenges and Considerations** Even though agency leaders may want to change the organizational culture to become more supportive of employees, many organizations
still have frontline supervisors and middle managers who are authoritarian, “burned out,” or simply lack good supervisory skills. Turning around a negative organizational culture can be challenging.

Cost: $$$  
Impact:  

**Improving the Physical Work Environment**

**What It Is** Improving the Work Environment includes taking steps to make the physical work space more pleasant.

**How It Works** Improving physical surroundings can range from relocating office space to better buildings in safer neighborhoods to making physical plant improvements (e.g., heating, ventilation, security, office equipment, and interior design) in the current space.

**Why It Works** A dreary office coupled with equipment that does not work contributes to overall burnout. Correcting these problems makes it possible for employees to remain on a job they otherwise find satisfying.

**Challenges and Considerations** Like low pay, poor physical surroundings are a dissatisfier. Employees who do not believe their basic needs for working in a reasonably safe and healthy environment are being met are likely to leave. However, beautiful offices with fine furnishing will not prevent employees from leaving if they are not valued by the agency or their workload is oppressive.

Cost: $  
Impact:  

**Job Restructuring**

**What It Is** Job Restructuring requires making significant changes in the way employees perform their work in order to make the job more satisfying. Tasks and functions can be added, changed or eliminated, depending on the desired outcome.

**How It Works** The agency must first identify those parts of the job that child welfare workers find most satisfying and dissatisfying. There may be some parts of the job that are almost universally disliked (e.g., paperwork and record keeping), but some parts of the job are satisfying to some and distasteful to others. Some workers find doing investigations, appearing in court, and providing case management oversight to be highly satisfying while others do not.

Redesigning one job into two separate jobs may result in the ability to assign employees to that part of the original job that they found most satisfying. For example, some agencies structure the Children’s Protective Services job so that the same employee does the initial investigation of abuse and neglect and continues to carry the ongoing case. In other agencies, the investigations and case management functions
are divided into two different jobs. Or, case aides may perform the more routine aspects of the job allowing the child welfare worker to spend more time on the more professional elements of the job.

**Why It Works** Abundant evidence exists showing that increased employee loyalty and reduced turnover is associated with providing employees with the opportunity to do what they do best and find most satisfying.

**Challenges and Considerations** Job restructuring is likely to have a greater impact in agencies where pay and benefits are adequate and workloads are manageable. The real challenge to restructuring jobs requires organizations to engage in some “out of the box” thinking about how work can be done differently.

---

**Job Rotation**

**What It Is** Job Rotation involves transferring employees between different jobs within the agency for a temporary period of time.

**How It Works** In agencies where child welfare workers are assigned to various specialized programs, rotating them between programs gives them an opportunity to take a break from the highly stressful assignments and also provides an opportunity to learn new skills. Although there may be classification implications (although probably not insurmountable), employees could rotate between child welfare jobs and the jobs of policy writers, trainers and program analysts.

**Why It Works** Providing a respite for employees who are “burning out” due to the nature of the job may provide the temporary relief needed in order to reenergize them when returning to their former job or another “high stress” position. That person may have otherwise left the agency entirely. The temporary assignment may also be welcomed as an opportunity to gain the additional experience that could better prepare individuals for promotional opportunities.

**Challenges and Considerations** Job rotations can be disruptive for the families served by workers who rotate to different assignments. Also, there can be relatively few “respite positions” compared to the stressful positions in most agencies. Some employees may resist rotating back to high-stress positions. Rather than have a formal job rotation program, an agency may prefer transferring long-term employees in more demanding assignments to less stressful jobs on a permanent basis. Although this strategy may not reduce turnover in the stressful assignments, it may reduce overall agency turnover.
**Just Ask**

**What It Is** A Just Ask program encourages (or requires) each supervisor to ask each of his/her staff members a series of questions designed to gather information about what would keep them with the agency.

**How It Works** Each supervisor is expected to periodically ask (perhaps during the performance evaluation conference) each of their direct reports a series of questions, such as:

- What will keep you here?
- What might cause you to leave?
- What is most satisfying about your work?
- Are we fully utilizing your talents?
- What is inhibiting your success?
- What can I do differently to best assist you? (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, p. 7).

Supervisors are then expected to periodically follow up with each staff member in providing whatever way they can to meet the employees needs.

**Why It Works** Simply asking a series of questions similar to those above makes the employee feel valued. Simply asking such questions increases employee loyalty and retention. This strategy also recognizes that each employee is an individual, having their own sets of needs and expectations. To the extent that their individual needs can be met, their satisfaction and loyalty also increases.

**Challenges and Considerations** In agencies with great “dissatisfiers” such as low pay and impossible workloads, this strategy may have minimal impact.

---

**Mentoring**

**What It Is** Mentoring programs provide opportunities for less-experienced employees to be paired with more-experienced staff.

**How It Works** There are a variety of approaches to developing mentoring programs. They can be formal programs where the agency uses a structured process to match the mentoring pairs, or they can be quite informal where the new employee is given the option of being paired with a volunteer mentor. In some situations, the mentoring is very “job specific” and resembles on-the-job training. In most situations, however, the mentor helps the new employee “learn the organization” or have access to a “listening ear.” Some
programs pair experienced child welfare workers with higher-level supervisors and managers as a professional development experience to help prepare the child welfare worker for promotional opportunities.

Many child welfare agencies experience very high turnover among newly-hired workers who find the job to be quite different than they expected it to be. Providing additional support can help the new employee make it through this difficult early period.

**Why It Works** There is a wealth of research that shows that an important factor in employee loyalty and retention is the employees’ belief that someone in the agency takes a personal interest in them and encourages their development.

**Challenges and Considerations** Mentoring programs can be particularly effective in helping new employees transition into their new jobs. However, in organizations where the workload is very high, experienced employees may resist serving as mentors to new employees because they simply lack the time. Organizations using a career ladder or tier system may assign mentoring responsibilities to the higher classified employees as part of the requirements of the position.

---

**Paperwork Reduction**

| Cost: $$$$ | Impact: ★★★ |

**What It Is** Paperwork Reduction programs are job reengineering initiatives designed to eliminate unnecessary paperwork to permit the child welfare worker to have more time to spend on direct client services.

**How It Works** Agencies can reduce paperwork by eliminating unnecessary forms and documentation, reassigning paperwork duties to case aides or clerical staff, and/or designing computer systems that assist with case management responsibilities.

**Why It Works** Most child welfare workers are frustrated by the amount of paperwork required in their jobs and would prefer to spend more time providing direct client services. To the extent that increased job satisfaction leads to job retention, reducing the frustration caused by excessive paperwork should lead to reduced turnover.

**Challenges and Considerations** Introducing technological innovation into the work place can be expensive and disruptive. Automated systems intended to reduce paperwork sometimes create more administrative burdens for the worker, particularly in the short run.
Performance-Based Pay

**What It Is** Performance-based pay systems provide employee compensation based on individual performance rather than step increases.

**How It Works** There are a variety of approaches to compensating employees based on their performance contributions. Some agencies continue to use traditional pay steps within the pay range to gradually increase the rate of compensation as employees gain experience, but provide additional compensation to better performing employees through the use of periodic bonuses (usually annual) or lump-sum payments. In other agencies, movement from the minimum to the maximum of the pay range is determined exclusively by performance, and base-rate increases are provided based exclusively on merit. Or, an agency may use a combination of merit-driven, base-rate increases and periodic bonus payments.

**Why It Works** For agencies experiencing turnover as a result of low pay, performance-based pay systems may improve retention rates because agencies can use their limited salary budgets more effectively by providing greater monetary rewards to better performers. A three percent increase, for example, under a traditional system provides everyone with the same increase. Under a performance-based system, the better performers could be given more than three percent if the weaker performers are given less than three percent. Turnover among the better performers should decline not only because their pay becomes more competitive, but also because the recognition makes them feel more valued by the agency.

**Challenges and Considerations** Performance-based pay has the potential of being very effective in reducing turnover among better performers in agencies with limited salary budgets wishing to use their scarce salary dollars more effectively.

Performance Management

**What It Is** Performance Management is the process of maintaining or improving job performance by constructively evaluating and assessing employee performance.

**How It Works** Most well-designed performance management systems have three components:

- Objectives.
- Behaviors or competencies.
- Employee development plans.
At the beginning of each evaluation period, managers and/or employees identify specific work objectives as well as the behaviors/competencies believed to be critical for successful performance. Employees and supervisors may also agree on a development plan designed to improve performance or achieve long-range career objectives. These three components form the basis for the employee’s evaluation.

**Why It Works** Employee loyalty and retention are enhanced when employees clearly understand what is expected of them and receive constructive feedback on how they are doing. When used properly, the development plan component provides the employee with the insights and tools necessary to become a better worker and to prepare for future advancement within the agency.

**Challenges and Considerations** Supervisors sometimes resist performance management systems because evaluating employee performance requires a major investment in time, may require the supervisor to confront performance problems, and forces them to be accountable for staff performance. In addition, when supervisory workloads are particularly heavy, supervisors may not have time to do thorough performance reviews.

**Realistic Job Preview**

**What It Is** A **Realistic Job Preview** (RJP) is a recruiting approach that is designed to communicate both the desirable and undesirable aspects of the job before an applicant has accepted a job offer.

**How It Works** Although a RJP can be presented in a variety of formats, such as verbal presentations, job tours and written brochures, a number of human services agencies have used a video portraying the job of a child welfare worker. The videos usually feature child welfare workers describing both the positive and negative aspects of the job, and shows footage of them engaging in a variety of work activities. Agencies that have produced such videos normally require all job applicants to watch the video before being interviewed for the job.

**Why It Works** Much of the turnover in child welfare jobs occurs within the first several months of employment because job applicants accept job offers without having a good understanding of the demands of the job. Worse yet, many applicants have certain expectations and/or perceptions about the job which are inaccurate. After viewing the RJP, those job applicants who conclude that they are not well suited for the demands of the job simply withdraw from the application process. Well produced videos focus on those issues believed
to have an impact on job retention, emphasizing how workers feel about the job rather than just focusing on the mechanics of the job.

A well designed RJP can be expected to significantly reduce turnover of child welfare workers, particularly the turnover that occurs within the first several months of employment when many new workers realize that they made a bad career choice. Research studies have also shown that employees who accept employment offers after seeing RJPs are not only more likely to stay on the job longer, but also show greater job satisfaction and are better able to cope with the demands of the job.

**Challenges and Considerations** Some agencies, particularly those facing serious recruiting difficulties, fear that showing a Realistic Job Preview will further reduce their ability to attract new employees. Others believe that they lack the “know how” to produce an effective video.

Cost: $$  
Impact: **  
_Safety Support_

**What It Is** Agencies can provide Safety Support by taking steps to make employees feel reasonably safe in a job that has inherent risks.

**How It Works** Since many child welfare workers feel at greatest risk when working in the field, some agencies have provided a wide array of solutions, including:

- Safety awareness training.
- Authorizing staff to travel in pairs when making potentially dangerous home calls.
- Use of cell phones and two-way radios.
- Equipping agency vehicles with keyless entry and alarms.
- Requiring staff to prepare detailed field itineraries.
- Requiring field staff to call the office at regular intervals.
- Forging cooperative relationships with local police agencies.
- Conducting risk assessments on families prior to making home calls (by doing on-line criminal history checks).
- Discussing safety related topics at staff meetings.

**Why It Works** Some employees leave the child welfare job because of safety concerns. If employees feel safer, they may be less likely to leave.

**Challenges and Considerations** Perhaps the greatest challenges to addressing “field safety” are in agencies that
have never faced a serious safety crisis and therefore may have become complacent. Despite the concerns of field employees, upper management may fail to take the steps necessary to address employee concerns.

Cost: $$
Impact: *

Second Language Incentive

What It Is Some agencies pay a Second Language Incentive to child welfare workers who speak a second language.

How It Works Agencies that provide an incentive to employees who speak a second language usually pay a premium (either cents per hour or a fixed percentage) above the normal hourly pay rate for all hours worked. Some agencies require that employees pass a language proficiency exam before becoming eligible for the premium. Some agencies also require those employees receiving the premium to serve as a translator on an as needed basis.

Why It Works The pay premium not only provides a higher pay rate than the employee would have otherwise received, but also recognizes the additional skill and service provided.

Challenges and Considerations Although a relatively small group of people will receive the pay incentive, this solution may have a significant impact on reducing the turnover of employees with a special, and often critical, skill.

Supervisory Development

Cost: $$
Impact: ***

What It Is Supervisory Development is the process of providing professional development to supervisors and managers to enhance their effectiveness with their staff.

How It Works Agencies provide supervisors and managers with training and other developmental opportunities to improve their leadership skills. Good supervisors must know how to clearly set performance expectations, provide ongoing feedback, provide opportunities for their staff’s development and growth, and build relationships based on trust. They must be good coaches, communicators and team builders.

Why It Works The quality of frontline supervision has a tremendous impact on employee satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

Challenges and Considerations Many organizations, particularly small ones, believe they lack the resources to provide good supervisory training and developmental opportunities. Even organizations with good supervisory training and development programs sometimes find it difficult to “change the ways” of some experienced supervisors who have developed poor supervisory skills over many years.
Telecommuting

What It Is A Telecommuting program allows employees to work from their home rather than commute to the agency’s offices to do their regular work.

How It Works Experienced child welfare workers work from home, using telephones, computers, fax machines, and possibly other remote capabilities. Participating child welfare workers are able to tap into their agency’s computer network from home so that all case-related information is as available at home as it would be in an office setting. Depending on the model, the employees may also have considerable flexibility in determining which hours they will work during the work day. Some agencies may require that the employee be available during core hours to take phone calls, participate in telephone meetings and so on. The employee is also usually expected to arrange field visits at times more convenient to clients, rather than being confined by the more traditional office hours. In some situations, the employee may be scheduled for some hours in the office to be available for meetings, training, etc. Some believe that child welfare worker positions are particularly well suited for telecommuting because of the inherent amount of field work required, the relative ease of monitoring work results, and the flexible scheduling resulting in more convenience to clients.

Why It Works Working from home offers employees the advantage of being able to save the time and financial expense of daily commuting to the office setting. Employees may also have considerable flexibility over their working hours within the workday. Employees with young children may be able to reduce or eliminate their day care expenses. Permitting employees such degree of control over their work lives may also help reduce burnout.

Challenges and Considerations A telecommuting model requires supervisors to monitor employee performance in an entirely new way – one that some supervisors will have trouble adapting to. Since employees will spend less time in the office setting, the collegial dynamics of casework may also change. The “start up” costs of a telecommuting model may be expensive initially, if the agency chooses to equip home offices with computers, fax machines and dedicated phone lines. These costs may be offset in the long run as a result of reduced office space and equipment.

Training (In-Service)

What It Is In-Service Training consists of the formal classroom training and on-the-job training that is provided to employees after they have been hired by an agency.
How It Works Agencies that believe they can reduce turnover by improving in-service training begin providing thorough and intensive training to new child welfare workers immediately upon hire or within the first few weeks. They also recognize that job-specific training and more general professional-development training opportunities must continue throughout the child welfare worker’s career.

Why It Works A career in child welfare is very demanding, relies on the exercise of good judgment and requires thorough training on broad social work principles and often-complex agency policy. Employees, and most particularly new employees, who feel inadequately prepared to cope with the job often end up leaving. Providing the skills employees believe they need to do the job well is critical to job retention.

One-hundred percent of the administrators responding to APHSA’s survey stated that they believed that increased or improved in-service training was at least somewhat effective as a strategy for reducing turnover (APHSA 2005).

Challenges and Considerations One of the biggest obstacles to classroom training is relieving employees of their work duties in order to be able to attend training. Experienced employees sometimes resist going to training because they face an accumulated backlog of work upon their return. In the case of newly hired employees, sending them to training immediately after hire prolongs the length of time other staff must cover vacant caseloads.

| Cost: $ | Impact: ** | Tuition Assistance |

What It Is Tuition Assistance programs provide financial assistance to child welfare workers pursuing work-related education and/or advanced degrees.

How It Works Typically agencies that offer tuition assistance programs provide financial reimbursement for some portion of the tuition and fees to employees who take job-related classes or obtain advanced degrees. Although the policies differ from one agency to another, reimbursement is usually made only after the employee successfully passes the class, may range from 50 to 100 percent reimbursement, and may allow a specified number of hours of paid time off to take the class. Some agencies have a plan that makes use of enhanced Federal funding to reimburse the tuition of employees pursuing a MSW degree. Often, employees are required to agree to work for the agency for a specified period of time in exchange for the tuition reimbursement.

Why It Works Tuition assistance programs provide a significant financial benefit and provide professional development opportunities. Child welfare workers may gain confidence in their ability to do the job and believe that they
are enhancing their qualifications for future career opportunities.

**Challenges and Considerations** Tuition assistance can be a very effective retention tool for those employees the agency may most want to keep (i.e., those interested in furthering their own professional development).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost: $ to $$$</th>
<th>University Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact: ⭐ to ⭐⭐⭐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What It Is** Many agencies have formed partnerships with colleges and universities in their state primarily for the purpose of better preparing social work students for jobs in the state’s public child welfare agencies.

**How It Works** Although there are a variety of unique programs, most are directed at better preparing students for jobs in public child welfare agencies. In some states, the agency and universities work together on curriculum design. In some instances the university curriculum is so closely aligned to the agency’s child welfare policies that students hired by the agency do not need to participate in new-worker training. In other instances, the states have contracted with the universities to design and deliver the agency’s training programs.

Some agencies have programs where the agency selects students for employment during their junior year in college, and pays their tuition (and perhaps a stipend) in exchange for a work commitment. In other instances, current child welfare staff enroll in the MSW program, and receive tuition reimbursement in exchange for a work commitment. Sometimes field placements can be arranged so that they occur within the agency, but in a different kind of work assignment.

Many other agencies partner with their universities on various work-study and intern programs. It is very common for students to do their field placements in both public and private agencies in the state.

**Why It Works** Many of the university partnership programs provide social work students with considerable exposure to child welfare agencies and their programs before the employment relationship is formed. Based on that early exposure, students may realize that either the agency or a child welfare job will be a bad fit for them.

**Challenges and Considerations** Although partnerships between the University Schools of Social Work and child welfare agencies hold tremendous potential, there are some minor pitfalls to be aware of. Some agencies have provided funding for stipends to social work students in exchange for work commitments, only to find that budget shortfalls and
hiring freezes prevented them from being able to hire the students after graduation. With regard to internship programs, some supervisors have invested a great deal of time supervising a student placement only to have the student take a job elsewhere after graduation.

References


Appendix A – Research Findings and Further Reading

The Causes of Turnover

The causes of turnover among child welfare workers are as varied as the organizations in which they work. Although there may be some common challenges such as low pay, heavy workloads, and ineffective supervision, the reasons for turnover in your organization may be very different.

The Magnitude of the Problem

A stable and highly-skilled child welfare workforce is necessary to meet the critical needs of vulnerable children and their families. High turnover of child welfare workers is a major contributor to the failure of child welfare organizations to meet state and federal goals. Some recent research findings include:

- In 2003, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) estimated that turnover of child welfare staff was between 30 and 40 percent annually nationwide, with the average tenure being less than two years.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation estimates annual turnover rates of 20 percent in public agencies and 40 percent in private agencies.
- The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) found a 22 percent turnover rate for Children’s Protective Services Workers for calendar year 2003, as compared to a rate of almost 20 percent for calendar year 1999.

The GAO’s Research

The GAO conducted an extensive review of the child welfare system and released their findings in March 2003 in a report entitled, *HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff*. In conducting its study, the GAO:

- Reviewed nearly 600 exit interview documents completed by staff who terminated their employment in 17 states, 40 county and 19 private child welfare agencies.
- Examined 27 available Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) completed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The CFSRs assess state’s performance on federally-mandated child and family welfare measures.
- Reviewed a variety of child welfare workforce studies.
- Interviewed child welfare experts and officials across the country.
- Conducted site visits to both public and private child welfare agencies in four states.

The Causes of Turnover

The GAO found that turnover among child welfare workers is caused by:

- Low salaries.
- High caseloads.
- Paperwork and other administrative burdens which detract from professional social work activities.
- Lack of supervisory support.
- Unavailability of training and/or insufficient time to participate in training.
- Risk of violence.

Generally speaking, although the causes of turnover will be unique to each organization, the following are the primary reasons we’ve identified for turnover across organizations.

1. **Low Salaries**

Some child welfare agencies pay their child welfare workers competitively, but many do not. As a general rule, public jurisdictions pay better than private, non-profit agencies. Recent research conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation documents that social services jobs consistently rank among the five worst-paying professional jobs tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for both men and women. In fact, “social services pays its workers less than any other sector that hires similarly qualified people for similar jobs.” (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2003)

The APHSA found that the average salary of Children’s Protective Services Workers was $35,553. As a comparison, US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics data for November 2003 show the average annual salary for registered nurses was 48.5 percent higher ($52,810) and 29.7 percent higher for public school teachers ($46,123).

In their child welfare workforce survey examining state agencies, the APHSA identified 17 “preventable” causes of turnover and had respondents rank each of them using a three-point rating scale. See Table 1 (page 56) for the results.
Table 1: Preventable Turnover Problems (APHSA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preventable Turnover Problem</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
<th>Number Reporting</th>
<th>Not Problematic (percent)</th>
<th>Somewhat Problematic (percent)</th>
<th>Highly Problematic (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workloads too high and/or demanding (e.g., stress)</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseloads too high</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After hours &amp; unpredictable work interfere in personal life</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much time spent on travel, transport, paperwork, etc.</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient services resources for families &amp; children</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers do not feel valued by agency</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with quality of supervision</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient opportunities for promotion &amp; career advance.</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low salaries</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker concerns about their physical safety</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient agency support for professionalism of workers</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality &amp; quantity of training or continuing education</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative media coverage of child welfare field</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency management problems (e.g., high manager turnover)</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability to legal liability around cases</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor working conditions (e.g., rundown/crowded building)</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of professional development opportunities</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other problems</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL AVERAGES</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.80</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
<td><strong>38%</strong></td>
<td><strong>23%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: APHSA, p. 37.

Note: Respondents were encouraged to base their responses on exit interviews; the responses represent an administrative point of view rather than the more direct worker perspective.
In the four states the GOA visited, all reported that they lose current workers to fields which pay higher wages and offer safer and more predictable work, such as education. The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ national wage survey reports that elementary and middle school teachers earn, on average, about $42,000 annually while social workers earn about $33,000, a difference of 27 percent. According to the GAO’s analysis of exit interviews/surveys, inadequate pay was cited as one of the top five reasons (13.85 percent of responses) for employees leaving.

In many instances, low pay may be a contributing reason for an employee’s decision to leave an organization rather than the primary motivation. Even in those instances, however, eliminating even one reason for worker dissatisfaction may make the difference between leaving and staying. Furthermore, inadequate compensation may indirectly result in increased turnover. Low pay contributes to recruitment difficulties, resulting in more vacancies, and consequently higher caseloads. The stress and “burnout” resulting from high caseloads are consistently cited as being one of the more common reasons for high turnover.

2. High Caseloads

High caseloads often drive good employees from their positions because of the stress and frustration that results from not being able to do the job as it should be done. The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) recommends that caseloads be between 12 and 15 children per worker, and the Council for Accreditation for Children and Family Services (COA) suggests they not exceed 18 children per worker. The APHSA survey reported that caseloads average 24 children per worker for Children’s Protective Services Workers and 23 children per worker for Foster Care and Adoption Workers.

Not surprisingly, high caseloads lead to increased turnover, which in turn leads to even higher caseloads and further increases turnover. Breaking this vicious cycle requires careful analysis and appropriate strategies to most effectively use limited agency resources.

3. Administrative Burdens

The GOA research indicates that child welfare workers and supervisors feel frustrated by overwhelming administrative burdens, such as paperwork and court appearances, that take up a large portion of their time. Some estimated that these administrative responsibilities take from 50 to 80 percent of their time.

Regulations and Retention

“Rule-bound, compliance-oriented jobs create a vicious cycle. On one hand, good workers who want some degree of autonomy will not stay in them. On the other hand, poor-quality staff are subjected to overregulation in a last-ditch effort to manage them. Though regulations are intended to build in accountability and ensure a base level of good practice, they fix the process into a one-size-fits-all intervention, ignore results, and are indifferent to high performance.

In addition, such regulation constricts flexibility and inhibits opportunity for professional recognition and career advancement. Excessive regulation, particularly in the fields of child welfare, juvenile justice, and income maintenance, is a consistent feature of work life and routinely cited as a leading reason why workers leave their jobs.”

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, p. 20.
Conscientious child welfare workers often feel so frustrated by the fact that administrative requirements diminish their ability to serve children and families that they quit.

A contributing factor to the increases in the administrative function of child welfare jobs is related to the difficulty in recruiting and hiring employees with appropriate credentials. Because of the scarcity of employees with masters and bachelors degrees in social work willing to work in child welfare, many agencies have been forced to hire employees with other degrees, or perhaps no degree at all. Jobs which had once been highly professional, requiring a large degree of independent decision making, have become far more structured with increased requirements for documentation. Consequently, some agencies find that the best qualified employees become quickly dissatisfied and leave.

4. Quality of Supervision

Good supervision is key to reducing turnover. Supervisory support can motivate child welfare workers to stay despite the stress and frustration of the job. Lack of supervisory support, on the other hand, is often cited as a critical factor in an employee’s decision to leave.

Even good supervisors become ineffective when they are so stretched with other responsibilities that they are unavailable to their staff. Organizations experiencing high turnover among supervisors often also face high turnover among casework staff. Inexperienced supervisors who lack appropriate and timely training are sometimes simply incapable of providing the needed staff support.

In the APHSA survey, states were asked to rate the importance of 15 organizational and personal factors that may contribute to the decision of child welfare workers to remain employed by the state’s child welfare agency. States ranked "quality of supervision" as one of the most important factors in retaining staff. Although the states acknowledged the impact of good supervision on staff retention, 78 percent of them indicated that "problems with quality of supervision" was somewhat to highly problematic in their agency (see Table 1, page 56).

5. Training Issues

According to the GAO audit, training opportunities are often inadequate to ensure that new hires are properly prepared for the challenges of their new jobs. Because of high caseloads and other work priorities, supervisors and experienced workers are often unavailable to provide on-the-job training. In some agencies, half or more of the newly-hired child welfare workers leave their jobs before completing their first year. Many who leave do so because they are not sufficiently trained and supported to do their jobs (GAO 2003).

Experienced workers reported that they elect not to participate in optional training because of time constraints and job priorities. Because work continues to accumulate while away at training, many workers simply prefer to forego needed training rather than return from training to a workload that has grown out of control.
6. Evening and/or Weekend Hours

In the APHSA survey, state agency administrators ranked worker dissatisfaction with the requirement for working evening and weekend hours as a major problem. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents identified this issue as being either somewhat or highly problematic during the past 12 months. (See Table 1, page 56.)

In many organizations, employees are required to be on call during evenings and weekends to investigate and otherwise respond to emergency situations. In many other instances, however, employees are involved in difficult situations at the end of the work day and simply cannot walk away because it’s quitting time. Many child welfare workers simply choose to put in long hours, without the authorization or expectation of overtime pay, because they find it necessary in order to keep up with their heavy workloads.

7. Lack of Resources for Children and Families

As shown in Table 1, 78 percent of state agency administrators responding to the APHSA survey ranked “Insufficient services resources for families and children” as significant reason for turnover among child welfare workers. 78 percent of them believe that this lack of services is somewhat or highly problematic. Feelings of frustration in not being able to provide reasonable support services for children and families leads to worker burnout.

8. Morale

According to the APHSA survey, 84 percent of the responding state administrators believe that “workers feel undervalued by the agency” is either somewhat or highly problematic. In their recent report, the Annie E. Casey Foundation identifies “not feeling valued” as one of the consistently identified top three reasons for child welfare workers leaving their jobs. Many of the other reasons offered for high turnover – low pay, heavy workloads, insufficient resources, and complex policies that tie workers’ hands – contribute to worker feelings of being undervalued. From the child welfare workers’ perspective, an agency’s failure to pay a fair wage, set manageable workload standards, provide basic equipment and supplies, and de-bureaucratize policy are regarded as a failure to address employee needs.

What We Lose When Workers Leave

“Frontline work in human services is about relationships. Workers are not interchangeable parts, and a child or family suffers when caseworkers don’t know how to help, or when they leave and are replaced by new, inexperienced workers. We know that just staying in their jobs continuously is an essential element of workers’ effectiveness. We also know the consequences of high turnover; for example, families with children in foster care are less likely to be reunited in a timely way and children in child care centers show slower development.”

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, p. 18.
The Consequences of Turnover

Adverse Impact on Children and Families

The GAO study found significant evidence that workforce instability and high turnover result in child welfare workers having less time to:

- Conduct frequent and meaningful home visits in order to assess children’s safety.
- Establish relationships with children and families. Trust between the children’s services worker and child is essential to obtain the necessary information to develop and manage the child’s case. When that trust is disrupted by turnover, it becomes more difficult for the new worker to reestablish a relationship with both the child and the family.
- Make thoughtful and well-supported decisions regarding safe and stable permanent placements. When turnover results in remaining workers assuming the responsibility for the departed employee’s cases, the ability to ensure the safety of the children involved is compromised. Furthermore, transitioning cases from one worker to another can result in delays or changes to permanency decisions. Decisions reached hurriedly or without adequate investigation can result in placement disruptions, foster care re-entry, or continued abuse and neglect.

Failure to attain Federal Child Welfare Outcomes

As part of the GAO’s audit of the Child and Family Service Reviews completed by HHS, GAO reported that HHS explicitly cited workforce deficiencies – high caseloads, training deficiencies, and staffing shortages – as a factor affecting the attainment of at least one assessment measure in each of the completed CFSRs. CFSR reviewers specifically cited staff turnover and vacancies as affecting worker responsiveness and decreasing ability to help children achieve permanency (GAO 2003).

References


Further Reading


Web Sites

www.cornerstone.to

www.aphsa.org

http://www.aecf.org

http://www.cpshr.us