

Child Welfare Recruitment, Selection, & Retention Organizational Assessment

Casa Grande Child Protective Services Office

Summary Findings

Conducted by: Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project
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Summary Findings

The organizational assessment of the Casa Grande office identified numerous significant findings. The data and analysis demonstrated areas of strength, as well as areas needing attention or improvement. These are the generalized findings based on review and analysis of baseline, focus group, and survey data. Details to support the findings can be found in the specific report sections. The areas explored were recruitment, selection, training, and retention.

These findings represent a point in time in the office. Involvement in this project invites scrutiny of policy and practice and can be a risk for everyone involved. The administration and staff are to be commended for engaging in a thoughtful assessment of their organization.

Recruitment

Strengths

- Multiple and varied methods of hearing about child welfare positions were described by staff.
- Local recruitment has been found to increase staff retention rates.
- A partnership between the State and Arizona State University exists and can be a potential resource for interns, who have, in the past, taken positions in the agency.
- Benefits such as educational leave and tuition reimbursement, which have recently been reinstated, can serve as a recruitment tools.

Areas for Improvement

- Recruitment in Casa Grande is difficult due to rural location and lack of resources.
- Generally, applicants do not obtain a clear, accurate, or realistic picture of what the job entails through the current recruitment efforts.

Selection

Strengths

- Standardized interview formats.
- The interview panel has been expanded to include more individuals representing different perspectives.
- The oral interview is flexible and allows more time for candidate to ask questions.
- Background/reference checks are rigorous and thorough.

Areas for Improvement

- Interview questions are not thought to provide the best assessment of candidates.
- Positions can remain vacant for four to five months during the hiring process.
- As part of a more comprehensive process, potential candidates could be more fully apprised of job pace, duties, and responsibilities.

Training

Strengths

- Case manager Core training does provide necessary foundation information.
- Child Welfare Training Institute has been responsive to staff feedback and has changed the model and design of delivery to better meet staff needs.
- New staff learn a great deal from on-the-job shadowing and mentoring by seasoned workers.
- Ongoing training is seen as relevant and helpful.

Areas for Improvement

- Almost two-thirds of staff did not feel that the training they received prepared them for their work.
- Case manager Core training does not include enough content directly related to job duties and responsibilities.
- Current Institute training model does not provide the opportunity to integrate classroom learning into field experience.
- Current Institute training model necessitates staff being gone from family for extended periods of time while in Phoenix.
- Mentoring efforts are not consistent.
- Over half of staff do not feel they know enough to do their job well.
- A significant minority of staff do not believe training is highly valued by the agency.

Retention

Supervision

Strengths

- Generally, staff described experiencing positive and supportive supervision. Supervision was most typically provided “as-needed,” as opposed to regularly scheduled.
- Many staff expressed commitment and connection to their supervisor or their staff as a strength.
- Workers report moderately high levels of agreement that they experience caring from their supervisors and help in difficult situations.

Areas for Improvement

- Supervision is not experienced consistently throughout the agency and between units.
- A significant minority (over 40%) of staff expressed concerns regarding the competence of supervision related to demonstrating leadership and learning the ropes of the agency.
- Between 35% and 40% of staff felt supervision did not include enough specific, hands-on support regarding required tasks and paperwork and assisting with burnout.

Organizational Culture

Clarity and Coherence

Strengths

- All staff agreed that the agency’s purpose was clear to them.
- Over two-thirds of staff indicated that their job expectations were clear and that they felt support to make work-related decisions.

Areas for Improvement

- More than half of staff identified a concern regarding the efficiency of work processes.
- A significant minority of staff (42%) did not believe supervisors and administrators had a good relationship.

Administrative Support

Strengths

- In general, administrators were seen as supportive of education and encouraging of worker's competence, and helpful when problems arose.

Areas for Improvement

- Between 35% and 45% of staff did not feel that administrators showed a genuine concern and empathy to staff.
- More than 35% of staff felt case decisions and services could benefit from more administrative support.

Office Culture

Strengths

- Staff is interested in finding a more open and direct way to resolve conflicts or problems.

Areas for Improvement

- A majority of staff interviewed described a culture that included unresolved, internal and personality conflicts.
- Staff perceive there is an awareness of the problem, but that overt attempts to resolve it have not been made.

Community/Resources

Strengths

- Individually, over 90% of staff felt they worked collaboratively with professionals from other agencies.

Areas for Improvement

- The majority of staff express strong levels of concern regarding community support for their work.
- More than 80% of staff believe that resources were inadequate to serve families.

Staff Motivation and Self-Efficacy

Strengths

- Staff expressed a sense of confidence and competence in the majority of their identified responsibilities, such as interviewing, strength and problem identification, and assessment of parenting.

- The majority of staff believe they are persistent, culturally competent, and collaborative in their approach to work.
- The vast majority of staff express an intent to stay in the child welfare field and a commitment to the profession.

Areas for Improvement

- Staff expressed less confidence in abilities related to safety assessment, effective interventions, and assisting children with separation.
- A significant minority (35%) of staff are concerned about their ability to expend the energy and effort needed to accomplish work tasks.

Job Satisfaction

Strengths

- Over 80% of staff indicated they were satisfied with their job.
- The majority of staff expressed satisfaction in making a difference, improving their knowledge and skills, and ensuring the safety and well-being of clients.
- Casa Grande was recently allocated additional staff positions.

Areas for Improvement

- Staff at all levels expressed the belief that the workload was unreasonable and unmanageable and was impacting the quality of their work.
- Staff spend time doing numerous paperwork tasks, not related to client contact.
- In general, staff do not feel adequately compensated for the work they do.
- The lack of merit raises or pay increases related to longevity is a disincentive to stay in their jobs.
- A majority of staff do not feel career advancement opportunities exist within the system.
- A significant number of staff experience child welfare stress related to worrying about individual families, the enormity of their decision, and the lack of time to do their work.
- Staff report a high level of symptoms related to fatigue—being emotionally drained and feeling “used up” at the end of a work day.

Phase II of this project will allow for areas of strength to be built upon and areas of need explored and prioritized for intervention.