

# **Child Welfare Recruitment, Selection, & Retention Organizational Assessment**

## **Peoria Child Protective Services Office**

### ***Summary Findings***

Conducted by: Western Regional Recruitment & Retention Project  
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#### Summary Findings

The organizational assessment of the Peoria 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 that include 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

- Central Office uses multiple and varied methods for recruitment.
- 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.
- As a recruitment tool, the State offers benefits such as educational leave and tuition reimbursement (recently reinstated).

##### Areas for Improvement

- Recruitment can be difficult due to the negative community and media perception of child welfare.
- A targeted approach to recruitment should include more diversity among applicants and geographic specificity (west valley of Maricopa).
- 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 are used and include both written and oral assessment.
- District I does continual interviewing and hiring of staff.
- Background/reference checks are rigorous and thorough.

### Areas for Improvement

- The District I interview plan does not always provide for hiring supervisor's direct knowledge of the applicant and input into the process.
- The testing process does not always produce the most viable candidates.
- Positions can remain vacant for one to three months during the hiring process.
  
- Sixty percent of staff did not feel interviewers gave candidates an accurate picture of the work and the agency.

## 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.
- Staff find ongoing training energizing and helpful.

### Areas for Improvement

- Over 80% 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.
- The current Institute training model does not provide the opportunity to integrate classroom learning into field experiences.
- The plan for graduated case assignment and responsibility is not consistently implemented.
- Mentoring efforts are not consistent.
- Over half of staff (60%) do not feel they know enough to do their job well.
- In general, staff did not believe ongoing training opportunities were readily available.
- A significant minority of staff (43%) do not believe training is highly valued by the agency.

## Retention

### Supervision

#### Strengths

- Numerous staff described experiencing positive and supportive supervision.
- Quality supervision was seen as a strength in the Peoria office and a reason for remaining employed there.
- Many staff expressed commitment and connection to their supervisor and/or their staff.
- Workers report moderately high levels of agreement that they experience caring from their supervisors and help in difficult situations.

#### Areas for Improvement

- Supervision was most typically provided “as needed,” as opposed to regularly scheduled.
- Twenty-eight percent of staff felt supervision did not include enough support regarding assisting with burnout, reinforcing Core curriculum, and help with “learning the ropes” of the agency.

## Organizational Culture

### Clarity and Coherence

#### Strengths

- 91% of staff agreed that the agency’s purpose was clear to them.
- The vast majority of staff (94%) felt support in making work-related decisions.
- Over three-quarters of staff (79%) felt case assignment was equitable.
- Almost two-thirds of staff (61%) felt their work uses helping strategies that work.

#### Areas for Improvement

- Three-quarters of staff (74.5%) identified a concern regarding the efficiency of work processes.
- While most staff understood the agency purpose, 82% did not feel the work reflects the purpose.
- Over half of staff (50–64%) identified concerns in supervisor and administrator cohesion and relationships
- Many staff (73–82%) expressed concerns regarding use of client-focused interventions, use of effective strategies, agency provision of needed resources, and an emphasis on quantity, not quality.

## Administrative Support

### Strengths

- In general, a significant number of staff (63–76%) saw administrators as helpful when problems arose, supportive of education and encouraging of worker's competence, and allowing of sufficient professional autonomy.
- Sixty-four percent of staff felt administration valued and encouraged cohesion among agency staff.
- A number of staff expressed a sense that some individuals in management wanted to be supportive but were too overburdened with workload issues to be able to do so.

### Areas for Improvement

- Significant numbers of staff (52–73%) did not believe administration demonstrated support for innovative ideas or encouraged shared leadership.
- Over two-thirds of staff (64–69%) felt that administration did not show a genuine concern or empathy for staff.
- Two-thirds of staff (63%) indicated they did not receive the assistance they needed from administrators to enhance quality of case decisions and services.

## Community /Resources

### Strengths

- Individually, 100% of staff felt they worked collaboratively with professionals from other agencies.

### Areas for Improvement

- Eighty-eight percent of staff did not believe that the community thought highly of or supported their work. Staff indicated that negative media and public attention impact their ability to do their jobs.
- The majority of staff (64%) express strong levels of concern regarding community support for their work.
- Seventy-nine percent of staff believe that resources were inadequate to serve families.
- Seventy-nine percent of staff indicated the lack of resources seriously impact their capacity to do their work.

## Staff Self-Efficacy and Motivation

### Strengths

- Staff expressed a sense of confidence and competence in the majority of their identified responsibilities, such as assessment, interviewing, strength and problem identification, and assessment of parenting.
- The majority of staff believe they are motivated, persistent, culturally competent, collaborative in their approach to work; and effectively able to interpret and apply agency policies.
- Three-quarters of staff (76%) 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 providing effective interventions, concurrent planning, and assisting children with separation.
- Almost two-thirds of staff (59%) are concerned about their ability to expend the energy and effort needed to accomplish work tasks.

#### Job Satisfaction

##### Strengths

- The majority of staff (82–85%) expressed satisfaction in making a difference, improving their knowledge and skills, and ensuring the safety and well-being of clients.

- Staff described seeing positive change in families as powerful and a motivation to keep doing the work.

#### 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 do not feel adequately compensated for the work they do. Ninety-one percent of staff did not feel they were rewarded fairly, considering their responsibilities.
- The lack of merit raises or pay increases related to longevity is a disincentive to stay in their jobs.
- Salary inequity among staff is a morale issue.
- Many staff did not feel career advancement opportunities exist within the system.
- A significant number of staff (65–80%) experience child welfare stress related to worrying about individual families and the enormity of their decisions, and the lack of time to do their work.
- A third of staff (29%) report a high level of symptoms related to fatigue and 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.