

Site Profile

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Intervention: Competency-Based Selection



QIC-WD Overview

The Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) is dedicated to understanding how to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. The QIC-WD partnered with eight child welfare agencies to evaluate evidence-informed workforce interventions and how they are related to outcomes for children.

Site Overview

The Department of Human Services' Child Welfare Division employs approximately 3,000 individuals; 2,168 of whom provide direct service to Oklahoma's children and families through prevention, protection, and permanency casework. The goal of the QIC-WD project in Oklahoma is to design a competency-based selection process to improve the hiring of the most capable child welfare specialists. This process will be used statewide.

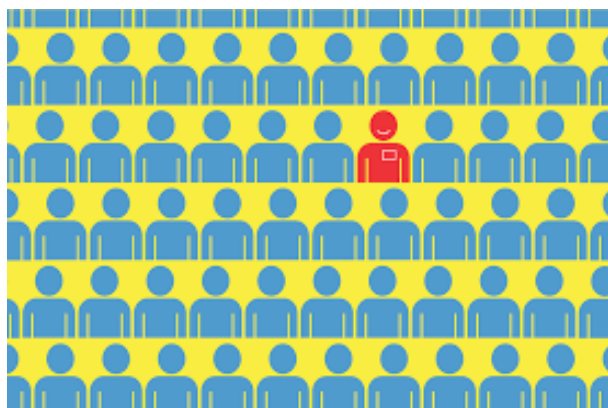
Workforce Challenge

In accordance with a 2012 Consent Decree, a workload standard was established for all caseload-carrying child welfare specialists. A workforce challenge Oklahoma is currently experiencing is having too many staff with a workload that exceeds the standards for their program area. Through a competency-based selection intervention, we hope to begin consistently hiring the "right" staff in the "right" places bringing parity to workload distribution.



Theory of Change

Once a competency-based selection process is applied statewide, candidates who are a better fit for their role will be more likely to perform well and will be apparent to selecting officials. When selecting officials hire individuals who are a good fit and perform well, the new staff will have a higher rate of job satisfaction which will reduce the overall vacancy rate. With a reduction in vacancies, workload distribution will be better balanced. When workload standards are consistently being met by staff across the state, the agency's challenge will be addressed while children and families are better served.



Intervention

To design the competency-based selection intervention, Oklahoma is conducting an in-depth job analysis to better define optimal performance and the characteristics required to perform the child welfare job well. The job analysis process includes interviews and surveys with the experts of the job-workers and supervisors themselves. This analysis will guide the development of a tailored selection strategy for Oklahoma's child welfare workforce.

Evaluation and Expected Results

The QIC-WD is dedicated to generating new knowledge about effective strategies to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. This will be accomplished through a site-specific evaluation and a cross-site evaluation. Through an evaluation of Oklahoma's Competency-Based Selection Intervention, we will better understand:

- the traits and competencies that should be present at the time of hire in order for a job candidate to be successful in doing child welfare work;
- how competency-based and standardized selection procedures affect worker proficiency, confidence, job satisfaction, commitment to the agency, and intention to stay;
- how increasing the number of staff who are a better fit for their positions and more likely to stay could reduce stress on existing employees and agency wide turnover; and
- how an increase in staff who are a better fit to child welfare work and a decrease in turnover can improve outcomes for children and families.

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