BUILDING KNOWLEDGE TO STRENGTHEN THE CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

ABOUT THE QIC-WD

The Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) is dedicated to understanding how to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. Through evaluation, the QIC-WD will enhance what is known about evidence-informed workforce interventions and how they are related to outcomes for children.

Current Landscape

Staff recruitment and retention are persistent challenges for many child welfare agencies. In addition to being costly, staff turnover can negatively impact the relationship between families and the agency.

These challenges are compounded by a lack of research on effective strategies to attract and retain child welfare workers.

Opportunity to Advance the Field

The QIC-WD uses a continuous workforce development process to guide selected agencies as they identify their workforce needs and implement evidence-informed interventions. Drawing from a variety of fields, the QIC-WD shares current information about workforce challenges and promising practices through its website and at conferences. Our QIC-Takes and QIC-Tips summarize what is being done in areas such as staff recruitment, retention, and agency culture and climate. Finally, the QIC-WD operates an Institute on Child Welfare Workforce Analytics and works with agencies to test the effectiveness of promising interventions.

Building the Evidence Base

The QIC-WD synthesizes workforce research in its Umbrella Summaries and is generating new knowledge about effective strategies to improve workforce outcomes.

A Partnership

Through a cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau, the QIC-WD is led by University of Nebraska-Lincoln in partnership with experts from University of Colorado-Denver; University of Louisville; University of Tennessee-Knoxville; C.F. Parry Associates; CLH Strategies & Solutions; Penny P Collins Consulting; and University of California-Los Angeles.

Turnover in Child Welfare

All employers want to attract and retain high-quality employees. This is essential in child welfare where the well-being of children and families is at the heart of the workforce.

Effective child welfare workforce strategies are ones that have been tried and tested. The QIC-WD works in selected sites and uses systematic methods to:

- ✓ Assess and evaluate child welfare workforce issues
- ✓ Identify or develop interventions
- ✓ Provide capacity-building services to agencies
- ✓ Demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions
- ✓ Connect workforce improvements with outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system

The QIC-WD strives to support child welfare agencies that aim to reduce the current rate of staff turnover. The median turnover rate for frontline caseworkers is 22% (Edwards & Wildeman, 2018) which is a significant challenge for agencies.

Although there is no simple fix to improving workforce outcomes, there are many successes to draw from. The QIC-WD is unique because it integrates workforce expertise from multiple fields to bring best practices to child welfare. QIC-WD staff understand the cultural needs and complex nature of child welfare systems.

Turnover has been documented as a serious concern among child welfare professionals since 1950

Working with the QIC-WD

The QIC-WD partnered with eight public and tribal child welfare agencies interested in being on the cutting edge of reform as it relates to workforce issues. Selected sites are Title IV-B funded and are presented in the map below.
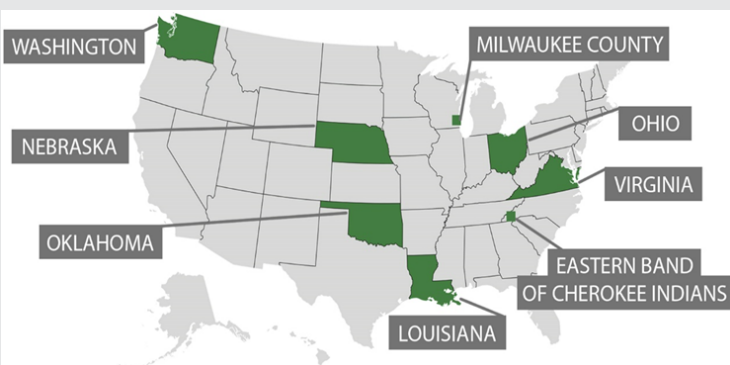
The QIC-WD is testing interventions that address agency culture and climate, onboarding, telework, secondary traumatic stress, supervision, job design, and mobile technology. What is learned will be shared nationally to strengthen the child welfare workforce.

WASHINGTON
MILWAUKEE COUNTY
OHIO
NEBRASKA
VIRGINIA
OKLAHOMA
EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS
LOUISIANA

CONTACT US

Dr. Michelle Graef

QIC-WD Project Director

🔗 www.qic-wd.org

🐦 twitter.com/QICWD