



## Recruitment & Retention

 Gomez, R. J., Travis, D. J., Ayers-Lopez, S., & Schwab, A. J. (2010). In search of innovation: A national qualitative analysis of child welfare recruitment and retention efforts. *Children & Youth Services Review*, 32(5), 664-671.

### WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This national analysis of child welfare recruitment and retention efforts investigates state-specific strategies to help improve recruitment and retention efforts. Qualitative data was collected through a review of 50 state child welfare websites and interviews conducted with 18 individuals in 13 states. The research examines the perceived effectiveness of frequently used recruitment and retention strategies as well as innovative or underutilized ones.

### WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

High employee turnover rates in child welfare agencies impact organizations at the employee, client, and organizational levels. The figure below shows 6 identified recruitment and retention strategies and methods of employing each strategy.

The most commonly utilized strategies were education incentives and training opportunities.

Employees indicate that education stipend programs, orientation, and ongoing training are most effective in improving recruitment and retention efforts.

Underutilized recruitment strategies include loan forgiveness/repayment, hiring bonuses, realistic job previews/simulations, paid time to pursue education, and tuition reimbursement.

Underutilized retention strategies include stress management workshop, job rotation, encouraging time off and short breaks, and change in organizational culture/climate.

Obstacles to innovation come from the organizational or political environment, and can include a culture of risk aversion, logistical issues, difficulty coordinating activities, lack of funding, legislative requirements, lack of support, and opposition from the public.

\*Limitations exist in limited information (solely from websites), a small sample of states for interviews, possible factor of social desirability, and an unbalanced amount of information between recruitment and retention.



### WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

-  Agencies should use pilot programs, provide safe environments, attempt innovative ideas, and develop systems to reward innovation as methods of improving recruitment and retention.
-  Staff innovation should be encouraged, which can lead to improved effectiveness of current strategies and the development of new strategies for improved recruitment and retention.
-  Agencies that learn from unsuccessful innovations and implement effective solutions can positively impact the organization, employees, and clients.
-  Further research is needed to gauge the types and effectiveness of innovative approaches that encourage worker recruitment and retention within child welfare organizations.