

Child Welfare Workforce Demographics (2000-2010): Snapshot of the Frontline Child Welfare Caseworker

The findings of various national, state and county-specific workforce studies and surveys conducted in the last ten years offer a general snapshot of frontline child welfare caseworkers in the United States. According to these findings, the average frontline child welfare worker

- ... Is a white female (although if she works in an urban setting, she is more likely to be African-American).
- ... Is in her late 30s, early 40s.
- ... Most likely holds a non-social work bachelor's degree.
- ... Earns approximately \$30,000-35,000 a year (although if she works in a rural setting, she generally earns less, and if she holds a master's degree, she generally earns \$5,000-\$10,000 more).
- ... Handles a caseload that is often twice the accepted national standard.
- ... Is one of six caseworkers managed by her supervisor.
- ... Remains in her position at least two years.
- ... Works at a child welfare agency that experiences turnover rates above 10% and vacancies that remain unfilled for 2-3 months.



Workforce Demographic Indicator	National Findings	State/County-Specific Findings
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72% female (AECF, 2003) 81% female (Barth et al, 2008) 84% female (NASW, 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland: 86% female (Hopkins et al, 2006) Michigan: 82% female (Faller et al, 2010) Missouri: 81% female (Drake & Yadama, 1996) New York: 81% female (Strolin et al, 2008) Oregon: 84% female (Sage, 2010)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Median age 41 (NASW, 2004) Median age 43 (Center for Health Workforce Studies & Center for Workforce Studies, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California: mean age 41; median age 38 (Clark et al, 2009); mean age 43 (Nissly et al, 2005) Maryland: mean age 45 (Hopkins et al, 2006) New York: mean age 40 (Strolin, et al, 2008); 2/3 over the age of 40 (SWEC, 2006) Oregon: Mean age 41, median age 38 (Sage, 2010)
Race/Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67% White (Barth et al, 2008) 77% White, 14% African American, 5% Hispanic/Latino (NASW, 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California: Caucasian most prevalent (Clark et al, 2009); 31% African American, 26% Latino (Nissly et al, 2005) Maryland: 40% White, 53% Black (Hopkins et al, 2006) Michigan: 60% White (Faller et al, 2010)
Educational Attainment & Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49% hold a non-social work bachelor's degree (Barth et al, 2008) 40% hold BSW/MSW degree (Barth et al) Bachelor's degree required (AECF, 2003) Bachelor's degree required (APHSA, 2005) Less than 15% require BSW/MSW (US GAO, 2003) 75% MSW, 25% BSW (NASW, 2004) Most likely to have no SW degree (12%), and likely to have a BSW as their highest social work degree (24%) (Center for Health Workforce Studies & Center for Workforce Studies, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California: 34.3% MSWs (Clark et al, 2009); 51% hold Graduate degrees (Nissly et al, 2005) Georgia: BSW, 13.5%; MSW, 6.1% (Ellett et al, 2003) District of Columbia: Of 309 caseworkers, 285 had MSWs and 24 had BSWs (US GAO, 2004) Michigan: Bachelor's degree in human service field (Faller et al, 2010) Oregon: AA: 2%; BA: 45%; BSW: 28%; MA: 10%; MSW: 13% (Sage, 2010) South Carolina: Bachelor's Degree (South Carolina Legislative Audit Council, 2006).
Salary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean public agency CPS: \$33,400; Mean public agency, Non-CPS: \$32,900; Mean private agency, CPS: \$28,700; Mean private agency, Non-CPS: \$29,200 (AECF, 2003) Mean of \$33,436 for public agency workers and \$28,646 for private agency workers (CWLA, ACF & APHSA, 2001) Average salaries: CPS workers \$35,553; in-home workers \$34,929; foster care & adoption workers \$35,911; multiple program workers \$36,136 (APHSA, 2005) \$43,000 median salary (NASW, 2004) \$44,000 (Center for Health Workforce Studies & Center for Workforce Studies, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland: Mean salary \$44,997 (Hopkins et al, 2006) Milwaukee County: Public agency staff start at \$31,825 annually while private agency staff start at \$30,171, \$27,000, and \$27,789 (Flower, McDonald & Sumski, 2005) New York: 75% have salary between \$25,000-\$35,000/year (SWEC, 2006) Oregon: Mean of \$41,562, median of \$41,000 (Sage, 2010)

Workforce Demographic Indicator	National Findings	State/County-Specific Findings
Caseload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 cases in CPS, 31 cases in Ongoing, twice the CWLA standard (AECF, 2003) • 19 families (NASW, 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia: 80% have caseloads that exceed CWLA standards (Ellett et al, 2003) • Maryland: 20 or more cases (Hopkins et al, 2006) • New York: Median is 25, mean is 27 (SWEC, 2006) • Oregon: 20 children (McKinsey & Co, 2008)
Supervisor/Worker Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:6 (APHS, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland: 1 to 5.93-9.67 (Hopkins et al, 2006)
Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Years in public agencies, 3 years in private agencies (AECF, 2003) • 5 years for CPS and in-home protective service workers; 3 years for foster care and adoption and multiple program workers (APHS, 2005) • Less than 2 years (US GAO, 2003) • Average is 6 years (NASW, 2040) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California: 9 years (Nissly et al, 2005) • New York: 7 years at the agency, 4 years in current position, 8 years in CW (SWEC, 2006) • Oregon: Mean of almost 6 years, median of 4 years (Sage, 2010)
Turnover Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% annually in public agencies, 40% in private agencies (AECF, 2003) • 12-22%; preventable turnover 5-13% (APHS, 2005) • 30-40% annually (US GAO, 2003) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California: 33% (Weaver et al, 2006); 6% to 27% (Cornerstones for Kids, 2006) • Maryland: Upward turnover trend (Hopkins et al, 2006) • Milwaukee County: 38.6% (Joint Legislative Audit Committee, 2006); less than 10% to 67% depending on the service area (Flower, McDonald & Sumski, 2005)
Vacancy Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 10% for workers; 7 to 13 weeks to fill vacant positions (APHS, 2005) 	

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