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OHIO PUBLIC CHILDREN SERVICE AGENCY STAFF Elements of a Quality Workforce

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR A QUALITY WORKFORCE - Well trained, educated, and supported professional staff.

MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS – All newly hired PCSA casework employees to either have or achieve a 4 year human services related degree within five years of hire. It is estimated the 95% of Ohio casework staff have at least a four year degree, and strategies to assist staff to obtain master's degrees are aggressively pursued.

Ohio Revised Code Sec. 5153.112. (A) A public children services agency may hire as a caseworker only the following:

- (1) A person who has a bachelor's degree in human services-related studies;
- (2) A person who has a bachelor's degree in any field and has been employed for at least two years in a human services-related occupation;
- (3) A person who has an associate's degree in human services-related studies;
- (4) A person who has been employed for at least five years in a human services-related occupation.

(B) For employment to continue, a person described in division (A)(2), (3), or (4) of this section must obtain a job-related bachelor's degree not later than five years after the date employment with the agency commences.

(C) This section applies only to persons hired on or after the effective date of this section and does not apply to a caseworker employed by a public children services agency before the effective date of this section who is hired by another public children services agency on or after that date.

MANDATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS - all competency based training, supported with locally earned funds pooled at the state level, and federal funds. The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program is governed by a steering committee including ODJFS, PCSAO, local agencies, the Institute for Human Services (nonprofit statewide coordinator), private adoption agency representative. Foster parents are proposed to join the steering committee, as the OCWTP also provides training for foster caregivers.

Core Training for PCSA Caseworkers - ORC 5153.122 (A)

- At least 102 hours in first year. Content: recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect; assessing risks; interviewing persons; investigating cases; intervening, providing services to children and their families; and other topics relevant to child abuse and neglect. Plus, 12 hours Domestic Violence training is required within the first two years of employment.

Core Training for PCSA Supervisors - ORC 5153.122 (B)

- At least 60 hours in first year as supervisor

On-Going Training for PCSA Caseworkers - ORC 5153.122 (A)

- 36 hour annually. Content: areas relevant to the caseworker's assigned duties, based on Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA)

On-Going Training for PCSA Supervisors - ORC 5153.122 (B)

- 30 hours annually. Content: areas relevant to the supervisor's assigned duties (based on ITNA)

Adoption Assessors (Public, Private, Court staff) - ORC 3107.015

- 32 hours, established by rule. Content: adoption placement practice, federal and state adoption assistance programs; post adoption services

Executive Training – While not mandated, PCSAO offers the Dan Schneider Executive Scholarship Fund for programs such as the John F. Kennedy School of State and Local Government at Harvard and the Voinovich Center for Executive Leadership Institute at Ohio University. Fund consists of local contributions.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM – Bachelors and Masters of Social Work Program

1. **An educational, financial, and recruitment relationship** between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Service, county Public Children Service Agencies, and Ohio public university schools of social work for the purpose of developing a pool of qualified applicants who can be hired by the county PCSAs to perform child protection activities.
2. All universities use a uniform curriculum for two specialized child welfare courses (six credit hours) that incorporate all competencies currently contained in the Core Curriculum of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. This **curriculum is paired with a highly structured and supervised field placement in a public child protection agency**, and made available to both BSW and MSW students who desire to work in the public child protection field.
3. Upon successful completion of the curriculum and field placement, graduation and acceptance of a job at a Public Children Services Agency, the graduate agrees to work at least one year in that agency, and receives a **partial tuition reimbursement** for their final college year.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE ACTIVITIES

Organizational Excellence is essential for an effective workforce.

ODJFS, PCSAO and the County Agencies have partnered for an aggressive continuous quality improvement program encouraging PCSAs to achieve Council on Accreditation status. COA standards require a certain percentage of PCSA employees in supervisory positions to have master level degrees, or at least a plan in progress to accomplish such. The campaign began in 2002, and at present, 24 public agencies have achieved accreditation status, covering 62% of the state child population; six more PCSAs are well into the process.

ODJFS supports a limited contract with the Council on Accreditation for co-hort training activities for agencies in participating in the initial or re-accreditation COA process. In the current biennial budget, PCSAO is advocating to allow a small portion of locally earned funds which are pooled statewide, to support this voluntary effort. These funds are currently restricted for use supporting the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program and the University Partnership Program.

RATIONALE FOR ALL STRATEGIES

Improved Outcomes for Children – March 2003 GAO Report links improved Child Safety and Permanency Outcomes (Child and Family Services Review) to stable, quality staff. Link at <http://www.gao.gov/docsearch/> - Child Welfare: HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff, [GAO-03-357](#), March 31, 2003. A series of focus groups of the general public, held by PCSAO in early 2000's, indicated the public particularly values a well-trained workforce.