

# Workforce Development Framework (WDF)



# Acknowledgements

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***For more information...***

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# NCWWI Workforce Development Framework (WDF)

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## Part I: Background and Overview

The “workforce is ...the most important and most expensive resource that child welfare agencies must invest in to achieve their goals and objectives” (American Public Human Services Association, 2010, p. 4).

The importance of the workforce in achieving an agency’s mission is unquestionable. Yet, child welfare agencies across the country are struggling to recruit, hire, train, support, and retain committed and high-performing staff, reflective of the diversity of our communities and of the families we serve. For this reason, the Children’s Bureau funded the **National Child Welfare Workforce (NCWWI)** to take an **integrated and comprehensive approach** to leadership and workforce development.

For a child welfare agency to achieve its mission, it must attract, develop, and retain a skilled and diverse<sup>1</sup> workforce, reflective of the wide-ranging backgrounds of our communities. In order to do so, agencies must create an *inclusive* culture and climate, where staff members experience mutual trust and respect, and perceive that they are a valued part of the organization. Further, efforts must be made to ensure that contributions and perspectives of diverse staff members are integrated into all levels of the decision-making, service planning, and service delivery processes. Research has demonstrated the distinct but intertwined relationship between diversity and inclusivity in the workplace, and the complex but clear impact on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intent to stay, and turnover (Hwang & Hopkins, 2014; Brimhall, Lizano, & Mor Barak, 2014).

The consequences of high turnover and inexperienced, unprepared staff are significant—costly for an agency and impacting children and families. For example, a recent study issued by the Sunset Advisory Commission (2014), on behalf of the Texas State Legislature, found that the cost to the State of *each* caseworker leaving the child welfare agency was estimated to be \$54,000. The impact on children and families is also costly, with studies demonstrating that among the deleterious workforce factors, high worker turnover was linked to delays in timeliness of investigations, reduced frequency of worker visits with children, and reduction in percentage of children achieving permanency (U.S. GAO, 2003; Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005; Leung, 2010).

Much work has been done to reduce turnover through multiple strategies across multiple domains, with some success; however, it is clear that without an integrated approach, child

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, diversity refers to race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and class and is borrowed from *Facing Race: A Renewed Commitment to Racial Equity*. Minnesota Philanthropy Partners, October 2013.



welfare agencies can all too often implement isolated interventions rather than crafting targeted and cohesive strategies. Similarly, achieving diversity of the workforce and a culture of inclusivity within the agency are not achieved through singular initiatives but instead are based upon an integrated and foundational set of values, beliefs, and practices that cut across all aspects of workforce development, based on principles of equity, tolerance, cultural humility, and respect for the unique qualities of each individual. Child welfare staff, working in service of the public good, face a high degree of uncertainty in their work environment due to the very nature of the complex challenges faced by families. As described by Blome and Steib (2014, p. 181), the stress of that uncertainty is compounded by the competing demands of a highly bureaucratic system with external oversight and scrutiny by multiple audiences—legislative bodies, appointed panels and commissions, and the courts, to name just a few.

To provide guidance to the field, NCWWI developed the ***Workforce Development Framework (WDF)***. NCWWI's Framework is uniquely tailored to reflect the complexity of the work and these unique features of child welfare. We reviewed the workforce planning literature across multiple professions and areas of research and cross-walked numerous models to ensure that NCWWI's Framework is theoretically sound, grounded in the literature, reflective of the environment and context of work in the field of child welfare, and aligned with NCWWI's **Leadership Competency Framework** and **Model of Change**.

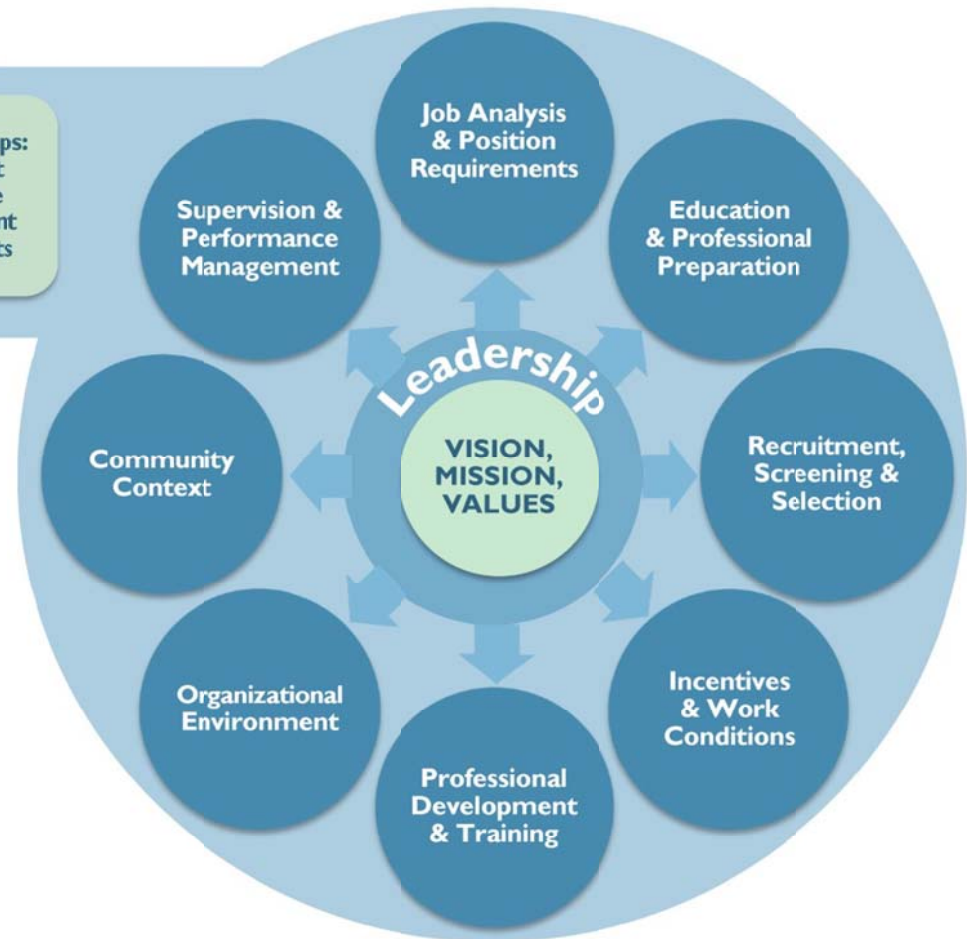
The WDF is intended to help agency leaders understand best and promising practices in developing a competent, committed, and diverse workforce, and an inclusive workplace. The Framework illustrates an integrated approach to consistently assess, plan, and implement strategies designed to address workforce gaps and evaluate the results through continuous quality improvement. Although the principal audiences for the WDF are middle managers and administrators, an agency's successful strategies should engage agency colleagues and community partners in concerted and collaborative approaches.

The visual graphic presented on the next page illustrates the essential elements of the framework, including key steps in the workforce development assessment and planning process, along with the core components that reflect multiple workforce development strategies. *Part II: Core Elements of the Framework* describes the steps in the assessment and planning process and each of the workforce development components. *Part III: Using the Workforce Development Framework* defines the desired outcome for each component, summarizes key competencies and strategies that are necessary to facilitate successful implementation, and finally, links the reader to resources, examples, and tools in **MyNCWWI**, which are continually updated and designed to support a diverse and inclusive workplace.

## Workforce Development Planning Process



## Workforce Development Components





## Part II: Core Elements of the Framework

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

Workforce planning is defined as:

The strategic alignment of an organization's human capital with its business direction. It is a methodical process of analyzing the current workforce, identifying future workforce needs, establishing the gap between the present and future, and implementing solutions so the organization can accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives. (International Personnel Management Association, 2002, p. vi)

In child welfare, workforce planning is a proactive process based on an assumption that the nature of our work, as well as the nature of the workforce, will change over time. In order to be responsive, it is essential to identify current and anticipated future workforce needs. An individualized and comprehensive planning process guides an agency to attend to its own unique culture, structure, context, and needs, and then select the most appropriate strategies to build a competent and diverse child welfare workforce for the future.

The planning process (noted on the left of the graphic on the previous page) is based on a central theme of continuous quality improvement, expecting that an organization will engage in an ongoing process to identify needs; assess and gather data; analyze supply, demand, and gaps; implement specific interventions to close those gaps; and monitor progress and evaluate impact.

Each step of the assessment and planning process is described in detail below.

#### **Step 1. Identify Need: Organizational Assessment**

In this step, an organization examines its current and anticipated direction, considering current programs and anticipated changes, past patterns, current and emerging trends, and identifies specific organizational and workforce needs.

#### **Step 2. Gather Data: Environmental Assessment**

An internal and external scan of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) using comprehensive, accurate, and reliable information provides essential knowledge for the reciprocal relationship with, and impact on, the workforce. Budget conditions and funding levels, legislative changes, and demographic forecasts, including race, ethnicity, age, gender, language, and special needs (e.g., health, mental health) are examples of some of the types of data that inform this step.

#### **Step 3. Analyze Workforce Supply and Demand**

A supply and demand analysis, informed by the environmental assessment, occurs next and includes current trends in staff turnover, past and projected rates of retirement, and internal vacancies and promotions by demographic characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, and age. Analysis of demand examines future activities and anticipated workload, along

with the diversity of staff composition and staff competencies—the education, knowledge, and diverse skills—required for the delivery of the organization’s programs and services.

#### **Step 4. Identify Workforce Gaps**

The comparison between the current workforce and anticipated future need leads to the identification of any gaps in “human capital”—the workforce. The gap analysis will point to the organization and community capacity to support the workforce, as well as areas where the number of staff and the type of competencies needed to fulfill the organization’s mission exceeds the workforce resources that are available within the agency or community, and will also identify racial or ethnic disparities or under-represented social identity groups in the composition of the workforce.

#### **Step 5. Close the Gaps: Implement Workforce Development Components**

Closing the gaps results in a targeted plan of action—establishing priorities and determining specific activities strategically designed to address the gaps. Actions should only be undertaken after careful consideration and prioritization of gap-closing strategies from the distinct Workforce Development Components.

#### **Step 6. Monitor and Evaluate the Impact**

The impact of the gap-closing strategies should be continually monitored using agreed-upon metrics and reliable information in order to track progress, adjust the plan as needed to adapt to changing conditions in the environment or unintended consequences, and to evaluate the impact of the strategies on workforce gaps, disparities in workforce composition, and the organizational functioning as a whole.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS**

The WDF illustrates the connection between the assessment and planning process and the subsequent consideration, prioritization, and selection of specific gap-closing strategies from among eight components critical to a comprehensive approach to workforce development. These workforce development components, while tailored for the child welfare workforce, consistently appear across multiple professions, and public and private organizations.

An organization’s vision, mission, and values are at the center of the components, as they ground the agency’s work, as well as establish future direction and the expectations for staff. Consistent with NCWWI’s philosophy of organizational effectiveness, quality **leadership at all levels** enables an organization to identify and operationalize the components of workforce development, engaging the whole organization in the work. The critical importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace is underscored in each of the components, based on a belief that a diverse and inclusive workforce is best achieved when these efforts are integrated throughout a workforce development process and as a series of actions and practices, rather than as an isolated event or add-on component.

Although distinct, the components are also integrated and can be compensatory. For example, while an organization may operate in a *community context* with identified challenges, such as difficulty in recruiting staff, or limited access to nearby institutions of higher learning, the *organizational environment* may compensate, offering a workplace where staff feel respected, valued as unique individuals and are less likely to leave, and are more likely to recruit others through “word of mouth.”

A brief description of each of the eight components is provided below.

### **Job Analysis & Position Requirements**

Ensuring a good fit between a candidate and the job begins with a thorough review and analysis of the job tasks and responsibilities, and understanding of the knowledge, skills, and attributes required to perform those tasks. A job analysis determines minimum and desired qualifications, accurate job descriptions, and classification of positions within an organization’s career system. The job analysis should also align with the organization’s vision, mission, and values.

### **Education & Professional Preparation**

Workforce development includes an examination of the required and desired level of higher education as well as specialized certifications. Determining the educational preparation most relevant for a position also leads to opportunities for partnership with institutions of higher learning. Schools that seek equity in educational outcomes for under-represented students also contribute to a diverse workforce by successfully recruiting, supporting, preparing, and graduating a diverse student body.

### **Recruitment, Screening & Selection**

Finding the right person for the right job at the right time requires a concerted, multi-pronged approach. This component is inclusive of the broad range of activities associated with recruitment practices resulting in a large, diverse pool of candidates. Casting a wide net includes posting announcements on relevant websites and placing announcements in newspapers or sites aimed specifically at under-represented audiences and affinity groups. Realistic previews of the job enable candidates to self-select in or out of the applicant pool. Screening candidates and developing competency-based, standardized interviewing processes that minimize the opportunity for overt or unconscious biases or assumptions provide insight into candidates’ potential “fit” with the job. Hiring procedures that minimize cumbersome processes and lengthy delays are also important strategies within this component.

### **Incentives & Work Conditions**

Competition for a shrinking workforce, along with an increasing awareness of the cost of staff turnover, means that organizations must strategically and thoughtfully consider the incentives (both monetary and non-monetary) and working conditions that matter to the workforce and contribute to the retention of valued employees. A physically and emotionally safe and secure work environment and the resources to do the job are critical.

### **Professional Development & Training**

A robust infrastructure, including meaningful university–agency partnerships, provides relevant and timely orientation and pre-service training for new staff, as well as in-service training and equity in ongoing opportunities for knowledge and skill development. An environment where continuous learning is modeled by leaders at all levels of the organization, valued and promoted, conveys the importance of the work and of a well-prepared workforce.

### **Organizational Environment**

An organization’s culture and climate play a significant role in the ability to attract, recruit, and retain a competent and qualified workforce. Organizational health and inclusive practices influence overall staff well-being and how staff feel about their job, teammates, supervisor, and the agency. Whether staff feel that they are included in organizational decision making, problem solving, and processes; have access to information and resources; and have positive views of the agency’s value of diversity, influence the individual’s perception of a climate of inclusion. These factors, along with having the resources needed to do the job, can directly influence job satisfaction and intent to stay, impact service delivery, and ultimately, the achievement of the organization’s mission.

### **Community Context**

Strong formal and informal partnerships, across and within culturally diverse communities, based upon mutual respect and trust, support agency efforts to more effectively recruit candidates who reflect the diversity of the community and the populations served by the agency. A workforce skilled in collaborating with community partners on behalf of children, youth, and families promotes reciprocal positive regard, respect, and supportive interactions. Staff who feel valued for their unique voice and supported within a collaborative community network are more likely to express their intent to stay with the organization.

### **Supervision & Performance Management**

The quality of supervision is a key factor in contributing to employee satisfaction and desire to stay on the job. Supervisors may also play a role in how staff experience the agency as a diverse and inclusive workplace. Supervisors offer emotional and social support, provide coaching and feedback, promote a healthy team culture and climate, and are the first line in ongoing performance management. Through their actions, supervisors model a commitment to best practice and policies, such as diligently searching for family and kin or adherence to law, such as the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). An ongoing process to address performance at the individual, unit, team, and organizational level demonstrates a commitment to mission, assurance of quality, and ultimately leads to better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

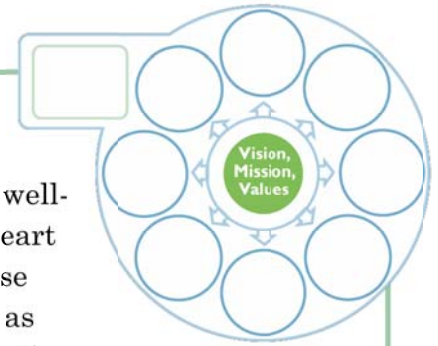
## Part III: Using the Workforce Development Framework

The purpose of the Workforce Development Framework is to help guide an agency's efforts to develop, support, and retain a diverse workforce. Although we have identified middle managers and administrators as the primary audience for this document, responsibilities for workforce planning may be assigned to specific individuals or accomplished as a team. A robust workforce development effort requires collaboration with staff across multiple levels and areas of responsibility within an agency, as well as with multiple partners in the community. Each component of the WDF is organized around four sections, and these are described below.

1. Desired Outcome/Condition, which offers the characteristics and behaviors that exemplify an agency's success with regards to the component.
2. Competencies, which includes a select list of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of child welfare middle managers or administrators that have particular relevance and importance for achieving the desired workforce development outcome.
3. Strategies: Tasks and Activities, which includes a range of effective or promising strategies designed to address workforce gaps impacting the agency.
4. Explore Resources, Examples, and Tools, which provides a hyperlink to relevant and current content on the **MyNCWWI** learning portal.

# Workforce Development Components

## Vision, Mission, Values



### DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

The agency's vision, mission, and values, focused on safety and well-being, and with respect for individuals' differences, are at the heart of effective practices with children, youth, and families. A diverse workforce is considered the agency's most important asset and, as with families, each individual is valued for their unique contribution and point of view, and is treated with empathy and respect and with concern by the agency for their safety and well-being.

### COMPETENCIES

- Understands the importance of building a shared vision among staff and aligning the work of the agency.
- Conveys the ethical principles and moral imperatives of the agency's work in the community with children, youth, and families.
- Fosters a diverse and inclusive workplace where individuals are valued and encouraged to express their unique points of view, and differences are seen as strengths to leverage to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.

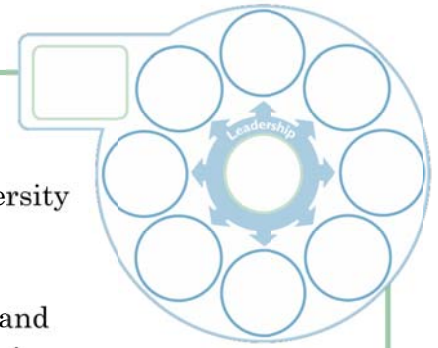
### STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Clearly articulate and communicate how agency direction, practices, and expectations of staff align with agency vision, mission, and values.
- Describe to staff, and reinforce through training and professional development, how a diverse, competent workforce enables the agency to achieve its mission and reflects its vision and values.
- Concretely describe and connect the daily work of staff to the agency's vision, mission, and values.

### EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCCWI: Vision, Mission and Values](#).

## Leadership

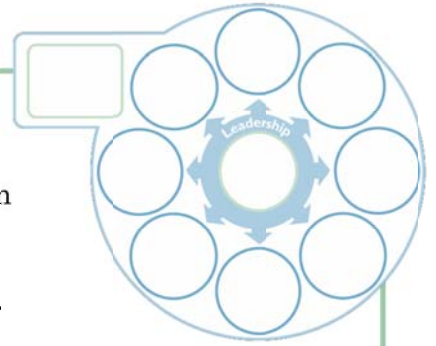


### DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

Leaders at all levels reflect the vision, mission, values, and diversity of the agency, and model qualities and practices that support a healthy and inclusive agency climate and culture, champion diversity of the workforce, value and respect the points of view and perspectives of each member of the workforce, and recognize their importance in contributing to positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

### COMPETENCIES

- Formulates and prioritizes goals and implements plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization.
- Actively solicits and listens to feedback and maintains open communication with staff, partners, and stakeholders; probes for new ideas; encourages the expression of diverse and divergent points of view; and ensures that all voices are respected and heard
- Ensures that diversity of the workforce and a culture of inclusion are integrated into every level of operations, decision making, and problem solving.
- Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, tolerance of different perspectives, and trust; facilitates cooperation; and motivates team members and partners to accomplish shared goals.
- Holds self and others accountable; sets high standards of performance and models what he/she expects from others; pursues goals and works hard to achieve them with both persistence and humility; and accepts responsibility for mistakes.
- Adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; encourages new ideas and innovations; and fosters a learning organization.
- Develops networks and collaborates across boundaries to develop strategic relationships, build consensus, and achieve common goals.



## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

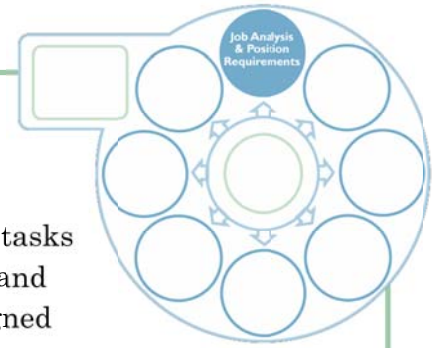
- Emphasize the role of leaders at all levels in providing vision and sustaining a commitment to agency goals.
- Strengthen leadership and management through improved leader selection procedures that recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Offer ongoing professional development opportunities for leaders at all levels through training, expert consultation, coaching, and mentoring, as well as investing in their licensures and certifications.
- Provide networking opportunities for leaders in similar positions across agencies and jurisdictions.
- Provide orientation and mentoring to new agency administrators and managers about the child welfare workforce and approaches to developing and sustaining an inclusive workforce.
- Build a leadership pipeline of a diverse pool of candidates within the agency by creating equitable accessibility to career progression opportunities for frontline staff.
- Conduct succession planning for anticipated retirements.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Leadership and Management](#).



# Job Analysis & Position Requirements



## DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

A collaborative relationship with the Human Resources (HR) department ensures that a thorough, up-to-date analysis of job tasks and responsibilities; required knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and union, merit, civil service, and legislative requirements are aligned with current practice and informs an inclusive workforce development process.

## COMPETENCIES

- Understands the importance of inclusive workforce needs, relevant job descriptions, and position requirements based on job analysis.
- Knows HR roles and responsibilities and processes used by the agency to conduct job analyses and develop position descriptions and classifications that reflect current practice requirements.
- Advocates for, and communicates the importance of, uniform position requirements to multiple and diverse audiences, including child welfare staff, HR personnel, union and civil service representatives, and legislators.

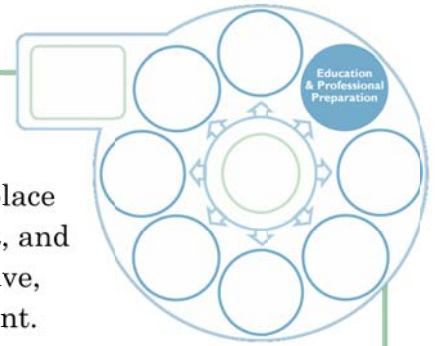
## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Support HR to conduct formal job analyses using valid and reliable methods.
- Advocate with HR to conduct informal job analyses using focus groups to collect information about tasks, responsibilities, and qualifications.
- Communicate with HR changes in the agency practice model, case practice standards, or established core competency model to ensure ongoing alignment with job descriptions and inclusive position requirements.
- Collaborate with HR to develop promotional and career development processes that reflect the proficiencies needed for each position.
- Communicate with HR, civil service, union, and other personnel to ensure expectations of staff are in conformity with all contractual, legal, and legislative requirements.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Job Analysis & Position Requirements](#).

## Education & Professional Preparation



### DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

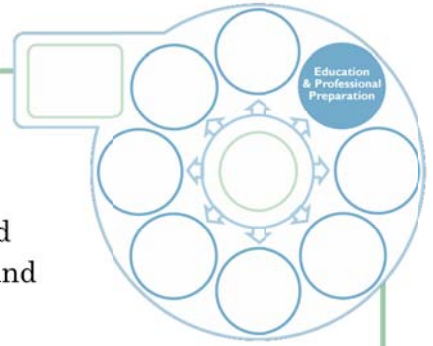
Proactive child welfare agency–university partnerships are in place and promote innovative, collaborative efforts to recruit, support, and prepare a diverse pool of candidates and support a comprehensive, evidence-informed system of child welfare workforce development.

### COMPETENCIES

- Supports MSW and BSW programs that offer social work education for a broad and diverse pool of current and future child welfare staff.
- Facilitates agency and university partnerships that promote research and evidence-based practices along with collaborative efforts to recruit, support, and graduate a diverse student body prepared for child welfare work.
- Understands the critical period of transition from school to work and promotes implementation of effective strategies to support positive transition into the workplace.
- Develops agency–university partnerships that supports pre-service, in-service, and ongoing professional development of the workforce.

### STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Collaborate with partners to develop a consistent, proactive approach for targeted educational recruitment and selection of a diverse student body, including under-represented groups of students (African American/Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Latino/Latina), foster care alumni, immigrants, first-generation students, older students, students from rural settings or low-income neighborhoods, and students who are sensitive to a broad range of diversity issues across various social identities.
- Bring together agency and university partners to advocate for and develop post-graduation support for transition from school to work environment.
- Collaborate with HR to offer tuition assistance or other incentives to staff to encourage ongoing education and support for job-related degrees and certifications.
- Advocate for efforts to establish an educational loan forgiveness program.



## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

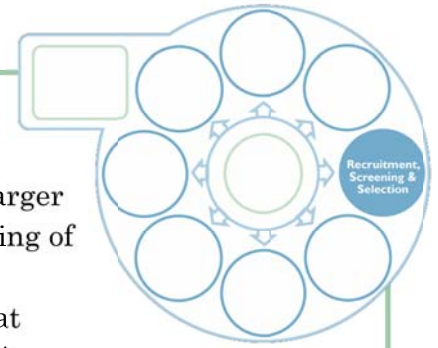
### Continued...

- Collaborate with HR and university partners to support field placement and role-specific support for agency supervisors and field placement faculty.
- Promote robust field placement opportunities to facilitate student skill development and experiences.
- Partner with universities to integrate child welfare learning and competencies into the school curriculum to prepare graduates for child welfare work.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Education & Professional Preparation](#).

## Recruitment, Screening & Selection



### DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

A proactive and realistic approach to recruitment results in a larger pool of diverse, qualified applicants with a realistic understanding of job requirements. A valid and efficient screening and selection process minimizes the introduction of bias, reduces the time that positions are vacant, improves the candidate–job match, minimizes early turnover, and increases employee retention.

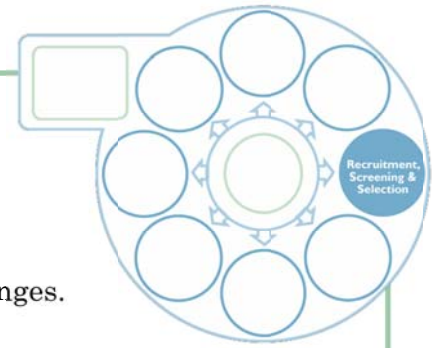
### COMPETENCIES

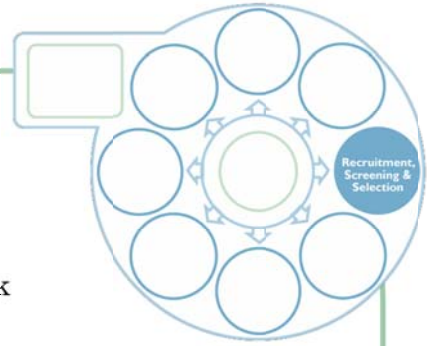
- Knows successful recruitment strategies that are tailored to the community and inclusive of culturally diverse sources for recruitment.
- Understands the importance of a variety of informational materials to communicate agency vision and realistic portrayal of job requirements.
- Collaborates with HR, other key agency staff, and community members to identify audiences and approaches to recruitment, and develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment plan, targeting under-utilized approaches to reach a broader diverse pool of candidates.
- Knows laws and policies governing fair screening and selection processes and of agency hiring and selection system.
- Understands and models the importance of working closely with HR to develop and use valid job-related criteria in a screening and selection process to ensure fair and equitable practices.
- Advocates for a rigorous interview protocol, aligning vision, mission, values, and job competencies with selection strategies.

## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

### Recruitment

- Analyze cost of leaving positions vacant, document the time taken to fill vacancies, and use data to advocate for key changes.
- Increase presence at job and career fairs at universities, community colleges, and middle and high schools, and maintain connection with interested students over time.
- Provide fiscal incentives and/or benefits (e.g., housing allowance, salary bonuses, flexible scheduling, telecommuting) to attract specialized staff (e.g., language proficiency) or to work in hard-to-place geographical areas.
- Offer bonuses to staff for recruiting and retaining high-performing staff.
- Collaborate with training and professional development staff to ensure that the child welfare curriculum contains realistic portrayals of the challenges and opportunities of child welfare work.
- Collaborate with HR and agency leadership to explore feasibility of implementing a loan forgiveness strategy to support recruitment.
- Develop a scholarship program for BSW and MSW degrees.
- Conduct targeted recruitment (historically black and Hispanic universities, tribal colleges, and community colleges) and from non-traditional audiences (retirees in child welfare and in other fields, such as teachers and law enforcement) to expand the pool of diverse candidates.
- Advertise in print and social media that target specific audiences (bilingual population, ethnically or racially diverse, etc.).





## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

### Continued...

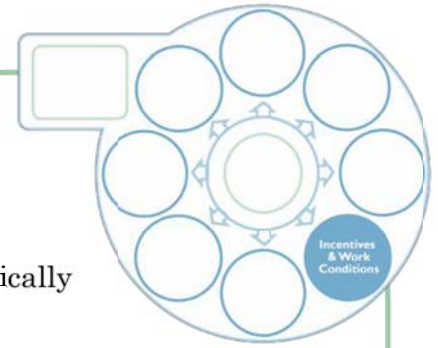
#### Screening & Selection

- Conduct interviews with newly hired staff to obtain feedback about the ease of the hiring process, and work with HR to minimize steps, streamline the screening and hiring process, and reduce time from application to notification.
- Develop web-based, self-screening for anonymous use, employing realistic job preview videos, job-related interactive information, and exploration of self-knowledge.
- Conduct a comprehensive, competency-based selection process measuring competency using a variety of tools, including interviews, case analysis, computer-based writing samples, and scenarios to test for critical thinking skills, all with behavioral anchors tied to clear “meets” or “exceeds” criteria for performance.
- Develop and implement a consistent approach to interviewing and train interview teams on use of the selection process, and conduct an ongoing process of review to minimize bias or assumptions that can influence the evaluation of candidates.
- Establish a “ready employee” list of people who have been fully screened and are on a waitlist to shorten time to hire.
- Establish a “substitute pool” of trained staff ready for vacancies, (e.g., retirees, former employees) to fill positions on a temporary and part-time basis for vacations, military leave, sick leave, maternity leave, etc.
- Partner with businesses to offer incentives to new hires, such as restaurant and retail discounts, health club memberships, and onsite day care.

#### EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Recruitment, Screening & Selection](#).

## Incentives & Work Conditions



### DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

Staff at all levels receive competitive and equitable salary, compensation, benefits, and incentives, and are provided the necessary tools and resources in the office and field to feel physically safe, emotionally supported, and valued as professionals and individuals.

### COMPETENCIES

- Thinks strategically to develop and implement strategies to express staff appreciation and contribute to employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention.
- Understands the impact of safe, trusting, and supportive working conditions on employee morale and performance, and advocates for ongoing assessments of staff safety in the office and field.
- Advocates for and works with teams to implement formal and informal programs and processes to address staff conflict and stress, respond to impact of secondary trauma, and encourage staff well-being.
- Implements strategies to manage staff caseload/workload and promote work/life balance.

### STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Conduct regular compensation surveys to ensure salary competitiveness.
- Advocate for competitive salaries, compensation, benefits, and incentives.
- Monitor and maintain reasonable and realistic workloads.
- Offer flexible scheduling options, such as telecommuting, compressed workweek, and job sharing.
- Offer programs and benefits geared to a broad range of workforce needs including childcare and elder care information, referral (I&R) services and benefits, and wellness programs.
- Develop onsite programs for self-care, wellness, and dealing with stress and secondary trauma.

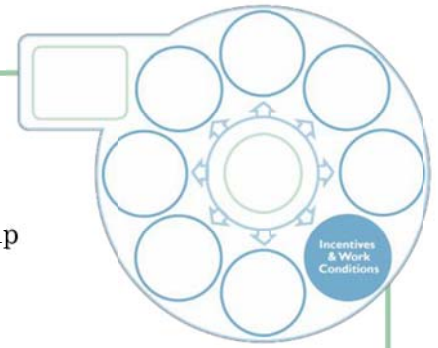
## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

### Continued...

- Provide technological resources and IT applications that help staff in the field and office access information, complete electronic case documentation, and receive supervision and expert consultation.
- Assess agency security procedures and protocols and develop risk management systems.
- Develop safety protocols and procedures and train staff in ways to respond to potential threats or threatening behaviors.

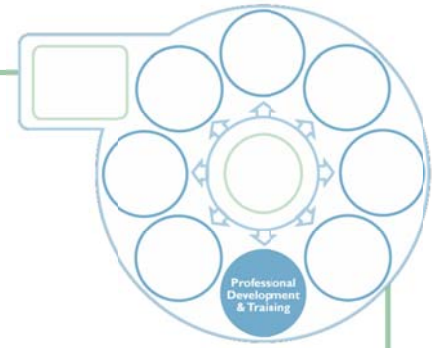
## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at **MyNCWWI: Incentives & Work Conditions**.





# Professional Development & Training



## DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

Staff at all levels are encouraged to learn and grow in an environment where principles of a learning organization are practiced and valued and resources are provided to support professional growth.

## COMPETENCIES

- Understands the role of a learning culture in promoting employee commitment and retention.
- Understands and communicates to others the role of the supervisor and the work environment in modeling and supporting transfer of learning from training to job performance.
- Collaborates with internal partners to develop an integrated, equitable, inclusive, and comprehensive approach to staff development for new and tenured staff at all levels.
- Plans and implements a training and professional development plan with others to meet current and emerging organizational needs.
- Formulates and implements skill and career building opportunities for all staff.

## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Partner with HR and other staff to advocate for, develop, and implement an employee orientation that emphasizes workforce development at all stages of employment.
- Encourage leaders at all levels to practice and model developing, using, and sharing knowledge to improve the quality of agency practices.
- Connect continuous learning to organizational goals and performance expectations.
- Use research knowledge and evidence in decision making and to inform practice.
- Implement coaching and mentoring programs for new as well as experienced staff.
- Establish and use criteria in promotions, merit increases, and other incentives that reward practices consistent with inclusive practice.

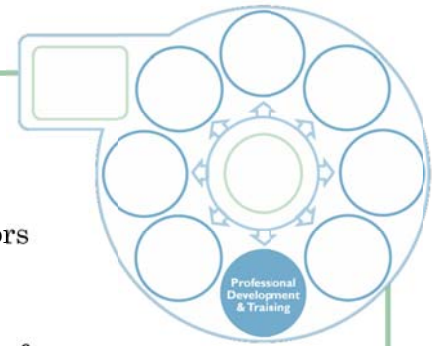
## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

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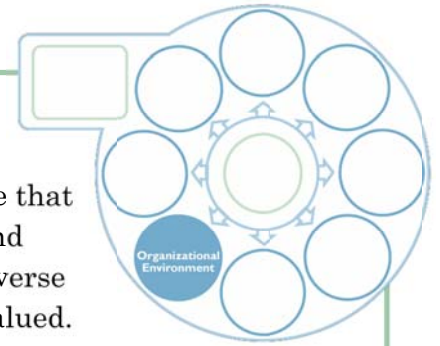
- Collaborate with HR and training staff to educate supervisors about evidence-informed practice skills and their role and ability to supervise, coach, and support staff in a changing workforce in providing quality services based on knowledge of best/promising practices.
- Develop an infrastructure to support/reinforce learning on the job via transfer of learning (TOL) activities, consultative supervision, mentoring, and coaching.
- Advocate for ongoing training evaluation to ensure that participants are achieving the desired level of knowledge and skills.
- Advocate for and partner with universities to encourage or provide classes, degree credits, and advanced degrees for ongoing staff professional development.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Professional Development & Training](#).



# Organizational Environment



## DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

Staff at all levels experience an inclusive organizational climate that focuses on building and promoting positive, solution-focused, and outcome-oriented agency culture. Diversity of the workforce, diverse points of view, new ideas, and teamwork are encouraged and valued.

## COMPETENCIES

- Knows the impact of the agency's work climate and culture on the morale and performance of the individual employee and unit/team functioning.
- Understands the value of a climate of inclusion where diversity of staff and viewpoint are championed.
- Contributes to an organizational environment in which all individuals feel valued and perform their job at their full potential.
- Creates a work and team environment where staff feel safe to express diverse points of view and respectfully disagree with one another.

## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Conduct rigorous, structured agency self-assessment and analyses to identify strengths and challenges impacting the organizational culture and climate and overall organizational health; implement strategies to improve organizational culture and climate based on assessment results.
- Promote transparent in-person and written communication.
- Model inclusive and distributive leadership practices and lead by example the agency's belief in the value of diversity of the workforce. Engage diverse staff at all levels in decision making and problem solving through inclusive and distributive leadership practices.
- Conduct routine staff satisfaction surveys and examine differences by race, ethnicity, age, gender, and positions to explore differences in staff experiences and perceptions, and involve staff in preparing responses to suggestions and recommendations.
- Implement structured methods and approaches to include diverse staff at all levels in continuous learning and organizational improvement.

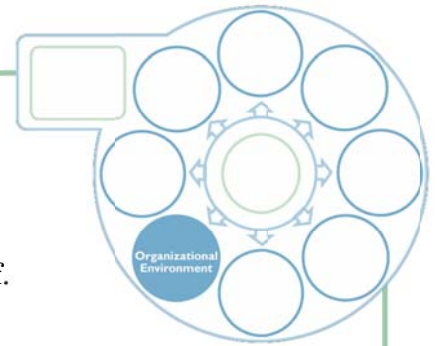
## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

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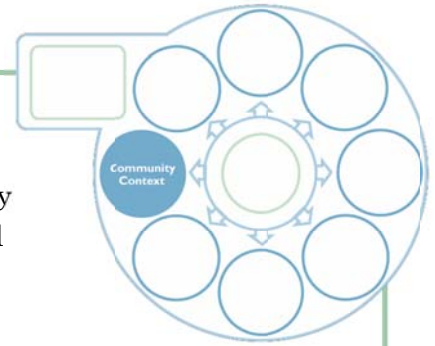
- Provide and enhance agency supports for students and field instructors, newly hired staff, and experienced/tenured staff.
- Develop measures for studying the impact of organizational effectiveness interventions on client outcomes.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Organizational Environment](#).



## Community Context



### DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

Mutual and reciprocal support and respect exist between agency staff and the community; the agency workforce feels valued and supported within a collaborative network.

### COMPETENCIES

- Knows the range of services and resources in the community and facilitates appropriate provision of services to children, youth, and families.
- Fosters positive, effective relationships within a network of community providers and stakeholders, such as the courts, law enforcement, schools, and faith-based institutions.
- Understands the importance of and demonstrates the ability to communicate the positive, effective, and professional role of the agency and workforce in the community.
- Engages community stakeholders and partners in recruitment of a workforce reflective of the diversity in the community and its local culture and languages.
- Works with community partners, stakeholders, and families in positive, solution-focused teaming and problem solving to maximize opportunities for collaboration that result in effective services for children, youth, and families.

### STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Respond to biased or inaccurate media accounts and effectively conduct a media campaign to communicate the importance of child welfare work, offer factual information, and impact public perception.
- Model inclusive partnerships and meaningfully engage families, youth, foster care alumni, and foster families on boards, advisory committees, workgroups, etc., in shared decision making and assessment of community needs; provide incentives and monetary compensation for their time.
- Take proactive steps to target recruitment of groups historically under-represented among agency staff and develop a diverse workforce, reflective of the community.
- Host a Community Resource Fair to promote reciprocal education and collaboration, and educate the community and families about resources and supportive services.

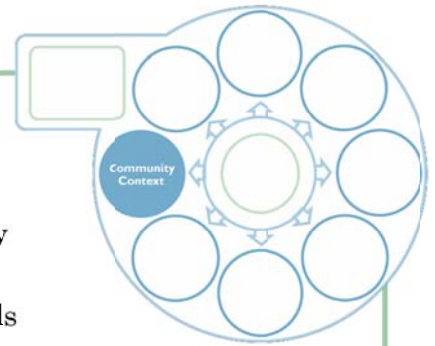
## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

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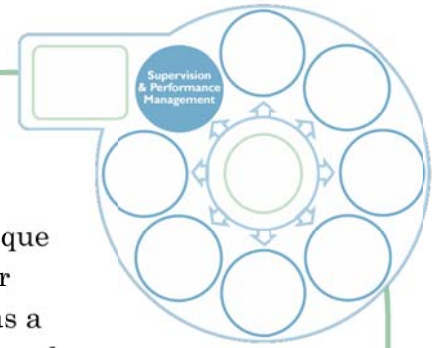
- Select and train members of a Speakers' Bureau to routinely present to community and faith-based groups.
- Encourage staff participation on public and non-profit boards and commissions and support their release time to attend meetings.
- Invite media (both print and electronic) to shadow child welfare practitioners and provide a realistic view of work in child welfare.
- Invite legislators to talk with staff and become engaged as champions and advocates.
- Out-station staff in diverse geographic locations and with community partners, and train them in collaborative methods of service provision.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at **MyNCWWI: Community Context**.



# Supervision & Performance Management



## DESIRED OUTCOME/CONDITION

Supervisors recognize their critical role in creating a safe and supportive climate and culture, where diversity of staff and unique qualities of the individual are celebrated and leveraged for their contribution to the team. Performance management is viewed as a continuous process, rather than an annual event, and is an integral component of the agency's functioning; routine and structured supervision to provide feedback, support, and guide performance is expected and valued.

## COMPETENCIES

- Understands the supervisor's role as a critical factor in contributing to staff job satisfaction, sense of belonging, and intent to stay.
- Knows the agency's performance management system, including HR policies and procedures, to ensure fair and equitable assessment.
- Understands and communicates the role of supervisors in linking employee performance to agency goals and outcomes.
- Models the skill of individual self-reflection to identify areas of strength and opportunities for continuous learning.

## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

- Support employee growth and development through routine individual and group supervision, where staff feel safe to express differing points of view, challenge and be challenged by their peers, and support a team environment.
- Acknowledge and leverage the unique qualities and characteristics of each staff member and their contribution to creating a positive climate and culture.
- Support and collaborate with Training/Professional Development staff to provide formal, structured in-service training and ongoing professional development regarding the role and expectations of supervisors.
- Model for staff and stress the value of ongoing supervision, coaching, and professional development to identify strengths and address areas for improvement.
- Implement frequent and regular case reviews and staffing between supervisors and staff to ensure a focus on best practice and adherence to law and policy expectations.

## STRATEGIES: TASKS & ACTIVITIES

### Continued...

- Partner with HR and staff to develop accurate job descriptions aligned with realistic performance standards.
- Work with staff to offer ongoing professional development, training, and coaching, and link these opportunities to performance expectations.
- Review and clearly link career ladder and promotions to performance management and appraisal.
- Emphasize Continuous Quality Improvement at all levels of leadership and tie policy, practice expectations, and performance standards back to outcomes for children, youth, and families.
- Communicate and practice performance management as an ongoing process of planning, observation, support, and evaluation.

### EXPLORE RESOURCES, EXAMPLES, & TOOLS

Relevant and up-to-date resources and examples from the field can be found at [MyNCWWI: Supervision & Performance Management](#).



# Workforce Development Framework

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