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REPORT FROM THE 2004 CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE SURVEY

STATE AGENCY FINDINGS

FEBRUARY 2005

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Acronyms

AECF   Annie E. Casey Foundation
ASFA   Adoption and Safe Families Act
APHSA   American Public Human Services Association
BLS   Bureau of Labor Statistics
CFSR   Child and Family Services Review
DOL   Department of Labor
IASWR   Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
NAPCWA National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators
PIP   Program Improvement Plan

REPORT FROM THE 2004 CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE SURVEY:
State Agency Findings

Executive Summary

Survey Process and Response Rate

This was a collaborative survey conducted in the summer of 2004 by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), Fostering Results, and the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research, with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The focus of the survey was public child welfare agencies and the questionnaire was sent to the child welfare administrator in each state and the District of Columbia. While survey data were also collected from a number of localities selected by the state child welfare administrator, this report summarizes only state data.

In all states the survey was completed by administrative level staff, often involving responses by more than one administrator, e.g., human resources and training managers. The data in this report were *not* obtained from front-line workers or supervisors.

A total of 42 states (82%) completed the survey, including 31 states that use a state-administered child welfare system and 11 states that are locally administered. All but three of the states responding to this survey had also responded to the initial child welfare workforce survey done in 2000.

Missing Data

All surveys have missing data, and in this survey missing data may signify: 1) the specific question is not applicable to the state and data do not exist; 2) the question cannot be answered by the state because data are collected only at the local level; or 3) the question applies and is within the scope of the state agency, but respondents either do not collect the data, do not have the data available, or choose not to share the data.

<u>Description of State Survey Respondents</u>

- All but three of the 42 state child welfare agencies are part of a larger human service agency.

- The average operating budget from all sources was $327 million, with a range from $2 million to $1.9 billion. The median budget was $154 million.

- Regarding agency accreditation: one state was accredited; one state was provisionally accredited; seven states were seeking accreditation; and six states were considering accreditation.

- The overall focus of the survey was on case-carrying child welfare workers (Appendix A).

<u>Conditions in State Child Welfare Systems</u>

- Sixteen of the 34 states responding (47%) were involved in a child welfare court decree or settlement.

- Only six of the 35 states responding (17%) reported that they had state statutory caseload standards.

- Twenty-one of the 34 states responding (62%) had case-carrying child welfare workers who belonged to a union, and 18 of 21 states (82%) engaged in collective bargaining with the unions.

- Only nine of the 35 states reporting (26%) were contracting with the private sector for child welfare services.

<u>Information Agencies Gather Directly from Their Employees</u>

States use several methods for collecting recommendations and perceptions directly from their case-carrying staff with varying frequency:

Method	Never or Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Exit interviews	9%	28%	63%
Staff focus groups	42	58	0
Staff surveys	30	61	9

States that responded "never or rarely" reported that budget limitations, lack of staff and time, and procedural difficulties were the main reasons they did not use these methods more.

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Workforce Salary Data

On April 1, 2004, the average salary for incumbents in each category of worker was:

Worker Category	Average Salary
child protective service workers	$35,553
in-home protective service workers	34,929
foster care and adoption workers	35,911
multiple program workers	36,136
front-line supervisors	44,232

These average salaries are markedly lower than salaries for nurses, public school teachers, police officers, and firefighters.

In the three and a half years since the 2000 workforce survey, average incumbent Child Protective Service (CPS) worker salaries had risen by 6.3 percent and supervisor salaries had risen by 5.5 percent. During this time the federal cost of living index had risen by 9.7 percent. Average minimum salaries, i.e., entry salaries, for each category of worker had risen by 8.5 percent to 9.6 percent during this time.

Data on average minimum and maximum salaries for each category of worker also are provided, including increases since the 2000 survey.

Education, Licensing, Training, and Career Ladders

A Bachelors degree was the predominant minimum academic degree required, but states require social work licensing at varying rates for each category of worker: 29 percent for CPS workers; 53 percent for in-home protective service workers; 42 percent for foster care and adoption workers; and 33 percent for multiple programs.

Information is provided on the average number of hours of mandatory pre-service training and average number of hours of in-service training each year for each category of worker, as well as the number of states that have career ladders for each category.

Caseloads

Data are provided about the average, median, and range of caseload sizes both when the child is defined as the case and when the family is defined as the case for each category of worker. The average supervisor to full-time equivalent worker ratio was 1:6 for all categories of worker.

<center>Staffing Issues</center>

Detailed data provided includes:
- authorized full-time equivalent positions on April 1, 2004,
- number of vacant positions on April 1, 2004,
- number of employees leaving the agency for any reason during 2003,
- number of staff leaving agency during 2003 that are estimated to be preventable.[1]

The average number of weeks required to fill vacant positions varied from a low of seven weeks for in-home protective service workers and multiple program workers, to 10 weeks for CPS workers, to a high of 13 weeks for foster care and adoption workers. All of these averages are higher than the comparable data of six to seven weeks for all types of workers from the 2000 survey.

The average tenure for workers leaving due to preventable turnover was five years for CPS and in-home protective service workers, three years for foster care and adoption and multiple program workers, and nine years for supervisors.

<center>Child Welfare Vacancy and Turnover Rates</center>

Using the data provided by the state child welfare agencies described immediately above, the following rates were calculated:

Category of Worker	Average Vacancy Rate (4/1/04)	Average Turnover Rate (2003)	Average Preventable Turnover Rate (2003)
Child protective service worker	8.5%	22.1%	12.6%
In-home protective service workers	9.9	15.1	6.5
Foster care and adoption workers	9.5	17.7	7.4
Multiple program workers	9.8	19.9	11.1
Front line supervisors	6.8	11.8	4.6

Data are provided comparing the vacancy and turnover rates from the 2004 survey with comparable data from the 2000 survey. While some rates have increased and others have decreased, overall there is no change.

The average percentage of turnover that was preventable ranged from a low of 49 percent for supervisors to a high of 69 percent for in-home protective service workers.

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[1] Preventable due to reasons other than retirement, death, marriage/parenting, returning to school, or spousal job move.

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Recruitment and Retention Changes

Comparing 2003 with the prior two years, 58 percent of survey respondents reported that their recruitment and hiring experience was about the same, while 23 percent reported it was some or much better, and 19 percent said it was some or much worse. For preventable turnovers, 71 percent rated their experience about the same, 13 percent some or much better, and 16 percent some or much worse.

State child welfare administrators rated the degree to which a number of factors contributed to the changes in recruitment and preventable turnover. The most important factor was budget limitations and constraints—rated by over 50 percent of respondents as highly important. The second highest factor was response to a tragedy e.g., child death or missing child.

Recruitment Problems and Strategies

State administrators rated the severity of 11 problems they might have experienced in the recruitment and hiring of case-carrying child welfare staff during the past 12 months. The six most severe problems are listed below in descending order:
- Perceived imbalance of demands of job and financial compensation,
- Starting salaries are not competitive with comparable positions,
- Other attractive labor market alternatives for job seekers,
- Budget constraints other than hiring freezes or restrictions,
- Hiring freezes or restrictions,
- Negative media reports.

Survey respondents also indicated whether they had implemented over the past five years 12 strategies in order to recruit and hire case-carrying child welfare workers, and if they had, how effective those strategies had been. Five strategies were implemented by more than half of the states, and they are listed below in descending order of their rated effectiveness:
- University-agency training partnerships and/or stipends for students,
- Job announcements posted on web sites,
- Early and aggressive recruiting at social work schools,
- Emphasized continuing education/training and supervision opportunities within agency,
- Increased personal contact with potential candidates to encourage their application.

Preventable Turnover Problems and Strategies

As with recruitment, state administrators rated the severity of 17 problems they might have experienced regarding preventable turnover of case-carrying child welfare staff during the past 12 months. The nine most severe problems are listed below in descending order:
- Workloads too high and/or demanding, e.g., stress, being overwhelmed,
- Caseloads are too high,
- After hours and unpredictable work interfere with personal and family life,
- Too much time spent on travel, transport, paperwork, etc.,
- Insufficient service resources for families and children,

- Workers do not feel valued by agency,
- Problems with the quality of supervision,
- Insufficient opportunities for promotion and career advancement,
- Low salaries.

Survey respondents also indicated whether they had implemented, over the past five years, 12 strategies in order to retain case-carrying child welfare workers, and if they had, how effective those strategies had been. Fourteen strategies were implemented by more than half of the states, and they are listed below in descending order of their rated effectiveness:
- Increased/improved in-service training,
- Increased educational opportunities, e.g., MSW,
- Increased/improved orientation/pre-service training,
- Provided technology, e.g., cell phones, laptops,
- Improved professional culture throughout agency,
- Enhanced supervisor skills,
- Implemented new child/family intervention strategies,
- Increased workers feeling valued/respected by agency,
- Increased worker safety,
- Implemented flex time/changes to office hours,
- Regularly sought and used employees' views,
- Improved physical office/building space,
- Special efforts to raise workers' salaries,
- Increased workers' access to service resources.

State administrators rated how important eight factors were in contributing to the child welfare agency's not implementing recruitment and retention strategies over the past five years. The question looked at the strategies as a whole rather than as specific reasons that specific strategies were not implemented. For both recruitment and retention, the most important factors are listed below in descending order of importance:
- We couldn't implement any strategies that required new resources,
- Agency staff did not have the authority to implement strategies,
- Strategies need to be customized to the unique needs of local offices,
- Crises in child welfare prevented agency staff from focusing on improvements,
- Strategies we did implement sufficiently improved recruitment and retention,
- We had no consensus on which specific strategies would improve outcomes,
- CFSR and PIP process prevented agency staff from focusing on improvements,
- We had no confidence that these strategies would improve our recruitment/retention outcomes.

Organizational and Personal Factors Contributing to Staff Retention

Focusing on the positive side of staff retention, state administrators rated the importance of 15 organizational and personal factors that contribute to the decision of case-carrying child welfare workers to remain employed with that state's public child welfare agency. The nine most important factors are listed below in descending order of importance:

- Good supervision, with a supervisor who cares about the worker as a person,
- An agency mission/purpose that makes workers feel their jobs are important,
- Dependable management support of and commitment to workers,
- Worker's self-efficacy,
- Worker's human caring,
- Fair compensation and benefits,
- Reasonable number of cases,
- Manageable workloads,
- Opportunities for workers to learn and grow professionally.

Most Important Agency Actions and Initiatives

In response to an open-ended question, state administrators identified the three most important actions for initiatives child welfare agencies and their partners must take to successfully retain qualified case-carrying public child welfare workers and front-line supervisors. The top five are listed below in descending order:

- Reduced caseloads, workloads, and supervisory ratios,
- Increased salaries that are competitive and commensurate with the work,
- Improved supervision, support, technical assistance, and supervisory accountability,
- Career ladders and promotional opportunities, and personal and professional growth,
- Staff training—pre-service and in-service, and supervisory training.

Background and Context of Survey

Entrusted with the care of the nation's most vulnerable children and families, child welfare workers are tasked with making life-preserving and life-altering decisions on a daily basis. Workloads can be high and work environments unpredictable; for this child welfare workers receive relatively low pay in comparison to other human services positions. Public child welfare administrators face the daily challenge of developing strategies to recruit and retain a qualified, competent workforce for this vital profession.

> Public child protection field staff are the foundation of any child welfare system. Progressive recruitment and retention policies and procedures are necessary to ensure a continuous supply of qualified and competent professional staff. The children and families that we serve deserve nothing less. The purpose of this survey is to identify what recruitment and retention practices are currently being employed--what is working; what isn't. An understanding of the current environment is imperative for making improvements. (Nancy Rollins, President of the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators, and Director of New Hampshire's Division for Children, Youth, and Families)

The passage of the Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA) in 1997 brought a new challenge for public child welfare: to find more timely and effective ways to help families address complex and sometimes lifelong problems, so that timelines for swifter safe permanency decisions can be met for the children in care. Studies by the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) and others indicate that a significant percentage of parents in the child welfare system are struggling with substance use disorders in addition to a frequent co-occurrence of mental health issues in this population, further adding to the acuity of these already difficult cases. A recent study by Burns et al. reports, "Nearly half (47.9%) of the youths aged 2 to 14 years with completed child welfare investigations had clinically significant emotional or behavioral problems." (Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. 43(8): 960-970, August 2004)

In 2001, the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) instituted the Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) to measure states' performance and hold states accountable for child welfare outcomes (GAO-04-781T, May 2004). "A stable and highly skilled child welfare workforce is necessary to effectively provide child welfare services that meet federal goals" (GAO-03-357, March 2003, p.1). A Children's Bureau analysis of the findings from the initial CFSRs in 2001-2004 indicates that worker visits with parents and children correlate positively with states' achievement of a number of indicators on the CFSRs. As of yet, there has not been a nationwide allocation of resources to help states address the critical recruitment and retention issues in public child welfare, which could enhance states' abilities to provide the best services possible for children in care.

The challenge of recruitment is great. Child welfare salaries are increasing, but are not competitive with salaries of other human service professions and are not making gains in relationship to increases in the cost of living. As a comparison, the average annual salary of a child protective service worker is $10,570 less than that of a teacher and $17,257 less than that of a registered nurse (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, November 2003 averages).

The average annual salaries of child protective service workers increased by 6.3 percent and supervisors' average annual salaries increased by 5.5 percent from 2000 to 2004; during the same four year time period the consumer price index rose 9.7 percent (Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2004).

The costs of turnover in child welfare are great. It has long been acknowledged that the financial cost of replacing workers can be high. In child welfare, there are other costs of turnover; therapeutic relationships with vulnerable children and families need to be reestablished, workloads are increased as staff cover caseloads until a new worker can be hired and trained, and meanwhile the ASFA time clock continues to tick and the child and family continues to need vital services to heal as they face the challenge of their lifetime.

Appropriate training is essential to equip the workforce to provide the services needed by children and families. Quality supervision is vital to ensure that child welfare workers are meeting the needs of children and families, making the appropriate critical decisions for the future of the families and providing necessary support to workers facing the pressures of the intensity of the work on a daily basis. Stability of the workforce is essential, as the professional relationships formed by the child welfare workforce with the children and families form the cornerstone for the transformative work needed in order for a child to be reunified with his or her family or for a decision to be made that reunification is not possible.

The issue of recruitment and retention in child welfare has captured the nation's attention, as evidenced by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) studies as well as the work of American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), Fostering Results, the Alliance for Children and Families, and the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR). In 2000 a collaborative survey was done by APHSA, CWLA, and the Alliance for Children and Families to examine the issues of recruitment and retention in Child Welfare. We now present the results of our 2004 survey, done collaboratively by APHSA, Fostering Results, and IASWR.

Survey Process and Response Rate

This was a collaborative survey conducted by APHSA, Fostering Results, and the IASWR in the summer of 2004. The Pew Charitable Trusts, through Fostering Results, provided funding to APHSA to serve in the lead role for the development of the survey questionnaire, pre-testing and fielding of the survey, as well as, data entry and analysis. The three organizations acted in partnership through all phases of the study, including this jointly issued report. The survey cover letter and questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

The survey was sent to the child welfare administrator in each state and the District of Columbia. It is important to point out that each state chose which administrator(s) would complete the survey. Because of the comprehensive nature of the questions, in many states more than one person responded, e.g., the human resources manager and the training coordinator. In all states, however, the survey was completed by management staff rather than front-line supervisors or direct service workers.

A total of 42 states (82%) completed the survey, including 31 states that use a state-administered child welfare system and 11 states that are locally administered (Appendix B). Two additional states submitted surveys after data had been entered and analyzed, and regrettably those states are not included in the data findings. Many states also asked local offices to complete the survey and the responses from these local offices will be analyzed and reported in the future.

Missing Data

In any survey, not all respondents provide data and information for every question, or every response category. Missing data, therefore, is an important reality of all survey research and needs to be put into context for each survey. For this survey, there are several things that missing data might signify, including:

- the specific question is **not applicable** to the state and accordingly data about it do not exist. For example, some states do not have workers classified as in-home protection service workers. In this survey we broke down the categories of case-carrying child welfare workers more specifically than in the 2000 survey, and therefore there is a greater likelihood that some states will have more "not applicable" responses for some of those categories.
- the question **cannot be answered** by the state because data are collected only at the local level and are not shared with or compiled by the state central office. This is particularly, but not exclusively true in locally administered states. An example of this type of question is rating the degree of recruitment and retention problems and the effectiveness of specific strategies for addressing these problems.
- the question applies and is within the scope of the state agency, but respondents either **do not collect the data, collect the data but it is unavailable, or choose not to share the data**. This can include an incompatibility in the way the state collects the data and how this survey asks for it. There generally is no reliable way to know from the lack of survey responses which of these "data not available" nuances is the reason.

While we can make some intelligent guesses on what missing data means for some questions and some states, generally it is not possible to be precise about this unless the state respondent makes a notation about this. See Appendix C for an analysis of missing data for the vacancy and turnover questions.

Description of State Survey Respondents

States were asked about the **structure** of the child welfare agency in relationship to other human services in that state:

- Thirty-nine states (93%) said that their child welfare agency is part of a larger human service agency, and the child welfare administrator reports to a higher-level human service CEO, e.g., secretary, commissioner, executive director,
- Three states (7%) said that their child welfare agency is not part of a larger human services agency, and that the child welfare administrator reports directly to the governor.

The average state child welfare agency **operating budget** from all sources was $327 million, with a range from $2 million to $1.9 billion (with 40 states responding). The median agency budget was $154 million.

States were asked about the **accreditation status** of their child welfare agencies, with the following results:

- One state was fully accredited,
- One state was provisionally accredited,
- Seven states were seeking accreditation,
- Six states were considering accreditation,
- Twenty-three states were not considering accreditation,
- One locally-administered state indicated that 10 of 24 local child welfare agencies were accredited and the remaining agencies were in process.

The overall focus of the survey was on **case-carrying child welfare workers**, which we defined as professional child welfare workers who carry cases and provide services directly to children and/or families, i.e., including case managers, but excluding paraprofessional staff. A number of questions broke this large category into four specific types of workers and included front-line supervisors (Appendix A).

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One question asked about the types of case-carrying workers each state agency had. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

Table 1. Category of Case-Carrying Workers		
Categories	Number of States with Category of Worker*	States with Category of Worker
Child protective service workers	24	57%
In-home protective service workers	15	36
Foster care and adoption workers	24	57
Multiple child welfare program workers	21	50
Other categories of workers	11	26

*Some states did not answer this question, and therefore these overall responses are undoubtedly an undercount of the categories of workers in all the states that returned a survey.

- States also provided information on the provision of **educational financial support** for case-carrying child welfare workers and/or supervisors to pursue a BSW, MSW and/or related degree. A total of 22 states (63%) indicated they provide financial support for the BSW degree, 31 states (84%) support the MSW degree, and seven states (28%) support related degrees. Information was also provided about the sources of funding for this support. Table 2 presents how many states are supporting each degree and their sources of funding.

Table 2. Source of Educational Financial Support			
Source of Financial Support	BSW Degree	MSW Degree	Related Degree
Number of states funding degrees	22	31	7
Title IV-E federal payments to states for foster care and adoption training	18	28	2
Federal child welfare discretionary training grants	4	4	2
Federal Social Services Block Grant	2	3	1
Federal child abuse state grants	4	1	0
State revenue sources	9	12	5
Local revenue sources	1	2	0
Private revenue sources	0	0	0
Other sources of funding *	4	5	0
Total number of workers financially supported during agency's last full fiscal year (number of states responding)	306 (15)	1,163 (24)	705 (5)
• Average number of workers per state	20	48	141
• Median number of workers per state	12	16	17

*A small number of states indicated that other sources of funding support their case-carrying staff degree programs. These include: TANF and Title IV-B, subpart 2; higher education match; and the university provides all match requirements for stipends.

Conditions in State Child Welfare Systems

- Of 34 states responding, 16 (47%), were involved in a child welfare **court decree or settlement**.

- Of 35 states responding, six (17%), reported having **state statutory caseload standards**.

- Of 34 states responding, 21 (62%), had case-carrying child welfare workers who belonged to a **union**. For the nine of these states providing data, the average percentage of workers belonging to the union was 79 percent, with a range of 40 percent to 100 percent. In five of those nine states, 100 percent of such workers belong to the union. In the 18 (of 21) union states providing data, 15 (83%), engage in collectively bargaining with their unions.

- Only nine (26%), of the 35 states responding, were **privatizing**, i.e., contracting with the private sector, for child welfare services. The average percentage of the caseload that was privatized was 30% among the four states providing data.

- When asked about the existence of the following **protocols** or **documents**, states indicated that:

  - 15 (36%), have child welfare **caseload** standards or guidelines, i.e., the number of cases or clients,
  - 15 (36%), have child welfare **workload** standards or guidelines, i.e., includes the number of cases and their complexity and service requirements,
  - 18 (43%), have child welfare **supervisor ratio** standards or guidelines.

Information Agencies Gather Directly from Their Employees

The survey asked how frequently state child welfare agencies are **collecting information,** e.g., recommendations, perceptions directly from their employees about workforce issues, like job satisfaction and retention challenges using three specific methods. Operational definitions were not provided for the three methods, and some respondents, for example, referenced written exit interviews rather than face-to-face meetings. The response categories of "never, rarely, occasionally, and frequently," also were left for each state to define. Findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Data Collection Method					
Data Collection Method	**Number of States**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Occasionally**	**Frequently**
Exit interviews	32	0%	9%	28%	63%
Staff focus groups	31	10	32	58	0
Staff surveys	33	3	27	61	9

States that responded "occasionally" or "frequently" for any of the methods were asked to indicate how their agency uses the information they collect from their employees. Twenty-six states responded and the most common coded responses to this open-ended question in descending order are:

- Informing workforce problem identification and resolution (15), including developing methods of improvement (3),
- Providing feedback to executives, managers, regional managers, incoming directors, and planning groups (13), with no direct link to how the data would be used,
- Improving supervisory training and supervisory awareness of the problems (4),
- Gaining staff input and employee perspectives on topics and issues (2),
- Informing the CFSR or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) process (2),
- Informing and revising future staff surveys and focus groups (2),
- Findings are used inconsistently or without clarity (2).

Similarly, states that responded "never" or "rarely" for any of the methods were asked to indicate the most important factors that contributed to their agency not using these methods. Twelve states responded and the most common coded responses to this open-ended question in descending order are:

- Budget limitations (4),
- Lack of staff (4),
- Lack of time (4),
- Procedural difficulties (4), including few staff responding to exit interviews, employees preferring anonymity, difficulty in coordinating data gathering, and managers already knowing the reasons for turnover.

Workforce Salary Data

Table 4. Salary Data on April 1, 2004						
Salary Data on April 1, 2004	Number of States Respond-ing*	Child Protective Service Workers	In-Home Protective Service Workers	Foster Care/ Adoption Workers	Multiple Program Workers	Front-Line Super-visors
Average minimum annual salary	21-31	$29,797	$28,775	$29,797	$30,039	$37,736
Range	--	20,760 to 38,795	20,760 to 37,648	20,760 to 38,795	23,768 to 41,528	26,580 to 62,268
Average maximum annual salary	21-31	47,700	47,791	48,962	47,925	55,759
Range	--	36,840 to 61,941	36,840 to 61,941	36,840 to 61,941	36,840 to 61,794	40,476 to 81,246
Average annual salary of incumbents	15-23	35,553	34,929	35,911	36,136	44,232
Range	--	26,000 to 48,159	27,302 to 47,701	26,000 to 48,159	23,396 to 47,701	29,000 to 67,374

* The number of states providing data for each salary item varied for the different types of workers and the range of states is shown in this column.

As a way of comparison, US DOL, BLS data for November 2003 show an average annual salary for the following categories of workers:

Worker Category	Average Salary
Registered nurses	$52,810
Public school teachers	46,123
Police officers & sheriffs	45,560
Firefighters	38,810

In most cases, the averages and medians, i.e., half of the figures are smaller and half are larger, for the 2004 salary data are very similar.

In the 2000 Child Welfare Workforce Survey, salary data were also collected for CPS workers and supervisors, as well as, for "all other direct service workers." In the 2004 survey, this all other worker category was broken down into the three more specific categories shown in Table 4. In order to compare changes in salaries over the past three and a half years since the 2000 survey, the data for in-home protective service workers, foster care/adoption workers, and multiple program workers have been combined. This comparative data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Average Salary Data			
Worker Category	Salaries on Sept. 1, 2000	Salaries on April 1, 2004	Increase
CPS minimum	$27,459	$29,797	8.5%
CPS maximum	44,642	47,700	6.9
CPS incumbent	33,436	35,553	6.3
Other worker minimum	26,725	29,537	10.5
Other worker maximum	43,717	48,226	10.3
Other worker incumbent	32,861	35,659	8.5
Supervisor minimum	34,441	37,736	9.6
Supervisor maximum	53,267	55,759	4.7
Supervisor incumbent	41,939	44,232	5.5

To put these salary increase figures into context, the BLS indicates that the official cost of living index increased 9.7 percent from November 2000 to November 2004.

Education, Licensing, and Certification

A Bachelors degree was the predominant **minimum academic degree,** i.e., not substitutable for work equivalencies, required for all categories of case-carrying child welfare workers and supervisors. Only two states indicated that a Masters degree was required for supervisors.

A **social work license** was required for the different categories of workers as follows:
- Seven of 24 states with CPS workers (29%),
- Eight of 15 states with in-home protective service workers (53%),
- Ten of 24 states with foster care and/or adoption workers (42%),
- Seven of 21 states with multiple program workers(33%),
- Twelve of 42 states with supervisors (29%).

Between five and seven states indicated that **certification of any kind** is required for any categories of workers addressed in this survey.

Training and Career Ladders

The survey asked about the number of hours of **mandatory pre-service training** and **mandatory in-service training**, and whether a **career ladder**, i.e., structured mobility in job series, existed for each category of worker. The findings are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Training and Career Ladders						
Types of Training and Career Ladder Availability	**Number of States Respond-ing**	**Child Protective Service Workers**	**In-Home Protective Service Workers**	**Foster Care/ Adoption Workers**	**Multiple Program Workers**	**Front-Line Super-visors**
Average number of hours of mandatory pre-service training	23-29	141	147	151	133	84
Range	--	0-300*	0-560*	0-560*	0-300*	0-240*
Average number of hours of mandatory in-service training each year	21-29	29	29	30	27	28
Range	--	0-160**	0-160**	0-160**	0-160**	0-160**
Number of states with career ladders	24-30	15	15	13	10	11

* One or two states were outliers with: CPS-300; In-home-560; FCA-560 and 300; Multi-300, and Supervisors-240

** One state was an outlier with 160 hours for all worker categories

Caseloads

The survey asked about **caseload sizes** for each category of worker both where the child is defined as the case and where the family is defined as the case. When a family is defined as the case one or more children would be involved. Another question sought the average supervisor to full time employee (FTE) worker ratio for each category of worker. Data on averages and medians are provided. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Caseload Size and Supervisor Ratio						
Caseload Type	**Number of States Respond-ing**	**Child Protective Service Workers**	**In-Home Protective Service Workers**	**Foster Care/ Adoption Workers**	**Multiple Program Workers**	**Front-Line Super-visors**
Child is defined as the case	3-19					
Average	--	24	42	23	27	9
Median	--	18	38	18	19	5
Range	--	11-51	18-80*	9-80*	15-80*	5-18
Family is defined as the case	2-16					
Average	--	28	17	14	21	4
Median	--	18	18	15	16	4
Range	--	12-100**	5-30	7-18	12-42	2-5
Average and median supervisor to FTE worker ratio	18-23	6	6	6	6	--
Range	--	3-10	2-10	3-10	2-10	--

* One state was an outlier with 80 cases, with the next highest being 41, 37, and 40 cases respectively.
** Two states were outliers with 100 and 77 cases, with the next highest being 30 cases.

Staffing Issues

Authorized Full Time Equivalent Positions on April 1, 2004

Table 8. FTE Positions on April 1, 2004					
FTE Positions	**Child Protective Service Workers**	**In-Home Protective Workers**	**Foster/ Care/Adopti on Workers**	**Multiple Program Workers**	**Front-Line Supervisors**
Average	787	353	225	421	115
Median	171	125	157	279	68
Total	17,322	2,828	3,369	7,159	2,986
States Reporting	22	8	15	17	26

With only a maximum of 26 states reporting on authorized positions (62% of states completing the survey), it is important to note that this partial count represents **33,664 case-carrying worker and front-line supervisor positions on April 1, 2004 in these 26 states**.

Number of Positions Vacant on April 1, 2004

Table 9. Vacant Positions on April 1, 2004					
Vacant Positions	Child Protective Service Workers	In-Home Protective Workers	Foster/ Care/Adopti on Workers	Multiple Program Workers	Front-Line Supervisors
Average	39	39	8	37	6
Median	10	8	5	28	4
Total	662	236	74	548	108
States Reporting	17	6	9	15	19

With only a maximum of 19 states reporting on vacancies (45% of states completing the survey), it is important to note that this partial count represents **1,628 vacant case-carrying worker and front-line supervisors positions on April 1, 2004 in these 19 states alone**.

Weeks Required To Fill Vacant Positions during calendar year 2003

The average number of weeks required to fill vacant positions varied from a low of seven weeks for in-home protective workers and multiple program workers, to 10 weeks for CPS workers, to a high of 13 weeks for foster care and adoptions workers. Supervisors fell about mid-way at eight weeks to fill a vacancy. **All of these averages are higher than the comparable data of six and seven weeks for all types of workers from the 2000 survey**.

Number of Employees Leaving Agency for Any Reason during 2003

Table 10. Employees Leaving during 2003					
Employees Leaving during 2003	Child Protective Service Workers	In-Home Protective Workers	Foster/ Care/Adopti on Workers	Multiple Program Workers	Front-Line Supervisors
Average	114	45	24	106	14
Median	24	24	15	38	6
Total	1,945	363	216	1,487	257
States Reporting	17	8	9	14	18

With only a maximum of 18 states reporting on turnovers (43% of states completing the survey), it is important to note that this partial count represents **4,268 turnovers among case-carrying worker and front-line supervisors during 2003, or 356 every month, among those 18 states alone.**

Number of Staff Leaving Agency during 2003 that Are Estimated to be Preventable

A "preventable turnover" is defined as a staff person leaving the child welfare agency *for reasons other than* retirement, death, marriage/parenting, returning to school, or spousal job move. Intra-agency transfers, e.g., promotions, demotions, or lateral transfers, within the state child welfare agency are *not* counted as preventable turnovers, although it is recognized that such transfers often cause much workforce disruption and commotion within the agency.

Table 11. Preventable Turnovers during 2003					
Preventable Turnovers	Child Protective Service Workers	In-Home Protective Workers	Foster Care/ Adoption Workers	Multiple Program Workers	Front-Line Supervisors
Average	84	41	10	68	4
Median	14	24	8	24	2
Total	755	204	63	406	42
States Reporting	9	5	6	6	10

With only a maximum of 10 states reporting on preventable turnovers (24% of states completing the survey), it is important to note that this partial count represents **1,470 preventable turnovers among case-carrying worker and front-line supervisors during 2003, or 122 every month, among those 10 states alone.**

Estimated Average Tenure of Employees Leaving Agency Due to Preventable Turnover in 2003

Many states were unable to provide this data, but those that did indicated that the average tenure for workers leaving through preventable turnover was five years for CPS and in-home protective workers, three years for foster care/adoption and multiple program workers, and nine years for front-line supervisors.

State Agency Vacancy and Turnover Rates
and Comparison with 2000 Survey Data

The workforce rates in Table 12 were calculated as follows:

- **Vacancy rate**—dividing the number of positions for each worker group vacant on April 1, 2004 by the authorized FTE positions for each group on April 1, 2004
- **Turnover rate**—dividing the number of employees for each worker group that left the agency for any reason during calendar year 2003 by the authorized FTE for each group on April 1, 2004
- **Preventable turnover rate**—dividing the number of estimated preventable turnovers for each worker group during 2003 by the authorized FTE for each group on April 1, 2004.

Table 12. 2004 Workforce Rates (Averages)					
Workforce Rates (Averages) *2000 Survey Data*	Child Prot. Service Workers	In Home Protective Service Workers	Foster Care and Adopt. Workers	Multi-Program Workers	Front-Line Supervisors
Number of States with Category of Worker in 2004	24	15	24	21	42
Vacancies					
2004 Rate	**8.5%**	**9.9%**	**9.5%**	**9.8%**	**6.8%**
2000	*9.3%*				*7.4%*
Range	**0-25%**	**0-31%**	**1-17%**	**1-24%**	**0-23%**
2000	*2-33%*				*1-20%*
No. of States Reporting	**17**	**6**	**9**	**15**	**19**
2000	*25*				*29*
Turnovers					
2004 Rate	**22.1%**	**15.1%**	**17.7%**	**19.9%**	**11.8%**
2000	*19.9%*				*8.0%*
Range	**0-67%**	**7-24%**	**0-32%**	**8-42%**	**0-62%**
2000	*4-38%*				*0-26%*
No. of States Reporting	**17**	**7**	**9**	**12**	**17**
2000	*19*				*21*
Preventable Turnovers					
2004 Rate	**12.6%**	**6.5%**	**7.4%**	**11.1%**	**4.6%**
2000	*12.3%*				*3.6%*
Range	**0-24%**	**3-12%**	**0-14%**	**0-17%**	**0-17%**
2000	*0-23%*				*0-10%*
No. of States Reporting	**9**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**9**
2000	*16*				*19*

Data from the US DOL, BLS provide a comparison for the child welfare worker vacancy and turnover rates. Although the BLS data do not correspond exactly with the time frames and methodology of the survey, they do allow the rates calculated from survey data to be put into a broader context. BLS data show that in November 2004, the one-day snapshot of vacancies among state and government workers was 1.5 percent. A vacancy is defined as a specific position existing, there is work available for that position, the employer is actively recruiting, and work could start within 30 days. Also for the month of November, 2004, BLS reported that separations, i.e., quits and layoffs, among state and local government workers was 0.8 percent. To calculate an annual separation rate, this monthly figure was multiplied by 12 months, resulting in a rate of 9.6 percent. The table below presents comparison of these rates with those found in this survey.

Category of Worker	Vacancy Rate	Turnover, or Separation Rate
State and local government workers	1.5%	9.6%
CPS workers	8.5	22.1
In-home protective service workers	9.9	15.1
Foster care and adoption workers	9.5	17.7
Multiple program workers	9.8	19.9
Front-line supervisors	6.8	11.8

Bar graphs of the vacancy, turnover, and preventable turnover rates for each category of worker calculated from the survey are included in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

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Figure 1: Average Vacancy Rates by Worker Category on April 1, 2004
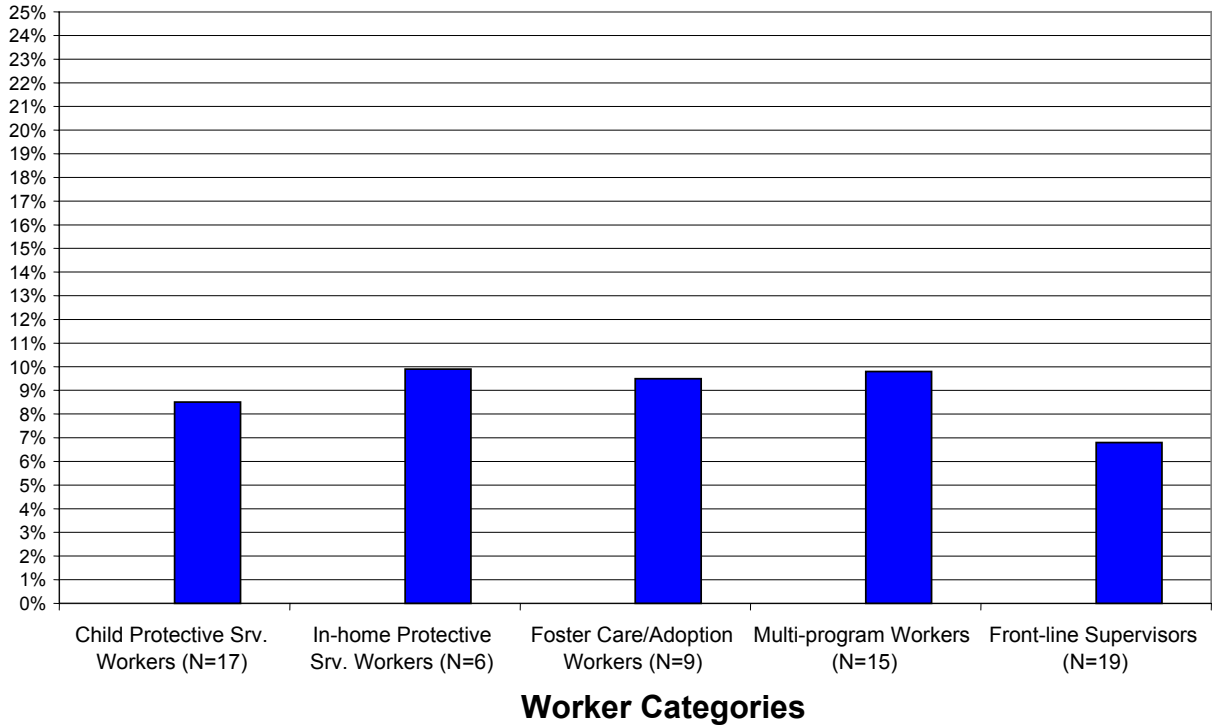
Worker Categories

Figure 2: Average Turnover Rates by Worker Category During 2003
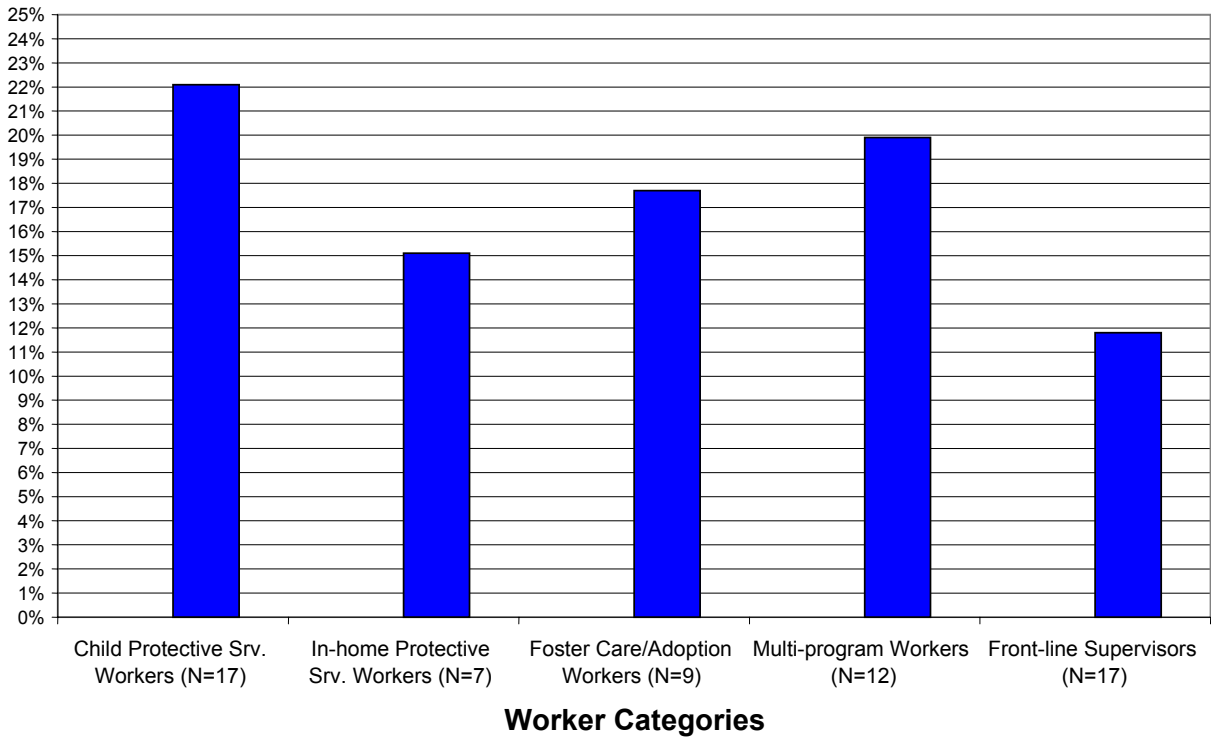
Worker Categories

Figure 3: Average Preventable Turnover Rates by Worker Category in 2003

Worker Categories
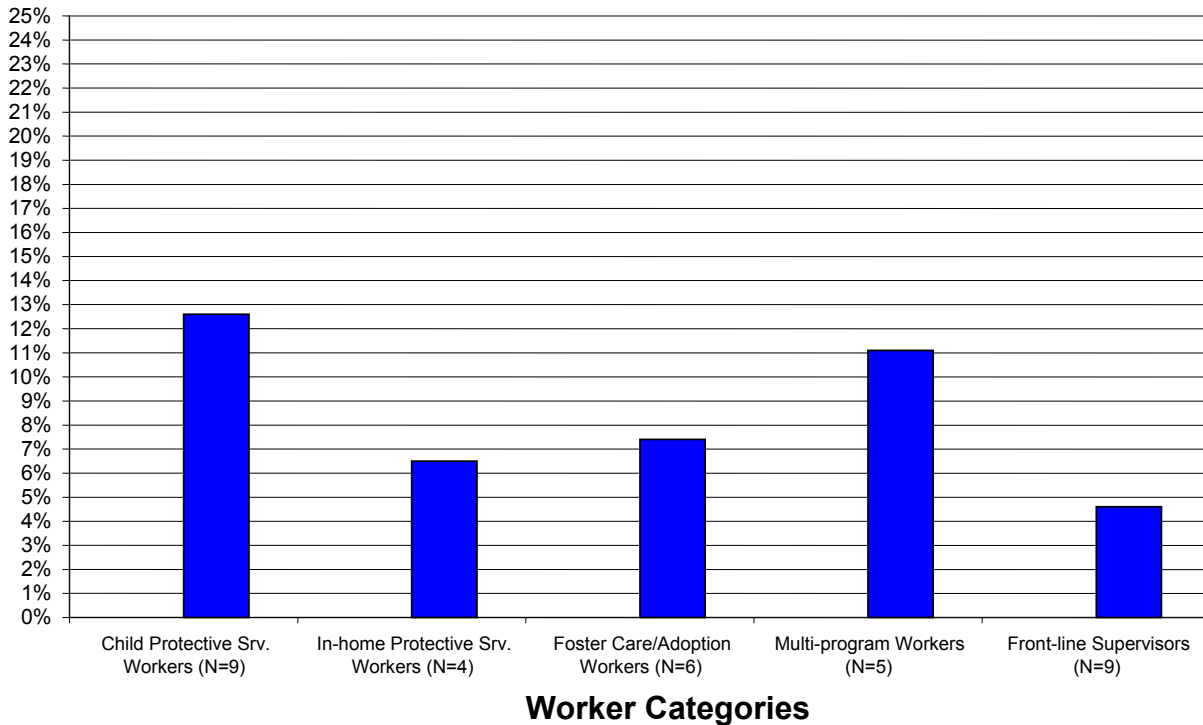
Brief Discussion of Median Workforce Rates

The data in Table 12 is based on averages. Medians, i.e., half the responses are higher and half are lower, also were calculated and for the most part the medians are very similar to the averages, with almost all the medians being slightly lower than comparable averages. The vacancy medians are slightly lower than the averages by 1-2 percent. Turnover rate medians also are slightly lower (1-4%) than averages. For preventable turnover rates, some medians are slightly higher than comparable averages for CPS workers, foster care and adoption workers, and multiple program workers, and slightly lower for in-home protective workers and supervisors.

Percentage of Preventable State Turnover

Another way of viewing preventable turnover is to divide the number of preventable turnovers by the number of staff leaving the agency for any reason for each worker group. The results of that calculation are provided in Table 13 and Figure 4.

Table 13. Percent All Preventable Turnovers					
Preventable Turnovers	Child Protective Service Workers	In-Home Protective Workers	Foster Care/ Adoption Workers	Multiple Program Workers	Front-Line Supervisors
Average	60%	69%	54%	55%	48%
Median	56%	71%	50%	52%	46%
Range	0-100%	33-100%	33-83%	0-92%	0-100%
States Reporting	9	5	4	6	8

Figure 4: Percentage of Turnover That Was Preventable in 2003 by Worker Category
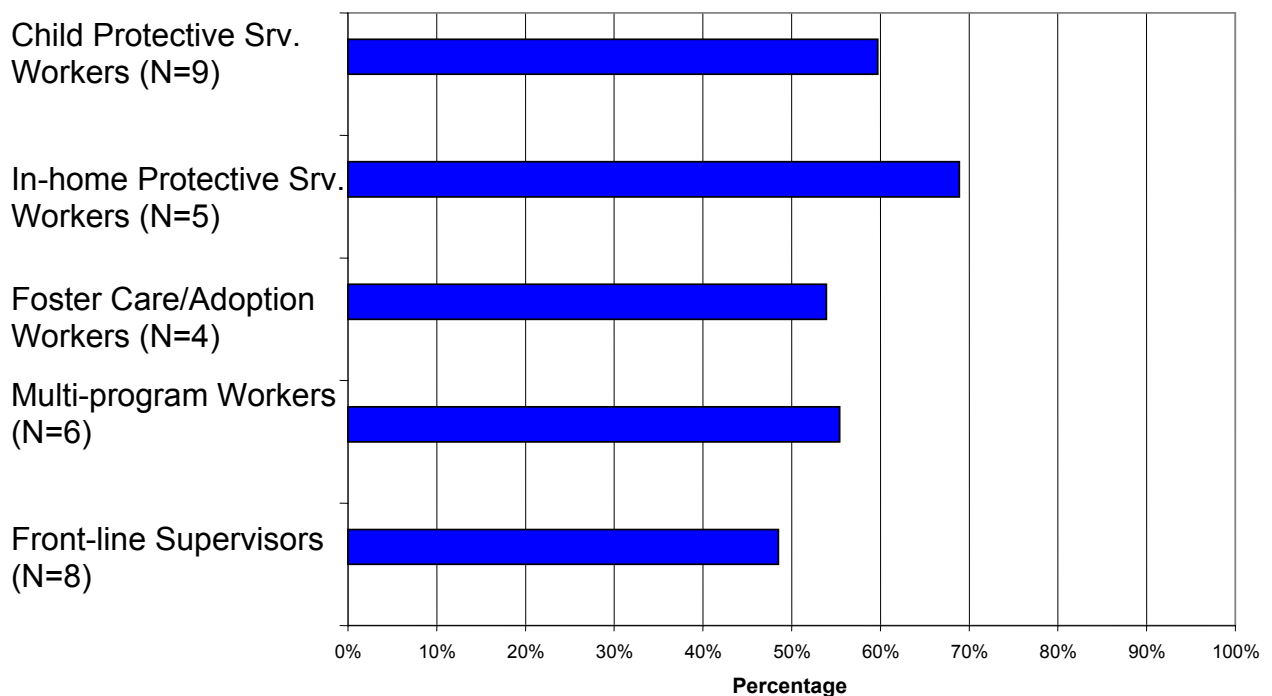
For comparison purposes, the 16 states that provided data on preventable turnovers for CPS workers in the 2000 survey, had an average of 57.4 percent (median of 66.6%) of turnovers that were preventable. This represents an almost unchanged average for the 2004 survey, but a somewhat lower median. The 2000 data for supervisors show a similar pattern with an average of 49.3 percent and a median of 59.8 percent of turnovers being preventable.

Further Analysis of Rates for Non-CPS Workers

In the 2000 child welfare workforce survey, the focus was on a smaller number of worker categories—CPS workers, all other direct service workers, supervisors, and total staff in the agency. For the 2004 survey, we maintained the CPS worker and supervisor categories and divided all the other direct service worker category into several sub-groups: in-home protective workers, foster care and adoption workers, and multiple program workers. In an effort to compare the 2004 rates with the 2000 rates, the averages for the three new worker groups in the 2004 survey have been averaged (simple not weighted) and compared with all the other direct service worker averages from the 2000 survey in the table below. Using this somewhat simplistic method of comparison, rates for non-CPS workers appear to have improved very modestly since collection of the 2000 data.

Table 14. Workforce Rates on Non-CPS Workers		
Workforce Rates on Non-CPS Workers	2000 Average Rates	2004 Average Rates
Vacancy Rate	11.8%	9.7%
Turnover Rate	19.4	17.6
Preventable Turnover Rate	9.8	8.3

Recruitment and Retention Changes

The survey asked states to compare calendar year 2003 with the prior two years and to indicate the extent of change that their agency had experienced with regard to recruitment hiring and preventable turnovers among case-carrying child welfare staff in the agency. Findings are summarized in Table 15, including comparing the findings for the identical question from the 2000 survey. 2004 survey data is summarized in Figures 5 and 6.

Table 15. Workforce Changes						
Workforce Changes	Number of States	Much Worse	Some Worse	About the Same	Some Better	Much Better
Recruitment/hiring	31	13%	6%	58%	10%	13%
• *2000 survey**		*21%*	*13%*	*38%*	*23%*	*5%*
Preventable turnover	31	3%	13%	71%	13%	0%
• *2000 survey**		*11%*	*24%*	*38%*	*24%*	*3%*

   * Compared to the period of July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 with the prior two years

**Figure 5: Extent of Recruitment Change in 2003
Compared to Prior Two Years (N=31)**

Much Better
13%

Much Worse
13%

Some Worse
6%

Some Better
10%

About the Same
58%
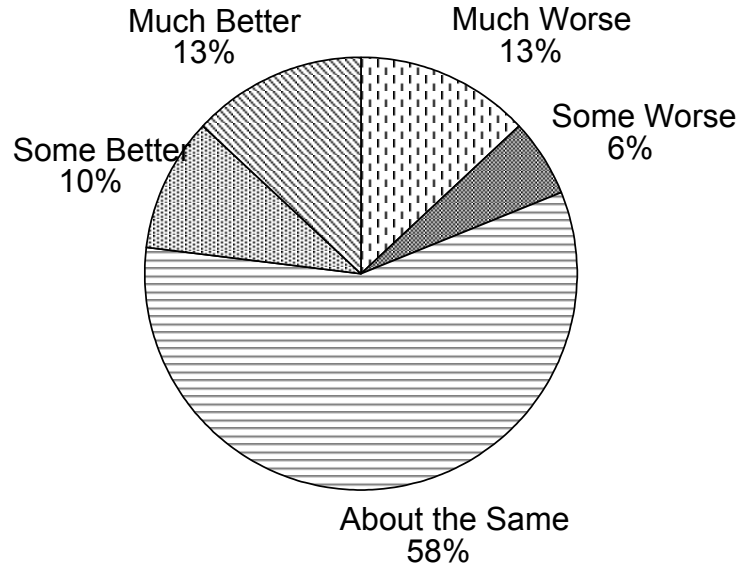
Figure 6: Extent of Retention Change in 2003 Compared to Prior Two Years (N=31)

Much Better
0%

Much Worse
3%

Some Better
13%

Some Worse
13%

About the Same
71%

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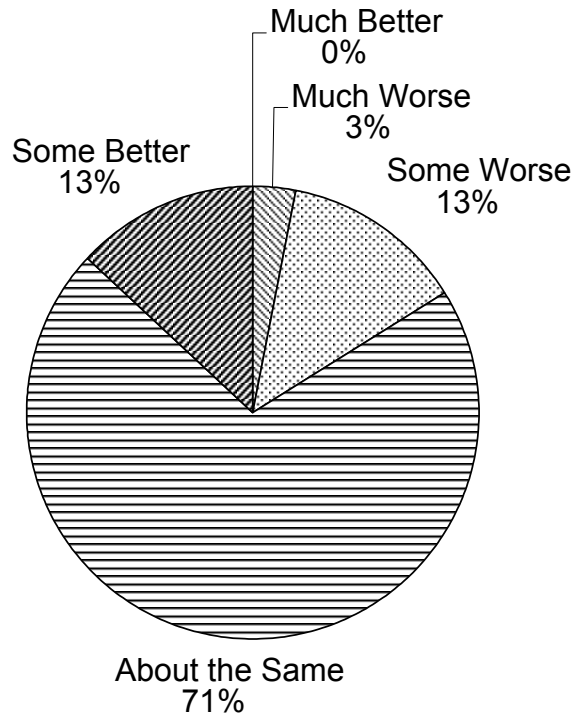
Factors Contributing to Changes in Recruitment and Preventable Turnovers

States that responded that their recruitment and/or preventable turnover situations were other
than "about the same" were asked to rate how much of a contribution seven factors made to the
change in their agency. Factors were rated on a three-point scale, with 1 = little or no
importance, 2 = moderate importance, and 3 = high importance. The findings are in Table 16.

Table 16. Factors Contributing to Change					
Factors Contributing to Change	**Average Rating**	**No. States Reporting**	**Little or No Importance**	**Moderate Importance**	**High Importance**
Recruitment					
Budget limitations and constraints	2.25	16	25%	25%	50%
Response to a tragedy, e.g., child death, missing child	1.53	17	71	6	23
Response to court decree or settlement	1.47	15	73	7	20
Major reform initiated by governor or legislature	1.44	16	75	6	19
Federal Children and Family Service Reviews (CFSR)	1.41	17	65	29	6
Program Improvement Plan process as part of CFSR	1.35	17	71	24	6
Going through the process of accreditation (new or renewal)	1.09	11	91	9	0
Preventable Turnover					
Budget limitations and constraints	2.46	13	8%	38%	54%
Response to a tragedy, e.g., child death, missing child	1.69	13	54	23	23
Federal Children and Family Service Reviews (CFSR)	1.58	12	50	42	8
Program Improvement Plan process as part of CFSR	1.58	12	50	42	8
Major reform initiated by governor or legislature	1.30	10	80	10	10
Response to court decree or settlement	1.27	11	82	9	9
Going through the process of accreditation (new or renewal)	1.14	7	86	14	0

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Recruitment and Retention Problems and Strategies

Recruitment Problems

State child welfare administrators rated the severity of 11 problems they may have experienced regarding recruitment and hiring of case-carrying child welfare staff *during the past 12 months.* They used a three-point rating scale, with 1 = not problematic, 2 = somewhat problematic, and 3 = highly problematic. Problems are presented in Table 17 in descending order of rated severity.

Table 17. Recruiting Problems					
	Average Rating	**Number Reporting**	**Not Problematic**	**Somewhat Problematic**	**Highly Problematic**
Perceived imbalance of demands of job & financial compensation	2.41	34	9%	41%	50%
Starting salaries are not competitive with comparable positions	2.03	34	27	44	29
Other attractive labor market alternatives for job seekers	2.00	34	29	41	29
Budget constraints other than hiring freezes or restrictions	1.93	28	50	7	43
Hiring freezes or restrictions	1.89	35	43	26	31
Negative media reporting about public child welfare	1.82	34	35	47	18
Problematic recruitment and/or selection requirements	1.63	35	46	46	8
Insufficient resources for training/supervision to attract people	1.47	34	62	29	9
Civil service/merit system qualifications not matching job	1.21	34	82	15	3
Benefits are not competitive with other comparable positions	1.17	35	83	17	0
Union constraints	1.00	32	100	0	0
Other problems	2.30	10	30	10	60
TOTAL AVERAGES	1.73	32	51%	28%	21%

Figure 7: Most Problematic State Recruitment Issues

Percentage of States Responding

■ Highly ■ Somewhat □ No Problem

34
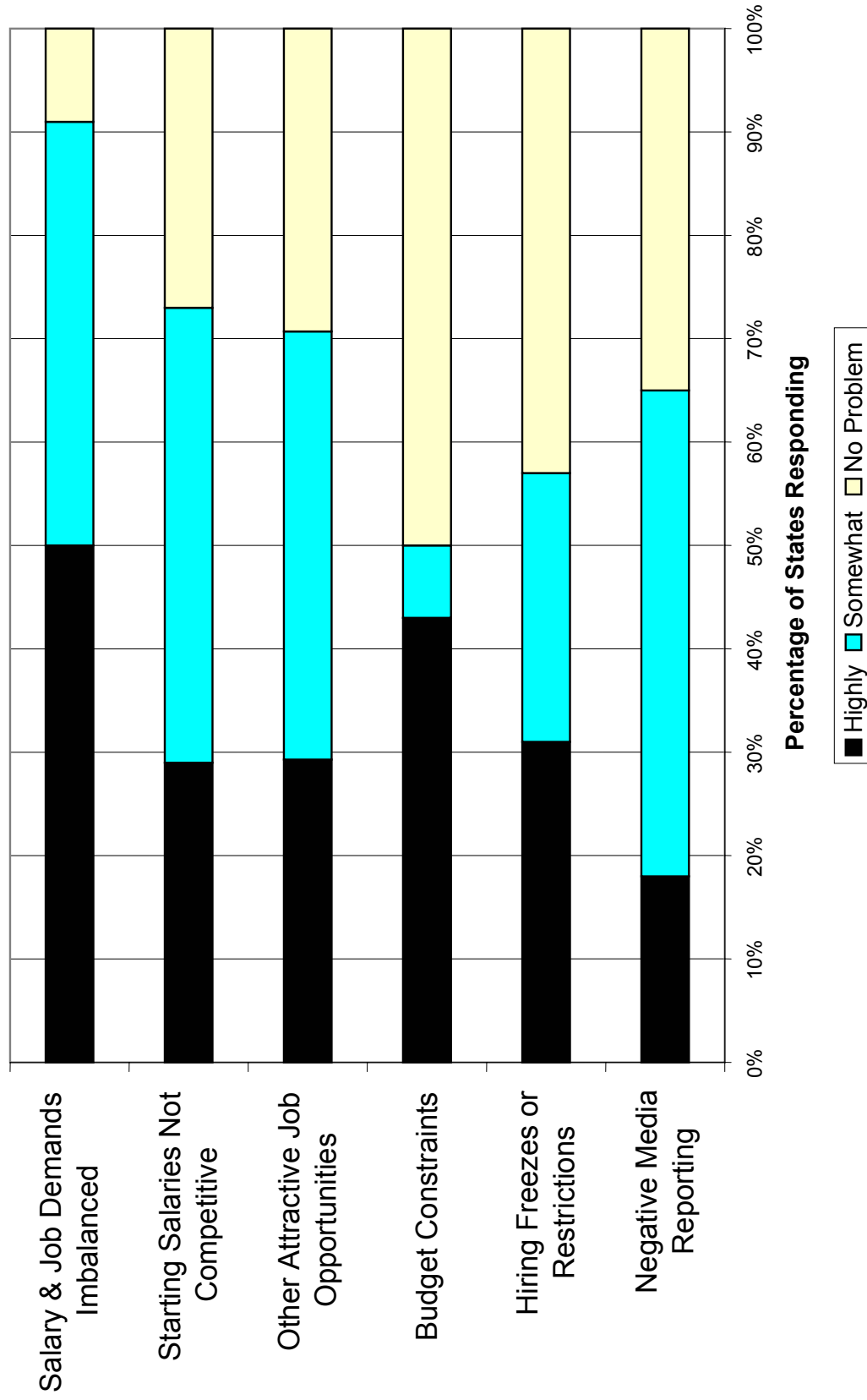
Recruitment Strategies

State child welfare administrators rated 12 strategies that their agencies may have implemented *over the past five years* in order to recruit and hire case-carrying child welfare workers. The respondents indicated whether their state had implemented each strategy and how effective those strategies implemented have been, with 1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, and 3 = highly effective. The findings in Table 16 are presented in descending order of overall rating score. A total of 32 or 33 states responded to each of the 12 strategies.

Table 18. Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment Strategies	Rating Score	Number Implementing	Percent Implementing	% Not Effective	% Somewhat Effective	% Highly Effective
Implemented by more than half of states						
University-agency training partnerships and/or stipends for students	2.30	30	91%	3%	40%	57%
Job announcements posted on own/others web sites	1.97	30	94	20	50	30
Early/aggressive recruiting at social work schools	1.81	27	84	15	55	30
Improved interview/selection procedures	1.78	25	78	4	64	32
Emphasized continuing education/training and supervision opportunities with agency	1.50	21	66	5	62	33
Increased personal contact with potential candidates to encourage their application	1.25	19	59	11	68	21
Implemented by less than half of states						
Outreach to groups and agencies with significant connections to diverse populations	0.88	14	44	21	57	21
Public appeals through the media (e.g., PSAs)	0.53	10	31	50	30	20
Use of realistic job preview (e.g., video portraying real work demands)	0.44	6	19	17	33	50
Some positions converted into more manageable entry-level case-carrying jobs	0.44	7	22	28	43	29
Salaries raised beyond normal inflationary increases	0.34	4	12	0	25	75
Hiring/signing bonuses and/or enhanced or more flexible benefit packages	0.09	1	3	0	0	100
Other strategies	1.29	3	43	0	0	100
TOTAL AVERAGES	**1.12**	**16**	**53%**	**13%**	**51%**	**36%**

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Figure 8: Most Effective State Recruitment Strategies Implemented by More Than Half of States

Percentage of States Implementing

Legend: ■ Highly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not Effective

Categories:
- University-Agency Training Partnerships & Stipends (N=30)
- Job Announcements Posted on Web Sites (N=30)
- Early/Aggressive Recruiting at Schools of SW (N=27)
- Improve Interview/Selection Procedures (N=25)
- Emphasize Continuing Education & Supervision (N=21)
- Increase Personal Contact with Potential Candidates (N=19)
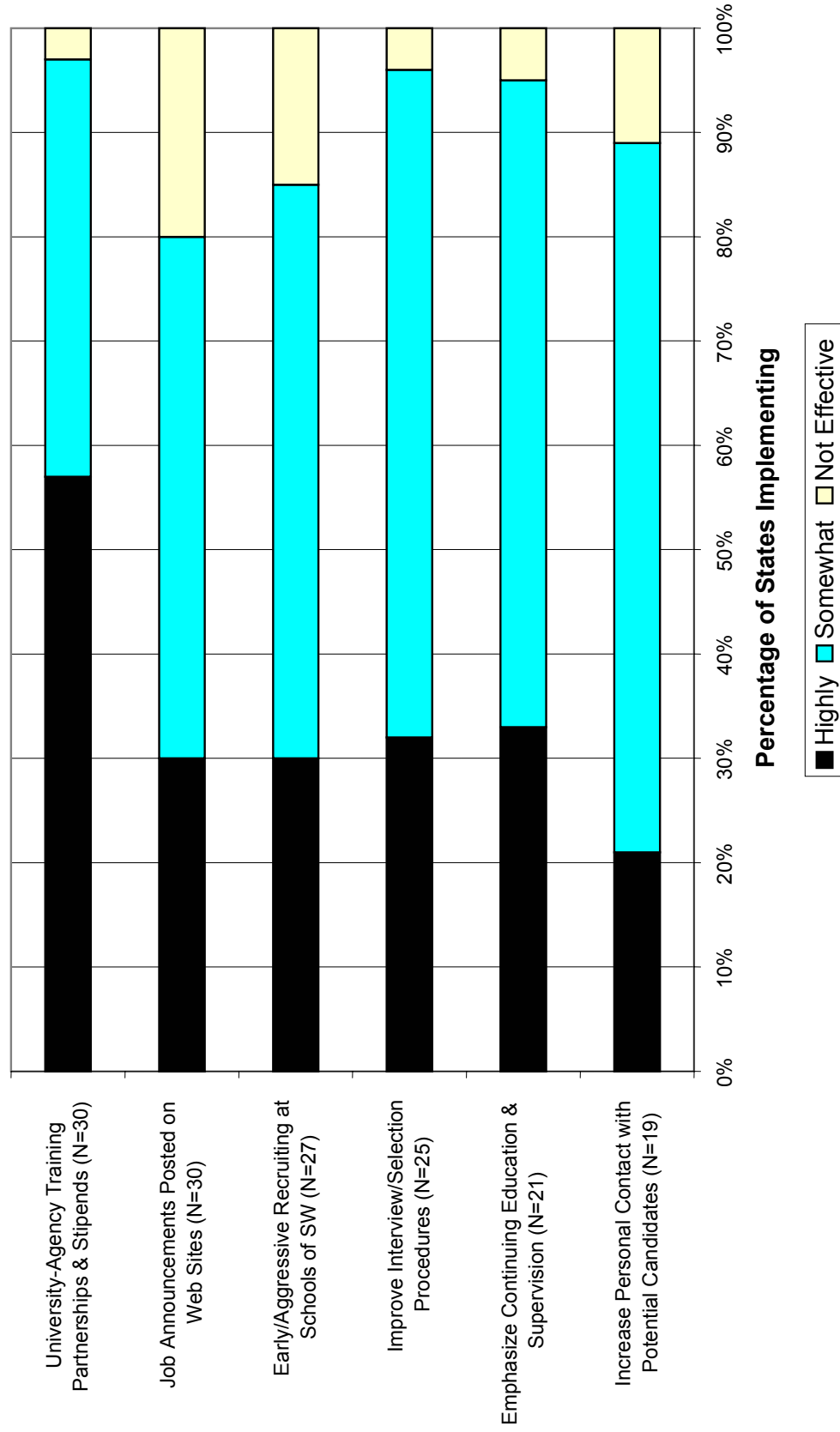
Preventable Turnover Problems

State child welfare administrators also rated the severity of 17 problems they may have experienced regarding preventable turnover of case-carrying child welfare staff *during the past 12 months.* They used a three-point rating scale, with 1 = not problematic, 2 = somewhat problematic, and 3 = highly problematic. Problems are presented in Table 19 in descending order of rated severity.

Table 19. Preventable Turnover Problems					
Preventable Turnover Problems	**Average Rating**	**Number Reporting**	**Not Problematic**	**Somewhat Problematic**	**Highly Problematic**
Workloads too high and/or demanding (e.g., stress)	2.75	32	6%	13%	81%
Caseloads too high	2.75	32	3	19	78
After hours & unpredictable work interfere in personal life	2.41	32	13	34	53
Too much time spent on travel, transport, paperwork, etc.	2.25	32	19	37	44
Insufficient services resources for families & children	2.06	32	22	50	28
Workers do not feel valued by agency	2.03	32	16	66	18
Problems with quality of supervision	2.00	32	22	56	22
Insufficient opportunities for promotion & career advance.	1.94	32	25	56	19
Low salaries	1.91	32	38	34	28
Worker concerns about their physical safety	1.63	32	44	50	6
Insufficient agency support for professionalism of workers	1.53	32	50	47	3
Quality & quantity of training or continuing education	1.53	32	50	47	3
Negative media coverage of child welfare field	1.47	32	59	35	6
Agency management problems (e.g., high manager turnover)	1.44	32	59	38	3
Vulnerability to legal liability around cases	1.34	32	75	16	9
Poor working conditions (e.g., rundown/crowded building)	1.23	31	77	23	0
Lack of professional development opportunities	1.22	32	78	22	0
Other problems	1.00	2	100	0	0
TOTAL AVERAGES	**1.80**	**30**	**39%**	**38%**	**23%**

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Figure 9: Most Problematic State Retention Issues

Percentage of States Responding

Legend: ■ Highly ■ Somewhat □ Not Problematic

Categories (top to bottom):
- Workloads Too High or Demanding
- Caseloads Too High
- After Hours & Unpredicatable Work Interfere
- Too Much Time Spent on Non-Case Tasks
- Insufficient Service Resources for Families
- Workers Do Not Feel Valued by Agency
- Problems with Quality of Supervision
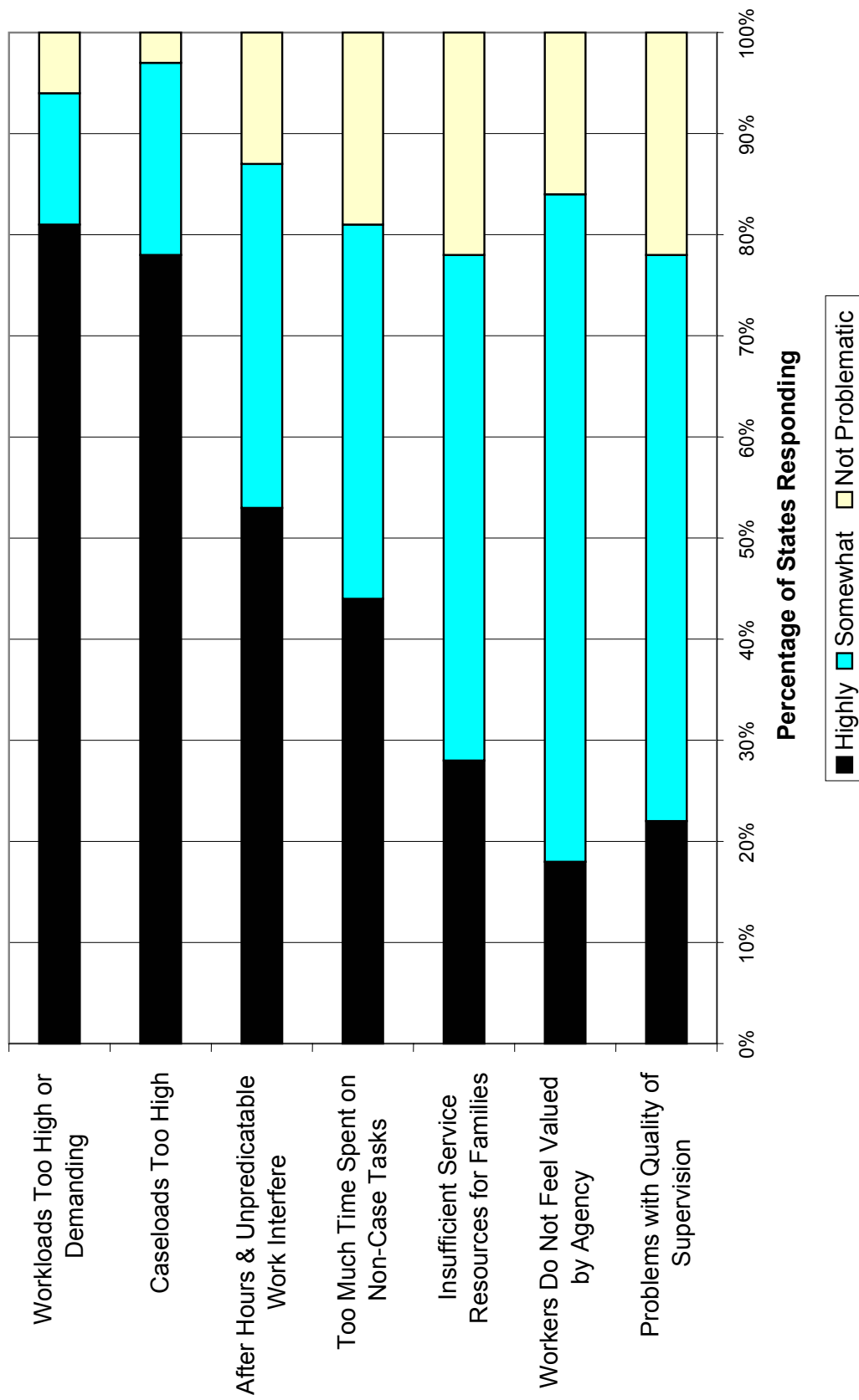
Preventable Turnover Strategies

State child welfare administrators rated 22 strategies that their agencies may have implemented *over the past five years* in order to retain case-carrying child welfare workers. The respondents indicated whether their state had implemented each strategy and how effective those strategies implemented have been, with 1=not effective, 2=somewhat effective, and 3=highly effective. The findings in Table 20 are presented in descending order of overall rating score. A total of 31 or 32 states responded to each of the 22 strategies.

Table 20. Strategies for Retaining Workers:

Strategies for Retaining Workers	Rating Score	Number Implementing	Percent Implementing	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Highly Effective
Implemented by more than half of states						
Increased/improved in-service training	2.22	30	94%	0%	63%	37%
Increased educational opportunities (e.g., MSW)	2.03	28	88	14	39	46
Increased/improved orientation/pre-service training	2.03	27	84	4	52	44
Provided technology (e.g., cell phones, lap-tops)	1.94	27	84	11	48	41
Improved professional culture throughout agency	1.72	26	81	12	65	23
Enhanced supervisor skills	1.66	27	84	7	89	4
Implemented new intervention strategies	1.63	23	72	9	56	35
Increased workers feeling valued/respected by agency	1.56	25	78	20	60	20
Increased worker safety	1.44	23	72	17	65	17
Implemented flex time/changes in office hours	1.31	21	66	19	62	19
Regularly sought & used employees' views	1.25	21	66	24	62	14
Improved physical office/building space	1.25	19	59	11	68	21
Special efforts to raise workers' salaries	1.16	18	56	33	28	39
Increased workers' access to service resources	1.13	18	58	17	72	11
Implemented by less than half of states						
Expanded diversity of workforce	1.00	14	44	7	57	36
Provided approved supervision for SW licensing	0.97	14	45	28	29	43
Paid for workers' CEU licensing requirements	0.94	14	45	28	36	36
Reduced workers' caseloads	0.91	15	47	20	67	13
Reduced "time wasters" for more case activity	0.81	15	47	33	60	7
Established formal mentoring program	0.75	12	38	42	16	42
Reduced supervisors' workloads	0.66	11	34	27	55	18
Implemented job rotation/job-sharing	0.44	9	28	44	56	0
TOTAL AVERAGES	**1.31**	**20**	**63%**	**17%**	**56%**	**27%**

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Figure 10: Most Effective State Retention Strategies Implemented by More Than Half of States

Legend: ■ Highly ■ Somewhat □ Not Effective

Rated Effectiveness by States Implementing

Categories (top to bottom):
- Increase/Improve In-Service Training
- Increase Educational Opportunities (e.g., MSW)
- Increase/Improve Orientation and Pre-Service Training
- Provide Technology to Workers
- Improve Professional Culture of Agency
- Enhance Supervisor Skills
- Implement New Family Intervention Strategies
- Increase Workers Feeling Valued/Respected

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Reasons Recruitment and Retention Strategies Were Not Implemented

The survey explored what factors contributed to the state child welfare agencies not implementing recruitment and retention strategies over the past five years. The questions looked at the strategies as a whole rather than specific reasons that specific strategies were not implemented. The state respondents rated eight factors on a three-point scale, with 1 = little or no factor, 2 = a moderate factor, and 3 = a major factor. Findings are shown for both recruitment and retention strategies in Table 21, in descending order of ratings for recruitment. A total of 31 to 32 states rated the recruitment factors and 29 to 30 rated the retention factors.

Table 21. Factors Contributing to Non-Implementation of Strategies				
Factors Contributing to Non-Implementation of Strategies	**Recruitment Rating Score**	**Major Factor for Recruitment**	**Retention Rating Score**	**Major Factor for Retention**
We couldn't implement any strategies that required new resources	2.53	69%	2.57	67%
Agency staff did not have the authority to implement strategies	1.97	31	1.86	34
Strategies need to be customized to the unique needs of local offices	1.72	31	1.83	30
Crises in child welfare prevented agency staff from focusing on improvements	1.63	25	1.67	27
Strategies we did implement sufficiently improved recruitment/retention	1.58	13	1.31	3
We had no consensus on which specific strategies would improve outcomes	1.42	6	1.40	7
CFSR and PIP process prevented agency staff from focusing on improvements	1.41	16	1.47	17
We had no confidence that these strategies would improve our recruitment/retention outcomes	1.31	13	1.23	7

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Organizational and Personal Factors Contributing to Staff Retention

State child welfare administrators were asked to rate the importance of 15 organizational and personal factors that may contribute to the **decision of case-carrying child welfare workers to remain employed with that state's public child welfare agency**. The factors were rated on a three-point scale, with 1 = little or no importance, 2 = moderate importance, and 3 = high importance. The findings are provided in Table 22 in descending order of importance for the 34 stat that responded to this question.

Table 22. Organizational and Personal Factors				
Organizational and Personal Factors	Average Rating	Little or No Importance	Moderate Importance	High Importance
Good supervision, with a supervisor who cares about the worker as a person	2.82	0%	18%	82%
An agency mission/purpose that makes workers feel their jobs are important	2.62	6	26	68
Dependable management support of and commitment to workers	2.53	3	41	56
Worker's self-efficacy, i.e., belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments	2.53	6	35	59
Worker's human caring, i.e., tendency to be supportive, nurturing, and responsive to the needs and feelings of others, to easily form relationships, and to take response-bility for the welfare of others	2.50	3	44	53
Fair compensation and benefits	2.50	6	38	56
Reasonable number of cases	2.47	18	17	65
Manageable workloads	2.47	20	12	68
Opportunities for workers to learn and grow professionally	2.47	6	41	53
Workers knowing what is expected of them and having necessary resources	2.44	18	20	62
Worker's work-life balance, i.e., family and friends and recreational/supportive activities outside of work	2.44	3	50	47
Workers' opinions counting and having appropriate autonomy to make decisions	2.41	9	41	50
Overall level of professionalism of the agency	2.26	15	44	41
Peer sharing and support, including having a best friend at work	2.15	21	44	35
Having a social work degree	1.91	29	50	21

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Figure 11: Organizational and Personal Factors Contributing to Staff Retention

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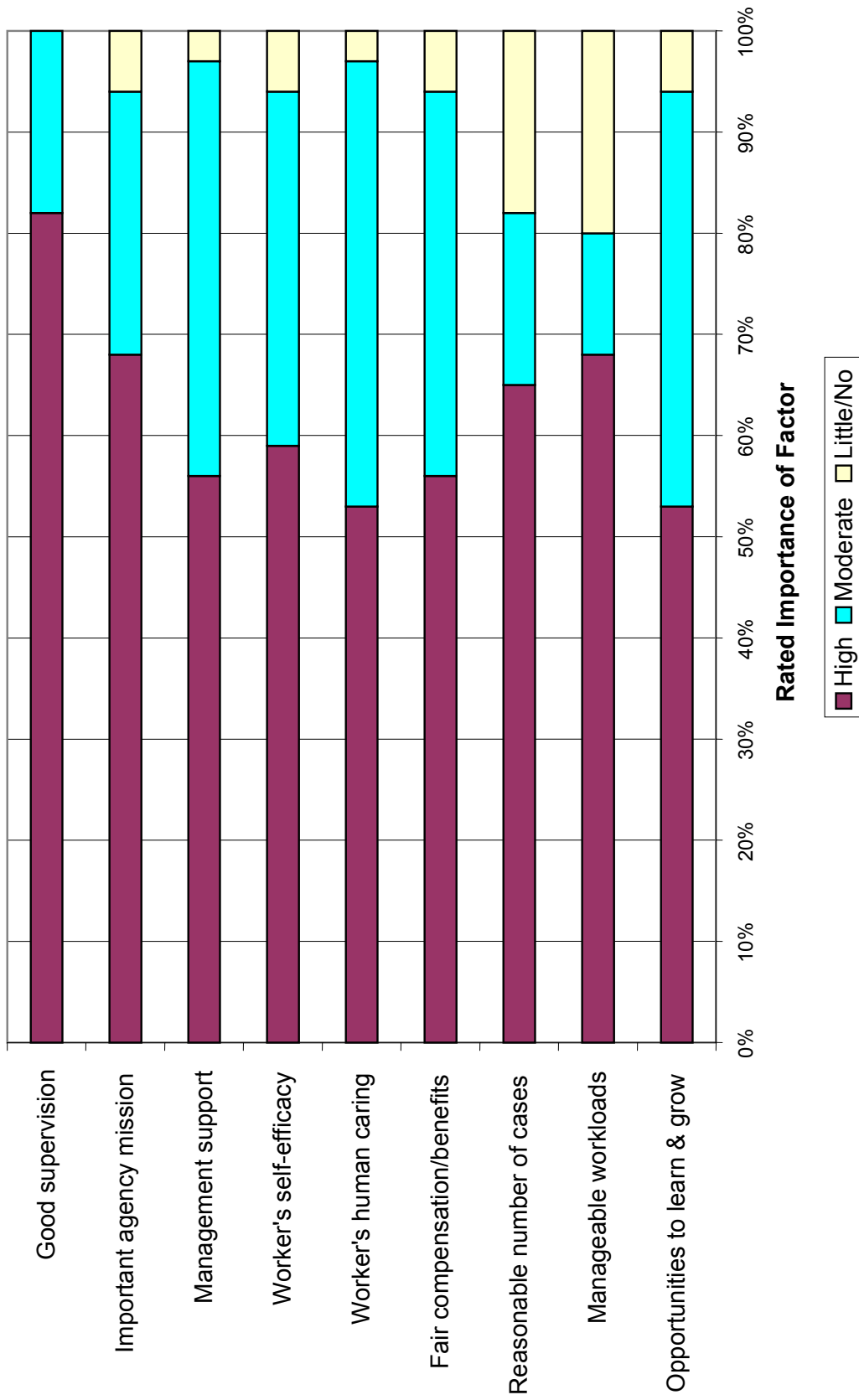
Most Important Agency Actions and Initiatives

The final question asked survey respondents to identify three most important actions or initiatives child welfare agencies and their partners must take to successfully retain qualified case-carrying public child welfare workers and front-line supervisors. A total of 33 states offered 122 such actions and initiatives that are summarized in Table 23 in descending order.

Table 23. Actions and Initiatives		
Actions and Initiatives	**Number of States**	**States Responding**
Reduced caseloads, workloads, and supervisory ratios	27	82%
Increased salaries—competitive and commensurate	19	58
Improved supervision, support, technical assistance, and supervisory accountability	19	58
Career ladders and promotional opportunities, and personal and professional growth	10	30
Staff training—pre-service and in-service, supervisory training a	9	27
Improved and/or increased benefits	8	24
Valuing workers and "softer" strategies—respect, rewards, voice in decision-making, better communications	7	21
Upper management support and assistance	7	21
Changed use of time, especially paperwork and courts	4	12
Service delivery and management improvements, including more services resources	2	66
Educational financial support—BSW, MSW, and continuing education	2	6
Each of the following 8 other actions were mentioned by one respondent: - Improved public image through media - Maintain full complement of staff (training pool) - Use multiple retention strategies - Provide necessary tools for staff - Integrate staff into existing units - Cross train at the local level - Develop measurable retention outcomes - Mentoring for staff	8	24

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REPORT FROM THE 2004 CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE SURVEY:
State Agency Findings

Implications

Introduction

The data gathered on the 2004 Child Welfare Workforce Recruitment and Retention Survey allows us to draw the following implications in the following areas: vacancies and turnovers, resources, workload, quality supervision, human resource capacity building strategies, education and training, salaries and data. These are not equivalent to findings that would be identified by individual state audits, but are more global implications evident from the data in the 2004 survey as a whole and in comparison to the results of the 2000 survey. We refer you to the Observations from the 2000 survey (Appendix E), and note that the current survey findings indicate that states continue to grapple with many of the same issues. As noted previously, the survey respondents were state public child welfare agency administrators rather than case-carrying workers, and represent an administrative point of view.

We were impressed by the creativity and innovation exhibited within many of the states despite challenging budget constraints. We see from the responses that compared to the 2000 survey, states are implementing more varied retention strategies, with more than half the states implementing 14 different strategies over the past five years (Table 20). And we continue to see many exciting opportunities for improvement in the future as agencies address ways to make vital gains in recruitment and retention that will positively impact the field of public child welfare.

The March 2003 GAO report titled *HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff* clearly identified the evaluation of workforce recruitment and retention practices as a vital issue. (GAO-03-357) In light of limited resources, we see evaluation as particularly crucial in determining the most effective strategies. In addition, more research is indicated on who stays in the child welfare workforce and why, in order to better understand the implications for recruitment and retention and to learn from what is going well. As NAPCWA President Nancy Rollins noted, "An understanding of the current environment is imperative for making improvements." States are encouraged to take these broader implications and individualize them for their own particular workforce conditions.

Vacancies and Turnover

Vacancies and **turnovers** in child welfare are costly in two ways; they are felt deeply at the financial level regarding the cost of recruitment and retention, as well as, at the human level in terms of the continuity of service for children and families. Although the vacancy rates have improved slightly (8.5% for CPS workers in 2004 as compared to 9.3% in 2000, and 6.8% for supervisors as compared to 7.4% in 2000, as noted in Table 12), vacancies are staying open longer as compared to 2000 (page 27). According to the U.S. DOL, BLS, the vacancy rate of state and local government workers in

November 2004 was 1.5 percent (page 26). This is significantly lower than all categories of child welfare workers and supervisors. In 2000, the average time to fill a vacancy for all types of workers was six to seven weeks; in 2004 this rose to seven weeks for in-home protective workers and multiple program workers, ten weeks for CPS workers, thirteen weeks for foster care and adoptions workers, and eight weeks for supervisors. What is not clear is if some of the increased time to fill a vacancy can be attributed to budget and hiring restrictions, to difficulties in recruiting qualified candidates, or to other factors.

The turnover rate has increased slightly from 19.9 percent in 2000 to 22.1 percent in 2004 for CPS workers and from 8 percent in 2000 to 11.8 percent in 2004 for front-line supervisors (Table 12). The turnover rates for other types of workers were also fairly high (15.1% for In-home CPS workers, 17.7% foster and adoptive workers, and 19.9% multi-program workers) in 2004. These turnover rates speak to the commotion in the child welfare system which impacts all facets of the system e.g., training of front-line personnel and supervisors, workload and caseload management, and service delivery, and most importantly, impacts the children and families for whom the system was designed to help.   In Appendix D, we calculate that for the 8-18 states reporting turnover data, based on the conservative figure of 70 percent of annual salary being the cost of turnover (as referenced in the book *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* by Kaye and Jordon-Evans), the cost of turnover in those states alone was $108 million. The cost at the human level is equally staggering. The GAO report (GAO-03-357) noted that "…families become hesitant to work with unfamiliar caseworkers…", "…trust is disrupted…" and "…worker turnover compounds children's feelings of neglect…and abandonment…" (page 20). Consistent therapeutic relationships with children and families are vital as caseworkers facilitate the transformative work needed to achieve reunification or alternate permanency plans.

Resources

Availability of a range of resources is essential. **Budget limitations** and **constraints** were listed as the number one factor contributing to recruitment and preventable turnover (Table 16), and lack of resources was noted as the top barrier to the implementation of retention strategies (Table 21). States identified several strategies rated as effective that would require additional **resources**, e.g. increased/improved in-service training, increased educational opportunities, and the provision of technology to workers (Table 20). States did, however, identify a number of other strategies that were considered effective that would not require significant resources, e.g. increased/improved orientation and pre-service training, improved professional culture of the agency, enhanced supervisory skills, and an increase in the workers feeling's of value and respect. A systemic evaluation of all resources is needed in order to leverage what agencies have available to them.

Workload

Workload remains a concern, ranking top among factors pertaining to preventable turnover of caseworkers (Table 19); in addition, it was the top factor on recruitment as salaries are not seen as compensatory for the highly perceived workload (Table 17). Workload, as contrasted to caseload, is a measure not only of the number of the cases handled, but of acuity and complexity of cases, as well as required administrative tasks and resource development. Understood this way, workload can be seen as contributing to the top five turnover problems (Table 19). Eighty one percent of respondents viewed too high and/or demanding workloads as highly problematic in retention issues (Table 19).

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Quality Supervision

Quality supervision continues to be a critical and sometimes weak link. Good supervision ranked as the top organizational and personal factor positively contributing to staff retention (Table 22), and it ranked among the top three most important agency actions and initiatives that respondents thought must be taken to retain caseworkers (Table 23). However, quality of supervision continues to rank somewhat to highly problematic by 78 percent of respondents as a factor contributing to preventable turnover (Table 19). In ranking the effectiveness of strategies agencies implemented over the past 5 years, only 4 percent ranked enhanced supervisor skills as highly effective, and 89 percent as somewhat effective (Table 20).

Human Resource Capacity Building Strategies

Human resource capacity building strategies, involving systemic ways to address workforce conditions, do work. Many states are implementing a multi-faceted approach to provide the support workers need to feel valued and to manage the complexities of a demanding job (Table 20). States reporting implementation of such strategies, including improved professional culture throughout agency, enhanced supervisor skills, increased workers feeling valued/respected by the agency, implemented flex time/changes in office hours, increased/improved in-service training and regularly sought and used employees' views, reported between 85 percent and 100 percent of these strategies were somewhat to highly effective. As noted in the 2000 survey,

> "These 'softer' strategies and actions often deal with the nature of work itself rather than monetary issues and rarely require significant new resources" (2000 Survey, page 5).

These strategies are accessible to administrators, and within their authority to implement.

Education and Training

Education and **training** for caseworkers and supervisors continues to be of high importance in recruitment and retention; University-agency training partnerships and/or stipends for students was the highest rated recruitment strategy implemented by respondents (Table 18) while increased/improved in-service training, increased educational opportunities e.g., MSW, and increased/improved orientation/pre-service training were rated the top three most effective strategies implemented by respondents to retain case-carrying child welfare workers (Table 20). As noted above, quality supervision was ranked highly as a factor contributing to staff retention (Table 20), and good supervision ranked as the top organizational and personal factor contributing to staff retention (Table 22). Training for frontline supervisors is critical due to the impact supervisors have not only on the retention of frontline workers but also on the worker's performance in the service to children and families.

<u>Salaries</u>

Salaries are increasing, but are not competitive with salaries of comparable public and private sector professions. The survey clearly indicates reasonable gains in the minimum and maximum salaries from 2000 to 2004 (Table 5). At issue, however, is that the average salaries of incumbent child welfare workers are significantly below salaries of other professions with related qualifications or with comparable stress and criticality of decision-making. As a comparison, the average annual salary of a child protective service worker is $10,570 less than that of a teacher and $17,257 less than that of a registered nurse. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, November 2003 national average salary data).

Also of note is that the salary is a greater barrier in recruitment than in retention. Salary issues factored into the top two recruitment problems (Table 17); yet low salaries dropped in the ranking of preventable turnover problems from fourth in 2000 to ninth in 2004, with 50 percent of respondents ranking it as highly problematic in 2000 as compared to 28 percent in 2004. It appears that once a worker is hired, salary is not the primary factor causing him or her to leave.

<u>Data</u>

Data based on the level of missing data on the survey responses, it appears that data is not easily accessible and available to be analyzed. This year's survey saw a decrease in the amount of data reported, particularly on vacancy and turnover questions. Missing data on the survey could indicate a number of scenarios, including lack of data, lack of access to data, lack of time to analyze data or lack of time to report data (page 15 and Appendix C); regardless of the reason, the key issue is that easy access to clear workforce data is vital to states' ability to devise and evaluate strategies for improvement.

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Appendix A: 2004 Survey Questionnaire

Fostering Results

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RESEARCH ▪ PRACTICE
IASWR
EDUCATION ▪ POLICY

2004 SURVEY OF CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE ISSUES

Completed Survey Cover Sheet

Child Welfare Agency: _____

Name of Person Coordinating
Completion of Survey: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

                     _____

                     _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

For any questions about the survey, please call Gary Cyphers at (202) 682-0100
or e-mail at gcyphers@aphsa.org

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2004 SURVEY OF CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE ISSUES

Instructions for Completion of Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached survey. Specific questions may need to be answered by different people in your agency, and we appreciate your coordinating their responses. We are interested in getting as precise information as possible from your agency. However, we would prefer that you provide an informed estimate rather than skip a question altogether. If additional space is needed for any question, please attach a separate sheet with the question number(s) indicated and/or attach pertinent materials.

Definitions of Terms

The focus of the survey is **case-carrying child welfare workers**, which we define as all professional child welfare workers who carry cases and provide services directly to children and/or families (i.e., including case managers, but excluding paraprofessional staff). Below are the definitions for four specific types of case-carrying child welfare workers and front-line supervisors. These terms are intended to suggest general categories of child welfare workers, but specific terminology can vary from state to state. Please select the categories closest to those used in your state or locality in responding to the questions.

- **Child protective service (CPS) workers**—workers that provide child welfare first responder services to families in which a child has been reported as a victim of or at risk of abuse or neglect. The core CPS services are screening, safety assessment, investigation, risk assessment, family assessment, and referral for services.

- **In-home protective service workers**—workers that provide services to families in which a child has been identified as a victim of abuse or neglect and remains at home with family or other caregivers, whether in the custody of the state or not. The core services include assessment, case planning, and implementation of services, which may be intensive and time limited, or less intensive and longer term.

- **Foster care and adoption workers**—workers that provide on-going services to families in which a child has been identified as a victim of abuse or neglect, and is <u>either</u> living in foster care (e.g., relative/kinship, residential, or independent living) <u>or</u> the court has approved a permanent out of home placement or termination of parental rights has been filed and adoption has been pursued. The core services include assessment, case planning, post-adoption support, and service delivery.

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- **Multiple child welfare program workers**—workers that provide services for two or more of the above named child welfare programs (i.e., carry a mixed caseload)

Front-line supervisors—assigned agency staff that provide direct supervision, support, and oversight of the performance of case-carrying child welfare workers.

2004 Survey of Child Welfare Workforce Issues

The purpose of this collaborative survey is to gather updated data about the status of workforce issues in public child welfare agencies throughout the country. The survey also seeks information about how agencies are monitoring workforce trends, and the promising strategies and practices that child welfare agencies may be using to address workforce challenges facing them. Each state agency also is being asked to select three local offices to complete the survey (see cover letter). The three partner organizations conducting this survey jointly and separately will report the findings from this survey and develop recommendations to inform and guide child welfare workforce policy and practice.

In completing this survey, please describe conditions in effect in your agency **on April 1, 2004**, unless directed otherwise in any specific question.

Agency Background Information

1. Please check the statement below that best describes your agency.

_____ a) State public child welfare agency (i.e., formally designated or statutory) in a **state-administered state**

_____ b) State public child welfare agency (i.e., formally designated or statutory) in a state-supervised and **locally administered state**

_____ c) County/city public child welfare agency in a **state-administered state** (e.g., field office)

_____ d) County/city public child welfare agency in a state-supervised and **locally administered state** (e.g., division of local human service department)

_____ e) Other (specify): _____

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2. Please check the statement below that best describes <u>how your child welfare agency is structured</u> in relation to other human service agencies in your state or locality.

     ____   a) **Independent**—the child welfare agency is not part of a larger human services agency, and the child welfare administrator reports directly to the governor or county/city manager

     ____   b) **Umbrella**—the child welfare agency is part of a larger human services agency, and the child welfare administrator reports to a higher-level human service CEO (e.g., secretary, commissioner, executive director)

     ____   c) **Other** (specify): _____

3. What is the size of your <u>agency's current annual operating budget</u> from all sources for child welfare?

     $ _____

4. What is the current status of the <u>accreditation</u> of your agency? *Please check status and indicate the name of the accrediting organization, if it is other than the Council on Accreditation (COA).*

     ____   a*)* Agency is fully accredited (name: _____)

     ____   b) Agency is provisionally accredited (name: _____)

     ____   c) Agency is in process of seeking accreditation (name: _____)

     ____   d) Agency is considering whether to seek accreditation (name: _____)

     ____   e) Agency is not considering accreditation at this time

     ____   f) Other (specify): _____)

5. Does your state or locality provide <u>educational financial support</u> for case-carrying child welfare workers and/or front-line supervisors to pursue a BSW, MSW, and/or related degree? *Please complete the table below by indicating whether you provide financial support for each type of degree, checking which source(s) of funding your agency uses to provide this educational support, and stating the number of workers supported during your last full fiscal year for each type of degree.*

	BSW	MSW	Related Degree
Provide financial support?—Yes or No for each type of degree			
Sources of Funding:			
• Title IV-E federal payments to states for foster care and adoption training			
• Federal child welfare discretionary training grants			
• Federal Social Services Block Grant			
• Federal child abuse state grants			
• State revenue sources			
• Local revenue sources			
• Private revenue sources			
• Other (specify):			
Number of workers financially supported during agency's last full fiscal year			

6. We are interested in the types of case-carrying child welfare workers your agency has and the proportion of workers in each category. *Please use the definitions provided on page 2. Then check below those that your agency has and indicate the approximate percentage of all case-carrying workers in each category. If the categories are different in your state please add them and the proportion of workers in each category (additional space is provided at the bottom of the page if needed).*

_____	child protective service workers	_____% of all child welfare workers
_____	in-home protective service workers	_____% of all child welfare workers
_____	foster care and adoption workers	_____% of all child welfare workers
_____	multiple child welfare program workers	_____% of all child welfare workers
_____	other: specify	_____% of all child welfare workers

7. How frequently does your <u>agency collect information</u> (e.g., perceptions, recommendations) directly from your employees about workforce issues (e.g., job satisfaction, retention challenges) using the following methods? *Please check the frequency for each data collection method.*

Method:	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Exit interviews				
Staff focus groups				
Staff surveys				
Other:				

a) If you answered "occasionally" or "frequently" for any of the methods, please indicate how your agency uses the information you collect from your employees.

b) If you answered "never" or "rarely" for any of the methods, please indicate the most important factors that contribute to your agency not using these methods.

8. Please check which of the following <u>conditions exist in your child welfare system</u>, with bulleted follow-up questions if your agency is unionized and/or privatizes child welfare services?

Conditions:	Yes	No
Child welfare court decrees or settlements		
State statutory caseload standards		
Case-carrying child welfare workers belong to a union		
• If "yes,' name of union:	---	---
• If "yes," what percentage of case-carrying workers belong to union? _____ %	---	---
• If "yes," is collective bargaining used?		
Child welfare services are privatized (private sector contracted)		
• If "yes," what percentage of caseload is privatized? _____ %	---	---

9. Please check which of the following <u>protocols or documents</u> your child welfare agency has. If such document(s) exist please send a copy with your completed survey form:

     ____	child welfare caseload standards or guidelines
     ____	child welfare workload standards or guidelines
     ____	child welfare supervisor ratio standards or guidelines

Agency Workforce Data

10. Please complete the table below about salaries, education and licenses/certifications, training and career ladders, and caseloads and supervisory ratios for the four categories of workers and front-line supervisors. If your agency does not have that category of worker, please write "NA" in that column. If data for any category of worker cannot be broken-out from a more general grouping (e.g., child welfare caseworkers), please provide that data and indicate what the grouping represents. Please use **April 1, 2004** as the reference point.

Workforce Issues as of April 1, 2004:	Child Protective Service Workers	In-Home Protective Service Workers	Foster Care and/or Adoption Workers	Multiple Program Workers	Front-Line Super-visors
Salary:					
a. Minimum annual salary					
b. Maximum annual salary					
c. Average annual salary of incumbents					
Education/License/Certification:					
d) Minimum academic degree requirement, that is not substitutable for work equivalencies (specify degree)					
e) Social work license required (yes or no)					
f) Certification of any kind required (yes or no)					
Training/Career Ladders:					
g) Number of hours of mandatory pre-service training					
h) Number of hours of mandatory in-service training each year					
i) Career ladder (structured mobility in job series) exists (yes or no)					

Caseloads and Supervisory Ratios:					
j) Average caseload size per worker for services where the: 1) child is defined as a case					
2) family is defined as a case					
k) Average supervisor to FTE worker ratio					

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Staff Recruitment and Retention

11. Please provide as precise data as possible about <u>position vacancies and staff turnovers in your child welfare agency</u>. If you do not have exact data please make your best informed estimate. Please use the definitions for the four categories of workers and front-line supervisors provided on page 2. If your agency does not have a specific category of worker, please write "NA" in that column. If data for any specific category of worker cannot be broken-out, please indicate in which worker category the data are included. Additionally, **we define <u>"preventable turnover"</u> as staff leaving the agency for reasons other than retirement, death, marriage/parenting, returning to school, or spousal job move. The balance of staff leaving the agency is defined as "preventable turnover**." Please do <u>not</u> include intra-agency transfers (e.g., promotions, demotions, or lateral transfers within your child welfare agency) as turnover.

Recruitment and Retention Issues:	**Child Protective Service Workers**	**In-Home Protective Service Workers**	**Foster Care and/or Adoption Workers**	**Multi Progr Work**
Position Vacancies:				
a. Authorized FTE positions on **April 1, 2004**				
b. Number of those positions that were vacant on **April 1, 2004**				
c. Estimated typical amount of time (in weeks) required to fill a vacant position during **calendar year 2003**				
Staff Turnovers:				
d. Number of employees that left your child welfare agency for any reason during **calendar year 2003**				
e. Number of those employees leaving agency **during calendar year 2003** that you estimate were <u>preventable turnovers</u>				
f. Estimated average tenure (in years) of those employees leaving your agency due to preventable turnover in **calendar year 2003**				

12. Comparing calendar year 2003 with the prior two years, how would you describe the <u>extent of change your agency has experienced</u> with regard to recruitment/hiring and preventable turnovers among case-carrying child welfare staff in your agency? *Please check the extent of change for each staffing issue.*

Staffing Issue:	Much Worse	Some Worse	About the Same	Some Better	Much Better
Recruitment/hiring					
Preventable turnover					

   a) If in question 12 you checked that your <u>recruitment and/or preventable turnover were other than "about the same</u>," please rate how important a contribution the following factors made to the change in your agency. *Rate each factor on the following three-point scale: 1 = little or no importance; 2 = moderate importance; and 3 = high importance.*

Possible Factors:	Recruitment Better or Worse	Preventable Turnover Better or Worse
Response to a court decree or settlement		
Going through the process of accreditation (new or renewal)		
Response to a tragedy (e.g., child death, missing child)		
The federal Children and Family Service Reviews (CFSR)		
The Program Improvement Plan process as part of CFSR		
Budget limitations and constraints		
A major reform initiated by the governor or legislature, or county manager/board		
Other (specify):		

Staff Recruitment and Retention Problems and Strategies

13. Which of the following problems has your agency experienced in its <u>recruitment and hiring of new case-carrying child welfare workers during the past 12 months</u>? *Rate each problem on the following three-point scale: 1 = not problematic; 2 = somewhat problematic; and 3 = highly problematic.*

   _____ a) A perceived imbalance of the demands of the job and financial compensation offered
   _____ b) Other attractive labor market alternatives for job seekers
   _____ c) Negative media reporting about public child welfare
   _____ d) Starting salaries that are not competitive with comparable positions
   _____ e) Problematic recruitment and/or selection requirements or procedures
   _____ f) Civil service/merit system worker qualifications that don't match the job duties
   _____ g) Hiring freezes or restrictions
   _____ h) Other budgetary constraints (specify): _____
   _____ i) Benefits that are not competitive with other comparable positions
   _____ j) Insufficient resources for training and supervision to attract good candidates
   _____ k) Union constraints

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_____ l) Other (specify): _____

14. Which of the following <u>recruitment strategies</u> has your agency implemented <u>over the past five years</u> in order to recruit and hire case-carrying child welfare workers. *Rate each strategy/approach on the following four-point scale: 0 = did not implement this strategy; 1 = implemented and found <u>not effective</u>; 2 = implemented and found <u>somewhat effective</u>; 3 = implemented and found <u>highly effective</u>.*

_____ a) Early/aggressive recruiting at social work schools (e.g., job fairs, class presentations)
_____ b) University-agency training partnerships and/or stipends to students (e.g., IV-E)
_____ c) Job announcements posted on own or others' employment websites
_____ d) Public appeals through the media (e.g., PSA announcements, news articles)
_____ e) Outreach to groups and agencies with significant connections to diverse populations
_____ f) Increased personal contact with potential candidates to encourage their application
_____ g) Use of realistic job previews (e.g., video portraying real work demands)
_____ h) Improved interview/selection procedures (e.g., screening for competencies/attitudes)
_____ i) Salaries raised beyond normal inflationary increases
_____ j) Some positions converted into more manageable entry-level case-carrying jobs
_____ k) Emphasized continuing education/training & supervision opportunities with agency
_____ l) Hiring/signing bonuses and/or enhanced or more flexible benefit packages
_____ m) Other (specify): _____

15. Looking at the <u>recruitment strategies and approaches as a whole in question 14 that your agency did **not** implement (rated 0)</u>, to what extent did the following factors contribute to your agency not implementing them over the past five years? *Rate each factor on a three-point scale:*
1 = little or no factor, 2 = a moderate factor, and 3 = a major factor.

_____ a) Strategies we did implement sufficiently improved recruitment outcomes
_____ b) We had no confidence that these strategies would improve our recruitment outcomes
_____ c) We had no consensus on which specific strategies would improve outcomes
_____ d) We couldn't implement any strategies that required new resources
_____ e) Agency staff did not have the authority to implement strategies
_____ f) Crises in child welfare prevented agency staff from focusing on improved recruitment
_____ g) CFSR and PIP process prevented agency staff from focusing on improved recruitment
_____ h) Strategies need to be customized to the unique recruitment needs of local offices
_____ i) Other (specify): _____

16. Which of the following problems has your agency experienced regarding <u>preventable turnover of case-carrying child welfare staff (i.e., leaving other than due to retirement, death, marriage/parenting, returning to school, or spousal job move) during the past 12 months</u>? Please base responses on exit interviews and staff survey information wherever possible. *Rate each problem on the following three-point scale: 1= not problematic; 2= somewhat problematic; and 3= highly problematic.*

_____ a) Workload too high and/or demanding (e.g., stress, being overwhelmed)
_____ b) After hours and unpredictable work interfere with personal and family life
_____ c) Caseloads too high
_____ d) Too much time spent on travel/transport, paperwork, court appearances, meetings
_____ e) Low salaries
_____ f) Workers do not feel valued by agency

Question is continued on next page

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_____ g) Problems with quality of supervision
_____ h) Insufficient service resources for families and children
_____ i) Insufficient opportunities for promotion and career advancement in the agency
_____ j) Insufficient agency support for professionalism of workers
_____ k) Worker concerns about their physical safety
_____ l) Poor working conditions (e.g., rundown/crowded building, lack of needed equip.)
_____ m) Agency management problems (e.g., high manager turnover)
_____ n) Inadequate quality/insufficient amount of training or continuing education
_____ o) Vulnerability to legal liability around cases
_____ p) Lack of professional development opportunities (e.g., conference attendance)
_____ q) Negative media coverage of the child welfare field
_____ r) Other (specify): _____

17. **Two-part question**: First, which of the following <u>retention strategies</u> has your agency implemented <u>over the past five years</u> in order to retain case-carrying child welfare workers? *Rate each strategy/approach on the following four-point scale: 0 = did not implement this strategy;*
1 = implemented and found <u>not effective</u>; 2 = implemented and found <u>somewhat effective</u>;
3 = implemented and found <u>highly effective</u>. **Second, for all strategies you implemented (ratings 1, 2, or 3), please circle the rating for those strategies that were consistently used by or embedded in your agency, as opposed to only being used occasionally**.

_____ a) Increased/improved in-service training for workers
_____ b) Increased educational opportunities (e.g., support for BSW and MSW degrees)
___ c) Paid for worker's continuing education (CEUs) licensing requirement
_____ d) Provided approved supervision required for worker's social work licensing
_____ e) Increased/improved agency orientation and/or pre-service training
_____ f) Reduced workers' caseloads
_____ g) Implemented special efforts to raise workers' salaries
_____ h) Implemented flex time and/or changes in office hours
_____ i) Found ways for workers to reduce "time-wasters" and do more direct case activity
_____ j) Enhanced supervisor skills, including case management and leadership skills
_____ k) Reduced supervisors' workloads (e.g., adjusting supervisor/worker ratios)
_____ l) Regularly sought and used employees' views (e.g., exit interviews, focus groups)
_____ m) Worked to improve the professional culture throughout the agency
_____ n) Increased workers feeling valued and respected by the agency
_____ o) Improved physical office/building space
_____ p) Increased worker safety
_____ q) Provided technology (e.g., cells phones; lap-tops; intranet; hand-held devices)
_____ r) Established formal mentoring program
_____ s) Implemented job rotation and/or job-sharing
_____ t) Adopted new intervention strategies (e.g., family-centered) that workers support
_____ u) Increased workers' access to needed resources to serve children and families
_____ v) Expanded diversity of workforce to reflect children and families served
_____ w) Other (specify): _____

18. Looking at the <u>retention strategies and approaches as a whole in question 17 that your agency did **not** implement (rated 0)</u>, to what extent did the following factors contribute to your agency not implementing them over the past five years? *Rate each factor on a three-point scale: 1 = little or no factor, 2 = a moderate factor, and 3 = a major factor.*
_____ a) Strategies we did implement sufficiently improved retention outcomes

_____ b) We had no confidence that these strategies would improve our retention outcomes
_____ c) We had no consensus on which specific strategies would improve outcomes
_____ d) We couldn't implement any strategies that required new resources
_____ e) Agency staff did not have the authority to implement strategies
_____ f) Crises in child welfare prevented agency staff from focusing on improved retention
_____ g) CFSR and PIP process prevented agency staff form focusing on improved retention
_____ h) Strategies need to be customized to the unique retention needs of local offices
_____ i) Other (specify): _____

19. Looking now at the case-carrying child welfare workers who intend to remain employed with your agency, what do you think are the <u>most important organizational and personal factors that contribute to their decision to remain employed in public child welfare</u>? *Rate each factor on the following three-point scale: 1 = little or no importance; 2= moderate importance; and 3 = high importance.*

_____ a) Fair compensation and benefits
_____ b) Reasonable number of cases
_____ c) Manageable workloads
_____ d) Good supervision, with a supervisor who cares about worker as a person
_____ e) Opportunities for workers to learn and grow professionally
_____ f) An agency mission/purpose that makes workers feel their jobs are important
_____ g) Workers knowing what is expected of them and having necessary resources
_____ h) Workers' opinions counting and having appropriate autonomy to make decisions
_____ i) Peer sharing and support, including having a best friend at work
_____ j) Dependable management support of and commitment to workers
_____ k) Overall level of professionalism of the agency
_____ l) Having a social work degree
_____ m) Worker's human caring (i.e., tendency to be supportive, nurturing, and responsive, to the needs and feelings of others, to easily form relationships, and to take responsibility for the welfare of others)
_____ n) Worker's self-efficacy (i.e., belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments)
_____ o) Worker's work-life balance (i.e., family and friends and recreational/supportive activities outside of work)
_____ p) Other (specify): _____

<u>Most Important Staff Retention Actions and Initiatives</u>

20. What do you believe are the three <u>most important actions and initiatives</u> child welfare agencies and their partners must take <u>to successfully retain qualified case-carrying public child welfare workers and front-line supervisors</u>?

1.
2.
3.

Thank you for completing this survey
Please fax this cover sheet, the completed questionnaire, and any attachments
<u>by June 30, 2004</u> to Gary Cyphers at (202) 204-0071
(or mail to APHSA, 810 First St., NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002)

Appendix B: 42 States Responding to 2004 Child Welfare Workforce Survey*

Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Delaware
District of Columbia
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Iowa
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky
Maine
Maryland
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Wyoming

Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin

*Those in bold also responded to 2000 survey

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Appendix C: Analysis of Missing Workforce Data for Questions on Vacancies and Turnovers

Worker Categories	States Have that Category	Authorized Positions	Vacant Positions	Turnovers	Preventable Turnovers
CPS Workers	24	22	17	17	9
Percentage		*92%*	*71%*	*71%*	*38%*
In-Home Protective Workers	15	8	6	8	5
Percentage		*53%*	*40%*	*53%*	*33%*
Foster Care & Adoption Workers	24	15	9	9	6
Percentage		*62%*	*38%*	*38%*	*25%*
Multiple Program Workers	21	17	15	14	6
Percentage		*81%*	*71%*	*67%*	*29%*
Front-Line Supervisors	42	26	19	18	10
Percentage		*62%*	*45%*	*43%*	*24%*
Averages for all Worker Categories		**70%**	**53%**	**54%**	**30%**

- Only 70% of responding states provided data on authorized positions,
- A little more than half of responding states provided data on vacancies and turnovers,
- Less than a third of responding states provided data on preventable turnovers,
- These missing data trends were less severe for CPS workers and multiple program workers, but were more severe for foster care/adoption workers and front line supervisors.

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Appendix D: Calculation of Direct Costs of Vacancies and Turnovers

There are direct and indirect costs of having workers quit. Just looking at the direct financial costs, Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordon-Evans, in there book *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em,* state that

> "multiple studies suggest that the cost of replacing key people runs between 70 and 200 percent of the person's annual salary. One study found that the top three reasons for implementing retention programs in organizations are:
> 1) losing an employee costs between 6 and 18 month's pay
> 2) hi-tech workers, professionals and managers cost twice as much as other employees to replace
> 3) many hidden costs are incurred through lost sales and lost customers"

Taking a very conservative approach in estimating the direct financial cost of child welfare workforce turnover from our survey data, we use the following assumptions:
- Replacing a worker or supervisor costs 70% of their annual salary,
- The average salary of the incumbents in each category of worker will be used.

Using this methodology, we calculated the snap-shot costs due to vacancies on April 1, 2004 and the annual costs of turnovers during all of 2003 for those state agencies that provided data. The estimates are presented in the table below.

Workforce Issues:	CPS Worker Costs	In-Home Prot Srv Worker Costs	Foster Care/Adoption Worker Costs	Multiple Program Worker Costs	Front-Line Supervisor Costs	Totals
Average salary of incumbents	$35,553	$34,929	$35,911	$36,136	$44,232	--
Vacancies on April 1, 2004 (N= 6-19 states)	662	236	74	548	108	1,628
Cost @ 70% of salary in millions	$16.48	$5.77	$1.86	$13.86	$3.34	$41.31
Turnovers during 2003 (N= 8-18 states)	1,945	363	216	1,487	257	4,268

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Workforce Issues:	CPS Worker Costs	In-Home Prot Srv Worker Costs	Foster Care/Adoption Worker Costs	Multiple Program Worker Costs	Front-Line Supervisor Costs	Totals
Cost @ 70% of salary in millions	$48.41	$8.88	$5.43	$37.61	$7.96	$108.29
Preventable turnover during 2003 (N= 5-10 states)	755	204	63	406	42	1,470
Cost @ 70% of salary in millions	$18.79	$4.99	$1.58	$10.27	$1.30	$36.93

Appendix E: Observations from Findings in the May 2001 Report of the Child Welfare Workforce Survey*

1. From this vacancy and turnover data, one can conclude that turnovers, particularly preventable turnovers, are fueling staff recruitment problems, especially among CPS workers. In response to this phenomenon, states have become quite efficient in filling the vacancies quickly, resulting in relatively small vacancy rates at any time. While some states previously have had infusions of moderate or large numbers of new child welfare staff positions to be filled (e.g. state of Washington in 1998-99), most vacancies are a direct result of turnovers, with half or more being identified as preventable.

2. Because there are many dimensions and factors at play with staff turnovers and vacancies, considerable variations and differences can occur from state to state, and often from county to county. This challenges states and counties to do a careful analysis of their particular situation in order to develop strategies and approaches for responding. One important source of information in this assessment process is the direct service workers themselves through worker surveys, focus groups, and exit interviews.

3. A lack of magic bullets or quick fixes for turnovers and vacancies challenges states and counties to use an intentional mix of multiple, well-coordinated strategies and approaches that are customized to address the specific turnover and vacancy problems they have. While increasing salaries and reducing caseloads are the most obvious and publicized strategies, states rated them as only "somewhat effective" in addressing these challenges. The survey findings affirm that competitive salaries and manageable caseloads are a necessary, but not sufficient, component of the ultimate resolution of this problem.

4. Many of the strategies and approaches identified by states throughout the survey clearly fall within the current volition and authority of many, or even most managers to implement. These "softer" strategies and actions often deal with the nature of work itself rather than monetary issues and rarely require significant new resources. The good news of these survey findings is that many of the strategies and changes that could contribute to reducing preventable turnover and vacancies are already available to child welfare administrators.

5. States that were not able to answer a number of survey questions may want to consider what they need to do in order to have important on-going data for decision-making.

*Found in 2001 Workforce Survey Report, Page 5.

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