

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)

Request for Information Number JFSR1819068141

Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development

Section I – General Information

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) releases this Request for Information (RFI) for the purpose of obtaining information from local Ohio Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) regarding workforce challenges and implemented strategies to address workforce challenges. ODJFS has the responsibility of partnering with the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) to implement and evaluate the impact of evidence-informed workforce interventions that aim to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. Having this information will assist the State with identifying and selecting a diverse group of PCSAs to partner with as members of the Statewide Implementation Team to test workforce interventions, recruitment, and retention strategies that will lead to improved outcomes for children and families.

ODJFS wishes to review and consider PCSAs to serve as members of the Statewide Implementation Team. Together the team would work to identify a workforce challenge and strategy and/or intervention to implement and evaluate. ODJFS also seeks specific information regarding PCSAs' willingness, readiness, and capacity to meet the requirements and expectations of this project.

The Statewide Implementation Team will be limited to identifying one (1) workforce challenge and strategy to implement and evaluate. Therefore, special consideration may be given to PCSAs with similar workforce challenges.

Suggestions and comments from PCSAs that offer information regarding workforce challenges and strategies and/or interventions that have been implemented to address these challenges, specifically related to the project as described in Section III of this RFI are invited. The objective of this RFI is to gather feedback from PCSAs who are currently experiencing workforce challenges and have the capacity, willingness, and readiness to work with a team to implement and evaluate the impact of evidence-informed workforce interventions to improve child welfare workforce outcomes to meet ODJFS specifications.

IMPORTANT: All responses submitted to ODJFS to any solicitation shall become the property of ODJFS. This RFI and any responses received in response that have been opened, reviewed, and considered by ODJFS are deemed to be public records pursuant to ORC 149.43.

RFI Clarification Process – Questions and Answers

Interested parties may ask clarifying questions regarding this RFI, using the following Internet process:

- * Access the ODJFS Web Page at <http://jfs.ohio.gov>;
- * Select “Doing Business with ODJFS” from the bottom of the page;
- * Select “RFP’s” from the left side column;
- * Select RFP Number JFSR1819068141 from the list of competitive opportunities;
- * Follow the link to the dedicated web page;
- * Select “Submit Inquiry” near the bottom of the web page;
- * Follow instructions there for submitting questions; or, to view posted questions and answers;
- * Select “View Q and A” near the bottom of the web page.

In submitting a question, please provide the contact person’s name, the organization’s name, e-mail address, and business phone number. ODJFS will not respond to questions submitted after 8:00 a.m. on the date the Q&A period closes.

Questions will be answered only if they are submitted using this process, and are received before the close of the Q&A period. All ODJFS answers will be posted for reference by all parties. Answers will be posted on the Internet webpage dedicated to this RFI and may be accessed by following the instructions provided above.

In the event of any technical difficulties with this Q&A process, PCSAs may seek assistance by contacting the ODJFS, Office of Contracts and Acquisitions: (614) 728-5693.

Anticipated Timetable

DATE	EVENT/ACTIVITY
September 20, 2017	ODJFS releases the RFI to PCSAs on DAS/ODJFS websites; Q&A period opens -RFI becomes active; PCSAs may submit inquiries for clarification.
October 4, 2017	Q&A period closes; 8 a.m. -No further inquiries will be accepted.
October 18, 2017	Deadline for PCSAs to submit responses to ODJFS; 3 p.m.
November 2 & 3, 2017	PCSAs in-person interview (potentially; only at ODJFS’ discretion)

Section II – Project Background

Staff recruitment and retention are persistent challenges for many child welfare agencies. In addition to tremendous fiscal costs to agencies and to individual staff who have invested themselves in the agency, staff turnover can negatively impact the relationship between agencies and families, leading to poor child and family outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being. These challenges are compounded by a lack of research on workforce development frameworks identifying specific agency needs and effective evidence-informed strategies to attract and retain child welfare staff.

The QIC-WD is dedicated to understanding how to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. Ultimately, improvements in workforce outcomes may lead to enhanced child and family outcomes for public and tribal child welfare systems. Over the past three (3) Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs), agencies have noted issues with workforce turnover as strong contributors to their inability to meet federal performance standards. Making an investment in the child welfare workforce is an investment in improving outcomes for children and families. The QIC-WD's ambitious goals, listed below, reflect their intent, in partnership with project sites, to make a difference in the landscape of the child welfare workforce:

- A. Use a systematic process and supporting tools to identify, assess, and evaluate child welfare workforce issues;
- B. Develop a crosswalk of current and future workforce trends impacting child welfare and how agencies can effectively address issues and prepare for these trends;
- C. Develop a comprehensive catalog of existing evidence-informed workforce strategies;
- D. Develop new evidence regarding the efficacy of select workforce interventions for improving agency workforce environment and outcomes;
- E. Develop new evidence regarding the connections between improved workforce outcomes and child and family outcomes; and
- F. Enhance agency capacity to implement new workforce interventions and sustain a continuous workforce improvement process.

ODJFS, Office of Families and Children (OFC), has been selected as one of the QIC-WD's project sites to test evidence-informed workforce strategies to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. As a project site, OFC must select a broad-based set of child welfare staff to create a Statewide Implementation Team. In addition, each site must commit to the following:

- A. Select and implement a workforce strategy and/or intervention;
- B. Participate in the evaluation of a workforce strategy and/or intervention;

- C. Participate in a community of learning; and
- D. Plan for sustainability and engage in dissemination.

Section III – Outline of ODJFS Needs, Specifications, and Assumptions

The purpose of this RFI is to gather information on the range of PCSAs who are interested in partnering with ODJFS and the QIC-WD on a Statewide Implementation Team to identify a workforce challenge and corresponding strategy to implement and evaluate. As a member of the Statewide Implementation Team, selected PCSAs will be expected to:

- A. Identify and commit two (2) PCSA representatives from their PCSA to serve on the Statewide Implementation Team from Fall 2017 through Fall 2021 (At least one (1) representative must be from the PCSA's Human Resources Department. The other representative could be a program services supervisor/manager, data analyst, quality assurance, etc.). Representatives will be expected to attend meetings monthly, or as needed;
- B. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ODJFS that will detail the mutual roles and responsibilities of the PCSA and ODJFS, including data collection, confidentiality, access to and retention of data, dissemination, anticipated time frames for project milestones, and establishing and managing internal and external stakeholder relationships to ensure successful project implementation and evaluation;
- C. Execute a Data Sharing Agreement that describes required data elements, data transmission processes, data storage, and issues of data protection, confidentiality, security, and publication;
- D. Work with the QIC-WD and the Statewide Implementation Team to select, implement, and evaluate a workforce strategy or intervention. Each selected PCSA commits to utilizing the most rigorous evaluation selected for the State of Ohio (Note: One (1) intervention will be selected for the entire state; not per PCSA);
- E. PCSAs selected to participate in the QIC-WD project MAY be randomly assigned by the QIC-WD to the experimental or control conditions. Depending upon the workforce intervention that is chosen for implementation and testing in Ohio, the QIC-WD may use random assignment or may identify matched comparison counties from beyond those selected to participate. Those PCSAs assigned to the experimental condition will co-develop and implement the selected workforce strategy, while those PCSAs assigned to the control condition will not implement the selected workforce strategy during the period of the project. Selected PCSAs agree to provide access to their human resources data and child welfare case outcome data, and to facilitate access to their child welfare staff for the purpose of completion of an annual survey. Upon completion of the experimental study period, technical information, guidance and lessons learned will be available to assist all interested PCSAs in Ohio who wish to implement the tested workforce strategy;
- F. Develop a realistic and feasible dissemination plan to support sustainability goals, share lessons

learned, implementation progress, and evaluation findings with community stakeholders. Dissemination and sustainability activities will start early in the project and involve information sharing and relationship building. Methods to support dissemination may include webinars, conference presentations, manuals, articles, etc.; and

- G. Each selected PCSA will receive resources and support from ODJFS and the QIC-WD throughout the project as needed to support the implementation and evaluation of the selected workforce interventions. The QIC-WD will work with ODJFS to develop an appropriate project budget that is specific to the intervention to be implemented and evaluated. Depending on the interventions selected in partnership with the QIC-WD and PCSAs, ODJFS may either provide direct purchase services, pass-through funds to counties for completion of specific activities, or reimburse selected PCSAs for expenses related to the implementation and the evaluation of the selected workforce intervention/strategy. Specific amounts may vary per PCSA, based on total number of selected PCSAs, unique needs, and scope of the project. Where applicable, project activities and corresponding expenses will need to be approved in advance.

Section IV - Content and Format of Response

- A. PCSAs are asked to submit a narrative. The narrative should provide sufficient information in the following categories:
1. PCSA profile;
 2. Description of workforce needs; and
 3. Organizational and evaluation readiness.

Responses should be no longer than ten (10) pages, double spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Graphs, tables and footnotes/endnotes can be single spaced, 10-point font, Times New Roman. The cover sheet does not count towards the ten (10) page maximum.

- B. Responses should briefly describe the PCSA, including its structure, (number of staff; number of frontline staff across units; number of supervisors across units) and any information regarding labor agreements, if the PCSA's funding comes from a voter-approved levy, and if so, if the funding will be contingent on voter approval in the next four (4) years;
- C. Responses should briefly describe the PCSA's workforce needs as follows:
1. Most pressing workforce needs;
 2. Most prominent workforce issues;
 3. Organizational barriers and facilitators that account for workforce trends;
 4. Workforce strategies or interventions implemented in the past five years, or planning to implement, to address workforce development issues (recruitment, hiring, training) and describe effectiveness and lessons learned; and
 5. Workforce needs regarding recruitment, hiring, training and professional development, salary and benefits, performance management, caseload/workload, vacancies and turnover,

workforce attitudes, physical work environment, or supervision. (It is NOT necessary to discuss all of these areas, only those that are most relevant at the PCSA.)

D. Responses should briefly describe the PCSA's workforce data as follows:

1. Workforce data collected/tracked (e.g., recruitment, hiring, training, performance management, tenure, compensation, benefits, turnover, exit interviews/surveys), process, software, and storage;
2. Challenges with collecting, accessing, submitting, and/or storing workforce data;
3. The PCSA's data collection and/or analysis capacity;
4. A summary of most recent workforce data and explain or interpret what it means;
5. The hiring process and who has authority;
6. A summary of results from any previous employee surveys or culture/climate surveys within the past three (3) years;
7. Turnover rate, including movement if known, trends in turnover data over the past three (3) years, and the formula used to calculate turnover;
8. Annual vacancy rate;
9. Workload/caseload statistics; and
10. Tenure data for as many staff categories as possible, including leadership, middle managers, supervisors, and frontline workers.

E. Responses should include a description of salary and benefits, including:

1. Description of incentives or support for workers and supervisors to continue their education;
2. Description of career advancement opportunities available to workers and supervisors;
3. Salary range for caseworker and child welfare supervisors;
4. Standards and processes for receiving supplemental pay or salary increases; and
5. Strategies or systems in place to recognize and reward workers and supervisors.

F. Responses should provide a description of caseload/workload standards and strategies/systems in place or have been used in the past to manage or improve caseload/workload.

G. Responses should include a description of the PCSA's organizational and evaluation readiness that includes:

1. The PCSA's willingness, readiness, and capacity to meet the requirements and expectations for the project;
2. A summary of the PCSA's history of working on similar implementation and evaluation projects (e.g. Implementation Center projects, Title IV-E Waiver projects, previous QIC projects, Demonstration projects, Organizational and Evaluation readiness);
3. A summary of initiatives, pilots, or projects in which the PCSA is currently participating or planning;
4. Identify the proposed representatives who would serve on the Statewide Implementation Team and their credentials.
5. A rating of the PCSA's interest in implementing and degree of fit with the PCSA's needs, on a scale of High = 3, Medium = 2, Low = 1, for each of the following potential workforce

interventions that are under consideration for testing in Ohio, along with any comments or concerns about a potential intervention. PCSAs should provide ratings for each intervention listed.

Potential Intervention	PCSA interest and willingness to co-design and implement in a research study			Degree of fit with PCSA's specific workforce needs and organizational environment			Comments or concerns?
	Low		High	Low		High	
Redesign of the front-line child welfare worker job, to determine the optimal configuration of tasks, staffing, and requisite minimum qualifications	1	2	3	1	2	3	
New selection (hiring) process for front-line child welfare workers	1	2	3	1	2	3	
New selection, promotion and coaching process for front-line child welfare supervisors	1	2	3	1	2	3	
Intervention (Availability, Responsiveness, Continuity (ARC)) intended to improve organizational culture and climate	1	2	3	1	2	3	

Responses to this RFI are to be submitted electronically (in a secure .PDF document format) to the following e-mail address: [ODJFS Procurement Inquiries@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:ODJFS_Procurement_Inquiries@jfs.ohio.gov).

Section V – Results from RFI Effort and Next Steps

PCSAs may be required to participate in an in-person interview as part of the evaluation process. The interview, if necessary, may include participants from the QIC-WD, ODJFS and/or other State staff or representatives it may appoint, as appropriate. ODJFS reserves the right to select from responding PCSAs for interviews and may not interview all PCSAs submitting responses. The PCSA shall bear all costs of participating in any scheduled interview.

After review of written responses and the conclusion of each interview, if required, the review team will recommend a final pool of PCSAs to the QIC-WD for approval. The QIC-WD will participate on the review team. The review team will make final selections of PCSAs for Ohio's Statewide Implementation Team.

In making selections, the review team will take into account PCSAs':

A. Workforce needs;

B. Structure (e.g., stand alone, combined, triple combined), size, and geographic location; and

C. Administrative and logistical challenges.

Thank you for your efforts to provide ODJFS with your suggestions, comments and relevant information to assist with this project.