

## **SUPERVISOR TRAINING PROJECT**

### **Pennsylvania**

**Interview with members of the Child Welfare Resource Center at University of Pittsburgh:**

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#### **Supervisor Requirements**

Pennsylvania does not have any state-mandated requirements for child welfare supervisors. Pennsylvania has a state-supervised and county-administered system; accordingly, each county establishes its own hiring requirements.

All supervisors must complete a minimum of 20 hours of training per year. For those supervisors with licenses (e.g. Licensed Social Workers), there are additional annual training hour requirements.

#### **Pre-service Training**

Pennsylvania requires that all child welfare supervisors complete a 60-hour Supervisory Training Series. For supervisors who have been promoted from within the agency, the training must be completed within 18 months of assuming the position. For those hired from outside of the agency, the training must be completed within 24 months of assuming the position, after completion of the 126-hour caseworker training.

The Supervisory Training Series was recently revised. The modules in the Series generally follow Lawrence Shulman's phases of supervision. The new courses include:

- [Module 1: The Preparatory and Beginning Phases of Child Welfare Supervision](#) (12 hours)
- [Module 2: Living the Mission of Child Welfare](#) (12 hours)
- [Module 3: Middle/Work Phase of Supervision](#) (24 hours)
- [Module 4: Managing Diversity through the Employment Process](#) (6 hours)
- [Module 5: Endings and Transitions: Managing Staff Retention, Satisfaction and Separation](#) (6 hours)

The curriculum is [competency-based](#) and covers both child welfare-specific topics and supervisory/management-specific material. The series is trained by contractors who have prior experience in supervising child welfare. For the first time, supervisors now attend the Series as a cohort group and are expected to attend each module in order. The training is held regionally and is offered approximately twelve times per year.

#### **Ongoing Training**

The Child Welfare Resource Center offers approximately 45 specialized and related supervisors courses which are available to supervisors after completion of the pre-service training. These courses are used to satisfy the annual training requirement. Most courses are 6-12 hours in length and are trained by contractors at the regional level.

Available curriculum and materials online include:

- [501: Writing Effective Performance Standards](#)
- [501: The Employee Performance Review Process](#)
- [521: Coaching Grammar and Case Documentation](#)
- [521: Strength-Based, Solution-Focused Supervision](#)
- [522: Supervisory Issues in Child Sexual Abuse](#)
- [542: Leadership and the Parallel Process](#)

Additionally, supervisor training events are held on the regional level. These events are offered approximately twelve times per year. These serve as opportunities to provide legislative updates, deliver workshops based on need, and network.

Transfer of learning support sessions are provided to supervisors by request. These services support supervisory skill development to support and coach caseworkers in applying knowledge and skills from ongoing training. Although transfer of learning support sessions can be delivered to support any workshop, transfer of learning support is most often provided for [204: In-Home Safety and Management Process](#), [301: Engaging Clients From a Strength-Based, Solution-Focused Perspective](#), and [305: Engaging Absent Fathers](#).

### **Professional Development**

Pennsylvania offers two university programs, Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) and Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB). The CWEL program is a cooperative effort among the United States Administration for Children and Families, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, the Pennsylvania Child and Youth Administrators and eleven accredited schools of social work in Pennsylvania. Its goal is to strengthen public child welfare services in Pennsylvania by providing educational opportunities at the graduate level for public child welfare personnel. Qualified persons who are admitted to any of the approved schools on either a full- or part-time basis may receive substantial financial support in return for a contractual obligation to continue employment with the sponsoring agency following their studies. Pennsylvania has graduated over 1036 students from the CWEL program to date. The CWEB program is similar to CWEL, but is offered to those pursuing a Bachelor's degree.

Some counties have recently begun using the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute's Leadership Academy for Supervisors. Transfer of learning activities have also been developed to assist supervisors in overseeing their caseworkers' acquisition of new skills.

Individual training needs assessments (ITNAs) are completed following the Supervisory Training Series, and completed every three years on the county-level thereafter. Training needs are also regularly measured through evaluations given at the close of employee workshops. All information collected from ITNAs is maintained in a database from which reports are run on a regular basis. Available trainings are reviewed to ensure that all competencies are being met. If needs are not being met, the training group will investigate how to satisfy the need (e.g. add new trainings, conferences, outside agency trainings). Pennsylvania recognizes the importance of professional development plans and is committed to improving their use of them.

**Supervisor Supports: Supervisor Advisory Workgroup**

A Supervisor Advisory Workgroup has been convened to support the engagement of child welfare supervisors in the identification and creation of professional development opportunities and provide them a forum to discuss evolving and new policies. In this forum, supervisors are instrumental in identifying supervisor training needs, selecting training topics, and providing guidance in the development of, supervisor training events, transfer of learning opportunities and ethics and online curriculum. They also review and make recommendations regarding the revisions of materials and resources related to their practice.

**Partnerships**

Pennsylvania has collaborated with several groups to provide supervisor training and support. The State's original pre-service training was created in collaboration with Ohio's Child Welfare Training Program. More recently, Pennsylvania has used an expert from Bryn Mawr College (Marcia Martin, Ph.D.) to work with the State on these revisions.